

**Gender, Race, Power and Religion:
Women in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa
in Post-apartheid Society**

Inauguraldissertation
zur Erlangung des Grades eines Doktors der Philosophie

dem Fachbereich Gesellschaftswissenschaften
und Philosophie

der Philipps-Universität Marburg

vorgelegt von

Uta Theilen (geb. Möllhoff)

aus: Trier

Eingereicht: 2003

Vom Fachbereich Gesellschaftswissenschaften und Philosophie als Dissertation angenommen am
25.09.2003

Tag der Disputation: 25.09.2003

Gutachter: Prof. Dr. Michael Pye / HD Dr. Peter J. Bräunlein

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank

all the South African men and women who shared their stories with me and made me feel welcome in their homes, homesteads and churches ...

... the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, foremost the professors Dr. David Chidester, Dr. John de Gruchy and Dr. Chirevo Kwenda for helping me with their expertise ...

... Prof. Dr. Theo Sundermeier (Faculty of Theology, University of Heidelberg) who helped me with his profound knowledge of South Africa and who made sure that I followed up on this project once I had returned to Germany – in spite of many obstacles ...

... the University of Heidelberg, the German Academic Exchange Program and the PSP Publishing Foundation (Basel, Switzerland) for funding parts of the fieldwork and research ...

... Daniela Guggenheim, Elizabeth Hagen, Rose & Ulrich Harrison, Gail Miller, Prof. Dr. Jill Morford and Christopher Triplett for proofreading and editing ...

... my parents Horst & Ilse for helping in many ways, my mother-in-law Tekla for babysitting, my husband Volker for his moral and technical support ...

... my daughter Lara for being a faithful companion during our South African “two-women adventure.”

To human kindness

Contents

Introduction	1
Main Part	10
1 British Methodism and its Mission in South Africa	11
1.1 Orientation	11
1.2 John Wesley and the beginnings of the Methodist movement	13
1.3 History of the Methodist Church in South Africa	21
1.4 Demography, education and gender	29
1.5 Post-apartheid aims of the Methodist Church	33
2 Women's organisations	42
2.1 Orientation	42
2.2 The Manyano	46
2.3 The Women's Auxiliary	52
2.4 The Women's Association	57
2.5 The Women's Fellowship	60
2.6 The Women's Network	61
2.7 Reflections	63
3 Methodist Women in leadership positions	66
3.1 Introduction to some case studies	66
3.2 Mrs. J., Circuit Steward	68
3.3 Ethel Sanjanja, Lay Minister	72
3.4 Nomsa Mpambo, Founder of Women's Fellowship	76
3.5 Pamela Delport, President of the Women's Association	78
3.6 Peggy Attwell, former President of the Women's Auxiliary	83
3.7 Jean Fisher, member of the Women's Network	87
3.8 Reflections	91
4 African traditions in post-apartheid South Africa	93
4.1 Orientation	93
4.2 A description of the contemporary situation	95
4.2.1 The South African government's African Renaissance	95
4.2.2 African traditional religion at UCT	100
4.2.3 The Methodist Church and African traditions	104
4.2.4 African traditions from Methodist students' point of view	108
4.2.5 African traditions from the Manyano's point of view	111
4.3 African traditions and customs – a survey	121
4.3.1 Birth and puberty ritual	122
4.3.2 Ancestor veneration and traditional healing	126
4.3.3 Customary law and gender equality	136
4.4 Reflections	143
5 Conclusions	145

Appendices	155
1 Abbreviations	156
2 Structures of the MCSA	157
3 Rules & Regulations of the Manyano	160
4 List of Interview Subjects	164
5 List of Manyano Members (Questionnaires)	165
6 Thabo Mbeki's speech on the adoption of the new constitution	168
Bibliography	172

Preamble of the South African Constitution

We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.
We, therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the
supreme law of the Republic so as to
Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice
and fundamental human rights;
Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will
of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in
the family of the nations.
May God protect our people.
Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso.
God seen Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa.
Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika.¹

¹ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 3

Introduction

The setting

The official release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, the mostly peaceful overthrow² of the apartheid³ government in 1994 and the making of a democratic South Africa with one of the most modern constitutions worldwide has filled South Africans and the international audience with admiration and enthusiasm.⁴ Expectations were high that the political change would finally bring the long desired equality of South Africans regardless of their ethnic background, as well as the improvement of the social and economic situation of black and coloured South Africans - ; the parts of South African society that had been the most disadvantaged during colonial and apartheid rule. The preamble of the new constitution of 1996⁵ gives vivid evidence of this dream of a new and more just South Africa.

The challenges facing the “new South Africa”⁶ are manifold: reconciliation between the victims of apartheid and their perpetrators, proper education and public health care for all South Africans, development of disadvantaged communities and (gender) equality – to name only a few. The mentioned challenges also concern the former mission churches. Whilst they had increasingly engaged in the struggle for political liberation since the 1970s, they have to redefine their roles after the end of apartheid and remodel their structures to correspond to democratic values.

The topic

The title “Gender, Race, Power and Religion: Women in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in Post-apartheid Society” relates to the complexity of relations and conflicts within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) in post-apartheid South Africa.

First, I shall explain why I chose Methodist women in urban South Africa as the object of my research. The focus on Methodist women and on the MCSA is pressing for two reasons: up to now, research on women in South African churches has been generally neglected and so has investigation into the MCSA, which is one of the former “English-speaking” mission churches.⁷ In contrast, extensive research has been done on the Anglican Church; possibly because of Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s popularity and his contributions in terms of an authentic African theology and liberation theology.⁸ However, the MCSA is an equally important part of the ‘Christian landscape’ in South Africa, not only because of its numerical dominance⁹ but also because it was the birthplace of the African Independent Churches (AICs)¹⁰ at the end of the nineteenth century, a development that was made possible because of the central role Methodists gave to the lay ministry. Lay ministry has been enjoying an increase in attention since the early 1990s in part because it provides opportunities for the empowerment of Methodist women in their congregations today.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the MCSA is sitting on the fence between a male and white dominated, oppressive and divisive past and a promising future of mutual respect within South African society. A detailed and contemporary analysis of the situation of women and of the status of African traditions in the MCSA in Cape Town and Paarl (Western Cape) will add to a better understanding of urban Methodism in South Africa today; the gathered information will make it possible to draw conclusions on the development of the MCSA in post-apartheid South Africa as a whole because changes start in a city environment whereas rural areas tend to maintain a status quo over a longer period of time.

The issues of gender equality, or more precisely inequality, difficulties of interaction and co-operation between women of different ethnic origin, power vs. powerlessness, and questions of religious anchoring are

² The political change in South Africa was not completely peaceful because it was accompanied by bloody conflicts between the Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC). It is assumed that the violent acts of activists of the IFP were supported by the South African Police Forces, the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB) and the Afrikaner Broederbond, radical organisations that demanded an independent Afrikaner (South Africans of Dutch descent; also called Boers) state within the Republic of South Africa. For more information, refer to Davenport & Saunders (2000), Sparks (1995), Kaiser & Müller (1992).

³ Apartheid is an Afrikaans word that stands for the discriminating political South African system that segregated South Africans along colour lines in the years 1948-1994. Since 1990 laws of racial segregation were successively loosened and finally abolished in 1994.

⁴ See Sparks (1995)

⁵ See the previous page

⁶ Slogan in the 1990s. South Africa was called “the new South Africa” or “rainbow-nation”, hinting at the different cultures and ethnicities living in South Africa.

⁷ The MCSA is called English-speaking church because of its British origin although the majority of its members speak a different mother tongue. Further English-speaking churches are: Church of the Province (Anglican), United Congregational Church, Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Church of Scotland.

⁸ For more information on Desmond Tutu and his theology refer to Tutu 1986; 1990; 1999.

⁹ According to a statistical list of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) from January 2003, the MCSA is with 2 500 000 member the strongest mainline church in numbers, followed by the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican) with 1 400 000 members.

¹⁰ See Chapter 1.3

issues that are naturally of major concern to Methodist women because of the country's history that still has an impact on its people today. A theoretical analysis¹¹ of the terms gender, race, power and religion is not the task or the intent of this thesis. Instead, it is my aim to let a number of selected Methodist women and men speak about their experiences with gender equality and inequality, questions of racial relations, and about empowerment or disempowerment in terms of religious authority in the Church today. Here, I need to point out that women – generally speaking - do not have much of a say in South African society as a whole although their support has always been welcome in the liberation movement, in the churches or in other sections of society. However, male dominance is deeply rooted in South Africa, especially in the African communities where a patriarchal lineage is the cultural base.¹²

Obviously, different Methodist women experience various grades of empowerment or disempowerment, depending on their ethnic background, their age, education, economic and social status. The location of residence is another factor of influence. The question that I address here is whether women in the MCSA would no longer be willing to accept the male dominance in the Church that - up to now - limited them to function as a sustaining silent majority, or if they would seek empowerment and gender equality as well; this would correspond to the developments in the South African public.

A question that naturally follows the "empowerment issue" of Methodist women is whether Methodist women will continue to look at the MCSA as their social and religious "place of belonging".¹³ Before I started the field work I expected that this still would be so. Taking into account that the challenges in post-apartheid South Africa are enormous, it is unlikely that state institutions alone will be able to provide stability and continuity in a situation where chaos prevails almost everywhere. Furthermore, Christian belief plays a much more important role in the lives of South Africans than it does in central Europe. It can be considered the core of many peoples' lives; hence, it seems unlikely that the pivotal role of Christian faith and of church communities will change over night; especially for (black) women who manage to face numerous hardships in their lives because of their religious anchoring.

With respect to the black membership of the MCSA, I wanted to find out if the acceptance and revival of African traditions within the Church has been equally important to women as to men, as the public discussion¹⁴ has suggested. Dealing with this issue, I was well aware that I was walking on difficult ground as the proposal of African traditions and customs is affected by negative memories because the apartheid government had enforced a policy called "separate development";¹⁵ this seemingly encouraged the practice of African traditions and customs but it was meant to keep black South Africans in inferior positions. However, the fervent propagation of an African Renaissance in post-apartheid South Africa by Thabo Mbeki,¹⁶ first Vice-President of Nelson Mandela and currently President of the South African Republic, plus the fact that black South Africans represent the top leadership in the MCSA, justify the assumption that Church policies might correspond with government policies.

The information gathered through these extensive interviews and discussions will provide a vivid and authentic picture of contemporary South African Methodism in Cape Town and its adjacent townships.

Method approach

The research is fundamentally based on fieldwork in Cape Town and Paarl, using methods that maximized the richness of the data and the variety of the informants and involved persons. One method was the use of formal and detailed interviews with Methodist women and men in leadership positions, as well as formal and informal interviews with additional individuals who could contribute information to the topic; e.g. traditional healers and academics.

From January 1996 until May 1997 I interviewed fifteen women and seven men at length.¹⁷ Fifteen of these interviews were recorded on tape, the other seven were written down. Additionally, informal interviews took place whenever the opportunity occurred. In these cases, a few notes were also written down. During a three week visit in Cape Town in June 2000, I did another seven informal interviews with former interview subjects in order to find out if the situation had changed since the end of my initial research in June 1997.

These interviews are a valuable historical source because they provide insights into personal, religious and ideological aspects. Additionally, they allowed a more familiar contact with individual(s) (Methodists), who in

¹¹ As done for example by Warne (2000), Boyarin (1998), Jacobs (1998).

¹² For more detailed information on customary law refer to Chapter 4.3.3

¹³ Cumpsty (1991)

¹⁴ See Chapter 4.2.1

¹⁵ In 1958 the principle of "separate development" was established under the government of the newly elected President F. Verwoerd. Predecessor of this policy was the *Group Areas Act* (1950) that legalised the division of residential districts along racial lines and the *Population Registration Act* (1950) that divided the South African population into racial groups.

¹⁶ See Chapter 4.2.1

¹⁷ See the list of interview subjects, appendix 5

turn could arrange further contacts. This approach was especially fruitful in the case of the Manyano¹⁸ where I needed to distribute a number of questionnaires to find out about the women's attitudes toward their empowerment in the Church, vis-à-vis the meaning their Church community had to them and concerning the status of African traditions and customs in their lives.

In April and May 1996, thirty-two questionnaires were distributed to Methodist Manyano in Langa (Cape Town) and Paarl (Western Cape) and another thirteen to Reformed Presbyterian Manyano in Langa.¹⁹ The latter were to serve as a comparison. Obviously, the limited number of questionnaires cannot provide a statistically comprehensive survey; however, they are one aspect of this kind of qualitative research. The data thus gathered were later used to examine if the situation concerning the initial three major issues with which this thesis is concerned as described on page seven differs a great deal between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the MCSA.

However, it should be pointed out here that the distribution of the questionnaires itself was a success that should not be underestimated because - as described later in the section on the fieldwork - it is a difficult enterprise to gain the trust of black township communities. Further, travelling in black townships can be dangerous because of the possibly dangerous gangs roaming about.²⁰

Participant observation was another important method that I frequently used during my fieldwork. Here, I would like to refer to the approaches of the anthropologist Jean L. Briggs²¹, the ethnologist Renato Rosaldo²² and the religious historian Mircea Eliade,²³ who emphasized the subjective nature of any research. One should keep in mind that trying to understand a foreign culture on an intellectual and an emotional level is regarded as a process that demands the fieldworker's awareness concerning his or her own misconceptions. In other words, a fieldworker has to make assumptions but he or she has at the same time to be aware that his or her view on a particular matter does not necessarily agree with the understanding of the subjects of research. Participant observation - when the observers are properly trained - provides the opportunity to get very close to an authentic description of the research, especially when the time period is prolonged. I regard eighteen months of intensive fieldwork as the minimum to get an authentic picture of Methodist women. Especially with the black women, participant observation proved to be a very valuable tool because it allowed the gathering of data through verbal as well as non-verbal communication.

I regret that I shall have to use the terms "black", "coloured" and "white" to avoid misunderstandings when referring to different groups in the MCSA. I am aware that these are terms which have been used to apply discriminating policies during the apartheid era. Although South Africans today handle questions of racial affiliation in a more relaxed way,²⁴ it is the desire of most South Africans to do without racial categories. In the case of the MCSA men's and women's organisations and many of their congregations, the terms "black", "coloured" and "white" are still in use.

Literature

Because the topic has political, social and religious aspects, I considered a wide range of written materials. Besides primary sources of the Methodist Church (Minutes, Reports of Conference, the Church's newspaper) and specialized literature (books, newspapers, magazines, internet publications),²⁵ belletristic literature was also used to get a clear and comprehensive picture of the conditions in South Africa in general and of the MCSA in particular. With regard to belletristic literature, I focused on publications by black South Africans.²⁶

¹⁸ The word Manyano is of Xhosa origin, derives from the verb *ukumanya* and means "to join" or "to unite". (Brandel-Syrier, 15).

When Methodist mission reached Natal at the end of the nineteenth century, a Xhosa hymn-book was used. Thus it happened that a number of Xhosa words associated with the MCSA and Christianity entered the Zulu language. The term Manyano was adopted by the Methodists and has been used ever since to denote their churchwomen's organisations.

Other Mission churches such as the Lutheran Church, the Dutch Reformed Church or the American Board Mission took on other African terms for their women's organisations. The Lutherans use the Zulu word *abasizikasi* ("those who help"), in the Dutch Reformed Church the Southern Sotho call their women's organisation *Mokhatlo oa bo-me* ("the union of mothers or women") and the Zulus in the American Board Mission use the term *isililo* ("the wailing" or "a group of wailing women"). (Ibid.)

The Methodists also call their Manyano "Women's Prayer and Service Unions". The Manyano themselves use the expression "Mother's Union" when describing their organisation in European terms.

¹⁹ See the list of Manyano, appendix 5

²⁰ In 1994 the US American social worker Amy Biehl was murdered by a gang in Gugulethu, one of the townships that were part of the fieldwork.

²¹ Briggs (1970)

²² Rosaldo (1993)

²³ Eliade (1969)

²⁴ Some time ago, the (black) South African radiospeaker John Qwelane (Qwelane is known to enjoy political provocation) asked his audience to call during his popular radio show *Late at Nine* to contribute their favourite racial jokes. As a matter of fact, Qwelane received many calls that night and millions of South Africans listened to racist jokes. As no ethnic group was left out, no one was offended and people could laugh about their own prejudices; hence, making room for different points of view.

GEO, 3

²⁵ Refer to the bibliography of this thesis

²⁶ Head (1997); Kuzwayo (1989) Mathabane (1994); Mandela (1994); Ramphela (1995)

Concerning the Manyano, I want to point to the work of the orientalist Mia Brandel-Syrier,²⁷ who started her research in the early 1950s. It has remained exceptional and fundamental to this day. The South African theologian Lynn Holness²⁸ published an article on Methodist Manyano and the historian Deborah Gaitskell²⁹ dealt with Christian women in a historic context but fieldwork comparable to that of Brandel-Syrier has not been repeated. This was one of the reasons why I saw the need for this particular kind of research.

Description of the fieldwork

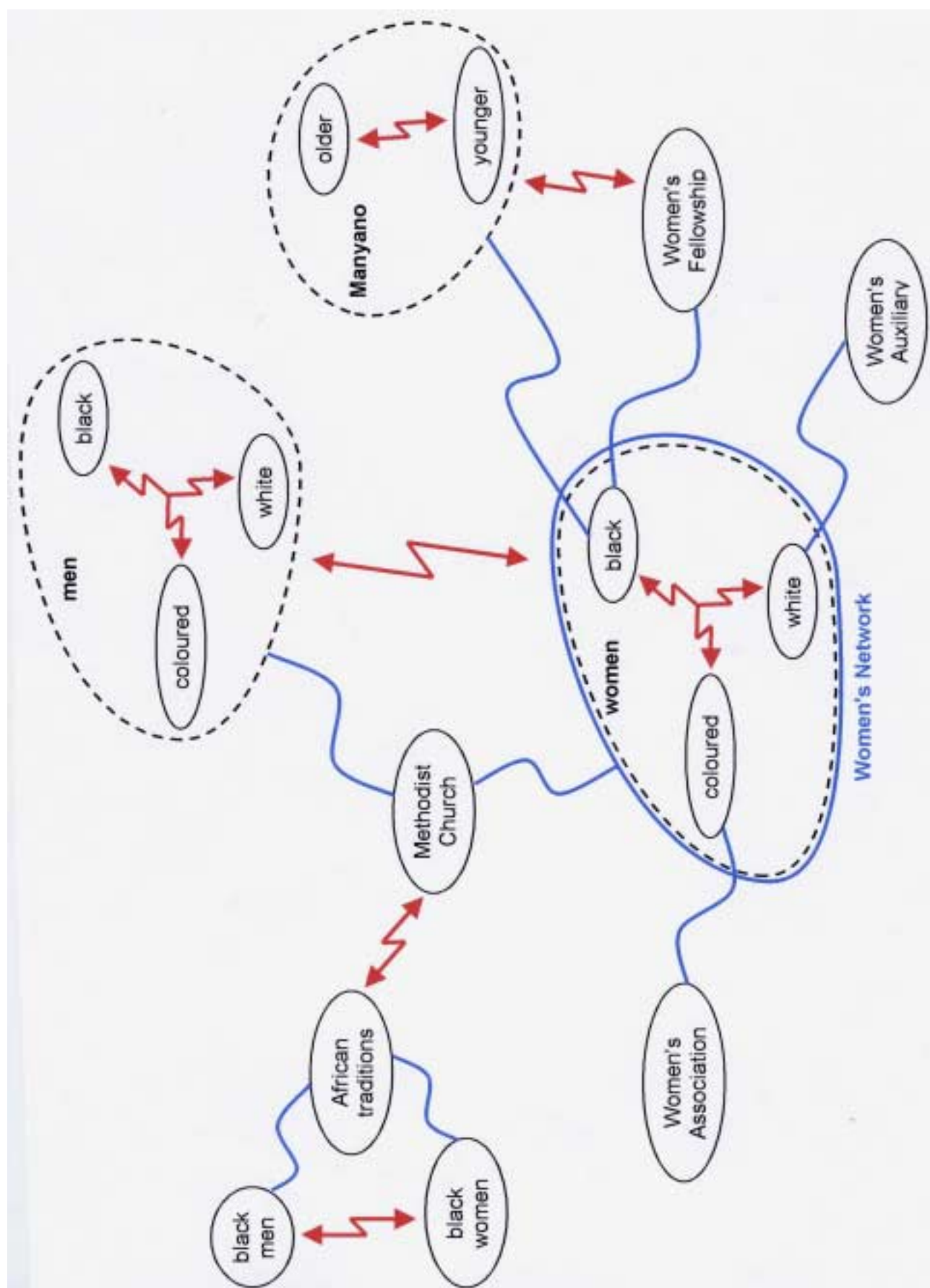
Before turning to the description of the actual fieldwork in Cape Town from January 1996 until June 1997, I would like to illustrate the frictions and conflicts in the MCSA with the help of a figure (see next page) in order to provide a better understanding of the situation within the Church. This Graphic demonstrates the relations between the five different women's groups that presently exist in the MCSA:

- The Manyano (black women)
- The Women's Fellowship (black women)
- The Women's Association (coloured women)
- The Women's Auxiliary (white women)
- The Women's Network (all women)

²⁷ Brandel-Syrier (1962)

²⁸ Holness (1997)

²⁹ Gaitskell (1990); (1997) et al.



The arrows in the figure represent conflicts. One can detect general conflicts between the MCSA and its female members who strive for more equality and empowerment in the Church. But there is also conflict between the four women's organisations that function along racial lines, as well as between the traditional Manyano and the recently established Women's Fellowship (both black). Conflicts or power struggles also occur between the female and the male members in the Church. Further, the white and coloured members of the Church view African traditions differently. But not all black members favour African traditions equally; conflict between black men and black women exists to a certain degree.

The success of fieldwork depends mostly on four factors: basic knowledge of the local situation of the object of research, constructive contacts at the location of the research, plenty of time and patience. Only the first and the last are predictable elements; the other two are a matter of organisational talents, luck and financial resources.

South African Church life was not new to me because of intensive fieldwork among African Independent Churches in Durban in the late 1980s. However, the situation was different in 1996, not only because AICs³⁰ differ greatly from an English-speaking Church, but also because I could rely on constructive contacts in Durban whereas the situation in Cape Town had to be explored.

Feelers were first put out at the University of Cape Town (UCT), located in Rosebank, where I was enrolled as an associated student, at that time the only legal way for a foreign postgraduate student to stay longer in South Africa than the three-month tourist visa would allow. The professors and lecturers in the Department of Religious Studies were very helpful and inspiring throughout the duration my stay. The University library also proved to be a good source of information.

The first step making personal contact with the MCSA was the Methodist Church in Rosebank where a number of black students from UCT were members of the Wesley Guild.³¹ "Wesley Guild" usually refers to the men's section in the MCSA. In the case of Rosebank, the Guild had about thirty male and eight female student members, ranging in age from twenty to twenty-five. In connection with a student church sermon, the ministering (white) Reverend Kevin Needham introduced me to the students and asked if I could attend some of their meetings. A first date for a meeting with the members of the Wesley Guild was arranged. Already this first meeting showed that most of its members did not welcome the visitor nor did they want to expose their interests and concerns on church matters and African traditions. Most of them did not even try to be polite; their behaviour was rather arrogant and scornful. During the stay at UCT, it became increasingly apparent that many of the younger black students, especially Xhosa, rejected any communication with coloured and white students; an unfortunate fact that hindered academic cooperation beyond racial lines. However, the encounter with the Wesley Guild did not fail completely because eight of the students were eventually willing to answer questions on their attitudes toward African traditions.³²

The situation at Central Methodist Mission (CMM) on Greenmarket Square in Cape Town was a lucky incident for my future fieldwork in the area. It was from here where I should make a number of valuable contacts in the months to come, especially with regard to coloured and white Methodist women. CMM³³ is mostly a coloured congregation and accustomed to linking up beyond racial lines. Especially the Reverend David Newby and his secretaries were very supportive and they never failed to make time for long talks or to provide me with information, material and contacts when needed. Two of these contacts were Lorraine Solomon, member of the Women's Association and formerly Secretary of the World Federation of Methodist Women, and Pamela Delpont,³⁴ who actively participated in the Women's Association, the Women's Auxiliary and the Women's Network. Both of these women were open and friendly. Contact with Pamela Delpont continues to this day.

First contact with the (white) Women's Auxiliary was made with the then President Lynn Allison who invited me to her home after I had phoned her with the request of meeting her and possibly other members of the Women's Auxiliary. In the beginning, the atmosphere at the meeting was slightly tense. I soon realized that this was due to the verbal attacks the Women's Auxiliary (W.A.) was experiencing on behalf of the Church's leadership that accused the organisation of being old-fashioned, colonial and patronizing toward coloured and black women.³⁵

Certainly Lynn Allison and her guest Peggy Attwell, former President of the W.A., member of the Manyano and wife of the retired Methodist minister Dr. Arthur Attwell, were different from older middle-class women in

³⁰ AICs are purely black churches, more charismatic and emotional in their religious practice. AICs were and are not politically inclined; a factor that facilitated contact with them even when apartheid was at its worst.

³¹ See Chapter 4.2.4

³² See Chapter 4.2.4

³³ Also see Chapter 1.5

³⁴ See Chapter 3.5

Both, Lorraine and Pamela are 'coloured' women.

³⁵ For more information see Chapter 2.3

central Europe where social, economic and political conditions differed from the ones in South Africa. During the talks at the house of Mrs. Allison, information on the W.A. and on the general situation in the MCSA was shared. Racist comments were not part of it. After this first encounter with representatives of the W.A., frequent contact with Peggy Attwell, whose story is given in Chapter 3.6, developed. She and her husband Arthur looked back on more than fifty years of ministry in various parts of South Africa. Not only did they provide valuable insights into the MCSA but they also offered to discuss the research in a number of meetings at their home. Peggy Attwell was a constant support until her death in 2000.

Jean Fisher,³⁶ a former President of the Women's Auxiliary, who had left that organisation in favour of the Women's Network, was another important encounter as she provided contact with the Manyano in Bergvliet (Cape Town), a mostly white congregation, where live-in domestic workers³⁷ form part of the Church's membership. It was at Bergvliet, that I had the luck to meet Ethel Sanjanja on several occasions. Ethel was at the time Lay Minister on trial³⁸ and she was a member of the leadership group of the Manyano. Her story is given in Chapter 3.3.

Contact with Manyano in the black townships of Langa and Gugulethu³⁹ turned out to be a longterm project because it is not possible to contact The Manyano directly. One needs to take the only accepted path laid down by the hierarchical structures of black congregations; that means, first the ministering Reverend has to be contacted and afterwards his wife who usually is the President of the Manyano. If the fieldworker has gained the approval of the minister and the President, she can talk to the Manyano of the particular congregation. In the case of the Methodist congregation in Gugulethu, I could not work with the Manyano because the presiding minister and his wife were in the process of moving to the Eastern Cape. The successor of the minister was not married. Hence, he appointed one of the senior Manyano as President who had yet to get acquainted with her new role. Although this woman was open to discussions, further contact with her or the Manyano in Gugulethu failed because the group was occupied with their transitional process.

Contact with the Manyano in Langa (Cape Town) only emerged a few months my return to Germany. Although I had attended a number of sermons⁴⁰ at the congregation in Langa where I had met Mrs. J.,⁴¹ who occupied the esteemed position of a Circuit Steward, I had no means of talking directly to the Manyano because for almost one year I could not get hold of their President, Mrs. Madhlala, who worked as charge nurse in the well-known Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town and was rarely present at Manyano meetings. In spring 1996, I eventually met her daughter by chance who in turn asked her mother's permission to arrange a first meeting with the Manyano. After that, communication with the Manyano in Langa was no longer a problem. The women happily shared their views on church matters and African traditions and seemed to enjoy the interest taken in their group.

Contact with the Manyano in Paarl was arranged through Patricia Sanqela, who at the time was President of the local Manyano in Paarl as well as of the Cape District. Before phoning Mrs. Sanqela, members of the MCSA did not give me too much hope that I would be able to speak at length with her. They told me that in the past Mrs. Sanqela had not been necessarily open to white people. However, the experience was very different. Mrs. Sanqela was happy to learn that I wanted to talk to her about ubuntu, an African world-view that considers human community and mutual support as a core element of humanity.⁴² Paarl is a small town, located in the Western Cape, about an hour's drive from Cape Town. Arriving in Paarl, I met with the Reverend Winston Sanqela in town. The Reverend then showed the way to his township. The interview with Patricia Sanqela and her husband lasted for several hours. The atmosphere was relaxed and very friendly; and provided an excellent base for a good result of the interview. As a matter of fact, I had the impression that the Sanqelas enjoyed sharing some of their African worldviews. Although I was the listening part and the Sanqelas were the talking part, all three of us experienced a true exchange of thoughts and ideas. Being completely absorbed in an African setting – even if it was only for a limited amount of time – helped me to understand a bit better how the fabric of African beliefs is "woven". This long talk was an important experience that added to the authenticity of the research.

In the beginning the office of the Presiding Bishop at Rosebank was open for communication. Hence, I could gain access to the Church archives. However, it seemed that the male (then white) leadership did not want an outsider to get too much direct information on the difficult handling of the issue of the women's

³⁶ See Chapter 3.7

³⁷ Women who live at the premises of their employer.

³⁸ A fixed term for lay ministers who are still enrolled in studying.

³⁹ Both are black townships of Cape Town.

⁴⁰ The concern of the Methodists for my safety was a moving experience. When she would drive up to the parking place of the Church, a few of the men would await her and escort her to the building, shielding her from possible attacks from outside.

⁴¹ Name changed for reasons of privacy. For more information on Mrs. J., see Chapter 3.2.

⁴² For more information on ubuntu, refer to Chapter 4.2.1

organisations in the Church. A long-planned invitation to a meeting of the Joint Committee⁴³ was cancelled by the Presiding Bishop the morning of the meeting. When I investigated why, the Bishop's secretary made vague excuses. Women members of the Joint Committee,⁴⁴ by then well-known to me, were rather surprised about the cancellation of the invitation. They expressed regret and stressed that they would have thought my presence might have been rather helpful because they would have liked to criticize a number of things that day.

Whereas the contact with the Methodist Manyano had taken a long time, I instantly found access to the Manyano of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCH)⁴⁵ in Langa and Gugulethu. Already in March 1996 I met Sara Holben, a US American Presbyterian minister who worked in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Gugulethu. Sara introduced me to the President of the Manyano in Langa, Mrs. Masinda, who proved to be a never ending inspiration. With her help a number of Reformed Presbyterian Manyano meetings and sermons in Langa and other townships could be attended. Mrs. Masinda also arranged meetings with her Manyano. All of the women were very enthusiastic to share information on their Church. It seems they were as thankful to have a white person show interest in their congregation as I was to be welcomed as a frequent visitor. Concerning the fieldwork with the Manyano it needs to be mentioned that the simple fact of my being a mother, maybe even being a single mother, helped to open doors because this was an experience that we shared. The Manyano are also called "Mother's Union", an indication of the importance of giving life. On some occasions I brought along my daughter. The presence of the little girl⁴⁶ helped to loosen tongues and the Manyano would be more ready to talk about their lives as women and mothers.

The fieldwork in Cape Town ended in June 1997 with my return to Germany. In June 2000 I visited Cape Town another time to investigate if the situation in the MCSA and in the women's organisations had changed in the meantime and to gather further data. It turned out that things had not changed in the three years of my absence. However, the crime rate in the townships had increased to a degree⁴⁷ that I had no other choice but to meet with the black women, who formerly had been my interview subjects, in central Cape Town. As I had kept in contact with them, they were happy to hear that we could see each other again, even if it meant travelling some distance.

It turned out that the fieldwork of the mid-1990s could not be repeated today because of the increase in violent crime in the black townships.

Structure of the thesis

The core of the thesis, the analysis of the MCSA in post-apartheid society with regard to its women and African traditions, is illuminated by additional comprehensive information, which should provide further understanding of the topic.

The main part of the thesis is divided into five Chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the development of Methodism in England as well as in South Africa, starting with early missionary activities in the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of the apartheid era. Chapter 1 will show that women already played a major role in early Methodism.

Chapters 2 and 3 represent the core of the thesis. Here, most of the material gathered during the fieldwork, and the views of the women in the MCSA are presented. The different women's organisations are explained in detail, followed by life stories of Methodist women in leadership positions. Here, all ethnic groups in the MCSA are exemplarily represented.

Chapter 4 is a comprehensive account of the status and meaning of African traditions in post-apartheid South Africa. Methodists, men and women, voice their attitudes. Furthermore, the South African

⁴³ A committee where representatives of the women's organisations meet to discuss problems and developments within the women's groups. Also see Chapter 2.1

⁴⁴ For example Pamela Delpont and Jean Fisher; see Chapters 3.5 and 3.7.

⁴⁵ The RPCH was founded by Scottish missionaries of the United Presbyterian Church. In 1923 they seceded from the United Presbyterian Church and first called themselves Bantu Presbyterian Church. In 1979 the name was changed into Reformed Presbyterian Church. In 2001, the RPCH reunited with the United Presbyterian Church, thus putting an end to decades of racial division in the Church. (Interview with Reverend Masinda, RPCH, Langa [Cape Town], 15 September 1996). The members of the RPCH belong to a socially poorer section of the black South African population whereas a greater number of the black members of the MCSA belongs to the middle-class.

⁴⁶ She was six years old when she came to Cape Town.

⁴⁷ During the fieldwork gang violence and shooting between the two rivaling bus taxi organisations was common. In 2000 the bus taxi (small vans that are made to transport eight people; usually they are overloaded with up to twelve passengers) organisations had joined to fight the public buses. They tried to frighten busdrivers and passengers by shooting them in the buses and at the bus stops; a number of people were killed. The gang violence had reached a new peak. Rev. Jennifer Sweet told me the terrible stories of the killing of little girls who belonged to her congregation in Belhar. Teenage boys had shot the six and seven year old girls on their way back from school as a trial of courage to be accepted into one of the black or coloured township gangs. Ms Sweet said that such crimes happen frequently in Cape Town and its suburbs. It is needless to say that the murder of innocent children traumatise their families and the local congregation as a whole.

government's policy of an African Renaissance is presented. Because African traditions have many facets, the issues of traditional healing and witch-killings in contemporary South Africa are both discussed as is the role of customary law in the new South African Constitution. To facilitate orientation, a detailed account of the treated points are given in Chapter 4.1. Chapters 2-4 are followed by *Reflections* that sum up the respective chapters.

Chapter 5 is a conclusion of the findings of Chapters 1 through 4. A prognosis is given concerning the possible development of the MCSA and of its women's organisations.

Main Part

1 British Methodism and its Mission in South Africa

1.1 Orientation

Methodism started as a religious movement in the second quarter of eighteenth-century England. It was a product of its time as well as it was John Wesley's child. Or as Dreyer put it in a recent publication: "Methodism is a doctrine John Wesley prescribed. In talking about Methodism, one is talking about Wesley."⁴⁸

As this statement still holds true to a certain extent, Methodism today cannot be correctly understood without a basic knowledge of its history. Even if this thesis does not offer the space to give a comprehensive survey on all historical facets of Methodism, the following chapter⁴⁹ will provide the reader with a fundamental understanding of its origin, initial intent and religious *Sitz im Leben*.⁵⁰

Chapter 1.2 will also point out the role of women in early Methodism. Due to lack of evidence in the majority of publications, one might be inclined to think that women did not play an important role in early Methodism, especially not in positions of leadership. However, women were an integral part of the Methodist movement: practically as well as intellectually.

Chapter 1.3 covers the period from 1795, when the first Methodists arrived at the Cape Colony in the entourage of British troops, until 1978 when George Matanzima, then prime minister of the Transkei, banned the Methodist Church.

South African Methodism rooted quickly in the nineteenth century and managed to reach a certain stability with the arrival of a larger number of Methodist settlers in 1820. Throughout the century, missionary efforts proved to be successful, also because African converts actively supported the Methodist mission. From 1884⁵¹ on, South African Methodism had to face a number of secessions, as African converts in leadership positions started independent churches.

Whereas literature on early Methodism in England and America is accessible in large quantity, fewer written materials are available on the history of Methodism in South Africa.⁵² Here, oral history provides extra interesting material. The story of the Slater family that emigrated to South Africa in 1820, gives insight into the first steps of Methodist settlers on South African ground.⁵³

Looking back at the historical beginnings of Methodism, one discovers that a number of historical rules and regulations, habits and beliefs are still important in the MCSA today. The Church's focus on mission, evangelization and on leading a moral and pious life along Wesleyan values, underline the importance that the founder of Methodism still has. There is no doubt that policies formulated in early mission days continue to affect the contemporary Church.

Another trait that has survived is its ambiguous nature in regard to equality and hierarchy.

Methodism in the twentieth-century witnessed further secessions and an increasing separation of its members along racial lines. Parts of the black and white membership struggled against racial discrimination during the apartheid era. However, the majority of the white Methodists stayed within the limits.

Chapter 1.4 provides basic information on the following issues:

- role of the Methodist Biblewomen,
- gender inequality within the MCSA,

⁴⁸ Dreyer (1999), 106

⁴⁹ Chapter 1.2

⁵⁰ For further literature on Methodism see Baker (1970), Green (1906), Schmidt, M. (1987-88), Whiteside (1906), and the attached bibliography.

⁵¹ See the Tembu Church, Chapter 1.3

⁵² More extensive studies on the history of Methodism in South Africa before the end of apartheid in: Attwell, A. (1989), Balia (1991), Hewson (1950), Mears (1973), Whiteside (1906)

⁵³ The story of the Slater family was compiled by Ramond F. Slater in August 1979 for private purposes. Mr. Slater lives in Salisbury, Zimbabwe.

- demography on Christian membership in South Africa,
- Bantu-education,
- role of English speaking churches during apartheid.

Chapter 1.5 explains in detail the search of the MCSA for a new and yet Wesleyan identity in post-apartheid South-Africa. Another focus of Chapter 1.5 lies on the demand of Methodist women for more equality within the Church's ranks.

1.2 John Wesley and the beginnings of the Methodist movement

Methodism is inseparably linked to one person: John Wesley (17 June 1703 until 2 March 1791) who formed and lead this evangelical movement throughout his long life.

John Wesley came from a family of ministers. His father Samuel Wesley was an ordained priest in the Church of England as well as his brother Charles was and John Wesley himself. When the two brothers formed the so-called Holy Club in Oxford in 1727, they might have been influenced by the ideal of living as the early Christians who regarded community as a means to spiritual experience. The club started as a loose get-together of students who engaged in serious bible-study. At that time, John Wesley was a fellow of Lincoln College in Oxford.

Soon the members of the Holy Club were jokingly called "Methodists" because of their strictly methodological approach to handling their meetings and religious matters. Methodology was John Wesley's strong point whereas his brother Charles was commonly known as being more of a poetic nature. All in all, Methodists must have seemed somewhat peculiar to contemporaries as John Wesley noted down in his book "A short history of Methodism:"⁵⁴

"It is not easy to reckon up the various Accounts which have been given of the People called *Methodists*: Very many of them as far remote from Truth, as that given by the good Gentlemen in Ireland. *Methodists*, they are People, who 'place all ... in wearing *long Beards*'. "⁵⁵ (italics in original)

Uncommon looks of the Methodists was not the only thing that was criticised. The overestimation of their own capabilities also gave offence to the public:

"The one charge then advanced against them was, That they were *righteous overmuch*; that they were abundantly too scrupulous, and too strict, carrying Things to great Extremes. ... if they were right, *few* indeed would *be saved*." ⁵⁶ (italics in original)

The beginnings of the Methodist revival John Wesley summed up as follows:

"In November 1729, four young Gentlemen of *Oxford*, Mr. *John Wesley*, Fellow of *Lincoln College*, Mr. *Charles Wesley*, student of *Christchurch*, Mr. *Morgan*, commoner of *Christchurch*, and Mr. *Kirkham*, of *Merton College*, began to spend Evenings in a Week together, in reading, chiefly the *Greek Testament*. The next year, two or three of Mr. *John Wesley's* pupils desired the Liberty of meeting with them: And afterwards, one of *Charles Wesley's* Pupils. It was in 1732 that Mr. *Ingham*, of *Queen's College*, and Mr. *Broughton* of Exeter, were added to the Number. To these, in April, was joined Mr. *Clayton*, of *Brazon-Mose*, with two or three of his Pupils. About the same time, Mr. *James Hervey* was permitted to meet with them and in 1735 Mr. *Whitefield*." ⁵⁷ (italics in the original)

In time, the members of the Holy Club extended their engagement to doing social work such as taking care of prisoners and of poor and sick people. The social activities were originally initiated by John Wesley's friend William Morgan.⁵⁸ However, John Wesley supported the idea of social work because he believed in "doing good".

In 1735, John Wesley decided to become an incumbent to the Anglican community at Savannah, the capital of the newly founded colony Georgia. His desire to travel to Georgia was less due to an interest to serve Diaspora Anglicans but more on account of his wish to convert native Americans to Christianity and thus to become part of an original Christian experience: the mission to the 'heathen'.

⁵⁴ J. Wesley (1774), 1

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 5

⁵⁷ Ibid., 4

⁵⁸ Schmidt, M. (1973), 21

Through his father Samuel, John Wesley was familiar with the mission situation in Savannah. Samuel Wesley had been deeply interested in the establishment of the colony. Frequent correspondence with General James Anthony Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony, kept Samuel Wesley up to date. However, when Oglethorpe asked for an incumbent for the parish in Savannah, Samuel Wesley did not suggest one of his sons. Possibly because John Wesley had refused to become his father's successor at the parish at Epworth in Lincolnshire in the previous year, claiming that he needed the environment of Oxford to "sanctify his life".⁵⁹ Therefore, Samuel Wesley proposed another young man, John Whitelamb, to serve at the missionary parish in Savannah.

When John Wesley found out about General Oglethorpe's request, he was taken by the idea to travel to America and spread the "good news" among the native Americans and among the slaves from Africa.⁶⁰ The fact that he was allowed to take his best friend Benjamin Ingham along, facilitated his decision additionally.

During his passage to Georgia, John Wesley published - together with Benjamin Ingham - an English-American Indian dictionary. After their arrival at Savannah in January 1736, it turned out that Ingham was given the task to perform missionary work on the Creek and Choctaw Indians while John Wesley was – much to his disappointment – constricted to serve as a parson to the Anglican congregation in Savannah.

Nevertheless, John Wesley's sojourn abroad proved to be of great importance to his spiritual development and consequently to the development of Methodism. Already on board ship to Georgia he spent time with a group of United Brethren⁶¹ whose destination was Savannah as well. Upon his arrival in Georgia, John Wesley continued to have frequent contact with the Moravians. Considering that Wesley was later to be known as a firm and dominant leader of the Methodist movement in England who ruled the roost until his death, it seems astounding that he would regard the Moravians in Savannah as his spiritual directors.⁶² His openness to look for spiritual direction with the United Brethren might be explained with John Wesley's obsession to find a method that would allow him to experience conversion.

During the two years at Savannah, the Brethren instructed John Wesley in their *Bußkampf* exercises. According to Moravian philosophy at that stage, *Bußkampf* described the phase when the convert struggles against the force of his own sinfulness. The convert inevitably fails and eventually recognizes that by his own efforts he will merely merit damnation and not the hoped for salvation. Coming to this stage, the aspirant realizes that only faith in Christ can save him. The German Pietists called this experience *Durchbruch* (breakthrough).

John Wesley was taught the *Bußkampf* exercises and subsequently tried them out on himself. In 1738, he suffered a spiritual crisis that corresponded with the experience of conversion that the Moravians had taught him. Subsequently, he taught the *Bußkampf* techniques to others, convinced that they were leading into the right direction.⁶³ From his experience of conversion he taught a theology which he defined as follows:

"We are all by Nature children of Wrath. But by Grace we are saved through Faith: saved both from the Guilt and the Power of Sin."⁶⁴ (italics in the original)

The relationship between John Wesley and the Moravians continued after his return to London. However, in the 1740s, a quarrel between John Wesley and the United Brethren in London arose out of a difference over technique and method. While John Wesley continued to regard and use the *Bußkampf* exercises as a means to inner witness, the Moravians dropped them because they came to regard them as a legalistic, unevangelical institution and therefore inconsistent with the 'real truth'. From then on, the Moravians saw the 'real truth' in the *Versöhnungslehre*; a doctrine of atonement that

⁵⁹ Ibid., 23

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ The United Brethren or Moravians commenced in 1727 as a revival movement at Herrnhut, Saxony. In Savannah, the Moravians had established themselves one year before John Wesley's arrival.

⁶² Dreyer, 111

⁶³ Dreyer, 110

⁶⁴ Wesley (1774), 7

asserted the radical significance of Jesus' atonement on the cross. The final separation from the United Brethren might explain John Wesley's not saying anything about the Moravians in his publications.

With his research results Frederick Dreyer wants to prove that the Moravian influence was substantial on John Wesley and therefore crucial for the development of Methodism. To him, the beginning of Methodism as an independent movement started on 23 July 1740, the day when Wesley seceded from the Moravians.

"On that day John Wesley and a small group of friends gathered on the premises of an old, disused iron works in the London suburb of Moorfields. This locality, known as the Foundery, was to serve as the headquarters of the Methodist revival. Only three days before this assembly, Wesley and his friends had seceded from a devotional society that was connected with the United Brethren in Germany. The secession was preceded by a dispute over who possessed saving faith and who was entitled to receive holy communion as a member of the society."⁶⁵

John Wesley gives three dates or 'rises' of Methodism:

"The first rise of Methodism, so called, was in November 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford; the second was at Savannah in April 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house; the last was at London on (May 1, 1738), when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to a free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer."⁶⁶

One striking feature of John Wesley remains the two-sidedness of his actions. On the one hand he was firm in following his own ways even if this meant provoking the public and the Church of England. On the other hand he always stressed his faithfulness to the Church of England, even at times when verbal and physical attacks on Methodists took place.⁶⁷ When he refers to his followers he simultaneously talks about his own inclinations:

"At present, those who remain with Mr. *Wesley*, are mostly *Church of England* Men. They love her Articles, her Homilies, her Liturgy, her Discipline, and unwillingly vary from it in any Instance."⁶⁸ (italics in the original)

The Church's standpoint vis-à-vis ordination was never challenged by John Wesley. Methodists lay preachers were welcome to spread the 'good news' but they were not allowed to administer sacraments. This was John Wesley's concession to the official church. Ordaining preachers would have been an affront and undoubtedly would have caused the secession from the Church of England. This, John Wesley wanted to avoid by any means. His concern explains why even the old John Wesley would rather suffer exhaustion when giving holy communion to hundreds of people instead of solving the problem by ordaining Methodist preachers who could have supported him.

However, John Wesley eventually deviated from this stance: in 1784 he ordained preachers to serve as missionaries in the colonies for the first time. He justified this step with inherent necessities. Furthermore, Wesley had come to the conclusion that as an ordained minister and elder of the Church of England he had equal rights to a Bishop of the Church of England.⁶⁹

Within the Methodist movement, hierarchy resumed to play a major role. The leadership was rather well defined into three sections: at the top John Wesley, surrounded by a small group of Anglican clergy who were allowed to call themselves 'ministers'. The second section was a group of lay preachers, so-called Helpers or Assistants, who were

⁶⁵ Dreyer, 13. For further details on this dispute, see Dreyer (1999), 13-16

⁶⁶ Wesley (1872), 307

⁶⁷ Such transgressions happened more frequently during the first two decades of the movement, the 1740s and 1750s.

⁶⁸ Wesley (1774), 7

⁶⁹ Sommer, 16

under the direct and vigilant surveillance of the ministers. The latter devoted their full time and energy to the supervision of the Methodist Societies and they continued expansion of Methodism into previously non-evangelized areas. The third and largest group of leaders included the local preachers, leaders of small groups, stewards, housekeepers and sick visitors.⁷⁰

As mentioned before, John Wesley corresponded with the official handling of ecclesiastical matters and he did not want his movement to be regularized by the official church.⁷¹ Therefore, Methodism can be considered a non-conformist movement. Anyone was welcome to join the Methodist Societies and yet stay a member of his own church, even of the Church of England, the Presbyterian Church, Quakers or other denominations. Interestingly enough, candidates of the Societies originally did not even have to profess to Christianity.⁷²

The Methodist Societies were formed to encourage brotherhood and common worship and to support anyone who wished to realize what John Wesley called the "holiness of heart and life".⁷³

Holiness must have been for what many countrymen John Wesley's were searching. In "A short history of Methodism" John Wesley wrote about the (new) Methodists:

"That Faith produces inward and outward Holiness. And these points they insisted on, Day and Night, In a short Time, they became popular Preachers. The Congregation were larger wherever they preached."⁷⁴

The *Zeitgeist* of the eighteenth-century England was in favour of John Wesley's teachings as the Methodist revival coincided with the Evangelical revival in the Church of England. It met the needs of a population that was open to new ways of looking at the world. But although Methodists and Evangelicals had their conception of conversion, namely the conviction of sin and salvation via faith in common, they differed in their theology. The Evangelical revival was Calvinist in its approach whereas the Methodists were not. Methodism identified itself by its insistence on evangelical conversion. In other words: Christians had to be born again through the testimony of experience that in turn is effected through faith.

This difference sometimes brought the two movements into conflict. Another difference between the Evangelicals and Methodists was that the Evangelicals were churchmen who worked within the parish whereas the Methodists worked outside the church. Thus the Methodist revival worked through the Connexion, an association of local Societies that had been set up independently of the Church and its jurisdictional divisions. The basic unit in the Connexion was the local Society. Any person who wished to "flee the wrath to come",⁷⁵ or to be saved from sin, could be admitted. As time went on, a vast network of Methodist societies sprung up throughout the country. John Wesley's policy was to have these Societies run independently, each with its own organisation and leadership. However, he did not regard them as an independent church nor did he want to identify the Methodists as Dissenters.

Other striking features of the Methodist revival were field-preaching and lay ministry. Lay preachers worked in fixed Circuits or they would tour the country as itinerant preachers. Itinerant preachers would not travel alone but were accompanied by a number of individuals. This partially had to do with being able to defend themselves against highwaymen and other disturbances. It also was regarded as an important means for the education, spiritual development and bonding together of the preachers. This tradition was later taken over in South African mission where a European preacher would be accompanied by African converts.

Two factors initiated by John Wesley, guaranteed that Methodism became a mass movement during his lifetime. One was the founder's decision to place the pastoral care

⁷⁰ Dreyer, 68

⁷¹ Ibid., 17

⁷² Ibid., 56

⁷³ Ibid., 31

⁷⁴ Wesley (1774)

⁷⁵ Dreyer, 56

and the education of common people into the hands of lay persons. The other was the fact that John Wesley and his preachers could administer to large crowds because they rarely preached in constricted places such as church buildings. Especially in the 1740s and 1750s they were not welcome to do so. What started out as a shortcoming proved to be an advantage.

The industrial revolution and the social disaster it caused, namely a vast gap between the social classes, is generally regarded as one external reason for the enormous success of the Methodist revival. Methodism provided its followers with a sense of dignity and orientation.

Contrary to the assumption mentioned above, Dreyer points out that Methodism should rather be examined as a system of thought in relation to other systems of thought instead of speculating on its sociological or psychoanalytic origins. He regards the susceptibility of eighteenth-century English society to new philosophical ideas as crucial to the success of Methodism. And with Methodism it was – in Dreyer's opinion – not any philosophy but the Moravian philosophical outlook on life that found access into the English society.⁷⁶

“Methodism as a finished developed system owes little to its background in England. Deriving from German Pietism, it originated in Saxony and came to England by the way of Georgia.”⁷⁷

When talking about Methodism, one is talking about John Wesley and other prominent men. Women are usually not heard of in literature on Methodism. Fortunately, Paul W. Chilcote⁷⁸ had undertaken the arduous task to gather material on biographies and activities of women in early Methodism. He proved that women played an important role in the early days and that John Wesley might not have gotten as far if he had lacked the vigorous and courageous support of women. In the following, I shall sum up some of Chilcote's findings. For further information, please refer to Chilcote's work.⁷⁹

As mentioned earlier, one of the most prominent features of early Methodism was its capacity to create its own leadership. And it was especially attractive to people who stood powerless on the periphery of English society: common people, the masses of the working class – and women. Right from the beginnings of Methodism in the early 1740s, women were a major factor, contributing to the inclusiveness and vitality of the movement. The general environment of the Methodist Society gave room to the cultivation of both men's and women's skills. Similar to Methodist women in their women's organizations in twentieth-century South Africa, women in eighteenth-century England used the environment of the Methodist Society within its Band⁸⁰ and Class meetings and its distinctive services of worship as training ground for their later preaching activities. Similar to South African Methodist women, Methodist women in eighteenth-century England were progressively permitted to express themselves and to exercise their talents in leadership, prayer, exhortation, and testimony. Interestingly enough a disadvantage turned into an advantage: the prohibition of ordaining preachers supported women in becoming active as lay preachers.

In the early years of Methodism, women did not naturally start out as Class leaders or preachers. As pointed out earlier on, both Wesley brothers were devoted Anglican priests; they wanted to stay within the limits set by the laws and regulations of the Church of England. This included those that restricted the activities of women. Thus, women had to fight for an engagement in the Methodist revival. As time went on, they became increasingly successful and also respected by Wesley's followers in their roles as pioneers, sustainers, and even as martyrs of the Methodist cause.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Also see Towlson (1957)

⁷⁷ Dreyer, 110

⁷⁸ Chilcote (1991)

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ 'Bands' were subdivisions of Methodist Societies. They were small, homogeneous groups of four or five persons of the same sex and marital status. The primary purpose of these groups was intense personal introspection. Its focus lay on mutual confession for those who were eager to reach perfection of their Christian state.

⁸¹ Ibid., 47

What holds true today, also applies to the past: Methodism attracted predominantly women. Therefore, early Methodists were equally criticised as the Quakers in the seventeenth century, namely, that their Societies consisted predominantly if not entirely of women.

"In a scurrilous attack upon the character of Wesley and particular developments within Bristol Methodism, an anonymous critic estimated that three-quarters of Wesley's adherents were women."⁸²

A count of John Wesley's Society at Foundery in April 1742 confirmed that women outnumbered men by a ratio 2:1. This was so in other Societies as well.⁸³

Women were present as early as April 1739 at Fetter Lane where they met in groups of their own. John Wesley identified these as Mrs. Norman, whose husband seemingly owned the land on which he was allowed to preach his first open-air sermon in March 1739. Another member of the group was Mrs. Grevil, sister of George Whitefield and a woman called Mrs. Panou.⁸⁴ On 9 April 1739, Mary Ann Page and Esther Dechamps, two sisters of Mrs. Panou, joined the group as well.⁸⁵

Women supported Wesley right from the start. One example was the loyalty of women, when dissension over Moravian pietism ruptured the Fetter Lane Society; approximately forty of the fifty women in the Band decided to follow John Wesley to the newly founded Society at the Foundery.⁸⁶ Women also functioned as active pioneers in the establishment and expansion of Methodism as they "invited and hosted the preachers, founded prayer groups and societies on the basis of their own initiative, and propagated and maintained the faith."⁸⁷

One woman who invited John Wesley to preach at her home already in 1742, was Mrs. Holmes who lived in the neighbourhood of Halifax. At about the same time a poor widow named Goddard offered her home at Chinley as a resting place for the itinerants who began regular preaching in the area. In Teesdale, a woman named Mary Allinson was the first to open her house to Methodist preachers.⁸⁸ Many more followed their example.

The cases mentioned above show that women often helped to form new Societies by functioning as hosts. Some women would use their social position to obtain admission to official church buildings; e. g. Methodist preachers acquired access to the Cathedral City of York with the aid of a woman named Mrs. Martha Thompson.⁸⁹ In other cases, women used their wealth to provide a building for Methodist preachers as did Mrs. Dorothy Fisher who purchased a small stone building at Great Gonerby in Lincolnshire to be fitted up for a chapel in 1786.⁹⁰

Because Methodism was not accepted by the Church of England, the involvement of women in the Wesleyan revival demanded of the women a courageous endurance of persecution, and in some cases, even martyrdom. Chilcote writes about an unnamed Methodist woman, who stood guard over the Methodist preacher John Healy when he was attacked by a mob while preaching in the Irish village of Athlone. In spite of continued whippings later leading to her death, she defended Healy until help arrived.⁹¹

If Methodism had not become a mass movement, the role of women might have remained restricted to the role of hosts and patron or simple follower. However, the increasing number of followers asked for structure and organization. Here John Wesley's talents came into play. He divided Societies into little Companies or Classes. These Classes were usually composed of twelve persons and lead by so-called Class leaders who occupied a strategic position within the Societies. These Class leaders guaranteed John Wesley the spiritual overview on all associated Class members. They also permitted

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 49

⁸⁴ Ibid., 46

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 49

⁸⁹ Ibid., 50

⁹⁰ Ibid., 52

⁹¹ Ibid., 54

him to maintain as close a contact as possible with his followers. A number of these leaders were women. This was a novelty in eighteenth-century England, where neither the uneducated nor the impoverished would occupy such offices, let alone women.

Women made their way in the Wesleyan revival because of their stamina and their talents. Not being regarded as equal to men, they had to prove to be experts in leading Bands and Classes, and in preaching. Especially since John Wesley made high demands on the spiritual and emotional maturity of a person in leadership, the women who were at the fore of Methodist Societies must have been outstanding. John Wesley was adamant about the trustworthiness and personal identity of his leaders, and he did not hesitate to remove someone from the office if he or she failed in the required areas.⁹² Certainly, the small number of the meetings facilitated the women's stand and helped to pave the way for an increased activity of women in the Societies.

It needs to be pointed out that the Bands were segregated by sex and marital status whereas the Class meetings were normally held as a kind of 'family' gathering, where old and young, men and women were present. Often, the male community leader would function as the natural leader of the group. One example of a female Band leader in the early period was Grace Murray, who appeared in connection with the Foundery Society in London in 1742. John Wesley himself had appointed her leader of a Band.⁹³ In some isolated cases women would even function at the head of men's Classes, e. g. Mrs. Dorothy Downes in 1776 or some years later Mrs. Hainsworth, wife of an itinerant preacher.⁹⁴ However, women were not quite as equal as men. When a woman stood at the head of men's Classes she was expected to act as an equal and not as a superior, as in the case when a man lead a Class.⁹⁵

By giving women the opportunity to express themselves in the Methodist Societies, Methodism undertook a revolutionary attack against a male-dominated society, even if this was not John Wesley's intention. The authorities must have regarded the short step from the evangelical proclamation of freedom in Christ to the feminist plea for emancipation – even if this term was not used then – as a serious threat.

"A common charge, levelled early against Methodist women, was the neglect of domestic responsibilities. As early as 1740, the Reverend James Buller indicated Wesley for keeping the women in his Bristol society so busy with religious duties that they could not supplement their husband's incomes during a period of great economic depression."⁹⁶

Female Band and Class leaders were already provocative in eighteenth-century England. How much more revolutionary must have been the official recognition of women preachers by the English Methodist Conference in the 1790s. Again, John Wesley reacted according to the necessities he thought important for his movement instead of clinging to rules and regulations not supporting his cause.

"The decade prior to Wesley's death in 1791 witnessed a great flowering of the activities of women preachers within Methodism. From Cornwall to the North Yorkshire moors, and in Ireland as well, women's voices were raised in proclamation of the gospel they felt called of God to preach."⁹⁷

One renowned woman preacher was Mary Bosanquet (later Mary Fletcher). Born in 1739 at Leytonstone, Essex, she became closely related to the Foundery Society at London in 1757. In 1763, she established an orphanage and a school at Leytonstone and began public services of worship on Thursday evenings the same year. In 1771, she sent an important letter to John Wesley in which she defended the preaching of women. Wesley's reply to her exposition was positive. By 1773, Mary preached throughout the north of England with excursions to Bristol and London. One account mentions her acknowledged preaching at Goker and Huddersfield in 1776. In 1782, she accepted the marriage offer

⁹² Ibid., 70

⁹³ Ibid., 74

⁹⁴ Ibid., 71

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 48

⁹⁷ Ibid.

by the Reverend John Fletcher and from then on functioned as his 'co-pastor' at Madely, Shropshire. After Fletcher's premature death in 1785, Mary carried on his pastoral work, in her neighbourhood as well as in several other chapels, which were built by her husband and herself. Mary Fletcher died in September 1815 at her home in Madeley.⁹⁸

Women also took on preaching, regardless of physical handicaps such as Margaret Davidson, who became the first woman preacher of Irish Methodism. She was totally blind from birth.

Another name to be mentioned is Elizabeth Dickinson, who is reported to have preached to thousands in and around Leeds in 1793. She also functioned as an itinerant preacher. These women, although only a small group of women preachers in early Methodism were regarded as pioneers for other women.

