

**AN AFRICAN YOUTH PERSPECTIVE ON MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY; A
METHODIST REFLECTION**

By

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Declaration

I, SIYABULELA THANDUXOLO LUNGANA (Mr.), student number 14063710 hereby declare that this dissertation, “*An African Youth Perspective on Missional Ecclesiology; A Methodist Reflection,*” is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Master of Theology, M.Th. - (Science of Religion and Missiology) degree at University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.

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Siyabulela Thanduxolo Lungana (Mr.)

30 August 2019

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the life of my grandmothers, the late Nofezile Jane Lungana and the late Nomsombuluko Linah Tshabalala.

These two women lived their lives in total devotion to God and to his mission not by making a lot of noise, but in silence and their devotion being seen through their works of piety and works of mercy. *Intliziyo ka Jesu imnene, sengizocasha kuyona* and *Lizalis' idinga laKho, Thixo Nkosi yenyano* they used to sing respectively as they laboured on in their lives...Perfect examples of Hebrews 11:13.

This study is also dedicated to the late Dr. Albert Mutavhatsindi who was a gifted academic in his own life. The first inspiration for doing this study came from the influence of his word. A great man who gave me a final handshake of fellowship and mission on the afternoon of his passing.

**May the souls of these soldiers and servant rest in peace and rise in eternal
glory!**

Lastly, this study is dedicated to all young people of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and beyond. This should serve as reminder that it is never too early or too late to discern and realise the call that God has placed on one's life. Following this call, at any young age, is not and never will be a mistake. Blessings to all young people who will have the chance to read this work.

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MAZENETHOLE!

Abstract

Missional church is not a new concept that is going around, however it is only recent that it has begun to be placed more in the forefront in the context of the church. In this happening also, especially in the traditional mainline churches, there have been some gaps that have been left over, the most prevalent of those gaps being that of young people and how things relate to them.

This study aims to show the state of missional church from the perspective of young African people in the context of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

A comprehensive literature review is tabled in this study, which displays what exactly missional church entails and how it can be implemented.

The study continues to table the MCSA as missional church and the components thereof referring back to some of the teachings and practices of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley.

We continue on to investigating the state of youth ministry in the missional church; reflecting on this from the general African state and then narrowing the reflection down to the MCSA. In that section as well, the latest developments in the MCSA are tabled as well.

The study continues to table the aspects of missional church that are ascribed to by the youth in the church; a case study of implementation there is tabled as well.

The role of the youth pastor and local preacher as driver is tabled in the study as well and a brief reflection is made on that as well stipulating the key roles of the offices.

The study concludes with an integration of all the chapters into the title and offers a brief conclusion and recommendations.

Key Terms: Missiology (Mission), Missional, Ecclesiology (Church), African, Youth, Methodist (Methodism), Local Preacher, Youth Pastor

List of abbreviations

MCSA	Methodist Church of Southern Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
MYU	Methodist Youth Unit
CM	Children's Ministry
YAM	Young Adults Movement
MethSSoc	Methodist Student Society
WG	Wesley Guild
PB	Presiding Bishop
MCYU	Methodist Children and Youth Unit
EMMU	Education for Ministry and Mission Unit
Comm. Dev.	Community Development

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1. CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The community of the church, as it was first established in the early years of the first century after the ascension of Christ, was supposed to be an agent of spreading the gospel of God and the risen Christ in the world at large. This is the original mandate that was followed however because of the changing times and contexts, the mandate of the church did so as well. As this took place, the church began to become a stagnant institution that was slowly losing purpose or rather function from it being the agent of Christ's news to being an institution. This was however recognised in various contexts and a necessity was seen for the revival of the original mandate of the church at large.

If we may fast forward a few centuries on to our current time and context which is the 21st century, churches or spiritual groups today, when they are established, tend to centre their existence on the fact that their main focus will be centrally that of mission; this in the sense of reaching out to people in the places where they are. What usually happens however with these churches or groups is that they end up just being places of gathering and completing business dealings and transactions; forgetting what they were initially established for; especially when it comes to the context of the youth, which is truly speaking a very futile exercise.

