

**THE METHODIST CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN TRANSVAAL
(1948-1976)**

By

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SUMMARY

This work seeks to describe and analyze the origins, growth, development, and main features of what can be termed the Methodist Church in the Transvaal Area. Faith in God was the only thing that kept some Christians and Methodists in particular going during those difficult times.

Despite a high price to be paid in the struggle, some church groups found it imperative to fight for human liberation as a sign of being obedient to God.

This thesis specifically aims at tracing the role played by the Methodist Church in the broader society in the Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland area presently known as the Highveld and Swaziland District looking specifically at the period between 1948 to 1976.

The interest is to discover out the Methodist Church's reaction to the introduction and implementation of the apartheid systems. In 1948 the National Party came to power in South Africa bringing with it the formulated policy of apartheid. Any church felt challenged and denied an opportunity to put into action gospel imperatives.

During this period the Methodist Church was caught between practicing Gospel imperatives to remain true to herself and being obedient to those in authority to allow herself to be divided along racial lines.

For the Methodist Church to claim to be "one and undivided" called for risking to loose properties and being a church without white membership. Interesting enough it was again in the Transvaal in Soweto on the 16th June 1976 when the black students riots marked the turning point in the struggle against apartheid.

The social witness of the Methodist Church in the Transvaal during the prescribed period was met with mixed feelings depending as to which side of the fence one found yourself.

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Methodist church is part and parcel of the Protestant family and therefore, in dogma, it does not differ much from the other Protestant churches.

Within the Christian church “One Holy and Apostolic” which is the body of Christ, the Methodist church holds a true place and cherishes this not alone for herself as an organized community but for her members; whenever two of three are gathered in the name of Christ and in obedience to His spirit.

This movement started against a background of extreme corruption in both Church and state in England. Sin and error prevailed to an alarming extent. Everything that gratified the lust of the flesh and eye was indulged in. Conditions at the University of Oxford and Cambridge were not better; prostitution was wholesale, drunkenness common and conversation corrupt. (Holsclaw 1979: 2-3)

The Methodists define the church as the company of the disciples of Jesus, consisting of such members who confess Him to be the Son of God, accept Him as their Saviour and Lord, love one another and unite in the fellowship of those who serve the coming of His kingdom on earth. Like the other Protestant churches, the Methodist church confess the headship of our Lord Jesus Christ, rejoices in the inheritance of the Apostolic faith, and loyally accepts the fundamental principle of the historic creeds and of the Protestant reformation. Naturally there are differences between the Protestant churches

themselves, otherwise there would be no need for their different names. In the Methodist tradition, a strong emphasis is placed on assurance, conversion, holiness, personal experience, and fellowship in Christian service, Christian perfection and free grace to the whole creation. (Mphahlele 1972:13). Christian perfection is what we are to strive for day in and day out according to John Wesley.

The Methodist Church doctrine claims its place in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the body of Christ. It rejoices in the inheritance of the Apostolic Faith and loyally accepts the fundamental principles of the historic creed and of the Protestant Reformation.

The Doctrines of the Evangelical Faith, which Methodism has held from the beginning and still holds, are based upon the Divine revelation recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The Methodist Church acknowledges this revelation as the supreme rule of faith and practice. These evangelical doctrines to which the preachers of the Methodist church both ministers and lay people are pledged are contained in Wesley's notes on the New Testament and the first four volume of his sermons. (Kirby 1954: 310)

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

The true continuity with the church of the past ages, which we cherish is to be found in the continuity of the Christian experience, the fellowship in the gift of the one Spirit, in the continuity of the allegiance to one Lord, the continued proclamation of the message, the continued acceptance of the mission. All these we share with the New testament Church. Christians

trace their genealogy from the Lord Jesus Christ. In this genealogy there is no distinction between laity and ordained, men and women. As regards the priesthood of all believers, indeed all Christians may be priest in this holy office. It is our conviction therefore, that the continuity of the church does depend on, and is not necessarily secured by, an official succession of ministers, whether bishops, or presbyters from apostolic times, but rather by fidelity to apostolic truth. (Kirby 1954: 311)

ORIGINS OF METHODISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Methodist church was founded by Rev. John Wesley (1703 – 1791) a clergyman of the Church of England. On 24th May 1738 he had a personal spiritual experience in Aldersgate Street in London in which he was assured of his own salvation. With this experience he felt called by God to be an itinerant preacher. With the support and help of his brother Charles Wesley and lay people, he embarked on a preaching ministry in churches, homes and in the open air, offering people the same assurance of salvation, which he had experienced himself.

Wesley's memory was so indelibly stamped with the events of the evening that he even recorded the precise time – a quarter to nine – at which the speaker was describing the life changing effects of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. This was the moment of truth for this unhappy and frustrated man.

To quote Wesley's own words about what followed is obligatory. He wrote: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for

salvation and assurance was given to me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

Soon after the discovery of gold in the area called Transvaal {pronounced in English as Trans Faal} a new Methodist district was established.

Geographically it was of vast extent, reaching from the Limpopo River on the north to the Vaal River on the South, stretching from the twenty-second to the twenty-eighth degrees. At that time the gold fields had not yet been very remunerative, although much gold had been obtained. One should bear in mind at that time this area was originally occupied by various large tribes of natives. The people in the Transvaal at this time were generally classified in two main local languages, Nguni speaking and Sotho speaking. It is possible that the Nguni ultimately originated in Central Africa but certainly migrated through to South Africa until they arrived in this place called Transvaal.

WHY THIS THESIS

This thesis has the humble purpose of trying to trace the role played by the Methodist Church in the Transvaal, looking specifically at the period "between" 1948 to 1976. It came into existence because of the keen interest of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) to know what contribution, was made by the church in the struggle for liberation and justice in the Transvaal.

THESIS

The focus of this thesis is about Methodists in the Transvaal, whereas I am going to narrow myself down to Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland, presently known as the Highveld and Swaziland district.

These were years during which the Apartheid system was radically and ruthlessly implemented and on the other hand this was the time when political resistance to the apartheid system was intensified. But the year 1948 was also significant when the National Party gained power in the country. It was to bring in a new articulated and formulated philosophy of racial segregation, which it was to promulgate and institute in every facet of South Africa (Worsnip 1991: xiv).

This apartheid regime sought to restructure South Africa in a way, which would secure the position of the white race forever, so as to make sure that they remain superior in charge and control not only over the land but the black people's lives as well. It is not the intention of this thesis to provide an exhaustive analysis of the role of the Methodist church, nor a detailed history of the church. It has rather a specific and limited aim of examining the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's positive contribution to society in promoting socio-political justice in the Transvaal. In this thesis for the purpose of clarity, I have arranged personal interviews with the following people: Rev Thlolwe, Dr Rev D. Veysie, Rev V. Harris, Rev Damoyi, Rev C. Mayson and Mr. W. Mpambo.

Because of my specific area of concern, I have made no attempt to record in detail the reaction of other South African churches during the period under review, whereas I found it imperative to look at other churches as well.

Similarly, I have not tried to analyze in detail both white parliamentary and black extra-parliamentary politics of the period.

ORAL HISTORY

The Methodist Church's contribution to the struggle is rarely recorded in formal, written sources. Therefore this study largely relies on oral information and records kept as archival sources. For this purpose a number of interviews were setup with both ministers and lay people present during the prescribed period. The interviews and discussions concerned gave background information regarding ethnicity, racism, class and the specific role of individuals, groups and organizations.

Only two of the interviews have been taped, because experience showed that the tape recorder limited the freedom of expression of the people involved. The informal type of interviews, which had the character of a discussion, gave far more insight and information than the formal approach.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Literature dealing with the role of the Methodist Church in the Transvaal falls roughly into two categories. First, there are studies dealing specifically with Methodists and secondly studies have been written in which the Methodist Church is seen as part of a wider process, namely the domestication of the church under colonial rule.

The literature dealing with the history of the Methodist Church in the Transvaal omits any mention of coloured voices standing up against apartheid.

Studies on the Methodist Church have often been shaped by the question whether the above-mentioned church was practical enough and meaningful to society. Studies showed that those stood up against apartheid were often attacked by some church leaders accusing them for doing what they did for the wrong reasons namely to attain social status. From this point of view, the contemporary study is able to observe the role played by the Methodist Church in the Transvaal as part of a wider society.

SOURCES

The primary and secondary sources at my disposal will be evident from the bibliography. It will be clear that this thesis would not be possible without a detailed search in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa archives housed in Cory library in the Rhodes University Library in Grahamstown. Apart from archival sources, one has been immensely helped by the interviews of many of our leaders who gave up their time and energy giving a great perspective and clear insight. Additional work was also done at the Methodist Connexional Office in Durban. It was a great privilege to lay my hands on research work done by people like Dr Joan Anne Millard, “The role of the Methodist local preachers and other laity in Potchefstroom, Pretoria and Johannesburg before 1900” Dr and Rev Donald C. Veysie “The Wesleyan Methodist church in the Transvaal 1823-1902.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY

HISTORY THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHURCH

There are some people who do not take kindly to the use of history in the attempt at explaining the world, let alone trying to resolve racial and ethnic problems. They feel that history is not only a burden to the modern mind seeking to get on with one's life, but there is a wish to forget the past, especially when the past re-works the wounds, to the detriment of personal happiness and joy. However I take the view that history is indispensable in explaining the various trends in the world today, in terms of sociological origins of current economic and structural problems, including at an even higher level a search for deeper understanding of the universe for the inquisitive enquiries of teleological and other sciences.

On the other hand the resolution of any conflict and the attempt at addressing pastoral problems, begin with identifying a problem, asking the question why listening to the account of the victims and villains in the story of hostilities by definition constitute historical re-counting of events. This history is unavoidable in the resolution of pastoral problems. Then the telling of the story compels one to go back to history.

The understanding of that history helps one to shape the future and prevent one to repeat the same mistake over and over again. One's identity is shaped by the history of that particular individual.

The year 1948 is of utmost importance in S.A. history. Afrikaner nationalism finally triumphed on the 28 May 1948, when the Re-united [Herenigde] National Party dislodged Jan Smuts United Party with a promise to preserve white power in general and Afrikaner power in particular. (Oakes, 1998: 374)

The instrument used to put the apartheid policy into practice was known as the apartheid system [literally separateness] designed to ensure that the interests of Afrikaans-speaking voters remained dominant in a parliament representing a white minority, giving the impression, if not the substance of a western –style democracy. One other important event about the year 1948 is the formation of the World Council of Churches.

THE MEANING OF APARTHEID

One other interesting thing about the Nationalist party's victory is that its leader Malan had attributed his party victory in the 1948 elections to the divine providence. Apartheid was a new word in 1948. It does not appear at all in an edition of an Afrikaans dictionary in 1948. There is evidence, however, that it was used before 1948. For instance, in Malan's "National Party commission report of 1947," the word appears over forty times, though not in precisely the same meaning. Apartheid was described as a policy based on the Christian principle of right and justice: it was a policy, which would maintain and protect the white race as a distinctive group. The same would also be guaranteed for all other national groups as separated communities. (Worsnip 1991: 46)

POLITICAL RESISTANCE

In 1949 James Moraka ousts Xuma as A.N.C. president. Militant programs of action adopted at an A.N.C. congress saw people like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo taking the A.N.C. Youth League leadership.

The new South Africa's glorious day had been the 16 Dec 1949, Dingaans Day, when 250-000 people, a tenth of all whites in the country had assembled outside Pretoria and to a salute of twenty-one guns inaugurated the Voortrekker monument. Though the tone of the celebration was intended not to be offensive, and Havenga even declared that it was a good day for the blacks too, for they have been relieved through white victory of Zulu tyranny and had learnt to look to the white man as their sure guardian, Dr Malan stressed that the battle was in no way over. The struggle for racial purity must go on together with the war against godless communism, which continued to act like a destruction and deep cancer.

The message of the festival was proclaimed loud and clear in 'Die Kerbode' official newspaper of the Dutch Reformed Church.

If what was happening in South Africa was in one way a stronger assertion of white power over black, it was in another way an anti-colonial development: the Afrikaner tribe, which had fled from colonial rule in 1830, which had nevertheless been conquered by the British in the 1890's, had now at last fully recovered the initiative and was asserting its power against the surviving fragments of colonial rule and against less fortunate tribes.

(Hasting 1979: 9)

THE NATIONAL PARTY'S VICTORY

After the Nationalist victory in 1948's general election "Die Kerkbode" declared that they as church give thanks in humility that the members of their government were all bearers of the protestant belief and members of the Christian church. The Nationalist Party had for its part explicitly based its apartheid policy on the Christian principle of right and justice. Dr Malan himself had been a minister of the church and his approach to political issues was heavily religious.

AFRICANS WERE FACED WITH CHOICE TO MAKE

By the time of the 20th century there were ecclesiastical alternatives for black Christians in South Africa. They could be members of mission churches whose membership was wholly black, but which were under the control of white missionaries and their mission boards in Europe and North America. A second possibility was that they could be members of multiracial denominations, those churches largely of British origins where the line between settler and mission church had not been clearly drawn. But even here, likewise, white leadership with European customs; discrimination and a great deal of paternalism dominated the black members, These were a third opinion. Black people could leave the mission and the multiracial churches and initiate their own. (De Gruchy 1986: 4)

During the year of 1950's the Transvaal district of the Methodist Church was taking the territory of the Transvaal. Geographically speaking, it was of vast extent, reaching the Limpopo River on the north to the Vaal River on the South, stretching from the twenty-second to the twenty-eight degree of

south latitude. Various tribes of natives originally occupied this part of the country. (Holsclaw 1979: 13). Each area was divided into European, African and Coloured section, and the district was known as Transvaal and Swaziland district.

CLASSIFICATION PROCEDURES

Passed in 1950 and amended several times to close loopholes, the Population Registration Act was designed to provide definition of race based on physical appearance as well as general acceptance. And once this had been established, it made provision for the carrying of identity cards in which the race of a person would be clearly marked. Some of the early classification procedures were crude to the extreme. For instance white officials were occasionally known to have resolved doubtful cases by using what became known as the pencil in the hair test, if a pencil pushed in the hair stayed there, it signified kroes [frizzy] hair and the classification of the subject is as Coloured / Africans. If it fell out, it signified straight hair, which usually meant classification as coloured or white.

STRONG PILLARS OF APARTHEID

The next pillar of apartheid was the Group Areas Act, which was passed in the same year as the Population Registration Act; while residential segregation of Africans and Indians had a long history with increased rigid measures having been passed for Africans from the 1920's and for Indians from the 1920's and for Indians from the mid 1940's the principle was now greatly extended. (Oakes 1998: 376)

THE YOUTH LEAGUE'S PROGRAMME OF ACTION

In 1949 the African National Congress was under Dr James Moraka, newly elected president –general, the movements met and evolved its programme of action. This programme of action was a milestone in congress history. It represented a fundamental change of policy and method. Underlying it was the refusal to be content forever with leftovers from the white South Africa table. The challenge was to be on fundamentals, they were no longer interested in petty adjustments. There was no longer any doubt in the congress people's mind that without the vote they are helpless. Without the vote there is no way for them to realize themselves in their land. The program of action adoption in 1949 stressed a new method. (Luthuli 1987: 98)

PEOPLE FOUND IN THE TRANSVAAL

The people found in the Transvaal during the prescribed period, the Boers were connected to the Dutch church found in the Transvaal. The English residents belong chiefly to the commercial or mining classes. The great majority of the people are natives of various races and tribes. The Basotho and Botswana people were dominating but one can still find Zulus, Swazis, Xhosas and other small communities. The prescribed period in this dissertation managed to produce a succession of Methodist leaders, both ministerial and lay, which have become household names throughout South Africa. One recall the saintly Seth Mokitimi the first black president of the South African church, Dr J.B. Webb, a vice president of the World

Methodist Council, Dr William Nkomo medical doctor and Christian statesman. The list is so long, Methodists seem peculiarly well-adapted to meet spiritual and social needs of a changing South Africa, as is evidenced by the growth and influence of such organization within the church as the women's and Young Men's Manyano and they exercise a powerful ministry. (Atwell 1995: 65)

In 1871 a Methodist minister called Blencowe, who worked in Natal, visited Transvaal. Two years later he came back with two other missionaries to start a trial mission to the Methodists already living in the Transvaal. One of the men who came with Blencowe was George Weavind who did a lot for Methodism in the Transvaal. The year that these three arrived, 1873 was the year in which gold was discovered in the Eastern Transvaal. In 1877 Sir Theophilus Stepstone from Natal annexed the Transvaal and made it a British colony. At first the Boers did nothing about this, but in 1880 they fought against the British and won. In 1881 British handed the Transvaal back to the Boers. While, the British were in control of the Transvaal [1877-1881] the Methodist church grew and organized itself. In 1880 the Transvaal District of the Methodist church was formed. This district was directed by the Methodist conference in Britain, and Owen Watkins was its first chairman. When Watkins retired in 1891, Weavind became chairman. He started a successful mission in Johannesburg: many Africans helped as lay preachers, assistant missionaries and later ministers.

BACKGROUND TO THE TRANSVAAL AREA

Transvaal and Swaziland constituted a missionary field known as a district of British conference and spearheaded by people like Owen Watkins from England, George Weavind, Amos Burnet etc. It is during this time that one notes the few openings for medical mission work, which would do much to alleviate human suffering and at the same time drastically demonstrate the gentler charities of the Christian faith. Before Transvaal and Swaziland could free to be part of the union of South African Methodism, Allen Lee urged five claims:

1. The Methodist Church in Southern Africa ought to be one: a common ideal, a common purpose, a common life, and a common heritage are surely reason sufficient to dictated a call for a united church: one Methodist Church in the land of the Southern Cross.
2. The Methodist Church needs one central authority. First in relation to the government on questions of racial and inter-racial problems particularly on land and educational matters as they relate to the great native people of the country. Then in relation to public bodies and matters of social and economic value. A more effective instrument is required to marshal the full use of the moral force of the people who belong to the Methodist Church.
3. Methodist on both sides of the Vaal has much to gain from the local community. Each has a life that will be stronger and a wealth of spiritual and material possession that will be greatly enhanced by the entire church in South Africa.
4. One unified Methodist Church is needed so that incongruities may cease to hurt the church members, both Europeans and Africans

transferred from one section to another are often puzzled to understand why we are not one and some have been scandalized when they have considered the things that prevent the union. The significant is that the laity of the church on both sides of the Vaal have been from the beginning almost unanimously in favour of one unified Methodist Church in South Africa.