Therefore the important role of women as religious leaders in the formative years of Methodism supports the present demand of South African Methodist women for more rights and an extended influence in lay and ordained leadership.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 262-63

1.3 History of the Methodist Church in South Africa

Membership increased rapidly. As a matter of fact the growth was so phenomenal that in 1813 the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) was formed to monitor and control all missionary activity originating in England. The task of the International Methodist Mission was not primarily to 'evangelise the lost'. Its aims were twofold: to minister to British citizens abroad and to convert foreign subjects. Methodism entered the American colonies in 1766, where it was soon "known as a distinct denomination, though still adhering to the Church of England..."⁹⁹

The first five Methodists in South Africa were British troops stationed at the Cape in 1795 as members of the first British regiment in South Africa. Methodist prayer meetings were held by these five men until four of them were transferred to the East Indies.¹⁰⁰

In 1805 France and England were at war once again. London sent another fleet to the Cape to secure British interests at this strategically important geographical site. One member of this 72nd regiment was a Methodist soldier by the name of George Middlemiss. Soon after his arrival in Cape Town, he assembled a small circle of Methodists, with himself functioning as a preacher.¹⁰¹ In 1812 a Class leader and lay preacher, Sergeant Kendrick, arrived and took over Middlemiss' work. By that time the Methodist congregation comprised 142 members. One hundred and twenty-eight were of British descent and 14 were Coloureds.¹⁰²

The Methodists did not gain any new members from the white population of Dutch origin. The 20,000 so-called Boers had a strong connection with their own Protestant church, and they regarded the British as unwelcome intruders at the Cape.¹⁰³

John Kendrick died in November 1813 and Sergeant William Blowes took over as leader of the Methodist congregation in Cape Town in 1814. Methodism in South Africa was then carried on by Barnabas Shaw who arrived together with his wife, in Cape Town, on 14 April 1816.¹⁰⁴ Soon after his arrival, Shaw found himself in conflict with the Dutch Reformed Church as well as with the presiding Governor Somerset. He started preaching to slaves, which was forbidden. Shaw also erected the first Wesleyan Church of South Africa in Wynberg, now a suburb of Cape Town. Somerset commanded that the church be burned down soon after its completion.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Ward (1993), 227

¹⁰⁰ Balia, 14

¹⁰¹ Mears, 6

¹⁰² Ibid.

Coloureds: a loose collective term then used to cover Khoisan and ex-slaves of Malayan background.

¹⁰³ Fisch (1990), 90

Today there are three Afrikaans Protestant churches, i.e. Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHK) and the Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika (GK). For a brief summary of the relationship between these three churches, see Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, "The Spread of Christianity among Whites and Blacks in Transorangia", in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (eds.) (1997), 121-134.

¹⁰⁴ In 1815, Britain's legal acquisition of the Cape took place during the general pacification. A treaty between Britain and the Netherlands transferred the Colony to Britain. In return, the British had to accept responsibility for financial commitments of six million pounds incurred by the Dutch Government toward other European powers. Davenport & Saunders (2000), 43

¹⁰⁵ Attwell, A., 214

The Governor had extended power as he had no Council to advise him or whom he had to consult. He was responsible only to the Secretary of state for War and the Colonies. New and amending legislation was enacted purely by proclamation, and appellate jurisdiction from the courts vested on him alone. The administration of the whole country was directed at Cape Town from the office of the Secretary to the Governor. The remote districts were managed through the local magistrate and his staff. The Dutch law in force at the time of the second British occupation remained the law of the Colony. Three provisions of that law need to be mentioned here because they exemplify the political situation of the time:

1. No one was allowed to cross the Great Fish River for the purpose of trading with the Xhosa tribes.
2. Public meetings for the discussion of public affairs could not be held except with the consent of the Governor.
3. No privately owned newspaper could be published without the permission of the Governor in office. The only so-called newspaper that existed in 1819 was the *Cape Town Gazette*, a Government publication that consisted almost entirely of official notes.

Hockly (1957), 18

Barnabas Shaw decided to transfer his activities to Namaqualand in the Western Cape by accepting an invitation from H. Schmelen, a minister of the London Missionary Society (LMS).¹⁰⁶ Shaw was to evangelise the Namaqua people. The mission station Lilyfontain, founded by Barnabas Shaw, exists to this day.

Methodism reached a more stable position in the Cape with the arrival of 4,000 English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh settlers in 1820. Among those 4,000 immigrants, 344 belonged to the Wesleyan denomination. The reasons for this immigration – the first on a larger scale – were manifold. Most of the settlers decided to leave their home country for economic reasons. Others were adventurous spirits who wanted to explore the unknown. Again others who lived in comfortable financial circumstances saw a chance to further profitable enterprise by opening new countries to trade and commerce. And last but not least, the evangelistic spirit of Britain in the early nineteenth century motivated individuals to travel to distant countries to christianize ‘the heathen’.¹⁰⁷

The settlers were not aware of the fact that they were supposed to function as a human buffer zone in the Suurveld - later known as the districts of Albany, Bathurst and Alexandria - at the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. During the Fourth Kaffir War, 1811-12, that area had been forcefully cleared of approximately 20,000 indigenous occupants by Colonel John Graham, the frontier commandant.¹⁰⁸ Subsequently, Graham proposed to the British Government a scheme of settling 500 Highlanders in this now depopulated area. However, the Government showed no interest in fostering colonial settlement by immigration.

The idea to defend the eastern frontier with the aid of European settlements was not new. The Earl of Caledon, the first Governor of the British Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, who assumed office in 1807, had previously recommended such a plan. His successor in office, Sir John Cradock tried to encourage Dutch farmers to take up land on the border. They refused to fall in with Cradock’s suggestions because they were aware of the dangers of trying to raise cattle near the border. Also, they knew that the Suurveld was not an agricultural but a pastoral district. For these two reasons they had already established themselves on large farms that were a considerable distance away from the frontier.

As the immigration of English speaking settlers was not supported by the Government in London, Lord Charles Somerset, who succeeded Cradock as Governor in 1814, moved artillery and cavalry from Cape Town to the frontier to secure it. Fourteen small military posts were established on the border and twelve others some distance in the rear. Additionally, a Government farm was established at the foot of the Boschberg. Its task was to supply the British troops with food, remounts and oat-hay. This location is today known as the town of Somerset East.

The military posts could not hinder small parties of Xhosa from crossing the border and carrying off cattle. Somerset then tried to attract farmers to this land by offering to remit the rent for the first ten years. 105 families eventually took up land on these terms, but within eighteen months ninety of them gave up the land for two reasons: an increase of raids and the impossibility of successfully carrying on farming owing to the small size of the plots allotted to them.¹⁰⁹

In 1817, a new crisis arose in the Cape Colony as the British Government withdrew the whole cavalry and a large portion of the frontier for financial reasons. Again, Somerset urged the British Government to encourage emigration to the Cape Colony.

It was not until 1819 that the Colonial Office reacted. By then, social distress and public violence in Britain had increased to an extent that forced the Government to look for solutions, possibly also by plans of emigration.¹¹⁰ In the same year, the situation in Cape

¹⁰⁶ The London Missionary Society started its work in the Cape in 1799. Some of the missionaries were of German descent. Elphick & Davenport (1997), 39

¹⁰⁷ Hockly, 22

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 13

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 14

¹¹⁰ After the termination of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, 300,000 returning soldiers and sailors had to regain their place in civil life. The end of the wars was not just for a number of these persons economically a disaster

Colony had become even more dramatic as the Xhosa prophet Makanda attacked Grahamstown with an estimated 10,000 warriors. Although 400 soldiers under Colonel Willshire managed to drive them off, it was clear that the danger of further raids and attacks could not be banished by military force alone.¹¹¹

When the Colonial Office finally encouraged emigration to the Cape Colony, the response of British citizens was enormous: 90,000 people applied to leave for the Cape from many parts of the British Isles. However, the scheme of the Government was to limit the number to 4,000. The project was financially supported by the Parliament with 50,000 pounds. In the end, the Government's motives to support emigration to the Cape Colony was not based on improving the social and economic situation in Britain. The number of 4,000 people was much too small to make a difference. Instead, military strategy took the foreground. After the victory over France, the Cape Colony continued to be important as a victualling station and naval base situated on and protecting the sea-route to India. This strategic advantage was not to be endangered by Xhosa attempts to recapture the land.

Most of the 4,000 British citizens¹¹² who were accepted as immigrants to the Cape Colony formed parties with a head or director making all the necessary arrangements. The Government required a deposit of ten pounds for a family with two children under fourteen years; a further five pounds for every two additional children under fourteen and five pounds for each older child between fourteen and eighteen years. A third of this money was to be paid back on landing in South Africa, a second third on reaching the settlement and the balance three months later.¹¹³ Each family was to receive a grant of 100 acres of land and legal title after three years of residence, with no taxes to be paid for the first ten years.¹¹⁴

The Methodists formed the largest party with 344 people. Their leader was Hezekiah Sephton from London. Because the Government undertook to pay the salary of a minister attached to a hundred families belonging to the same denomination,¹¹⁵ the Wesleyan group was accompanied by chaplain William Shaw¹¹⁶ who had been nominated for this task by the General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. At the time Shaw was twenty-one years old. He was accompanied by his wife Ann and infant Mary-Ann.¹¹⁷

Sephton's party was divided up as they were too many for one ship. On 6 February 1820 they left from London on the *Aurora*, a 500 ton sailing-ship and the *Brilliant*, a 330 ton vessel. The Reverend William Shaw led the settlers in the cheerful hymn "Come Thee that Love the Lord".¹¹⁸ On board the *Aurora* were Thomas Slater from London, his wife Sophia and seven of their ten children: Julia Ann, Elizabeth, George, Henry, Edward and

but also for various manufacturers who had supplied the army and navy with material during the war years. Low wages and a succession of bad harvests led additionally to the disastrous situation in 1819.

¹¹¹ In 1819 the area of the Cape Colony comprised 128,150 square miles and was divided into seven districts with each district having its own district town. Furthermore, there were several other small villages and some mission station and military posts. But for the most part the country was occupied by farmers. The great majority were graziers, running flocks and herds on huge tracts of land. Fewer engaged in agriculture. All in all, the Colony was at that time economically extremely poor and backward. The population rounded up to about 112,000. 47,000 were of European background, 30,000 Khoisan and 35,000 slaves or apprentices. The permanent white population was almost entirely Cape Dutch. Probably only 4,000 of the 47,000 Whites were of British descent although the English had tried to increase their numbers by attracting merchants, professional men, discharged soldiers and sailors, tradesmen and others from Britain since the second British occupation in 1806. Those newcomers settled with their families and servants mostly in and around Cape Town.

Hockly, 17

¹¹² These 4,000 persons consisted of 1,455 men, 795 women, 960 boys and 790 girls. Of the 1,455 men forty-two per cent wanted to pursue farming and country pursuits, thirty-two per cent were skilled artisans and mechanics, twelve per cent were into commerce and trade, five per cent were discharged soldiers and sailors, four per cent teachers, doctors, ministers of religion, professional men and five per cent had no connection at all with the settlement scheme.

Hockly, 32

¹¹³ Hockly, 26 & Ray Slater, private compilation (1979)

¹¹⁴ Ray Slater, no page given

¹¹⁵ Hockly, 27

¹¹⁶ Reverend F. McClelland and Reverend W. Boardman, both clergymen of the Church of England travelled with their respective parties. Unlike Shaw, they started out as ordinary settlers and did not receive salaries at first. However, soon after their arrival at the Cape, they were appointed as ministers to their respective parties and were paid salaries by the Government.

Hockly, 38

¹¹⁷ Ray Slater

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

John Francis. Their eldest son Charles who was then twenty-one years old was a settler in his own right. Thomas Slater was born in 1767 and his wife Sophia in 1778. This means that Thomas Slater was already 53 years old when he left England. His sole reason for emigrating to the Cape Colony was his bad health that he hoped to improve in a milder climate.

“Thomas Slater being of a delicate constitution, was advised by his physician to seek a warmer climate. He had already booked passage to America, which he had recently visited, when a friend who was leaving for the Cape under the 1820 settler scheme persuaded him to do likewise”¹¹⁹

The evening of departure, 6 February 1820, the *Aurora* dropped anchor off Gravesend and then had to wait for a whole week before a favourable wind came up. During this time, the *Brilliant* with the other members of the Sephton party was only a few cable lengths away. On 15 February, anchors were weighed for Deal, to make final preparations for the long journey ahead. On 21 February, the *Aurora* left Deal and the settlers saw their last view of England, Lizard Points.

On 2 May 1820 the *Aurora* reached the Cape of Good Hope and dropped anchor in False Bay just off Simonstown. The *Brilliant* had safely arrived one day earlier. For eight days provision and water supplies were replenished. Only the head of the party was allowed ashore. Both ships continued their journey to Algoa Bay, another 500 miles along the Southern coast of Africa, on 10 May 1820. They arrived at Algoa Bay at nightfall on 15 May. The settlers waited with excitement for dawn to see the land that was to be their future home.

Thomas Pringle, the leader of the Scottish party on board the *Brilliant* wrote about the journey from Simonstown to Algoa Bay:

“We sailed out of Simon’s Bay on the 10th May with a brisk gale from the N.W., which carried us round Cape L’Aguillas, at the rate of nearly ten knots an hour. On the 12th, at day-break, however, we found ourselves almost becalmed, opposite the entrance to Knysna, a fine lagoon, or salt-water lake, which forms a beautiful and spacious haven, though unfortunately of rather difficult access, winding up, as we were informed by our captain ... During this and the two following days, have scarcely any wind, and the little we had being adverse, we kept tacking off and on within a few miles of the shore. This gave us excellent opportunity of surveying the coast scenery of Auteniqualand and Zitzikama, which is of a very striking character....

... we at length doubled Cape Recife on the 15th, and in the late afternoon came to an anchor in Algoa Bay, in the midst of a little fleet of vessels, which had just landed, or were engaged in landing, their respective bands of settlers.

... Around us in the west corner of the spacious bay, were anchored ten or twelve large vessels, which had recently arrived with emigrants, of whom a great proportion was still on board. Directly in front, on a rising ground a few hundred yards from the beach, stood the little fortified barrack or blockhouse, called Fort Frederick, occupied by a division of the 72nd regiment, with the tents and marquees of the officers pitched on the heights around it. At the foot of these heights, nearer the beach, stood three thatched cottages and one or two wooden houses brought out from England, which now formed the offices of the commissaries and other civil functionaries appointed to transact the business of emigration, and to provide the settlers with provisions and other stores, and with carriages (ox-wagons; U. T.) for their conveyance up the country. Interspersed among these offices, and among the pavilions of the functionaries and naval officers employed on shore, were scattered large depots of agricultural implements, carpenters’ and blacksmith’s tools, and iron ware of all descriptions, sent out by the home government to be furnished to the settlers at prime cost. About two furlongs to the eastward, on a level spot between the sandhills on the beach and the stony heights beyond,

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

lay the camp of the emigrants. Nearly a thousand souls, on an average, were at present lodged there in military tents; but parties were daily moving off in long trains of bullock waggons, to proceed to their appointed places of location in the interior, while their place was immediately occupied by fresh bands, hourly disembarking from the vessels in the bay.

... nearly half the globe's expanse intervened between us and our native land – the homes of our youth and the friends we parted from for ever; and that here, in this farthest nook of Southern Africa, we were now about to receive the portion of our inheritance, and to draw an irrevocable lot for ourselves and for our children's children... ”¹²⁰

Sephton's party disembarked on 19 May 1820. The following three weeks the Slater family and the other members of their party camped on the beaches, collecting equipment and rations for a months supplies. On 5 June 1820, Hezekiah Sephton and a section of his party moved off. They were helped by Cape Dutch farmers who were requisitioned in the districts of Uitenhage and Graaf Reinet to transport settlers and their belongings to their various locations.

The Sephton party first travelled to a place called Rietfontein. It was at Rietfontein where Sephton was removed as head of the party by consent of the acting magistrate, a man named Captain Trappes. The settlers had travelled to Bathurst to see Trappes to complain about Sephton's behaviour over money matters.

Soon it turned out that the party had been supposed to settle on the Assegai River and not at Rietfontein. Therefore, they left Rietfontein on 8 July 1820 and travelled to the Assegai River, which they reached on 18 July. They had now arrived at their final destination or as Ray Slater put it: "The Settlers had now to take root and grow or die where they stood."¹²¹

Thomas Slater was allocated allotment No. 30 which consisted of 23 morgen. His son Charles Slater was allotted No. 32 of 11 morgen, 362 rods. The Reverend William Shaw was allocated Lot No. 21, being 12 morgen 300 rods, on behalf of the Wesleyan Church. A small village arose. At the suggestion of Shaw the place was named Salem.¹²²

Shortly after reaching Salem, Thomas Slater had a serious recurrence of the affliction he was suffering from before leaving England. Thus, he was unable to work his allotment. As he was an educated and artistically inclined man, he retreated into drawing and painting. An official note in the 1820 Settler's Memorial Museum at Grahamstown states that Thomas Slater died on 22 December 1841.¹²³ It seems that his wife Sophia already passed on in 1827, having spent only seven years in the land of her adoption. Her eldest daughter Sarah arrived in Salem in 1826 owing to her mother's failing health. She never returned to England and died in 1895 at the age of 101 years "in full possession of her faculties".¹²⁴

The Reverend William Shaw is definitely the person who most helped Methodism to gain a firm base in the Cape Colony. To this day he is a mostly respected person due to his unfading engagement in taking on any task that he was confronted with. It is also said that he was "beloved by Europeans and Natives alike".¹²⁵ Even in the earliest days of the new settlement he was the best known of four residing ministers as he took upon himself the spiritual welfare of the whole settlement. His endurance was enormous: during the first three years he travelled thousands of miles on horseback and on foot. No kind of weather would hinder him from visiting the scattered homesteads, conducting services,

¹²⁰ Pringle (1840) as cited in Hockly, 43

¹²¹ Ray Slater

¹²² Inspired by Psalm 76: "In Salem also is His tabernacle and His dwelling place."

Salem is located about 60 miles east of Port Elizabeth, some miles inland from the coast and south of the main road from Port Elizabeth to Grahamstown.

¹²³ 1820 Settler's Memorial Museum, Grahamstown

¹²⁴ Elizabeth Hagen (great-niece of Sarah Slater), Lawrenceville, NJ (USA), e-mail 24 January 2002

The little of village of Salem is virtually unchanged. A brass plaque in the old Methodist Church built in 1832 commemorates Thomas and Sophia Slater and a monument Old Aunt Sarah. Today the Slaters and their descendants live all over the world.

¹²⁵ Hockly 150

encouraging and advising anyone who called for him. In his work William Shaw was assisted by several lay-preachers, some of whom in later years became ordained ministers.

In addition to his duties as a minister of religions, William Shaw acted as local representative of the Committee for the Relief of Distressed settlers. Here, he investigated cases of hardship, reported on applications for relief, and he helped in the actual distribution of comforts to the sick and needy.¹²⁶

In 1822 the first church ever built east of the Sundays River was completed in Grahamstown and one in Salem one month later.¹²⁷ William Shaw is said to have erected thirteen chapels in the Cape Province in as many years, with the help of volunteer workers. In addition, a number of Sunday schools and other educational institutions were opened. In the mid 1830's about 800 children and adults of different ethnic backgrounds were educated in those institutions.¹²⁸

From 1823 onwards, Shaw was also engaged in the mission of the Xhosa. Subsequently, the Wesleyan denomination gained adherents among the indigenous population. Among the newly christianised were a number of men who would function as lay-preachers and evangelists, carrying Methodism further on. Allowing lay people to administer in religious affairs certainly added to the enormous success of the Methodist's mission that in time superseded all of the other Christian missions in the Cape Colony.

Names like George Blencowe are part of the history of the Methodist mission in South Africa. In 1866, Blencowe was transferred to Ladysmith in Natal.¹²⁹ From there he undertook long, arduous journeys to the Transvaal and to the Oranje Free State.¹³⁰ In the late 1860's a native preacher called David Magatha was the first of his kind to build a Methodist Church in the small town of Potchefstroom in the Transvaal.

Methodist missions in the Northern Transvaal began around 1869 with another native preacher, Samuel Mathabathe.¹³¹ It needs to be noted that by 1866 Methodist mission also became increasingly successful, especially in regard to black male converts, because of the preceding years (1863-1865). The Cape Colony had been struck by drought, disease and death. Many people became bankrupt. On top of that, the full effects of the Kaffir War of 1852 were still influential. Aside from the enormous losses of land through white settlement earlier on, "Africans were now finding themselves economically devastated, politically powerless, and spiritually barren in the new situation."¹³²

Therefore, 1866 is remembered as one of several important evangelical revivals that were chiefly led by the black convert Charles Pamla and also by the white minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America, William Taylor. Taylor was not entirely successful as a preacher among the black population, as he needed an interpreter. Originally Pamla functioned as his interpreter in King William's Town but soon took over the sermons and, developing his own momentum, became the real charismatic leader himself. Taylor eventually moved to Natal to concentrate on preaching to the white congregations. At this point, Pamla started extensive travelling on his own to Pietermaritzburg, Edendale, Durban, Verulam and elsewhere.¹³³ When he retired in 1913, Pamla had converted over 25,000 people. In addition he had provided black congregations with a native hymn book and a booklet on African customs and the Christian faith. Pamla died in 1917 at the age of 83. He had served the Methodist Church as unpaid evangelist and ordained minister for almost sixty years.¹³⁴

¹²⁶ Hockly, 147

¹²⁷ Ibid., 148

¹²⁸ Attwell, A., 214

¹²⁹ After 27 April 1994, Natal is referred to as KwaZulu-Natal.

¹³⁰ After 27 April 1994, Transvaal is referred to as Gauteng and the Orange Free State or Oranje Vrijstaat as Free State.

¹³¹ Balia, 17

¹³² Balia, 29

¹³³ Ibid, 25

¹³⁴ Ibid, 29

Although the spread of Methodism across South Africa¹³⁵ was mostly the work of black converts, they were neither given full credit nor accepted as the equals of their white colleagues. Further frustration was caused by the fact that black preachers were treated as subordinates. G.M. Setiloane refers to white clergy's mistrust of their black colleagues when he states:

“The missionaries could not trust the African converts to preach and teach without their supervision because they could never dissociate Christianity from their Western culture and civilisation.”¹³⁶

Unequal treatment must have felt even less acceptable in the Methodist Church because the Church's tradition of ethical doctrine and its policy regarding the Ministry of Laity demanded an equality of rights. Frustration among talented black preachers eventually led to secessions from the mother Church. The Independent African Churches (AIC) go back to one of these secessions. It was as early as 1884 when Nemiah Tile, a Tembu, left the Wesleyan Methodist Church to found the Tembu Church of South Africa. This church was under protection of the King of the Tembu and localised in Mqokezweni in Tembuland.

In 1892 another Methodist minister, Mangena Mokoni, started together with about fifty others the Ethiopian Church in Pretoria. Mokoni received further evangelical support from the Reverend Jamas Mata Dwane who left the Wesleyan Church in 1896 and eventually became the head of the Ethiopian movement.¹³⁷

Another secession in the 1930s is described by B.G.M. Sundkler in *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*:

“The Bantu Methodist Church or the “Donkey Church” founded on the Rand in 1932-3 is one of the most spectacular secessions in recent times ... The interesting point about it is the role of the broad mass of urbanised church people in the upheaval. There was an unmistakable nationalist spirit which fired leaders and followers with enthusiasm for the break, as well as dissatisfaction with the financial policy of the Mission. Within a year of the formation of the new Church there was a split into two main sections, the Bantu Methodist Church and the Bantu Methodist Church of South Africa.”¹³⁸

The banning of the Methodist Church in the Clarkbury District in the Transkei in 1978 was regarded as a dramatic event in the history of Methodism in South Africa because the Methodists had been one of the first churches (1820) to launch a missionary drive into the Transkei and the Church had its largest following among Xhosa-speaking people. The banning of the MCSA was caused by the decision of the Church Conference not to send messages of goodwill to the state president of South Africa or the president of the Transkei to show their disagreement with apartheid policy. George Matanzima, himself a Methodist local preacher and prime minister of the Transkei Homeland,¹³⁹ reacted by his drastic decision of banning the MCSA in the Transkei altogether.¹⁴⁰ A new church, the United Methodist Church, was formed instead. MCSA property worth about four million US\$ was turned over to the new church.¹⁴¹ At least one-third of the Methodist ministers in the Transkei openly opposed the new church and one of them was detained by the Transkei police.¹⁴² In the meantime the Transkei or the Clarkbury District as it is called by

¹³⁵ In 1936 12,1 per cent (equals 795,369 members) of the South African population belonged to the Methodist Church. J. R. Cochrane (1987), 254

1980 10,1 % of the South African population belonged to the Methodist Church. Attwell, A., 6

¹³⁶ G. M. Setiloane (1986), 186

¹³⁷ In the 20th century leaders of the Ethiopian Church began to become politically active in the ANC and other organisations.

¹³⁸ Sundkler (1961) as cited by Attwell, P. (1997), 218, footnote 32

¹³⁹ Transkei is one of the Homelands created by the apartheid government in order to implement separate development based not only on race, but also on ethnic background. The ten Homelands were Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Gazankulu, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Kangwane, Lebowa, Qwaqwa. The first four were granted a limited form of independence by the apartheid government.

¹⁴⁰ Balia, 93

¹⁴¹ Regehr (1979), 91

¹⁴² Ibid.

the MCSA has been reclaimed in 1988. Since then two Methodist churches exist in the Transkei: The United Methodist Church and the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

Last but not least, the formation of the Black Methodist Consultation (BMC) should be mentioned as an important part of the Church history. The BMC was initiated by the Reverend Ernest Baartman in 1975 to improve the situation of black members in the Church. Seventy-five per cent of the membership in the Methodist Church were Blacks, but they were excluded in the same proportion from the decision-making courts of the Church. At the time the Methodist Church was composed of twelve Districts, with ten being in the hands of white chairmen and only two in the hands of black Methodists. The BMC's mission was to ensure that white domination was progressively reduced and the entrenched hierarchy transformed. The BMC also saw the need for political life in the church. Its membership was open to both clergy and laity. Further the BMC laid the ground for a necessary self-examination, for a "Black awareness"; its aim was to undo any psychological oppression born out of existing structures.¹⁴³

Originally, frustration and desperation opened the doors for the Methodist mission as Africans strived for a religio-magical intervention. What started out as hope and longing for a better life often ended in frustration, as the secessions in the Methodist Church show. The reasons were multiple. On the one hand, black Methodists could no longer accept the fact of an abundance of evangelists with no ordained clergymen among them. Black Methodists were at no time equal to white Methodists no matter how much the white leadership emphasised that their church was "one and undivided".¹⁴⁴ The Independent African Churches and the Black Methodist Consultation (BMC) gave an opportunity to follow up on African religious patterns, to rebuild a communal solidarity and to restore traditional tenets of African cultures that had been shattered by the European onslaught. Independent churches and the BMC also served as a platform for political activities, such as the Tembu political protests¹⁴⁵ in the 19th century or the protests against apartheid from 1948¹⁴⁶ on.

¹⁴³ Balia, 89

¹⁴⁴ Critical voices (e. g. Rev. E. Baartman [Gugulethu] and Rev. D. Newby [CMM Cape Town] call this demand of the MCSA that goes back to the 1960s "fake and dishonest" because the reality of the MCSA was nevertheless marked by division and racism.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 56

¹⁴⁶ Advent of the National Party rule in South Africa (1948). Balia, 87

1.4 Demography, education and gender

The history of the Methodist Church in South Africa shows that preaching and other church positions were in the hands of men, whether black or white. Although black men have succeeded in attaining leadership positions¹⁴⁷ in the church since the 1960s, women are still dramatically underrepresented in both lay or ordained positions.¹⁴⁸

Situations alter depending on whether they concern black, coloured or white women, as black congregations tend to be traditionally more male-dominated. Overall, the lack of influence on church matters is an unacceptable reality for the women who represent about 70 per cent of the Church's total membership. The only women who were welcome to serve the gospel in public, even in the old days, were the Biblewomen, black women who functioned as lay-preachers where funding for an ordained minister was missing or where lay male preachers were rare. Biblewomen were mostly single black women who were appointed to the tasks of lay-preachers when money for full fledged ministers was tight. They furthermore functioned as teachers and interpreters. In the 19th century they were mostly active in rural areas, in the 20th century also in urban areas. The small salary of a Biblewoman nevertheless provided these women with an existential income. They were supervised, trained and paid by the W.A.. The first Biblewomen's Fund was inaugurated in 1924. In 1996 the Methodist Church decided to take the biblewomen out of the responsibility of the WA because they wanted to put an end to what they saw as patronizing of the biblewomen through a white women's group of the Church. The W.A. on its part criticized the decision of the Church leadership as antisocial toward the Biblewomen. It is a fact that the financing of Biblewomen is no longer guaranteed because of this change. In 2001, in all of the MCSA 85 biblewomen were still in office. This is only a fraction of the original number when the women were still paid by the Women's Auxiliary. Aside of the limited financial resources that the MCSA can offer to Biblewomen, the decrease of Biblewomen may also have to do with this position no longer being as attractive to black women as it was in the past.

But although women did not occupy official church positions, they have always been a major part of the Methodist Church – not just in numbers - right from the beginning of Methodist mission in South Africa. In the early mission days, black women who were living at the edges of their African societies for various reasons converted to Christianity before men did. With their acceptance into the Christian 'civilisation' they hoped to improve their social positions. Men, on the contrary, did not necessarily have the need to convert as their authority was generally unquestioned in African societies.¹⁴⁹

The Christian missionary in South Africa has led to an infiltration of Christian doctrine, language and sentiment into the social and cultural history of South Africa. As time progressed, the Christian mission was successful as far as an increase of membership was concerned. Statistics have kept trace of the distribution among the population of different ethnic backgrounds:

In 1911 forty-six per cent of the total population called themselves Christians. Twenty-six per cent were black. In 1990, 76 per cent of the black, 86 per cent of the coloured, 13 per cent of the Indian and 92.1 per cent of the white population claimed to be Christians. In 1997, 72.6 per cent of the total population belonged to a Christian Church.¹⁵⁰

To South Africans of European background, it was the usual thing to be Christian. Blacks converted to Christianity for various reasons, including better acceptance into the modern world, for protection during the frontier years of the 18th century and to obtain economic, social, medical and educational advantages, since social work, medicine, nursing and education were largely sponsored by Christian missions and churches.

¹⁴⁷ Seth Mokitimi was elected first black President of Conference in 1963. Davenport & Saunders, 684

¹⁴⁸ In 1994, Mrs. J. was the first woman who was elected as a Circuit steward in the black congregation of Langa (Cape Town). This was an unusual moment, for the congregation as well as for Mrs. J. as the position of a Circuit Steward is the most respected honorary post in the Methodist Church. Also see Chapter 3.2

¹⁴⁹ See Chapter 4.3.3

¹⁵⁰ Elphick & Davenport, 1

“Turning Christian meant heaving access to education. Without turning Christian, there was no possibility of going to school. It was the only hope to reach some point of equality with the Whites”.¹⁵¹

This statement of the former Methodist church minister - Chirevo Kwenda - shows that to become Christian also meant to become 'civilised' and thus to get access to the educational institutions of the churches.

Although missions of the black South African peoples are nowadays regarded rather critically, schools and colleges initiated by missionaries had very good reputations and provided excellent opportunities for black children, teenagers and adolescents. The loss of the mission education was deeply felt when the National Party under Hendrik F. Verwoerd – South Africa's long-term prime minister and architect of the political system of apartheid – introduced the so-called Bantu-Education in 1953. It was the beginning of a continuous degradation of Black education.

Bantu Education purported to give the black population a chance to learn in their own languages and cultures instead of being patronised by the white minority. In reality, it led to a low standard of education in the black population,¹⁵² a disastrous educational background of generations of Blacks and a number of social problems that still affect South Africa to this day.

Ellen Kuzwayo, born in 1914, a long-term member of the ANC who was elected a member of parliament in 1998, writes in her biography about the difference between education at the mission school of Lovedale¹⁵³ and Bantu-education:

“Lovedale was certainly an ideal example of the type of school provided by the missions of the black community in South Africa. The detested Bantu Education (and its successors) ... in contrast, provides no education at all; it seeks only to suppress talent, to lower morale, and to produce obedient servants ...”¹⁵⁴

As mission schools were taken over by the Bantu Education Act of 1953, apartheid stripped the churches¹⁵⁵ of their power on educational issues. As the system became increasingly unbearable, the black population began to protest. The Sharpeville massacre of 1960 received international attention and reinforced the black consciousness movement of the 1960s and 70s. The South African Council of Churches (SACC), which was created by the English-speaking churches in 1936 and reconstituted in 1968, became part of the resistance process in South Africa in the 1960s.

By then English-speaking churches already looked back on a tradition of opposing government, starting in the late 1920s and 30s with conflicts between the Afrikaans speaking Boers and the English.¹⁵⁶

After 1948,¹⁵⁷ white English-speaking theology in South Africa developed its dual heritage of evangelical spirituality and concern for basic civil rights. The South African theologian and member of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee Charles Villa-Vicencio explains the beginnings of anti-apartheid theology as follows:

“Although not wedded to a *volk*, its influence has been strengthened by the wealth and prestige of the English churches and also of the English universities, where theologians have been prominent in departments of religious studies. It has used historical criticism, a traditional staple in English biblical scholarship in South Africa, to develop an anti-apartheid theology....”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ Interview with Dr. Ch. Kwenda, University of Cape Town (UCT), June 1996

¹⁵² In 1982, 24 per cent of all black school graduates were illiterate. Weiss/ Oesterle (1987), 74

¹⁵³ Lovedale Mission was founded by the Church of Scotland in 1824.

¹⁵⁴ Kuzwayo (1996), 94

¹⁵⁵ Aside of the English-speaking churches it had been the Catholic Church which invested a lot of resources into the education of black South Africans.

¹⁵⁶ Villa-Vicencio (1984), 33

¹⁵⁷ Advent of the National Party

¹⁵⁸ Klaaren in Elphick & Davenport, 376

Villa-Vicencio, while on one hand criticising the role of English-speaking churches during colonial times, states on the other hand that English-speaking churches, especially the Anglican Church have consistently and relentlessly opposed the racist system of apartheid.¹⁵⁹ He detects the ground of this opposition in a spirit of liberalism, British paternalism and to a large extent in the presence of black converts and ministers. Villa-Vicencio identifies the opposition of the English speaking churches as a reflection of South African liberalism, both at its bests and at its worst, because it demands “both equality before the law and yet conformity to certain imposed standards of western individualism and achievement.”¹⁶⁰

Certainly, the attack of the English-speaking churches on the Afrikaans speaking government was not grounded in an ideology of egalitarianism. It was rather a reaction to the entrenchment of racial and economic divisions and separation in every area of existence.¹⁶¹

Another issue that needs to be emphasised once more is the power struggle between the English speaking and the Afrikaans speaking white South Africans. Although the English speaking population rejected the Afrikaans speaking government, they gained advantages through the racist system. A few individuals¹⁶² in the English speaking churches fought fiercely for equal rights for their black fellow Christians, but mostly the opposition was limited to verbal condemnations of apartheid at annual conferences and in pastoral letters. The white church leadership was out of touch with the anti-apartheid movement.¹⁶³ Thus the English speaking churches, whatever their ethnic backgrounds, missed out on being a prophetic alternative voice for all Christians in South Africa. This failure of the English speaking churches was due to their inability to define and condemn fundamental structures of exploitation and control in their parishes, as well as a reluctance to give up the advantages derived from their ethnic background.¹⁶⁴ A consciousness of these matters still needed to be developed.

During the Soweto¹⁶⁵ student rebellion in 1976-77 which spread to other provinces of South Africa, the conflict between state and church came to a climax. In 1985 the Kairos Document, a theological statement condemning apartheid as a heresy and supporting a prophetic theology that stresses the empowerment of the poor and oppressed by God, was produced by black township pastors and a number of academics.¹⁶⁶

When apartheid was abolished in 1994, churches in South Africa and especially those involved in the struggle against apartheid were forced to rethink their role in society. For decades they had fought on a lesser or larger scale against the inhuman system run by the National Party and theologically supported by many members of the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk.

The English-speaking churches saw themselves as voices against injustice, following the tradition of the Bekennende Kirche in Nazi-Germany. During the apartheid era there was unity in the struggle and also unity based on common social praxis. At the time, not much attention was paid to divisive theological and confessional issues. After apartheid, there was more opportunity to reflect on the differences between the denominations. This meant that during a time of national reconciliation, a revival of denominationalism, which is rooted in colonial times, also took place. The theologian John de Gruchy sees the origin of denominationalism in social realities rather than in theological differences.¹⁶⁷

¹⁵⁹ Villa-Vicencio, 28

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 36

¹⁶² For example Father Trevor Huddleston, Michael Scott and Rev. Arthur Blaxall (all Anglican). For more detailed information, see Walshe, P. in Elphick & Davenport, 383-399

¹⁶³ Ibid., 386

¹⁶⁴ Villa-Vicencio, 29

¹⁶⁵ Abbreviation for South Western Township. Soweto is located southwest of Johannesburg. Today between two and three million people live in an area of approximately 120 square kilometres. Soweto is probably the best known South African township because of its role during the black struggle for political liberation.

¹⁶⁶ Klaaren in Elphick & Davenport, 376

The Kairos Document, Challenge to the Church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986, 2nd ed.)

¹⁶⁷ De Gruchy (1995), 12-25

Because of the threat of rifts for denominational reasons, he stresses the importance of an ecumenical church.

“Important is the unity between the church and its witness, between ecclesiology and ethics ... fundamentally important for the ecclesiological future of the SACC. Otherwise the SACC will simply become another NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation, U. T.) welfare organization, rather than a vital expression of the church of Jesus Christ.”¹⁶⁸

The churches are faced with new issues and opportunities in a society that may have freed itself of an unjust system but is still in crisis. An ecumenical church is needed to be prophet and pastor to a society that must deal with major changes. These changes may be positive for society as a whole, but they nevertheless represent major tasks to be done.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 15

1.5 Post-apartheid aims of the Methodist Church

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa assumed this name on January 1, 1931, when the three Branches of Methodism in South Africa, the Transvaal and Swaziland District of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Great Britain, the Primitive Methodist Missions in the union of South Africa and the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa united and by private Act of Parliament became the Methodist Church of South Africa.¹⁶⁹

The church is now called the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, because the Methodist connection includes not only the Republic of South Africa, but also Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.¹⁷⁰

The MCSA belongs to the tradition of the English-speaking churches and is a member of the South African Council of Churches. It has fought against apartheid, although its black membership was more involved than its white membership. The activities of the BMC made it possible for Blacks to attain leadership positions in the MCSA.

Apartheid has shaped the church in ways that have been painful to its membership and congregations. In particular, the enforced removals of sections of the South African population along racial lines, under the terms of the Group Areas Act,¹⁷¹ destroyed congregations and separated Christians from one another. However, the removals were not always accepted without opposition. One example was the City Council of Cape Town, which boycotted a public hearing of the Group Areas Committee in August 1956. It was proposed that the whole of the Table Mountain area to the west of the suburban railway line, from Cape Town to Muizenberg, was to be reserved for white people only. District Six, as the area in the city bowl of Cape Town, close to Table Mountain, is called, lost a vast number of mixed-raced ('coloured') inhabitants and institutions when the plans of the Group Areas Committee were put into action in 1966.

The removal of the coloured people living in this part of town disrupted a Methodist congregation well known over the decades as a place of multiracial worship, Central Methodist Mission (CMM) in Buitenkant Street, located close to the legendary Green Market Square.

The CMM under the ministry of Rev. Peter Storey, became the site of a caring ministry for the victims of forced removals. People who were able to do so continued to attend the church sermons at CMM even if this meant travelling long distances, demonstrating the close connection the coloured members and their congregation. It also explains why the CMM could rely on an active membership when apartheid was abolished. The ties that had been maintained helped to start new ventures.

During the years of the forced removals (1966 until 1981) the CMM fought in vain but nevertheless openly. On the front of the church building the following inscription was written on a plaque:

"All who pass by. Remember with shame the many thousands of people who lived for generations in District Six and other parts of this city, and were forced to leave their homes because of the colour of their skins. Father forgive us..."¹⁷²

Though the efforts of white Methodists to improve the situation of black and coloured Church members need to be acknowledged, change came about chiefly through the joint efforts of – for example - the BMC, which had made it possible for Blacks to enter leadership positions.

¹⁶⁹ Attwell, P., 9

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

The list of Districts presently comprises: The Cape of Good Hope, Grahamstown, Queenstown, Clarkebury (Transkei), Kimberley and Bloemfontein, Northern Free State and Lesotho, Natal Coastal, Natal West, Central (formerly South Western Transvaal District), Limpopo (Botswana), South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland, Mozambique, Namibia.

¹⁷¹ 1958, 1966

¹⁷² Metropolitan Methodist Church, 3

In 1991, the MCSA was administered by eight white and five black chairmen. There still was no ethnic balance in the distribution of positions of authority but the situation was an improvement compared with the past, when it was common practice at most Methodist synods to elect Whites as chairmen and Blacks merely as vice-chairman.¹⁷³

Even when a black president was in office, there was disappointment among the black membership. In the 1988 church Conference Rev. Otto Mbangula complained that even after a number of black presidents and a couple of black chairmen, black membership had not seen much improvement. The question arose whether a black president could serve black interests while presiding over a predominantly white executive body.¹⁷⁴ Mbangula and others saw the need for a fundamental change in structures that were designed to support white supremacy on one side and black subordination on the other. In the following years the BMC increased its activities at Conference and Synod levels.

Equal power in church government was still mentioned as a sore point by some black members in the mid-nineties, although the second Convocation of the MCSA, which held a meeting in Johannesburg in September 1995, gave final approval to radical changes in national, regional and local church government.¹⁷⁵

This meant that changes were supposed to be on the way. The theoretical ground had been laid but the practical changes did not always happen. However, the highest position in the church, the office of the Presiding Bishop, is presently occupied by a black clergyman, Rev. Mvume Dandala. He was elected in January 1997.¹⁷⁶

The tasks of the contemporary MCSA are manifold. As the black membership reaches a position of greater power and influence, questions about the handling of African traditional customs in the context of the church often arise. The attitude of the MCSA's leadership toward African traditions and customs in the MCSA will be dealt with in Chapter 4.2.3.

Discrimination against women was, and still is, another aspect of the Methodist Church that needs to change. At the Methodist Conference of 1989, Denise Ackerman, then lecturing at the University of Cape Town (UCT), pointed out that according to the gospel, not only Blacks equal to Whites but also of women are equal to men.¹⁷⁷

In the meantime the democratic government of South Africa has made the gender issue a national priority. Gender equality was given legal status in the constitution of May 8, 1994.¹⁷⁸ Many self-help groups have developed as women are confronted with an increasing rate of violent crime.¹⁷⁹

In the Methodist Church, movement toward equality for women is slow – especially in the black communities - though some changes have been made as women are increasingly being asked to function as lay preachers and Society Stewards. A positive example of an equal participation of women in leadership positions in the Church is the congregation at Central Methodist Mission (CMM) on Green Market Square in Cape Town. Minister David Newby recounts how it came about that even without an affirmative action policy, fifty per cent of the people in leadership in his church are women:

“... automatically women represent fifty per cent of Society Stewards and even greater proportions of other leaders in the church. Women represent a majority of leaders in the church because they are a majority of members in

¹⁷³ Balia, 91

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 92

¹⁷⁵ Olivier (1996), 1

¹⁷⁶ Rev. M. Dandalas predecessor, Dr. Stanley Mogoba, is also a black South African.

¹⁷⁷ Balia, 99

¹⁷⁸ Bill of Rights, Chapter 2, section 9.1: „The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnics or social origin ...“

¹⁷⁹ South Africa is the country with the highest rape rate in the world. The South African Government has stated in 1999 that every second South African woman faces rape at least once in her life. Statistics state that every fifth man in South Africa has committed the crime of rape. In 1998, 320 gang rapes were reported. The most shocking numbers are 17,000 cases of child-rape which equals to 47 a day. These numbers have doubled since 1994. The victims are four to fourteen years old.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 27 October 1999

the church. And also because they have the gifts and they are able to express those gifts. And there was a time ... I discovered earlier in my ministry. Somebody came to me and asked: 'Why don't women ever serve communion in this church?' And I said: 'Because I never realised it.' And the next week it changed. And there was this openness to change. We are all one in Christ. There is an equality here, and there is not a sense of oppression of women in our church."¹⁸⁰

This kind of openness toward women does not exist in most Methodist churches. Ordained female ministers are still rare and are often confronted with a degree of prejudice that cripples their work. In the Cape District only five women and 65 men are functioning as ordained church ministers.¹⁸¹ Only one of these five women ministers, Jennifer Sweet, is not white.¹⁸²

The leadership of the Church has recognized that special efforts will have to be made to drastically change the status of women in the church.

In the Report to Conference in the year 1994 the Synod of the Cape of Good Hope District recommends "that an official document expounding the Theological and Biblical basis for the Ordination of women be produced and distributed to our Ministers."¹⁸³ Furthermore the Doctrine Committee "recognizes the serious attitudinal problems of prejudice and bias against women ministers ... and recommends that Conference appoint a committee to identify harmful attitudes and actions with regard to Women Ministers, and to formulate a constructive way of dealing with them."¹⁸⁴ (underlining in original)

How women in the MCSA value their position and how they try to alter their situation is discussed later in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

Much scrutiny has focused on the three historical women's organisations in the MCSA, which exist more or less along racial lines to this day. To the male leadership the women's separate organisations are a relic of apartheid, a disgrace that should disappear, the sooner the better. Pressure has been put on the women's organisations to unite. This issue will be dealt with in Chapter 2.

However, only women and their organisations can stop the decline of the membership in the Methodist Church, as its female members unquestionably form the backbone of the Church.

At this point it is very clear that black and white interests are radically different from male and female interests. The black male membership wants to make sure that the church and society will rid itself of racism and that African traditions will be lively components of church life. The feminist or womanist struggle is of lesser importance to them.¹⁸⁵ The white and coloured membership wants to initiate a moral and spiritual revival of Wesleyan Methodism. White and coloured women want to lead a modern life with a European Christian framework. Black women want to celebrate their sermons in their language, learning to be proud of their traditions and who they are. The Church as a whole wants to follow up on social concerns and preserve an important role in society.

In this era of change and disorientation the MCSA has brought forth a program which is called *Journey to a New Land* (JNL). Rev. David Newby recalls the beginnings of this process:

"The Journey to a New Land started off in about 1991. A group of people in the leadership felt it was important to have another gathering of Methodist people. What they had in mind had to do something which they had done in

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Rev. D. Newby, Central Methodist Mission (CMM), Cape Town, 22 October 1996.

¹⁸¹ In all of South Africa statistics of the MCSA were in 2001 as follows: ministers 655 (64 female), evangelists 39 (all male), deacons 11 (8 female, 3 male). MCSA, Rev. Ross Olivier (Secretary of Conference), e-mail June 2001

¹⁸² Jennifer Sweet would have been categorised during the apartheid era as "coloured". She calls herself a "black woman". She was an active member of the liberation movement and lived in exile (England) for many years. She returned to South Africa in the late 1990s where she worked as a minister in Belhar (Cape Town).

¹⁸³ Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Doctrine Committee, "Report to Conference", 1994, 2

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Balia, 99

1981. They gathered about thousand Methodists in one place for a few days and had speakers and tried to make the way forward for the church. So in 1991 they put a conference together – I think Wits University was the venue – and they put the program together.

Then the people in the grassroots of the church and particularly from the township churches said: We are not happy with that process. It needs to begin amongst the people and not be some big conference which doesn't empower anyone.

And so this was heard and the leadership of the church then cancelled the idea of a conference and moved forward with another process and that process was going into all of the Districts – 13 Districts of the Methodist Church at that time – and running workshops, really creating opportunities for people to talk about what was it that God was calling the Methodist Church to be and to do.

So, the workshops happened in every District and each District set up quite a number of them into regions; - they divided the Districts into regions. They also invited people to make their own submissions, personally and ask: what was it that you believe, what were the priorities facing the church. In the end they received about 14.000 submissions. And then the team in Joburg (Johannesburg, U.T.) with people like Mvume Dandala who was elected Presiding Bishop in January 1997 and Peter Storey who was the Bishop of the Central District and Ross Olivier who was later to be appointed to run the whole Journey to a New Land process – they went through the 14.000 submissions and tried to identify the themes which were emerging. Essentially they identified six calls.¹⁸⁶

These six calls were later printed and published. They are supposed to serve as a guideline for all Methodists in what the church leadership called the “re-inventing” of the Church.¹⁸⁷ The bottom line of the claims was the cry for spiritual renewal and for a radical overhaul of Methodist structures. They were confirmed on the Methodist Convocation in Benoni in 1993. A committee, called the Journey Transformation Committee was appointed to formulate a list of detailed proposals that were to be discussed in Synods, Circuit quarterly meetings and a number of seminars all across South Africa. This committee gave its first report to Conference in 1994 in Umtata. A second Convocation was held in 1995 at Linden, Johannesburg where the new church structures were officially authorised. What has since been known as the Journey to the New Land has “six calls” which are as follows:

1. A deepening of the spirituality for all members.

“Deepened spirituality” defines the Church’s task to teach its members how to pray, to read the Bible and how to best live a Christian life according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Church members are asked to live the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ, a life that should be carried out not just in church but also in all other sections of personal life, such as marriage, politics and the workplace. Methodists believe that such structural changes should be regarded as miracles that will only happen via the transformation of people’s hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. Prayers and worship are the major means to achieve this goal.¹⁸⁸

2. The focus of the Church should be on the pastoral work and less on the maintenance of the Church.

Point 2 deals with the problem of shrinking membership; mission is thought of as a means to reach out to a wider community, to Methodists as well as Methodists to be.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Rev. D. Newby, 21 May 1997

¹⁸⁷ Olivier, 1

¹⁸⁸ Methodist Church of Southern Africa, “Journey to a New Land. Participant’s Manual ‘Get on Board’ Workshops”, 3

The Church's decision in 1997 to hold the first triennial Conference in 1998, a mission conference, shows how seriously the problem of shrinking membership was taken. Structural changes were made by replacing some departments by the office of the Presiding Bishop, whose task it is to "drive" the mission of the Church.¹⁸⁹

3. Reinforcement of lay-ministry.

Behind this call lies the philosophy of Methodism that all believers are potentially ministers, whether they have studied theology or not. Methodist ministers are asked to enable their members for ministry and thus add their share in the work of mission. Positive side effects of lay-ministry are the reduction of the work load on ordained ministers as well as averting abuse of power by a few. A new development was the appointment of the first Lay Leader on the Connexional level of the Church.¹⁹⁰

Rev. David Newby comments this new development:

"... we now have a lay President of Conference ... Some people see this symbolic but the Lay President in the Church is now making a meaningful contribution in the leadership of the Church and that is something that I think is very important. It's an indication that we take the ministry of lay people serious and we're beginning to empower people. We're looking at lay representation in synods. It's been pushed up .. it used to be minister dominated – now 2/3 of the synods tends to be lay people, 1/3 ministers. We are looking for balances in that way."¹⁹¹

4. The abolition of racism, the Methodist Church being truly "one and undivided".

Methodists, especially black Methodists were tired of talking about unity but still remaining separate. They wanted to share resources and criticized unequal church conditions such as a black minister looking after up to 32 congregations whereas white churches had up to three ministers per congregation. The obvious situation shows that reconciliation also has to take place in the Church and not just on State level. According to the MCSA this includes repentance, forgiveness and the healing of memories as well as making integrated Circuits¹⁹² work. In 1997 contact between Methodists of different ethnic backgrounds was limited to quarterly meetings. A sense of unity was still missing. Rather the division along racial lines within congregations and organisations was still evident. Change can be successful if the members manage to eliminate deep rooted fears and prejudices.

In Call 4 the MCSA recognises not just the missing unity among the different races but also the issues of gender imbalance and the marginalisation of children and youth in society and in the Church.¹⁹³ The first ordained female Methodist minister in a white Congregation in South Africa was Constance Oosthuizen. She had been a deaconess before and her area of ministerial activity was localised in Natal. By 1997 the MCSA had only five female ministers in the white congregations.¹⁹⁴ In the black communities women were neither ministers nor Society Stewards. In 1996, Mrs. J. was the first woman to be elected Circuit Steward in the Methodist Church of Langa (Cape Town). This was a historical event.¹⁹⁵ In 1999, the MCSA received its first coloured female minister, Jennifer Sweet, a women who had lived in exile for many years.

Concerning the gender imbalance Rev. David Newby comments:

"I think that – when I look at the Church there is a small movement toward the acknowledgement and the empowerment – empowerment is the wrong

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 4

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 5

¹⁹¹ Interview with Rev. D. Newby, 21 May 1997

¹⁹² Integrated Circuits are Circuits that have crossed racial lines. Here a mixture of black, coloured and white congregations are supposed to work together. Integrated Circuits exist since the early 1980s. They are supposed to help overcome apartheid structures.

¹⁹³ MCSA, "Journey to a New Land", 6

¹⁹⁴ Interview with P. Attwell, Noordhoek, Western Cape, May 1996

¹⁹⁵ Also see Chapter 3.2

word - but the acknowledgement of the ministry of women in the church. Even though women ministers have been in the Methodist Church for more than twenty years, it's still a male dominated institution. But women have become more vocal. And because women are now fighting for their rights rather than fighting for the men to repent and do their thing, I think that's been more effective.”¹⁹⁶

5. Church leaders should be role models as servants and let the laity participate in decision-making.

It was noted in the early 1990s that over the years some ministers had built up oppressive regimes. This was the reason for explicitly pointing out that autocratic leadership is not consistent with the teaching of Jesus. The motto was: a “renewed church needs renewed servant leaders.”¹⁹⁷ The democratisation in the country was not without influence on the willingness in the MCSA to change structures from hierarchical or even autocratic forms to more democratic ones. All church members were encouraged to participate in the church or to put it in words: “to give 'the Methodist Church back to God'”.¹⁹⁸ Consequently, structural changes have been made at Local, District and Connexional Church level. Locally the election of Society Stewards and other lay leaders are now carried through by the congregations themselves. At District level any member in good standing is nowadays permitted to nominate any minister within the Connexion to the office of Bishop for the position of Bishop. The powers of District synods have been enlarged by enabling them to identify mission priorities aside of merely receiving reports and debating issues. Because of the necessity of enforced mission the synod appoints mission groups that support people who want to engage in the work of a mission group. “Mission groups replace the old departments and are driven by local needs rather than Connexional agendas.”¹⁹⁹

At Connexional level major changes have been made. The Presiding Bishop and Lay President were elected by a joint committee of all synods throughout the Connexion. “The annual Conference has been replaced by a triennial Conference. The Conference ensures a 2:1 ratio of lay people to ministers. ... It is a far larger gathering than the old Conference and is more representative.”²⁰⁰

6. Ordained Ministers should be free for their main task: preaching, teaching and spiritual guidance.²⁰¹

This call goes hand in hand with empowering the laity for ministry. Rev. D. Newby comments:

“The sixth call was to – for ministers to be set free to their primary vocation and this is tiding in with the other calls. But ministers have become more and more apart from the sense that ministers had become more autocratic and kind of demigods in places. There was also the feeling that many ministers had become bureaucrats. And that they just pushed pieces of paper around and spend their lives in meetings and ceased to fulfil that which they have been set aside for. And so the first five calls were quite threatening to the clergy, and they still do feel afraid because the congregations kind of see it as an opportunity to overthrow them and there is this whole power struggle.... But I see in the sixth call - and ministers were beginning to say and lay people were beginning to say: 'when can our minister be a minister? We want our minister to do ministry.'

And the primary vocation really is the ministry, the pastoral ministry, the ministry of preaching, the ministry of the word, the sacramental ministry. Another part that emerged – I guess through the influence of practical

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Rev. D. Newby, 21 May 1997

¹⁹⁷ MCSA, “Journey to a New Land”, 6

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 7

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 8

²⁰¹ For more details on the structural changes in the MCSA see Appendix 2

theology - is that ministers are called to empower. We are people who need to empower people for ministry. It's one thing to say: 'the laity needs to be ministers and engage in ministry.' It's quite another thing for them to develop skills and be given the encouragement and the affirmation to do it. And so more and more there is being that understanding of ministry that you are there to exercise a pastoral ministry, a ministry of the word, a ministry of sacrament but also a ministry of empowerment whereby you get alongside people and you help them to discover their gifts, use their gifts and grow those gifts and I guess that's what that last call is about. Now, ministers have been threatened by that. They just have not grasped that that's a very liberating place to be. That's when you actually empower your people for ministry, you don't have to be threatened, you can actually relax."²⁰²

The power struggle Rev. Newby continuously refers to in the interview is a theme that runs through the church like a scarlet thread. It also affects the situation of women and their opportunities for growth and advancement. As long as the empowerment of all people is feared, things will develop at a very slow rate, especially in rural areas where the need for change is not high on the priority list.

One reason to hope for improvement is that fear is more an issue for the older generation, whether black or white. The task of putting the six calls of the JNL into practice is still going on and will so for an unknown period of time. To make changes in accordance with the six Calls truly happen, Rev. Newby counts on an improvement of ministerial training:

"The present ministerial training is irrelevant. Ministers are being trained to do something which when they get into a local situation they do not have the skills to do ministry... Many, many of our ministers are ill-prepared. Especially those who were trained in the 1950s and 60s. They were trained with a particular model of ministry. When they are asked to come along and empower people for ministry, get alongside people and help them make theological sense of the world which they live in – they can't do it. They are used to preaching on a Sunday, visiting the congregation and doing everything themselves. That's the model they've been taught. and in the old days everybody came along and said: 'Yes, we hear you, we'll do what you tell us to do.' Now people – and life - have changed. People want to be involved, people are questioning, people are trying to say 'Well, how do I make sense of what is happening in the world?'

They are asking the questions and they want answers and they want the tools to find those answers. Many of our ministers are ill-prepared for that. And I don't think our seminaries are helping them. And so I think our ministerial training is in crisis. It's been one of my hobby horses. I spent a great deal of my time in training ministers, just helping them to understand how to reflect – you know – people aren't taught how to reflect on the context in which they live. For them, they've been trained to be church mechanics, to keep the knots and bolts of the church going. They are not trained to look beyond the threshold of the church and say: 'What is my community? Who is my community? What are the needs of my community? How do I respond to those with the gospel?' There is no sense of that happening. They have no social analytical skills and – I know – I never got them. I had to go and find them myself, study."²⁰³

Not all changes in the MCSA that go along with the JNL find approval. The black Rev. Sanqela who was a superintendent for 18 years, working in Paarl, Western Cape, for part of this time, criticizes the decentralisation of the Church administration.²⁰⁴ He finds that the transfer of power from the Circuit to the Societies, turning the latter into the decision making bodies, is in many cases counterproductive for the black congregations.

²⁰² Interview with Rev. D. Newby, 21 May 1997

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Rev. W. Sanqela, Paarl, W. C., 28 May 1997

Societies having more power is, in the opinion of Rev. Sangela, advantageous to the white congregations, since their Societies are usually well equipped financially. In the black congregations, the group of Societies that form a Circuit²⁰⁵ would guarantee financing where it was needed, whereas single societies could be quite poor. The black congregations reject the so-called Circuit structure because only one minister ministered to many Societies, whereas the white congregations often had more than one minister for their Societies. A black minister used to visit a Society once in three months. The rest of the time lay preachers substituted for him.

The problem Rev. Sangela sees today is that each Society has to meet a certain assessment. If it does not, this can result in problems for the minister in office. For example, he might not receive a stipend. When asked if a Society is not supposed to give money to a minister when he needs it, the Rev. replied:

“Not per se. It’s only when they are meeting their assessments. For instance, you can go to a Society that is able to collect some money and the Circuit assesses that plus minus - say we’d be interested every month, please give us about 300 Rand and then you will find that the 300 Rand is kept away by the Society. When we come to the quarterly meetings and you discuss those things you find that it may be a Society B that is not meeting its own assessment. And then Society A and C say: ‘Good people, you’ve got to meet your assessments.’

And you find that the Circuit has no money while the Societies have got money. It’s that terrible thing that is happening. There are two streams that come together. The Blacks have been using the Circuit system whereas the Whites and the Coloureds have been using the Society system. And naturally the Circuit system had money then. And because of that new thing (JNL, U.T.) – decentralisation - the Societies have got money and the Circuits don’t.”

The JNL implies efforts for a better cooperation of the congregations across racial lines. Rev. Sangela confirms that a few encounters between the congregations have taken place. However, he considers them to be “window-dressings”.²⁰⁶ He refers to ubuntu²⁰⁷ as a way of communication that can cross racial borders. In this connection, he criticizes the lack of communication between the white and coloured Methodists and the black members, which he sees as the main obstacle to an improvement of fellowship.

“The white and coloured congregations have to make a move toward black people to learn about ubuntu and thus truly understand each other. So far the black people had to move toward the others. And also with our meetings, if you say – for instance – a local preacher goes to a white Circuit. The first question asked is: ‘Have you got an interpreter?’ And if the preacher says ‘No’, he will not be able to communicate. But when a white preacher comes over, he knows there is going to be somebody there who will understand the language and who will just go to interpret. That is also one of the things – it actually labels them. A good preacher, a medium preacher, a weak preacher and resulting that because we are Blacks, our preaching is not as effective as a white preacher’s. That’s the impression I get because now we tend to box them in. Because he’s a black preacher and he is not able to understand English or Afrikaans. And I believe, it is the knowledge of God that one has to deliver, rather than Bultmann and Goldmann and all the rest. Gradually, the Blacks are really coming 75 per cent of the way and the white members are coming about 25 per cent of the way.”