Young people by their nature are inquisitive and innovative beings and as such in all places that they are, when faced with a particular situation, the default reaction is to find ways of improving or making it better. This is the case in the church as well. The challenge however in the church is that there is a certain way that they have of doing things and it is greatly, if not totally influenced by how those things were done

before. In the end, the church ends up trying to create carbon copies of what was done before. When the Israelites in Exodus 17 were on the journey to the Promised Land, they got to Rephidim where there was no water. The people began to turn on Moses and complain to him about the fact that there was no water. Moses then went to God and asked for counsel. God instructed Moses to take the staff that he had and strike a rock. He did so and water came out of the rock for everyone and their cattle to drink. Later on in the journey, they reached Kadesh, where Moses' sister died. In that place, there was no water again and once more, the Israelites complained to Moses about water; Moses again went to God to enquire. This time God gave him the instruction to speak to the rock that was in front of him. The biblical text describes that Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water came out of the rock and the people and their livestock drank. God was not impressed with what Moses did and in turn, he came back to Moses saying that because he did not trust God enough to follow God's instruction, Moses would never make it to the Promised Land. What exactly did Moses do wrong? The first time, he was instructed to hit the rock and the second time he was instructed just to speak to the rock. Young people in the church merely try to make a change in the direction that the church is going but it proves difficult because of the reaction that they receive from the church. This is the reason why one finds that the church seems to be missing the plot when it comes to appropriating itself to suite the changing times and generations that find themselves being in it. If one were to guess the answer that Moses would have given to God if God had asked why he did not follow the second instruction, Moses would have probably said; 'But we've always done it that way'. As much as 'that way' might work, it sometimes does not work for young

people and it is possible that their voice could be God's new word to the church that just needs to be heard.

In this study, we are going to attempt to address this issue by attempting, as comprehensively and as simply as possible to develop a missional ecclesiology that is as contextually as possible appropriate to the youth; the youth in the Methodist church more specifically.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The researcher mentioned in the introduction what the original purpose and evolution of the missional church has been. The missional church however has begun to lose its essence and purpose and as a result of this, one finds that because of this reason, church membership, of young people in particular, has declined greatly in the past years. According to Brittain et.al, statistics according to the Usumbona Youth fund show that 62.2% of religious services are attended by the youth and 10.9% of those go to services regularly if not daily, however a significant 20.2% never go to any type of service and are not affiliated to any religious denomination whatsoever (Brittain et. al, 2013:645). More specifically when looking at the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the statistics are visible due to lack of relevance of the Church and its continuously evolving operations to young people. This is the main problem that this study addresses.

1.3 AIMS/ GOAL OF THIS STUDY

This study aims to develop an African Missional Ecclesiology that is appropriate and contextually relevant to the youth in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (Herein after referred to as the MCSA). This being done by addressing the problem stated

above of the structures and operations of the church not being relevant to young people and their contexts; thus, causing them to end up moving to Charismatic churches or even distancing themselves from church in totality.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

When speaking of the literature review is, Mouton (2005) starts with a controversy saying that the “literature review” does not, in fact, encapsulate all that we intend to convey by the term. When you embark on your study, one of your first aims should be to find out what has been done in your field of study”. He continues also to say, “You should start with a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem that you are interested in” (Mouton, 2005:86-87). It is fair to say that in the discipline of Missiology, the concept of Missional Ecclesiology is a relatively new concept and is still also in the process of evolution and development in the different contexts in which it is being introduced. As such, different scholars and writes have been writing different interpretations of what it is or should be, of course some debating with each other as well. I will therefore reflect on the work of a few scholars both domestic and international to get a feel of the current work that exists surrounding this concept.