5. The paramount reason for one organic South African Methodist Church is the urgent need for a full mobilization of the total forces of the Methodist Church. The leaders of the Methodist Church in South Africa wish to see the church effectively one, that the wealth, soul of intelligence, of moral strength, of evangelical zeal and of material possession may be felt in breaking down the rampant of both white paganism and black heathenism within the sphere of influence and in face of the tremendous calls from the more central and eastern parts of Africa. (Hewson S.A. 86)

Significantly, Allen Lea quoted a statement made in the year when the South African conference was established: Our mission as Methodist is not and never has been restricted to men of one nation or colour we that success and prosperity have been vouchsafed to us largely because we have always sought to benefit both European and native races. This glory of our connection, we will trust be always maintained. (Hewson: 89-90)

Our United Methodist Church is what one would expect from the followers of John and Charles Wesley who understood so well that John described as a Catholic spirit for the true Methodist, who never had a sectarian heart. There is therefore no problem in the fact of Methodist in South African missionary conference, and in the leadership of the Christian Council of

South Africa. At this point in time church leadership of Methodism in South Africa have stressed the conviction that co-operation between the racial groups in South Africa is not merely desirable, but an urgent necessity: For Methodist Church to grow it was imperatives that it should be faithful in her two-fold duties and worship. God has both the community and the individuals through whom god can brings and does bring redemption out of disaster and rebirth out of decay. (Whiteside 1906: 103)

Many natives were excited by the news of the gospel more especially those dwelling at Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp, Ventersdorp. Heathen kraals were visited, but the greatest obstacle to the acceptance of the gospel was polygamy. Mr. Weavind once said 'when you preach, the natives said you always talk about our having too many wives, we are too old to alter, look to the little ones for they will listen'. The finger of God touched their heart with concern for their children. (Whiteside 1906: 420)

It was remarkable that from parts of the Transvaal request came for native teachers and preachers. Headmen pleaded with the church: if you will give us a teacher we will fetch him in a wagon, build a house and a church and we will support him. The training institution at Kilnerton assumed increasing importance. At Mafikeng chief Montsia was heathen, but Christianity had been introduced and kept alive among the tribes by his brother Molema, who was a tall intelligent native: The native town called Mafikeng was founded by Molema. (Whiteside 1906:429-430)

One of the dilemmas for Methodist church in dealing with the natives as equal partners was the state. According to state law no native could possess land. He might rent an allotment, build a house and on an approved the land,

but at a moment's notice he could be ejected without compensation. This was frequently done. In many parts of the Transvaal, those natives who have been sent to the institution would return to their own tribes, they had preached the Gospel to the heathen, and formed Methodists societies among the converts. Without any help from Europeans, they had in some instances built plain little churches, in which every Sunday they worshipped God. At the beginning, Swaziland was a dangerous place to be, more especially if you are a Christian however this situation was help by the chief who believed that Christianity is a good thing; the tension here was between Christianity worship and belief of the ancestors especially those of their former kings and they appeased them sacrifices. (Wonsnip 1991:72)

BACKGROUND TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE TRANSVAAL

The Transvaal and Swaziland District was started as a missionary district of the British conference, financed and staffed by the British Wesleyan Methodist church. Other writers note the fact that Methodist missions in the Transvaal started with Africans bringing the gospel to their own people. At first, however, this happened without the knowledge of the Methodist church as a whole, and the official Methodist missionary in the area was a white minister from Natal, Rev. George Blencowe. Blencowe visited the Transvaal in 1871 to assess the situation and returned in 1873 with three companions (one of whom was George Weavind, later chairman of the Transvaal District) to open an experimental "trial mission. "To his surprise and delight Blencowe discovered that the Transvaal already possessed a thriving African Methodist congregation at Potchefstroom, led by David Magatha.

In 1881 Owen Watkins, a missionary from Natal, was appointed the first Chairman and General Superintendent of Methodist to work in the Transvaal. His task was to encourage and support the existing missions and plan the expansion of the expansion of the work. During the Anglo-Boer War of 1899- 1902, Methodists in the Transvaal were in general in good terms with the Boer government, even though they sometimes criticized its actions. Methodists were advised by their ministers to act as responsible citizens of the Republic and fight against the British if necessary.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

The first Methodist church in Potchefstroom was built in 1875. It was the first chapel in the Transvaal and for twenty –nine years this building was the center of all the non-conformist religious life of the town. In 1904 the congregation had outgrown it and a temporary wood and iron structure forward the second church, which was erected. This was soon too small and it was decided to build a church worthy of the town and people, though there were severe constraints. With words of encouragement and commendation of the high commissioner, Lord Selborne, the foundation stone was laid in 1905. The church was opened the following year and was a source of pride to Methodists and of satisfaction to others in the town. The number of young people attending was encouraging and every Sunday evening there were also a good number of military presences. (Mears S.A: 22)

Among the many transactions affecting church property was the sale of the Wesley building on the Andries Street church property, which has formed the heart of Methodist in Pretoria. (Mears S.A: 22).

The centrality of the situation, so very advantageous over a long period, proved increasingly disadvantageous, as traffic noises became a disturbance and distraction. But the decision to sell was almost forced by the extensive crumbling of the bricks of which the church was built. A new building scheme had to be faced, and it was impossible to build on the same site, with at the same time maintaining the necessary services. In any event the congregation had outgrown the seating capacity of the church, and that necessitated the move to new premises.

BACKGROUND TO SWAZILAND

Swaziland was the station of the Rev. J. Allison from which he was driven in 1841, and with him went Daniel Msimang, who settled at Driefontein, in Natal and for a native to become wealthy was not usual. When native ministers were wanted for the Transvaal, Daniel though fifty years of age, was the first to offer himself, and with him volunteered two of his sons, and his brother. Daniel was sent to Swaziland and acting on the advice of Mr. Watkins, he planted his mission where Mr. Allison had planted his and called the place Mahamba. For a time he and his wife and two daughters whilst on mission at Mahamba lived in his wagon.

Every evening he had family prayer in the open air and such was the tenders and earnestness of his positions that the Swazi's kept, they scarcely knew why. The neighboring Boers were offended and appealed to the commissioner to stop him, but he replied: 'no; I know Daniel very well. He is a good man, and no one shall hinder him.' As the Boers got to know him

they respected him and would listen to his addresses. The witch – doctors took alarm and threatened to take his life. Daniel replied, “When I came to Swaziland I knew it was possible I might be killed. That does not trouble me. I am in the hands of the Lord.” He went on calmly preaching the Word. A native woman was converted, and her husband, full of rage, sought and demanded that Daniel should die. But the chief said: ‘No, Christianity is the good thing.’ Daniel found clay in the valley, made bricks and built a church forty feet long.

When Mr. Watkins came to see what was happening, Daniel’s tall figure was drawn into its full height, and his face shone with Divine light, as standing in the church he built, he presented thirty adult natives for baptism. Swazis like many other races at a similar stage of belief, worshipped the spirit of the dead, especially those of the former kings and appease them by sacrifices. At the beginning of the 1950’s and prior to this prescribed period the Methodist Church and other churches had only started to discuss the need for Christians both black and white to stand for what is just and right the and the issues secured to be on the agenda of the church then are the following:

1. The full and direct representation and participation of all sections of society in the affairs of both the church and the state.
2. The abolition of all legislation discriminatory on the ground on the grounds of colour, creed, race or sex.
3. The provision of land for the landless people of South Africa and assistance in making the best use of it.
4. The non-state interference in the offers of the church.

THE PRESENT SWAZI NATION

The present Swazi nation forms part of the Nguni group who migrated southwards over a number of centuries. The ancestors of the Swazi people lived in Mozambique until about 1700. To escape warring Zulus they moved westward through South Africa, crossing the Lebombo Mountains into what is now Swaziland. Swaziland gained its independence from Britain in 1968 and a Westminster type of government was introduced. In 1973 however, King Sobhuza 11 suspended the constitution and reverted to traditional systems. At the time of his death in 1982, he had held the throne for sixty-one years. Following King Sobhuza's death a period of stability followed. King Mswati 11 was crowned in 1986 at the age of eighteen and restoring the country once again to a constitutional government.

PEOPLE OF SWAZI NATION

The Swazi people in Swaziland (closely related to the Zulu) form part of a larger grouping of Swazi, a million of whom live in South Africa in the Transvaal and its former homeland called Kangwane. Swazi's account for 90% of the population of Swaziland. The balance is made up of Zulus, Mozambicans, and Muslims, who originally came from East Africa and small white population involved in commerce trade and commercial farming.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Swaziland has a well-managed and diversified free enterprise economy. There is a modern sector which is responsible for more than 90% of the country's production and which employs about 30% of the labour force. The remainders of the people are involved in traditional agriculture or are self-employed. Missions and churches began education in Swaziland. Today most of the primary schools are still in the hands of churches and missions although they are assisted financially by the government.

NATURE OF THE SYNOD

From the Synod Minutes of 1950, of the District of Transvaal and Swaziland held at Pretoria from the 1st to the 4th August 1950. What one can take note, about those minutes is that, that District was one big district stretching from Petersburg presently known as Polokwane down to Vereeniging, Swaziland to Vryburg. That one big district was under the chairmanship of Dr J.B. Web and the secretary of the synod was Rev C.K. Storey. The political situation in the country could not be the part of the church agenda. It is significant to remember that the policies of apartheid were being implemented as we have pointed out earlier on.

The 1949 synod met under a cloud of difficulties both political and economical. "That cloud is unhappily still with us in an even more intensified form. Not only have race relations deteriorated to a dangerous degree, but also recent legislation has made the future look gloomier. The continually scaring cost of living has created an economic problem of the

first magnitude. We rejoice, however, to record that, in spite of all this, the blessing of Almighty God has been made manifest in our work.” (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European session, 1950: 11)
These were the words of the chairman in his address to the synod as the chairman. One can deduce from this statement that was not all and well in the district and country as whole.

HEALTH AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GOSPEL

That synod of 1950 resolved that, the Methodist Church of South Africa in the Transvaal would view the future with sober confidence, determined that whatever might be the circumstances in which they labour, they shall keep the vision of their main task undimmed and that was "to spread Scriptural Holiness throughout the land." (Minutes Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European Session 1950: 12)

At that time, Gospel still saw health as the important components of what Christ has calls us to do. Synod noted that the Superintendent's wife, who has acted as a matron and the African nurses, who at all hours without of duty time, have laboured with success to establish the medical work of Mahamba. The synod requested conference formally to recognized the existence of the Mahamba Hospital, and to make provision for its continuance by a special grant of 500. The necessary information to be supplied by the Rev. A. Matthews, who was a superintendent. The question of the re-establishment of the Hospital on a full scale and he raising of funds for capital expenditure was referred to the District Medical Committee. The District Medical Committee consisted of the following members. Dr. M.S. Molema, Dr. Nyembezi, Dr. F.W. Nkomo, Mr. S.T. Sukati and Mr. S.H.

Maseko. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European Session 1950: 12)

Whilst the government was making sure that African people feel that they are secondary citizen in this country. Here in 1950, we see a resolution coming for the Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod saying "This synod request conference to consider the practicability of bringing the African Minister's children on to the same basis of maintenance allowance as European Minister's children." The point, which was being challenged, was paragraph (68 in page 170 of the laws and disciple)

FROM AFRICAN TO EUROPEAN

It is of uttermost important to note that in 1950, the Methodist Church in Africa had two sessions of the Synod, the first one was African session which is to be held three or four days prior the European one. Looking at 1950 minutes of synod of the African session took place from the 1st to the 4th of August in Pretoria, and thereafter the European session, which took place from the 4th to the 9th of August. It is also interesting to note that the chairman and the secretary of the two sessions were the same white ministers. As we read this resolution I want to us have at the back of our minds the resolution of the African session. European session's resolution talks of the need that all their efforts should bear fruit in Christian homes, active membership and consecrated leadership. They resolve to make the filling of this need a matter of continual prayer and work, putting all their power at the disposal of the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit may call many to the service of the Christ in the Ministry of His Church. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European Session 1950: 390).

The resolution passed by the African session regarding the Mahamba Hospital was repeated here and has been passed. The Synod in European Representative session also supported the Resolution from the Mahamba Circuit Quarterly meeting, passed in the African Representative session. They also supported the question of the re-establishment of the Hospital on a full scale. One of the important resolution pointing out that European Representative session was aware of what took place among the African in the African session of our church, for an example we would like to note this resolution “In view of the present inadequacy of literature for African Sunday School, the present unsatisfactory teaching of Catechism, and the ineffectiveness of present Sunday School notes, this synod asks conference to institute as exhaustive survey of the teaching aids in our Sunday School throughout the connection.” (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod African Session, 1950: 48)

HEALING MINISTRY

It is striking to note that one of the reason offered by people for leaving the Methodist Church to join other churches was well attended to as early as 1950. “The Synod of the Transvaal District recommends that conference publish a brief statement on Spiritual Healing on the following lines, rather than that in the minutes. In the early Church, the healing of mind and body was regarded as no more abnormal than the making of converts by preaching. In general it is God’s will that all God’s children should be healthy in body, mind and spirit. In this as in other matters He requires of us the co-operation of believing in prayer. It has always been true that certain

individuals have ‘gifts’ of healing, but we are sure that they should not separate themselves from the church of Christ, nor their work from the whole saving work of Christ. Nor it is right that spiritual healing should be done for monetary reward. In the future, particular ministers may be trained to work in association with medical science. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod European session, 1950: 54)

The above is based on the Methodist faith, believing that Christology –Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the Head of the church. Jesus Christ has in Himself gifts of miracles. He is the Comforter through the Holy Spirit and teacher of God’s law. He is the Redeemer of the world. Jesus, the representative man, represents God in human capacity. Christ is God because He represents the very nature of God the Father. All Methodists are called to preach the gospel to all people within and outside the church. She is also empowered to administer healing as stipulated in the Bible.

METHODISM IN BOTSWANA AS PART OF TRANSVAAL

The Methodist church was founded by Rev. John Wesley (1703 – 1791) the clergymen of the Church of England. As I have pointed out earlier on when I was tracing the origin of Methodism. Those who responded to His ministry organized themselves into religious societies divided into classes, each with its own leader. John Wesley appointed helpers and assistants to have an oversight of the societies, which were grouped in to circuits. The affairs of the societies were regulated by an annual conference of preachers. Although it was not Wesley’s intention to separate Methodism from the Church of England after his death, the Methodist Church became a distinct church.

From England the Methodist Church spread to other parts of the world including South Africa, where it came with the 1820 settlers under the leadership of both William Shaw and Barnabas Shaw as missionaries. No single individual was responsible for the establishment of the Methodist church in the Transvaal. What is known is that some Barolong from Botswana spent sometime with Methodist missionaries in Thaba-Nchu in the Free State/Lesotho border.

Other Botswana came under the influence of the Methodist church at the mines and schools around Johannesburg. Initially Barolong, farm was the main centre of Methodism in Botswana. People who had been converted to Methodism in the Transvaal were collected for worship and depended on Transvaal District for direction and help. As part of the Transvaal District, there was Methodist minister visiting Botswana from time to time. As we mentioned earlier on the Methodist Church observe two important sacraments:

- (a) Baptism is done by sprinkling of water on the forehead of the child or the grown up person in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a right of incorporation into the family of God. The Methodist church believes in one baptism.
- (b) The Lords Supper is celebrated at least four times a year, once a quarter at each congregation. It can be once a month where personnel are easily available. Wafers and unfermented grape juice or similar substance are used as symbols of the body and blood of Christ. The Lords Supper is celebrated in obedience to Christ's command and also a means of grace and creating community. Only full members of the church are eligible to receive the Lord Supper.

CHAPTER I

CHURCH TOUCHING BIBLE WITH REALITY

1.1 THE ROLE OF RACISM IN THE CHURCH

According to the message of Christ, for which the people of the Old Covenant were to prepare humanity, to understand that salvation is offered to the whole human race that means to every creature and to all nations. The first Christians gladly accepted being considered as the people of a 'third race' according to an expression of Tertullian. This was not to be clearly understood in a racial sense, but rather in the spiritual sense (Card 1988: 10) In the Methodist church in the Transvaal some Christian activists like Rev C. Mayson did not hesitate to raise their voices against racial practices from within the church. If people don't stand up consciously against racism there is a tendency of denying its existence and from this research work it is clear that many of our fellow Methodists even thought racism was natural because they were victims of what we call the phenomenon of spontaneous racism. Racial laws can contribute towards promoting racism but again for people to eradicate racist behaviour they need to change their hearts. The church is ever challenged to bring about message, which lays foundation for strong Christian convictions and that in itself challenges racism of any form practiced either inside or outside the church.

1.1.1 OPPRESIVE LAWS, RACISM AND THE CHURCH

Deeper research on this area show that the church at this time finds itself divided along racial lines. The Methodist Church has been to a great extent divided by racism. The fact that people of this country use many languages is not an excuse for racist tendencies, instead it is an advantage to the church and this is evident in our black churches. When a Methodist Church minister is being stationed or placed in any of our black circuits he/she is not asked whether he / she speaks the language of the people he/she is going to work with. One of the sad things about racism is that it forces the church to compromise her authentic witness.

The other problem that seemed to be evident at this time that played an important role in dividing the church is culture and language and at this time there were two dominant and distinct churches, that are Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking churches. It is believed that cultural diversity is natural and it is not divisive unless it is allowed to become dominant in some way. Cultural diversity can and should enrich the life of the church. But the moment culture becomes absolute in some sense, then it divides rather than enriches the church, society, institution, organization etc.

1.2 MIXED MARRIAGES AND IMMORALITY

One of the motivating reasons for this is the fact that the Nationalist Party Government believed in what they called a 'pure race': if black and white were to marry one another that would result to a dilution. This meant that

the government was to stamp out marriages between white and black altogether.

In 1949 Parliament passed the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act and that became the major piece of apartheid legislation. This meant that the church was directly affected, as this was applicable to all citizens of the country.

The ministers of religion were and still are solemnizing many marriages and this meant that whether they like it or not they were forced by law to marry people based on racial lines.

In 1950 the ban on 'Mixed marriages was followed by an amendment to the Immorality Act, passed in 1927 by Barry Hertzog's Pact Government to ban extra-marital sexual relations between Africans and Whites.

The amendment had the effect of outlawing sexual relations between all blacks and whites. (Saunders 1992: 375).

This period challenged churches including the Methodist Church, if they were to be true to themselves, and demand freedom from control by the state. This means freedom for religious faith and worship and witness, including public worship and public witness. It means freedom of association and freedom for ordering of the corporate life of churches themselves. Some individuals who thought different from Dr Malan must have said to themselves they knew that God is on the side of the oppressed. This is first of all a biblical theme. People like Dr Webb, were keenly aware of the centrality of the exodus: God is one who liberated the oppressed slaves in Egypt: creation and exodus are indissoluble linked, as Deutero – Isaiah makes clear. Again creation is the first act of history, and human history is the story of god's liberating action.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa was aware of the fact that Christianity believes that every human person bears the image of God and thereby lays a claim upon us. The structure of both church and society must lend themselves to the creation of human community while safeguarding human dignity and liberty of conscience; civil government, whether or not it is in the hands of Christians is to be respected as a gift of God, bringing order in society. It cannot create perfect society, and it cannot demand ultimate loyalty. Where requirements of the state are seen to be in conflict with the will of God, Christians through their vocations in the world are called to serve the neighbour by their skills and by their love and to transform the structure of society so that God's justice will be shown to the world.

The social witness of the Methodist Church more especially in the Transvaal District, during the early 1950's was more or less the same as that of the English-speaking churches as a whole. The basic difference was the special place, which the Methodist Church of Southern Africa had as a result of its connection with the British establishment. Another of the government's priorities was to strip Africans of the last vestiges of their access to the white political system and to substitute these with political rights in the Reserve. The fundamental idea throughout, Verwoerd told parliament in 1951, is Bantu control over Bantu areas as and when it become possible for them to exercise that control efficiently and properly for the benefit of their own people. (Sunders 1992: 378)

Dr. Verwoerd, who studied at European Universities, did not see a point of educating blacks, as that would frustrate them after qualifying, as they were not going to get those jobs because they were reserved for whites only.

1.3 THE ROLE OF THE WOMEN'S UNIFORM

Once again we cannot forget the importance of the role of women's and their contribution in the Methodist Church, other churches and the community at large. Their very existence is based on prayer, spiritual meditation and common social concerns. Uniform dramatizes the visibility of the movement and of the role of women in general in the church. The great majority of Manyano women were housewives with a primary school education, all of them ambitious on behalf of their children's education. Not always have these Women's Manyano and their achievements been fully appreciated by some of their more highly educated black sisters.

