A missional approach to school dropout in a poor urban area of South Africa

Kasebwe Timothee Luc Kabongo

Supervisor: Dr. Attie Van Niekerk

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the degree of

Doctor Philosophiae (PhD) In Missiology

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

August 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis titled "A missional approach to school dropout in a poor urban area of South Africa", is my own work. I hereby submit it to fulfil the requirements of the degree programme of doctor of philosophy in Missiology at the university of Pretoria. I have not previously submitted this thesis or some of its content for a degree at another university. Where secondary material is used, it has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the university requirements. I am aware of the University's policy and implications regarding plagiarism.

Additionally, I take responsibility for any inaccuracies and shortcomings, which may
be detected in this research.

_____   Date:_____
Kasebwe Timothee Luc Kabongo
(Student – 27422390)

_____   Date:_____
Dr. Attie van Niekerk
(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

To my wife, Kesebeloang Petunia Kabongo, for your support, love and many sacrifices you made to give me space so that I can work on this thesis. To my children Keamogetswe, Bahati and Faraj for allowing daddy to stay away from you so that he could study. To InnerCHANGE, the spiritual family I belong to, for teaching me to remain a faithful servant of God among the people the world considers the least.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This is a transdisciplinary research which deals with a missional and tangible involvement of the church in a real issue such as school dropout in order to minimise it. School dropout is an issue that negatively affects many people of a poor urban area such as the township of Soshanguve, north of Tshwane. Children who drop out of school are usually blamed by all everybody around for leaving school.

Having people who dropped out of school in mind, this research started off with an inspiration from a quote from Albert Einstein that states that every human being is a genius. It was also inspired by the legacy of the church throughout history as a good news agent in restoring the dignity of people living on the margins such as school dropouts and catalysing the ideal society we would like to become.

This research stresses that the building of the ideal society we would like to become requires solidarity and collaboration between all stakeholders, including those living on the margins of society such as school dropouts. The building of this society is inspired by biblical principles. The themes of solidarity and collaboration shaped the transdisciplinary nature of this research in its search to minimise school dropout. This search involved learning about external (environment, living circumstances, health, learning environment, teaching staff) and internal causes (learning disability) of school dropout from existing research findings. It also involved an interaction with the results and consequences of school dropout from a selected number of disciplines of knowledge. The results of school dropout from the disciplines of missiology, economics, development sciences and sociology were examined. They helped affirm the relevance of this research because school dropout is not allowing South Africa to develop at a desirable pace. It works against the ideal society we would like to become.

In its solution seeking process, this research finally involved Christian professionals qualified in areas of social work, psychology, nursing and teaching to share their understanding of causes of school dropout and to be part of solution seeking to minimise school dropout, this research underwent.

All the above-mentioned elements were put into practice in a reading club of 20 children from grade R to 4 from Soshanguve public schools who were selected because they were academically struggling. Volunteer tutors from the neighbourhood helped teach children. They were mentored by some of the Christian professional volunteers who were involved in this research. Together, we formed a partnership. This project was initiated from the stand point of our faith and Christian perspectives. Therefore, the themes of compassionate and sacrificial love and the parable of the talents (Matthew 25: 14-30) were used regularly to encourage volunteers and children involved. This partnership was good news to beneficiaries because many of them cultivated an appetite for reading and learning which brought a sense of fulfilment in their lives. This partnership also led to the multiplication our

service initiatives. It finally equipped our team with tools to engage people who already dropped out of school. With the latter, hopeful and humble results were found.

KEY WORDS

Asset, collaboration, fun environment, incarnational, inspiration, mission Dei, missional, multiplication, partnership, reading club, solidarity school dropout, spirituality and tutoring club.

Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education Training
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ANAs	Annual National Assessments
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DR	Doctor
LER	Learner-to-Educator Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIV	New International Version
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
Rev	Reverend
SA	South Africa
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SPARC	Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
WCC	World Council of Churches
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (French: Organisation des Nations unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture)
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

Two life experiences motivated this study: a classroom interaction with learners and a personal experience of dropping out of school.

1.1.1 Classroom interaction with learners

During my previous studies which focused on our InnerCHANGE tutoring ministry (Kabongo, 2015), our missional team entered in a partnership with a local middle school. In the latter, we tutored grade 7 learners. Each of our classrooms had more than 30 learners. We tutored twice a week for one hour a day. As a team our aim was to focus on problem subjects such as Mathematics and English.

Soon after starting to tutor at this middle school, I found myself being regularly frustrated by the amount of disruption and indiscipline made by some of the learners. I found myself spending more time trying to calm down the disruptive learners than tutoring. My goal was to spend my entire one-hour in the classroom tutoring. In order to achieve this goal, I decided to focus on learners who were focused and positively responsive to me and kicked out of the classroom the disruptive ones. The latter were the least academic in the classroom. Soon after doing that, I felt very productive in my classroom.

Fast-forward to few months later, I was preparing a sermon based on Mark 2:15-17 where Jesus was having a meal at Levi's house with people who were considered as unworthy because of their reputation. Pharisees, who were teachers of the law, saw him and were unpleasantly surprised by his behaviour. Jesus used the analogy of a doctor and a patient in telling them he (the doctor) did not come for the healthy (the righteous), but the sick (sinners).

This passage convinced me that I was part of the problem in our team ministry to this middle school, because the disruptive and less academic children needed me more than the other learners. Fuder (2001:134) also reminded me that the slow economic development in poor urban areas is mainly caused by the education capacity of people. The church has the mandate to proactively intervene in the education of the poor if its hope of an equal and just society is to come to pass. This reflection echoed Hirsch's (2007:79) opinion that theology has to encourage the church as a body to actively be involved in "the positive change of individuals and institutions" through social development actions such as the education of the poor, marginalised and outcast. The learners who were disruptive unknowingly needed tutoring more than the less disruptive ones or they needed help to figure out how to learn to the best of their ability.

As a follower of Jesus and a tutor, my goal was to help out all the learners achieve good results in Mathematics and English, especially those learners who were struggling to cope during normal school hours. Therefore, I changed my strategy of efficiency and started giving more attention to less academic learners, who were also the most disruptive ones with the hope that being fair to them would academically bring them on par with the other learners.

In my inclusion of these problem learners with the others, I did not feel like I was capable of bridging the knowledge gap between them and the other learners. Additionally, I did not feel like I was able to help some of these problem learners to learn much. I was left wondering if behavioural problems and learning difficulties I experienced were not undiagnosed learning problems that needed to be given proper attention.

From this experience, my heart has been breaking for learners who struggle to cope academically. I am learning to reach out to them and help them learn to the best of their ability. One common theme I hear from these learners is that they hate school and they usually feel tired from the first hour of school. I also hear very regularly from my community members who dropped out of school, how much they hated school and they are really glad they are not in school anymore.

In spite of these kinds of negative statements about school voiced by some of my neighbours who are poor, I am aware of the fact that everyone aspires to better socio-economic circumstances. Education is one of the things that could lead to that. Mugambi (1995:17) thinks that the church is the institution in which people's vision of the world and aspiration to a better future should be represented. Theology in its social justice dimension should encourage followers of Jesus to be hands of hope in how well they care for their society. Therefore, the role of the church could be to raise members' awareness of need and acting as a conduit for channelling resources to the poor (Burger, Louw & van der Watt 2010:68).

In our South African context, the non-profit sector, government and market institutions are currently involved in various schemes aimed at improving the quality of life of ordinary people. Disability and child grants, free primary health care and feeding schemes, for example, may prevent the poor dying from hunger or preventable illnesses. However, such strategies need to be paired with projects with a more long-term vision that aim to enhance the skills and education of poor individuals. A good combination of that would pave the way for a healthy transition out of poverty (Burger, Louw & van der Watt 2010:67). This is why church attention to the current high rate of school dropout is critical because it has a very strong potential to transform a striving community into a hopeless one. A critical church's task is to maintain hope or to bring hope out of a hopeless situation.

For me as a mission worker, evangelism is my priority. However, I am increasingly learning that there is no evangelism without solidarity with the poor and the marginalised such as school dropouts. Bosch (1991:408) stresses that "there is here a credibility test": a proclamation that does not practically take

in consideration the promises of justice, compassion of the kingdom to the vulnerable and marginalised of the earth, is a caricature of the gospel. However, Christian participation in tangibly ministering to one another point us to the promises of the kingdom. This is a Christianity which has recovered its mission of being the salt and light in the world and not only insipid in itself. A personal experience of dropping out of school was the second motivation to undergo this study.

1.1.2 Personal experience of dropping out of school

Part of my life story is that I once was a Roman Catholic seminarian. I dropped out the seminary several years later. From the beginning of my seminarian journey, one of the shocking events of my experience was to be told that our order only needed a maximum of four people to become priests out of the 28 people I started my formation with. All of us, peers, signed in to join the order because we felt called to serve the Lord through interfaith dialogue with Muslims (order charism). Early in our formation, we were also told that our primary identity should be to become an order member and the mission we felt called to, was secondary. From the first year of our formation to many years after, several friends dropped out of the formation and I also dropped because we were not a good fit.

This model of selection which leads to dropout, seems to be acceptable in the Roman Catholic church. At a minor seminary (a vocational school for priests in the making) in India (ucanews.com 2018), it was said that only 15% of Colombo´s minor seminarians went on to become priests. The then bishop of Colombo, Malcolm Ranjith (ucanews.com 2018), was not worried about this low turnout, but instead talked about "better quality than quantity," when he spoke at a parent´s day event on May 22, 1998. According to him, large numbers meant little personal attention and poor quality in their formation outcome. He continued by arguing that the 85 % that dropped out had no vocation to serve Christ on a full-time basis. Reality has proven the bishop wrong because many of my peers who dropped out the seminary went to other orders and they are priests today. A former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, once said that African traditional culture of solidarity was strongly eroded during urbanisation, and that Christianity did not fill the gap as it was expected. Instead the church, in this case of the seminary formation, "has promoted a culture of" elitism or selectiveness that exclude many people who felt called to serve (van Niekerk, 2015).

Here in South Africa, Christian private schools played a role in racial integration during apartheid. These schools gave scholarships to blacks from townships and rural areas. But scholarships were only given to smart blacks. Such was the case at Uthongathi (csmonitor.com 2018), a Christian private school in the Durban area. Its founders valued multi-racialism. Therefore, they looked for individuals and corporate donors to provide help, especially scholarships for black students who had the ability. The parents of these students, obviously could not afford to pay the relatively high school fees. Nonetheless, for many of them (black parents), going to Uthongathi was the best thing that could have happened to their child. State-run black schools were known to have a poor standard of education compared to other racial groups'. In my opinion, the academically struggling children needed those scholarships the most so that they could access quality education. Here, with the best of

intentions, the church discriminated against the majority of black children in selecting a few of them who could fit into an established education structure.

The church also seems to have adhered to the global economy culture that seems to look upon some professions as better than the others because they financially remunerate better. Bell (2012:1) stresses that the "global economy deforms desire in a manner that distorts human relations with God and one another". The materialistic church seems to have adhered to this distorted view contrast. Christianity is meant to heal desire, affirm human's equal worth intended by God and fight off any discrimination along economic, racial or political lines.

Most of the faith based organisations I know that run high schools around the city of Pretoria, don't have technical or vocational skills they teach. Mathematics and physical sciences subjects seem to be the preferred choice in both public and private Christian schools because they prepare children to high paying professions such as medical doctors or engineers. Many parents/guardians living in poor urban communities are very proud of their children when a child chooses mathematics and physical sciences subjects. The latter are seen as the best pathway out of poverty because of what someone could study in university and the profession they could embrace. It is believed that a good paying job brings happiness. And poverty is often times equated to lack of happiness.

In running these schools, the church's heart is to provide the best education possible to people. Similarly, "all parents want to give their children a better life, however we must realise that such life should not be" about getting rich only (Starke 1992:130). Wouldn't it be better if churches running schools and parents//guardians could "pass on to their children a world in which their options for meeting everyone's needs of food, education, fulfilling work, shelter, and good health were expanded, not lessened" (Starke 1992:130)?

The above-mentioned examples show how the church has fallen into the dominant narrative of selecting few people and excluding many others in the name of quality over quantity. The church is therefore guilty of encouraging school dropout. This reality contrast Jesus' mandate to the church to care (be doctors) for the marginalised (sick) such as school dropouts. Such a reality has led this study to imagine what it means for the church to be good news in tangible ways in initiating a community collaborative effort to minimise school dropout.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

In reading through the topic of this study, a question may be asked: why is this theme being dealt with in missiology and not in science of education? This study is indeed focusing on an important aspect of our education system that exposes the pronounced lack of capacity in schools located in urban poor areas of South Africa.

The approach of this research is transdisciplinary in nature. It embraces processes where professionals from different disciplines and people who are in the actual situation (our tutors) put their heads together to search for meaningful solutions to concrete problems such as school dropout (van Niekerk, 2015). Klein (2001) puts it as follows: "The core idea of transdisciplinarity is different academic disciplines working jointly with practitioners to solve a real-world problem". In the process of developing a missional theology, good progress has been made with the reflection on aspects such as the exegesis of biblical texts, a missional ecclesiology, and the leadership that is needed to inspire a congregation to transform from a missionary to a missional approach. To make all of this effective, it is important to develop missional practices for the countless local contexts and local problems that congregations are confronted with. Such a practice must be developed from below with the practitioners, both professionals and people struggling with that particular problem. In developing such a practice, the theological reflections on the missional congregation, the spirituality of the practitioners and the insights of the practitioners need to be combined into one synergistic whole.

This research was done in collaboration with a transdisciplinary team that is discussed further below. This team includes an educationist, and the study is done using the educational theory of Cabus, S.J. & De Witte, K. (2016:3) that helps us to understand the factors that lead to school dropout. Their theory stresses that multiple factors influence "early school leaving". One of them is student attrition that stresses that a student is likely to drop out after one or two retention in grade. Another factor is teenage pregnancy. Another one is bad health shocks. Another one is the lack of interest in schooling from the child which has an influence on the learner's commitment to the school and peers. Finally, another factor is teaching; a good teacher could help an average pupil to like school and be motivated to learn.

Woodhill (2010) support transdisciplinary approaches in solution seeking. He remarks that "much of innovations, and in particular institutional innovations", arise not from academic research and so-called experts in different fields of knowledge alone, "but from the interactions between the many different actors involved in a particular problematic situation". He stresses that "the more effective we can be at collaborative learning, the greater will be our capacity for institutional innovation". Institutional innovation here, alludes to changes that may be needed in the children's' households, schools and/or churches. De Beer & van Niekerk (2017:25) affirm this approach to collaborative solution seeking when they point out that "questions of our time cannot be grasped by one scientific discipline alone. We must work with other sciences. Theologians must learn from others, and we must make our own contribution to the broad scientific endeavour to participate" in solving issues of public interest such as school dropout. The knowledge acquired from this transdisciplinary group helped me to serve the children of our reading club to the best of my ability and humbling results came from this joined effort.

 The focus of this research is therefore missiological. It contributes to the social transformation of a poor urban area through the raising of capacity within the church of skills that could help learners who

are struggling academically to get the right help and learn to the best of their ability and capacity. This means that an attempt is made to test-drive the role of the missional church in partnering with government and a particular community to be part of the solution in providing the best platform possible for children who are struggling academically for various reasons. The majority of the learners who are currently struggling academically will drop out of school in the near future. Nieman (2010: 37) reminds us that traditionally and historically, the missional church has "shown social and political will as part of its mission to do good by being involved in helping people who are poor" and marginalised. This mission has found expression in a wide range of operations and activities such as its involvement in matters of education. Hendricks (2010: 276) comes out clearly in his understanding of theology which is, according to him, "contextual and missional by its very nature and that it should be involved in addressing society's issues and problems" such as the current high rate of school dropout, in a holistic way. He also believes that the "church has a crucial role to play in, amongst other issues, providing an infrastructure for an African renaissance" of self-confidence and mutual support.

Jesus said that the doctor cares for the sick and not the healthy. This is a call for followers of his to learn to step into the role of a doctor in their witnessing to the world. The current government interventions to stop or minimise school dropout aren't working effectively. Jenson (2006:1-2) encourages the church in this kind of endeavour when he writes that "over the last century, a broad consensus has developed in theology and philosophy that human personhood is fundamentally constituted by its relationships". He sees sin as "the urge towards relationlessness and dissociation and the sinner, a person without relations". In this train of thought, the church would be sinning if it disassociates itself from problems such as the current rate of school dropout and just focus on saving souls. It would do injustice to its founder if it is self-centered and/or passive in the resolve of problems of those who are in danger of dropping out of school. It must be involved in social maladies and witness the legacy of its founder as good news and attend to the healing of the relations of those who struggle at school or have dropped out.

 Hirsch (2007:127) also argues along the same line in saying that the "bible tells us" that followers of Jesus are in the world, and there they must remain. They "have not been created in order to separate themselves from, or to live aloof from, the world" and its problems. When this separation is affected, it will be God own doing, not humans. "The Christian community must never be a closed body", but a body that involves itself in peace making and empowerment of the outcast, marginalised, burned out and poor.

This study intended to understand the issue of school dropout and propose some solutions to resolve it. It involved the body of Christ through some of its members who provided expert insight into the matter. This is a way of working together for the common good. Marius Oosthuizen (2016) challenges the whole South African society, including the body of Christ, that we should stop waiting for government alone "to take practical steps to address our social" maladies and issues. He stresses that "President Nelson Mandela in spite of his tremendous legacy of reconciliation has left South

Africans with a sense of helpless dependence on" government. We often hear "complaints about the lack of leadership and will in the country required to deal with our issues". We also "hear people complain about our inability to work together towards a common future. In those narratives, the 'other'" – be it government, African foreigners, apartheid beneficiaries, imperialists or our neighbour – "is always at fault. When we listen to government officials, they blame business. When we listen to business, they blame government. Increasingly, when we listen to communities, they blame government" and businesses. Our failures as a country are a shared responsibility. Government has failed the country by failing to create a society in which all its citizens have equal opportunities and its children receive equal quality education. Business has "failed the country by relying on small-scale corporate social investments instead of fully appreciating their role as an agent of transformation in our society. Communities, civil society and the labour movement in particular, failed our country by being either fractured, distracted, or driven by political and ideological agendas". The body of Christ has also failed the country by being passive or blaming other stakeholders in the education crisis South Africa faces.

The church could stand in the gap and give a helping hand to government through skilled members who could help diagnose the causes of not academically coping well so that each learner could be taught to the best of his/her ability. The significance of this research is therefore motivated from within the context of mission, emphasizing the role of the church as good news to its neighbourhood (Tshilenga 2005:2).

The ultimate result I hoped to achieve in this study was to lead the church and its members to fully live out Jeremiah 29: 7 in actively praying for peace in our neighbourhoods and work hard to make them prosperous. The more successful our neighbourhoods are, the better off we will be as individuals and families. This is what Linthicum (2003:38) calls a shalom community, an environment where socio-economic justice is available to all and community's problems and their resolve is a concern for all, starting from the church. This conviction leads to state the problem statements of this study.

1.3 Problem statements

 Several, yet connected, existing problems have motivated this study:
a. There is a very high percentage of school dropouts in poor urban communities of South Africa. Many of those who drop out of the school end up being involved in crime, and/or abusing drugs and alcohol at a very young age. Their behaviour makes them to become a nuisance and a headache to their families, community and society in general.
b. Currently many learners are struggling academically. There is a strong possibility they will drop out of school in the future. The problem could be with the learners themselves, or it can be that an alternative schooling model that suits their capacity and ability to learn is needed.

c. A sad reality is that schools located in poor urban areas are very under-resourced and lack qualified professionals who can diagnose learning problems and needs of pupils in order to orientate them to the right learning or schooling platform. This reality could healthily be handled if different role players, including the church, get involved in it.

d. Unfortunately, from my observation, the local church seems to expect government alone to resolve the issue of school dropout. Yet, I have noticed that within the local church, there are individuals who are learned and skilled to competently engage with community problems such as the current high rate of school dropout, but they don't do it because they do not see the use of their skills for the betterment of the community as their task and mission to witness to the world as Christians. The church could encourage its qualified congregants to step in this noticed gap as a way of being good news to its neighbourhood. However, it is not doing that. In my opinion, the church can't just watch families and communities being negatively affected by school dropout and expect solutions to come from someone else while it could be part of the solution. These skilled church members can be guided to be more effective in being good news through their daily work as well as in specific church outreach programmes in their community.

e. The church lacks a clear understanding of the role that the Christian message as such can play to solve the problem of school dropouts and improve the quality of life of school dropouts.

1.4 Research questions

This Kiswahili saying that is also attributed to Albert Einstein, inspired my main research question:" Everybody is a genius. However, if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid". In connecting this quote to school dropout, this study stresses that the problem is not with the children alone, it is primarily with what we expect from them. The present school system expects children to comply with modern Western criteria, because the system prepares them for the so-called modern global economy. However, some children are not wired to fit in this system. As a consequence, they drop out of the system and some of them end up being a headache to their communities and families through their involvement in crime, alcohol and substance abuses. The current public schooling system in poor South African communities, judges "the fish, mammals, reptiles and monkeys" by their ability to climb a tree. There is a need to create appropriate learning platforms for every learner. This endevour will require the collaboration of different stakeholders, including the church. Such collaboration could happen between community members or organisations and could minimise school dropout. The main question this study is posing is: what would be the role of the church in engaging a social malady such as school dropout with the intention of minimising it? Some sub-questions to help engage this matter deeply are:

What type of society do we want to become that the church could help shape through education? The global modern economy is open for severe criticism from a Christian perspective, and the church should not see it as the ideal for which we must prepare our children. I argue that children must be helped to fit into the educational system, and the educational system must be transformed to take us

towards a humane society that is accommodating and inclusive, not a consumer society. Therefore, it is important to pose this sub-question

What role should education play to prepare children who struggle to learn for this type of society we want to become?

These three questions will guide this research.

1.5 Aim

 The aim of this research is twofold:

Firstly, to present guidelines to the church and the family of the child to help resolve the problem of school dropout alongside the school the child attends, including ways to deal with the different elements that may have a negative effect on the learning of a child that usually leads to school dropout.

Secondly, to give guidelines to the church, to take the lead to promote grassroots community development and transformation, and to encourage members and communities to be the primary solution to their own communal issues, challenges and problems.

1.6 Assumptions

I embarked on this research endeavour with some assumptions that guided the study subdivision in chapters in a way that logically and comprehensively tested and evaluated these assumptions. Below are the latter:

1. A community has certain assets that enable it to proactively take good care of issues that challenge it.
2. A child's full potential to learn may be negatively affected because of various reasons: one of them maybe an unhealthy family environment, another one maybe an innate learning impairment, another one could be health conditions, another one could be bad learning environment and/or poor quality of teaching (education), and/or an inappropriate education model.
3. To equip families, schools and a community to better support children who struggle academically. The process of this could lead to an exploration of alternative education models together with alternative ministry models that could suit such children.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The framing of discussions and finding is explained using a praxis cycle. This section also discusses the research design and methods of this study.

1.7.1 Missiological or praxis cycle

In this research, I use an approach known as mission cycle or praxis matrix, which is a seven-dimensional step (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). This cycle was useful "to help mobilise a group of committed Christians to work together for transformation in their context" (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). It can also help to "explore the transformational praxis (theory and practice) of another person or group" (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). It could also be used as "an analytical framework to do research on the transformational attempts of others" (Kritzinger 2010). Kritzinger (quoted by Banza 2013:33) remarks that this "seven-dimensional matrix developed out of the three-dimensional See-Judge-Act approach, then into the classical four-dimensional pastoral circle of Insertion-Analysis-Reflection-Planning developed by Holland & Henriot (1992)" that became famously known as the pastoral cycle. It was finally developed into the seven-dimensional circle" this research uses (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). I used this praxis cycle to demonstrate how the missional church can step into being part of the solution in actively engaging children who are struggling to cope with the mainstream schooling system in urban poor areas and through that, live out what it means to be good news to a society. Below is the brain map of this cycle:
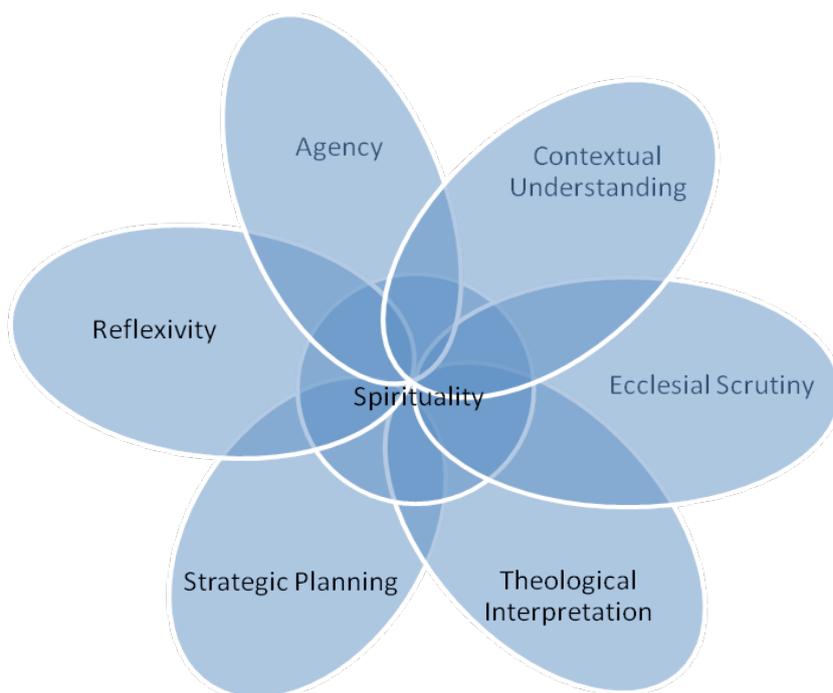
When using the missiological cycle as a research instrument, there is no fixed starting point; one can begin with any point of the matrix, as long as none of the dimensions is left out. The seven dimensions of this praxis cycle are "spirituality, agency, contextual understanding, ecclesial scrutiny, interpreting the tradition (theological interpretation), discernment for action (strategic planning) and

reflexivity" (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). Kritzinger & Saayman (2011:3-6) stress that "spirituality should be placed at the heart of the matrix because it distinguishes mission from other forms of transformative praxis or activism in society". Mission is inspired by a "spiritual motivation" that drives a certain agenda (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6).

It is necessary to indicate briefly what I mean by each dimension of the matrix:

Spirituality: In this section I asked if "the spirituality at the heart of a particular mission praxis such as this study can best be characterized as contemplative, sacramental, devotional, faith seeking understanding, pentecostal, deeds of justice, or as a combination of some of these" (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). The spirituality of this research was about deeds of justice.
Agency: Here I explored questions such as "who is the person or the community involved in mission? A group of community members were involved. The professional partners were interviewed and their opinions on school dropout were invaluable in taking action steps to solution seeking.

Contextual understanding: Here I explored how "the community of mission understands its context: the social, political, economic, cultural factors that influence the situation in which they live or work" (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). Opinions from different sciences confirmed the pertinence of this collaborative research.
Ecclesial scrutiny: Here I explored the community of mission assessment of its collective memory of the church. This remembering process served as the backbone to imagine a better future the church can help catalyse.
Interpreting the tradition: Here I explored "how the community of mission interprets the Scripture and the Christian tradition in its particular context? (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). This section was an action reflection process and its findings constitute the heart of this research.
Discernment for action: Here I explored "what kinds of methods, activities or projects my community of mission employs and designs in its attempt to erect signs of God's reign in its context" (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). Different disciplines of knowledge came together to explain causes of school dropout.
Reflexivity: Here I explored the "interplay between the different dimensions of this praxis cycle" I made use of (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3-6). The interplay showed how elements complimented one another leading up to the outcome of this research.

1.8 Research design

Nine team members were involved in this research: a social worker, a nurse, a psychologist, an inclusive learning educator and five tutors who were volunteers in our tutoring ministry. These nine fellows were all followers of Jesus who volunteered their time to serve children and families of children struggling academically in our community. These nine people were my co-researchers. Each of the five tutors was assigned four children to focus on. They tutored the children twice a week for

two hours a day. They tutored children from grade R to 4. Each tutor had four learners of the same grade. The focus of our tutoring was on reading and understanding what is read. We reported our assessment of the child's progress to the parents and guardians once a month.

I interviewed the professional co-researchers (chapter 5) in order to establish from their field of knowledge causes that could lead to a child's poor academic performance. Denzin & Lincoln (2000:633) define an interview as "a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening". I came up with a questionnaire that I gave to all the interviewees and I listened to them answering questions which equipped me to seek solutions and alternatives in the area of school dropout.

Nworgu (1991:94) brought in another insight which prepared me to better conduct interviews. According to him, "the interviewer must be skilled in asking the right questions and must know how to get the respondent to supply the needed information" in order for good results to be obtained. Questions must be properly formulated, clear and user friendly to the interlocutor. The use of interviews for academic research is increasingly popular. It has become one of the best pathways to generate "empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives and circumstances they experience or have experienced before" Holstein & Gubrium (2004:140-141). Interviews are viewed as "special forms of conversation, which vary from highly structured, standardized, quantitatively oriented survey interviews, to semiformal guided conversations, to free-flowing informational exchanges". One common factor of all interviews is that they are interactional (Holstein & Gubrium 2004:140-141).

For this study, I used structured interviews with a set of questions prepared in advance. I gave the questions to the interviewees a week ahead of time so that they can prepare themselves well to answer questions. These interviews helped me better understand causes that could explain a child poor academic performance. They also helped me formulate the framework of our partnership as co-researchers. The professional co-researchers were drawn in this study to help plan the study, to mentor our tutors and me when we had questions as well as in our interactions with the children's parents as we intended to build a healthy partnership that would help children to learn to the best of their ability. When one team member came across a learning problem within his/her group, the insights of parents and educators and the whole group of professional co-researchers were considered in the different discussions because I desired a holistic understanding of the problem and to find adequate solutions.

After interviewing professional volunteers, the next chapter (chapter 6) captures the data collected from our interactions with the parents/guardians of our children as well as the focus groups I held.

Greeff (2005: 299) states that a focus group is a "means of better understanding how people feel or think about an issue, product or service. Participants are brought together because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of discussion". According to Mandriz (2000:835),

most researchers use "two major techniques to collect qualitative data: participant observation and interviews". Focus groups or group interviews", she says, "possess elements of both techniques while maintaining their own uniqueness as a research method" (Mandriz 2000:835). The focus group technique is one of the best tools of listening to people and learning from them. Additionally, it boosts the confidence of participant who may "find one-on-one interactions scary or intimidating" (Mandriz 2000:835). It also create "a safe environment" for participants to freely share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same socio-economic, ethnic, and gender backgrounds" (Mandriz 2000:835). She (Mandriz 2000:835) alludes to "some studies that have been conducted on focus groups that show that group participants find the experience more gratifying and stimulating than interviews". This may be one of the reasons focus groups help with an easy collection of data (Nieuwenhuis 2008:90).

The data I collected was analysed following a content analysis in qualitative research, which according to Wilkinson and al. (2004:184) "need not employ a formal coding scheme, nor need be a precursor to any kind of quantification". Simply put, content analysis most basically "entails inspection of the data for recurrent instances of some kind, irrespective of the type of instance e.g. word, phrase, some larger units, also variously labeled (e.g. categories, organizing themes, interpretive repertoires)" (Wilkinson and al. 2004:184). The content analysis followed the steps that Krueger (2002: 1-16) and Clark (1992) advice to follow in conducting focus group interviews: good mental preparation, creating a warm and inviting environment for everyone involved, the use of appropriate language of communication, making pauses and probes when necessary, recording all conversations, attentiveness to both verbal and non-verbal conversations, and making sure to be on the same page with the audience.

I also took Krueger's (2002: 1-16) advice to ask open-ended questions to my audience and avoided by all means close-ended ones, which usually bring answers such as "yes" or "no" only. Also at the end of every focus group discussion, I made sure I captured all the data accurately. I read through my notes and played back the recorded conversations to my audience. I also took note of the tone and intensity of conversations to highlight important points of our discussions. Sometimes I picked up a shift in opinion during our discussions, I tried my best to diligently trace the genesis of the shift with the intention to determine the rational or emotion behind the change. In transcribing the data collected, I prioritised arguments that were specific and experiential over those that were vague and impersonal ones. Additionally, first person responses were more important than hypothetical third person ones. Finally in all the discussions, I intentionally stepped back in many instances so that I could allow major ideas, insights and points to emerge from the group itself.

Notification procedure:
- In consultation with the co-researchers, I set meeting times for group interviews.

Transcribing focus group interviews:

13

- The data to my computer from my recorder and notebook.
- Time and a particular venue were important factors. I work best in the early hours of the morning and use that time to type transcripts in my study room. This helped with the accurate transcribing of the data.
- The majority of the data is a paraphrase of the responses and insights of group members.
- Element such laughter, shouting and the like helped point me to important matters under discussion.
- The collected data was grouped in a hierarchy of meaning and importance (Mangayi 2016:37-39).

I had four focus group sessions:

The first group focus was made of our reading club tutors only and me. We met one month after kicking off our reading club. We had realised that all our children were struggling academically and we wanted to share our notes and observations, so that we could strategize our way forward.

The second focus group met after a quarter into our reading club, we met as a group of ten people: five tutors, four professional volunteers and me. The focus of our discussions was the evaluation of the first quarter of activities and strategise about the way forward.

The third focus group met at the end of the second quarter of our programme. We again met as a group of ten people: five tutors, four professional volunteers and me. The focus of our discussions was on evaluating the outcomes of our strategies of improving the reading literacy of our children.

The fourth focus group met at the end of the third quarter of our programme. We focused our discussions on the evaluation progress and on strategising about how to help four children of our group that were still struggling to read.

Toward the end of the school year, as a group of ten co-researchers, we gathered with the parents/guardians of our children. Out of the expected twenty parents/guardians, seven of them came. We reported our results to them and we gave some advices on ways we could partner to provide the best quality of life possible for children.

We measured the progress the children made by their ability to fluently read the assigned books of their grade or by how well they adjusted to a particular learning style we experimented based on the advice of our professional co-researchers.

This research grappled with what it means to address some human fundamental needs. It is inspired by the Nova institute Quality of Life Assessment (2015). The institute uses Max-Neef (1991) theory of human needs. This theory stresses that "the best development process will be that which allows the greatest improvement in people's quality of life". It goes on to say again that "quality of life depends

on the possibilities people have to adequately satisfy their fundamental human needs". The theory distinguishes between needs and satisfiers.

There are nine or ten fundamental human needs that all people always have:

Subsistence: to survive

Protection: to be safe from people and other elements that threaten us

Affection: the giving and receiving of love.

Understanding: this means to understand the world and other people and to be understood.

Participation: to take part in life's activities.

Idleness: to rest and to relax.

Creation: to do things through words and deeds.

Identity: to be someone

Freedom: to have the freedom to participate as somebody in life.

Transcendence: to exceed or surpass the usual experience.

For example, food and shelter are not needs, but satisfiers of the need people have for subsistence and protection. Also, education is only a satisfier of the need for understanding.

The importance of this way of thinking is that it helps us to see that fundamental human needs are universal. The poor and less educated, do not need more than the rich and educated, and one culture does not create more needs than another. In fact, it is not the needs of human beings that change over time, but our way of satisfying our needs. What are culturally determined are the satisfiers of our needs. All human beings need to give and receive survival, protection, love, understanding, participation, relaxation, creation, freedom and transcendence. How we satisfy these needs is different. Thus, fundamental human needs are considered as limited, only ten. However, the number of satisfiers is immeasurable.

The attempt to help every child to learn to the best of his/her ability seeks to address the fundamental human need of understanding. Whereas the involvement of community members with helping learners and their families in identifying the best way to grapple with their learning ability could be seen as addressing the human needs of protection, affection and participation.

How were the above-mentioned research techniques implemented? The methodology section explains that.

1.9 Research methods

This is case study research which made use of other methods to strengthen it. Case study research is situated within the broader domain of qualitative social science research. Case studies are "in-depth investigations of a single entity or a small number of entities. The entity may be individual, a family

group, an institution, a community or other social units. In a case study, researchers obtain a wealth of descriptive information and may examine relationships among different phenomena or may examine trends over time. Case study researchers attempt to analyse and understand issues that are important to the history, development, or circumstances of the entity under study. One way to think of a case study is to consider what is at centre stage" (Polit D.F. & Beck C.T. 2008:235).

The approach this research took, consisted of collecting and interpreting data. The latter led to a clear understanding of some causes that could explain why a child struggles to cope academically. These causes lead some of them to drop out of school. This study then did an action reflection experiment of what it means to be considerate of these causes. It did that in partnership with key stakeholders such as the school and the child's family. The causes and process of seeking solutions were communicated to the children's educators and parents/guardians. The end in mind was to see children who are academically struggling be given positive attention both at school and at home.

This study rested heavily on the emancipatory approach to research. Swartz (2011:48-49) points out that "emancipatory research put a major emphasis on empowerment, a participatory worldview and giving back". It "is an intentional ethics of reciprocation, in which research is both just and beneficial to participants and in which the researcher ensures that the people" involved or to whom the research is about know and understand their unique roles in missio Dei and undertake to fulfill those roles. "The purpose of such an ethics of reciprocation is to give back both ownership and tangible platforms" for neighbours to be good news to one another (Swartz 2011:48-49). My main hope in conducting this research is to contribute to the democratisation of mission, specifically the incarnational ministry among people living in poverty. My understanding of democracy is from its original meaning (dictionary.com), which is the rule of the people, with the people and by the people. My heart is to see ordinary residents of urban areas be local missionaries - good news agents - to their neighbours and the place they live in.

This study also has an autoethnographic aspect to it because it was partly motivated by the researcher's personal experience. Ellis, Adams & Bochner (2010) state that "autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience". According to them this methodology allows someone to use "tenets of autobiography and ethnography to" share a story or findings (Ellis; Adams & Bochner: 2010). In an autobiography, a writer usually reflects "retroactively and selectively about past experiences" (Ellis; Adams & Bochner: 2010). Often times, autoethnography authors "write about epiphany, which are remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted" their life timeline (Couser, 1997).

The transdisciplinary research methodology was also used in this study. It was discussed under section 1.2 above.

1.10 Literature review

I did an extensive reading of books, academic journals, seminar papers, newspapers, magazines and websites. My interaction with this body of knowledge helped to build and maintain an intellectual dialogue with experts in this area of my research interest. In that interaction, I did not come across any literature that discussed school dropout, using a transdisciplinary approach. Therefore, this thesis intends to explore a transdisciplinary approach in solution seeking to school dropout, as a way of contributing to the body of knowledge that is already available about the church being good news in tangible ways. This transdisciplinary study is what this study intends to do because it was identified as a research gap.

1.11 Research delimitation

The title of this study is "A missional approach to school dropout in a poor urban area of South Africa". Its main focus is on the role of the missional church in being actively part of the solution in social maladies such as the current high rate of school dropout, and also the lack of resources in schools located in poor urban areas which prevent many children to learn to the best of their abilities.

This study will only examine four key areas that can negatively affect a child to learn to the best of his/her ability: innate learning barriers, health, family environment and learning environment.

The learning applications of this study will only be done with grade R through grade 4 learners.

The study is conducted in the context of the township of Soshanguve as a sample of an urban poor area.

1.12 Content

Chapter one is the introduction, which attempts to capture the direction I am taking and provides a roadmap under which this research is designed. It underlines the central issue of concern and why I felt it was worthwhile to carry out this study (Kabongo 2015:12).

Chapter two: The type of society we want to become.
In this section, I will capture my learning and new understanding of the issue of school dropout as a member of the body of Christ, support it with the legacy of the church in bringing appropriate responses to problems throughout history (Ecclesial scrutiny).

Chapter three: Examination of causes behind struggles to scope at school and alarming facts about school dropout in my context?

Here I will explore the state of school dropout in South Africa, research findings of causes that can explain a child difficulty in coping well at school. Research findings in the area of science of education, psychology, social work, public health will serve as a resource. I will capture my observation and reflection on school dropout from the context of my life and ministry standpoint (Contextual understanding).

Chapter four: Consequences of school dropout according to different disciplines of knowledge.
Here I will do a literature study in order to bring together the interpretations and understanding of the problem of school dropout from different areas of knowledge points of view (Discernment for action).

Chapter five: Co-researchers interpretation and understanding of causes of school dropout
Here, I will capture the interviews done with the four research partners involved in this study (Agency).

Chapter six: Action – Reflection
This part will capture the learning accumulated in classrooms with learners and meetings with learners' parents and educators. I will then make an objective reflection of this learning in order to act again in a better and effective way (Theological interpretation).

Chapter seven: Spirituality of this research
 This section discusses the socio active discipleship through which the missional church can nurture followers of Jesus and community members as community development and transformation agents that seek to proactively be part of the solution to societal issues such as the current high percentage of school dropout (Spirituality).

Chapter eight: General conclusion
The conclusions of this study are made here. Findings and suggestions of a way forward in minimising school dropout are outlined here. Additionally, the interplay between the different components of the praxis cycle are captured through the chapter subdivisions of this study. This interplay led to the findings and recommendations of this research (Reflexivity).

CHAPTER II: THE TYPE OF SOCIETY WE WANT TO BECOME

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will capture learnings from literature study of the kind of society we want to become as the African society. Our African history of slavery, colonisation and apartheid will be a great resource to examine the disempowering and empowering roles of the church in history. I am reminded of my history teacher who always told me: "History reminds us of the past, so that we can be wise stewards of our present life and smartly envision our future". Lord Acton (quoted by Terreblanche 2003:3) stresses "that if the past has been an obstacle and a burden, knowledge of the past is the safest emancipation of" a better present and future. Colin Bundy (quoted by Terreblanche 2003:3) points out that a generation makes its own history shaped by a meaningful collective memory of the past. Therefore, in order to grasp the present conjecture and realities of Africa as a continent, recalling the collective memory of the church is key in our hope to build the kind of society we would like to become. As far as the missiological praxis is concerned, this is the ecclesial scrutiny in which the role of the church and education in undermining human dignity or in promoting an ideal society God would be proud of, is highlighted.

2.2 MY OWN STORY

I was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I moved to South Africa in 2002 as a refugee. I joined a missional community in Pretoria two years later. Through this missional community, we served different communities of poverty, including the township of Soshanguve. I met my wife in the latter. Together, we are raising our three children in that context and we lead a missional team that is involved in different community development projects.

My parents grew up during the Belgian colonisation of the D.R. Congo (1908 – 1960). My parents came to Christ from going to missionary schools. I also was privileged to go to missionary schools up until I graduated from high school. The vast majority of these missionaries were from Belgium. As I became an adult, there was a growing awareness and understanding in me that the Belgian colonisation of the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi used Christian missionaries as front-line employees of its enterprise. Terreblanche (2014:353) stresses that "it would not have been possible for the European countries to exercise indirect rule in their colonies without the support of missionary organisations". These organisations had the important task of pacifying indigenous Africans by proselytising them- either in protestant or catholic Christianity. In North Africa, in the Nile area and in Nigeria, in particular, the Christian missionaries' task was complicated by the influence of Islam. Missionary schools in those areas played an indispensable role in 'infusing the civilisation agenda and evangelism'. Generally, throughout Africa, although education was restricted to the elite – mainly the children of chiefs – missionary schools were important institutions in colonising Africa. Their task was not only to convert the children of the elite to Christianity, but also to inculcate loyalty towards their

colonial masters. The mission schools were therefore among the clearest manifestations of European cultural imperialism in Africa. Steve Biko (2007:159) once stressed this:

"A long look should also be taken at the educational system for blacks. The same tense situation was found as long ago as the arrival of the missionaries. Children were taught, under the pretext of hygiene, good manners and other such vague concepts, to despise their mode of upbringing at home and to question the values and customs of their society. Thus we can immediately see the logic of placing the missionaries in the forefront of their colonisation process. A man who succeeds in making a group of people accept a foreign concept in which he is expert makes them perpetual students whose progress in the particular field can only be evaluated by him; the student must constantly turn to him for guidance and promotion.

I now live and work in the township of Soshanguve where all our neighbours were on the receiving end of the system of apartheid (1948-1994), a structural system of injustice that was championed by some church leaders, which undermined the human dignity of many South Africans. The system of apartheid also infused its methods and philosophy into the Bantu education mentioned in the following chapter. Until today, many of my neighbours are still suffering from the ramifications of apartheid. While some part of the body of Christ supported apartheid, some other part played a pivotal role in exposing its evils and calling for a just society in South Africa. The latter role was prophetic, exemplary and inspirational to me as a servant of God. It challenges me to articulate an activist gospel that is good news to my community and society.

This inspiration is needed because the church located in poor areas such as Soshanguve seems to expect the government alone to correct the mistakes and injustices of the past such as the current discrepancies in the educational outcomes between the poor and non-poor South African child and the high rate of school dropout. Let's start with the disempowering role of the church in history.

2.3 THE DISEMPOWERING OF THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

2.3.1 The role of the church during slavery and colonisation

As a black African, the history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid shows how the church was complicit in being the devil's ally. Van Niekerk (2015) stresses that "up to the 1980's there was a close relation between the Dutch Reformed Church and National Party" that championed the system of apartheid when it governed South Africa. Schroeder (2008:67-68) states that one of the worst tragedies in human history was the creation of a massive trans-Atlantic slave trade. An estimated 24 million black Africans were taken from their homes into slavery over a 400-year period. Sadly, more than 12 millions of them may have died in the march and in the coastal holding cells/castles before being loaded on the ships for transportation overseas. Then came the colonial period which oppressed and dehumanised the indigenous people while dispossessing them of their land and

wealth. The colonisers worked hand in hand with the church. Bosch (1991:232) remarks that on closer inspection one might say that colonisation was the modern continuation of the crusades. "Although crusades failed, the crusade mentality persisted". In Europe, the colonisation of the non-Christian peoples by Christian nations predated the colonisation of Africa by many centuries. In those exploits, Christian nations conquered non-Christian societies. The latter embraced the Christian faith soon after and assimiled into the culture of the powerful. However, when "European Christians met people of African origin, who were physically, culturally and linguistically very different from them, they regarded them as inferior and imposed oppression on them" (Bosch 1991:232). In 1537 the pope authorised the opening of a slave market in Lisbon, where up to 12000 Africans were sold annually for transportation to the West Indies. Through slavery and colonisation, the church was an active agent of injustice and oppression.

Speaking in front of his fellow Christians of the 17th century, the French philosopher, le baron de Montesquieu (quoted by Seleone 2007:74) challenged his audience in saying: "It is not possible for us to think that slaves are human beings, because if we acknowledge that they are human beings then we must begin to suspect that we ourselves do not behave like Christians". The church should be ashamed of some of its legacy in places like Africa. It proclaimed a Jesus who is tolerant of slavery, colonialism, apartheid, corruption, murder and all kinds of other crimes. Looking at these historical facts, it is clear that the church does not always act in the best interest of the people it is called to serve and love.

2.3.2 Christianity as state religion

Terreblanche (2014:26) remarks that when Christianity became a state religion and the Roman Catholic Church became an imperial church, "Christianity had to sacrifice much of its original prophetic message, (for example: the message of compassion and forgiveness, of love for the poor and the weak, and the intention to create a just Christian society in an evil world)". During this era, power became a very important function of the church. The pope was one of the most powerful members of the empire and little time was given to the prophetic foundation Jesus built the church upon.

As the church enjoyed a good partnership with the states, Terreblanche (2014:347) stresses that in the two or three decades before the Berlin conference (1885), protestant missionaries in Britain and Germany, and Catholic missionary societies in Belgium and France pressurised their respective governments to embark on the formal colonisation of Africa so that they could be protected from the savage behaviours of Africans. These countries bought into this opinion and agreed to colonise Africa. They were aided by their existing maritime empires developed from the 16th century onwards which succeeded in introducing a capitalist economic system. In contrast, the black world in which 50% of the population lived in poverty, destitution and misery became victims of multiple empire building enterprises of European/Western countries over 500 years. If we compare these two different

cultures, it seems that everything that had to do with Europeans was regarded as desirable and positive, and everything connected to blacks was seen as negative and undesirable. Unfortunately, some historians and social scientists have been of the opinion that the goodness of the west and the badness of Africa should be ascribed, on the one hand, to the alleged superiority of Western people and to the superiority of the Christians religions, and on the other hand, to the inferiority of Africans and the inferiority of their religions. It should be considered that the spectacular development of the west vis-à-vis the pathetic underdevelopment of Africa could not have taken place without the west preying parasitically and relentlessly on the people and the resources of Africa (Terreblanche 2014:8).

There is evidence showing that some British missionaries often saw themselves as pioneers of legitimate trade, forging a link between Christianity and healthy commerce in the popular imagination; they would carry the 'three Cs' into Africa namely Commerce, Christianity and Civilisation that Livingstone had fixed firmly in the late Victorian imagination and it was subsequently argued that he believed that the Bible and the flag must go together if Britain's moral destiny in Africa was to be wholly fulfilled (Terreblanche 2014:348). When several British missionary expeditions arrived in Africa late in the nineteenth century, they were shocked when they were exposed to the allegedly dangerous behaviour of the Africans. The idea about Africans as backward people and of Africa as a backward continent became for several British missionary societies an issue that needed to be addressed in accordance with their Christian conscience. Consequently, they embarked on comprehensive missionary campaigns in Africa and approached these campaigns with such sincerity that they became comprehensive projects for Christian expansionism in Africa. Despite the original enthusiasm about the three Cs to Africa, within a decade or two they became completely disillusioned about the possibility of converting Africans to Christianity and of convincing them about the value of Western civilisation. It did not take long for the missionaries and business corporations operating in Africa to convince European governments about the alleged racial inferiority of Africans, and of the need to conquer and to colonise large parts of Africa to rescue the people from themselves. What started as Christian expansionism and a moral crusade in Africa early in the 19th century, metamorphosed during the late 19th century into aggressive European imperialism with the enthusiastic support of missionary organisations. The fact that British free- trade imperialism of the 19th century established informal trading interests in large parts of Africa made it easy for the missionary societies to convince the British government to become a formal empire-building country in Africa-especially when France, Germany and Belgium were starting to threaten informal British interests in Africa by their imperial endeavours (Terreblanche 2014:348-349).

From this developed common interest in Africa between the church and European countries; "colonialism and mission became interdependent: the right to have colonies carried with it the duty to Christianise the "colonised (Bosch 1991:232-233). Mission was understood as an exercise a particular denomination did of sending people outside of Europe to evangelise. The state was an institution which delegated its mission to subjugate nations to "secular powers and to a corps of specialists (priests or religious)" (Bosch 1991:232-233). "The missionary was irrevocably tied to an

institution in Europe, from which he/she derived the mandate and power to confer salvation on those who accept certain tenets of the faith" (Bosch 1991:233). Civil authorities had to approve any organizational initiatives the church came up with.

In South Africa, Terreblanche (2003:301) thinks that while religious considerations played a role in the British colonisers "belief that they were a divinely chosen people", these considerations were not as nearly as explicit as the claim of Afrikaners (supported by the Afrikaner churches) that "they were a divinely chosen people" with the task –prescribed by Providence- of promoting Christian civilisation and instilling high moral values into the members of all the other population groups. By over emphasising "the alleged injustices done to Afrikaners by British imperialism and exaggerating the dangers of black swamping" due to their numbers, "Afrikaner ideologues succeeded in creating a 'syndrome of victimisation'" – in other words, "the idea that the existence and interests of the Afrikaners were endangered by other population groups". In this way the "National Party succeeded in mobilising Afrikaner ethnic power by portraying Afrikaners as the wrongful victims of a double onslaught: the first was their exploitation 'from above' by British colonialism and foreign capitalism, and the second the danger 'from below' of Afrikaner culture being swamped by an 'uncivilised' African majority". The church played a key role in propagating this ideology.

Until today, in some quarters, the word mission presupposes the ambience of the west's colonisation of overseas countries or the display of western cultural imperialism with the Bible and theology as its tools. When the settlers arrived in the Cape of Good Hope, they were charged not only to subdue the indigenous population, but also to evangelise them (Bosch 1991:309-310). As a mobilisation inspiration towards doing missions, young men and women were challenged that their love of South Africa should be seen in their commitment to "active mission work, because mission work was (sic) not only God's work, it was (sic) also work for the sake of the nation". This is similar to a famous statement made by the founder of an organisation I once belonged to, the White fathers. When the French Cardinal Charles Lavigerie first sent out his White fathers to Africa, he reminded them: "We are working for France as well as for the Kingdom of God" (Bosch 1991:311).

During the apartheid era, the misuse of the Bible and Christianity for political means as an oppressive tool discouraged some Christians from their faith. Most victims of this situation were from the oppressed black majority. The damage caused by the situation as explained above, led to many theological questions and discomfort from the oppressed. Some of them revolved around the dilemma and doubts that the Christian religion was successfully used as oppressive machinery. They therefore distanced themselves from Christianity and became 'atheists' while some joined other religions (Masuku 2010). Lubbe (2009:131) stresses that "the close association which existed between the apartheid regime and the Christian church, albeit by and large with one particular denomination", brought the credibility of the Gospel message into question. The loser in this case proved to be not the state but the church, whose message of love, peace and justice became tarnished by an inhumane and sinful ideology that benefitted a minority and oppressed the majority of the population.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo also, colonial expansion had religious overtones and was intimately linked with mission! For the Belgian government, missionaries were indeed ideal allies and very reliable employees who stewarded and expanded the ideologies and philosophy of the empire. They lived among indigenous people, learned local dialects, and got to understand their customs. Who was better equipped than these mission workers to persuade unwilling natives to submit to the colonisers? And once the political authorities had awakened to their sacred duty regarding the uplift of the people entrusted to them, who could be the more reliable educators, health officers, or agricultural instructors than the dedicated missionary forces, provided government granted adequate subsidies? What better agents of the colonial cultural, political and economic influence could a western government hope to have than mission workers? Missionaries were pioneers of western imperialistic expansion in the Congo DR. Considering such sentiments it should come as no surprise that missionaries sometimes petitioned the government of their home country to extend its protectorate to areas where they, the missionaries, were working, often with the argument that unless this happened, a rival colonial power might annex the territory. Scottish missionaries did that in Malawi and German missionaries in Namibia (Bosch 1991:310-311).

2.3.3 The role of the church in producing a parasite African elite

Missionary schools during slavery and colonial eras helped produce an African elite which adhered to the imperialist philosophy and to this day, this elite is still unable to move Africa towards the ideal society it would like to become.

The main point I want to make in this section of my study is what follows. Slavery, colonialism and apartheid were perpetuated with the blessing of a few indigenous people who financially and socio economically benefitted from the oppression of their brothers and sisters. The church deeply contributed in forming and championing such an elite. We cannot understand the challenges of our time without understanding the ways in which 500 years of Western empire building, often with the complicity of the elites of Africa have shaped our world into a deeply unequal and gratuitously unjust place that it is today. Growing income inequality, environmental damage and increasingly higher financial-market risks have significantly impaired our ability to transform technological progress and wealth formation into a long-term sustainable developmental model. We cannot hope to remedy the brokenness of our modern economic system without understanding the economic, social, political drivers that have brought us here, and that continue to dictate the narrative of institutionalised poverty and globalised inequality (Terreblanche 2014:3). Africa is today the most impoverished and least developed continent in the world. It finds itself in this dismal position because of a multitude of violent, aggressive and destructive interventions by other continents over a period of at least 1000 years. Africa has also been the victim of Muslim and Christian slave trading that pillaged its human resources and instigated endemic slave wars, with devastating effects on Africa's socio-economic stability, its political viability and its cultural development. The internal conflicts and the endemic slave

wars between the manifold ethnic tribes in Africa were greatly augmented by the Scramble for Africa (1884-1885) and European colonisation from 1885 until 1960, which led to the artificial mapping and then decolonisation of Africa. As a result of this artificial mapping of Africa, the continent has at present 54 separate states. The populations of the different states do not belong to the same ethnic groups, but encompass a great variety of groupings that are often engaged in hostilities with one another. The African elite takes advantage of these hostilities to rule undemocratically and perpetuate the unfortunate deeds learned from colonisers and slave traders, of moving African wealth out of the continent. Yet many of these leaders claim to be followers of Jesus.

No continent has been seriously ravaged by as many foreign-instigated wars and by as many internal wars as Africa has. Apart from the endemic wars that were instigated by Muslim and Christian slave traders over a period of almost 1000 years, the following kind of wars can be identified in Africa since the period of independence: colonial wars, proxy wars, guerilla wars, coups d'etat, cross-border wars, private military wars, terrorism and religious wars (Terreblanche 2014:342-343). Many of the brains behind these wars claim to be Christians.

During the first pattern of Western empires, the European empire building countries needed large numbers of labourers to work in their mines and on their plantations in the Americas. After the Native Americans had died in their thousands, the empire building countries collected their labourers in Africa by entering into contractual arrangements with African states or kingdoms, mainly on the western seafront of Africa. African leaders gained resources through these slave trading contractual agreements (guns, metals, cloths and other goods with redistribution potential) by seizing someone else's human assets. The overseas outlet for captives gave an advantage to the most militarised of African states – Asante, Dahomy, Oyo, Benin – and produced more efficient slave trading mechanisms. Militarisation of some kingdoms put neighbours that did not follow suit in jeopardy (Terreblanche 2014:345). To this day slavery "remains embedded in the African psyche, sometimes expressed as anti-European" and "anti-Arab attitudes and feelings, and sometimes in what Jung" (quoted by Terreblanche 2014:346) called the "ethnic memory". Perhaps the most negative legacy of 450 years of Western trading and slave wars in Africa is that these wars destroyed the mutual trust between Africans. During the slave trade season, members of the same tribe often ran the risk of being turned over to traders by others who wanted to get rid of them. Consequently, Africa became an asocial and anti-social place where relationships between individuals became characterised by brutality and savagery (Terreblanche 2014:346). African chiefs and kings sold to slave traders unwanted subjects. Other kings intentionally were at war with other nations so that they could catch war prisoners and sell them to slave traders. Maathai (2009:26-27) remarks that some African natives, especially those in trouble with the local establishment, cooperated with the newcomers (slave traders and colonisers), sharing the community's secrets and lifestyle. In return for their generosity, these collaborators, (many of them outcasts) were elevated to the positions of chiefs, scouts, or church elders, positions that they would never have held in the traditional societies. This deliberate practice of manipulating, ignoring or misunderstanding the complex and subtle existing

leadership structures in favour of selecting leaders and imposing them on the population, was the cornerstone of the colonial administration. Although they were members of the community, such chiefs and their assistants were the de facto agents and information gatherers for the imperial powers. These local autocrats did everything they could to promote the oppressive, exploitative, and human rights violating authority of the colonial government and ruled their own people with greater cruelty than the colonisers themselves. In my own family, it is said that a village chief sold one of my great grandfathers to Arab slave traders because he was insubordinate.

Missionary societies have some praiseworthy records of their actions in Africa. However, it is entirely regrettable that lots of missionary societies labelled the African culture as savage and bloodthirsty when they arrived on the continent in the 19th century. They did not realise that what they encountered amongst indigenous peoples were not inherent characteristics, but were the direct consequence of the endemic slave wars that had been instigated over a period of 400 years in Africa by the actions of the European or Arab slave traders and few indigenous collaborators! What the missionaries quite evidently did not realise was that, the people of Africa did not need them to rescue them from the violence of their militarised kingdoms whose elite acted as collaborators with slave traders (Terreblanche 2014:349).

Thanks to the zeal of European missionaries and to the historical, political, and intellectual power of Europe, European theology is the most dominant theology in the world today. But the legacy of that theology is bittersweet. While many of these missionaries were courageous, faithful pioneers who brought the message of the gospel to foreign territories such as Africa at great personal sacrifice, often their theology and their actions separated love for God from love for neighbour. The result was that their theology accommodated the subjugation of black people through colonisation, slavery and other forms of domination, rather than repudiating it as unbiblical (Perkins 1993:40). What can the gospel then liberate black Africans from? Today's some followers of Jesus still ignore God's call to be a blessing to all nations. Jesus said that when he was lifted on the cross, all people would be drawn to Him. All believers are to be united at the foot of the cross, demonstrating the power of God to reconcile people across divisions. Today tribalism, xenophobia, racism and factionalism are ripping the seams of our African society. Violence and destruction of public infrastructure have become a common means of communication between masses and people in power. A local or national African elite encourages these disastrous actions with an agenda to access power at all cost. Some of this elite swears by the bible as their guiding toolkit. And sadly, the large part of the body of Christ, rather than seizing this opportunity to call out any evil actions, has withdrawn and given its tacit approval to violence and division. This is nothing less than blasphemy against the body of Christ; we have substituted racial and class separation for the reconciling love of God (Perkins 1993:48).