Franklin (2008) lays out Bonhoeffer’s missional ecclesiology and he says the following three points are what is necessary for understanding missional ecclesiology. The researcher feels that these are imperative in this study as well as he is in full agreement with Bonhoeffer when he says that his belief is that mission is not only supposed to be treated as a by-product or a part of the church but it is the main reason for the entire existence of the church in the first place (Franklin, 2008:98). The following are the main points in Bonhoeffer’s missional ecclesiology;

❖ The Church Proclaims and Embodies the Gospel

According to Bonhoeffer, the church in its mission has the job of not only spreading the gospel to people but also being active about it. The catch however is that this is not to be done in such a manner that it takes advantage of people by selling them ‘cheap grace’ because this practically only inflicts emotional blackmail at a cost to those peoples’ livelihoods (Franklin, 2008:99). Bonhoeffer continues to say that the proclamation of the gospel should take place contextually and in being shared, it must be equally addressed to both people of good and bad nature so as to be as authentic as possible. Lastly, Bonhoeffer argued that as important as it is to proclaim the gospel, it should at no point be treated as separate from embodiment in the form of action and service; the most prominent example that he uses for this argument is that of Jesus Christ and his disciples through him teaching them that instead of them preaching to the masses that they are the salt of the world, their job is to *be* the salt in the world through their acts of ‘loving service’ and so emphasizing the presence of Christ himself in the world (Franklin, 2008:100-102).

❖ The Church Practices Religion less Christianity

Bonhoeffer asks the vital question being “who is Christ for us today?” and he continues to end with speaking about a religionless faith. Franklin continues in analysing this and says that what Bonhoeffer was attempting to reflect on are the two questions ‘Who is Christ?’ and ‘What does Christ mean for us in the context and time that we are living in today?’ This is where the institution of the church comes into play in being the agent of showing the world the reality of living in Christ. The only way to do this is that of spreading the gospel

of Christ in the world and most importantly in its existence and ACTION, that being in the form of mission (Franklin, 2008:105-115).

❖ The Church Exists-For-Others.

“It is only this “being there for others,” maintained till death, that is the ground of his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.” (Franklin, 2008:117).

This is a quote from Bonhoeffer’s book in reflection on Christ as the ‘man for others’. This statement sums up exactly what the purpose of the church is and how it is meant to be in relation to the abovementioned points from Bonhoeffer. The final argument that he makes is that in his existence, Christ lived in existence purely for others and he made this clear in action. This simply means that the church exists for the exact same purpose, that of the church only being the church when its existence is for nothing other than for others; “Its mission is to tell men of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others” (Franklin, 2008:118).

In concluding, Bonhoeffer goes back again to emphasise the fact that missionality is embedded in the being of the church, which means that the church does not just do mission, but mission is what the church IS. The missional church is that which plays an active role in the *mission dei* through which the sending of Christ and ultimately the church took place into all of the world and creation. Being religionless in Christianity in bring missional means a new reality of God and the holistic realization of Christ as Lord-This is what the church advocates towards in being missional. Finally, in closing off Bonhoeffer’s missional ecclesiology speaks to “the Church both as a community of love and worship and as an agent of social justice that stands in solidarity with the “the least of these”” (Franklin, 2008:118-125).

Richard Bliese in his expression of missional church says that there are four main points depicted in the figure below that give a full picture of missional church.



Figure 1: Recreation of the figure “The Church in Mission” in Bliese, 2006:241

❖ Missional.

Bliese agrees with Bonhoeffer when it comes to missional church by saying that the church has its existence because of mission “just as fire exists by burning”. Christ was sent into the world with a mission from God as the spirit was sent into the world with a mission from God and Christ and therefore the church with a mission as directed by the trinity. The church is a missionary movement just as God is a missionary being at heart (Bliese, 2006:239).

❖ Confessional.

Mission can be understood through the confession of the Trinitarian God. The reality looking at the current state of the church is that the reformed church continues to reform, evolve and change and therefore the missional church remains consistent through the confession which according to Bliese, “brings

both certainty and humility to the church's practice of mission" (Bliese, 2006:240).

❖ Evangelical.

Evangelism is the main agent of ensuring that all people in the world know the Gospel. The majority of the work of evangelism includes the informing of all people of the promises that Christ made and left in the world for all people to work towards. Bliese says that "this good news points to the promissory character of God's presence in the world" and therefore mission in the world takes place in the form of embracing all the activities of God in the world that are centred around those very promises of Christ in the world (Bliese, 2006:240).