1.4 VOICES AGAINST APARTHEID

All the voices against apartheid in the 1950's were almost from the white leadership. The only black voice of the church in 1950 was a voice of middle – class Africans. Yet the immense majority of the church members were black. (Worsnip 1991: 21)

A number of black people resisted apartheid by not talking but by their action like non-co-operation with apartheid policies at the ground level. By 1950 Albert Luthuli was a vice president of the Christian council and behind him there were men like the Anglican priest James Calata, secretary-general of the congress. In a splendid statement of August 1950, James Calata called Christ the champion of freedom, thus enunciating a theological theme more associated with 1970 than 1950. Two years later when Luthuli accepted the presidency of the African National Congress and had been

dismissed from his position as chief, he issued a statement upon his position. For thirty years he said he had been pursuing the path of moderation knocking in vain patiently, moderately and modestly at a closed and barred door, now he saw no other alternative than that the African National Congress and the passive resistance campaign. He ended up with the famous words: "It is inevitable that in working for freedom some individuals and some families must take the lead and suffer: the road to freedom is via the cross."

1.5. WOMEN AUXILIARY

The main aim was to bring about means, which would enable women to take their place in the greater task of the church. The name "auxiliary" expressed the intention from the beginning to help and support the mission of the church in a more significant way than it was possible in small isolated groups, and to be recognized in so doing as an effective body within church structure. Some people wish to know whether, the feminist movement to a great extent or up to a point motivated the women's auxiliary of that time. The tide of new awareness on the part of the role of women played an important part. However the overriding motive in forming the organization was first and foremost a deep commitment to God. A strong spiritual foundation would be the ground of all their endeavors. (Atwell 1997: 14)

The Transvaal's women association 'aims and objects' were three fold:

- I. Personal: to promote the spiritual life of members.
- II. The church to co-operate in assisting the various departments of church work.

III. The world to promote the interest of missionary, social and temperance work. (Attwell 1997: 15)

Their membership card bore the motto 'let us consider one another, to promote unto love and to good works.' The words are from Hebrew 10:24 the authorized version of the New Testament.

1.5.1 SHORT BACKGROUND OF WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

There is no evidence when the Women's Auxiliary was formed in South Africa, nor was there any thought of linking it in an organizational sense with the women's Manyano. Each had their own ready-made way of conducting the affairs of their respective organizations. The women's Manyano has won the respect and admiration of the Women's Auxiliary (Attwell 1997: 66).

By 1944 there was a strong feeling among Coloured members that they wanted direct representation at district meetings and at Synod and conference. They no longer wished to have an European president imposed upon them or to represent them. Meetings at Executive level with representatives of the affiliated coloured branches were held. Due to this need and cry, the following question was put to the District meeting for consideration. Does the meeting consider that in the interest of the coloured members they should be allowed equal representation, or does the meeting consider that a separate organization with opportunities of development would meet the need and possibilities of the coloured work? (Attwell 1997: 74).

Much prayer and thoughtful discussion was given to this question, but it was felt that there was “no unanimous voice” among the coloured women themselves, and therefore the time was not opportune to take any definite steps. This kind of thinking seems to condone apartheid and the Methodist Church had already made to think that way: The regime wanted in fact all Christians to believe that an apartheid system was a God-given answer to racial challenges.

This was the planting of the seed for the formation of what is known as the women’s association. The transition of coloured branches from the women’s auxiliary to the newly formed association did not happen overnight. Many members of the Women’s Auxiliary in the Transvaal joined the Women’s associations in numbers in 1950. The women’s association grew from a few hundred members to two thousand members, the number required to entitle them a seat at conference. Leadership gifts among coloured women quickly came to the fore. Women involved in these structures were as aware as any person that the divisions between Methodist women should be bridged, and had known this for a long time, this was evident by their constant effort to find ways and means of closer co-operation.

The women’s auxiliary started funds known as the General purpose fund, Own Missionary fund, Comfort fund and Bible women’s fund, Medical funds, The Nurses Fund, The Peace Memorial Fund, The Deaconess Training Fund, Christian Citizen Department Fund etc (Atwell, 1997: 166 – 170).

1.5.2 DUTIES AND WORKS OF WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

For many women the highlight of their year is 'the district meeting.' Its department covers the work of the women auxiliary with a secretary for each one. There are other activities of a general nature for which the auxiliary is available, and these are very varied indeed. The branch executive handles certain matters such as organization programmes and details of specific events. Most decisions are made in the open meeting by all members. The departments are as follows:

- Christian citizenship, covering all aspects of social concern
- Country and postal members ministering by post to women living in isolated circumstances.
- Church unity, united fellowship across denominational lines, included in women auxiliary activities at local level, fundraising
- General availability and activities-social events, support in various ways for church and women auxiliary projects and occasions, hands on involvement in vast range of service

Young women auxiliary started as a department of the women auxiliary. However a few years later they decided that they should be separated and have their own general and district secretaries and followed its own chosen events and modes of services.

1.5.3 PROGRAMMING

There is a time for everything; a season for every activity under heaven, says the book of Ecclesiastics. This is certainly reflected in the women's auxiliary programming. Time is given to devotions at every meeting and

business can take up a considerable portion of the agenda in a busy branch. Some branches have separate meetings for dealing with business matters and for enjoying a programme without the intrusion of lengthy discussion. Suggestions and ideas are invited from the branch member, guest speaker and devotional topics pre dominate. Themes for the year are sometimes followed, such as the roles that women of different cultures fill in their communities explained by women of those cultures. Magazines, programs are popular when members contribute in the writing of short items of their choice. (Attwell 1997: 39)

There are field visits for example to a training center, a children's or senior home, to a shelter for the destitute or squatter camp. Visits often result in giving support in one way or another. One of the lesser-known events of the women's auxiliary service is perhaps, the support of African nurses who served in country hospitals and clinics. The clinics varied in size and consequently in the number of nursing staff required. At time some nurses became staff nurses and still later a few were made sisters. (Attwell 1997: 37)

Dr D.F. Malan, a former minister and the nationalist leader who became Prime Minister in 1948, described history as follows:

Our [the Boer] cause is the greatest masterpiece of the centuries. We [the Nationalist Party] hold this nationhood as our due for it was given to us by the architects of the universe [His] that is God aim was the formation of a new nation among the nations of the world. The last hundred years have witnessed a miracle behind which must lie a divine plan indeed, the history of the Afrikaner reveals a will and a determination which makes one feel that Afrikanerdom is not the work of men but the creation of God.

(Saunders 1992: 373)

In the Boers struggle against British imperialism, especially in the aftermath of the Anglo – Boer war or the second war of independence the Afrikaners drew immense strength from Dr Malan’s interpretation of history. They saw a sacred thread running through all the events of their past, beginning with the Great Trek into the unknown [the exodus] and including the encounter with and victory over the natives nations, likened to the Philistines, especially at the battle of Blood River where they entered into a sacred covenant with God, the entry into the promised land.

1.6 AN OUTLINE OF STRUCTURES

1.6.1 THE CLASS

The class is the basic pastoral unit of the Methodist Church. Members ought to allocate to a class, cell or group under the care of a pastoral leader. The classes were, and in some cases still are, the principal meetings in the local church for the fellowship and mutual encouragements and growth in the faith.

1.6.2 THE SOCIETY

A Society (local church) is the whole body of members of the Methodist Church linked with one another particular in place of worship.

The Society exists to exercise the whole ministry of Christ. Worship, Evangelism, learning and caring and services are essential features of that ministry. The Leaders Meeting has a responsibility for the co-ordination of

that ministry. The Local Trust Committees are appointed to manage the local church buildings on behalf of the Presiding Bishop, in whom all Methodist property is vested.

Church members belong to the Leaders Meeting, some because they have been elected by the members at an Annual Society Meeting and some because they hold one of a number of offices within the society.

For people who wish to become members of the Methodist Church, there is a period of training and one of the leaders meeting is satisfied with the person's sincere acceptance of the basis of membership of the Methodist Church, a service of confirmation and reception into membership is held. If they have not previously baptized, the service will include baptism.

The Laws and Discipline expresses it in these words: "All persons are welcome into membership who sincerely desire to be saved from their sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and show the same in life and conduct and who seek to have communion Christ Himself and His people by taking up duties and privileges at the Methodist Church."

1.6.3 THE CIRCUIT

The circuit is the primary unit for the administration of local Methodist and serves as a network in which societies express and experience their interconnexion for the purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help. It is formed from societies in a defined area. A number of circuits make up a district.

The responsibilities of the circuit are exercised through the Circuit Quarterly Meeting. Its task is to combine spiritual leadership with administrative efficiency to help the circuit fulfill its purpose.

The purpose of circuit is to effectively the resources of ministry, which include people property and finance. It acts as the focal point for the fellowship of the societies, looking after their pastoral care, training and evangelistic work.

1.6.4 THE DISTRICTS

Circuits are grouped together to form a district. For each of the 12 Districts in South Africa there is a Bishop whose task is to lead the ministers, deacons and lay people in the work of preaching and worship, evangelism, pastoral care, teaching and administration. Each district has a Synod. Its purpose is to decide policy for the district and to be a link between the Conference and connexional offices of the Church on the one hand and the circuits and societies on the other. The Synod includes all ministers, deacons and probationer ministers and deacons in the district together with church members some because they are Circuit Stewards, some elected by the Circuit Quarterly Meetings and some because they hold office in the District.

1.6.5 THE CONFERENCE

The Conference, which meets every second year, is the Church's governing authority and supreme legislative body. It is the sole and final authority in respect of the doctrines of the church and their interpretation.

1.6.6 THE CONNEXION

This is the term used to describe the Methodist Church linked together through Societies, Circuits, Circuits and Districts. These form what we call Connexion.

1.7 SUSTAINING THE FIRST ESSENTIALS

Lets start by posing the question once asked by Mr. Atwell. How does the woman auxiliary maintain and further the essential spiritual foundation of the organization? First it was essentially bound to the church of which it is part, it shares in the ministry and mission of the church, the body of Christ in the world, and all it stands for. (Atwell 1997: 17) The outward observances of its spiritual character are many faceted but at the same time uncomplicated earnest and fairly uniform throughout the organization. Women who move from one area to another for whatever reason will be on area to another for whatever reason will be welcome on the basis of the familiar group in any branch of the women's auxiliary and soon find like minded companionship.

Every meeting of the women auxiliary, at whichever level branch, district or connexional includes prayer, hymns worship and scripture reading at the very least. Often members take turns in conducting this part of the meeting. Devotional addresses or other forms of devotional input a frequent. Before the union of Methodism in 1931, the women association in the Transvaal and the women auxiliary of South Africa differed in their administration in that Transvaal was one district, not six, as in the rest of the country. (Attwell 1997: 17) For this reason, in the Transvaal no second administrative body was necessary. They did not have the complication of having to include country –wide representatives on their committee for convenience; their committee had to live in the same locality as the president.

1.8 CHALLENGES OF THE CHURCH IN THE TRANSVAAL

Since 1948 the church never ceased to take an opportunity to treat racism as a priority. A number of conferences were held starting from the Rosettenville one to deal with the racial problem. In 1948 the top ideologist, Paul Sauer, maintained that the country could either progress towards equality between black and white communities or to complete separation, which would protect the whites and ensure the development of Africans in their own areas. (Saunders 1992: 374) The Rosettenville conference in 1947 came up with strong fundamental truths believed by the churches at that time, under the circumstance of the apartheid policies, implementation the church presents committed themselves to the following.

1.8.1 God has created all people in his image; consequently beyond all differences this remains the essential unity.

- 1.8.2 Individuals and groups who have progressed from a primitive social structure to one more advanced should share in the responsibilities and rights of their new status.
- 1.8.3 The real needs of South Africa is not apartheid but ‘eendrag’ ‘i.e. unity is strength.’
- 1.8.4 Citizenship involves participation in responsible government. The franchise should be recorded to all capable of exercising it.
- 1.8.5 Every child should have the opportunity of receiving the best education that the community can give, and for which the child has the capacity.
- 1.8.6 Every person has the right to work in that sphere in which he/she has can make best use of his abilities for the common good; the aim of the above statement was to shake a little bit the unfolding policy of apartheid. (Saunders 1992: 56)

1.9 MASS DEMONSTRATIONS

It is at this time that it dawned to the church that its task is to defend the weak against the strong .For some a ministry of reconciliation meant standing apart from and above a particular conflict, for other it involved participation that can only be negotiated from a basis of social equality. Many churches dilemma was what motivated them to be involved, was the need for socio-economic or evangelical expansion. During the 1950 many Christians under the African National Congress banner supported mass demonstration, people raising their objectives to the group area bill and the suppression of communism bill. This was the first public peaceful confrontation between the government and the masses, this stay -at -home

demonstration was successful, particularly in the Transvaal in a place like Johannesburg one of the greatest challenges of the Methodist church in the early years of 1950 was the need to have a home for young men and to help them to conduct themselves on Christian principles. Johannesburg had contained thousands of young men who elsewhere had comfortable homes, but who in consequence of the high prices for lodgings, have to sleep in small, unhealthy rooms at night; when business is over, they wander aimlessly about the streets, some go to the biblical room, others to the theatre, little was being done for young men without friends in a strange city, and the church that supplies that need will win their gratitude and affection. Therefore the work among the black was deepening in importance and power.

Many thousand migrant workers and also villages in the northern parts of the Transvaal were accessible to the preaching of the gospel, and many have been drawn to Christianity through the migration of converted blacks from other parts of the country. These newly evangelized and little taught servants of Christ have had a remarkable gift in communicating the essentials of Christ's gospel to their fellows. (Whiteside 1906: 459) Unfortunately for the African evangelist, according to the Rev D.P. Dugmore, they "had all the necessary enthusiasm but they lacked organizing ability." Thus a European supervisor or superintendent was needed, to be placed in charge of the (De Gruchy 1979: 45)

1.10 METHODIST CHURCH AND EDUCATION

During this period the Kilnerton Training Institution was seen in every corner of the country as a spring of the living water, but people who directly benefited from this, the most were those around the Transvaal. The Kilnerton Training Institution had three departments, one for black evangelists who would normally receive a three year training, the second one was a normal school for the education of black teachers, and the last one was a boarding school for boys, to which the sons of black ministers were admitted at a low fee. Such an institution was unique in the country. Methodists at this stage were a force to reckon with, not only in the city but also in the township, villages and hostels. It is easy for one to see that there were two dimensions to Methodism at this stage; there were those who were so busy with evangelism to a point that they closed their eyes to socio-economic realities of the time. They followed and understood John Wesley when he said our job is about nothing else but to save souls. They were so spiritual that they thought that the things of this earth were not important one is to make sure that one day one goes straight to heaven. Again there were those who were fully aware of the socio-political conditions and clear about not only the existence of the tension between the political structures and the government, but aware of the existence of apartheid policy and they also were aware of actions like the defiance campaign, the government segregation policy of 1950, group areas etc. This provided for the propagation of segregated areas in which only members of a certain race group were allowed to live and conduct business. The Government response to political resistance was the 1950 suppression of communism act. More and more the rejection of apartheid legislation came to be seen as communist

and therefore anti – Christian. (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994: 252) What prompted the 26 June 1952 defiance campaign was Justice Minister Charles Swart, who informed parliament that he had uncovered evidence that communist had infiltrated trade unions and universities and that the communists party posed a danger to the country’s national life, the country’s democratic institution and the country’s western philosophy. He called the opposition to support whatever measures were necessary, although he did not suggest what these might be. As a result of this Swart banned Kahn from addressing meetings on the Witwatersrand for a year. (Saunders 1992: 380)

What is amazing about the implementation of the apartheid policy is that, to Verwoerd and the other designers of apartheid, the fact that the majority of Africans were probably bitterly opposed to their scheme was of little consequence. What again is strange about this western civilized Christian government is that, those who disagreed with their policies had to be forced to agree. And if they persisted in their opposition, they had to be crushed.

CHAPTER II

A STRUGGLE WITH IN A STRUGGLE

2.1 TENSIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa's position is not easy to understand during the early years of the 1950's. It is hard to be convinced that the church's non-aligned approach is simply the results of her belief that the church should belong to no political party. Although it is easy to understand that, what does one do, when the very political situation threaten the very existence of the church. The non-aligned position of the church was fundamentally challenged by the mere fact that, one section of the church was eligible to vote when the other section of the same church was regarded as non-citizen with no right to vote let alone the abusive names used when referred to them. The white section of the church was also divided: those who called themselves liberals who believed that there was a way by aiming at creating a political structure, which would attempt to oppose apartheid using the ballot box as its weapon. This was not to be done by joining a political party but merely by a collection of people with liberal views. The church was challenged by this period to re-read the Bible more especially verses like Luke 4:18.

At this time education was in the hands of the church as we all know that the church's package was involving the following: education, health, evangelism, civilization and Christian worship. People like Dr Donald

Veysie was one of the people deployed in the Transvaal as a superintendent of the Witwatersrand mission field. Dr D. Veysie is a Methodist minister who was once a President of Conference in 1980. The President of Conference is equivalent to the Presiding Bishop.

During this time all those who were not in agreement with the apartheid regime found themselves in a dangerous situation. If they are black they are not human enough to be taken serious and listened to, but if they are whites there is something wrong with their thinking to a point of wanting to be loved by the blacks at the expense of their own colour and race.

From our interview it is clear that Dr. Veysie was responsible for what was known as the Witwatersrand area that meant covering the area from Randfontein to Springs that includes Soweto and Johannesburg. They were to hold their meetings once a week at Albert Street, both blacks and whites were part and parcel of the mission field. He was responsible for twenty-six black schools, the government was paying the salaries for teachers and the church was responsible for administration. Dr Veysie was accustomed to using two means of transport from one place to another, and that was by train and a bicycle.

Was the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in this period not aware of the political resistance or was it part of the move to liberate people of this country? I think this question is yet to be answered but there is one thing we know and that is that the M.C.S.A was in existence at this time, visible and in action.

2.2 PUBLIC RESISTANCE

On a cold June day in 1951, in the middle of a hard dry highveld winter, a group of somber men stood clustered around a grave, watching in silence as the coffin of their former leader was lowered into the red Transvaal earth. They had come to pay their last respect to the old war-horse of South African politics, Pixley Seme, one of the founders of the African National Congress [A.N.C.] in 1912 and an ex-president of the organization. As the earth thudded on the coffin lid, it buried not just a veteran fighter for African political rights, but also someone whose belief was in political moderation that the younger members of the organization felt had achieved precisely nothing. (Saunders, 1992: 382)

Some strong individuals started to come out and criticize the Government with no support from the church structures. Backed by anti-apartheid groups in the coloured, Indian and white communities, the African National Congress (A.N.C.) demonstrated its growing militancy in 1952, staging a Defiance Campaign that pushed it into a head-on confrontation with the Government. (Saunders: 1992).