In the current postcolonial Africa, most of our leaders are African brothers and sisters. The change of personnel from white (colonial era) to black (postcolonial era) has not necessarily translated into the socio-economic betterment of the living conditions of black Africa. Meredith (2005: 683) points out that

"more than USD 500 billion of Western aid has been sunk into Africa, but with little discernible result". Van Niekerk (2015) reveals that "the funds have often been used to finance wasteful lifestyles and even the further oppression of those who are most vulnerable". The permanent socioeconomic drama of Africa and its causes are well known. The figures, facts, evidence and misdeeds are there. And the serious responsibility of Africans themselves for this stagnation is undeniable, yet we are still blaming the white colonialist for his misdeeds on our economy years after our independence. My own uncle was forcefully drowned in the lake Kivu in 1961 by fellow black Africans who happened to be his political opponents. He was the personal assistant of Patrice Emery Lumumba, the first prime minister of the independent D.R. Congo. He died a few months after Lumumba was assassinated in January 1961. Many people who care about the fate of Africa question why so many postcolonial African leaders treat their citizens so cruelly, and why after nearly half a century of independence so many African countries remain poor and dysfunctional (Maathai 2009:26). We all know that the clear majority of our black African leaders still bank, receive medical care, send their children to school outside their native countries, with the preferred places of choice being the west. The World Bank recently observed that the standard of living on the black continent is about the same as it was more than thirty years ago. The responsibility of us, black Africans, in this situation is enormous: lack of thought, laziness, a mendicant mentality, corruption, irrational interference by arbitrary political powers in the economic sphere, ill-conceived development plans-so many evils which crush people like a sordid and sinister fate. Penoukou (1991:44) stresses that it is time to call for all Africans to make a collective effort to change the situation in the name of their dignity and intelligence as human beings.

In South Africa some quarters of the population tend to solely blame apartheid for the current state of poverty in places like Soshanguve. The current corruption, nepotism and maladministration the country is bleeding from have very little to do with apartheid. Our education system (2015) is in crisis, especially with the poor-quality outcome coming from township and rural area schools. Very regularly, I see black teachers who are happier to just be at work than to work. There is some well investigated evidence of incompetent and corrupted school principals and teachers who are still holding their jobs because of their affiliation to a certain union or political party. Some school governing body members, school district officials and trade unions are involved in corrupted practices. This evidence has very little to do with apartheid, and so much to do with our greediness and self-centeredness as individual black persons. A direct outcome of these corrupt practices is that African children are still receiving poor quality education and are dropping out of school in big numbers.

2.3.3 What is the church currently guilty of?

About social matters such as education, the local church around the township of Soshanguve seems to be a passive observant (Kabongo 2015:8). The local church has been guilty of either being passive in expecting the government alone to resolve the problem or of taking a neutral position of neither blaming anyone for this crisis, nor acting to be part of the solution. It sees herself as under resourced and equally a victim of apartheid as the population it serves. It therefore sees itself primarily as a 'half

empty glass' that needs to be filled by other stakeholders such as government, affluent suburban churches or international organisations. This 'syndrome of victimisation' where people see themselves as victims of history, circumstances or an existing structure seems to be a common narrative in a place like the township of Soshanguve. This kind of mindset usually leads people to feel like they should be only beneficiaries of services. I believe that as the body of Christ, we should primarily be agents of ministry to the people God called us to serve. Desmond Tutu challenges the church to be an agent of change and transformation in being a role player in matters of justice. He said that:

"If you [the church] are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality" (Moshia 2006: front page).

Martin Luther King Junior (Engdahl & Krieg 2010:74) argues along the same line and stresses that the church must learn that to passively watch and accept an unjust system is "to cooperate with that system, and thereby to become a participant in evil". He concluded by saying that "the church and individuals in our generation must repent for the appalling silence and inaction it is guilty of, when it comes to matters of justice" (Kabongo 2015:60-61).

In urban communities such as Soshanguve and even the rest of Africa, Christian participation in the Missio Dei will become more credible if we as the body of Christ learn to honour the humanity of the other as Jesus did. If we identify and dismantle death-dealing structures that strangle Africa, we will make God's good news visible (Oduyoye 2001:52).

Therefore, as InnerCHANGE, we are learning to articulate a theology of place that could help our neighbours learn to oversee their community as agents of transformation. We go about this in helping our neighbours to get a love for God; a love for themselves, and a love for their community. We try to help our neighbours to get skills and education with the purpose of being good news to themselves and others around them. We then encourage them to bring those skills back to the community and be part of the transformation we desire to see in our community.

2.3.4 Conclusion

History teaches us that the church once worked in partnership with colonial powers. Together they oppressed Africans and treated them as sub humans. Colonisation disempowered Africans of their dignity and dispossessed them of their wealth and land. During that time, the church sacrificed a lot of its prophetic message to become the devil's ally.

During that era, mission was tightly connected to the spread of the Western culture in Africa. To this day, the Western culture seems to be more desirable than the indigenous African cultures by ordinary

people. The church, through its schools helped produce an African elite that ideologically served the colonial and imperialist powers than their fellow Africans. This conclusion is represented below:

Nowadays, the church located in South African poor urban communities such as Soshanguve does not play the devil's ally in colonising Africans. However, it is guilty of being passive when it comes to solution seeking is social issues affecting our communities. This opinion is represented below:
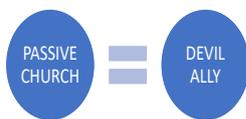
In spite of its many blunders throughout history, the church has a legacy that inspires because, it is good news.

2.4 CHURCH AS AN INSPIRATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORY

The church also has a good story to tell about being good news to the world. This good news has been humbly, yet consistently lived out by several followers of Jesus. This is why it is important to become familiar with the history of the church in order to learn about how well Jesus was proudly represented by his followers and then move into the future equipped and inspired to continue the legacy of fellow followers of Jesus (Schroeder 2008:66).

Schroeder (2008:15) remarks that in the Bible, Jesus operates as a transformation agent, the apostles followed in his footsteps as well as several servants of God throughout the history of the church. All followers of Jesus know that they are made in God's image, they are to reflect this self-giving love. Jesus showed us concretely what it means and some individual followers of Jesus inspirationally showed that to the world.

2.4.1 Inspirational individuals in history

2.4.1.1 Samuel Ajayi Crowther

In 1792, 1100 freed African slaves from Britain came from overseas to Freetown, Sierra Leone. They had preachers in their midst. Through them, Freetown became the center of mission to other Africans. Of all the preachers, Samuel Ajayi Crowther stood out. Although English was used in worship, Crowther introduced the use of his local language, Yoruba, among his own people in worship and he took the lead in translating the Bible. He was proud enough of his own culture and language that he spent a lot of time valorising it and preaching the Gospel in it (Schroeder 2008:76). This is an inspiration to people like me. Currently I can intellectually articulate my ideas better in French and English than in Kiswahili, my mother tongue. This is also true for many people from my generation and below. Crowther teaches me that following Jesus should inspire me to incarnate in my culture like Jesus incarnated in the Jewish culture and proclaimed an upside down kingdom from that standpoint.

2.4.1.2 Dorothy Day

History tells us that in 1932 Dorothy Day, an American activist, met a like-minded man, Peter Maurin, who encouraged her to start the workers' newspaper to address the social problem of the poor and working class. She founded the Catholic Worker movement. The latter established a house of hospitality for the homeless during the great depression and later for the most marginalised of her society (Schroeder 2008:84). She once said:

"What we would like to do is change the world--make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, of the destitute--the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words--we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing we can do but love, and, dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbour, to love our enemy as our friend (goodreads.com 2019)."

Schroeder (2008:84) points out that "in combining the practice of charity and the call to justice" through her movement, Day become an exemplary "type of holiness not easily domesticated, but perhaps of special relevance to our times". She used to say: "I have long since come to believe that people never mean half of what they say, and that it is best to disregard their talk and judge only their actions." (goodreads.com 2019. Through her life and deeds, she became "a living parable, focused on what she called the mystery of the poor". For her, the poor were Jesus, and what you do for them, you do to Jesus.

Inspired by Dorothy Day and other great people throughout history, some nuns living in Brasil decided to move out of their convent and live among the poor as ordinary neighbours in 1952. They considered Luke 4:18: The spirit of the Lord is upon me and has anointed me to preach good news to the poor", and exodus 3:9: "And now, behold the cry of the people of Israel has come to me". The

nuns wrote: "We are living in poor areas, in small simple houses like those of the poor. The house we live in is totally open to people. It is a centre of dialogue with the poor. The people have access to our house and participate in our life, meals and prayer. Prayer is fundamental for us. In this way of life we make a new experience of God. Formerly, in the convent, the experience of God was often centred around oneself – an experience of God who leads, loves and pardons one. In the midst of people we experience God as the God who is committed to the poor, a God of justice, a God who is present in the history of the people (Rodriguez 1991:217-218).

Through this experience the nuns also stated that:
1. They became more open to the world in its historical, social, political and economic dimensions; because there was a constant dialogue with the people in all dimensions of life.
2. They increasingly became aware of the presence of God in the world, in events, and in the poor; the incarnational and contemplative dimensions of their religious lives found synergy.
3. Their manner of seeing the world changed radically. Before they saw the world through the eyes of the rich. Through their incarnational presence, they saw it from the perspective of the oppressed. They were converted and evangelised by the poor. They learned to live out the values of solidarity, sharing and hospitality in real situations (Rodriguez 1991:219).

2.4.1.3 Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa was born in Albania and worked as a missionary in India teaching in a school. In 1946, she received a call from God to do something different- to shift from teaching mostly middle class children to being with the poorest of the poor. Her heart was moved by the sight of those left to die in street gutters. She established a home where they would be treated with human dignity as God's children in their final day of life. Other centers of service were eventually set up in India and around the world to care for the most destitute and unwanted. Mother Teresa expressed her vision in this way: "God has identified himself with the hungry, the sick, the naked and the homeless. His hunger was not for bread, but for love, for care and to be somebody to someone. Nakedness was not of clothing only, but nakedness of that compassion that very few people give to the unknown. Homelessness was not only just for a shelter made of stone, but that homelessness that comes from having no place to call your own" (Schroeder 2008:83).

 She encouraged people, especially followers of Jesus to do something beautiful for God. She is known for saying profound words such as: "Do not think that love in order to be genuine has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies." She always stressed that people put quality love in what they do (goodreads.com 2019).

For her: "to show great love of God and our neighbour we need not to do great things. It is how much love we put in the doing that makes our offering something beautiful for God" (Schroeder 2008:83).

What a better place for everyone to live in the world would have been if like mother Teresa, all the followers of Jesus put selfless and Christ like love in everything they did?

2.4.1.4 Beyers Naude

Masuku (2010) remarks that South Africa has seen followers of Jesus who stood up against injustice and oppression. One of those people is Beyers Naude, a minister whose denomination supported apartheid. One of his famous statements is:

"You can never be fully human unless you've discovered the humanity in other human beings. Don't close your eyes to the injustices of your own country by trying to solve the injustices of another country. That's an evasion of Christian responsibility" (Goodread.com 2019).

He uniquely communicated the Christian message to the victims of apartheid in such a way that while they doubted and rejected the Christian religion, they ultimately embraced it because he touched them through his ministry (Masuku 2010). The victims of apartheid were disillusioned by the Christian faith because of the way in which it was misused as a tool for oppression. Anthonissen (2006:146) stresses that Beyers Naude humbly and tangibly lived out his core understanding of the message of the Bible which was of grace, compassion and justice for all people. And per Naude, this message had to be faithfully and uncompromisingly proclaimed and practiced in an unjust society such as South Africa. It was exactly this understanding of the Bible and the life-changing choices it brought about that made Naude a renowned warrior for justice and the respected person he is today.

2.4.1.5 Desmond Tutu

Another renowned South African follower of Jesus who is been good news to our society is Desmond Tutu. The latter is a passionate activist of human rights and uses his high profile to campaign for the oppressed. He is known for making wise statements such as "do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world" (goodreads.com 2019). He has campaigned to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia. During the apartheid era, Tutu also criticised the violent tactics some of the anti-apartheid groups such as the African National Congress used. He denounced terrorist actions liberation movements did, to express their discontentment with the apartheid government. He also called out and disagreed with the dehumanising side of communism. He is generally credited with coining the term Rainbow Nation as a metaphor for post-apartheid South Africa after 1994 in which different cultures and backgrounds harmoniously live together and affirm each other's human dignity as God's creatures. This expression has since entered mainstream consciousness to describe South Africa's ethnic diversity. Since his retirement, Tutu has worked as a global activist on issues pertaining to democracy, freedom and human rights.

2.5.2 Inspirational acts by the institutional church

In South Africa, although the church compromised its allegiance to Jesus through its support to apartheid, it has also been good news to this country in many ways. Burger & Van Der Walt (2010:396-397) state that the church enjoys a "high level of public trust in South Africa". A study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council in 2009 showed that the Christian church was the institution that the public trusted the most. Seventy-four percent of the respondents trusted churches. The perception of trustworthiness provides the necessary credibility for churches to facilitate network formation and inside out transformation in poor areas such as Soshanguve (Kabongo 2015:64). I believe that the church as an institution has been a catalyst of community development in South Africa and could be a better catalyst of a meaningful way of living out the gospel in our communities.

Tutu (2004:60) thinks of the church as an active role player in the world on behalf of Christ, its head. He illustrates it in a very tangible way using a statue found in Rome. This statue has no arms. When one asks why, he/she is told that it shows how God relies on us, His church, to do His work for Him. The church is God's eyes, ears and arms in the world. God waits upon it and relies on it.

The importance and positive role of the church is affirmed by social theorists such as Comte, Durkheim and Sorokin (quoted by Burger & van der Walt 2010:396) who recognised the important role of religion in empowering communities plagued by poverty, fragmentation and strife such as Soshanguve. These social theorists all emphasised the unifying effect of religion as well as building solid infrastructures for movements that pursue ways to dignify all human beings.

In my research studies, I have been very encouraged to learn about how much the church has been good news to this world throughout history. In Latin America, for instance, during the colonial era, while the church collaborated with the official state, some missionaries did not agree and followed alternative ways of doing real mission. One of those people was Bartolome de Las Casas. He is known for speaking out strongly against the terrible treatment of the indigenous peoples. He strongly stood up for the human rights of the indigenous peoples. He is famously known as the defender of the Indians (Schroeder 2008:68-69).

Here in South Africa, I have also been inspired by several Christian institutional organisations. Let me talk about the closest to Soshanguve I know about.

2.5.2.1 Tshwane Leadership foundation
In South Africa in the year 1993, six inner city congregations joined hands to form an ecumenical trust, Pretoria Community Ministries, to be proactive and relevant to the changing nature of the inner city and related challenges. This organisation has grown into the current Tshwane Leadership Foundation that is a tangible example of how the church can be good news to the world.

Burger & van der Walt (2010:398) remark that the goal of this organisation is to use its broad network around the country and abroad to promote leadership and broker resources by offering economic and social support to the vulnerable and at-risk people living in the inner city of Pretoria. It also encourages, equips and assists other grassroots organisations at being effective good news initiatives in their contexts. In one of his reflections about the inner city of Pretoria which has changed to a predominantly black city, Stephan de Beer(2008:185), the founder of Tshwane Leadership Foundation, stressed that the citizens of the Inner city are often treated "as victims of racism and exploitation, without stressing their agency". Little attention is paid on their creativity and resilience which underpin their strategies of survival. He (de Beer 2008:185) encourages "the church to appreciate ordinary people's agency and an awareness of own assets, so when they relate to external partners they do so with a clear consciousness of who they are, who they want to become, and what they envision for themselves. In this way we can build partnerships that are mutually liberating".

Tshwane Leadership foundation is a role model for me because I believe that religious groups should become more involved in initiatives promoting the empowerment of the poor and social integration. The current enduring high levels of poverty, unemployment and social polarisation in South Africa makes the need for such efforts to be urgent and relevant. Therefore, a religious institution such as InnerCHANGE should create enabling environments to help people help themselves and become active agents of the future they hope for. Our challenge, though, is in becoming meaningful role players and gaining credibility among our neighbours so that together we can work towards a community we would like to see around us (Nieman 2010:42).

This ecumenical strategy taken by churches of Pretoria shows that the incarnation of Jesus was essentially a spatial strategy of transferring himself into the brokenness of our world and eventually dying in that space where robbers and lepers become builders of society. A Christian spatial praxis would deliberately seek to become present in our local church buildings and our ministers walking around wearing clerical collars, it will include participation in public meetings, in the struggles of daily living, in understanding those processes that shape our local urban fabric with the heart of seeing people become agents of issues they face (de Beer 2008:191). The margin is in fact the inclusive space where we recover ourselves as followers of Jesus and we move in solidarity to erase the category giver/receiver as we create a space of mutual solidarity (de Beer 2008:192).

 In our context of Soshanguve, too many local churches aren't engaging people in their needs and aspirations. Acts of mercy such as relief and community development are not priority matters of local churches. I believe that the church should learn to articulate an activist gospel that addresses the systemic issues and affects the country policies so that the world can be a better place to live in (de Beer 2008:182). A profound preoccupation with eternal life the local church seems to have as its main priority, should be rooted in concrete actions of engagement and solidarity with ordinary people. Perhaps, deep local engagement as well as eschatology is required and should be engaged in ways

that they can cross-fertilise each other (de Beer 2008:183). Tshwane Leadership Foundation efforts, shows what the church is capable of, as a prophetic witness, to the community: a shining lamp.

In our urban communities, we urgently need inspirational followers of Jesus and Christian organisations to help us articulate and implement an ecclesiology of responsible participation. However difficult it may be, it is time that we as members of the body of Christ increasingly take responsibility, area by area, for those projects which arise out of our essential needs and which are within our capabilities. Taking things in hand autonomously and responsibly, through local and even city wide solidarity among the churches, portrays a prophetic witness of liberation for the future.

Learning from established theologians such as Bevans and Schroeder (2009) who in their book *Constants in context,* distinguished between three types of mission:

- *Type A Theology* tends to emphasize that we have transgressed the law of God and that Jesus took our punishment on him – what is important is the saving of souls and the extending of the church.
- *Type B Theology*: mission helps people to discover the ultimate truth in Christ.
- *Type C Theology*: mission is a commitment to work for liberation and transformation within history and in life.

In principle, this research agrees with all these above-mentioned types. It stresses that our commitment to the liberation and transformation of our urban communities will help both the not yet believers as well as believers to tangibly discover the ultimate truth in Christ. As a result of that, more people will become obedient followers of Jesus and contextual expressions of the church will be birthed. Our missional team tries to capture this understanding in our efforts to catalyse a society our neighbours aspire to.

2.5.3 Conclusion

The church has an inspiring legacy as an agent of hope, peace and development throughout history. Through its prophetic message and its action, it has been a good news agent in society. This is represented below:

Fellow followers of Christ such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa, Beyers Naude, Desmond Tutu, through their prophetic actions, inspire the body of Christ to be involved in social issues in order to bring the good news of hope to communities.

- Samuel Ajayi Crowther, through his efforts of valorising his mother tongue, restored the identity and dignity of African people in an era where African languages were seen as primitive. A 'civilised African' was judged by his/her ability to speak a Western language.

- Dorothy Day as a woman, defied the gender prejudice of her time to proactively respond to need that was born out of the great depression.
- Desmond Tutu in his prophetic actions prioritized Christ over his cultural identity as a black person and his position of privilege as an Anglican bishop. He objectively critiqued both the apartheid government for being oppressive and the then liberation movement, the African National Congress, which sometimes used terrorist actions of destroying infrastructures and killing, to voice out its disapproval of the apartheid system.
- Mother Teresa went beyond the scope of practice (teaching in high schools) of her congregation to respond to God's calling to practically serve the poorest of the poor in India.
- Beyers Naude challenged his denomination for its support for the oppressive system of apartheid. He chose the unpopular, yet the Christlike way of contending for the oppressed black South Africans

Organisations such as the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, show how the body of Christ can unite to prophetically respond to the needs and questions arising in a context.

Based on this legacy, the church has the collective memory to spearhead and catalyse the building of a kingdom like society which will be good news to everyone who live in it.

2.5 THE CHURCH AS CATALYST OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY

Green & Haines (2012:10-13) teach us that in trying to emulate the heart of Jesus for the world, some churches and faith communities have postured themselves as active agents of development and transformation of their community. They are missional and outward focused. They try to always be on the lookout for community assets as a way to identify strengths and resources that can contribute to its development and transformation. This way of being church highlights two biblical truths:
1) Jesus was very intentional about calling people to see value where it was traditionally ignored.
2) Community development in the early church, gave rise to natural solutions through the engagement of its members (Kabongo 2015:61).

Looking at the day-to-day realities of a poor community such as Soshanguve, our missional team, InnerCHANGE, has always been inspired by David Bosch's (1991:xv) understanding of mission. He stresses that mission is that "dimension of our faith that refuses to accept reality as it is, and aims at changing it". Transformation is therefore, a word that depicts an essential feature of what Christian mission is all about.

This understanding of mission is not only valuable for the health and life of the church. It also speaks into the core Christian values found first in the life and teachings of Jesus and the early church. As InnerCHANGE, we are learning to grapple with the full understanding of this through Mark 2:17 which states that Jesus was primarily preoccupied by the marginalised (the sick) than the elite (healthy people)

As a team, we are not doctors ministering to the sick, but we are primarily workers, looking for doctors from within our contexts to take care of their neighbours who are sick. We are firm believers of this Chinese poem:

"Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have
But of the best leaders
When their work is finished
Their task is done
The people will remark
We have done it ourselves" (John Perkins quoted in Hayes 2006:11).

The church has a key role to play in order to help people, especially the poor and marginalised, do things for and by themselves. It should give some serious thought to a comprehensive community development plan that enables people to be agents of the building of their neighbourhoods. The psychological and socio-economic development that flows from that process would reward individual initiative. It will also cause people to look inward for solutions instead of a heavy reliance on government and international organisations to solve their problems (Perkins 2003:11). In this inward seeking for solutions, the church could be a catalyst for a healthy environment as well as of a kingdom like alternative community.

2.5.1. About a healthy environment

In places like Soshanguve where ordinary community members seem to be the primary polluters of their environment, the church could creatively look for solutions from within the population. In reflecting on the current challenges of environmental sustainability and climate change, the South African council of churches stressed that we need a change of heart and mind in order to transform "our society towards a sustainable economy and a sustainable lifestyle" (Declaration SACC 2009: x, 41). An unhealthy environment has a negative effect on the quality of life of people. In a polluted environment, for instance, people's health isn't good. The health conditions negatively affect their ability to work, raise families or go to school. Bad health also means an over reliance on public health. Since our South African public health is dysfunctional, the poor (the majority of our neighbours) don't always get help when they need it. A sick population is unable to efficiently contribute to the economy of a country. The church could play the role of educating communities about creation care. This is a kingdom like effort.

2.5.2 About a kingdom like community

Van Niekerk (2015:5) points out that "the church must be involved in matters of the community" and help search for inside out answers to issues. The process of this search would move people towards a society where justice, fairness, mutual love and mutual care will prevail. As a research team, we have been figuring out the best way to involve ourselves in matters of the community and wherever we get an opportunity, we challenge the local church to also do so. We have observed that local churches around us are primarily inward focused. We have been exploring what it means to move the local church beyond its walls so that it can be missional in being involved in community transformation. On our journey, we have been encouraged by Perkins (2003:12) who stated "that God has always depended on His people to step onto the battlefield, to assume responsibility and to take the lead in order to make His love visible to the whole world". We have been training our neighbours in community development and transformation in using the bible as one of our main tools in our toolkit. Two biblical passages have been the cornerstone of our teaching:

First, John 6:1-13, which talks about Jesus feeding thousands of people. He did that with five small barley loaves and two small fish. Inspired by this passage, we teach our neighbours that everyone has something to share. Jesus invites us to avail our talents, skills and even possessions to share with others, especially those in need. In the above-mentioned passage, Jesus fed thousands of people from five breads and two fish (enough food for just one person). Jesus used what this young man had to feed a multitude of people. He is also inviting us to share the little we have and He is able to see to it that the needs of those we serve are met.

Second, we use Nehemiah 2:17-18. It talks about Nehemiah inviting his fellow country men and women to come together and build the ruined walls of Jerusalem. Similarly, as a research team, we have the heart to develop and transform our contexts of life and ministry, but we can't do it alone. We need help from other people and institutions, starting from our neighbours so that we can build healthy partnerships that would bring about inside out development and transformation. We see our

neighbours as those who will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations of our community. They are capable of repairing the broken walls and restore our streets with dwellings (Isaiah 58:12).

Here again, history, through it painful landmarks, remind us how the walls of identify and culture were broken by powerful systems such as colonialism. In reflecting on the state of his community, Thabo Malesa, one of our neighbour co-labours, captured his thought through a poem. He titled it "Broken Township":

"It seems that there are few angels left in this township,

Just birds that have been told that their wings are not strong enough

To lift them above the land on which they stand.

It seems ninety percent of the stars on this side of town have fallen

And the other ten seem displaced.

It seems the sun has lost its shine

It no longer believes that it too is a star

That it belongs in the sky and it can be looked up to too.

 My township is despair.

It is a hopelessness that can be smelled.

The grass is slowly wilting

And it, along with the garbage in our streets gets suspended in air from time to time.

It's all flying to faraway places.

It seems everything is looking for a way out of this place.

 My township is a beautiful art gallery

It's full of family portraits…all missing a frame and a father figure.

My township is a concert featuring pregnant teenage dancers

And they dance off rhythm to the footsteps of boys

Who were trained to run away from the responsibility of fatherhood.

My township is an abused city girl

She has eyes that are bruised like rotten fruit

And extension cord cuts on her back.

She tries to hide it, so she wears make up

But if you look closely, you will see all the cracks in her foundation.

She is broken inside.

Her neck is always right next to mine and she tells me that she is tired of being ugly

She says she's tired of the disgraceful stares

And the constant mouthful touts she endures.

Her happiness is trapped in the basement of her self-esteem

And her pride is indigent

She drowns herself in alcohol and drugs hoping to ease her pain but that never helps.

She has crime stamped on her back

And she walks around with broken handcuffs still dangling on her wrists.

But you see, despite her flaws…

Despite our differences, she's still mine and I know that in time

She will come alright and she will thank me for not giving up on her

For loving her unconditionally from the day my feet stepped on her belly

For wiping off all of her sweat, along with the tears that were running down her neck.

I often grab her by the handcuff on her left wrist and tell her that no one escapes history

That every city in the world has her own scars and hers are not any special

I hugged her and whispered "*I love you*" in her ear

She smiled and her hope seemed all the more revived

And I thought to myself "*perhaps her scars would not have been so deep if she was truly loved by those who possess her*" (horrockshappenings.wordpress.com 2016).

I echo Thabo's words because mutual support is a key pathway toward building the kind of society we would like to become. A missional team such as InnerCHANGE should lend to the government a helping hand to make South Africa a better place for all who live in it. We know that it is our current government goal to get to such a society. However, it has been so far unable to fully eradicate the legacy of colonialism, segregation and apartheid, but it has instead introduced several laws aimed at laying the foundations for a non-racial society. While the government should be commended for this effort, it will not be possible to create a rainbow nation if there is a vast wealth disparity in the population as it is now (Terreblanche 2003:45). The body of Christ has a major role to play in helping the poor cross the bridge of inequality, empower people to become inter dependent in their answering of their prayers.

We know that as part of the body of Christ, our task includes a sacrificial ministry to people in need such as the ones our above-mentioned co-labour, is alluding to. While some fellow followers of Jesus find little or no place for social action in the church's mandate, others are not so quick to reject service as a legitimate part of community outreach, acknowledging that hungry people cannot listen to sermons or homilies. They view social action as a bona fide preparation for evangelism or even a manifestation of evangelism. This emphasis, however, remains on proclamation as the focus of the

church's outreach ministry. Others elevate social action to the same plane as proclamation, arguing that the two activities should be carried on simultaneously. John Stott (quoted by Grenz 1994:506), for example, argues that social involvement is a partner of evangelism for the two belong to each other and yet are independent of each other. Much of the Christian missionary work has reflected the idea that concern for the needy is partner with verbal evangelism. In keeping with this belief, missions often encompass medicine, education, and proclamation (Grenz 1994:506-507).

Grenz (1994:507) stresses that the "involvement of the church in social action is crucial regardless of its relationship to evangelism". According to him, "it is a natural extension of Jesus' own ministry as entrusted to us" (Grenz 1994:507). Hence, in embarking on a ministry of service such as education, the church is simply continuing the mission of Jesus himself. "Our lord Jesus did not describe his task as proclamation in isolation but as proclamation in the context of service" (Grenz 1994:507). He applied to himself the words of the great prophet Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19). True to His word, Jesus engaged in service to the people in need: "the sick, the outcasts, the demon possessed, the sinful, and the sinned against found in him a friend and healer" (Grenz 1994:507). Jesus "demonstrates the presence of the kingdom of God through his act of compassion and care" (Grenz 1994:507). He commissioned his disciples to go ahead and emulate these actions and even do greater things, "prior to his death" (Grenz 1994:507). For our missional team, social activities such as education are an opportunity not only to transform our neighbourhood from the inside out, but also to make disciples of Jesus.

Corbett & Fikkert (2009:41) go further is stating that "when people look at the church, they should see Jesus' embodiment". It is our responsibility as the church to point people to Jesus in ways that make sense to them. Boesak (1988:37) challenges the church to preach something that is "meant for the whole human existence, not something meant for the inner life, the soul, the spirit only". The Jesus we proclaim in the church was certainly not a spiritual being with spiritual qualities estranged from the realities of our human existence. One of the leading role models in approaching people in their full humanity is the Centre for Sustainable Communities at the Faculty of Theology of the university of Pretoria (2015). Its motto is "life-giving theology". It seeks "to understand and promote the type of relationships – to God, to people, to nature – that would make it sustainable, whole, humane, just – in a realistic and not a utopian way" (van Niekerk 2015:3). It promotes "grassroots community projects where community members are involved in leadership and decision-making" as agents of change (van Niekerk 2015:3).

Terreblanche (2003:3) reminds us that "the postcolonial Africa as well as the South African political transition of 1994 has not yet liberated Africans from the chains of extended colonialism and oppression". As a continent, we heavily relied on the promises of better living conditions from our politicians. Those promises have hardly come to pass. This state of affairs should be a wakeup call

that should stir up a mass involvement in the building of the society we aspire to. Therefore, it is important to learn from the flaws and blessings of the church in history so that slavery, colonialism, apartheid and the current under development of the post-colonial Africa could be used as resources for action towards a better society. But right now this song of the Ivorian reggae singer, Alpha Blondy, speaks about the reality of life South African urban communities and many other places in Africa, experience. The song says:

"Ça me fait si mal (It pains me a lot)
Ça me fait beaucoup pleurer (It makes me cry a lot)
Ça me fait si mal (It pains me a lot)

Mon coeur a toujours saigné (My heart always bleeds)

Quand je pense qu'aujourd'hui (When I think that today)
En Afrique on se détruit (we destroy ourselves in Africa)
Tandis que les puissances rient (The world super powers are making fun of us)
Elles aiment nous voir désunis Oh !! (They like to see us in disunity)

Ça me fait si mal (It pains me a lot)
Ça me fait beaucoup pleurer (It makes me cry a lot)
Ça me fait si mal (It pains me a lot)
L'Afrique doit se réveiller (Africa should get a wakeup call)

Ecartons les fauteurs de trouble (Let's get rid of trouble makers)
Et ces barrières qui nous entourent (And barriers that surround us)
Faisons taire un peu les canons (Let's stop shooting each other)
S'entretuer n'est pas la solution (Killing each other is never a solution)

Ça me fait si mal (It pains me a lot)
Ça me fait beaucoup pleurer (It makes me cry a lot)
Ça me fait si mal (It pains me a lot)
Mes frères doivent se réveiller (my brothers and sisters must get a wakeup call)

Les foyers de tensions se multiplient !! (areas of conflicts are on the increase)
Les orphelins se multiplient (Orphanages are on the increase)
Les armes se multiplient (Weapons are on the increase)
Les guerres s'amplifient (war zones are getting worse)
Les morts se multiplient (Death toll is on the increase)
Et nos pleurs s'amplifient (Cries are worsening)
Nos dettes se multiplient (Debts are worsening)

Notre misère s'amplifie (Poverty is on the increase)

Les réfugiés se multiplient (Refugees are increasing

Et notre désespoir s'amplifie (And our despair is very pronounced)

Ça me fait si mal (It pains me a lot)

 Songs like these give an insight into the heart breaking experiences of many people in Africa. What it laments about is so true in many African countries. This is why, through this research our team is undertaking, we intend to be the change we wish to see in the world (Maathai 2009:3). I would like to make sure that we are a blessing to my motherland, Africa, in tangibly working towards community transformation and development instead of expecting politicians, government and the west to be the solution to our problems. We believe that we have got five breads and two fish to feed my neighbours. We know this is not enough to satisfy the hunger of everyone. Yet, we have faith that our lord Jesus will use our bread and fish to feed all our neighbours to satisfaction. We have learned that changes of attitudes on social transformation will happen only if we can open our minds and hearts through lifelong education. This transformation should start within ourselves first. It will then enable us to positively influence the communities we live in, in order to bring about "tolerance, respect, and appreciation" (Terreblanche 2003:443). In places like Soshanguve and even throughout the continent of Africa, the church could portray the ideal society we would like to live in by being an active reconciler. In this study, the research partners are who will use their expertise alongside our missional team to attempt to minimise school dropout. One of the intentions is to help reconcile these neighbours to others in need of their help and skill so that together we could help reconcile some of the outcast neighbours, school dropout, to their community as well as the demands of the nation's economy. The church could be a reconciler of different backgrounds, narrative and ways of seeing things.

2.5.3 The church as a reconciler

Donavan (2005:37-38) shares a story of his outreach ministries in Tanzania that depicts a familiar problem of distrust and lack of reconciliation in Africa. He said that one time after he had finished a year of instructions in one Tanzanian village, a lady resident of the village said to him that she understood what the gospel message said to them. She understood that Donavan wanted the people of her village to love the people of Kisangiro. "Why must we do that?", she wondered. Kisangiro happened to be the next village, three miles away. The people of that village were of the same tribe as the people of this woman's village, but of a different clan. Being people who existed beyond the boundaries of the clan, they qualified for her as being "those dark, evil people out there." Donavan reflect on this scenario in saying that this lady's difficulty lay in extending the obligation of love towards people of another clan who lived three miles down the road. That was a giant step for her and a testing point for Christianity. Can you imagine speaking to this lady about nation building, or about joining in a common endeavour to establish a school or medical centre for villages? If someone does

44

not help that village lady, and millions like her, through that first step, across that impassable chasm, if she and they do not come to believe in God above all the tribes and clans, and in a sacred world of unlimited possibilities and expectant hope, there will be no nation building and no human development. The burning hatred, hostility, and prejudice of one race, or ethnic group, or tribe, or clan toward another is a very potent force that has torn apart South Africa and other African countries (Donavan 2005:40).

Seleone (2007:75) challenges the body of Christ to learn from a freedom activist such as Steve Biko who envisaged a society in which we might all be brothers and sisters living in solidarity with one another. Another way of stating this would be to say that Biko hoped that somewhere in the distant horizon we might overcome hatred towards one another and live in peace, harmony and security. It does not matter in the final analysis how successful we are in other respects. If we continue to butcher one another in the manner that we do, South Africa's face will carry ugly scars that can never be reconciled with the society Biko lived and died to achieve. I can still hear Biko's voice from the distant horizon whenever an injustice is committed against a fellow human being: in time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible – a more humane face. Biko's voice is heard loudly when black people commit injustice, which is not only a betrayal of a principle Biko lived by and died for, but also a sad reminder of the long journey we still have to travel.

 If the church were to authentically demonstrate the gospel, the dominant narrative of consumerism and survival of the fittest our society has will be reversed. Because one way the Christian life style is called to contradict the world is in our love for the marginalised. Upward mobility is society's rule for success, and even those who grew up in townships get as far away as they can from the poor and marginalised. Therefore, there is lots of brain drain from townships to the city and suburban areas. Nonetheless, because of God's special concern for people living on the margins of society, the church's closeness to them is a reliable test of our authenticity. Jesus not only lived and moved to the margins of society, but at a crucial time in his ministry he pointed his love for the marginalised as the proof of his lordship (Perkins 1993:64). As the body of Christ, we often face a crisis in terms of the gospel we preach because we have not authenticated ourselves in the world around us (Perkins 1993:71). The church should be bothered that it is not perceived and experienced as the salt and light of urban communities such as Soshanguve. "The Christian faith is intrinsically incarnational; therefore, unless the church chooses to remain a foreign entity, it will always enter into the context" in which it happens to find itself and be an ambassador God is proud of because it will actively be working towards a hopeful and just society (Hirsch 2007:127). Castellanos (2015:8) believes that "incarnation is the foundation for all effective ministry". When Christians live in close proximity with the marginalised, they follow the example of Jesus himself. The gospel narratives clearly show Jesus surrounding himself with and favouring sinners, publicans, the sick lepers, Samaritans, pagans and women throughout his life. This is accepted as a basic characteristic of his praxis. The usual conclusion drawn from it is –correctly- that if even these people were favoured by Jesus- which means that God's love for them is made plain- then all human beings possess the dignity of children

of God and all human beings are truly brothers and sisters (Sobrino 1987:140).

The church should prioritise reconciling the poor to God and to the rest of the world. Sobrino (1987:142-143) stresses that those for whom the" kingdom is destined are those who are most deprived of life at its basic levels". In the biblical passage where Jesus replies to the envoys of John the Baptist, the poor here are the blind, the lame, the deaf, and so on, lies a fundamental message of Jesus to the world. An interpretation of this passage is that, according to the thinking of that time, the situation of such men and women was no longer worth calling life: in effect, they were dead. The good news is then the bringing of life to those who have been denied it and deprived of it in the secular sphere. Such is the condition of the poor in our current world. Jesus himself lived a simple life out of solidarity with the poor. The persecution he underwent can be understood in a personalistic sense in view of the attacks he made on various social groups, but it will not be understood in depth without appreciating the element of defense of the poor contained in these attacks. The five controversies in Mark 2:1-3, are based on a defense of the sick, sinners, and the hungry. When Jesus unmasked the hypocrisy of the Pharisees it was to show them not to avoid our duty to parents in need (Mark 7:1-13). His impoverishment stems from something much deeper than asceticism. It stems from a voluntary solidarity with the poor and outcast. The requirements Jesus laid on others show that same movement in the direction of basic impoverishment: the call to follow him to carry out a mission in poverty, to leave home and family, to take up the cross; these are not arbitrary requirements that he could just as well not have imposed, or in whose place he could just as well have imposed others. They are requirements in the direct line of impoverishment. The beatitudes show the same approach, from a different angle: the poor in material things are called to appreciate their poverty and live it as poverty in spirit, thereby participating actively in the movement of impoverishment. This active process of impoverishment that Jesus practiced in his life is simply the historical version of what was later theologised as his transcendent impoverishment: the incarnation. This transcendent impoverishment took historical form through the assumption of solidarity with the poor and outcast (Sobrino 1987:145-146).

Linthicum (1991:105) stresses that as an institution that "names its lord as the prince of peace", the church should fully participate in confronting, resisting the systems that discriminate against other human beings. This is how God says that it means to worship him:

"I'll tell you
what it really means
    to worship the Lord.
Remove the chains of prisoners
    who are chained unjustly.
Free those who are abused!
 Share your food with everyone
    who is hungry;
share your home

with the poor and homeless.
Give clothes to those in need;
don't turn away your relatives". (Isaiah 58:6-7 CEV)

The church should worship God in catalysing holistic healing in the society. Like Jesus said in Mark 2:15-17, the church should give a preferential attention to the marginalised like children and school dropouts. It should take them from the margins to the centre in caring for them in meaningful ways. Jesus did so; and the church as a fellowship of followers of Jesus should also do so. For instance, Jesus paid attention to people who lived on the margins of society such as fishermen. He brought them to the centre of his ministry and developed them into fishers of humans as we see in Mark 1:16-20. The holistic healing the church goes after takes into consideration the person, things that would improve his/her life and the environment he/she lives in. School dropout are marginalised and need to be reconciled with the other members of the community. Their gifting and talents are unused or underused in the society that they can't make a good and meaningful living, economically speaking; they are some of the poor of our communities. As a means of survival, some of them hurt the community they are meant to be reconciled to and help build.

In our society, school dropout is the gateway to poverty. Myers (1999) sees poverty as a result of "relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable". It is the absence of shalom in all its meanings. One of the roles of the church is to build shalom communities. Linthicum (2003:40) stresses that we as the church should focus on working for the realisation of " the shalom community in our political, economic and religious life together. That mission will entail proclaiming the vision and doing whatever we can to move this world toward becoming the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. This is the essence of what we, as followers of Jesus, are about: to create a community of shalom that benefits everyone.

Being inspired by Christ himself, Newbigin (1969:48-49) points out that it is inherent in the "nature of the Gospel to be concerned about the secular" issues of the world such as school dropout in order to bring shalom. According to him, the gospel in its original form is the announcement of an event which is decisive for all human beings and the whole of their life. This is why the church cannot limit herself to the religious sphere only. Its relevance for our time must be demonstrated by its ability to be good news to the world in being an instrument of hope, piece, community development and a catalyst of the social emancipation of the poor.

The church also has the role to display the legacy of Jesus to the world, in such a way that none followers of Jesus could be inspired by that legacy. Such was Gandhi. Philip Yancey (quoted by Attie van Niekerk, 2015) comments that although "Gandhi never accepted the claims of Christian theology, he based his life philosophy on principles learned from Jesus". Through Gandhi and his legacy, we saw that besides founding a church, Jesus set loose a stream of moral authority that releases captives,

liberates the oppressed and undermines a violent, competitive world. Gandhi, a Hindu, put into practice Jesus' principles of reconciliation, humility and vicarious sacrifice which revolutionised liberation movements in the world.

The church also has the role to convert followers of Jesus into a lifestyle that has integrity with their faith. The book of James stresses that faith without action is meaningless (James 2:14). Newbigin (1969: 93, 96) rightly points out that in the bible, conversion is always alluded to in the context of concrete actions such as what this study underwent. It also involves membership in a community and a decision to act in certain ways. Van Niekerk (2015) thinks that when the church becomes a converted active role player in the community or society, it should plan very carefully and utilise its best resources to inspire the world and to aspire to the kind of society people want to become. Inspired by the philosopher, the famous AN Whitehead who described religion and science as the two strongest general forces which influence human beings, van Niekerk (2015) believes that theology is in a position to work in partnership with science in order to stir communities towards a better quality of life. Such has been the approach this research took in bringing together different sciences in order to minimise school dropout. The church, in its practical and essential aspiration, is an organization that concerns itself with improving the quality of life of all human beings.

If the church were to be a relevant testimony of the message and mission of Jesus in vulnerable neighbourhoods, it must expand its current paradigm of gospel-centred ministry. This will entail making certain that it puts the millions of people surviving on the margins of society at the centre of its concern. In fact, the margins are at the centre of God's concern (Castellanos 2014:17). Therefore, the church should champion contextual gospel movements.

2.5.4 The church as a promoter of inclusive gospel movements

One of Jesus' main missions on earth was to start a movement of followers of his that will boldly proclaim the good news of the gospel, visibly live it out and followers of Jesus will multiply thus. Metcalf (2015:20) acknowledges that and adds that Christian movements, and all its various sub movements, have advanced most effectively when they went with two different but complementary structural feet on the ground: one in the form of a local church and the other as a faith based organisation with a clear and specific charisma.

Addison (2009:27) defines a movement as an informal grouping of people and organisations "pursuing a common cause". What they have in common is an "agenda for change" (Addison 2009:27). A movement goal could be to further a vision of an organisation, however organisations "are not the totality of a movement (Addison 2009:27). A movement can have leading figures, but no one person or group controls a movement. Movements are made up of people committed to a common cause" (Addison 2009:27). As a missional team, we would like to be catalyst of a gospel movement that encourages and challenges neighbours facing poverty to practically strive to be part of

the solution to the problems their community faces. We aim to appropriately stir up a holy discontent about the state of things, vision and action in our neighbours. Because "discontent unfreezes people from their commitment to the way things are. Movements emerge when people feel something needs to change", and we would love to see our neighbours and us be the change we would like to see in our community (Addison 2009:27). "If the vacuum created by discontent is filled with a vision of a different future and action to bring change, then a movement is born" (Addison 2009:27). Movement "change people, and people change the world" around them and beyond (Addison 2009:28).

First, as a research team we belong to a missional team, our foundational message focuses on Jesus Christ who was crucified and died so that we can have the power to be good news to this world in overcoming the power of the devil whose main aim is like a thief "to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). Second, we have a common agenda to be good news to the marginalised around us. Third, we have a strong desire to invite people to join the band of Jesus' followers (Addison 2009:31).

A passionate and active faith to see our neighbours be mission agents, is at the heart of what we are doing. Our neighbours are the best resource we have as an organisation (Addison 2009:49). We believe that the time has come when Africans should take ownership of the change, transformation and development they would like to see in their communities of residence. A French writer, Victor Hugo) once said: "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come" (Addison 2009:56). The epoch of expecting solutions to our problems to come from someone else as Africa is over.

Thankfully, from experience, we have learned that people living on the margins of society have a special place at the table of God's kingdom. In reading through the bible, it is overwhelming to see how God consistently puts the neglected and oppressed at the centre of his ultimate concern. He does so, not by targeting them as the objects of his salvific action, but by redeeming and engaging them to be co-labourers with the Holy Spirit in the mission of declaring and demonstrating to the entire world that the kingdom of God is at hand (Castellanos 2015:16). Many of such stories are found in the bible and the early church.

2.5.5 Lesson from the Bible and the early church

The bible is filled with stories that demonstrate how Jesus intentionally moved people who lived on the margins of the society to its centre. In Mark 1, he calls two fishermen, an uneducated and poor class in the society, to become his ministry partners. Through the above-mentioned story, Jesus teaches us as a church to learn to see opportunities where the rest of the world sees problems.

Alluding to the issue of table fellowship, McLaren (2007:208) remarks that it is most clearly addressed by the author of Luke and Acts to "demonstrate Jesus preferential heart for the outcast". Jesus ate with the tax collector Levi (Luke 5:29-30), allowed the woman sinner to wash her feet with her hair during another meal (Luke 7:36-38), and stayed in the home of Zacchaeus, another tax collector

(Luke 19:5-9). In all three cases, religious leaders complained about Jesus having contact with these unclean persons. Jesus explained that he came not to avoid such persons but to cleanse the sinner and offer forgiveness, as a doctor helps the sick (Luke 5:31-32). Schroeder (2008:17) stresses that this was the sign that the reign of God, whose love is inclusive was at hand in Jesus.

Luke 14 groups together several of Jesus' sayings to challenge some practices of the Christian communities to whom he was addressing his gospel. In the setting of having a meal in the home of one of the Pharisees, Jesus teaches that the healing of a human being is more important than a strict observation of the law, that table fellowship should not be the occasion of placing one above the others and that guests should not be invited to a meal per their capacity to reciprocate. Taking these passages together, we can see that Jesus challenges aspects of the Jewish culture that discriminate against people based on economic, physical, or social standards. Furthermore, these impure persons are not to be separated from God but are embraced by God. Jesus witnessed to this inclusive reign of God and invites his followers to be inclusive in their love and interaction with others (Schroeder 2008:18).

In looking at Jesus' active ministry time on earth, we see how people's lives were dramatically changed. Sinners and tax collectors got a new lease in life, lepers and paralytics were healed, those enslaved to demons were delivered, people heard a message of hope and a call to a new life and new relationships. Followers of Jesus are to be forgiving and compassionate. They are to love even their enemies, just as Jesus would forgive his persecutors. The parable of the good Samaritan describes how a follower of Jesus thinks and acts rather than passing by on the other side of the road, he/she goes the extra mile out of compassion and love for the stranger. Jesus' choice of the good Samaritan as the ideal disciple points to the boundary breaking character of mission. Although Jesus devoted most of his time and energy to his Jews, sign post like this indicate that the good news is for all people. In looking closely to the incident with the Samaritan woman because it is representative of Jesus pushing the edges of his societal understanding of purity. He was to share not food, but contact, conversation and ultimately the word of God beyond Judaism. Jesus responds to the woman's physical and spiritual thirst by offering her living water. The church therefore must be exemplary in living out inclusive love. There should not be space for racism, xenophobia, homophobia or any forms of discriminations against another human being in the mind and action of any followers of Jesus. Often, it is easier to discriminate against someone from a different race, culture and socio-economic class (Schroeder 2008:20-21). Although society may agree with that, followers of Jesus should actively disagree with that because inclusive love is what Jesus teaches us.

After much discussion of whether Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and to follow the Mosaic Law, Peter reminded the assembly that God has approved what had happened among the Gentiles by granting the Holy Spirit to them just as he did to Jews. After Peter's speech, the whole assembly was silent, and Paul and Barnabas then recounted all the signs and wonders God has worked among the Gentiles. James, the leader of the Jerusalem community, affirmed that, since God

was taking from among the Gentiles a people to bear his name, we ought not to cause God's Gentile converts any difficulties. This act of faith in discerning God's spirit at work in unforeseen and challenging ways was the mark of approval on the future direction and face of the church. Similar to the Council of Jerusalem, the Second Vatican Council acknowledges again and reaffirms that being a Christian is not limited to any cultural way but rather is open to being received and expressed by the vast array of cultures in the world (Schroeder 2008:40).

Christ has called his followers to a ministry of service. But what is their task? Following Jesus' example leads us to the ministry of service that focuses on meeting the needs of the less fortunate of the world. Like the good Samaritan, we bind up the wounds of the injured and outcast of the world. Yet followers of Jesus have increasingly concluded that service to the world demands that we move beyond binding up wounds to become advocates of the wounded by attempting to foster structural changes in society that would pave the way for a better society for all. In being involved in structural changes, we seek to lessen the likelihood of injury in the future. Beyond this people-centred motivation, the fostering of structural changes is mandated by fidelity to the kingdom (Grenz 1994:508).

Sociologist Rodney Stark (quoted by Corbett & Fikkert 2009:44) points that "the early church's engagement with the suffering people was crucial to its explosive growth". He mentions that cities in the Roman Empire were characterised by poor sanitation, contaminated water, high population densities, open sewers, filthy streets, unbelievable stench, rampant crime, collapsing buildings, and frequent illnesses and plagues. Also, life expectancy at birth was less than thirty years – and probably substantially less. The only way for cities to avoid complete depopulation from mortality was for there to be a constant influx of immigrants. This was a very fluid situation that contributed to urban chaos, deviant behaviour and social instability. Rather than fleeing these urban cesspools, the early church found its niche there. Stark explains that the Christian concepts of self-sacrifice and altruism were keys to their understanding of ministry to others. Whereas, paganism provided no ethical foundation to justify caring for the sick and the destitute who were being trampled by the teeming urban masses. Therefore, Christianity revitalised life in Greco-Roman cities by providing new norms and new kinds of social relationships able to cope with many urgent urban problems. In cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments. In cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. In cities torn by violence and ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And in cities faced with epidemics, fires, and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective nursing services. From the early church life, we can see that mission was not only about salvation in the next life, but also with bettering the human condition in this life. Christians did not only bring people into the church, but also cared for them and worked with people in the world, particularly those in need. Schroeder (2008:82) argues that church's strategy of ministering to and among the suffering was so powerful that other kings took note. In the fourth century AD, the Roman emperor Julian tried to launch pagan charities to compete with the

highly successful Christian charities that were attracting so many converts. Writing to a pagan priest, Julian complained, "The Christians support not only their poor, but ours as well, everyone can see that our people lack aid from us" (Corbett & Fikkert 2009:45).

In the early church, homes were the center of Christian life and launching pads of the Christian movement we are part of. Certain houses, especially larger ones, were designated for the weekly gatherings for prayer, bible study, community discussion, sharing resources, and the breaking of the bread. They are known as house churches. Some went through major renovation to accommodate the growing number of Christians. During the week, these homes were places for many informal conversations about the Christian faith with friends and neighbours. Early Christians also witnessed to their faith outside their homes. Most lived in crowded urban areas, where probably as many as half the children died at birth or as infants, and where fires, earthquakes, and epidemics devastated the lives of thousands. Christians took care of orphans and widows, extending their care to the needy and sick to non-Christians. This action did not go unnoticed by others and marked the beginning of simple hospitals. We also have written reports of Christians having informal conversations in the marketplaces, laundries, and shops (Schroeder 2008:49). Nowadays we could also use our homes as a launching pad of a movement of followers of Jesus who actively and visibly are good news to their neighbours. I have personally been humbled by some of our volunteers who use their homes for ministry. They do bible studies and tutoring with community members in them. They are not waiting for a community hall to be built by government for such meetings to take place.

Another snapshot from the early church is a picture of women in mission. We already saw the inclusiveness of women in Jesus' ministry, particularly in the incident with the Samaritan woman. Christianity continued to appeal to lots of women. In contrast to broader society, the high regard in which the Christian community held the human dignity of women was reflected for example, in its stance against abortion, infanticide, divorce, incest, adultery, and polygamy. Everyone was treated equally as children of God. Not only Gentiles and slaves but also women could be full and equal members of this community. Women's role in mission began in their homes. First of all, since women were the majority of Christians and there were not as many eligible Christian men for husbands, they often married non-Christians. There are written accounts of such women leading their husbands and their extended households to faith in Christ. Second, women were influential in the many Christian gatherings in homes. Third, women also shared the gospel when gathered outside their homes (Schroeder 2008:50).

The bible and early church movements of inclusiveness inspired movements such as the USA civil right movement. Today, as our missional team actively tries to figure out ways to start and maintain a grassroots gospel movement, we are learning from the civil right movement.

2.5.6 Lesson from the Civil Right Movement in the USA

Brad R. Braxton (quoted by Dickerson 2005:217) "observed that King as a black preacher" reformed the way of interpreting the bible in African American churches. According to King, the bible was "a storybook whose value resided not so much in the historical reconstruction or accuracy of the story in the text, but rather in the evocative images, in the persuasive, encouraging anecdotes of the audacious overcoming of opposition, and in its principles about the sacredness of the human person" (Dickerson 2005:217).

Therefore, the civil right Christian activists believed that the task of the African American church was twofold. First, to develop a prophetic and fearless message which would speak into the social order. Second, every African American church must discover and develop a type of leadership that would do for America and the Negro race what Gandhi did for India. As well as what Jesus did for the world (Dickerson2005:221). To see this outcome, the African American church needed to figure out effective ways to be missional.

We see this hoped-for outcome lived out in the ministry of John Perkins (quoted by Castellanos 2015:33-34), a famous, yet humble civil right activist. While he set out to establish a church with a zeal for evangelism and discipleship that reconciled people back to God, it quickly became apparent that a new approach was needed. Along with offering hope for eternity, it had to be rooted in the current struggles of his neighbours who lacked jobs, adequate health care, educational opportunities and relief from the oppression of post slavery Jim Crow laws. It wasn't enough to move people emotionally in church as a way to forget their problems; faith demanded working and praying to bring about justice in the here and now. The more John examined and assessed the situation in Mendenhall, Mississippi, the more he became convinced that unless he and his wife, Vera Mae, could develop leaders to love God and to take ownership of the vision to see their neighbourhood transformed, their mission would not be complete. To develop these leaders, he reasoned, their young people had to get an education and then relocate back in Mendenhall to be agents of the kingdom with the new skills they had gained. Economic empowerment was at the heart of John's vision as he established the new work in Mississippi. With his experience and success as a businessman in California, he knew that true freedom for the families in his community had to include stable jobs and the opportunity to own their own businesses. Charity had to be replaced with development in order to truly set people free. John knew that while it was good to take care of people's daily needs, a better and sustainable solution was to empower them to be answers to their own prayers. This way, they could have control of their own economic destiny. Building relationships to attract resources and then redistributing them into the community to create opportunity and sustainability was critical to his strategy, and it ultimately attracted greater investment for their community revitalisation efforts. For those who invest their life by living and ministering in vulnerable neighbourhoods, John has always encouraged them to recognize the difficulty of their ministry to do things alone. He believes that incarnational ministers need to find other brothers and sisters who have

a similar calling to walk with in their journey.

Therefore, it is important for a missional team such as us to come up with structures of a movement which will catalyse not just heavenly aspirations, but also will be profoundly effectual in the here and now. This approach has a good potential to birth results which are deeply transformative for a world that is in great pain and ever-increasing need (Metcalf 2015:23). Such results will be guaranteed by our ability to raise local leaders that would be change agents from within. Soshanguve and the African continent as a whole need such change agents.

2.5.7 Africans as the steward of a movement from within

Penoukou (1991:41-42) remarks that on the eve of the independence of the African states in the 1950s, there was a demand made by African intellectuals of an overt recognition of African values. A theology of adaptation, of finding stepping-stones in cultural traditions needed to be articulated. This theology needed to promote a growing awareness of the need to incarnate the gospel in African reality. This need brought to the fore the relevancy of liberation theology in Africa. The African liberation theology was sometimes called 'Black Theology' (Setiloane 1980:49).

Theology of liberation first appeared in Africa during the 1970s because of the dehumanising situation on the continent, the new awareness of the gospel as the promise for the whole person for all people. All theology of liberation is born out of the attempt to understand the suffering of those who are victims of oppression and institutionalized exploitation, of those who are rejected and treated like objects while they are human beings created in the image of God, redeemed by Christ and sanctified by the spirit (Penoukou 1991:42).

Londi (1991:53-54) stresses that if we must find a word to characterise African theology, it is inculturation. The purpose of this theology is harmony within diversity. For this reason, we would not wonder, for now, if socioeconomic and political imperatives of development and the challenges that they present come after the searches for identity. Some would indeed focus primarily on the demands of development and social justice to build a Christianity concerned with African society today. The main agents of inculturation in Africa should be Africans themselves (Londi 1991:54).

History teaches us why Africans should be agents of inculturation in Africa. Sempore (1991:97) shares this story from the kingdom of Congo. He said that when the first missionaries arrived in the Congo at the end of the 15th century they had little difficulty in baptising the king and his subjects. However, three years after he was baptised, he reverted to the religion of his ancestors. His son Alfonso I failed in keeping his people faithful to the religion of the missionaries. The epilogue of the first evangelisation of the black world took place in the 17th century with Kassola, and in the 18th century with Dona Beatrice, both members of the Bakongo tribe in the kingdom of Bakongo. In 1632 the neophyte Francisco Kassola broke away from the Jesuit father Pedro Tavares and founded the first independent native movement in black Africa. He carried along with him crowds of people

captured by the passion of a new kind of preaching in the language of the Bakongo people. The crowds were also attracted by his reputation of the new sort of medicine man. Healer and seer, he attempted to deliver people from illness, from fear of witchcraft and spells, from anxiety about the future. People were also reassured by his tolerance for ancestral customs that they considered sacred. Less than a century later, in 1704, a young Mukongo woman of twenty-one, Kimpa Vita, also known as Dona Beatrice, caused a serious rift in the missionary work of the Capuchins in the Congo and in Angola when she founded a movement known as the Antonians. This young prophetess, who was later burned alive in 1706, succeeded in revitalising the kingdom that has fallen into decadence and bringing about a consciousness of national identity. More importantly, she was able to introduce into Christian territory traditional concepts and practices that were hardly compatible with the missionaries' view of Christianity (cultural elements). Just as Kassola had done, she saw that Christianity can only take root in a lasting way if it is grafted onto the roots of the religious and cultural world of the African people. Sempore (1991:105-106) argues that the ultimate goal of inculturation is to make Christianity more popular and more evangelical, and this in a spirit of unconditional fidelity to the message of Christ and of sympathy of heart and spirit toward men and women and their own milieu. This is a task that belongs to the church. Such an authentic approach will allow the church to avoid the risk of closing in on itself and will be a forceful invitation to openness to mission and involvement in the world such as it is, with its gigantic planetary challenges and its immense hope. Inculturation would promote an authentic way of living our faith in ways that are appropriate to our context of life.

Our current time necessitate a paradigm shift in our approach to mission as Africans. Addison (2009:111) stresses that necessity is the mother of invention and new ideas come from fresh invention. We need to creatively walk the tough, yet sustainable road of us being the agents of mission in our own neighbourhoods. Eric Hoffer (quoted by Addison 2009:103) stated: "In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists". As a missional team, we would love to be learners who collaborate with their neighbours in the transformation process of our community, using biblical principles. Transdisciplinary model of research is very helpful here because it encourages me to investigate things from different levels of reality which generates reciprocal enrichment that may facilitate the understanding of complexity. Transdisciplinary helps me see the world in a more systemic and holistic ways (Max-Neef 2005:15).

Many cross-cultural mission organisations such as ours focus on 'contextualisation' as a way of equipping people who are poor, uneducated and under resourced towards mission agency. They want to ensure that the gospel and the church come in a form this is relevant to the receptor culture. I personally prefer the concept of indigenisation, which ensures that local believers take responsibility for the spread of the gospel and community development. When that happens, local believers do the best job at making forms of the gospel and the church relevant to their culture and circumstances (Addison 2009:118). In our indigenisation approach, our organisation has gotten good results when

we ministered one neighbourhood at a time. Hence our commitment to minister one community at a time is critical in our ministry philosophy and our development of a theology of place.