Communication is the main issue, not in the MCSA alone but in South African society as a whole. The JNL is one attempt to improve the situation. The state for its part is taking strong-man action to link South Africa socially, economically and politically to the modern Western world.

²⁰⁵ In Paarl in the Cape District about 17 black Societies formed a Circuit. Decisions were passed at Quarterly Meetings.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ See Chapter 4.2.1

At the moment, South African society is progressing at a faster rate than the churches are. This puts great pressure on the churches, especially since their role has to be newly justified. The MCSA has to build up new self-esteem by proving to all of its members that it is on the right track.

The question arises, to what degree will the MCSA change or should one say: will it be able to change? And will the MCSA possibly undergo a higher degree of secularization than part of its membership wishes?

Rev. Newby comments:

“I am not afraid of that ... The real problem is that when you cannot distinguish the Church, when the church becomes the mirror of society – we are sensitive about that. We need to be a window, rather than a mirror ... And to know why we are sensitive about it is that for all the years the Church mirrored apartheid. ... So, I think people are very sensitive about just becoming a mirror of what is happening in society. And if anything is democracy or the democratic process and we do things because it's the ‘in-thing’ ... then we miss the mark. The Church is not about doing the politically correct thing. The church is about listening for what God is doing in the world; being co-creators with God in the world but not about just doing what is politically correct.”

“ ... Yes, there is a strong link between the democratic process in our country and what is happening in our church and I welcome that. But the warning lights sound and I say: ‘Just don’t think because we have a democratic process that we are necessarily hearing God.’ It’s very likely but we must be careful that we don’t say: ‘The voice of the people is the voice of God.’”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ ²⁰⁸ Interview with Rev. D. Newby, 21.05.1997

2 Women's organisations

2.1 Orientation

The majority of the membership in the MCSA are women, totalling 70 %.²⁰⁹ Often, they are called the "backbone" of the Church, not only because of their numbers but also because of their activities, which include fund-raising, social engagement, ministerial help or other. Women may also be able to halt the shrinking of membership in the Methodist Church.²¹⁰

Since the late nineteenth century, black, coloured and white Methodists worshipped and met more or less strictly along racial lines. This segregation into different ethnic groups was the policy of the Methodist Church at the time and went along with the social customs of colonial South Africa. The separation ran from the local level to District Synods and it led to the three traditional women's organisations which still exist today: the Manyano (black women), the Women's Association (coloured women) and the Women's Auxiliary (white women). These three women's organisations have been much criticized by the Church's leadership because they still exist more or less along racial lines. Pressure on them commenced as early as in the 1960s, along with the call of the MCSA to be "one and undivided".

In 1961 the Joint Committee was formed as a first step toward organisational union. The three women's organisations were part of this Joint Committee as one unit. At that time, the Joint Committee was primarily concerned with matters involving the World Federation of Methodist Women.²¹¹ By the 1980s the Joint Committee was a recognised body sanctioned by the Methodist Conference. Communication with the Church leadership was reinforced. The Presiding Bishop functioned as the Joint Committee's Convenor.²¹²

Today the General Presidents and General secretaries of the three women's organisations and a representative of the Women's Network²¹³ meet on a regular basis to

²⁰⁹ Rev. Winston Sangela from the Methodist Church at Paarl had an interesting explanation for women being the majority in the MCSA; an explanation that does not account of the reality of black women's lives which are characterized by working from sunrise to sundown.

"From the very onset, the church has become a meeting place for the women who wanted to meet. It became a place where they were able to see new models, whether it's clothing or that type of thing. And it became a place of interest to them: 'We're going to church to see what kind of hats the people are wearing nowadays. Because there were affluent people and those who had nothing. Now, the church became a centre of attraction to break away the monotony of being there, in their various houses, without work, without nothing because they used to wake up in the morning and clean their houses and it ended there. And then this church thing, when it came, it came to people with ample time in their hands. And one can always say - even now in modern times- the menfolk used to go to work and on Sundays they were tired. They did not want to go anywhere. That thing is still there ..."

Interview with Rev. W. Sangela, 28 May 1997.

²¹⁰ The membership in the Cape District dropped by 2 % in 1996.

MCSA, "Journey to a New Land", 4.

The membership had already dropped from 12,1 % in 1936 to 10,1 % in 1980 in all of South Africa.

Attwell, A., 216

A statistical list (South African Christian Handbook), published by the South African Council of Churches, counted in 1976/77 in the MCSA 424 750 members and 1 500 000 adherents. There were 3 399 churches and 1 842 preach stations in the country, ministered by 785 ordained church ministers and 64 evangelists and part time ministers. In comparison the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican) counted 1 500 000 members, 814 churches and 386 preach stations, ministered by 1 300 ordained ministers and 500 evangelists and part time ministers. This shows that the in the Church of the Province of South Africa congregations were better supplied with ministers and evangelists. There was a larger scale of Methodist churches and preach stations which had to be administered by a smaller number of ministers and preachers. In the financial ranking the MCSA lies behind the Church of the Province of South Africa.

²¹¹ The World Federation of Methodist Women followed the development of the United Nations and its Agencies. It was the conviction of Methodist and uniting church women that they should have the opportunity to identify women's issues in this international forum as well as to have an input into debates and decision-making as a Non-Governmental Organization within the U.N.. A Christian perspective is the foundation of the World Federation. Currently the World Federation is involved with the following issues: health, literacy, environment, ageing, rights of children, family life, rural life, justice, racism, Women's and Human Rights, women and prostitution, poverty, women and economic development, women and Aids, education, development, peace. United Nations Information Leaflet of the World Federation of Methodist Women (No. 5), May 1994.

²¹² Attwell, P., 158

²¹³ Formerly Department for Women's Ministries.

Ibid., 159

discuss the contemporary situation and potential development, as well as conducting activities that may lead to the combining of the three women's organisations in a federation. The representative of the Women's Network functioned as an advisor.

As pressure on the three women's organisations to unite intensified in the 1970s, women looked for joint efforts to improve the situation.²¹⁴ Two such joint ventures took place in 1972 and 1973. In 1972 the Women's Auxiliary and the Women's Association in Cape Town turned the area around the Metropolitan Church (CMM) on Greenmarket Square into a flower garden. An estimated five thousand people of all races witnessed this event and took part in singing Methodist Hymns. In 1973 all three women's organisations worked together by organising a festival at the premises of the Rosebank Methodist Church in Cape Town, which was supposed to attract all six thousand members of the three groups.

The *Cape District Newsletter* of the Women's Auxiliary described this festival as a success in the right direction.²¹⁵ In 1972 all three women's organisations agreed on forming a South African Federation of Methodist Women under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Conference: "By 1974 the South African Federation of Methodist Women was on track, with full agreement of all three organisations down to District level."²¹⁶

Forming a federal organisation, the women agreed on values such as accepting each other as equals. This included, for example, that Methodist women were not obliged to either adopt the uniform of the Manyano nor to give it up.²¹⁷ The formation of new women's organisations in addition to the three traditional ones was to be accepted as part of the social change in South Africa. It was stated that any new organisation could be affiliated to the Federation. Furthermore the three women's organisations agreed on increasing their knowledge of each other and thus the mutual understanding. In 1979 a constitution was drawn up that scrutinized the similarities and differences between each of the organisations. The aim was to reconcile the three drafts into one common constitution. A suggested constitution was submitted to all three organisations in 1980.²¹⁸ It was accepted by the Women's Association and the Women's Auxiliary but not by the Manyano. This event shows that historically, cooperation between the Women's Auxiliary and the Women's Association has been stronger. Also, the language barrier has greatly influenced the Manyano's reluctance to work closer together with the other two women's organisations.

"I don't think it is going to work because some of our people are with the Manyano, some of them don't even understand the language. And when you think some of them are not educated, they can't speak English nor Afrikaans. Not that they wanted to be like that. But they didn't go to school because they had no means. So, you feel sorry for them. They accept the white people but as for their language part I feel very sorry for them."²¹⁹

An official resolution of the Manyano in Natal Coastal District was sent to the other two women's organisations, explaining why they do not see a basis for union:

"The Natal Coastal District Women's Manyano Convention notes Conference desire for the uniting of the three organisations of the Methodist women in South Africa. But, however, believes that this move is as yet premature, because of fundamental differences in the formation and objectives of the three organisations, which if forced to unite, may be detrimental to the existence of all. Therefore, resolves that Synod asks Conference to do an in-depth study of factors that led to the formation of these organisations before it can legislate unity."²²⁰

²¹⁴ Ibid., 147

²¹⁵ Methodist Women's Auxiliary, *Cape District Newsletters*, 1973

²¹⁶ Attwell, P., 149

²¹⁷ See Chapter 2.1

²¹⁸ Ibid., 150

²¹⁹ Interview with Mrs. P. Sanqela, District President (Cape) of the Manyano, Paarl, W. C., 28 May 1997

²²⁰ Attwell, P., 158

The resolution does not give detailed reasons. In talking to Manyano representatives and black church ministers it becomes clear that what the Manyano fear the most is being laughed at or being subjugated by white and coloured women.

“... when they come together, since they work for the Whites, they would be seeing some dominance again. They might think: 'Monday til Saturday I am with Madam and Sunday I have to come and meet her again. Monday to Saturday I am used to say 'Yes, Madam, yes Madam'. On Sunday it's impossible for me. Now, from Monday to Friday to Saturday she (the employer, U.T.) is used to say 'Do this and do that' and then all on Sunday she should be able to say 'Let us do it that way'. And on Monday I am going back to her work. Now, if there was some misconception or a point of departure on Sunday when we meet, I wonder if my Madam is going to bring that out in my work. she might say: 'I did not like your attitude yesterday'.

The women said: 'When we feel most like real mothers, when we are all by ourselves it is when we really pray for our children. When we're really by ourselves, it is when we are really able to do our own things rather than having a person looking upon us and who is not understanding why we are all praying and shouting and singing, clapping and dancing.'”²²¹

While this attitude of the Manyano is still valid, the annual Church Conference repeats its wish that the traditional three women's organisations should unite. To the Conference, these organisations, formed along racial lines are a remnant of colonial times and apartheid, an unwanted disgrace that should disappear, the sooner the better. One of the people who go along with this is Rev. David Newby, who feels that the Manyano do not want to give up power:

“I don't understand why they can't be a federation. I don't understand why people can't be together. I think, it is a cop-out. ... There is room for cultural diversity. There must be. And there is room for people to learn each others cultures, others traditions without saying: 'We got to take it away.' You don't have to take away uniforms and you don't have to take away traditions,²²² but if you ask me why I am still so vehemently opposed to the separation of the three groups and why I am so critical: I don't think it has to do with those differences. I think it has to do with power. I think it has to do with people not willing to relinquish power positions and they may have good reasons for that. Maybe many of the African women feel that they will be swamped once again. They'll find themselves marginalised as they have been often in the Church.”²²³

While the three traditional women's organisations in the MCSA try to redefine their roles, new women's groups have sprung up. One of them is the Women's Network, a non-racial group which started in the late 1980s. The Women's Fellowship, a black organisation, was started in 1995 in the township of Gugulethu.

All women's organisations will be described in detail in the following chapters. As far as written material is concerned, there is a fair amount on the Manyano and the Women's Auxiliary.²²⁴ Lesser printed information is accessible on the Women's Association and the Women's Network.²²⁵ All written information on the Manyano, the Women's Auxiliary, the Women's Association and the Women's Network was complemented by interviews with members of these groups/organisations and by interviews with church representatives. Merely oral information was available on the Women's Fellowship during the time of the fieldwork of this thesis.

²²¹ Interview with Rev. W. Sangela, 28 May 1997

²²² For example sacrifice of animals, circumcision, marriage and death ceremonies

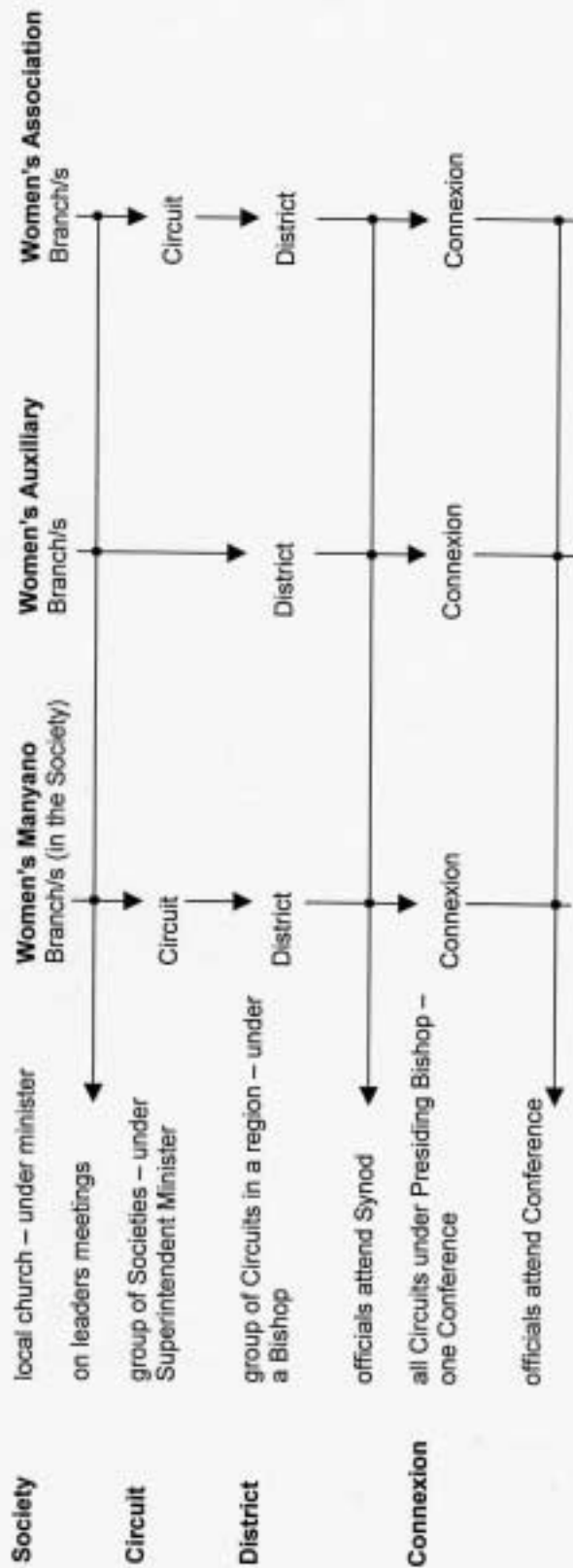
²²³ Interview with Rev. D. Newby, 21 May 1997

²²⁴ Attwell, P. (1997); Brandel-Syrier (1962); Gaitskell (1990; 1997), MCSA, "Reports to Conference"; MCSA, Minutes on the Manyano

Attwell, P. (1997), Reports to Conference, MCSA/Minutes, MCSA on the Women's Auxiliary

²²⁵ Internal papers, Reports to Conference et. al.

Organisational Structures of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in regard to the three women's organisations



Which women's organisation has branches in the local Society depends upon the racial orientation of that Society. Some Societies have Manyano and Auxiliary branches, others Manyano and Association branches. Women's Manyano and Women's Association have Circuit officials, meetings and projects. In a Circuit where two or three of the Women's Organisations have branches, it offers an ideal opportunity for united work. The difficulties are: this is not a familiar concept to the Auxiliary and sometimes the business which a Circuit is required to do for its own District gets in the way of joint effort.

2.2 The Manyano

The Women's Manyano is one of the three traditional women's organisations in the Methodist Church that function along racial lines. The Manyano are black women who worship not in English but in their Mother tongue. In the Cape this is usually Xhosa.

The exact year of the first Manyano meeting is unknown. It is most likely that the Manyano started at the end of the 19th century as unofficial prayer meetings in homes, under trees and other places, long before they were given a name. These gatherings helped women assume new responsibilities as Christian wives and mothers.²²⁶ Part of the successful evangelisation of the 'heathen' was the denunciation of African beer, which eventually led to total abstinence on the part of the members.

The first written record of a Manyano dates back to 1905, when a gathering of Manyano took place at Verdrift in Natal.²²⁷ In 1907, another one at Edendale, also in Natal, started the spread of the Manyano, as Transvaal women had been invited to the Edendale gathering. The women felt the need to give their informal meetings the structure of a constitution. In 1909 the Transvaal women organised a gathering at Potchefstroom which started as a prayer union. In time, political and social activities were undertaken by the Manyano, for example during the anti-pass demonstrations in Bloemfontein in 1913.²²⁸

In 1926 the organisation was officially recognised by the Methodist Conference.²²⁹

In the past hundred years the Manyano has given many black women a feeling of belonging and dignity in an environment that put them at the bottom of society. The Manyano also functioned as a self-help group and helped to establish the Christian faith among black female Methodists. Until this day, such values as being a good housekeeper and mother have remained. The Manyano developed into the oldest and by far the largest Methodist women's organisation in Southern Africa. Overall numbers reached nearly 100,000 in 1997.²³⁰

In the Cape District, Manyano membership numbered 1,461 in the year 2000,²³¹ a number that may seem small but which corresponds to the Xhosa population in the Cape Province, which increased somewhat as workers migrated from the Transkei to the Cape²³² in the 1970s. Another increase of Xhosa speaking population took place shortly before the election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa in 1994.

The Manyano, how they live and what they represent, must be understood in the context of the thorough-going holism that pervades African life. Contrary to Western philosophy and understanding of reality, dualisms such as the distinction between body and soul, spiritual and secular, temporal and eternal are foreign concepts to the Manyano.

It may appear at first sight that the Manyano do not differ too much from the white Women's Auxiliary or the coloured Women's Association. The Manyano also engage in a variety of social activities, regard themselves as ardent Christians and they are equally successful and eager fund-raisers. However, there are cultural and psychological differences that affect the religious attitudes of the Manyano and their understanding of human existence as a whole.

Many of the Manyano are older women who still are in touch with the fables and myths of their ancestors. Although their children no longer know about these traditions, - especially in the urban areas - they remain deeply ingrained in many of the women who wish to hand them on to keep their African culture alive. More details on the Manyano attitudes toward African traditions will be given in Chapter 4.2.5.

The Manyano declare their identity in public by wearing what they call "the uniform", of which each part symbolises salvation through Jesus Christ:

²²⁶ Gaitskell (1997), 258

²²⁷ Attwell, P., 138

²²⁸ Gaitskell, 254

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ MCSA, Cape of Good Hope District, Reports to Synod (2000), 148

²³² The population of the Cape Province, especially of the Western Cape is predominantly coloured and white.

“A black skirt denotes sin, a red blouse – more like a belted jacket – represents the redeeming blood of Christ, the number of buttonholes His wounds, and a deep white collar and a small round white hat cleansing from sin through Christ, or holiness.”²³³

In regard to the history of the Manyano uniform, printed evidence of its beginnings is not available. It may be that the uniform was first worn in the beginning of the 20th century and officially accepted in the 1920s.²³⁴ The uniforms were originally used to distinguish between women who had been converted to Christianity and those who had not. As time passed, the uniforms came to distinguish between the different denominations in black women’s organisations. To Manyano women, their uniform is a serious and very spiritual matter. This garment is only worn during Manyano meetings and church sermons. Traditionally these meetings were held on a Thursday afternoon as this was the only afternoon when domestic servants were given leave from work. Meetings are now also held on Saturdays, because black women have found other employment than domestic service.

Groups of Manyano whose membership consists of live-in domestic workers can only be found in formerly white areas, for example in Bergvliet (Cape Town).²³⁵ In the black communities, an increasing number of the Manyano trained to become nurses, school-teachers and other workers. It seems that education is not necessarily decisive. Women who have grown up with the Manyano remain with them even if they have received an academic education.²³⁶

To become a Manyano, the aspirant has to prove, during a six months probation period, that she has learned the rules and regulations of the organisation. Apart from acquiring a certain amount of biblical knowledge, it is most important that the woman is leading a ‘moral life’. This means that the woman has to – for example - refrain from smoking and drinking, as these are regarded as major obstacles to “good prayers”. A woman becomes a full-fledged member of the Manyano by the “robing-ceremony”. This is a deeply emotional occasion – not just for the adherent but for all members.²³⁷

The Manyano follow strict rules and regulations.²³⁸ Prayer and worship are the foundations of their identity. Service and discipline are also major components, but subordinate to the first. “Mother’s Union” implies the kind of membership. Married mothers can usually become a Manyano. Younger and older unmarried women are members of the Young Women’s Manyano. Women who get divorced have to leave the Manyano but can ask for readmission by undergoing another six months trial period. Unmarried mothers are usually not accepted. Some Manyano allow exceptions to the rule because the Manyano at Langa had one single mother as a member, the Manyano at Paarl had one single woman among them.²³⁹

There is no rule that excludes a white or coloured woman from becoming a Manyano, but very few non-black women have become members of the Manyano. However, it is customary for the Manyano to robe the wife of the Bishop or their Superintendent minister. If the Bishop or Superintendent is black, his wife already is a member of the Manyano. But if he is white, then his wife would be robed as a matter of course. Peggy Attwell, wife of a Methodist minister, school-teacher and editor of “Take our hands”,²⁴⁰ was one of those white minister’s wives who was robed by virtue of her husband’s position. She described this event in a letter:

“It was indeed a most joyful and exciting occasion for everyone and contrasted sharply with the political climate at the time. The date was 26 June 1986. We had been through the most horrifying violence in 1984/85 and when my ‘robing’ was arranged the streets in Welkom, where we lived, were

²³³ Attwell, P., 139

²³⁴ Compare to Khabela, N. D. (March 1995) in: *The Messenger*, 12-14

²³⁵ See Interview with E. Sanjanja, Chapter 3.3

²³⁶ Interview with P. Sanqela, 21 May 1997.

One of the Manyano in her congregation is a university professor.

²³⁷ Interview with P. Attwell, 2 June 1997

²³⁸ For more information on the rules and regulations of the Manyano, see Appendix 3

²³⁹ Questionnaires, Langa & Paarl, May 1997 (personal archives)

²⁴⁰ See Attwell, P.

patrolled by armed soldiers because of what was called 'certain information' in connection with Soweto Day, 16 June ... We didn't expect to use the church for this occasion. We started off in a small hall adjoining, where the Manyano meetings normally took place, but it was full to overflowing, and cars and combi-loads of women were still arriving, so we moved into the church, which was soon filled to capacity."²⁴¹

Peggy Attwell's description of her robing ceremony shows how enthusiastic the black women were about a white woman becoming one of them. The reason for the scarcity of white women becoming a Manyano had to do with the particular situation in divided South Africa. It also had to do with a lack of knowledge of African languages, which are the foundation of Manyano prayers and hymns although this does not need to be a reason as Peggy Attwell points out:

"When I attended Manyano meetings, they used their own language. I would not expect them to use English for my benefit, nor would I expect them to adopt Western modes of conducting affairs. At meetings I attended, one of them would explain to me quietly what was happening or being said. They were very considerate in that way. I could read the words of hymns to sing, even if I didn't understand all of them, and I could identify with them in times of prayer – I was with them in spirit, as I prayed."²⁴²

Peggy Attwell had the privilege to get to know the world of the Manyano even during the Apartheid era due to her husband's position in the Church. But this was not the only reason. Aside of her willingness to share the spiritual world of the Manyano, she had been invited to join because she had been working alongside them in trying to promote mutual understanding between women of different races in the Church.

Among the so-called ordinary white Methodist women, this means women who were not married to ministers, Peggy Attwell personally knew only of three women who had joined the Manyano as a result of their working relationships with the Manyano.²⁴³

Today, the Manyano have a harder time attracting new members, whether black, white or coloured. This is especially so in an urban environment, where modern, educated young women regard the concepts and attitudes of the Manyano as outdated and too strict in their moral demands. Also, the structure of the organisation is not democratic but rather strictly hierarchical. For instance, the wife of the respective minister is automatically President of the Manyano, whether or not she has the talents and the knowledge for this position. Historically this automatic office-holding goes back to the turn of the 19th century when, after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, an increase in ordained African ministers took place²⁴⁴ and the spouses of the ministers were – in a sense - regarded as ordained as well. In recent years this assumption has drawn criticism in some congregations, sometimes more openly, at other times through gossip. Modernity has reached the Manyano to a certain extent, making criticism possible when the members feel it is justified. Also, the contemporary Church leadership supports the demand for change. In their opinion, women who are not the wife of the minister in office should also have the option to become President of the Manyano if they are fit for the task.

Patricia Sangela, District President of the Manyano in the Cape, would not mind seeing another woman take on her position. However, her husband, who is a church minister, supported the church tradition. He felt it is easier for the minister - who is automatically the supervisor of the Manyano - to work with his wife on Manyano matters instead with someone else's wife:

²⁴¹ P. Attwell, personal letter to Uta Theilen, 23 April 1998.

²⁴² Ibid.

I can confirm the considerate behaviour of Manyano women as I made similar experiences during my visits.

²⁴³ These women were Ruth Coggin, a former editor of the Church's newsletter *Dimension*, Irene Campbell who was General President of the Women's Auxiliary in the 1970s and Norma Webster who had also functioned as a part General President.

Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Gaitskell, 265

“Now, to get somebody else there who must act as a president, it means I have to sit down with her here and plan and everything and then the stigma that – so for instance the Manyano ladies have to go to somewhere else and I need to accompagnie them – now, I am leaving my wife behind and then quite a lot of things she may think and I would fail according to the African status of things. I cannot allow my wife to go and work with another man, even though she may be respected and all that but I will never do it. And now to let somebody else’s wife to come and work with me while my wife is somewhere there – now in my study doing office-work together to keep her down there for instance in the morning, and then it becomes a little bit difficult. But if my wife was there, then it becomes easier because we can talk this over a cup of tea, over a meal and plan it all together.”²⁴⁵

Not only women can become President of the Manyano, but also unmarried or divorced ministers. For instance, the Rev. Ernest Baartman was supposed to function - according to the rules and regulations - as the President of the Manyano when he was transferred to the Methodist Church in Gugulethu. To the Reverend, a highly respected minister and leader in the MCSA, this was not an acceptable option. Being a modern and liberal thinker, he asked one of the senior Manyano to take on this position instead. He then merely functioned as an overseer. Although this woman was respected among the Manyano, her being chosen by the Reverend gave rise to some envy.

The struggle for power is a major issue – not just among the three traditional women’s organisations – but also among the Manyano. There is a power struggle between the older and younger women and between the women who hold positions and those who do not. It is a normal feature of any democratic system that positions of power are transferred to different people after a certain period of time, but this would be regarded as devastating by those Manyano who have held such positions for many years. This means, that only a few of the Manyano get the chance to try out their leadership talents.

“Power struggles starts when people are receiving power to become church leaders. If you are made a church leader you’re getting a platform of power of some sort. Then, when they want to change you, you see yourself being again pressed down. You’ll find that there are some old ladies, who are quite old but still are leaders of the church because if you change that person there, it is as if you have guillotened her altogether... She does not function anymore, she just withdraws within herself while other people are saying: ‘Please, come up and support’, she would like to withdraw. “

The power struggle also happens amongst the minister’s wives when a new Manyano District President is elected.

“The power struggle is there with minister’s wives themselves now. The power struggle thing is not just vested on the Society level. It comes up to the District level. And we find that my wife when it is time to vote for president, she may be taker and the others may discriminate against her. But while she has won the vote. So, if some minister’s wife may become District President, the other minister’s wives will not accept.”²⁴⁶

Apart from the envy and power struggle, the Manyano welcome the increase of womens’ empowerment in the black churches. According to questionnaires that were distributed to The Manyano in the congregations at Langa and Paarl in April and May 1997,²⁴⁷ all of the questioned women felt that women have an important role to play in the black churches. Only two women were not happy that women are finally permitted to function as Society Stewards, elders, deacons, lay ministers and ordained ministers. Concerning the support of men empowering women, eighteen women felt very encouraged and twelve saw some aid coming from the men in their congregations. The same answers were given concerning the mutual support of women in the congregations.

²⁴⁵ Interview with Rev. W. Sanqela, 21 May 1997

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ For details refer to appendix 5

To this day, the Manyano regard themselves as a prayer union, not a union of preachers.²⁴⁸ However, it seems that they have developed more preaching and leaderships gifts than many white women. During their meetings and sermons the Manyano give evidence of their talents in speaking of the word of God.

The questionnaires already mentioned above, also gave evidence of the women's deep connection with Christianity. Thirty-one out of the thirty-three questioned women stated that they believed that they were saved through baptism. When asked what they thought of the Bible, they recorded:

“The Bible gives me happiness”

“It is the greatest book in the world”

“It is good because it leads me right ways in life”

“The Bible teaches me about God”

The statements above are but a few selections. The other women referred equally positive to the Bible. The questionnaires also showed how strong the link is between the women, their ministers and their congregation.

The Manyano environment give black women the security to experiment with and develop their preaching talents. They take their responsibilities as Christian women very seriously and try to carry their Manyano life into the other parts of their lives. For women who are faced with and who often are personally affected by extreme violence, child abuse, rape, and the disappearance of close family bonds, the Manyano offer a place where lost strength and faith can be replenished. In addition to their many duties as breadwinners, mothers and grandmothers, Manyano women make time to hold weekly prayer meetings and engage in various social services, such as caring for the aged and the poor, and visiting the sick in hospitals and at home. They also provide soup kitchens for school children who would otherwise go without food all day because their parents lack the money. All in all the Manyano guarantee one of only a few stable and structured places in the midst of an often chaotic and frightening township life.

However, their readiness to serve others is not always rewarded. There were cases of murder of grandmothers committed by their own 15 or 16 year old grandchildren who were merely interested in the money they could steal from the old women.²⁴⁹

The Manyano movement will continue, certainly in the rural areas where changes are not taking place as rapidly as in a city environment. But they will also continue to be apparent in the Methodist churches in the urban areas in spite of the decline in membership which is due to the aging and the fact that fewer young women are joining the Manyano. In 1997 the youngest member of the Manyano at Langa was 37, the eldest 77 years old. The majority of the women were in their forties and fifties. At Paarl – a more rural area - the youngest Manyano was 37 and the oldest 62 years old.²⁵⁰ Here, the majority of the women were in their thirties and forties. In 2000, fifty-four women were enlisted as members on probation in the Cape of Good Hope District.²⁵¹ This is not a great number but sufficient for the Manyano not to get too worried about their future yet.

²⁴⁸ MCSA, Cape of Good Hope District, Reports to Synod (2000), 147

²⁴⁹ Interview with P. Sangela, 21 May 1997

²⁵⁰ Questionnaires distributed among the Methodist Manyano in Langa and Paarl in May 1997 (personal archives)

²⁵¹ MCSA, Cape of Good Hope District, Reports to Synod (2000), 148



Manyano, Methodist Church Langa (1997)



Manyano, Methodist Church Langa (1997)

photographs by Uta Theilen

2.3 The Women's Auxiliary

The reasons for the inception of the W.A. differ from those of the Manyano. In the early Manyano, Christianised women meet to support each other in their new faith. By contrast, the W.A. started as a support group for the Christian mission. At the time alcohol abuse was a major issue, since these first women's groups fought vigorously for abstinence.²⁵²

The forerunners of what later became the W.A. were a group in Berea, Johannesburg, that was established in 1907, and another group at Sunnyside, Pretoria, in 1908. Both were initiated by Rev. William A. Allcock who also functioned as their President.²⁵³

Rev. Allcock's initiative was duplicated by Rev. A. J. Johnson, who started a women's group at Norwood, Johannesburg in 1909. He also functioned as President of this group. Thus, the first white women's groups were formed and led by men. Contemporary society did not leave much choice to women, who did not have equal rights with men. South African white women only received the right to vote in 1930. Black and coloured women were excluded.²⁵⁴ This was the political and mental framework in which South African women had to function during the first decades of the 20th century. Women in the churches needed the commitment and support of a few ministers to get their groups started. After they had been given this opportunity, the idea of women's gatherings in favour of the Methodist Church could spread further.

By 1915 there were many independent group meetings throughout the Transvaal, under different names and with no contact between them.²⁵⁵ Two Methodists, Esther Burnett and Rev. Henry Goodwin, saw the need to link the isolated groups together. As a result of their concern, a committee of interested women²⁵⁶ was formed in August 1915. The daughter of one of the committee members, Isobel Hogg recalls this event:

"My Dad (Rev. John Mullineux, U.T.) told me that at the Synods the women were called upon to prepare the hall with flowers, seating, prepare tea complete with food, set the urn to boil and then were expected to disappear. No women were allowed to pour tea or serve food – in fact it was a 100 % male affair! The feeling among the women was that they were carrying so much in the Church, raising money, keeping the Church in order for services and doing a lot of support ... they felt they wanted to be recognised as an official body within the Church."²⁵⁷

During a Central Church Council four women²⁵⁸ who had been appointed as a deputation approached the Chairman of the District, Rev. Amos Burnett, with their proposal. They asked for official recognition of their work, for the permission to hold a Women's Conference during the next Synod in 1916, form a District Council and draw up a constitution for their organisation. The proposal was accepted and the first Women's Annual Conference held during the Synod in 1916. At the time, the name of the organisation was "Women's Association". The name was changed to "The Guild of the Wesleyan Methodist Women of South Africa"²⁵⁹ after the 1916 Annual Church Conference²⁶⁰ had approved the Committee's report of the Women's Association:²⁶¹

²⁵² Interview with P. Attwell, May 1996

Peggy Attwell saw a connection with the temperance movement which started in the USA in the 19th century. Temperance is still playing a major role in the MCSA.

²⁵³ Attwell, P., 4

²⁵⁴ Coloured men had the vote in the Cape.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 7

Much critique of this inequality of the races was given by the South African writer Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) who not only spoke up for gender equality among Whites but among all South Africans. For more details on Olive Schreiner see Burdett, C. (2001)

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Mrs. Ester Burnett, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Ellen Cox, Miss Jenny Howard, Mrs. M. Lancaster, Mrs. Mabel Mullineux, Mrs. Newbolt, Sister Emma Ollerenshaw and Miss Boden.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 3

²⁶⁰ Mrs. Ellen Cox, Mrs. Mabel Mullineux, Miss Jenny Howard, Sister Emma Ollerenshaw.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 5

²⁶² Ibid., 6

²⁶³ The highest court of the Methodist Church

²⁶⁴ Ten names of women were listed by the initials or Christian names of their husbands.

“The Conference resolved that the following be a committee to enquire how and to what extent the Church can best avail itself of the services of the women thereof, and to report to the next Conference.”²⁶²

During the second Women's Annual Conference in 1917, a constitution was drawn up. Letters were sent to all parishes in the District of the Transvaal to acquire information about existing women's groups in the District. There were twenty-nine with a membership of 800.²⁶³ In the same year the name was once again changed, this time to “Wesleyan Methodist Women's Auxiliary”.²⁶⁴

Early on, the idea of a co-ordinated country-wide organisation of Methodist women began to emerge. Right from the start, written records of the new organisation were kept up to date.²⁶⁵ The W.A. members also made sure that they developed structures and organisational methods to ensure an improved network with other Methodist women's groups in South Africa. In 1931, the women's organisations of the Transvaal united with the W.A. of the rest of the country, when three branches of Methodism in South Africa came together.²⁶⁶

One of the prime movers who improved the network between the Methodist women's organisations and spreading of their activities, was Mrs. A. E. Brookes,²⁶⁷ General Secretary of the W.A. in 1919. She also represented the W.A. at the Church Conference for the first time in the same year, and she was the first woman ever to become a member of Conference.²⁶⁸

A newspaper article from 1919 states that the male Church leadership had begun to regard the entry of women into public life as a benefit. It was further noted that on many public questions a woman's standpoint was needed as much as the man's.²⁶⁹ In the years following, a few women started to preach. One of them was Mrs. Heald, who was President of the Claremont Women's Auxiliary in Cape Town in 1924.

Mrs. Heald's preaching activities started a discussion about whether women should preach and if they had the discipline to study to do such work.²⁷⁰ Indeed, it was a problem that women generally lacked fundamental theological education, which made them vulnerable to criticism. Women interested in preaching had no choice but to educate themselves in informal ways, for example by continuous study of the bible and by discussing theological matters in the women's meetings. Biblical education has continued to be an important part of the W.A..

The W.A. exists in ten of the thirteen districts of the MCSA. For basically political reasons, it no longer exists in Mozambique, Clarkebury (Transkei) or Namibia. In Mozambique the W.A. came to an end when English-speaking people left the area in 1945/46. In the Transkei, where the W.A. had been active for sixty-two years, it was banned along with the MCSA in 1978. Fifty-two biblewomen were employed by the W.A.. After the Clarkebury District was reinstated in 1988, W.A. from other Districts continued to support a list of twenty-nine remaining biblewomen. However, the W.A. did not take root in the Transkei to the same extent as it had in the past.

In Namibia a women's organisation called the Women's Fellowship replaced the three former women's organisations – the Women's Manyano, the Women's Association and the Women's Auxiliary - over a period in the 1980s.²⁷¹ Formally the development of the Methodist women's organisations has achieved what the Church leadership still wants to attain in South Africa. But in reality the traditional three women's organisations in Namibia

Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., 6

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ For example Church Minutes covering the early period of 1915-1919

²⁶⁶ See Chapter 1.3

²⁶⁷ Her husband's initials

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 7

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 8

²⁷¹ The Women's Auxiliary started in the former so-called South West Africa Protectorate in 1919.

Ibid., 51

have not achieved the intended purpose. The W.A. is no longer active and the Manyano and the Women's Association still meet separately.²⁷²

The W.A. in South Africa is still active, following up on its social concerns and providing Methodists of all ethnic backgrounds with a number of various activities and funding. There are ongoing projects such as supporting Children's Homes,²⁷³ crèches, homes for abused children and caring for the aged in their own homes or in institutional homes. The members of the W.A. provide (mostly in an honorary capacity) education, personal care, entertainment, religious services, food parcels, the distribution of meals and other services. Recently, more emphasis has been placed on developing self-help services rather than simply providing help to the needy. In addition to the above-mentioned services, the W.A. Branches annually decide on what they call "a specific Christian Citizenship project of the year".²⁷⁴ In the past these were, for example, setting-up employment agencies to match up employers and domestic workers on the provision of water tanks in the township areas.²⁷⁵ The latter example gives an insight into the devastating conditions in many black rural communities.

The number of social activities of the W.A. would not be possible without a well-run organisation to support them. W.A. groups have met for over 75 years in Annual District Meetings in which presidents, secretaries and delegates from the different Districts represent the membership. One delegate per 25 members is elected by the total membership. All of the Districts meet together annually. In the Branches, meetings are held mostly weekly, sometimes only every two months. The women feel that they do not have much of a say at the Synods. They want to become more assertive in this regard.

To the outsider, fund-raising is the most obvious activity of the W.A.. The women themselves lay the emphasis on their spiritual grounding. A short address to the biblewomen at an induction service in 1976 reflects their religious inclination which still holds true today:

"You may be called to feed His flock by preaching and teaching. You may have to nurse the sick, care for the poor, save those who have fallen into sin, and encourage those who are without hope. You will have to show friendship to those who have no friends, no matter how difficult this may be. In all these tasks you must be true evangelists of our Lord Jesus Christ, using each opportunity to help others as He would have done, so that those you serve will come to know Him not only because of what you have told them about Him, but also because you have shown them what He is like."²⁷⁶

Christian fellowship and group loyalty are important values of the W.A.. According to Wesleyan theology, they are regarded as the basis of a spiritual life.

"What is it that lifts women's groups into a warm and glowing fellowship; that seems that parting the better for having met together? One can call it the spirit, atmosphere, fellowship or perhaps the happy combination of many gifts being used to the glory of God. When the atmosphere of the meeting is happy, one can be sure God's Holy Spirit is present. One of the aims of the W.A. is the deepening of the spiritual life. This starts with the individual lives of our members and extends to our homes and families, our church and community. The branch meeting is the place for fellowship with each other, where spiritual growth can take place. ... Studying the Bible, our handbook for the Christian life, opens new vistas of knowledge and allows the still small voice of God's Holy Spirit to speak to each one in a personal way."²⁷⁷

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ For example Marsh Memorial and Heatherdale Children's Homes in the Cape.

Ibid., 109

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 107

In 1956 the Methodist Church changed the name of its "Temperance and Social Welfare Department" to "Christian Citizenship".

Ibid., 105

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 108

²⁷⁶ MCSA, *Women's Auxiliary Newsletters*, 1976, 27

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 35f

Considering how important functioning groups are for the W.A., it is obvious that the shrinking membership is a serious problem for the remaining women. In 1997 there were still 1,200 active members in the Cape District. In 2000, 1,035 members in 36 Branches were counted in the same District.²⁷⁸

As early as 1996, W.A. members in the Cape District pointed out that they were in a organisation that was literally dying out. Very few younger women would join. With “younger women” the W.A. refers to women between the ages of 30 and 40. The W.A. in Cape Town feel that young professional women do not have the time or the interest to join an organisation that demands a high deal of voluntary effort. And they point out that families where both partners have very little time together because of a busy life-style, wish to rather belong to something they can do together.²⁷⁹

The problem of the W.A. dying out seems to be particularly a problem of the Cape District. Other Districts like the Limpopo District (Mpumalanga) or the Natal Coastal District appear to have more younger members. For example in the Limpopo District two vital women in their 40s functioned as District presidents during the last decade. The mere fact of younger presidents affects the higher or lesser popularity of the W.A. for younger women. This would also explain the situation of the W.A. in the Cape District. Since most of the members are elderly, the W.A. has a reputation of being rather old-fashioned and “colonial” in the eyes of younger women.

Peggy Attwell²⁸⁰ and others feel that the W.A. has been continuously marginalised by the Church leadership since the 1980s. They see no sign that the efforts of the W.A. in the past and present are being acknowledged, whether these efforts were protests against the separation of people of different ethnic backgrounds as early as 1939, or the W.A.’s endeavour to meet with the Manyano and with the Women’s Association.²⁸¹ The W.A. women say – as the Manyano do – that their organisation is basically open to women of any ethnic background. Certainly, in the past a melting pot of women in the W.A. failed for cultural reasons and the effects of apartheid policies. But although there were women in the W.A. who were definitely not prejudiced toward women of other ethnicity, they must have acted in a superior manner, otherwise the Manyano would feel less reluctant to join.

All in all, I found during my research that a feeling of disappointment and betrayal prevails among the W.A.. According to them, they have always been loyal to the Church. They think that they are now used as a scapegoat because the Church leadership blames the lack of progress toward a union of the women’s organisations on them.

“Our relations with Church leadership at present, sad to say, are strained. We are in the ‘bad books’ because we are still three separate organisations. Having been involved at a high level from time to time – not all the time – I have come to the conclusion that we are not listened to or ‘heard’. Our efforts were not acknowledged, we have been criticized, but not helped much.”²⁸²

The W.A. leadership cannot accept the criticism of the Church leadership because they feel that they are already doing a lot to join with the Women’s Association and with the Manyano. Thus, they have combined activities with the Women’s Association, for example a combined communion service at the beginning of each new year, quartlery or bi-monthly get-togethers, mutual help with each other’s needs and projects and many more in store.²⁸³

Concerning the relationship with the Manyano, the W.A. leadership has the vision to unite with the Manyano in a federal form of union, within the framework of the values they hold in common. Each organisation should remain autonomous in its different organisational styles. In spite of differences the W.A. leadership feels that they have many things in common with the Manyano:

²⁷⁸ MCSA, Cape of Good Hope District, Reports to Synod (2000), 145

²⁷⁹ P. Attwell, personal letter to Uta Theilen, 23 April 1998

²⁸⁰ Formerly President of the W.A.

²⁸¹ Interview with P. Attwell, April 1997

²⁸² P. Attwell, personal letter to Uta Theilen, 23 April 1998

²⁸³ Ibid.

“... we do share common concerns, we do all identify with the same core beliefs and principles, and we can give expression to this basic unity that is, and always has been, present among us as Methodist women.”²⁸⁴

Peggy Attwell pointed out that the W.A. has never been for a separation among the Methodists of different ethnic backgrounds. So, how could they now be against a union of the women's organisations as the Church leadership imputes to the W.A.:

“The Methodist Church, and the vast majority of Methodist members, never supported the Nationalist Government and its apartheid policies. Our church of which the Auxiliary is a devoted part, worked and prayed and longed for change since our youth, therefore it was with relief and thankfulness that the end of apartheid was received.”²⁸⁵

The W.A. leadership does not quite understand why the Manyano resist a union with them. They do not think that this has to do with the importance that African customs might have for the Manyano. They believe that the African customs which are practised by the Manyano are not necessarily contrary to their Christian belief.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.
²⁸⁵ Ibid.

2.4 The Women's Association

Before the organisation Women's Association was formed as a group in 1947, coloured women met in individual groups attached to their churches, in the same way as the prayer groups of black and white women who later organised themselves into the Manyano and the Women's Auxiliary. Some of the coloured women were already affiliated to the Manyano or with other groups with such names as Classes, Guilds, Bright Hour, etc..²⁸⁶

With the establishment of the W.A., the affiliation of coloured Branches²⁸⁷ was discussed but did not always result in the integration of the coloured women. In 1931, shortly after the union of the Transvaal and the South African Connexion, a resolution from the Transvaal W.A. asked to include the coloured Branches in the Annual Report of the Church. However, representation of the Branches at the District Meetings was reserved to its white members. This demand was ratified in the constitution of the W.A. in 1932:

“Coloured Branches may affiliate to the Women's Auxiliary, under a European President, on accepting the Constitution and on payment of the Affiliation Fee, but they can only be represented at their District Meeting by their European President.”²⁸⁸

This resolution shows the nature of the affiliation of coloured Branches to the W.A.. Unable to be represented by their own people, coloured women were exposed to white paternalism and could only exercise their leadership talents when individual W.A. members would allow them to do so. They found themselves in a dilemma. The affiliation issue was not solved to their satisfaction which resulted in continuing discussions about a separate women's organisation of their own.²⁸⁹

As time progressed, coloured women increasingly dared to speak up for their own interests. By 1944, they had asked for direct and equal representation at District Meetings, at the Synod and Conference instead of having a European president. At the time coloured women still lacked formal representation. If a request was made, it would have been done through a sympathetic white minister.²⁹⁰

The decisive step toward a separate organisation by the name “Women's Association” was eventually taken at a meeting at the Buitenkant Methodist Church in Cape Town in February 1947. The Rev. H. G. Leverton, Superintendent of the Cape Town (coloured) Circuit was the force of this initiative.

In the beginning years the newly founded women's group attracted new members in shifts. This means that the coloured Branches affiliated to the W.A. did not automatically convert to independent Women's Associations. The changes took place gradually and it was not until 1960 that the majority of the coloured Branches of the W.A. had changed over to the Women's Association. The Simonstown Branch of the W.A. - for example - was fully integrated and remained so until the coloured population was forcibly removed from the area in the mid-1960s.

The shift to an organisation of their own attracted new members to the Women's Association. In all of South Africa there were only 335 members in 1945, but they numbered over 2000 in 1956. At this level, the organisation was eligible to send a representative to the Church Conference.²⁹¹ In 1950, membership in the Cape and the Transvaal had reached the 400 required for direct representation at the Synod level.²⁹²

In the 1980s, generation gaps became more visible as a number of young women were trying to pull themselves forward and to free themselves from a life style that expected

²⁸⁶ Attwell, P., 139

²⁸⁷ The first coloured branch started in Johannesburg in 1922. By September 1923 there were eight Branches in the Johannesburg coloured Circuit. Six of them were started by the wife of Rev. M. M. Cobban.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 140

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 141

²⁹⁰ For example at a meeting of the W.A. Cape District Executive in May 1935. Ibid.

²⁹¹ Lorraine Solomon, Women's Association, Southfield, Western Cape, e-mail 20 September 2001

²⁹² Attwell, P., 144

²⁹³ Lorraine Solomon, Women's Association, Southfield (Cape Town), e-mail 20 September 2001

from women that they (at best) matriculate from school, get married, have children and stay at home. Depending on the area, a new way of looking at life developed. In some areas the old-fashioned customs still prevail to this day.²⁹³ The search for a new identity of young women also affected the Women's Association because groups of the young women started their own Fellowships. Some of these Fellowships eventually affiliated to the Women's Association after they had agreed on a common ground with the older generation.

In 1996, the Women's Association comprised 2,500 active members in all of South Africa. In the Cape Province,²⁹⁴ 1,200 women belonged to the coloured women's organisation. Since then the membership of Women's Association has decreased. This is primarily due to the aging and literal dying off of its members and secondly to the merging with the W.A.. The latter resulted in a number of Women's Association Branches closing down. By 2000, their number had dropped to 1,070 members and 64 Branches in the Cape District.²⁹⁵

Traditionally, the Women's Association met on a weekly basis, but due to lack of time, the meetings were reduced to once every fortnight or even only once a month. Especially in Cape Town, the organisation made efforts throughout its existence to empower its women theologically, spiritually and politically. It seems that the establishment of a separate organisation did help to support coloured women in coming to the fore. But the existence or lack of support from their husbands and families should not be underestimated. I found that those women who could count on it were especially successful.

One example is Lorraine Solomon, who lives in Southfield, a suburb of Cape Town. Born in 1934, she has been active in the Methodist Church for many decades. She also was shaped by the racist South African reality. Identifying herself with the liberation struggle during the apartheid years, she considers herself to be a "black woman".²⁹⁶ However, she also realized early in her life that although she was oppressed as a non-white and as a woman, she had advantages by comparison with black South African women. Urban coloureds usually had a better education and economic background than their black fellow citizens.

In 1987, the Church Conference elected Lorraine Solomon as Secretary of the World Federation of Methodist Women.²⁹⁷ This position allowed her to travel abroad and to gain expertise in the setting up of workshops. One of the prominent issues continued to be the empowerment of women, gender and racial equity. Mrs. Solomon finds that a lot still needs to be done within the MCSA, as women are still being discriminated against. It seems that the amount of discrimination varies from rural to urban areas and between white, coloured and black congregations.

A woman who experienced what it means to be a woman, white and a church minister in a coloured congregation is the Rev. Jenny Samdaan. In 1993, she was transferred to Belhar, a coloured section of the MCSA in the Western Cape. When she first started, she was faced with a heap of prejudices and the membership made her life a misery. She does not know if it helped that her husband was a coloured South African, but eventually she was accepted by the congregation. In October 1994, she was invited to work at the Methodist Church of Belhar for another five years.²⁹⁸

Similar to the W.A. and the Manyano, the Women's Association engages in various social activities, such as fund-raising for social activities and helping in cases of emergency.

Spiritually, the Women's Association is very active, with prayer meetings and a well-organised large church service which takes place once a year, close to the date of South

²⁹³ Interview with P. Delpont, University of Western Cape (UWC), Belville, Western Cape, 13 May 1997

²⁹⁴ Covers the area from Namaqualand to Belfort West.

²⁹⁵ In 1986/87 the Women's Association had counted 1,870 members and 78 Branches in the Cape District.

MCSA, Secretarial Report 1987/88, 37th Annual District Meeting, 87

²⁹⁶ Interview with Lorraine Solomon, Southfield, Western Cape, 13 September 1996

²⁹⁷ The name has been extended to "World Federation of Methodist Women and United Churches" to include the United Churches which are strongly represented in Australia, Brazil, Pakistan and Zambia.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Rev. Jenny Samdaan, Belhar, 25 February 1997.

African Women's Day on 9 August. It's called "Woman's Work Sunday", and its purpose is to recognize all the women in the church.

Attracting new members from among the young women is as difficult for the Women's Association as it is for the Manyano and the W.A.. Interesting enough, the Women's Association had with Pamela Delport²⁹⁹ its youngest president at the time of this field research. Pamela (born 1957) felt that she could be only successful as a president because she received sufficient support from the women in the Women's Association. In her opinion, getting together and focusing on mutual goals keeps the organization going and guarantees that the Women's Association will continue to exist.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ See Chapter 3.5

³⁰⁰ Interview with Pamela Delport, UWC, 13 May 1997

2.5 The Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship was founded by the hair-stylist Nomsa Mpambo (born 1955) in the black Township of Gugulethu in 1994. Ms Mpambo, who was excluded from the Manyano after her divorce, did not try to rejoin this organisation. For a number of years she simply attended church sermons but did not engage in any group activities. However, her wish to engage in fund-raising and other activities and to receive recognition for this kind of work led her to form a group of her own that would not be patronized by the powerful Manyano. Thus, the Women's Fellowship was formed. Certainly, the timing was right; apartheid had been abolished and the Church leadership was open to support independent women organisations and groups. Thus, the opportunity arose for black women to express themselves in the framework of the Church but separately from the traditional Manyano.

In the beginning there was only a handful of women. In 1997, thirty members participated in the Methodist parish in Gugulethu. There had been no further increase in membership when I met Nomsa Mpambo again in 2000. It seems that the Women's Fellowship is so far limited to Gugulethu, where it receives support from the ministry.³⁰¹ It certainly was a lucky circumstance that the Rev. Ernest Baartman was appointed to the Methodist Church in Gugulethu in 1996. He thinks it very important that there is more than one organisation where black women can express their spirituality and their social concerns. Again, a new group needs the sympathetic support of the minister to be able to function and grow – similar to the experience of the Women's Association in the 1940s and 50s and the W.A. in its beginnings.

The Women's Fellowship is engaged in similar activities to those of the Manyano, fund-raising for the church and social activities such as helping a member when there is death in her family, helping out with money and looking after the sick.

The members of the Women's Fellowship are about 40 years and up. They are mostly professionals, domestic workers as well as teachers and businesswomen. Because of their professional background their self-esteem is high. They regard themselves as more 'cultured' than the Manyano.³⁰² The Manyano on their part do not necessarily approve of this new women's organisation. They feel that black women who want to be organised within the MCSA should join their group.³⁰³ A few Manyano do not regard the Women's Fellowship as a threat but are happy about a new version of a women's organisation in their church as long as the new group regards prayer of prime importance.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Gugulethu also has a newly founded women's group which is also called Women's Fellowship and which was founded as an optional group to the Manyano. This is the only other example that I came across during my field research 1996-1997 in regard to black congregations. In other cases women tend to call their group Women's Fellowship. Another example was a group which was started by young coloured women who did not feel comfortable with the Women's Association; see Chapter 3.5.

³⁰² Interview with Rev. E. Baartman, Langa (Cape Town), 26 February 1997

³⁰³ Interview P. Sanqela, Paarl, 28 May 1997

³⁰⁴ Questionnaires to Manyano at Langa and Paarl, April/May 1997

2.6 The Women's Network

The Women's Network was officially formed in 1990 and has functioned ever since as a resource facility and as a platform for reconciliation opportunities for all women in the MCSA. The predecessor of the Women's Network was a group called Women's Desk which existed already in 1985. Its members pushed for drastic changes in the MCSA and South Africa. Pamela Delpont and Jean Fisher, both members of the Connexional Committee of the Women's Network in 1995 recall these beginnings.

"Since 1991 women have started to make noise. We had a big consultation in Pietermaritzburg where women actually got together and started telling the Church that we have had enough. There were a couple of follow ups. Then we were adamant that we were going to form a Women's Desk.³⁰⁵ And we wanted to be represented in the Church. And then we made the Church officially recognize this Women's Desk. And then they didn't know what to do with this women's Desk because we weren't an organization. Then they slot us in which was then the Christian Citizen Department."³⁰⁶

"The idea of a Women's Desk was viewed with suspicion by many women and with confusion by the Church and its leaders. Some saw it as a ploy to force the three women's organisations to unite. Others felt that it was a fourth organisation to cater for those women who were not members of the three organisations. It was viewed by some as a platform for radical feminism."³⁰⁷

The committee of the Women's Network was first located in Durban and then moved to the Cape. The women involved in this group are all well educated and modern in their worldviews. Many of them are professionals who share their resources as much as their schedules allow. In 1997 there were plus minus nine women, aged 40 to 50 years, in the Cape District.

The Women's Network stresses that it is not an organisation but a group that allows "all Methodist women to come together in their diversity, to build relationships, to find spiritual support and to be exposed to the issues of the day as they interact together."³⁰⁸

According to Pamela Delpont the Christian gospel is the foundation of the Women's Network's engagement:

"We are very adamant that our aims and goals should be Christ-orientated. So, this package comes with theology all the time. For example, when we talked to women about their lack of empowerment, we would use the disciples. You would always find you related to the bible, even in District Meetings. At the moment we would spend half an hour on bible study. So, you are not only equipping the women for the real world. You are equipping them spiritually to go and work out. So, we try very hard to balance that out. So, it is theological as well as worldly."³⁰⁹

Empowering women theologically includes supporting the women who have managed to attain a leadership position in the Church, for example as a lay minister:

"When there are women gatherings they ask a minister to preach, a male to preach. Then we would say: 'Look, how many female ministers are in the Church? We need to empower women and equip them to support the women that are in leadership as well.' So that was one of the ways that we started making the Church recognize the women."³¹⁰

The Women's Network has no authority over the existing women's organisations, nor does it have a formal link with them. However, any member of the three Connexional women's organisations is welcome to join in and attend meetings and workshops. The

³⁰⁵ Predecessor of the Women's Network

³⁰⁶ Interview with P. Delpont, UWC, 13 May 1997

³⁰⁷ J. Fisher, c.v., August 2001 (personal archives)

³⁰⁸ MCSA, Report to Synod 1996, 45

³⁰⁹ Interview with P. Delpont, UWC, 13 May 1997

³¹⁰ Ibid.

Women's Network has tried to get links to the Circuits in order to have regular contact with them and to let the women know what the Women's Network was doing. The work of the Women's Network has become more publicised through its magazine *NetWord.za*. At the time of this field research this did not yet happen to the satisfaction of this women's group.

In 1996, a District Executive was formed to facilitate local activities and review the vision and objectives of the Districts. Meetings were arranged at various Societies to accomplish this. At these meetings, goals were summarized that were valid in 1996 and which continue to be so today:

1. The Women's Network wants to be actively involved in the process of the Journey to the New Land.
2. Mission and evangelism are a concern.
3. Women's could and should play a helpful role in educating each other for leadership and in giving each other confidence.
4. Women need help with their integration in the Church and in society. This process can be facilitated by helping them to share their stories and move toward unity.³¹¹

The Women's Network is run by a committee that decides on the issues that are of contemporary concern. The meetings of the group are irregular, on an average once a quarter. If a project is on the way, meetings are organized up to three times a month.

Examples of seminars are: a Spiritual Seminar³¹² in 1993, and a national conference on the theme "God's Vision for Women" in 1996. In 1999, the never-ending issue of violence against women and children in South Africa kept the Women's Network busy.

The Women's Network was and is the favourite child of the Church leadership among the various women's groups. They regard the Women's Network as the only group that could transform the apartheid-related structures that still remain in the other women's organisations. The Women's Network on its part does not want to be a threat to the three Connexional women's organisations. That is why its representatives refused to be an equal partner to the women's organisations in the Joint Committee - the meeting of the leadership of the three women's organisations with the Presiding Bishop - although the Church leadership would like to see the Women's Network in this position. The Women's Network prefers to function as a witness and a mediator. It does not want to be used as a pressure tool on the three traditional women's organisation to join.

The importance of the Women's Network to the Church leadership was underlined in May 1999, when the Annual Synod agreed that the Women's Network should be given a seat at Synod.³¹³ Practically, this official recognition opened the doors for more networking among the women of the Cape District.

³¹¹ MCSA, Report to Synod 1996, 45

³¹² "A Day of Drawing Aside with God" in 1993.

MCSA, Reports to Synod (1993) 121

³¹³ MCSA, Report to Synod 2000, 142

2.7 Reflections

In demanding the union of its traditional women's organisations, the MCSA leadership focuses too much on the problem of racial separation and thereby tends to forget the history of the different groups that still have a say today. That history shaped its members and gave them their individual identities as Christian women, often in a hostile environment. This is especially the case for the Manyano.

When crying for drastic reforms, the Church leadership seems to overlook that reforms have already started from within the groups; certainly because of pressure from the Church, but mostly because of changes that came along as generations passed, with the dramatic political change in 1994 and last but not least with the increase of women's empowerment in South African society and in the MCSA.

Rather than making unrealistic demands on the women, the Church leadership should focus on supporting women within their congregations. This holds especially true for black women who have a much more difficult standing in their churches than coloured and white women.

As far as a survival of the three traditional women's organisations is concerned, one can state that the Manyano will maintain a powerful position in the black churches, especially in rural areas, but to a certain degree also in urban areas. The black women devoted a lot of energy and time as they managed to combine family, provide a living and voluntary work in the Church over several generations. Because they invested a lot, they will lose a lot, if they are forced to give up their ways of looking at the world and acting accordingly. The Manyano developed structures – admittedly rigid structures – that kept them going in times of chaos, oppression and a life that was and is overshadowed by crime. As much as the AICs are interesting to foreign entrepreneurs wishing to invest in South Africa, the Manyano are equally fit to function for commerce; not just as a base for religious activities. The reason for drawing this comparison is to point out that the stability of the Manyano is a stability that cannot be taken for granted in contemporary South Africa. It is outstanding.