Among them there were men who would soon become household names in South Africa: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and future ANC leader Oliver Tambo. Under Seme's 'successor, Alfred Xuma, the congress had been accused of elitism and excessive moderation, and of resistor calls by its newly formed Congress Youth League [CYL] of which Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo were member's in favour of organized resistance. Xuma, ironically had done much to improve the administration of the ANC during his term as

president: it was he too who gave a go-ahead for the formation of the CYL. But having done that, he had immediately crossed swords with younger members to back a CYL inspired programme of action. Until the masses were properly organized, he had argued action would only lead to expose. But for many young African activists the time for talking was over. (Saunders 1992: 383-84)

During 1950 there was a major demonstration on the 26th June. Its immediate purpose was to protest against the group areas Bill and the suppression of communism Bill: It took the form of a one-day stay at home and was most successful in Johannesburg. In the minds of the organized [Africans, Indians and Coloured participated] one purpose was that those who stayed at home should fittingly mourn the many Africans, who had up to that time lost their lives in the struggle for liberation. There has been for a number of years a steady loss of lives of demonstrators at the hands of the police. (Luthuli 1982: 28)

2.3 WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION

In 1956 the Northern Transvaal and Botswana (now Limpopo) District began planning to raise money for their home in Pretoria-the Queenswood Methodist Home for the Aged. It is clear from the above-mentioned statement that the Methodist Church has been involved in the Social Justice issues, more especially women who took it upon themselves to positively represent the church in the world. (Attwell, 1997: 45)

Since then, Methodist Homes for the Aged have been established in a number of District, the Transvaal having the greatest number of homes, thanks to the tireless dedication of the late Matt Eddy to this cause, clearly motivated by the Holy Spirit and commitment to the mission of Jesus. The home that the Auxiliary in the Transvaal rightly regards as their own although they have given unstinting support in many ways to them all-is Fair Havens Methodist Home for the Aged, in Fairview Johannesburg. (Mears S.A. 28)

More and more interest was being shown in the work of the women's auxiliary in the Transvaal and they were being added on a daily basis. During this time the influence was so great that their support was overwhelming and the division did not affect their growth progress in any way. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa is and always was a truly South African Church looking for South Africa solution to the South Africa problems.

Just before I say something about Methodist church women I want to describe the Transvaal, as it was understood by the church in the 1950's. Transvaal was a huge area from the Vaal to Limpopo as it is clearly explained in our introduction. It is only in 1957 that the huge Transvaal District was divided into two: as from the 1st January 1957 to become the Southern Transvaal, Swaziland district and the Northern Transvaal, Bechuanaland and Mozambique district respectively; fourteen years later on the 1st January 1971 they were further divided to make up three Transvaal district i.e. South Western Transvaal District changed to be known as 'The Central District. The Northern Transvaal and Botswana District became

'The Limpopo District.' The South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland in now
'The Highveld and Swaziland District.'

2.3.1 RESPECTABLE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

Considering the size and visibility of women's church organization, it is surprising that they have received little attention in the study of history. The women's church organizations, especially the influence Methodist Church women's manyano had become part of the public domain. They had become an integrated part of society, and everyday featured in public life. The custom of their weekly meetings dated back from its inception.

The women's Manyano is the largest Methodist Church group of them all in terms of numbers. This consists of groups of African women who meet for prayer services in their homes, under the trees in rural areas and in various places. Individual prayer cells within circuits and societies joined forces as they became aware of each other's existence. Enthusiasm ran high about this movement as it spread from society to society, from circuit to circuit. This movement starts at a local level, where members meet once a week on Thursdays, from there it moves to circuit level up to the District and when Districts come together they form what is called connexion. They were known as "Prayer women" (omama bomthandazo) at first and later as the Methodist Women's Prayer and Services in vernacular, Manyano or Kopano (Attwell 1997:38)

The women's Manyano is a uniformed organization, each piece of the uniform symbolizing salvation through Jesus Christ. A black skirt denotes sin, a red blouse- more like a belted jacket –represents the redeeming blood

of Christ, the number of button holes represents Christ wounds, and a deep white collar and small round white hat represent cleansing from sin through Christ of holiness. The uniform is very much in evidence on city, town and township streets, and even remote country roads, in the Transvaal over weekends, and especially Thursday afternoon, the traditional meeting day. The uniform is sacred, the red blouse, collar and hat ceremoniously placed on new members at a special service after they have completed six months “on trial” and fulfilled certain requirements. The “robing” ceremony is a deeply emotional and respected occasion (Attwell 1997: 41).

When they done ‘robing’ every member of the church is expected to attend and other manyano’s must also be in their uniforms is support of the women’s manyano’s dignified service. The President of the organisation is responsible of the blessing of the uniform. The President of the organisation is normally minister’s wife. The majority of them might be the uneducated but they play an important role in terms of the influencing the direction of the church more especially when it comes to economic matters.

Prayer is the foundation on which the women’s manyano rests; prayer service and discipline, which is strict and must be adhered to, are important components. The women’s manyano is a powerful force in the life of the church, engaging directly in evangelism and with great real encouragement and supporting the missionary spirit.

2.4 LIBERAL THINKING WITHIN AFRIKANERDOM

Things seemed to be more at high speed for Beyers Naude after Cottesloe, but not without contradictions. He was elected moderator of the Transvaal Synod only two years after the synod voted his church had to withdraw from the World Council of Churches, and two months after his widely publicized and recriminatory resignation from the Broederbond. The first request the synod asked of its new moderator was that he resigns his position as editor of *Pro Veritate*, which he had established the previous year. As we all can imagine this was not an easy time as it was an intensely difficult moment. In retrospect he sees it as an attempt to establish *quid pro quo*. The church would affirm his integrity and insight, and in return he would be expected to affirm the position of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK). Such moments are most difficult to negotiate. (Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy, 1985: 10)

When colleagues and adversaries are being pleasant and conciliatory it is not easy to stand rigidly by ones principles. He asked for time to consider their request and after a week he rejected it. This was in April 1963, and to quote Beyers Naude, “once the bloodhounds of ideological Afrikanerdom had obtained the scent they would never let go.’ In August of that year he founded the Christian Institute. A month later he was forced to resign as moderator, and was denied clergy status by his own church Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (N.G.K) immediately after he preached his farewell sermon to his Aasvoëlkop congregation on Obey God rather than men. His inaugural lecture as director of the Christian Institute was significantly

entitled *Versoening* (Reconciliation) delivered at the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg then under the pastoral care of one of the great patriarchal figures of Methodism, the Rev. Dr. J.B. Webb. When Naude talks of those who meant most to him at a personal level in those days he refers to DS Tema, E.E. Mahobane, Seth Motikimi, J.B. Webb and Joe Wing. This is the time that started the alienation of Beyers Naude but also the beginning of a new solidarity with a different community, an ecumenical community, a resisting community, and eventually that would be largely a black community (Villa-Vicencio and de Gruchy 1985: 10).

The challenge for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (M.C.S.A) and the church at large put many Christians in a dilemma regarding the implementation of the apartheid system strongly based on Christian principles. As early as 1950, the biting started to be felt by many. For a person to be both a citizen of the state and obedient disciple of Jesus Christ was never easy, and when a political crisis leaves people unable to hold these two responsibilities in creative unity, the consequences become far-reaching.

2.5 DIVIDED LOYALTY

It is of utmost importance for today's generation to understand how Christians responded to the implementation of the apartheid system, claiming that by virtue of being Christians they are bound to support the safety of the white race and of Christian civilization by the honest maintenance of the principles of apartheid and guardianship. Worsnip, puts it clearly when he referred to the understanding of the people who knew

quite well, what apartheid did not mean. He says, “everybody” was quite clear what it did not mean. It did not mean equality, it did not mean race mixing, and it did not mean integration and the extension of rights to the non- whites.

What was most significant during the period (early 1950’s) is that while many churches in South Africa had at various stages of their history found themselves in different relations to the apartheid regime, the implementation of apartheid meant churches were to be divided as some at times found themselves to be churches of the government and at times the voice of the opposition.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa like all other churches was faced with a dilemma in terms of how they should respond to the government; one of the difficulties was that their own house was not in order. Nonetheless the Methodist Church was challenged to think seriously about her obligation as the Church of Christ to exercise its prophetic ministry in relation to the state, and in certain circumstances the possibility of conscientious disobedience to the laws of the state. In order for anyone to understand the role of the church, one needs to see the role of ideologies. Maybe the starting point is to ask ourselves this question: what is an ideology and why is this important for Christians to understand? Calvin E. Shenk answer this question in this way, an ideology is a plan for shaping society and interpreting history. An ideology may seek to defend the existing social structures or it may attempt to change them. Ideologies contain strategies and methods to bridge the gap between the idea and the fulfillment of it. It is a kind of awareness, a cultural system, a worldview. Ideologies have a

strong impact upon attitudes, values and behavior. Government often became the instrument for an ideology. Every nation pledges loyalty to an ideology, which serves its interests (Shenk, 1988: 13 – 14).

2.6 APARTHEID AS IDEOLOGY

It is not true to say it is an ideology or ideological thinking that says people should be separated from themselves, from the work process and from others. With this understanding and background one is able to analyze the role of the church, and the Methodist Church in Southern African in particular. Apartheid was an ideology of separation in South Africa. It emerged from the nationalism of Afrikaners, white South Africans of Dutch descent who speak Afrikaans. Based on the Afrikaners own desire for separation and ethnic identity, Afrikaners argued for the self-determination, which suggests that each group of people have the right to maintain its dependence from other groups of people. Apartheid enforces rigid separation of people based upon race. Apartheid was a policy of divide and rule. Whites deny blacks full participation in society and limit their freedoms (Shenk, 1988: 15).

2.7 HOW APARTHEID AFFECTED THE CHURCH

Based on what had happened, many churches supported, whether politically, by keeping silent in the face of injustice, or through participating actively in the exploitation of the oppressed .

It can be regrettably said that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa was among white churches, which helped to maintain the economic, military and

security apparatus that oppressed black people. Whether they agreed with it or not, all whites benefited from the system simply because of their skin colour. Some white Christians were afraid to speak out against apartheid although they knew that it was wrong. Some supported the cause of justice but were patronizing in their attitude to peoples of other races. On the other hand there were prophetic people within the white Christian community who worked for true justice and reconciliation and sometimes paid heavy prices for their commitment.

All black people were oppressed by apartheid. Some allowed themselves to be used to oppress and divide their own communities. Sometimes atrocities were committed by black Christians in the name of liberation, for party political reasons or congregations suffered because of their resistance to apartheid and its injustices.

2.8 IS GOD OR CAESAR INVOLVED

In spite of the euphoria in the church community during 1950's there were, however, a few Methodist Church voices also in the Transvaal, which challenged the Afrikaner Nationalist-Dutch Reformed Church paradigm. As I pointed out earlier on, apartheid was a religious ideology that used scriptures to promote separate development (The tower of Babylon). Now we need to understand the basis for the Church's prophetic ministry. I want to believe that the churches were to find grounds to oppose what was later regarded as heresy. Definitely the question of the relationship of God and Caesar was not a new issue, yet it arose with a fresh urgency. All Christians more especially those known not to be Afrikaners have had to resolve the

problem of the relationship of the deepest religious loyalties to their practical decision about government. Then some members of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa knew that the sovereignty of God and the services of God were of utmost importance in their lives more especially at the time of apartheid implementation (Villa-Vicencio, 1986: xxiv-xxv).

Questions of life and death, whether considered on the scale of peace and war, on the personal scale of human rights or abortion, have both theological and political dimensions. Both God and Caesar are involved. The question and solutions to challenge apartheid flows through scriptures.

2.9 THE PRIEST OF THE COURT

God moved Joseph into a position of authority and power in Egypt, then Egypt oppressed Israel. God led Moses out of Egypt and the confrontation between Yahweh, the Lord of Moses and the God of king Pharaoh disrupted Egypt. The tribes of Israel are joined in a religious confederation to resist the Baalistic city-states of Canaan. Kingship is granted to Israel only reluctantly by Samuel for he saw the rejection of the Lord in the institution of kingship. Prophets and priests struggle to work out a solution to the problem of religious loyalty and political loyalty. In Amos the struggle is between the prophet of God and the priest of the court serving the king. Through periods of political success and political failure, from David to the exile, the question is not absent. Church history shows that the church has attempted many solutions to the God and Caesar problem. Consequently, the search for wisdom, also for the Methodists regarding their

involvement in challenging the implementation of the apartheid system during the prescribed period.

2.10 SILENCE MEANS CONSENT

This is a popular phrase used when people fail to stand up and be counted. More often than not those who are silent don't necessarily mean they are in agreement but they lack a big heart and guts to stand up.

The establishment of the Bantustans – first called 'homelands' and later 'national states' was crucial to the policy of apartheid. It was based on the principles of 'diversity', 'ethnicity' and the right of self-determination' of each separate group to control its own affairs.'

Opponents, who regarded the apartheid system as mere racism, were making a major mistake and they were making a serious mistake in evaluating the possibilities of change and failed to understand what the government really meant by 'change'. Of course the policy of apartheid was ultimately based on racism – although some of those who defend the system may not even be consciously aware of it, or even genuinely reject it. Although there is little doubt that the mass of the rank and file of whites, both Afrikaans and English-speaking, supported it ultimately for racist reasons and the maintenance of privilege, that does not take into account the philosophy and thinking of those government leaders and ideologies who defend the existence of Apartheid. In terms of apartheid policy about two million black people had been removed and relocated from where they were living and resettled elsewhere mostly in the already impoverished Bantustans.

2.11 INFLUX CONTROL

The British Colonial authorities introduced the pass law system in 1812 in Cape Province. The pass laws meant that a Khoikhoi had to have a written pass before he could move off the mission station where he lived or the farm he worked on. This kind of discrimination was based on a person's colour. It was steadily extended by white-controlled administrations throughout South Africa. Under the National Party government it has been further 'refined'. In terms of it, all Africans (Coloured and Indians excluded) must carry a pass, later called an identity document. (Serfontein 1982: 14)

CHAPTER III

CHURCH IN A DILEMMA

3.1. THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH

In September 1948, the Methodist conference stated that no person of any race should be deprived of constitutional rights or privileges merely on the grounds of race, and morally binding contracts protecting such rights or privileges should be regarded on the high level of a pledged word. Political and social rights especially of the underprivileged groups should not be reduced but rather be developed and expanded into greater usefulness. (De Gruchy 1986:39)

I am sure it was also clear in the minds of the Methodists that this is not a struggle that can be fought successfully by one denomination only.

To me it has seemed a modest objective to study the emergence of Methodism in the Transvaal within the period of struggle against apartheid in South Africa. This thesis does not in any way try to introduce a new history of the Methodist church in the Transvaal; it is rather in continuity with work done by people like Dr Rev Don Veysie and Dr Joan Millard. This study of the history of Methodism and society proves that the advance of the Methodism has not been a uniform or steady progress, but rather a series of waves or events: each period of advance being followed by a period of relative stability.

From some of the interviews conducted, it is clear to me that the Methodist church and other churches of the time saw that there was some excellence in the apartheid period: they saw there was evil, they saw there was strength, they saw there was weakness, they praised the good, they censured the family, they feared its strength, they ridiculed its weakness.

They however did not see the need to challenge it, there was no authoritative judgement given out by the church. Some individuals tried to speak negatively about it and against it but that was done vaguely. To try and put this in its proper perspective, I think it is important that we should understand that in the Methodist ministries there were different people, different methods, and different measuring rods about what befits the pastoral office.

3.1.1 THE CHURCH'S REACTION

The Methodist church of Southern Africa seemed to have been aware of the race discrimination issue, whereas it seemed not be comfortable with it but on the other hand there seemed to be no effort in terms of being critical and vocal about it. One can easily conclude that they were not sure what an adequate solution must be since 1948; the church showed interest in consulting with the government on this new policy, however the endeavours were not given attention. Other can argue that the church on her own was not perfect but her endeavours to challenge the state were weakened by the fact that she were to look at herself, and guard her relationship with the state.

3.2 THE METHODIST CHURCH DISTRICT DIVIDED

As early as 1950 Transvaal was divided into two districts namely southern Transvaal and northern Transvaal. Southern Transvaal consisted of the following stations Johannesburg, Germiston, Vereeniging, Vanderbylpark, Swaziland, Krugersdorp, Potchefstroom, Ventersdorp, Lichtenburg and Klerksdorp. Northern Transvaal had the following stations Pretoria, Witbank, Middelburg, Rustenburg, Warmbaths, Pietersburg, Nelspruit, Mafikeng and Vryburg. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa found itself a member of the family called the English - speaking churches. The phrase English –speaking churches is a misnomer having acquired a rather specific connotation in South Africa. The English – speaking churches are the Anglican Church, the Church of the Province of South Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. There are other churches, which use English as their official language and can trace their origin either directly back to Britain, which are not normally considered part of this family of churches. For an example, the Church of England of South Africa is a small church whose roots go back to the heresy charge laid by the bishop of Cape Town, Robert Gray, against Bishop Colenso of Natal in the middle of the last century. (Villa-Vicencio 1998: 16)

3.3 THE BEGINNING OF ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT IN S.A.

When the Christian Council of South Africa was formed in 1937 {to become the South African Council of Churches in 1968} the rift between English – speaking churches and the Afrikaans reformed church began to widen. In

1941 the only Afrikaans reformed churches to have joined the council was the white NGK together with the Sendingkerk in the Transvaal, resigned to form the federal missionary council of NGK: with this any hope of church unity was destroyed.

3.4 THE METHODIST CHURCH'S CALL

I am not quite sure whether it would be asking too much to expect that the Methodist church in particular should have found itself to stand up and challenge the status quo based on its origin because one of the things that informed the formation of the Methodist movement is that John Wesley's reforming zeal was not limited to the church. John Wesley was well aware of political, economic and judicial evils of his day and condemned corruption of all sorts. John Wesley states his opinion of the question of population, the increase of the great towns, the depletion of the rural districts, unemployment, the land question, small holdings, agriculture, fisheries, taxation, the national debt, east Indian stock, the legitimacy of speculation, the accumulation and distribution of wealth, luxury, dress, money, intemperance, smuggling, and evil of pensions and kindred themes. John was interested in electricity, medicine and law and particularly at such points as they bore on the social life of the poor.

3.5 CHURCH IS CHALLENGED TO STAND UP

On the church side, it is not surprising that South Africa legislation, particularly where it most directly affected traditional areas of church ministry, such as mixed marriages act, produced protests and resistance of

some sort. The British Council of Churches in 1950 recorded its determination to oppose any tendencies towards racial discrimination in any territories for which the British government is responsible, while in October the same year the South African Methodist church at its annual conference condemned the action of the government as leading gradually to a totalitarian state and the restriction and removal of the African and Coloured franchise.

3.6 AFRICAN OR EUROPEAN CHURCH

There are many critical issues facing the Methodist Church in Southern Africa with regard to Africanization. The biggest question, which needs to be asked is that: should the European cultural, theological and Spiritual heritage of people from Europe be scrapped or should this heritage be integrated into the life of the church in a creative relationship with the black African heritage? It would be naïve and shortsighted to demand from whites within our church that they should dump those aspects of their heritage, which they have found and continue to find spiritually meaningful. The fact of the matter is that just as the Christianity of the black people needs to be rooted in their African culture for similar reasons, the Christianity of the white people cannot be entirely severed from its European heritage. After studying Christianity in South Africa one concludes that there is something fundamental missing and that is the development of a spirituality and theology that embodies both the African and European heritages in a dynamic way.

3.7 CHURCHES AND CLAUSE 29

As far as the churches were concerned there was silent opposition as each denomination was crying in its little corner with no effort to try and combine forces for the sake of the gospel. There were some isolated instances where the churches would try to work together in opposing apartheid but I think what was lacking was to make sure that they are united to make a united stand and in that way they could have made an impact in changing the mind of the then government. For example in 1957 in the fight against Clause 29(d) of Act 36 of 1957 the Methodist Church had not been alone in its protest against this legislation. The Church of the Province of Southern Africa, the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, the Baptist Union of South Africa, the Seventh Day Adventist Church Conference and the Roman Catholic were all registering their protest; even the Dutch Reformed Church herself was not left untouched by the above-mentioned Clause.