2.5.8 The church as an encourager of the value of loyalty and commitment to a place

 In urban communities, such as Soshanguve, the African initiated churches are the most dominant local expressions of the body of Christ. The latter tend to put lots of emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit and personal salvation. Our research team is composed of people from these churches. Together we are learning to be holistic in our theological approach so that we can meaningfully be good news to our neighbours; even to the whole city. We are inspired by Jeremiah 5:1 that says:

"Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city".

Bakke (1997:66) stresses that God's kingdom agenda seeks the personal salvation of all persons and the social transformation of all places. The body of Christ should be both the sign of and a witness to God's creative and redemptive agendas. We need the evangelist, the pastor and the community developer as partners. None should assume their calling more spiritual or more significant than the other. Every gift belongs in the mission of the church.

The needs and issues to be resolved in poor communities such as Soshanguve are many and overwhelming. They require a proactive engagement of several stakeholders, including the body of Christ. The latter should not stay aloof or passive to solution engagement. Liberation theology is an inspiration here. It asks for a radical commitment of Christians to the plight of the marginalised to help them change their desperate situation through an active engagement for social justice and human rights. It uses social analysis tools to understand adequately the cause of oppression and dependence (Fuellenbach 1991:74). Transdisciplinary research framework helps out too. It does social analysis in a specific way: it engages with social scientists and community members to make the context analysis. Thus, not only taking the social analysis over, but also taking part in doing it (Max-Neef 2005:7). Liberation theology also shows how God chooses the marginalised, like our neighbours, to become agents of salvation for humankind. They are treated as favourites. In 1 Corinthians 1:27, God purposely chooses what the world considers nonsense in order to put the powerful to shame. God chooses what the world looks down on and despises, and thinks as nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. What the world considers nonsense and weak in this passage is identified with concrete people in history-the powerless and exploited of the present world. The whole scripture is reread from such a perspective. The exodus story is seen in a new light. Liberation theology is to be understood as the effort to think of and grasp our faith from a commitment in solidarity with the poorest; walking with them and affirming that on this road the lord is present and raising the poor as agents of transformation and mission. It is considered as dangerous because it creates a fundamental insecurity. A church that has installed itself over the centuries among the established will find it extremely difficult to welcome a message that comes from the poor and

oppressed who question the church's support of the status quo. The reaction quite naturally would be that of anxiety, fear, insecurity because such a message is dangerous for society and for a church that is part of such a society (Fuellenbach 1991:81).

For our missional team, Albert Einstein quote "no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it" is uncovering a new meaning (Hirsch 2007:127). We are aware that poverty has something to do with external causes such as colonialism, apartheid and the evils of capitalism. It also has to do with internal causes such as people choosing not to be the change they would like to see in the world. Sustainable solutions will be found when people affected by poverty are proactive agents of a movement out of poverty. The church could help catalyse this movement because the Bible tells us that followers of Jesus are citizens of the world, and that there they must remain. Followers of Jesus have been created to engage the world in its entirety and not to separate themselves, or to live aloof from it. When this separation is affected, it will be God's own doing, not people's. The Christian community must never be a closed body but must distinguish itself by its altruistic love.

Our love for one another should be visible in concrete experiences of life that demonstrates our real concern for justice and solidarity. This love should also be seen in how well we empower people around us to be agents of transformation that is needed in their neighbourhoods (Fuellenbach 1991:84-85). The empowerment of our neighbours is key to the effectiveness of our work in Soshanguve because they are the kinds of people Isaiah 58:11-12 talks about:

"The LORD will guide you always;
   he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
   and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
   like a spring whose waters never fail.
Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
   and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
   Restorer of Streets with Dwellings".

Oduyoye (2001:52) stresses that in Africa, Christian participation in the Missio Dei will become more credible if we learn to honour the humanity of the other as Jesus did and design healthy platforms in which ordinary people would learn to become agents of mission and not eternal recipient of mission. If we identify and dismantle death-dealing structures that strangle Africa from bottom up, we will make God's good news visible. The church could start initiating ordinary Christian participation into Missio Dei from neighbourhoods where it is located in engaging both its members and its neighbours.

2.5.9 Conclusion

As the catalyst of the ideal society we aspire to, the church should:

- Seek to empower, in meaningful ways, ordinary people to be the answer to their own prayers.
- Help communities to be educated in creation care so that people can be good stewards of the environment they live in.
- Help people be kingdom minded in being agents of justice, fairness, mutual love and mutual care. In fact, God depends on his children to tangibly bring the reign of justice on earth as it is in heaven.
- Seek partnership with other stakeholders in solution seeking in society.
- Help reconcile broken relationships in society because as humans, we are all equal and should aspire to live in solidarity with one another.
- Prioritise the common narrative of all followers of Jesus than the usual emphasis on denominational emphasis we see in our urban communities. Additionally, unity in the body of Christ should lead to the prioritising of discipleship in our presence in communities. The church message to the world should flow out of its actions and words.

The above-mentioned elements are represented below:
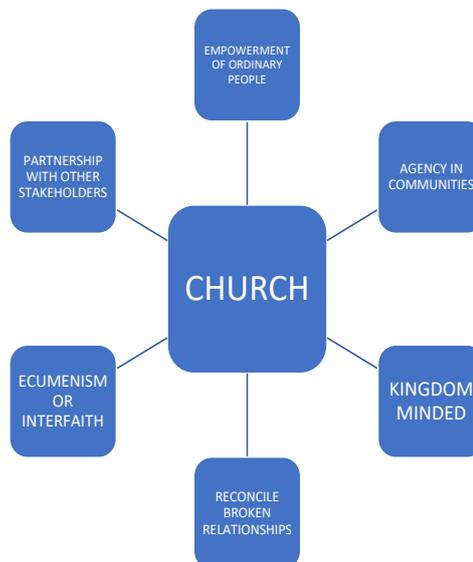
The prophetic message of the bible should have clear implications in the social order. Therefore, the church should be an active agent of this message and help ordinary people to become mission agents in their own right in the context.

2.6 THE CHURCH AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

Richard Niebuhr (quoted by Metcalf 2015:10) said that the great Christian revolutions came not by the discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when someone or a group of people take "radically something that was always there". As a research team, we would like to be those to take seriously and radically the legacy of the church in developing communities. Our missional team would like to use the disempowering and empowering roles of the church during slavery, colonialism and apartheid as a resource to encourage South Africans to rise to the occasion and participate in building their country from each one's sphere of influence. The Congolese scholar, Jacques Depelchin thinks that "radical transformation in Africa will depend more on how the past is remembered than on how the future is plotted" (Terreblanche 2003:3).

Currently when I look at the democratic South Africa, I see a growing number of black people who are educated and have access to wealth (economic freedom). This is still a tiny minority of the black population which is still poor and not well educated in its majority. This situation has the potential to, on the one hand, display good things to come in terms of poverty alleviation and equality. On the other hand, this is a sign of another failed African state, which has failed to love its citizens like it promised. Terreblanche (2003:18) argues that "since 1994 the poor South Africans have become entrapped in a new form of oppression": a state of systemic exclusion and systemic neglect by the current government and the modern sector of the economy. Hence it is not surprising that the poor have become poorer since the beginning of the current post-apartheid era. Nonetheless, few black people only have been able to "cross the Rubicon" to become counted among the wealthy. Like in the slave trade, colonial and apartheid eras, many black Africans were commercial products or means through which white people could access wealth. Some of the victims of slavery, apartheid and colonialism were sold out by their greedy and heartless brothers and sisters. For the latter, slavery and colonisation was an opportunity to become rich and powerful. I am afraid, up to so far; democracy has just been an opportunity for very few Africans to become rich while the majority of the population's living conditions are worsening. The conditions under which independence was granted to African countries set in motion long series of civil wars and intrastate wars. It is therefore not surprising that many African countries deteriorated quite dramatically after independence-especially since highly indebted African countries became failed states in the post-colonial period (Terreblanche 2014:421).

In light of this situation, the church should advocate for an inclusive economy and society which would benefit all citizens and play a part as an agent of development in solidarity for the poor, the excluded

and the outcast. If inequality is such a dominant fixture in the African society, it is because we (Africans) don't love one another as we were supposed to. We could learn some lessons about solidarity from the black consciousness movement.

2.6.1 Lessons from the Black Consciousness Movement

De Beer (2008:172) states that "black consciousness is understood to be a philosophy of communal solidarity among an oppressed people". In spite of the fact that its founder, Steve Biko's "premise was blackness as experienced in the apartheid South Africa, he deliberately sought to situate his work in a more universal humanist framework, identifying it as part of a global movement of solidarity with all oppressed people" (De Beer 2008:172). In trying to understand the heart of Black consciousness within the context of apartheid South Africa, Kritzinger (2008:91), a white South African remarks that "the thesis of Black consciousness is that a strong white racism has birthed the antithesis which is a strong solidarity amongst black people". Through the interaction of these two situations, we can reach a balance, which is "a true humanity" (Kritzinger 2008:91).

In his articulation of true humanity, Steve Biko, "defines freedom as the ability to define oneself with one's possibilities held back not by power of other people", but only by one's relationship to God, the creator (de Beer 2008:184). According to him, "once people grasp that their potential is not determined solely by other human beings, but also by themselves in relationship to the Creator who gave them that potential in the first place, they can start to operate not as victims, but as agents of their envisaged futures" (de Beer 2008:184). Steve Biko stresses that "consciousness must not be abstract intellectualism. However, it should translate into a concrete step that leads people through their full participation from bondage to liberation and from liberation to responsibility. It should also engage people as agents of their own destiny, free to give expression of their own infinite, God-given possibilities" (de Beer 2008:184).

Steve Biko "was unflinching in his conviction that as long as black people looked for and accepted white leadership in all spheres, including religion, they were not yet ready to take their future in their own hands" (Maluleke 2008:62). Nowadays, one can say that as long as ordinary Africans are accepting of the social status quo as it is and expect all solutions to be found by the elected politicians, we will not see a sustainable development come to pass any time soon. Therefore, we challenge ourselves to be on a quest for true humanity, because somewhere on the distant horizons we will see the glittering prize. We would like to march forth with courage and determination, drawing strength from our common plight to see South Africa transformed and as a better place for everyone to live in (Mbeki 2007:24). Biko believed that a great gift was still to come from Africa, a humane face" and South Africa could be a catalyst of such a society because of its history of discrimination (Mbembe 2007:147-148). If it is able to be successful, it will pave the way for such a society all over the world. In a country like South Africa, a humane face should be connected to "true liberation of both the" privileged and the marginalised" (de Beer 2008:175).

Kritzinger (2008:102) stresses that initiatives to overcome issues such as racism, poverty and any kind of discrimination must start from below, from people who are negatively affected by these very issues. In the same way that issues of homophobia, xenophobia and landlessness, for example, should be raised by people who are negatively affected by them. It would be unwise to let the elite alone deal with these matters, be it black or not. Like currently, most of the people who are allegedly implicated in state capture are black people who were seen as liberator. In fact, Maphele Ramphele, a Black consciousness activist, once commented, "that not all black people are necessarily committed to liberation and that the poor are not inherently egalitarian" (de Beer 2008:173). It is therefore pretentious to assume that all black people are committed to our communal aspiration for a society in which every member will have a good quality of life (de Beer 2008:173). This is why it is wise to continuously conscientise and mobilise every member of our society "toward a common cause of solidarity" (de Beer 2008: 173-174).

De Beer (2008:174) believes that the work of "fostering black consciousness should continue", calling people to be in "solidarity with their communities of origin", to contend for those who are still living in "the scars of stolen dignity" so that they can "discover their own humanity, giftedness and agency" (de Beer 2008:174). The church could take ownership in catalysing this kind of work because it would be a prophetic way of living out the good news of the gospel. Brueggemann (2001:3) stresses that "the task of the prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception that is an alternative to the consciousness of the dominant culture around us". A growing dominant narrative in urban areas, seems to be individualism and consumerism. At their worst, these two influences undermine the value of solidarity Africans are known for. The church could encourage self-pride as well as collective pride in urban communities so that collective human dignity could be a common agenda to pursue (de Beer 2008:179).

Biko and "his contemporaries recognised that the oppressor's most potent weapon was the mind of the oppressed" (quoted by De Beer 2008:181-182). The church could proactively chew on this statement and mobilise ordinary people to be agents of things they desire. Biko and his band were reacting against a general apathy they saw in black people. Many of them accepted ways they were defined by others, the oppressors. Biko and his contemporaries stressed that Africans should assert themselves in terms of who they knew they were, and in terms of being created in the image of God" (De Beer 2008:182).

Until today, millions of Africans remain trapped in perceived hopelessness. Therefore, there is a need for a psychological liberation that will help them reach a stage of asserting themselves and their identities. They will be equipped to refuse an irrelevant "external agencies and top-down authorities that may attempt to determine their destiny" (de Beer 2008:184). The church could help empower communities "to acknowledge their own active agency which will lead to self-reliance and the discovery of assets" which will build the wall of neighbourhoods of poverty (de Beer 2008:185). De

Beer (2008:187) is wisely cautious in his encouragement for urban communities to be self-reliant. According to him, "self-reliance is not absolute independence". It works better in a "proactive engagement with other sources of information and resources outside one's own community" (De Beer 2008:187). The aim of this engagement is" for cross-fertilisation, to nurture collective consciousness and collective solidarities that go beyond the local neighbourhood" (De Beer 2008:187). The end in mind in this "engagement is to lead to true empowerment which would occur when individuals and communities take control over their lives and effectively participate in processes which lead to outcomes that affect them" (De Beer 2008:187). The body of Christ should model self-reliance in a way that would inspire ordinary community members to proudly walk that road too.

Maluleke (2008:66) sees self-reliance as a journey towards the African revolution. He states that for the church "to take part in the African revolution, it is not enough to write a revolutionary song, it must fashion the revolution with the people" it is called to serve (Maluleke 2008:66).In order for it to be efficient in this endevour, it "must be a living part of Africa and of her thought; it must be an element of that popular energy which is entirely called forth for the freeing, the progress and the happiness of Africa". Maluleke (2008:70) continue his argument is stressing that in the African revolution, "there is no place outside that fight for the artist, or for the theologian or for the intellectual who is not himself concerned with, and completely at one with the people in the battle of Africa and the suffering of humanity". He concludes his argument in stating that "If the body of Christ is passive or uninvolved in this quest of an inside out revolution of Africa for Africa, it will run a real risk of becoming the opium of both the rich and the poor. Perhaps a good question the body of Christ should wrestle with is, to what extend our implementation of biblical principles is revitalising and equipping people rather than undermining their spirits with false promises and blame-the-victim strategies (Maluleke 2008:70)?

The body of Christ has a lot to learn from Biko and fellow black consciousness movement activists. In fact Dwight Hopkins (quoted by Maluleke 2008:65-66) "described Biko as a theologian from and with the masses of black people". Biko "never became bogged down with strict doctrinal or theological categories of thought or elaborated long-winded treatises. Quite the opposite, he involved himself in theological issues pertaining to the very life and death of his community" (Maluleke 2008:65-66). This is something we aspire to as a missional team. We aspire to see our teams contextually and relevantly reflect the aspirations of our neighbours that are deeply rooted in biblical principles. On this journey, we are encouraged by Kritzinger (2008: 94) who believes "that no one can escape the fact that the culture and aspirations shared by the majority group in any given society must ultimately determine the broad direction the church catalyses things". He argues that "ministry in Africa must inevitably exhibit African values and be truly African in style while not compromising the biblical principles which are our common narrative as the body of Christ" (Kritzinger 2008: 94).

2.6.2 Task at hand

The church is a fellowship of followers of Jesus. As followers, Jesus tells us that it is important to show to others and the whole world that we are indeed his disciples. We are true disciples by the way we love. Love will always be good news to others. When the church is proactively involved in social justice issues such as school dropout, it displays its faithfulness to Jesus. Corbett & Fikkert (2009:42) state that "the task of God's people is rooted in Christ's mission". In straight forward terms, it can be said: "Jesus preached the good news in words and deeds, so the church must do the same. And as we have seen, Jesus particularly delighted in spreading the good news among the hurting, the weak and the poor. Hence, it is not surprising that throughout history God's people have been commanded to follow their king's footsteps into places of brokenness" (Corbett & Fikkert 2009:38). McLaren (2007:49) argues along the same line when he wondered "what the task of the church was". He answered his question by saying that it is to embody Jesus Christ by doing what He did and what he continues to do through us. Jesus used both words and deeds to bring in a kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace. Therefore, the church needs to do what Jesus did. Its interaction with society, human beings and the environment should be meaningful and good news to everyone involved. This is represented below:
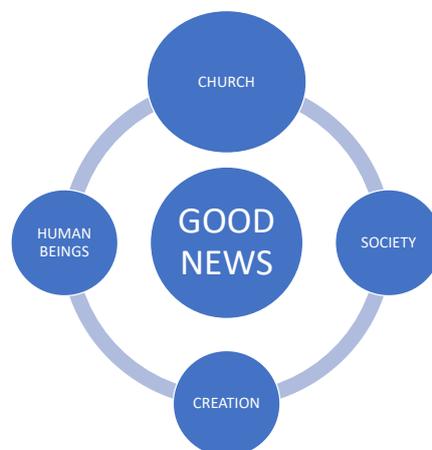
For the church of Africa to fully be faithful to Jesus' command of love, things must start internally for us Africans. Biko "suggested that the first step thereof is to make black people come to themselves, to put back to life into their empty shell; to infuse them with pride and dignity, to remind them not to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his/her birth" (de Beer 2008:194). The church has to take the initiative to be involved as good news signs in our communities if it were to retain relevance for fellow blacks, especially young blacks. Maluleke (2008:63) remarks that "God does not do theology; human beings do and that the time has come for our own African theologians to take up the cudgels of the fight by restoring a meaning and direction in the black people's

understanding of God". Biko challenged the "church to use the Bible and faith in a relevant way. If they did not do anything about it, they should give up any hope of God doing it on its behalf" (Maluleke 2008:63). This was a profound critique of certain forms of religiosity that seemed to encourage an attitude of expecting God to come and intervene on behalf of blacks. The church will remain relevant "wherever it is influencing, shaping and transforming ways of thinking and ways of life" in ways that are honouring to God" (de Beer 2008:172). This study as a collaborative effort is attempting to highlight the good fruit that comes from the body of Christ. This team effort only stands a chance to be effective and meaningful if we are intentional about learning from different disciplines of knowledge opinions on a social malady such as school dropout. The next chapter will capture this learning.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Partnership seems to be a key concept in the history of the church. At some point, the latter worked in partnership with colonisers and slave traders in the pursuit of an agenda to subjugate, brain wash and impose a faith. The pursuit of this agenda was not a good witness to the biblical truth that all human beings were created in God's image. Therefore, are of equal worth.

In its partnership with various stakeholders throughout history also, the church has an inspiring story to tell in Africa. It built tangible infrastructures, which have been a blessing to Africa. It prophetically spoke up truth to oppressive powers when everyone else was scared to do so. It built when everyone else was destroying. It was the voice of marginalised communities. It was the reformist in a status quo environment. In summary, it was good news in times of despair and need.

It is this good news legacy that inspired this study and the imagination of the society we would love to become as Africa. This society will only come to pass if we all become role players in making it a reality and work in solidarity with one another. This research is in solidarity with people who dropped out of school. It believes that this solidarity will only be meaningful if a study of external and internal causes that could lead to school dropout is made. The next chapter will focus of these causes.

This concluding poem titled 'Build Africa' captures the heart of this chapter:
Like a bird build its nest, I must build Africa,
Like a brick layer erect a wall, I must build my country,
Like a welder assembles different pieces into a gate, I must build my community,
Like a child builds a castle at the beach, I must build my neighbourhood.
Who is the builder in my village?
Who has the plan of what my village should look like?
Who was appointed by the almighty to build?
 I see no one coming forward.
Why is there no one who can build here?

I gave a call to your creator and this is what he told me:

"I created everyone with the ability to build".

Africa! Africa! Africa!

Rise up and make your creator proud,

Build Africa.

CHAPTER III: POTENTIAL CAUSES OF ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section looks at the current statistics of school dropout in South Africa, and external and internal causes of school dropout. A selection of research findings looking at external and internal causes of school dropout to confirm or reject assumptions made in the introduction of this study (Section 1.6), was made. Looking at the geographic and cultural contexts in which this study was conducted, the community will be considered as "high context" (Hall 1976: xi). This means that "the responsibility of understanding" schoolwork is primarily "on the learner", not the teacher as the communicator of knowledge (Hall 1976: xi). As far as missiological praxis is concerned, this chapter explores the contextual analysis of this study. Research findings in the areas of social work, psychology, public health and education will serve as resources. Learning outcomes from these findings will be connected to reflections about school dropout this research makes. They gave a general background of this study. They were also insightful in the recruiting of professional research partners in this transdisciplinary approach.

3.2 THE REALITY OF SCHOOL DROPOUT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Andrew Hartnack (2017) "defines school dropout as leaving education without obtaining a minimal credential", which is the end of grade 12. Spaull (2015: 34)remarks that "most school dropout in South Africa occurs in grades 10 and 11, resulting in 50% of learners in any one cohort dropping out before reaching grade 12". Numerous intervention proposals from scholars and non-profit organisations have been given to the South African government in an attempt to minimise school dropout. These proposals have been either systemic or programmatic.

3.2.1 Systemic interventions

Three different interventions are put in this category:

- **Restricting grade retention:** The South African government has implemented a policy in connection with this proposal. This policy prohibit public school from keeping a struggling student "back for more than one year in any three year phase" Hartnack (2017). The rationale behind this policy is that grade retention is one of the prime causes of school dropout (De Witte et al. 2013: 15).
- **Improved quality and access to Early Childhood Development:** Organisations such as Nal'ibali focus on this. I would argue that its efforts need to be amplified countrywide.
- **Improving the quality of education and the school curriculum: "**The South African literature on dropout is united in its conclusion that the quality of education offered to marginalised learners must improve radically" (Hartnack, 2017).

67

3.2.2 Programmatic interventions

Six different interventions are put in this category:

- **Academic interventions:** This has to do with encouraging educators and school administrators to imagine ways "to strengthen academic performance of learners still in school, particularly those who are struggling" (Hartnack, 2017).
- **Psychosocial and adult support:** This has to do with capacitating schools with skills that could complement educators in their tasks of helping students learn effectively.
- **After school programmes:** "After school programmes are crucial in building social skills and life skills, in addition to contributing to academic and behavioural interventions" (Hartnack, 2017).
- **Targeting high risk behaviours:** Paying compassionate attention to "learners who display high-risk and anti-social behaviours, such as aggression, disruption, bullying, drug and alcohol taking, and sexual activity is also an important prevention measure" (Hartnack, 2017)..
- **Family intervention:** For the family, especially adults to be involved in the educational development of a child.
- **Re-engagement and reintegration:** To find creative ways to cultivate an appetite for learning in children and youth that already dropped out of school. This is done with the hope of reintegration such people into the mainstream schooling system or direct them towards plateforms that would tap ito their learning preferences.

I have heard many of these systemic and programmatic interventions articulated by educators and implemented at some public schools in our township of Soshanguve. However, at the end of 2017, businesstech.co.za published a document about the state of school dropout in South Africa. According to it (businesstech.co.za 2017), "the South African Department of Basic Education's figures, show that 1,100,877 learners enrolled for Grade 10 in 2014, but only 610,178 enrolled for Grade 12 in 2016 – showing an alarming rate of 44.6% of learners either dropping out of the system altogether or remaining stuck in Grade 10 and 11. This pattern is visible across every province in the country, where the drop-out rate reaches as high as 54.4% in the Northern Cape".

Furthermore, "the province of Free State, which took the title of the best-performing province in the Matric exams that year, saw more than half of its learners drop out between 2014 and 2015" (businesstech.co.za 2017). Below is the reality of school dropout throughout South Africa, per province.

Province	Grade 10 (2014)	Grade 12 (2016)	Drop-out rate	Grade 12 pass	Pass rate	'True' pass rate

Northern Cape	22 034	10 041	54.4%	7 902	78.7%	35.9%
North West	67 734	32 045	52.7%	26 448	82.5%	39.0%
Free State	55 293	26 786	51.6%	23 629	88.2%	42.7%
Eastern Cape	154 220	82 902	46.2%	49 768	59.3%	31.9%
Limpopo	189 170	101 807	46.2%	63 595	62.5%	33.6%
KwaZulu Natal	264 816	147 648	44.2%	98 032	66.4%	37.0%
Mpumalanga	94 528	54 251	42.6%	41 801	77.1%	44.2%
Gauteng	174 471	103 829	40.5%	88 381	85.1%	50.7%
Western Cape	75 791	50 869	32.9%	43 716	86.0%	57.7%
South Africa	**1 100 877**	**610 178**	**44.6%**	**442 672**	**72.5%**	**40.2%**

The economist Nicholas Spaull (2012:8) adds salt to the wounds by stating that nationally, of the learners still being in school, "27% of them are "functional illiterate". Moreover, he stresses, this national average hides the reality of learners from poor communities such as Soshanguve. The reason is that "South Africa is still a tale of two schools: one which is functional, wealthy, and able to educate students; with the other being poor, dysfunctional, and unable to equip students" (Spaull 2012:14). The majority of learners are functionally literate in well resourced school as opposed to the majority of learners being functionally illiterate in school located in poor communities (Spaull 2012:14).

In trying to downplay this crisis of school dropout, the South African Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said that "dropout rates between Grade 1 and matric are misunderstood. She said there are many reasons why pupils who begin Grade 1 this year won't matriculate with their peers. These include pupils who leave school to attend colleges and high failure rates between grades" (enca.com 2019). I reckon this issue of school dropout has reached a crisis proportion in South Africa, not because government did not try to resolve it. This crisis negatively affects communities, especially communities of poverty such as Soshanguve. This is why the body of Christ, through a missional team such as InnerCHANGE, endeavoured to be involved in this crisis as part of its prophetic mandate to be the salt of a community and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14). This involvement adopted a transdisciplinary approach of learning about causes of school dropout from different sister sciences.

3.3 EXTERNAL ISSUES THAT COULD LEAD TO SCHOOL DROPOUT

The external issues discussed here are based on research finding from social work science. I will cover four major areas, namely family dynamics, poverty, neglect and war/violent environment as strong potential causes of school dropout.

3.3.1 Family dynamic

Family background is a critical contributor to a child academic success of a child. Rumberger (2012:10) points out that "family background under the mediation of the school explains most of the variation in educational outcomes". He bases his argument on existing research findings demonstrating that "parental education and income, is a powerful predictor of school achievement and dropout behaviour". He (Rumberger 2012:11) continues by pointing out that "research has also demonstrated that students from single parent and step families are more likely to drop out of school than students from two-parent families". He (Rumberger 2012:12-13) finally alludes to a positive fact in remarking that students who stand a good chance of not dropping out of school, are those who come from functional families, where parents are involved in their lives, including their education and even encourage them to be independent in their decision making.

In the South Africa urban poor communities such as Soshanguve, when someone talks about family, what comes to mind is a mother and children. The vast majority of families is fatherless or has physically and emotionally absent fathers, although the latter may be living in the same neighbourhood. The above-mentioned research findings help us to understand why school dropout is high in places like Soshanguve. Although the ideal for a child's upbringing and development is to have a father and a mother performing harmoniously together their respective roles towards him/her, history shows us that single mothers have raised some very influential people in the world. From this surprising revelation, a new theory of the will to political power was born. It was found out that these children's emotional needs and deprivation brought in them some exceptional will power to being different in exceeding in life, as well as "transforming the world" (Tournier 1982:2-3). This theory as well as the few examples of people around the world who were emotionally deprived by being raised by single mothers for example, yet became successful in life such as Barack Obama, are encouraging. They bring hope in demonstrating that children who are emotionally deprived, can still defy the odds in being assets for the future of this rainbow nation. The process towards that hopeful future will require collaboration between different stakeholders, including the church (Nieman 2010:41).

Cardoso & Verner (2006:3-4) point out that "drug and alcohol use and abuse, and parents' psychiatric disorders" can result in a child dropping out of school. He also says that "socio-economic status of the

family, gender, race, and age of the child could be a determinant of school dropout". He finally points out that child labour or just the need for children to work in some poor families can force some children to drop out of school and become breadwinners. However, a family that runs a business is more likely to have children helping out with work and still going to school. Nonetheless, negative circumstances that affect a household, such as a breadwinner becoming unemployed, can force a child to drop out of school and find work.

Cardoso & Verner (2006:5) also found that "the determinants" of a child's "school success differs according to the school level, with the parents' level of education being very crucial for primary school performance". In Soshanguve, many of our children are raised in families where parents are uninvolved in their academic life. Research results also indicate that youngsters who have their own children easily drop out of school. Teenage parents are very probable dropouts.

Cardoso & Verner (2006:14) also found out that "age has, as expected, a significant impact on school abandonment, with older teenagers more likely to give up school". Johnson (2003) points out in a study he conducted that "child abuse, spousal violence, parental divorce, length of time living with an alcoholic parent, parental marital status, and parental availability and predictability" raise the possibility of children struggling to cope in school with the probability of some of them dropping out of school at a young age because these factors lead a family to be dysfunctional.

Rumberger (2001:43) stresses that a "child that grows up in a dysfunctional family, experience a lot of trauma and pain which negatively affect them throughout their whole life". For example, a "child may miss an essential part of childhood because he/she was forced into unnatural roles within their family" (Rumberger 2001:43). The ramifications of a dysfunctional family have led some children to alcohol or drug use, as a means of fleeing from pain. Others unconsciously repeat the same abuse they suffered from when they relate to others around them.

What is a dysfunctional family? Townsend (2015:19) defines it as a family "in which the relationships between the parents and children are strained and unnatural". In such families, "at least one of the family members has a serious problem that negatively impacts every other member of the family, and each member of the family feels constrained to adapt atypical roles within the family to allow the family as a whole to survive" (Townsend 2015:19). However, in a functional family, members "openly acknowledge their problems, discuss them honestly, and work toward change. For them change is possible and they are able to work through conflicts and disagreements without hurting each other. They also tend to give the benefit of the doubt to each other because trust among them is strong.

Another thing that can seriously compromise a child's psyche and academic performance is bullying. Townsend (2015:1) defines bullying as "largely unprovoked, negative physical or psychological actions perpetrated repeatedly over time between bully/ies and victims". For school going children, bullying could lead them to develop hatred for school, and the fear of being belittled or undermined by

others. Some of the bullied children will therefore choose to stay away from school in order to not face the pain and trauma of being ill-treated. This behaviour stunts academic progress and cultivate a dislike for school.

Let's now have a look at how poverty could have an adverse effect on the academic performance of a child with the risk of dropping out.

3.3.2 Poverty

Lachman & al. (2002:598) state that "extreme poverty detracts from school attendance". Hungry children are more at risk of dropping out of school than well fed ones. Poverty is actually considered as a social neglect because it polarizes a society into the 'haves' ad 'have nots'. This neglect of children is easily noticeable in many schools located in South African poor urban areas.

Poverty prevents parents or guardians to care for their children to the best of their ability. When a family (particularly parents/guardians) are empowered out of poverty, their ability to care for children and lead them towards successful academic pathways increases. This is why issues of poverty alleviation should be a shared platform between different shareholders, including the church.

Ebigbo (2009:78) "examines aspects of the effects of poverty on society, specifically on children". He confirms that poverty put children at risk and put them in situation where they would struggle to perform well academically. He goes on to say that "poverty is often measured in financial terms", but it should also be looked at as major player that breed despair in society. Poverty makes many people to only focus on the 'here and now', not the long-term future. In many instances, we see many people with a poverty mentality spend all the money they have as soon as they get it, because they subconsciously believe that there is no future, only the present. School provides long term reward that people with poverty mentality may not have the patience to wait for. A poverty mentality can be inculcated in a child from a young age, especially from observing the relationship with materials, money and school that adults around him/her have.

The quality of an education system can also be affected negatively when funds are unavailable to purchase basic things such as uniforms and books. In South Africa, schools from poor communities suffer from this phenomenon. Many children drop out of school because of this lack of resources. The average income of families of dropouts is below or around the South African minimum wage (education.gov.za 2017). More than half of the families in our neighbourhood live on government grants and are headed by school dropouts (education.gov.za 2017). Poverty can cause parents, guardians and the society in general to neglect children.

3.3.3 Neglect

Slack et al. (2004) identify "two main historical discourses about the attribution of cause surrounding child neglect: personality and poverty". There seems to be a marriage between poverty and child neglect. Hence Slack et al. (2004:93) points out that "neglected children evidently suffer from poverty both in their material and their emotional environments."

Casey (2015:410) is of the view that "child neglect can lead to poor academic outcomes for children in both the short and long terms". According to him, "deleterious effects, which are commonly noticeable, include anxiety and low self-esteem, problematic behaviour, educational underachievement, and adverse impacts upon peer and social relationships". "The long-term" negative impact that has been repeatedly observed "on children may be influenced by the severity, chronicity, and developmental stage at which the neglect occurs". In a community such as Soshanguve, parents and guardians neglect children both knowingly and unknowingly. Many children are born to teenagers and people who are not ready to assume the responsibility of raising them.

Neglect is defined in many ways. The definition this research will settle on, comes from Casey. He (Casey 2015:415) defines neglect as "the persistent parental omission of care, a failure to provide, and to meet a child's basic needs". This definition is consistent with my experience and observation of children living in a poor area such as Soshanguve. Economic circumstances of some families also entertain child neglect. In order to provide for their families, parents have to work very long hours or be gone for all the weekdays and only come back home to be with their children on weekends. Children are therefore left unattended and without adult supervision. Casey (2015:411) defines neglect as "the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development". By this definition, many families in our township of Soshanguve could be identified as negligent of their children.

Casey (2015:412) argues that mothers are "overwhelmingly identified as perpetrators of neglect". This is a bias toward blaming women because they are the primary child caregivers in most societies. The responsibility of child neglect should rest upon both parents or guardians, when it occurs. As much as the responsibility of child rearing and nurturing belongs to both the father and mother of a child. However, in an urban poor environment such as Soshanguve, it is very common to run into situations where a father left their girlfriends/wives and children. There is a variety of reasons why lots of men do that: some of them are afraid to take responsibility, some don't make enough money in order to maintain their family, or others because the mother of the child did not want them to be involved. It seems like when fathers don't live in the same house with their children, their relationship suffers: children would be angry of or disappointed by their father, and in some cases even seem to detach from him. At the same time, affected relationships between father and child could discourage the father even more to be involved the way he knows how to, and causes him to think he is not wanted or needed (Simorangkir 2016:56). The South African society as a whole, starting from the church, should learn to deliberately equalize the role of fathers and mothers in child care giving. Obviously, changing discourses, and thereby the way actors think and act, takes time. But when we take into

account the willingness of a generation that has seen, heard and experienced the detrimental effect of this discourse of exclusion or lack of involvement of fathers, we can have good hope that eventually, men will start feeling less inferior, useless, and excluded when it comes to the caregiving of their children – and increasingly encouraged to become, be and stay involved (Simorangkir 2016:57).

Christoffersen and Soothill (2003:63) investigated a range of studies on the "characteristics of neglectful parents, with the focus mainly on personality, caring roles, attitudes, relationships, and attachment histories". They concluded that such parents tend to demonstrate negative attitudes, they are inappropriately angry with everyone around them, including their children, they are very tense at home and other environments they are in, they display signs of depression, they are confused and seem to be less intelligent than non-neglectful parents. Such parents also have "significantly more children", have "experienced a greater degree and severity of maltreatment in their own childhoods"; are "more likely to be unemployed" and report "significantly more depressive symptomatology than the comparison sample". Neglectful parents/guardians tend to be "significantly damaged individuals who are ill equipped, emotionally or practically, to care for children". No wonder we have a significant number of children who have difficulty coping academically in poor communities such as Soshanguve! The parents/guardians of children may well be a huge part of this sad situation.

Casey (2013) conducted a study in which "neglectful parents were considered as a risk when they put their own needs first". They were experienced as "less healthy; less able to resolve conflicts; less cohesive; less well led and less verbally expressive". They were also experienced as "having fewer parenting skills, including effective communication and coping with stress". They are also viewed as "lacking empathy and expressing dislike toward their child, whom they are supposed to love and care for". From this research (Casey 2015:413) three types of neglect were identified:

- **"Disorganised neglect"**: Here a family deals with multiple problems at once, the family structure is disorganised, and crisis prone. In this family, parents/guardians are incapable of taking care of their children's needs, until there is crisis and all the panic bottom are pressed in order to urgently resolve a matter.
- **"Emotional neglect"**: Parents/guardians solely focus on their responsibility to materially provide for their children and overlook the emotional needs of the children.
- **"Depressed neglect"**: Parents/guardians are cursed into themselves, aloof and withdraw from the responsibility to holistically take care of their children. Therefore, they become strangers to the needs of their children. Children become distant and disengaged with their parents/guardians.

Gaudin et al. (1996:368-369) gathered together children from both non-neglectful and "neglectful families". He discovered that "neglected children had more unresolved family conflict than those in the comparison group". Neglectful and dysfunctional families were "rated as having less closeness and less clear internal family boundaries; poorer negotiating skills; less responsiveness to other family

members' statements; less warmth; and less empathy toward one another". The neglect by parents sometimes has generational links. Coohey (1995: 885) points out that neglectful parents are more likely to have being raised by neglectful parents/guardians. Negligent parents undermine the human rights of their children. War situations are also guilty of undermining the rights of children, specifically their right to have access to education.

3.3.4 War and a violent environment

South Africa is not involved in a war at the moment, but there are fugitives from war zones and there is a lot of violence in our urban communities. Looking broadly at the African continent, many countries are currently facing war. One of the casualties of war zones are children and their education (Gabarino, 1993). People living in war zones and violent environments, usually suffer from "post-traumatic stress" that our society and the church don't properly address (Straker & Moosa, 1988; Pelzer, 1999). The development of policies that protect children during war or violent situations is important. Additionally, it is critical for people in power to abide by these policies. In Africa, many of the latter are overlooked and we see many children be recruited as soldiers by warlords. In South Africa, we see many children being recruited to take part in violent service delivery protests.

Schools are one of the first structures to close down in war zones or violent service delivery protests. Children are left stranded. Oftentimes the education these children receive undermines human dignity as they are taught to unsympathetically kill, destroy, steal and rape. In troubled areas where schools are still functioning, many children do not attend because of safety concerns. The destruction of communities, the instilling terror, humiliation, and degradation on ordinary citizens, has become the focus of war. In South Africa, the destruction of schools during service delivery protests seems to be a normal thing to do in poor communities. These actions have adverse ramifications on children. The latter live in unsafe social environment, and they have disrupted educational, health, and economic infrastructures. In these violent environments, children are usually traumatized through their many experiences of death around them. Their families are often times scattered, fragmented and disintegrated which emotionally destabilizes a child. Dawes (1994) points out that "10% to 20% of children exposed to war and violence are likely to develop psychiatric conditions, if they do not get professional help".

Some psychodynamic consequences also affect children who have experienced war situations or extreme violence. Some children develop revenge fantasies from being deprived of protective parents (Parents, especially fathers, are usually assassinated or forcefully recruited in as a soldier) or from observing their parents being humiliated and terrorised by bullies that soldiers can be or community members with an agenda for violence. In these conditions, children's education is disrupted. In light of this reality experienced by children in war and violent environments, intervention strategies need to be directed simultaneously at the individual, family, small group, and community levels, which the church could be a part of (Lachman & al. 2002:600-601).

Many studies highlight the "negative ramifications war and organised violence have on children" (Dawes, 1994). They are, but not limited to "anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, and emotional and conduct disorders" (Dawes, 1994; Paeans, 1994; Terr, 1991). They are also tangible impacts such as "distorted family relations, compromised cognitive and scholastic functioning, possible disrupted moral development, and the impact of children being raised in a fragmented, disempowered community" (Lachman & al. 2002:602). Children living in war zones and violent environments experience a lot of fear. It is obvious that children living in fear cannot focus or prioritise their education (Lachman & al. 2002:603). A child's education is critical, and conditions that compromise it should be proactively fought against (Lachman & al. 2002:590). In South African poor communities such as Soshanguve where violence is prevalent, the issue of fear evidenced in war zones can be seen in many of our children.

3.3.5 Conclusion

Unhealthy family dynamics, poverty, child neglect and war situations seriously affect a child's ability to academically perform to the best of his/her ability. They are represented below:
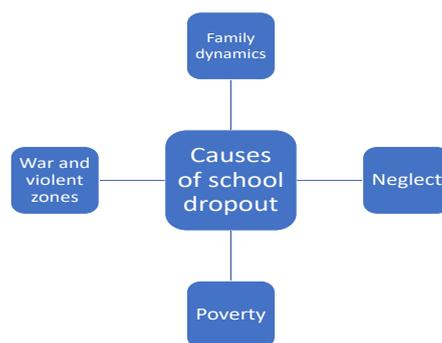
These elements could even lead to a child dropping out of school. From the above-mentioned situations, it has been established that:

- Children who are emotionally deprived, such as those who were raised by single mothers (the majority of children living in poor urban communities), are at risk of dropping out of school. However, some people defied this statement, went through school and became very influential in the communities and the world.
- Substance abuse and parents/guardians' mental disorders can also cause school dropout.
- The socio-economic status of family can force children to drop out of school in order to work.
- Age can also cause school dropout, especially when a child is a lot older than his/her classmates.
- A dysfunctional family environment and bullying can also cause a child to drop out of school.
- Poverty can also force a child to drop out of school. It deprives a child of the necessary

ingredients such as food, stationaries, protection tools (clothes, shoes) that every child needs in order to academically thrive. Poverty also has the power to take away from a child the ability to aspire to a better future, different from his/her current circumstances.

- Child neglect also causes school dropout. Many neglected children have a low self-esteem, problematic behaviour that can cause them to drop out of school.

- War and a violent environment can also cause school dropout. Many children living in these environments suffer from post-traumatic stress, which negatively affect their attention span. War and violent environments also physically prevent children from attending school. Some children end up developing a dislike for school because of the unstable school going rhythm they are forced in. This dislike can develop into a permanent school dropout. They are also external issues that cause school dropout.

3.4 INTERNAL ISSUES THAT COULD LEAD TO SCHOOL DROPOUT

The internal issues discussed here are based on research finding from psychology. It is well known (Rumberger 2012:14) that a child's psychological condition can impede his/her ability to cope academically and could lead to school dropout. Wadsby & Co. (2007: 17) stress that "children of mentally disturbed parents will themselves develop mental problems potentially compromising their academic carrier". However, of vital importance is not the mental illness per se. It is rather the intensity and chronicity of the illness, the basic social functioning of the parent, the child's constitution and social network, and the possibility for cooperation between different stakeholders to help and support the child. Additionally, what is critical, is the long-term social and psychological support the child receives. The vast majority of children living in South African poor communities such as Soshanguve don't get adequate support. This section will overview the parental influence as well as independent factors such as autism, dyslexia, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

3.4.1 Parental influence

In a study conducted in Finland (Luoma et al., 2001), it was found that "maternal depressive symptomatology at any time is a risk factor for children's well-being and academic performance". Another study (Wadsby & Co. 2007:149) found out that "children, especially boys, of psychosocial risk mothers, particularly of those mothers with alcohol/drug problems in their earlier or present lives, reported more symptoms of poor mental health than children of non-risk mothers". These children have a more "negative self-image, have experienced more life events of negative character that have been difficult to adjust to", and many of them drop out of school. Some of these children are more likely to be placed in children's homes. Many of them don't like school. Many more don't have a positive opinion about their future. Habitual smoking is more common among these children, especially during their teenager years. Some of them have suicidal thoughts, especially girls.

3.4.2 Students living with disability

Experts state "that students with emotional disabilities can be impulsive, inattentive or aggressive"; this is the kind of behaviour that gets them in trouble (education.gov.za 2016). "Learning disabilities can also cause children with special needs to be in trouble more often than their peers" (education.gov.za 2016). Children "with learning disabilities are not properly" catered for in South African public schools (education.gov.za 2016). Children who are affected by this systemic injustice are usually helpless. Many of them "dislike school, act up at school or do things to distract from the fact that they're not doing well" (education.gov.za 2016). Many of these children enter the justice system through crime very early in their lives and are academically behind their peers (education.gov.za 2016). From this finding, it is clear that many children with learning and emotional disabilities are overrepresented in our streets corners spending the majority of their time gambling, running car washes and other small businesses. Studies (Kabongo 2015:121) show that at least one in three children who get on the wrong side of the law have "a disability, ranging from a mental health disability like bipolar disorder to learning disabilities like dyslexia". In South Africa, children living "with emotional disabilities are three times more likely to be arrested" than other children (Kabongo 2015:121). Also, many of them are substance abusers. Generally, when a young person "ends up in jail", chances of him/her "staying there for many years" are high (Kabongo 2015:121). We also see many of them "being a nuisance to their community of origin through their poor choices if they are not incarcerated" (Kabongo 2015:121).

In many poor environments such as Soshanguve, the pathway to correctional service admission often starts early for some children. Many of the latter are found in public schools, which don't have resources to diagnose possible mental problems which could lead to disruptive behaviours. The South African Department of Basic Education requires schools to treat children with disabilities as normal and include them in learning environments similar to all the other children. However, very often, these children with special needs receive a different treatment than the others and an inferior type of education. For the youth living "with disabilities who end up in jail, education can be minimal, and at times, non-existent, even though" the South African government has programmes to help them receive an education (Kabongo 2015:123).

Because of the lack of professional help at schools in the community, we don't know why only 18% of children who started Grade 1 will get to Grade 12 (Kabongo 2015:123). The suspicion would majorly be, barriers to learning. "Children whose needs are met at an early age from their homes are able to go to school ready to learn" (Kabongo 2015:123). They're much less likely to cause discipline problems in the classroom. In some local schools located in poor urban areas, one of the ways discipline problems are dealt with is through suspension. For many students living with disabilities, suspensions do not motivate them to be rule abiding or focus on their studies. Many of these children "get in further trouble out of school, and some end up in prison" (Kabongo 2015:123). Several

learners who have been to prison confirmed "their trouble with the law was preceded by frequent suspensions for fighting or talking back" (Kabongo 2015:123). School codes of conduct are usually 'one size fit all' and "do not take into account students living with disabilities" (Kabongo 2015:123). This is why the implementation of school code of conduct often times lead to a "disproportionate suspension of some learners, whose actions may just be manifestations of their disability" (Kabongo 2015:122).

One of the main reasons children with learning disabilities get in trouble more often than their peers is because "teachers aren't trained in how to manage children who are insubordinate or disruptive" (Kabongo 2015:122). Experts (Kabongo 2015:122) believe that "discipline needs to move to a more teaching-based approach so that students explicitly learn correct behaviour". For example, if a learner lives with a disability that leads to aggressiveness and acting out, educators should be compassionate and understanding (Kabongo 2015:122). Considering this challenging reality of public schools, the church could assist the government to understand the reasons behind the high rate of dropout and discipline problems in schools. In poor urban areas, we have professionals such as social workers and psychologists this research would like to draw into this conversation.

The failure to effectively educate children living with mental disabilities is also due to families and the community. Some families spend a lot of time and energy seeking a cure for the disability from traditional doctors or pastors with gifts of deliverance and healing. The hope is that the child will go to school after being healed from the disability. A child's disability can also bring shame to the family. The latter would therefore hide the child from the community and keep him/her indoors until the hoped-for healing is found (education.org.za 2014).

Throughout history, the most dominant understanding of disability has to do with individual deficit. In addition, disability has always been regarded as a barrier to learning. These barriers are visual, auditory, oral, cognitive, physical, medical and psychological. Learners who experience barriers to learning as a result of disability are usually marginalized and separated from others. Below is a list (not exhaustive) of mental conditions or disabilities that can potentially lead to school dropout if not well taken care of: autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and dyslexia. We have a first-hand experience with these disabilities in our missional team tutoring ministry.

3.4.3 Autism

Autism (Wikipedia.com 2016) is defined as a "neurodevelopmental disorder characterised by impaired social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, and restricted and repetitive behaviour". It is associated with aggressive behaviour, inappropriate destruction of things, and unpredictable tantrums. It is said that a "third to a half of individuals living with autism do not develop enough natural speech to meet their daily communication needs" (wikipedia.org 2016).

3.4.4 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD (wikipedia.org 2016) is a "neurodevelopmental psychiatric disorder in which there are significant problems", decreases someone's attention span. For a correct diagnosis to be made, the symptoms must have their genesis from age 6 to 12. They must also persist for more than 6 months for a diagnosis. For pupils, ADHD results in poor school performance. Nonetheless, many pupils diagnosed with ADHD still have a pretty good attention span for tasks and activities they find interesting.

3.4.5 Dyslexia

Dyslexia is also known as "reading disorder. It is characterised by trouble with reading despite normal intelligence" (Wikipedia.org 2016). It affects people in different ways. "Its cause is believed to involve both genetic and environmental factors. Some cases run in the family and other cases begin in adulthood as the result of a traumatic brain injury, stroke, or dementia" (Wikipedia. org 2016). It is most commonly seen through someone's difficulties in spelling and pronouncing words, reading quickly and aloud, writing words, , as well as understanding what one reads. People living with dyslexia usually have the desire to learn. However, this disorder prevents them from doing so.

Pupils living with dyslexia may have difficulty "identifying or generating rhyming words or counting the number of syllables in words – both of which depend on phonological awareness" (Wikipedia.org 2016). A small percentage of pupils also have "difficulty segmenting words into individual sounds or may blend sounds when producing words, indicating reduced phonemic awareness" (Wikipedia.org 2016).

 If not properly diagnosed, dyslexic problems may "persist into adolescence and adulthood and may accompany difficulties with summarising stories, memorisation, reading aloud, or learning foreign languages" (Wikipedia.org 2016).

3.4.6 Contextual observation

Children attending schools located in poor areas such as Soshanguve don't get the privilege of being psychologically assessed, especially when they are struggling academically. Learners with academic problems are usually side lined or are simply taught in different classrooms than their fellow peers, which do not help. I believe that the psychological assessment of slow learners should be seen as a human right and the government and other stakeholders should ensure that it happens (Donohue & Bornman 2014:4).

3.4.7 Conclusion

The internal causes of school dropout covered in this study are represented below:
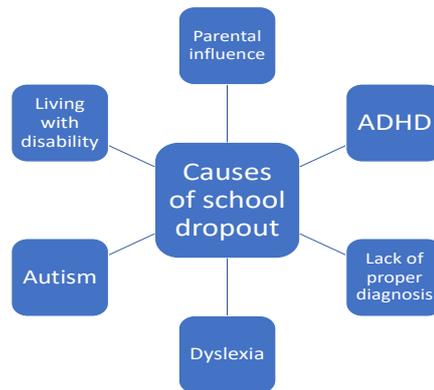
In this section, it was established that:

- Maternal depressive symptomatology, psycho social risk mother (especially drug and alcohol using ones) and habitual smoking by learners can cause school dropout.
- Children living with emotional disabilities such as bipolar disorder, dyslexia, ADHD and autism are seen as strong drop out candidates. In fact, these disorders cause many children living in poor urban environments to drop out of school because they don't get professional help at schools or in their communities of residence. Furthermore, the majority of educators are not trained to deal with learners who do not have ordinary behaviour.

3.5 PUBLIC HEALTH

A child having difficulty in coping well academically may also be caused by health-related problems connected to his/her mother while being pregnant, generic illness or other diseases. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) report states that "maternal antenatal alcohol use is one of the leading preventable causes of mental retardation in children". The damage is pretty significant. It ranges from things like learning difficulties at school or deviant behaviour in social interactions, to foetal alcohol syndrome, which is characterised by severe learning disabilities. Nickie & al. (2013:89) stress that "due to accumulating evidence that even low levels of antenatal alcohol exposure could cause adverse neurobehavioral effects in children; many countries officially recommend that pregnant women completely abstain from alcohol" for the sake of their own health and that of the unborn baby.

Chang (2004) points out that "comprehensive alcohol advice has been shown to be effective in reducing antenatal alcohol use" in pregnant mothers. However, "research has revealed that this advice is often insufficiently implemented" by healthcare workers (Jones et al.2011). For this reason, many "pregnant women and their partners remain ignorant of the consequences of antenatal alcohol use and underestimate the risks". For example, in places like Soshanguve, alcohol use is a prominent

social activity. A good percentage of women get pregnant under the influence of alcohol. Some of them while being regular alcohol users only find out about being pregnant three or four months later.

An advice for the reduction of alcohol use and abuse during a woman's pregnancy should take into consideration the increase of the self-consciousness of people who are engaged in such behaviour (Janz and Becker ,1984). Another advice is to include the pregnant mother's partner in the process of correcting the drinking habit. The expectant partner has the potential to positively change the habit of the mother to be, could majorly influence the behaviour of a pregnant woman. In fact, Janz and Becker (1984) point out that a "partner's drinking habit" has a direct effect on a pregnant mother stopping to drink or not. Also, a research assessing the "effectiveness of a brief intervention in the reduction of antenatal alcohol consumption found enhanced effects when the brief intervention was given to both the pregnant woman and her partner instead of the pregnant woman alone" (Janz and Becker,1984).

Another habit with negative ramifications on a child ability to excel academically, is smoking. Studies by different researchers have come to a similar conclusion stating that "smoking during and after pregnancy significantly increases health risks for mother and child" (Norman & al. 2014:216). These studies also point out that "prenatal and postpartum smoking are associated with premature birth, intrauterine growth retardation, low birth weight, infant mortality, sudden infant death syndrome, and childhood respiratory, behavioural and cognitive problems which have a direct link to academic troubles" (Norman & al. 2014:216).

Several strategies have been used to encourage pregnant mothers to stop smoking. Positive outcomes, in terms of smoke cessation, were experienced when a pregnant mother had health concerns for her and the baby, while breastfeeding, with good social support and when the mother experienced adverse physical reactions to smoking. Some of these mothers relapsed. The following factors are usually "associated with relapsing: lack of partner's support, easy access to cigarettes, lack of social and financial support, addiction, stress of dealing with a newborn" (Norman & al. 2014:216-217).

Some research findings argue that a lot of "pregnant mothers who engage in destructive behaviours such as alcohol, cigarettes and other prohibited drugs use come from challenging life circumstances" (Norman & al. 2014:217). Many of them are in dysfunctional relationships with family members and boyfriends. Some have been victims of violence. Many of them did not like school and some even dropped out of school. Some saw friends, siblings and parents' substance use. They also adopted that habit as a life coping mechanism. The vast majority of them live with poverty. Some have criminal records and have been incarcerated. Others were/are involved with partners who are criminal or have been in trouble with the law before (Norman & al. 2014: 217).

Research finally shows that "substance abuse is one of the major causes of class repetition at school" (American bureau of Justice, 2011) The substance most abused by pupils is alcohol, followed by cigarettes and marijuana. According to a report released by the American Bureau of Justice (2011), "drugs are known to negatively affect the brain. Alcohol and inhalants are actually the most brain damaging drugs of all, as they literally destroy neurons". Additionally, "all mood-altering drugs alter the way neurons receive, process and transmit information" (American bureau of Justice, 2011). It is done by "altering the level of certain neurotransmitters in the synapse, the space between neurons" (American bureau of Justice, 2011).

Another cause of decline in school work that lead to school dropout has been identified as "teenage pregnancy" (Modisatsile 2012:5). The latter is a concerning issue both in South Africa and internationally. A straight forward impediment that pregnancy causes pupils, is to drop out. The short-term consequence of dropping out, is the mother' limited educational achievement which have a direct connection to how well the young mother could take care of her own health as well as that of the baby. The long-term consequence could be economic instability, predisposition to single parenting and future major challenges in someone's marriage.

Pregnant learners may also experience difficulty in studying because of pregnancy-related illnesses (Modisatsile 2012:5). This new reality can make it difficult for them to struck a good balance between being a mother and a learner, as more time may be spent with the baby than on schoolwork.

3.5.1 Conclusion

In this section, it was established that a mother's ill-health during pregnancy, a pregnant mother's risky behaviour such as the use and abuse of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs can have a negative impact on the child when he/she is ready to go school. They are represented below:
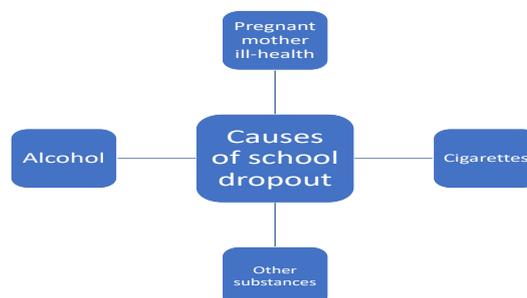
The child may underperform or completely not be fit to go to school as a consequence of the mother's health condition or behaviour during pregnancy.

3.6 CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The challenges that currently paint a sombre picture of the South African education system have to do with inefficient training of educators; unskilled educators; lack of commitment to teach by educators; lack of or inadequate pupils' support system at home; and an under resourced public schooling system. This section will discuss the quality of the South African education system, the role of educators in the challenge and the impact of politics in the current state of affairs.

3.6.1 The quality of the system

Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert (2009:7) stress that "the majority of South African learners do not have access to good quality education". Additionally, they "argue that the primary reason for dropout is the poor quality of education received by learners" in South Africa. Learners who are poor are the hardest hit by poor quality education. According to them, poverty is also an impediment to successfully dealing with a tough education system such as the one we have in South Africa.

South African learners are below par according to the international standard based on the literacy and numeracy scores when they participate in international assessments. For example, in the grade 6 tests of 2005, "learners obtained a national mean score of 38% in language, 27% in mathematics, and 41% in natural sciences" (Spaull 2015:6). During those tests some pupils from Phagameng, Thembelihle and Diepkloof Extension in the Gauteng province, "appeared disinterested in and alienated from their schooling and felt that they have no positive future to look forward to" (Spaull 2015:6). One of the parents from Phagameng township even commented that educators in their schools are not dedicated and are careless about the future of their learners who are from poor family backgrounds. He continued his complaint by stating that learners "don't feel free to go to school because of the bad things that happen in" their community (Spaull 2015:6). He also contrasted his experience of educators in the township with that of formerly white only schools in stating that educators "from formerly white only schools teach children with dedication and they care about their future. They have strict discipline rules and everything is done efficiently there (Spaull 2015:6).

Rumberger (2012:14) states that "several studies suggest that resources influence school dropout rates". For example, "the learner/educator ratio has an effect on high school and middle school attendance even after controlling for a host of other individual and contextual factors". Rumberger (2012:14) also argued that "the higher the quality of the teachers as perceived by students and learners, the lower the dropout rate, while the higher the quality of teachers as perceived by the principal, the higher the dropout rate". South Africa poor urban communities are known to have a very high learner/educator ratio. The South African basic Education minister, Angie Motshekga (2009) recognised this issue and declared that "her department had come up with a strategic objective to reduce the class size at schools". According to her, "funding was secured and each provincial department of Education" was supposed to receive an equitable share of this funding. The latter was supposed to provide additional posts to targeted schools such as the over populated ones we find in poor communities like Soshanguve. Through the reduction of the class size, the learner-educator ratio

84

would have decreased if funds were allocated to the right places. Public schools in urban environments such as Soshanguve are still over populated and this environment makes both learning and teaching difficult. This situation increases the possibility of school dropout. According to well-affirmed research findings (childrencount.org.za. 2018), "the learner-to-educator ratio (LER) contributes directly to the quality of schooling offered". It has been proven that "the more crowded the classrooms, the less educators are able to give personal attention to learners to help them along in the learning process" (childrencount.org.za. 2018). It has also been proven that "learners in overcrowded classes may find it difficult to follow the lesson, or to ask questions when they do not understand the material taught" (childrencount.org.za). Therefore, the "larger the class, the harder it is for educators to know the circumstances of individual learners" which leads to some learners feeling neglected and uncared for, hence some drop out of school in search of a caring environment or due to lack of care.

According to the South African department of basic Education data (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016), "South Africa saw a slight increase in the LER for ordinary schools between 2000 and 2004, but has seen a decrease in the LER since 2004 (partly due to the inclusion of teachers employed by school governing bodies)" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). The report also mentions that "the average LER in public schools in 2010 was 30.3, down from 32.4 in 2007. As can be expected, there are huge differences in the learner-to-educator ratio between public and independent (private) schools – at a national level; the LER in independent schools is approximately 16" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). It was also discovered that "the ratio also tends to be higher in primary schools than in secondary schools" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). However, "the national and provincial average LERs in public schools is within the nationally and internationally desired level – set at a maximum of 40 learners per educator in primary schools and 35 learners per educator in secondary schools". The reality of poor urban schools is that "classes vary enormously in size, and some educators have classes of 50 learners or more" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). The national and provincial LER average can, therefore, be deceiving for someone is trying to face the realities of schools in South African urban communities (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016).