Certainly, the Manyano will change. And certainly younger professional women will prefer spending their free time in other places than with the Manyano. Because of the Young Women's Manyano and because of the strong ties between mothers and daughters, a certain number of young women will continue to join – also in the urban areas. Even a rigid organisation like the Manyano does not remain static. Individual Manyano will seek the contact with Methodist women from the other organisations as they have increasingly done in the past decade. An improvement of communication between the three traditional Methodist women's organisations (the Manyano, the Women's Association and the Women's Auxiliary) will gradually lead to changes. Reconciliation is an ongoing process.

The Women's Fellowship will continue on a small scale. It is difficult for women professionally absorbed to find the strength and the time to build up new structures. The Women's Fellowship also lacks the communication with the other women's organisations of the Church. That is why this group – at least at this point – cannot be regarded as a strong partner in reconciling the women in post-apartheid South Africa. The Women's Fellowship will continue as a group of black women who seek independence from the Manyano more than interacting with other women's organisations of the Church.

Women who were engaged in the Women's Auxiliary were mostly women who did not work outside their homes. This means that they had more time available for voluntary work. Today, also a great number of white women go out to work. This fact alone will lead to a decrease in membership of the Women's Auxiliary because working women don't have as much time as housewives and – I dare to say this – white women are not as desperate as black women because they usually don't have to struggle as hard to survive. Whereas the Manyano are a question of emotional and sometimes physical survival for black women, the W.A. is a question of how the individual woman prefers to spend her time. Even if she is a dedicated Christian, she does not need the Auxiliary as much as black Methodist women need the Manyano. White Methodist women might find it sufficient to attend church services and meet with other women of their congregation on an irregular basis.

As was pointed out in Chapter 2.3, the W.A. is literally dying out, at least in the Cape Province. Possibly a few new young members could turn the wheel around. With “young”, one would have to think of women in their thirties; women who are settled, professionally as well as privately. Women in their twens, generally speaking, are expected to have other priorities than engaging in voluntary church work.

The Women’s Association will continue in areas predominantly populated by coloured South Africans. In more ‘mixed areas’, they will tend to join in with the W.A. or engage in the Women’s Network, depending on a more modern or more conservative attitude toward life and Christianity.

The Women’s Network will continue as a platform for Methodist women who are looking for support: professionally and spiritually. The Women’s Network started to function as a melting pot in the MCSA. I say “started”, because at this point the Women’s Network predominantly attracts white and coloured women.



Ethel Sanjanja, Manyano (1997)



Nomsa Mpambo, Women's Fellowship (2000)



Pamela Delport, Women's Association & Women's Network (2000)



Jean Fisher, Women's Network (2000)



Peggy Attwell, Women's Auxiliary & Manyano (2000)

photographs by Uta Theilen

3 Methodist Women in leadership positions

3.1 Introduction to some case studies

Women were and are an integral part of South African Methodist communities throughout the history of the Church. As has been emphasised in Chapter 1.3, they were backstage activists for many decades as they mostly functioned for their parishes in a quiet and modest manner. For a long time they did not have the opportunity or the courage to take over positions that were occupied by their male fellow Christians. This has been changing since the 1980's when women demanded more influence as spiritual leaders in the MCSA. Their self-esteem developed through their work in the women's organisations. The organisations naturally provided the women with leadership skills by allowing them to take over important roles as social and spiritual helpers in different church projects. Taking over important roles in the Church is regarded as a great honour by the women and as an opportunity to bring out talents that would otherwise slumber. But not just the women benefit. The Church does as well. This is a reality which is no longer underrated by the leadership in the MCSA. After all the communities can exist and function properly through voluntary work. Therefore it is counter-productive if women are prevented from working as Circuit Stewards, Lay Ministers and others. The leadership of the MCSA knows this and takes efforts to change the situation. And although the contest between male and female members is still going on - especially in the black congregations women are still less likely to be elected as Circuit Stewards or to engage in lay ministry - things are progressively improving. Questionnaires distributed among the Manyano in Langa and Paarl, Western Cape, reflect this development. The majority of the Manyano expressed satisfaction with the speed of change in their parishes. They were convinced that their role in the Church has definitely changed to the better since the mid 1990's.³¹⁴ They also expressed their pride about women taking on leadership positions in the various congregations. When asked how they would describe the support of men vis-à-vis women who try to attain leadership positions as well as the support among the women themselves, most of them were satisfied with the conditions.³¹⁵

In the following Chapters (3.2-3.7) six Methodist women are introduced who managed to occupy leadership positions, either in their parishes or in their women's organisations. Their stories also reflect facets of South African history because the women come from different ethnic backgrounds and each woman contributes individual experiences. In spite of, sometimes distinct, differences in their biographies, all six women have struggled for more personal independence and for influence in their congregations. Their personal development has been a continuous progress. The black and coloured representatives had to face multiple difficulties during the apartheid era. They showed an enormous amount of courage and stamina as they did not give up their dreams and ideals. But even after the end of apartheid, they still face prejudice and hindrances of all sort. Thus, any woman who does not give up, and who continues to take on responsibility in the Church and in society, is an encouraging example for the women who have not dared to come to the fore yet but who wish to do so. Therefore, each individual story is also a public story and a witness to the changes in the MCSA.

Comprehensive interviews with Mrs. J. (Manyano), Ethel Sanjanja (Manyano), Nomsa Mpambo (Women's Fellowship), Pamela Delport (Women's Association, Women's Network), Peggy Attwell (W.A.) and with Jean Fisher (Women's Network) are the foundation of the material presented. Peggy Attwell and Jean Fisher provided me with an additional detailed curriculum vitae.

The interviews give insight into the biographies of the women, they reflect their family backgrounds, their interests and their development on a personal and a professional level. The outcome of the interviews was not predictable. Although I compiled a list of questions before an interview took place, I needed to play the situation by ear. This means that not all questions could be posed if the situation did not allow. Some of the interviews took a lot of confidence building work beforehand. And even after the women

³¹⁴ Questionnaires distributed to the Methodist Manyano in Langa and Paarl in April/May 1997 (personal archives)

³¹⁵ Ibid.

were willing to share their stories some were shy. This explains why the interviews with the white and coloured representatives give more biographical details, such as exact dates of birth etc., than those of the black interview subjects. The language barrier was a certain obstacle in the conversation with Ethel Sanjanja and Nomsa Mpambo. Ethel might have conveyed more information if her language skills in English had been more profound. However, I regard the interview with Ethel Sanjanja as very informative and valuable because Ethel is one concrete example of the many black women in the MCSA who are usually too shy to speak up in a white world. Her story is an example of a positive development in the MCSA after apartheid.

3.2 Mrs. J., Circuit Steward

At the time of the interview³¹⁶ Mrs. J.³¹⁷ was in her mid fifties. She lived with her husband in East Rondebosch, a district of Cape Town. East Rondebosch used to be an exclusively white area. Most of the residents are middle-class families. The houses and gardens surrounding them are of a comfortable size and tidy.

Mrs. J. is a Xhosa-speaking South African who has been working as a nurse for many years. At the time when I met her, she worked full-time as a head nurse in the well-known hospital Groote Schuur in Rondebosch. She was only able to take on this responsibility after the end of apartheid. She mentioned that before black people were not considered for responsible professional positions.

Although Mrs. J. lived in East Rondebosch, she was an active member of the Manyano at the Methodist congregation in Langa which is located about ten kilometres from her home. Mrs. J. has two daughters and one son, all of them grown up and living in other parts of South Africa.

Meeting Mrs. J. took some initial effort because any visitor of the Manyano has to run through the whole hierarchical set before being allowed to talk to any member. This means that I had to contact the leading minister of the Methodist congregation in Langa first. Since I had known the Rev. Madhlala from a visit to Durban a few years earlier and also because he was a gentle person, this first contact was fairly easy. Meeting his wife proved to be more difficult because she was not accessible for almost one year. This certainly was due to her long working hours as a nurse. But it maybe also had to do with a lack of interest or unwillingness on her part. Luckily, I met the young Miss Madhlala by chance. Communication between the two of us worked well and soon after this encounter, Mrs. Madhlala called to give her permission to interview the Manyano at Langa. This experience proved once again that luck is very much part of the field researcher's success or failure.

The first meeting with Mrs. J. took place at a Sunday church service in the Methodist Church of Langa. Mrs. J. is a cheerful lady with shiny eyes and a broad smile. She seemed very happy to meet someone who was interested in the Manyano and introduced me to her group of Manyano women. She was also very open to explain details of the sermon, of the seating arrangements in the church and other procedures. She also invited me to join several Manyano meetings and to interview her at her home in East Rondebosch.

Meeting Mrs. J. proved to be a great opportunity. Her friendliness made communication easy as well as her excellent knowledge of the English language. Again, it was the African who provided a bridge for a wider understanding between people with different cultural backgrounds.

Mrs. J. did not start off as a Methodist. She grew up as the daughter of an Anglican priest. Because of his work the family moved frequently and Mrs. J. received her education in different parts of South Africa. When she trained to become a nurse in Port Elizabeth, she met the man who would become her husband. He was a Methodist. But even after Mrs. J. got married at age 29, she continued to follow her Anglican faith for a number of years as she called herself "a staunch Anglican". In the interview she explained that she very much enjoyed the Anglican way of sanctifying the service, especially the Holy Communion. She said that during those occasions she felt removed from earthly boundaries.³¹⁸

By becoming a member of the Anglican Mother's Union, she followed her mother's footsteps. However, she did not enjoy it and eventually opted out, as she referred to it. Years later, when she joined the Methodist Manyano on her own accord, she took great pleasure in it because she felt that it had been her own free choice.

³¹⁶ East Rondebosch (Cape Town), 4 May 1997

³¹⁷ Name changed

³¹⁸ Ibid.

Mrs. J.'s three children were baptised in the Anglican Church. Because her husband was very engaged in his own church, the MCSA, Mrs. J. gradually feared the danger of religious division in her family. To prevent this, she eventually decided to join the Methodists. At that time she was in her early forties. Positive encounters with Methodist hymns during her youth facilitated this decision for her.

"The (Methodist) music was fantastic. I enjoyed the music. And my father used to say, even before I got married: 'I am wondering if the Methodists are not getting under your skin.'...With the Methodist type of music it brought up that Africanism in me."³¹⁹

Mrs. J. feels very strongly about her Christian faith but not less strongly about her African background and traditions. More details on this matter will be given later in this chapter.

Changing denominations in South Africa is not unusual. For instance, people change their denomination when their social status changes. Women often change their denomination when they get married to someone who belongs to another church. Combining different religious patterns comes naturally. Thus, Mrs. J. still cherished what she called "Anglican sanctity" but her Anglican background did not conflict with the ways spirituality is practised in the MCSA. She felt that she could live her spiritual needs in both churches.

When Mrs. J. was elected Circuit Steward by the Quarterly Meeting³²⁰ of the Dumisani Circuit³²¹ in 1995, she was the first woman in a black Methodist congregation who occupied this most important voluntary position in the Church. Although Mrs. J. had been an active member of the Manyano for many years and was very engaged in the Christian Citizen Department³²², she did not expect to be elected as Circuit Steward. Thus, the decision of the Quarterly Meeting took her by surprise.

"I did not take it as a credit to what I have done. But for some reason I was voted in as a Circuit Steward by the whole Quarterly Meeting. ... This is the second term³²³ I am serving. I do believe God has got a purpose in everything he does. That's my belief. You know, one time I was in a Circuit meeting and one lady sitting next to me asked my name: 'Are you ... ?' And I said 'Yes' and I never met that lady and she said: 'You have been chosen by God.' And I said: 'What do you mean?' She answered: 'When you were to be elected as Circuit Steward we prayed and your name came up.'"³²⁴

Being elected a Circuit Steward is more than a political election; it is a religious matter. This explains why the male membership objected to putting a woman in this position. Even at the end of the twentieth century women were not regarded as fit for important spiritual roles.

Mrs. J. is aware of the opposition and criticism that her election created. Sometimes this makes her standing in the congregation very difficult. She finds consolation and strength by turning to the Christian faith.

"I know, when I was appointed a Circuit Steward I was up against a lot of opposition. From my congregation I must say. And from men especially. From my congregation because it is something which is new for a woman. And I was the first woman. And I knew immediately that I would get some hard knocks. But I said: 'I know, if it is God's will, that I am occupying the position, he will lead me.' And he has done so. A lot of criticism, a lot of bashing has happened and I realised later, I was being bashed. At the time I was insulated, I didn't feel anything. God insulated me. And I experienced a

³¹⁹ Interview with Mrs. J., East Rondebosch (Cape Town), 4 May 1997

³²⁰ Encompasses all leaders from different Societies.

³²¹ The Dumisani Circuit (Xhosa: "to praise") encompasses the congregations of Athlone, Claremont, Langa, Lansdowne, Rosebank and Pinelands; they are districts of Cape Town.

³²² The Department in the MCSA which deals with social affairs, taking care of the people in need etc..

³²³ 1 term = 1 year

³²⁴ Ibid.

lot of unacceptability. They loved me as a person but they didn't accept me as a Circuit Steward."³²⁵

When Mrs. J. was active in the Manyano, things were in order in the eyes of the men. Mrs. J. was cherished for her ongoing enthusiasm as well as for her wit. But when she made the shift from a lay position to a spiritual leader, fear arose - fear, that Mrs. J. might not stay in her place as an African woman.

"... I am sure our men, our African men, thought I would not respect them in the way that I should do. And I have never stopped giving and showing them respect. Because being a Circuit Steward is nothing but being a servant. And I took it like that. I am a servant to these people and I even detested the effect, the way they separated me from the congregation and put me in a special place."³²⁶

The occupation of a special position in the church is made visible by a certain seating arrangement. Usually the Circuit Steward is positioned on the front row of the stage. Since the male church members first wanted to be sure that Mrs. J. deserved her new position, she was seated on a chair located between the male and female section of the church.³²⁷

Mrs. J.'s tasks as a Circuit Steward includes the unification of the women's organisations and the "unification of the Church". Thus, her portfolio as a Circuit Steward goes along with the aims of the Church's initiative, Journey to a New Land.³²⁸ She also functions as a mediator between different congregations and organisations, and is in charge of the organisation of meetings and visits of ministers from different Societies.³²⁹

In 1996, Mrs. J. started a small group of seven women who were members of the Manyano, the Women's Association and the W.A.. They met on a monthly basis to pray together and to share their concerns, beliefs and values. The fact that these women had already known each other personally, shows how important personal links are for a basis of trust. It also shows how difficult it is to develop confidence in each other without a previous relationship. Mrs. J.'s group planned to progressively attract more women. One of their aims was to cross racial borders and to develop skills that would empower them as women: e.g. speech. A workshop on women as victims which showed them how they can escape such situations was part of their efforts in 1997. Certainly, the opportunities provided by Mrs. J.'s activities for cross-racial cooperation is a positive development. However, Mrs. J.'s lack of knowledge and interest in the Women's Network shows how difficult it is to bring women together who don't know each other yet. After all, the Women's Network is the definitive cross-racial women's group in the Methodist Church.

Cross-racial communication within the Church remains a major topic. This also concerns the relation of Judaeo-Christian faith and African beliefs and rituals. Mrs. J. has taken on the position of a modern black South African woman. In her opinion one needs to examine which rituals and customs should be still practised and which should not. As much as she supports a revival of African customs, she is aware that her own struggle as a Circuit Steward is closely connected to the patriarchal background of her culture.

One of the African traditions that she feels strongly about are the puberty rites. She proudly talked about her son's decision to go through the traditional circumcision ritual which lasts three months. At the time the young man decided on his own to go out to the bush of the Eastern Cape. Mrs. J. is certain that this experience made her son a more responsible human being. Further, she is convinced that the few white young men who undertake the traditional African circumcision ritual turn out to be better Whites. By "better Whites" she means individuals who are more aware of the basics of life and less prejudiced toward other cultures and other ways of living.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Men and woman sit separately in the church. Another distinction in seating is made between the Manyano and the non-Manyano.

³²⁸ See Chapter 1.5

³²⁹ Circuit Stewards are also supposed to take care of the finances of the Circuit which demands a high investment of time and a lot of responsibility. Mrs. J. handed this task to a male colleague.

Furthermore, one should note that Mrs. J.'s son did not hide his circumcision experience in his congregation. On the contrary, after his return from the bush, he openly demonstrated the clay painting on his body which is, according to the traditions, applied for a three week period. Thus, he identified himself in public as a successful participant of the traditional circumcision ritual.

To Mrs. J., it was important to know that her son was in good hands in the Eastern Cape. The circumcision rituals practised in the urban areas no longer have much in common with the traditional ways. Aside from risking their lives by the lack of proper hygiene, the young men pay a lot of money to smart business men disguised as traditional doctors.³³⁰

Mrs. J. knew that her struggle as the Circuit Steward at the Dumisani Circuit will continue; maybe as long as she will hold that position. Some changes need more patience and time than others and gender still gives rise to extensive prejudice and set ideas about what a person is and is not allowed to do.

"There are people who are still thinking that the old order is the better. But I have got reservations toward that because we are saying: 'We are one and undivided.' And why can't we, why are we not allowing and trusting God to do it? Because we are always seeing ourselves as the main actors and not God as the main actor. We just got to let ourselves be manipulated by God. To his cause, God made this world for all of us. And I see nothing wrong with that. There is nothing wrong with it. We can live side to side, we can stay together in this house as human beings. That's all."³³¹

Mrs. J. finds strength and confidence in her Christian faith. She finds comfort in it whenever she is not certain how to handle a situation. And she is aware that she is a role model for other women and wishes that in a few years time it will be as status quo for a woman to serve as Circuit Stewards as it has been for women to be part of the Manyano.

³³⁰ Also see Chapter 4.3.1

³³¹ Ibid.

3.3 Ethel Sanjanja, Lay Minister

Ethel Sanjanja is a Xhosa speaking South African who was in her late thirties at the time of the interview³³². She worked as a live-in domestic worker in Constantia, an affluent community close to Cape Town. A live-in domestic worker is someone who lives on the premises of the employer. In the case of Ethel, her employer was a well to do Jewish family.

Ethel shared her modest two-room apartment with her husband, her teenage daughter, her niece (who was about 20 years old) and her mother. Ethel's husband worked as a gardener in the same part of town. The couple considered themselves fortunate to have jobs although they were often obliged to work six to seven days a week and lacked social security in the event of illness. However, considering the high percentage of unemployment among the black population, they felt grateful. A potential threat to Ethel was unemployed, educated Blacks, who were willing to take on domestic work because other job opportunities were lacking.

I met Ethel Sanjanja with the help of Jean Fisher.³³³ Both of them were active in the same parish, at the Methodist Church of Bergvliet, a neighbouring suburb of Constantia. At the time of the field research Ethel was a "Lay minister on trial".³³⁴ The MCSA has two categories of Lay Ministers. The first³³⁵ to which Ethel belonged, is the 'Local Preacher'.³³⁶ These are lay people who remain in secular employment, but who are trained and commissioned³³⁷ to preach and conduct worship services, funerals and other acts of public and private worship (e.g. in hospital wards, retirement homes etc.). The training involves two years of part time study, at three different levels. Ethel was in her second year and a student of the first level, the so-called Award level.³³⁸ This level is designed for people whose highest educational qualification is grade 7. Award courses are conducted non residentially, mainly by correspondence, with ordained ministers assisting with live tuition in most cases. Award courses can be studied in various languages, but mainly in Xhosa, Zulu, South Sotho, sePedi (North Sotho), SeTswana, Afrikaans and English. In the case of Ethel the language was Xhosa.

"The courses are in Biblical Studies, Theology, Homiletics and Wesley Studies. Local Preachers 'on Trial' (i.e. student Local Preachers) submit essay assignments and undergo oral examinations and Trial Services. Their

³³² Constantia (Cape Town), 24 May 1997

³³³ See Chapter 3.7

³³⁴ Term used in the MCSA

³³⁵ The second category of lay ministry is referred to as the Diaconate. Here, people may choose to become Biblewomen or Evangelists or Deacons. "An Evangelist is required to have a minimum educational standard of Grade 7 and Local Preachers' training at least at Award Level. Evangelists assist local ordained ministers in preaching and pastoral work and are full time lay ministers of the Church."

Rev. T. Attwell, Rosebank (Cape Town), e-mail 8 December 2001.

Evangelists wear a form of clerical collar and are referred to as "Sister" or "Brother". While black women tend to choose the Biblewoman option, black men tend to choose to become Evangelists. The training - apart from the Award course for local preachers - includes a two week seminar each year over the period of two years. The training of Biblewomen and Evangelists takes place in residence at John Wesley College, Kilnerton in Pretoria.

"Deacons serve a probation of four years and may be required to complete the Diploma in Theology. Deacons are ordained as Deacons, and so are not strictly Lay Ministers, while not being ordained to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. Deacons work full time in a local church or Circuit."

Ibid.

³³⁶ There is no differentiation between the races, so there are Local Preachers of all races and both genders.

³³⁷ The Methodists use the term "Publicly Recognised".

³³⁸ The other two levels are:

1. Junior Level: for people whose highest educational standard is grade 10. "The Junior level operates in exactly the same way as the Award level, with the same language options and course, but presented at a more advanced educational standard." Ibid.

2. Senior Level: for people whose highest educational standard is grade 12 or above.

"Senior level course may be taken through the Local Preacher's Department, or as a Diploma Courses toward the Diploma in Theology. Unfortunately, Senior Level course is offered only in English. The Senior level is required as the minimum preliminary theological qualification for admission to studies for the Ordained Ministry. The Senior level includes the same four subjects. The Diploma, however, requires a further nine courses which may be chosen from 3rd year studies in Old and New Testament, Systematic Theology, and courses in Church History, Pastoral Studies, Missiology, Christian Spirituality, Theological Ethics, Ecumenical Studies, Liturgics and Homiletics and Methodist Studies. The Diploma is the minimum academic qualification for ordination to the Ministry. Normally the Diploma takes three years of more or less full time study. Ibid.

progress is reported on every three months at a Circuit Quarterly Local Preachers Meeting in the area where the student lives, with their results being recorded centrally by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's Education for Mission and Ministry Unit (EMMU) Local Preachers' Department, which is based at ... John Wesley College, Kilnerton in Pretoria."³³⁹

The first meeting with Ethel took place at the Methodist Church in Bergvliet. Ethel was preparing to lead a service for the Manyano on a Sunday afternoon. About twelve women were present. All of them worked as live-in domestic workers in Bergvliet and Constantia. Technically their group belonged to the Manyano of Langa. But they only occasionally joined that group for reasons of geographic distance and lack of time.

The women gave the impression of being a mixture of quiet and shy yet simultaneously very welcoming and friendly. They seemed to be happy to show a white person what their Christian faith meant to them and how they were celebrating it. The atmosphere was more relaxed than the one I had experienced at Langa and Gugulethu.

The Manyano service at Bergvliet lasted about one and a half hours. Ethel and the other ladies wore their uniforms with great pride. They sang hymns and prayed in Xhosa. After the service, Ethel disappeared only to return a few minutes later, this time dressed in the black and white outfit of a Lay Minister. During the following two hours she led the service for the entire black congregation. This service was also given in Xhosa. Ethel's stamina as a preacher was impressive, especially because she was tired from a long week's work. Furthermore, she was suffering from severe pain in her back. Once more I could witness how much empowerment the women drew from their spiritual practise and from the solidarity amongst the Manyano and the congregation as a whole.

A few weeks after this event, another meeting with Ethel took place at her home. In her modest way she presented her neat apartment and served tea and biscuits. Later on, her husband, daughter and niece joined us. At some point Ethel told me that her mother, who was ill in bed in the room next door, wished to see me. It was a moving experience to talk to this elderly lady and to experience a sort of kindness that I have rarely noticed with Europeans. The family's openness to share parts of their life histories showed that communication between the different South African cultures can truly happen when there is the willingness to interact and learn from each other.

During the talk, Ethel and her husband expressed their unhappiness about their lack of education. They felt that this disadvantage put them at the bottom of society, even more so than their colour of skin. Ethel's shyness partially had to do with her restricted knowledge of the English language. In comparison, Mrs. J. had been very outspoken and confident.

Ethel was born a Methodist and grew up for part of her life belonging to this denomination. Her biography is an example of a black South African woman who has had a hard life but who never gave in to her fate. Ethel did not have the privilege of education as has been mentioned earlier. On the contrary, she suffered suppression, poverty and the loss of innocence at an early age. She and her older sister were brought up by their grandmother in a rural Afrikaans speaking area of the Cape Province while their mother was trying to make a living in Upington, Cape. The father of the two girls left the family when they were small and seemingly married another woman by civil law. Ethel was not sure if her parents had been married by customary law only which would have left her mother without legal rights,³⁴⁰ but she remembers that her mother had a very difficult time after the father left the family. For a while her mother tried to provide a living on her own.

When Ethel was about ten years old, her mother became mentally ill. Apparently her mother was no longer capable to deal with the enormous pressure she had been living under for years. Unfortunately, Ethel's mother was but one of many victims as numerous black women in South Africa either suffered mental disease or became addicted to alcohol due to social and economic circumstances that were prevalent during the

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ See Chapter 4.3.3

apartheid era.³⁴¹ Ethel's mother received Western medical care. She did not consult a traditional healer because she did not believe in them. Ethel pointed out in the interview that when one believes in the Christian God, there is no need for a Sangoma.³⁴²

The illness of Ethel's mother put an end to her childhood. She and her sister had to leave school and were sent to Umtata in the Transkei where they worked for an Englishman, making pottery. Her salary was eight Rand per month while her sister earned twelve Rand a month.³⁴³ Ethel felt exploited but she did not see an escape from her situation.

Ethel was very close to her older sister. The two supported each other in good and bad times. Together they took care of their ill mother and of the sister's little daughter. In 1984, Ethel's sister died in a car accident. Ethel left Umtata and went back to her birthplace of Rhodes. There she worked as a domestic servant in a police station. It was in Rhodes that she met her husband Lawrence at the IOTT Church, the Independent Order of True Temples.³⁴⁴ The two have remained members of the IOTT as well as of the MCSA throughout the years. Lawrence has always been a supportive husband and father, both to Ethel's niece and to their own daughter. Ethel is very thankful for her husband because many black women have to bring up their families without the support of a man.

For the first years of their marriage, Ethel and Lawrence lived in the Transkei, which they still regard as their proper home. Ethel recounted that this time was a very difficult for them because of their poverty. However, she was convinced that living in the Transkei and being able to provide for a modest living by tending small vegetable gardens and keeping goats and cattle was better than living in the big cities where one is not just exposed to poverty but also to unemployment and crime.

"I think it's better at home because at home there is no violence and all that sort of things. Because here (in Cape Town, U. T.) – sometimes the other have got no jobs – they suffer and they end up to the streets ... So, it's better to stay in the Transkei and then you've got your own business because you got everything. You plant in there in the fields, you have got the cows that you can milk, everything."³⁴⁵

In 1990, Ethel and her family moved to Johannesburg in search of work. They found employment with the Jewish family Ethel was still working for in 1997. In 1990 she was paid 110 Rand a month, in 1997 about 200 Rand.³⁴⁶ When the employers moved their business to Cape Town, they took Ethel and her family along.

With the move to Cape Town, Ethel's life continuously improved. This was partially attributed to the Methodist congregation at Bergvliet which gave her and her family a spiritual home and social support. In addition, the political developments of the early 1990's made changes possible Ethel had never dreamt of. Part of it was the option to train as a Lay Minister, a position that is rarely occupied by black women.

Pre-requisite for the positive changes was the altered attitude of the MCSA toward their history and toward women. At the Bergvliet Methodist congregation, a white minister named Rev. Miller supported Ethel's wish to become a lay preacher. Miller was fully accepted by the black members of the church because he had developed impressive language skills in Zulu when living and working in Kwa Zulu Natal.

The mere fact that a white person was willing to learn an African language had a pacifying and unifying effect on the different ethnic groups in the Bergvliet congregation. It showed that Methodists need not live along racial lines and that they can worship together if they wish.

"... the things come better now. Before, we were not worshipping with the white people. We were worshipping separate. But now everything changed

³⁴¹ See Mathabane (1994)

³⁴² Zulu for witchdoctor, traditional healer. For more details, refer to Chapter 4.3.2

³⁴³ 8 Rand = 5.4 US\$; 12 Rand = 8.1 US\$ (according to the exchange rate in May 1973)

³⁴⁴ An African Independent Church

³⁴⁵ Interview with E. Sanjanja, Constantia, 24 May 1997

³⁴⁶ 110 Rand = 31 US\$; 200 Rand = 57 US\$ (according to the exchange rate in January 1996)

and I feel sorry for myself because I have got no education. Because all the people in the church think I am special in the church but I am not because I have got no standard (no high-school degree, U. T.). The way I believe to God, he can maybe help me because the others, they got standard, they go to university.”³⁴⁷

During the interview, Ethel's feelings of inferiority, rooted in her lack of education, became apparent. Although she thought highly of the Rev. Miller and expressed in the beginning of the interview that she would not mind a cross-culture worship at her congregation, she later stated a preference to stay in a black context and to worship in Xhosa with her own people. She expressed a deep mistrust toward most white people which goes back to experiences that occurred during her earlier in her life which was deeply marked by apartheid.

“The white people try so hard to make us to combine with them but we are so stiff in our head there. Every Sunday they want us to go and worship with them but we don’t want to ... Now, we still have got that apartheid: those are black and those are white... Because we always think of those times (apartheid, U.T.). .. So, sometimes when they see us in the church making tease, they feel angry inside because they hate the black people but they can’t do anything because it is the church.”³⁴⁸

All in all, Ethel seemed somewhat discouraged concerning more honest ways of communication and understanding between the different cultures in South Africa, whereas her teenage daughter had a positive attitude and pointed out that there are also black people who are “not nice”.

Ethel still had the oppressor and oppressed scheme in her bones. Being able to train as a Lay Minister and thus obtaining a certain amount of education helped her self-esteem and gave her joy. It also satisfied her that the black congregation at Bergvliet and the white minister respected her in her semi-clerical position. Being able to train in her mother tongue Xhosa helped her to overcome obstacles that she otherwise would not have dared to face.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

3.4 Nomsa Mpambo, Founder of Women's Fellowship

Nomsa Mpambo is a Xhosa speaking black South African who was born in Kensington, Cape Province in December 1955. She was the second child of four. When she was still young, her family moved to a small house with two bedrooms, a kitchen and a living-room in Gugulethu, a black township in the outskirts of Cape Town. Both her parents originally came from the Transkei, similar to most of the Xhosa speaking population in the Cape Province. Nomsa's father worked as a mechanic, her mother as a domestic servant.

The parents provided all of their four children with a comprehensive school education. Nomsa was sent to boarding school in the Transkei when she entered secondary school. Her parents were very upset when Nomsa became pregnant at age 17. They feared that the successful completion of her schooling was endangered. In addition, illegitimate children were regarded as a disgrace. As a matter of fact, Nomsa had to lie about her pregnancy to the principal and teachers in order to be able to graduate because the headmaster would have kicked her out of school. Nomsa had only a few more months before graduation and thus managed to finish school. She did not marry the father of her daughter. Instead, her parents took care of the grandchild after it was born. Nomsa explained that in Xhosa tradition the grandparents regard the first grandchild as their own child. Therefore, taking in Nomsa's daughter as their own child was the natural thing to do. Even when Nomsa got married to another man in 1975, her daughter did not come to live with her. Her husband would have accepted Nomsa's daughter but her parents did not allow their granddaughter to leave. It was not until she got divorced in 1981 that her daughter joined her. At that time the girl was 15 years old.

After school, Nomsa started to work as an employee in a German butchery instead of continuing to study as did her sister who later became a school teacher. In 1983, she left the job at the butchery and trained to become a hairdresser. At the time of the interview³⁴⁹ she still lived in Gugulethu where she successfully ran a hairdresser's shop with two employees.

The Rev. Ernest Baartman from the Methodist Church in Gugulethu arranged the contact with Nomsa when I asked him about other women's groups aside from the Manyano. He mentioned the Women's Fellowship which was founded by Nomsa in 1994. In 1997, when I met Nomsa, the group had about thirty active members.

Nomsa grew up in the Methodist tradition. As a child she attended Sunday school and as a young woman she was a member of the Young Women's Manyano. When she had the child, she was no longer treated as a full member. Nomsa was hurt that the Church regarded her as a disgrace. Although she had been a full member before she had to start all over again and she couldn't go through the trial period as a Manyano until she got married. This indicates once more that motherhood may be regarded as secondary to marriage in the worldview of certain Manyano groups.

Nomsa remained loyal to the MCSA although she was disappointed with her exclusion from the Manyano after she got divorced. She always had been part of the Church and although she did not always feel at ease with the strict ways of the Manyano she liked the devotional part. From 1981 until 1994 she simply attended Sunday services without planning to ask for new admission. In 1994, she had the idea to start an independent women's group that could support the congregation by fund-raising without having to obey the laws of the Manyano. However, the Manyano remained the most influential women's group in Gugulethu. They had the power to demand certain financial duties from the Women's Fellowship; e.g. to finance the renovation of the church building in 2000. Each Society in the church has to contribute to this costly project: The Sunday school, the Guildes, the Church choir and the women's organisations. Nomsa agreed that the Women's Fellowship also has to give their share but she felt that the Manyano had exaggerated demands vis-à-vis her group, simply because they disapproved of a separate women's group:

"We have to meet on Sunday because they targeted us a 1000 Rand but we complained to Rev. Baartman. It's too much because we are not a lot of

³⁴⁹ Cape Town, 14 May 1997

people. And we have to bring up a 1000 Rand in four months time!... When we came (to the Manyano, U.T.) they said to us: 'Maybe you are going to complain that this is too little.' We said: 'No! We are coming to complain this is too much!' They said: 'You people got the wrong idea. A 1000 Rand in four months time. What is that? That is nothing!'"³⁵⁰

I asked Nomsa if she had thought about joining the Women's Network before she started her own group. I turned out that Nomsa didn't know about this women's organisation nor was she really interested in their work. Because Nomsa lived in black contexts exclusively for several decades of her life, it was natural to her to stay in it. Rarely had she had contact with white Methodist congregations during apartheid and she was not sure if it made sense meeting them.

"We knew there were white churches. But we had nothing to do with them. But it never bothered us. We had nothing to do with that. We had no contacts. Some years ago it started that we heard: 'Maybe we go to another church'. Before we were not allowed to go to a white church."³⁵¹

Nomsa was enthusiastic about being active in her congregation and she wanted to be a meaningful part of it. Her need to take her life into her own hands was apparent and she enjoyed sharing what the Women's Fellowship is doing. Possibly, she was not necessarily interested in what is happening in other Methodist congregations of the area and in their women's organisations because she was completely absorbed by her professional duties and by the setting up of the Women's Fellowship.

³⁵⁰ Interview with N. Mpambo, Cape Town, 14 May 1997

³⁵¹ Ibid.

3.5 Pamela Delport, President of the Women's Association

Pamela Delport is an English speaking, coloured woman who lives with her husband and their three children in a nice home in Southfield. Southfield is a section of Cape Town where mostly middle-class families of racially mixed origin reside. Pam was born in Cape Town in 1957 to a family of five children. Her father worked as a bus driver and her mother was a housewife. Both of them were deeply involved in the Methodist Church. Accordingly, they brought up their five children in the Wesleyan traditions and beliefs.

"I was born a Methodist. I grew up in the Methodist Church; we went to Sunday school in the Methodist Church. When I got to standard 9, I started training to become a Sunday school teacher. I enjoyed working with little children. Later I became Superintendent of the primary school's section for a couple of years after I was married."³⁵²

Another element that affected Pam's life right from the start, was the fact that she grew up in Retreat, which was an area where the so-called Cape Coloureds lived. This means that she belonged to the group of South Africans who were neither categorised as 'African' nor as 'European'. The apartheid system labelled Pam as a South African of 'mixed ethnicity'.

"It was difficult. You actually felt that there was no place you belonged. What we often said was that we were too black to be white and too white to be black. We sat on the fence. We struggled to find identity in the community of the coloured cultural community. We struggled not to get an inferiority complex because we were made aware of the fact that you were not of the upper class. And then besides not being financially secure as well - it made matters even worse. So, you would find that there were a lot of Coloureds, women or men that had a complex."³⁵³

At the time I met Pam, she had come a long way from being a young coloured girl who struggled for an identity. She was still deeply involved in the Methodist Church, e.g. she held the position of the District President of the Women's Association in the Cape. She also was the Connexial President of the Women's Network and she was actively involved in the World Federation of Methodist Women.³⁵⁴

The Cape District comprises about 80 Branches with approximately 1,200 active members. Pam was coordinating all the activities of the Women's Association with the help of the presidents of these Branches. Pam's career in the Women's Association has not been a continuous one. She retreated from the organization for a few years in the 1980's because she did not see much improvement in regard to the union of the three women's organisations:

"I was a member but I wasn't an active member for about two to three years because I got very frustrated with the fact that those women didn't want to join; that there were three organisations. They weren't even thinking of moving together. So, I belonged to the Association as an ordinary member. That's when I got involved with Network (Women's Network, U. T.) and started spending more time running workshops in the Network and going to the Consultation³⁵⁵ and things like that. But when I was outside I realized that you can't sit on the outside and criticize and make a noise. It's not even heard. If you want a change, you actually got to get in there. And that's what a lot of people don't understand: why I went back. But I felt, if you want a change, you actually got to go in there and make the changes. And so I went in again and I became an active member and then I became a Branch

³⁵² Interview with P. Delport, UWC, 13 May 1997.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ See Appendix 2: structures of the MCSA

³⁵⁵ The Consultation at Pietermaritzburg, 1985. Also see Chapter 2.4

President, and then a District President. And I have discovered that it works because now as a District President we rearranged a whole meeting.

We said to the ladies: 'We're tired. We are looking back to the past and say: I did, I did, I did. We don't want to know that. We want to know: what are you going to do? How are we going to move forward?' We told the different Executive members: 'We want your vision for next year.'

You know, they used to have four or five church services in these District Annual Meetings. And we said: 'But please people, we need to equip our people, we need to train them, not just have services and that's it.'

So we combined three of the services and we had two workshops in those places. So, we now are in the right place, we can start making changes and we can start making people realize that there is got to be a change."³⁵⁶

Pam's example proves that things can be combined that were strictly separated in the past and still often are today. Thus, she is District President of the Women's Association as well as a member of the W.A. of her local church simply because her local church does not have a W.A.. This demonstrates that a number of women in the Women's Association trusted her enough to elect her as District President although she was locally active in the W.A.. However, not everybody in the church agreed:

"That (the election, U. T.) caused uproar. Even the Connexial President of the Women's Association couldn't understand how they could elect me as a District President when I am an Auxiliary member. I was supposed to prove where my loyalties lie and I said: 'I am not proving anything. I don't have to prove anything. My loyalties lie with women's work.' I felt that as the President of the Association I would be able to fulfil my vision that way."³⁵⁷

Pam's vision is that the women of the three Connexional women's organisations will work together for the benefit of all.

Pam's life is a success story and an encouraging example for other women. Aside from attaining leadership positions in the church, she has succeeded professionally as well. At the time of this field-research she lectured at the Department of Physiology at the University of the Western Cape. Pam obtained that position by her own merit. However, she states that the moral and practical support of her spouse who is a dedicated father and husband, should not be underrated. She knows of women in her organisation who encounter difficulties with their husbands because of the wife's commitment to a women's group:

"I have also known marriages that have gone through tough times and it was growing times for both couples to adjust - where the wife was determined. You know she was going to move forward in life, even if she didn't know how. She had to be counselled in church or where they had to be counselled to grow beyond that state. So, there were incidences where there wasn't any problem but there were also incidences where there was. When you speak to women in the Association you find that just belonging to an organisation and having to attend meetings takes a lot of work. Those women often claim that they have problems with their husbands because they are out of the house doing these things. So, some of the times a lady would sit in the group and say: 'Oh, my husband was so miserable when I left the house to come to a women's meeting.' But she is determined that she wants to be there. And what she is doing she finds satisfactory. She gets reward out of it. So, she is prepared to go through that kind of situation to get to our meeting. So, it is not easy. There still needs to be a lot of growth as far as the men are concerned."³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

Pam is fortunate that she finds great support in her husband. But she also experienced times without support earlier in her childhood because her father did not believe that a girl should receive more than a basic education:

“My father was telling me right away that he was wasting his time training us (his three daughters, U.T.). None of us could get extramural education where we could go for a degree because he thought that we would get married and end up like my mother. So, he invested all his money in his two sons for education. The little bit that he could afford being a bus driver. So, as a result we (the girls, U.T.) had to work and then study.”³⁵⁹

Apparently Pam always possessed a great deal of motivation and assertiveness, as the beginning of her academic career exemplifies.

“At the age of four and a half, my father bought me a case he had come across the sale. The very next day my mother hunted for me. I was standing at the school. I was adamant that I was going to school because I had a case and books and everything in it. It was a new school that had opened two roads away from us. The principal phoned my mother to tell her that I was there. Then he told my mother to leave me there because I threw a tantrum. I did not want to stay home. I wanted to go to school. I was bored because we never had preschools for our children, crèches and things like that. So, I stayed at the school and at the end of six months the principal told my mother that I could stay and the following year as well, just to keep me busy. At the end of the year I wrote exams with the children and I topped the class. So, they put me in sub B, the following standard, because it was pointless keeping me.”³⁶⁰

At age sixteen Pam matriculated from high school and started working in the medical field. She worked during the day and studied at night. At twenty she got married to Alan Delpont whom she had met for the first time in confirmation class when she was about twelve. When Pam was 21, her first son was born. At that time she was studying, working and receiving leadership training in the Sunday school. The Church always remained a second home to her. As a matter of course she first became a member of the Young Women's Association and then after she was married, a member of the Women's Association.

Pam did not know much about the non-coloured Methodist congregations because her life revolved around the Methodist community with which she was affiliated. Another obstacle, of course, was the apartheid system itself.

“We were very isolated. You lived in a coloured area, you went to school, to church in a coloured community and that was it. Your little bit of exposure that you would have was a training course for Sunday school teaching or something like that that would be mixed. When I reached the stage to belong to women's groups, there would be one or two mixed meetings. But other than that you weren't exposed to black people or white people. It was like you were living in a little cocoon.”³⁶¹

When Pam was asked if she was distressed about the situation in those days she replied:

“I didn't see anything wrong with it at that time. Once I started work, it started frustrating me. In my years of maturing, I started to compare: 'Look, these people are getting more and these people are getting less and we are sitting on the fence.'

Then I felt anger – once I got to be a teenager. I started seeing the country. And I saw that there were other countries that were living differently. There was anger but it did not lock up my energies. We were rather trying to better ourselves in the situation that we were in. I wasn't very much for fighting

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

anti-apartheid and things like that. I would spend more of my time helping people that needed to be helped. And we did a lot in the women's work."³⁶²

Pam painfully experienced that apartheid did not just divide the country but this rift splintered the MCSA as well. Occasionally encounters between different ethnic groups occurred within the Church. But it was not enough to get to know each other and to work together for a mutual benefit.

Politically, Pam's awareness grew as time went on, although she was not politically active. But she knew that her rights were fewer than those of the white South Africans and she did not like that. However, she would not consider herself a "black woman" as the 'coloured' woman Lorraine Solomon³⁶³ did.

"(Coloured, U. T.) Women would consider themselves black because they couldn't get the privileges of white women or from the white culture. But there were definitely jobs that Coloureds could get that Blacks couldn't get. So you couldn't see yourself as totally black. I mean, even the culture, in the way that we were reared and that. Right up to now. The system, the culture, they have different doctrines than we do. So, I don't think I would consider myself black as that but definitely not white."³⁶⁴

The black Rev. Ernest Baartman stated in an interview³⁶⁵ that black, coloured and white Methodists have never been equal and still are not. Pam experienced this discrimination as she climbed up the hierarchical ladder in the MCSA:

"I started realizing that when I started serving on District level. When you started working as a Circuit person on Circuit level, you started going to District Meetings and then you started meeting Blacks and then you started meeting Whites and your eyes were opened. And you realized that white churches have sometimes two ministers per church. Black ministers have to serve three, four or five churches which have thousands of people in them in comparison to the six or seven hundreds in the one white church. When I lived in Strandfontein³⁶⁶ which was in the Mitchell's Plain³⁶⁷ Circuit, we had one minister to two churches. Our local preachers preached virtually every other Sunday. Now I am serving in the so-called white community because I live there and you'll find that there are two ministers to one church."³⁶⁸

Pam was on one hand empowered by the Women's Association because she could try out her talents and become active where she saw the need. However, she also felt discontentment with the way the Women's Association was run by the older generation. She and other young women realized that they had to find other ways of engaging in women's work than in the set mode.

"When Eugene (Pam's eldest son, U. T.) was about a year old we decided that we needed to form a women's group that met our needs. The Women's Association of the older women didn't meet our needs. They had little tea parties and little discussions and get people to do devotions. And we felt that we wanted to do activities. We wanted to do talks; we wanted to have classes. We wanted to do relevant things. We had a young minister and his wife who were about our age. And she couldn't adjust to the organisation (Women's Association, U. T.). And then she started handpicking us and asking: 'Don't you want to form a group?'

Then, without even affiliating to the church we called ourselves Women's Fellowship and we were given the church premises on which to meet. All the women would draw up the program. We would define which were our needs. We wanted to have talks on good eating habits. We wanted to have talks on

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ See Chapter 2.4

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Interview with Rev. E. Baartman, Gugulethu, 26 February 1997

³⁶⁶ A place close to Cape Town.

³⁶⁷ A section of Cape Town.

³⁶⁸ Interview with P. Delport, UWC, 13 May 1997

rearing children. We felt a lot of times that we needed to counsel – even the children in Sunday school. We never had acquired those skills. So we went to courses on counselling. The women decided this was what their needs were. And then we would adjust the program accordingly. We also felt that we wanted time to get away from our children. So we would arrange a trip, go out for the day as women and then have a ball and come back.”³⁶⁹

In 1980, the young women of Pam’s Women’s Fellowship affiliated with the Women’s Association because a new minister in their congregation asked them to share their capacities instead of being “selfish” and using them for their own needs only. After that the young women shared their ideas and opinions with the older women and things gradually improved.³⁷⁰

Pam is an example of a highly motivated and emancipated woman with a rich life. In the MCSA she has attained the respect of her fellow Christians. Occupying leadership positions seems to have come easily for Pam, but she has also experienced contention between the sexes and the inherent exertion a woman to make her way in the Church.

The situation is very well summed up in her own words as follows:

“Before, when you were a woman all you could do was teach at Sunday school. I mean, you never served in leadership roles. You represented if there is a body where a woman is to be represented; then Women’s Association would serve on that. But you very seldom found - in the older days - that a woman would serve as a Steward, a Society Steward or a Circuit Steward. Even in the Trust. Now, there is still a stigma where men run the finances of the Church. In the suburban areas, in the poor areas you still got to get them to learn that woman can do that kind of accounting and things as well. But you’d find that you weren’t even listened to. There was never a capacity, or a table or a desk on which you could speak out your frustrations and that. But things are changing.”³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

In the Methodist Church in Ottery Road in Ottery (a section of Cape Town), a women’s group still runs under the name of Women’s Fellowship to retain its identity.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

Pamela Delport interestingly points out that in many congregations women are still not entrusted with money issues. In the black congregations the Manyano are appreciated as stewards of money issues – especially if they were the fund-raisers. The Manyano tend to say that men cannot be entrusted with money issues because they spend it on unnecessary things.

3.6 Peggy Attwell, former President of the Women's Auxiliary

Peggy Attwell's life (1927 – 2000) was dedicated to the Methodist Church, to the W.A. in particular and to women's work in general. Peggy's biography reflects the ups and downs of a woman who stood by the side of her minister husband and who grew to be a strong person, empowered by her Christian faith and by a supportive environment that included the W.A..

When Peggy told her life story, she started with 1947, the year when she married Arthur Attwell and became a minister's wife. Arthur had entered the ministry of the MCSA one year earlier. Soon after their marriage, Arthur was sent on his first engagement to a place called Waterval Boven in a remote area of the Transvaal.³⁷² Peggy accompanied her husband to his new assignment. At Waterval Boven Peggy started her first branch of a Woman's Auxiliary. From then on the W.A. would be a constant and significant part of her life:

“... his first appointment was to a little church in a railway camp on the edge of the Higveld escarpment, overlooking the Lowveld, a very beautiful environment scenically. Our little church was a tumble wood-and-iron structure and their last minister had been there in 1916! The congregation were all railway employees, from engine drivers to district engineer. There was lots to be done, starting with clearing a pathway of weeds to lead up to the front door of the church. We decided to start a branch of the Women's Auxiliary, as we realised that where there is an Auxiliary, things get done! At the first meeting, I was made President. This terrified me. Our first child was born that year also.”³⁷³

Methodist ministers lead a life of frequent relocation, as they are devoted to the service of the church. Consequently, Peggy and her family were obliged to pack up their belongings at Waterval Boven only one year after their arrival. Arthur had been appointed to a new post in a town called Boksburg at the East Rand. This church was much larger than the previous one. The previous ministers had been far older than Arthur and the congregations had to get used to a young minister. Arthur now was responsible for two churches, one in Boksburg and another smaller one in Boksburg North; both were mining and industrial communities. Peggy had to accustom herself to new tasks and find her place in a W.A. that was already well established. Its members were the age of Peggy's mother. Practically no women her age were involved. Peggy was relieved that the women treated her with kindness and acquainted her with her duties in church, as the ministers' wives were expected to be involved. In Boksburg Peggy did not become President of the W.A.. However, she recalled another challenging experience:

“...I shall never forget that I was asked to take a W.A. (Women's Auxiliary, U. T.) service, which is a church service held annually by the W.A.s on W.A. Sunday in the church. I believed that I had to do everything that was expected of me. So, once again terrified. I conducted the service, gave the address and everything. It took days for me to recover.”³⁷⁴

Peggy's second child was born at Boksburg. In 1951 the family was sent to the Eastern Transvaal³⁷⁵ to a town called Nelspruit. Once again they were in a pioneering situation:

“There was no church building at all. We built the first Methodist church in the town, and Arthur started Methodist churches elsewhere in that region: to mention only one, at White River. This was a wonderfully happy period for us, and a very creative time in our lives. A W. A. was already in existence when we arrived there (in Nelspruit, U. T.).”³⁷⁶

³⁷² Transvaal is now referred to as Gauteng.

³⁷³ P. Attwell, personal c.v., 1998 (personal archives)

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ This area is now referred to as Mpumalanga.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

We started the one in white River for the purpose of getting a church built there. Very many of the churches in South Africa have resulted from the initiatives of the local W.A., in existence before the church itself, for which the W.A. raised the money to build.”³⁷⁷

Being able to be a constructive part of Methodist mission and the spreading of the Christian faith by building new churches and thus bringing new communities into life was spiritually a highly rewarding and empowering experience for Peggy and for the other women of the W.A..

Peggy’s third child was born in Nelspruit. In 1955 the family left this town when Arthur joined the army as a chaplain. For Peggy this was not a happy move as she was restricted to a life without the support of a woman’s organisation or other social contacts:

“We lived at Voortrekkerhoogte, an army camp. Life changed radically for me, as my role as an army chaplain’s wife was completely different. I realised years later that my problem was an identity crisis, but I didn’t understand that at the time. I had worked in partnership with my husband as a minister’s wife, and was happy in that role. But the army was quite a different set-up, and I was somewhat at sea about where or how I fitted in. The Principal Chaplain openly said ‘Wives keep out!’ and would not have a women’s organisation attached to the church which was provided for army families.”³⁷⁸

Peggy could not envision being without a women’s organisation and decided to join the W.A. at the Wesley Church in Pretoria. The minister of this church, Rev. Jim Massey, and his wife helped her through the difficult times at the army camp. In addition, they suggested to her that she extend her activities in the W.A. and serve on the District Executive. Although Peggy did not follow up on this suggestion at that time, she put the idea into effect in later years.

It was at Voortrekkerhoogte that Peggy’s fourth and last child was born before Arthur was appointed to the Cape as an army chaplain in 1956. Depending on where they were living in the following years, they either joined Wynberg Methodist Church or Plumstead Methodist Church.³⁷⁹ Peggy was active in the evening W.A. of both churches.

About a year after moving to the Cape the family faced a major crisis: Peggy had cancer. She was 30 years old at the time. Her oldest child was ten and her youngest fifteen months. Peggy managed to recover her health in the following two years. At that time she discovered that “God is closer than breathing; nearer than hands and feet.”³⁸⁰ This frightening experience had brought her even closer to her Christian faith. And it showed her the high value of family, friendship and support from within her church.

In 1958, Arthur received an invitation to take over as minister at Plumstead.³⁸¹ Consequently he left the army and the family spent three years at Plumstead. For Peggy those were very positive years that she liked to remember. In 1961 the Attwells had to move to Goldfields in the Free State. Peggy described her new life in this mining community as following:

“It could not have been a greater contrast to Plumstead. Welkom was the town we had to go to, ten years old at the time, somewhat raw, and mushrooming at an incredible rate. It was already a big, sprawling place, buzzing with activity and growth, and the people there were young and adventurous. It was both exciting and fun, informal and friendly ... Arthur was the Circuit Superintendent for both the African and the ‘European’ ... Circuits. Once again, this church was at a formative stage. The foundations had been well laid by Arthur’s predecessor, but there were simply the foundations. The church had still to become firmly established.”³⁸²

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Both are sections of Cape Town.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ A section of Cape Town.

³⁸² Ibid.

As in the past Peggy helped her husband develop a flourishing community. Again, this took a lot of energy and enthusiasm and gave them in return great joy and a feeling of achievement. It was hard on her when after three years at Welkom, Arthur was requested to return to Simonstown in the Cape to serve as a Navy chaplain. The year was 1964. But although this move caused a crisis in Peggy's life, she used it to find her own way as a woman and as a person:

"I ... came to realise that I needed to be a person in my own right rather than living vicariously through my husband's life, which I had been doing."³⁸³

Peggy stayed active. In Simonstown she joined the local W.A.. This time she did not serve as a Branch President as she had done in some of the former communities. When Peggy moved to Simonstown, the W.A. was still racially mixed as the congregation had many coloured members. As a matter of fact, the majority of the W.A. was coloured women. Peggy recalled the forceful removal of the coloured population under apartheid legislation in the late 1960s as a very painful experience. The Methodist community was seriously injured by the loss because the coloured members had been an important part of it.³⁸⁴

It was in Simonstown where Peggy climbed up the Church's hierarchical ladder as she was elected to serve on the Cape District Executive. A dream had come true:

"I should say at this point that from early in my life as a minister's wife I had attended District meetings, simply because I enjoyed them so much and found them such a source of inspiration. I never dreamt that one day I would be up there on the platform, and certainly not that I would be a District President!"³⁸⁵

In the following years Peggy succeeded in all her endeavours - from her participation in the MCSA as well as a writer for the BBC and various magazines and newspapers.

In 1968 Arthur was invited to take over the church at Rosebank.³⁸⁶ There, Peggy served as a District President of the Cape District from 1971-1973. At that time the women's organisations were already struggling to advance the unification of the three Connexional women's organisations.

In 1974 Peggy moved to Durban, Natal, because Arthur was appointed to Durban Central Church. In Durban Peggy worked as a Church secretary and served on the Natal Coastal District Executive. She also registered at the University of South Africa (Unisa) and majored in English and Communications. When she was asked to edit the Church's newspaper *Dimension*, she accepted. For nine years she occupied this position as a volunteer.

In 1982 Arthur was invited to return to Goldfields in the Free State. Again Peggy served on the District Executive and was asked to become General President of the W.A.:

"It was a great challenge, during difficult times in our country, but a wonderful time. My love and respect for the W.A. and all that they do was increased immeasurably."³⁸⁷

In Welkom, Peggy experienced both joy, as she was robed as a Manyano,³⁸⁸ and horror, as she witnessed the frightening outcome of apartheid politics:

"I complemented my degree ... and as a result of that, I taught in a black high-school in the township there for two years, in 1984-85. It was a period of terrible upheavals in the country - dreadful violence - during which the school where I taught was petrol-bombed, the administration block completely gutted. It was a shock to arrive at school one morning to find it

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ In 1988, I talked to a priest of the Anglican Church in Simonstown who also mentioned the tragedy of the forced removal of the coloured population. He said that his congregation never recovered from the loss.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ A section of Cape Town.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ See Chapter 2.2

still smouldering. Fortunately no one was in the building when it was bombed.”³⁸⁹

In 1989 Arthur retired from Welkom after 42 years in the active ministry. However, he took charge of Commemoration Church in Grahamstown after his retirement and taught at Rhodes University from 1989-1991. After that Peggy and Arthur moved for the last time when they properly retired. They returned to the Cape where most of their family live. When I met Peggy and Arthur their home was at Noordhoek, Western Cape. Peggy called herself a “foot soldier” in the W.A. as she no longer held a position. However, she was always available when help was needed. When she was asked to write up the history of the W.A., she agreed. The book was published in 1997 by the title *Take our hands*.³⁹⁰

Peggy had been a witness and an activist of women’s work in the Methodist Church for over fifty years. She died unexpectedly in August 2000. Her expertise as a mediator of different viewpoints and her calm and gentle personality will be missed very much, and not just by the members of the Women’s Auxiliary.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ See bibliography

3.7 Jean Fisher, member of the Women's Network

Jean was born in Cape Town in 1943 to a Scottish father and an English speaking South African mother. Jean had one older brother. The family belonged to the Presbyterian Church. In 1951 they moved to Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape and joined the Methodist Church for want of a local Presbyterian church. Jean described the Methodist community in Uitenhage as very welcoming and supportive. This was helpful because Uitenhage was dominated by an Afrikaans speaking population and there was friction between these two language groups.

From 1951 to 1967 Jean grew up in Bloemfontein in the Transvaal. Bloemfontein had a very substantial English community. Contact with the Afrikaans community was rare but so was conflict between the two.

Again, the MCSA was a second home for Jean. She attended Sunday school and liked it very much because it was "lead by good teachers and strongly attended".³⁹¹ She was also impressed by the devoutness of the Methodists. She remembered "one little lady who loved the Lord so much that she glowed."³⁹²

In 1957 Jean joined the Wesley Gulde, which nowadays runs by the name of Youth group. The Gulde offered a variety of activities: social evenings, literal evenings, devotional evenings, service evenings, evangelical camps, Spiritual Growth Camps and a few camps on social issues. Aside from these routine activities, the Gulde played a significant role in Jean's life in two specific ways - she met her future husband, David, there and was offered her first opportunity for direct contact with black people. At the time, she was about 15 years old. Up to then she had lived in a purely white environment and only knew older black people who worked as gardeners or maids:

"It was in the late 1950's. The church was struggling with apartheid. On one Saturday the whole Gulde went on buses to Thaba'Nchu. There was a Methodist mission station, a hospital and a school. We went to look around, spent the evening and danced with the students of the school. It was the first time that I had face to face and body to body contact with black people."³⁹³

At this point in the interview Jean remembered another incident in her life that had left a deep impression on her:

"When I was little, my mother told me that one knows whether one is coloured or not by looking into their hands. I thought: 'What a funny thing to say!'"³⁹⁴

Later in her life Jean became aware that she did not know much about black or coloured South Africans. But when she was young, she lived in her own insular little world that revolved around family, school and church. In the church there was not much talk about the political situation. And women were not expected to get involved in political conversation, which was designed as "men's talk". Women were expected to stay in the kitchen and take care of the children.

Jean started to run a Sunday school in various black townships where she told bible stories as part of missionary work. There she encountered more black Methodists. She did not know much about the spirituality of black South Africans at the time.

In 1967 Jean married David Fisher. The same year, the young couple moved to Seapoint, a section of Cape Town. In Seapoint Jean did not really get involved in the Methodist Church. In 1969 she and her husband moved to Tokai, another section of Cape Town, and joined the Methodist church in the neighbouring suburb of Bergvliet. Jean described this church as nice, friendly and informal in comparison to the church in Bloemfontein where the minister had been "high in the pulpit". She also enjoyed the chorus singing and high degree of congregational participation in Bergvliet.

³⁹¹ Interview with J. Fisher, Tokai (Cape Town), 10 May 1997

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

Jean joined the W.A. at Bergvliet in 1971. At that time her eldest son was an infant. When she was asked if she wanted to be the secretary of the W.A. she was beside herself with joy because she had become “a cabbage housewife” and wanted to lead a more active life. The new position gave Jean the opportunity to attend District Meetings. Therefore, she gained a better perspective on the wider work of the Church because she met women from other churches. The W.A. of her local church was composed of mostly elderly members – even when Jean was a young woman. But although she would become increasingly dissatisfied with the organisation she desired to be part of it at that time.