Due to this combined effort it is not clear whether these churches had managed to sit down and work out a strategy. Verwoerd was bound to respond by presenting before Parliament, on the 21 March, an amendment Clause, which differed from the original in the following ways: Firstly the churches concerned will be given a reasonable time to make representation and the minister would be open to the consideration of the availability or lack of alternative facilities.

Secondly, the minister would not direct that no black might attend any church service, etc., in a white area unless such a person was, in his opinion, creating a nuisance, or that such attendance was undesirable. Thirdly, the

Bill was amended in such a way as to make the black worshipper the offender, if the minister's notice was disobeyed (de Klerk 1989: 239)

3.8 PRAXIS OF METHODIST CHURCH THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

As early as 1949, as mentioned in chapter two, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, made a statement saying “no person of any race should be deprived of constitutional rights of privileges merely on the ground of race, and morally binding contracts protecting such rights or privileges should be regarded on the high level of pledged word. Political and social rights especially of the underprivileged groups should not be reduced but rather developed and expanded into greater usefulness.” (De Gruchy 1990: 54) This time things could not be taken for granted, in South Africa, life was complicated and sophisticated in that local people were subjected to European civilization and political control and at the same time, seeing the inclusivity of faith and salvation as in conflict with political thinking about the distinction between religion and politics.

When we talk about the church we refer to her as an institution quite aware of the fact that there were individuals within the church who saw things differently but sometimes their voices were a drop in the ocean.

3.9. OBEDIENCE AND CO-OPERATION

There were some good initiative taken by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (M.C.S.A.) and the ecumenical movements in talking against apartheid, but when all is said and done, the sad truth remained that instead

of transforming this terrible human fault, the church and its mission conformed to it. The problematical tendency in Christian mission in general in South Africa which was very clearly embodied in the life and missionary convictions of David Livingstone. His belief that Christianity, commerce and (Western) civilization go together, is well known and it had a strong impact on generations of missionaries in South Africa was westernized at the same time as it was Christianized. (Prozesky 1990: 31)

The church as an institution based on obedience and co-operation found herself in an awkward position because it was compelled by circumstances to disobey and work against the government. Since the arrival of the church in this land there has been co-operation and maybe there was also cross checking on implementation. According to the church, it was part of the believer's discipleship to submit themselves to the measure of the ruling government, because this body is believed to have been appointed by God. The problem with this kind of thinking assumes that, the Government can never be evil or is not capable of implementing policies contrary to the will of God.

Again this statement exonerates the government from any kind of corruption but as we all know God is always good and God's will would be about good governance, and to treat God's people with dignity. The church did not, at least for a considerable time, see the inclusivity of faith and salvation as challenging or in conflict with political thinking about the distinction between religion and politics, the unreadiness of Africans as well as the impossibility of effectively challenging the European power structure and the church's dependence on that structure to maintain law and order and so

allow the church to carry on its mission. Without undermining the debates by a few individuals within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa the weight of evidence suggest that the church somehow felt she was living under a legitimate government. It is this assumption, which determines the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's political position. It looks like she will only stand up when the church realized that her very existence was threatened, that she was persuaded of the need for a collective resistance, even that was to be done in a way that should not publicly antagonize the state.

We cannot be unfair to the church and say they sat back and did nothing. The Methodist Conference as I have mentioned in the previous chapter was convinced that the discrimination between people on the grounds of race alone was inconsistent with the principle of Christ's religion. They urged that in every land people of every race should be encouraged to develop in accordance with their abilities and a fairness of opportunity in trade and professions and in facilities for traveling and in the provision of housing, in education at all stages and in schemes of social welfare. The Separate Amenities Act of 1953 brought about two things: Firstly, they were challenged as the churches to stand up and criticize the Act, and secondly she had to deal with some of the contradictions within the Methodist Church herself. Apparently there was no parity of stipends between black and white clergy; there was still no Black Superintendent and many white congregations actively resisted multi – racial worship.

In 1953, there was a separate grant for the black minister's children to that of the white minister's children. The evidence of this is in the minutes of the Synod 1953, African session. 'Synod agreed to the suggestion that the

period for which educational allowance are made be extended from four to five years provided that not more than two children claim on the fund at the same time.’ (African session Synod 1953: 15) This is one of the internal problems of the church that made the church to find it difficult to stand on high moral ground in challenging the Government. The Methodist Church was in turn, quite uncompromising in its condemnation of the Programme to Combat Racism. Its Conference resolution on the matter assume language which in comparison with the news media and Government reaction at the time showed to be part of the dominant white reaction to the decision to provide humanitarian aid to liberation movements. (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 113)

3.10 DOMINATION AND EUROPEAN SUPREMACY

In explaining the purpose of the Separate Amenities Act of 1953, Justice Minister Charles Swart declared: ‘We will always find that reasonable amenities are provided for all classes according to their aptitude, according to their standard of civilization and according to their need.’ He was supported by P. W. Botha (later Prime Minister and first executive State President), who argued that in order to gain a clear view regarding fair treatment and the rights of non – Europeans, we should first answer another question and that is: Do we stand for the domination and supremacy of the European or not? For if you stand for domination and supremacy of the European, then everything you do must be in the first place calculated to ensure that domination comes first.’ (Oakes 1988: 377)

The Methodist Church like all other churches from the Protestant family was difficult to describe. Although in principle it was possible to describe a

particular religious community in terms of its social construct of reality, to do so in practice was a very difficult task. This is a fruitful reminder that doctrinal differences between confessional groups may not be, and indeed often are not the most important issues involved.

Any attempt therefore, to describe a particular group in terms of its convictions and doctrines alone runs the risk of giving a distorted picture. Where there are already two communities in conflict, it is difficult for Christians to hold back from total commitment to one side or the other, and indeed for them to do so they may weaken the political impact of the resistance. Certainly the emphasis on heaven as the only state where God's kingdom can be fully attained, and the focus on life after death, has been another way in which the past, the anger of the oppressed classes has been diffused. The New Testament view of salvation was not always clearly and correctly communicated to others with a political agenda to please those in power. In view of the frequent removal of African townships by the Municipality and in view of the then Government's policy of removing non – Europeans out of towns under the group Areas Act, that Synod recommended to Conference the advisability of creating a Connexional Building Fund to assist Urban Circuits in the erection of churches and mission houses, as it was then obvious that town circuits will be faced with an incessant building programme as a result of that policy. The 1953 Synod requested Conference to ask the Methodist Connexional Office to work out a scheme whereby a certain amount could be earmarked from the missionary and Sustentation Fund towards the building up of such funds (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District session Synod 1953: 17).

The Methodist Church did not believe in apartheid and the implementation of its policies, but again leaders believe that the church accepted the existence on earth of nations and races as separate entities through God providence. This was therefore not the work of human beings. Although God created all nations on earth from the same blood, He gave each its national intuition and soul, which must be honored by all, and which may not be destroyed by those in power. The Synod of the Transvaal and Swaziland District of the Methodist Church protested strongly against the proposed removal of the Western areas, comprising Sophiatown, Martindale, Newclare in Johannesburg, particularly as that move, would have the results of depriving the non – European communities of their right to own freehold property, a right they have enjoyed for over forty years.

It was resolved that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Prime Minister and the minister of Native Affairs.’ (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland African session Synod 1953: 18) From the above-mentioned resolution, it was clear that the church was referring back to her responsibility of ensuring the state that whatever hurtful thing was being done to the people of God was being done to the church.

3.11 EDUCATION AND APARTHEID

First came the grand design of Bantu Education the Nationalist Party Government devised and determined to implement. The main argument of Dr Verwoerd, was that the Bantu Education policy was designed to equip blacks for servitude, ensuring that there would be no place for them in the white society.

In later decades, when the church saw that her own black mission schools were threatened and finally closed as part of the Verwoerdian education policy for blacks, the English-speaking churches would protest but in vain: the die had been cast already (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 72)

The demand by blacks for government intervention in black schooling had been going on for a long time. Mission education was often heavy-handed and paternalistic, and in most instances inadequately funded and administered. The African National Congress for example had called for free compulsory education to be provided by the state, and in 1949 had placed eight hundred of the two thousand mission schools in the Transvaal under state control in response to demands by black parents. However, the response of the Nationalist Government to the call for intervention, in the form of the Bantu Education Act, resulted in a second condition worse than the first. (Villa – Vicencio 1988: 95-96).

Under Bantu Education black people were being drawn a step further in the direction of Verwoerd's Bantu Education Policy designed to equip blacks for servitude, ensuring that there would be no place for them in white society "above certain forms of labour." (Villa – Vicencio, 1988: 72). "The Synod makes representation to the Transvaal Education Department, that in the reserves where mission schools exist, a tribal or any other school that may be desired in the same area should not affect the existing mission school, instead the two schools should run parallel. It was agreed that the Chairman Dr. J.B. Webb should make this a subject of Conference with a Director of Education at a later stage as opportunity occurred. In trying to follow this keen interest up it was not clear whether it was implemented, and if it was what were the outcomes.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953, which brought to an end a proud but not unambiguous history of involvement by the English – speaking churches in black education, has been enshrined in the words of its architect, Hendrik Verwoerd: Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live. Education should have its roots entirely in the Native areas and in the Native environment and Native community.

The Bantu Education must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for a black person in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. (Villa – Vicencio 1988: 95)

3.11.1 WOMEN'S MANYANO AND EDUCATION

It was obvious to any person that Bantu Education was designed to ensure mental control and manipulation of black people. The demand for many blacks that the Governments should intervene was not properly understood. The Synod appealed to the Transvaal Education Department (T.E.D) to reconsider its recent action of placing newly appointed African women teachers on temporary basis. This gave them no status as teachers and discouraged them from entering the profession. This was referred to the Advisory Board and it was agreed that Dr. Webb should mention it to the Director of Education. (Villa- Vicencio 1988: 18) We must not forget that by that time, women within the Methodist Church were a force to be reckoned with. The Women's Manyano, numbering nearly 100 000, is the oldest and by far the largest Methodist women's organization in Southern Africa. It began to form most probably towards the end of the nineteenth century. Groups of African women met for prayer in homes, under the trees,

and in various other places. Exact dates are unknown. Individual prayer cells within circuits joined forces, as they became aware of each other's existence.

Christianity as a religion played a central role in the image of being 'respectable'. It was believed by that particular group that Christianity disciplines a person. People those days believed that, those who attended church were better than those who did not go to church, they at least tried to keep themselves better.

Enthusiasm ran high, and the movement spread from circuit to circuit. Increasing visits between circuits widened towards District organizations. They were known as "Prayer Women" at first, also "Nyamezela" (Patience) and later as the Methodist Women's Prayer and Service Union, in the vernaculars as Manyano or Kopano. (Attwell 1997: 138) From its inception women's Manyano had a key interest in their children's education. In the chapel at Kilnerton, Pretoria – once a huge missionary institution founded in 1886, now the home of John Wesley College, a seminary where Methodist Ministers are trained there is also – a memorial plaque commemorates Esther Burnett as the first President of the Women's Manyano. This would apply to the Transvaal, at the time not yet part of the South African Connexion. (Attwell 1997: 139)

3.12 AFRICAN YOUTH CENTRES

The 1952 Conference Resolution requesting Synod to give earnest consideration to the urgent need for establishing youth centers in city locations was noted and circuits asked to assist in this needed work.

It was agreed to forward the following notice of motion to the Minister of Native Affairs through the Board of Education.

“The Synod welcomes the Government scheme of establishing Youth Centers for African delinquents, etc. and requests the Minister for Native Affairs to release details of the scheme in order for those who are interested to find ways of co – operating in the venture. The Synod further begs to point out the need for a consultative organization between the Government and the people.” (Minutes of the Transvaal and Swaziland District session Synod, 1953: 20)

3.13 TWO AND UNDIVIDED

Sometimes I do understand why the church was not so strong in opposing the Government, more especially the European sector of our church. I noted with earnest interest the notice of motion tabled at the European session of the Transvaal and Swaziland District of 1953. That Synod of the Transvaal and Swaziland District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa meeting in Johannesburg, puts on record its most grateful appreciation of the magnificent gesture of the Mayor and Town Council of Springs for the launching of the relief Appeal Fund and all other assistance afforded, for the victims of the Payneville location Tornado Disaster. In particular, we commend the initiative exemplified by the Mayor Councilor C.M. Moltman, the generous support of the public, business houses, firms, factories and mines in a most notable co – operative effort, and which also made possible the giving of an amount of £ 1,500-00 towards the cost of rebuilding the Payneville Methodist Church. We give thanks to God for this demonstration of love and sacrifice.

Malan's high court Bill was one of the sparks, which set the Defiance Campaign alight. The African National Congress, the Indian Congress Movement and the Cape Franchise Action Council met to draw up a series of measures to be used against the various laws and the statutes of the Nationalist Government. These laws and statutes include the Separate Representation of Voters Act, the Group Areas Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and Bantu Authorities Act. The climax was to be a mass campaign of defiance, which was to begin on the 26 June 1952, when mass volunteers would deliberately flout the laws, which they saw to be unjust, with the intention of being arrested. When the campaign opened it was accompanied by days of prayer and volunteers pledged themselves at prayer meetings to a code of love, discipline and cleanliness. The situation compelled those who lived close to the reality of the situation to try their level best in making the church not be short sighted in its reaction to the implementation of the apartheid policies.

As these policies were being implemented, many people were being intimidated, for instance on the 28 June 1953 at the Odin Cinema, where a meeting of residents of Sophiatown took place to decide what action could be taken to oppose the Government's intention to remove blacks from the area. During the meeting the police marched in and arrested a prominent member of the Indian Congress. The Choice of such a moment for public arrest was unduly provocative. (Worsnip 1991: 96)

3.14 DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

It is clear from the minutes of Synod that the idea of dividing the Transvaal and Swaziland District was stated in 1952 and re – affirmed by the Synods again in 1953. In the Transvaal and Swaziland District we note this Notice of Motion. “ The Synod respectfully request Conference to give careful consideration, not only to the eighth and ninth District scheme already submitted but to the attached plan suggesting a complete revision of present district boundaries and the formation of eleven Districts with a more even number of ministers in each district than exist at present. It does not present this plan as being in any way final or complete, but believes that it might form a basis for a more practical and realistic approach to the problem under consideration. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European Session 1953: 32)

The Transvaal District was too big and gave serious problems when it comes to administration and management. This is in relation to the proposal that the entire Methodist Church ought to look at its demarcation of boundaries and the number of districts.

It is not clear whether the copy of resolution of the synod held last year was sent to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Native Affairs or not and what was the response thereof, but it is clear from the resolution adopted by the Synod on the work of God in the District, that the Government programme and policy of apartheid is being implemented. “Synod meets this year in an atmosphere of crisis, particularly for the African people who are facing some of the worst pieces of legislation of the Government in the pursuit of its apartheid policy. In the matter of the forced removal of the Western areas of

Johannesburg, with its sinister motive of depriving the non-European of their right to freehold land ownership, and in the matter of the Bantu Education Act, the aim of which seems to be to lower the standard of education of the African child, these Synods still protest in no uncertain terms against this measure. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod the African session, 1954: 10) The question one is left with is: How genuine was the Methodist Church to this protest? A false or superficial expression, when people's lives and future were deliberately being destroyed, could not really strengthen their witness, for the truth of the Gospel is often more faithfully maintained by a prophetic minority rather than a compromised majority. Moreover, a protest that is expressed in words and not embodied in action is empty.

Finally in 1954, we note with interest that minutes of the synod mention the following: "After very full consideration and discussion Synod in both its African and European sessions accepted the principle of an immediate division of the present Transvaal District into three new Districts.

(a) Northern Transvaal District

- That the Transvaal District be divided into Northern and Southern Transvaal District, the line of demarcation to be along parallel twenty-six, but with due cognizance being taken of existing circuit boundaries. Synod accepted this unanimously. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European session, 1954:34)

(b) Further Division of Southern Transvaal into two Districts

- That a further division takes place dividing the Southern Transvaal into two separate Districts, namely: Eastern Transvaal and Western

Transvaal. This was adopted by voting 144 in favour and 18 were against.

- There was considerable discussion on the question of where the line of demarcation should be. Synod adopted an amendment to the Committee's suggestion (that the line of division between East and West be through Johannesburg) as follows:
 - "That the line of division between East and West be drawn west of Johannesburg. This agreed by voting 102 in favour, 29 against and 10 neutrals. It was noted that this would involve a division of the Johannesburg West District.

In both the African and Coloured and the European session it was agreed that the names of the new District be: NORTHERN TRANSVAAL, EASTERN TRANSVAAL AND WESTERN TRANSVAAL. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European Session 1954: 35)

3.15 ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Looking back at the area covered, it is clear that the given missiological disorientation of the church in general and the Methodist in particular, resulted to a gap needing Christian to deal with central teachings of Christian responsibility and how to implement Gospel imperatives.

Many people had been hurt in the past both those who implemented apartheid policies and those stood against it. Many more had actually died in the struggle. Unfortunately there had been deep scars in the community as well as with the church her, many people affected on both sides of the conflict of the past.

During the 1950's it is clear that the Methodist Church had attempted to deal with the hurts in some cases superficially whilst in others irrelevantly.

CHAPTER IV

CHURCH AND STATE IN TRANSVAAL

4.1 RACISM AND THE CHURCH

It now appears that the logical conclusion of those who engineered the provisions of apartheid is that the Christian church should divide herself into separate racial churches, such as the African Methodist Church and the European Methodist Church. This absurdity was totally unacceptable to the Methodist church maybe not to all of them but at least those who had guts to stand up.

Many Methodists like Anglicans shared the same view. You hear them in their conferences talking about forcing segregation by race alone is unjust and cannot be reconciled with the Christian view of our fellow people for two reasons: firstly, enforced segregation in itself and its very nature imposes a stigma of inferiority upon the segregated people, judging that an individual based on race, by the sole fact of race and regardless of the individual qualities of any individual person is not fit to associate on equal terms with members of another race.

Secondly, it is a matter of historical and evident fact that enforced segregation by race alone leads to oppressive conditions and the denial of basic human rights to the race discriminated against deprivation of the right of association with one's fellow people in the basic and fundamental reason for the immorality of the racial segregation. The nature of the human being

requires and demands freedom of association, in order to develop and actualize his/her potentialities as people.