A situation that will for sure have a positive influence the LER, "is the ability of schools to employ more educators when needed". Some schools, especially the formerly white only ones, "are able to employ additional educators using school fees that they raise independently" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). However, "schools that cannot collect (high) fees from their learners, are likely to have high LERs. High LERs may also be due to school mismanagement" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). A good number of schools in poor urban neighbourhoods "don't charge school fees in order to help the poorest of the poor children to have access to education" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). Such "schools can't afford to have teachers whose salaries will be drawn from school fees. Even when there is willingness from school management to have a healthy LER, this doesn't happen because of financial constraint" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016).

Research shows that" the learning environment and the availability of resources available, are critical factors that impact on children's ability to learn" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). Educators and the school administration "are key resources in the learning process" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). Additionally, "learning outcomes are influenced partly by the qualification and motivation of educators, and partly by a good learner-to-educator ratio" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016).

3.6.2 Educators and school administrator role

The educators and school administrators' competency are also key to producing desirable outcomes in the learning of children, as well as their commitment to educationally improving themselves. In South Africa, this is evidence that some "educators do not have a good enough understanding of subjects they teach" (childrencount.ci.org.za 2016). According to the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2016), "poor teaching, particularly in primary schools, is one of the most significant hurdles to the education of the South African child". This independent think tank produced a report on the state of mathematics education in public schools. The report stated that "the quality of teaching being given in South Africa was among the worst in the world". Another study (Spaull, 2012) showed that "South Africa's Grade 6 mathematics teachers were at the bottom of the competency spectrum when compared with their peers in eight countries, including Tanzania and Uganda". Educators "competency and complacency" is a major problem in our public schools. As a result of this attitude, only "half of all pupils who started school together made it to grade 12 and, of those, only 12% qualify for university". A study (Spaull, 2012) also cites "the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, which showed that the average South African grade 9, was two years behind the average grade eight from 21 other middle-income countries in mathematics". It has been proven that "poor teaching leads to bad knowledge impartation which can have serious psychological implications on learners potentially cultivating an inferiority complex in comparison with learners who have competent teachers". This inferiority complex could easy lead some children to view the school environment as hostile, unsafe and undesirable. These feelings could lead them to drop out of school.

Modisatsile (2012:1-2) stresses that "the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) results demonstrate that grade 3 and 6 South African learners have low levels of literacy and numeracy". We know that "without solid foundations in literacy and numeracy, our learners will never obtain the high-level skills needed by a nation to address poverty and inequality for development and growth" (Modisatsile 2012:1-2). The assessments done in 2012 for example, found out that "only 35% of learners can read, with results ranging from 12% in Mpumalanga to a high of 43% in the Western Cape. Many learners who fail ANAs end up dropping out of school". A year before these assessments were done, the minister of Basic Education stated at the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) that "the results of 2007 had shown some improvement in reading since 2003, but not in mathematics" (Modisatsile 2012:2). The minister also voiced out her concern for the standard of South African education. In her own words, she said:

"This is worrying precisely because the critical skills of literacy and numeracy are fundamental to further education and achievement in the worlds of both education and work. Many of our learners lack proper foundations in literacy and numeracy and so they struggle to progress in the system and into post-school education and training" (quoted by Modisatsile 2012:2).

Trevor Manuel (June 2011), the then National Planning Minister, also found in his diagnostic overview that:

 "The quality of schooling is substandard, especially in township schools. Substandard education and school dropout are harmful to the economy of a country because they deprive a country of the skills it needs from its human capital" (quoted by Modisatsile 2012:2).

The South African Human Science Resources Council once conducted a study where it found out that 20% of educators are absent from work on Mondays and Fridays. The absenteeism rates increase to one-third at month end. "In poor communities, educators teach an average of 3,5 hours a day, compared with about 6,5 hours a day in former white schools. This amount to a difference of three years' schooling in total between formerly white only schools and schools in poor communities" (ai.org.za 2017). These findings show how the very people, educators, who are supposed to promote the right and needs for education of the poor South African child, undermine them. I am increasingly persuaded that if South Africa had better qualified teachers in terms of skills, work ethics and integrity, paralleled with a culture of learning for teachers, parents and children, we would not have the alarming rate of school dropout we currently have (ai.org.za 2017).

3.6.3 Impact of politics

The responsibility of our substandard education system should be shared between different stakeholders. One of the key culprits is the educators. Paton (2016) demonstrates that in her Business Day article. She made a controversial statement in arguing that our South African "education has a largely immovable problem: its teachers. Many are not fit for the job". She argues that they "don't seem to have enough knowledge of the subjects they teach, they are unable to undertake high-level cognitive tasks and cannot impart a critical approach to written text". The majority of educators "do not spend the required minimum time on classroom written work and many arrive late at school or are frequently absent". In 2015, government officials were pleased to announce to the country an improvement in matric results that went up to 70%. However, they failed to point out that 300,000 learners failed and another 300,000 dropped out before reaching their senior year of high school. This holistic analysis of the outcome of our education system renders the pass rate at only 50%.

Despite this sombre reality of a dysfunctional education system our children study under, some good initiatives have been taking by government officials to improve the quality of our education. For

example, government set up workshops for educators with the intention of upskilling them. However, most initiatives have not worked. Three big obstacles have blocked the way:

First, the Bantu education ramifications are still vivid and a palpable reality in South Africa. The majority of the educators are graduate of that system. They were given a substandard type of education and they are giving to children that same poor-quality education, even with the very best of intentions. Taylor (2012) believes that "many teachers are just too badly educated themselves". Nick Taylor (2012), who until 2015 was the director of the "National Education Evaluation and Development Unit", wrote in a 2012 a comprehensive report of the stage of our education system. He had concluded that the majority of public school's foundation phase educators "lacked all three aspects needed" for quality teaching: "knowledge of the subject; knowledge of the curriculum; and knowledge of how to teach the subject". He went into details to say these educators are both unable "to follow the prescripts of the official curriculum", and "unaware of what these are". He was also at pains in mentioning basis issues like "teacher punctuality and absenteeism, have not been solved at many schools".

Second, educators' reluctance of attending government sponsored trainings. Educators seem to think poorly of these initiatives stressing that they undermine their dignity. In reality many of them feel that such initiatives threaten their job security because they are aware that their competence will be exposed. No wonder, educators have spoken against and even resisted all government attempts at making them do competence testing. Nonetheless, in places where competence testing was conducted, the results were disappointing and humiliating, to say the least. Bansilal (2014) from the university of KwaZulu-Natal did a study in which, "two hundred and fifty-three Matric mathematics teachers" were tasked to write "a shortened version of a Matric mathematics paper. The average result was 57%, with a quarter of the sample achieving less than 50%. A third of the teachers were unable to tackle complex procedures or problem-solving questions". In 2007, there was already a SACMEQ test score that was made public. He was conducted on grade 6 mathematics educators. "The results showed that 79% educators had content knowledge levels below the grade they were teaching in" (bdlive.co.za 2016). The report finally points out that the "lack of proficiency in English, the main language of instruction from grade 4 up, also undermines the efficacy of teacher training and teaching" (bdlive.co.za 2016).

Third, one of the teachers' unions called the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). It is a political ally of the current the South Africa governing party. It has taken advantage of that to focus on many things, except the education of children. SADTU is known to have "distorted the lines of accountability between the employer and employees to the extent that normal labour relations hardly pertain" (bdlive.coza 2017). Several people who are concerned by our education system, including a growing section of the governing party, have stressed that the place to begin fixing our dysfunctional public education system, is to deal decisively with SADTU. "With 240,000 of SA's 390,000 teachers, concentrated heavily in township and rural schools, SADTU has the power to block any initiative it

perceives as threatening" (bdlive.co.za 2017). Below are some of the government good initiatives that SADTU has successful prevented to the disadvantage of our children:

• "2006: a plan to license teachers to weed out the 20%-30% considered untrainable";

• "2007: a proposal to reintroduce school inspectors";

• "2011: competency testing for entry into the profession and for promotion posts mooted in the National Development Plan";

• "2011: performance-related pay and incentives for teachers that are also recommended in the plan";

• "2013: testing of Matric markers; and"

• "2015: the designation of teachers (this became principals only) as an "essential service" to prevent them from striking" (bdlive.co.za 2017).

SADTU approved of the 2011 government initiative to introduce annual national assessments (ANA) for educators. This was after it had been "objecting to the standardised testing for children in the fear that this would be used to evaluate" educators (bdlive.co.za 2017). However, in 2015, it refused that educators take them on the backdrop of a disagreement with government officials over "the frequency of these tests" (bdlive.co.za 2017). SADTU general secretary Mugwena Maluleke, amid criticisms from different quarters argued that:

"Under skilled teachers should be identified and empowered through training, not testing. Once you say to teachers that they must write the same test as their learners, you create resistance. A positive tool to identify their skills needs to be developed … why can't we identify these particular teachers, given their historical challenges, and come up with a programme of empowerment?" The underlying assurance the union wanted to get was for teachers not to be in danger of losing their jobs even if their "weakness is exposed" (bdlive.co.za 2017).

In 2015, the Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga "piloted a tool for self-diagnostic assessment for mathematics and English — an anonymous test meant to direct teachers to areas of the curriculum they should work on" (bdlive.co.za 2017). The tests were kicked off in 2016 and the results were not meant to affect the educators job security. The minister stressed: "This removes the biggest barrier to testing, which is stigma. If teachers feel they are going to be judged, you will not get through to them" (bdlive.co.za 2017). Motshekga came up with another creative strategy "to introduce quality control into the selection of Matric markers, by setting criteria that markers must have an 80% pass rate at their school to qualify" (bdlive.co.za 2017). Another creatively strategy the department of basic education came up with is called "One Plus Four" (bdlive.co.za 2017). It is geared toward upskilling grade 8 and 9 Mathematics educators. The framework of this initiative is that educators get trained on Mondays. The training covers the weekly knowledge content that learners had to be taught.

Therefore, every Monday, educators get the curriculum to be covered in classrooms for the whole week.

The basic education minister Angie Motshekga should be applauded for being creative in upskilling educator. Children will definitely benefit from having competent and dedicated educators in the classrooms. She was pragmatic in implementing One Plus Four. The country had experienced many fruitless disagreements between government and SADTU. If the government were to impose policies that SADTU disagree with, it will hit children the hardest. For example, a "strike by 240,000 teachers means 800,000 children will be on the street" (bdlive.co.za 2017).

Another problem that contributes to the high rate of school dropout is the lack of capacity in teaching:

"According to the "Relations Council of South Africa, between 18 000 and 22 000 teachers leave the teaching profession every year, either voluntarily or forcibly. The assumption is that the 18 000 to 22 000 educators who exit the teaching profession need to be replaced by an equal number of teachers coming in. There is an estimated output of 6 000 to 10 000 new teachers graduating annually from higher education institutions, some of whom might not enter teaching or who might go abroad to teach, as a result of low salaries and poor working conditions in South Africa. In light of this, the government needs to respond to the problems raised in the report. The other aspect that the government should look at, is the time spent by teachers in classrooms. Strike action, sometimes unofficial, consumes as much as 5% of school time and holding a union meeting during school time is often the norm in township schools" (Modisatsile 2012:4).

As a result of this, educators put themselves under pressure to go through the yearly curriculum in a short period of time and fail to accommodate slow learners. The latter may feel neglected and drop out of school.

Despite South Africa subscription to the United nations Millennium Development Goals 2, our education system seems to be in shambles. The government has made a lot of efforts that are not yielding good results yet. It, in fact, spends 18,5% of its annual budget on education. However, the latter still "remains in a poor state of affairs with the majority of its products being underrated graduates and dropouts because of its inability to take care of outside the box learners" (Modisatsile 2012:1-2). Additionally, "over the past five years the country has seen a doubling of the education budget, but still the system has failed to reverse unacceptably low exam results or to improve the standard of teaching" (Modisatsile 2012:1-2). Based on these facts, it is fair to stress that the quality and functionality of education need significant improvement. "Within this context there is also a need to place emphasis on the human rights of learners, which guarantee the right to education", and precisely quality education (Modisatsile 2012:1-2).

Modisatsile (2012:3) also stresses that violence in schools remains a key cause of school dropout. Some learners drop out of school because of being bullied. Corporal punishment, although banned by

the government, still occurs in the classroom. Rape of is a reality in our schools. Perpetrators range from educators, other school officials and learners.

Another significant issue in the education system, is the service provider: The South African government. Nguta (2015) tells us that despite the government significant financial investment in education, outcomes are still disgraceful. Friedman (1955) identified three roles, governments traditionally play in education: legislating for compulsory education, financing education and running schools. He argued that the first two are justifiable while the last one is indefensible. He was right in 1955 and he still is now. Why is it that a school run by the government is more likely to fail than a school run by private individuals? Why is it that any enterprise or organisation run by the government is more likely to fail than one run by private individuals? There can be no convincing explanation than that of Friedman: There is stronger motivation to succeed in all enterprises run by private individuals than there is in those run by the government. If an enterprise run by private individuals fails, they have to close it down or be responsible for the costs to keep it going. So in order to avoid digging into their own pockets, they are forced to become innovative and efficient.

However, when a government enterprise fails, it doesn't have to close down. Instead, more money is thrown into it and this money does not come from the people who are responsible for the failure of the enterprise, it comes from taxpayers. I believe that this has been seen with Eskom, SAA, the SABC and other failed entities. I also believe that this may be the main reason why government schools fail in South Africa. The people who run these schools do not have the motivation for them to succeed. This is why it is not unusual that textbooks are not delivered on time or at all, vacancies are not filled despite available resources and there is generally no appetite for quality education. If a legitimate independent school operated as inefficiently as a government school, parents would take their children away and the school would ultimately have to close down. So in order to avoid this, independent schools are forced to run efficiently and deliver good results.

Nguta (2015) states that parents naturally want the best for their children. But if that is the case, you may ask, then why don't the parents remove their children from failing government schools? They don't because they lack the income and means to exercise choice of good schools for their children. Consequently, their children are trapped in drop-out factories styled as "no-fee schools". No-fee schools are inferior schools. They provide inferior education to disadvantaged children who have no alternative to the inferior education they provide. There are twelve million South African children who face this cruel fate against half a million middle-class children who have access to good schools. Unequal education is wrong because it perpetuates inequality.

To continue on blaming the government Modisatsile (2012:4-5) rightly point out that in many schools located in poor communities, learning and teaching materials, such as textbooks, are unavailable. This situation makes it hard for the educators to teach to the best of their ability and for the learners to be on par with the knowledge required for their grade. "According to the South African Bill of Rights, everyone has the right to education, and it is the government's duty: to build enough schools and

provide enough teachers for everyone to be able to go to school and obtain a proper education" (Modisatsile 2012:4-5).

Until today, 24 years into the democratic South Africa, "a high number of South African schools still lack vital learning resources. In many instances the government fails not only to provide facilities such as libraries and laboratory material, but also crucial learning materials such as books and stationaries. The shortage of learning materials results in a further decline in the standard of education" (ai.org.za 2017). Most educators have a hard time teaching in under resourced environments, as it hinders their performance and that of the learners. Some educationalists point out that we don't have a "teacher development system, empowering teachers to use their techniques and they refer to the closure in the mid-1990s of the country's teaching colleges" (ft.com 2017). The government took that decision with the expectation that universities will provide a better standard of teaching and supply both human capital and relevant skills needed to up lift our education standard. However, universities have been unable to produce teachers in sufficient numbers and with the relevant skills. Additionally, very few "graduates want to move to impoverished communities (ft.com 2016). In February 2011 Mrs Motshekga, the basic education minister said: "I do not believe that the South African education system is in crisis, but that the education of black children is" (ai.org.za 2016). She blamed the crisis on a lack of discipline and focus of educators. Reality has proven the minister wrong, because our education system is indeed in crisis. Additionally, this crisis is a shared responsibility that include the government and educators, as well as other stakeholders.

They are also some unresolved systemic issues that the government needs to address. Jansen (2011:100) states that grade repetition remains high starting from the very first grade and with more than half the students (51.5%) repeating one or more years in grades ten-twelve. More than 4% of students across the country miss a year or more of school. And dropout rates are very high as learners move into high school, with 20% of eighteen-year old not in school and not completing grade 12. The statistics about the overall improvement of pass rates are deceiving. If the white and middle-class students' results were not included, the real inequalities and underperformance for the majority of the population will become evident. In 2007, black learners from townships and rural areas who dropped out of school were 325181 out of a total of 395453, which is 82% (Jansen 2011:101).

Jansen (2011:107-108) remarks that the teacher training inputs are generous, but they do not address the knowledge problem; typically, such training is geared towards information transfer on a generic basis, rather than according to the knowledge needs of a set of teachers. Different kinds of knowledge need to be considered: knowledge of the subject matter (content knowledge); knowledge of teaching (pedagogy); "knowledge of learners (psychology); knowledge about knowledge (epistemology); knowledge of communities from which the learners come (anthropology, sociology of learning); knowledge of classroom organisation and discipline (managerial knowledge)"; and more. It is the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge that remain the major dimensions of what we here call the knowledge problem. Put bluntly- and there is evidence for this in South Africa- if a

teacher does not know enough about a particular subject, he/she is not able to teach that subject effectively, irrespective of the generic training inputs and the individuals personality characteristics of that teacher. This is why systematic error often shows up in the Grade twelve assessments of subject scripts of particular schools. The same schools seem to show the same errors, indicative of a knowledge problem of the teachers in respect of different aspects of the curriculum. The government is aware of this problem, and that is why the President's Office came up with one of the most remarkable interventions to address the problem, to treat teachers as if they were learners in the classroom. This 'infantilisation' of educators is something for which South Africa will pay a heavy price. This official act is an admission that the teachers who occupy many of the South African classrooms as (presumably) trained professionals in fact have little to no knowledge of what was required to teach for gainful learning. In the process, the vast vestiges of professional facades among the educators were stripped away. This sombre reality of the poor quality of educators we have is responsible for the poor quality of education we know and increases school drop-out as many educators are incapable to help out slow learners or learners with special needs.

Another issue to highlight is at the government policymaking level. It is represented in what was generally referred to as Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Jansen (2011:108-109) thinks that "this highly esoteric and unworkable policy collapsed primary schooling in the country in a spectacular mix of curriculum verbosity and impossible expectations for implementation". He continues to say even the most ideological and optimist of bureaucrats saw this complex curriculum plan falter at the classroom interface: most teachers did not understand it; most schools did not have the resources to implement it, most districts did not have well learned officials to interpret it; and most senior officials at national level do not have the curriculum expertise to devise simple and sensible plans for a weak and unequal school system. The attempt to devise a weakly conceived curriculum was made all the more futile by the incapacity to deliver on basic services especially to schools in townships, rural areas and large provinces. To this day, many schools – especially those in rural areas - are unable to start the academic year on time because of a simple administrative incapacity to manage enrolment and develop schedules in advance. In our education system, the critical skills of leadership, management and administration from national to provincial and to local levels are lacking. Obviously with the passage of time, the familiar excuses of the legacy of apartheid; the lack of resources; and the need for more time for reforms to take effect is increasingly becoming frustrating to the ordinary South African. It is clear from the current bureaucratic and administrative ineptitude we see, that the post-apartheid South Africa has placed much more emphasis on policy making than on planning. It has been assumed that merely generating policies would translate smoothly into the realities of planning and practice amongst a docile electorate or, in this case, schools; unfortunately, that is not the case.

There is also a low level of accountability for performance within the department of basic Education. This helped me understand why a black teacher in a township school would place his/her child in a former white school, miles away in a middle-class suburb. Additionally, why same teachers would disrupt township schools filled with children from poor neighbours, knowing that his/her child is safely

ensconced in a school where the time table remains uninterrupted. This sad reality does not make sense outside of a theory of contempt for township schools and township children among the teachers themselves. Educators frown upon school inspections and see them as political interference in teachers' work. Many school principals have voiced their inability to act against errant teachers, such as latecomers or early leavers, for fear of being targeted by a militant trade union. The more established and especially the formerly white schools are now supervised by black district officials whom in most cases know less than them about the subject matter, and even less about the organisation and management of schools. The black bureaucrat from the district, inevitably a local comrade, now has two choices to make. The first one is to impose his/her authority as a way of compensating for the knowledge and experience gap between them. The second would be to simply allow the former white only schools to continue running their school operations as they always did, and not interfering by rather spending his time with the disadvantaged schools. The resolution of the crisis of our current two school systems in South Africa can only be found in a political solution. The large black, underperforming school system requires the restoration of political authority over schools back to where it belongs, in the hands of government and the community and not the teachers' unions. It then requires political authority and a community through learners' parents' representatives that can effectively hold teachers and principals accountable. Accountable for re-establishing the rhythms and routines of schooling that have time tables and uninterrupted teaching schedules alongside the routines of teaching duties, homework assignments, student feedback, school improvement, and the like. Without this culture of teaching and learning firmly established in every school of our country, all policies and innovations will find little traction in the chaos and unpredictability of black urban and rural township schooling after apartheid (Jansen 2011:112-113).

In the meantime, the smaller, middle class and largely white apparently functional educational system still produces the best quality performance we have in the country. It is in this small group that we find the majority of mathematics and physical science passes, a group of students who annually produce the class inequalities of South Africa where a small privileged minority are again destined to rule economically over the failing of masses (Jansen 2011:112).

3.6.4 Conclusion

In this section, it was established that the quality of the South African education system is mediocre based of its product output. Many children don't like or fit into the school system that is presented to them, hence they dropout. Many schools from urban communities are under resourced. A school's resources have a significant influence on school dropout.

School officials' commitment to teach and run institutions efficiently is questionable. This attitude makes school not pleasant for many children. As a consequence, many of them drop out.

Political alliance between the governing party and a teachers' union called SADTU has also

contributed to the dysfunctional nature of our education system which encourages school dropout. This alliance has caused many standoff situations where the government was unable to implement key policies and strategies that could have helped to cure the maladies our education system suffers from.

The government alone as the manager of our education system has failed dismally to hire adequate staff capable of implementing its goals and aims. Hence many of its policies are ineffective. It also failed to adequately replace educators who left the system by new hires. All the elements discussed in this section on the role of education in school dropout are represented here:
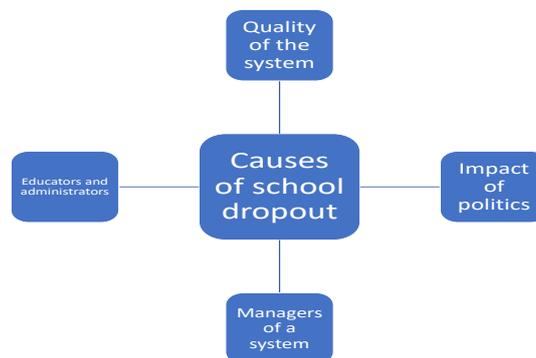
3.7 CONCLUSION

Children's inability to cope well at school can be caused by several factors including those mentioned above namely external issues, internal issues, health and challenges related to our education system. But perhaps the most significant justice issues many poor communities such as Soshanguve face is an inequitable education system that fails to accommodate children who don't fit into the mainstream schooling system or who have some learning disabilities. In many of our township schools, children are not reading at their expected grade level, their writing skills are mediocre, basic mathematical skills such as multiplication and division tables are not mastered, there is an unhealthy reliance on calculators, and generally, the achievement gap is widening between the poor and non-poor. Too many children from poor communities are dropping out of school as early as primary school. After more than twenty years of democracy, South Africa seems to struggle to stem this tide of educational decline inherited from apartheid via bantu education (Castellanos 2015:147-148). This struggle is real in light of the current high rate of school dropout throughout South Africa. Despite of the many interventions that have been suggested to the government and the various implementations of them, the school dropout rate is concerningly high.

Now that this literature review has been able to establish external causes, internal causes, healthcare issues and educational challenges that can cause children to drop out of school, it important to figure

out ways to be good news with this knowledge. On this journey, the Christian narrative embedded in the body of Christ will serve as an inspiration. The church is understood here, "as people of God, the body of Christ, God's stewards of creation, a people in relationship bound to love one another and help one another in solution seeking" (Hendricks 2010:284). Hendricks (2010:284) challenges "the church to be intentional in its interaction with real issues" such as school dropout. That journey should equip people for inner change as well as their collective calling "to love God and their neighbours" (Hendricks 2010:284). In doing so, "they would try to participate in God's ongoing involvement in moving towards an anticipated future reality" of justice and mutual compassion (Hendricks 2010:284). On a societal level, the church has an important role to play in areas such as our broken education system. "It must witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and proclaim prophetically that justice be done to all" (Hendricks 2010:284). Part of this vocation is to get involved in giving preferential treatment to the outcast such as school dropout. The church will fully be a true representative of God's justice if it is holistic its approach to solution seeking. Such a holistic approach will be possible if it is teachable and interact wisely and meaningfully with results and consequences of school dropout that other disciplines of knowledge found. The next chapter will focus of these results.

A concluding poem captures the heart of this chapter:

I blame my parents for being tall,
I blame my mother for being black in complexion,
I blame God for being black African,
I blame Africa for my poverty.
I blame South Africa for the violence around me,
I blame Soshanguve for being far away from Pretoria,
I blame a friend for my dislike of school,
I blame a mate for my fatigue after playing basketball.
I blame, I blame, I blame!
I now smell like blame,
I walk like blame,
I have become like blame,
My neighbourhood is called blame.

CHAPTER IV: CONSEQUENCES OF SCHOOL DROPOUT ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES OF KNOWLEDGE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section examines consequences of school dropout in a society. This research selected perspectives from missiology, economics, development studies and sociology in its compilation of these consequences. The role of this chapter in the praxis cycle is discernment for action, where the exploration of the consequences of school dropout from the perspective of four fields of knowledge, will help shape the action of this study in its effort to minimise school dropout. The awareness gained from these four disciplines of knowledge will help shed some light on the impact of school dropout of people as human capital and society in general.

4.2 MISSIOLOGY

In Genesis 1:27, the bible declares that all human beings were created in God's likeness and with equal worth. Wright (2010:50) argues along the same line in saying that the first mention of human beings in the Bible states two fundamental things about humans: firstly, God made us in his image (both male and female), and secondly, God intended us to be representatives of his image. And also through the calling of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, God intended all human beings to be the conduit of his blessing through who they were created to be. Van Dyke & Rocke (2012:95) rightly point out that the incarnation of Jesus in the world teaches us the reality of God's presence everywhere. The incarnation takes a world that we have divided and pulls it back together, for God proclaims that all of life is holy.

However, some people, some institutions and some part of the church discriminate against other human beings. Among the discriminated against and marginalised people of our society are school dropouts. In Mark 2:15-17, Jesus told his disciples that he (the doctor) did not come for the healthy, but the sick and marginalised of our society such as school dropout.

Our society seems to be okay that some people don't fit into a system, and therefore they are useless and some part of the body of Christ agrees with this way of doing things.

4.2.1 Institution centred approach vs God centred approach

Dropout is very likely in a formation structure that has a narrow aim to increase membership. This is evident in many local churches where the emphasis seems to be on increasing membership than making disciples. Wright (2010:129) argues "that part of the mission of God's people is to have God so much at the centre of who they are and what they do, that there is a centripetal force, God's own

gravitational pull, that draws people into the sphere of his blessing". Missional magnetism is what we call this. Missional magnetism should lead us to discover what God affirms in Matthew 25:14-30 that every human being has a God giving talent that he/she called to bless others with. As a church, our witness loses credibility when we contradict it by discriminating against others in the name of selection. As the body of Christ, our light will shine only when the world can see Christlike works through us. In a word, if we are to speak of Jesus with integrity, we have to resemble him in taking care of the marginalised, such as the school dropout, as a way of emulating the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:1-6 (Wright 2010:131). The high rate of school dropout in poor urban communities shows how unjust our world is and the church is silent or inactive in the issue.

4.2.3 The church as an accomplice

The high rate of school dropout is an incubator of marginalised people in our society. Rodriguez (2003: 56) remarks that "Jesus' experience" with marginalisation "at the hands of his own people resonates with" school dropout, "who are usually treated as foreigners in their native land. School dropouts seem to be the stone the 'builders' that our society has rejected, yet we have seen such stones become the cornerstone of our society. Such as Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg (Wikipedia.org 2018), respectively founders of Microsoft and facebook who dropped out of Harvard university but went on to become very successful inventors.

This is why I agree with Kwame Bediako (1995:98) that the church needs to "meet God in the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking immediately to us in our particular circumstances, in a way that assures our people that we" care in taking preferential options for the marginalised such as school dropout .

Rene Padilla (quoted by Wright 2010:110) once stated that a "church without social ethics rooted in the moral vision of the scripture with its emphasis on justice, mercy and humility before God is in no condition to avoid" participating in marginalising some human beings. The high rate of school dropout in our poor urban communities and the inaction of the church in being part of the solution to it exposes how the church has moved away from God's preferential action to the poor and marginalised like it is well stated in Isaiah 61: 1.

4.2.4 Conclusion

The exclusion of other human beings such as school dropouts, goes beyond God's ways because we are all created in his likeness. Some church structures are built on encouraging dropout in the name of selection. These structures are so focused on positional things such as membership than living kingdom likely on earth as it is in heaven. Such structures make the church to be an accomplice in the exclusion of others instead of it being an agent of affirming God's love for everyone through their uniqueness. In this regard, the church be seen as an encourager of school dropout.
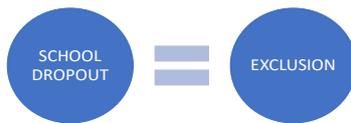
This encouragement has an effect on any country's economy. What does economics think about school dropout?

4.3 ECONOMICS

In South Africa school dropouts are not considered as assets, but a burden to the economy. Many of them require government assistance in order to survive, they rely on the already overburdened and under resourced public healthcare system because it is free of charge, some of them resort to crime as a means of survival and become a liability to households, communities and the country in general.

 South Africa is a developing country and it needs a diversity of skills in order to develop. The high rate of school dropout is an evidence of our inability as a country to convert the individual God given talents of everybody into a diversity of skills that our economy needs in order to develop. Commenting about the current South Africa high unemployment rate, the former president Thabo Mbeki (2016:vi) once commented that South Africa primarily lacks skills, not jobs. And school dropout increases the lack of skills.

It is important to go into details about how school dropout is a liability to the economy of a country.

4.3.1 Government assistance

In lamenting about of the high percentage of school dropout in the American inner cities, Rumberger (20012:2-3) wondered why such concerns for dropouts is there. He (Rumberger 20012:2-3) answered that "one reason is that dropouts cost the nation money". Dropouts are less likely to find and hold jobs that pay enough money to keep them off government assistance. In 1998, 75% of people who dropout out of high school were unemployed in the United States of America. Even when school dropouts find jobs, their salaries can't sustain them. High unemployment and low earnings cost a country like South Africa both lost productivity and reduced tax income. This situation has negative ramifications on how government can deliver on promised services. South Africa has a 48% youth unemployment rate as of the end of December 2016 according to statistics South Africa (2017). And the general unemployment rate is 26,5%. People who have qualifications stand a good chance to get employment; whereas those who dropped out of school contribute 59% of the unemployed in South Africa (statssa.gove.za 2017).

One of the greatest impacts of school dropout is seen in government assistance in welfare. School dropouts earn less in wages. They rely a lot on public assistance programs such as grants, free school for children, food parcels and free housing.

4.3.2 A burden on public healthcare system

School dropouts cost South Africa money in many ways. Research "demonstrates that school dropouts are more likely to have health problems that would render them very dependent on our already under- resourced and overburdened public health care system" (Rumberger 2012:3). These health problems generate large social costs that government must factor into its budgeting. They negatively affect priorities such as infrastructure development, the betterment of the quality or the improvement of public health facilities. In the United States, in one city alone, it is estimated that a year's cohort of school dropouts from the city school system would cost $3.2 billion in lost earnings. Additionally, more than $400 million in social services is related to health issues such as substance abuse and addictions (Rumberger 2012:4).

4.3.4 Crime

According to Harlow (2003:17) 75% of state prison inmates in the United States of America are school dropouts. "School dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested in their lifetime. A 1% increase in high school graduation rates would save approximately $1.4 billion in incarceration costs, or about $2,100 per each male high school graduates. A one-year increase in average education levels would reduce arrest rates by 11%".

In South Africa, many high school dropouts start by indulging themselves in alcohol and drug abuse on the road to criminal life. According to the department of Justice and correctional services (2017) five out six young offenders dropped out of school before they got in trouble with the law. These young offenders cite common problems encountered by youths as contributing factors to them committing crime. The most pressing issues are peer pressure, unstable families, unstable communities and lack of education and development. Generally, 82% of State prison inmates do not have a matric certificate. In his 2014 speech, the then Correctional services minister Sibusisso Ndebele stressed that the average inmate is a young substance abuser who, has dropped out of school before high school, is functionally illiterate and, more often than not, homeless.

Crime has a negative impact on the economy of South Africa (2016). Many school dropouts resort to crime as a means of survival. Many of them end up in prisons. As part of initiatives to discourage more youth from doing crime and being incarcerated, the South African Correctional Services holds 'Safer Schools Crime Awareness Tours' countrywide. During these tours, convicted inmates, who are serving long-term sentences for various crimes, address learners. These inmates, who are participating in rehabilitation programmes whilst in custody, interact with the learners, educate, and

sensitise them about the consequences of committing crime. As part of on-going crime awareness and crime prevention initiatives in schools throughout the country, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), in partnership with various stakeholders, are targeting school learners. Many of the latter drop out of school and become easy recruits into criminal activities which hurt our economy.

The South African government (2016) has been increasing the correction services budget in order to educate illiterate and school dropout offenders. More than 50 Book Clubs have been established in correctional centres across the country, to promote a culture of reading, and writing, amongst inmates. We know that literacy provides invaluable benefits for rehabilitation of offenders and the quality of our development as a nation is measured by how we treat the outcast such as the offenders. In improving the lives of the neediest in our society such as offenders, in a manner that effectively breaks the cycle of violence and crime, the South African government is doing the right thing in instilling among offenders, a lifelong reading and learning cultures. However, the ideal society should be crime free and government should not have to spend money on offenders.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) (2016), many schools maintain zero-tolerance policies when it comes to discipline. These schools impose expulsion and suspension on students despite the circumstances of their offenses at school. These policies, which are more likely to affect children of colour, push students out of the classroom and into the juvenile justice system. "The School to Prison Pipeline," a report from ACLU, says many students face barriers to re-enter the traditional school system. As a result of this discouraging reality, they permanently stay away from school. The children who are able to graduate from high school, still struggle to get employed because of their background of crime. This sad situation, often times, leads many of these youths to a life of crime. Crime will lead them in and out of prison. With the latter, they will become a liability to the government which has to shoulder the cost of their incarceration.

4.3.5 The liability factor of school dropouts

Through the help of van der Merwe (2017), I have come to understand that economic costs have two aspects: implicit and explicit costs. Explicit cost refers to the actual payment that has to be made. It is the easiest cost to keep record of because it is physical money that goes out of a consumer's bank account or out of the government budget.

Implicit costs (or opportunity cost) is seen as the value of the missed opportunity. It is difficult to calculate because someone would have to specifically look at the alternative and how much he/she could have gained if a different choice was made. For example: if someone drops out of school for a small low-paying job, then the benefit is that he/she will get an income that he/she would not have had if he/she stayed in school. However - this is not the whole story, there is a huge opportunity cost because if she/he finished school and delayed getting an income for a year or two then his/her income would have been substantially larger, he/she would have more opportunities, etc. So the

opportunity cost of dropping out early is a higher wage, increased opportunities, etc - that is something that he/she could have had but missed out on. Implicit cost can also be something bad that is happening - social cost - like depression - there is no Rand cost to suffering from depression but it is a cost to individuals and society nonetheless.

The economic cost of school dropout can also be looked at from a microeconomics and macroeconomics points of view. Microeconomics look at a single consumer, or in our case an individual who dropped out of school. While macroeconomics will look at the impact on the entire economy - the impact of all school drop-outs on the entire economy (unemployment rate/inflation rate/ gross domestic product/etc). I am summarising the economic cost of school dropouts as follows:

	MICRO	MACRO
EXPLICIT COST		Increase expenditure in state welfare programs Crime implies a certain cost
OPPORTUNITY COST	Individuals have lower potential income Individuals suffer from self-doubt and other issues such as depression Exclusion from formal economy Lower social mobility Not a contributing member of society Less balanced (and happy) person Losing a potential entrepreneur and job creator	Increase poverty Increase income inequality Lower social mobility GDP (size of economy) below potential size Less tax revenue

From this table, it looks like the largest part of the explicit cost comes down on the state that has to provide for these pupils. However, this seems like the tip of the iceberg - compared to the massive implicit cost that is carried by everybody in society: the dropouts, the state and the society at large. This is very difficult to put a rand-value on the total economic costs due to the large portion implicit costs.

Looking at the abovementioned facts, I am inspired by Biko (quoted by Mbembe 2007:136) who always stressed that "self-examination and self-scrutiny are essential starting points for the

development of true self-consciousness" and our emotional healing. I have come to understand that one of the reasons why there is still so much poverty in South Africa is because as a nation we have not being able to figure out to best way to minimise the high rate of school dropout. This situation has a negative impact on our economy because the country is not able to match the skills required to quickly develop our economy with the skills produced.

Education is vital for economic development and school dropout leads to economic underdevelopment. According to vision 2030:

 "Education is a key component of economic growth because it has direct influence on entrepreneurship, productivity growth and then increases employment opportunities. Education also helps in making potential youth for the enhancement of ability, creativity and systematic skills to contest with the fast-changing global market demands. It is an imperative investment for human and economic development. This human capital accelerates economic activity and development".

People who drop out of school hurt a country's ability to produce innovative minds and resources a developing like South Africa needs. School dropout of is therefore an impediment to the ideal society we desires to see. Due to school dropout, the South African economy must find alternatives to cover the loss of income in tax that school dropout citizens caused by their unemployment or under employment to pay the cost of basic services we all need. Many school dropouts will struggle to get decent jobs in our South African developing economy. They will therefore spend most their lives relying on government assistance. As adults, school dropout will most likely struggle with poverty and will fail to be agents of the kind of society we want to become (Latif 2015:2-3). It is therefore important to find out what the development studies say about school dropout.

4.3.6 Conclusion

School dropouts usually become a liability to the economy of a country. They seem to be overly reliant on the South African government help for their survival. In contrast, they pay very little in the government system in terms of tax. Many of them are also a liability because they are involved in crime. The latter is destruction at its very best. Crime destroys the infrastructure of a community, the human capital, trust and harmony of a community. These destructions have a negative effect on the economy. These thoughts are captured below:
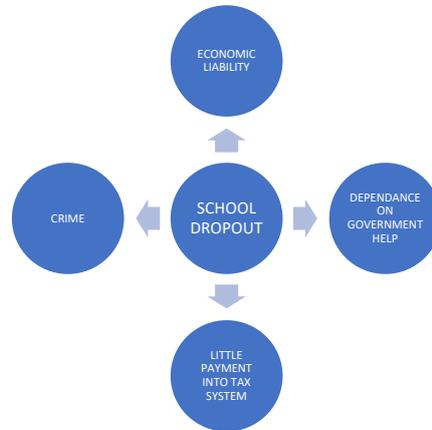
4.4 DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Green & Haines (2012: xi), development experts, asked this rhetorical question to their audience: "Can community residents work together to improve their quality of life?" The answer was positive because they had been part of numerous experiences of residents collaborating to provide affordable housing, job training, and credit for local businesses. Yet there continued to be scepticism about the ability of poor urban communities to overcome problems of poverty, underdevelopment and social isolation. They stressed that unused or under used human capital hurt the development of a community and country.

People who drop out of school are considered as unused and under used part of the human capital of a country. The development expert Manfred Max-Neef states that "development is about people and not about objects". This means that "the best development process will be that which allows the greatest improvement in people's quality of life. The quality of life has to do with the ability to satisfy your fundamental human needs" (van Niekerk, 2015). People who drop out of school are not equipped to proactively participate in the building of the society. They are, therefore, deprived of their fundamental need of participation in the seeking of the peace and prosperity of their country like Jeremiah 29:7 states. This study will look at what effect being unused or under used has on a person, a community and a country.

4.4.1 Effect on a person

Being unused or under used have the potential to make someone feel worthless. Worthlessness (goodtherapy.org 2018) **is** defined "as a feeling of desperation and hopelessness. Individuals who feel worthless often times feel insignificant, useless, or believe they have nothing valuable to offer the world". The feeling of worthlessness usually leads to depression. People diagnosed with depression often report the above-mentioned feelings, and children who were neglected or abused may carry a sense of worthlessness into adulthood. According to Aaron Beck (2016) people who are depressed usually feel defeated, defective, deserted and deprived. Many experts (psychcentral.com 2018) find that "people who feel worthless see themselves as deficient in the qualities of life they highly value such as intelligence, achievement, popularity, attractiveness, health and strength".

The feeling of worthlessness usually leads people who dropped out of school to self-destructive behaviours such as substance abuse. Their use of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and other substances make them feel in control of something although they are a nuisance to their health and an impediment to their ability to contribute to self-development and the development of others. The feeling of worthlessness does not only have a negative impact on an individual; but also, on their community of residence.

4.4.2 Impact on the community

People feeling unused and under used also has implications on the development of a community. Many people who dropped out of school and feel worthless, lack the confidence to actively and positively contribute to the development of their community. "Confidence comes from feelings of well-being, acceptance of your body and mind (self-esteem) and belief in your own ability, skills and experience" (skillsyouneed.com 2018). If the feeling of worthlessness leads to self-destruction, it sometimes leads to the destruction of one's own community assets. We experience such a lot in South Africa, through service delivery protests.

Service delivery protests (timeslive.co.za 2018) are increasingly violent in South Africa. In many of these service delivery protests, roads, libraries, shopping malls, schools and other community assets get destroyed.

(Tirivangasi & Mugambiwa 2016:41) stress that in community-based service delivery protests, the majority of participants are the unemployed and the youth who dropped out of school. These protests have been accompanied by images of burnt tyres, looting of goods, and destruction of property, road blockades and violence against foreigners. Nowadays, most service delivery protests have resulted in the looting of foreign owned goods. Many allegations are posed against the foreign nationals. Some of them are: not registering their businesses, not paying tax, selling products below market price, receiving unfair privileges from wholesale companies due to shared religious beliefs, opening their shops within close proximity to locally-owned businesses thereby capturing some of the locals'

105

markets; Foreign-owned businesses sell fake goods or non-South African products, operating their businesses for nearly 24 hours every day and even having workers sleep in shops". These are the factors which local people consider unfair to them. The factors pointed above can be explained as the lack of business acumen on the part of the local people. However, some felt being a South African citizen by right gives them the power to take what they believed to be theirs and drive foreigners back to their country (Tirivangasi & Mugambiwa 2016:45).

No matter how right these allegations may be, violence and destruction have antithesis of development. The development of the country suffers from the destructions done in communities.

Green & Haines (2012:9) rightly point out that "community development is a planned effort to build assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life". Assets as the gifts, talents, skills and capacities of individuals, associations and institutions within a community. They also see an "asset as a special kind of resource that an individual, organisation, or entire community can use to reduce or prevent poverty and injustice". A sustainable community development should involve all community stakeholders -locals and foreign nationals. Unfortunately, many locals who dropped out of school are unable to participate to the building of their community because their gifting, skills and talents are not utilised.

The development of a local community should be connected to a countrywide development. Myers (1999:123-124) rightly stresses that no "process of human and social development can be entirely defined locally". Every community is part of a family of social systems that are regional, national and international. A micro-level of development is located within a national social system. There is a link between these two levels of development when there is community empowerment, the strengthening of local institutions and sustainable well-being. The marginalised people of our poor urban communities can only find their own voice through their active participation in the development of their communities and country in general. They can effectively only do so if we put in place a system that helps unleash the genius in them that God lovingly created them with.

4.4.3 Impact on the country

People feeling worthless and resorting to self-destructive behaviours and destroying the physical assets and infrastructure of their community also have a negative impact on the development of the country. Like Max Neef said earlier, the development of the country is catalysed by people. However, if people's skills and talents are unused on under used, there would not be any development. And if people destroy instead of building, development will never happen. There is a development theory that stresses that the development of a country only takes place when "human beings commit themselves to the process of change" and invest whatever gifts, talents and resources they have to the process. As human capital, people must make the choice or be empowered to seek inside out development using their skills, gifts, talents and resources (Myers 1999:121).

Green & Haines (2012:133) thought that to have a developmental economy, it is essential that workers have the basic skills necessary to participate in the development of a nation. To attain this goal, a government may encourage and incentivise businesses to become much more involved with schools and to forge productive partnerships with school systems. This partnership between a government and businesses should include the following strategies:

- Increase pupils' exposure to issues concerning careers and work before or in high school
- Develop an understanding of all career and postsecondary educational options
- Strengthen career and technical education

The development of a country is very dependent on the education of its citizens. Issues such as poverty alleviation, creation care or good care of children can best be addressed through education. Unfortunately, in developing countries such as South Africa, less attention is paid to improving the quality of education and provision of relevant and contextual education for the poor in a way that could accelerate the development of every resident. In this regard, a UNESCO report (2000) on the state of the world's children, points out, that:

"About one thirty million children in the developing world denied their right to education through dropping out and implicitly surrendered their ability to proactively participate in the development of their countries. In China for instance, school dropout rate in rural schools is about 40 percent and the reason of dropout is that students are unhappy with their studies. A study in India found that the reasons of students' school dropouts are due to financial problems and expenses. So, students drop out of school to fulfil their financial needs. Another reason of students' dropouts is that some parents are not interested in the education of their children. Dropout rate in Bangladesh is also high as in other developing countries. According to Bangladesh news.com in the year 2005 to 2006, 1.7 million students were enrolled in secondary education level but about 0.7 million students' dropouts without completing their secondary education and higher secondary education examination in 2007. At university level dropout rate is not different from secondary and higher secondary level. If there is less contribution of parents' interest for their children's education then there are greater possibilities of students dropping out. Substandard primary education system, deficiency of training in teaching staff, and parent teacher relationship are the major reasons of dropouts in Pakistan. Nearly 27 million children do not enter any school and seven million do not get primary education. The United Nations through its Millennium Development Goals report states that Pakistan will not be able to achieve its development goals by 2025 because of the high level of illiteracy and school dropout. Approximately 50% of enrolled children drop out before completing primary education. In 1977 a study showed that 79% of dropouts were from low-income families. Large numbers of students stop going to school without completing their degree. In primary and high school, the main cause why children drop out is corporal punishment. This physical punishment is considered a beneficial method to make their students obedient. According to the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) Islamabad, a local Non-Governmental Organisation advocating the rights of children, 35,000 high school pupils in Pakistan drop out of the education system each year due to corporal punishment. In

South Asian countries, Pakistan ranked on top of list of worst performing countries in terms of educating its population. In fact, only 10% of its school going population terminates their 12 years of schooling. In Pakistan, only 2% of budget is dedicated to the education sector. Dropping out of school, with its many implications, remains a common term to use in describing the failure of schools and their students in Pakistan. In European Union countries, students dropped out due to their weak financial position before completing their high school. A study on the USA identified that many students dropped out of their school because they find their classes boring. It is evident that the higher the rate of school dropout, the less developed a country, a region or a community is".

Poverty and dropouts are inextricably connected. They affect a healthy child and adolescent development in three primary settings: families, schools and communities. In 2009, a study was released which highlighted the sad fact that children from poor family background were five times more likely to drop out of high school than those who come from non-poor families (Chapman, 2009).

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, poverty has slightly decreased in urban communities such as Soshanguve. But in recent years there seems to be a deepened income inequality between the haves and have nots in urban areas. And the high rate of school dropout in these poor communities isn't helping in lessening this inequality; instead it is producing more people who will soon be classified as poor (Lachman & al. 2002:595-596). In his article titled 'The role of higher education', Barney Pityana (2010:2-4) stresses that "unequal societies are unhealthy, they have higher and early mortality rates", many life style diseases, "malnutrition, high infant mortality, mental illnesses, high prison populations and illiteracy". Inequality negatively affect society as a whole. "Unequal societies record around three times more mental illness than more equal ones. Anxiety disorders, depressions, homicide and addictions are the conditions most likely to be linked with the income gap. For example, in unequal societies like the US and Britain, prescriptions for psychiatric conditions are particularly high. Prison populations are much higher in those societies. Many of them maintain the death penalty and attitudes towards crime are very rigid. Resources are spent on putting up barriers instead of opening societies. They are marked by distrust and people live in fear. Gun ownership is very high and violence, including domestic violence, is common. The prison population has less to do with the scale of actual crime committed and more to do with attitudes where sentences are harsher in unequal societies as the law seeks to respond to societal expectations. Attitudes towards health and lifestyle are another issue found in unequal societies: unhealthy pursuits, unhealthy eating and diet habits, obesity, smoking and alcohol abuse. In each unequal society, there is a marked link between social status and obesity, for example. Those most likely to suffer from chronic stress are most likely to indulge in unhealthy habits". Unequal societies have polarised economies in which we find a high percentage of teenage pregnancies and other social maladies than in equal societies. "Inequality is the single deadliest sin of post-apartheid South Africa. Mental conditions and a psychotic society are evident everywhere; the inability of society to dialogue rationally; an education system that is not coping and fails to meet expectations; drugs at schools and violence on the school playground; ill-discipline; hospitals on the point of breakdown and a health

system that is not coping; persistent racial divides, poverty levels and dependence on the social grant system for survival by whole families; high mortality rates and teenage pregnancies".

In moaning the fact that poverty is one of the main causes of school dropout, Williams (1998:3) came to the realisation that "poverty is never simple". He argued that "it is a complex amalgam of physical and spiritual pain, which robs the person and the community of dignity and meaning as much as it deprives the body of nourishment, shelter and beauty. Poverty is about exclusion and power, about relationships and loss of self-respect, it is about lack of choice and limitation of freedom. But all these are related to lack of money" (Williams 1998:3). A poor person is prevented by circumstances from participation in the ordinary life and opportunities around him/her. One of those opportunities is education, which is usually a good channel through which someone can actively participate in the development of self and the community around him/her. However, when someone has been told his/her entire life that his/her place is at the bottom-that entire mixture helps create a low image of self (Perkins 2014:23). Poverty is therefore what robs people of choice and freedom. Indeed, people do not perceive themselves as poor unless they observe that others around them are better off. School dropout is a passport to the world of poverty. "Results suggested that poverty, as captured for example by the number of siblings or the work status of the father, is a determinant of child labour and of poor school performance" (Cardoso & Verner 2006:3). Every South African government since 1994 has recognised the importance of and the need for improving the quality of education. Education is undoubtedly the key to the success of entrepreneurial development and it is vital that the standard of basic education be improved, with a special emphasis being placed on numeracy and literacy in a way that would help every child to learn to the best of his/her ability (Herrington 2011:123).

In order for all these matters of development to be resolved, all stakeholders should play their role. The portion of the South African population that is the most affected by inequality should also be involved if we hope to one day see the society we would like to become. Perkins (2014:115) says it well in stressing that in "situations of inequality or oppression, the oppressed group must take a stand somewhere, sometime". "For until the people take that stand", he continues, "there is no development possible for them. Yet when they take that stand in the face of clear injustice, the people who are victims" of inequality are once again humanised (Perkins 2014:115). And they then become capable of a level of development - spiritual, economic, social or other – not psychologically possible for a people still in passive and dependent on solutions to come from other sources than themselves. In places like Soshanguve were the majority of the population is on the receiving end of inequality, we are sitting with this evidence (ndpc-web.clemson.edu 2016): teen girls in the bottom 20% of basic reading and math skills are five times more likely to become mothers over a two-year high school period than teen girls in the top 20%; male and female students with low academic achievement are twice likely to become parents by their senior year of high school, compared to students with high academic achievement and the death rate for those with fewer than 12 years of education is 2.5 times higher than the rate of those with 13 or more years of education.

When I walk in the streets of our neighbourhood and talk with the youth who dropped out of school, I have come to realise that over one third of them say to have suffered hunger at some point in their lives (Cardoso & Verner 2006:12). As a nation of South Africa, we all need to play our part in addressing the issue of school dropout if we desire to see a less unequal society and a developed country. It is a fact that school dropout hurts the capability of a country to develop. It deprives a nation of the skills needed for a smooth and sure development to happen. It is a recipe for under development and poverty. Amartya Sen (2012:89) argues that "the goal of development programmes or policies is not simply to alleviate absolute poverty but to enable all people to develop their capabilities". He defines human capabilities as being "the substantive freedom of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and enhance the real choices they have" (Sen 2012:89). A good education is a basic capability. It "equips learners with the knowledge and skills to use their material possessions, innate talents and environment to make real choices, and to lead a full life. Lack of access to quality education is an indicator of poverty, so is dropping out of school sometimes" (Sen 2012:89). In South Africa, many learners from under resourced schools are not able to translate educational inputs into capabilities. Even if these learners have improved resources, they may still drop out because their education is of no use to them or is not valued. Failure to connect studies to its usefulness in life may render learners vulnerable to drop out, although poor quality education is seen as the primary driver of school drop-out (ci.org.za 2016).

The development of South Africa will be dependent on how serious government takes "education training and innovation" (gov.za 2016). These are critical elements that would help eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. "Education empowers people to define their identity, take control of their lives, take part confidently in developing a just society, and play an effective role in the politics and governance of their communities" (gov.za 2016). Additionally, South Africa will not become a respected role player "in the global economy, if it does not have an educated work force" (gov.za 2016). And coming up with measures to curb and significantly reduce school dropout would be a solid starting point. Statistics show that "somebody who lacks a high school education will have lifetime earnings that are only about 60% of those of somebody with that education. That's just the impact on personal income. There are the social costs as well that negatively affect the development of our rainbow nation" (wsj.com 2016). This is why sociology as a discipline has something to say about school dropout.

4.4.4 Conclusion

School dropout is directly linked to a lack of expertise or a 'know how to' that enables someone to participate in the building of a society. People in this situation usually feel worthless. Hence they struggle to self-develop, invest in people or initiatives around them and participate in the building of a society. These concluding thoughts are represented in this picture:

SCHOOL DROPOUT → LACK OF EXPERTISE → FEELING OF WORTHLESSNESS

4.5 SOCIOLOGY

The sociology scholar Jean Yves Mudimbe (1997:378) once stressed that because school dropouts see themselves as a "failure in society", they lack a sense of purpose in the building of the society we would like to become. Their focus is on the here and now, because all that matters is surviving today. Sociology being the science of the fundamental laws of social relations and institutions, it has a lot to say about the impact of school dropout on society (dictionary.com). The social context of someone can have an important influence on motivating him/her to drop out of school or pursue education. I will explore the apathy that school dropouts have towards participating in the building of the kind of society we would like to become

4.5.1 The lack of purpose

William Damon (2008) stresses that the majority of young people "who dropped out of high school are struggling to make" the leap into adulthood and active participation in the building of the society around them. Mr. Damon's team conducted in-depth interviews with 1200 youths from the USA. The vast majority of them were disengaged from social matters and anything that did not have to do with their immediate needs such as food, clothing, alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs.

We have learned in the previous chapter that dropping out of school is a process and does not occur overnight. The process often starts from the beginning of a child's academic career. Poor academic achievement as early as primary schools predict a sombre reality that a child will be neglected by educators in public schools that are overcrowded and under resourced. This neglect is usually felt by the child who very soon will learn to disengage from the classroom activities, which could later result in dropping out of school.

Wangari Maathai (2009:129-130), a Kenyan Nobel peace prize winner, points out that school dropout "disempowers a society of valuable assets" that go unnoticed and unrecognised that could have helped Africa to develop sustainably. According to her, disempowerment-whether through a lack of confidence, apathy, fear, or an inability to take charge of one's own life- is the most unrecognised problem in poor urban communities. For the disempowered such as school dropouts, it seems much

111

easier or even more acceptable to leave one's life in the hands of third parties, whether governments, elected leaders, or, in some cases, aid agencies and faith-based organisations. Ultimately, the disempowered end up believing that whatever happens is God's will, predetermined and inevitable. To try to convince such people that they can alleviate their circumstances through their own effort, is hard.

Society must teach people from early age confidence, self-reliance and purposefulness in pursuing own goal. In the society, children who are given some autonomy to make certain choices and decisions about their lives could increase their self-determined motivation to be purposeful in life (Vallerand 1997:2-3). But children who are constantly criticised for underperforming have their self-motivation destroyed. Such is the case of children who dropped out of school because they are constantly blamed by the people who were supposed to support them. Maathai rightly points out that destroyed motivation lead to "dependency syndrome" which is a substantial bottleneck to development as challenging as corruption and poor governance. It adds an extra weight to the work of those who want to enable individuals and communities to better their circumstances. In poor urban communities, we see neighbours who dropped out of school still depend of their parents' government grant money even as adults. Many of these neighbours are the ones who currently need land to live on and the government must provide it for free. Once the land is given, there is a need for basic services such as water and electricity. Most people also expect these services to be provided for free. After this provision of services, most people demand the government to build them houses for free. It feels like the list of demands is endless. And the government can't afford to timely respond to these demands. The latter are actually non-sustainable in the long term even if a government is very pro poor.

People living on the margins of society need to be engaged in their own development. Minimising school dropout would improve people's ability of agency for development and the building of the society we would like to become. Communities should be mobilised to combat maladies such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, or tuberculosis. They must also work together to fight the scourges of failed leadership, corruption, and moral blindness. Sadly, because the poor are more likely to be uneducated and illiterate, the solution of such problem is the responsibility of the elite, which is a tiny minority in African societies. Societies are like machines. Everyone needs to do his/her part in order for it to work. If some pieces of the machine are not working properly, not only does the machine not move forward, but it begins to grind, eventually the machine will come to a halt. This is called 'underdevelopment'. What it means is that even the smallest move forward appears to take forever, and the societal machine is under constant threat of stopping altogether. Such a stop or the slow move forward is a threat to the building of the society we would love to become (Maathai 2009:131).

Tournier (1982:18) said: "A man's value is to be measured not so much by his successes, as by the way he takes his failures". As a South African society our failure to bring about an equal society (more realistically, to narrow the inequality gap) or a better society we hoped for more than 20 years after

democracy is partly due to how well we produce skills to respond to the demands of our society. Some theorists believe that a discipline such as sociology has a moral obligation to critique society in order to bring some awareness about issues such as school dropout. They challenge us not to take the reality and cultural worldviews we have learned for granted, but to interact with them instead and to question our way of looking at them because we should always aspire to an ideal society and the current high rate of school dropouts in South Africa is keeping us from moving towards that ideal society and our way of being in the world (Wallace & Wolf 2006:262). The theologian, Hendricks (2010:275) broadens the argument in saying that "the challenges we face in South Africa are enormous that only a holistic approach will be able to make a difference. In this, the church, with the theology that undergirds its ministry, could be a key role player". The church reaches more people on a weekly basis than any other organisations. It has stronger infrastructure than even government in connecting, serving and influencing people and society in general. If the church could play a proactive role in addressing the issue of school dropout, it could help our society convert its failures into opportunities so that we could build the society we would like to become.

4.5.2 Conclusion

A healthy society needs each one of its members to participate in its building. It therefore need each member to have a sense of purpose so that active participation could happen. School dropout deprives many people of a sense of purpose. Purposelessness stalls the building of a community or a society. This is represented below:

4.6 CONCLUSION

Not a single sector of the society can alleviate the issue of school dropout on its own. Hence, it was important to learn from different disciplines of knowledge such as missiology, economics, development studies and sociology about their understanding of school dropout. Transdisciplinary helped to understand the importance of learning about a problem from the perspective of different areas of knowledge. Max-Neef (2005: 15) put it well when he said that transdiscipline "extends its action through several levels of reality". The transition from one area of knowledge to the other "generates reciprocal enrichment that may facilitate the understanding of complexity".

Missiology opinion of school dropout started off by paraphrasing a biblical truth that all human being was created with equal worth in God's image and likeness. Some structures of the church go against this biblical truth by discriminating against people who don't fit in them. Such structures are schools run by the church, seminaries or bible schools where we also see a lot of dropouts. The church has

become a counter witness of God's message about who a human being in its endorsement of school dropout. Similar to the corporate world, the church uses the term selection in keeping some people in and others out.

Economics opinion was that school dropout were a burden to the economy of the country than assets. People who drop out of school are usually dependent on government assistance in a form of grants and service such as healthcare and education of their children. In a country like South Africa, this assistance isn't enough. The grant people receive is way below the living wage, the healthcare system is over burdened by the needs of people and the public schooling system is dysfunctional and in shambles. This situation leads some people to be involved in crime in order to survive or fit in society. Crime is a liability to any society. It destroys rather than builds.

The development studies highlighted the fact that the development of a country is linked to rate of school dropout. Developed countries are judged by their ability to orientate their human capital towards skills they need. School dropout deprives a country of the expertise it needs in order to efficiently respond to its challenges and needs. The high rate of school dropout South Africa experience is an indication that the country is moving toward the opposite direction of the development it desires.

Finally, sociology pointed out that people who drop out of school usually don't have a sense of purpose in life. Additionally, a healthy society needs every one of its members to be purposeful in order for it to move towards the direction it desires.

After gaining some helpful insights from these four disciplines of knowledge about the results of school dropouts, it important to continue learning before an action plan to minimise school dropout is put in place. At this conjuncture, it is important to learn from the professional volunteers who are research partners in this study. The next chapter will focus on the compilation of the research partners insights.