❖ Vocational.

Vocation speaks to the actual task of caring for and redeeming all that God has created and left in the world; Bliese says that it is the factor that covers the whole missional scope of God's work in the world as it is intended and expected. Vocation is actually the main director or pointer in establishing mission as it is what flows "from a heart of thankfulness for God's generosity in Christ Jesus." (Bliese, 2006:241).

As depicted in figure 1 above, Bliese believes that these four points are interlinked to one another and actually flow from and to one another in all the contexts that they are exercised in. He says, "One cannot talk about mission without including the church's confession of faith. A church's confession is centred in its understanding of the gospel. The evangelical heartbeat of the gospel gains expression through the vocational callings of Christians in the world" (Bliese, 2006:241). Joined together

and effective, these four points serve as the basis for missional church that is sufficed for any and all contexts in which it is.

Tim Sheridan and Jürgen Hendricks in reflecting on the missional church movement, base their key focus on the work of Lesslie Newbigin as they believe that his reflections are of paramount importance in understanding the nature and birth of the missional church. In reflecting, Hendricks and Sheridan (2013) summarise the missional church as was tabled by Newbigin in the following five points;

- ❖ The gospel lies at the centre of missional church, particularly referring to the crucifixion of Christ as that is where primarily the formation and establishment of the church spawns from and gets its foundation from alongside discernment that “refers to faith seeking to discover the *missio Dei*. It is about trying to listen to God in and through Scripture and the past and present faith community and in obedience getting involved in the *missio Dei*.” (Sheridan & Hendricks, 2013:1).
- ❖ Secondly, they refer to the ‘logic of mission’, which entailed the fact that the gospel had to ensure that some action took place; in the Xhosa language, the common saying regarding this fact is *ilizwi lika Thixo aliphumi libuye linga yenzanga umsebenzi*. Christ did not write the Bible himself, but it was his teachings and practices that inspired the works that came after him (Sheridan & Hendricks, 2013:2).
- ❖ Thirdly, they say that there is absolutely no way that mission can exist if the church is fragmented and separated. They refer to a quote by Mike Goheen where he says;

If the church is to make known the good news that at the end of history all things will be brought together under one head, even

Christ, then as a preview it must embody this in its life. Its divided life is a scandal, equivalent to a temperance movement whose members are habitually drunk; in both, the life of the community contradicts their message. It is only when the unbelieving world sees evidence of a reconciled community that they will believe the message of the gospel. (Sheridan & Hendricks, 2013:2)

- ❖ Newbigin refers to a 'painful tension' that exists because the church is stuck in between the true gospel and the contemporary views of cultural worldview. He continues to say that there needs to be a space of balance that is found between the two in addressing because core of the missionary encounter lies at the point of equilibrium, if we may call it that, of the two (Sheridan & Hendricks, 2013:2).
- ❖ Lastly, Newbigin believed that the most important job that the church has to accomplish currently is that of the missionary encounter meeting the church of the west and this needs to be taken as a priority. He proposed four sub-tasks attached to making this possible;
 - the cultural task of engaging in a missiological analysis of culture;
 - the theological task of recovering the gospel as public truth;
 - the ecclesiological task of recovering the missionary understanding and practice of the church;
 - and the epistemological task of unmasking the idolatry of reason and other philosophical assumptions reigning in Western culture.(Sheridan & Hendricks, 2013:2).

The title of this study indicates that it will be done from a Methodist perspective as well and therefore it is only befitting to include the reflections of the founder of

Methodism as well with regards to the topic of missional church. Payne (2014) summarises John Wesley's missional ecclesiology in the following two ways.

Wesley believed that the church is ancient institution that needed to be preserved and protected and in it being so, the people of the church (in them being the church as well) are the chosen few of executing mission; this entails that people and the church possessed a traditional and living relationship with one another.