Enforced segregation is morally wrong and sinful, because it denies physical unity of the human race. The Church has a divine mandate to teach all nations irrespective for their race. It has the duty also of serving the real Spiritual needs of all people. Discriminatory legislation prevents the church from carrying out its mission of service to all people as members of one family as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In spite of Methodist's involvement in the cause of the working class in England, the Methodist church ended up, with the notable exception of trade union activity not to be involved as an institution in political affairs. If one tries to trace Methodist church involvement from the beginning of its ministry in South Africa, there is not much to write home about. In the nineteenth century the Methodist Church of Southern Africa was not actively engaged in political dissent. When John Ayliff was in conflict with Grahamstown magistrate about chaplains visiting prisons, he was told by his superiors of the Methodist Church that "preachers at home had been tried before conference for saying so much" Yet, it is clear that Ayliff worked in active co-operation with the authorities to impose their "native policy." (Villa – Vicencio, 1988: 57). I believe that it would be unfair to paint every white Christian with the same brush. There were some in the church however who began to identify with black politics and, as it were, in the black conditions. They were, however lonely voices crying in a white ecclesiastical and political wilderness. The struggle I hope we will deal with in this chapter is racism. Checking if racism is compatible with the Christian gospel? I know that the answer to this question is not a matter of

yes or no, as it was a struggle from the very beginning when people of a different race encounter one another. The church including the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in the Transvaal has both the right and the duty of proclaiming what God demands in any situation, either it be political, social, and economical. The M.C.S.A. like other English speaking churches was committed primarily to a doctrine of salvation and concerned with ministering to the individual social needs of black and ready to protest against the harshness of legislation affecting blacks. The word protest here is used to mean talking about the legislation in question, write statements about it. If it comes to a push, have a delegation to talk to the relevant department of the Government. There is no idea of a public mass demonstration. The M.C.S.A. paid little attention to the fundamental structures of exploitation and control, thus ministering to the symptoms rather than essential causes of black suffering. (Villa – Vicencio, 1988: 72 – 73)

I would assume that one of the dilemmas of the M.C.S.A at this point in time was to risk endangering her relationship with what she knew from the day they arrived here in South Africa for what they were sceptical about. Liberation theology was not popular, during the years of the 1950's however theologians knew something about it. I am in agreement with Villa – Vicencio when he points out that many people were brainwashed by the government – controlled media into believing that the “political dimension” of Latin American theology must be ascribed to the influence of Marxist Atheism; it is important to show that other theological traditions also teach Christians to oppose all forms of political and economic exploitation. Barth’s Word of God provides this kind of alternative, not as a basis for

conceding media's attack on liberation theology but rather as a means for verifying the conclusions via another route. (Villa – Valencio, 1988: 54)

The spread of Methodism in the early years among Blacks was to a greater extent the result of the dedicated and prayer toil of new converts to the Christian faith. The Methodism in the Transvaal owes its origins to the missionary endeavors of a Wesleyan who was not a fully equipped and formally appointed missionary, but a simple and uneducated native by the name of David Magatha. (Balila 1991:16)

David Magatha was born in 1814 in the Rustenburg area. When he was a boy his village was attacked by the Ndebele Chief Mzilikazi and he was taken a prisoner. The Ndebele took him back to their own country in the western Transvaal near the Botswana borders. When he escaped in 1836 he traveled a long way south into the Orange Free State and went to live on the Methodist mission station at Thaba 'Nchu. Here he became a Christian and joined the Methodist Church. He took his Christianity very seriously, and was full of enthusiasm to share the gospel with other people. The missionaries gave him permission to preach and teach in the Methodist Church and he went back to the Transvaal to take the good news to his own people in Magaliesburg.

4.2 GOD –GIVEN AUTHORITY

The church best serve the community or society she finds herself in, when she is independent. When the church is involved in the struggle herself that helps her role and effectiveness. Though it is the right and the duty of every Christian to become involved in the circumstances and consideration of the

time, the church as a whole could not do this. The role of the church was something different. Her primary focus of attention was emphasized to be on the salvation of the individual, because the Christian must testify to the fact that we are citizens of two cities, the earthly and the heavenly.

(Worsnip, 1991: 93). The church can neither be a political party nor a trade union, however that does not mean that if the political party is involved in an action, which doesn't compromise the Biblical principles of the church, she cannot join. When the church supports a certain political party's action or trade union's action it is definitely doing so from different premises to that of the party or trade union.

When the National Party implemented its apartheid policy, its needing the church support for apartheid was initially based almost exclusively on the concept of tradition – as well as was made clear in its mission policy – for some time the nagging need had been felt to explain that this tradition was at least, not in conflict with God's revelation in Scripture. Moreover, for some time critical voices had been objecting to the church supporting the political programme of apartheid on theological grounds. For example, Ben Marais argued that practical considerations might perhaps necessitate apartheid, but the policy could not be presented as a Biblical obligation. Thus a debate on the theological grounds for apartheid was sparked off which continued for more than a decade after 1948. The debate centered mainly on the most satisfying exposition of the theological grounds for apartheid. (Prozesky, 1990: 63 –64)

Villa – Villencio puts it well, when he says in the light of God's revelation it is evident that the Christians can never be content with the existing order and

that the church will always be engaged in resisting the status quo that the state seeks to uphold. In proclaiming Jesus Christ as sovereign Lord the church announces the negation of the existing state in the interest of the true state. To do this the church must simply see herself as the church: it must proclaim the supremacy and freedom of the word of God. God is never bound to any particular form of government and may at any moment call any of them into question either in part or as a whole. Responsibility does not end with this negation of the prevailing political order; it is the initial step toward a positive process of socio political reconstruction. It is the No for the sake of the Yes. (Villa – Vicencio, 1988: 78)

Judging from the response of the Transvaal and Swaziland District synod the Methodists just handed over Kilnerton institution with no resistance whatsoever. “Rev. D. Dugmore reported that the institution including the High School would be taken over by the Government during 1956. The Government is willing to lease the building for the 3 years. The chairman expressed on behalf of the synod our high tribute to the loyal and faithful service to the African.” (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, African session, 1955: 22)

There seem to be two important things in this statement: one is that the church finds itself in a situation where they agree to sign closure of this chapter and start a new one under the control of the state. Whereas the minutes do not go into details about the deliberations about this matter but one cannot imagine that this was just one of those discussions as it affected the lives and future of many thousands of the African people.

4.2.1 CHURCH AND LAW

The year 1953 saw the passage through the South African Parliament of various laws, which were to set the seal on the Apartheid State. The first was the Public Safety Bill, which received its first reading on the 26 January. This bill, which became in the same year, was a direct response to the Defiance Campaign. The first reading of the Public Safety Bill was followed rapidly, by the first reading of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill on 28 January. This Bill made the breaking of law an act of protest or offence in itself. The 11 August saw the first reading of the Bantu Education Bill and it was evident from the start that the proposal of this Bill were to have serious implications for the Methodist Church and its educational institution. The purpose of the Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953) was to clear the way for the blacks to take up their role as unskilled labourers in the future South African Republic. The Methodist Church like other English-speaking churches during that time was committed primarily to a doctrine of personal salvation. Concerned with ministering to the individual social needs of blacks and ready to protest against the harshness of legislation affecting blacks, the churches paid little attention to the fundamental structures of exploitation and control, thus ministering to the symptoms rather than the essential causes of black suffering. “What the Bantu Education Act did was to entrench traditional values in law. In so doing it resolutely eradicated the less subservient elements in black education. It was these dimensions within mission education, systematically exaggerated by Verwoerd, that have contributed to a romantic image of the mission schools. Mission schools, he argued, sought “to create a class of educated

and semi-educated persons without the correspondent soci-economic development which should accompany it.” (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 96)

Charles Villa- Vicencio says Verwoerd was partially right. According some, mission schools were designed, at least prior to the 1953 Education Act to produce an African educated elite. And even after the shift to a more practically oriented industrial education, graduated from mission institution such as Lovedale, Healdtown, Adam’s College, St Peters and Fort Hare would become political leaders not only in South Africa, but well beyond its borders. (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 96)

4.3 RESOLUTION FROM THE YOUTH DEPARTMENT

“The Youth Department recommends to the conference that now is the time for an immediate extension of the Department programme as the most urgent missionary development of the church. The Department shares the concerns of the church and its Missionary enterprise through the Department’s activities.”

The Y. M.D. therefore recommends:

1. The last part of paragraph 4. Page 105, minutes of Conference of the recommendation 1954 be implemented by the appointment of the present African General Secretary on a full time basis (Note – the present African General Secretary was appointed in 1953 for three years). Synod agreed.
2. Those additional appointments are made with in the Youth Department to meet the immediate requirements of the needful

missionary extension in African and Coloured Sunday school and Youth work.

3. That (a) Conference gives due consideration to the necessary grants to allow this work to be done on a long – term policy basis.
(b) Every endeavor should be made to ensure the Y.M.D. eventually becoming self-supporting.

Once the independence of the Methodist Church was compromised done cannot believe his eyes to see how the Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod collaborated with the state in implementing its apartheid policy. “That Conference be requested to urge the Government to expediate the application of the Group Areas Act, in so far as the coloured people are concerned, in view of:

- (a) The critical need for housing for many homeless Coloured families.
- (b) The continuing uncertainty which prevents coloured people from building their own homes and
- (c) The inability of the church to proceed with it building programme and the consequent lack of social, recreational and spiritual services for coloured people. Synod agreed. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, African session, 1955: 25 paragraph 7)

Synod unanimously agreed that should the tenants at Good Hope have to leave the farm, in compliance with the requirements of the squatters Act of 1936, an attempt be made to procure another farm in a suitable area. (Synod 1957: 21)

Synod of 1956 was the last Synod of East Transvaal and Swaziland as it was proposed in 1954 that the District be divided into three Districts that were to

be implemented in 1957. The Transvaal and Swaziland District of the Methodist Church of South Africa places on record its deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God for a year of advancement. The synod of 1956 was the last before the division of the Transvaal and Swaziland District into the Northern and the Southern Transvaal District. It was fitting that their deep appreciation of guidance and goodness of Almighty God during the past years be recorded in the official files of their synod. The early fathers in the faith laid firm foundation, and at that time, as they enter a new era of service and advancement, they were reminded with thankful hearts of our godly heritage. The difficulties that confronted our fathers in the faith were often fraught with physical danger, but they were as real and urgent as what confronted their forbears. Yet the spirit in which their forefathers met their difficulties was still with them those days, and the challenge of the modern civilization was being met in the power of the Risen Christ.

Though the District was to be divided unity of spirit would prevail, and together the two Districts would go forward to do Gods work. It was the desire of that Synod to place on record its appreciation of the inspired leadership of its Chairman, and to give God thanks for his life and witness. Looking back over the past they gave thanks unto the Almighty God for the experience. The synod unanimously agreed that the names of the two Districts be Northern Transvaal and Southern Transvaal. The chairman expressed the thanks to all the members of his committee for the many hours of patient labour expended on this question of division of the District. (Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, European Representative session, 1956: 51 – 52)

The chairman of the new Southern District was Rev. D.J.B. Webb and Northern Transvaal was Rev. D.P. Dugmore. From 1957 for the first time a lay -person had joint ministerial session but still the African Representative session and European Representative session continued. This is evident by their photograph showing black and white ministers being one as ministers of the gospel. This was the first step toward the right direction. Another good step taken by 1957 synod were that. “That synod unanimously agreed to request Conference to abolish the African Affairs Committee and the Coloured Affairs, and transfer the work done by these committees to the race Relations sub – committee of the Christian Citizenship Department. In view of the practical difficulties, which confronted Superintendent Ministers in certain circuits in trying to implement the church’s avowed policy of bringing the various racial section of the church closer together – Conference was requested to provide for the guidance of such circuits, a memorandum suggesting practical measures for overcoming such difficulties.

4.4 ONE AND UNDIVIDED

The first major crunches in church state relations come in 1957 with the promulgation of Clause 29© of the Native Law Amendment Bill. This Bill made it very difficult for Black people to attend worship in churches in so – called white areas. In other words, apartheid was beginning to affect the life and worship of the churches in a direct way. The Methodist church found itself in a dilemma because the implications of this meant if the church is not complying with it, it might end up being categorized as a black church and that meant they won’t have a right to own property in

white areas. Because the church wanted to be nice and to be seen respectful to the Government by not challenging the very beginning of the apartheid policy implementation then the state found it proper to run the life of the church. I cannot agree more with Godfrey Clayton when he says the state was trespassing on the freedom of the church and if that Bill was to become a law in that form should not be obeyed. (De Grunchy, 1990: 60 – 61)

It is clear that the church including the Methodist Church was provoked to take a stand; where conscience and legislation conflict, the church must take its stand with its conscience whatever the consequences may be. This Bill also perturbed even the Dutch Reformed Church. The D.R.C. stressed the duty of the state to allow the church the freedom to fulfill its calling: The right to determine how, when and to whom the Gospel shall be proclaimed is exclusively in the competence of the church. (De Gruchy, 1990: 60)

The Methodist Church Conference held in Durban 1958 took a stand on this matter, it was not easy because the leadership was not completely convinced that the church was ready to face the consequences of not agreeing with the state. They were aware of the fact that the state had the power to act against multiracial worship if the Cabinet Minister felt that was necessary. At the Conference the decision was taken after some lobbying done by people like Cedric Mason and George Irvine. The Methodists Church of Southern Africa stood firm and said, as Methodists we are one and undivided we cannot have a Black church, a Coloured, Indian church and a White church and that was echoed by many Christian activists of that time dividing our church along racial lines is against the Gospel.

4.5 P.A.C. AND ANTI – PASS CAMPAIGN

The massive anti – pass campaign initiated by the P.A.C. and launched on 21 March 1960 had its origins in the organization’s breakaway from the African National Congress (A.N.C) late in 1958. The split had been developing since the foundation of the Congress Youth League (C.Y.L.) under the leadership of Anton Lembede in 1944. Lembede had argued for an adoption of an Africanist philosophy to enable Africans to regain their self-sense of worth even if this meant a ban of co – operation with other groups that had thrown their weight behind the liberation struggle. Ironically, it was the arrest of mainly A.N.C. activists on charges of treason that led to the revival of the fortunes of the Africanists: with many of the A.N.C. leaders languishing in prison, day to day leadership of the organization passed into the hand of the less experienced members. By the end of 1957, serious dissension had broken out within the ranks of the Transvaal A.N.C., with the Africanists led by Pohako Leballo and Robert Sobukwe, a Methodist preacher. At National Conference in December of that year, they proposed a motion of no confidence in the Transvaal executive, which although it was defeated, led to the calling of a special meeting in February 1958 at which grievances of dissident branches were discussed. The meeting was chaotic, fist fighting broke out and the chairman ignored Leballo’s call for regional executive election – backed by a majority of delegates.

Apartheid education was extended to university level in the late 1950’s despite strong protests from the English language universities that they wished to continue admitting black students. The Government’s intentions,

published in a Bill in 1957, were regarded as a serious inroad into academic freedom. The legislation was held over for two years while a parliamentary commission investigated the matter. In 1959 the Extension of the University Education Act provided for the establishment of ‘non white’ universities, and empowered the Minister of Bantu Education to admit only members of a specified Bantu ethnic group to particular colleges. Africans who were already enrolled at ‘white’ universities were to leave by the beginning of 1961.

4.6 UNORGANISED CHURCH’S RESPONSE

Where there are already two communities in conflict, it is difficult for Christians to hold back from total commitment to one side or the other, and indeed for them to do so may well weaken the political impact of the resistance.

Certainly the emphasis on heaven as the only state where Gods Kingdom can be fully attained, and the focus on life after death, has been another way in which in the past the anger of the oppressed classes has been defused. The New Testament view of salvation is not exclusively heavenly, but in so far as it says that our real treasure lies there (Matt, 6: 20) it can and in fact sometimes act as an opiate, that Marx said it would be the case.

There is, in fact, little evidence to suggest that the English-speaking churches response to the economic and social problem of the pre – 1948 period differed significantly from the ruling ideology of that time. The response of these churches to the 1913 Land Act, the foundation stone of the

entire apartheid system and the fundamental cause of the impoverishment of the indigenous rural population, was at best ambiguous and inconsistent. They provided where and when possible and spoke on behalf of the black population to the authorities, but because of their obligation to minister to the whites as well as blacks, they were unable to locate themselves on the side of the oppressed majority. It is evident that the church, the Methodist Church in particular did not want to openly, oppose the government; instead they allowed themselves to be instrumental in the implementation of the apartheid policy with an aim that they would soften the impact of the restrictions on the black population. Their protest seemed to make life a little more palatable for the oppressed African members of the church.

Argument grew day by day from the church leadership that those in power should be given a chance and that a concerted effort was being made to build relations with the apartheid leaders. The church's response to the Defiance Campaign launched on the 26 June 1952 was mild and cautious, except for the few individuals, whom we can call Christian activists. The churches as excessive and responsible for an unnecessary suffering rejected the campaign. The Methodist Church produced prophets and leaders like Albert Luthuli, African National Congress leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner; Robert Sobukwe, the founder of the Pan Africanist Congress, Seth Makitimi, the first black elected leader of an English – speaking church in South Africa, and many others.

The Methodist Church thought the Mixed Marriages Act to be an unnecessary restriction on individual liberty, placing an “unfair” responsibility on marriage officers. Yet ultimately the Methodist Church, require her ministers to abide by the legislation.

4.7 LACK OF A UNITED VOICE AGAINST APARTHEID

What the Methodist Church failed to do is to address the needs of the African people by consulting with other churches so as to form a united front and speak with one voice against apartheid. The Methodist Church's response to the implementation of Bantu Education was different from other churches like the Roman Catholic Church in that, the Methodists rejected the policy of Bantu Education as incompatible with the Christian principles for which the church stands (de Gruchy, 1988: 100); to make sure that educational needs of the majority of our country were met, the Methodist Church felt compelled to relinquish control of her schools to the State and continue to exercise a Christian influence upon education by ensuring that subjects like Religious education was a cornerstone of education. The Bantu Education Act was understood to say to the churches they can run schools as follows:

- They could run their school the way the government wanted, and give the Africans a bad education.
- They could give the schools to the government, but go on running the boarding hostels where the children lived.
- They could close the schools
- They could run the schools themselves, without help from the government but this meant finding a lot of money to pay for the schools.

The problem of the relationship between church and state was not new. It has accompanied the church for the almost twenty centuries without being resolved. Answers given in certain times and situations proved to be

inadequate when circumstances change and new issues appear. The roots of this struggle for theological clarity may be traced to the Bible itself, in that the Bible does not provide a detailed and complete treatise on this difficult subject. The Bible, as God's authoritative witness to his revelation in history, treats problems such as these in a historical way. Scriptural normativity is so closely interwoven with the historical context that a direct application of what are sometimes called "biblical principles" can often be a hazardous and even misleading undertaking: Romans 13 a clear directive to which the apostle Paul addresses himself, and we discover the same in 1 Peter 2: 11-17.

It seems as if in both cases we are presented with a quiet and well – ordered society in which, the relationship between the state and its Christian citizens is clearly defined. But Revelations 13 portrays the state in its diabolical rebellion against God and its persecution of the church. The whole passage vibrates with these tensions. This discrepancy between these two different approaches in the Bible arises from the different historical contexts in which they were written, and for this reason a straight forward, literal application of any of these approaches to present – day circumstances can be deceptive.

The crunch came in November 1958, at a Transvaal provincial congress at which office – bearers were to be elected. With Africanists planning to run their own candidate for regional president, a major test of strength loomed. In a speech that set the tone for the meeting, national president Albert Luthuli warned delegates against the racial extremism the Africanists represented. Thereafter, speakers were heckled and fistfight threatened to break out on several occasions. The first day of the session ended with a

decision that only accredited delegates would be permitted to attend the following day, when the elections were to be held. Rather than settle the matter violently, the Africanists conferred outside the hall and decided to leave the A.N.C. to form their own movement. The P.A.C. was formally established on 6 April 1959. (Oakes, 1988: 399)

4.8 ECUMENISM

Ecumenical comes from a Greek word meaning ‘of the whole inhabited (lived in) world.’ Today the ecumenical movement means the coming together of the different Christian denominations and the working towards one united church, which will really be the ‘Body of Christ’.

In 1936 the Christian Council of South Africa was formed in Bloemfontein. Leaders of the English-speaking churches and members of both the N.G.K. and N.H.K. were there.

In 1941 the Dutch Reformed members left after problems of language and colour. The Christian Council of South Africa was mainly for the English speaking Protestant denominations.

In 1966 the Christian Council of South Africa moved its headquarters from Cape Town to Johannesburg. In 1968 it changed its name to the South African Council of Churches (S.A.C.C.) This body played an important role in speaking out against the racial laws of the South African government.