This concluding poem titled "Lifelong learning" captures the heart of this chapter:
Before I walked, I learned how to crawl,
Before I crawl, I learned how to sit,
Before I sit, I learned how to lay on my tummy
Before I laid on my tummy, I learned how to sack milk out of my mother breast.
I learned Kiswahili to be a citizen of the town of Bukavu,
I learned French to be a citizen of the Democratic Republic of Congo,
I learned English to be a citizen of South Africa,
I learned Sotho to be a citizen of Soshanguve.
I continue to learn because I would like to help.
I continue to learn because I care

I continue to learn because I would like to be an agent of transformation.

I continue to learn because God wants to be famous through my actions.

CHAPTER V: RESEARCH PARTNERS' INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF CAUSES OF SCHOOL DROPOUT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gathers the points of view of the professional research partners. These views will broaden our missional team understanding of the issue of school dropout. Chapter 3 of this study compiled literature of research findings of external and internal causes of school dropout. This section will focus of interview data gathered from professionals who have both the theoretical knowledge of causes of school dropout and the experiential knowledge of this reality in an urban community such as Soshanguve. As far as the missiological cycle is concerned, this chapter will be about agency. The exploration of professional research partners opinions and understandings of school dropout will pave the way in solution seeking when it comes to mininising the issue. A questionnaire was prepared, which helped the professional co-researchers to reflect on the issue of school dropout and our aspiration as a team to minimise it. Their different perspectives will help shape the formulation of the framework of our partnership as community transformation agents.

Here, trans-disciplinarity was of great help in coordinating between individual opinions and perspectives in order to come up with a working format that intended to benefit our reading club children (Max-Neef 2005:7). A researcher, practitioners and people who are in the situation were all involved in the process.

5.2 AIM OF THE INTERVIEWEES

The aim was to hear from individual professional co-researchers what their perspectives are on the issue of school dropout. This study is a qualitative research and the interviews were structured with a questionnaire. However, the questions were framed in a way that allowed free flowing conversations related to the issue of school dropout.

As the main researcher, I had a face-to-face conversation with each of the co-researchers in order to talk about their availability for the interview. Once a day and time were agreed upon, I sent out the questionnaire to each one a week before the interview via email or whatsapp. The aim was to allow them to mentally prepare for the upcoming interview and come well prepared on the day of the interview.

The interview questions were written in English, but during the interviews, the respondent alternated between speaking in English, Sepedi, Setswana or Sesotho. The alternating of different languages is also the way we communicate amongst ourselves as friends and with other neighbours.

The average duration of the interviews was approximately 60 minutes. Each interviewed co-researcher "agreed to having their interview recorded and for me to quote any part of the interview verbatim or by paraphrasing in this thesis" (Mangayi 2016:413-414).

5.3 DATA PRESENTATION

The presentation of the data collected from my co-researchers will be done in following the sequences of the questions on the questionnaire handed out. Interviews were recorded through a recorder. What is recorded in this study, constitutes the second step of the qualitative data analysis process. After the interview, enough time was taken to listen to the interviews. The collected data was transcribed on my laptop and safely saved. After the transcribing everything, I took the task of selecting and reducing the collected data information into categories appropriate for this research, bearing in mind the research questions found in chapter one of this study. particularly the research question and sub-questions and hypothesis presented in chapter one (Mangayi 2016:414).

5.4 INTERVIEW FINDINGS PER QUESTIONS ASKED

This section captures the data collected. The latter is paraphrased or used verbatim. A questionnaire was prepared so that our conversations could be focused on the issues this study is dealing with.

5.5 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was composed bearing in mind the theme and subthemes captured in the research question section of this study in chapter one. The intention was to create a platform where our professional volunteers will share their experiential understanding of the issue of school dropout as well as their aspirational imagination of a kingdom like society.

5.6 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AS RELATED TO THE THEME AND SUBTHEMES OF THIS STUDY

Summaries of the interview findings are presented here. The questionnaire was initially composed bearing in mind the theme and subthemes of this research, (see chapter 1, section 3 research questions). After the answer to interview questions, there is a synthesis. The latter captures my learning, a take away or a highlight that will be taken into consideration moving forward.

5.6.1 Interviewees contributions from the first question

Social worker volunteer:

A good number of our township children are raised by illiterate or school dropout parents /guardians. They are being raised in an environment where the culture of learning and studying are either unknown, undervalued or not encouraged.

Some parents and guardians see taking a child to school as a way of getting a break from childcare or taking a child out of the street.

Some children live in very traumatic circumstances that have an effect on their attention span at school. Circumstances such as a crime infested environment, negligence, emotional abuse, poverty, unsafe communities, etc. may be traumatic to a child.

Some children start school late and later on, age hindrance will be a problem that could cause school dropout. The much older children could feel odd around their classmates, especially if they are academically underperforming.

Due to some unfortunate circumstances such as poverty and death of parents, some children have to move houses a lot, change schools as they move and not be given an opportunity to stick to a schooling system that works for them. Some children end up developing a dislike for school and dropout.

Some children are also taken to government children's home after a long stay away from school. Once they go into these kinds of institutions, however, there is not a good system to help children smoothly transition into school at the special schools located in places of safety. They seem to be thrown in the deep end, therefore struggle to cope with the existing system of school. They hate school and can make it difficult for other learners to study well. A good number of these children end up dropping out of school.

Another potential cause of school dropout has to do with some mothers abusing their children as a way of punishing the father of their children. This kind of dysfunctional situation is sometimes called, broken family. Many children come from broken families in which there is a pronounced lack of support from parents and guardians. Broken families disrupt the child with parents' problems. In many of them, there is a lack of support for educational needs, which sometimes lead to school dropout.

Peer pressure and the desire to belong could also lead to school dropout when a child chooses to stay out of school because friends do so.

The lack of resources in township schools negatively affects children's ability to be creative and discover their unique gifting. In our schools here, only academic performance matters. When a child does not enjoy books, there is nothing else for him/her to lean on, therefore the possibility of dropping out becomes greater.

Psychologist volunteer:

Most of township children are traumatized because they are brought up in dysfunctional families and they attend overcrowded and under resourced schools. Children who need extra attention in order to academically perform well, don't get that. They end up easily dropping out of school at some point.

A family in which a child is brought up could also predict school dropout. In South Africa, most families have only one parent, the mother. In my opinion, an ideal family is composed of a caring father and a caring mother who intentionally invest their emotional and material resources for the wellbeing of their children. Mothers head the majority of township families. Therefore many children lack fathering love. This situation has psychological implications on how a child interacts with male adults. Some children can't handle the presence of a male authority figure without professional help, because the absence of the father in their lives is traumatising to them. They can be very stubborn around male educators, because they remind them of a significant missing influence in their lives, their father.

Sometimes a projection of frustration on children by adults who are meant to care for them, can be so traumatic that a child can drop out of school. Some children are made to feel and believe that they are the cause of the poverty and misery their parents are going through. The parents would have such a victim mentality that they would see others, including their own children as a threat to their welfare. Because of lack of power and means to support themselves, the children could develop feelings of resentment towards their parents and any parent figure they come across with. The externalisation of these feelings could be through lack of discipline, insubordination and non-compliance to school rules. At school, the child would be disciplined regularly because of his/her behaviour and he/she may end up dropping out.

A good number of township children were born as a surprise. The mothers did not plan to get pregnant. Some parents through their behaviour and actions regularly communicate to the children that there were unwanted and they are not welcome to this day. These children experience rejection at home. At school, some teachers reinforce these feelings of rejection through unprofessional behaviours such as boasting about their children attending former model C schools, or the kind of clothes their children wear. Children end up feeling rejected also by the school and end up staying away both from school and from emotionally abusive parents.

Some family dynamics and circumstances could negatively affect a child. I will give you a scenario: Thabo was born in 2000, 11 months later, her mother gave birth to another baby whom she had to give attention to, more than Thabo. The latter felt lonely and deserted and has never been happy ever since. Thabo has always been feeling like a victim who was neglected by her mother. Such a child may develop negative feelings thinking that the whole world is against her/him, including teachers, especially when she/he has to be disciplined. The child could drop out of school in search for someone who will love him/her. The child may or may not find this person.

There is also the problem of transfer of feelings which could lead to school dropout. An abused and neglected child may develop hatred towards her/his parents and all adults around her/him, including educators. A child may end up perceiving the school as an abusive environment because all the school staff are adults.

Bullying is also something that leads to school dropout in our community. In many dysfunctional families, parents bully their children subconsciously. When it also happens that the child is bullied at school, there is a high chance that such a child would drop out of school. Some children learn how to bully others from their parents. They go to school and start bullying other children. They end up getting in trouble with their educators. As a consequence of their bullying behaviour, they would be disciplined in different ways, suspended and in some extreme cases, they could be kicked out of the school. The school will end up becoming the least favourite environment of the child, who will therefore dropout.

Some children have a problem of mental focus. This easily goes undiagnosed in the township because of lack of professionals such as psychologists and social workers in township schools.

Nurse volunteer:

Some physical circumstances can explain why a child is a slow learner or even why he/she dropped out of school. Such circumstances are for example when a child was born pre-maturely. Some cases of prematurely born children have a physical and an emotional dimension. I will give you a scenario: When Kgotso was born, her mother was experiencing emotional problems due to the tragic loss of her partner. This caused her to go into labour before the expected time and she gave birth to a premature baby. The latter was kept in hospital for three months in the incubator and was never breastfed because her mother suffered chronic asthma and terrible chest pains.

Many of our children were born HIV positive. HIV and Aids has been singled out as one of the major factors contributing to children dropping out of school, with the pandemic said to account for close to 50 percent of the total number of primary and secondary school dropouts (sundaynews.co.za 2017).

Some physical factors could play a role in the academic success of a child or the opposite. I would advise InnerCHANGE volunteers to ask health related questions to the parents of the children in order to get a holistic understanding of the history of a child. Questions such as:

Does the child have any chronic illness?

What illness did the child suffer from at a young age?

Was the mother drinking alcohol or smoking during pregnancy?

What is the history of the child diet?

The answer to these questions could help explain why a certain child is a slow learner, struggling academically or dropped out of school. I know that undiagnosed hearing, eyesight problems could lead to school dropout. Some kids have difficulty reading something in front of them or repeating what

the teacher just said. Such difficulty could lead to school dropout, especially in public school where we find overcrowded classrooms.

Educator volunteer:

Language should be factored into the causes of school dropout in a township such as Soshanguve. Learners have to function in English with regards to their writing and reading from grade 4, which is different from their mother tongue. Some learners fail classes not because they are not intelligent, but because they confuse their spelling and vocabulary being English and vernacular. For example, writing 'luk' instead of 'look'. I have seen some learners drop out of school because of the frustration of confusing languages and failing grades.

For many learners, writing and reading start and finish at school. At home there is no education, no books, no newspapers to read. If parents are illiterate, they are unable to transfer any academic knowledge to their children. Many parents don't know how to encourage their children to thrive academically because nobody encouraged them to do so. There is this saying:' you can't give what you don't have'. I understand this saying by seeing how well, illiterate parents and guardians are involved in the education of their children. Because of the lack of a culture of reading and learning in families, teachers must start from 0 and they are under pressure to finish a curriculum. This reality affects the quality of our teaching. The basic education department assesses educators by their ability to go through the prescribed curriculum. However, a compassionate educator should help all learners to academically progress. Such an educator is always under pressure because many of our learners in public schools are below par, according to what is expected in their grade.

We also have lots of incompetent educators in our profession. These educators make it easy for learners to dislike school and eventually dropout. Some educators are in the professions because they get a salary, but they don't have the passion to impart knowledge. The context could also be a fertile ground for bad education and school dropout.

Lack of resources such as school books, teaching materials and specialised skills also make it easy for children to drop out of school.

The education department does not always set its priorities right. We have badly damaged classrooms, fewer classrooms than what we need, hence the overcrowding of classrooms, yet the department of education seems to prioritise the change of teaching methods over everything else. With this prioritising, educators and learners seem to constantly be a step behind the education department. This is tiring to both educators and learners. Some educators end up resigning or taking an early retirement because of that and some learners dropout of school.

Some of the basic education department policies are failing our learners. For example, slow learners sometimes have to be pushed to the next grade without proper foundation. From my experience, the majority of learners who get pushed to the next grades end up dropping out of school.

Learners with short span of concentration are dropout high risk. They regularly disrupt classes, get disciplined frequently and may end up seeing school as not a fun environment to be at and dropout. Some slow learning problems are caused by the circumstances of the birth of the child or the parents lifestyle habits such as drinking alcohol, smoking or using drugs during pregnancy.

Cognitive development is another factor that causes children to dropout. Our township schools don't do a proper assessment of a learner's milestones in development. In the latter, questions about sensory development, motor development, and language and speech development are asked. Parents and guardians could be very helpful in shedding some light on the history and circumstances of their child.

I have a syllabus I would like to show which comprehensively asks questions in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the history of circumstances of a child. I used it when I was doing my inclusive learning specialisation with the university of Pretoria.

Section 5.7 of this research uses the framework of the above-mentioned syllabus in preparation for the field work we will do going to interact with the parents' children.

Synthesis
All our professional volunteers affirmed the fact that school dropout is caused by different factors such as the social circumstances of the child, the educational resources available to the child, health conditions of a child as well as some internal elements happening in the brain that could make it difficult for a child to thrive academically (seen already in chapter three). The educator volunteer also pointed out the language of education as a factor.

A generational illiteracy and lack of the culture of learning in a family have a link to school dropout rate in a family or an environment such as Soshanguve. School dropout could be seen as a normal thing in certain families because the parents, grandparents, etc. also dropped out of school.

In urban poor environments such as the township of Soshanguve, scapegoating seems to be a common thing. People tend to blame others for issues such as school dropout and don't introspect their responsibility in the creation or maintaining of a problem. Tshilenga (2005:192-193) would say that scapegoating is a collective sin in a place like Soshanguve. He defines "collective sin as a sin of the group". It is distinguished in the first place by the fact that it is not bound to human nature but to culture. It is not bound to the origin of the human being, but to his presence in a community of other living beings. It is different because of the fact that an individual does not commit it; a group, a collectivity, a

123

community commits it. Many people tend to blame someone else for something they should be responsible for. Parents and educators tend to blame underperforming learners. The community as a whole tend to think poorly of primary or high school dropouts. From listening to our professional volunteers, many stakeholders such as parents, teachers and government could be responsible for the high rate of school dropout. We will certainly not be the society we would like to become if we don't self-introspect and take responsibility for our part in making it possible for children to drop out of school. This section is captured in the picture below:
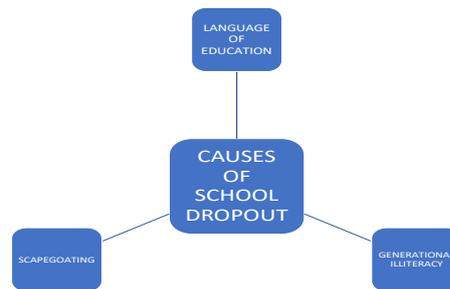
5.7.2 Interviewees contributions from the second question

Social worker volunteer:

The programs are ineffective judging by the results we see. I think that the living circumstances and conditions of most township children, necessitate a regular running of programs such as behaviour programs, at schools, children's homes, orphanages and non-profit organisations. I once worked at a place of safety in a nearby suburb, we had behaviour programs for children. I am yet to see that in the township.

According to me, one of the samples of how ineffective the school programs in the township are, is Tsosoloso special school which only caters for children who have difficulty coping in a normal public school. A lot of their programs don't really cater for special needs children. Teachers don't seem to rebuke children when they misbehave. They would call the child social worker to do that, instead.

Psychologist volunteer:

In my opinion, the programs and school curriculum offered to learners in the township are mostly ineffective because educators are frustrated by the system. They have overcrowded classes and schools are under resourced. They are unable to transfer knowledge to the best of their ability because of these challenging working conditions. The educator's motivation to be effective is low and we see that in the fruit they produce in educating our children.

Nurse volunteer:

In healthcare we like to say that the effectiveness of a system is seen through its impact on the majority of our clients. From where I stand, the product of township schools seems to be children that can't read their home language or English well, low score in critical subjects such as mathematics, physical sciences, life science and English. We have a significant shortage of nurses in the country, but very few children from our township schools can qualify to study nursing at the university because of low matric score. This has been a challenge for decades. For me, our national education inability to positively overcome the shortage of nurses, for instance, tells me that our current education system is ineffective.

Educator volunteer:

The programs and school curriculum offered to learners in the township are not effective in the township for multiple reasons. Educators are constantly frustrated by new methods of teaching the department of basic education comes up with. Overcrowded classrooms and the high number of learners who can't cope with the pace of their workload also frustrate them. I think all the township and rural area educators should be required to undergo training in inclusive learning teaching and for the government to require them to come up with class 'tailor made' programs on a yearly basis. Many learners are traumatised from home and the community, and that sometimes causes their poor academic performance.

Synthesis

All our professional volunteers concurred that our education system in the townships, is ineffective, judging by the outcome they see. Such an education system can only be a fertile ground for frustrated, displeased and uncared for children. Some of the latter will for sure dropout in order to seek for caring environment, a fit or just stay away from frustration. The department of basic education stresses about educators meeting the required grade outcome. However, these hoped for outcomes are irrelevant for some children who are wired differently to fit into the 'global economic system' the South African government stresses about. They are wired in a unique way and we need to help them acquire knowledge based on their uniqueness. This section is captured in this picture below:

CAUSES OF SCHOOL DROPOUT

- DISREGARD OF PEOPLE'S UNIQUE WIRING
- TOP DOWN CONTENT EXPECTATIONS
- UNREALISTIC AIM TOWARDS 'GLOBAL ECONOMY'
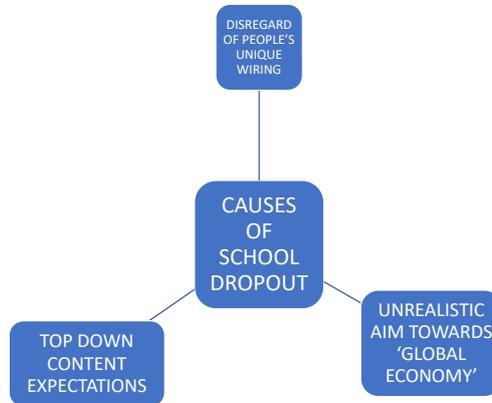
5.7.3. Interviewees contributions from the third question

Social worker volunteer:

This alternative model is needed and will require the involvement of different stakeholders such as government, the private sector, businesses and non-profit organisations. The success of this alternative will require an intentional paying of attention to individual learners who are currently struggling at school. The government certainly doesn't have the resources to pay attention to all individual needs of learners. Ideally I would love to see some learners be sent to vocational schools earlier than the current requirement of a child has to have passed grade 9. For some other children, working part time could be the best thing for them. Other children need to have a regular access to professionals such as psychologists, social workers and other therapists in order to remain in school and positively engage their academic duties.

Psychologist volunteer:

An alternative model that is functional would certainly produce better outcomes. I could picture more classrooms and well-resourced school with the right equipment and better skills. Family, the community environment and the conditions, in which some children are studying in, traumatise many of our learners. Some of them end up dropping out of school because their emotional needs have never been attended to. A healthy alternative model should make sure that a child's emotional well-being is taken into consideration.

Nurse volunteer:

An alternative model should be creative in looking for available assets in order to have an inclusive and functional system. I personally send my children to former model C schools because those schools have a lot more resources than the township ones . For example, my children are involved in extra mural activities that help a lot in their physical and emotional development. But in most township schools I know, educators don't seem to have such time or value for extra mural activities.

To be honest creativity is really needed for better outcomes to be seen here in the township. I am thinking maybe if the government could require all social work, education, nursing, speech therapy, psychology and physiotherapy students to spend a year doing community work in poor communities before they graduate like medical students have to do. Many of these students could be sent to schools to assist educators. This way, schools in townships and villages could have capacity to holistically attend to the needs of all learners. Increased capacity would minimise school dropout.

Educator volunteer:

An alternative education model would be ideal for the township because many children need special attention and we currently don't have resources to effectively respond to that. In a functional alternative model, individual needs of learners will be given the right attention and orientation towards future performance or carrier. Non-profit organisations in partnership with government could help foster alternative teachings for children who don't cope at school and could dropout.

Synthesis

All the volunteers stressed that alternative models of education are needed because the model we currently have in townships makes it easy for many children to drop out of school. For me the most intriguing proposal came from our nurse volunteer suggesting that universities, in partnership with government could help students from certain professions serve among the under privileged in order to increase and improve the capacity of serving our children.

I have seen young children, who were underperforming academically, yet they were good with their hands or in arts. Like our social worker volunteer stressed, certain children from primary school age could thrive better in vocational schools than in normal mainstream public schools. Here I am reminded of Albert Einstein's quote: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". In our case here, insanity could be to expect the minimisation of school dropout with the current education system. An alternative system could give us hope to minimise school dropout. And a multi-disciplinary approach could give us hope of a different outcome to what we currently experience with our education system.

5.7.4. Interviewees contributions from the fourth question

Social worker volunteer:

School dropout as I see it in the township is a consequence of how much families, the government and communities have failed our children. We have learned to run away from our responsibility as parents and professionals by only blaming children who dropout.

Psychologist volunteer:

According to me, when someone drops out of school, it means that school is no longer fun. When school is fun, a child will look forward to going there and will enjoy spending time in his/her books.

From my experience, our education system focuses a lot more on what a child learns (or have to know) than how a child acquires knowledge. The discovery of the 'how' requires many resources that are costly. Both the 'what' and 'how' are critical in order to help a child learn to the best of his/her ability.

Nurse volunteer:

From a healthcare perspective, illness (many children in the community are on anti-retroviral) and essential needs such as lack of food, lack of hygienic pets for ladies, injuries can keep children away from school, first temporarily and it may end up being a permanent thing.

Abortion attempts, especially from the third trimester of the pregnancy could lead to brain damage or mental and physical disability of a child. Some children may be struggling academically because their mothers unsuccessfully attempted abortion.

Educator volunteer:

As an educator, our working environment is not conducive for us to teach to the best of our ability. We also don't have professional support to get a holistic portfolio of our learners. We need the services of psychologists, social workers, speech and hearing therapists and nurses, at each and every school, but we don't have them. The school environment makes it easy for children to dropout. Learners are also frustrated, neglected and even bullied by frustrated educators. Schools end up being places where learners don't enjoy to be at and therefore, they dropout.

Synthesis

All our volunteers stressed that the environment, socio-economic circumstances and the working conditions of educators play a role in creating a fertile ground for a child to drop out of school or to minimise school dropout. A safe community, a functional family and school environment where educators are competent and work in the best conditions possible are key to minimising school dropout. These thoughts are captured below:

```
              ┌──────────────┐
              │ ENVIRONMENT  │
              └──────┬───────┘
                     │
              ┌──────┴───────┐
              │  CAUSES      │
              │  OF          │
              │  SCHOOL      │
              │  DROPOUT     │
              └──┬────────┬──┘
     ┌───────────┘        └───────────┐
┌────┴────────────┐          ┌────────┴────────┐
│ POOR WORKING    │          │ SOCIO           │
│ CONDITIONS OF   │          │ ECONOMIC        │
│ EDUCATORS       │          │ CIRCUMSTANCES   │
└─────────────────┘          └─────────────────┘
```

```
              ┌──────────────┐
              │ SAFE         │
              │ COMMUNITY    │
              └──────┬───────┘
                     │
              ┌──────┴───────┐
              │ FACTORS      │
              │ THAT KEEP    │
              │ CHILDREN     │
              │ IN SCHOOL    │
              └──┬────────┬──┘
     ┌───────────┘        └───────────┐
┌────┴────────────┐          ┌────────┴────────┐
│ FUNCTIONAL      │          │ COMPETENT       │
│ FAMILY          │          │ EDUCATORS WITH  │
│                 │          │ GOOD WORK ETHICS│
└─────────────────┘          └─────────────────┘
```
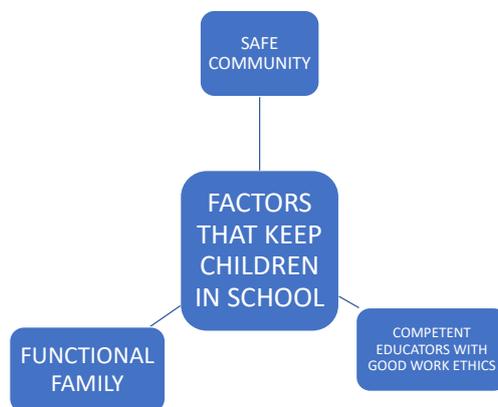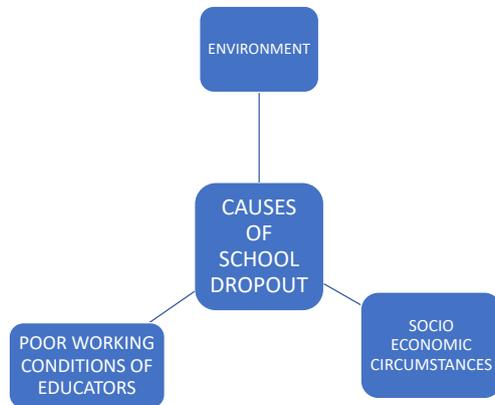
The psychologist volunteer brought up a key insight here about the focus of our education system on what a child has to learn. An alternative model should focus on what children need to learn. A good marriage between 'what' and 'how' a child learns would lead to a 'tailor made' curriculum that could be relevant to many children based on their circumstances and needs. This insight is captured below:

```
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  WHAT A CHILD   │
                    │ NEEDS TO LEARN  │
                    └─────────────────┘
                            │
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │                 │
                    │    RELEVANT     │
                    │   CURRICULUM    │
                    │                 │
                    └─────────────────┘
                            │
                      ┌─────────────────┐
                      │  WHAT A CHILD   │
                      │ WANTS TO LEARN  │
                      └─────────────────┘
```
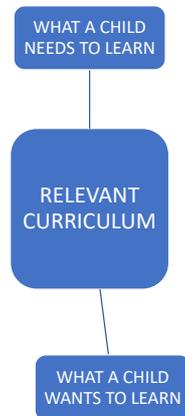
5.7.5. Interviewees contributions from the fifth question

Social worker volunteer:

A successful model will have to take into consideration family relations (affective, cognitive and normative) around a child. Things such as the father-child relationship, mother-child relationship, marital relationship, brothers and sisters, child's attitude towards himself/herself and friends always need to be taken into consideration. People seem to passively accept the fact that many families are fatherless, many young mothers are uninvolved in the lives of their children. I feel like as a society we should aspire to having functional families which provide the best platform for the growth and development of our children. In such families, children tend not to drop out of school.

The ideal society would have no discrimination against the vulnerable children, slow learners, mental disability. Such a society will be enlightened and emancipated because measuring points and assessment of abilities will be contextual and hopefully relevant. In that society, government would not provide as much free things as it does right now. Free things such as grant, housing, water and electricity could be an impediment to the building of a society in which people would learn to earn their living, which is healthy. Right now, a lot of our people expect handouts from government, which is disempowering in the long run.

There seems not to be any synergy between African cultural ways of parenting and the government policies on parenting. This situation leaves a lot of African parents with the feeling that they don't have full authority over their children. Some children decide to drop out of school because they have the right to make a choice, but they are not obliged to be responsible for their actions.

130

Psychologist volunteer:

The ideal society I would love to live in is the one where we would have a holistic view on all human beings. The black African cultures I know don't seem to care much about the emotional wellbeing of children. The black African cultures I know end up raising emotionally unhealthy children into adults who have children and raise them without caring for their emotional wellbeing. I know that this is a generalisation, but the point I am trying to drive here is that an emotionally healthy society will produce less school dropout children.

Black African children are raised in environments where they were expected to learn only, not to be listened to. Children have the right to participate in matters of live they see and observe. An ideal society would listen to children and even amplify their voices so that we can build a healthy and inclusive society.

Nurse volunteer:

An ideal society is the one in which everyone in our society has access to top quality healthcare. Right now, the poor don't have access to quality healthcare and some of their children end up dropping out of school because of that.

We must also learn to take responsibility as black people because a lot of health professionals are unprofessional at work. Many people have died because of nurses or doctors' negligence or unprofessional behaviour. I know many people in Soshanguve who prefer to go to Steve Biko hospital in Pretoria than George Mukari in Garankuwa because they get better treatment there. A multi racial staff runs Steve Biko hospital, whereas black people manage George Mukari hospital. In Matthew 22:39, the bible teaches me that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbour as yourself. As black people, we must learn to love one another in tangible ways such as serving patients to the best of our ability. In an ideal society, I would love to see healthcare professionals give their best to each and every patient.

Educator volunteer:

It would be a better society where justice, fairness, compassion and mutual understanding would prevail. The current schooling system only works for a minority of our learners. The ideal society would be to come up with systems that cater for the different needs of our learners. Maybe, non-profit organisations expertise in children could be more considered and accommodated in solution seeking of our current education system problems. Partnership between different stakeholders is the kind of society I dream about.

Synthesis

All our volunteers common thread was that an ideal society would be inclusive, compassionate and holistically care for children. Some of the things are seen as normal will have to be altered because

they are not necessarily kingdom like. In poor urban communities, we have come to see as normal a family with a mother only, a real man should not be emotional and involved with his children, quality healthcare is only accessed by the middle class and affluents, and quality education has to cost a lot of money. These thoughts are captured below:
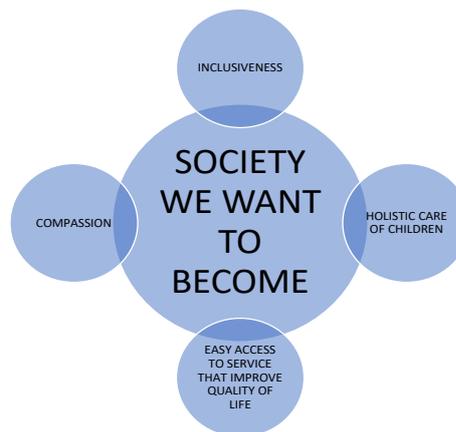
The social worker volunteer stressed about the culture of agency where the government and church should teach people to take responsibility. She also stressed about the current challenge African parents have to raise children according to the government policies which have a western culture undertone; compared to parents raising children to the best of their ability and knowledge.

The psychologist volunteer stressed that African children are raised in environments where they were expected to learn only, not to be listened to. Children feelings and opinions are easily disregarded. Listening to children could lead parents and other adults to take proactive and preventing measures, which could benefit the academic carrier of children.

The nurse volunteer brought up the topic of other centeredness and everyone playing his/her part in the building of an ideal society we all desire.

The educator volunteer stated that the ideal society that would minimize school dropout would promote collaborative efforts between different stakeholders for the benefit of all, including the children.

5.8 GATHERING OF THOUGHTS

In listening to these research partners, a lot of the research findings captured in chapter three were affirmed. They also brought up new and unique insights that are valuable to this research. Below are new insights learned from them:

Social worker volunteer:

According to her, poor parenting, peer pressure, under resourced schools, ineffective school programs, lack of behaviour programs for children who come from dysfunctional families and crime infested environments such as the township, could lead to school dropout. And early referral to vocational schools and the capacitation of schools with proper skills could be good remedy to school dropout.
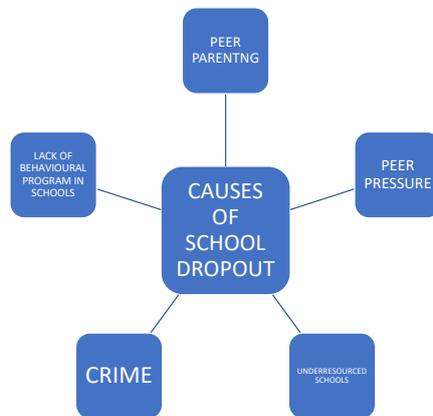
Psychologist volunteer:

According to her, the high rate of school dropout could be explained by the fact that many children from poor urban communities are traumatised because they come from dysfunctional families and overcrowded and under resourced schools. And a good remedy could be for our education system to balance its focus between what and how children learn. These thoughts are captured below:

CAUSE OF SCHOOL DROPOUT — TRAUMATISED CHILDREN

POSSIBLE REMEDY TO MINIMISE SCHOOL DROPOUT — EDUCATION FOCUS ON WHAT AND HOW A CHILD LEARNS
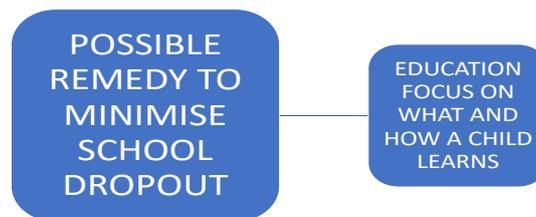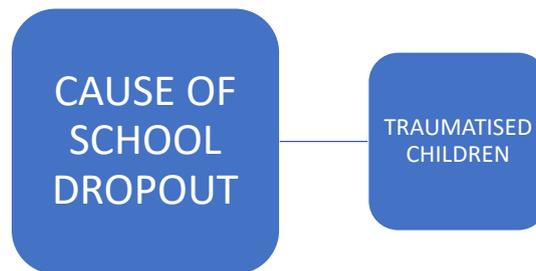
Nurse volunteer:

According to her, eye and hearing problems could make it difficult for a child to hear what is going on in the classroom. A poor diet could also negatively affect a child attention span in the classroom. Abortion attempts, especially during the third trimester could lead to the child brain be damaged and therefore could struggle to thrive in school. She proposed that a good remedy could be for the

government to value and focus on skills production in its diversity. She suggested that the government enter into partnership with universities and colleges so that students from different disciplines could intern at schools in order to support the already overburdened educators. These thoughts are captured below:

```
                    ┌──────────┐
                    │ EYE AND  │
                    │   EAR    │
                    │ ILLNESS  │
                    └────┬─────┘
                         │
                    ┌────┴─────┐
                    │  CAUSES  │
                    │    OF    │
                    │  SCHOOL  │
                    │ DROPOUT  │
                    └──┬────┬──┘
            ┌──────────┘    └──────────┐
       ┌────┴─────┐              ┌──────┴───┐
       │ ABORTION │              │   POOR   │
       │ ATTEMPT  │              │   DIET   │
       └──────────┘              └──────────┘
```

```
    ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
    │   POSSIBLE   │      │    HIGHER    │
    │  REMEDY TO   │      │   LEARNING   │
    │   MINIMISE   ├──────┤ INSTITUTIONS │
    │    SCHOOL    │      │ TO CAPACITE  │
    │   DROPOUT    │      │ SCHOOL WITH  │
    │              │      │   INTERNS    │
    └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
```
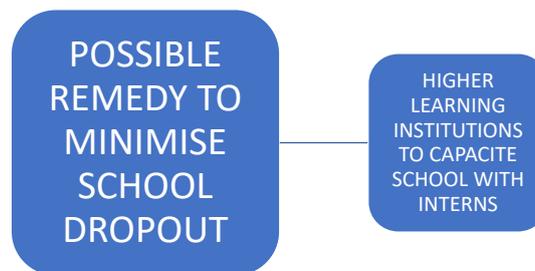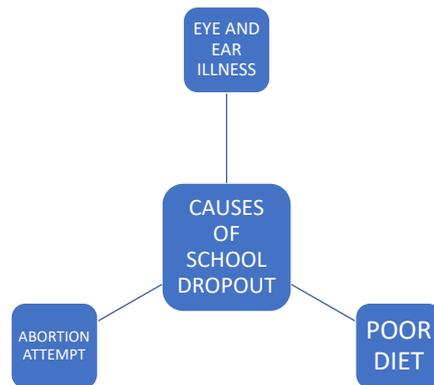
Educator volunteer

According to her, language barrier, the government wrong priorities of constant curriculum change and policy making over daily teaching and learning conditions (which should be the priority) and the children attention span lead to school dropout. A remedy could be for the government to establish

functional partnerships with educators, communities and institutions of higher learning. These thoughts are captured below:
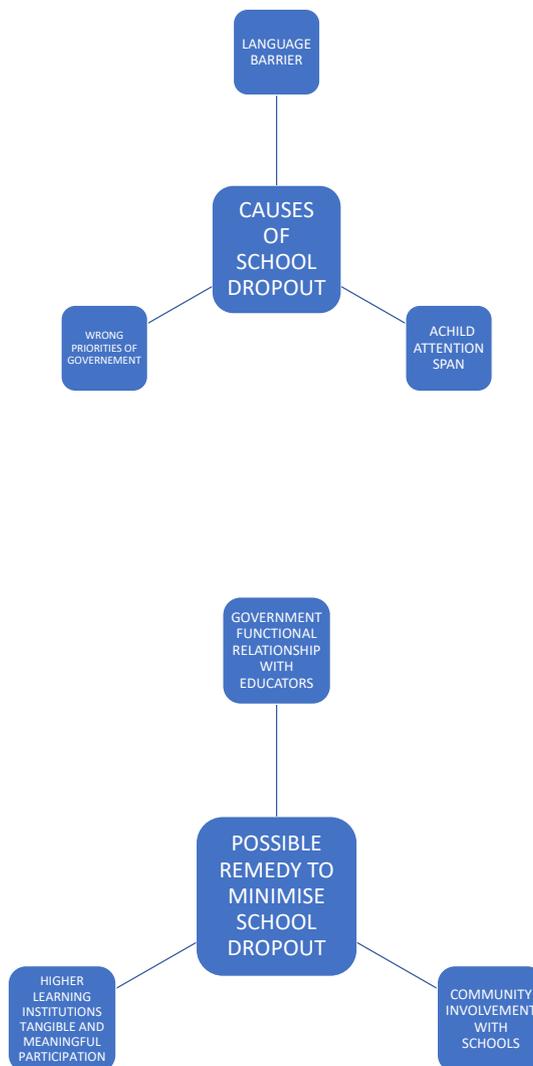
Summary

My research partners seemed to raise the issue of engagement and involvement as a major reason behind school dropout. Parents, especially fathers, are not involved in the lives of children as they should. Frustrated educators do not engage children professionally. Adults don't get involved in the lives of children so that they can engage them, taking into consideration their life history.

136

The church could play a unique role in taking into consideration the issue of engagement and involvement that is linked to school dropout. It could raise capacity to be part of the solution to these issues through its membership and it could open its buildings to hosting conversations about engagement and involvement in the lives of children so that we could see a humane society come to pass. But in order for that to happen, we will need to have courageous followers of Jesus who will bring to the fore the kind of leaders who seize the moment, cohere the wishes and aspirations of ordinary people to catalyse transformation in poor urban communities (Van Wyk 2007:1).

5.9 FRAMEWORK BUILT FORM THESE INSIGHTS FROM INTERVIEWEES

It was important to regularly clarify with research partners that the focus of this study are children. The aim was to help the children of our reading club, read to the best of their ability. In order for that to happen, we decided to engage and involve key stakeholders that are meant to care for children, namely the parents/guardians and educators.

In the mapping out of our framework, Williams (1998:11) who once said that three basic factors have lifted humanity, out of a state of inequality into a better society for all, was an inspiration. He mentioned that first, there has been work and people have been dignified by economically improving the quality of their lives. Second, people have cooperated in seeking for solutions to their common problems and issues. The aim of this study is to have different stakeholders collaborate for solution seeking. Third, knowledge and specialisation has further multiplied the effectiveness of work and the diagnosis of problems. The insights learned from our professional volunteers will be considered and tested for the benefit of our reading club children. Williams (1998:12) is an encouragement, when he stresses that "two working together will achieve more than one alone", and from the very beginning of times, cooperation was seen to be more effective than the work of each just working individually. "At the simplest level", he continues, "family duties are apportioned among its members", and the whole family benefits from joint efforts. This is even true among animals, many species hunt and act in packs where each member has specific duties.

As followers of Jesus, the reality of our society's dysfunctional education system presented us with an enormous opportunity to learn, understand and act in order to be part of the solution, for throughout the scriptures God's people are commanded to show compassion to the marginalised such as school dropout children. In fact, doing so is simply part of our job description as followers of Jesus Christ (Matt 25:31-46). While the biblical call to care for the marginalised transcends time and place, passages such as 1 John 3:17 should weigh particularly heavy on the minds and hearts of Christians: If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? And in line with this study I would say, if anyone has a skill or gift that could build up their community, they should use it for the welfare of others. I believe that each Christian has a unique set of gifts and responsibilities that influence the scope and manner in which to fulfil the biblical mandate to help the marginalised (Corbett & Fikkert 2009:13-14). People availing their skills to

serve one of the most vulnerable section of our population, the children, is a tangible way to demonstrate that. The educator volunteer suggested a manual we could use as a research team. She once used it as she was getting her specialisation in inclusive learning education. The manual had a set of questions that we were going to ask to the parents/guardians of our children in the process of engaging them in this research.

5.9.1 Implementation of the agreed upon framework

We agreed to interview each and every parent/guardian of our reading club using a set of questions, from Remedial education (workbook), practical experience 402 (Second year), university of Pretoria. See the form in appendix 2.

5.10 THE WAYPOINT OF OUR PARTNERSHIP

At this juncture, it is important to be reminded that the main motivation behind undergoing this study was to efficiently reach out to foundation phase children who are struggling to cope academically and help them learn to the best of their ability. This direction was affirmed by this quote heard many times in Kiswahili, which is also attributed to Albert Einstein:" Everybody is a genius. If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

As we were building the structure of our reading club, we stressed that a collaborative effort of different stakeholders in helping each of our children read to the best of their ability, had the potential to bring fruitful outcomes. Collaboration was the best way to be in solidarity with vulnerable children of our community because solutions had the potential to be holistic because they came from different insights.

We also agreed that it was critical to experiment with new and different tutoring approaches because the children we selected were already academically struggling in the mainstream schooling system. And we committed to do research on tutoring approaches that would focus on the strength and uniqueness of a child. We felt that a good alternative model of education should help a child identify his/her uniqueness, affirm it and nurture it to the point that it positively alters the quality of life of an individual and their understanding of who God created them to be. The experimentation of this alternative model will be discussed in chapter 6 of this study.

We adopted a child-centred approach to education by emphasizing on making education fun. We started our day by playing fun games with the children, then we did some formal reading for 45 minutes and finished our day with creative art for another 45 minutes. For reading we bought books with a lot of pictures or we were intentional about printing out reading materials that had pictures and words. Some days, after the start up fun games, some children wanted to do creative art only; we

allowed them to do so and we taught them through that. We finished the day giving to children a snack.

 As a group of followers of Jesus, we challenged ourselves to venture in this endevour in order to be kingdom agents in actively responding to a societal need to help foundation phase children to improve their ability to read and understanding of the content of their reading. As representatives of the body of Christ we foresaw our role as that of active solution seekers and gatherers of human, knowledge, infrastructure capitals that could lead to positive outcome of our efforts.

There was also a need to expand the classroom experience of our community children beyond the formal school they go to from Monday to Friday. We needed to creatively look for spaces such as church buildings (or facilities), community members' homes or other public facilities as well as raise capacity (recruit willing community members) to serve. My professional research partners volunteered to train tutors and dedicated sometime of volunteering so that we could keep the integrity of our intent. These thoughts are captured below:
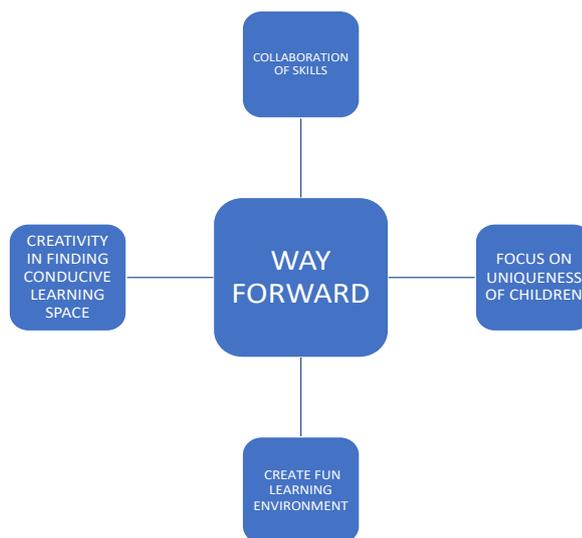
5.11 INSIGHTS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

After our research team came to a common agreement about the set of questions above, we decided to include our reading club tutors in our connection with the parents/guardians of our children. When interviewing the parents/guardians, the tutors were going to come along with me. We saw the kind of initiative we embarqued on as a way of us accepting our role as agents of the building of our community (Mbeki 2007:39).

Mbele (2007:61) challenged our research team in stressing that our "education is worthless if we cannot use it to extricate our community from the vice of poverty", school dropout, violence, disease and ignorance. He urged us to want always to serve our community and not to expect any special recognition or reward for doing so. Community activism should be part of our tasks as the church and individual community members. The following chapter will capture our community activism as solution seekers in partnership with different stakeholders and the reflection on our activism. It is in line with this motivation that as a research team, we resolved to pay close attention to the strength, uniqueness, growth areas and abilities of each of the 20 children we had in our reading club.

5.12 CONCLUSION

Interviews were very important in helping the professional research partners reflect on the issue at hand in this study - school dropout. They generally affirmed the fact that school dropout is a multi-facetted issue that had very little to do with the person who drops out, but more to do with circumstances around and inside that person.

The data collected in this chapter confirmed a lot of principles this study compiled in chapter 3. It also brought in new and contextual insights alluded to in section 5.8 that need to the taken into consideration in our interaction with the 20 children from our reading club.

The professional volunteers' experiential knowledge and understanding of school dropout shaped a lot of the actions we took in order to efficiently run our reading club. These actions are highlighted in the next chapter.

We are now moving into the next chapter of this study armed with these insights in our toolbox so that we can tangibly be good news to children who are struggling academically and are at risk of dropping out of school in the near future. The concluding poem titled "Together we are better", captures the heart of this chapter.

I struggle to wash my body with one hand.
I struggle to walk long distance with one leg.
I am better off when they are together.
Like a gang of buffaloes,
Like a pack of donkeys,
Like a litter of puppies,
Like a parade of elephants,
Like a tower of giraffes,
Like a tribe of goats,
Like a band of gorillas,
Like a cackle of hyenas,

Like a leap of leopards,
Like a troop of monkeys,
Like a colony of rabbits,
Together, we are better.

CHAPTER VI: ACTION – REFLECTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

While writing this chapter, a research finding was released about our South African children reading ability. A South African newspaper (businesstech.co.za 2017) released a report from "The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which measures literacy rates of grade 4 learners, which revealed that as many as 78% of learners in that grade in South Africa are not able to read in any language". These findings highlight the relevancy of reading clubs so that we can instil a culture of reading and learning in our young minds.

This chapter covers the fieldwork this research underwent. The guidelines behind this practical work were the main research question and the two sub questions asked in the first chapter of this study: What would be the role of the church in engaging a social malady such as school dropout with the intention of minimising it? What type of society do we want to become that the church could help shape through education? What role should education play to prepare children who struggle to learn for this type of society we want to become?

 These questions will be answered in connection with the Quality of Life Assessment (2015) developed by the NOVA institute.

As far as the missiological cycle is concerned, this is the theological interpretation where the research questions, assumptions and the transdisciplinary way of approaching a problem will be converted into concrete actions. The outcome of actions taken will be reflected on, in order to improve areas of growth and weaknesses. In this compilation of data and analysis, Karl Marx 's quote comes to mind: "Philosophers have hitherto interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it" (quoted by thumafoundation.org 2017). In this section, the point this research is making, is to explore an alternative way of teaching and the role of the church to concretely bring healing through the affirmation that God created all human beings in his likeness. In South Africa, almost four in five Grade 4 learners fall below the lowest internationally recognised level of reading literacy. Many of these children are part of the body of Christ and members of our poor urban and rural communities.

6.2 PERTINENCE OF THE RESEARCH TEAM EFFORT

According to a report released on December 5, 2017, there has been no significant progress in improving children's reading skills since the last survey five years earlier. "South Africa has been ranked last out of 50 countries that participated in the PIRLS 2016, which compares the reading achievement of participating countries by measuring reading ability, collecting extensive background

information about policy, home support, and curricula" (businesstech.co.za 2017).

In 2016, South Africa was the lowest ranked country of all the participating countries. In 2011 already, South Africa came last among all the countries that participated in pre-PRILS, an easier bridging measure for low-achieving countries. "This finding is a pretty damning indictment on our education system, which is hamstrung by various problems, including teachers not being literate themselves, poor management and teacher absenteeism" (businesstech.co.za 2017).

The fact that South Africa is consistent in being placed among the lowest ranked countries in reading literacy, should be a wakeup call for the church to be part of the solution. The educationalist, Combrinck (timeslive.co.za 2017) stressfully, yet rightly point out that if a child "can't read", his/her "opportunities in school, after school or for a decent job will be limited", which is why reading should start at a very young age.

Moreover, Combrinck (2017) concurred that "there was a glimmer of hope" when we look closely to our South African children progress in their reading abilities. In fact, between 2011 and 2016 a "performance improvement in 5 African languages out of the 11 tested", was recorded at grade 4 level. Additionally, "at the end of 2015, Combrinck's (2017) team tested the reading comprehension skills of 12,810 Grade 4 pupils in all South African 11 official languages. More than 5,000 grade 4 pupils were tested in Afrikaans, English and isiZulu". According to Howie (quoted in timeslive.co.za. 2017) , the PIRLS co-ordinator for South Africa, these "results suggested most pupils cannot read well enough to succeed in subjects across the curriculum in grade four and higher grades".

Combrinck (2017) and her team stressed that "this poor level of reading is true across all languages in South Africa, as less than a quarter of learners overall reached the lowest international benchmark". She concerningly highlight that, "less than half of the learners who wrote the tests in English and Afrikaans could read. And 80% of pupils learning in one of the other nine official languages effectively cannot read at all". Among all the South African provinces, the "Western Cape, Free State and Gauteng performed best, and reading achievement in Sepedi, isiXhosa, Setswana and Tshivenda were the weakest (Combrink, 2017). Additionally, "boys performed worse than girls, with 84% not being able to reach the lowest benchmark, in comparison to 72% of girls" (Combrink, 2017).

Other findings include:

• "More than 90% of pupils writing in Setswana and Sepedi did not reach the lowest benchmark;

• Pupils writing in one of the nine African languages attained the worst scores, which were significantly lower than those writing in Afrikaans or English. Children writing in isiXhosa and Sepedi are the most at risk;

• Children who live in remote rural areas or townships have the lowest reading literacy scores;

• Class sizes are increasing. In the Grade four study, the average class size was 45, compared with 24 internationally; and

• Fewer young teachers are entering the system. Most pupils are taught by older teachers, but there is no relationship with reading literacy scores" (Combrink, 2017).

From their analysis and findings Combrinck (2017) and her team reach the conclusion that, "the groups most at risk are those in deep rural areas and townships, those learning in African languages, and boys,". In this conclusion, Howie (timeslive.co.za. 2017) added that "she hoped that the illustration of the scale of the literacy problem would inspire solutions. We can provide evidence and suggestions, but other experts now need to come on board and do the work". She (timeslive.co.za. 2017) continued her argument by declaring that "if we can bring together like-minded people with honourable intentions who can use funds and resources for education effectively, there is no reason we can't fix this, although it will take time and hard work.". As a missional team, we are raising our hands to be part of the solution and involve other stakeholders so that we could look for fruitful and sustainable solutions. The parents/guardians of our children are one of our key stakeholders. This is why we went to visit them and learned from them about the children both parties care for.

6.3 FRAMEWORK OF OUR PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This session practically interact with the research questions: It stresses that children must be helped to fit into an educational system, and the educational system must be transformed to take children towards a humane society that is accommodating and inclusive, because every human being has an innate genius in him/her.

This section also brings together the transdisciplinary solution seeking to a problem such as school dropout. The problem is seen and argued from different disciplines of knowledge perspectives as pointed out in the previous chapter. All these disciplines of knowledge came to the unanimous view that school dropout is an impediment to the building of the kind of society we would like to become. This research is a collaborative effort of different stakeholders. The key ones are the children's parents/guardians, the educators and other community members. In order to reach out to the children's parents and guardians, the tutors and I did home visits.

6.3.1 Home visits

In the previous chapter, the professional research partners were interviewed. These interviews took place few weeks after the selection of this group of children who were part of this research. The professional partners read through my notes of assessment of the children ability to read, done at the very beginning of this programme. Only the children whose ability to read was below par compared to their peers of the same grade, were selected. The insight gained from reading these notes, led all the

professional partners to agree with the educator suggestion that we use the Remedial education (workbook), Practical experience 402 (Second year) from the university of Pretoria, mentioned in the previous chapter. This resource was used to interview the parents/ guardians of the children.

6.3.1.1 Data analysis

From interviewing the parents/ guardians of our children, we found out that 18 out 20 of our children (90%) were born from unplanned pregnancies. This confirmed findings from literature review in chapter 3 (3.2.1 and 3.2.4) and our psychologist volunteer in the previous chapter.

Also, 6 out of 20 mothers (30%) admitted to using alcohol or smoking during pregnancy. This confirmed the public health care findings that pregnant mother's lifestyle may negatively affect the child ability to cope well in school in chapter 3 (3.3 and 3.4). Our volunteer nurse also confirmed that in the previous chapter 5.

Also 16 out of 20 parents/guardians (90%) admitted to be on some sort of medical treatment during pregnancy. As a married man, I know that pregnant women are prone to illness because of hormonal changes in their body and the reality of carrying a new life. I also knew that in the township of Soshanguve, when someone says they are on treatment, it is assumed they are on anti-retroviral medication. In the past, I refuted that assumption because people around me suffer from different illnesses, including AIDS. In December 2017, our team took the children and teenagers we work with on a camp (this is a tradition). Many of our reading club children came to the camp. Many of their parents/guardians gave us the daily medication these children take. In looking at those medications, our volunteer nurse coached us how to safely keep them and mentioned that these medications are for people who are immune compromised, with does not necessarily mean they are HIV positive. This awareness confirmed the findings from public health research in chapter 3 (3.2.2 and 3.3.1) and the insight from our nurse volunteer in chapter 5, that HIV infection and chronic illnesses can impede a child's ability to excel academically.

Also 11 out of 20 (55%) mothers had pre-term babies. This awareness is connected to findings made in chapter 3 (3.4) and our volunteer nurse also confirmed in chapter 5 that some pre term children have a hard time coping well in school.

We learned from parents/guardians that 6 out of 20 (30%) of our children were below par in their motor development compared to their peers. This made more sense after we knew that some of our children were born pre-term and many more drink medications on a daily basis.

Also, only 6 (30%) of our children like school and 14 don't (70%). Of those who didn't like going to school, there was one case of corporal punishment at school and two cases of educators swearing at children. This finding is connected to social work findings in chapter 3 (3.2.1) and our social worker volunteer in chapter 5 that a traumatic environment where there is corporal punishment and swearing could lead to school dropout. It is true that many educators from poor urban areas are frustrated by their poor working conditions (insight from our psychologist volunteer in chapter 5 and also mentioned in chapter 3.3) that some of them go to the extent of abusing, neglecting and/or bullying children

(psychologist insight in chapter 5 and also chapter 3.2). These educators are incompetent (insight from our educator volunteer in chapter 5) and need to be dealt with so that they can be professional in their dealing with children.

We also found out that 12 (60%) parents/guardians felt like their child has a good relationship with their educator, and 8 (40%) felt like the relationship was not good.

We also learned from parents/guardians that only 2 (10%) self-initiated doing homework and 18 (90%) did not. This is understandable because of the children's age and understanding of the importance of doing homework. This reality is also connected to the insights from both our social worker and educator volunteers stressing that there is no culture of learning in many urban poor communities of South Africa (chapter 5 and chapter 3.2.1) and that the culture of learning starts and stops at school (Insight from the educator volunteer in chapter 5).

We also learned that only 9 (45%) children wake up in the morning and are excited about going to school. The other 11 (55%) have to be dragged out of bed or the house, others have to be bribed with some money in order to go to school. From this awareness, I was left wondering if this may be a schooling system we needed to interrogate: all schools start in the morning. I know that some people function better in the afternoon or at night than in the morning. Could some of our children academically perform better in the afternoon than in the morning?

I finally learned that corporal punishment at home is still a common practice. Of our children, 9 (45%) were corporally punished at home. This is a very contentious issue in the African culture. Our social worker volunteers bemoaned (chapter 5) the fact that nowadays, parents don't know how to best discipline their children. According to her, corporal punishment is biblical:
"Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" (Proverbs 13:24). She believed that this is a place where the government policies collide with the African culture of corporal discipline and the biblical advice on a good way to discipline. And many parents are overwhelmingly helpless about how to raise their children because they do not want to be in trouble with the law of the country.

The analysis of this collected data inspired the seeking of solutions to the difficulty our children had in reading. From the beginning of this program, the end in mind was to improve the children reading fluency and get to the best level possible. With the advice of our educator volunteer, we used the "Hasbrouck-Tindal oral reading fluency chart" (readnaturally.com 2017) which is a tool that helped us "rate the reading fluency of" all our children. This tool helped us to build a fluency program and expectation for all the grades involved in this research. Our basic benchmark was to help a child read fluently and aloud the assigned books of his/her grade. We had learned that a child's "ability to read aloud with speed, accuracy and expression" was foundational and essential in the cultivation of an appetite for reading (Spaull, 2016). In the assessment of the effectiveness of our program, we took into consideration "the 5 components for good reading accomplishments" (Spaull, 2016):

1. "Phonemic awareness": We made sure that children are able to "hear and identify" phonics in their reading.
2. "Alphabetic principle": We helped the children "understand that words are made up of letters that represent segments of the speech". We also helped them "understand the relationship between letters" and phonics.
3. "Vocabulary": We were creative in our use of words that were meaningful to the children.
4. "Comprehension": We led them to draw meaning from reading a text and share it.
5. "Fluency": We helped the children " read in a way that was "connected the text quickly, accurately and with meaningful expressions".

The research team gathered in four focus groups to that end.

6.3.2 Focus group one

The first group focus was made of our reading club tutors only and me. We met one month after kicking off this program. After learning that the majority of our children did not like school, we discussed how we could make our reading club fun for them. An educational psychologist, Edward Thorndike (1999) developed laws of learning in which he stressed "that learning is strengthened when accompanied by a pleasant or satisfying feeling", and it is "weakened when associated with an unpleasant feeling". Learners will continue coming to a fun environment and "doing what provides a pleasant effect to continue learning".

A fun environment was going to speak into the children's fundamental needs of affection and idleness. Affection, because they were going to receive love through the activities we planned for them. Idleness, because fun activities were going to relax their minds before and through the classroom activities.

We faced the reality that many of our children were not motivated to come to reading club. Few were brought by their parents/guardians. And our tutors had to go fetch the others from their homes and bring them to the club. During our discussion, we talked about starting our tutoring sessions with fun games which most children like and could play them a whole day long. We also made few swings in our office yard.

About creating a fun environment, we decided to regularly (twice a month) take out the children to learning trips outside our normal tutoring space. And for the trip, we packed nice snacks and juice in a party pack style. We went to nearby libraries and parks. I have learned from my children that school trips are very fun primarily because they get nicer lunch food and the change of environment. Our goal was to diversify the learning venues for our children and hope to stimulate their appetite for learning and equate the reading club to a fun activity they would look forward to doing. I have realized that often times, we fall into the trap of thinking that learning is best done inside the four walls

of our classrooms or houses. The educationalist Brian Gatens (2016) stresses that breaking up the monotony, getting the students outside and letting them burn off some energy will have a positive impact on your learning.

Some of our tutors also mentioned that schools in our township don't do creative things with children. Some people have fun doing creative activities with their hands and learn better that way than with words and verbal explanations. Incorporating creative things could be a very good way to acknowledge the learning preferences of some children and also balance the development of both their right and left sides of the brain. As a reading club, this insight led us to critique our own approach to tutoring in terms of balancing the left and right side of the brain. We realized that 80% of our teaching is left brain orientated and only 20% is right brain orientated. We decided to balance things out in dedicating 50% of our tutoring to left brain things and the other 50% to creative things (right brain). We were going to do this for a quarter, then assess any improvement in some children ability to learn to the best of their ability.

I reminded our tutors that one of the aims of this research was to come up with an alternative approach to teaching. The current mainstream education approach seems to focus on preparing children to fit into the national and global system of job market. Children who do not fit in this way of education, drop out. But as a society, we should aspire to be in solidarity with one another, therefore we needed to figure out creative approaches to learning that would accommodate all our reading club children. That is why we had four children per tutor. The heart behind this experiment was to create a platform in which children had quality one on one and group attention from their tutor. I was hoping this format would address the children fundamental needs of affection by them receiving love and quality attention from their tutor; of understanding by improving the reading and content grasping ability, since they all came from overcrowded classrooms in public schools (insight from the educator volunteer) and many of them lived in a traumatic environment (insight from the social worker and psychologist) thinking about both their families and the community they live in; and of participation because they were a small number in the classroom.