Wesley had the movement of Methodism however as he was part of the Church of England, he still had a lot of respect for it and therefore never separated himself from it, one of the reasons also being the fact that most of the support for his movement came from there. The biggest reason however that he did this was his belief also of the need of the revitalization of the church itself from his own experiences. In conjunction with this, he was able to still execute his missional aim. In looking at the above, we can conclude that Wesley's missional ecclesiology is founded on the two points being "combined essential aspects of institutional Christianity with evangelical faith." (Payne, 2014:36-39).

Barret (2009) in his reflection on this topic describes it in the following three points;

- ❖ To be missional is the essential nature and vocation of the church.

Missional Church requires active participation in the *mission Dei* which purely means that instead of treating mission as just another activity of the church, the reason for the church being there in the first place should be nothing other mission being the primary purpose. This is in agreement with Bonhoeffer's theology of missional church that we discussed earlier as it bears full witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world. Barret continues as well to agree with Sheridan and Hendricks (2013) in saying that in order to understand its

vocation in the mission Dei, the missional church has to use spiritual discernment. (Barret, 2009:180).

- ❖ To be missional is to pay attention to the church's context.

The general assumption in any place is that there is a single religion throughout that entire area, especially Christianity in the case of reformed and mainline churches. This is what actually causes the suffering and decline of the church's influence in a number of things in a certain area. Missional church calls for this to be taken into consideration by way of not making this assumption and treating whatever area according to the context in which that specific area is in thereby making "every context a missionary context" (Barret, 2009:181). This is what ensures that the church is able to attend to every need as its necessary and retaining the communal nature of missional church rather than just a group of people who operate outside the church as opposed to the inside.

- ❖ To be missional is to proclaim and to be a living sign of the gospel.

"The witness of the missional church is always grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ, initiated by God and led by the Holy Spirit" (Barret, 2009:182). This statement by Barret is again in total agreement with Bonhoeffer where he says that "the Church both as a community of love and worship and as an agent of social justice that stands in solidarity with the "the least of these"" (Franklin, 2008:125). This is to say that the primary role of the missional church is to ensure the continuance of the gospel of Jesus that he left in the world. In following in the footsteps of Christ, the natural expectation is that the same treatment that he received while he still waked the earth will be the same treatment that the church will receive in practicing his missional nature.

Barret also refers to Newbigin in saying that the missional church takes the Bible, not only as a book to be read and studied but as something that shapes a way of life where evangelism is the centre of Christ as witness to the reign of God (Barret, 2009:183).

Knoetze (2016) when reflecting on missional church in Africa lays out six points that sum it up, each of them coming with its own implications. For the purposes of this review for this study however, we will only look at just three of them He says the following in his 2016 article.

❖ The Bible constitutes the missional church.

He writes that the conversation that is supposed to be taking place is actually not around the topic of the biblical reasons for mission but rather the missional reasons for the bible because when looking at it “the whole Bible is itself a ‘missional phenomenon’” (Knoetze, 2016:3).

Biblically, the implications surrounding missional church is that as was mentioned by Sheridan and Hendricks (2013) as well that culture has become an overarching theme more especially in the African context. The missional church aims to release scripture from the captivity of culture however; this proves difficulty because of the great influence that culture still carries in most contexts. A remedy to this that Knoetze proposes is by Bunge (2008) in his book *The Child in the Bible* where he says “A missional church that is serious about the Bible as well as about (African) children will have to: examine (selected) biblical texts through the ‘lens’ or category of ‘the child’. In other words, they keep in mind or ‘foreground’ questions and concerns about children and childhood as they interpret biblical texts. (Bunge, 2008: xviii)” (Knoetze, 2016:4). This is what will most authentically shape and

further cultivate the assurance of the continuation of the missional church in Africa by “helping children to realise that they are part of the God story in the same way that they are part of their family’s story” (Knoetze, 2016:4).

- ❖ The missional church is Trinitarian based.