4.9 COTTLESLOE CONSULTATION

At Sharpville March 21, sixty-nine Blacks mainly women, were shot and killed by the police and 186 were wounded, according to official figures. In the post – Sharpville “state of emergency” thousands of Blacks were arrested and many were banned. The leadership of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, including Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe, were arrested and the organization was declared illegal. The ecumenical movements met in a Johannesburg suburb in December 7 – 14, 1960 and the Methodist Church was part of this gathering of great importance. Presided over by Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of the United States, chairman of the central committee of the World Council of Churches, the consultation was attended by ten delegates from each of the eight South African member churches, and five representatives of the World Council of Churches.

CHAPTER V

THE METHODIST'S RESPONSE TO APARTHEID

5.1 NOTORIOUS CHURCH CLAUSE

The Synod of the Southern Transvaal District noted with concern and regrets the Acts passed by the Government during the last session of Parliament. In 1957 the Natives Laws Amendment Act, with its notorious church clause, the Nursing Bills, and the University Bill which came before Parliament were all enactment's which would result in an increase to the friction which existed in all races, and has furthered the sense of antagonism which is present in the minds of the African people of South Africa. The above-mentioned statement was made by members of the synod due to their frustration about what they were to experience on a daily basis as the apartheid policies were being implemented to make sure that all natives felt that they were second-class citizens. The church could not be left unscathed by that system, as those in power did not trust her power. For anything not to be challenged by the people it ought to be justified biblically, hence the role of the Dutch Reformed church in giving a theological rationale for the existence and implementation of the apartheid system.

The strength and power of that system laid in making sure that the church was divided along denominational lines. The Synod believes that these measures were against the revealed will of God, as it recognizes it in Holy Scripture, and against the mind of Christ, as it sees it at work, in His teaching and example in the New Testament. The Synod could not see how

their legislatures reconcile their belief in Holy Scripture with their actions in passing such legislations. It reminds them of the eternal truth that, “righteousness exalt a nation.” There was no righteousness in the discriminatory measures of the then Bills passed by Parliament, and the Methodist Church would not as a body be found guilty of discrimination in the work of God, but would continue to act as reconciling agent in the land. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1957: 21). During the year 1957, when the first division of the old Transvaal District, took place and resulted in two districts namely the Southern Transvaal and Swaziland District and Northern Transvaal and Botswana District, it happened a year before the most important historic decision Conference in Queenstown in 1958, that “our church is one and undivided.”

5.2 EDUCATION CHALLENGED

“This Synod of the Southern Transvaal District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, then sitting in Germiston, viewed with alarm instances of refusal by the Government to allow young African students desiring to further their education in other countries overseas. This is considered as a retrograde step and likely further to arouse a sense of antagonism in the hearts of our African people.”

“We pray therefore that the Government revise its policy in this respect and open the door to those wishing to go elsewhere in the world for the purpose of advancing their education.” (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1957: 39). It was recorded that the Mahamba Secondary School has been closed due to the pressure from the educational Authorities, but that the

Standard Seven Classes has been allowed to reopen on the assurance that there shall be no boarding school. This has been complied with.

That Synod respectfully requested Conference to make representation to the Minister of the Interior requesting him to re-consider his decision to withdraw letters of authority to solemnize marriages from ministers. While that synod recognized the fact that this was a privilege and a right, it wished to point out that a supernumerary minister in the Methodist Church is in fact not 'retired' in the generally accepted sense of the word. He is a Minister without a particular and constant congregation, but he is frequently called upon to do 'supply work' in cases of sudden sickness – and where re-curring circumstances occur he is required to serve a congregation in all necessities. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1959: 21).

The synod appointed the Rev. Vivian W. Harris to be the supervisor of students for European Probationers and Rev. A. Bolani to be the Supervisor of studies for African and Coloured Probationers. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1960: 15)

That synod expressed its extreme regret over the action of the Government in passing legislation in amending the Liquor Act (Act 30, 1928) that enabled all Africans free access to light wines and beer and view with dismay that, that was the only sphere in which the government is prepared to break down the granolithic barriers between racial groups.

“Furthermore, this urged and directed our people to disassociate themselves from both consumption and distribution of liquor.” (Minutes of the Southern Transvaal District Synod 1960: 61)

This matter touched one of the fundamental ethical issues in the life of the Methodist Church. Drunkenness, beer drinking, gambling are discouraged as evil. In other words, it became clear now in the eyes of the Methodist that the Government was not just about oppressing black people but was based on evil principles and aimed at destroying the African people. Synod requested Conference to ensure that the term ‘African’ is used in all official church documents, except when reference is made to the Bantu Education Department and similar matters. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1962: 109)

5.3 RESOLUTION FROM THE CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP DEPARTMENT

In view of the fact that our country was at that stage making a nationwide drive to improve family life, the 1961 synod urged upon all the Methodist people who were concerned, to take the lead in improving the Wage Structure, starting with their own employees. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1962: 14)

That Synod agreed in principle that in future the European and African Lay session meets together in Joint Session. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1961: 65 paragraph 4)

One other important resolution taken that year regards family life “That synod of the Southern Transvaal District of the Methodist church of

Southern Africa, having had its attention drawn to the disintegrating effect on family life, brought about by Influx Control in the Urban Areas, resolved that Conference make representation to the Department, with a view to urging upon them the necessity of:

- (a) Reducing the number of people who contravene Influx Control Regulations, by treating several Municipal areas as a single unit, for the purpose of Influx Control (e.g. Pretoria and Witwatersrand)
 - (b) Applying the regulations with special regards to their effect on family life.
 - (c) Waiving the regulations in regard to young couples newly married, in order not to prejudice the women, by making it impossible for them to take residence in the district where her husband is domiciled.
- (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1962: 115)

That synod requested Conference to approach the Directors of Radio Bantu or Radio South Africa, with a view to broadcasting Divine Services at a much later hour than was then the case, if the public care to benefit at all. That Conference be asked to make representations to the Government to prohibit, or restrain the practice of advertising Liquor in the Press and on the Radio in the Republic, in view of the harmful effect such advertising has on our young people in particular.

The European Session of the Synod did not take a vote in favour of having a Joint Representative Session, but six votes were regarded as against, in principle. That synod accepted that if it were not practicable for a Joint Representative Session in that District, that the Coloured Representative,

become part of the European Representative Session of the Synod. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1962: 163)

The first joint lay – representative session of the synod – European Africa, Coloured commenced at 8 am in the central district, Rev. Dr. J.B. Webb was the chairman, the Rev. B.B. Mohabane, the Deputy, Rev. P.S. Baker the Secretary, on Saturday 22 June 1963. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal Synod, 1963: 51)

There is no doubt in my mind that once again Gods absolute power seems to be at play. Of course that was a miracle judged even at the time when this happened. Chairman’s address gave evidence to the unfavourable conditions in which that miracle happened. ‘We have experienced another troubled year in the affairs of the country as a whole.

More and more legislation has been enacted which had its roots in the ideological pre-occupation of the present Government. The so called Sabotage Act and the “90 days without trial” provision were further straws to show which way the wind is blowing, and with what velocity.’

5.4 RESOLUTION ON THE STATE OF THE WORK OF GOD

The following statement is from the Synod of 1967.

That synod of the Southern Transvaal District, meeting in Representative Session at Johannesburg, gave thanks to God for the wonders of His Grace abundantly evident in the life of His Church militant here on earth.

- For the united witness of our multi-racial fellowship made manifest in that historic synod wherein they had met for the first for many, many years as one church.

- For the will and the wisdom He had given to overcome the many practical difficulties standing in our way, and the proof, if the proof be needed, that in Christ it is possible for white and non – white to work and plan together for the common good, that fundamentally our problems are one and the same and the answer to them always is to be found in the one Lord Christ.

“The Conference, noting with satisfaction the increase of pulpit exchanges across the colour line, resolves the direct Superintendents of Circuits to discuss with their Leader’s Meetings the question of more frequent and regular exchange of pulpits between ministers of the different racial groups within the church and to report back to Synods the results of these discussions.” (Minutes of the Southern Transvaal District Synod 1963: 139)

The synod draws particular attention to the urgent social needs, such as unmarried mothers, illegitimate children, alcoholics and other ministrations of the church, and ask that consideration be given to the establishment of “city – missions” on the Australian model, to relate the local church and its people to the social needs of the community. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1966: 59).

Stanley G. Pitts took over from Dr. J.B. Webb in 1965. This Synod being deeply concerned with the increasing overcrowding in the schools in Soweto and elsewhere in the Southern Transvaal resolves that immediate steps should be taken to impress upon the Department of Bantu Education to make funds available to the Bantu Housing Board in order to enable Municipalities to construct more Primary Schools. It is therefore suggested that a

Deputation be made to Dr. Hartshorn. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1967: 56)

Although the Methodist Church history has shown that certain individuals attempted to improve the living conditions and opportunities of the African people, the church as an institution, did little along the lines of promoting liberation. Having said that, it has only been during the 50's and 60's that this situation has begun to change. During the 50's and 60's several development programmes came into being or at least has been visible, centered on the effort of the poor. The Christian Citizenship Department played an important role in creating a platform for socio-political debates. These debates proved a point that the Methodist Church should not side with the rich and the powerful against the poor and powerless.

Some individuals within the Methodist Church started to emphasize the need for conscientising evangelism, which did not simply concentrate on a person's soul or spiritual condition but made people more aware of their situation in this words and encourage the oppressed to fight against the injustices perpetuated against them.

Due to problems related to culture and the church the Methodist Church in Southern Africa find it self busy discussing the following issues:

The paragraph under circumcision beginning with words "No objection should be raised" and ending with words "... circumcised Timothy for a special reason (Acts 15 v. 30) " be amended to read. "There is no objection to circumcision in itself, as long as it is carried out in a hygienic fashion, but there is objection to the unchristian practices and teaching, which are associated with it. Our ministers are therefore urged to do everything within

their power to associate puberty rites with Christian practices and teaching. It must be emphasized that circumcision is purely optional for a Christian. Circumcision was abolished by the first Council of Jerusalem (Acts Chapter 15), but in spite of this St Paul circumcised Timothy for a special reason (Acts 16 v. 3). (Minutes of Northern Transvaal District Synod 1960:13)

The two churches, the Methodist and Anglican came closer to one another during the 1960's and it is recorded that the District Synod of 1964 as saying. "This Synod approves and support the conversations currently talking place between the Methodist and Anglican churches on the subject of Church Union, and urges that all possible steps be taken to foster closer relations between members of these two churches in all ways possible on Society and Parish level e.g. that the Anglican Congregation should join in Divine Service with the Methodists and then the Methodist should join in Divine worship with the Anglican - Minister and Rector should exchange pupils from time to time etc. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1964: 15)

5.5 YOUTH AND EDUCATION

This synod recommends that the present system of Religious Knowledge Examinations continue in the European and African Sections of the church, but in the case of the European Religious Knowledge Examination, this is only recommended in anticipation of the publication of scholars Handbook in the immediate future, which will require radical changes in the whole system. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1964: 42)

Dr. J.B. Webb led the Southern Transvaal District from 1957 to 1964. From 1965 Rev. Stanley C. Pitts became the chairman of the District: he held his first District synod in Germiston from the 1st July to 6th July 1965. What would be significant about the year 1965 in the Methodist Church is that she felt challenged to deal with racial tendencies within the church herself. “This synod of the Southern Transvaal request Conference to amend paragraph 301, page 85 Laws and Discipline by the deletion of the “European and Coloured” in the first line to bring it into line with other relevant Clauses in the Constitution. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1965:61)

As I have pointed out earlier the ministerial session of the District synod met as one big gathering including blacks coloured and whites for the first time in 1957. Again in 1966 for the first time we saw joint session of lay representatives at the Synod. The Christian Citizenship Department presented its report based on calling the synod to raise the following resolution. The Synod expressed its strong opposition to imprisonment without trial and suggested that Conference make representations to that effect to the responsible authority concerned. In view of the crucial moral issues, the values of the individual and human dignity that were involved in the majority of legislative matters in this country, that Synod recommended that the conference instruct all ministers, Leaders meetings and Guild executives to invite speakers from political parties to youth and adult groups, which best express our Christian convictions on all race issues.

In the spirit of the Methodist Church examining itself, the Synod of 1967 recommended as follows: “This Synod recommends that all candidates

(African, Coloured and European) be examined together before the Synod in order to ascertain their beliefs and understanding of the essential fundamentals of Christian experience, Christian Doctrine, the Bible and the Church and Sacraments, and that to this end a simple primer in theology be suggested as a GUIDE and not to a text book. The purpose being to see how much they themselves believe and have experienced, rather than how much of a book they may have learned or not learned. The Board of Examiners is asked to suggest such a book. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1967: 15)

5.6 EDUCATION

The Southern Transvaal District Synod of 1967 took education seriously and pointed out the following.

“This Synod recommends that the District Education Committee be alert to all matters that pertain to African Education and that requests and protests be made before legislation is passed in this connection. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1967: 56). The implementation of apartheid policies directly interfered with the plans of the church and compelled 1967 Synod to come up with a resolution under the direction of Christian Citizenship Department.

- (a) “That whereas this Synod is conscious of the desire of the Government to uplift the Coloured Community by way of increased educational facilities, it views with deep concern the deep seated suspicion which has been aroused by the passing of the training centers for Coloured Cadets Act of 1967, in that there were very real suspicion that by the implementation of this Act, the pernicious ‘pass

system' is being extended to include members of the Coloured group. This fear is particularly underlined by the fact that the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration had stated that the Act could be used to get Coloured Youths to fill the position left vacant by the Africans who are to be repatriated from the Cape.

- (b) This Synod further expresses the opinion that the stated aims of the said department of education could be better achieved by the introduction of compulsory education for Coloured youths up to the age of 16 years.

5.7 SECOND-CLASS CITIZENSHIP

Again the same Synod dealt with issue of citizenship by raising the following:

“This Synod most strongly deprecates the attitudes expressed by certain Government representatives when they insist:

- (a) That Africans can never be considered as permanent in the cities, no matter how long they reside there.
- (b) That facilities for Africans should, in the cities, not be so attractive that they encourage Africans to feel a sense of permanence in the cities and cause reluctance to return to the so - called “homelands.”

Believing that if these attitudes, and the policies are enforced it will, cause untold hardship and suffering, and they reflect an attitude to other human beings which degrades human dignity and reduce them to “labour units,” which attitudes are totally unacceptable to the Christian conscience.

This synod request that this resolution should be referred to the Department of Bantu Administration and Development.

This Synod, through Conference, request the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development to ensure that the church does not suffer financial loss through the implementation of state policy where – ever a Bantu population is moved from one area to another in terms of the Group Areas Act. The Synod request Conference to make an approach to the Minister of External Affairs in order to obtain permission for Ministers of Religion who are Swazi nationals to serve the Methodist Church of South Africa where – ever they are sent by the Conference. (The Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1967: 62 – 63)

“ Due to the passing of the Bantu Amendment Act which has made it possible for the Government to uproot Africans from the urban areas to the Bantustans request that the conference place more emphasis upon the development of our church in the Bantu Areas with regard to Agencies and buildings. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1968: 54)

Once again the Southern Transvaal District seemed to be too vast and it needed to be divided: “Following a Commission appointed by the Synod of 1967, which met in early 1969, to investigate the possibility of dividing the present Southern Transvaal District, this commission presented a full report to Synod, which is detailed on the following pages. Synod accepted this report without amendment and unanimously recommends its implementation to conference, asking Conference to direct the next immediate step for this Division. (Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod, 1969: 42)

Reason forwarded for the divisions were the following:

- The size of the Synod, which many of our own halls were too small to accommodate
- The difficulties newcomers had in following:

It was noted that while a division of the District would obviously reduce numbers, this would not automatically make the work easier to follow by newcomers. The commission recommended that the District should be divided into Western Transvaal and Eastern Transvaal, in which the West would include Johannesburg and Circuits to the West, while the East would include Germiston, Vereeniging and Circuits to the East. This would give 24 circuits in the West and 23 Circuits in the East, with members and adherents numbering 99, 000 in the West, and 84, 000 in the East. The commission noted that the division of the District should present no great difficulty in Administration or Finance. The Transvaal Joint Finance Committee would continue as it is to but with three instead of two Districts represented.

(Minutes of Southern Transvaal District Synod 1969:43)

The apartheid system keeps on placing itself on the agenda of the church. “The Synod of the Southern Transvaal District learns that according to a provision in the Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1968, all aged African should not reside in the urban areas, but should go to their respective ‘homelands.’

Synod respectfully request Conference to investigate the position as it now affects aged African Ministers who have already established themselves in urban areas. Because of a number of deaths of non- – European detainees under interrogation this Synod resolves to ask Conference to bring to the

notice of the Government that the Christian Church views this situation as the one that arouse to a sense of danger.

- (a) This resolution is also to be forwarded to the South African Council of Churches.
- (b) It is further recommended that the District Christian Citizen Department's Secretary, bring the matter to the notice of all quarterly meetings in the Districts.

5.8 THE NEW SOUTH EASTERN TRANSVAAL DISTRICT

The first District Synod of the new District called South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, comprising all delegates, commenced in the Benoni Methodist Church at 8:30 am on Monday 28th June 1971. The chairman of the District, the Rev. V. W. Harris, the secretary of the synod, the Rev. Phillip S. Barker and the Deputy Chairman, the Rev. A.S. Ngubeni, administered the Sacrament of Holy Communion. (Minutes of South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland District Synod, 1971: 18)

The division of the Southern Transvaal District at Conference 1970 into the two new Districts of the Southern – Western Transvaal and the South – Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland has provided the opportunity for much closer fellowship amongst our people according to the new chairman of the District Rev. V. Harris.

This Christian Citizenship Department resolution at the Synod was about the plight of the Coloured people. The coloured people feel it an affront to their dignity that in the registration of their children and on all other personal document they are referred to as "Other Coloured." The Boksburg Circuit

requests the Connectional C.C.D. Committee to make representation to the Department of Coloured Affairs. (Minutes of South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland District 1970)

It looks like the first African person to be appointed to be the superintendent of the Circuit in this new District was in 1921 at its first seating in the person of the Deputy Chairman, Rev. A.S. Ngubeni and the visit of the President of Conference to the Circuit brought great joy.

(Minutes of Southern Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland District 1970 appendix 9)

5.9 BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

The Black consciousness movement arose from an accumulation of events in the sixties, beginning with Sharpsville (1960). This movement, through it linked up with earlier African nationalism, was broader because it included the so-called ‘coloureds’ mixed race and the Indian population group.

(Verstraelen – Gilhuis 1992: 25)

There is no way one can finish talking about Black Consciousness without referring to one of the proponents of the Black Consciousness in the country, a man who galvanized black pride and inspired the political struggle against apartheid: he was none other than Steve Bantubonke Biko. His political thinking and philosophy have influenced many black political leaders.

Black consciousness can be traced back to 1850’s from a Xhosa man and a missionary Rev. Tiyo Soga. He believed in a form of black consciousness, in his advice to each of his children before they left for overseas: ‘You will ever cherish the memory of your mother as that of an upright, conscientious,

thrifty, Christian Scotch woman take your place in the world as coloured, not as white men, as Kafirs, not as Englishmen. For your own sake never appear ashamed that your father was a Kafir, and that you inherited some African blood'. (Saunders 1989: 151)

Steve Biko whose philosophy inspired the rise of black consciousness during the 1970s, laid the foundations for the liberation of the mind and body for many people. Through his writing, Biko inspired and enlightened many with regard to issues of racism, post-colonialism and Black Nationalism. Black Consciousness had an immediate appeal for thousands of black South Africans. Although it was not an organization, it spawned a number of bodies that espoused its philosophy. By 1972 a Black People's Convention had been set up to act as an umbrella body to co-ordinate its adherents. Although Biko was considered a black radical, there is now evidence that his position on the issue of race was misinterpreted in order to feed white fears, which were the order of the day during his time.