In the 1970's many white South Africans were scared because of the political situation. Thus the unspoken rule amongst the W.A. was: “Don't talk about politics”. Politics in the Church were more likely to be discussed on Synod level where the black ministers challenged the white leadership. The focus of the W.A. was on evangelism instead. This included prayer, bible study and mission. Accordingly, Jean engaged in mission and helped people in need. Controversial issues were avoided. However, Jean tried to find, within the work of the W.A., projects that were trans-cultural and trans-racial. Because fund-raising has always been a fundamental part of the W.A.s' effort to finance social projects, Jean was active in that endeavour as well. However, she tried not to get involved too much personally.

Jean made the first contact with the Women's Association in her area in the early 1970's while organizing a fundraiser concert. The minister's wife of Jean's church, Connie Underwood, who was in contact with the ministerial couple in the neighbouring coloured Circuit, asked her if she wanted to be part of the project.

“As I was trained in speech and drama I accepted willingly after being reassured that it was quite safe to go 'over the line' (the railway line) but to remember to keep the cars locked as I travelled the 10 minute journey. The rehearsals were fun and the concert a revelation! The play took up the second half of the programme with variety items in the first half. The uninhibited hilarity and willingness to look the fool to entertain, the sheer joie de vivre of a culture new to me was captivating. The doors of friendship opened and were built on later as our Methodist Church in its endeavour to demonstrate its 'One and Undivided' stance through the apartheid years, regrouped Methodist Societies into cross cultural Geographic Circuits.”³⁹⁵

Jean found that the fine arts proved to be good means to “cross the line” and get to know her non-white neighbours. The encounter through the fund-raising project also showed her the social distinctions between the women of the W.A. and the Women's Association at that time. Many of the coloured women worked as domestic servants whereas the white women were more educated. The older coloured women would look after their grandchildren so that their daughters could make a living. The white women had nannies looking after their children, which gave them a lot more freedom to get involved in all kinds of voluntary and professional activities.

Although certain events brought coloured and white women closer together, the social differences were always present and caused tension to a lesser or greater degree. Thus, Jean had the impression that the coloured women felt more relaxed when they were on their own:

“In a white situation they felt more uncomfortable. Sometimes the Auxiliary was quite patronizing: 'Let's show them what is a good program.’”³⁹⁶

Jean felt uncomfortable with patronizing. She criticized the lack of sensitivity of many of the Auxiliary women. She felt that they were fundamentally judgmental in their attitude. Jean had the opportunities to meet women of other cultural background than her own by virtue of her position in the W.A.. In 1978 she was delegate to a five-day seminar of the World Federation of Methodist Women in Johannesburg. This was the first time that she worked in a racially mixed women's group. The absurdity of the apartheid policy hit her after the end of this successful conference. The situation also showed Jean, how naive

³⁹⁵ J. Fisher, c.v., August 2001 (personal archives)

³⁹⁶ Interview with J. Fisher, Tokai, 10 May 1997

she had been and how much she had lived in her own closed up, sheltered little world for "Whites only". Jean was then 36 years old.

"As our small racially mixed group waited at the airport for our return flight to Cape Town I couldn't understand the hesitation of some of the women to sit down for a cup of coffee, until the revelation hit me that 'Whites only' were allowed to go into the restaurant. My dear sisters in Christ were excluded. I was devastated to experience apartheid for the first time and to listen how it made my sisters feel."³⁹⁷

In 1979, Jean was elected District President of the W.A.. She stayed in this position until 1981. She experienced that era as a "growing experience". She held public speeches and visited all of the W.A. Branches in South Africa and Namibia. During those visits she witnessed that many of the older women feared that they might not get enough young people to join. Back then Jean tried to encourage and give the women a "free vision". She also organized workshops on setting goals to support the personal growth of women, an effort she intensified when she joined the Women's Network in later years. So-called Outreach Projects to Africans were another priority of Jean's engagement in the W.A.. She found great support in the Manyano Mrs. Tshabalala³⁹⁸ from Langa. Her amiable relationship with Mrs. Tshabalala demonstrated to Jean that productive communication between the cultures is possible.

As the political situation in South Africa intensified, the MCSA decided to take action. In 1983, the leadership changed the Circuit boundaries to encompass other congregations of racial diversity. Although this process was gradual, it opened opportunities for Methodists of different ethnic backgrounds to meet and to learn about one another. Jean witnessed that process in her Circuit:

"After coming off the Cape District W.A. Executive I devoted time to building unity among the women in our new geographic (non-racial) Circuit. The Heathfield Circuit was composed of 4 coloured and 1 white Societies with three ministers. The Association Branches in the 4 churches were used to meeting and working together in their old Circuit, whereas the Auxiliary Branches were not used to Circuit involvement and were very hesitant about venturing 'across the line'. Quarterly events were organised such as a 'Mothers and Daughters Dinner' and a 'Nativity Carol service' and communication began to develop."³⁹⁹

Times were changing, and these changes made room for a new women's movement in the Methodist Church that would later be known as the Women's Network. The Consultation in Pietermaritzburg in 1985, organised by the Justice and Reconciliation Department of the MCSA, was the beginning of it. Jean attended. To get to Pietermaritzburg, she joined seven women of the Women's Association who had hired a bus. Part of the travelling group were also six Manyano women from Worcester. Jean called the Women's Consultation in Pietermaritzburg "another turning point in her life".⁴⁰⁰ For the first time in her life she had met women who were highly educated and motivated – regardless of their colour of skin. She was enthusiastic although the conference had not been all cream and sugar, particularly amongst the factious Cape group. Some of the coloured women were caustic toward the black women when the latter issued the firm belief that all should work together. The women decided that they needed to set up workshops to improve the situation and promote understanding, both for the individual woman as well as for the three women's organisations.

Back in Cape Town, Jean wanted to share her experiences and her enthusiasm with the women of the W.A.. She felt disappointed when she didn't receive much response.

As time went on, Jean realized that she would not be able to follow up on her interests and ideas in the W.A.. She felt dissatisfied with the status quo of the organisation. In her opinion, the W.A. did not seem to advance with contemporary society as its members

³⁹⁷ J. Fisher, c.v., August 2001 (personal archives)

³⁹⁸ Later Mrs. Ngidi

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with J. Fisher, Tokai, 10 May 1997

were in the 1980's "still talking about the same thing as twenty years ago".⁴⁰¹ Jean no longer fit in. Over the years she had changed and become politically aware of the South African situation. Jean described this period of time in her life as a "time of pain and conflict":

"In 1986 unrest erupted once more. It was different for me this time as it affected many of my friends and those in my own Circuit who lived with the caspers and teargas, stray bullets and tyre burning and anxiety for their children's lives. My home church and the Auxiliary withdrew to safety and advised me to do the same, but I felt compelled to share in the sufferings even though mostly through phone calls, empathy and prayer. There was little I could do. However, I felt alienated from my own community and women's organisation and angry at their 'laager mentality'. Efforts to bring the women together became more difficult after that, and fear for one's safety persisted long after the unrest had died down with white women unwilling to venture outside of their own residential areas."⁴⁰²

Jean increasingly distanced herself from the W.A.. She no longer attended District meetings nor did she carry out an official function.⁴⁰³ Instead, she became actively involved in the Women's Network. However, she remained a member of the W.A., as she said, "mostly for diplomatic reasons".⁴⁰⁴

As an active participant of the Women's Network, Jean witnessed the progress of its work. Until the end of apartheid in 1994, the Women's Network had to struggle to manifest its values and work. In the new South Africa a small resurgence of interest occurred when the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) focused on reconciliation issues.

"Parts of the Church settled into an acceptance that because freedom of association was now a political right one could centre one's attention congregationally. The hoped-for unity didn't happen. At the Network Consultation in 1995 the Natal based Connexional Committee handed over the reigns to Pam Delport, Gene August and myself to form a committee and run with it. We tried to establish our credentials and place in the structures of the MCSA which was undergoing many changes, one of which was the 'Journey to a New Land' initiative."⁴⁰⁵

Jean cannot envision living without her Christian faith. Her roots in the Methodist Church run deep. She feels blessed through the Church and its people, particularly the women. Jean's engagement in and for the Church, especially for the women in the Church, will continue. When asked what her hopes for the future are, she replied:

"I would love to see each District holding 'women forums' where issues of concern to women are looked at by Lay and Ministerial women of the Church which would result in reconciliation and united action. Presently the women do so much but each in their own corner."⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² J. Fisher, c.v., August 2001 (personal archives)

⁴⁰³ Throughout her W.A. years Jean had held positions as a secretary (three years), as a District Executive (three years) and as District President (two years).

⁴⁰⁴ Interview with J. Fisher, Tokai, 10 May 1997

⁴⁰⁵ J. Fisher, c.v., August 2001 (personal archives)

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

3.8 Reflections

All six of the women represented above have deep roots in the MCSA. All of them feel that it is the church that they want to belong to. Four of them were born Methodists. Mrs. J. was born Anglican and decided to become Methodist because her husband belonged to the MCSA. Jean Fisher started attending the Methodist Church when she was a child because her parents were in want of a Presbyterian Church.

All of the women draw self-respect from their engagement in the Church. In the case of Ethel Sanjanja her low self-confidence, due to her lack of schooling when she was young, is neutralized through her position as a Lay Minister on trial.

The six stories show that to speak about 'the women' in the women's organisations is problematic, although the temptation to make generalizations exists. One such comment is: "All members of the W.A. are old-fashioned, snobbish and patronizing". This might be true for a number of them, depending on the individual viewpoint of the observer. However, several individuals prove that this assumption is not necessarily true. For instance, Peggy Attwell travelled between the black and the white world, even during a time in South African history when this was not common. And Jean Fisher personally surpassed a W.A. that she considered antiquated. She took the initiative and joined another women's organisation to follow up on the things that she regarded as important in her life as a Christian woman.

Another comment is: "The Manyano don't want to have anything to do with the Women's Auxiliary and with the Women's Association". This might be true for a number of the Manyano but not for all of them, not even necessarily for the ones who seem to reject contact. The stories show that, again, the individual makes the difference. In the case of Ethel Sanjanja it is true that she is not necessarily open toward white people because of her negative experiences in apartheid South Africa. However, when she feels safe enough to trust, she enjoys communicating with a white person, the minister of her congregation for example.

Mrs. J. does not avoid contact with white and coloured Methodists. If such a opportunity occurs she seizes it. Her little women's group with 'mixed women' proves this. Nomsa Mpambo does not have much contact with white and coloured Methodists simply because she lived in a black context for her entire life. Today she could make the contact if she wanted to but at the time of the interviews she was not interested. This lack of interest does not derive from rejection but from a lack of knowledge about "the other women".

Concerning the Manyano, I want to refer to another experience that I already mentioned in the introduction; it exemplifies that the assumption "Manyano do not want to communicate with white and coloured women" is not necessarily true. When I expressed my interest in meeting the District President of the Manyano, Patricia Sangela, I was told: "Mrs. Sangela is not open". However, when I called Patricia Sangela to ask her if I could speak to her about *ubuntu*,⁴⁰⁷ she was very friendly and instantly invited me to her home at Paarl. The conversation with Mrs. Sangela and her husband turned out to be very vivid. Maybe because the door opener had been a traditional African topic.

African traditions and rituals are an important part of Mrs. J.'s life. She does not have any problems combining her Christian faith with African rituals. To her, African traditions improve the character of a person – provided they are exercised properly; this means undiluted.

African traditions are not an issue for Ethel and Nomsa. They enjoy praying and singing in their mother tongue and using their traditional hymns, but traditional African rituals, such as puberty rites or the slaughter of an ox on certain occasions et cetera, do not concern them. Peggy, Pam and Jean do not mind African traditions "as long as they don't interfere with the Christian belief." This means, African music, hymns, dances and the slaughter of animals are accepted, but not necessarily rites like the circumcision ritual. Traditional healing and ancestor worship are not regarded as compatible with Christianity.

⁴⁰⁷ See Chapter 4.2.1

The different reactions concerning African traditions as well as the responses of the Manyano at Langa and Paarl⁴⁰⁸ concerning this topic make clear that African traditions are an issue in the MCSA. Apparently this issue is even more important than many white and coloured Methodists want to admit in public.

⁴⁰⁸ Questionnaires, May 1997 (personal archives). For more details, refer to Chapter 4.2.5

4 African traditions in post-apartheid South Africa

4.1 Orientation

Officially Christianity remains the dominating religion in South Africa as 72.6 per cent⁴⁰⁹ of the population belong to a Christian denomination. However, the figures are only one side of the truth. As far as white and coloured South African Christians are concerned there are no 'parallel situations'. But in the black South African context one deals with an official and an unofficial version of religious preference. Parallel to belonging to a Christian denomination, black South Africans still follow African traditions and customs.

One needs to be reminded of the enormous popularity of the African Independent Churches, ever since they started by secession from – predominantly – the Methodist Church in late nineteenth century, to realise how important it always was for black South Africans to follow their own ways of religious expression.

African rituals and customs continued although more often secretly than publicly. One example of public practice was the cooperation of Western medical doctors and therapists with traditional healers,⁴¹⁰ even during the apartheid era. Two white South Africans who brought their expertise into play to give voice to African traditions were Dr. Vera Bührmann,⁴¹¹ a psychoanalyst à la C. G. Jung from Cape Town and Dr. Gerhardus Oosthuizen,⁴¹² formerly professor at the Department of Theology at the University of Durban-Westville. Bührmann and Oosthuizen urged the necessity of understanding the African soul – even when apartheid had reached its worst in the 1980s.⁴¹³ The reasons for their efforts were idealistic as well as of a fundamentally practical nature. Idealistic, because Bührmann and Oosthuizen fell between two chairs. They were suspiciously looked upon by white as well as by black South Africans; by white South Africans because African traditions were regarded as inferior to Western culture at that time. And black South Africans wondered if Bührmann and Oosthuizen worked for the apartheid regime that investigated into African traditions to use that knowledge for their political and economical power position. The truth is that Bührmann and Oosthuizen were convinced that there would be no mediation between the cultures in South Africa if white and coloured South Africans remained ignorant of their black countrymen's own religious faith.⁴¹⁴

The end of apartheid did not only liberate black South Africans politically but also their religion – one can state this, although with certain reservations. Obviously, apartheid did not disappear overnight. Thus, one still speaks of a "hidden apartheid" in South African society, similar to the "mental wall" that still exists in reunited Germany. However, things are progressively changing in post-apartheid South Africa and it will be the task of the following chapters to draw up the contemporary situation vis-à-vis African traditions and customs.

Chapter 4.2.1 deals with the concept of African Renaissance as it is proposed by the South African government under the patronage of the presently governing President Thabo Mbeki. Further, ubuntu, a crucial element of the cultural perspective of the African Renaissance movement, will be dealt with in this chapter as well. The question is whether ubuntu can be more than a myth, an invention of tradition. What ubuntu means to the Manyano will be presented in Chapter 4.2.5. Here, Manyano members of the Methodist congregations in Langa and Paarl will also point out what African traditions mean to them and if they still want to see them exercised in daily life.

At the time of the research of this thesis, African traditions became an integral part of the curriculum in the Department of Religious Studies at UCT, represented mostly by two lecturers: Dr. Chirevo Kwenda and Ms Nomsa Mndende. They both talked about African

⁴⁰⁹ Elphick & Davenport, 1

⁴¹⁰ For more details on traditional healers, refer to Chapter 4.3.2

⁴¹¹ Dr. Bührmann passed away, very advanced in years, in the late 1990s.

⁴¹² Dr. Oosthuizen, renowned as an expert on African Independent Churches, was already retired but still very active during my fieldwork (1987-1988) in Natal. For a selection of his numerous publications, refer to the bibliography of this thesis.

⁴¹³ Bührmann (1984), Oosthuizen (1986), (1988)

⁴¹⁴ I gained a personal impression of their work during my research in Natal.

traditional religion (ATR) as a concept. Their academic grappling with African religious traditions was parallel with the Government's discourse on the African Renaissance. Chapter 4.2.2 will give a detailed description of the situation at UCT.

The attitude of the Methodist Church's leadership for a possible revival and integration of African rituals and customs within the Church will be discussed in Chapter 4.2.3.

Individual students from the Wesley Guild of the Methodist congregation at Rosebank will explain their viewpoint on the matter in Chapter 4.2.4.

Before turning to Chapters 4.2.1 - 4.2.5, it might be advisable to read Chapter 4.3 first to get an overview on the African traditions, rituals and customs that are still practised in contemporary South Africa. Since overlapping information between Chapters 4.2 and 4.3 could not be avoided, I leave it to the reader which order - chronological or reverse - he or she prefers.

Chapter 4.3.1 will give basic information on the contemporary meaning and practice of the birth and puberty rituals. These two rituals were selected because intensive research proved that especially these two rites are still of prior importance to black South Africans. A comprehensive survey of African traditions that were exercised by past generations or a detailed account on differences in rituals and customs between the various South African tribes would exceed the frame of this thesis and the purpose of the initial research.

The issue of traditional healing and the respect for the forebears of a family or clan – also called ancestor veneration - will be the topic in Chapter 4.3.2. Especially traditional healing continues to be of importance and, at the same time, a problem because South Africa has been witnessing a shocking increase of “witchburning” since 1990. This concerns especially women because healers were and are predominantly women although there are also a number of respected male traditional healers.⁴¹⁵

Estel Nxele, whom I befriended during my fieldwork in Natal in the 1980s was an acknowledged traditional healer and originally also a member of the Methodist Church. Information on Estel and on how she became a traditional healer will be included in this chapter as well.

The legal position of black women in customary law will be the issue of Chapter 4.3.3. While the new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa proclaimed on 25 January 1994 a new order founded on the principle of equality, it also clearly recognized customary law on the same terms as Roman-Dutch common law, as part of the South African legal system.⁴¹⁶ This upgrading of customary law was preceded by fervent discussions on the matter by representatives of the legal profession and by women's groups who saw gender equality endangered. The discussion on customary law was – aside of discussions on lobolo (bridewealth) - not an issue for the MCSA leadership, the students of the Wesley Guild and the interviewed Manyano in Cape Town and its suburbs. This is partially so because the judicial details of customary law are rather complicated and the students and women did not have the opportunity to deal in depth with the subject. Further, urban Africans are not concerned in the same way with the application of customary law as the rural population is. However, a brief account on customary law must be included in this thesis; not only because it continues to be a hotly debated matter in contemporary South Africa, but also because it sheds a light on the legal standing of black South African women from a traditional point of view.

⁴¹⁵ For example Credo Mutwa (1921-), a Zulu traditional healer who is the leader of approximately 500 other traditional healers in South Africa.

Larsen (1996), XXIV

⁴¹⁶ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Chapter 2, section 31 (3); Chapter 12, sections 211-212

4.2 A description of the contemporary situation

4.2.1 The South African government's African Renaissance

The concept of an African Renaissance is closely connected to a new self-confidence of black South Africans that was ignited with the successful political liberation in 1994. However, it was not until May 1996 – on the occasion of the adoption of the new South African constitution – that it entered public discourse. Certainly, Thabo Mbeki's famous speech "I am an African"⁴¹⁷ in May 1996 opened the door to the vision of an African Renaissance that has captured the interest of South Africans and a number of international scholars and politicians⁴¹⁸ ever since. The discourse on the African Renaissance, high on hopes and enthusiasm, has been and continues to be a matter of public discussion that catches the media's attention almost on a daily basis.⁴¹⁹

The ANC and Thabo Mbeki, Vice-President at that time, employed the concept of an African Renaissance in the official ANC discourse in 1997.⁴²⁰ Mbeki, today President of South Africa, has since continued to be the principal spokesman for an African Renaissance.

The African Renaissance is divided into two wings: a political and economical wing and a culturalist wing. The political and economical concept of an African Renaissance as it is promoted by the South African government and the discussion about it will be summed up briefly to provide basic information on this hotly debated discourse. The culturalist aspect of the African Renaissance is synonymous to the discussion on a revival of ATR and on the concept of ubuntu. The latter will also be explained in this chapter because it is closely linked to the idea of an African Renaissance. A more detailed account of ATR will appear in Chapter 4.2.5 and Chapter 4.3 – 4.4.

Terms such as Global South, New World Order and Multipolarity are connected to the political and economical side of the concept of an African Renaissance; that is, Renaissance advocates promote a positive vision of Africa as a peaceful, democratic, and market oriented region. Their aim is to offer an African alternative to prevailing European concepts.⁴²¹ However, the special African character in local and continental governance still needs to be defined. This lack of definition called critics to the scene:

“... despite its alleged lack of content, the idea of the African Renaissance can influence – indeed, has influenced – policy and its making. Nevertheless the essential features remain ... high on sentiment, low on substance.”⁴²²

The African National Congress (ANC) adopted the idea of an African Renaissance as a key component of its ideological outlook, especially as this pertains to international affairs.⁴²³ Hence, steps were undertaken to push the African Renaissance to the fore: in September 1998, a respective conference was organised with the active support of the President's Office,⁴²⁴ in 1999 the African Renaissance Institute (ARI) was launched and soon after the South African Chapter of the African Renaissance Institute (SACAR). The latter is supposed to lead a social movement that aims at what is defined as the “reawakening of the African continent”.⁴²⁵

According to the ANC, African Renaissance should not be limited to South Africa but it ought to cover all of Africa, helping the African continent as a whole to establish political democracy in all African countries and to break neo-colonial relations between Africa and

⁴¹⁷ In his speech "I am an African", Mbeki defined Africanism as being one with the African earth. Furthermore, he evoked the African people as a community of fate and suffering in which he included the Afrikaans speaking South Africans as victims of Western imperialism. For the complete text of "I am an African", refer to the appendix 6 of this thesis.

⁴¹⁸ Burke (1987), Landsberg & Kornegay (1998), Liebenberg (1998), Stremlau (1999) et al.

⁴¹⁹ For example *Mail & Guardian*, 20 February 1998, *Sunday Independent*, 27 March 1999 et al.

⁴²⁰ Maloka (www.cean.u-bordeaux.fr), 1

⁴²¹ Stremlau (1999), 8

⁴²² Vale & Maseko (1998), 277

⁴²³ See ANC, "Strategy and Tactics" (December 1997)

⁴²⁴ A result of this conference was the publication of Makgoba (1999).

⁴²⁵ Maloka, 1

the world's economic power.⁴²⁶ Although the debate on an African Renaissance is very vivid in South Africa, critical voices are heard from the African diplomatic community in South Africa as African ambassadors declined an invitation to the first African Renaissance Conference, asking: "What's this African renaissance nonsense?"⁴²⁷ This reaction shows that the concept of African Renaissance is more of a topic for South Africa because this "triumphalist syndrome"⁴²⁸ seems to be consistent with the psychological disposition of newly liberated African countries.

Last but not least other African countries might suspect that the African Renaissance concept might after all be predominantly in favour of South Africa's interests or as Landsberg and Kornegay put it:

"Is the renaissance a Pax Pretoriana thinly disguised as a Pax Africana? Or is it genuine Pax Africana? Pax Africana ... means African solutions for African problems ..."⁴²⁹

African traditions are viewed as a placebo for a new enlightenment, as the problem solver of pressing present-day problems - at least by black South Africans. The change is supposed to come from within and turn people into better persons. A crucial role in the "nation-building"⁴³⁰ of post-apartheid South Africa is given to ubuntu, an African value which was ethnicised in the 1990s.⁴³¹ Ubuntu is generally translated as "humaneness", and it is regarded as the African answer to imported Western materialism and egoism.

Actually, ubuntu is the abbreviation of a Xhosa proverb that reads as follows: *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*; a person is a person through his relations to other persons.⁴³² Simply taking the proverb as such, it reflects a somewhat trivial sociological statement that can hold universally true. In the case of the "new South Africa" it is facing a past where human rights were daily violated, and dealing at the present time with a disastrous social, health and economic situation, ubuntu has taken on a special significance. For example, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)⁴³³ has been propagating ubuntu – strongly inspired by Desmond Tutu's⁴³⁴ Christian interpretation of ubuntu - as a major factor for reconciling victims of apartheid and their perpetrators. Indeed, the international audience was impressed and moved by the many examples of victims who forgave murder, torture and other encroachments that happened to them during the apartheid era.

⁴²⁶ Maloka, 3

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 2

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Landsberg & Kornegay (1998) as cited by Maloka (www.cean.u-bordeaux.fr), 3

⁴³⁰ The term "nation-building" stands for the promise of prosperity, peace and harmony in the "new South Africa." Programmes such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) are fundamentally contributing to nation-building. In 1993, the Government of National Unity (consisting of ANC, NP and IFP ministers) brought the RDP into being. Its aims were to improve the social and economic situation in post-apartheid South Africa by financing health, welfare, education, housing, land, water and other development projects. The deprived areas were given priority. For a more detailed account on the RDP, see Davenport & Saunders, 569-70; 631-32.

⁴³¹ Desmond Tutu defined ubuntu as the counterpart to sin. See Michael Battle (1997), 95. J. H. Smit called ubuntu a "traditional African moral concept."

J. H. Smit et al. (1999), 1

⁴³² Marx (2001), 95; Shutte (2001), 3

In Zulu it is *„umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu“*, translated as "A person depends on others to be a person".

H. J. Smit et al., 31

⁴³³ The TRC was established after the first democratic elections in 1994, for the sake of reconciliation after the human right's violations during the apartheid era. It was made up of three committees: for Human Right's violations, for Amnesty and for Reparation and Rehabilitation. The members of the TRC were 186 publicly nominated men and women who had to be "fit and proper persons who are impartial and who do not have a high political profile."

Davenport & Saunders (2000), 691

The TRC was not a court. Its aim was to provide "restorative justice" for victims or their surviving relatives. The weakness of the TRC was that it could grant amnesty to perpetrators but that it could only give a recommendation on the amount of reparation to be paid to victims. In due course, individual victims were not necessarily given individual "restorative justice" because any social reform taken on by the government could be passed as a form of payment for reparation and rehabilitation - as propagated by the TRC. Hence, it was expected from the individual victim to content him- or herself with social reforms that favoured the South African society as a whole.

For more details, see Marx, 91-120

⁴³⁴ See Battle (1997)

Before turning to contemporary definitions of ubuntu, a brief explanation of what ubuntu meant in a tribal environment is necessary because none of the authors who emphasize ubuntu - what they call a uniquely African ethic - try to establish proof on the historical evidence of such a culture of benevolent community on the African continent. They simply refer to "tradition" as such. For example, the Catholic Professor of Philosophy, Augustine Shutte, wrote:

"The conception of UBUNTU was developed over many centuries in traditional African culture. This culture was pre-literate, pre-scientific, pre-industrial."⁴³⁵

One gets the impression that "tradition" is regarded as synonymous to "valuable". This comparison reminds me of statements that I heard from Indian lay-persons and scholars who claimed that one of their holy scriptures, the Bhagavat-Gita⁴³⁶ contains the "ultimate truth because it is thousands and thousands of years old" although investigation has proven that its original text was written in the first half of the second century BC and the version known today in the second century AC. Naming something "traditional" or "very very old" simply wants to indicate the value and the importance of the object referred to.

Originally, ubuntu stood for the willingness of tribal communities to offer hospitality to strangers. Ubuntu was not an omnipresent virtue but it existed as a demand that as many members of a community as possible should follow. As a matter of fact, in the past decades, ubuntu has proven very valuable in the struggle for survival in the black townships that were and – to a large extend still are -characterized by poverty, crime and desperation.⁴³⁷

It is understandable that in a society where the majority of the population feels dominated by a foreign culture, efforts will be made for an integration of its own values. The emphasis on an African Renaissance and ubuntu playing a key-role in the "new South Africa" has to be seen in this setting. Advocates of ubuntu want to prove to the world that Africa contains morals and cultural aspects that can enrich not just Africa but also the world as a whole.

"Africa has a special moral role to play in the construction of the international community in helping others to rediscover the spiritual dimension. Contemporary European philosophy with its materialism makes it impossible to understand the human person."⁴³⁸

As mentioned earlier, ubuntu is presented as a challenge to self-centered individualism and to a society that has lost most of its compassion. Ubuntu is thought of as an empowerment of the suppressed and impoverished masses because mutual support can improve their situation.

Following here are a few definitions of ubuntu. Generally speaking, as core values of ubuntu are named: mutual obligation, dignity, respect, trust, compassion, caring, charity, understanding, empathy, equality, honesty, hospitality, conformity.⁴³⁹

Lebamang J. Sebidi defined ubuntu as African humanism. To him, ubuntu shows in "every human act which has community building as its objective orientation."⁴⁴⁰ Accordingly, any anti-social behaviour is not ubuntu. Acts of ubuntu can only be "good" because ubuntu stands for anti-individualism and pro-communalism. Ubuntu is part of the African cultural heritage and no other because traditional Africans define the human

⁴³⁵ Shutte, 9

⁴³⁶ The Bhagavad-Gita is part of the greater epic Mahabharata, a compilation of about 106.000 verses that were written between 500 BC and 400 AC.

⁴³⁷ Marx, 96

⁴³⁸ Shutte et al. (1999), 19.

M. Deacon, one of the editors in this work, claims to quote Leopold S. Senghor; however, she did not give a source. Senghor (9 October 1906 – 20 December 2001), President of the Senegal during the 1960s and 1970s and a renowned poet and philosopher, was one of the outstanding representatives of African humanism. He also developed the philosophical and political ideology of the Négritude, thus preparing the way for black Africans and African Americans to investigate into their roots and African cultural traditions. For information on publications, refer to Senghor in the bibliography of this thesis.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 31

⁴⁴⁰ Sebidi (1998), 63

being in relation terms only. In Sebidi's point of view, the relationship between an individual and his society is not to be understood in hierarchical terms.⁴⁴¹ This sounds almost like a contradiction in itself because hierarchy plays a major role in tribal communities. Here, one can sense that the concept of ubuntu has already experienced a mix of traditional and modern values. Sebidi further states that "exponents of Ubuntu-ism cannot be racists" because "Ubuntu-ism is inclusivist and humane almost to a fault."⁴⁴² Therefore, ubuntu could function as a link in a South African society that has been racist until recently and that is still struggling with its past.

J. H. Smit, a Catholic Professor of Philosophy, defined the humaneness of ubuntu as the realization of brotherhood for all Africans, who will share, treat and respect other people as human beings of dignity.⁴⁴³ Herewith, ubuntu could function as a tool of transformation, affirmation and pride in post-apartheid South Africa.

Peter Magkoba called ubuntu a philosophy, not just a concept; a philosophy that "transcends both race and culture."⁴⁴⁴ Calling ubuntu an "African philosophy" underlines the request of black South Africans who want to see their ethics treated as equally valuable to Western philosophies.

The popularity of ubuntu certainly has to do with the general atmosphere of wanting to give voice to African traditions after the end of apartheid. It also has to be seen as part of the international revival of indigenous cultures and their righteous demand to be recognized as equals to western cultures. The concept of ubuntu transports hope. Ubuntu is supposed to help in all areas of life. Hence, ubuntu is also called for as the desired ethic of management in South African enterprises to enhance success.

"Managerial reality is not objective and absolute. It is relative and culturally determined. It is a set of packaged solutions to complex survival problems.... Therefore, effective adaptation of management principles and practices in South Africa will only take place if the collective experience of the majority of South African black workers is taken account of."⁴⁴⁵

In his book, when propagating ubuntu as the only ethic for a humane management in his book, Mbigi does not acknowledge that team-work, mutual support and respect toward each other have been fundamental demands of modern management during the last fifteen to twenty years. They might not always be realized but managers today know that the contentment of their employees is crucial to the success of a company. One can name it "ubuntu" or "modern management"; the aim is very similar.

The over-use of the term has lead to abuse. Because ubuntu sounds exotic and promising, it has been increasingly commercialised during the past decade. Hardly any of the groups or individuals who equip their enterprises with the name "ubuntu" – may that be a Circus, an interactive distance learning school, a school for dance and gymnastics in Germany or a tourist village in Norway – have anything to do with ubuntu in the original sense of "hospitality" or with the invented sense of contemporary South African politics. Because of the commercialisation of ubuntu, it runs risk to be used by anyone as he or she pleases; thereby, ubuntu could loose its credibility as a serious African worldview that has the power to enrich communities if properly realized.⁴⁴⁶

But danger does not only lie in the commercialisation of the word ubuntu. Danger also lies in the interpretation and propagation of ubuntu by the South African government. It is quite obvious that the contemporary meaning of ubuntu contains a number of morals and values that can also be found in Christian ethics. The answers of the Methodist Manyano in Chapter 4.2.5 point out these parallels. The resemblance between ubuntu values - as redefined in the past decade – with Christian ethics is not surprising because ubuntu was pushed forward by theologians; one of the more prominent being Desmond Tutu. When propagating ubuntu as a uniquely African tradition, the South African government

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 66

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Smit (1999), 15

⁴⁴⁴ Magkoba as cited by Smit, 17

⁴⁴⁵ Mbigi & Maree, 17

⁴⁴⁶ The Ubuntu School of Philosophy, based in Pretoria, organises and runs countrywide seminars and workshops on the subject.

reinforces the revival of particular cultural identities in a neo-apartheid way. In this point of view, black South Africans are the better persons because they have ubuntu as their cultural background.⁴⁴⁷ The question is: Where will the solidarity take place? Will black South Africans show social allegiance only to their own? Identifying Western cultures with individualism, egoism, the lack of social responsibility and cold-heartedness instead of with freedom, autonomy of the individual and democracy, will lead to new separation of South Africans along racial lines.

Ubuntu could be a peacemaking concept in South Africa. Unfortunately, the attempts of the South African government to point out the value of ubuntu by criticizing "Western philosophy" without differentiating between different Western philosophies create dichotomy in the South African population. Desmond Tutu - maybe unwillingly - supported this development by reducing "the West" to the Cartesian principle *Cogito, ergo sum*, contrasting it with the African tenet "I am human because I belong",⁴⁴⁸ one gets the impression that one needs to choose between a cosy tribal way of living and a cold Western kind of living.

Ubuntu certainly comes along as an attractive option to make the world a better place to live in. Who does not want to be supported and respected? The South African government has taken up the concept of ubuntu because it raises communal interests above individual interests that serves their purpose of "nation-building." People may be more likely to give up individual interests in favour of communal interests.

Ubuntu also demands conformity of South Africans and respect towards the leadership, may this be traditional or governmental. It is not surprising that the concepts of African Renaissance and of ubuntu cause high waves of enthusiasm, especially among black South African men because it strengthens their power position. For example, the *ubuntu-botho* curriculum used in schools in KwaZulu Natal, emphasized the traditional Zulu family that can only be headed by a man: "The woman knows that she is not equal to her husband."⁴⁴⁹

Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance and ubuntu sanctify the power of men, while they show little or no concern for gender issues. Women and their interests or rights are not explicitly mentioned in the two concepts. It seems that - similar to the times of the struggle of political liberation - the discourse on race is privileged over class and gender.

⁴⁴⁷ Shutte (2001), 15

⁴⁴⁸ Marx, 112

⁴⁴⁹ Kaganas & Murray, 136

4.2.2 African traditional religion at UCT

One needs to note again: on a political level things in South Africa are changing quickly since the end of apartheid. An increasing number of black South Africans no longer regard the indigenous traditions as inferior to Western European culture. The new attitude was also recognized by the Universities. In the following, the situation in the Department of Religion at UCT will be described as I found it during my fieldwork in 1995-1997. From my past studies at the University in Durban-Westville in 1987-1988 I knew that the great majority of theologians used to be very sincere about Christianity. They would make some space for the investigation into African affairs, but I could not help the impression that these activities took place half-heartedly. Therefore, it was very interesting to witness a Department of Religion at UCT that was in the middle of change. Whereas the "Christian party" tried to redefine the role of Christianity and its theology in post-apartheid South African society, the "ATR party" made manifold efforts to educate interested students in the worldview of ATR. These efforts coincide with the South African *Zeitgeist* that focuses on teaching African Studies in a way that black South Africans want their cultures to be taught and understood.⁴⁵⁰ To be precise: black South Africans want to be proud of their roots and not be ashamed of them. They demand the rewriting of South African history that includes an African point of view.⁴⁵¹ White South Africans and students from overseas also increasingly seek to educate themselves in Africanism with all its facets – religiously as well as politically.

During my research, I noticed a high level of motivation and enthusiasm among the black students which differed greatly from the general spirit of depression and hopelessness that I had witnessed during my fieldwork in Natal in the late 1980s. It seemed, that the end of apartheid allowed the self-confident display of what African traditions can mean to individuals or groups. The campus of UCT was sometimes one of the sites of such endeavour. In one case an interested audience could witness the traditional welcome of a Xhosa chief and his wife, which included a Xhosa praise singer.⁴⁵² This performance was obviously not used for the sake of academic discourse but as a demonstration of the revival of African power. The participants in this ritual seemed highly excited and very satisfied with their presentation. Following the ritual, there was no possibility to reflect on what just happened by means of a discussion between the student audience and the performing persons. This led to criticism from theologians in the Department of Religious Studies who missed the academic analysis of this event, which - after all - took place on the grounds of a university. Another criticism was that too much importance had been given to the presentation of Xhosa traditions. Members of other Bantu tribes, such as Sotho or Zulu, whom I met at UCT, also criticized the dominance of the Xhosa at UCT,⁴⁵³ complaining that they were regarded as inferior by their Xhosa speaking fellow students, who would refuse to converse in English with them, demanding that they should learn Xhosa.⁴⁵⁴

The intellectual heads of the ATR party at UCT were two lecturers: Ms Nokuzola Mndende, a Xhosa speaking South African, and Dr. Chirevo Kwenda, a Shona from Zimbabwe.

Ms Mndende identified herself as a dedicated African traditionalist who never belonged to a Christian church. She demonstrated pride in the fact that she was spared conversion. In her opinion, European culture and with it Christianity destroyed Africa and its people. She

⁴⁵⁰ During apartheid profound research on African studies was supported by the government, mostly to gain a better understanding of the African 'opponents'. The politics of 'a separate development' were supported by such research. They helped to confirm apartheid politics concerning the otherness and an assumed inferiority of the African culture in respect to a 'superior' European culture.

⁴⁵¹ For example Balia

For a modern history on South Africa, see Davenport & Saunders.

⁴⁵² UCT, March 1997.

⁴⁵³ The Xhosa had a strong position at UCT because they outnumber other Bantu tribes in the Cape Province. The position of Nelson Mandela as the first black President of South Africa (he is a Xhosa) supported their powerful standing additionally.

⁴⁵⁴ Xhosa and Zulu are related languages but Xhosa and Sotho are not. Thus, demanding a Sotho should learn Xhosa is like asking an Englishman to learn Russian.

condemned Christian mission for having cooperated with the colonizers.⁴⁵⁵ Ms Mndende proclaimed a revival of ATR and demanded that all black South Africans still belonging to a Christian church should leave it and turn back to their African roots instead. In her opinion this is the only way to find out who they really are. Ms Mndende's anger exemplifies the hurt of black people due to a long history of colonisation and conversion in South Africa, which disregarded the religions of the indigenous population and destroyed a lot of its traditional knowledge.⁴⁵⁶

I tried to find out what exactly ATR meant to Ms Mndende, which components she regarded as crucial, etc.. As Ms Mndende did not keep the appointments, the related questions could not be answered. It seemed she did not want to talk to an (white) outsider about ATR.

The other advocate of ATR at UCT was Dr. Kwenda, a former Methodist minister, who grew up in an environment that was Christian as well as traditional African. His father worked as a Methodist minister and belonged to the African leadership by virtue of his status as a chief. According to Dr. Kwenda, his father incorporated African healing rituals into his ministry. Thus, African traditions always were an important part of the Kwenda clan, which provided Dr. Kwenda with an insight into ATR, which is no longer common among the Christianised African population of Southern Africa.

Dr. Kwenda left the ministry many years ago and followed an academic career in the field of the study of Religion instead. He was educated at universities in Africa and the United States of America. When he was appointed as a lecturer at UCT in 1994, he felt the strong need to hand on to the students – regardless of their racial background – the meaning and the importance of African religious traditions. His aim was to function as a constructive mediator between ATR and the Western world and to make the public aware of its healing powers. He pointed out that African traditional spirituality incorporates a sense of hope and optimism, which enables people to act in a way to make the world a worthwhile place. In the African worldview, death is not to be feared because it is included in life. The living are connected with the deceased – the Living dead - and with the unborn. Thus, death is transformed from something destructive into a creative and constructive force.

Dr. Kwenda regards the notion of belonging, the “spirituality of belonging” as he calls it, as the core of ATR. For the future the scholar envisages a new community, a community connected by spirit rather than by blood relation.⁴⁵⁷

Chirevo Kwenda was convinced that ATR was and still is misconceived by a great number of Europeans and North Americans who regard Western analytical thought as superior to African religious thinking. The scholar repeatedly pointed out that traditional African thinking is more comprehensive than white academics want to acknowledge. And he underlined that it had never stopped being part of the black South African fabric – even during the era of apartheid. Thus talking about the renaissance of ATR as if it had just resurrected from destruction is in his opinion not correct:

“The renaissance of ATR is really a very multidimensional thing. First of all, ATR has been alive, has been practised in different forms by different groups of people in different ways in the rural areas, then from urban areas et cetera.

Now, when we speak of renaissance of ATR, we just say that certain things have changed in the environment in which it is taking place. We are saying, whereas in the past it was oppressed, it was persecuted, it was side-lined and marginalized - not only ideologically but actively by acts of legislation etc. - we have now - at least as far as the constitution is concerned – a secular state. In other words, a state that doesn't seek to privilege any religious tradition or

⁴⁵⁵ Unofficial talks with Ms Mndende during the time of the field-research.

I noticed that the work of the missionaries was collectively condemned. There was no distinction made between the “arrogant missionaries” and those individuals who regarded black South Africans as equal human beings and tried to improve their lives.

⁴⁵⁶ On colonisation and conversion see Balia (1991); Ibid., *Missionalia* (1990); Bredekamp & Ross (1995); Buthelezi, *Pro Veritate* (1973); Boesak (1977); Cochrane (1987); Comaroff & Comaroff (1991); Mbali (1987).

⁴⁵⁷ *Odyssey*, April/May 1996, 13

confession. Therefore, it is giving room in the environment for all religious traditions to drive and operate. That doesn't necessarily mean that suddenly the environment is conducive to the practice of ATR without any hindrance because the prejudices of the past will continue, even without the backing of legislation.”⁴⁵⁸

Dr. Kwenda is aware that he has a long way to go in following his dream of reintegrating ATR in South Africa in “a meaningful way.” In his opinion, putting Christian symbols on African symbols is not enough. On the contrary: it simply means denying the possibility of anything African existing having power. Chirevo Kwenda regards the prejudism toward ATR, especially amongst the black leadership in Christian churches, as one of several major obstacles to a renaissance of ATR:

“Some are interested, some are not. You see, the tradition has been demonised in many ways: in preaching, in writing, in speech, every day speech, in practices etc. which – its environment was full of symbols – which said that this is evil. And I am sure many people have internalised that. So that you find that even some people who might want to but they just don't have the courage and the know-how and they get so confused about all of this. they even become afraid to get involved with that. It pulls them. It pulls them because they are born into that. And at one point or another in their lives they had people who lived by that kind of orientation. It pulls them. They are afraid of it. They've been told it's evil, they've been told: you devil in that. And: you have opened Pandora's box of evil. It will be coming in avalanches and you won't be able to contain it. And then, what will you do?”⁴⁵⁹

Another obstacle is the lack of education in African traditions and customs – in the universities as well as in the schools:

“In the schools, for instance, you continue to find that there is not clarity yet in terms of curriculum. There is great uncertainty in the high-schools today. There is uncertainty as what will happen to ATR. We know that we are supposed to have multicultural religious education. But the act is not in place yet and some of the things that are taking place at the moment are transitional. That's what we can say at best. Perhaps we'll come to the point where things will be more clarified. For instance, at the moment high-schools are buying books on religion because the whole situation is in limbo at the moment. That includes especially ATR.”

Although South African society has become more open toward African traditions, the question of how much ATR already exists in the MCSA or not, cannot be answered easily. As Dr. Kwenda said people internalised their traditions to be evil. And who wants to do something evil or even be evil? Therefore, black South African Christians often have two faces: the Christian and the traditional African:

“In the rural areas they do their rituals. And some of them never go to church. Some of whom do rituals are also Christians. They also go to church and so on. But the question whether they call themselves Christians or something else as I have said many times before – I regard that as a political question rather than a religious question.”⁴⁶⁰ How you live with yourself has nothing to do with religion. It is a political decision that you have to make yourself viable in your environment. It has nothing to do with your beliefs. It has nothing to do with your domestication, with the values of a certain tradition. For instance, one of the complaints of Christian ministers of religion has been that people make Christianity a Sunday only religion, meaning that for six days of the week they are not operating, orientating their lives around Christian values. In other words, they are orientating their lives around

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 14 May 1997

On the teaching of ATR in the schools see Kwenda et al. (1994).

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Here Ch. Kwenda refers to the past when it was necessary for Africans to convert to Christianity in order to receive Western education and to avoid hassle with the powerful white minority.

African values, traditional values. And then on Sunday they will go to church and they will do what Christians do. Now, it doesn't matter if you slap on yourself the label 'Christian'. It is really what you do six or seven days a week that really matters. And one would make an argument that just given how people orientate their lives during the week, you could probably call them ATR who also practise Christianity."⁴⁶¹

Dr. Kwenda's approach was provocative to the theologians in the Department of Religious Studies because he focused on ATR as a subject independent of any relation to Christianity; in other words, he did not teach an African Theology⁴⁶² nor did he speak of inculturation⁴⁶³ nor of cross-culturation,⁴⁶⁴ but he taught solely African traditional religion in its own right. He demanded that white and coloured South Africans must respect ATR for what it is. White and coloured South Africans can participate in ATR by accepting and respecting it or by participating in some activities and rituals that are open to visitors. However, they can never be a true part of the system. As little as somebody not born as a Hindu can become a Hindu,⁴⁶⁵ or African can become African, Dr. Kwenda promotes mutual respect and he believes that peace can only develop in South Africa if ATR is reintegrated and respected in a meaningful way. But the white and coloured South Africans also need to understand that ATR is something they can never truly enter. As an example he referred to the marriage of his brother with an English woman. Although she had been very willing to learn all about African traditions, the marriage ultimately had to fail – in Dr. Kwenda's opinion - because his brother's wife neither grew up with ATR nor did she belong to an African lineage.⁴⁶⁶

According to Dr. Kwenda, ATR is the spiritual home of black South Africans. The question arises whether it is possible for an African to live according to African traditions and be a Christian at the same time. Dr. Kwenda referred to this problem in his book:

"There does not seem to be anything wrong with Africanising Christianity. African Christians have a right to use available cultural resources to construct a viable identity for themselves. *But they have gone further and sought to deny to those who are not Christians a right to have an African identity that is not Christian.* (italics in original, U. T.)"⁴⁶⁷

Identity continues to be a difficult thing for black South Africans as they try to accommodate their traditions in addition to Western culture and (their) Christian religion. According to Dr. Kwenda there are at least four ways of being African in unison with Christianity and the West:

- "to be African and Christian and a little Western;
- to be a little African, very Western and Christian;
- to be African and a little Western;
- to be a little African and a little Western without being Christian."⁴⁶⁸

Dr. Kwenda and Ms Mndende mourned the loss of their ancestral religion. They are convinced that ATR is sufficient as a guide for conduct and at the same time spiritually satisfying, and they regard conversion to Christianity as a great mistake and not necessary to improve the lives of black South Africans.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Hovland (1993); Mulago (1991)

⁴⁶³ Here the Christian holy scriptures are adopted using ideas from the indigenous culture.

⁴⁶⁴ It means that a specific religion not only undergoes changes in a different context but that the culture bringing the specific religion will also be changed in the process.

⁴⁶⁵ I know of only one case of a non-Hindu officially converting to Hinduism and even functioning as a Hindu priest: the deceased Dr. Agehananda Bharati, formerly professor of Anthropology at the University of Syracuse, N.Y..

⁴⁶⁶ Inofficial talk with Ch. Kwenda, University of Cape Town, 1996

⁴⁶⁷ Kwenda et al., 134

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 135

4.2.3 The Methodist Church and African traditions

In Chapter 1.5 of this thesis, the MCSA's search for a newly defined role in a modern South African society was presented. It was pointed out that the majority of the membership of the so-called English-speaking churches, to which the MCSA belongs, is black South African and not white or coloured South African. The Africanisation of the Church has been an issue for the liberation movement as far as the political and ecclesiastical empowerment of its black members was concerned. Furthermore, an authentic African theology has been in demand since the 1960s. Efforts toward a more positive outlook on African traditions – especially the usage of African languages, prayers and dance - in the conventional churches were undertaken. Today they are an integral part of worship among black Methodists congregations. They are no longer seen as a threat to the power position of the Western European Christian belief system that white and coloured Methodists still consider to be the genuine belief to which a Christian should attach himself.

Times have changed in favour of African customs as black South Africans have developed pride in their cultural roots via political empowerment. Although changes on the ground of the mission-founded churches cannot be compared to the spiritual freedom black South Africans enjoy in the AICs⁴⁷⁰ and although changes are slow, steps toward a wider integration of African values and rituals have been made.

One change is the integration of the circumcision ritual in Methodist parishes, as informal as this may be. According to one of the executing Methodist ministers⁴⁷¹ the initial intention was not primarily to give more power to this African ritual.⁴⁷² His major concern was to offer a safe place to young men of his congregation, because the nonhygienic practice of circumcision in the urban areas – usually the same knife is used on all participants - claim death tolls on a regular basis.⁴⁷³

A positive side effect of the integration of the circumcision ritual in churches is the greater value that this African ritual thereby experiences. To my knowledge, circumcision rituals on the premises of a Methodist Church remain exceptional events.

Generally speaking, the white and coloured members of the MCSA don't mind African music in the churches; however, they would not feel comfortable with the integration of faithhealing or other African rituals such as the slaughter of animals and "ancestor worship."⁴⁷⁴ Peggy Attwell, then member of the W.A. and the Manyano, had a different opinion. She felt that African customs are not necessarily contrary to Christianity. She referred to lobolo, the traditional bridewealth,⁴⁷⁵ to ancestor veneration and to the slaughtering of an animal. She mentioned that the Reverend Mvumi Dandala had an animal sacrificed when he was elected Presiding Bishop of the MCSA. However, this ritual did not take place on church grounds or even nearby; it was performed at Mr. Dandala's traditional home in the Transkei.

Peggy Attwell of course considered other African traditions, such as polygamy and witchcraft, as incompatible with Christian belief.⁴⁷⁶

The MCSA is still closely connected to its origin as a mission-founded church. It continues to be conservative in the majority of its ideas, structures and discipline, even as changes are coming forth through the Journey to a New Land⁴⁷⁷ (JNL) process. This concerns especially the historic Protestant doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers,"

⁴⁷⁰ Kruger (1989); Sundkler (1961).

⁴⁷¹ Otto Ntshanyana, in 1996 Reverend at the Methodist Church of Kayelitsha, Western Cape.

⁴⁷² Talk with Rev. Otto Ntshanyana, UCT, October 1996.

⁴⁷³ The young men are usually not taken to the hospital when sepsis sets in because their families fear that a female medical doctor might treat the men.

Interview with Lindiway, independent women's group of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Langa, 13 December 1996.

⁴⁷⁴ I prefer the term 'ancestor veneration' because 'ancestor worship' reflects the prejudice of non-black Christians toward this religious African tradition, which is highly respected by black South Africans.

Interview with Pamela Delport, the Women's Association, University of Western Cape, 13 May 1997.

⁴⁷⁵ See Chapter 4.3.3

⁴⁷⁶ Informal discussion with Peggy Attwell, Noordhoek, November 1996

⁴⁷⁷ See Chapter 1.5

which will increasingly empower the laity in the Church. However, the JNL process does not consider the topic of Africanisation of Methodist theology. For example, ubuntu is not a matter of discussion in the program. However, the former Presiding Bishop, Dr. Stanley Mogoba,⁴⁷⁸ called for a re-evaluation of the Church's relationship with ATR. He saw the necessity of dialogue between African religion and western Christianity and demanded that "the best and most helpful aspects from the respective systems"⁴⁷⁹ should be blended. As an example, he referred specifically to ancestor veneration:

"The ancestors are an integral part of persons, families, communities, clans, tribes, villages or even nations. They are woven into the very fabric of the lives of people. No individual exists apart from the web of relationships. How then, can one tear oneself from this structure?"⁴⁸⁰

Dimension, which published the article in 1994, must be regarded as one of a few publications on the side of the MCSA's leadership that give special interest to African traditions. It seems that the political change in 1994 gave rise to enthusiastic exclamations and demands that were not pursued as time went on because other issues became more important. For example, in August 1994 at the the National Consultation on Christianity, African Culture and Development in Southern Africa, the Church's leadership expressed the need for a training manual for the ministry from an African perspective. Apart from repetitive investigation, for example, at the Institute for Education for Ministry and Mission (EMMU) in Silverton, the question on the manual could not be answered because all inquiry was left without response. One can only speculate why no one responsible at EMMU nor the Presiding Bishop, the Reverend Mvume Dandala⁴⁸¹ or one of his deputies did not reply on the matter.⁴⁸²

The Resolutions of the Connexional Executive from 2001 and the Resolutions of the Conference from 2001 allow some insight into the most recent Church's politics. Reading the papers, it becomes clear that African traditions are not a priority. The summary on the Training of Ministers did not mention African traditions at all. Instead, the emphasis was on the competence of theological knowledge, namely Bible study.

"Holding that firm attachment to and competence in understanding and teaching the Bible are the first essentials for those ordained to Ministry of the Word and Sacraments the Connexional Executive affirms that the attainment of thorough knowledge of Scripture be given uncontested priority in preparing people for the Ordained Ministry."⁴⁸³

The Annual Methodist Conference in 2001 touched the issue of African traditions only casually when its participants referred to the standing of traditional leaders in modern society:

"Conference resolved to call upon the South African Government to address the concerns of the traditional leaders in terms of empowerment and in view of the new municipal demarcation dispensation and its impact on traditional communities. This should preclude all traces of conflict and enhance the spirit of peace as contained in the African Renaissance concept. A clear definition of the role of traditional leaders in terms of transitional empowerment within the context of the new dispensation should be defined as a matter of urgency."⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁸ Presiding Bishop of the MCSA from 1988-1997.

⁴⁷⁹ "Time for dialogue with African religion", *Dimension*, 2:1, 19 September 1994, no author and no page given.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Also President of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) since 2001. The SACC represents the majority of Christians in South Africa. Its organisation comprises twenty-four churches, one observer-member and associated para-church organisations. The national office is located in Johannesburg. The SACC functions as "the national ecumenical enabler and co-ordinator of inter-church debate and action." www.sacc.org.za/about.html

⁴⁸² Investigation took place now and again in the years 1997-2002.

⁴⁸³ Resolutions of Connexional Executive 2001, www.methodist.co.za/messages_text.asp?id=connexec§ion=home, 2

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

The rights of traditional leaders were secured in Chapter 12, sections 211-212 of the South African Constitution as adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996:

According to the findings presented above, it can be rightly assumed that – at least at this point - the MCSA's leadership still does not give priority to an integration of African traditions into the Church. Dr. Chirevo Kwenda, lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at UCT supported this assumption:

“You see, as far as African Christians are concerned, their lead, their ministers, their intelligentsia are concerned, I don't think they really have the will to embrace African religion, African tradition in a meaningful way. It's what the people are doing that doesn't get talked about. Why? Because here you are going into the area of contestation of power. And no one wants that kind of contestation within a tradition. So, when you talk of Africanisation of Christianity, you are talking of taking a little here and a little there, things of colour, things that you do, something from an African tradition and so on and therefore you now make it African. But the moment you really touch the sources of power or the tradition itself, then people are uncomfortable with that. You know, you are going back into that demonised area of evil and so on. And then people begin to talk about the need to cleanse the African culture. There is a need to redeem it, there is a need to cleanse it and so on. In other words, you got to tame it. You got to Christianise it before you can use it. So you begin to question: is it Africanisation of Christianity or is it Christianising the African culture? Sometimes you can't tell what is happening because more of what I hear is Christianisation of African culture more than Africanisation of African Christianity.”⁴⁸⁵

The situation displayed above leads to an awkward situation: on one hand the South African government promotes pride in African values and traditions. But within the context of the MCSA, an identity crisis continues that has been going on since early missionary days. Desmond Tutu once called it “a form of religious schizophrenia”⁴⁸⁶ because black South Africans want to be Christian and yet still follow their roots and culture, but they are not allowed to or don't dare to do so. Whereas the members of the AICs⁴⁸⁷ lived and live out their Africanism⁴⁸⁸ openly, the black members of the MCSA still tend to hide what they think and feel in regard to African spirituality.

The top level leadership of the MCSA - although it is black South African - does not give more power to African traditions by changing the curriculum of ministry education or by proposing a revival of African traditions and customs more assertively. This frustrates some of their ministers. Teroko, a former Methodist minister, does not see that there is any space for African traditions in the Church.⁴⁸⁹ The Rev. Ernest Baartman pointed out

-
- “211. (1) The institution, status and role of traditional leadership, according to customary law are recognised, subject to the Constitution.
 (2) A traditional authority that observes a system of customary law may function subject to any applicable legislation and customs, which includes amendments to, or repeal of, that legislation or those customs.
 (3) The courts must apply customary law when that law is applicable, subject to the Constitution and any legislation that specifically deals with customary law.
- 212 (1) National legislation may provide for a role for traditional leadership as an institution at local level on matters affecting local communities.
 (2) To deal with matters relating to traditional leadership, the role of traditional leaders, customary law and the customs of communities observing a system of customary law –
 (a) national or provincial legislation may provide for the establishment of houses of traditional leaders; and
 (b) national legislation may establish a council of traditional leaders.”

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Ch. Kwenda, 14 May 1997

⁴⁸⁶ Pato, 26

⁴⁸⁷ The AICs are growing in number and power ever since they started. Today about 6000 Independent African Churches exist in South Africa, estimated Dr. Gerhardus Oosthuizen in 1996. Social scientists figured that nine million out of 30 million black South Africans belong to an Independent African Church; five million are members of the largest AIC in South Africa, the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC). One is quite wrong to think that the majority of the ZCC are marginalised South Africans. Aside of unemployed, unskilled and skilled workers and farmers, members of the ZCC are teachers, university professors and journalists. It is important to note that the AICs did not engage in the political struggle during the apartheid era. Instead they focused on living Christianity according to the spiritual needs of black South Africans.

Demographic information drawn from:

www.ems-online.org/_texte/Suedafrika/SuedafrikaAUC.htm

⁴⁸⁸ In contemporary discussion the term “Africaness” is frequently used instead of Africanism.

⁴⁸⁹ Inofficial discussion with Teroko, UCT, May 1996

that African traditions are not what they used to be and that attempts to revive them must fail because crucial knowledge has been forgotten.⁴⁹⁰ And the Rev. Sanqela voiced the need for mutual efforts to bring black, coloured and white Methodists together: for the sake of African traditions and true understanding.

“The white and coloured congregations have to make a move toward black people to learn about ubuntu and thus truly understand each other. So far, black people had to move toward the others.”⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ Interview with Rev. E. Baartman, Gugulethu, 26 February 1997

⁴⁹¹ Interview with Rev. W. Sanqela, Paarl, 28 May 1997.

4.2.4 African traditions from Methodist students' point of view

The following information is based on questionnaires that were distributed to the Wesley Guild, a Methodist student group at Rosebank, Cape Town. The University of Cape Town is also located at Rosebank, and the historic Methodist Church and its adjacent community building where the students meet lie within walking distance of the Campus. I made contact with the Wesley Guild through the aid of the white Methodist minister at that time, Rev. Kevin Needham.

The Guild met once a week in the evening for discussion and prayer. Usually only men are members of a Wesley Guild. In the case of the students' Guild at Rosebank, young men and women attended the group. At that time, eight female and about thirty male students frequented the Guild on a regular basis.

Whereas communication with the Manyano was easy after the initial bureaucratic and hierarchical obstacles had been set aside, communication with the Guild members remained difficult as described in the introduction of this thesis. Language reasons were not an obstacle because the students were fluent in English but apparently not interested in communicating with a white outsider. Especially the male members of the Wesley Guild kept up a defensive wall. Most likely this was one of the reasons why only six out of twenty questionnaires were returned: four came from female Guild members and two from male members. One of the male students who called himself "Mr. X" gave an answer that hints at one of other possible reasons for the students' failing cooperation with the researcher:

"Africanism is what Africans are, not what the European think they are. You do not judge "a people" with means foreign to them when you don't even understand the people you are dealing with. Not you as a reader but what Europeans spread and wrote and thought about African culture."⁴⁹²

Obviously, Mr. X. did not think that a white person would ever be able or willing to understand what it means to be African. Therefore he did not see why he should answer questions on African traditions.

However, even if the answers of six students cannot be more than individual statements that might not hold true for the other students, they are nevertheless important because they give evidence of the attitude of young academic black Methodists vis-à-vis African traditions.