If we could put the construction of the church into a figure, the researcher would like to believe it would look as follows:

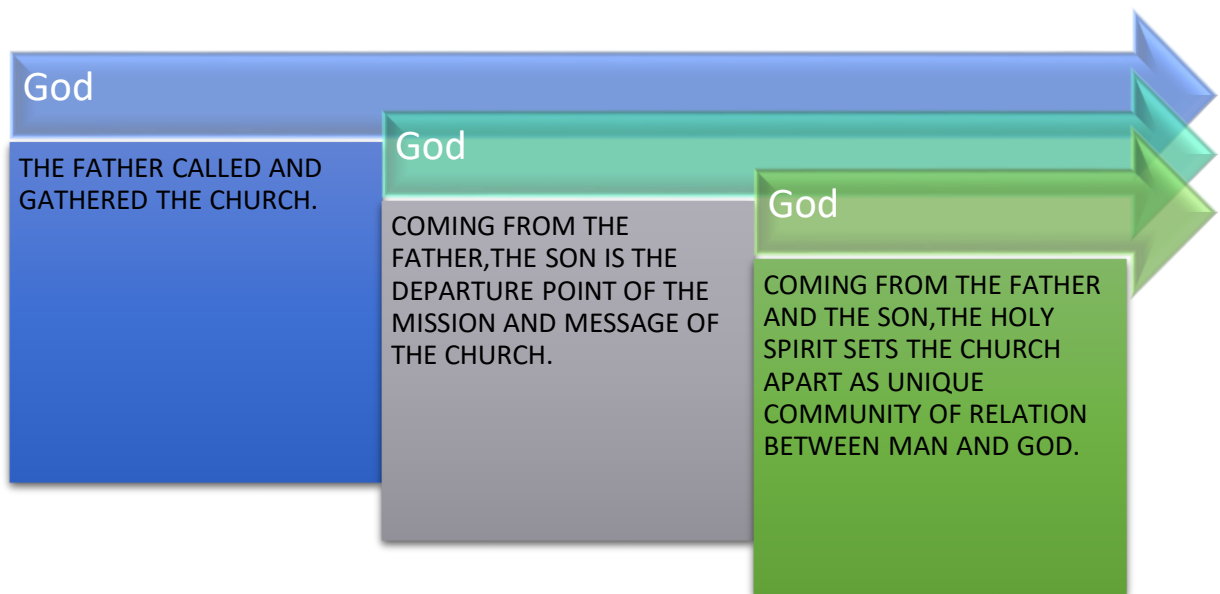


Figure 2: Construction of the Church based on Knoetze (2016:4)

This figure shows primarily that the missional church stems forth from the “triune heart of God” (Knoetze, 2016:4) and it is from that love that the missional church bears and witnesses obedience through acts and active participation in the triune mission of God throughout all of God’ creation.

The implications of the missional church being Trinitarian according to Knoetze are primarily the theme of missional church being established as mission coming from the margins rather than mission that is aimed at the margins because when people realise the fact that rather than being considered as the by-products of God, they

are actually the image of God, Knoetze says that they will begin to play an active role in the *missio Dei* under the universal banner of all being the *Imago Dei*.

- ❖ The missional church is a discerning community.

The existence of God and God's work is undebatable and undoubted irrespective of the question of whether His power and reign is something that is to come, is or was. This is experienced and received differently from context to context. The job therefore of the missional church in the different context is to testify in faith of their participation in the missional praxis of God that exists in their specific community and context. "When mission is understood as primarily God's movement, the church is confronted with the significant challenge of discernment" (Knoetze, 2016:5). The process of discernment proves to be difficult at times because it comes as something that is in plain sight but at the same time as something that is of great mystery. The only real way in which it takes place is "with the ultimate human purpose to praise, worship and glorify God" (Knoetze, 2016:5). In the African missional church, discernment plays a very big role as it is only when it has taken place when a clear direction of the response to the call of the spirit is headed to. The researcher agrees fully with this statement from Knoetze, but he adds as well that as powerful as the concept is, it is not to be taken advantage of or misused because as beneficial as it is, it also has the potential to destroy mission completely.