The church became a Blue print for the Nationalist Policy in separate developments instead of being the bridge between races. (De Gruchy 1979: 15)

The Black Methodist Clergy embarked on a critical programme to turn the tide. They were invited to meet "at Bloemfontein St. John Methodist Church in May 1975" by the Rev. Nkathazo Ernest Baartman, to reflect on the ministry of the church from the black perspective, and particularly to assess the role and contribution of the black people in leadership structures of the Church (Balila 1991: 87). This meeting gave birth to the Black Methodist Ministers Consultation (B.M.C).

A number of organizations were started, or combined to give shape to the Black Consciousness Movement, such as Black Community Programmes (B.C.P), Black People's Convention (B.P.C), Interdenominational African Ministers Association (IDAMASA), Black Allied Workers Union, Black Women's Federation, Black Ministers Consultation (B.M.C). The movement also received intellectual stimulation and impetus from the South African Student Organization (SASO), created in 1968 and supported by young black intellectuals, among whom was Steve Biko (detained September 1977). For a short period Black Consciousness was viewed by the white regime as a black expression of the official policy of separate development, but this lasted only until its political character became clear. In 1977 the Movement, along with its principal organs of expression was declared an illegal action, which prompted a new and intensified phase in the Black Consciousness Movement.

From 1978 according to Steve Biko essentially the black community is a very religious community, which often reflects on beings, in other words, what is my purpose in life, why am I here, who am I? It is true that many oppressed black people continuously remold religious ideas which are imposed upon them and produce a religion that is capable of functioning as a defensive as well as a combative ideological weapon.

5.10 THE MEANING OF 'BLACK'

When blacks in South Africa used the word "Black," they have in mind two things, on the one hand, the will for self-affirmation and on the other the

state of being oppressed. For a long time blacks in South Africa were called “non-whites,” people who failed to meet a standard and that standard is to be a white European. Again the sooner the blacks fully realize that they are created in the image of God, blackness is no longer viewed as a curse. Black theology speaks of Blackness as “an awareness’ an attitude, a state of mind. It remains a bold and serious determination to be a person in your own right. Black theology is not about racism but affirmation and consciousness. Ironically, Biko’s sentiments have been embraced by politicians in the new dispensation who were vocal critics of his philosophy at the time. There is consensus that Biko was destined for great things had his life not been cut short by the apartheid regime.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have sought to describe and analyze the origins, growth, development and main features of what can be termed the emergency and of the Methodist Church in the Eastern Transvaal. Since the early days of the penetration of Methodism into the Transvaal, many people saw the message of the Gospel transforming their lives. It is a fact that the theological understanding and church practices informed and stimulated socio – political discussion and criticisms.

Like all other mainline churches, the Methodist Church did extensive evangelical work, built churches, schools and hospitals.

In order for the history of Methodism particularly in the Eastern Transvaal to be correctly understood and fairly assessed, one need to make sure that both primary and secondary source are closely analyzed using personal interviews to cross check – some of the information at my disposal.

Having established the early foundation of the Methodist Church, the next step was to relate the very existence of people who claim there to follow John Wesley to a broader theological and political context. Thus, the Methodist Church shared with other churches like Anglican, the struggle found themselves in, and the struggle was how to understand and live the Christian faith without being compelled to negate, their struggle for land rights for land rights and liberation.

I hope and trust that dilemma and contradiction are noticeable in this research work. Within the Methodist Church herself, there were those who believed that some individuals were using the wrong methods to challenge

then existing status quo. Some thought it was wrong to see Christians using the same weapons as their opponent.

CHURCH AND POLITICS

The church of God can never be a political party or advocate a certain party's politics. It was an inevitable consequential that due to the nature of the church, her witness of the church in political matters. There is nobody who can stand firm and deny the fact that the church has a prophetic task, however this will differ according to the specific political situation, which is to be addressed.

When normal political action and political organization were made impossible by unjust laws, the church will have to step into the void with its political prophecy in order to take up the cause of the helpless and the victims of justice. That is also what the biblical prophets would have done (Chikane and Albert 1991: 95)

One can easily deduce from this research work that the story of the church in South Africa demonstrates that Christian religion is directly and intimately related to the socio – political history of the country. There is no way in which one can think of dividing politics and the church. According to John de Gruchy the word 'polis' means the city that is the arena of human and social transactions affecting the common life of the community in all its dimensions. A moment's reflection will show that nothing is excluded from the 'polis' and therefore nothing exempt from politics the art of keeping

society functioning properly. Everything from family life to education from daily bread to economic politics is included.

Since the Constantinian era began in the fourth century, making the Christian religion the faith of the Roman Empire, there has been a very close relationship between the Church and the state in those countries that have traditionally constituted Christendom. Even with the demise of the power of the church as a major political institution, the idea of Christendom has persisted. (De Gruchy 1979: 219)

BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

If our topic is about church history we will always find our foundation in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. In interpreting the Bible correctly one must always seek to close the gap between the biblical cultures and the influence of the readers context.

Contextual theologians always point out that in the very process of reading and understand the Bible we are already interpreting it in our own way.

What is more, in our subsequent ‘application to the situation’ we are applying text that we have selected, to a situation, which we have interpreted, according to our own viewpoints. This can, for example be illustrated by referring to the ongoing disagreement between the so – called English liberal churches and white Afrikaner churches in South Africa. Many of the former read the assiduously and find that apartheid is a heresy, that it cannot be justified theologically and that it is evil. Many of the latter read the Bible equally assiduously and decided that separate development is God’s own solution to the complex problems of race relations in South Africa. The above-mentioned point brings home, the fact that each group

approaches the Bible with preconceived notions, and then inevitably finds in justification for the beliefs it already holds.

BLACK LEADERS AND CHRISTIANITY

Almost all black vocal leaders were committed Christians who believed that their political involvement was based on their Christian belief. They understood Jesus Christ to be a freedom fighter.

While black leaders were committed to the propagation of the Christian faith in South Africa, they were critical of the type of Christianity that turned people away from Christ. This is confirmed by the leader of the African National Congress, Albert Luthuli.

Chief Luthuli was himself an example of this understanding of the task of the church. Throughout his life he sought to live out his Christian faith. It was for this reason that he could master his activities in the African National Congress:

“For myself, I am in Congress precisely because I am a Christian. My Christian belief about human society must find expression here and now, and Congress is the spearhead of the real struggle. Some would have the communists excluded; others would have all non-communists withdraw from the Congress. My own urge because I am a Christian is to get into the thick of the struggle with other Christians, taking my Christianity with me and paying that it may be used to influence for good character of the resistance (Hastings 1979: 232).

DIFFICULT YEARS

The African National Native Congress founded in 1912 (later known as the African National Congress) after the racist Union Constitution of 1910, had been put in place, was now planning various campaigns against the Pass Laws. Nelson Mandela, as one of the key leaders in the youth wing, was inevitably in the thick of it.

Together with Tambo, Mandela was particularly keen to encourage the A.N.C. Youth League which the two young men had formed in the 1944, encouraging a programme of action calling for strikes, boycotts and other acts of civil obedience in protest against South Africa's racist way of life.

The apartheid regime's way of dealing with such people took its course and soon Mandela found himself issued with the inevitable banning order, he was confined to a limited area, turned in a sort of non person, and forbidden to speak or write for a public audience.

Not long after, in 1955, came the famous congress at Kliptown, which produced the celebrated Freedom Charter, which to this day forms the basis of much A.N.C. thinking. The following year came the famous treason trial when Mandela and some 150 others, including the then A.N.C. President, Chief Albert Luthuli, were charged with high treason (Cassidy 1991:34).

During the same year of the famous statement of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa “one and undivided church” as a response to Clause 29, Mandela’s first marriage having failed, he found solace in the love of a young social worker by the name of Winifred Madikizela, familiarly known as Winnie, whom he married in June 1958 when he was almost in his forties.

UNITY IN CHRIST

The Methodists agree with others that our unity as Christians is derived from what God has done in Jesus Christ, our crucified Saviour and risen Lord. Christ ‘Himself is our peace’ (Ephesians 2: 4). Our unity not only as Christians is God’s gift, not something we have to create or engineer, it is a gift which has been brought into effect through the Holy Spirit, and it is therefore something which precedes all our efforts to discover and affirm it. While unity is God’s gift to us in Christ, it is nevertheless a gift, which has to be appropriated and expressed; otherwise we deny the Gospel and undermine the witness, which is our common task.

Any reflection on the church situation in South Africa must begin, then, with the contradiction that while Christians confess to be ‘one in Christ’, they are really divided and fragmented, and often in conflict with one another. It is an audacious act of faith to confess ‘one holy, Catholic Church when so much of the evidence points in the opposite direction.

This does not go unchallenged; the ecumenical church has met a number of times where churches from different backgrounds attempted to reconcile as the church of God. The reason for superficial or cheap forms of reconciliation is that the church too often fail to speak the truth to each other,

therefore our expression of unity, when it emerges, is far too shallow. It is not the unity given by Christ through the Holy Spirit but a cheap reconciliation conjured up by the people's own emotions or sense of goodwill, which fall apart as soon as people are to face reality.

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE

The question of ethnic and racial discrimination based on fear and suppression of differences is a painful experience of all African women. Indeed the coming of Christian mission in the past two centuries was characterized by an absolute denial of the validity or even existence of African women.

From this research it is clear that women are always in the front line to receive or experience ethnic tensions, religious tensions and economic tensions.

Women never received oppression and exploitation sitting down many had organized themselves to articulate their dreams and struggles for liberation and self-empowerment.

During Defiance Campaign period many women discovered that gender, class, religious, racial and ethnic issues were inseparably tied with political and economic interest. When African theology emerged in the 1960's it was completely silent on women's experiences of God and their contribution to the shaping of the African Church.

South African women adopted the roles ascribed to them by the church, that was being nurtures, serves and helpers taking care of priest, bishops and the

white women missionaries in their temporary needs such as house-keeping, cooking, doing laundry, gardening, and praying. They also attended to the needs of the poor and needy in their own communities.

South African women's have struggled to recapture and reclaim their once spiritual and religious role. In resistance South African women sought to change the social order, which was very oppressive in form of class, race or gender. They also searched for the elimination of physical, moral and emotional suffering of women.

Many Christians are guilty of the fact that they had allowed cultural norms, whether ancient or modern, rather than the Gospel to determine the reading of Scripture. As a result the church has said very little about the way in which women in general, and black women in particular, have been abused in society, and the way in which the church has too easily conformed to some questionable values of a male-dominated society, contradictory to the values of the Kingdom of God.

JUSTIFICATION FOR OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION

As I journey through with this thesis, I discovered that role played by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in the Eastern Transvaal did prove that the church have been used not only as an instrument of exploitation and oppression and domination but also as justification of inhuman actions by one human being against another.

I am sure we all remember this in 1948, 1950 and 1953 when the dominant and ruling class used the church not only to articulate its interest but also to promote and defend those interests. Again it is clear that the church is an

essential component of the mechanism for control, oppression, exploitation and domination, which the ruling class in society has used consistently.

The dominant class is able and have been able to harness the church for the promotion of its interest because the class which controls the means of production, the state and all its department is in a position to control not only the production of the dominant ideas within the society but also the church, norms, customs ethics etc. which help in the consolidation of the state quo. For class domination cannot continue and reproduce itself without taking a leading role in the production and dissemination of cultural and religious norms, compatible with the socio-economic system from which it derives its very existence.

From this thesis it is clear that intellectual giants of the ruling class like Dr. Verwoed, Jan Smuts constitute the dominant intellectual force in the production, articulation and dissemination of their ideology and religious dogmas of the ruling class as well as their consideration within socio-economic status.

The role or the function of the church in the society is determined by the socio-economic system and material or concrete conditions obtaining within the society. For the material conditions not only determined the origin, content and form the church within a given society but they also determine the role that the church play within the society.

Although the role of church in society is determined by the material conditions existing in the society, the church doesn't remain oppressive in relation to the material conditions. On the other hand one can argue that the

church can in turn actively influence, and facilitate the development of material conditions. It follows therefore that the role and function played by the church in the development of society must not be underestimated.

Lesson one can draw from this thesis is that, there is always an interaction between socio-economic conditions, the material conditions, which make the relationship between the structure and superstructure and in this case, material conditions on the other hand and the church on the other, a dialectical relationship. Implied here is the notion that the role played by the church, although ultimately determined by the material conditions existing within the society, also influences the development of the material conditions.

INSTRUMENT OF JUSTIFICATION

There can be two main functions of the church in society as we can pick them up from this thesis, and both these two functions are determined by the nature and character of the society in which she exist. In other words, they are determined by the objective conditions prevailing and the nature of the mode of production and its intended production relations.

The church can become either instrument of justification for oppression and exploitation, or instrument of liberation and freedom.

These instruments are the giants and champions of the ruling class who articulate the cultural and religious sentiments, illusions, modes of thoughts and view of life of the ruling class. Having gone through this study it is my view that the role of the church is determined by the class nature of society

and the completion this role take is determined by the content and intensity of the class struggle.

Comparatively speaking to the majority of the people apartheid system was justified in the same manner the slavery was justified.

Christianity gave slave-owners the opportunity to exploit, abuse and dehumanize slaves with impunity for if slavery was a form of punishment visited upon some people within society, then slave-owners must have had the blessing of God for slavery to be considered a normal societal institution. But of course, slavery was neither an imposition from God nor a form of punishment but rather a product of society at a certain stage in its development.

That is why, when the slave mode of production gave way to the feudal mode of production, religious not only justified the new feudal politics and its domination of the serfs, but also turned against slavery and condemned it as unreligious and in the case of Christianity as unchristian. And when feudalism gave way to capitalism, religious also adapted itself to the new mode of production. It adapted its terminology and its dogmas of the era of capitalism. Having said the above I am again reminded of how Jesus Christ Himself dealt with issues of this nature. Jesus seemed to provide authoritative basis for this when he marked “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s and unto God things that are God’s (Matt 22:21)

CHURCH AS AN INSTRUMENT IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION AND DEMOCRACY

Again if one comes close to this thesis, will discover that the same instrument of political oppression, economic exploitation and social degradation can in some instances be vehicle for the struggle for liberation, freedom and democracy. The church for many oppressed people provided inspiration to the masses. For instance, traces of this is found in St Paul's letter to the Galatians when he remarked: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female for you all one in Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:28)

Yes we all know that, Jesus Christ Himself provided some inspiration to the poor, the down trodden, and the subject classes by presenting Himself largely as a redeemer of the poor, the oppressed and exploited.

The formation of what was called Christian Citizenship Department with the Methodist church of Southern Africa is clear indication that the role of the church to raise socio-economic issues can never be underestimated. The state of the 1958 Conference in response to apartheid policy. "The one and undivided Church" bear witness to the attempt of the Church in being a vehicle for the struggle for liberation.

Even if one cannot stand firm and say the church started to resist apartheid from its inception there is clear evidence that some individuals played a remarkable role. The imposition of Pass Laws on the women drew angry

mass based revolt with some women in their church uniforms in 1956. The 1950 Suppression of communism Act, and the 1953 Bantu Education Act sought to suppress and silence the Black Resistance, on ideological levels. A period of intensified repression, which introduced serious gains by detentions and severe sentencing, was unshared in between 1962 and 1964. These times of repression culminated in the Rivonia Trials, death sentences for some leaders of resistance, and the Robben Island life jail terms for others such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki etc.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE M.C.S.A. IN GENERAL AND TEMBISA CIRCUIT IN PARTICULAR DURING THE YEARS OF APARTHEID:

It was in the years of our Lord 1981, when Tembisa obtained circuit status, breaking away from Katlehong and Thokoza as the three townships formed one big circuit. The schism was arrived at amicably, without any hard feelings.

By this time, Tembisa circuit had already two church buildings and manses namely Mashemong and Umfuyaneng. Tembisa Circuit had two ministers a superintended and a circuit minister. The first superintended was Rev. J.R. Molebatsi and Rev. S.M. Sikhosana was the circuit minister stationed at Umfuyaneng. This newly created circuit comprised of members who were living in Tembisa and domestic servants living in the surrounding when areas of Edenvale, Birchleigh and Kempton Park.

It was exactly during this time that the notorious 99 years lease law was promulgated which prohibited blacks, and their organizations the church included, to own sites in the urban areas. Due to this act, it was difficult to

obtain new sites to build proper church structures in response to the growth of membership in various sections of the township, such a situation, necessitated Tembisa people to hire classrooms at various schools for purposes of worships, so that congregants do not travel long distances to and from the church services.

In 1983, through meaningful negotiations entered between the church and the municipality (Local government), and the Methodist Church being registered as a church not a sect, with its comprehensive constitution, managed to secure a site in Hospital View. By this time Rev. T.J. Khoza was the superintended and Rev. T. Hina was the circuit minister. All the Methodist logistics pertaining to that site were followed to the latter.

As the Methodist Church had declared itself openly that it is one and undivided, doors were opened in the formally only white Methodist churches to black Methodist for purposes of worships. This was in defiance to apartheid laws of separate development among races of the country. This became a breakthrough in the Methodist Church as white Methodists together with black Methodists stood side-by-side defying the evils of apartheid, proclaiming unequivocally and unapologetically that apartheid is a heresy.

Mostly ministers of religion in the Township came together and formed a fellowship called Interdenominational Africa Ministers Association of South Africa (IDAMASA). It was through this body where Christians fought collectively the injustices of the then regime.

In the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, blacks formed the Black Methodist Consultation (BMC). This body was used to capacitate black Methodist in as far as the day-to-day running to affairs of the church. The major aim of this organization, which was the formation within the church, was to fight the injustices of apartheid within and outside the church. This task was done with success.

The era under review was characterized by unrest, instability and ungovernance in the township. Tembisa not being an exception, despite the arrogance of the powers that be the Methodist Church doors were opened for political meetings and to funerals of political activist.

Our Ministers were arrested and humiliated for such permissiveness, accommodativeness and tolerance to political climate, they were detained and harshly interrogated. All that could not alter political awareness spirit that was prevailing among the church people.

Geographical circuits were instituted during this period. This alone proved that no man-made laws could separate us as God intended us to be one. It is needless to emphasise that that defiance to people called Methodists was not just lip services but a reality. Then the regime was rendered in effective and powerlessness.

Obedience 81, a big conference called by the Methodist for the Methodist concerned in Johannesburg in 1981. It was at this conference where evils of apartheid noticeable in and outside the church were openly criticized. Indeed there was freedom of speech in this conference. Speakers did not

fear any reputations as it used to be the case before. Print and electronic media covered the deliberations.

Churches opposed to apartheid aligned themselves with the Methodist stance.

The decline of the South African economy has also affected the church severely as members became unemployed, the growth of the church suffered as people became unemployed. As news of the 16th June 1976 shooting began appearing on television screens and in newspapers in the rest of the world, South Africa's economy, already showing signs of decline after the past Sharpsville boom years, took a devastating knock. No one can claim that he/she was never affected by this historical tragedy, hence the turning point.

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Tuesday July 31st to Friday August 3rd 1951

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Tuesday August 4th to Friday August 7th 1953
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Monday August 1st to Wednesday August 3rd
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1956
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