The four female Guild members ranged in age from 18 to 24. I shall call them Ms. A., B., C. and D. to protect their privacy. Three of them spoke Xhosa and one spoke Sotho. All of them were single and had no children. Two originally came from a rural area and two from an urban environment. Ms. A. studied Xhosa at UCT, Ms. B. Social Work, Ms. C. Accounting and Ms. D. Marketing Management.

The two male students wanted to remain anonymous right from the start. They were both Tswana speaking South Africans, were 21 years old, single and studied Medicine and Commerce. I shall call them Mr. X. and Mr. Z..

When asked which parts of African traditions could play a major role in modern South Africa, all of them pointed to ubuntu:

"It can help people to realise who they are and respect each other for the values and norms each one has."⁴⁹³

"I strongly believe African Culture can bring back ubuntu on people because the way people think, ubuntu is fading."⁴⁹⁴

Aspects of ATR that were important to them were:

- "the connection with the ancestors"⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Student of the Wesley Guild at Rosebank who called himself "Mr. X", May 1997.

⁴⁹³ Ms. B., Wesley Guild Rosebank, May 1997

⁴⁹⁴ Ms. C., Wesley Guild Rosebank, May 1997

⁴⁹⁵ Ms. A., Wesley Guild Rosebank, May 1997

- “Birth ritual”⁴⁹⁶
- “Traditional law”⁴⁹⁷

Ms D. connected with ATR traditional law⁴⁹⁸ and responded with disapproval:

“I don’t respect (African, U.T.) tradition too much since I think most of traditional law was oppressive to women whilst favouring men.”

When asked if ancestors are an important part of their lives, five out of six students answered with “Yes”. Ms. A., Ms. B. and Ms. C. regarded ancestors as protectors and guides. Ms. D. said that she saw herself as their child because she carried the same blood. She also was convinced that they brought her luck.

Mr. X. explained his relationship with his ancestors as follows:

“I am their descendent and they are my roots.”

Mr. Z. who did not consider ancestors, respectively ancestor veneration, reasoned:

“They are no more. How can someone who is not omnipotent or omnipresent hear me when I call for help or whatever.”

When asked if they grew up with traditional birth and puberty rituals, three responded with “Yes” concerning the birth ritual, and three with “No”. None of the six had gone through a puberty ritual, such as circumcision, or they did not want to mention it.

The birth ritual was regarded as especially important by Ms. A. because she believed that it connected her with her ancestors.

The three students who grew up with rituals said that they only practiced rituals in their traditional home. They regarded the city environment as not fit for rituals.

In Ms. A.’s case, her mother, a teacher who also functioned as a traditional healer and who belonged to the Methodist Church as well, was the link between her daughter and African traditions. Ms. B. referred to her father as her link to African traditions. The other four students did not answer the question. Ms. D., who did not grow up with African traditions, said that she would not mind integrating them in her life “as long as they are not making me feel inferior as a woman.”

When asked if they consult a traditional healer, a herbalist or a Western trained medical doctor when ill, Ms. A. and Ms. B. responded that it depended on their illness. Ms. C., Ms. D. and Mr. Z. preferred to consult a medical doctor whilst Mr. X. drew attention to the problem of real or fake traditional healing:

“Western medical doctor or a traditional healer, depending on where I am and what is the problem. We are living in different times with too much generalisation and faking.”

Ms. B. and Ms. D. responded on the issue of traditional healers:

“I guess, I don’t believe much in what they have to offer.”

“I am not sure if they work. I find it difficult to believe that they can have supernatural powers.”

When asked if witchcraft is an issue to them, Ms. B., Ms. C., Ms. D. and Mr. Z. responded with “No”. Ms. A. and Mr. X. replied with “Yes.” Mr. X. also stated that he already encountered a personal case of evil spell which he drove away with the help of a traditional healer.

Five out of six students looked for guidance in their dreams and three out of six still knew traditional myths and fables.

⁴⁹⁶ Ms. B.

⁴⁹⁷ “Mr. X”

⁴⁹⁸ Customary law

Five out of six students felt that lobolo should be continued. Mr. X. regarded lobolo as “a sign of gratitude and appreciation of what a family has done for you (in offering a life-partner, U.T.).”

Mr. Z. was firm on the matter of lobolo. When asked how he would react if his future wife would refuse lobolo because of a modern outlook on the issue, he stated:

“She better understand that not everything should be looked at from a European perspective.”

When asked if authority should remain in the hands of men – according to customary law this can be father, brother or husband – all of the students responded with “No” and they added:

“I don’t want to be dominated by a man. I believe in equality in all spheres of life.”⁴⁹⁹

“No more women abuse, and I think God doesn’t want to see that happening; results from the fact that men think/feel that they are in power of everything.”⁵⁰⁰

The reply from Mr. X. sounded a bit cynical:

“Was it (the authority, U.T.) ever in the hands of men?”

When asked how they would define their identity as an educated African woman or man in post-apartheid South Africa, the students answered as follows:

“I still remain who I am. Born African.”⁵⁰¹

“I am an African to the end of time.”⁵⁰²

“Free, black, educated, successful, woman”⁵⁰³

“As an educated African woman in a post-apartheid South Africa I think my duty is to make other African women aware of their rights and how they can protect themselves from abuse.”⁵⁰⁴

This last quote shows that this young woman was aware of the problems women have to face - even in a modern and democratic South Africa.

The answers also showed that African traditions were still meaningful in one way or the other. All but Ms. A. live African traditions in a more leisure manner. Especially ubuntu, lobolo and ancestors were important to them, but they were not as deeply connected with their African roots as Ms. A. was, possibly because her mother was a traditional healer.

⁴⁹⁹ Ms. A.

⁵⁰⁰ Ms. D.

⁵⁰¹ Mr. Z.

⁵⁰² Mr. X.

⁵⁰³ Ms. A.

⁵⁰⁴ Ms. D.

4.2.5 African traditions from the Manyano's point of view

To find out what ATR means to the Methodist Manyano, a questionnaire was drawn up and distributed to two Manyano groups: one in Langa and another one in Paarl. Personal details, except for their names, of the thirty-three Manyano who answered the questionnaires are listed in appendix 5. This number covered about two thirds of the total membership of the two groups. For the sake of completion, I need to point out that I could only consider those Manyano for the questionnaires who knew enough English to understand and answer the questions. Those women who were not fluent in English could unfortunately not voice their attitudes. However, I regard the cooperation with the Manyano as a success, because Dr. Kwenda (UCT)⁵⁰⁵ had been sceptical whether the Manyano would answer the questions at all. He had pointed out that they most probably feared excommunication from the Church in case they admitted sympathy for African traditions.

“They would excommunicate them. Or at least they would get into trouble. And who wants to get into trouble? People want to lead their lives as normally as possible and they would do those things that would get them into trouble, they would do the things that matter quietly.”⁵⁰⁶

Surely, I could not know beforehand what would be the outcome of my research. The preparations to get in closer contact with the Manyano was a longer term project as already described in the introduction of this thesis. However, after one year of knowing each other, I trusted that enough confidence had been built up to address the women with a number of questions, even if some of them were a bit delicate because they touched contested ground.

I had also had contact with the Manyano group from the Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCH) in Langa. To find out if there was a significant difference between the attitudes of Methodist and Reformed Presbyterian Manyano toward African traditions, the same questionnaires were given to thirteen women of the Reformed Presbyterian congregation. For the sake of comparison, the material gathered is included in this chapter.

The questions asked will be presented below and followed by an evaluation of the answers.

1. Do you think that African traditions have to play a strong role again in order to heal this country?

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A ⁵⁰⁷
Manyano at Langa	22	18	81,8	3	1
Manyano at Paarl	11	7	63,6	1	3

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	13	100	0	0
--------------------	----	----	-----	---	---

The answer is obvious. All of the women were convinced that South Africa is not complete without African traditions. And not just that. Traditions are regarded as essential to help solve problems the country faces: spiritually as well as socially.

⁵⁰⁵ Also see Chapter 4.2.2

⁵⁰⁶ Interview with Ch. Kwenda, UCT, 14 May 1997

⁵⁰⁷ n/A = no answer

2. Which traditional rituals and customs are very important to you?

a) birth ritual⁵⁰⁸

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	21	94,5	1	0
Manyano at Paarl	11	11	100	0	0

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	11	84,6	0	2
--------------------	-----------	----	------	---	---

b) circumcision⁵⁰⁹

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	16	72,7	1	5
Manyano at Paarl	11	7	63,6	1	3

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	7	53,8	2	4
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	---

c) lobolo⁵¹⁰

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	16	72,7	1	5
Manyano at Paarl	11	8	72,7	1	2

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	13	100	0	0
--------------------	-----------	----	-----	---	---

The answer to questions a) and b) confirm that the majority of the women regards birth and circumcision rituals as essential to the identity of black South Africans. It is interesting that a lower per centage (53,8 %) of the Reformed Presbyterian women regards circumcision as important. This might have to do with the younger age of the Reformed Presbyterian Manyano.

The answer on lobolo is interesting because a high per centage of the Methodist Manyano regard bridewealth as important. This contradicts the attitude of Florah Mathabane,⁵¹¹ who rejects lobolo as a money-making business of fathers on the backs of their daughters. The Manyano regard lobolo as a means of respect. A hundred per cent of the Reformed Presbyterian Manyano affirm lobolo. Here one needs to point out that eleven out of the thirteen women who participated in the questionnaire were single. Possibly they welcome lobolo because they had not experienced the hoped for security of a traditional marriage.

⁵⁰⁸ For more details on birth rituals refer to Chapter 4.3.1

⁵⁰⁹ For more details on the circumcision ritual, Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Bridewealth. For more details refer to Chapter 4.3.1 and 4.3.3

⁵¹¹ See Chapter 4.3.1

3. Are your ancestors an important part of your life?⁵¹²

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	19	86,4	0	3
Manyano at Paarl	11	9	81,8	1	1

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	10	76,9	0	3
--------------------	-----------	----	------	---	---

The answers above confirm that the majority of the women regards their ancestors and therefore the veneration of ancestors as an integral part of their lives.

4. Are dreams important for guidance in your life?

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	19	86,4	1	2
Manyano at Paarl	11	6	54,5	3	2

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	8	61,5	2	3
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	---

Dreams and the veneration of ancestors are directly related because in the African worldview ancestors speak to their descendants through dreams. For some reasons the Methodist Manyano at Paarl and the Reformed Presbyterian Manyano did not always connect the two. Whereas the same number of Methodist Manyano at Langa answered questions 3. and 4. equally with "Yes", the other two groups showed a difference in numbers between question 3. and 4.

5. Did you grow up with traditional rituals of birth, initiation, marriage and death?

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	17	77,3	2	3
Manyano at Paarl	11	7	63,6	2	2

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	12	92,3	1	
--------------------	-----------	----	------	---	--

The majority of the women affirmed that they grew up with traditional rituals. This shows that the practice of traditional rituals – also among Christians – was common during the women's childhood.

⁵¹² For more details on ancestor veneration refer to Chapter 4.3.2

6. Do you practice any of these rituals?

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	14	63,6	5	3
Manyano at Paarl	11	6	54,5	1	4

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	8	61,5	3	2
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	---

A lower per centage of the women confirmed that they still practice traditional rituals today. There are two possible reasons for these answers: either rituals were exercised more frequently in the past or the women did not dare to admit that they still practice rituals.

7. If yes, where do you practice them?

	Total	Only at my homestead⁵¹³	%	At my home in Cape Town / Paarl	Both	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	3	13,6	2	9	8
Manyano at Paarl	11	3	27,3	2	1	5

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	3	23,1	3	2	5
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	---	---

The answers show that the women who practice African rituals integrate them in their traditional home⁵¹⁴ as well as in their present residences. A lower per centage of the women (13,6 – 23,1 %) practice rituals only in their traditional homes.

8. How do you feel about maintaining rituals in a city environment?

	Total	Difficult	Very difficult	No problem	%	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	2	2	12	54,5	6
Manyano at Paarl	11	4	0	6	54,5	1

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	13	4	3	23,1	3
--------------------	-----------	----	---	---	------	---

⁵¹³ The place where the person was born and where his/her umbilical cord was buried is regarded as the true home. It is called homestead or traditional home.

⁵¹⁴ The place where they were born.

More than half of the Methodist Manyano did not regard the practice of African rituals in an urban environment as problematic. Their point of view does not confirm the statements of black Methodists⁵¹⁵ who regarded a city environment as an obstacle to the feasibility of African rituals. However, the answers of the women don't give details on whether the rituals are exercised properly, i.e. in the traditional manner. Talks with the women showed that they look at things in a practical manner. Therefore, they adjust traditions to their actual environment. Certainly, the women disagree with rituals that have become dangerous because improperly exercised, e. g. the circumcision rite of young men.⁵¹⁶

9. Could you envision rituals without the sacrifice of animals?

	Total	Yes	No	%	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	2	12	54,5	8
Manyano at Paarl	11	2	6	54,5	3

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	5	7	53,8	1
--------------------	----	---	---	------	---

The answers show that the sacrifice of animals is regarded as an integral part of African rituals. More than half of the women think that sacrifice of an animal makes a ritual complete. Estel Nxele was a traditional healer, who had exempt animal sacrifice from her work.⁵¹⁷

10. When you are ill, whom do you ask for medical advice?

a) a Western medical doctor?

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	16	72,7	1	5
Manyano at Paarl	11	10	90,9	0	1

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	11	84,6	0	2
--------------------	----	----	------	---	---

b) a herbalist?

	Total	Yes	No	n / A	%
Manyano at Langa	22	3	0	19	86,4
Manyano at Paarl	11	0	0	11	100

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	0	0	13	100
--------------------	----	---	---	----	-----

⁵¹⁵ e. g. Rev. E. Baartman, Gugulethu

⁵¹⁶ For more details refer to Chapter 4.3.1

⁵¹⁷ For more details on Estel Nxele, refer to Chapter 4.3.2

c) a traditional healer?

	Total	Yes	No	n / A	%
Manyano at Langa	22	1	0	21	95,5
Manyano at Paarl	11	0	0	11	100

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	0	0	13	100
--------------------	-----------	---	---	----	-----

The majority of the women claimed that they consult a medical doctor in case of illness. I doubt the truth of these answers because in questions 12. – 13., up to 45,4 per cent of them admit to having contact with a traditional healer.

11. Do you think there are traditional healers in the Cape who know how to do their work properly?

	Total	Yes	%	Some	No	%	Not sure	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	8	36,4	3	8	36,4	2	1
Manyano at Paarl	11	6	54,5	0	5	45,5	0	0

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	7	53,5	0	5	38,5	0	1
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	---	------	---	---

The research showed the trustworthiness of traditional healers to be a problem in Cape Town and its surrounding areas. This has to do with frauds that take advantage of the general desperation. Still more than half of the Manyano believe there are genuine traditional healers in the Cape Province, which is an interesting fact. Between 38,5 and 45,5 per cent of the women don't trust so-called traditional healers in their area or are not sure if they can do so.

12. If you had contact with at least one traditional healer, where did this take place?

	Total	At my home- stead	%	At my home in the city	%	Other	%	n / A	%
Manyano at Langa	22	9	40,9	1	4,5	0	0	12	54,5
Manyano at Paarl	11	4	36,4	0	0	4	36,4	3	27,3

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	4	30,8	0	0	1	7,7	8	61,5
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	---	---	-----	---	------

According to the chart, 40,9 per cent of the Methodist Manyano at Langa and 72, 8 per cent of the Methodist Manyano at Paarl had consulted a traditional healer. Among the Reformed Presbyterian Manyano only 38,5 per cent confirmed that they had done so. As a matter of fact the majority of them had not consulted a traditional healer in the city, which underlines the results of question 11: the women don't trust traditional healers in town.

13. Was this traditional healer a man or a woman?

	Total	Man	Woman	%	Both	n / A	%
Manyano at Langa	22	3	6	27,3	1	12	54,5
Manyano at Paarl	11	1	6	54,5	1	3	27,3

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	1	3	23,1	1	8	61,5
--------------------	-----------	---	---	------	---	---	------

The chart shows that female traditional healers were more often consulted than male. This is due to the higher number of female traditional healers.⁵¹⁸

14. Are there any traditional healers in your family?⁵¹⁹

	Total	Yes	%	No	%	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	11	50	9	40,9	2
Manyano at Paarl	11	2	18,2	9	81,8	0

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	2	15,4	9	62,2	2
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	------	---

Up to fifty per cent of the Manyano claim to have a traditional healer in their family. If this is true, African traditions are deeply rooted in their clans. The following answers⁵²⁰ show that these traditional healers incorporate Christian traditions into their own beliefs, which is a natural thing to do among black South Africans.

⁵¹⁸ For more details on traditional healers and gender refer to Chapter 4.3.2

⁵¹⁹ For more details on traditional healers refer to Chapter 4.3.2

⁵²⁰ Question 15

15. Are they member of a Christian church as well?

	Total	Yes	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	11	0	11
Manyano at Paarl	11	2	0	9

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	2	0	11
--------------------	-----------	---	---	----

16. Do you tell African stories and fables to your children or grandchildren?

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	15	68,2	3	4
Manyano at Paarl	11	11	100	0	0

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	5	38,5	2	6
--------------------	-----------	---	------	---	---

Oral history guarantees the survival of traditional cultures and patterns of behaviour. The chart above shows two things: oral history still has a firm hold among the Methodist Manyano. At the RPCH only 38,5 per cent of the women still tell African stories and fables to their children. This is related to the fact that the Reformed Presbyterian Manyano are on average much younger than the Methodist Manyano at Langa and Paarl. The problem is that younger women often don't continue oral traditions, mostly because they don't know better. The Reverend Sangela, Methodist minister at Paarl, deplored this because – in his point of view - without storytelling a proper education of the children is no longer guaranteed:

"They are now starting to write some fables ... the storytelling method is gradually taught to students ... If they can be brought back to life, then people can know the (African, U. T.) norms. But it is almost too late. Our youngsters don't know anything about this. Their life is controlled by taste ... It may have been caused by apartheid, maybe not ... After apartheid what I fear – we are said we are free -. Free to do what? Our kids say we are free, coming home at 1 a.m., not locking the door. They disregard any rules."⁵²¹

17. Is ubuntu important to you?⁵²²

	Total	Yes	%	No	n / A r
Manyano at Langa	22	21	95,5	0	1
Manyano at Paarl	11	11	100	0	0

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	13	100	0	0
--------------------	-----------	----	-----	---	---

⁵²¹ Interview with Rev. W. Sangela, Paarl, 28 May 1997

⁵²² For details on ubuntu refer to Chapter 4.2.1

Practically all of the Manyano reacted to ubuntu as positively as expected. Because ubuntu is promoted by the South African government, the women felt free to support this African worldview.

When the women were asked what comes to their minds when they think of ubuntu, they answered as follows:

- “You must respect yourself and the others.”
- “Is to help and to be kind to all people.”
- “To be one.”
- “Ubuntu means that you cannot survive alone. We need unity to survive.”
- “You can’t survive alone. You must show kindness.”⁵²³
- “To gain friends and cooperation.”
- Tolerance between each other.”
- “It means sharing, forgiveness, kindness.”
- “Taking care of each other.”
- “It means that you should live in harmony with other people. Care for them the way you wish them to take care of you.”
- “Loving your neighbor as you love yourself.”
- “Ubuntu means to take care of one another. If somebody is in pain, you must comfort her.”⁵²⁴
- “Kindness and sympathy.”
- “Friendly, trustworthy.”
- “Things have changed a lot. Parents used to be the boss of the house while children under their roof, but now parents will rather leave the home because of children ruling; if they think it right, you as a parent can’t say ‘No’. You’ll end up in police stations, courts and so on.”⁵²⁵

The last answer shows that ubuntu is highly esteemed among the Manyano because intergenerational problems have finally led to violence between parents and children. The numerous accusations of witchcraft and witch killings indicates on the seriousness of the problems between the older and younger generations. The women wish to return to a world where things are still in order, where respect towards the elder and cooperation in the communities are natural behaviour. Their accustomed life style is based on mutual support without which they are lost. The situation is especially serious in an urban environment where traditional family ties have almost completely disappeared.

It is interesting that some of the women used Christian allegories, such as “do unto others as you wish it to be done to you” to emphasize their understanding of ubuntu. This shows how Christian values have been mixed with a modern understanding of ubuntu. The answers – “forgiveness and kindness” - point out that the women saw ubuntu as a strong means for reconciliation. Reconciliation is a must if people want to live together again as communities and not merely as crowds of people who fight each other. In this sense women regarded ubuntu as a saving instance because ubuntu stands – as said earlier on in Chapter 4.2.1 for the worldview that people exist because of other people. This means, people cannot be without other people. This African attitude is for example reflected in the Zulu greeting in plural form.⁵²⁶

⁵²³ All the answers above were quoted from the questionnaires distributed to the Methodist Manyano at Langa.

⁵²⁴ The answers above were quoted from the questionnaires distributed to the Methodist Manyano at Paarl.

⁵²⁵ The answers quoted above were drawn from the questionnaires distributed to the Reformed Presbyterian Manyano at Langa.

⁵²⁶ A. Ogbonnaya emphasized that from an African worldview a person must be seen “as a community in and of itself including a plurality of selves” that need to be regarded as “a complexity of intrapsychic relations.” Ogbonnaya, 117

18. Do you think that white people are afraid of African religious traditions?

	Total	Yes	%	Some of them	%	No	%	Not sure	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	3	13,6	8	36,4	7	31,8	2	2
Manyano at Paarl	11	6	54,5	0	0	4	36,4	1	0

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	7	53,8	0	0	4	30,8	0	2
--------------------	----	---	------	---	---	---	------	---	---

More than half of the questioned Manyano thought that white South Africans have reservations as far as African traditions are concerned; especially when these touch contested religious ground.

19. Do you think that nowadays many black people are afraid of African religious traditions?

	Total	Yes	%	Some of them	%	No	%	Not sure	n / A
Manyano at Langa	22	2	9,1	6	27,3	11	50	0	3
Manyano at Paarl	11	5	45,5	0	0	6	54,5	0	0

Manyano RPCH Langa	13	5	38,5	0	0	5	38,5	0	3
--------------------	----	---	------	---	---	---	------	---	---

I found the answers on this question astounding as I had not expected that a rather high per centage (up to 45,5 per cent) of black South Africans are believed to fear their own traditions. This result confirms Dr. Kwenda's conviction that black South African Christians are not open to African traditions because they have been taught to regard them as evil.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ For more details refer to Chapter 4.2.5

4.3 African traditions and customs – a survey

Before explaining selected African rituals and customs, it has to be pointed out – for the sake of better understanding – that these rituals and customs are deeply rooted in the African worldview, which does not exist out of superstition or not knowing better as a number of western theologians and scholars tended to believe ever since they came into contact with the 'heathen' of Africa. Africans are aware of the dynamic nature of life. They face events and changes in their lives - may that be illness, death of a loved one or any other positive or negative experience - with complex ritualistic interplay; activities such as sacrifices of animals to appease the spirits of the ancestors, to celebrate life and to heal breaches in the community.

Rituals connect African people with their society at an early age. Growing up with rituals, the participants learn about various aspects of their society without questioning them. Chirevo Kwenda pointed out that the participation in a ritual as a communal experience is more important than intellectually understanding the implication of a ritual. Hence, he wrote:

“It is not a question of understanding. It is a question of living life, and ritual is about just that.”⁵²⁸

Rituals were also regarded as a means of educating members of a society in a “communal spirit” or a “communal dance”⁵²⁹ as Ogbonnaya called that interaction of the individual with his or her community. Kwenda emphasized:

“Participating in ritual draws us closer to the norms of our particular group or society. So ritual really reinforces those things that are taught in other ways within society. Ritual has the function of gathering them all together and, in a mighty and powerful thrust, communicating them to all who participate in the ritual – in ways that are subtle, almost unnoticeable but, because of continuous use, powerful. They cut indelible grooves into people’s minds and lives.”⁵³⁰

Ritual ceremonies were meant – to put it in a nutshell - to help a person throughout life in periods of transition within the community.

⁵²⁸ Kwenda, 106

⁵²⁹ Ogbonnaya, 120

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

4.3.1 Birth and puberty ritual

“The people do not stick to the rules of the old culture anymore. What is left is a worship of the ancestors, the consideration of Sangomas (traditional healers, U. T.) and certain rituals: circumcision of young men, lobolo (bridewealth, U. T.), slaughter of an ox at the death of a man to bring back his spirit into the house. But the rules are not followed.”⁵³¹

This quote sums up the situation concerning traditional rituals in Cape Town and its surrounding areas. Rites still have a place in the lives of the black population, but as Lindiway pointed out above, people tend to create “their own rituals”. Because many black South Africans have moved from rural to urban areas to find labour, the rituals have been twisted. Originally they were meant to give guidance and to connect the people of a clan with their ancestors as well as with the yet unborn family members.

Intensive research has shown that only two rituals are still of major importance in the Methodist congregations at Cape Town: the birth ritual and circumcision of young men. Death rituals would be mentioned but they did not occupy the attention in the same way. When black Methodists in Cape Town and its adjacent sections were asked about rituals, they would instantly refer to the birth ritual as being very important to them. One could easily sense the power of the grounding that the individual had internalised – simply by knowing that he or she had a true home. A home that could never be taken away, no matter what would happen to them or where they would live someday. The traditional home of a black South African is where his or her umbilical cord was buried. It connects him or her with his or her ancestors, without any doubt and forever. Even a very modern black South African would point out the birth ritual as being essential to his or her existence.

Dr. Kwenda added that the birth ritual actually starts before conception. Hence, he underlined the responsibility African parents have vis-à-vis a child-to-come because being born “the right way” is crucial to the existence of a human being. Special prayers, songs and exceptional attention before conceiving a child are necessary preliminary procedures.⁵³² Dr. Kwenda deplored the loss of this knowledge because Africans will not know where they belong nor will they be able to function properly as human beings if they do not start their physical existence with the appropriate spiritual assistance. He also explained that conceiving and having children out of marriage is not only a disaster because of the social and financial insecurities involved. According to him, the African worldview regards an illegitimate child also as a spiritual catastrophe because the infant will not be in the good hands of a clan. Thus, it can be compared to a leaf that is tossed around by the winds, not knowing where it will end up.⁵³³

Puberty rites concern mostly teenage boys as puberty rites for girls are no longer practised among most South African tribes. This also holds true for the Xhosa. Because the majority of the black population in the Cape Town area are Xhosa,⁵³⁴ puberty rites for girls are not an issue here. However, for the sake of completion, some quotes from Mark Mathabane’s book *African woman*⁵³⁵ will be inserted at this point to show how a young woman experienced ritual school in Soweto (Johannesburg) in the 1970s. Mathabane’s sister Florah did not give details about the physical procedures of ritual school but about the emotional and psychological effects it had on her. Florah Mathabane is a Shangaan-speaking South African.

⁵³¹ Interview with Lindiway, Gugulethu, 13 December 1996

⁵³² Interview with Dr. Ch. Kwenda, 14 May 1997

⁵³³ Ibid.

According to customary law “birth out of wedlock” is irrelevant to the child’s status in the community or its legal rights and duties. The legal disadvantages of illegitimacy are not as great in customary law as they used to be in common law. Bridewealth is relevant for the children’s status in their father’s family. If it has been paid, the children are considered legitimate offspring in their father’s family and if it has not been paid, the children belong to their mother’s family.

Bennett (1995), 111

⁵³⁴ Dominant home languages in the Western Cape are Afrikaans (62.2 %), English (20 %) and Xhosa (15.3 %).

Source: Provincial statistics for 1995, 3.5.2 as cited by Davenport & Saunders, 574

⁵³⁵ Mathabane

“The chief purpose of ritual school, as it was explained to me during initiation, was to kill a young girl’s self-will so she could be remolded into a mature and complete woman: self-sacrificing, obedient, capable of assuming the role of wife, and thus appealing to men as the perfect complement to their desires, wishes and whims.”⁵³⁶

Florah was sent to ritual school after she had menstruated for the first time. Because she was the eldest daughter in her family, her mother was not allowed to be present during the ritual. This was a frightening experience for the young girl. Her parents sent her to ritual school because they believed that men prefer girls who attended it:

“‘Living in the city has given you the wrong impression of what it means to be a woman,’ our Mothers told us. ‘A true woman doesn’t shout at her husband. A true woman doesn’t refuse her husband anything. A true woman doesn’t contradict his counsels. A true woman respects her husband as ruler of the house. She obeys and supports him in everything...’”⁵³⁷

Florah mentioned that especially the girls living in townships did not want to go to ritual school “because of the many horror stories they had heard ... that girls were beaten, starved, and forced to go around naked.”⁵³⁸

Florah’s ritual school in Soweto lasted only four weeks whereas it went on for three to four months in the Homelands where conditions were even harsher. Two weeks after the ending of Florah’s ritual camp a coming-out ritual was held that included the slaughter of a goat and the drinking of African beer. Florah was convinced that the ritual camp supported oppression of women:

“Despite the important role ritual school played in the life of the family and the village – by teaching women about their role in the traditional society – essentially the practice, especially in the twentieth century, only reinforced the inferior status of women in society. It taught us to accept polygamy in men, to obey them unconditionally, to see our lives as consisting primarily of sacrifice and self-denial, and to be obsessed with petty rivalries and jealousies to gain and keep the attention of men.”⁵³⁹

Taking Florah Mathabane’s explanations into consideration, one cannot see any advantage of ritual school for a modern girl who is striving for equality. Her descriptions show the clash between the “old order” and modernity. Her parents wanted to make her fit for a financially worthwhile marriage; that is, if their daughter went to ritual school they could ask for a higher amount of bridewealth (lobolo).⁵⁴⁰ Florah did not want to be treated as an inferior nor traded like a cow.

Circumcision rituals of young men in an urban area are problematic as was already exemplified in Chapter 4.2.3. They concern the young men and they concern their mothers. A Reformed Presbyterian woman named Lindiway said in an interview:

“You raise your boy, you send him to school and then he gets killed in the circumcision camp.”⁵⁴¹

Sepsis and sometimes death because the man executing circumcision uses the same knife (assegai) on all participating young men, certainly was not the original intent of the circumcision ritual. Here, one deals with an African tradition that is not properly exercised. In a modern environment the ritual degenerated into a money making racket.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 207

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 212

These claims sound ridiculous when knowing that Florah’s father was an alcoholic for many years, who did neither care for his family nor did he treat his wife and children with respect.

Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 208

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 213

⁵⁴⁰ For more information refer to Chapter 4.3.3

⁵⁴¹ Interview with Lindiway, Gugulethu, 13 December 1996

⁵⁴² Interview with Rev. E. Baartman, Gugulethu, 26 February 1997

In the 1990s one man who would be looking after 36 boys charged 100 Rand (approximately 30 US\$ according to the exchange rate in January 1995) per boy.

Ibid.

Supporters⁵⁴³ of the circumcision ritual insist that it will – if properly exercised – turn a dependent and selfish teenager into a responsible young man. As a matter of fact, the puberty rites' intention originally was to prepare a young man and a young woman for their roles as husband and wife, father and mother.

In the rural areas, for example in the Transkei, the circumcision ritual still lasts the traditional three months. During this time, the young men retreat to a secluded and remote location where they are under guard of a respected traditional healer. African beer is used for ritual purposes only. Hard liquor – today commonly used during circumcision retreats in the urban areas of Cape Town – are not permitted. Girls are also not welcome to attend the retreat as spectators.

In the urban areas of Cape Town, circumcision retreats last only about three to four weeks. Alcohol abuse and visits of girl-friends seem to be common.⁵⁴⁴ The main problem for the wrong handling of circumcision rituals in an urban environment are the men in charge. They lack the necessary experience and they certainly are not traditional healers even if they claim that title. The Rev. Baartman's answer on the matter was coloured by resignation:

“The people in charge used to be experienced in the actual ritual. The elders had to investigate on the one doing circumcision. One wouldn't give the boy to anybody. They weren't even paid in the olden days (late 1940s, early 1950s, U. T.). Today it is commercial. ... lots of drinking: brandy et cetera. The ancestors didn't know anything about brandy. The problem is that lots has been adapted. ... in the old days, circumcision school was a school. They should value human life, be people of dignity. Their morals were looked upon. Boys wouldn't force sex on girls and they respected the elderly (the ones older than the boy, U.T.). ... Transition from boyhood to manhood was emphasised. For example, the clothes were changed to show that the boy changed into a man. He couldn't even use the same watch anymore. The boys came out of circumcision school being adults.”⁵⁴⁵

Florah Mathabane was not impressed by the behaviour of young men after they had been through circumcision school in Soweto:

“Boys who had been to the mountain school and were circumcised had the right to stop us in the streets and demand that we recite certain poems, about which they had been told during their own initiation. If you recited it perfectly, they gave you money as a reward. If you fouled up, they had the right to beat you up with a stick ... you were supposed to drop down on your knees right there in the middle of the street, in front of everyone, and curl up in a fetal position, and lie on your side at their feet, almost groveling, in recognition and respect for their superiority.”⁵⁴⁶

The son of Mrs. J., Circuit Steward at the Methodist Church in Langa, went to the Eastern Cape for his circumcision ritual. His mother proudly recounts this event:

“I can say I am blessed that my only boy said: ‘I am going to the bush. I do not care who says what. I want to be a man in the proper sense of an African man.’ He had already done matric. And he went to the bush. And shortly before he came back they put some clay on him – that is customary. He had that on for the full three weeks period. And he used to go to church with that paint. He said: ‘I am not going to change. I am African and I am Christian. I am not going to stop going to church simply because I have gone through initiation.’ And he went to church every Sunday. And the last week they put on a dark clay which is very – urgh – (Mrs. J. makes a sound of disgust, U. T.). He had it on and he went to church. He said: ‘I will go. And you know, I

⁵⁴³ e. g. Dr. Chirevo Kwenda, University of Cape Town

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Mrs. J., East Rondebosch, 4 May 1997.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with Rev. E. Baartman, Gugulethu, 26 February 1997

⁵⁴⁶ Mathabane, 213

said to myself: 'I am blessed because he did not look down on his culture.'"⁵⁴⁷

All the black Methodists whom I talked to, complained about the intolerable state of the circumcision ritual in an urban environment. They were convinced that South Africa would be a better place to live in if circumcision was still exercised "the right way" because – after all – numerous crimes are committed by young men. Among these are the gang rapes, a crime that - according to the explanations of Rev. Baartman - would not have happened in the past.

It is probable that circumcision rituals exercised in the urban areas, often turn out to be tragical because they are done secretly. As Mrs. J. pointed out earlier, it took courage for her son to openly admit that he would participate in a traditional initiation camp. It is easier to hide the participation in a ritual that lasts only three weeks than to hide one that lasts three to four months with obvious signs – paint et cetera – accompanying it. The deaths of young men because of circumcision are directly related to the fact that Africans still feel pressured to hide their traditions. Mystery mongering leads to a lack of investigation of the traditional healers and consequently to abuse. Unfortunately, secrecy is often maintained when a young man becomes septic. He will not go to hospital for medical care for two reasons: he does not want anyone to know that he went to initiation camp, and he fears that a female doctor might treat him. The consequences are often fatal.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁷ Interview with Mrs. J., East Rondebosch, 4 May 1997

⁵⁴⁸ Interview with Lindiway, Gugulethu, 13 December 1996

4.3.2 Ancestor veneration and traditional healing

In the African worldview, humans find direction with the help of their ancestors who are also called the “Living Dead”.⁵⁴⁹ Western theologians often called the rituals, revolving around the ancestors, “ancestor worship” because they interpreted them as comparable to the veneration of the Divine.⁵⁵⁰ Bührmann talked about “ancestor reverence” or “ancestor remembering” because the ceremonies and rituals serve the primary purpose to appease supposedly wrathful ancestors and “to learn their wishes, to be guided by their wisdom and to have communion with them.”⁵⁵¹

Life can only continue in a satisfactory way if the living – to be exact: the male descendants - perform their duties toward the ancestors.⁵⁵² Kwenda pointed out that the ancestors need the living as much as vice versa, especially in the phase right after their death when they have not become a powerful ancestor yet. Here, the importance of death rituals comes into play:

“... when people die and begin the transition from the life of the living to the life of ancestorhood, they enter a period of vulnerability. Here they are not this elder among the living whom everyone looks up to, nor are they this great ancestor who can be called upon by name and approached by the living ... They enter a period when they are neither this nor that. ... They have to be assisted through their transition. This is where the various rites and rituals that surround death come in.”⁵⁵³

Africans turn to their ancestors for help because – in their worldview - the direct presence of the Divine is more than a human being can bear.⁵⁵⁴ One method of getting in touch with the ancestors are dreams. They are treated as fragments of reality, as an essential part of a healthy life.⁵⁵⁵ In the Xhosa worldview, dreams “are communications from the ancestors and may therefore not be ignored and ... every effort must be made to understand the messages these dreams convey.”⁵⁵⁶ In the African worldview, ancestors are busy trying to communicate with the living through dreams because they can no longer make contact in the ways to which the living are accustomed. Hence, dreams are regarded as a channel of communication between ancestors and the living.

Credo Mutwa, a Zulu traditional healer, exemplified the importance of the ancestors to black Africans:

“This belief that a man lives solely to serve his ancestors is one of the most deep-rooted beliefs in the whole of Africa, and tribal unity is based on this. The tribe as a whole *must* (italics in original, U.T.) keep the spirits of its founders alive ...”⁵⁵⁷

The Zulu culture knows different classes of traditional healers: the nyanga, sangoma and sanusi.⁵⁵⁸ A nyanga may be either an ordinary herbalist or a diviner.⁵⁵⁹ He or she may inherit the profession from his or her family. A sangoma has clairvoyant capacities and cannot make the decision to be a traditional healer; instead, he or she is called by his or her ancestral spirits to become a sangoma. A sanusi is above the nyanga and the sangoma. Mutwa calls a sanusi also a high sangoma, someone “who strives ceaselessly

⁵⁴⁹ Bührmann, 27

⁵⁵⁰ This partially has to do with the mingling of different words used by the participants of ancestor veneration. For more details, see Sundermeier, 142-159

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² For further details see Bührmann, especially 77-90.

⁵⁵³ Kwenda, 81

⁵⁵⁴ Oosthuizen (1986), 40.

⁵⁵⁵ Kwenda, 90

⁵⁵⁶ Bührmann, 17

⁵⁵⁷ Mutwa (1998), 573

⁵⁵⁸ Zulu

⁵⁵⁹ Often the terms diviner and sangoma are interchanged in everyday vernacular. As a matter of fact the two are comparable in their approach to healing: using the system of divination (explanation later in this chapter) and trance. For a detailed description of the process of becoming a diviner in the Xhosa tradition see de Jager & Gitywa, *African Studies* (1963).

to be ethical in everything he does, for the fate or the tribe or nation may depend on his discernment ...”⁵⁶⁰

All three are generally characterized as “witch doctors”, although this term does not apply to the nyanga who is working as a herbalist. The nyanga acting as a diviner, the sangoma and the sanusi are referred to as witch doctors because much of their time is spent counteracting the hexes placed upon tribal members by witches. It is a term that many sangomas take in stride because it does describe one of their functions.

Credo Mutwa described the talents and tasks of a sangoma as manifold:

“The so-called witch doctors of Africa are scientists, psychologists, para-psychologists, and artists. Sangomas are also clairvoyants, ... diviners, and diagnosticians of illness. They play the same role that psychiatrists and priests and priestesses of various religions fulfill in Western and Eastern societies. We were the spiritual leaders of our people in ancient times, and in many ways we still are.”⁵⁶¹

In the past as well as in the present time, the majority of traditional healers were and are women; often women who live(d) on the fringes of society. As traditional healers they were and are respected as well as feared. According to Mutwa African traditions could not have survived without the African women and without female healers:

“... African women have been the pillars that sustained our tradition, even at times when men abandoned tradition. Women know the sacred meaning of tradition. Thus the saying, ‘Tsebo e na le matswele a mosadi’ (meaning ‘all knowledge from a woman’).”⁵⁶²

The dominant role of women as traditional healers is still visible in the female outfit of male traditional healers; for example Credo Mutwa wore women’s clothing. In this way, he demonstrated respect to the historic role of women as traditional healers and to the Goddess that – according to the Zulu narrative of creation - gave life to humankind.⁵⁶³

Bührmann described a sangoma as a person who travels between two worlds: the world of the humans and the world of the ancestors.⁵⁶⁴ Sangomas are the ones to ask for help when sorcery comes into play, although their work is not restricted to neutralizing acts of witchcraft. According to Credo Mutwa, a sangoma and a sanusi must possess the same occult capacities as a witch⁵⁶⁵ if he or she wants to be effective in discerning witches and their acts of witchcraft. The difference between the two lies in their different approach to the occult. A sangoma is using his or her spiritual power to help and cure people, a witch is abusing it to harm people.⁵⁶⁶ Obviously, the transition between sorcery and healing is fluid which often leads to the accusation of sangomas practising witchcraft.⁵⁶⁷

Mutwa explained the difference between a sangoma and a sorcerer or witch⁵⁶⁸ as follows:

⁵⁶⁰ Mutwa as cited by Hund (1999), 2

⁵⁶¹ *Odyssey* (February/March 1997), 23

A clairvoyant and a diviner are essentially the same. Sangomas who do fortune-telling are generally referred to as “diviners”.

⁵⁶² Commission on Gender Equality (1998), 19

⁵⁶³ Larsen, 38

“It was she who, at the command of Unkulunkulu (the Great Spirit, U. T.), placed the Heavens in order, the stars and the Sun, and made the Earth firm to stand upon. Though she is the mightiest and most original of all that wear the human form, *Ma* (italics in original) is called by the Old Wise Ones, ‘The Imperfect Undying One,’ and those who carve her form from wood or stone or make her form in clay, know that she must be made imperfect ... For it is from her pattern that all life is formed, and that is why we all are imperfect. She too had those wounds of the soul we call jealousy, anger, misery ... That is why Ma does not judge our human imperfections like those male gods who oversee Human destiny, for she shares them; and all beasts and humans are her beloved, imperfect children.”

Larsen, 35

For more details on the African genesis as transmitted by Credo Mutwa, see Mutwa (1998)

⁵⁶⁴ Bührmann

⁵⁶⁵ For more details on witches, refer to Evans-Pritchard (1937), Marwick (1970), Hammond-Tooke (1998)

⁵⁶⁶ Informal discussion with Credo Mutwa, April 1997, Kaya Lendaba, Eastern Cape

⁵⁶⁷ This particular problem will be dealt with later in this chapter.

⁵⁶⁸ In contrast to Mutwa, Theo Sundermeier differentiated between sorcerers and witches. He explained that sorcerers purposely cause harm. Traditional medicine can protect against sorcery. Witches don’t cause harm deliberately. They usually do their foul work at night without even knowing that they are witches.

“... the sangoma’s sphere of concern is far more broad and deep than that of the sorcerer. His or her understanding of magic must comprehend its context, its history, and its mythological antecedents. This is a level far beyond that of the mere technician of magic who simply activates its force. In essence the sangoma must embrace the whole inner sense of both the natural and the supernatural worlds as a preliminary to entering into the zone of magical cause and effect. Power is not believed to reside in a single act or ritual of magical efficacy, but in the entire universe, and it is only through knowledge of and orientation within that universe that the sangoma’s power may be exercised in a wholesome way; one that heals both the person and his world at the same time, relieving the magical exchange of the reflexive overcompensation of cause and effect.”⁵⁶⁹

One method used to get in touch with the magical world is called divination.⁵⁷⁰ The methods used in divination vary from tribe to tribe, and they may even vary among the diviners of one tribe. The most widespread method of getting in touch with the world of the unknown is divination, in which a set of small bones or horn are used that are thrown onto the ground after the patient and the diviner have focused on the relevant question or problem. The traditional healer then draws information from the arrangement of the bones. Depending on the initial question of the patient, the diviner will make statements about the future, the solution of personal problems or the right treatment of an illness. Sometimes he or she will fall into trance to receive an answer.⁵⁷¹

Estel Nxele (1923-1989) was a Zulu sangoma who worked and lived in Umlazi, a township located in the the suburban areas of Durban. I visited her on several occasions during my research in Natal. Estel lived alone in a modest two-bedroom house that could be easily detected as the dwelling of a sangoma because the sheet-metal roof was decorated with the skull of an ox that had been given to Estel on the occasion of a successful cure. In her early days as a sangoma, Estel accepted animals as payment. At the time the I met her, she no longer ate red meat and her patients paid her with money; the common payment for traditional healing today.

Estel was born around 1923 in a place called Ndwedwe in Natal. She told me that her mother could not fall pregnant until her grandmother asked the ancestors (amadlozi) for help. The amadlozi taught the grandmother how to prepare a medicine that helped Estel’s mother to fall pregnant. This story was important to Estel because she was convinced that she would not have come to the world without her grandmother’s and her ancestors’ spiritual help. How the grandmother always played a crucial role in Estel’s life is explained below.

Estel’s grandmother would eventually have taught her African medicine if she had lived long enough, but she died when Estel was only seven years old. Estel was convinced that her grandmother left the physical world because she could shed more power onto her grandchild by being in the spiritual world of the ancestors. Estel recalled what happened after her grandmother passed away:

“When my grandmother died, her spirit came to me. I could hear her talk to me and could also feel her pressing herself on my shoulder or body.”⁵⁷²

Estel’s life continued in the scheme of an African Christian family for a number of years because her parents were both Methodists and held influential positions in the church. When she was twelve years old, she had to quit school because her father died and no one could help her finance her future education. Estel started working in Durban where she met her husband in 1944. The marriage broke up shortly after because - according to Estel - her ancestors did not allow her to have a sexual relationship with a man. She explained that she later realized that her life was completely dedicated to the ancestors.

Sundermeier, 228-229

⁵⁶⁹ Larsen, XXIV

⁵⁷⁰ Comaroff; Jean (1991); Hammond-Tooke (1975); Peek (1991); Eiselen (1932).

⁵⁷¹ I witnessed such trance sessions during my fieldwork in Natal.

⁵⁷² Oosthuizen (Dec. 1987) private compilation on Estel Nxele

In an interview she said, that she had to stay “clean”, that sleeping with a man would have disturbed her healing energies, although they were still dormant at that time.⁵⁷³

It was not until 1966 that Estel realized that her path would irrevocably be the one of a sangoma:

“It was in this hotel (where Estel worked, U. T.), in 1966 where the amadlozi (ancestors, U. T.) in me showed very strong that they wanted to work in my body. I used to suffer terrible headaches. My face used to swell and my eyes would close and be watery. This used to last one minute. My shoulders used to be heavy and would have sharp pains in the back. I couldn’t eat anything except toast and fish with milk, lemon, vegetables and fruit. I hardly slept at night. In the middle of the night, I used to go down on my knees and feel them and hear them talking in my ears telling me what to do and where to go.”⁵⁷⁴

An unexplicable illness is a crucial occurrence that preludes the “call” of the ancestors. Credo Mutwa recounted his experience of “spiritual illness”, called ukutwasa in Zulu:

“I had a sickness then, which was one of the reasons why my mother recommended that I take my grandfathers profession (he was a sangoma, U. T.). It was a very weird sickness which medical doctors did not understand. I felt strange to myself. I was not who I was. Sometimes I had visions of myself being torn apart by great cannibals and sometimes by leopards. I could see through solid objects during the sickness. I remember at one time I was able to follow the progress of my dog through a barrier of stone. It was as if the stones were made of glass. I have since then been cursed with a very strange gift ... the gift of seeing things before they happen, which I’ve been trying to get rid of since then but I cannot ...”⁵⁷⁵

Becoming a sangoma was a process and not a sudden breakthrough for Mutwa. The same applied to Estel Nxele. After she had understood the “call” of her ancestors, she went to a place called Indulinde in Zululand where she was to be trained at the home of Mr. Zoebbon Mhlongo’s. Because she feared to lose her house and her job in Umlazi, she asked Mr. Mhlongo if he could train her at her house. Mr. Mhlongo agreed to train her there every fortnight without charging a fee because Estel had no means to pay him.

Here, one can see how the traditions changed in the past forty years. Then, a sangoma would train a person for free if she or he saw the capacity for traditional healing in a trainee; the training of a traditional healer was considered to be essential to the well-being of the African community. Today, the financial benefit usually comes first, but that is not the worst. The problem is the uncertainty whether a sangoma is truly traditionally and thus properly trained and not simple a fake who is cheating the people. The answers of the Manyano in Chapter 4.2.4 clearly pointed out that problem. To my knowledge, only a few serious traditional healing schools still exist in South Africa; for example in Zululand, the Transkei and in the Eastern Cape. The lay person usually does not know about them because the schools work in seclusion and do not advertise.

For the sake of preserving and restoring ancient African culture and traditions, Credo Mutwa built a “healing village”, Kaya Lendaba, located in the Shamwari Game Reserve in the Eastern Cape. It was completed in the spring of 1997. The concept of Kaya Lendaba differs from a traditional “sangoma school” since it is open to all kinds of visitors who want to learn about African traditions.

It was not the first time that Mutwa broke with traditions because he also trained white people to become sangomas, and he broke his oath of keeping African knowledge a secret when he wrote down oral traditions that were transmitted to him during his training

⁵⁷³ Interview with Estel Nxele, Umlazi (Durban), Natal, December 1987

It is interesting that an African sangoma had similar experiences as a Hindu or Buddhist monk or nun who follow sexual chastity because they believe it to be beneficial for their spiritual development and ultimately for their enlightenment.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Larsen, XXiii

as a sangoma and his experiences as a traditional healer.⁵⁷⁶ This earned him criticism from traditionally inclined black South Africans⁵⁷⁷ but Mutwa reasoned:

“‘Ultimately’, he says, ‘I saw that the lore of my people was destined to die with those of us who knew it, and that it would then die forever. I gradually recognised that by breaking my oath – something originally made to protect the sacred lore in times that were very different from these – I was doing something for my own people, preserving the eternal wisdom that had been carried down for centuries, and also doing something for humanity.’”⁵⁷⁸

Mutwa’s decision to break his oath must also be seen in the setting of an ever present danger of being killed because sangomas are repetitively victims of homicide. Mutwa told how he was once accused of witchcraft and almost burnt alive. Two of his friends were killed by a mob of young activists in 1987.⁵⁷⁹ These traumas must have reinforced the rightness of his earlier decision.

Concerning the training of Whites as sangomas, Mutwa pointed out that traditions should be valued; yet one should understand that times have changed and still are changing. He was convinced that today also white people are “called” to become a sangoma. Hence, for the benefit of the human community, they ought to be properly trained in the same way as black candidates.⁵⁸⁰

The training of a sangoma generally lasts three years and asks physically and mentally a great deal from the participants. Stanley Krippner described the training period of the twasa, the apprentice sangoma as follows:

“... must learn how to prepare herbal medicines, how to interpret dreams, how to incorporate spirits, how to diagnose illness, how to exorcise ‘tokolose’, frightened ghosts or zombies, how to control weather, and how to foretell the future. In addition the twasa must learn the tribal and community history, mythology, and ceremonies.”⁵⁸¹

After three years of training, Estel Nxele graduated in 1969 from the KwaBhekimpile Isangoma and Inyanga Training School in Natal as a fully independent sangoma. From then on, her life was dedicated to working as a traditional healer:

“In 1970 I stopped working and I started to heal people from their diseases. My amakhosi (Supreme Being, U. T.) always tell me what the patient suffers from and what to use to heal him. For an example, the amakhosi tells me when a patient is coming and the patient actually comes. Then I call the patient into the temple (Isigodlo). She sits on a mat, not on a chair, with shoes off, and she does not tell me her problem. She says only one thing: *Ngiyathuleka emadlozim, angikhanyisele* (I pray to amadlozi [ancestors, U. T.] to put my problems into a clear light and I see it and understand it easily). Then they [the amadlozi, U. T.] tell me what is wrong with the person. They even tell me which medicine to give her. If her illness needs the hospital, I send her there. I don’t even try to heal her.”⁵⁸²

The last sentence shows that Estel knew her responsibilities and her limits. She did not claim to be capable of curing all medical problems. But she also insisted that not all

⁵⁷⁶ “Indaba my children” was published for the first time as early as 1964. The book was reprinted for the fifth time in 1998. This shows that nationally and internationally the demand on learning about African myths, legends and customs is high.

⁵⁷⁷ Mutwa has been sitting between two chairs throughout his life. On one hand, he has been highly respected; on the other hand, he has been attacked by people from both sides of the black South African society: by traditionalists and by politically inclined people. For example, he was attacked by political activists as a traditionalist, who disregarded deliberately revolutionary principles. They slashed his right arm and hand with axes, a doubly pernicious act because the aggressors knew that Mutwa earned his living as a painter and sculptor.

Larsen, XXViii

⁵⁷⁸ Mutwa as cited by *Odyssey* (April/May 1997), 19

⁵⁷⁹ Commission on Gender Equality, 19

⁵⁸⁰ Informal discussion with Credo Mutwa, April 1997

⁵⁸¹ Dr. Stanley Krippner, “Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa: A Zulu Sangoma”, paper, no date or publisher given, as cited by Larsen, XXiii

⁵⁸² Ibid.

diseases can be healed with the means of modern medicine. Estel Nxele was a respected traditional healer in the Durban area. Her patients came from all cultural and racial backgrounds. Most striking was her modesty and gentle nature towards any visitor, particularly at a time when “necklacing”⁵⁸³ and other atrocities had climaxed.

One of Estel’s white guests was Dr. Vera Bührmann, a Jungian psychoanalyst from Cape Town, who has been already mentioned in Chapter 4.1. Dr. Bührmann was interested in traditional African healing rituals because in her medical practice she was confronted with illnesses of black South African patients that could not be explained in terms of Western natural sciences.⁵⁸⁴ Here, it should be noted that, in the African worldview, witchcraft is a reality that has an impact on people. Bührmann found that people could become sick due to actual witchcraft but they could also fall ill or even die because of the power of witchcraft ideas. In order to achieve complete cure, the involvement of the whole family of the patient was necessary in an African ritual that was performed by a traditional healer.

“Treatment, especially for any mental dysfunction, is not individual, but requires the cooperation of the family and at times the active treatment of others in the family. Certain healing ceremonies cannot be done without some relatives of the patient being available to fulfil certain obligations.”⁵⁸⁵

The reader’s focus is turned again to the core of the African worldview: the interconnection of individuals in African communities that starts with the families and the clan. Kwenda wrote about the connection of healing and sickness in an African community:

“Healing embraces all facets of the individual’s life and the life of the group as a whole, the same way that sickness touches all the members of the group in some respect or another. ... When healing takes place, it has to go into all these nooks and crannies and corners, and touch all the affected persons.”⁵⁸⁶

Mutwa blamed the alarming proportions of violence, especially of the violence toward girls,⁵⁸⁷ women and (female) traditional healers on the destruction of the extended family and communal ties during the colonial and apartheid eras. In his opinion, black women began to be looked upon as being inferior to men when Europeans entered the African scene.

“In tribal society, marriage was a beautiful partnership between the man and the woman, where both partners were really equal. ... with the coming of the Western Civilization, our people were fed the very wrong Victorian notion that the woman is the man’s inferior or the woman should be the man’s ward with the man being the woman’s guardian. ... this notion did not exist in traditional Africa.”

It seems that a lack of respect toward women in general influences the attitude toward traditional healers, if one follows Mutwa’s discourse on the role of women in precolonial Africa. It is impossible for me to state that African women were truly respected “in the old days”. My research has shown that today women are unfortunately often used as scapegoats for anything that goes wrong in the lives of people. According to Mutwa this is has to do with the distortion of traditions.

⁵⁸³ Activists of the anti-apartheid movement and members of the ANC Youth League used to murder suspect collaborators by placing a fuel filled tyre around their necks, burning them alive. This was an explicitly cruel murder because it took about thirty minutes for the victim to die. From the African traditional point of view it was disastrous for the victims’ souls, since a deceased or living person who has been cremated or burned cannot enter the world of the ancestors. According to Credo Mutwa such barbaric acts were unknown in “the old Africa”. Larsen, 164

⁵⁸⁴ Whether there is a reality to sorcery or not will not be discussed in this thesis. Generally speaking, Western sciences look upon the African fear of sorcery as an imagination of the mind. To the Africans sorcery is a reality. For more information refer to J. Hund (1999), S. Larsen (1996)

⁵⁸⁵ Bührmann, 25

For further information on traditional healing, refer to Bate (1995); Hodgson (1983); Janzen (1995)

⁵⁸⁶ Kwenda, 94

⁵⁸⁷ One in four girls under age sixteen has been raped.

Africa Today, April/May 2002

Especially pre-school girls increasingly become victims of rape because many HIV infected males believe that they can be cured by sleeping with a virgin.

Further, he explained that witchcraft in the negative sense is a manifestation of the destruction of the traditional social security systems in “old Africa”. In precolonial times, magic was used by the “Council of the Mothers of the People”⁵⁸⁸ to exercise control over all the people. According to Mutwa, this control did not incorporate corporal punishment because the “Mothers of the People” knew that this would harden an average criminally inclined person. Instead, they kept war and crime away from their land by means of witchcraft. Hence, witchcraft was not used to terrorise people but to maintain peace.

Mutwa’s explanation sheds an interesting light on the issue of witchcraft. However, the present situation is much too severe to indulge in intellectual discourses on whether witchcraft can be positively applied or not. Black South Africans insist that Western academics should finally recognize that witchcraft applied to harm people is not a myth but a reality.⁵⁸⁹ Before the South African Suppression of Witchcraft Act No. 3 of 1957 outlawed the participation of tribal authorities, cases of witchcraft could be counteracted with the help of traditional healers. Persons found guilty of witchcraft were punished in accordance with accepted customary norms. Apparently, customary punishment could also be violent as Harnischfeger pointed out:

“In precolonial Africa witches had been expelled frequently or sold into slavery, occasionally wrapped into leaves of grass or bananas and burned alive. Or they had been simply forced to pay compensation for the caused damage. All these sanctions were now declared offensive and threatened with long prison sentences.”⁵⁹⁰

Because witchcraft was dismissed as superstition, victims of witchcraft and their families could not find compensation for a crime committed against them. It seems that the intensification of witchcraft accusations, killings and violence in South Africa in recent years indicates a correlation between the non-recognition of witchcraft and the witch killings.⁵⁹¹ Reliable data on the number of homicides cannot be obtained because the relatives of victims usually don’t report the crime to the local police stations or the police does not dare to step in when these killings occur. In April 1986, 43 men and women were burned in one single incident. In Lebowa, a former Homeland in the Eastern part of Gauteng, “police reports state that a total of 312 people were killed between 1985 and 1995 in witchcraft-related violence.”⁵⁹² In the North of Gauteng, one of South Africa’s nine provinces, the situation was so critical in 1995 that the regional government delegated a committee to investigate into the violence against so-called witches and into the numerous ritual killings.⁵⁹³

Most of the victims are women; for example, in the mid 1980s young men, ranging in age from 16 to 25 years would kill mostly elderly women in their sixties, accusing them of witchcraft.⁵⁹⁴ Credo Mutwa thinks that there always has been “a secret war to destroy the feminine side of Africa.”⁵⁹⁵ Apparently men hate and fear women because women have discovered “the miracle of God”,⁵⁹⁶ because they have faith, because they know about the healing potentials of herbs and because they have continued to be successful even in destructive environments, such as many black South African townships. They have managed to earn a living for their family and have been able to provide a home for their children.

⁵⁸⁸ Mutwa, 558

⁵⁸⁹ Witchcraft includes the use of magic, medicine, poison, harmful charm and other devices to cause any illness or death in any person or animal or to cause injury to any person or animal, and to cause damage to property. Commission on Gender Equality, 40

⁵⁹⁰ Harnischfeger (2000), 100

⁵⁹¹ Hund, 20

⁵⁹² Harnischfeger, 99

⁵⁹³ Ritual killings, also called muti-murder, are crimes that are committed throughout the country by black South Africans who desire to make powerful medicine from the body parts of their victims. These murders characteristically involve a much greater degree of secrecy and rumours. “Ritualistic murders are seen to reflect anti-social beliefs which defy general western notions of human morality and rationality.”

Indicator SA, 8:4 (Spring 1997): 46.

The problem of ritual killings cannot be further discussed in this thesis. For additional information, refer to Evans (1991, 1993), Faure (2000), Minaar (1992), *www.Sonntagsblatt.de* (1995)

⁵⁹⁴ Harnischfeger, 103

⁵⁹⁵ Commission on Gender Equality, 19

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Even if one takes into consideration that acts of witchcraft still happen in contemporary South Africa, one needs to realize that the increase of witchcraft accusations are mostly not based on actual offences but that they are frequently used as pretexts for personal vendettas, animosity, agendas for political action, intergenerational and domestic rivalry and so forth.⁵⁹⁷

The issue of witch killings and witchcraft cannot be further discussed in this thesis.⁵⁹⁸ But the problem, briefly presented here, points out that things have gotten so out of hand that the South African government is under enormous pressure to change the legal situation as soon as possible. As customary courts are no longer held in high esteem by most black South Africans, it might be an alternative to create special witchcraft courts as appendages to the formal court system.⁵⁹⁹ Sangomas could function within these courts as (psychic) mediators. A change in the legal situation could eventually improve the status of traditional healers and save the lives of many innocent women and men. It could also improve the self-esteem of black South Africans because the dismissal of their concerns and beliefs in relation to witchcraft has left them in a sphere of uncertainty and fear that in turn is backfiring on the South African society as a whole.