We also noticed from our home visits that corporal punishment was still a very common practice in our community. I was raised with corporal punishment at home and at school. For the first five years of marriage, I used corporal punishment as a way to discipline my children. I stopped afterward when I realized that I was not good at drawing a clear line between disciplining and abusing. In South Africa, it is a government policy not to use corporal punishment in homes and in schools. The clinical psychologist, Juniper Russo (2017), thinks that "corporal punishment provides only a temporary change" in a child's behaviour and tends to be counterproductive, and that no compelling evidence exists to support the notion that physical strikes can improve a child's behaviour or mental health. "Corporal punishment", she continues, "may result in short-term compliance because of the child's fear of physical pain".

Many African sages I know and many of our neighbours in Soshanguve believe that corporal punishment can alter a child's behaviour by teaching him/her to associate negative behaviours with physically painful consequences. To avoid physical pain, the child will theoretically stop engaging in the actions that lead to corporal punishment (livestrong.com 2017). In interviewing the parents/guardians, there was a clear connection between a child being slow in preparing to go to school and corporal punishment.

The issue of corporal punishment usually brings to the fore the dilemma that followers of Jesus have in prioritising being law abiding citizens (no corporal punishment) and following biblical principles (Don't spare the rod). Both our social worker and psychologist volunteers told me separately that corporal punishment could lead to a trauma and lack of focus. We decided that corporal punishment was a topic we were going to engage the parents/guardians of our children with, when we gather them.

6.3.3. Implementation of focus group resolutions

6.3.3.1 Fun environment
At the front end of our reading club activities, we had starter games for 30 minutes. Our tutors came up with a whole list of games kids enjoyed playing in our communities. For every session, they used 2 or 3 games. At the end of the games, we fed them a snack and a drink. Food also served as an incentive to encourage children to be punctual. The children had two snacks: after the games and at the end of the tutoring session. Those who were not punctual only got one snack at the end of the session. Very soon, we saw a sharp increase in the numbers of children who were punctual. Some of the children even started coming straight our office from school.

The children also enjoyed and always looked forward to going to our organised learning trips. We went to two libraries in Soshanguve and did our reading sessions there. We also had a person working at the library come and motivate the children and tutors about cultivating an appetite for reading and the benefits that come with knowledge acquisition. We also went to parks with children friendly facilities such as swings. There, we did some outdoor learning and some children amazed us about their smartness, because we had not seen them that sharp in classrooms. Many children talked to their peers about how fun the trips were and we started having more children coming to join our club. However, for the sake of this research, we kept the number of children to 20, but we opened another reading club with the new comers and recruited new volunteers.

Creating a fun environment also meant introducing creative expressions in our sessions, thus balancing the right and left sides of the brain in our teaching.

6.3.3.3 Balance between right and left sides of the brain in teaching
The decision to experiment this approach was supported by the theory of left-brain and right-brain dominance derived from a study performed by a neuropsychologist by the name of Roger Sperry

(1974). From that research, we came to learn that everyone learns and thinks by using mainly one side of their brain. Some people are right-brain dominant and some are left-brain dominant. There are also some that think with part of each side. These people are referred to as middle-brained or whole-brained thinkers.

Roger Sperry's findings showed that right-brain learners are more intuitive and spontaneous people. When it comes to the right side of the brain 'it thinks in pictures not words, visual-spatial skills of location and direction (maps), reorganising colours and shapes and imagining and arranging them into art (sculpture, painting, architecture, music, rhythm, and dance) are functions of the right brain. The right-brained tend to look at the big picture beforehand rather than all the details and facts. A left-brained is driven by logic and prefers following steps or a specific system to accomplish a task. Details and facts are always important to the left brain. It decodes and processes information, it works step-by-step; sees things in parts; puts things in order; remembers people's names; comes up with logical answers to problems. Middle-brained learners use each side of the brain thus making them more flexible when it comes to learning new things. Many studies have been conducted that validate these things.

Below is a table from a lecture given to Tshwane University of Technology teaching students (Thabo Modise, Pedagogy III. 2017) that captures the characteristics, functions and implications for learning for right brain and left-brain people:

RIGHT BRAIN	LEFT BRAIN
Characteristics and Functions	**Characteristics and Functions**
Prefers to draw and handle objects	Logical thinking
Imaginations	Solves problems by breaking them apart.
More likely to act on emotions	Sequential
Self-acting	Thinks concretely.
Inventing	Talks to think and learn
Solves problems by looking at the whole	Analytical
Visual/Spatial oriented	Serious ideas/ Logical ideas.
Kinesthetic learner	Critical thinking
Visual analysis	Parts/segmented
Pictures things to think and learn	Structured/planned
Playful/Loose experimenting	Ordering/Sequencing
Random exploration	Objective processing of ideas

Follows written or demonstrated directions	Prefers to write and talk
Visual/Kinesthetic instructions	Auditory/Visual learner.
Creative thinking/synthesizing	Follows spoken directions/ verbal instructions
Relational concepts	Verbal
Divergent thinking	Remembers names
Takes risks	Convergent thinking
Looks for similar qualities	Takes few risks
Musical abilities	Looks for differences
Lets feelings Go – Emotional	Math (Algebra)
Simultaneity	Rational
Holistic/Gestalten	Receptive
Intuitive thinking	Evaluative thinking
Evaluative thinking	Thinks of one thing at a time.
Abstract	Focal thinking
Responsive	Linear
Nonlinear	Verbal memory
Tonal memory	Controlled experimenting
Humorous ideas	Abstract math computation
Math (Geometry)	Reading/Phonics
Subjective processing of ideas	Nonfiction
Simple math computation	Writing
Diffuse thinking	Interpreting behaviour
Sight reading	Verifying
Singing	Duplication and application
Dreaming	Reality
Assuming	Improving known
Fantasy	Intellectual
Fiction	Controls feelings

Affective interaction	Time oriented
Spontaneous	Prefers objective tests
Remembers faces	Controls right side of the body
Prefers essay tests	Language abilities
Controls left side of the body	Dislikes improvising
Likes improvising	Little use of metaphors and analogies
Use metaphors and analogies	

Implications for Learning	**Implications for Learning**
Discuss, draw, write the concept before learning it.	Encourage logical, step-by-step problem solving
Encourage use of imagination through creativity.	Break down concepts into smaller, sequential parts.
Discuss the role of feelings in decision making.	Use concrete examples to make abstract concepts understandable.
Use role-playing activities	Discuss the role of organised concrete thinking.
Use creative craft materials for inventive projects.	Learn various strategies to analyze problems.
Use graphic organizers to illustrate whole concept.	Understand solution steps in logical thinking.
Use manipulatives to demonstrate spatial relationships.	Use games, toys, materials with specific purposes.
Use touch and movement activities.	Break major concepts into parts and subgroups.
Use illustrations whenever possible.	Use materials that help organize (binders, planners).
When in doubt, draw it out	Use manipulatives that demonstrate a process.
Conduct experiments.	Discuss or repeat orally while writing.
Apply brainstorming strategies	Use verbal or written directions.
Use written instructions.	Students repeat directions orally.
Have students create their own instuctions.	Talk aloud while studying when appropriate

Demostrate how to build or make something.

Make collage pictures.

Utilize open-ended discussions

Play games that encourage risk taking.

Play games that encourage risk finding similarities.

Encourage involvement in musical activities.

Discuss acceptable outlets for emotions

Encourage simultaneous thinking.

Observe completion of task before trying.

Encourage students to create own problem solving systems.

Use abstract materials

Encourage self-improvement

Devise methods to help with organisational skills.

Use spelling aids and visual memory strategies.

Use or create humor.

Discuss specific facts and details.

Organize brainstorming ideas into a conclusion

Play games that minimise risk taking

Play games that encourage finding differences

Encourage involvement in math and science

Encourage talking through problems

Use or create humour.

a) The right brain learner

They prefer to work in groups. They like to do art projects, industrial arts electives in middle school and graphic design. They would prefer to design and make a mobile rather than write "another tedious term paper".

b) The left-brain learner

They prefer to work alone. They like to read independently and incorporate research into their papers. They favour a quiet classroom without a lot of distraction.

c)Teaching imbalance with regards to right and left sides of the brain

In general schools tend to favour left-brain modes of thinking, and they mostly ignore the right-brain ones. But in our reading club, we took a middle-brained approach, focusing on the skills of both sides. In a society and education system that normally favours and embraces the left-brain ways of learning, we had a chance to come up with an alternative by balancing left-brain and right-brain. We developed lesson plans to accommodate both types of learners in helping them discover how they learn best and be motivated to learn more, thereafter. I wanted to make sure that all our students had a fair chance at learning and better understand our teachings (essay.uk.com 2017).

In our experiment of left-brain and right-brain teaching, some children were clearly interested in one style over the other. The interested ones were engaged and participating; the least interested were either disengaged or disruptive. As a team of tutors, we had to come up with a discipline policy and take a stand on corporal punishment.

6.3.3.4 Discipline

In order to ensure that our methods of teaching were consistently implemented, we needed to pay attention to discipline. I made it clear to our tutors that corporal punishment and swearing were not allowed. At first, we tried 'time out' for 10 minutes for disruptive children, but it did not work. But very soon, I learned that food was going to be a good incentive for them to be disciplined. We decided that the disruptive children won't get a snack and drink at the end of the session. That worked for us. The children never wanted to miss out on a snack at the end of the day.

6.3.3.5 Conclusion

As a team, we knew that we were one step ahead in our goal to cultivate an appetite for reading in our children, if we created a fun environment they could enjoy coming to. A fun environment leads to smoother learning. With the children being engaged, we now had an opportunity to explore alternative approaches to education that could have to direct link to the minimisation of school dropout. A quarter into this research, I gathered with all our professional volunteers and tutors for assessment and strategizing. This section insight is captured below:

FUN ENVIRONMENT → CHILDREN'S GOOD ATTENDANCE TO PROGRAMME

6.3.4. Focus group two

After a quarter into this research, we met as a group of ten people (five tutors, four professional volunteers and me). I prepared the following questions to facilitate our conversation:

1. How well have we done at creating a fun learning environment?

2. Did our decision to balance creativity and reading help our children in their ability to read?

3. What giftings have we discovered in our children?

4. How are these giftings connected to the kind of society we would like to become?

5. What can we do to involve the children's parents/guardians into this research?

6.3.4.1 How well have we done at creating a fun learning environment?

There was a unanimous sentiment from all participants that we had done a good job at creating a fun environment judging by the good attendance of our 20 children in our program and their punctuality.

6.3.4.2 Did our decision to balance creativity and reading help our children in their ability to read?

In terms of the actual reading, 10 children out of 20 improved their reading ability. One of the tutors reckoned that the improvement could be due to the structure of the reading club. Children started off with playing a starter game for 30 minutes, then eat a snack and a drink afterwards. Some then spent 40 minutes reading and others doing art. And finish the day with some doing creative things such as art, collage and storytelling or reading (40 minutes). Finally, we finished the day with another snack and drink (10 minutes).

Our professional volunteers encouraged us in this journey of seeking alternative teaching approaches by reminding us that the high rate of school dropout is a sign of an ineffective schooling system that has failed some of our children (Social worker 5) and that mostly focus on what a child should learn than how a child acquires knowledge (Psychologist 5). Such a system limits the production of diverse skills because some talents of individuals are undermined (Nurse 5). And our schooling system is run by a government that prioritises policy making and changing curriculum over daily teaching and learning conditions (Educator 5).

6.3.4.3 What giftings have we discovered in our children?

I took these insights from our professional volunteers into consideration. The tutors and I paid intentional attention to the unique gifting of the children and were inspired by the educationalist, Michelle Gregoire Gill (2016) principle that "learning should advance a child's development rather than follow it". And she also stresses that students learn best when they are engaged in learning. People will always be engaged when they operate out of a gifting.

Michelle Gregoire Gill (2016) adapted five psychological theories to form the core guiding principles of a school she founded. I also adapted these guiding principles to our reading club. These principles are captured and explained below:
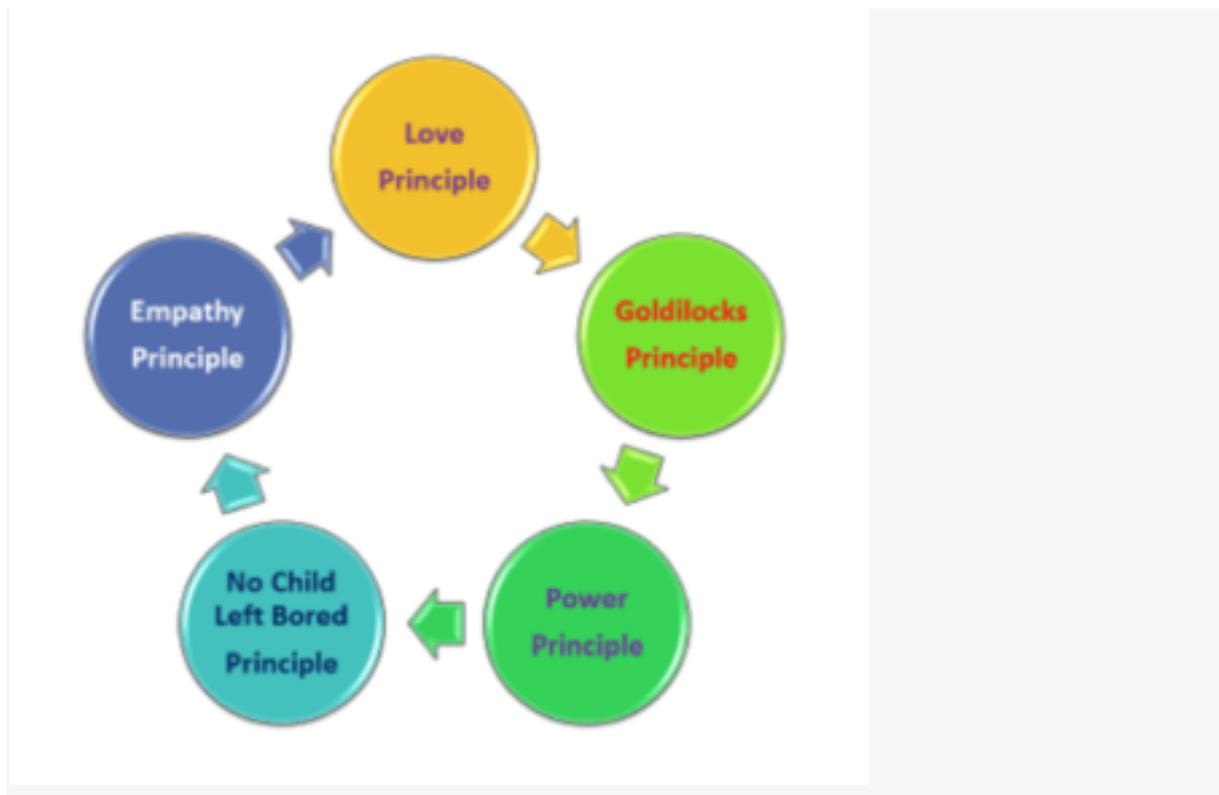
1. **Nurture (the love principle)**: We aimed to focus on the individual child, nurturing his/her social and emotional needs.

2. **Challenge (the goldilocks principle):** We aimed to meet children in their ZONE with work that is not too easy, nor too frustrating for them.

3. **Motivation (power principle):** We aimed to give students voices and choices in their learning. We wanted to see children participate in classroom and our other ministry activities such as kids' club and camps.

4. **Passionate interests (no child left bored principle):** We aimed to provide frequent opportunities for authentic, interdisciplinary learning based on children's interests.

5. **Service (empathy principle):** We aimed to encourage students to use their gifts and talents to solve problems to help make the world a better place (psychologytoday.com 2018).

In the classroom, we observed that girls seemed to be better at creative stuff and the majority of our learners were girls. But boys and girls were equally interested in activities such as dancing, drawing, collaging, painting and other creative art expressions.

We discovered some talents in our children. I took advantage of these talents to coach our volunteers about experimenting an alternative education model that is connected to the kind of society we would like to become, a society that is inclusive and considerate of every member unique talent and uses it efficiently. We basically used their unique talents as an asset to teach them how to read. Below is the list of the talents we discovered:

Five of our children were very talented in drawing, five in athletics (fast runners), three in acting, three in baking, two were very knowledgeable in bicycle and that's all they wanted to talk about, one was a very good soccer player and the last one only wanted to watch cartoons on television all day long.

For those who were talented and interested in drawing, we gave them drawing tasks from the beginning of our class, put words and sentences on the things they had drawn and taught them how to read these words and sentences.

For the athletes we started off with telling a story of a renown athlete, then came up with words and sentences connected to their field of interest to teach them how to read.

Our learning outings to parks always included some time for them to run around or play soccer. Our tutors and I observed them and other circumstances around that environment to come up with stories to tell, words and sentences for their learning.

For those who liked bicycles and cartoons, we used their field of interest in collecting bicycle brand names and part names in order to teach them how to read. We also collected cartoon characters and short stories to help one child read. Some days, we made the children ride a bicycle as part of their learning experience. Some days, we also watched a cartoon for the sake of one child, drew some stories from it and used that as a teaching tool.

6.3.4.4. How are these talents connected to the kind of society we would like to become?

The society we would like to become is the one where everyone's uniqueness is recognised and affirmed as a valuable asset to the building of it. Our focus on the individual interest or talents of our children brought a lot of energy in the room and a good sense of engagement of our children. For example, every time we did drawing as a creative art activity, two of the five talented drawers finished first and offered to help out their peers who were still behind. This gesture portrayed the character of other centred love in sharing with others what someone has.

We saw this other centred behaviour in many of other children as well as. Every time someone was operating in an area they were talented in, they looked happy, they were vocal and willing coach others about how to do things well.

In terms of envisioning the future, drawing is such a creative skill that could be nurtured into a profession such as art or graphic design.

Athleticism could be nurtured into a profession in sport. The latter is a lucrative profession in our society. InnerCHANGE, through its other ministry activities, has an existing platform to nurture sport talents of our children.

An interest in bicycles could lead to someone knowing the mechanics and engineering of bicycles and even cars. Someone could make a living out of this skill and our society needs vocational skills such as mechanics and engineering.

Interest in cartoons could lead someone to develop storytelling skills, language vocabulary development and an ability to debate.

6.3.4.5. What can we do to involve the children's parents/guardians into this research?

From the beginning, three mothers brought their children to our program. I hoped to see all the children's parents/guardians involved with us because we wanted to create a learning community that involved us and the parents/guardians. The educationalist Wilder (2013) stresses that the positive impact of "parental involvement on student academic achievement" has been recognised by educators, administrators, and policy-makers. The outcome of a parental involvement and academic achievement is usually positive, regardless of a definition of parental involvement or measure of achievement.

When we were recruiting our children and during our interview with parents/guardians, many of them spoke negatively about their children. The main reason why they allowed their children to be tutored was because they were "stupid at school" and needed a lot of help in order to learn how to read.

We were spending time with these children and discovered some of their talents that we were using to teach them how to read. I wanted the parents/guardians to know about the talents we had discovered and for them to start building a positive image of their children when it came to academic performance. We decided to invite all the parents/guardians to a meeting in which we were going to report on what we did with their children. Our social worker and psychologist volunteers were going to do lead our conversations. The latter was important because many of our children live in traumatic environments and the parents/guardians are part of the problem (also see in 3.2.1 and 5) and we wanted to conscientise them in creating, for the sake of their children, a safe and healthy environment for their children (psychologist 5). For our first meeting, only five parents/guardians came. I was disappointed by the attendance. However, we were able to go ahead with our planned program. We asked parents/guardians the permission to go to the children's schools to share our findings. Four out of five parents offered to go with us. We went together. We also decided to do home visits to parents/guardians every last week of the month in order to build a relationship and partnership with the children's parents/guardians.

6.3.4.6 Conclusion

As a team we were encouraged to see half of our children improve their ability to read from the first quarter. Of the ten children who improved, five were the talented athletes, three talented drawers, one cartoon lover and one biking lover. Our task was now to maintain what worked for the 10 and start figuring out something that could work for those who were still struggling. We took our findings to the children schools, shared them with their educators and started building a relationship with the school.

The professional volunteers also suggested that we expose our tutors more to early childhood education training so that they can learn various methods and approaches of helping children learn. Our social worker and psychologist volunteers made a commitment to volunteer more of their time to

help out with the assessment of the individual needs of the children. They suggested that we start doing some assessment of the children through the images, drawings, collages and sport. The step by step process of this assessment was a diagnosis of children's attention span. The steps of the assessment were the following:

1. Give a drawing or collage task to a child and give him/her 10 minutes to finish it.
2. After 10 minutes, check if the task is completed
3. If the task is completed, have the child take a break and give another 10 minute creative art task and check if it is completed within the allocated time.
4. If task is not completed, have the child take a break. Afterwards, give him/her again a 10 minute task for 12 minutes: five minutes work, two minutes break and five minutes work again.
5. If the task is completed then, we gave this child many breaks (after every five minutes, two minutes break) during our 80 minutes creative and reading times.

Mahone & Schneider (2012:1) discovered that "early developmental differences involving attentional control in children are considered to arise from a variety of influences", including genetic, temperamental, and environmental factors. And the strongest early predictors of attention problems included premature birth, low birth weight, prenatal tobacco exposure, non-intact family, young maternal age, paternal history of antisocial behaviour, and maternal depression. The above-mentioned predictors were mentioned by our professional volunteers in the interviews in chapter five.

Our task in the next quarter was going to examine the attention span of our struggling children in their acquisition of knowledge. `This section thoughts are captured below:

6.3.5 Focus group three

This was about halfway into the research. We also met as a group of ten people: five tutors, four professional volunteers and me. I prepared the following questions for our discussions:

1. How well are we doing at helping the child learn how to read in taking into account their attention span?
2. How can we share our learning and findings with parents and educators?

6.3.5.1 How well are we doing at helping currently struggling children learn how to read in taking into account their attention span?

The tutors and I shared the observations we made about the children attention span.

For some grade R and 1 children we gave them colouring task, for instance. For the first 3 minutes, all the children coloured within the prescribed boundaries. After that some of them started drifting away from the boundary lines, others started putting different colour tones.

For the grade 2, 3 and 4, we gave them a collage task. Each child was given a unique theme. They had a look for pictures in magazines. Some children executed the task well and many others lost track of what was expected from them and the tutors had to remind them their theme.

We also played soccer and netball to assess the concentration levels of the children. In the first 15 minutes of the games, the children were very engaged. Afterwards we could noticeably observe lapse of concentration in many children due to boredom and tiredness.

I found an educator specialising in early childhood education who volunteered to train our tutors and me every other week. She focused her teachings on the pedagogy of teaching. This training improvement our ability to manage individual children and our small groups.

6.3.5.2 How can we share our learning and findings with parents and educators?

We sent out an invitation to parents because we wanted to meet up with them once a month to share what we were doing and our discoveries as well as exhort them to be involved in the education of their children. We were again disappointed that only five parents came.

We also went with these five involved parents to visit the children's schools and report our discoveries to the educators. The later were impressed with what we were doing and offered to send our way some of their struggling learners for us to tutor them. We took some of these learners in our other reading club.

We also asked for advice about how to help learners who were still struggling to read. They asked what languages of instruction we used. Some of the educators stressed that language barrier could impede learning. Our educator volunteer also mentioned that in the interview (see chapter 5). We told them that we used English as our medium of instruction and our educator volunteer advised us to do so because there are more English reading resources available than resources in vernacular.

The majority of the children's educators were pro vernacular because it is the government policy. But all the children's parents/guardians preferred their children to be taught how to read English. The reason being was that according to them, English is the business language of the world. I also send my children to school where they learn English as their home language. Also, practically, when we discovered the talents of each of our children, it was easier to find a repertoire of English words, sentences and stories connected to the field they were talented in. We also saw encouraging milestones in reaching our goal of helping children learn how to read to the best of their ability at that point. We were gaining some confidence in our experiments. The English language is also a class

reality in our community. The majority of professionals of our community, including township public school educators, send their children to schools where English is used as first language. All the parents/guardians who bring their children to our reading club live with poverty and would have loved to send their children to schools where English is used as home language. These schools charge monthly fees that the majority of our community members can't afford. So our reading club language policy was a good deal for the parents because their children got to learn to read and speak English for free.

Language policy in school is an important academic debate in South Africa that grassroots people wrestle with as we pave ways for a better future of our children. Section 29(2) of the Constitution of South Africa states that every learner has the right to receive a basic education in the language of his/her choice, where this is reasonably practicable. This right is an important recognition of equality and diversity, and the need to depart from a history in which education– and language in education, in particular – was used as a vehicle to implement and strengthen apartheid. Through this right, learners' diversity and individuality is recognised, and this can facilitate the important objective of unlocking their potential.

 In environments such as the township of Soshanguve, learners take two languages: home and first additional languages. Home language is also referred to as vernacular. The latter is the language the learner knows best, and is most comfortable reading, writing and speaking. For this reason, the home language taught to the learner at school is often (but not always) the same as the language the learner speaks at home(section27.org.za 2017). For the majority of our children in the reading club, their school home language was different from the language they speak at home or in the community.

As a team, we agreed with the parents hope that children should improve their ability to read and improve their understanding of English. In his Percy Baneshik Memorial Lecture to the English Academy of South Africa, Professor Jonathan Jansen (2013) argued along the same line and recommended the introduction of English as the language of instruction as early as possible. He observed that many black parents recognised that English proficiency is important for successful participation in the economy, and therefore concluded that their children should be instructed in English. He carries on in arguing that black parents' preference of English over home language has two unspoken logics to it: the logic of economics (your chances of upward mobility), and the logic of politics (the language of the oppressor). Black parents prefer to have their children study in English. No matter what politicians might say about indigenous education, or the Pan South African Language Board about language rights, black parents make the correct calculation that virtually the entire economy is now organised on English terms and therefore the chances of success are much greater in the colonial language. There is another reason why English is the language of choice in school. It is that the indigenous languages are so poorly taught and still have an underdeveloped scientific vocabulary.

This is where a major miscalculation occurs on the part of language activists: simply learning in your

mother tongue is absolutely no guarantee of improved learning gains in school, as the disastrous annual national assessments results show year on year. The problem is not the language of instruction — it is the quality of teaching, the knowledge of curriculum and the stability of the school that determines your educational chances in a black school (Jansen, 2017).

Indeed, our reading club language policy does not entirely comply with the government language policy. There also is scientific evidence of the benefit of learning in mother tongues in foundation phase. It is been found that among children in schools of a similar quality and coming from similar home backgrounds, those who were taught in their home language during the first three years of primary school performed better in the English test in grades four, five and six than children who were exposed to English as the language of instruction in grades one, two and three. The size of the difference is not inconsequential: it is equivalent to about a third of a year of additional learning for children who were instructed in their home language during grades one, two and three compared with their peers who were instructed only in English during that same period. This finding seems to be in line with the thinking of education specialists, who have for many years promoted the advantages of mother-tongue instruction in the early stages of children's education. Given the practical realities of the South African education system, the policy to encourage the use of mother-tongue instruction in the foundation phase but still allow schools to make the final choice based on their specific circumstances seems to be beneficial (Taylor & Coetzee, 2017).

The purpose of this study was not to take a side in this debate. However, it was important that our team be considerate of the wishes of the parents and the available resources that were going to allow us to reach our aim. Parents/guardians are some of the main stakeholders in this research and it was critical for them to feel listened to. We also found from the children's educators that children who improved their reading ability with us, also improved in their home language at school.

6.3.5.3 Conclusion

Our journey towards minimising disinterest in education continued to be encouraging. 80% of our children had improved their ability to read. Parents/guardians and educators also concurred with this assessment based on what they saw at home and in the classroom. A parent of one of our children, saw the good fruit and took the initiative to connect me to a funding organization she knew. We (InnerCHANGE) made an application and were approved and got some much-needed funding to increase our staff capacity, our art materials and buy more stationaries. We were very encouraged in seeing a kind of partnership we have always desired with our community. We still needed to figure out how to help six children out of the twenty we had, improve their ability to read. This section thoughts are captured below:

6.3.6 Focus group four

Nine months in this research, we met again as a group of nine people (five tutors, four professional volunteers and me) to evaluate the approaches and experiment some more. I prepared these questions to facilitate our discussion.

1. How well are we doing at judging a fish by its ability to swim?

2. What can we do with the four children who have not improved their ability to read?

3. How well are we doing at partnering with the parents/guardians of the children?

6.3.6.1 How well are we doing at judging a fish by its ability to swim?

Everyone in the room felt very good about the improvement they had seen in the children in terms of self-expression through art and reading. Some of our children had cultivated an appetite for reading to such an extent that they read to us, to their parents/guardians at home and in the classroom. We were overwhelmed by many referrals of struggling children from many educators from our neighbourhood schools.

The general sentiment of the group was that we had discovered something that made it possible for many of our children to enjoy learning how to read.

6.3.6.2 What can we do with the four children who have not improved their ability to read?

Here we had to rely of the knowledge and expertise of our professional volunteers because we (the tutors and me) had run out of ideas about how to help. Our psychologist volunteer informed us that one of our four struggling children was Down's syndrome after she had a conversation session with him. We learned from her that Down's syndrome causes a distinct facial appearance, intellectual disability and developmental delays.

Another child was clearly petite and developmentally few years behind compared to her peers. Our social worker, psychologist and two of our tutors went to visit her guardians at home to learn more about the living circumstances of the child. They also had one on one sessions with the child. The

164

professionals' conclusion was that the child had foetal alcohol spectrum disorders. The latter refers to a group of conditions which can affect a person whose mother drank alcohol during her pregnancy. The disorders may vary from mild to severe, and they can affect different systems in the body. The most severe form affects a person's vision, hearing, memory, attention span, and learning and social capabilities.

We also discovered that one child was dyslexic. Our psychologist and social worker volunteers found that out after doing this online test with all the four children: https://www.testdyslexia.com

We finally found out the last child is on anti-retroviral treatment and lives in a physically and emotionally abusive home.

At a team we decided to shift from our focus of helping these four improve their ability to read, and rather to help them maximise their ability to communicate using art and other hands on mediums they were already good at (natural talent literacy). Our social worker volunteer availed herself to work with these four children once a week, on Saturday afternoons. We sent letters to the children's parents to inform them of our intent.

 We only received one parent/guardian feedback okaying our decision. The other parents came to our office to let us know that they were not happy with our decision. They came separately, but their concern was the same as if they talked amongst themselves before coming to us. They all felt like our suggestion was going to marginalise their children and that there was an implicit statement from us that their children were unfit to learn like other children.

 Our intention to help the four struggling children to cultivate an appetite for reading was put under a severe test here. It felt like our intention to help was hurting people. A poor resolution of this problem had the potential to reinforce these three parents sense of inadequacy towards our education system and thinking poorly about their children.

We respected the parents' concerns and did not do Saturday afternoon classes with the four learners. We kept them in the same classrooms with the other learners. However, we focused on their artistic genius and storytelling which they enjoyed and got very good at. We kept close communication with the parents and told them what we were doing with their children. They were all fine with what we were doing.

A common characteristic about these four children was that they were very good with their hands. So, an appropriate schooling environment for them would be a platform that encourages them to self-express through their hands. They told coherent stories from collages, drawings, crafts or paintings. They just could not read although two of them were in grade 3, one in grade 2 and one in grade 4.

6.3.6.3 How well are we doing at partnering with the parents/guardians of the children?

For our third quarter meeting with parents/guardians, 12 of them came (60%). As a team we were encouraged by their attendance. Our social worker volunteers chaired the meeting. She creatively asked the attendees what motivated them to come to the meeting. They all said that it was because their children were doing well in school and they had heard from the children's educators encouraging words about their academic improvements. They then knew that InnerCHANGE was doing a good job with their children.

The parents' statements reminded me of a culture I experience in poor urban environments of only supporting successful things. I see that a lot in sport where Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates or Sundowns (all very famous South Africa football teams) fans only support their teams when they are winning. When the team is going through a hard time, fans will be ready to kill the team managers or some underperforming players.

In our meetings with the children's parents/guardians, we were aiming to encourage them to show support to their children even when they underperformed academically. Our social worker volunteer mentioned in the previous chapter the fact that the academic impediments some children have may just be a symptom of how dysfunctional the families they are raised in, are. Any sustainable result of a child welfare should be holistic, she said. It must involve or incorporate his/her family in the solution seeking process. During our interviews, many parents/guardians spoke negatively about their children because they were not performing well academically. From my experience, children that grow up in households where parents use degrading, humiliating and disrespectful language, usually develop low self-esteem. Many children from peri urban areas such as Soshanguve, grow up in families hearing sentences like: you are a bad kid, you shouldn't have been born, you will never succeed in life, you're good for nothing, you have been a curse to us, you are dumb, your cousin is much smarter than you, and much more. I regularly hear these words in the streets of Soshanguve.

Many parents/guardians rely on criticism and negative language believing that it will make their children responsible. Abusive and hurtful words that parents use affect all the areas of children's lives. It affects their emotional, cognitive and social development. They grow up with feelings of 'not being perfect'. They feel inadequate and blame themselves for being the cause of parent's frequent reprimands and negative communication. They feel that they are constantly being watched with a critical lens. There is a feeling of being judged all the time. These children grow up to be harsh on themselves. It can even make them demanding of others and set very high expectations for themselves as well as for others. They become sensitive about negative comments and there is a tremendous amount of guilt. Children having verbally abusive parents can even get into substance abuse or commit suicide (eftforpeace.wrdpress.com 2017).

When our social worker volunteer led this conversation, she prepared four topics of discussion for a two-hour session. The topics were below:

166

- Building resilience and self-esteem for life
- Understanding your child's personality
- Love languages of children
- Traditional values and raising children in the current South Africa.

She had a list of topics that she planned on facilitating with the children's parents throughout the year. The list of topics she submitted to me is below:

- Building resilience and self-esteem for life
- Understanding your child's personality
- Love languages of children
- Growing great families
- Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Growing boys and raising girls
- Parenting from a united front
- Communication – speaking your family's language
- Strategies for blended families
- Get on top of sibling rivalry
- Trauma and family dynamic

6.3.6.4 Conclusion

In our seeking of advices to help out children we were not improving their reading literacy, our attention was brought to the need for technical and vocational schools in our community. The four children who were still struggling to read along with the other 16 children had noticeable talents. However, these talents were not good enough for them to thrive in our existing mainstream schooling system. These talents could be an asset to the children as well as our society if they are nurtured in appropriate institutions such as technical schools. In Soshanguve, they are two technical schools only. They have a long waiting list. And monthly public transport to get to and from school is unaffordable for low income households, which is the vast majority of our neighbours. We started an advocacy group composed of educators, InnerCHANGE staff and community members. We have been talking to the government to see if some of our existing schools in our neighbourhood could be turned into technical and vocational school. Our provincial government is converting some middle schools in high schools so that we could have a uniform system of primary and high school only in Gauteng. In Soshanguve, we still have primary, middle and high school. We have written a letter to the Gauteng basic education MEC (Member of the Executive Council) and we are still waiting for his reply. From my experience as a tutor, I can say with authority that South Africa is wasting time of and loosing lot of genius that could fit better into hands on skills than the mainstream system leading to a matric certificate.

The substance of our message to the (MEC) of Basic education was for the government for partner with interested community stakeholders such as our group in order to proactively intervene in the

early literacy of our children. Dictionary.com defines literacy as a person's knowledge of a particular subject or field. Our artistic children don't have a proper platform to express their genius (their literacy) in our community public schools and many of them drop out of school at some point.

There is some research evidence showing that early literacy intervention strategies help prevent high school dropout(readingpartners.org, 2017). Reading proficiency in the fourth grade is a strong indicator for high school dropout. It is said that children who are not reading at a proficient level by fourth grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school before graduating. Students growing up in low-income neighbourhoods who cannot read with proficiency, are six times more likely to leave high school without matric. There are many strategies that parents, tutors and educators can use to help their children become successful readers during their foundation phase such as keeping books in the house, reading aloud, and shared reading create in a literacy-rich environment in which students can flourish. Early literacy intervention programs are key to increasing high school graduation rates and fostering long-term economic growth and prosperity in a country such as South Africa. As concerned community members, school dropout is a problem we cannot afford to accept and we cannot afford to ignore because it negatively affects us on a daily basis, we concluded our letter to the MEC (readingpartners.org, 2017). For us literacy should not be limited to reading, it should be extended to cultivating an innate talent of art or other skills to the point that it benefits the talented person and society in general.

I also believe that some talented children should be sent to vocational schools from primary school age, contrary to the current government policy that require a child to have passed grade 9 in order to be eligible for vocational school. The rationale behind this argument is that talented children who are frustrated by the mainstream schooling system would operate in an energy giving environment where they would spend the majority of their day nurturing and developing the genius that is in them. Similar to what I have learned from our reading club, children in vocational school would learn literacy and numeracy from their talents standpoints. The thoughts of this section are captured below:

VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS = BEST LEARNING PLATFORM FOR SOME CHILDREN

6.4 END OF THE SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

By the end of the 2017 school year, our team was pleased and humbled to see 16 out 20 children significantly improve their ability to read and understand the content of their reading. And we were

saddened to admit that we could not help 4 of our children to improve their reading ability, but we were able to help catch the genius in them when it came to hands on things.

As a team of tutors, we also understood that in order to cultivate an appetite for reading and learning in our children, we needed to be lifelong learners. All our tutors have been taking Early Childhood Education courses and learn how to teach in home languages such as Sepedi, Setsonga and Isizulu. We are all members of a local library and regularly visit it to get books to read.

The education alternative we discovered after a year of experiments was one based of the search for a child talent or energy giving activity. We "tailor made" our reading curriculum based on these talents and areas of interest. This section thoughts are captured below:

EFFECTIVENESS — LIFELONG LEARNING — TAILOR MADE APPROACH TO TEACHING

6.5 ROLE OF THE CHURCH

As a missional team, we view the role of the church as that of tangibly, relevantly and meaningfully living out the gospel. We have come to define the latter as the good news of Jesus proclaimed and visibly lived out. Through a practical initiative such as the reading club we ran, we drew lessons for future ministry initiatives by regularly reflecting on the decisions we made or suggestions we came up with. This research frames the learned lessons in a form of a guideline. The outlining of the guideline helped us start and run smoothly other reading clubs. This guideline could help a congregation initiate a tangible service that is community based. Also, this is something early childhood development centres such as a creche, drop in centre or camps could use. Below is the guideline:

The first element has to do with setting the tone:

- Be yourself: Start an initiative that is meaningful to you or that is dear to your heart. As someone who dropped out of school two times in the past, a relevant education system is very important to me.
- Learn to win people around you through your exemplary influence and a clear expression of your passion. Many people are open to serve. They get their inspiration from observing a person or a group of people. Recruit and build a team with people who are passionate to serve. One of the best ways to attract outstanding people on your team, is to showcase the

outstanding people that are already part of your team.

- Find a venue people will come to.
- Put together an infrastructure that is welcoming to your target group. Think about swings, an adventure course for children, for example.
- Seek to build partnership with key stakeholders with whom you have a shared passion and commitment to a cause from the very beginning of the process.
- Make sure that having fun is a significant part of your team dynamic as well as your interaction with beneficiaries. Build a resource package to create a fun environment. Think about songs, games, stories the beneficiaries could enjoy.
- Be constructive in your criticism. Be open to suggestions about ways to improve the program. Debrief and reflect of your actions and experiences regularly. Listen to stakeholders' hopes and expectations and communicate yours in a compelling and persuasive way.
- Train team members regularly about the 'how to' of things and diversify trainers. Educate yourselves on different styles of learning and diversify learning environments.
- Create a healthy and sustainable incentive system for both team mates and beneficiaries.
- Work on a tailor-made curriculum and learn to think outside the box.

The second element has to do with vision casting:

- It is important to regularly remind team mates the aim and the vision behind your initiative.
- It is also important to remain open to new ideas coming from your team and the beneficiaries. We also found it important to be open to collaboration opportunities that could strengthen an initiative. We gained strength from a diversity of views and sought after the participation of those who enhanced the effectiveness of our initiative.
- In a community-based project, it is critical to give ownership of the initiative to the community itself. We learned to introduce new initiatives with the participation of community members from the very beginning.
- Build your initiative philosophy in a transferable format. It is important that the passing of the baton is possible and smooth. Also, we found it important to transfer the content of our aim in a user-friendly format such as songs, drama, recitation and dance for our children.

The third element has to do with identity and reputation:

- There should be integrity between the vision of your initiative and your actions.
- Catalyse a healthy team dynamic that would foster trust amongst members and between the team and community members.
- Regularly reach out to stakeholders in order to deepen the collective ownership of the initiative.

The fourth element has to do with communication:

- Clearly state to your team and people interested in your program your identity and the aim of

the program. For example, it was very important for our missional team to state the fact that we are a Christian organisation and through the reading club, we were going to do discipleship. Our main aim was to help the children cultivate an appetite for reading. We used a lot of Christian literature, songs and stories in our reading club.

- Use different mediums of communication to keep the initial vision alive and fresh to team mates, beneficiaries and all the stakeholders involved.

The fifth element has to do with disputes and conflicts:

- Conflict will arise when people work together. Keep a short account of those conflicts. Be objective in the resolution of them in bringing into discussion all the parties involved.
- Disputes brought to your attention should be handled objectively and sensitivity.

The sixth and last element has to do with violations:

- From the beginning of the initiative state consequences of violations upfront to team mates and all stakeholders involved. It is then critical to be proactive and consistent in enforcing them (Ligaya Tichy, 2013).

As I reflect further on the role of the church, through our missional team, I am convinced that the outcome of our reading club was a direct implementation of the biblical message of loving others sacrificially (Luke 9:23-26) in seeking the welfare of an urban community (Jeremiah 29:7), in involving a community to build and actively seek answers to its own prayers (Nehemiah 2:18). Through our reading club, we were not only able to showcase the children's abilities and genius, but we were also able to confront the prejudice that parents/guardians as well as educators have toward children who are not doing well in school. In this regard, we were able to reconcile children to their families, and educators to their learners. The church, through our missional team, played this role of reconciliation in tangible ways.

The reading club was also a discipleship and evengelisation platform. We did creative bible studies, which the children replicated and transferred to their homes. As a result, we did not only see children come to Christ, we also saw parents/guardians come to Christ and wanting to be good news to others around them in tangible ways. Many of those adults are now serving their community through other initiatives InnerCHANGE runs. Some have also connected InnerCHANGE to their local churches so that it can guide them through ways to be involved in community development. We have been humbled to see an increased number of neighbours who have taken the initiative to serve their community, recruit other neighbours as team mates and be involved in a tangible service. Our role has been to provide mentorship only. With the rising of many change agents from within, we have seen the community's increased confidence in its increased ability to be the solution to its own problems. With the change agents that are followers of Jesus, we see an increased reliance on God as the inspiration to solution seeking and a decreased dependence on InnerCHANGE as the

inspiration. This is due to the fact that these neighbours have discovered assets within themselves, resources around them that are helping resolve some of our communal issues.

Through this reading club, we were also able to see a unique contribution the church could make through community development work: to put skill and calling in a symbiotic relationship. Skills played a key role in helping children improve their reading ability. Calling has to do with the passion and commitment of our research partners to be good news, loving and compassionate neighbours. In our South African context, skill seems to be the primary reason why someone is hired to do a certain job. However, in many instances, we see skilled people being at work without working. In this study, calling is understood as a faithful response to God's instruction to his children to be a conduit of his blessing to the whole humanity (Genesis 12:3). In our reading club, we experienced good outcome when there was synergy between the knowledge of 'how to' and a heartfelt desire to be a conduit of God's blessing to others. The church could encourage its members to approach their professional tasks as a calling. Such an approach has the potential to improve service delivery and the birthing of good news stories in different spheres of our society.

Shane Claireborne (Perkins 2014:9) an activist and missiologist once said that if you want to know what someone believes, watch how they live. Each one of us is a potential living epistle. Our lives and actions shout what we believe, sometimes even louder than our words. So often, people cannot even hear our words past the noise of our lives. It is important for fellow followers of Jesus and urban dwellers, to become a proclamation of the good news of the gospel (Perkins 2014:10). Billy Graham (quoted by Otto 2014:x) said it nicely this way: "It's the holy spirit job to convict, God's job to judge, and our job as human beings to love others".

In reflecting on the history of oppression and inequality in Africa and South Africa, in particular, as a black person, it is easy for me to think of myself as a victim and would expect reparation or affirmative active from governments and other stakeholders. But although I was a victim of oppression, I believe that there is lot of room for me to be proactive in being part of the solution to personal and societal problems around me. Perkins (2014:115) stresses that "in situations of inequality or oppression, the oppressed group must take a stand somewhere, sometime. For until the people take that stand, there is no development possible for them. Yet when they take that stand in the face of clear injustice, an oppressed people are once again humanized". And they then become capable of a level of development-spiritual, economic, social or other – not psychologically possible for a people still in passive, dependent state.

Agency from grassroots people is the best way we could bring sustainable solutions to issues such as school dropout. Castellanos (2015:13-14) points out that like in the days of Nehemiah, it will take a group of pioneers who would use their acquired skills and time to be missional in building the community in tangible ways such as teaching children how to read and develop an appetite for reading. They will be the catalysts of the emergence of the shalom of God, which will begin to emerge in every environment they live in. The situation of high rate of school dropout and a dysfunctional

education system that face South Africa calls for a revolution in our attempts at a solution. These problems can't be solved without strong commitment and risky actions on the part of ordinary Christians with heroic faith to believe, as the little shepherd boy David did, that our God is greater than any Goliath who attempts to mock his name. God has always depended on his people to step onto the battlefield, to assume responsibility, to take the lead, and to make his love visible to the world. It is time for the whole body of Christ to take the whole gospel on a whole mission to the whole world. It is time for us to exhibit by our lives that we believe in the oneness of the body of Christ. It is time for us to prove that the purpose of the gospel is to reconcile alienated people to God and to each other, across racial, cultural, social and economic barriers. It is time for the reconciling love of God that has touched each individual heart to spill over into love for our neighbour (Perkins 1993:18).

Like Bosch (1991:311), I believe that every follower of Jesus "who loves South Africa should commit to active mission work". The latter is to be tangible good news agent of the gospel to others around you. This study involved other people in building and seeking the shalom of an urban community such as Soshanguve. In the process, new horizons of service were explored and reached.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter captured the heart of this research that is to encourage the body of Christ to tangibly and creatively live out Jesus' exhortation in John 13:35, that by loving others (being visible good news agents), people will know that we are his disciples. This is why fellow community members and followers of Jesus gathered to collaboratively help children learn how to read.

Our journey towards minimising disinterest in education has developed/unfolded as follows:

We started off by asking this question: How can our learning environment be attractive to children? We resolved to create a fun environment and be holistic in our teaching in balancing the right and left-brain styles of learning and teaching. We also experimented with different discipline methods during our activity times which helped make our learning environment effective. The results of the implementation of these different elements led to 50% of our children improvement in their ability to read from the first quarter. These results led to another question: how can we get to 100% improvement? The answer to this question was to upskill our tutors through training and workshop, diversity of assessment method, learn from schools in collaborating with the children's educators, and involve the children's parents in this project as much as possible. The result of this change of strategy led to an improvement of 30% more. We were now at 80% improvement of the group at the end of third quarter. This latest result made us realise that we had not fully reached on target of 100%. For the remaining 20%, we recommended vocational schools based of our assessment.

The process to these results captured the transdisciplinary nature of this research. We worked as a group with our different strengths and skills that led to the results shared in this chapter. As followers

of Jesus, the metaphor of the body of Christ being different members of a human body which has different members playing specific roles (1 Corinthians 12:18-23) served as a reminder of why we were doing what we were doing and why we should stick together in times of challenges. We also armed ourselves with hope that comes from biblical truth that states God created every human being in his likeness (Genesis 1:27) and with a least one talent (Matthew 25:14-30). Our faith helped us interact with children with expectation. An expectation that we will discover a genius in each of the children we had in our program. We were humbled to see this expectation come true.

The pertinence of a study such as this, had to do with the current crisis our education faces with many of our children not being able to read at a grade as high as 4. The South African education system is in fact ranked among the worst in the world. Many stakeholders are involved in solution seeking in this matter, including the body of Christ such as our missional team. This chapter captured what the church did to meaningfully respond to this crisis.

It involved key stakeholders such as parents/guardians in addition to professional volunteers and tutors. The interactions with these key players were done through home visits and focus groups. These interactions led to an outcome of 80% of children who significantly improved their ability to read.

From the above-mentioned process, we designed a guideline which helped us multiply into new initiatives. More details about multiplication are in the next chapter. A reflection on the outcome of our reading club led to stating the role of the church in community development: it is to bring synergy between skill and calling, which lead to sustainable and fruitful results.

This concluding poem titled "Doers of the word" captures the heart of this chapter:

As a child, I learned to eat before I said the word eat,
I learned to crawl before I could say it,
learned to walk before I could spell it.
As an adult, I have been forced to say love before I love.
I have been forced to say care before I care.
I have been forced to say empathy before I emphathise.
I have been forced to say sympathy before I symphathise.
Why should I be an adult if the kingdom of God belongs to children?
I miss being a child,
I grieve the loss of my childhood.
I am heartbroken that I can't do as much as I say.
I want to be a doer of my word.
I want be a doer of the word of God.
I want be a child in the body of an adult.
I also want be an adult in the mind of a child.

I want to do what I say.

I want to say what I can do.

I want to be a doer of the word of God.

CHAPTER VII: THE SPIRITUALITY OF THIS RESEARCH

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the socio active discipleship which is the foundational spirituality of this study. In working with different community stakeholders to minimise school dropout, positive rewards of collaborative efforts in solution seeking, have come out. Our community members were a critical human capital that made possible the results we had. Green & Haines (2012:117) stress that "human capital is an essential community asset. It includes general education background, labour market experience, artistic development and appreciation, health, and other skills and experiences". As a missional team, we are learning to build on the skills and experiences found in our poor urban environments, match them with the needs and opportunities to serve and be good news to others in tangible ways.

With regards to the praxis matrix, this chapter explores the spirituality of this study. The latter is located it in the area of deeds of justice. From working with neighbours in our reading club, we have learned to mobilise neighbours in solution seeking and reaching out to marginalised people such as school dropouts.

The socio active discipleship of this research is located in the incarnational stream of Christian life and faith. This discipleship led to the application of principles learned in the previous chapter which led to the multiplication of other reading clubs, a better management of our tutoring clubs and helping school dropouts to use their gifting and talents in order to better the quality of their lives.

7.2 THE INCARNATIONAL STREAM

Foster (1998:235) points out that the incarnational stream "focuses upon making present and visible the realm of the invisible spirit". It seeks to address "the crying need to experience God as truly manifest and notoriously active in daily life" (Foster 1998:235). As a missional team, we feel called to incarnational life and to work in areas of poverty. We believe that an effective way to make disciples is to positively and relevantly interact with the daily realities of our neighbours in partnership with these neighbours. We believe that the mission of the church is 'with' people because Jesus himself is Immanuel (God with us). We have learned over the past few decades that when the preposition 'with' drives mission, the potential to transform both the leaders and the people they seek to serve is heightened. The cost of this approach is a much higher investment of time and relational energy. It also demands that leaders give up power rather than guard it (Rocke & van Dyke 2012:75). One of the best signs of a successful incarnational ministry is seeing "in people an ever-decreasing dependence upon us and an ever-deepening dependence upon God" (Foster 1998:269). We view the

ultimate goal of incarnational ministry as arriving to a stage where ordinary person become themselves agents of mission. Our neighbours usually partner with us in tangible ways.

Perkins (1993:44) rightly says that "the gospel is the love of God made visible, able to be touched and felt" through physical agents of his kingdom. Additionally, "living out the gospel means bringing the good news of God's love to people who are in need, demonstrating to them the love of Jesus and introducing them to the eternal life found in him" (Perkins 1993:44). The situation that faces South Africa calls for a revolution in our attempts at a solution. As a group, we strive to be the expression of the living love of God. We are no longer just a group of people, but the incarnation of God's love. We are not going to church; we are the church. As Jesus' students, our strategy is to make disciples who love God and their neighbours in tangible ways. As these disciples mature spiritually and sharpen their leadership and technical skills, more responsibility is passed into their hands, because they have the potential to be very effective in redeeming their communities (Perkins 1993:160-161).

 In InnerCHANGE, we believe in being contextually relevant among people living with poverty we serve. John Hayes (2006:113), our founder, stresses that nowadays, "the world needs Christians who allow themselves to be not only seen and heard, but also touched". The world doesn't need more words made fresh, but it "needs more people to live the good news incarnationally, in a way that can be seen, heard and handled". John Wesley's mother, Susanna, is one of my role models of the incarnational model because of how she completely immersed herself "in the details of daily life: finding God in the details and serving God through these same details" (Foster 1998:235). She once prayed: "Help me, Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church, or closet, nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in your presence. May all the happenings of my life prove useful and beneficial to me. May all things instruct me and afford me an opportunity of exercising some virtue and daily learning and growing toward your likeness. Amen" (Foster 1998:235).

Foster (1998:269) stresses that the" first action in practicing the incarnational tradition is the invocation of God's manifest presence into this material world of ours". At this level, "the initiative rests squarely upon" humans because God, will not enter many areas of our life uninvited (Foster 1998:269). Therefore, "we invite God to enter every experience of life" (Foster 1998:269). We also beg "him to set our spirit free for worship and adoration" (Foster 1998:269). We request the healing of our bodies; that "creative ideas for our business enterprises" will fill our minds; that "broken relationships" will be restored and "conflicts resolution at work or home"; that "our homes will be holy places of worship, study, work, play and lovemaking" (Foster 1998:269). We finally invite all our neighbours to "allow" their "entire life to be a channel of divine love" (Foster 1998:270). As we do so, Julian Muller's (2011) post- foundation paradigm helps us frame our philosophy of ministry and praxis in a contextually meaningful way.

7.3 POST-FOUNDATIONAL PARADIGM

Müller's (2011) post-foundational paradigm is "never concerned with the theoretical, but always the local and embodied, connected to real concerns, real issues and real people". This paradigm encourages agency in issues affecting the people we are called to love and serve. This agency should be "marked by humble listening and a participating presence" (Müller, 2011). Müller (2009:7) speaks of it as "a not-knowing approach, not coming to the table of complexities with any preconceived ideas or pre-packaged answers" in order to stimulate active engagement.

McLaren (2007:79) connects well the "incarnation of Jesus in the world to active engagement". According to him, "God sent Jesus with this good news- that God loves humanity and wants to redeem it through the presence of his son". One of Jesus's essential goals was to tangibly show us how to be in touch with the ways of the kingdom of God. Jesus graciously invites everyone to follow a new way. "Trust me and become my disciple" Jesus says, "and you will be transformed, and you will participate in the transformation of the world which is possible, beginning right now". This is the good news they are called to emulate everywhere they are. True good news, should "confront systemic injustice, target significant global dysfunctions, and provide hope and resources for making a better world-along with helping individuals experience a full life" (McLaren 2007:79). The body of Christ could help catalyze a movement towards a full and fulfilling life. If it does so, it will be good news to the world (McLaren 2007:34).

McLaren (2007:208) rightly points out that Jesus spent a great deal of time amassing a portfolio of good deeds which were good news to others, preferentially towards those whom the world sees as the least, the marginalised. For Jesus, exclusive concern for one's own self-interest qualifies one as 'not kingdom' like. The way of the kingdom of God calls people and institutions such as the church to a higher concern for the common good. As a missional team we usually remain focused on these concerns in an active engagement because of how we understand incarnational ministry. For us, it is a model learned from Christ, a method, a message and a spiritual discipline (Hayes 2006:114-120).

7.3.1 Model of Christ

The supreme statement of the incarnation is found in the gospel of John (1:14). This passage declares that "the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us". Additionally, believers are sent out the same way Jesus was sent (John 17:18). As InnerCHANGE staff, we strive to fully be part of the fabric and tissues of neighbourhoods we serve. We fully subscribe to the popular saying: 'in South Africa, like South Africans'. We acknowledge that this is a lifelong pursuit. But when we do it well, a significant bond of trust develops with missionaries, local churches and neighbours. The latter start seeing themselves as agents of God's work in their neighbourhoods of residence. Our value of

living among the very people we have been called to serve helps significantly in this process (Perkins 1993:32).

For us, the incarnation model is not just an abstract theological idea whose sole purpose is to fix the problem of sin. It is a concrete expression of something that has always been true that we humbly try to emulate. Jesus moves into the neighbourhood to reveal something that has been true since the beginning- God is with us, radically so because he loves us (Rocke & van Dyke 2012:44). This model helps us understand the 'great commission' in tandem with other biblical accounts. Matthew 28 exhorts us to go and make disciples and then baptize them, but it tells us very little about the methodology for how those disciples are to be made. John 20:21 tell us how in – "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you". This prompts us to ask: if Jesus sends us as the father sent him, exactly how did the father send Jesus? The answer sings out from the beginning of the gospel of John: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). God sent Jesus in the flesh, and that is how Jesus sends us – in the flesh. In the book of Ephesians, Paul uses a helpful metaphor: "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). The Greek word used here for handiwork is poiema, which means poetry in English. Speaking incarnationally, we see ourselves as "God's poetry to the world. God is speaking poetry to us and through us to the world" (Rocke & van Dyke 2012:72-73). It is our distinct privilege to be in community and partnership with people living in hard places and together being God's fleshed poetry. We also have the privilege of raising up poets to incarnate God's gospel song to the lost, disenfranchised, and marginalised people (Rocke & van Dyke 2012:72-73).

A poet is an agent of hope in a context. He/she plays the role of a prophet that helps a community imagine the society they would like to become and participate in the building of it. Brueggemann (2001:65-66) states that the task of a poet is "to bring to public expression those hopes and yearnings that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply that we no longer know they are there". Hope is the refusal to blindly accept the reading of reality of the majority opinion. It also "limits the grandiose pretension of the present, daring to announce that the present to which we have all made commitments is now called into question" (Brueggemann 2001:66). Poets have a "purpose in bringing hope to public expression, and that is to return the community to its single referent, the sovereign faithfulness of God" (Brueggemann 2001:66).

7.3.2 The method

We believe in reaching out to people in very practical ways. We have also learned that one must always earn the right of speaking into someone else's life before doing so. Also, one must always earn the right to be heard. Finally, that insiders are better than outsiders in communicating good news among a host culture. Incarnational ministry provides relational leverage that equips people to be humble learners in our mission to make disciples of Jesus among our neighbours. As we partner with

other followers of Jesus, sometimes our effectiveness is impeded by individual focus on denominational doctrine. Perkins (1993:18) challenges followers of Jesus to exhibit by their lives that they believe in the oneness of the body of Christ that should transcend doctrinal, racial, cultural, social and economic barriers in order to spill over into love for our neighbours.

Nolan(quoted by Fuellenbach 1991: 85) distinguishes "four stages in our growth in commitment" to people living on the margins of urban environments:

a) First stage: Compassion emerges out of our exposure to suffering and misery which in turn moves us to action, be it to relief work or to the simplification of our own lifestyle.

b) Second stage: We discover that marginalisation is a structural problem based on some particular social and political situations that are manufactured by humans and which create oppression and injustice. Our reaction is anger and indignation, in particular towards decision makers and politicians. We must master our anger and come to see that the system must change and the blame game is fruitless and disempowering.

c) Third stage: We come to discover that the people living on the margins are perfectly able to save themselves. Our role could be to catalyse ways to involve affected people to be part of the solution.

d) Fourth stage: We move from disillusionment and disappointment with the people living on the margins to true solidarity, which leads to us doing mission with our neighbours; and ultimately for ministry to be done by our neighbours themselves.

In my learning from seasoned incarnational ministry workers and also co-labouring with people, I have seen the following personality qualities make incarnational ministry happen:

- **Imagination:** Learning to constantly think outside the box. And being open to build and rebuild ministry structures and platforms. Brueggemann (2001:40) encourages us to value imagination because it helps us "to keep on conjuring and proposing future alternatives" to ministry initiatives we already run.

  Brueggemann (2001:65) talks about prophetic imagination which could help Jesus' partners in mission to continuously remain relevant. He states that "the task of prophetic imagination and ministry is to bring to public expression" and realisation that "those hopes and yearnings that have been denied and suppressed" such as our ability to be agents of the kind of society we would like to become. In the current South Africa, hope, in one hand, could be to critically interact with current solutions in place to minimise school dropout. "On the other hand, hope is subversive, for it limits the grandiose pretension of the present, daring to announce that the present to which we have all made commitments" such as the government alone should solve

all major societal issues, is now called into question because partnership between different key stakeholders in our society will be key to sustainable solution finding.

- **Articulation:** Communicate God's vision in a persuasive and touching way. In South African poor urban communities and maybe the majority of the continent of Africa, it is important to communicate how God shapes our cultures and identities as people, and how this God and Christ fit into the panoply of powers around us (van Niekerk, 2015).

- **Effectiveness in administration of people:** The ability to "choose the right workers and organise them. Set priorities and make sure the work is done in the right order" (Foster 1998:250). Delegate well (Foster 1998:250). An effective administration of people is a character trait of good leadership. Clinton (1888:14) thinks that "leadership is a dynamic process" in which people with God given capacities influence specific groups of God's people toward God's purposes.

