

MICHAEL CASSIDY

Lay Apostle to the Cities of Africa.

A biographical, interpretive and critical study of the role of Michael Cassidy, as a layman, in the life of the Church and its mission in Africa. (1957-2007)

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CURRICULUM VITAE.

John V. Tooke was born in Pretoria on 1 December 1937. His early work experience was in commerce, industry and politics. His conversion, during the first mission of African Enterprise in Pietermaritzburg led him, in time, to join this work in 1967.

He studied Missiology at UNISA under David Bosch and at Fuller Seminary School of World Mission in Pasadena during 1972 obtaining the degrees of B.A. with a major in Missiology. He received a Master degree in Missiology after two spells at Fuller Seminary in 1974 and 1994

In 1974 he attended the Lausanne Congress. He later served a number of years on the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation. He was the Africa representative for 5 years for the Mustard Seed Foundation that encourages mission and ministry in local churches in Africa's big cities. He was ordained into the Methodist Church in 1990.

During his time at African Enterprise he helped to set up a number of National conferences for Christian leaders. These included the Durban Congress in 1973 the South African Christian Leadership Assembly in Pretoria 1979. He convened the theology group for the National Initiative for Reconciliation. He has a special interest in the legacy of Michael Cassidy the founder of Africa Enterprise.

SUMMARY.

This work is a reflection about and case study in Apostolicity. It is also about the power of an individual to be a change agent in socio-political contexts. Its subject is Dr. Michael Cassidy who is founder and former international team leader of African Enterprise, an international Evangelistic organisation, that partner with churches in Africa to foster the growth of the Christian movement in cities through its ten national indigenous teams spread through Africa. Cassidy is also regarded as a prominent Evangelical leader at home and abroad, and is a strong influence in the Lausanne movement.

The thesis traces the ministry of Cassidy in his years leading up to the founding of the work and his nearly 50 years of witness in the turbulence of Africa and South Africa during and after the Apartheid years. This historical review has special interest for the ecumenical witness of the church in its fight against Apartheid through great conferences like The Durban Congress on Mission and Evangelism 1973, The South African Christian Leadership Assembly (SACLA I and SACLA II), the National Initiative for Reconciliation and the Rustenburg Church Consultation.

In the research the theological, missiological and philosophical motifs of Cassidy's work are discussed, with special attention to the issues of truth and the socio-political implications of love. The thesis also describes Cassidy's involvement in the Marriage Alliance and the struggle to bring a biblically based outcome to the South African legislation on the matter of gay marriage. Cassidy's worldview and his spirituality, weighed against the current debate on these issues, are examined.

A primary interest expressed in the thesis is the concept of Lay Apostolicity, a concept that was powerfully raised by Cassidy whose ministry has been as a layman who has not been ordained. The structures for mission are deeply examined from Protestant and Catholic perspectives. The writer argues that Cassidy's ministry has special value as a model and example for others in understanding and participating in the apostolic ministry of the ordinary Christian man and woman in the local church or in the working context.

The thesis takes as its leitmotif the Prayer of Jesus in John 17 - and the life of Cassidy is discussed alongside reflections of and in relation to Jesus' prayer for in his Apostles (and those who follow) in the hours before his passion. The 'marks' in Jesus' prayer have been identified as: Mission, Glory, Unity, Love, Truth, Holiness, Spirituality, Joy, Successive Chapters on each of these appear in the thesis.

An analysis of Cassidy's witness and mission was made through a survey with 120 respondents to measure the effect of Cassidy's ministry. The chapter on Joy deals with this. The final chapters deal with an assessment of Cassidy's life and work. The first of these looks at the dynamics of leadership and a critical assessment of his peers and others. The last chapter on "The measure of the man" attempts to list and clarify special significances, abilities and characteristics that have contributed to a unique calling and contribution to our understanding of Lay Apostolicity.

DEDICATION.

In writing this Thesis on Michael Cassidy I would seek to **celebrate** the ministry of a lifelong friend and colleague shared, in periods, in a mutual experience of evangelism and the journey of mission. His is a life that blesses and influences. As the idea of ‘team’ was innate to Cassidy, this work also honours former colleagues in the first generation team. These stand as living, stones in the foundation of the work of African Enterprise.

The **dedication** must go to my beloved wife Rona. Who knows the manifest sacrifices, difficulties and fears that my obedience to God wrought in her life? She has always loved, always endured, always partnered and provided space for ministry that kept me from her side. Through this let her be tenderly remembered and thanked as well.

I **acknowledge** also the promptings and encouragement of my three sons Lance, Larry and Lloyd which were largely influential in promoting the idea of a thesis on Michael Cassidy. Perhaps this was a strategy to keep me from atrophy. Sons outgrow their father’s wisdom as they cultivate their own. I hope that they might, in due course, read what is hidden here of things beyond their ken.

Thanks are rendered to Dr Calvin Cook who has filled my life on occasions with Grace and love. His guidance as a Church Historian and theologian carried wonderful insights that gave strength and help at key moments. Colleen Smith kindly helped with proofing the text.

This fosters also the **memory** of David Bosch who stimulated the writer’s interest in Missiology and demonstrated its meaning and spirit profoundly in his life, teaching and example. He was a companion on the Way who is greatly missed.

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