⁵⁹⁷ Hund, 21

⁵⁹⁸ For further information on witch killings and ritual killings, refer to: Ashforth (1998); Harnischfeger (2000); Hund (1999); Peltzer (2000); Stadler (1996)

⁵⁹⁹ Hund, 27



Kaya Lendaba ("Healing Village" of Credo Mutwa, Shamwari Game Reserve, Eastern Cape (1997)



Kaya Lendaba ("Healing Village" of Credo Mutwa, Shamwari Game Reserve, Eastern Cape (1997)

photographs by Uta Theilen



Estel Nxele wearing her traditional garment (1988)



Estel Nxele's house in Umlazi (1988)



African market for medicinal herbs (Umlazi, 1988)

photographs by Uta Theilen

4.3.3 Customary law and gender equality

“The inclusion or exclusion of cultural rights in the constitution will directly affect the status of women and children. Patriarchy is an established feature of all the southern African systems of customary law ... A gender equality clause, such as the one contemplated in the ANC bill of rights, would proscribe the many institutions associated with patriarchy – polygyny and bridewealth to name only two – whereas in the Law Commission’s bill they could be defended as elements of a cultural system.”⁶⁰⁰

This quote sums up the controversial discussions that preceded the inclusion of customary law and with it the establishment of traditional leadership as part of the legal system in South Africa’s first democratic Constitution in 1996.⁶⁰¹ While the architects of the new Constitution wanted to apply new legal standards in post-apartheid South Africa by guaranteeing gender equality and a right to participate in one’s culture,⁶⁰² they were not aware of the extent of demands on behalf of the traditional rulers who – unexpectedly to many – complicated the negotiations around the issues of culture and the status of traditional leadership. Especially the emphasis on equality was to become a challenge to the representatives in the negotiating process. While Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress (ANC), pushed by the ANC women’s section and other women’s groups, wanted to move questions of gender equality from the margins of discussion to a central place in the post-apartheid political and legal agenda, traditional authorities objected to a change of women’s status. For example, the chief negotiator for the Cape Traditional Leaders, Mwelo Nonkonyana, repeatedly insisted that women are not equal with men.⁶⁰³

The fact that traditional leaders eventually acquired a formal status in democratic South Africa has to be seen in the setting of the power struggle between the National Party and the ANC after the end of apartheid. Traditional leaders did not yet possess a formal status when the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) met in 1991 to enter negotiations on the political future of South Africa. However, by 1993 it became clear that bargains between the National Party and the ANC had become extremely difficult. It was then that traditional leaders brought their influence into play.⁶⁰⁴ In 1993, when the Multi-Party Negotiating Process (MNPP) assembled close to Johannesburg, traditional leaders⁶⁰⁵ were promised their existing position would be maintained in the future constitutional order if they supported the democratization process and the Government of National Unity (GNU).⁶⁰⁶

The continuity of traditional empowerment in exchange for political support is not new to South Africa. Already the colonists made a pact with traditional leaders because they considered them fit to secure their imperial interests. Although Europeans were ambiguous toward African culture and tradition and particularly towards customary law, criticising lobolo (bridewealth), polygamy, chieftainship and other aspects of tribal culture, they needed to preserve African traditions as a means of control because the challenge to white supremacy arose from an urban black proletariat as well as from a growing professional elite of lawyers, teachers, church ministers, doctors and journalists.⁶⁰⁷

Becoming functionaries of the colonial state, African rulers switched their dependency because in pre-colonial times they had been dependent on the acceptance of their reign by their own people. Although African political systems have been hereditary according to the rule primogeniture in the agnatic line, traditional rulers could be driven away through

⁶⁰⁰ Bennett (1993), 30

⁶⁰¹ This Constitution was preceded by an Interim Constitution in 1993. Hence, the sovereignty of Parliament was replaced with a sovereign Constitution, which was interpreted by a politically independent Constitutional Court. Fundamental values and norms were embedded in a Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution of 1996).

⁶⁰² Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Bill of Rights, Chapter 2, section 9 (1-5) and section 30

⁶⁰³ Kaganas & Murray, 135

⁶⁰⁴ Chiefs and other traditional leaders were especially influential in the former Homelands of South Africa: Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Gazankulu, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Kangwane, Lebowa, Qwaqwa.

⁶⁰⁵ Organized in the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA)

⁶⁰⁶ The GNU consisted of the African National Congress (ANC), National Party (NP) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)

⁶⁰⁷ Andrews, 252

rebellion or secession if they were found guilty of misrule or other trespassings. Traditional rulers had been obliged to stay in touch with popular opinion through their councillors,⁶⁰⁸ who were normally respected leaders and senior kinsmen in the community.

The co-opting of Britain with indigenous leaders in the late nineteenth-century led to the dependence of indigenous rulers upon the colonists. At the same time African people lost the possibility to remove traditional leaders who had fallen out of favour. Hence, the role of traditional rulers entered a new era. In the past, the lack of precisely defined powers over their subjects, their diffuse and at the same time all-inclusive authority had not been a significant danger to African societies because traditional rulers usually felt obliged to follow their professional ethics as “fathers of their nations”.⁶⁰⁹ If they failed, they could be removed from office. Under colonial guardianship, unwanted rulers could dominate and exploit their people if the colonial state regarded a particular indigenous ruler as fit for their interests. Ever since, traditional leaders and customary law have been functioning under the wings of successive European governments.

In South Africa indirect traditional rule was implemented nationally in 1927 when the Native Administration Act reorganized the court system and local administration. The legal expert T. W. Bennet commented this step:

“The government took this occasion to appropriate to itself broad discretionary powers over the African population. The Governor-General was created ‘Supreme Chief’,²³ a constitutional curiosity²⁴ that gave him the power to create and divide tribes as necessity of the good government of the Blacks’ seemed to him to require,²⁵ and appoint any person he chose as a chief or headman.^{26,610}

The Native Administration Act paved the way for the forthcoming white governments which restructured African political institutions according to their needs and wants. In 1951, shortly before the National Party (NP) established the apartheid system, the government put new local authorities over existing tribal structures. Rulers appointed under the Black Authorities Act became responsible for the orderly administration of their areas of jurisdiction. Those who objected to government directives were supplanted from office or passed over in matters of succession.⁶¹¹ As a result a complaisant cadre of so-called traditional leaders took over the rule in the so-called Homelands. These gained a certain independence from South Africa in due time or as one should say: with the blessing of the apartheid government ‘traditional leaders’ had a free hand in the Bantustans/Homelands to acquire a certain position of power that was of personal benefit to them and their clan.

Obviously, one needs to make distinctions between individual traditional leaders. Certainly not all of them were corrupt. However, taking the role of many traditional rulers during the colonial and apartheid eras into account, it is not surprising that the black consciousness movement and the ANC did not regard traditional ruling as a force that should be given a lot of power in a democratic South Africa. However, as mentioned earlier on, the political conditions inherited from the past caught up with Nelson Mandela’s government. Additionally, one needs to point out that - aside from the pressure from the traditional leaders themselves - the institution of a traditional leader still enjoyed considerable public support even if this did not necessarily apply to the individual office-holder.

The Interim Constitution of 1993 declared that the institution of traditional leadership including indigenous law needed to be recognized and protected by the democratic Constitution. Neither the Law Commission nor the ANC wanted to be accused of

⁶⁰⁸ Wardheads and elders

⁶⁰⁹ Bennett (1995); 67

African rulers were obliged to care for their people, to judge disputes fairly, to govern wisely and to provide for those in need of help.

For more details on the pre-colonial political role of traditional leaders, see Bennett (1995)

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 69

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 69

suppressing customary law. Therefore they did not impose a single undifferentiated legal and cultural regime on all South Africans.

To secure the practice of customary law, traditional leaders were given two new organs of government: in the provinces the House of Traditional Leaders and nationally the national Council of Traditional Leaders. These bodies are entitled to debate all bills pertaining to their powers or to customary law. However, their power with regard to passing new Acts on customary law are limited because they can only delay the passing of an Act, but they cannot enforce it. Hence, their task could be described as that of a legal adviser with no comprehensive authority as far as the passing of new Acts is concerned.⁶¹² Their executive and judicial powers are not impaired. This holds especially true for rural areas where the customary system is mainly administered by chiefs. As head of the nation an African ruler will continue to represent his people in all relations with outsiders, and spiritually he will still be regarded as a direct link to "the shades of the founding fathers".⁶¹³ Chiefs will continue to hear civil claims arising out of customary law and custom brought before them, and they will continue to administer tribal land and allocate such land according to traditional law. The latter affects especially black women who have no ownership rights under this system. Further, powers of traditional rulers today also include responsibilities of modern local governments, such as licensing businesses and initiating agricultural development projects.

Traditional rulers will continue to be respected and contested. This is especially so with regard to gender equality because traditional authorities insist – among other contested ideas - on the agnatic succession. In their opinion, women ought not to hold political office. Therefore, traditional authorities will continue to fight for the agnatic system of succession because that is their vulnerable spot. If this system was abolished, the indigenous authorities would no longer be "traditional". It is interesting how traditional rulers twist the general understanding of democracy by claiming that the system of traditional leadership is not inconsistent with democracy. The following quote proves how a traditional leader uses rhetoric to persuade people that the agnatic succession in traditional leadership supposedly does not contradict democratic ideas:

"The traditional leader acquires his position without being elected. He is decreed by custom and birth to be a leader. Heredity and the fact that he comes from the correct lineage confer legitimacy ... The fact that the traditional leader is required to act in the interests and according to the wishes and the will of the people ensures that he does not undermine the democratic right of his people."⁶¹⁴

Customary law, its pros and cons for the persons concerned,⁶¹⁵ and the discussion regarding the contest between culture and gender equality under South Africa's Interim Constitution is a broad field.⁶¹⁶ As basic information on the legal situation of customary law and traditional leadership has been provided herewith, one should now turn to the sections of customary law that inevitably will lead to a clash between the non-discrimination clause⁶¹⁷ and the customary system, although the Constitution expressly subjects the powers of traditional authorities to "regulation by law."⁶¹⁸

Certainly, socially independent and educated black women might not have had a problem securing their rights. However, disadvantaged rural and working-class women will most probably lack the possibilities and capacities to demand an application of common law in

⁶¹² Bennett, 22

The policy of segregation encouraged Africans to return to their cultural tradition. During the apartheid era, bantustans/Homelands were given generous powers to do with customary law as they wished.

⁶¹³ Bennett (1995), 74

⁶¹⁴ Nkosi Sango Patekile Holomisa, "The Role and Place of the Community Courts and Chiefs' Courts" (paper delivered at the University of the Western Cape, 26 March 1993) as cited by Kaganas & Murray, 135

⁶¹⁵ "Traditional courts no doubt operate to the special benefit of Africans, who, for reasons of finance and education, have no access to magistrates' courts and the Supreme Court ... traditional courts ... provide them with a forum in keeping with their cultural expectations."

Bennett (1995), 77

⁶¹⁶ For more information, refer to Armstrong (1987), Bennett (1985); (1993); (1995), Nhlapo (1991); (1994), Kaganas & Murray et al. in the bibliography of this thesis

⁶¹⁷ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Chapter 2, Section 9 (3-5)

⁶¹⁸ Bennett (1995), 75

case they might be discriminated against by - especially - traditional family law. Here it needs to be pointed out that approximately seventy per cent of the people living in the rural areas (including the former Bantustans/Homelands) are women. The majority of these women (59%) are single parents.⁶¹⁹ And the majority of these women are illiterate persons who range in age from 20-35 years.⁶²⁰ These women run the risk to be passed over when it comes to the practice of African customs. But also in an urban environment women cannot necessarily escape the effects of customary law. In an interview, I was told the story of a woman who lived in Gugulethu. Shortly after her husband died⁶²¹, his brother and his wife and other relatives of the deceased moved into the little house of that woman to proceed with the death rituals. For six weeks the widow had to host and feed about six people which cost her more than she could afford. After the six weeks were over, she was kicked out of her house because – according to customary law – the property now belonged to a male relative of her late husband. The widow had no means to fight this situation. Additionally, she feared the consequences from her husband's and her own family if she did not stick with customary rules.⁶²²

Although women may be poor and uneducated in rural areas, they have become increasingly aware of their situation in recent years. For example the Rural Women's Movement in Gauteng has identified customs that are particularly oppressive to women; these relate particularly to marriage under customary law.⁶²³ Before turning to facets of customary law affecting women's rights negatively, one needs to briefly mention that the position of black women with regard to customary law might have been better before colonization than today; T. W. Bennett pointed out:

“Capitalism and the official code of customary law were two principle factors contributing to the decline in their overall status.²⁸ While the advent of capitalism opened new opportunities for people throughout Africa and forced women to play roles never expected of them by traditional society,²⁹ its long-term effect was to downgrade or marginalize women in both the family and market place.³⁰ They now suffer all handicaps of social and economic insecurity without the legal powers to change their circumstances.”⁶²⁴

Bennett criticizes that the official version of customary law was not brought up to date in the new Constitution. In his opinion, judges in the higher courts “were hesitant to depart from the strictly patriarchal, ‘traditional’ version of customary law”,⁶²⁵ while women received more sympathetic hearing in the lower courts although these tribunals were controlled by traditional leaders. One of the advantages of traditional jurisdiction became apparent: traditional rulers seemingly respond more flexibly to changes in local attitudes, whereas higher courts preferably deal with cases less connected with local problems but with those of a more general nature.

Bennett regretted that the judgements of local tribunals had no influence on official accounts of customary law because they were not reported. Apart of this disadvantage, the legal procedures of local courts as reported by Bennett gives rise to the hope that women may find fair treatment in local courts. This somewhat smoothens the fact that contemporary official customary law is “a perversion of women's pre-colonial status”,⁶²⁶ a product of the colonial period that falls short of the norms of modern human rights.

In the following a selection of areas where customary law significantly clashes with women's rights of equality will be explained:

1. Proprietary capacity

⁶¹⁹ Figures from 1989-90 show that in Cape Town 69.8 per cent of all African births took place outside civil or customary marriage. This trend rose in the following years. Burmann & van der Werff, 111

⁶²⁰ Community Law Centre Belleville, 1
⁶²¹ In the 1990s

⁶²² Interview with Lindiway, Gugulethu, 13 December 1996.

⁶²³ Community Law Centre, UWC, Belleville, Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Bennett (1995), 84

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 85

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

2. Contractual capacity and *locus standi in judicio*
3. Marriage

1. Proprietary capacity

According to customary law women are essentially minors, intellectually immature and incapable to form a proper judgement.⁶²⁷ Although age-old family arrangements have been transformed a long time ago because of the social situation of many black women being single mothers, or married mothers being the breadwinners of the family – willingly or out of necessity - because the husbands worked in the cities or had left the family; customary law did not account for this. Whilst in history, African women were denied control over livestock and land, the means of producing food, they nevertheless played a vital role in food production. In modern times they earn wages and salaries but traditional courts give control of the income acquired by women to the men. In this setting, one needs to point out the great achievement of Manyano women who insisted already years ago, that the control over the money they had raised for the Church stayed in their hands.

The denial of women to freely acquire, enjoy and dispose of property certainly contradicts the new Constitution that guarantees equal acquisition of property⁶²⁸ and gender equality before the law.⁶²⁹

2. Contractual capacity and *locus standi in judicio*

In connection with the denial of proprietary capacity, customary law generally does not allow women to perform contracts. Additionally, they are not allowed to bring actions in their own names; this means, they have no *locus standi* in court. Because women are considered uneducated in forensic arts, customary law argues that women need someone who leads their cases for them. In other words, women cannot be denied a legal action but they require assistance from their guardian, who must be a male relative: father, husband, brother, uncle or son. The standing of married women who are subject to customary law can be compared to that of a child in common law. The denial of *locus standi in judicio* can be of advantage to a woman when she has committed a crime; her guardian would be responsible for it.⁶³⁰

3. Marriage

Marriage in a African traditional context creates not merely a bond between individuals but between groups of kin. In a customary marriage, the co-operation of the spouses is desirable but not essential. Whereas civil marriages involve the state, African marriages are private affairs; this means, both creation and dissolution of a marriage are managed by the families involved. In customary marriages a husband has the right to contract polygynous unions and it is his duty to pay bridewealth (lobolo). From a western point of view, these two features of customary marriages are the most controversial which led to the denial of their full recognition by the colonial state. However, in 1927 customary marriages received partial recognition under the Black Administration Act.⁶³¹ As customary unions continued to be considered inferior to civil unions, a civil marriage could override an existing customary marriage.⁶³²

In post-apartheid South Africa black South Africans are free to choose the customary form of marriage without having to fear losing their right to enforce any claims and duties arising out of customary unions in court. According to the principle of plurality, the new Constitution offers both forms of marriages – civil or customary - equal recognition.⁶³³ Hence, the legal foundation has been laid. However, whether customary marriage can be managed in its traditional form – starting with its formation and ending with its dissolution

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 80

⁶²⁸ Constitution of South Africa, Bill of Rights, Chapter 2, section 25 (1)

⁶²⁹ Ibid., section 9 (1-5)

⁶³⁰ Bennett (1995), 90

⁶³¹ Ibid., 113

⁶³² This was especially disastrous for traditionally married women who stayed behind in the rural areas while migrant labour forced their husbands to make a living in the cities. The distance did not allow frequent visits which often resulted in the men contracting civil marriages with another woman in the city. The women married the customary way could not enforce any rights because the state did not regard them as legally married.

⁶³³ Constitution of South Africa, Bill of Rights, Chapter 2, section 15 (3)

- needs to be questioned; a number of its features contradict women's equality, and many black South African women are no longer willing to accept discriminating and incapacitating procedures.

The bride's guardian playing a pivotal role is one of them. In a customary setting, women always need their guardian's consent. Hence, a guardian can enforce a marriage or he can prevent it by refusing the bridewealth (lobolo) offered.⁶³⁴

Lobolo is a transfer of property by the husband or his guardian to the wife's family as part of the process of constituting a marriage. Lobolo used to have a variety of functions; it was not simply a medium of exchange but it was also supposed to compensate some of the guardian's expenses for bringing up and protecting a girl. Further, it was a measure of the bride's worth, the stability of the marriage should be ensured and it was supposed to guarantee the proper treatment by the future husband. Last but not least, it was and still is a cultural symbol.⁶³⁵

In historical times, usually livestock was exchanged as lobolo. The number of animals donated to the wife's family differed from tribe to tribe. Among the Sotho 20-25 cattle, ten sheep or other small stock or one horse were common, among the Venda eight cattle for a 'common' man's daughter, ten for a chief's daughter and four to six cattle when a chief married a 'common' daughter. Zulu donated lobolo also depending on the social status of the bride: ten cattle for the daughter of a 'common' man, fifteen for the daughter of a chief's relative and no limit when the daughter of a chief was the bride.⁶³⁶

Today, usually money is paid as lobolo. There is no official record of how much money in bridewealth payments is presently transferred. It is assumed that in eighty per cent of marriage contracts an average of 2,500 Rand⁶³⁷ is paid. Obviously the amount of lobolo paid varies between urban and rural areas as it varies depending on the social status of the bride. In some cases bridewealth of 13,000 Rand⁶³⁸ was paid for attractive and well-educated girls.⁶³⁹

'Money-lobolo' often burdens young marriages with debts. This might be one of the reasons why young men have sexual relationships and children without getting married. Bridewealth could also become a problem in case of a divorce. The wife's family is usually obliged to return bridewealth and might rather force her to stay in an unhappy relationship than refund bridewealth. However, research in Cape Town has shown that there has been a steep decrease in claims for the refunding of bridewealth when marriages break up.⁶⁴⁰

T. W. Bennett pleaded for the removal of the central role of lobolo in customary law to prevent it from reaching legal status. He pointed out that under "customary law the validity of a marriage is rarely called into account through failure to fulfil bridewealth obligations."⁶⁴¹

The payment of lobolo also determines the guardianship of children. This means, a mother has no right to her children. Because she does not possess custody, in case of divorce, a father can take the children with him without his former wife's consent. If a woman brings up children without the father's support, he is nevertheless entitled to receive bridewealth for his daughter(s).

⁶³⁴ Another problem is that customary law does not prescribe a fixed age of competence. T. W. Bennett suggested to apply the Age of Majority Act to women subject to customary law. Women over the age of 21 would then not need the consent of the guardian.

⁶³⁵ University of Cape Town, Seminar on ATR, Fall 1996.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Approximately 543 US\$ (according to the exchange rate in January 1997)

⁶³⁸ Approximately 2,826 US\$ (according to the exchange rate in January 1997)

In 2000, the per capita income in South Africa amounted to 3,020 US\$. (Source: Österreichische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit im südlichen Afrika, www.oefse.at/german/publikat/lprofile/joburg/jobu_index.html).

One needs to be aware that this figure includes high incomes of white South Africans and of a minority of coloured and black South Africans. Only every fifth black South African earns more than 37 US\$ a month.

Gevisser, 30

⁶³⁹ Burmann & van der Werff, 112

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Bennett (1995), 119

The explanations above point out that under customary marriage, women are expected to attend to the domestic tasks as well as to found a family without question. Customary law has no notion of post-divorce and post-death maintenance or alimony. Its prior concern is to balance families' interests through refund of lobolo.

As explained earlier in this chapter, according to customary law, only males are permitted to possess property. This means that any goods a woman acquired during marriage are the property of her husband. This custom leaves African widows in desperate situations because only a male relative of the deceased – his brother, son, grandson or other closely related male relative is legally capable to inherit. If the deceased had more than one wife, normally the oldest son of the first wife will inherit his status and his property. The widow then is dependent upon the good will of the heir who might give her a share of the inheritance or not. If a brother of the deceased is willing to assume responsibility for the widow by marrying her, she will be handed over to his guardianship.

Customary law is part of a fundamentally patriarchal system that generally is regarded as degrading to the status of women. In a modern setting it does keep in accordance with the actual social situation. It came as a surprise that the majority of the Manyano regarded the payment of lobolo as a desired custom.⁶⁴² This can be explained by their longing for a protective family environment, which has become rare in South Africa – especially in a black urban context. The women are not aware that the contemporary version of customary law falls short of being authentic according to African tradition in the sense of functioning for the benefit of respective African nations. A reform of customary law into a more authentic version does not seem likely.⁶⁴³ However, one ray of hope for the women's cause is that - as has been mentioned earlier in this chapter - local traditional courts, in spite of their patriarchal alignment, have proven to be more flexible when managing individual requests.

⁶⁴² See Chapter 4.2.5: African traditions from the Manyano's point of view

⁶⁴³ Bennett (1995), 85

4.4 Reflections

The exposition on African traditions shows that African communities in and around Cape Town still want to practice their traditions and rituals. This development might be surprising considering that the practice of African culture had been imposed upon black South Africans by the detested apartheid system; a policy of cultural segregation that led to a chain of negative side effects such as segregation along racial lines, pass-controls, the establishment of Homelands and the degradation of non-European cultures and religions – to name only a few. However, the demand of the ANC for an African Renaissance and the desire of black Methodists to give African traditions a meaningful place in their lives as Christians is part of the worldwide revival movement of indigenous cultural values and worldviews. Obviously, in other parts of the world indigenous peoples⁶⁴⁴ started to claim their rights earlier. Because of their difficult political situation, black South Africans were only able to do so after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison on 11 February 1990.

Cynically enough, the policy of separate development policy allowed the survival of African languages, a lucky chance that other indigenous people can only dream of.⁶⁴⁵

The interviewed black South Africans expressed a need for proper handling of their traditions that have been changed and twisted in the course of time, due to colonialism and the apartheid system. Although they sensed that it might be an impossible task to revive African traditions and customs in the original sense, they avoided using the term “reinvention of tradition” because they would regard such an analysis of the present situation as degrading. It is interesting that educated black South Africans are the most fervent propagators of what they call “African traditional religion” (ATR). They see the need to take African traditions out of the grey zone and to give them their proper place as one that is equal or even superior to Christianity and European culture, both of which are considered synonymous. Investigation has shown that less educated black South Africans in urban areas,⁶⁴⁶ still favour a Western education for their children because they believe that this to be the only true door opener to success in a modern society. Hence, they neglect to teach them Xhosa and put more emphasis on educating them in English. Part of their attitude goes back to the deeply ingrained belief that African culture and language is not civilized whereas the English language and culture is.

This attitude contrasts the concerted action of the South African government, which supports the practice of African cultures and languages in all facets of society, for example in the South African media, where especially the African communities are encouraged to run radio and television programs in their respective languages. The fact that customary law was integrated in the democratic legal system has to be seen in connection with political power struggles after the end of apartheid and in the setting of an ANC government that wanted to give all groups of society the right and possibility of cultural expression. The explanation of customary law has shown that this system might be of advantage to black South Africans in individual cases; even for women. However, one needs to consider that it is a legal system not compatible with modern democratic values and the notion of gender equality. When propagators of customary law point to its important position in pre-colonial South Africa, they tend to forget that what is known as customary law today is the result of the encounter between the colonial and apartheid powers and indigenous rulers whose focus was on the preservation or expansion of their respective political powers. Unfortunately, one cannot refer to indigenous written material on pre-colonial African traditions and customs, and oral traditions have been abandoned or erased. The only written history one can refer to is the description of European

⁶⁴⁴ The native American Movement intensified its protest against discrimination and violence against them in the early 1970s.

⁶⁴⁵ Native Americans, especially in the USA, are less fortunate as far as the survival of their languages are concerned. From the early twentieth century on, it was US policy to suppress the use of native languages by threatening American Indians with penalty laid down by the law. Today native Americans try to revive their languages. In the case of the Ojibwa nation, located around the Great Lakes, this is only possible with the help of Canadian Ojibwa who are still in demand of their language because the Canadian governments had not oppressed native languages in the same way as US governments.

This information was drawn from my research among the Ojibwa in Rapid River, Michigan, USA (1999).

⁶⁴⁶ For example domestic workers acquainted with me in Plumstead and Constantia (Cape Town).

missionaries and travellers. Because their accounts are tainted by a European outlook on life, it is difficult if not impossible to find out how black South Africans, especially black women, experienced their cultures. It might not have been as ideal as it is often proclaimed by (male) black South Africans and the Thabo Mbeki's government. One might be able to say that black women used to accept their lives because that was what they knew. One certainly knows that black women suffered a great deal because of the break-up of their families which started with migrant labour in the early twentieth century; generations of women were left with the heavy burden of having to provide for their children and grandchildren on their own. In a democratic South Africa black women demand that their needs will no longer be forgotten or neglected. My research shows that black Methodist women are dedicated Christians and dedicated Africans but not at all cost. The leadership of the MCSA neither opposes African traditions nor does it propagate them.

Active representatives of African traditions, for example the Zulu sangoma Credo Mutwa, try to preserve African traditions by addressing the public and introducing secret African spiritual knowledge to outsiders. These activities are supported by the international indigenous movement and a number of concerned South Africans of all ethnic backgrounds.

5 Conclusions

The current situation in the MCSA

The results of the research as presented in the previous chapters show that challenges in post-apartheid South Africa are manifold; for the State as well as for the former mission churches to which the MCSA belongs. The realization of “nation-building” is being pursued by different means. Whereas the State focuses mostly on political resolutions to reach its goals, summed up in the preamble of the new South African constitution,⁶⁴⁷ the MCSA is striving for a renewal through its Journey to a New Land concept.⁶⁴⁸ Because this concept is supported at a grassroots level, it bears good chances to bring forth the necessary changes for a non-racial and undivided church from within the congregations. Acceptance of the Church’s policy on a large scale is fundamental to the success of the MCSA’s efforts to integrate democratic structures and to realize equality of all its members, be they black, coloured or white, women or men. The fact that the Reverend Mvume Dandala is Presiding Bishop of the Church, and has in the meantime been elected President of the South African Council of Churches, is reassuring for the black membership of the MCSA. Fortunately Bishop Dandala is also accepted and respected by many coloured and white Methodists.

The MCSA has only just started on its new road, and a lot of discontent, wishes and needs still exist. Talks with a number of black members reflect dissatisfaction with e.g. the continuing disadvantageous situation of black congregations as far as the supply of ordained ministers is concerned. Contrary to black congregations, white congregations are well equipped with ordained ministers because they have the financial resources to hire professional clergymen. Black congregations serviced only with lay preachers or possibly one present or itinerant ordained minister, will continue to exist as long as a stable black middle-class is missing. The same applies to the realisation of a “mixed population” in areas of residence that were formerly separately assigned to black, coloured and white population groups. It is mainly for economic reasons that so-called black, coloured and white districts or townships still exist, although a number of black South Africans have acquired wealth and moved to more affluent areas and individual Whites have moved to black townships because of impoverishment.

A further need, this time concerning the MCSA’s leadership, is the hitherto missing union of its women’s organisations. The separation of Methodist women’s groups along racial lines is a painful reminder of the apartheid era and of the MCSA being divided into fractions; a division that does not go along with the philosophy of a non-racial society. As a matter of fact, the separation of the women’s organisations has a negative effect on the Church as a whole, as chances for combined efforts are impaired because women are the majority in the MCSA, and their linking up would speed up the changes in the Church and render it more attractive to prospective new members. As one of the major concerns of the MCSA is the shrinking of its membership, their pressing for the union of the women’s organisations has to be seen in this setting.

The results of the research show that the separation of the women’s organisations will continue for an unpredictable period of time although individual women are drawing closer together beyond racial lines. However, especially the Manyano will insist on an independent women’s group because they do not want to give up their ways of worship and of handling spiritual and profane matters in Church. Furthermore, black women still mistrust white people although they do not readily admit this because their attitude does not go along with the demands of the contemporary South African idea of the “rain bow nation”. Reconciliation will take a long time and it is difficult to make statements about who is more likely to forgive and who is not. In the case of the MCSA, reconciliation seems to be left to individual efforts. The Church itself has no definite program that could be in the least comparable to the work of the government’s Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

⁶⁴⁷ See page 6 of this thesis and Chapter 4.2.1

⁶⁴⁸ See Chapter 1.5

I experienced that most of the older Manyano were very open and friendly once they felt accepted by a white person. Young university students tended to be more negative toward white people. Again, the daughter of Ethel Sanjanja, then a high-school student in the 12th grade, neither shared the fears and objections of the university students nor those of her mother. Her example shows that the younger black generations' attitude toward white people is not necessarily affected by their parents' former experience of racial oppression and discrimination.

There are individual Manyano who seek contact with women of other women's organisations. Step by step, change will gradually take place and women in the MCSA will draw closer together if they manage to find ways of (constructive) communication. Unfortunately, the geographic distance alone between the various congregations as well as busy schedules prevent women from frequently meeting women from other congregations which is a necessary supposition to work on the reconciliation of black, coloured and white women in the MCSA. The fact that coloured and white women join up more easily can be explained by their mutual history as described in Chapter 2.4. Furthermore, their social status generally does not differ as much as that between white and black women. Also, coloured and white women in Cape Town often live in neighbouring districts which is the heritage of apartheid policy; hence, commuting and meeting in 'mixed groups' is easier for them.

Last but not least, coloured and white women in Cape Town share a similar understanding of Wesleyan theology and religious practice. Although 'Cape Coloureds' are usually Afrikaans and not English speaking, in Cape Town language is not a barrier between them because here the coloured population is mostly bilingual. Many of the black women know enough English to get by and some of them are fluent in the language, but language problems definitely are one of the reasons for the lack of communication between the Manyano and coloured and white women.

Here, I want to refer to the interview with the Reverend Sanyela who talked about black South Africans being looked down on when they are only capable of preaching in their native tongue and not in English. Indeed, it is true that the English speaking population in Cape Town can be rather against people who are neither of English descent nor fluent in their language. Language barriers are one of the areas where the "internalized apartheid" becomes apparent. Here, differentiation does not only take place along colour lines but also along lingual and cultural lines. Different groups within the population are categorised in ranks: white English speaking South Africans are still considered higher up in the hierarchy than e.g. South Africans of Afrikaans, German or Italian descent. The same applies to the various black population groups as has been mentioned earlier in this thesis. E.g. Xhosa and Zulu are regarded higher in rank than i. e. Sotho or Tswana speaking South Africans. In other words, divisions in South Africa continue to be manifold which renders the situation more complex and difficult. The MCSA is affected mostly by divisions between its black, coloured and white membership because in Cape Town the white members are generally of British descent and the black members are mostly of Xhosa origin. Hence, there are no distinct groups within the black and white membership that could oppose one another; this fact gives slight relief to the overall situation.

As far as the women's organisations in the MCSA are concerned, the communication between the Manyano and the W.A. is especially problematic and almost non-existent, although there are exceptions to this rule as the cases of Peggy Attwell and Mrs. J. show.⁶⁴⁹ Peggy was President of the W.A., although she was accepted into the Manyano organisation. Mrs. J. seeks contact with women of the W.A. and the Women's Association.

An improvement of the communication between the women's organisations is essential to the progress of the present situation. I noticed that the lack of (frequent) encounters between the Manyano, the Women's Association and the Women's Auxiliary is responsible for the missing knowledge about each other. It is surprising that even the Women's Network, in spite of its importance in the Church and its activities with regard to women's empowerment in the Church, is not known to most black women, whether they

⁶⁴⁹ See Chapter 2.2

are a member of the Manyano or of the Women's Fellowship. Therefore, it happens that black women who want to become active across racial lines, e.g. Mrs. J., rather start their own little group instead of linking up with a group like the Women's Network that is already organized and which could combine women's efforts. Obviously, the Women's Network would need to introduce its work and aims to the black congregations and not simply wait for women to learn about them through the Bishop's office in Cape Town or by chance. Here, the Church would have to take over more responsibility if it takes the union or federation of its women's organisations seriously. It is impossible for the Women's Network to make substantial progress in a foreseeable period of time as long as they only have access to human resources on a honorary basis. The Church would have to offer the services of a part-time or full-time networker to advance the much needed activities of public relations and networking. Up to now, the Church has not offered the funding for a respective trained worker; a woman who would have to be an insider of the MCSA. As long as the Women's Network has to rely merely on the time-limited support of honorary capacities, changes will be slow and efforts on behalf of the women will continue to lack organised and therefore effective concerted action.

Indeed, looking at the MCSA in general, and at its women's organisations in particular, one is reminded of an accumulation of different pieces of a puzzle. It certainly is an extremely difficult task to draw these 'pieces' together that were kept apart for generations and to create a meaningful whole 'picture'. The MCSA's leadership is aware that they are dealing with no less than the remaking of their Church. Its General Secretary, Ross Olivier, acknowledges the large scale of the tasks:

"Our task is no less than the reinvention of the Church. It may take several generations. We will not see the end of it, but we must begin now ..."⁶⁵⁰

Indeed, the variety of subjects that have effected the MCSA from without and within – as presented in this thesis – could take away the breath from any Methodist who wants to get involved in the project of "reinvention of the Church". However, research has shown that the MCSA can rely on members who are willing and capable of accepting the task and taking on the difficult responsibility of drawing its different population groups together; some are more successful in doing so than others, depending on the support they are receiving from the members of their congregations.

The position of the women's organisations/groups within the MCSA

The interviews with women in leadership positions and the answers on the questionnaires distributed to the Manyano show that women in the MCSA have become aware of their important position in the Church and that they have started to take advantage of the political changes in South Africa to bring their cause to the fore.

When dealing with women in the MCSA, I concentrated on the analysis and description of its women's organisations as well as on exemplary cases of women who already occupy leading positions. As this approach proved to provide a structured survey on matters concerning the various groups of women in the MCSA, I shall also sum up the results of the research according to the different women's groups/organisations in Cape Town: the Manyano, the Women's Fellowship, the Women's Association, the Women's Auxiliary and the Women's Network. The outcome of the research on the student Wesley Guild which has male and female members will be mentioned briefly.

Concerning the Manyano and their possible protest against structures in the MCSA that support the dominance of men and the subordination of women, one needs to first of all point out that the Manyano themselves function strictly along hierarchical lines. Interestingly, their structures have not changed since Mia Brandel-Syrier did research on Manyano groups in the early 1950s. Hierarchical structures are a question of identity for the older Manyano. They may not always like them, but they accept that these structures give them a sense of guidance and importance. Especially those Manyano who climbed up the hierarchical ladder do not want to let go of their power once they have attained it, as the Reverend Winston Sangela made credible in an interview.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁵⁰ Olivier, 27

⁶⁵¹ See Chapter 2.2

The Manyano pride themselves as mothers, housekeepers, breadwinners and fund-raisers. As lay preachers and lay theologians they mainly work within their Manyano groups. They wear their uniform with great pride and call it "traditional" although it is obviously copied from an English school uniform; there certainly is no link to any traditional African garment. The same applies to their attitude toward the hymns which they sing in Church. The Manyano are reluctant to change them and consider them to be a genuine traditional Manyano way of praising the Lord in song, although these hymns were originally influenced by Victorian England. Here, one needs to admit that many of the Manyano do not know about the origin of the hymns. But even when they do, they do not want to change them because the Manyano strongly believe in the preservation of traditions, and they rarely question transmitted religious practices and customs. This explains why many Manyano initially have difficulties in accepting women who hold offices in the Church that were previously reserved for men. However, they have started to change their attitudes; e.g. Mrs. J. who was the first woman to be elected Circuit Steward and is experiencing more support than objections from the other Manyano. Most of the women see Mrs. J. as a type of model. The same holds true for Ethel Sanjanja who has the courage to train for the lay ministry although she is a person, who is rather shy because of her difficult biography and due to her lack of a comprehensive school education.

The idea of women supporting each other is not natural for women's organisations in general and for the Manyano in particular. Patricia Sanqela, formerly President of the Manyano in the Cape District related a personal experience that – in her opinion – characterises the general atmosphere of envy and competition among women who are disadvantaged by society. A number of years ago, Mrs. Sanqela had a severe car accident which left her partially paralysed. For many months she was in need of nursing and no one would have thought that one day she would recover sufficiently to be able to lead a normal life again. During that time, her husband solidly supported her. Apparently, the Manyano in Patricia's congregation envied her for this kind of faithful support. They asked her husband, the Reverend Winston Sanqela, to leave his wife and look for another one instead.⁶⁵² I could sense the disappointment that Mrs. Sanqela still felt about this betrayal. This example should not prove that the Manyano are not loyal as such, but that loyalty cannot necessarily be taken for granted.

Returning to the cases of Mrs. J. and Ethel Sanjanja, it is important to state that neither of them demanded to function as a Circuit Steward or a Lay Minister. Mrs. J. was elected because her Circuit thought her to be the right candidate for this position and Ethel Sanjanja modestly asked to be trained as a Lay Minister. In both cases, the women were supported by men who occupied positions of influence in the Church. For example, Ethel Sanjanja was supported by the Reverend Miller, minister in the Bergvliet Methodist Church.⁶⁵³ This shows that women depend on male support in their congregations. Fortunately, an increasing number of men in the Church, especially those in leading positions, are interested in an upgrading of their female members. This fact gives rise to the hope that cases like those of Mrs. J. and Ethel will not be exceptional, but will make other black women confident to follow in their footsteps. Women have become aware of their essential role in Church life and they have realized that there is nothing wrong with women holding highly esteemed honorary posts. Therefore, they will continuously seek and gain more influence as lay leaders. However, up to now there have been no ordained black female church ministers and it is unlikely that black women will dare to be trained as fully-fledged church ministers in the near future.

Women of Women's Fellowship do not demand an end to the structures of male dominance in black congregations although they criticize them. They are preoccupied and busy with getting established independently and as equal partners of the Manyano. Women in the student Wesley Guilde are aware of this, and they demand an end to discrimination against women in their congregations.

The results of the fieldwork show that – concerning the black congregations – there are major differences in attitude between older and younger women. Older women do not

⁶⁵² Interview with P. Sanqela, 28 May 1997

⁶⁵³ See Chapter 3.3

want to let go of their positions and younger women seek a higher degree of equality and democratic structures in their churches; this does not only concern the gender issue but also intergenerational problems. Young women demand that a person should occupy a position because of his or her skills and not for reasons of age or gender.

Pamela Delport from the Women's Association, pointed out that she and other young women in her organisation already realized a number of years ago that they would not be able to get the process of gender equality going in the Church if they kept resorting to fund-raising, tea parties and devotional services. Therefore, an independent group of young women in the Women's Association, which later reunited with the mother organisation,⁶⁵⁴ pushed for the individual and proper training of women. These young women realized that the Church cannot separate itself from the South African society, because its members are part of this society; a society that was dealing with a number of sincere problems. This statement still holds true today. Women of the Women's Association want to be empowered, not simply for egotistical reasons but because the current situation demands it. It is not astounding that a number of members of the Women's Association also joined and continue to join the Women's Network, the definite platform for women's rights and for women's empowerment in Church.

When the apartheid system was abolished, a number of self-assured and strong-minded women in the Women's Association grasped the chance to bring the women's cause to the fore. The generally enthusiastic atmosphere in South Africa helped these women as well as did the support of a number of male ministers⁶⁵⁵ in the MCSA, who were happy and willing to hand over more responsibilities to the female members.

Pamela Delport points out that not only the support of the Church's leadership is needed to improve the situation of women in the Church, but that women also need the support of the male as well as the female members of their own congregations in addition to the support of their husbands and families. As Pamela stated earlier,⁶⁵⁶ (coloured) women often became active in their congregations without the consent of their husbands. This made the situation extremely difficult for them. If the husband supports his wife – as is the case with Lorraine Solomon and Pamela Delport – she naturally has much more additional energy in order to cope with the various tasks facing her.

Women in the Women's Association still encounter opposition from male fractions in their congregations but on the whole they are not facing the same difficulties as the Manyano because the Women's Association does not have to deal with the traditional African attitudes of hierarchy. Concerning intergenerational problems, the situation in the Women's Association is somewhat similar to that of the Manyano. Older women tend to be more conservative and not as flexible in their attitudes and ideas, whereas the young (and better educated) women consider gender equality as a natural feature of a modern society.

The Women's Auxiliary in Cape Town is characterised by an elderly generation of women who do not engage in feminist demands of gender equality in the MCSA. The women are content when their work is acknowledged by the Church's leadership. As they usually come from middle-class families who until recently led a privileged life in comparison to less privileged black and coloured women, their interests and needs are generally different from those of the Women's Association and the Manyano. The role of the Women's Auxiliary - as far as women's rights in the Church are concerned – lies in the past. Here, I want to refer to the efforts of individual women in the early W.A., e.g. A. E. Brookes, General Secretary of the W.A. in 1919, the first woman who managed to become a member of the Methodist Conference. Certainly, in the early twentieth century, only very few women dared to speak up for equal treatment in the Church. However, individual steps can have a major effect. It was for women like Mrs. Brookes that the Church's leadership started to consider allowing women to preach and acknowledge the value of their viewpoints on Church matters.⁶⁵⁷ The body of the W.A. gave white women the backing to speak up. Certainly, in the early days of the MCSA only white women dared to

⁶⁵⁴ See Chapter 3.5

⁶⁵⁵ e.g. Reverend David Newby

⁶⁵⁶ Chapter 3.5; Interview with P. Delport, 13 May 1997

⁶⁵⁷ See Chapter 2.3

do so because the political, social and cultural situation made it impossible for black and coloured women to voice their needs and wishes. They had to struggle within their own women's groups and congregations for a better standing but could not speak openly in public.

Today, the W.A. – at least in Cape Town - has to struggle to be accepted by the Church's leadership. As Peggy Attwell mentioned, the W.A. women "have been criticized but not helped much"⁶⁵⁸ in the transitional process of the MCSA in post-apartheid South Africa. Presently the W.A. in Cape Town is more concerned with its survival and acceptance by the Church and not with questions of gender equality.

The Women's Network, formerly attacked as "a platform for radical feminism",⁶⁵⁹ is today highly esteemed by the Church's leadership and by the Methodist women, who know about this group. The Women's Network's popularity is due to its focus on Wesleyan Christianity, on its liberal and modern outlook on life and on the fact, that it integrates women from all women's organisations, regardless of their ethnic background. Members of the Women's Network are self-confident and educated women who consider women's equality a natural right. It is not surprising that there are similarities with the policy of the Women's Association, namely equipping women to empower them, because – as mentioned earlier - some of the women who are engaged in the Women's Network are also members of the Women's Association. Concerning the assumed "feminist approach" of the Women's Network, I have to point out that the Women's Network is not using imported Western feminist theories and it does not engage in theoretical discussions whether women should be treated equal to men. Their method is of a more practical nature: women want and need to be treated as equals. Therefore, they need to be equally educated and equipped as men to reach that goal. The approach of Women's Network is constructive with regard to the Manyano because black women tend to object to Western ideas of feminism since they do not want to be subjected to new "imperialist ideas" that do not take their particular situation into account. After all black women still experience double discrimination although things are progressively improving; they are discriminated against as women and as Blacks.

Women ministers in the Church are also demanding an end to discrimination against them. The Church's leadership reacted to this demand by instructing the Executive Secretary to conduct a survey - in consultation with the Women Minister's Committee - on the problems and inequalities faced by women ministers within the MCSA. Its primary aim is to address prejudice against female ministers and to challenge those Methodist districts that do not have a substantial number of women ministers to redress imbalances.⁶⁶⁰ This is a first step toward changes that will take a long time, maybe several generations.

To sum up, women in the MCSA are demanding an end to discrimination against them. One is not dealing with a combined effort of all women's organisations but rather with individual approaches of women who are sometimes supported by ministers of their churches. Only in the case of Women's Network can one speak of a combined effort of a women's group in the Church. The Women's Network realizes that Methodist women need to link up more across racial lines in order to push forward changes more successfully.

Within the MCSA changes toward more gender equality take place at a much slower rate than on the government level. This tends to be frustrating for the women. However, the interviewed women made it clear that they will not move from their position, but go ahead. Some of the women demand changes more assertively than others. Each individual endeavour of a woman for more rights in a congregation can be considered a major step because her actions and courage have a domino effect on the other women in her community. This holds true for all women in the MCSA and it is especially important in the black congregations, where women have a more difficult standing on account of the traditionally rooted superiority that men hold over their coloured and white sisters-in-faith.

⁶⁵⁸ P. Attwell, personal letter to Uta Theilen, 23 April 1998

⁶⁵⁹ J. Fisher, c.v., August 2001

⁶⁶⁰ MCSA, Homepage, October 2002, 5

Last but not least, women have to stop being in each other's way. If solidarity in a group is missing, progress cannot take place.

The status of African traditions in the MCSA

A revival of African traditions and customs as proclaimed by Dr. Chirevo Kwenda and Ms Nokuzola Mndende (UCT) which includes the denial of Christianity and the appeal to black South Africans to resort completely to ATR, is not the issue for black members in the MCSA. Hence, the statement of Dr. Kwenda, who told me that I would not be able to find out about "proper ATR" among the Manyano, proved to be true.

Throughout my fieldwork I found that black Methodists, women and men, voiced the wish to be accepted both as Christians as well as Africans to whom a number of African traditions and customs are still meaningful. The answers on the questionnaires distributed to the student Wesley Gulde and to the Manyano support this impression. Black Methodists want to be proud of their African traditions, they do not want to be bedevilled if they admit that these are still meaningful parts of their lives. They also want to practice their traditions properly without being discriminated against, even if they condemn the criminal deeds of fake traditional healers. Furthermore, they display pride in the African concept of ubuntu and they ask for its integration into modern South Africa, as proclaimed by the government and its concept of an African Renaissance.⁶⁶¹ None of the interviewed and questioned black Methodists, women or men, ever said they wanted to give up her or his Christian faith. It was apparent that the MCSA and the Christian faith are essential parts of their lives. They seek a meaningful union of their African roots and Christianity or - to put it in Chirevo Kwenda's words - they decided to be "African and Christian and a little Western".⁶⁶²

Black Methodist women welcome the practice of ATR but they nevertheless remain cautious as far as the reinstatement of an African masculinity in the sense that customary law⁶⁶³ is concerned. For several generations women had no other choice but to accept responsibility by taking care of their families while their husbands were either absent or not willing to assume their part of the responsibility. Therefore, women - especially in urban areas - are not willing to accept a man's authority without question as African traditions demand. The questioned women are aware that an uncritical cultural retrieval and glorification of ATR would add to the erosion of their dignity. Here, black women have a firm standing, and they are by no means willing to give up what they have achieved in a long-term struggle. One example of such 'stubbornness' of the Manyano is their claim to control the money that they raised. This behaviour does not correspond with the regulation in customary law where only the male head of a family is permitted to control money - no matter who earned it.⁶⁶⁴

The Church's leadership does not emphasize African traditions, a fact that shows that the importance of ATR amongst its black members is not reflected in the MCSA's policy. The Church's leadership does not publicly acknowledge the value of African traditions to its black members. When investigating the Church's publications, one would not think that African traditions and customs are still practiced as extensively as the answers on the questionnaires show; namely that the practice of ATR plays an important part with the majority of black Methodist women. The present policy of the MCSA's leadership has in fact resulted in a decrease in membership. Few new members join and the younger generation does not readily become active in the Church.⁶⁶⁵ This applies especially to the younger male generation. Therefore, the Church's focus is on Evangelism, Church growth⁶⁶⁶ and training of its ministers, which corresponds with the biblical demands for special Biblical and Theological Studies.⁶⁶⁷ The MCSA's policy is practice-orientated. African traditions are dealt with when they occur, e.g. with the question of customary

⁶⁶¹ See Chapter 4.2.1

⁶⁶² See Chapter 4.2.2

⁶⁶³ For more details on customary law refer to Chapter 4.3.3

⁶⁶⁴ Also see Chapter 2.2

⁶⁶⁵ See epilogue

⁶⁶⁶ As the Church is facing a decrease of membership each District, Circuit and Society should engage in a three-year growth plan, where projections and strategies for establishing new Societies are specified.

MCSA, Homepage, October 2002, 1

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 3

marriages. Here, the Church's leadership recently affirmed that customary marriages are recognised by the MCSA as equal to civil marriages as long as they meet criteria relating to monogamy, proof of marriage and heterosexuality.⁶⁶⁸ A philosophical grappling with the practicability of ATR on Church ground is - at least at this point - not the issue. The MCSA leadership's attitude toward ATR causes frustration for propagators of ATR, may those be individual black members of the Church or academics as e.g. Dr. Kwenda and Ms. Mndende, who regard the mainline churches as serious obstacles to a radical revival of ATR.⁶⁶⁹

I noticed that – at least at the moment - black members of the MCSA do not push ATR forward more aggressively because social and economic problems are presently more important to them. However, they would welcome an official integration of African traditions and customs within the Church.

The MCSA as a place of belonging

Modern South African society, especially in an urban environment like Cape Town offers numerous possibilities for social engagement and self-realization. Therefore, Methodist women do not necessarily need to stay with the Methodist women's organisations to engage in meaningful activities. However, as already stated in Chapter 2.7, women in the MCSA will continue to organise themselves in the various women's organisations as long as their enrollment continues to be of advantage to them. All of the women experienced dramatic changes since the end of apartheid. There is improvement and there is status quo. With regard to improvement, one needs to point foremost to the end of discrimination against the black and coloured population concerning their chances to receive a proper school and university education and new professional possibilities.⁶⁷⁰ The effect of this altered policy will become apparent once the younger generation has graduated from high-school and university. The improvement of education and skilled job opportunities will influence the self-confidence as well as the social status of women.⁶⁷¹ Their outlook on life is likely to change, which in turn can have an effect on their involvement or non-involvement in the MCSA. Many of the Methodist women are aware that the MCSA might not be attractive enough to younger, self-confident and well trained women because of its outdated structures. To guarantee the joining of younger women, especially the Women's Network sees the need to move forward toward the younger generation and to get a feel for their respective circumstances, needs and interests.

In the past, most black and many of coloured women showed a lot of stamina because they worked full-time and yet they were active in a women's organisation. White women were more privileged because most of them did not have to contribute to their family's income. All women – black, coloured and white - were active in their respective women's organisation because it was part of their tradition and they needed the social contacts their organisation offered to improve their self-esteem or to find help. Because women today can choose among different kinds of institutional activities, the motivation of women wanting to stay members of the Manyano, the Women's Association or the Women's Auxiliary will play a crucial role for their decision making in the future. At the moment, chances are good that women will continue to regard the Church as their social and spiritual "place of belonging" because they have not begun to seriously look for alternatives.

It can be stated that women will stay active in their respective women's groups as long the MCSA is their social home, as long as they are in need for help and as long as they are prepared to offer help to others in need. Especially in the black urban areas of Cape Town where the majority of families are single mothers or grandmothers and their (grand)children, the Church and its women's organisations will continue to be an important point of contact. Besides an open ear and spiritual consolation they offer soup kitchens to hungry school-children and old-aged citizens; the latter being neglected by their relatives, who lack the finances or the willingness to support the old people. Another

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 5

⁶⁶⁹ See Chapter 4.2.2

⁶⁷⁰ The Government's policy called "affirmative action" is used to enhance equal chances of the black South African population on the job market. For more information on affirmative action, refer to Adams (1993).

⁶⁷¹ Presently, black middle-class women are a minority in the MCSA.

important sector supported by the Church is the area of training and education as well as the maintenance of old-aged homes, nursery schools and orphanages.

The women's organisations in the MCSA definitely are an integral part of their members' identity. Whereas denominationalism is one of the contemporary concerns of South African theologians who are striving for ecumenism instead of avoiding further divisions in South Africa,⁶⁷² it is the strong identification with the MCSA that adds to the unfading commitment of the women to their Church.

In spite of their identification with the MCSA, the Manyano, the Women's Association, the Women's Auxiliary and the Women's Network will moreover follow their own values. They will stay more or less aware of what is happening in South African society, depending on their inclinations, but they will not necessarily adapt to popular policies and philosophies - may those come from the South African government or from the MCSA's leadership - if they do not see a benefit for their own causes.

A possible prognosis

The Methodist women's struggle in the MCSA will continue: within their own groups, between the different women's groups and with the male membership and leadership of the MCSA. Negotiations and reconciliation will not always be easy but nevertheless are not impossible. Women in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa have made themselves heard in the Church and they will not back out. The Church can count on its female members today as it could in the past. However, the male leadership will have to accept that 'their women' will continue to challenge them when the situation demands it. Hopefully, it will not be as scandalizing a experience to them as it was in the past, because nowadays they are more used to it. The Church's leadership finally understood that the MCSA cannot exist without its women. Therefore, in 2002 the MCSA publicly acknowledged the crucial role of women in the Church and promised to fight discrimination and prejudice against them.

“The Connexional Executive, having heard reports on prejudice, discrimination and practices that continue to inflict pain and humiliation on women ministers ... and women in general within the fellowship of the MCSA, and in the context of celebrating the National Women's Day,⁶⁷³ resolves to: ... salute the important role that women have played and continue to play in the development of our country and the transformation of our Church. ... re-affirm its commitment to the role of women in the MCSA and calls upon Bishops, Superintendents, Ministers and Circuit Stewards to promote and create a conducive atmosphere in all Church structures ...”⁶⁷⁴

The women welcome the efforts of the Church to improve their status. However, they remain cautious because they know that the transformation will have to come from within the congregations, which means that the process of change will take much time, patience and persuasion. In an urban environment like Cape Town chances are good that the influence of modern and liberal thinking will positively influence the MCSA and speed up the realization of gender equality and of a truly non-racial church.

⁶⁷² See Pityana & Villa-Vicencio (1995)

⁶⁷³ 9 August

⁶⁷⁴ MCSA, Homepage, October 2002, 5

Epilogue

In the following replies of Manyano women⁶⁷⁵ on the question which are their dreams for their future regarding themselves and their children are written down without comment; simply to give the women – at this point - a last chance in this book to voice their hopes and wishes – profane or spiritual.

“Better understanding and a better life.”⁶⁷⁶

“Better education and a well paid job. And also to believe in God because he can do wonders.”⁶⁷⁷

“More finances, better education.”⁶⁷⁸

“I would love everybody at home to be educated because with education you have everything.”⁶⁷⁹

“I like every child to be educated.”⁶⁸⁰

“I hope that my daughter could be successful in her studies and become a professional person one day.”⁶⁸¹

“I would like to have my own car and I would like to take my son to university.”⁶⁸²

“Safety and money.”⁶⁸³

“I would like to work for God.”⁶⁸⁴

“To be an exemplary Christian.”⁶⁸⁵

“I want to live a staunch Christian life with my family.”⁶⁸⁶

“To be sincere in my faith. To be able to raise my two daughters in such a way that they are good residents and also good Christians.”⁶⁸⁷

“To always cast my burden on my Lord. To accept all things that happen to me, whether good or bad, and to take those as challenges.”⁶⁸⁸

Living with peace and respecting each other. I would like my son to go to church too when he’s old enough.”⁶⁸⁹

I would like my children to follow my God.”⁶⁹⁰

“I like to share love to the people who don’t know about God. I like my children to come to church.”⁶⁹¹

“I would like to be a beacon of light to every person I come across. I would like my offspring to be God loving and lead a quality and fulfilling life and to be a good contribution in building the new South Africa.”⁶⁹²

“I want to love the Christian life but not forgetting that we are a black family who was brought up with traditional rituals.”⁶⁹³

⁶⁷⁵ See Appendix 5. The names are not given to protect the women's privacy.

⁶⁷⁶ Methodist Manyano, Langa (22, Appendix 5), May 1997

⁶⁷⁷ Methodist Manyano, Langa (20, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁷⁸ Methodist Manyano, Langa (21, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁷⁹ Methodist Manyano, Langa (16, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸⁰ Methodist Manyano, Langa (13, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸¹ Methodist Manyano, Paarl (26, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸² Reformed Presbyterian Manyano, Langa (F, Ibid.), April 1997

⁶⁸³ Reformed Presbyterian Manyano, Langa (L, Ibid.), April 1997

⁶⁸⁴ Methodist Manyano, Langa (2, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸⁵ Methodist Manyano, Langa (8, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸⁶ Methodist Manyano, Paarl (23, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸⁷ Methodist Manyano, Paarl (28, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸⁸ Methodist Manyano, Paarl (30, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁸⁹ Reformed Presbyterian Manyano, Langa (N, Ibid.), April 1997

⁶⁹⁰ Methodist Manyano, Langa (12, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁹¹ Methodist Manyano, Langa (4, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁹² Methodist Manyano, Langa (6, Ibid.), May 1997

⁶⁹³ Methodist Manyano, Paarl (31, Ibid.), May 1997

Appendices

1 Abbreviations

AIC	African Independent Church
ANC	African National Congress
ATR	African traditional religion
BMC	Black Methodist Consultation
CMM	Central Methodist Mission (Metropolitan Church) Cape Town
E.C.	Eastern Cape
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
JNL	Journey to a New Land
MCSA	Methodist Church of Southern Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
UCT	University of Cape Town
UWC	University of Western Cape
PAC	Pan African Congress
SACC	South African Council of Churches
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Committee
W.A.	Women's Auxiliary
W.C.	Western Cape

2 Structures of the MCSA

1 The Connexion

The Connexion in the MCSA consists of a Conference, a Connexional Executive and a Connexional Discipline Committee.

1.1 The Conference

In 1996, the former Annual Conference was replaced by a three to four day Triennial Conference as part of the reforms. Representatives from all Circuits attend the Conference. The focus is on bible study, prayer and “listening to the voice of God”.⁶⁹⁴

The Conference consists of:

- one lay representative per Circuit who is elected by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting. Circuits with a membership exceeding two thousand are allowed to elect an additional delegate.
- ministerial representatives from each District. They are elected by the Synods, in a number equal to fifty per cent of the number of Circuit-elected lay delegates.
- Synod-elected lay members of the Connexional Executive
- ex officio members of the Connexional Executive
- two youths delegates per District, elected by the Youth Synods.⁶⁹⁵

As part of the Church’s reforms specific connexional tasks were delegated to:

- a “reshaped Connexional Executive”⁶⁹⁶
- a “reshaped Board of Ministries”
- a Connexional Discipline Committee.

As many functions as possible have been transferred to the Districts because they are in closer contact to the Circuits and Societies. The Conference is not designed to provide leadership for the Church as such because it is not structured to respond to needs expressed by the local Church. Therefore it is not regarded as relevant by the Circuits.

1.2 The Connexional Executive

The members of the Connexional Executive are:

- the Presiding Bishop⁶⁹⁷
- the Executive Secretary
- all Bishops⁶⁹⁸ (13)
- one Connexional Lay Leader⁶⁹⁹
- the Lay General Treasurer of the Methodist Connexional Office (MCO)

⁶⁹⁴ Olivier, 9

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 10

⁶⁹⁷ The Presiding Bishop is elected by all ministers and a widest possible representation of lay people. The election is conducted by the Synods via a ballot. A clear majority of fifty per cent plus one vote is necessary.

Ibid., 12f

⁶⁹⁸ Any ordained minister can be elected as Bishop by his own or by another District. A Bishop serves a maximum of three consecutive years. Any Synod wanting to elect their Bishop for a fourth term can do so by a favourable ballot of at least 75 per cent.