  Clinton (1888:39) believes that effective administration of people would raise godly leaders our urban environments need. I concur with him that today we need men and women whose lives imitate those people in the bible who are worthy of the name leader. The church worldwide is in need of a committed group of disciples, like those past leaders, who can lead the way by demonstrating through their lives a faith worth imitating by believers as well as not yet believers.

7.3.3 The message

As InnerCHANGE staff, we recognise that love is real and is costly. When we move in neighbourhoods of poverty, we send the message that if love is costly, then those who are the object of such love are worth much. This seems to mean a lot to ordinary people we interact with, because they bear the weight of the world's low opinion of them in every aspect possible.

One of the ways we communicate the message that all human beings have equal worth, is through the building of relationships. Perkins (1993:28) advices us that the best that God's people have to offer "is relationships with people living in poverty that reflect the kind of careful, quality attention we have in our own families. This is the high quality of relationships offered by a people seeking to love their neighbours as they love themselves".

Perkins (1993:29) goes on to stress that the church message cannot separate Christianity from the hopelessness of people living on the margins of society around us. "If so", he continues, "then something about the gospel has failed us". When our faith is confronted with the reality of our neighbours in urban poor environments, we are challenged by significant questions that go to the very heart of the gospel: what should the body of Christ look like in an hour such as this? What should the

body of believers look like? What are the marks of an authentic church in an hour such as this? These questions force us to be lifelong learners of what it means to communicate the gospel in relevant ways. In our contexts of life and ministry the message of the gospel has beared meaningful fruits when we were actively faithful and steward of others

7.3.3.1 Active faithfulness

Wagner (1998:27-28) points out that "living a life worthy of the kingdom of God involves participation in fulfilling the cultural mandate" of being visible good news agents. According to him, involvement in social ministries is not optional for either Christians or Christian churches. Faithful followers of Jesus must show their faith by their works (James 2:18). Poverty, war, homophobia, starvation, disease, brain damage, hopelessness, and despair are signs of the kingdom of satan. They are the exact opposite of the shalom of God. Christians who have been born again into the kingdom of God cannot be indifferent to the gruesome signs of the kingdom of satan around them.

However, many followers of Jesus wonder whether to engage in social ministry can be considered a legitimate end in itself or if we should do it only as a means to the end of winning souls. Wagner (1998:39) argues that social service can be both. He gives an example of one church, which is growing rapidly by attracting a large number of unchurched people to Christ, which has as motto for ministry, "Find a need and fill it, find a hurt and heal it." By discovering the felt needs of unchurched people and designing church programs of service that will meet those needs with them, the church uses social service as an evangelistic means. Hundreds of examples could be drawn from mission organisations which established schools, hospitals, or orphanages in order to help open people's hearts to the gospel message. But having said this, Wagner does not believe it is necessary to justify all Christian social ministry on the basis of its help in saving souls. For example, the Good Samaritan bound up the wounds of the person who was robbed and beaten with no conditions attached. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, his healing was 100% successful, though only 10% came to faith through it. Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda despite the fact that (a) he didn't even know who Jesus was, (b) he didn't even thank Jesus for his healing, and (c) when Jesus later told him to stop sinning he betrayed Jesus to the Jewish authorities, who plotted to kill him (John 5: 1-18). But the event is recorded in a significant part of Jesus' ministry. Sometimes the reason for social involvement is a straightforward demonstration of God's justice. There is a biblical justification for doing good whether or not men and women are brought to faith in Christ as a result of it.

Barth (2003) summed things up very well when he once said that he does not read conversion stories in the Bible, he reads account of how people were called to discipleship and service.

7.3.3.2 Stewardship

A kingdom like message should actively inspire people to be better stewards of people and creation. Wright (2010:28) asks us probing questions to help us understand our role as stewards: "Do the

183

people of God have any responsibility to the rest of human society in general beyond the imperative of evangelism?" What do we mean when we use "biblical phrases like being a blessing to the nations, or seeking the welfare of the city, or being the salt of the earth or the light of the world, or doing good?" He argues that the bible is "passionately concerned about what kind of people claim to be the people of God". "If our mission is" to spread the "good news, we need to be good news people". If we endevour to propagate a message of transformation, "we need to show some evidence of what transformation looks like. So, there is a range of questions we need to ask about the whole church that have to do with things like integrity, justice, unity and inclusion, and Christlikeness" (Wright 2010:29-30). In asking these questions, we will increasingly be in touch with what it means to be human.

Wright (2010:49) believes that to" be human is to be in proper relationship with God, other people, and the world". According to him, "sin has marred these relationships, but in Christ, the perfect human, they are restored" (Wright 2010:49). Therefore, each of these three relationships is restored as we increasingly grow into the image of Christ. Because Christ is the perfect human, the one person who completely fills out the image of God, the more we become like him, the more human we become. Following Jesus, far from transforming someone into super-spiritual, quasi-angelic beings, is actually a quest to recover our humanity. This is why the church should retain its institutional tradition of contending for justice and mercy so that it can remain relevant (Rene Padilla quoted by Wright 2010:110).

7.3.4 Spiritual discipline

Incarnational ministry helps wean us away from self-reliance (our skills and possessions) to God-reliance. "Sharing our lives with the" least "serves as a spiritual fast- a discipline for our personal growth, not as a way of renouncing the world in arid asceticism but as a way of joining with Jesus to embrace the world's feet and wash them". Spiritual discipline enhances Jesus' followers' "personal growth by cultivating godly dependence and dethroning consumerism, which distracts from intimacy with God" (Hayes 2006:114-120). In InnerCHANGE we believe that to carry out God's work, we must allow ourselves to be transformed by his love. Being transformed is a process that takes our entire lives, and we must remember that; we must also bear in mind that we will not be perfected all at once. The process does, however, have "a beginning point, at which we agree to allow God to work in our lives and to change us into the likeness of his son". I will not experience that until this "process of transformation begins in us, we cannot love others as we must to demonstrate God's love to them. And unless we ourselves have experienced the transforming love of God personally, we cannot expect God's love to transform others" (Perkins 1993:58). This journey towards personal transformation is helping our missional team to be intentional about being other cantered in God's ministry through me to others.

Spiritual discipline also shapes us into a sacramental living deeply embedded into Jesus' legacy of love. Foster (1998:263-265) points out that the "most basic place of our sacramental living is" on our

"marriages, and homes and families. There we live together in well-reasoned love for everyone around us. Work is another everyday place-perhaps the most substantive place -for spiritual and incarnational living". The third place "is in society at large. Here we bring the reality of God to bear upon cultural, political and institutional life". "This is a cultural mandate" God gives to all human beings the "stewardship authority to care for and manage the earth" so that mutual love could be the basic, yet the most important norm so that the kingdom of God would come on earth as it is in heaven.

Foster (1998:266-267) talks about "seven strengths" of this sacramental living among people living in poverty:

- It underscores God's omnipresence and omnipotence among people the world deems least and last.
- It roots us in everyday life with our neighbours. It saves us from a spirituality divorced from the secular world in the hopes of finding God elsewhere.
- It gives meaning to our work. We are becoming co-labourers with God as we bring the good news of the gospel into the poor urban environment. We also get beyond ourselves.
- It is a valuable corrective to Gnosticism. The central gnostic heresy is that spiritual things are holy and material things are bad. A holistic approach should rather be adopted in which spirituality could help people have a fulfilling and happy relationship with materials. Two realities from this part of the line inform our theology of mission. First, the presence of the holy spirit making available to the people of God the same transforming power that energised the life and ministry of Jesus and raised him from the dead. Second, the existence of the church itself as the missional community of those who have responded to, and entered, the kingdom of God by repentance and faith in Christ, and who now seek to live as a transformed and transforming community of reconciliation and blessing in the world" (Wright 2010:43).
- It constantly beckons us God ward. "So the mission of God's people has to start and finish with commitments to the God whose mission we are called to share. But that in turn depends on knowing our God-knowing in depth, from experience of his revelation and his salvation. What exactly is it, then, that we are to know and to remain loyal to? In both testaments, God's people are called to a non-negotiable, uncompromising loyalty to the uniqueness of God-revealed as YHWH in the Old testament and walking among us in the incarnate life of Jesus of Nazareth in the New (Wright 2010:31).
- It makes of our body a portable sanctuary through which we are daily experiencing the presence of God; learning, even learning to work in cooperation with God and in deepening dependence upon God. To be human, is to be in a proper relationship with God, other people, and the world.
- "It deepens our ecological sensitivities. We grow in our stewardship of the earth, for we know that it is God's good creation. We plant evergreens and compost garbage, we clean a room and put coasters under glasses, and in these ways, we help to tidy up" the earth. Dave Bookless (quoted by Wright 2010: 48) challenges us to rediscover that "the gospel, the good

news, does not begin with Jesus' birth". It begins with the good earth that God made. It is important to celebrate creation in all its richness and the wonderful gift of a good God.

- As followers, we are Jesus' co-workers in mission (1 Corinthians 3:9) (Wright 2010:47). Jesus came to us as an incarnated being, therefore it is critical for our missional team to serve in an incarnated way. From the wisdom I accumulated in the previous chapter, our team multiplied ministry initiatives that are helping minimise school dropout. Our team started three other reading clubs (grade R-4), we improved the running of our existing tutoring clubs and are helping school dropout neighbours pursue things they are passionate about and improve the quality of their lives.

7.4 OTHER READING CLUBS

Children are some of the best missionaries I know. They are very good at inviting their peers to activities and programmes they enjoy. From the second month into our initial reading club, new children started coming. They were invited by their peers. However, we could not accommodate them because I wanted to maintain the setup of four children per tutor. From the first quarter into the reading club, after we went to schools to visit the educators of the children, educators started sending our way children who were struggling to cope in their classrooms.

The extra number of children that were on our waiting list prompted us to open other reading clubs. We did not have a venue to host it. One of our neighbours offered his house garage for us to use. Our InnerCHANGE incarnational approach strongly encourages us to collaborate with different stakeholders in communities we live and serve in. We commit to simplicity and believe in living out this biblical passage quoting Jesus direct message on one of the occasions he was sending out his disciples:

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He instructed them to not take anything for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt." (Luke 9:1-3)

When my wife and I started InnerCHANGE in Soshanguve, we only had our family house as our ministry hub. We started our first ministry from our house. As we grew and expanded our ministry activities, we pursued partnerships with several community stakeholders out of necessity and a belief that inside out solidarity and partnership lead to sustainable transformation. Tournier (1982:21) believes that, "necessity is the mother of invention". The greater the need, the greater the creative energy to which it gives rise in order to find solutions (Tournier 1982:58).

We were blessed by a neighbour who generously availed her garage for ministry purposes. We then recruited volunteers from our neighbourhood who served their community from that garage. Our

educator, psychologist and social worker volunteers as well as teacher friend who is the head of the department of foundation phase at one of our neighbourhood primary schools trained the volunteers for two weeks before the classes began. We had 28 children from grade one to three. We still kept some format of four children per one tutor: we had two tutors for eight grades 1 children, three tutors for twelve grade 2 children and two tutors for eight grade 3 children. We used the same approaches experimented in the first reading club: we started off by creating a fun environment, balanced creativity and classic reading and encouraged all the children to learn how to read from the area they were talented in. By the end of the year 2017, 70% of our children has significantly improved their ability to read.

From May 2017, two other reading clubs started in two separate local churches. We used the buildings of these churches for teaching. The beneficiaries were primarily children from those churches and the surrounding neighbourhoods. Members of those local churches invited us to start those reading clubs. These members were involved with InnerCHANGE as volunteers. The tutors of the children were church members. We trained them for a week before they started tutoring. In one church we had 36 children from grade R to four and in another we had 12 children from R to 2. By the end of April 2018, we had seen 85% of these children improve their reading ability. Here, we also applied the wisdom learned from our initial reading club to our tutoring clubs.

7.5 TUTORING CLUBS

The wisdom learned from our reading club also had an impact of our tutoring clubs. Since 2011, we have been running tutoring clubs. We started off with one, and we have multiplied into three different clubs where we tutor children from grades five to twelve. The majority of our learners have problems in key subjects such as mathematics, English, physical sciences, life science and accounting. As a team of tutors, we have always asked ourselves a fundamental question of how can we help the children better understand their subject and pass well? Here we added another question of what unique talents to the children have that we could use to motivate them to succeed in the mainstream schooling system or a vocational school?

As always, we tried to figure out an environment the children would enjoy coming to and acquire knowledge. Food always attracts a crowd and create a fun environment in poor urban environments. We fed the learners.

We also introduced right brain activities as part of our tutoring sessions. We did creative art which led us to host an event on August 26, 2017 where parents/guardians and other community members were invited to. With art, each of the learners had an area they were very good at. Art times were clearly enjoyable times because there was a diversity of options and people gravitated towards things they liked and were talented in. We allowed them to do that. The art event was also an opportunity for us to meet the children's parents/guardians because we wanted to build a partnership with them that could benefit the children both parties care for. We had more than three hundred children and

teenagers at that event, but only forty-three parents/guardians came. We took that opportunity to talk to them and encouraged them to be involved in the lives of their children. The event was also an opportunity for some parents to discover talents they did not know their children had.

Through our time together and interaction with the learners, we learned to pay attention to their unique talents. Our assessment of their talents led us to recommend that some of them go to vocational schools. 63% of our learners improved their marks and passed their grade at the end of the 2017 school year. We recommended that the rest (37%) consider a vocational education pathway. This is why I believe that vocational schools should be opened to children from primary school age.

We also introduced an incentive system that was going to motivate the learners to work hard. As InnerCHANGE we take children and teenagers we work with on fun outings once a quarter. We charge a fee for these outings. We decided that children, the regular attendees, who had an average pass of 50% in major subjects will only pay half the price, those who had 60% and above will go for free. This was enough of an incentive that we saw many children up their game in order to pass well.

Food, creative art and the incentive system made it possible that we had more learners at the end of the year than we had at the beginning. We had few learners drop out of our tutoring clubs (37 people), But our intake (fifty two people) outnumbered the dropout. Children and teenagers did most of the inviting of their peers to come to the tutoring clubs. At the end of the year 2017 we had a total of 139 in our three tutoring clubs.

7.6 DISCOVERING GIFTING/TALENTS IN SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND HELP THEM PURSUE THEM

As mission workers, we believe that our programmes should serve our neighbours in their concrete circumstances. And these programmes must ultimately be from the people, for the people and by the people in order to succeed and be sustainable. In this process, one of the things we wanted to see unfold based on what we learned in the previous chapter, was to be involved with neighbours who dropped out of school and had not yet discovered their carrier pathway. We wanted to see these neighbours discover and use their unique talents and skills as an asset to serve others, give back to their community as well as pave their way into a possible carrier pathway. Developing good and meaningful relationships with these neighbours was the most important thing we needed to focus on if we had to earn the right to speak into their lives (Perkins 1993:118).

As a researcher, my personal motivation behind interacting with our neighbours who dropped out of school was based on my personal journey as a person. This biblical passage "as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17), is very true about my life. God has brought in my life people who have spoken with authority, wisdom and compassion that moulded me into the person I am today. I once dropped out of a Roman Catholic seminary and a master's programme at a

South African university. On those two occasions, I was depressed. However, some wise people spoke into my life and reignited a sense of hope and purpose in me. Learning from my experience, I wanted to encourage my neighbours that although they dropped out of school, they have got a genius in them that is unique and if used well could improve the quality of their lives and of those around them.

I already had two platforms where I regularly interacted with neighbours we dropped out of school: volleyball and football teams. During our practice sessions, we took a break (at least 30 minutes) to talk and I facilitated conversations that were going to challenge them to use their talents in order to improve the quality of their lives and of those around them. I used the bible as the point of reference of the kind of society we are all called to build and proactively be part of. I used the following passages: Matthew 25:14-30- The parable of the talents to show to everyone that we all have talents; Mark 4:1-20 – The parable of the mustard seed to teach that a mustard seed from them could fall on fertile soil (talent used effectively) could pave the way for a positive breakthrough in their lives; Isaiah 58:12- To encourage people to rebuild their lives and communities; Jeremiah 29:4-12- To encourage people to be other centred in first seeking the peace and the prosperity of their communities of residence; Nehemiah 2:1-18 - To teach that building a community is a communal effort; Genesis 12:1-3 - To encourage people to be the conduit of God's blessing to others.

The outcome of our conversations led some friends to go to vocational schools. I took those interested to three vocational schools close to our office so that they could choose a good fit. Others went back to mainstream public schools through Adult Basic Education Training (ABET) centres and are working on graduating from high school.

One guy opened a tailor business, two others worked on getting drivers' licenses and are now taxi drivers, another sells food, another opened a carwash business, another runs a computer repair business, another run a carpentry business and another is a brick layer. Some of the guys went to soccer team trials. Three of them now play in the second division of the Premier Soccer League. For those who worked, there was a need for financial literacy training. A friend who is a qualified accountant has been training our friends in financial stewardship. One of the practical action steps towards financial stewardship our friends have taken was to save their profits in their bank accounts and once a quarter they submit their bank statements to InnerCHANGE for accountability.

Some of these friends joined our InnerCHANGE apprenticeship programme. After they graduated, some started coaching football, others basketball, others volleyball, others netball, and one is in charge of our creative art department in our reading and tutoring clubs. Few others still have not made the decision to pursue anything in life. The friends who are busy through work, school or service to their community seem to be happier than I have ever seen them before.

189

7.7 HAPPINESS FOR ALL AS A GOAL

From the above-mentioned results, I have come to understand that our current education system makes it possible and easy for many people to dropout. And people dropout because they are unhappy with what they are learning or not learning in school. I have also discovered that when people operate from a position of strength, like using their talents and/or gifting, their happier and fruitful.

One of the take away from the previous chapter action refection process, was to prioritise fun and happiness in the designing of our programmes. We have learned that when people are happy, they effortlessly come to our programmes, they improve their academic performances and/or they pursue carrier paths they are naturally gifted in. However, the consumer culture we live in teaches us that happiness comes from being rich. Additionally, only few carriers lead people to be affluent. Therefore, everyone should aspire to pursue them.

The truth of the matter is that around the world, the happiest countries are not necessarily the richest. According to the latest Happy Planet Index (happyplanetindex.org, 2017), "Costa Rica, the world 76th biggest economy in the world, is the happiest country in the world" (statisticstimes.com, 2017). People living in Costa Rica have a better quality of life higher than residents of many rich nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom. In fact, Costa Ricans have a better life expectancy than American citizens. Furthermore, all of this is achieved with a per capita Ecological Footprint that's just one third of the size of the United States'. Costa Rica abolished its army in 1949. It has since reallocated army funds to be spent on education, health and pensions. In 2012, Costa Rica invested more in education and health as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product than the United Kingdom. Mariano Rojas (2015), a Costa Rican economist, attributes Costa Ricans' good quality of life to a culture of forming solid social networks of friends, families and neighbourhoods. Costa Rica is also a world leader when it comes to environmental protection. The Costa Rican government uses taxes collected on the sale of fossil fuels to pay for the protection of forests. In 2015, the country was able to produce 99% of its electricity from renewable sources. Additionally, government continues to invest in renewable energy generation in an effort to meet its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2021. The country currently has the highest literacy in the world (statisticstimes.com, 2017).

If the body of Christ is involved in social matters such as mininising school dropout, it will make people in urban poor communities happier by helping people nurture a culture of learning based on their talents or gifting. Happy people will make a happy society which is the kind of society we would like to become. For that to happen, key stakeholders should collaboratively work towards catalysing the building of a happier society. The church should see herself as one of the key stakeholders and shift its current passive ways of interacting with social issues. My learning in the area of school dropout has led me to develop two kinds of spirituality: the spirituality of the marginalised and the spirituality of responsibility.

7.8 SPIRITUALITY OF THE MARGINALISED

Throughout the gospel Jesus shows a preferential leaning towards the marginalised and the poor. This study has shown that our consumerist world disregards the genius found in some people and only considers some others. Like John Green (quoted by Hayes, 2006) would say, the results of this research erupted from a "life lived in the seminary of the street" and in the sanctuary of the marginalised. This is a theology of praxis that has challenged our research team to be lifelong learners of what it means to empower and emancipate people living on the margins of society such as school dropouts. The marginalised are made in the image of God. They are persons embedded in families, communities and the country. And they have gifts, talents, skills, and the potential to become kingdom like, like everyone else (Myers 1999:61-62).

The results of this research have led our missional team to embrace a spirituality centring on an upside-down kingdom Jesus. In the bible, Christ reminds us that the last are truly first, the leader is the servant and the poor are blessed. Throughout the history of the church as pointed out in chapter three of this study, the church has been guilty of communicating a Christianity that discriminate against others, but in Matthew 25, we see God standing with the marginalised, outcast and the poor (Hayes 2006:17). In our society, some say the marginalised such as school dropouts are lazy, fatalistic, and will not save for the future. They may appear lazy, but what we may be seeing is their ability of conserving limited physical energy. Fatalism may be an adaptation that is prudent, not a giving up mentality. The appearance of powerlessness, unawareness and acquiescence may be a condition of survival they have learned to adopt because society considers them as the last and least (Myers 1999:64).

For Virgilio Elizondo (quoted by Rodriguez 2003: 3), the essential biblical message can be described as "the Galilee principle," which "manifest in the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth". The Galilee principle" is defined as, "to bring divine blessings to all, God chooses what the world rejects" (Rodriguez 2003: 3). This Principle is captured clearly in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who lived and died as a despised Galilean. During that time, nothing good was expected to come out of Galilee. "God chose Galilee to be the starting point of God's human presence among us" (Rodriguez 2003: 3). The "image of the Galileans to the Jerusalem Jews is comparable to" the situation of school dropouts in urban poor communities (Rodriguez 2003: 3). They are marginalised because they do not fit into an existing system and disconnect from it. In the bible, "Jesus does not just do things for the poor and the marginalised, but he identified with them in the most intimate way by being born one of them, learning from them, going to their homes, and eating with them. He is one of them, and he appears to feel comfortable in their company" (Rodriguez 2003: 3). As a missional team, we have learned from Jesus and we do incarnational ministry. We view ourselves as Jesus' mission partners among people living in poverty and on the margins of our society.

Through this study, we saw that some of the rejected stones (children who do not fit into the mainstream education system, school drop outs) have the potential to become cornerstones of our society like psalm 118:22 implies. But our society destroys them by labelling them as a liability. Bob Ekblad (2015) rightly points out that "labelling dehumanises people, reducing them to something that is much easier to incarcerate, medicate, deport, hate or even eradicate. Labels categorise, entrap, curse and brand us in ways that are nearly impossible to shake". Fortunately, there is hope in Jesus. "He removes labels and relocates us into" the society of God's image bearers where we are all of equal worth (Ekblad, 2015). For instance in Luke 5:12-13, "there is a man covered in leprosy, a condition that was seen as permanent in Jesus' day. Jesus' approach of dealing with this man most certainly challenged the people's normal, limited realism regarding what was possible, bringing them into a Kingdom of God-inspired imagination (Ekblad, 2015). Jesus touched the man to heal him, not to be contaminated by leprosy. Nowadays, Jesus sends his church to go and touch, interact and live in solidarity with the marginalised so that healing could happen, our society could be restored as kingdom like and the genius in every God's image bearer could be unleashed and contribute to the building of the society we would like to become. This is a dream and a hope that has led to the development of a spirituality of agency.

7.9 SPIRITUALITY OF AGENCY

Black consciousness movement inspired this spirituality of agency. Steve Biko (2007:156), the founder of this movement stated that people needed to "rally together with their fellows in order to bring transformation" and build the kind of society they wanted to become. He also stressed that people "self-examination and determination to bring a humane society in South Africa", should be prioritised. In his appraisal for black consciousness the urban theologian, Stephan de Beer (2008:172) stressed that it is "a philosophy of communal solidarity among an oppressed people. Although Steve Biko's premise was blackness as experienced in South Africa, he deliberately sought to situate his work in a more universal humanist framework, identifying it as part of a global movement of solidarity with all oppressed people" so that they could be agents of the kind of society they desired (de Beer 2008:172).

In our reading and tutoring clubs, the outcomes of our intended goals were the results for the children consistent attendance to our programs. The results were also deeply influenced by the involvement of some parents or guardians of the children, community members who volunteered their time to serve the children as well as the body of Christ through the professional volunteers who made it possible for this study to be transdisciplinary. The results of this study show that active collaboration bears delicious and sustainable fruits.

In working directly with people who dropped out of school, we started experiencing transformation when individual people took the decision to do something about their life desire. Those who started off going back to school or a business of their own inspired other group members to follow. People

started thinking and acting with purpose in a way that fulfilled them and also brought hope to a community since some of these friends had turned from being a liability to an asset to their community through their choice making of being servants of their community like Jesus did or pursuing life giving pathways such as school and starting businesses. Scott Bessenecker (quoted by Hayes, 2006) rightly stresses that **"**Jesus calls the church to attach itself uncomfortably to marginalised people and use its hands to do something that would empower them".

The church serving in urban areas can participate in the collective imagination of a better community and help implement a vision that will come out of the imagination exercise. All community stakeholders should be brought together in order to articulate ways in which they can contribute to make such a vision, a reality. The church could then recruit sensitive designers, planners, and bureaucrats from within or the community in order "to integrate diverse visions into one coherent, cohesive vision for it particular neighbourhood" (de Beer 2016: 6).

 We need an active citizenship in our poor urban environments such as our professional volunteers and tutors so that the church could be a catalyst of grassroots inside out transformation. In order for this active citizenship to be beneficial, it will require a motivated, "educated and empowered citizenry. Faith communities and churches can play a much more dedicated and informed role to prepare their members to be participating, to be responsible citizens and to understand the practices and possibilities of citizenship" (de Beer 2016: 6). Some of these active citizens could come from school dropout whose gifting, skills and talents are not yet recognised in the mainstream system. We see some of them become agents of transformation at InnerCHANGE. We have realised that most the school dropouts do not know their skills or talents and how valuable they can be to others .Paul says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, where he states that "God chose the foolish things, weak things, lowly things, despised things, to shame and nullify the things that are". God didn't choose the economically privileged, or the upwardly mobile middle-class Jews, but the unschooled and ordinary Galileans (Acts 4:13). His preferred agents of transformation seem to be "the poor, refugees, undocumented labourers, high school dropouts, single mother son welfare and drug addicts" (Rodriguez 2003:59).

 The spirituality of agency of this study is encouraged by Kritzinger (2008:99) who stated that there "exists among humans, because they are humans, a solidarity through which each shares responsibility for every injustice and every wrong committed in the world, and especially for crimes that are committed in his presence or of which he cannot be ignorant". Along the same line de Beer (2008:174) points out that the work of "fostering black consciousness should continue, calling blacks back to solidarity with their communities of origin, as well as black people who are still living with the scars of stolen dignity to a discovery of their own humanity, giftedness and agency". The church could be a catalyst of that. In order for that to happen, a paradigm shift need to happen.

7.10 A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE CHURCH'S INTERACTION WITH SOCIAL ISSUES

In looking at the local churches in an urban community such as Soshanguve, the buildings are increasingly becoming unpopular places to go to. People seem to attend different events on a Sunday rather than going to church. Yet, local church leaders still believe that people should come to church in order for them to get saved; and salvation will automatically lead to the resolve of all personal and social issues. As a missional team we advocate for an everyday centric approach to church that involves going out in the neighbourhoods and interact with the complexities of issues that ordinary people face, partner with them to bring solutions to diagnosed problems. We have learned to move away from a Sunday centric approach to church. In their book The shaping of things to come, Frost and Hirsch (2006:41) stress that local churches should move from their current centripetal (directed toward the centre- Attractional) format to a centrifugal
(moving or directed outward from the centre – incarnational) format if it intends to effectively fulfil its mission to be good news to the world.

Bosch (1991:384) stresses that local churches are in need of "conversion from parochial self-absorption to an awareness of what God is doing for the salvation of men and women in the life of the world". If the church were to take incarnation seriously, then the direct results will be to see the word become flesh in every context of life. For this reason, followers of Jesus "task is not really different from what the New Testament authors set out so boldly to do. What they did for their time, we have to do it for ours. We too must listen to the past and speak to the present and the future" (Bosch 1991:384). At the same time, "our task today is far more difficult than that of the New Testament authors. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter and the others lived in cultures radically different from ours and faced problems of which we have no idea. Moreover, they used notions their contemporaries immediately understood but we do not" (Bosch 1991: 21). A successful realisation of the mission of the church will be dependent upon our ability to speak a language our contemporaries understand.

Hirsch (2007:142-143) points out that when we go back to Jesus and learn about missional engagement from him, as his followers, we discover a whole new way of going about it. We rediscover that strange kind of holiness that was so profoundly attractive to non-religious people and offensive to the religious ones. From Jesus we learn how to engage people in an entirely fresh and non-churchy way. "He hung out with sinners, and he frequented the bars/pubs of his day. He openly feasted, fasted, celebrated, prophesied, and mourned in such a way as to make the kingdom of God accessible and alluring to" ordinary people (Hirsch 2007:142-143). In South African urban environments, the church has the moral authority, skills and assets to effectively engage social issues such as school dropout around it. Although churches can draw inspiration from and rely on the high level of trust that they command in our urban environments, their anticipated contribution is certainly

not self-evident and involves significant changes. In present-day South African society there is indeed a profound need for the body of Christ to take a hard and critical look at its current theological make-up and respond actively to the challenge of constructing new contextual, positively progressive, life – related and gender sensitive theologies to guide their action and thought (Swart 2010:460).

Brueggemann (2001:40) challenges church leaders to freshen up their vision for the sake of a positive outcome of our common mission to good news in catalysing the unfolding of a happy society around us. For him, like prophets, we should guard ourselves from wondering if our vision can be implemented. We should learn to imagine a vision first, then figure out how to implement it. All believers' vocation is to keep alive the ministry of imagination and propose future alternatives to our current model of doing church. The Christian faith should strive to always be relevant to a context. It is "intrinsically incarnational and should always enter into the context in which it happens to find itself" (David Bosch quoted by Hirsch 2007:127).

In urban environments such as Soshanguve, the local government alone is incapable of meeting all the social and infrastructural needs of the population, which in turn is leading to ever higher levels of frustration and a growing lack of confidence in government's ability to deliver (Swart 2010:447). This state of affairs should lead local churches and other faith-based organisations to rise as potentially important partners of government and the state because of their proximity to people in need, their infrastructure, their well-developed networks within communities. The church should be part of the building of caring and mutually supportive communities in South African urban environments (Swart 2010:449). This kind of involvement will be good news to our community members and has the potential to lead many people to following Jesus and become assets to the building of the kind of society we all desire.

Mosala (1989:18) highlights the merit of contextualisation in the gradual creation of the South African society we want to become. He makes a sustained argument that "biblical texts should be read in the context of their production" and in the contexts of reading specific communities. For him, this recognition should lead missiologists to interrogate the biblical texts for their social class interests and biases. South African theology should be located in the historical and cultural contexts of the people of South Africa. Based on this understanding, he argues, it is the people's everyday lives that should inform the theological processes and discourses.

We would like to show to our neighbours that we love them so dearly that we would love to partner with them in order to love other people around us. The implementation of the above-mentioned biblical passage has driven a lot of our philosophy and heart to serve our neighbours in the township of Soshanguve. Our neighbours are nowadays our primary co-labourers as we actively attempt to contextualise missions.

We have also learned to partner with fellow followers of Jesus to build our communities. Frost and Rice (2017: 33) believe that Jesus followers should "be engaged in a variety of sectors of society" and do remarkable things to stimulate culture-altering change. Our local churches are filled with gifted individuals who crave companions, mentors, mothers and fathers to walk beside them on the journey of life with Jesus and to help them discover the ways they can join God's renewal in our urban environment. The church should alter "the trajectory of culture in the way God envisions. To do so will involve new ways of thinking about community, politics, business, education, health care, art, religion and" land redistribution (Frost & Rice 2017:24). "It will involve everyone, not just the pastors. It will involve not merely asking what kind of church our urban environment needs, but what kind of an urban environment God is giving birth to" (Frost & Rice 2017:24).

Lesslie Newbigin (quoted by Frost & Rice 2017:192) echoes this argument in stating that "the church in each place is to be the sign, instrument and foretaste of the reign of God present in Christ". He stresses that the church should be an instrument and a foretaste of the reconciled world. And the church collaborative engagement in society should be a signpost to the new world God is ushering in, a locally rooted taste of the new heavens and new earth (Frost & Rice 2017:11). He goes on to call for a "declericalizing" of the church. Furthermore, he calls for an equal rediscovery of the importance of lay people. The latter are known to help congregations share with one another the actual experience of weekday work and to seek illumination from the gospel for daily secular duties. He believed that all of culture—the arts, business, health, education, politics—could be shaped by the values of God's kingdom if ordinary followers of Jesus working in all those fields could be equipped to think Christianly about the nature of their work. And he believed that clergy were limited in their ability to shape their congregations in this way. He also believed that the church needed to develop wise men and women that sat under biblical authority and the teaching of ministers and bridged the gap between the rarefied world of the clergy and the everyday world of the parishioner. He advocated for the ordination of all believers to the work to which God has called them (Frost & Rice 2017:136-137).

This mass ordination would lead the church to be more outward focused and partner with local institutions and ordinary people to transform communities. Biko (2007:162) once said that people should unite and respond as a cohesive group to things that collectively affect them. They must cling to each other with tenacity that will bring about change. The church should be part of that because school dropout negatively affects it as it does other sectors of our society. The mass ordination should imply that the church should intentionally nature transformational leaders.

Mwambazambi & Banza (2014:2) describe "a transformational leader is a leader who understands his/her moral responsibility as that of contributing to the transformation and enhancement of individuals and communities or organisations for a higher communal good". According to Mathafena (2007:75), "transformational leaders transform followers by creating changes in their goals, values, beliefs and aspirations". Additionally, "they are admired role models who are respected, emulated and trusted. They behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge. Team spirit is aroused; enthusiasm and optimism are displayed".

Transformational leaders have the confidence to join in the movement of seeing ordinary people be answers to their own prayers. The movement will encourage people to work in solidarity with one another in order to build the king of society we would like to become. The movement will inspire people to win for themselves a greater degree of intellectual, political and cultural autonomy for the sake of the common good (Mbembe 2007:135).

7.11 CONCLUSION

As an incarnational ministry, our missional team aim is to see our neighbours be agents of mission to themselves. The incarnational stream is all about making God visible and present in our daily realities. It sees the gospel as God's presence made visible. In our context of ministry, the post-foundation paradigm helps emulate the principles of the incarnational stream in a meaningful way because it focuses on concrete issues such as school dropout and real people who are affected by this issue. This focus becomes very effective when we view incarnational ministry in four dimensions: as a model, a method, a message and a spiritual discipline.

As a model, we learn to follow in the footsteps of Jesus who chose to live in a particular place and immersed himself fully in that context. As a method, we believe in reaching out to people in practical ways. As a message, we try to emulate Christ through his compassionate and sacrificial love for us. As a spiritual discipline, we strive to depend more of God than to rely on our skills and resources in our presence, message and action among people living with poverty.

With regard to this research, our approach to incarnational ministry saw the multiplication of our reading club into several other initiatives: three more reading clubs. The learned lessons of our reading club also had positive effects on the running of our tutoring clubs as well as in our ministry to people who dropped out of school. We have been able to unleash some sense of purpose in the latter and we currently see many of them become happier than before.

The multiplication reality led this research to formulate a spirituality of the marginalised and a spirituality of agency. The spirituality of the marginalised stresses the biblical fact that the rejected and people living on the margins of our society have the potential to become the cornerstones of the building of the kind of society we would like to become. The spirituality of agency stresses that everyone should be an agent of the building of their society.

Our team interaction with community members through the reading clubs, tutoring clubs and friends who dropped out of school, has been a fertile ground for disciple making. Many of our neighbours have come to Christ through these initiatives. This outcome has challenged us into a paradigm shift from an attractional model of ministry to an incarnational one. We now channel the majority of our resources to going where 'not yet believers' are, serve them in tangible and meaningful ways and lead

197

them to Christ. Whereas in the past we expected people to come to us in order to serve and disciple them. This concluding poem titled "Fruitfulness" captures the heart of this chapter:

I am Kabongo, the biological fruit of his parents.

I have children. They are my biological fruits.

Like Nicodemus, I am a born-again child of God.

I am the fruit of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

His suffering brought me life and salvation,

His instructions inspire me to love God and my neighbours,

His commandments inspire me to multiply,

His life teaches me to be fruitful.

I am his fruit.

He wants me to make him famous,

He wants me to make him popular,

He wants me to make him known,

He wants me to drive with him,

He wants me to walk with him,

He wants me to swim with him,

He wants me to fly with him,

He wants me to rest with him,

He wants me to play with him,

He wants me to rejoice with him,

He wants me to mourn with him,

He wants me to be with him everywhere.

CHAPTER VIII: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

8.1. INTRODUCTION

This study created an opportunity to practically explore what it means to be good news in mobilising capacity in order to minimise school dropout. It used a transdisciplinary approach to include different disciplines and people in the specific context such as the township of Soshanguve. This approach is well- designed to understand complex situations, it protects us against a paternalistic approach where we come with solutions that we want to prescribe to people in a given context. It involves various role players in solution seeking, which has the potential to lead to a holistic and comprehensive solution seeking.

At this juncture, it is important to outline the interplay between the different chapters of this research in examining and appreciating them. The interplay of these chapters led to conclusions and recommendations this research makes. As far as the praxis cycle is concerned, this chapter will focus on reflexivity which will capture how all the research chapters (missiological cycle dimensions) complemented each other in finding results.

As a researcher, I believe Africa needs to be reinvented through solidarity from within. This study gave hope of the possibility of this conviction. InnerCHANGE South Africa reading club was made possible through the help and involvement of fellow followers of Jesus and other neighbours. This model of raising local capacity for ministry was expanded to our other ministry activities and the results have been positive and humbling. Mbembe (2007:147) rightly points out that the goal of solidarity amongst Africans should be to "collectively deepen their quality of life". According to him, that is where our "emancipatory potential lies as a people group". "Historically" he says, "it is a fact that formerly oppressed groups have advanced mainly through self-organisation". Furthermore, if Africans were to be respected in the world, their original homeland, Africa, must be regenerated. African redemption and restoration should be one of the priorities of black people from all backgrounds and generations. The body of Christ could be a catalyst of this regeneration of Africa. In doing so, it would be a "useful light and salt to this continent in need of reinvention" so that happiness for all can become a reality (Kalemba 2011:12). Below are the concluding insights of this study framed into the missiological cycle.

8.2 FINDINGS CAPTURED USING THE MISSIOLOGICAL CYCLE

Throughout this study, the dimensions of the praxis cycle were used. They were helpful in understanding the issue of school dropout as well as in creatively mobilising the body of Christ and a community to be part of the solution. The findings of this research made it possible for our missional team to tangibly participate in missio Dei. Hendricks (2010:279) rightly points out that the "essence of theology", according to the missional approach, is to know God, to discern his will and guidance. It is also a faith seeking understanding. Theology should be seen as participating in the mission of God. It

also implies that a faith community cannot really understand God in a personal and secluded way without taking part in his missional praxis. It is an activity initiated by the sending, missional God who, in his grace and mercy, entered into a covenant with a faith community in order to use it as an instrument of his mission to love, redeem and restore the world.

8.2.1 Introduction of this study

This research endevour was driven by a personal motivation born out of a classroom experience at a Soshanguve township middle school and an experience of dropping out of school myself. These two experiences raised a lot of questions that this research resolved to explore and provide answers to or pathways to finding answers. Dropping out of a Roman Catholic seminary and a master's program at a local university were life shaping experiences. With the masters' program, I spent three years working on a proposal that was never good enough to be submitted to the research committee of the university, according to my then supervisor. This situation brought feelings of frustration, discouragement and resentment. In those three years of unsuccessful academic endevour, the fruit of my reflections from this research brought good results on the field. These contrasting experiences were a bad taste in my mouth and brought up in me many questions about the impact of academic work in the building of the society we would like to become. I reflected on this issue in my article titled "The Africanisation of missiology: the work of InnerCHANGE South Africa to raise up local missionaries and decolonise black African minds (2018)". In the article I argue this:

"In my introduction to the academic world, I once was deeply shocked by a respected university professor when he told me that the primary audience of academic writings is the academic world itself. As I read lots of published books and papers, dissertations and theses, I am realising that so much of what is discussed could benefit ordinary people, my neighbours whom I am coaching to be co-labourers in missions. Yet the style of writing and language of communication keep many of my neighbours from accessing the knowledge-rich academic world. The latter seems to be a set aside club that has set clear rules about what it takes to belong to it and spends less time to grapple with what it means for it to belong to a shared world of intellectuals and ordinary people. The radio talk show host Eusebius McKaiser believes that some academics cannot write for the public. Sometimes South African academics do not write clearly, and don't want the public to understand their ideas. They probably don't want to be engaged or challenged; they don't want to be shown up or exposed! The world sees academics as really clever people. The academia is actually also a safe place for people who are terribly scared of public debate" (Kabongo 2018:3-4).

An academic research at this level is normally expected to be of a very high standard in terms of theory, praxis and scholarship. This expected high standard sometimes means a written document that can only be understood by people of the academia who are known to be more theoretical than practitioners. My aim in undergoing this study was to produce both an academically sound research and a practical tool that will allow ordinary people to be transformation agents or mission workers in

their neighbourhoods of residence. This research endeavoured to mobilise the church to help minimise school dropout in a practical way. This process gave birth a spirituality.

8.2.2 Spirituality

In this chapter, I asked what is the spirituality of this missiological research (Kritzinger & Saayman, 2011)? The answer was a socio-active discipleship. The incarnational stream characterised this spirituality. This stream focuses on making present and visible the realm of the invisible spirit of God. Katongole (2017:205) stresses that theology "needs to be grounded on the soil. For if the church could not address the everyday problems of people, why is it here?". The implementation of this stream resulted in the multiplication of initiatives that are helping to minimise school dropout. Three more reading clubs were started, our tutoring clubs benefited from principles we learned from our initial reading club and some neighbours who dropped out of school regained a sense of purpose and started improving the quality of their lives. The implementation also resulted in the formulation of two spiritualities: the spirituality of the marginalised and the spirituality of agency.

Our missional team wanted to see our neighbours be agents of mission to themselves. This desire came to pass in humbling ways. The post-foundation paradigm helped in the implementation of the principles of the incarnational stream in a meaningful way because it helped us focus on concrete issues such as school dropout and sharpened our ability to be solution seekers. Working together as a transdisciplinary team helped us "acknowledge our active agency" as residents of the township of Soshanguve (de Beer 2008:185). Solution seeking started by dreaming about the kind of society we would like to become using the legacy of the church as an inspiration.

8.2.3 Ecclesial scrutiny

Here we explored how does the community of mission assess past actions of the church in their context (Kritzinger & Saayman, 2011)? The role of the church as a participant in oppressive systems, a good news agent and a catalyst in the building of the kind of society we would love to become, was highlighted.

A key concept this chapter pointed out was partnership. The latter seemed to be a recurring theme in the history of the church. A partnership can have constructive effects or negative effects. This research is a partnership, hence its transdisciplinary nature. Herrington (2011:116) sees a working partnership between disciplines, individuals or organisations as "complementary" and mutually beneficial for people and institutions involved. A negative partnership benefit a few people and hurt many others. Throughout history, the body of Christ entered into partnerships that hurts many people and benefitted few people. For instance, it collided with colonial powers and slave traders in the

pursuit of an agenda to subjugate, brain wash and impose a faith. Achille Mbembe reflects on this partnership of the church and it consequences on black Africans. He(Mbembe 2017: 79) says:

"Whether in literature, philosophy, the arts, or politics, Black discourse has been dominated by three events: slavery, colonisation and apartheid. Still today, they imprison the ways in which black discourse expresses itself. These events have acquired certain canonical meanings, three of which are worth highlighting. First,…there is separation from one self. Separation leads to a loss of familiarity with the self to the point that the subject, estranged, is relegated to an alienated, almost lifeless identity. In place of being connected to itself that might have shaped experience, one is constituted out of an alterity in which the self becomes unrecognizable to itself: this is the spectacle of separation and quartering. Second is the idea of disappropriation. The process refers, on the one hand, to the juridical and economic procedures that lead to material expropriation and dispossession, and, on the other, to a singular experience of subjection characterised by the falsification of oneself by the other. What flows from this is a state of maximal exteriority and ontological impoverishment. These two gestures constitute the singular elements of the black experience and the drama that is its corollary. Finally, this is the idea of degradation. Not only did the servile condition plunge the black subject into humiliation, abjection, and nameless suffering, It also incited a process of social death characterised by the denial of dignity, dispersion, and the torment of exile. In all these three cases, the foundational events that were slavery, colonialism and apartheid played a key role: they condensed and unified the desire of the Black man to know himself and to hold himself in the world (the moment of autonomy)" .

In contrast to the previous paragraph, the church also has the legacy of entering into partnership that built society as a whole. Throughout history, it has been seen as the good "company of pilgrims on the way to the end of the world and the ends of the earth" (Wright 2010:28). This legacy inspired our missional team in its involvement to minimise school dropout.

Our team was also inspired by the black consciousness movement with its philosophy of encouraging solidarity in solution seeking. This study was a collaborative effort. Solidarity played a key role in the outcomes that were presented in chapter 6 and 7. Mbembe (2007:144) points out that "for black solidarity to serve as a political and moral resource in" our current society, "it needs to be defined not only to deal with new social realities but, even more importantly, to conform better to democratic principles. For black solidarity to remain the moral struggle it was in times of bondage, it must be rooted in a commitment to equal justice for all – a commitment to enable all voices to be heard, and to protest the legitimate interests of" some people at the expense of others who are often times relegated to the margins of society.

Another inspiration in solution seeking came from learning about the statistical realities of school dropout in South Africa, and the external and internal causes of school dropout highlighted by research findings in social work, psychology, public health science and science of education.

8.2.4 Contextual understanding

Here, we explored how a community of mission understands its context: the social, political, economic, cultural factors that influence the situation in which they live or work (Kritzinger & Saayman, 2011). This chapter stressed that if the body of Christ were to be proactive and efficient in minimising school dropout, it needed to adopt a holistic approach. It gave a briefing on the current statistics of school dropout in South Africa, which is a concern. It also laid the ground for the transdisciplinary approach this research is all about. It used research findings from social work, psychology, healthcare sciences and science of education to help us understand internal and external causes that could lead to school dropout. Through this process, "disciplinary cross-fertilization" deepened our understanding of a real issue such school dropout (Max-Neef, 2005).

A conclusion was made that children's inability to cope well at school can be caused by several factors they are not responsible for. Overlooking these causes poses a justice issue. Children who struggle academically are often times blamed for their shortcomings. However, taking into consideration external and internal causes that can explain why someone struggles to cope in school could help families, communities and schools to be compassionate towards such children. The church could play a role in building a compassionate society by educating communities about causes of school dropout. The church can use its human capital of skilled members to reach this goal. It can also use its existing resources in order to help educate communities. Additionally, to reach this goal, the church needs to learn about the results of school dropout in a society. Corbett & Fikkert (2009:13-14) reminds the church that "the reality of our society's vast wealth presents it with an enormous responsibility, for throughout the Scriptures God's people are commanded to show compassion to the poor" and marginalised. "In fact, doing so is simply part of our job description as followers of Jesus Christ . Each Christian has a unique set of gifts, callings, and responsibilities that influence the scope and manner in which to fulfil the biblical mandate to help the poor" and marginalised (Corbett & Fikkert 2009:13-14).

8.2.5 Discernment for action

Here the question "what kinds of methods, activities or projects do the agents (community) of mission employ, design in their attempt to erect signs of God's reign in their context (Kritzinger & Saayman, 2011)? This research gave a voice to disciplines of knowledge such as missiology, economics, development sciences and sociology, to share their opinion about school dropout. The awareness gained from these opinions amplified the relevance of mininising school dropout in our today world.

8.2.5.1 Missiology

Missiology started off by stressing that all humans were created is God's likeness and with equal worth. The high rate of school dropout in our urban communities shows how unjust our world is and the church is an accomplice in this. The world global system treats human beings with unequal worth. It excludes those who do not fit into a system and proud itself for keeping those who fit and labels them as selected quality.

The church also seems to have fallen into this dominant narrative and exclude those who don't fit into its education system without providing alternative education models. It therefore marginalises academically unsuccessful learners. The missiologist Rodriguez (2003: 56) pointed out that Jesus also experienced marginalisation at the hands of his own people who were supposed to take care him. Children who struggle academically seem to also be marginalised by the church, along with other institutions. The church was supposed to be the first institution to take care of them because Christ loved compassionately and came to take care of the sick, not the healthy. School dropouts seem to be the stone the 'builders' of our society have rejected, yet we have seen such stones become the cornerstone of our society.

The high rate of school dropout in our poor urban communities and the inaction of the church in being part of the solution to it, exposes how the church has moved away from God's preferential action for the poor and marginalised like it is well stated in Isaiah 61: 1. This study has shown how the poverty of affluence has overtaken our materialistic urban poor communities so that people who are marginalised because they can't fit into our current school system can be side lined and be invisible to all of us (Robert Lupton quoted by Hayes, 2006).

8.2.5.2 Economics

Here it was pointed out that in the South African economic system, school dropouts are not considered as assets, but a burden to the country. Many of them require government assistance in order to survive, they rely on the already overburdened and under resourced public healthcare system because it is free of charge, some of them resort to crime as a means of survival and become a liability to households, communities and the country in general.

 South Africa is in dire need to convert economic liabilities into assets. As a developing country, it needs a diversity of skills in order to develop. The high rate of school dropout is an evidence of our inability as a country to convert the individual God given talents into a diversity of skills that our economy needs in order to develop.

8.2.5.3 Development studies

In this section school dropout was viewed as an unused or under used human capital of a country. A high rate of school dropout therefore hurt the development of a country. School dropouts are deprived of their fundamental need of participation in the seeking of the peace and prosperity of their country.

8.2.5.4 Sociology

Here we saw that school dropout are those our society labels as purposeless. They are seen as those who have nothing to contribute to the building of the society we would like to become. Their focus is on the here and now, because all that matters is surviving today. As a South African society, we have failed to bring about a better society we hoped for more than 20 years after democracy partly because so much of our human capital is unused or under used due to school dropout. We are unable to produce skills that adequately respond to the demands of our society. Therefore, the church should participate in the making of every member of society into an asset. This kind of endevour will diversify skills and give to every member of the society a sense of self-worth, which is needed in our communities. The end in mind is, to see every member of the society be an agent of the building of our society. This was the motivation behind why many people decided to collaborate in this research. That collaboration involved hearing insights about school dropout from our professional volunteers.

8.2.6 Agency

In this section, questions explored were: Who is the person or the community involved in mission? What social, economic, or class position do they occupy in the community? How do they relate to the receivers of mission in a context such as Soshanguve (Kritzinger & Saayman, 2011)? Interviews of the professional partners who were involved in this research were done and captured here. These partners were a social worker, a psychologist, a nurse and an inclusive learning educator. These interviews shaped this transdisciplinary research to its next level. Max-Neef (2005:15) points out that "transdiscipline…extends its action through several levels of reality". It sees disciplines of knowledge on an equal footing as they interact with one another to try and understand a particular matter or to resolve a problem. It therefore sees these disciplines as complementary in solution seeking.

 In the interviews, research partners affirmed a lot of the research findings covered in chapter 3. They also added insights that were taken into consideration in the practical work captured in chapter 6. Their insights helped shape this research as a transdisciplinary study where theology (the church) in partnership with social work, psychology, public health science and education science worked together to minimise school dropout.

All the professional volunteers raised the issue of engagement and involvement as a major reason behind school dropout. These two issues were intentionally taken into consideration in our helping of children to improve their ability to read.

Interviews were very important in helping the professional research partners reflect on the issue at hand in this study - school dropout. They generally affirmed the fact that school dropout is a multi-facetted issue that had very little to do with the person who drops out, but more to do with circumstances around and inside that person. These insights were a very good preparation for the practical work on mininising school dropout this study was all about.

8.2.7 Theological interpretation

In this chapter, the exploration of how the community of mission interprets the scripture and the Christian tradition in its particular context, was done (Kritzinger & Saayman, 2011). The church tradition of being involved with the vulnerable was an inspiration. It helped us to serve children to the best of our ability.

This was an action - reflection approach. In the latter my end in mind was to bring life in the children's academic ability. This end in mind was inspired by this Latin sentence: "non scholae, sed vitae studemus" (literarily meaning Not for school, but for life do we study) (de Give, 1961). We used our team reading club of 20 children to help them improve their reading ability. Our Christian faith armed us with principles that were critical in the results we reached. As a team of volunteers, the bible taught us to expect to discover a genius in each one of our children because God created every human in his likeness and with at least one talent (Matthew 25). We also had a bible study as a team of tutors as well as each tutor with their children during each of our sessions. The end result of it was that 80% of our children were able to significantly improve their ability to read. These results were definitely orchestrated by the Holy Spirit who worked through our efforts and provided more than we were capable of. Some of our older children facilitated bible studies among their peers and at their homes. Our reading club ended up being a platform where they improved their reading ability and learned how to evangelise through reading the bible with others. Some of the parents of our children were recruited by their own children to join our team of volunteers and they are now serving their community though us.

We learned in the process that creating a fun environment for children is good for their dedication to learning. We also learned to balance right and left brain learning styles in our tutoring approach. We have also learned to prioritise the Holy Spirit in what we do because we believe and we have seen that he can do more than we are capable of or we can imagine. Finally, we learned to search, study and discover individual talents of the children and our teaching was tailored around those unique talents. This action-reflection process reminds one of this biblical principle captured through this passage:

"Jesus went back to Capernaum, and a few days later people heard that he was at home.[a] Then so many of them came to the house that there wasn't even standing room left in front of the door. Jesus

was still teaching [3] when four people came up, carrying a crippled man on a mat. But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus. So they made a hole in the roof[b] above him and let the man down in front of everyone. When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the crippled man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2: 1-5).

In this passage, it took a group of four people to successful take a need to Jesus. This passage also reminds me of the African saying that "it takes a village to raise a child". It indeed took a village to arrive at the results this chapter shared.

8.2.8 Conclusion

The interplay between different missiological cycle dimensions brought to the fore four important contributions that this study makes in the field of missiology:

a) This study provides good evidence of the transdisciplinary method, and that this method is an excellent way to put a missional approach into practice. In this study, theology (the church represented by InnerCHANGE) worked collaboratively with other fields of knowledge to find solutions to a concrete challenge such as school dropout. These different fields of knowledge worked in solidarity with one another in their engaging of school dropout. Ramphele (2017:129) stresses that "solidarity is critical to success in tackling" societal issues such as school dropout.

b) The question of how context should be interpreted is a central question in theology. This study presents a well-founded and practical answer to that question. InnerCHANGE as a missional team, has always had a deep desire to influence "people who will be a gift to a changing world" (Huckins & Yackley 2012:11). This collaborative study was good news to all the people involved. It did not only help children from the reading clubs, it also helped adults involved see how they could be missional in using their skills or just what they have.

c) This research provides a good example of African theology in developing agency among ordinary people. When I observe the generally passive nature of the church in its engagement of social issues, this quote from Chinua Achebe comes to mind. He points out that Africa, before the arrival of colonisers and slave traders was a well-integrated society, with dignity and honour. Colonisers came with Christianity and used it to create havoc on the continent (Achebe, 1958). Followers of Jesus from Soshanguve contrasted this observation of Chinua Achebe in being the answer to their prayer. In encouraging agency among Africans, the former South African Education minister, Kader Asmal once said:

" The lion, we have always hoped, will one day have its day… The lion will one day rise up and write the history of Africa. We know, very well, the kinds of histories that have been written by the hunter.

Those books only serve the hunter's interests… We now want to hear the lion's story. We now want to hear the lion's roar" (Ramphele 2017:47).

This study aims to help release the sound of a roaring lion. My research partners, our tutors, the parents/guardians of our reading club children, local churches and other stakeholders involved in this research worked together to voice out the sound of the roaring lion.

d) This research provides a very useful guide for congregants and ordinary people in poor communities. Tshilidzi Marwala (gov.za 2019) believes that "knowledge becomes education when it is used for the benefit of society". Clinton (1988) compliment this thought in stating that a wise leader is known by his/her ability to transfer what he/she has learned to others. This is why he defines leadership as "a dynamic process in which a person with God given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group" (Clinton 1888:14). Providing guidelines for a congregation to be involved in a particular context is a small way this study wanted to influence the body of Christ in community involvement. Jesus himself demonstrated the kind of leadership he wanted his followers to be all about by transferring power to his disciples through the great commission of Matthew 28:16-20, and other commissions in Luke 9 and Luke 10, for example. We also see Paul teaching Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 that knowledge transfer leads to multiplication. The guidelines extracted from this transdisciplinary exercise done with 20 children, led to a successful multiplication of other community based ministries as it was shared in the previous chapter (7.4). These four contributions have also led to the formulation of recommendations.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the high rate of school dropout in poor urban environments and its impact on families, community and the country, strategic actions need to be taken so that the church along with other stakeholders can minimise school dropout in a way that would improve the quality of lives of individuals and communities. In a report published by the newspaper Mail and Guardian (2016), it was found out that the number of pupils who left school before matric is so far in excess of those who enter employment or pre-tertiary study, that it must be concluded that most of them are dropping out to join the army of those not in employment, education or training. The few who are employed are still largely dependent on their parents/ guardians when it comes to housing.

More than minimising school dropout, this study also discovered what makes some people come alive in their learning of something. McLaren (2014: xv) thinks that the "quest for aliveness is the essence of people's faith in a religion. Therefore, what the church should be all about. "When someone says they are spiritual", he continues, "they mean to say they are seeking aliveness" (McLaren 2014: xv).

The church, therefore, should really help catalyse "a global movement dedicated to aliveness" (McLaren 2014: xvi-xvii). "This movement must be global, because" it will be good news to all human beings (McLaren 2014: xvi-xvii). "It must be spiritual, because" it's fruits will go beyond "the brain-level

politics and economics to the heart level of value and meaning" (McLaren 2014: xvi-xvii). "It must be social, because" it will be a grassroots inspiration that will "spread from person to person, friend to friend, family to family, network to network" (McLaren 2014: xvi-xvii). In fact, a "movement stirs and focusses grassroots human desire to bring change to institutions and the societies those institutions are intended to serve" (McLaren 2014: xvi-xvii). McLaren (2014: xvi-xvii) points out that "the spirit of God works everywhere to bring and restore aliveness-through individuals, communities, institutions and movements". He alludes to the bible to illustrate the point he is trying to make:

"In the biblical story, for example, Moses led a movement of liberation among oppressed slaves. They left an oppressive system, journeyed through the wilderness and entered a promised land where they hoped to pursue aliveness in freedom and peace. Centuries after that, the Hebrew prophets launched a series of movements based on a dream of a promised time… a time of justice when swords and spears, instruments of death, would be turned into ploughshares and pruning hooks, instruments of aliveness. Then came John the Baptist, a bold and non-violent movement leader who dared to challenge the establishment of his day and call people to a movement of radical social and spiritual rethinking. John told people he was not the leader they had been waiting for, he was simply preparing for a way for someone greater than himself. When a young man named Jesus came to affiliate with John's movement through baptism, John said, there he is! He is the one! Under Jesus's leadership, the movement grew and expanded in unprecedented ways. When Jesus was murdered by the powers that profited from the status quo, the movement didn't die. It rose again through a new generation of leaders like James, Peter, John, and Paul, who were full of the spirit of Jesus. They created learning circles in which activists were trained to extend the movement locally, regionally and globally. Wherever activists in this movement went, the spirit of Jesus was alive in them, fomenting change and inspiring true aliveness" (McLaren 2014: xvi-xvii).

The recommendations of this study are inspired by a continued quest for aliveness in the people living on the margins of society. McLaren (2014: xviii) is an encouragement here again when he rightly points out that "before Christianity was a rich and powerful religion, it began as a revolutionary nonviolent movement promoting a new kind of aliveness on the margins of society" This is why "it dared to honour women, children, and unmarried adults in a world ruled by married men. It dared to elevate slaves to equality with those who gave them orders. It challenged slave masters to free their slaves and see them as peers. It defied religion taboos that divided people into us and them, in and out, good and evil, clean and unclean".

8.3.1 First recommendation

The first recommendation of this research is, to educate and sensitise school governing body (SGB) members about the issue of school dropout. People who drop out of school are primarily a liability to families and communities. SGB members are community members. According to the government organogram, the SGB is above the principal and educators of public schools. I will encourage SGBs

to challenge the government to diversify the learning streams for children because not everyone fit into the existence system. Two of our InnerCHANGE volunteers are part of SGB at two neighbourhood schools. I already got an opportunity to speak about this recommendation to these two SBGs. One of the fruits of this engagement with the SGBs is that InnerCHANGE now works in partnership with Altus Sport and the SGB of one middle school as well as two primary schools of Soshanguve. Altus Sport (altussport.co.za 2019) utilizes sport as a tool for community, youth and girl empowerment with the support from strong public and corporate partners. It was founded in 1994 with the purpose of assisting and establishing sport clubs in the township areas. Soon the focus moved from sport development to sport for development. It aims to develop quality youth sport leaders who will each make a positive difference in someone's life. It is recognised and supported by local government authorities such as the Department of Education, Health and Sport, the Tshwane Metro and the Tshwane Sport Council.(altussport.co.za 2019). Through this partnership, we have seen many children express the genius in them. InnerCHANGE is constantly on the lookout for partners such as Altus Sport so that the education of children can be diversified and inclusive.

