AOSIS

Saving the rainbow nation: Education as challenge to the churches in South Africa

CrossMark
click for updates

Author:
Johan M. van der Merwe[1]

Affiliation:
[1]Department of Systematic and Historical Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Research Project Registration:
Project Leader: Johan van der Merwe
Project Number: u02383810

Description:
This research is part of the project, 'The Church and Poverty in South Africa', directed by Prof. Johan van der Merwe, Department of Systematic and Historical Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria.

Corresponding author:
Johan van der Merwe,
johan.vdmerwe@up.ac.za

Education in Africa is in a crisis. Some scholars go as far as to say that it is broken. This was also noted when the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, linked to the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, were developed. One of the goals was defined as to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. This article explores the important role of education in transforming societies. To achieve this objective, the research in this article is based on a qualitative literature search. It focuses on relevant literature that included books, scholarly articles, online articles and scientific data provided by Statistics South Africa. It starts off by describing the brokenness of education in South Africa through the latest statistics that provide a very dark picture of education in the country. In the second place, the article revisits the Reformation to indicate that the church can and is called to play an important role in the improvement of education. The article concludes with two examples of how church organisations and specific churches in South Africa take up the challenge to transform societies through specific educational programmes.

Contribution: Specific mention is made of the programme of the South African Council of Churches called The South Africa We Pray For and Little Seeds, which is a combined programme in Early Childhood Development. As such, what happens in South Africa can be an example to the rest of Africa.

Keywords: South Africa; education; crisis; poverty; church; reformation; early childhood development; The South Africa We Pray For.

Introduction

South Africa is in many ways an example to the rest of Africa. One of the important reasons is the fact that the country succeeded in a peaceful transformation process that led to the first democratic election on 27 April 1994 (Van der Merwe 2014). This is in contrast to other countries[1] in Africa, where violence and revolution were the way in which transformation was achieved. That is why the African dream, as stated in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, will be in jeopardy without a South African contribution. Although it seemed that South Africa was on a road to recovery after the dark years of apartheid, the rainbow nation is in serious trouble. Amidst rising unemployment, corruption and poverty (Van der Merwe 2020), education is one of the prime examples that confirms this statement.

The metaphor of South Africa as the rainbow nation was first used and made official by Nobel Peace Prize Winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu after the release of Mr Nelson Mandela from prison and the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1990 (Nevitt 2022). According to Habib (1997:15) this metaphor soon got a life of its own after being adopted by former presidents of South Africa, namely Mr Nelson Mandela and Mr Thabo Mbeki. It was not only used to further patriotism for the citizens of South Africa, but it soon became a 'descriptive label of the South African nation', used both locally and abroad to describe the new democracy in South Africa (Habib 1997:15). According to Archbishop Tutu the metaphor of the rainbow did not intend to keep the nations' head in the clouds but rather to identify the country as a country of reachable possibilities (Nevitt 2022). More than 30 years later, the rainbow has almost disappeared because of unprecedented corruption, violence and growing poverty because of unemployment in South Africa. This is confirmed by the latest numbers of Statistics South Africa, which state the unemployment rate for the fourth quarter of 2021 as 35.3% (Statistics SA 2022).

1.Most of South Africa's neighbouring countries gained independence through revolution: Angola in 1975, Mozambique in 1975 and Zimbabwe in 1980.