⁶⁹⁹ The Methodist Conference elects the Connexional Lay Leader. His or her duties are: to serve as a member of Connexional Meetings, to visit Circuits and Districts to encourage especially the Methodist laity, to ensure the “proper care and well-being of Ministers and their families by encouraging lay leaders in the Connexion to fulfil their obligations in this regard ... to report to the Conference, Connexional Executive and the Synods the state of the Church from the lay point of view and to represent the Church on behalf of the Presiding Bishop locally and internationally when requested by the Presiding Bishop, Conference or Connexional Executive.”

Ibid., 15

- one representative for men's and women's work respectively
- two General Secretaries of the Mission, Service & Justice unit and of the Education and Training unit of the Board of Ministries
- one General Secretary of the Department of Education for Ministry
- the ex Presiding Bishop until a Presiding Bishop elect has been elected; this means that an ex-Presiding Bishop serves for a period of 18 months in that capacity
- one lay member from each of the thirteen Districts. They are elected by the Synod for a three-year term
- one Youth Representative elected at the Connexional Youth Consultation (C.Y.C.)⁷⁰⁰

The Connexional Executive is chaired by the Presiding Bishop and it manages the Connexion between the Conferences. It is supposed to meet at least twice per year to "plan, implement and monitor the work of the Church, subject to the directions of Conference. It will deal with matters referred to it by Conference or Synods and is responsible for the final stationing of Ministers. It will also strive to ensure that an ethic of sharing and mutual concern is fostered between Districts thus strengthening our connexionality."⁷⁰¹

1.3 Connexional Discipline Committee

The Connexional Discipline Committee was introduced in the MCSA as part of the reforms around the initiative Journey to a New Land (JNL). It consists of seven people of whom no less than three should be ordained Ministers and not less than three are supposed to be lay persons.

2 Organisational structures

2.1 The District

The reform of the MCSA in 1996 allocated greater responsibility to the thirteen Districts of the Church. While the connexional principle was maintained, more power was transferred to each District in order to fulfil the need for leadership and decision-making on the local level. The transfer of more power to the Districts is supposed to lead to a more effective co-ordination and management of human and material resources.⁷⁰²

Each Synod holds responsibility for determining mission priorities and needs within the District. It also functions as an overseer for the realization of the Conference decisions. The respective Synod decides how its resources should be distributed and how the Circuits need to be assisted. Circuits and Societies are enabled as well as they are held accountable for their activities.

One of the priorities of the Church leadership in the 1990's was to ensure that the Districts will not lose sight of mutual sharing and resourcing between the Districts. The Connexional Executive is the official body that must ensure this.

Some of the functions that used to be performed by the Departments were shifted to the hands of the Districts. The Synod is responsible for seeing that this in fact happens.

The District Executive is the official body that must implement the decisions of the Synod on the District level. It also manages the District affairs between the Synods. Each District Executive is elected by its Synod and it is chaired by the respective bishop. The executive consists of Ministers and lay members.⁷⁰³

2.2 The Circuit

The Circuit system represents one model of the local church in the MCSA. It tends to be a cluster of larger and smaller congregations, where administration, decision-making, finances, planning, programs and events take place in a centralised manner.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 11

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 10

⁷⁰² Ibid., 18

⁷⁰³ Ibid., 19

The mission objectives and priorities for the Circuit are discussed and decided at an Annual Circuit Planning Meeting. Financial planning, the election of office-bearers and other tasks of a Circuit are part of this meeting. It also appoints the Circuit Executive that is chaired by the Superintendent Minister. It comprises the Ministers, Circuit Stewards, Circuit Treasurer and other persons. The executive consists of an equal number of Ministers and lay-persons.

The Circuit Executive reports to the Quarterly Meeting and on demand to the Synod or District Executive.

The Quarterly Meeting is in charge of the activities of the respective Circuit; e.g. it holds the Societies accountable. The foundation of their work is a quarterly evaluation of the Circuit to measure its effectiveness in terms of the mission objectives established at the Planning Meeting. The mission groups give reports of their work each quarter.

The Circuit Quarterly Meeting consists of the Superintendent, Ministers, Circuit Stewards, Circuit Treasurer, Circuit Secretary, Society Stewards, Biblewomen, Evangelists, Deacons, Class Leaders, five Local Preachers, Presidents of the organisations and chair-persons of all mission groups in the respective Circuits.⁷⁰⁴

2.3 The Society

The Society system represents another model of the local church in the MCSA. It tends to be more parish-centred, where each congregation is focused on its own affairs. It has little more than an administrative and courtesy relationship with other congregations in the same Circuit.

The official body responsible for the management of a Society is called Leaders Meeting (LM). Its primary task is to discern the vision and mission challenges and to make decisions concerning objectives and strategies required for an “effective ministry”.⁷⁰⁵ This means, the LM appoints mission groups that are responsible for the church’s “life and work.”⁷⁰⁶ The membership of the LM consists of chairpersons of all active mission groups. Usually the Minister is heading the LM but he or she can delegate a Society Steward to act as chair-person instead.

The LM organizes an Annual Society Meeting. At this meeting, a mission statement is shared with the entire congregation. The latter is invited to make their own contribution. Mission objectives are shaped and endorsed, and the work of each mission group is reported. A financial report is presented as well. At the Annual Society Meeting the Society Stewards are elected and additional mission groups are appointed if necessary.⁷⁰⁷

3 The Board of Ministries

The former Departments in the MCSA have been constituted as a so-called Board of Ministries in 1996. Its units are as follows:

Secretariat	Mission, Justice & Service	Education & Training	Organisations
Methodist Connexional Office	Mission & Christian Citizenship	Department of Education for Ministry	Women’s Manyano
Finance	Youth Department	Christian Education	Women’s Association
Communication		Board of Education	Women’s Auxiliary
Ecumenical Affairs		Publishing House	Wesley Guilds
		Sunday Schools	Biblewomen
			Evangelists
			Deacons

Source: Olivier (1996), 16

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., 24

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., 25

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., 26

3 Rules & Regulations of the Manyano

1. Identification and aims of the Women's Manyano

"... The Women's Manyano ... is the Methodist Women's Prayer and Service Union and stands for holiness of life, purity of speech and conduct, temperance, and service to the glory of God and for the extension of His Kingdom.

... The Women's Manyano and its members are subject to the authority of the Church. The Manyano operates in terms of this Constitution which contains the principles of the Manyano and is subject to approval by Conference of the Connexional Executive, and in terms of the Manyano's Rules which are subject to the approval of the Triennial Convention of the Manyano.

... The aims of the Manyano are:

... To build up and manifest spiritual life, and in particular to foster diligence in private prayer and in reading and studying the Bible;

... To be faithful in attending the means of grace, including the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the Class Meeting, the Services of the Church, Family Prayer and reading of the Bible in the home;

... To guide the life of the home in accordance with Christian principles and example, with special reference to training children for the service of God in Purity of thought, word and deed, and in respect for their elders;

... To seek the conversion of our people to belief in God and to seek to be used by God for the building up of the Church of Christ;

... To encourage the missionary spirit among our people and to raise funds for Mission Work and for other authorised local and Connexional Church and community needs.⁷⁰⁸

2. Women's Manyano and the Church Organisations

2.1 Women's Manyano and the Connexional Organisation

"... A Connexional Convention shall be held triennially consisting of:

... the General Executive Committee,

... the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Christian Citizenship Secretary of each District,

... two representatives elected by the Convention of each District,

... two representatives of the Young Women's Manyano of each District elected at the Young Women's Manyano District Convention.

The ex-General President, Secretary and Treasurer are voting members of the Convention. The Convention is held in the District of the General Executive Committee.

... The Districts in turn shall nominate a General Executive Committee from among the members, for appointment by the Connexional Convention. The District whose turn it is shall nominate two names for the office of General President, from which the Convention shall elect the General President. The General Executive Committee consists of the General President, the General Secretary, the General Treasurer, the General Christian Citizenship Secretary and four other members who shall both be Ministers' wives. They shall hold office for three years.

... The General President shall be inducted during the Convention by the Presiding Bishop in a service which is open to all.

... If the General President is unable to continue her duties, the Presiding Bishop shall convene the General Executive Committee and the District Executive Committee to appoint a successor.

... If the General President is transferred from the District which nominated her, and her distance from the General Executive causes her inconvenience, she shall, after consulting the

⁷⁰⁸ Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Laws and Discipline (1997), 181

District Executive, the General Executive and the Presiding Bishop, convene the District Executive of the District to which she has moved who shall appoint a new General Executive.

... If a District President cannot attend the Connexional Convention, the ex-President may attend in her place.

... The General President is the official representative of the Women's Manyano at Conference ...

The General President is the official representative of the Manyano at the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. The triennial Convention may appoint an alternate if she is unable to attend."⁷⁰⁹

2.2 Women's Manyano and the District organisation

... A District Convention shall be held annually for prayer, fellowship and evangelisation, and to transact the business of the organisation in the District.

.. The District Convention consists of:

... the District Executive Committee,

... the Presidents and the elected representatives of the Circuit Manyano,

... Ministers' widows and the wives of Supernumerary Ministers in the District,

... one representative from each Circuit Young Women's Manyano,

... one representative for every fifty Circuit Manyano members or part thereof, with a maximum of six from any Circuit, elected at the Circuit Manyano meeting prior to the District Convention. Such representatives should not be the same persons each year."⁷¹⁰

2.3 Women's Manyano and the District Executive Committee

"... The District Executive Committee consists of the District President, the ex-President, the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Christian Citizenship Secretary, the wives of the Ministers and Supernumerary Ministers in the District, Ministers' widows in the District, and one member elected by each Circuit Manyano from among its members.

... The District Convention shall nominate two Ministers' wives in the District for election by Synod as President of the District Manyano. She holds office for a single term of three years. The District Convention shall elect annually the District Secretary, District Treasurer and District Christian Citizenship Secretary. If the President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, or the Christian Citizenship Secretary is unable to act, the former incumbent of the office shall take her place until the next District elections.

... The District President takes office at the following District Convention and should be inducted by the Bishop.

... The District President should ensure the appointment of Christian Citizenship Secretaries at District, Circuit and Society level.

... The Secretary of the District Manyano shall prepare, for presentation to Synod, a report on the work of the Manyano and an audited financial statement for the year.

... The President and the Secretary of the District Manyano, or the alternates, are members of Synod ..."⁷¹¹

2.4 Women's Manyano and the Circuit organisation

"... The Manyano in each Circuit is managed by a Circuit Executive Committee consisting of:

... the Circuit President, who shall be the wife of the Superintendent or of the Resident Minister,

... the ex-President,

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 182

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., 183

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 184

... the Vice-President elected annually by the Circuit Manyano. In a Circuit with more than one Minister, the second Minister's wife shall be Vice-President,

... the Chairwomen of each local Branch,

... a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Christian Citizenship Secretary elected annually by the Circuit Manyano.

... Elected Officers should hold office for three years at a time.

... Circuit gatherings should be held quarterly.

... The Circuit President and a representative elected annually by the Circuit Manyano are members of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting ..."⁷¹²

2.5 Women's Manyano and the Branch organisation

"... The Branch shall meet weekly, usually on Thursday and/or Saturday, and should be opened and closed with song, prayer and Bible reading.

... The Branch shall not operate outside of the geographical bounds of the Circuit.

... Each local Branch of the Manyano is managed by a Local Committee consisting of the Superintendent and other Ministers in the Circuit, the wife of the local Minister as Chairwoman, five members of the Manyano elected annually by the Branch, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Christian Citizenship Secretary elected annually by the Circuit Manyano.

... Should there be no local Minister's wife the Chairwoman shall be nominated by the Branch in consultation with the Superintendent and appointed by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.

... The wife of an Evangelist is not ex officio a Chairwoman but may be so appointed.

... The Secretary shall keep the Minutes of the meetings and a Roll of members. The Committee shall arrange the meetings.

... The Branch shall open a savings or a bank account in the name of 'The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Women's Manyano (... Branch)' to be operated by two signatories: the Chairwoman, and either the Secretary or the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall report as required by the Branch. The accounts shall be audited annually.

... The meetings are under the control of the Superintendent and other Ministers. All funds raised by the Branch shall be reported to the Quarterly Meeting through the Resident Minister. No public fundraising shall be organised without the approval of the Superintendent."⁷¹³

6 Young Women's Manyano: Aims

"... The Young Women's Prayer and Service Union (Young Women's Manyano) is a branch of the Methodist Women's Manyano ...

The aims of the Young Women's Manyano are:

... To encourage members to read the Bible daily and to keep themselves pure as temples of the Holy Spirit;

... To promote the missionary spirit and to support the Church;

... To visit the sick and to pray for and witness to unbelievers;

... To honour parents as becomes a Christian;

... To keep their home clean and tidy."⁷¹⁴

7 Young Women's Manyano and Methodist organisations

7.1 Young Women Manyano and the District organisation:

"... The Young Women's Manyano shall hold an annual District Convention in each District under the District Women's Manyano Convention.

⁷¹² Ibid., 185

⁷¹³ Ibid., 186

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

... Each Circuit may send one representative to the Women's Manyano District Convention. They shall report on the work of the Manyano in their Circuit. Their travelling expenses shall be paid by the Circuit Manyano concerned."⁷¹⁵

7.2 Young Women's Manyano and the Circuit and Branch organisation

"... The business of the Young Women's Manyano shall be transacted in consultation with the Women's Manyano but their finances shall be kept separate. An audited financial report shall be submitted to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.

... Each local Branch of the Young Women's Manyano is under the general oversight of the local Branch of the Women's Manyano. The rules governing the local Branch of the Women's Manyano apply also to the Young Women's Manyano."⁷¹⁶

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 187

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., 187

4 List of Interview Subjects

Lynn Allison, Women's Auxiliary, Muizenberg (Cape Town)
Dr. Arthur Attwell (formerly Rev. of the MCSA), Noordhoek, Western Cape
Peggy Attwell, Women's Auxiliary, Noordhoek, Western Cape (1927-2000)
Rev. Ernest Baartman, MCSA, Gugulethu (Cape Town)
Pamela Delport, Women's Association & Women's Network, Southfield (Cape Town)
Jean Fisher, Women's Network, Bergvliet (Cape Town)
Dr. Chuma Himonga, Law Department, University of Cape Town
Dr. Chirevo Kwenda, Department Religious Studies, University of Cape Town
Lindiway, independent women's group of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Langa (Cape Town)
Mrs. Masinda, Manyano Reformed Presbyterian Church, Langa (Cape Town)
Credo Mutwa, traditional healer, Kaya Lendaba, Eastern Cape
Rev. David Newby, Central Methodist Mission (CMM), Cape Town
Grace (Nozipho) Ncube, Manyano, Gugulethu (Cape Town)
Rev. Otto Ntshanyana, Kayelitsha, Western Cape
Estel Nxele, traditional healer, Umlazi (Durban), Natal (approximately 1923 - 1989)
Nomsa Mpambo, Women's Fellowship, Gugulethu (Cape Town)
Malinge, Reverend Reformed Presbyterian Church, Cape Town
Mrs. J., Manyano, East Rondebosch (Cape Town)
Rev. Jenny Samdaan, MCSA, Belhar
Ethel Sanjanja, Manyano, Constantia (Cape Town)
Rev. Sanqela, MCSA, Paarl, Western Cape
Patricia Sanqela, District President (Cape) of the Manyano, Paarl, Western Cape
Lorraine Solomon, Women's Association, Southfield (Cape Town)
Rev. Jennifer Sweet, MCSA, Belhar (Cape Town)

Groups

Manyano, MCSA, Bergvliet (Cape Town)
Manyano, MCSA, Gugulethu (Cape Town)
Manyano, MCSA, Langa (Cape Town)
Manyano, MCSA, Paarl, Western Cape
Manyano, Reformed Presbyterian Church, Langa (Cape Town)
Wesley Gulde (student group), Rondebosch (Cape Town)

5 List of Manyano Members (Questionnaires)

Manyano women at Langa⁷¹⁷

Women	Age	Marital status	Children	Language	Profession	Original Home
1	77	widow	0	Xhosa	pensioneer; before cook	Butterworth (Transkei)
2	71	widow	8	Xhosa	domestic worker	Engcobo (rural area)
3	61	married	6	Sesotho	domestic worker	Cape Town
4	60	married	3	Xhosa	nurse in an old age home	Butterworth
5	58	married	5	Xhosa	housekeeper	Umtata (Transkei)
6	57	married	4	Xhosa	health worker	urban area
7	57	married	4	Xhosa	tea-girl	Eastern Cape (rural)
8	56	married	3	Xhosa	domestic worker	Engcobo
9	54	single	2	Xhosa	domestic worker	East London
10	53	married	5	Xhosa	chair-lady	King Williamstown
11	51	married	6	Xhosa	--	Transkei
12	49	married	3	Xhosa	housekeeper	--
13	48	married	7	Xhosa	domestic worker	urban area
14	48	married	3	Xhosa	domestic worker	urban area
15	47	married	8	Xhosa	housekeeper	Cape Town
16	46	divorced	3	Xhosa	distributing clerk	Eastern Cape
17	46	married	3	Xhosa	domestic worker	Eastern Cape
18	42	married	3	Xhosa	school health educator	Cape Town
19	40	married	2	Xhosa	domestic worker	Transkei
20	39	married	2	Xhosa	housekeeper	--
21	37	married	2	Xhosa	domestic worker	Eastern Cape
22	37	divorced	1	Xhosa	cashier	--

⁷¹⁷ The names of the women are not given to protect their privacy.

Manyano at Paarl

Women	Age	Marital status	Children	Language	Profession	Original Home
23	58	divorced	3	Xhosa	teacher	Eastern Cape
24	57	married	3	Xhosa	cleaner	rural area
25	54	married	5	Sotho	secretary	rural area
26	45	married	2	Xhosa	housewife	urban area
27	45	married	4	Xhosa	domestic worker	urban area
28	45	married	2	Xhosa	teacher	urban area
29	41	married	5	Xhosa	domestic servant	Uitenhage (E. Cape)
30	39	married	4	Xhosa	shop assistant	Paarl
31	38	divorced	3	Xhosa	labourer	Eastern Cape
32	37	single	0	Xhosa	teacher	urban area

Manyano (Reformed Presbyterian Church) at Langa

Women	Age	Marital status	Children	Language	Profession	Original Home
A	62	single	3	Xhosa	pensioneer	urban area
B	58	married	5	Xhosa	tea-lady	urban area
C	46	divorced	4	Zulu	domestic worker	Durban
D	46	single	2	Xhosa	cook	Transkei
E	45	single	2	Xhosa	messenger	Transkei
F	40	single	1	Xhosa	domestic worker	Cape Town
G	38	single	2	Xhosa	domestic worker	Transkei
H	39	single	1	Xhosa	staff nurse	rural area
I	37	single	1	Xhosa	domestic worker	rural area
K	35	single	2	Xhosa	domestic worker	Eastern Cape
L	31	single	1	Xhosa	domestic worker	Transkei
M	27	single	2	Xhosa	tea-lady	rural area
N	27	single	1	Xhosa	bank clerk	Transkei

6 Thabo Mbeki's speech on the adoption of the new constitution

“Chairperson,

Esteemed President of the democratic Republic,

Honourable Members of the Constitutional Assembly,

Our distinguished domestic and foreign guests, Friends:

On an occasion such as this, we should, perhaps start from the beginning.

So, let me begin.

I am an African.

I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter-day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun.

The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.

The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld.

The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThuekla, and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.

At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito.

A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say – I am an African!

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape. They who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as people, perished in the result.

Today, as a country, we keep an audible silence about these ancestors of the generations that live, fearful to admit the horror of a former deed, seeking to obliterate from our memories a cruel occurrence which, in its remembering, should teach us not and never to be inhuman again.

I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their actions, they remain still, part of me.

In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence. The stripes they bore on their bodies from the lash of the slave master are a reminder embossed on my consciousness of what should not be done.

I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hinsta and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom.

My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as the Ashanti of Ghana, as the Berbers of the desert.

I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St. Helena and the Bahamas, who sees in the mind's eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death, concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins.

I am the child of Nongquase. I am he who made it possible to trade in the world markets in diamonds, in gold, in the same food for which my stomach yearns.

I come of those who were transported from India and China whose being resided in the fact, solely, that they were able to provide physical labour, who taught me that we could both be at home and be foreign, who taught me that human existence itself demanded that freedom was a necessary condition for that human existence.

Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that – I am an African!

I have seen our country torn as under as these, all of whom are my people, engaged one another in a titanic battle, are one to redress a wrong that had been caused by one to another and the other, to defend the indefensible.

I know what it signifies when race and colour are used to determine who is human and who, sub-human.

I have seen the destruction of all sense of self-esteem, the consequent striving to be what one is not, simply to acquire some of the benefits which those who had imposed themselves as masters had ensured that they enjoy.

I have experience of the situation in which race and colour is used to enrich some and impoverish the rest.

I have seen the corruption of minds and souls as a result of the pursuit of and ignoble effort to perpetrate a veritable crime against humanity.

I have seen concrete expression of the denial of the dignity of a human being emanating from the conscious, system and systematic oppressive and repressive activities of other human beings.

There the victims parade with no mask to hide the brutish reality – the beggars, the prostitutes, the street children, those who seek solace in substance abuse, those who have to steal to assuage hunger, those who have to lose their sanity because to be sane is to invite pain.

Perhaps the worst among these, who are my people, are those who have learnt to kill for a wage. To these the extent of death is directly proportional to their personal welfare.

And so, like pawns in the service of demented souls, they kill in furtherance of the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal. They murder the innocent in the taxi wars.

They kill slowly or quickly in order to make profits from the illegal trade in narcotics. They are available for hire when husband wants to murder wife and wife, husband.

Among us prowl the products of our immoral and amoral past – killers who have no sense of the worth of human life, rapists who have absolute disdain for the women of our country, animals who would seek to benefit from the vulnerability of the children, the disabled and the old, the rapacious who brook no obstacle on their quest for self-enrichment.

All this I know and know to be true because I am an African!

Because of that, I am also able to state this fundamental truth that I am born of a people who are heroes and heroines.

I am born of a people who would not tolerate oppression.

I am of a nation that would not allow that fear of death, torture, imprisonment, exile or persecution should result in the perpetuation of injustice.

The great masses who are our mother and father will not permit that the behaviour of the few result in the description of our country and people as barbaric.

Patient because history is on our side, these masses do not despair because today the weather is bad. Nor do they turn triumphalist when, tomorrow the sun shines.

Whatever the circumstances they have lived through and because of that experience, they are determined to define for themselves of what it means to be African.

The constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes an unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origins.

It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

It gives concrete expression to the sentiment we share as Africans, and will defend to the death, that the people shall govern.

It recognises the fact that the dignity of the individual is both an objective which society must pursue, and is a goal which cannot be separated from the material well-being of that individual.

It seeks to create the situation in which all our people shall be free from fear, including the fear of the oppression of one national group by another, the fear of the disempowerment of one social echelon by another, the fear of the use of state power to deny anybody their fundamental human rights and the fear of tyranny.

It aims to open the doors so that who were disadvantaged can assume their place in society as equals with their fellow human beings without regard to colour, race, gender, age or geographic dispersal.

It provides the opportunity to enable each one and all to state their views, promote them, strive for their implementation in the process of governance without fear that a contrary view will be met with repression.

It creates a law-governed society which shall be inimical to arbitrary rule.

It enables the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means rather than resort to force.

It rejoices in the diversity of our people and creates the space for all of us voluntarily to define ourselves as one people.

As an African, this is an achievement of which I am proud, proud without reservation and proud without any feeling of conceit.

Our sense of elevation at this moment also derives from the fact that this magnificent product is unique creation of African hands and African minds.

But it also constitutes a tribute to our loss of vanity that we could, despite the temptation to treat ourselves as an exceptional fragment of humanity, draw on the accumulated experience and wisdom of all humankind, to define for ourselves what we want to be.

Together with the best in the world, we too are prone to pettiness, petulance, selfishness and short-sightedness.

But it seems to have happened that we looked at ourselves and said the time had come that we make a super-human effort to be other than human, to respond to the call to create for ourselves a glorious future, to remind ourselves of the Latin saying: Gloria est consequenda – Glory must be sought after!

Today it feels good to be an African.

I am born of the peoples of the continent of Africa.

The pain of the violent conflict that the people of Liberia, Somalia, the Sudan, Burundi and Algeria is a pain I also bear.

The dismal shame of poverty, suffering and human degradation of my continent is a blight that we share.

The blight on our happiness that derives from this and from our drift to the periphery of the ordering of human affairs leaves us in a persistent shadow of despair.

This is a savage road to which nobody should be condemned.

This thing that we have done today, in this small corner of a great continent that has contributed so decisively to the evolution of humanity says that Africa reaffirms that she is continuing her rise from the ashes.

Whatever the setbacks of the moment, nothing can stop us now! Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace! However improbable it may sound to the sceptics, Africa will prosper!

Whoever we may be, whatever our immediate interest, however much we carry baggage from our past, however much we have been caught by the fashion of cynicism and loss of faith in the capacity of the people, let us err today and say - nothing can stop us now!

Thank you.”⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁸ Copy of the Mbeki speech, distributed at the campus of UCT in June 1996.

Bibliography

- Ackermann D., "Women, Religion, and a Democratic Society - Putting Ourselves on the Agenda", in *African Women Today*, ed. M. Lessing, 284-291 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1994).
- Ackermann, D. et al., "Claiming Our Footprints" (Stellenbosch: Milano Printing, 2000).
- Adams, Ch., "Affirmative Action in a Democratic South Africa (Kenwyn, S.A.: Juta & Co., Ltd., 1993).
- ANC, "Statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress. Delivered by President Thabo Mbeki, on the occasion of the 88th Anniversary of the ANC", 8 January 2000.
- Andrews, P., "Spectators at the Revolution? Gender Equality and Customary Law in a Post-Apartheid South Africa", *Law and Anthropology*, 7 (1994): 250-276.
- Ansprenger, F., "Versöhnung durch Wahrheit? Südafrika will seine Vergangenheit bewältigen", *Neue Politische Literatur*, 45 (2000): 390-399.
- Armstrong, A. et al., "Uncovering Reality: Excavating Women's Rights in African Family Law", *International Journal of Law and the Family*, 7 (1993): 271-368.
- Armstrong, A. K., "Struggling over Scarce Sources" (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992).
- Ashforth, A., "Of Secrecy and the Commonplace: Witchcraft and Power in Soweto", *Social Research*, 64:4 (1996): 1183-1234.
- , "Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in the New South Africa", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 150-152, XXXVIII-2-4 (1998): 505-532.
- Attwell, A., "The Growing of Saints. Determinative Factors in the Rise and Development of Methodism" (Ph.D. thesis: Unisa, 1989).
- Attwell, P. (ed.), "Take our Hands. The Methodist Women's Auxiliary of Southern Africa 1916-1996" (Cape Town: Salty Print, 1997).
- Bakker, T. M., "A Church as Therapeutic Community". Paper delivered at the Seventh National Congress of the Psychological Association of South Africa, Durban, September 1989.
- Baldwin, L. V., "Invisible Strands in African Methodism" (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1983).
- Balia, D., "Black Methodists and White Supremacy in South Africa" (Briardene: Madiba Publications, 1991).
- , "How Best to Save the Heathen - Formation of the Unzondelelo Missionary Movement in Natal", *Missionalia*, 18:3 (1990): 320-329.
- , "Black Methodists and White Supremacy in South Africa" (Briardene: Mariba Publications, 1991).
- Ballington, J., "The Participation of Women in South Africa's First Democratic Election" (Auckland Park, S.A.: Electoral Institute of South Africa, no date given).
- Banzana, E. V., "The African Traditional Marriage", in *Perspectives on Ubuntu. A Tribute to Fedsem*, ed. M. G. Khabela & Z. C. Mzoneli, 94-112 (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1998).
- Barnes, H. E., "Society in Transition" (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).
- Barrie, T., "The Making of Methodism" (London: Epworth Press, 1997).
- Battle, M., "Reconciliation. The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu" (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1997).
- Bazilli, S. (ed.), "Putting Women on the Agenda" (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991).
- Beidelmann, T. O., "Sacrifice and Sacred Rule in Africa", *American Ethnologist*, 14 (1987): 542 – 551.

- Bekker, S., "Ethnicity in Focus. The South African Case", *Indicator SA*, Issue Focus (December 1993): 63-77.
- Bennemann, W. I., Jr. et al., "The Seeing Eye: Hermeneutical Phenomenology in the Study of Religion" (University Park & London: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1982).
- Bennett, T. W., "Human Rights and the African Cultural Tradition", *Transformation*, 22 (1993): 30 - 40.
- , "Human Rights and African Customary Law" (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1995).
- , "The Application of Customary Law in Southern Africa" (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1985).
- Berger, I. & Robertson, C. (eds.), "Women and Class in Africa" (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1986).
- Bhengu, M. J., "Ubuntu: The Essence of Democracy" (Cape Town: Novalis, 1996).
- Biko, S. (ed.), "I Write What I Like" (London: Bowerdean, 1978).
- Boesak, A., "Unschuld, die schuldig macht" (Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1977).
- Bokie, S., "Death and The Invisible Powers" (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
- Botha, S., "South Africa's Party System", in *South Africa: Designing new Political Institutions*, eds. M. Faure & J.-E. Lane, 105-120 (London et al.: SAGE Publications, 1995).
- Bourdillon, M., "Religion and Society: A Text for Africa" (Gweru: Mambo, 1990).
- Bowie, F., "Women and Missions: Past and Present" (Providence: Berg, 1993).
- Brandel-Syrier, M., "Black Women in Search of God" (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962).
- Brantley, R.E., "Wordsworth's Natural Methodism" (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975).
- Brettell, C. & Sargent, C. (eds.), "Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective" (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1993).
- Briggs, J. L., "Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family" (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
- Bühmann, M. V., "Living in Two Worlds" (Cape Town & Pretoria: Human & Rousseau, 1984).
- Burdett, C., "Olive Schreiner and the Progress of Feminism" (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
- Burger, A. P., "Ubuntu: Cradles of Peace and Development" (Pretoria: Kagiso, 1996).
- Burke, P., "The Renaissance" (London: Macmillan, 1987).
- Burman, S. & Reynolds, P. (eds.), "Growing Up in a Divided Society" (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986).
- Buthlezi, M., "Christianity in South Africa", *Pro Veritate*, 12 (1973): 4-7.
- Bredenkamp, H. & Ross, R. (eds.), "Missions and Christianity in South African History" (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995).
- Bynum, C. et al. (eds.), "Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbol" (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).
- Campbell, C., "The Township Family and Women's Struggles", *Agenda*, 6 (1990): 1-22.
- Carmody, D. L., "Women and World Religions" (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1989).
- Chidester, D., "Shots in the Streets: Violence and Religion in South Africa" (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991).
- , "Religions of South Africa" (London & New York: Routledge, 1992).
- Chilcote, P. W., "John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism" (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1991).

- Cochrane, J. R., "God in Context: The Symbolic Construction of a Religious Universe in a Base Christian Community", *Scriptura*, 12 (1993): 35-56.
- , "Servants of Power. The Role of English-speaking Churches in South Africa: 1903-1930" (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1987).
- Coetzee, J. K., "Botshabelo: The Face of 'Orderly Urbanisation'?", *Development Southern Africa*, 5:3 (August 1988): 336-347.
- Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J., "Naturing the Nation: Aliens, Apocalypse, and the Postcolonial State". Paper (University of Chicago/American Bar Foundation, 2000).
- , "Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa", vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
- Commission of Gender Equality. Paper at the National Conference on Witchcraft Violence, 6-10 September 1998, Thohoyandou, Venda.
- Community Law Centre Belville, "Custom and Religion in a Non-racial, Non-sexist South Africa". Report of the International Seminar of the Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape 14 – 16 May 1993.
- Connell, R. W., "Gender and Power" (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).
- Constitutional Assembly, "Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" (drafted version for the public), (no place given: Republic of South Africa, 1996).
- Cumpsty, J. S., "Religion as Belonging. A General Theory of Religion" (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1991).
- Davenport, T. R. H., "South Africa: A Modern History" (London: Macmillan Academic and Professional, Ltd., 1991).
- , "The Transfer of Power in South Africa" (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998).
- Davenport, R. & Saunders, C. (eds.), "South Africa. A Modern History", 5th ed. (London et al.: Macmillan Press, 2000).
- Davies, R. E., "Methodism" (London: Epworth Press, 1985).
- Deacon, H., "Midwives and Medical Men in the Cape Colony Before 1860", *Journal of African History*, 39 (1998): 271-292.
- de Gruchy, J., "Christianity and Democracy" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- , "Becoming the Ecumenical Church," in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, eds. B. N. Pityana & Ch. Villa-Vicencio, 12-25 (Johannesburg: SACC, 1995).
- , "The Church Struggle in South Africa", 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986).
- de Gruchy, J. & Villa-Vicencio, C. (eds.), "Doing Theology in Context. South African Perspectives" (Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Philip, 1994).
- , "Wenn wir wie Brüder beieinander wohnten ... Von der Apartheid zur Bekenntenden Kirche - Stellungnahmen südafrikanischer Theologen" (Neunkirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984).
- de Heuss, L. "Sacrifice in Africa: A Structural Approach" (Manchester & Bloomington: Manchester University Press & Indiana University Press, 1985).
- de Jager, E. J. & Gitywa, V. Z., "A Xhosa Umhlwayelelo Ceremony in the Ciskei", *African Studies*, 22:3 (1963): 109-116.
- de la Rey, Ch., "Culture, Tradition and Gender: Let's Talk About It", *Agenda*, 13 (1992).
- Delport, E., "Domestic Workers - Light at the End of the Tunnel", in *South African Women Today*, ed. M. Lessing, 173-180 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1994).
- Diamond, S. G., "The Psychology of the Methodist Revival", 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934).
- Dreyer, F., "The Genesis of Methodism" (Bethlehem, NJ: Lehigh University Press, 1999).

- , "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", *American Historical Review*, 88:1 (1983): 12-30.
- , "A 'Religious Society under Heaven': John Wesley and the Identity of Methodism", *Journal of British Studies*, 25:1 (1986): 62-83.
- Du Plessis, J. A., "A History of Christian Mission in South Africa" (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911).
- du Toit, C., "African Spirituality and the Poverty of Western Religious Experience", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 100 (March 1998): 36-60.
- Edwards, F., "Neo-Feminist Spirituality: An Evolutionary Perspective", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 3 (1989): 53 – 61.
- Edwards, I., "The 1820 Settlers in South Africa" (London et. al.: Longmans et. al., 1934).
- Eiselen, W. M., "The Art of Divination as Practised by the Bamasemola", *African Studies*, 6 (1932): 1 - 29; 253 - 263.
- Eliade, M., "The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).
- Elphick, R. & Davenport, R., (eds.), "Christianity in South Africa" (Oxford & Cape Town: James Currey & David Philip, 1997).
- Engel, U., "Ethnische Konflikte und politischer Neubeginn in Südafrika", *afrika spectrum*, 32:1 (1997): 25-47.
- Etherington, N., "Gender Issues in South East African Missions, 1835" (Belville: University of Western Cape Press, 1992).
- Evans, J., "Muti Murders. Ritual Responses to Stress", *Indicator SA*, 8:4 (1991): 46-48.
- , "Where Can We Get a Beast Without Hair? Medicine Murder in Swaziland from 1970 to 1988", *African Studies*, 52:1 (1993): 27-42.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E., "Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937).
- Faure, V., "Flesh, Blood and Rituals. Notes on the Commodification of the Occult in the Democratic South Africa". Paper submitted to the Journal of Contemporary African Studies, February 2000.
- Fernandez, J. W., "African Religious Movements", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 7 (1978): 195-234.
- Fisch, J., "Geschichte Südafrikas", 2nd ed. (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991).
- Freund, B., "The Weight of History: Prospects for Democratisation in South Africa", in *African Democracy in the era of globalisation*, ed. J. Hyslop, 431-441 (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1999).
- Gaitskell, D., "Devout Domesticity? A Century of African Women's Christianity in South Africa", in *Women and gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. Ch. Walker, 251-271 (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).
- , "Power in Prayer and Service: Women's Christian Organizations", in *Christianity in South Africa*, eds. R. Elphick & R. Davenport, 253-267 (Cape Town: David Philip, 1997).
- Gcabashe, L., "Spiritual Liberation or Spiritual Oppression?", *Agenda*, 25 (1995): 7-15.
- Geertz, C., "Dichte Beschreibung. Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme", 4th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995).
- Gluckmann, M., "Custom and Conflict" (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1956).
- Goduka, M. I., "Affirming Unity in Diversity in Education: Healing with Ubuntu" (Kenwyn: Juta, 1999).
- Goldberg, V., "The Position of Married Women in South Africa", in *South African Women Today*, ed. M. Lessing, 239-251 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1994).

- Gray, R., "Black Christians and White Missionaries" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
- Hammond-Tooke, W. D., "The Symbolic Structure of Cape Nguni Cosmology", in *Religion and Social Change in Southern Africa*, eds M. G. Whisson & M. West (Cape Town: David Philip, 1975).
- , "Selective Borrowing? The Possibility of San Shamanistic Influence on the Southern Bantu Divination and Healing Practises", *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 53 (1998): 9-15.
- Harnischfeger, J., "Witchcraft and the State in South Africa", *Anthropos*, 95 (2000): 99-112.
- Head, B., "Sternenwende" (Göttingen: Lamuv, 1997).
- Heelas, P. & Lock, A. (eds.), "Indigenous Psychologies: The Anthropology of the Self" (London: Academic Press, 1981).
- Heitzenrater, R. P., "Wesley and the People Called Methodists" (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).
- Hendricks, Ch., "Gender Revisited", *Agenda*, 19 (1993): 86-88.
- Hewson, L., "An Introduction of South African Methodists" (Cape Town: Standard Press, 1950).
- Hockly, H. E., "The Story of the British Settlers of 1820 in South Africa", 2nd ed. (Cape Town et. al.: Juta, 1957):
- Hodgson, J., "The Faith-healer of Cancele: Some Problems in Analysing Religious Experience among Black People", *Religion in Southern Africa*, 4:1 (1983):13-29.
- Holness, L., "Women's Piety and Empowerment", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 98 (1997): 21-31.
- Holt, I. L. & Clark, E. T., "The World Methodist Movement" (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1956).
- Horn, P., "Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa: Another View of Dynamics", *Transformation*, 15 (1991): 83-88.
- "A Gender Agenda: The New Women's Coalition", *Indicator SA*, 9:3 (1992): 85-88.
- Horton, R., "African Conversion", *Africa*, 41 (1971): 85-108.
- Hovland, T. H., "The New Paradigm of African Theology", *African Theological Journal*, 22:2 (1993): 91-106.
- Hund, J., "Sangomas, Witches, the Problem of Belief and African Justice". Paper presented at the 19th annual meeting of the Society for Anthropology of Consciousness at the Univeristy of California at Berkeley, 24-28 March 1999.
- , "Witchdoctors and Witches: Sangomas as Mediators in Witchcraft Accusation Trials". Paper presented at the 19th annual meeting of the Society for Anthropology of Consciousness at the Univeristy of California at Berkeley, 24-28 March 1999.
- Idowu, E. B., "African Traditional Religion" (Cape Town: House Sion, 1973).
- Institute for multi-party democracy, "Witchcraft Summit". Discussion document: towards new legislation. Durban, 28 September 1999.
- Isichei, E., "A History of African Societies to 1870" (Cambridge: University Press, 1997).
- Janzen, J. M., "Self-presentation and Common Cultural Structures in Ngoma Rituals of Southern Africa", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 25:2 (1995): 141-162.
- Johnston, A., "South Africa's Emerging Democracy: A One-Party Celebration?", *Indicator SA*, 14:2 (1997): 7-11.
- July, R. W., "The Origins of Modern African Thought" (London: Faber & Faber, 1968).
- Kaganas, F. & Murray, Ch., "The Contest Between Culture and Gender Equality Under South Africa's Interim Constitution", *Journal of Law and Society*, 21:4 (1994): 134-157.
- Kaiser, A. & Müller, Th. O. H., "Das neue Südafrika" (Bonn: Dietz Verlag, 1992).
- Kaunda, K. D. & Morris, C. M., "A Humanist in Africa" (London: Longmans, 1966).

- Kgatla, S. T., "Understanding Witchcraft", *Word & Action* (Autumn 1996): 8-9.
- Khabela, M. G. & Mzoneli, Z.C., "Perspectives on Ubuntu: a Tribute to Fedsem". Papers submitted at the theological colloquium at the Federal Theological Seminary in Pietermaritzburg in August 1993 (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1998).
- Kiloh, M., "South Africa: Democracy Delayed", in *Democratization*, ed. D. Potter et al., 294-320 (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).
- Klaaren, E. M. (1977), "Creation and Apartheid: South African Theology since 1948", in *Christianity in South Africa*, eds. Elphick & Davenport, 370-382 (Oxford/Cape Town: James Currey/David Philip, 1997).
- Kotzé, D., "The New South African Constitution", in *South Africa: Designing new Political Institutions*, eds. Faure, M. & Lane, J.-E., 34-58 (London et al.: SAGE Publications, 1995).
- Koyana, D. S., "Customary Law in a Changing Society", in *South African Law Journal*, 98 (1980): 442 – 447.
- Krüger, G., "Zwischen Gott und Staat. Die Unabhängigen Kirchen in Südafrika" (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1989).
- Kruger, J. S. et al., "The Human Search for Meaning. A Multireligious Introduction to the Religions of Humankind" (Pretoria: Via Afrika, 1996).
- Kuckertz, H. (ed.), "Ancestor Religion in South Africa". Proceedings of a seminar on ancestor belief (Cocadu, Transkei: Lumko Missiological Institute, 1981).
- Kuzwayo, E., "Call Me Woman" (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989).
- Kwenda, C. et al., "African Religion and Culture Alive" (Hatfield, South Afrika: Collegium, 1997).
- Landsberg, C. & Kornegay, F., „The African Renaissance: A Quest for Pax Africana and Pan-Africanism“, *Foundation for Global Dialogue Occasional Paper*, 17 (October 1998).
- Larsen, S. (ed.), "Song Of The Stars. The Lore of a Zulu Shaman" (Barrytown: Station Hill Openings, 1996).
- Lessing, M., (ed.), "South African Women Today" (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1994).
- Livingstone, D., "Missionary, Travels and Researches in South Africa (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858).
- , "Wisdom as a New Paradigm for Practical Theology in a Post-Apartheid Society", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 3 (1995): 41-54.
- Lyotard, J., "The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
- Mabandla, B., "Promoting Gender Equality in South Africa", in *Putting Women on the Agenda*, ed. S. Bazilli, 75-81 (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1991).
- MacGaffey, W., "African Ideology and Belief: A Survey", *African Studies Review*, 24 (1981): 227-274.
- Makgoba, M. W. (ed.), "African Renaissance: The New Struggle" (Johannesburg, Mafube, 1999).
- Malherbe, J., (ed.) "Women, Society and Constraints" (Pretoria: Institute for Gender Studies Unisa, 2000).
- Mandela, N., "Long Walk to Freedom" (Boston et al.: Little et al., 1994).
- Maninger, S., "Ethnic Confrontation – Security Implications of Policies Towards Ethnic Minorities", *African Security Review*, 6:4 (1997): 16-24.
- Maphai, V., "Liberal Democracy and Ethnic Conflict in South Africa", in *Ethnic conflict and democratization in Africa*, ed. H. Glickmann, 71-119 (Atlanta, Gorgia: The African Studies Association Press, 1995).
- Maphai, V. (ed.), "South Africa. The Challenge of Change" (Harare: Sapes Books, 1994).

- Marwick, M. (ed.), "Witchcraft and Sorcery" (London: Penguin, 1970).
- Marx, Ch., "Ubu und Ubuntu. Zur Dialektik von Apartheid und Nation-Building", *Saeculum*, 52:1 (2001): 91-120.
- Mathabane, M., "African Women" (New York: Harper Collins, 1994).
- Mavimbela, V., "The African Renaissance: a Workable Dream". *Foundation for Global Dialogue Occasional Paper*, 17 (October 1998).
- Mauss, M., "Soziologie und Anthropologie", vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989).
- Mbali, Z., "The Churches and Racism" (London: SCM Press, 1987).
- Mbigi, L., "Ubuntu: The Spirit of African Transformation Management" (Randburg: Knowledge Resources, 1995).
- Mbiti, J. S., "African Religions and Philosophy" (London: Heinemann, 1971).
- McAllister, P. & Sharp, J., "The Ethnic Taboo", *Indicator SA*, 10:3 (1993): 7-10.
- Mears, W. G., "Methodism in the Cape" (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1973).
- Meena, R., "Gender in Southern Africa" (Harare: Jongwe Printers, 1992).
- Memmi, A., "The Colonizer and the Colonized" (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965).
- Meyns, P., "Regionale Kooperation im südlichen Afrika nach dem Ende der Apartheid", in *Afrika zwischen Dekolonisation, Staatsversagen und Demokratisierung*, eds. R. Tetzlaff et al., 207-238 (Hamburg: Institut für Afrikakunde, 1995).
- Minaar, A. de V. et al., "The Witches of Venda. Politics in Magic Potions", *Indicator SA*, 9:1 (1991).
- , "To Live in Fear. Witchburning and Medicine Murder in Venda" (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992).
- Moghadam, V., "Gender and National Identity - Women and Politics" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Mollenkott, V. R. (ed.), "Women of Faith in Dialogue" (New York: Crossroad, 1990).
- Mudimbe, V. Y., "The Idea of Africa" (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- , "The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge" (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988).
- Mulago, V., "Traditional African Religion and Christianity", in *African traditional religions in Contemporary Society*, ed. J. K. Olupona, 119-148 (New York: Paragon, 1991).
- Murray, Ch., "Gender and the New South African Order" (Kenwyn: Juta, 1994).
- Mutwa, C., "Isilwane. Tales and Fables of Africa" (Cape Town: Struik, 1996).
- Mphahlele, E., "The Fabric of African Cultures", *Foreign Affairs*, 42:4 (1964): 614-627.
- Nader, L., "Tracing the Dynamic Components of Power", *Current Anthropology*, 38: 5 (1997): 711-727.
- Nhlapo, Th., "Culture and Women Abuse", *Agenda*, 13 (1992): 5-14.
- , "The African Family and Women's Rights: Friends or Foes?", *Acta Juridica*, 135 (1991): 135-146.
- , "Women in South African Society – Traditional and Cultural Constraints" (Belville: Community Law Centre University of Western Cape, 1994).
- Niethammer, L., "Lebenserfahrung und kollektives Gedächtnis. Die Praxis der "Oral History" (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).
- Nuelsen, J. L., "Die Ordination im Methodimus" (Bremen: Verlags-Haus der Methodistenkirche, 1935).

- Ofori, P. E. (ed.), "Black African Traditional Religions and Philosophy" (Nendeln: KTO Press, 1977).
- Ogbonnaya, A. A., "Person as Community: An African Understanding of the Person as an Intrapyschic Community", *Africa Theological Journal*, 22:2 (1993): 117-129.
- Olupona, J. K. (ed.), "African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society" (New York: Paragon, 1991).
- Oosthuizen, C. G. (ed.), "Religion Alive: Studies in the New Movements and Indigenous Churches in Southern Africa" (Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986).
- Oosthuizen, C. G. et al. (ed.), "Afro-Christianity at the Grassroots: Its Dynamics and Strategies" (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).
- , "Afro-Christian Religion and Healing in Southern Africa" (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1989).
- , "Religion, Intergroup Relations, and Social Change in South Africa" (New York et al.: Greenwood Press, 1988).
- , "The Healer-prophet in Afro-Christian Churches" (Leiden et al.: E. J. Brill, 1992).
- , "The Place of Traditional Religion in Contemporary South Africa", in *Religion alive: Studies in the New Movements and Indigenous Churches in Southern Africa*, ed. C. G. Oosthuizen, 36-40 (Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986).
- Outlaw, L., "African Philosophy: Deconstructive and Reconstructive Challenges", in *Sage philosophy*, ed. H. O. Oruka, 223-248 (Leiden: Brill, 1990).
- Parrinder, G., "African Mythology" (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1967).
- Pato, L. L., "African Theologies", in *Doing Theology in Context. South African perspectives*, ed. J. de Gruchy & Ch. Villa-Vicencio, 152-227 (Claremont : David Philip, 1994).
- Pato, L. L. (ed.), "Towards an Authentic African Christianity" (Umtata: University of Transkei, 1989).
- Peek, P. (ed.), "African Divination Systems: Ways of Knowing" (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).
- Peil, M. "Consensus and Conflict in African Societies. An Introduction to Sociology" (Edinburgh: Longman, 1977).
- Peltzer, K., "Public Opinion on Witchcraft Seriousness and Reporting Intentions in the Northern Province South Africa". Paper presented at the National Conference on the Witchcraft Suppression Act (South Africa), The Ranch Hotel, 28-30 November 1999.
- Pillay, N., "Equality and Customary law", *Agenda*, 20 (1994): 44-47.
- , "Wife Battery and Child Abuse", *Agenda*, 16 (1993): 62-63.
- Pityana, B. N. & Villa-Vicencio, Ch., (eds.), "Being the Church in South Africa Today" (Johannesburg: SACC, 1995).
- Plessis, J. du, "A History of Christian Missions in South Africa" (London: Longman Green, 1911).
- Powell, H., "The Status of South African Widows", in *South African Women Today*, ed. M. Lessing, 252-264 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1994).
- Prekel, T., "South African Women - Meeting the Challenges of the 1990s", in *South African Women Today*, ed. M. Lessing, 3-31 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1994).
- Price, R., "Race and Reconciliation in the New South Africa", *Politics & Society*, 25:2 (June 1997): 149-178.
- Pringle, Th., "Narrative of a Residence in South Africa" (London: no publisher given, 1840).
- Rack, H., "Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism" (London: Epworth Press, 1989).

- Ramose, M. B., "African Philosophy Through Ubuntu" (Harare: Mond Books, 2000).
- Ramphele, M., "A Life" (Cape Town/Johannesburg: David Philip, 1995).
- Regehr, E., "Perceptions of Apartheid. The Churches and Political Change in South Africa" (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1979).
- Robins, S., "Gender, Ethnicity and Radical Politics in South Africa" (Rondebosch: University of Cape Town Press, 1995).
- Rosaldo, R., "Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis" (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
- Sachs, A., "Judges and Gender: The Constitutional Rights of Women in a Post-Apartheid South Africa", *Agenda*, 7 (1990): 1-11.
- Sacks, V., "Multiculturalism, Constitutionalism and the South African Constitution", *Public Law* (Winter 1997): 672-691.
- Sagner, A., "Sozialformen des Alters in Südafrika", *Anthropos*, 92 (1997): 451-469.
- Schmidt, M., "Der junge Wesley als Heidenmissionar und Missionstheologe. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Methodismus", 2nd ed. (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1973).
- , "John Wesley: Leben und Werk", 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Zürich: Gotthelf Verlag, 1987-1988).
- , "Pietismus", 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1983).
- Sebidi, L. J., "Toward a Definition of Ubuntu as African Humanism", in *Perspectives on Ubuntu. A Tribute to Fedsem*, ed. M. G. Khabela & Z. C. Mzoneli, 62-67 (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1998).
- Seif, J., "Gender, Tradition and Authority in 19th Century" (Grahamstown: Rhodes University Press, 1995).
- Semmel, B., "The Methodist Revolution" (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
- Senghor, L. S., "Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century", in *Perspectives on Africa: a reader in culture, history and representation*, ed. R.R. Grimber & Ch. B. Steiner, 629-636 (Cambridge & Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).
- , "Négritude et Humanisme" (Paris: Ed. Du Seuil, 1964).
- Setiloane, G.M., "African Theology. An Introduction" (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1986).
- , "The Contribution of the Methodist Church to the African Indigenous Movement", in *Religion alive: Studies in the New Movements and Indigenous Churches in Southern Africa*, ed. C. G. Oosthuizen, 186-195 (Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986).
- Seynaeve, K., "Ubuntu - Schritte zwischen Schwarz und Weiss" (Freiburg: Herder, 1993).
- Shutte, A., "Philosophy for Africa" (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1994).
- , "Ubuntu: An Ethic for a New South Africa" (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2001).
- Shope, G., "Liberation of the African Woman". Paper at the Conference *Africa beyond liberation, reconciliation, reformation and development*, Potchefstroom, 27 April – 1 May 1992.
- Shorter, A., "African Christian Spirituality" (New York: Macmillan, 1978).
- Simelane, B., "Women and the Law in Africa", *Agenda*, 23 (1994): 98-99.
- Smart, N., "Worldview: Cross-Cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs" (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1983).
- Smit, J. H. et al., "Ubuntu in a Christian Perspective" (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroomse Universiteit, 1999).
- Smith, E. W., "The Secret of African" (London: The United Society's Press, 1990).
- Sogolo, G., "African Philosophy: A Definitive Analysis of Conceptual Issues in African Thought" (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1993).
- Sommer, C. E. (ed.), "Der Methodismus" (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1968).

- South African Council of Churches, "South African Christian Handbook" (Johannesburg: SACC, 1976/77).
- South African Law Commission, "Project 90: The Harmonisation of the Common Law and the Indigenous Law" (Pretoria: South African Law Commission, 1998).
- Sparks, A., "Tomorrow is Another Country" (London: Heinemann, 1995).
- Stadler, J., "Witches and Witch-Hunters. Witchcraft, Generational Relations and the Life Cycle in a Lowveld Village, *African Studies*, 55:1 (1996): 87-110.
- Stoeffler, F. E., "Pietism, the Wesleys, and Methodist Beginnings in America" in *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, ed. F. E. Stoeffler, 184-221 (Grand Rapids, MI: Erdmans, 1976).
- Stremlau, J., "African Renaissance and International Relations". Private manuscript. Article published in *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 6:2 (1999): pages unknown.
- Sundermeier, Th., "Nur gemeinsam können wir leben", 3rd ed. (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 1997).
- Sundkler, B., "Bantu Prophets in South Africa", 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).
- Taylor, J. D., "Christianity and the Natives of South Africa: A Year-Book of South African Missions" (Lovedale: Lovedale Institutional Press, 1918).
- Tisani, N., "The Shaping of Gender Relations in Mission Stations with Particular Reference to Stations in the East Cape Frontier During the First Half of the 19th Century", *Kronos*, 19 (1992): 64-79.
- Toynbee, A., "A Study of History" (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).
- Towlson, C. M., "Moravian and Methodists: Relationships and Influences in the Eighteenth Century" (London: Epworth Press, 1957).
- Townsend, W. J., "A New History of Methodism" (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909).
- Tutu, D., "'Gott segne Afrika': Texte u. Predigten des Friedensnobel- preisträgers" (Reinbek, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1986).
- , "Versöhnung ist unteilbar: biblische Interpretationen zur schwarzen Theologie" (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1986).
- , "Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Justice in South Africa", 3rd ed. (London: Mowbray, 1990).
- , "No Future without Forgiveness" (London: Rider, 1999).
- Unit for Gender Research in Law Unisa, "Women & the Law in South Africa" (Kenwyn: Juta, 1998).
- Vale, P. & Maseko, S., "South Africa and the African Renaissance", *International Affairs*, 74:2 (1998): 271-287.
- van Kessel, I. & Oomen, B., "'One Chief, One Vote': The Revival of Traditional Authorities in Post-apartheid South Africa", *African Affairs*, 96 (1997): 561-585.
- Vellem, V., "Building Relations in the Context of the Post-Apartheid South Africa, in *Perspectives on Ubuntu. A Tribute to Fedsem*, ed. M. G. Khabela & Z. C. Mzoneli, 121-132 (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1998).
- Villa-Vicencio, Ch., "Race and Class in the English-speaking Churches". Paper # 29 at the conference of the University of the Western Cape, 8-10 October 1984.
- Walker, Ch. (ed.), "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945" (Cape Town: David Philip & London: James Currey, 1990).
- Walshe, P., "Christianity and the Anti-apartheid Struggle: The Prophetic Voice within Divided Churches", in *Christianity in South Africa*, eds. R. Elphick & R. Davenport, 383-399 (Oxford & Cape Town: James Currey & David Philip, 1997).
- Ward, W. R., "Faith and Faction" (London: Epworth Press, 1993).

Wells, J., "The Day the Town Stood Still: Women in Resistance in Potchefstroom 1912-1939", in *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*, ed. B. Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983).

Wesley, J., "A Short History of Methodism" (London, 1789).

----, "Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, from the first held in London by the late Rev. John Wesley A.M., in the Year 1774" (London: Epworth Press), 1931.

----, "The Works of the Rev. John Wesley", vol. 8. (London: no publisher given, 1872)

Western Cape Province Council of Churches, "Women's Experiences throughout the Ages". Paper at the Ecumenical Women's Consultation, 3 June 1995.

Whiteside, J., "History of the Wesleyan Church of South Africa" (London: E. Stock, 1906)

Wilson, M., "Reaction to Conquest: Effects of the Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

Zikmund, B. B., "Womens Organizations: Centers of Denominational Loyalty and Expressions of Christian Unity", in *Beyond Establishment*, eds. Carroll, J. & Roof, W. C., 116- 142 (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox, 1993).

Papers & Publications by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Methodist Church of Southern Africa, *Dimension* (September 1994 – January/February 1997).

----, Doctrine Committee, *Reports to Conference* (1994).

----, "Journey to a New Land. Participant's Manual 'Get on Board' Workshops" (1997).

----, "Laws and Discipline" (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1997).

----, Methodist Women's Auxiliary, *Cape District Newsletters* (1973-1976).

----, *Minutes* (Rondebosch: Archives of the Main Office, 1986-1996).

----, "National Consultation on Christianity, African Culture and Development in Southern Africa". Paper held at Telkom College, Midrand, 9-12 August 1994.

----, *Reports to Conference* (Rondebosch: Archives of the Main Office, 1990-1996).

----, *Reports to Synod*, Cape of Good Hope District (Rondebosch: Archives of the Main Office, 1990-1996; 2000).

Methodist Women's Consultation, "Whole Women in Christ", in: *Papers of Conference at Germiston Methodist Church*, 25-26.4.1987 (Cape Town: personal archives).

Metropolitan Methodist Church, "Two traditions: One future" (Woodstock [Cape Town]: Laughton & Co, 1988).

Olivier, R., "The Next Step. The Continuing Story of a Church in a New Land" (Cape Town: Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 1996).

Newspaper and magazine reports (authors given)

Arenstein, J., "Tribal law may become part of the system", *Sunday Independent* (22 November 1998).

Barrell, H., "Pityana prejudged the media", *Mail & Guardian* (25 February – 2 March 2000).

Behrens, G., "Wo die Blitze zucken", *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (12 Sept. 1998).

Davhana, G. E. J., "Liberalism theory suffocates ubuntu", *New Nation* (9 May 1997).

Gevisser, M., "Nach der Revolution? Reichtum!", *GEO-Special*, 6 (December 2002/January 2003).

Haffajee, F., "Renaissance incorporated", *Mail & Guardian* (2 October 1998).

Miller, P., "As a white, do I have a role to play in my country?", *The Natal Witness* (7 Sept. 2000).

Ndungane, N., "A new faith for new South Africans", *Mail & Guardian* (20 February 1998).

----, "It's my duty to speak about", *Mail & Guardian* (6 March 1998).

----, "War on poverty in South Africa", *Mail & Guardian* (13 March 1998).

----, "We are responsible for our planet", *Mail & Guardian* (27 February 1998).

Rupert, J., "Sandal brigade should pull up their socks", *Sunday Times* (30 August 1998).

Schwarz, B., "Im Herzen der Hure", *Der Spiegel*, 24 (1998).

Seepe, S., "Africa must be measured in its own right, not as a fringe of Europe", *Sunday Independent* (5 January 1997).

Smith, Ch., "The shame of a nation", *Africa Today* (April/May 2002).

Vapi, X., "Whither the African Renaissance?", *Sunday Independent* (27 March 1999).

Newspaper and magazine reports (authors not given)

"A witch has no horn", *Bulletin* (July/August 1995).

"Delegates hail witchcraft talks", *The Natal Witness* (11 September 1998).

"Konferenz über Hexerei in Südafrika. Die traditionellen Heiler wehren sich", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (10 September 1998).

"Mbeki spells out challenges", *The Natal Witness* (31 August 2000).

"O. J. Simpson am Kap", *Der Spiegel*, 52 (1995).

"Race, law and poverty in the New South Africa", *The Economist* (2 October 1999).

"Racism hiding in the pages?", *The Economist* (19 February 2000).

Internet articles / addresses

Bydekarken, J., "Medizin aus Körperteilen", www.sonntagsblatt.de/1995/ds-36/hexen.html

Louw, D. J., "Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other" (www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriLouw.htm).

Maloka, E. T., "The South African 'African Renaissance' Debate: A Critique" (www.cean.u-bordeaux.fr/polis/vol8ns/maloka.pdf, 2002).

Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Homepage, www.methodist.co.za/messages_text.asp?id=connexec§ion=home

Österreichische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit im südlichen Afrika, www.oefse.at/german/publikat/lprofile/joburg/jobu_index.html

South African Council of Churches, www.sacc.org.za/about.html