8.3.2 Second recommendation

The second recommendation is that the government create more vocational schools in urban environments. In a place like Soshanguve, there is already an existing infrastructure that could be converted into vocational schools. Few years ago, government decided to convert most of the Soshanguve township middle schools into either primary or high schools because it is phasing out the middle school system. Vocational schools would be the incubator of the diversity of skills our country needs in order to develop. Vocational schools would also be platforms where some people will thrive because they will be learning about things they are gifted and talented in. When people operate from their gifting, the possibility of nurturing an entrepreneur spirit is high.

In an emerging economy such as South Africa, there is a need to cultivate a spirit of entrepreneurship. Some economists believe that the best way to improve employment, diminish poverty, create a more equal society, is to support and assist the local entrepreneurs. However, school dropout negatively affects the ability of someone to pioneer a new initiative. These economists have established a strong link between education and entrepreneurial spirit. Individuals who are educated in areas they are gifted in, are usually able to start-up a personal initiative which is income generating (Herrington 2011:121). With the South African high rate of school dropout, our society does not produce as many entrepreneurs as we would like to see in order to respond to the high demands of employment and basic services our population has. Herrington (2011:132-133) thinks that South Africa seems" to have a noticeable lack of 'can-do' attitude", which is partly attributed to the general low literacy levels of the majority of the population, low entrepreneurial experience and informal learning opportunities. In addition, South Africa lacks a co-operative entrepreneurial culture. A 'can do attitude' could be well cultivated in vocational schools

Herrington (2011:116) points out that the original meaning of the word entrepreneur is "starting a new venture from limited resources". Education equips someone with the ability to start new ventures from limited resources. Skilled individuals are needed for South Africa to become competitive in a global economy. A major challenge South Africa faces now is that of a growing unemployment, which is especially evident amongst the country's youth who will drop out of school in big numbers. The expanded body of unemployed and increasingly unemployable young people is placing a considerable burden on a limited government budget that already has to juggle many other demands. The existing formal sector is not likely to absorb the growing labour force and this, coupled with bourgeoning youth employment, is creating enormous pressures. Unemployment remains a key challenge that needs urgent attention given the impact that it has on poverty, crime, productivity and economic growth (Herrington 2011:115).

InnerCHANGE has started implementing this recommendation by entering into formal partnership with two vocational training centres located in the northern townships of the city of Pretoria. If refers some of the teenagers that participate in its tutoring programmes to these schools. InnerCHANGE also has entered into partnership with Alpha & Omega (alpha-omega 2018) , a Christian faith based non-profit organisation that has shelters which do vocational training for its beneficiaries. Alpha & Omega was founded by Charles Pritchard, a Roman catholic business man. Its mission is connected to the great commission of making disciples of Jesus in the Roman catholic doctrinal way. It consists of a teaching, prayer, counselling and healing ministry (alpha-omega 2018). It apprentices people into becoming the saints they were created to be (alpha-omega 2018). It runs one shelter for men and another one for women. So far, InnerCHANGE has referred two young adults men it was involved with in its support group for drug using who desire to break away for their addiction. These two young adults dropped out of school and are now receiving some vocational training.

8.3.3 Third recommendation

Third recommendation is that the basic education department diversify its curriculum in primary and high schools located in poor urban communities. Activities such as sport are seen as extra mural activities that hardly take place in townships like Soshanguve. Some people do sport as a carrier and make a good living. From my personal experience as a basketball coach and a tutor, the majority of my basketball best players were not very academic in school. In fact, some of them dropped out of school and they have not harvested much from their athleticism because the country does not have a professional league. I also know many good soccer players whose talents where nurtured informally in the community, not at school. I dream of a school curriculum that would include sport, agriculture, welding, plumbing, graphic design, carpentry and many other hands on skills especially at high school level. InnerCHANGE collaboration with a school and Altus Sport is already bearing fruits in bringing sport as an integral part of a local school curriculum as shared in the first recommendation of this study. InnerCHANGE is also actively capacitating local public schools in the after school programme. On a yearly basis, it runs an apprenticeship that recruits young adults from surrounding townships

and train them to be agents of hope in their neighbourhoods. In one of my recently published articles, I said this about our apprenticeship:

In our first apprenticeship in 2016, we guided 18 young adults, aged 19 to 25. They all were our team volunteers in areas such as sports and tutoring ministries. Our hope was to help them develop personally, spiritually and missionally. Since 2016, we have had an apprenticeship for neighbours every year. It has been exciting to journey with these groups and to see how God is developing these young leaders to bring transformation to our local neighbourhoods. These young leaders volunteer with us on a weekly basis. We gather for formal training every other week for a period of four months. Our apprenticeships are geared more towards action (at least 24 hours a month) than theory (four hours) and reflection (four hours of mentoring). The reason for focusing on action more than theory is because I have been learning that the gospel is made real to people by its effects, by the actions of the people who profess it. The love of God demonstrates its nature to us through the actions of its followers in society. The first Christians learned of the love of God by seeing Jesus in action in their lives (Kabongo, 2018).

InnerCHANGE has sent out some of its apprenticeship graduates to local schools and churches interested in community development work to help out children who are struggling academically and help them learn from areas of interest.

8.3.4 Fourth recommendation

Fourth and last recommendation is to request the partnership of institutions of higher learnings with government in the area of capacity building in public schools located in poor communities. Institutions of higher learning could strike a good balance between theoretical learning and community involvement. Students of psychology, social work, education, healthcare, engineering, etc could be required to spend a year of internship working at schools in poor communities to assist already overburdened educators. InnerCHANGE has recently entered into a partnership with a non profit organisation that values marrying theoretical education and community engagement. This organisation is called More Than a Teacher. More than a Teacher training academy (kswr.org.za. 2018) aims to develop education students into fully professional, passionate and productive educators who achieve high quality learning outcomes for learners and who, ultimately, transform learning and future possibilities. Participants are drawn largely from historically disadvantaged communities. All students are registered for a degree in education at a local long-distance learning university. To strengthen their professional readiness, students:

- Undertake 20 hours of classroom teaching each week and gain diverse learning experiences. They work as assistant teachers in a classroom under the mentorship of a qualified and experienced educator.
- Do extra mural training and participation at a school they are placed at.

- Do one month of service learning at another school during the year in order to broaden their experiential knowledge.
- Lead a school-based project that responds to needs (teaching and learning, student experience, peer tutoring).
- Participate in personal development sessions by skilled facilitators.

InnerCHANGE has sent some of its members to study through More Than a Teacher. It has also created a platform where students from different institutions of higher learning do their practicals through its ministry activities in Soshanguve and Winterveldt.

InnerCHANGE has also been actively recruiting some students who do long distance learning with universities and draw them to different groups of tutors working at schools and local churches. The intention here is, to build transdisciplinary groups for effectiveness in solution seeking.

8.4 CONCLUSION

The interplay of learning about the collective memory of the church, causes of school dropout, the consequences of school dropout from some disciplines of knowledge and the insights of professional volunteers led to a collaborative effort to help children improve their ability to read. The impact of this collaborative effort was not limited to one reading club. It multiplied into other reading clubs, tutoring clubs and our missional team involvement with neighbours who dropped out of school. This process birthed a spirituality of socio active discipleship that now colours all our ministry activities.

This spirituality also inspired the recommendations this study made. They are four and each one of them is action orientated. InnerCHANGE is on a learning curve to implement these recommendations as it intends to live out the gospel with integrity. It has learned from a document published by the world council of churches, Together towards life, that "the gospel is the good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society"(Resource Book 2013:52). The poem below captures the essence of these recommendations:

My eyes are open,
My heart feels,
My mind is flabbergasted,
As I notice an increased number of school dropouts in our streets.
I wonder what it would take to stop this movement,
I grapple with the fear that one of my children may be one of them in future,
I am anxious and scared for the safety of my possessions,
I am angry that many children don't like school.
I am disappointed with people like me who blame school dropouts on the children's poor decision-making.

My cry is a longing desire to see a different society than our current,
A mutually caring village where we love our neighbours as ourselves
And we actively build a better nation for all.

CHAPTER IX: REFERENCES

Addison, S.2009. Movements that change the world. Smyrna: Missional Press.

Alexander, K.L. & Co, "From first grade forward: Early foundations of high school dropout" in Sociology of Education, Vol.70. No. 2 (Apr., 1997), pp. 87 -107.

Alpha Blondy in https://genius.com/Alpha-blondy-ca-me-fait-si-mal-lyrics. Accessed on 03/01/2016
Alpha & Omega at www.alpha-omega.org.za. Accessed on 23/04/2018.

Alspaugh, J.W.1998." The relationship of school and community characteristics to High school dropout rates" The Clarain House: A journal of educational strategies, Issues and Ideas. Volume 71, Issue 3. Accessed at http://www.tandfonline.com on 22/9/2015.

Altussport at https://www.altussport.co.za. Accessed on 18 Feb 2019.

Anthonissen, C., 2006. Critical discourse analysis as an analytic tool in considering selected, prominent features of TRC testimonies. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *5*(1), pp.71-96.

Bakke, R., 1997. A theology as big as the city. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press.

Banwell, C. & Bammer, G. "Maternal habits: Narratives of mothering, social position and drug use" in International Journal of Drug Policy 17 (2006) 504–513.

Banza, A.K.2013. Transforming Africa: the role of the church in developing political leaders. Unpublished doctoral thesis: UNISA.

Barth, K. 2003. Call to discipleship. Augsburg: Augsburg Books.
Bdlive, 2016 at http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2016/01/20/sa-schools-under-sadtu-dominion. Accessed on February 23, 2016.

Beck, A. 2016. Transcultural cognitive behaviour therapy for anxiety and depression. A practical guide. London: Routledge.

Bediako, K.1995, Christianity in Africa: The renewal of a non-western religion.
Edinburgh: Orbis Books.

Bell, D. M.2012.The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World. Ontario: Baker academics.

Bevans, S B & Schroeder, R P 2004. Constants in context: A theology of mission for today. New York: Orbis Books.

Biko, S. 2007. "Black consciousness and the quest for a true humanity" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. Pp. 151 - 163

Bible New International Version

Bible Contemporary English Version.

Bjs, 2017 at https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=814.Accessed on 16/02/2017.

Boesak, W., 1988. Psalm 82: God amidst the Gods. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, (64).

Bosch, D. 1991. Transforming Mission. Paradigm shifts in Theology of mission. New York: Orbis and Books.

Boyd, G.A. 1992. " When you grow up in a dysfunctional family". at http://www.mudrashram.com/dysfunctionalfamily2.html. Accessed on 28/07/ 2015.

Brueggemann, W.2001. The prophetic imagination. Second edition. Minneapolis: Fortress press.

Burger R. & Van Der Walt C.2010 "Bridging South Africa's Deep Divides. Religious Networks as a Resource to Overcome Social and Ecomonic Exclusion."in Religion and Social Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Perpectives for Critical Engagement.

Burger, R., Louw, M. and Van der Watt, C., 2010. The challenge of poverty and social exclusion in post-apartheid South Africa. *Religion and social development in post-apartheid South Africa*, pp.61-73.

Business tech at https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/149291/shocking-drop-out-rates-where-in-south-africa-the-fewest-kids-make-it-to-matric/. Accessed on 31/12/2017.

Cabus, S.J. & De Witte, K. 2016. 'Why do students leave education early? Theory and evidence of high school dropout rates'. Journal of forecasting, J. Forecast, 35, 690-702.

Cardoso, A.R. & Verner, D.2006." School Drop-Out and Push-Out Factors in Brazil: The Role of Early Parenthood, Child labor and poverty" in Discussion Paper Series No. 2515. IZA:Bonn

Casey B. 2015., "Child neglect" in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd edition, Volume 3. Pp.410-416

Castellanos, N.2014. When the cross meets the street. What happens to the neighborhood when God is at the center. Downers Grove: IVP Books.

Ci, 2016 at http://www.ci.org.za/depts/ci/pubs/pdf/general/gauge2008/part_two/exclusion.pdf. Accessed on March 1, 2016.

Clinton, J.R.1988. The making of a leader. Recognizing the lessons and stages of leadership development. Colorado Springs: NavPress.

Combrinck, 2017. Cited in timeslive.co.za.

Coohey, 1995. Cited in http://www.politicsweb.co.za/party/pupil-teacher-ratio-at-3041--angie-motshekga. Accessed on February 21, 2016.

Christoffersen, Mogens Nygaard, and Keith Soothill. "The long-term consequences of parental alcohol abuse: a cohort study of children in Denmark." *Journal of substance abuse treatment* 25, no. 2 (2003): 107-116.

Clark, C.D., 1992. The focus group interview and other kinds of group interview, viewed 25 February 2010, from http://ppa.aces.uiuc.edu/pdf_files/focus.pdf.

Clinton, J.R.1988. The making of a leader. Recognizing the lessons and stages of leadership development. NavPress: Colorado Springs.

Chang, C., Leighton, J., Mostashari, F., McCord, C. and Frieden, T.R., 2004. The New York City Smoke-Free Air Act: Second-hand smoke as a worker health and safety issue. *American journal of industrial medicine*, *46*(2), pp.188-195.

Children count, 2018 at www.childrencount.org.za. Accessed on July 5, 2018.

Cochrane, J.R., De Gruchy, J.W. and Petersen, R., 1991. *In word and in deed: towards a practical theology of social transformation: a framework for reflection and training* (Vol. 1). Cluster Publications

Corbett, S. and Fikkert, B.2009. When helping hurts. How to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor and yourself. Chicago: Moody publishers.

Csmonitor, 2018 at https://www.csmonitor.com/1987/1218/oscho.html. Accessed on May 24, 2018.

Damon, W., 2008. *Moral child: Nurturing children's natural moral growth*. Simon and Schuster.

Dawes, A.E. and Donald, D.E., 1994. *Childhood & adversity: Psychological perspectives from South African research*. David Philip Publishers.

Dawes, P.J. and Davison, P., 1994. Informed consent: what do patients want to know?. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, *87*(3), p.149.

Dcs, 2016 at http://www.dcs.gov.za/docs. Accessed on 17/12/2016.

De Beer, S.2008. "Recovering black consciousness for new and universal" in The legacy of Stephen Bantu Biko: Theological challenges, Research Institute for Theology and Religion. Pretoria: University of South Africa,.

De Beer, S. 2008. "Contesting inner-city space: Global trends, local exclusion/s and an alternative Christian spatial praxis" in Missionalia, Vol 36 No 2/3 Aug/Nov 2008.

De Give, M. 1961. Grammaire latine. De Boeck: Liege.

Denzin, N. K & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds), 2000, Handbook of qualitative research, second Edition. New Delhi: Sage.

Dieltiens, V. & Meny-Gibert, S.2009. School drop-out: Poverty and patterns of exclusion at http://www.ci.org.za/depts/ci/pubs/pdf/general/gauge2008/part_two/exclusion.pdf. Accessed on March 1, 2016.

Dickerson, D.C., 2005. African American religious intellectuals and the theological foundations of the civil rights movement, 1930–55. *Church History*, *74*(2), pp.217-235.

Dictionary, 2016 at www.dictionary.com. Accessed on 28/12/2016.

Donovan, J. V. 2005. Christianity Rediscovered. Orbis Books: Maryknoll.

Donohue, D. & Bornman, J. 2014, The Challenges of Realising Inclusive Education in South Africa, in South African Journal of Education,34 (2), Art # 806, 14 pages.

Du Toit, C.2010. Power sharing and African democracy: Interdisciplinary perspectives. Pretoria: Research institute for theology and religion, first edition.

Edwards, S.W. and Chapman, P.E., 2009. *Six Pillars of Dynamic Schools*. Educational Research Service. 1001 North Fairfax Street Suite 500, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Ebigbo 2009. Bakare, M.O., Ebigbo, P.O., Agomoh, A.O., Eaton, J., Onyeama, G.M., Okonkwo, K.O., Onwukwe, J.U., Igwe, M.N., Orovwigho, A.O. and Aguocha, C.M., 2009. Knowledge about childhood autism and opinion among healthcare workers on availability of facilities and law caring for the needs and rights of children with childhood autism and other developmental disorders in Nigeria. *BMC pediatrics*, *9*(1), p.12.

Eft for peace, 2017 at https://eftforpeace.wordpress.com/2011/01/24/effect-of-negative-language-on-children/accessed on 21/12/2017).

Ekblad, B. 2015. Erasing labels in http://www.clarion-journal.com/clarion_journal_of_spirit/2015/07/erasing-labels-bob-ekblad.html. Accessed on June 1, 2018.

Enca, 2019 at https://www.enca.com/news/dropout-rates-misunderstood-motshekga. Accessed on 21/03/2019.

Escience central, 2016 at http://www.esciencecentral.org/journals/economic-effects-of-student-dropouts-a-comparative-study-2375-4389-1000137.php?aid=57059. Accessed on Feb 29, 2016.

Essay, 2014 at http://www.essay.uk.com/essays/education/essay-left-and-right-brain-dominance-and-the-impact-on-learning/accessed on June 4, 2017.

Everyday life, 2016 at http://everydaylife.globalpost.com/economic-ripple-effect-high-school-dropouts-10730.html Accessed on Feb 29, 2016.

Frost, M. & Hirsch, A.: 2006. The Shaping Of Things To Come. Innovation and Mission for the 21st – century Church. Hendrickson Publishers.

Frost, M. and Rice, C., 2017. To Alter Your World: Partnering with God to Rebirth Our Communities. *Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books*.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J.H., 2000. The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. *Handbook of qualitative research*, *2*(6), pp.645-672.

Foster, R. J. 1998. Streams of living water: Celebrating the great traditions of Christian faith. First edition. Nashville: Harper Collins.

Friedman, M., 1955. The role of government in education.
Forst, M. and Hirsch, A. 2003. The shaping of things to come. Innovation for the 21st Century church. Peabody: Hendrickson publishers.

Fuellenbach, J.1991. "The Theology of Liberation" in Essays in celebration of twenty-five years of SEDOS. New York: Orbis books.

Frost, M. & Rice, C. 2017. To alter your world. Partnering with God to rebirth our communities. Downers Grove: IVP Books.

Fuder, J.E. 2001. Training students for urban ministry: an experiential approach. A dissertation presented to the faculty of the school of intercultural studies. Biola university. Eugene: Wipf and Stock publishers.

Garbarino, J. and Kostelny, K., 1993. Neighborhood and community influences on parenting. *Parenting: An ecological perspective*, pp.203-226.

Gatens, B in (https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/curriculum-teaching-strategies/let-children-play-add-fun-to-classroom/ accessed on 30/05/2018).

Gaudin Jr, J.M., Polansky, N.A., Kilpatrick, A.C. and Shilton, P., 1996. Family functioning in neglectful families. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *20*(4), pp.363-377.

Godin, S. 2004. Free prize inside! The next big marketing idea. Penguin: USA Portfolio.
Good reads, 2019 at **https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/119043.Dorothy_Day. Accessed on 11/02/2019.**

Good therapy, 2018 at https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/issues/worthlessness/ accessed on May 24, 2018.

Greeff, M., 2005. Information collection: interviewing. *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions*, pp.286-313.

Green, G.P. & Haines, A. 2012.Asset Building & Community Development 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications..

Grenz, S.J. 1994.Theology for the community of God. Paternoster Press: Grand rapids.

Gopal. C. and Ngubeni, Z. 2015 in http://thoughtleader.co.za/readerblog/2016/03/31/theres-no-dignity-in-education-without-proper-sanitation/ accessed April 3, 2016

Hall, E.T.1976. Beyond Culture. New York: Anchor Books

Happy planet index, 2017 at http://happyplanetindex.org/countries/costa-rica.accessed on 11-08-2017.

Harlow, C.W., 2003. Education and Correctional Populations. Washington: Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report.

Hartnack, A.2017. Background document and review of key South African and international literature on school dropout at http://dgmt.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/School-Dropout-Background-Paper-Final.pdf. Accessed on 22/02/2019

Hayes, J. B. 2006. Sub-merge. Living Deep In A Shallow World: Service, Justice And Contemplation Among The World's Poor. Ventura: Regal.

Hendriks, J. 2010. "A change of Heart – Missional Theology and Social Development." In Religion and Social Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Stellenbosch: Sun Press

Herrington, M. 2011. "Entrepreneurship: How can obstacles be overcome? "in Advocates for change. How to overcome Africa's challenges. Picador Africa: Johannesburg

Hirsch, A.2007. The Forgotten Ways. Reactivating The Missional Church. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

Hofstee, E. 2006. *Constructing a good dissertation: a practical guide to finishing a Masters, MBA or PhD on Schedule*. Sandton: EPE.

Holland, J. & Henriot, P. 1983. *Social analysis: linking faith and justice*. Maryknoll: Orbis.

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F., 2004. The active interview. *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*, *2*, pp.140-161.

Horrocks happenings, 2016 at *https://horrockshappenings.wordpress.com/2016/03/21/guest-post-broken-township. Accessed on April 16, 2016.*

Howie in www timeslive.co.za. 2017)

Huckins J. & Yackley, R.2012. Thin Places. 6 Postures for creating & practicing missional community. The House studio: Kansas City.

Iol, 2016 at http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/sa-maths-teachers-among-worst-in-the-world-1593936. Accessed on February 23, 2016.

Jansen, J.2007. "King James, Princess Alice and the ironed hair: a tribute to Stephen Bantu Biko" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. pp. 123 - 132

Jansen, J.D. 2011. "South Africa's Education system: how can it be made more productive?" in Advocates for change. How to overcome Africa's challenges. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

Jansen, J. (2013) Percy Baneshik Memorial Lecture to the English Academy of South Africa.

 Jansen, J. 2013 in https://mg.co.za/article/2013-10-04-wrest-power-from-english-tyranny.Accessed on 9/12/2017).

 Janz, N.K. and Becker, M.H., 1984. The health belief model: A decade later. *Health education quarterly*, *11*(1), pp.1-47.

Jenson, Matt 2006. The gravity of sin. Augustine, Luther and Barth on Homo Incurvatus in se. London: T&T Clark

Jenkinson, W. and O'Sullivan H.1991. Trends in mission.Toward the Third Millenium. Essays in celebration of twenty-five years of SEDOS. New York: Orbis books.

Jenson, Matt 2006. *The gravity of sin. Augustine, Luther and Barth on homo incurvatus in se.* London: T&T Clark

Jones, D.N. and Paulhus, D.L., 2011. The role of impulsivity in the Dark Triad of personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *51*(5), pp.679-682.

Kabongo, K.T.L. 2015. Ministry with a poor community. A missional appraisal of the InnerCHANGE tutoring ministry in Soshanguve. Unpublished master's degree dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Kabongo, K.T.L. 2018. "The Africanisation of missiology: the work of InnerCHANGE South Africa to raise up local missionaries and decolonise black African minds" in www.globalmissiology.org, vol.4, No 15 (2018): July

Kabongo, K.T.L. 2018. "The Africanisation of missiology: the work of InnerCHANGE South Africa to raise up local missionaries and decolonise black African minds" in www.globalmissiology.org, vol.4, No 16 (2018): October

Kalemba, M. 2011. The church task regarding leadership crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. Paper presented at Africa Leadership Forum, Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 11 November 2011.

Kritzinger, J.N.J. 2010. ―Mission as ...‖ Must we choose? *Missionalia* 39:1/2 (April/August), 32-59.

Kritzinger, J.N.J. & Saayman, W. 2011. *David J. Bosch: prophetic integrity, cruciform praxis*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Kritzinger, JNJ 2008.Liberating whiteness: engaging with the anti-racist dialectics of of Steve biko" in The legacy of Stephen Bantu Biko: Theological challenges. Pretoria: Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa,.

Krueger, R.A. and Casey, M.A., 2002. Designing and conducting focus group interviews.

Lachman, P et al..2002. "The effect of poverty on child protection in Africa" in Child Abuse & Neglect 26 (2002) 587–617

Latif, A. & al. 2015. "Economic effects of student dropouts: A comparative study" in Journal of Global Economics, 3:2 at http://www.esciencecentral.org/journals/economic-effects-of-student-dropouts-a-comparative-study-2375-4389-1000137.pdf. Accessed 28/12/2016.

Linthicum, R. C. 1991, Empowering The Poor. Community Organizing Among the City's 'Rag, Tag and Bobtail'. Bryant L. Myers, Series Editor. Innovations in mission. Marc.

Linthicum, R.C.2003. Transforming power: Biblical Strategies for Making a Difference in Your Community.Intervarsity press: Downers Grove
Londi, B. M. 1991. "A theology for African Churches" in Essays in celebration of twenty-five years of SEDOS. New York: Orbis books.

Lubbe, G. 2009. "Observations on the Spirituality of Martin Luther King Jr, Desmond Mpilo Tutu and Barack Hussein Obama" in Missionalia. Vol 37, No 3 November 2009. P. 125-137

Luoma, I., Tamminen, T., Kaukonen, P., Laippala, P., Puura, K., Salmelin, R. and Almqvist, F., 2001. Longitudinal study of maternal depressive symptoms and child well-being. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *40*(12), pp.1367-1374.

Maathai, W. 2009.The Challenge for Africa. A New Vision. London: William Heinemann.

Mangena, M. 2007. "Thirty years o and not much has changed" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. Pp. 11 – 18.

Mahoney, JL & Caims, RB.1997. " Do extracurricular activities protect against early school dropout?" in Developmental psychology, Vol 33 (2), Mar 1997, 241-253.

Masola, A. 2013. "Madiba and Education at http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/athambilemasola/2013/12/10/madiba-and-education/. Accessed on 13-12- 2013.

Masuku, M. T. 2010 The ministry of Dr Beyers Naudé : towards developing a comprehensive mission (communication) strategy towards the victims of oppression. Pretoria: Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Pretoria.

Marwala, T. at www.gov.za. Accessed on 13/01/ 2019.

Max-Neef, M.A. 2005. "Commentary foundations of transdisciplinarity" in Ecological Economics 53 (2005) 5 -16 also available online at www.sciencedirect.com

Mbeki M.2011. Advocates for change. How to overcome Africa's challenges. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

Mbeki, T. 2007. "Steve Biko:30 years after" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. Pp. 21 - 40

Mbembe, A.2017. Critique of black reason. Translated and introduction by Laurent Dubois. Duke university press: Durham.

Mda, L. 2007. "Dear Steve" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. Pp. 1 - 9

Mbele, V. 2007. "Biko's influence on me" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. Pp.53 - 61

Mbembe, A. 2007. "Biko's testament of hope" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. Pp. 135 – 148

Mahone, E.M. and Schneider, H.E. 2012. Assessment of attention in preschoolers" in Neuropsychol Rev. 2012 Dec; 22 (4): 361-383.

Macnaghten, P. and Myers, G., 2004. Focus Group in Qualitative Research Practice, Clive Seale et al.(Orgs.).

Mda, L. 2007. "Dear Steve" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. Pp. 1 - 9

Madriz, E., 2000. Focus groups in feminist research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, *2*, pp.835-850.

Malesa, Thabo 2016. in https://horrockshappenings.wordpress.com/2016/03/21/guest-post-broken-township. Accessed on April 16, 2016.

Mangayi, K. C. 2016. Mission in an African city: Discovering the township church as an asset towards local economic development in Tshwane. Pretoria: unpublished doctoral degree, UNISA.

Maluleke, T. 2008. "May the black God stand, please! Biko's challenge to religion" in The legacy of Stephen Bantu Biko: Theological challenges. Pretoria: Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa.

Max-Neef, M.A. 2005. "Commentary foundations of transdisciplinarity" in Ecological Economics 53 (2005) 5 -16 also available online at www.sciencedirect.com.

Max-Neef, M., 1991. De la esterilidad de la certeza a la fecundidad de la incertidumbre. In *Ponencia presentada al Congreso Internacional de la Creatividad. Universidad Javeriana, facultad de psicología, Bogotá*.

McLaren, B.D.2014.We make the road by walking. A year-Long quest for spiritual formation, reorientation, and activation. New York: Jericho books.

McLaren, B.D.2007. Everything must change. Jesus, Global crises, and a revolution of hope. Thomas Nelson: NashvilleOtto, T.2014. Oriented to Faith. Transforming the conflict over gay relationships. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books.

Meredith, Martin. 2005. The state of Africa. A history of fifty years of independence. London: Free Press.

Metcalf, S.2015.Beyond the local church. How apostolic movements can change the world. Downers Grove: IVP Books.

Mg, 2017 at http://mg.co.za/article/2016-06-06-school-dropout-numbers-blamed-on-poor-learning-in-early-grades. Accessed on 16/02/2017.

Modisaotsile,B.M. 2012. The failing standard of basic education in South Africa in http://www.ai.org.za/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/03/No.-72.The-Failing-Standard-of-Basic-Education-in-South-Africa1.pdf

Modise, T. 2017. Pedagogy III. Course given at Tshwane University of Technology. Pretoria:TUT.

Mosala, I.J., 1989. Christianity and socialism: Appropriating Moses and Jesus for national liberation in Azania. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, *3*(2), pp.28-37.

Moshia, M. E. 2006. African Village Boy: Poverty and Bantu Education Systems of Apartheid South Africa. Bloomington: AuthorHouse.

Mudimbe, V.Y. 1997.*Tales of faith : religion as political performance in central africa*. London: Athlone Press (Jordan lectures in comparative religion, 18).

Müller, J.C., 2011. Postfoundational practical theology for a time of transition. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *67*(1).

Myers, B. L. 1999. Walking With The Poor. Principles and Practices Of Transformational Development. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books,.

Michelle Gregoire Gill in www.psychcentral.com. Accessed on 06/6/ 2016

Mugambi, J.N., 1995. From liberation to reconstruction. *Nairobi: EAEP*.

Mwambazambi, K. & Banza, A.K., 2014, 'Developing transformational leadership for sub-Saharan Africa: Essential missiological considerations for church workers', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 35(1), Art. #849, 9 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ ve.v35i1.849

Ndebele, S.2014. In his 2014 speech, the then Correctional services minister Sibusisso in www.ndpc-web.clemson.edu. Accessed on 08/6/2016.

Ndpc-web, 2016 at http://ndpc-web.clemson.edu/statistics/quick-facts/economic-impacts-dropouts. Accessed on 29 Feb 2016.

News24, 2017 at http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/govt-report-accuses-sadtu-of-selling-teaching-posts-20151217. Accessed on April 19, 2016.

Nickie Y. & al.2013. "A qualitative investigation of alcohol use advice during pregnancy: Experiences of Dutch midwives, pregnant women and their partners" in Midfiwery 29. Pp. 89 – 98.

Norman A. & al.2014. "Smoking Cessation, Maintenance, and Relapse Experiences Among Pregnant and Postpartum Adolescents: A Qualitative Analysis" in Journal of Adolescent Health 55 (2014) 216 – 221.

Nova, 2015 atwww.nova.org.za. Accessed on 22/7/2015
Nguta, M. 2015. Here is an innovative solution to SA's sub-standard education, school vouchers in http://thoughtleader.co.za/readerblog/2015/10/20/here-is-an-innovative-solution-to-sas-sub-standard-education-school-vouchers/ accessed on 20/10/2015

Nickie Y. & al.2013. "A qualitative investigation of alcohol use advice during pregnancy: Experiences of Dutch midwives, pregnant women and their partners" in Midfiwery 29. Pp. 89 – 98.
Norman A. & al.2014. "Smoking Cessation, Maintenance, and Relapse Experiences Among Pregnant and Postpartum Adolescents: A Qualitative Analysis" in Journal of Adolescent Health 55 (2014) 216 – 221

Nieuwenhuis, J., 2007, "Introducing Qualitative Research" in K. Maree (ed), First steps in research, pp.46-68. Hatfield, Pretoria: Van Schalk Publishers.

Nworgu, B. G., 1991, Education research: Basic issues and methodology. Ibadan, Nigeria: Wisdom Publishers.

Newbigin, L.1969 The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Nguta, M. 2015 in http://thoughtleader.co.za/readerblog/2015/10/20/here-is-an-innovative-solution-to-sas-sub-standard-education-school-vouchers/ accessed on 20/10/2015.

NOVA Institute 2005, Quality of Life Assessment Instrument. Guidelines for use: first issue.

Nieman, A. 2010. "Churches and Social Development in South Africa – An exploration" in Religion and social Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.

Oduyoye, M.A. 2001. Three cardinal issues of mission in Africa. Oxford: Regnum Books International.

Oosthuizen, M. 2016. Stop waiting for our 'leaders' and take practical steps to address our problems in www.thoughtleader.co.za. accessed on 2/04/2016.

Otto, T.2014. Oriented to Faith. Transforming the conflict over gay relationships. Eugene, Oregon Cascade Books.

Paton, C. 2016. SA schools under SADTU dominion in http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2016/01/20/sa-schools-under-SADTU-dominion. Accessed on February 23, 2016.

Penoukou, E. J. 1991 "The churches of Africa: Their identity? Their mission?" in Essays in celebration of twenty-five years of SEDOS. New York: Orbis books.

Perkins, J.M.2014. Let Justice roll down. Grand Rapids: BakerBooks.

Perkins, J.M. 1993. Beyond Charity. The call to Christian community development. Grand Rapids: BakerBooks.

Pityana, B. 2010. "The role of higher education" in Power sharing and African democracy: Interdisciplinary perspectives. Pretoria: Research institute for theology and religion, first edition.

Polit D.F. & Beck C.T. 2008. Nursing Research.Generating and Assessing Evidence for Nursing Practice.Eighth Edition. Hong Kong:Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
 Politicsweb, 2016 at http://www.politicsweb.co.za/party/pupil-teacher-ratio-at-3041--angie-motshekga. Accessed on February 21, 2016.

Psych central, 2018 at https://psychcentral.com/lib/worthlessness-and-depression/accessed on 24/05/2018.
Psychology today, 2018 at https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psyched/201606/nurturing-the-gifts-every-child. Accessed on may 31, 2018.

Ramphele, M. 2017. Dreams, betrayal and hope. Penguin books: Cape Town.

Rapley, T. 2007. Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis. London: Sage.
Remedial education (workbook), practical experience 402 (Second year), university of Pretoria

Read naturally, 2017 at https://www.readnaturally.com/knowledgebase/how-to/9/59. Accessed on 17/01/2017.

Reading partners, 2017 at https://readingpartners.org/blog/early-literacy-intervention-strategies-help-prevent-high-school-dropout/accessed on 25/12/2017.

Rumberger, R.W.2001. "Why Students Drop Out of School and What can be done" in K-12 Dropouts and Graduation rates at http://escholarship.org/uc/item/58p2c3wp (accessed on 20/08/2015).

Rumberger, R.W.2012. "Student engagement, peer social capital, and school dropout among Mexican American and Non-Latino white students" in Sociology of Education, Vol. 81 (April):109-139

Rocke, K. & van Dyke, J. 2012. Geography of Grace. Doing Theology from below. USA: Street Psalms Press.

Rodriguez, D.A. 2003No Longer Foreigners and Aliens: Toward a Missiological Christology for Hispanics in the United States in http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/009182960303100109. *Missiology: An International Review, Vol. XXXI, No. J, January 2003*

Rodriguez, M. A. 1991. "Living with the poor in Brazil" in Essays in celebration of twenty-five years of SEDOS. : New York: Orbis books.

Russo, J. 2017 in https://www.xojane.com/author/juniper-russo. Accessed on 23/05/2017.

Sacmeq at http://www.sacmeq.org/sites/default/files/sacmeq/reports/sacmeq-iii/national- Accessed on 3 July 2016reports/mal_sacmeq_iii_report-_final.p.

Schreiter, R.2001. Mission in the third millennium. New York: Orbis books:.

Section 27, 2017 at http://section27.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Chapter-11.pdf. Accessed on December 9, 2017.

Seleone, M. 2007. "Biko's influence and a reflection" in We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. pp. 63 -75

Sempore, S. 1991. "Popular Christianity in Africa" in Essays in celebration of twenty-five years of SEDOS. : New York: Orbis books.

Sen, A., 2012. Open and closed impartiality. In *Global Responsibilities* (pp. 75-98). Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.

Setiloane, G.M., 1980. Theological trends in Africa. *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies*, *8*(2), pp.47-53.

Slack, K.S., Holl, J.L., McDaniel, M., Yoo, J. and Bolger, K., 2004. Understanding the risks of child neglect: An exploration of poverty and parenting characteristics. *Child maltreatment*, *9*(4), pp.395-408.

Simorangkir, L. J. 2016. Caring about care. Reflections of mothers and children on care arrengments in South African communities. Unpublished masters dissertation: VU University Amsterdam. Skills you need, 2018 at https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/confidence.html. Accessed on 24/05/2018.

Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ)

Sobrino, J. 1987. Jesus in latin America. New York: Orbis books.

Spaull, N. 2012. Poverty & Privilege: primary school inequality in South Africa. Stellenbosch economic working papers: 13/12.

Spaull, N. 2013. South Africa's education crisis: The quality of education in South Africa 1994-2011 at http://www.section27.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Spaull-2013-CDE-report-South-Africas-Education-Crisis.pdf. Accessed on March 1, 2016.

Spaull, N.2016 in http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RESEP-Policy-Briefs_Nic_Spaull-EMAIL.pdf. Accessed on February 3, 2018.

Sperry, R. 1974 cited in Pedagogy III, Module taught at Tshwane University of Technology in 2017

Schroeder, R. P. 2008. What is the mission of the church? A Guide for Catholics. New York: Orbis Books.

South African Council of Churches. 2009 Climate Change – A Challenge to the Churches in South Africa. Climate Change Committee, Marshalltown: SACC Declaration SACC)

South African government department of Basic Education at www.education.gov.za. Accessed 5/06/2016.

Starke, L.1992. How much is enough. The consumer society and the future of the earth. The worldwatch environmental alert series. First edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Statssa, 2017 at http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media_release_QLFS_Q4_2016.pdf. Accessed on 16/02/2017.

Statistics times, 2017 at http://statisticstimes.com/economy/countries-by-projected-gdp.php. Accessed on 11-08-2017)

Straker & Moosa, 1988; Pelzer, 1999 cited in Lachman, P., Poblete, X., Ebigbo, P.O., Nyandiya-Bundy, S., Bundy, R.P., Killian, B. and Doek, J., 2002. Challenges facing child protection. *Child abuse & neglect*, *26*(6-7), pp.587-617.

Sunday News, 2017 athttp://www.sundaynews.co.zw/hivaids-account-for-50-percent-school-drop-outs/Accessed on 2-06-2017.

Swart, I. 2010. "Networks and partnerships for Social Justice? The pragmatic turn in the religious social development debate in South Africa" in Religion and social Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.

Swartz, S. 2011. "'Going deep' and 'giving back': strategies for exceeding ethical expectations when researching amongst vulnerable youth". Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, South Africa. At http://qrj.sagepub.com vol. 11(1) 47–68.

Taylor, N. 2012 in www.shineliteracy.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NEEDU-Report.pdf

Taylor, S. & Coetzee, M. 2017. *"Mother-tongue classrooms give a better boost to English study later" in https://nicspaull.com/2013/10/27/languages-of-learning-in-south-africa/Accessed on December 9, 2017.*

Test dyslexia at https://www.testdyslexia.com. Accessed on06/3/2017

Terreblanche, S.2003. A history of inequality in South Africa, 1652-2002. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press & KMM Review Publishing.

Terreblanche, S. 2014. Western empires, Christianity, and the inequalities between the West and the Rest 1500-2010. Johannesburg: Penguin Books.

The conversation, 2018 at http://theconversation.com/the-myth-of-the-college-dropout-75760. Accessed on May 24, 2018.

Thorndike, E. (1999). Education psychology. New York: Routledge.

Thought leader, 2016 at http://thoughtleader.co.za/jasonhickel/2016/03/09/how-the-west-destroyed-the-global-souths-best-shot-at-development/ Accessed March 21, 2016.

Thuma foundation, 2017 at www.Thumafoundation.org.Accessed on 23/6/2017.

Times live, 2018 at https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-05-14-service-delivery-protests-increasing-and-most-are-violent/accessed on 25/05/2018.

Tichy, L. 2013 at http://thecommunitymanager.com/2013/09/26/how-to-write-effective-community-guidelines/accessed on 10/07/2018.

Tirivangasi H.M. & Mugambiwa S.S. 2016. Citizenship crisis or Xenophobia? A critical analysis of service delivery protests in South Africa. SAAPAM Limpopo Chapter 5th Annual Conference Proceedings 2016.

Tjong Kim Sang, E.F. and De Meulder, F., 2003, May. Introduction to the CoNLL-2003 shared task: Language-independent named entity recognition. In *Proceedings of the seventh conference on Natural language learning at HLT-NAACL 2003-Volume 4* (pp. 142-147). Association for Computational Linguistics.

Tlf, 2016 at http://www.tlf.org.za/about-us/, accessed on 16/04/2016.

Tournier, P. 1982. Creative Suffering. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Townsend, L.2015. The relationship between bullying behaviours and high school dropout in Cape Town, South Africa in http://sap.sagepub.com/content/38/1/21.abstract . Accessed on March 1, 2016

Tshilenga, E.K. 2005. Collective sins in Africa. A missiological approach to the African crisis. Pretoria: CB Powell Bible centre UNISA.

Tutu, D. M. 2004. God Has a Dream. A Vision of Hope for Our Time. New York: Doubleday.

Ucanews, 2018 at https://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/1994/06/16/bishop-appeals-for-quality-to-reduce-minor-seminary-dropout-rate&post_id=45450. Accessed on 12/5/2018.

Live strong, 2017 at https://www.livestrong.com/article/74424-child-discipline-corporal-punishment/Accessed on 21/12/2017.

UNESCO 2000 report at
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=13865&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.
Accessed on 03/11/2016

Van der Merwe, 2017. "Implicit and explicit economical cost of school dropout". Personal email (24 June 2017)

Vallerand, R.J., 1997. Toward a hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 29, pp. 271-360). Cambridge: Academic Press.

Vallerand & al. 1997. "Self-determination and persistence in a real-life setting: Toward a motivational model of high school dropout" in Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol.72, No 5, 1161-1176.

Van Niekerk 2015. GSW 310/314: mission in practice. Module given at the university of Pretoria.

Van Niekerk, A., 2015, 'A centre for community life in its fullness', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36(3), Art. #1448, 7 pages. http://dx.doi. org/10.4102/ve.v36i3.1448

Vitaro & al. 2001. "Negative social experiences and dropping out of school" in Educational psychology, Vol.21, No. 21, No. 4.

Van Wyk, C.2007. We write what we like. Celebrating Steve Biko. Johannesburg: Wits University.

Wadsby, M. & Co 2007."Children of mothers at psychosocial risk growing up: A follow up at the age of 16" in Journal of Adolescence 30 (2007) 147-164. Science direct

Wagner, C. P. 1998. Church growth and the whole gospel: biblical mandate. Eugene: Wipf and stock publishers:.

Wallace, R A & Wolf, A 2006. Contemporary sociological theory: expanding the classical tradition sixth edition. New Jersey: Pearson.

Wikipedia, 2016 at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Tutu. Accessed on April 15, 2016.

Wilder, S.2013. Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: a meta-synthesis found at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131911.2013.780009/ accessed on 31/05/2018.

Wilkinson, S. and Silverman, D., 2004. 10 Focus Group Research. *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*, pp.177-199.

William D. 2008 in https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/06/11/41purpose_ep.h27.html.accessed on 25 May 2018.

Williams, D.T.1998. Capitalism, Socialism, Christianity and Poverty. J.L van Schaik, Religious

Woodhill, J.2010. *'Capacities for Institutional Innovation: A Complexity Perspective'. IDS Bulletin* Volume 41 Number 3 May 2010, Blackwell Publishing.

World Council of Churches 2013. Resource Book, 2013.WCC 10th assembly. Geneva: WCC publications.

Wright, C. J. H.2010. The mission of God's people: a biblical theology of the church's mission. Biblical theology of life. Zondervan: Grand rapids.

Wsj, 2016 at http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB122455013168452477.Accessed Feb 29, 2016.

APPENDIX 1

a) Interview questions

1. A concerning high percentage of children living in poor areas such as Soshanguve seem not to like school or they struggle academically. Are there any psychological/social/ health/educational problems you are aware of that could explain this situation?

2. What do you think about the effectiveness of programs and school curriculum offered to learners in the township?

 3. What do you think about an alternative education model that could cater for children who don't fit in the current education system?

4. What is your opinion about reasons behind school dropout? Are the children just not fit for school or are there important unattended psychological and social problems that you are aware of?

5. What kind of a society would we live in if every child is given the right attention to learn to the best of his/her ability?

b) Transcript of an interview

A transcript of an example of an interview with one of the children's parents. I use the approach found in 'Remedial education (workbook), practical experience 402 (Second year)'. The interviewer is represented by L and the interviewee, by E.

Participant	Transcript	Own reflection
L	Good day Mrs. E	
E	Good day reverend L	
L	Thank you for availing yourself for this interview.	
E	Pleasure	
L	I am thankful to God for your willingness to be a research participant in this study. As the letter of consent I sent you 3 months ago stipulated, this research is about 'Being good news to school dropouts. A missional approach to the South African education crisis in a poor urban area'. Before we start, I wish to let you know that confidentiality will be strictly	

	kept. I will not write your name, but use your professional title when I transcribe. In the main work you will be known among others as a co-researcher or a research participant. Is this clear to you?	
E	Yes, it is.	
L	A concerning high percentage of children living in poor areas such as Soshanguve seem not to like school or they struggle academically. Are there any psychological/social/ health/educational problems you are aware of that could explain this situation?	
E	Language should be factored into the causes of school dropout in a township such as Soshanguve. Learners have to function in English with regards to their writing and reading from grade 4, which is different from their mother tongue. Some learners fail classes not because they are not intelligent, but because they confuse their spelling and vocabulary being English and vernacular. For example, writing 'luk' instead of 'look'. I have seen some learners drop out of school because of the frustration of confusing languages and failing grades. *For many learners, writing and reading start and finish at school. At home there is no education, no books, no newspapers to read*. If parents are illiterate, they are unable to transfer any academic knowledge to their children. Many parents don't know how to encourage their children to thrive academically because nobody encouraged them to do so. There is this saying:' you can't give what you don't have'. *I understand this saying by seeing how well, illiterate parents and guardians are involved in the education of their children. Because of the lack of a culture of reading and learning in families, teachers must start from 0 and they are under pressure to finish a curriculum. This reality affects the quality of our teaching*. The basic education department assesses educators by their ability to go through the prescribed curriculum. However, a compassionate educator should help all learners to academically progress. Such an *educator is*	

always under pressure because many of our learners in public schools are below par, according to what is expected in their grade.

We also have lots of incompetent educators in our profession. These educators make it easy for learners to dislike school and eventually dropout. Some educators are in the professions because they get a salary, but they don't have the passion to impart knowledge. The context could also be a fertile ground for bad education and school dropout.

Lack of resources such as school books, teaching materials and specialized skills also make it easy for children to drop out of school.

The education department does not always set its priorities right. We have badly damaged classrooms, fewer classrooms than what we need, hence the overcrowding of classrooms, yet the department of education seems to prioritise the change of teaching methods over everything else. With this prioritizing, educators and learners seem to constantly be a step behind the education department. This is tiring to both educators and learners. Some educators end up resigning or taking an early retirement because of that and some learners dropout of school.

Some of the basic education department policies are failing our learners. For example, slow learners sometimes have to be pushed to the next grade without proper foundation. *From my experience, the majority of learners who get pushed to the next grades end up drop out of school.*

Learners with short span of concentration are dropout high risk. They regularly disrupt classes, get disciplined frequently and may end up seeing school as not a fun environment to be at and dropout. Some slow learning problems are caused by the circumstances of the birth

238

	of the child or the parents lifestyle habits such as drinking alcohol, smoking or using drugs during pregnancy. *Cognitive development is another factor that causes children to dropout. Our township schools don't do a proper assessment of a learner's milestones in development. In the latter, questions about sensory development, motor development, and language and speech development are asked.* Parents and guardians could be very helpful in shedding some light on the history and circumstances of their child. *I have a syllabus I would like to show which comprehensively asks questions in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the history of circumstances of a child. I used it when I was doing my inclusive learning specialization with the university of Pretoria.*	
L	Mrs. E your insights were very helpful. They lead us to the second question. What do you think about the effectiveness of programs and school curriculum offered to learners in the township?	
E	The programs and school curriculum offered to learners in the township are not effective in the township for multiple reasons. Educators are constantly frustrated by new methods of teaching the department of basic education comes up with. *Overcrowded classrooms and the high number of learners who can't cope with the pace of their workload also frustrate them. I think all the township and rural area educators should be required to undergo training in inclusive learning teaching and for the government to require them to come up with class 'tailor made' programs on a yearly basis.* Many learners are traumatized from home and the community, and that sometimes causes their poor academic performance.	

	240	
L	Thank you, Mrs. E. This leads us to the third question. What do you think about an alternative education model that could cater for children who don't fit in the current education system?	
E	An alternative education model would be ideal for the township because many children need special attention and we currently don't have resources to effectively respond to that. In a functional alternative model, individual needs of learners will be given the right attention and orientation towards future performance or carrier. Non profit organisations in partnership with government could help foster alternative teachings for children who don't cope at school and could dropout.	
L	Thank you Mrs. E. This leads us to the fourth question. What is your opinion about reasons behind school dropout? Are the children just not fit for school or are there important unattended psychological and social problems that you are aware of?	
E	*As an educator, our working environment is not conducive for us to teach to the best of our ability. We also don't have professional support to get a holistic portfolio of our learners.* We need the services of psychologists, social workers, speech and hearing therapists and nurses, at each and every school, but we don't have them. The school environment makes it easy for children to dropout. *Learners are also frustrated, neglected and even bullied by frustrated educators.* Schools end up being places where learners don't enjoy to be at and therefore, they dropout.	
L	*Thank you, Mrs. E., This leads us to the final question.* What kind of a society would we live in if every child is given the right attention to learn to the best of his/her ability?	

| E | It would be a better society where justice, fairness, compassion and mutual understanding would prevail. *The current schooling system only works for a minority of our learners. The ideal society would be to come up with systems that cater for the different needs of our learners.* Maybe, non-profit organisations expertise in children could be more considered and accommodated in solution seeking of our current education system problems. *Partnership between different stakeholders is the kind of society I dream about.* | |

APPENDIX 2

A transcript of an example of an interview with one of the children's parents. I use the approach found in 'Remedial education (workbook), practical experience 402 (Second year)'.

Name of the child: Lebogang Sebela

Age: 10 years

Grade: 4

School: Baxoxele Primary School

Ministry: Reading club

Facilitator: Prudence

<div align="center">Health care history</div>

Pregnancy planned? No

Problems? Swollen legs and bad morning sickness

Any treatment taken by the mother? Yes

Alcohol/Smoking during Pregnancy? I only found out I was pregnant five months before I gave birth and only stopped drinking alcohol regularly then.

Problems at birth? None

DETAILS

Birth Mass   :Good

Caretaking   : mother

Physical milestones

- Crawling   : 4 months old
- Talking   : Before walking
- Walking   : 18 months

Left or right handed   : Right

Eyes and feet   : Good

Illnesses and diseases   : None

Diseases in the family   : Hypertension

Physical handicaps?   : None

Accidents, injuries, operations, trauma? None

Physical build and movement? Good

LEARNING PROBLEMS: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS.

Milestones in development:
Sight? Good
Eyes ever been tested? No
Hearing? Good
Ears ever been tested? No
Motor development-Good
Control of movement? Good

Language and speech development:
First word-mama (2 years old)

Interest in stories (5-6 years)- Good

Pre-School
No problem with word construction

Grade 1
No problem with word construction

At present
No problem with word construction\
Language development-Good

Speech problems –None

ASSESSMENT QUESTION TO STUDY ACADEMIC TRAJECTORY OF CHILD

Child's feeling toward school? Does not like being in the classroom, but loves being with friends and
looks forward to playing with them everyday. So going to school is a fun thing for him.
Relationship with teachers? He is scared of her because of corporal punishment.
Homework (study habits)? He only does them under supervision.
Marks and Reports- Not good.
Changing of Schools- Never

EXTRA MURAL ACTIVITIES
Day programme of the child
How is the child woken up in the morning- Wakes himself up.

First action? Toilet

Dress easily and quickly? No

Breakfast where and with whom? He does like to eat breakfast at home. He prefers money to buy what he likes at school. So we give him some money daily.

Topics discussed at breakfast? None.

Any other activities? He watches cartoons before going to school.

Scolding in the morning? Sometimes
Reason for scolding? He gets too relaxed

How does the child get to school? Transport

How does the child get back home? Transport

Does the child directly come home after school? Yes

Afterschool center? InnerCHANGE

Somewhere else? No

Lunch preparation? He eats lunch provided by the school.

ASSESSMENT OF ABILITY TO READ AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS PROGRAM

He could not read any English or Sepedi (his first language at school) words. He could only read alphabet from A to J. He could not do any phonics or syllables at all. His understanding of English and Sepedi stories is very limited.

APPENDIX 3

A transcript of an example of an invitation letter our missional team sent out when we held a talent show that involved our read club children.

InnerCHANGE South Africa
1671 Moletlane street
Block HH
Soshanguve 0152

Dear Stakeholder

InnerCHANGE South Africa will be hosting an arts events day on the 26th August 2017. Come and explore and be exposed to the talents and hidden abilities of our children. We encourage holistic excellence and we invite you to come and tap into the artistic excellence of our children.

"If you judge a fish by it's ability to climb a tree, it will spend it's whole life believing that it's stupid"

DATE: 26 AUGUST 2017

TIME: 10H00-14H00

VENUE: JEHOVA O BONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ENTRANCE FEE: R20.00

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT: THABO @ 0606330331 AND LUC @ 0722315643

APPENDIX 4

A transcript of an example of a focus group discussion for the study.

    a)   Question

After discovering that the majority of our children did not like school, our guiding question was: how could we make our reading club fun for children?

    b)   Transcript of a focus group discussion based on the question above

As the researcher, I am represented by L and the five participants are represented by the following letters: A, B, C, D and E. When one speaks for the first time, she is marked A1 or B1 and if the very person speaks for the second time he/she is marked A2 or B2 and so on.

PARTICIPANT	TRANSCRIPT	OWN REFLECTIVE NOTES
L	Dear friends, thank you for availing yourselves for this meeting. As a reminder, this research is about 'Being good news to school dropouts. A missional approach to the South African education crisis in a poor urban area'. We will be collaborating in our exchange of ideas and practice as we help our reading club children to read to the best of their ability. The consent letter I gave you 3 months ago also stipulate the title of this study and its collaborative nature. There is some snack and drinks on your table. Please feel free to help yourselves. Before we get started, let's pray. C may you pray for us? (C opened us in prayer). Everyone was given a glass, poured a cool drink they preferred, got some snack on	

	their plates before I asked the main question of the day. How could we make our reading club fun for our children?	
A1	We should consider stating to play for the children between their homes and here when we go to fetch them	
B1	Let's buy board games for them so that we can play before we start teaching. Many children enjoy board games.	
C1	We could start cooking food for them. Children like food. Where there is food, you will see many of them.	
D1	We consider taking them to fun outings . Most of the children have a certain routine and know very little about what is happening outside of their neighbourhood. Outing s will be fun ang refreshing.	
C2	I suggest that we change the learning environment sometimes. We think the children will get bored to study in the same space every time.	
A2	I suggest that we include art and creative expression in our weekly rhythm. It seems like teachers and parents are usually unhappy with children who draw a lot instead of studying or listening. Such was the case of my brother. He is a very good drawer, but dropped out of school in grade 8.	

D2	I think some of the children don't like school because their parents beat them up regularly in the morning. These children don't feel like they have the freedom to choose what is fun for them. School is not fun, but they are forced to go there.	
L	Dear friends, thank you very much for these insights. They were very helpful. I will take all of them into consideration moving forward. We have come to the end of our discussion. D, may you pray for us to close this discussion (D prayed, we did the dishes and clean up together before anyone left).	

APPENDIX 5

Consent letter.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Theology

CONSENT FORM

Name: KTL Kabongo
Position: Doctoral degree in Missiology student
Contact details: 012 713 2000/ 072 231 5643. kablut@yahoo.fr

Title of the study: "Being good news: A conscious community collaborative effort to minimize school dropout. A missional approach to the South African education crisis in a poor urban area".

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this research is to holistically consider different elements that may have a negative effect on the learning of a child that usually leads to school dropout and to invite the church and the family of the child to help resolve the problem alongside the school the child attends.

Procedures: I will interview and work with a group of research participants. Together we will be spending time with some Grade R, 1 and 2 learners from Mafumbuka primary school in Soshanguve block HH who struggle academically. We will try and diagnose the reasons behind the academic struggles and come up solution proposals that would involve the child parents and educators.

There is no risk or discomfort associated with this research that can affect the participants. The later involvement in this research is voluntary; hence they may withdraw from participation in the study at any time and without negative consequences. Their participation in this study does not provide any financial gain either.

All information provided by the participants will be treated as confidential; Anonymity is assured and the data would be destroyed should the participant withdraw. The persons who will have access to this research data are: myself as the researcher, the participants and my study supervisor.

1.   I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ___Yes___
2.   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ___Yes___
3.   I agree to take part in the above study. ___Yes___
4.   I agree to the interview. ___Yes___

Carolie Khaya   _21/02/2016_   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Department Science of Religion &
Missiology and Practical Theology
Room 2-18, Level 2, Building Theology
University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20
Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 2889

Fakulteit Teologie
Lefapha la Thutatumelo

APPENDIX 6

Child protection act

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER (REGULATION 44).

TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL STUDENTS DOING VOLUNTARY WORK WITH CHILDREN AS PART OF THEIR CURRICULAR OR VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS.

IN TERMS OF SECTION 126 OF THE CHILDREN'S ACT, 38 OF 2005, I

KASEBWE TIMOTHEE LUC KABONGO
STUDENT NUMBER: 27422390

(FULL NAMES, SURNAME AND STUDENT NUMBER) DECLARE THAT TO MY KNOWLEDGE MY NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER (REGULATION 44).

A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT/S IS ATTACHED AS VERIFICATION OF MY IDENTITY.

- BIRTH CERTIFICATE
- OR IDENTITY DOCUMENT
- OR PASSPORT

KASEBWE

NAME

SIGNATURE

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS

2016 -05- 2 7

RIETGAT

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

SIGNED ON THIS

DAY 27- MAY - 2016

AT 11:54

CERTIFIED BY

7134674-

CJ 7
89 Buisekuit str
Sassanguna
0.52.

Unit for Community Engagement
University of Pretoria
PRETORIA 0002
Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 5341
Cell: 0837537969

Email address:
gernia.niekerk@up.ac.za

250

APPENDIX 7

Letter of introduction and informed consent for participation in academic research.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Department of Science of Religion and Missiology

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Title Of The Study:
Being good news to school dropouts. A missional approach to the South African education crisis in a poor urban area.
Researcher:
KTL Kabongo from the University of Pretoria
Contact details: 012 713 2000/ 072 231 5643, email: kablut@yahoo.fr

You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research area, namely a learner in our tutoring ministry. Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document *before* the start of the study. If a child is 7-17 years and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-17 years are also required to sign an assent form.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is firstly, to holistically consider different elements that may have a negative effect on the learning of a child that usually leads to school dropout and to consider the role of the church and the family of the child to help resolve the problem alongside the school the child attends.

Secondly, as the church, to take the lead to promote community development and transformation in encouraging community members to learn to be the primary solution to their known communal issues, challenges and problems.

The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request. No participants names will be used in the final publication.

- **Duration of the study**: The study will be conducted over a period of two years and its projected date of completion is November 2018.

Research procedures: We will be tutoring the children twice a week for one hour a day. We will be tutoring children from grade R to four. Each tutor will have four learners of the same grade. The focus of our tutoring will be on reading and understanding what is read. We will report our assessment of the child's progress to the parents and guardians once a month individually. There will be focus group sessions with the children's parents/ guardians and/or the children's educators quarterly in order to come to a common understanding on the children's progress in classrooms. The research group will regularly come together for discussions, in order to integrate their insights from various research disciplines.

-

- **What is expected of you**: As one of our children's educator, to inform us of his/her classroom performance and progress in the classroom.
- **Your rights**: Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences. You, as participant, may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify any issues pertaining to this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document.
- **Confidentiality**: All information will be treated as confidential and pseudonyms will be used in this study in order to protect the identity of the people involved. The relevant data will be destroyed, should you choose to withdraw.

WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research.
I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: LERATO MMABATHO   Lerato

Researcher: KTL KABONGO

Date: 26 MAY 2016

Contact number of the Researcher: 072 231 5643