Although there are many reasons for this scenario, one of the important reasons is a crumbling education system. This is not only a South African problem but seems to be endemic to the continent of Africa. According to a report from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002:2), as quoted by Jansen, Pretorius and Van Niekerk, primary school completion was under 50% at the turn of the century. Jansen, Pretorius and Van Niekerk quote the following important statistics to emphasise the extent of the crisis further:

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa's (ADEA) newsletter (2004:12) reports that in Africa, only one child in five completes junior secondary school. The gross enrolment rate (GER) for secondary education for developing countries is only 57%, while in North American and Western European countries, the GER exceeds 100% (ADEA 2004:12). Of the 90 million children of secondary school age in Africa, only 23 million are in school (ADEA 2004:12). Even in 2002, fewer than 16 countries achieved an enrolment figure of 100% in primary education. About 16 countries achieved an enrolment figure of 70% but still have illiteracy rates of between 37% and 82%, which is unacceptably high (UNESCO 2002:3). The rest of the countries in Africa have achieved less than a 70% gross enrolment, the rate being between 31% and 67% with a mean of 53%. The illiteracy rate of these countries is between 16% and 76%, and in the sub-Saharan Africa region there was an increase of 19 million illiterates the last few years alone (UNESCO 2008:34). According to UNESCO (2002:3), a complete paradigm shift in education is necessary in this last category of countries (Jansen, Pretorius & Van Niekerk 2009:74).

Although deteriorating education is clearly a problem in Africa, this article will focus specifically on South Africa and the challenges it faces with regard to education.

According to Van der Berg (2018) 'the relationship between poverty and education runs in both directions'. He explains that:

[L]ack of a good quality education means that many South Africans cannot fully participate as workers or entrepreneurs in the economy. This condemns them to unemployment or low-wage employment, and prevents their human potential being unlocked to allow them to become productive workers and citizens. (p. 1)

On the other hand, better education leads to stimulation of the economy, which leads to economic growth (Van der Berg 2018). If this is true, it is not difficult to understand why a sound education system is so important in the struggle against poverty and unemployment.

This is why the rainbow is slowly disappearing: 'Our education system is broken and unless we fix it, all else is doomed' (Workman 2020:1). This is the opinion of Michael Workman, with which the author heartfully agrees. Workman states more clearly that the time has come for all

South Africans to realise that if we don't do something about the terrible state of education, the country will fall into the abyss of anarchy (Workman 2020:1). He refers specifically to the difference between the wealthy, well-resourced schools and the poorest of the poor schools. To this end, I cannot stress more urgently that if we continue along the same route that we have been travelling since 1994, then by the end of next year, there will scarcely be any functioning schools' (Workman 2020:1). He continues by explaining how the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic put the magnifying glass on the fault lines of our education system before stating that one of the important factors for sustainable change to the system will only be possible if it has strong community support. Without the support of local communities, any innovation is doomed to fail (Workman 2020:1).

The opinion of Workman is supported by Wilkinson (2015) as quoted by Nortje (2017:27), who found that only 80% of schools in South Africa can provide learners with the necessary skills to contribute to society. This can be attributed to mismanagement of funds by schools and government, socio-economic factors that influence learner attendance and staff qualifications (Nortje 2017:27). Allen (2014), as quoted by Nortje, describes the crisis even more strongly when he states: 'The 30% minimum pass requirement instituted by the Minister of Basic Education is a violation of the rights of South Africa's children to quality education' (Nortje 2017:27). The enormity of the crisis in education is confirmed by the fact that the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, recently said to the members of Parliament that the detrimental consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic go so deep that education in the country will not quickly recover (Prince 2022:1).

The above points of view are supported by research done by Maddock and Maroun, in which interviewees described the state of education in South Africa as 'horrific', 'a massive red flag', 'shoddy' and 'in a bad state' (Maddock & Maroun 2018:199). This is further confirmed by the publication of Statistics South Africa's *COVID-19 and barriers to participation in education in South Africa, 2020*, which indicates that there were close to a quarter of individuals aged 5–24 years who were not attending any educational institutions. Another shocking statistic is the fact that over 1.1 million children aged 5–13 and 14–18 years were out of school in 2020. Those aged 5–13 years started from a low base of 207 768 in 2016 and increased to 779 979 in 2020. The increase in out-of-school children was attributed to COVID-19. The scenario got worse: in 2020, the percentage of out-of-school 5-year-olds was the highest of all age groups (37.7%), compared to other age groups; this was followed by those aged 6 years old at 11.8% (Stats SA 2020). This means that it is the foundation of basic education that is crumbling. This, among other things, is an indicator of an education system in serious trouble. The dark picture that is being painted by Workman and statistics from Statistics South Africa is supported by Shenilla Mohammed, executive director of Amnesty International, South Africa,

who wrote in a report of Amnesty International published in February 2020:

> [T]he South African education system, characterised by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and relatively poor educational outcomes, is perpetuating inequality and as a result failing too many of its children, with the poor hardest hit. (p. 1)

The report further makes the following important comment:

> The repeated failure of government to address the issues is not only a question of accountability, but it also has consequences for the life chances of thousands of young people and the future of this country. (p. 1)

According to Workman, the solution lies in engaging the community and developing ownership, responsibility and pride, which will ensure that community values are embedded in education and will lead to responsibility and accountability (Workman 2020:1). It cannot be done by government. The local churches are ideally suited and called to play this important role in communities. This point of view is confirmed by Jansen et al. (2009:67) when they say: 'The church has a big role to play in bringing about social changes that in turn can enable development'. They then emphasise that it is the priestly calling of the church that demands closer and more direct involvement in education (Jansen et al. 2009:71).

The church and education

It falls beyond the scope of this article to discuss different biblical perspectives on education or the history of the church and education in detail, but if education is really a challenge to the church, it is important to understand that the calling to the church to get involved in education is built on a biblical foundation and is part of the history of the church. The church's roots with regard to its call to be involved in education are to be found in the Bible.

The renowned scholar Walter Brueggemann[2] defines the main aim of education in the Bible as: 'to pass on the stories of the community of faith so that it may continue from one generation to another' (Brueggemann 2000:73). Brueggemann further notes that an important facet of education in the Bible was to empower Israel to care for those without social value and power and to give hope to communities. According to Khumalo this means that: 'education in the Bible served the important function of building and maintaining God's community' (Khumalo 2005:13). This is supported by the fact that:

> The Bible is a statement about public life and because it concerns public life it is concerned with the use of power, the management of resources and the shaping of policy. (Brueggemann 2000:79)

Although education in the Bible refers specially to religious education, the main challenge is to educate children and adults so that they can contribute to the transformation of

society. This point of view is further substantiated by Khumalo (2005:4) who quotes Revd Peter Storey (2004) from his book *And Are We Yet Alive* in which he writes:

> [A]t local church level, the absence of meaningful Christian Education programmes for both adults and children in the majority of our congregations is a scandal that should no longer be tolerated. As doors of opportunity in the secular world open to increasing numbers of people, the paucity of intellectual stimulus in their churches will be laid bare. (p. 63)

Khumalo (2005) continues to make the following important remark:

> The church has no alternative but to be involved in the processes of transformation taking place within society. To do otherwise would be detrimental to its mission in the world, and in effect the church would become an irrelevant institution. (p. 6)

This transformation will only take place if the church plays its part in sound education.

This point of view is nothing new. Throughout its history, the church was involved with education. One of the best examples comes from the Reformation of the 16th century and more specifically from the work of Martin Luther,[3] who wrote extensively on the importance of education and the churches calling to education. Jansen et al. (2009:80) points out that the Roman Catholic Church had a monopoly during the Middle Ages, 'which restricted education to a very few in the population' but that 'the Reformation in conjunction with the state was remarkably successful in broadening the basis of elementary education' (Jansen et al. 2009:81). This is further supported by Powis Smith, who wrote that both Luther and Melanchthon revolutionised the schools of Germany from the universities down to the elementary grades, giving a more broadly humanistic character to the educational system (Powis Smith 1924:50). Luther's first formal treatment of the topic of schools is found in his treatise of 1520, *To the Christian Nobility*, in which Luther wrote on the reformation of education. Luther followed this up with another treatise in 1524, *To the Councilmen of All cities in Germany that they establish and Maintain Christian Schools* (American Edition vol. 45, pp. 347–378 as quoted by Hill 2007). In this document, Luther wrote:

> [F]or it is a grave and important matter, and one which is of vital concern both to Christ and the world at large, that we take steps to help our youth….My dear sirs, if we have to spend such large sums every year on guns, roads, bridges, dams and countless similar items to insure the temporal peace and prosperity of a city, why should not much more be devoted to the poor neglected youth -at least enough to engage one or two competent men to teach? (American Edition Vol 45:350 as quoted by Hill 2007:350)

How Luther understood cooperation between church and state as part of the calling of the church with regard to education becomes clear in his letter *On the Councils and the Church*, written in 1541 (Hill 2007:20). Hill correctly names this document as one of Luther's most important letters. In the letter, Luther referred to the work of pastors and teachers

---

as people 'who plant and cultivate young trees and useful shrubs in the garden' (Hill 2007:20). He observed that education had originally been the primary task of the monasteries and then summarised that education is of the utmost importance for church and society. Hanko supports this by saying that 'the Reformation saw the church and its wellbeing and the sanctified life of God's people, which is part of their salvation, as the primary goal of education' (Hanko 2016:24). Most of the theologians from the Reformation believed that the civil state as well as the church would be served through education (Hanko 2016:24). Furthermore, it was especially Martin Luther and John Calvin who wanted to broaden the base of education. This is why education plays such an important role in the future of South Africa and in saving the rainbow nation. Education is not only about learning, but also about the improvement and upliftment of societies.

Taking the biblical perspectives and the history of the church regarding education into consideration, Jansen, Pretorius and Van Niekerk are correct when they argue that the church has 'a definite has a definite formative socio-cultural calling in the world in line with its prophetic, priestly and kingly tasks' and that it 'needs to influence societies and communities through its members' (Jansen et al. 2009:80). The author agrees with them when they emphasise that it is part of the calling of every member of the church to have a positive influence on society. This can and should be done through execution of their office as priest, prophet and king. This means that Christian churches have a very important responsibility through the calling of their members to participate in the improvement of education in societies:

• Firstly, churches will have to fulfil their prophetic calling by challenging government and other social institutions into action to improve education. This will ultimately also lead to the upliftment of societies.
• Secondly, churches must fulfil their priestly calling by making facilities available for education. Individual members, such as teachers, coming from the education sector can also contribute by offering extra classes that are being organised by churches in church facilities.
• Thirdly, the church is called to take up its kingly function by working with parent communities to ensure good education. Christian parents must be motivated to get involved in school governing bodies (Jansen et al. 2009:74).

If churches succeed in playing this important role, it will contribute to what Khumalo calls the transformation of societies. It will also contribute to the relevance of the church in societies (Khumalo 2005:6).

The church and education: Taking up the challenge

The fact that education in South Africa is in serious trouble cannot be denied. More than that, it feeds off and aggravates the growing poverty problem in South Africa. Something must be done, and the church is ideally positioned in communities and called to take up this challenge. Although there are many churches in the country that accepted the challenge, I will focus on two important examples[4]:

The first is the programme of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The SACC is 'an ecumenical association of affiliated Christian Churches and organisations that come together in action for social justice' (SACC 2015). This means that the programmes of the SACC can have a huge influence in transforming societies. One of the focus areas of the SACC is *Comprehensive Quality Education* while the goal is to: 'modernize education and have it promote a citizenry that is values based and cohesive, while deliberating and articulating well into economic productivity and innovation' (SACC 2015). This led to the SACC introducing the important programme *The South Africa We Pray For* on 16 December 2015, where the churches of South Africa committed themselves through a public declaration at the Regina Mundi Church in Soweto, to 'identify, pray and act together on critical socio-economic issues that have a marked difference in the quality of life in South African society' (SACC 2015). They declared that they would:

Pray and act for Healing & Reconciliation, healing the past, and engaging the challenge of gender, ethnicity, and race.

Pray and act for the restoration of the Family Fabric, facing up to the tattered family fabric which has been caused by the impact of transition of especially the African family life, in order to nestle a reconciled existence for future generations.

Pray and act for the destruction of Poverty and Inequality, addressing the need to reverse poverty and inequality in order to reconcile the yearnings of marginalised poor people with the fortunes of the country.

Pray and act for Economic Transformation, dealing with the long-standing need for economic transformation and identifying the trade-offs necessary to address the fundamentals that result in a reconciled economic dispensation.

Pray and act toward anchoring Democracy, where corruption, maladministration and the decline of trust in public institutions, is interrogated to promote a transparent and functional democracy. (SACC 2015)

This important declaration led to an action plan that was rolled out in communities, of which the eradication of poverty was an important part. One of the corner stones of this part of the action plan was to address inequality in health and education (SACC 2016:37). In the area of improving education in communities a number of initiatives were proposed. They were: 'Early Childhood Cognitive, Numeracy & Literacy Development, Culturing for Reading, Grade School Education Support and Christian Teacher Enlistment'

4. The scope of the article does not allow for the evaluation of these programmes. The two examples were chosen as a general programme for all churches and a church-specific programme. The author acknowledges that many other programmes exist. The evaluation of these programmes can be the subject of further research.

(SACC 2016:37–41). The action plan further proposed *Financial Literacy Education* and *Nutrition and Wellbeing*, through which churches must address the challenge of food and nutrition for the poor. As motivation for this part of the programme, it was stated that:

> [T]he consequences of malnutrition and nutrient deficiencies include the stunting of children's growth and causing learning disabilities – impacting capacity for effective education, affecting the rest of a child's life and its place in the economy and society. (SACC 2016:42)

The importance of this statement is supported by Statistics South Africa in the report *COVID-19 and barriers to participation in education in South Africa, 2020*, in which it is indicated that in 2020, 82.4% of individuals aged 5–24 years attended schools where food was given as part of the school feeding scheme. Of those who were provided with food, learners in the age group (5–9 years) and the oldest age group (20–24 years) benefitted the most from the school feeding scheme: 81% and 84.5% were daily consumers of food, respectively (Stats SA 2020). It is clear from the programme of the SACC that they identified early childhood development (ECD) as one of the critical areas where the church could get involved in education. This is supported by statistics from Statistics South Africa that indicates young children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

The second example is a church-specific ECD programme as suggested by the SACC, which is called 'Little Seeds'. This is a joint programme by Diaconia, which is a joint service group of the Dutch Reformed Church (Western Cape) and the Uniting Reformed Church (Cape), and Badisa, which is a faith-based designated Child Protection Organisation (Badisa 2022). The programme was launched in May 2019 at the Western Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (Badisa 2022).

At the launch, the importance of the programme was described as follows:

> [A] seed cannot grow without proper nourishment. Just like a child cannot develop without the proper education, nutrition and support. The time to act together is now. Little Seeds is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the children's futures blossom. The end of poverty and inequality should be the ultimate goal to prevent these 'little seeds' from blowing away. (Badisa 2022:1)

This statement is supported by the mission statement of Little Seeds, according to which the programme is inspired by a God-given calling to 'promote, facilitate and provide accessible ECD services in areas of need in collaboration with faith communities and a network of partners' (Badisa 2022), while the vision of the programme is 'to be an Early Childhood Development movement that enables children in the Cape Region to grow and to thrive' (Little Seeds 2022). As part of the vision, it is also stated that children need the following essential building blocks: 'love, nutrition, security

and stimulation' (Little Seeds 2022). This vision is further explained by the main aim of the programme, which is to 'address poverty and inequality through quality ECD in the Cape Region of South Africa' (Little Seeds 2022). According to the programme, early development services are defined on two levels, namely 'The physical, psychological, cognitive and social development of children between birth and 9 years and Strengthening child protection by creating safe and secure environments for children' (Badisa 2022). It is further indicated that '[t]his collective movement offers an umbrella of dedicated and comprehensive ECD services focused on Advocacy Awareness, Prevention and Early Intervention' (Badisa 2022). The services that the Little Seeds programme offers are:

> Smart Start which focuses on training and supporting community members to start their own micro-enterprises in the field of home-based, quality ECD to children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old; Day Mother program for the stimulation of children between 0 and 5 years; Little Seeds reading groups aimed at raising awareness about the importance of reading for fun and registration and management of Early Childhood Development centres through their expert knowledge and experience in this field. (Badisa 2022:1)

From the two examples above, the church in South Africa is rising to the challenge. Programmes are developed by church organisations and different churches through which they strive to improve education in South Africa.

Conclusion

At the launch of the Desmond Tutu Scholarship for Ethical Leadership at the Henley Business School on 20 May 2006, Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in a speech delivered to the business leaders from both the United Kingdom and South Africa: 'Education is not preparation for life, it is life itself' and that 'proper education is the most potent agent of empowerment' (Henley Business School 2022).

This is the reason why the church cannot ignore the challenge of the current state of education in South Africa. The author agrees with Maree when he writes regarding education, stating that humankind has demonstrated that it can devise solutions to major challenges and, in fact, convert these challenges into opportunities and that this also implies education in South Africa (Maree 2022:258). The church is ideally positioned to play a transformative empowering role in education by doing the following:

- Motivate children to attend school. Local churches should motivate children through youth ministry to attend school by emphasising the importance of education.
- Motivate and support parents: the church should make use of the opportunity to motivate parents to send their children to school and to get involved in good governance of schools. Greater parent involvement will lead to a smaller learner fallout and will help to curb corruption in schools.
- Motivate and support teachers: teachers are among the most important role players in education. Low morale

and burnout among teachers open up opportunities for local churches and societies to engage and empower teachers through their ministry.

- Provide infrastructure: many churches have buildings that are only used on Sundays. These facilities can be utilised for childcare, extra classes and study venues.
- Provide nourishment: churches can play an important part in the provision of nourishment to children, either at school or at after-school centres and day-care centres.

All the above can be done by local churches through existing programmes. By doing these, churches will not only answer to their calling in society, but will also help to save the dream of the rainbow nation for millions of children.

Acknowledgements

References

African Union, n.d., *Linking Agenda 2063 and the SDGs,* viewed n.d., from https://au.int/agenda2063/sdgs.

Allen, K., 2014, *Poor quality education trapping children in poverty. Save the children*, viewed 20 June 2022, https://www.savethechildren.org.za/news-and-events/news/poor-quality-education-trapping-children-in-povert.

Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 2004, 'Secondary education: The missing link', *Association for the Development of Education in Africa Newsletter* 16(3), 1–23.

Badisa, 2022, *Little Seeds*, viewed 19 April 2022, from https://badisa.org.za/2022/02/14/little-seeds/.

Brueggemann, W., 2000, 'Passion and perspective: Two dimensions of education in the bible', *Journal of Religion and Education* 23(2000), 70–79.

Habib, A., 1997, 'The rainbow nation and prospects for consolidating democracy in Africa', *Journal of Political Science / Revue Africaine de Science Politique* 2(2), 15–37.

Hanko, R., 2016, *Christian education a reformation heritage*, viewed 15 July 2017, from https://www.scribd.com/document/261931186.

Henley Business School, 2022, *Obituary Desmond Tutu 12 January 2022*, viewed 27 April 2022, from https://www.henley.fi/2022/01/12/proper-education-is-the-most-potent-agent-of-empowerment-archbishop-desmond-tutu/.

Hill, J.E., 2007, *Luther on education*, viewed 15 June 2016, from http//www.ccle.org/luther-on-education.

Jansen, C.A., Pretorius, F.J. & Van Niekerk, E.J., 2009, 'Education and the role of the church in Africa: Three relevant aspects', *Koers* 74(1–2), 67–85. https://doi.org/10.4102/koers.v74i1/2.117

Khumalo, S.R., 2005, 'Education for social transformation in South Africa: A Methodist approach', thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Unpublished.

Little Seeds, 2022, viewed 27 April 2022, from https://www.littleseeds.org.za/about/.

Maddock, L. & Maroun, W., 2018, 'Exploring the present state of South African education: Challenges and recommendations', *South African Journal of Higher Education* 32(2), 192–214. https://doi.org/10.20853/32-2-1641

Maree, J.G., 2022, 'Managing the Covid-19 pandemic in South African schools: Turning challenge into opportunity', *South African Journal of Psychology* 52(2), 249–261. https://doi.org/10.1177/00812463211058398

Mohammed, S., 2022, *South Africa: Broken and unequal education perpetuating poverty and inequality*, viewed 11 February 2022, from https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/02/south-africa-broken-and-unequal-education-perpetuating-poverty-and-inequality/.

Nevitt, L., 2022, *Rainbow nation?*, viewed 21 April 2022, from https://www.capetownmagazine.com/whats-the-deal-with/rainbow-nation/125_22_17853.

Nortje, M.J., 2017, 'The effect of poverty on education in South Africa', *Educor Multidisciplinary Journal* 1(1), 47–62.

Powis Smith, J.M., 1924, 'The church and education', *The Journal of Religion* 4(1), 46–59. https://doi.org/10.1086/480407

Prince, L., 2022, 'Covid-19 se skade aan skolestelsel nie vining herstel, sê minister', *Netwerk 24*, viewed 14 June 2022, from https://www.netwerk24.com/netwerk24/nuus/covid-19/covid-19-pandemie-se-skade-aan-skolestelsel-nie-vinnig-herstel-se-minister-20220614.

South African Council of Churches (SACC), 2015, viewed n.d., from http://sacc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/South-Africa-We-Pray-For-2016-Action-Plan.pdf.

South African Council of Churches (SACC), 2016, viewed n.d., from http://sacc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/South-Africa-We-Pray-For-2016-Action-Plan.pdf.

South African Council of Churches (SACC), 2015, *The South Africa we pray for: Proposed 2016 action plan*, viewed 16 June 2022, from https://sacc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/South-Africa-We-Pray-For-2016-Action-Plan.pdf.

Statistics South Africa, 2020, *COVID 19 and barriers to participation in education in South Africa*, SA Education Series Volume VIII, viewed 20 April 2022, from http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media%20release%20QLFS%20Q4%202021.pdf.

Storey, P., 2004, *And are we yet alive?* Salty Print, Cape Town.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2002, 'Report: Tanzania calling – Taking up the challenge of education in Africa', *Conference on education, Dakar*, viewed 20 April 2022, from http://www.sadtu.org.za/ev/nov_dec_2002/tanzania.html.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2008, *Institute for statistics: Literacy report,* UNESCO.

Van der Berg, S., 2018, *The two-way street between poverty and education*, viewed 24 April 2022, from https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=5449.

Van der Merwe, J.M., 2014, 'Between war and peace: The Dutch Reformed Church agent for peace 1990–1994', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 40(2), 85–103.

Van der Merwe, J.M., 2020, 'Poverty and the COVID-19 pandemic: A challenge to the church', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 76(1), a6221. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i1.6221

Wilkinson, K., 2015, 'Are 80% of South Africa's schools ''dysfunctional''?', *Mail & Guardian*, pp. 1–2, 25 March.

Workman, M., 2020, *Our education system is broken, unless we fix it, all else are doomed*, viewed 16 April 2022, from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-11-26-our-education-system-is-broken-and-unless-we-fix-it-all-else-is-doomed/.