The implication therefore of discernment is that as mentioned earlier that "helping children to realise that they are part of the God story in the same way that they are part of their family's story", discernment is likely to come through them especially in the African context and therefore listening to them

and properly addressing their biblical narrative. This is of importance because “this discernment is not only for their spiritual formation but also to discern God’s presence in all areas of their lives, socially, economically, politically, et cetera.” (Knoetze, 2016:5-6).

To close off this literature review, the researcher is going to reflect on the work of the prominent African scholar Robert N’Kwim.

In his 2016 book, he reflects on the missional church in Africa in the 21st century and he says the following;

He is in full agreement with most of the scholars that we reflected on so far in saying that the church and mission are inseparable and that the two are just different faces of the same reality. He cautions however that the mistake should not be made where one says that the mission of the church is more important than the church itself because again it is discernment that leads every different church in whatever direction it goes (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:26).

N’Kwim agrees also with Knoetze in quoting Niemandt where he says, “Mission begins in the heart of the triune God and the love that binds together the Holy Trinity, overflows to all humanity and creation. Missional theology builds on the understanding that God is Trinity and Missional. Mission is the participation in the life of God” (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:27). This statement affirms that God’s mission is sending into the world for the sole benefit of the world and all of creation- “The mission is Gods” (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:28).

Missional church according to N’Kwim differs from context to context because the challenges thereof are not the same and therefore although the mission is those places remains the same, the way of addressing and executing it definitely has to be appropriate to the specific space and time. Currently in the 21st century, the focus

of missional church is that of attending to the immediate needs of people that N'Kwim describes as failing leadership, corruption, poverty, economic mismanagement, civil wars and many other practically social issues and in all of these he says the main 'prayer' that the missional church of the 21st should be making is that of the coming of the baselia tou Qeou. in the community of African people. According to him, "the proclamation of the kingdom of God lies at the very heart of the church's vocation in the world. Mission belongs to the very nature of the church, whatever the conditions of its life, for without mission there is no church, because the church continues the work of humankind's salvation revealed and achieved by Jesus Christ our Saviour" (N'Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:31).

To summarise this literature review, all the scholars that the researcher has reviewed say that the following points make up the basis of missional church;

- Primarily Missional or rather a missional spirit.
- Proclamation and embodiment of the Gospel.
- Evangelism.
- Vocation.
- Discernment.
- Proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

So far, there have been a few concepts that have been touched on in terms of the introduction of the study by the author, however it remains important that we also look at what the key terms that are going to keep on coming up in the study so as to have a better enlightenment of them and their purpose in the study as well.

1.5.1 Missiology (Mission)

There are many definitions that are given to the concept of mission generally and they are mostly influenced by the different contexts and spaces in which it takes place. The greatest definition however that the researcher has come across so far, is one that was given by Professor Nelus Niemandt where he says purely, mission is finding out where God's people are at work and joining in (Kim, 2009:1). This definition is the greatest for the researcher because it is the one that most captures the essence of the concept in its entirety.

Krastev (2012) in his developmental paper says that typically, missiology is the study of mission and that is the departure point for the question 'what is mission?'. In answering this question, he goes further to say that mission can be defined using three concepts; the *Missio Dei* which the essence of "is that God has a plan to restore His creation to its original purpose and wholeness, and that He is working in the world to complete this plan", Secondly, "the redemptive work of Jesus Christ" and lastly "this plan is progressively unfolding in history, beginning with Abraham, through the death and resurrection of Christ, and to the final apocalyptic act of God at the end of age" (Krastev, 2012:1-2).

Coming to Missiology, Nel, in his thesis, says that in most instances it has been difficult to assign a concrete and final definition to it and the reason for that is the ambiguous nature of the concept in itself. He continues to display the various theological tensions that are in existence surrounding this issue but at the end, the revolutionary argument that he comes to is in agreement with that of Krastev in saying

My focus is on how his challenge was interpreted in the past, but also how it could now function as a bridge towards a postcolonial expression of

Missiology. The point is however not simplistically to replace or add ever new adjectives, as in the case of —contextual, but rather to affirm that our deepest faith commitment and struggles for the realization of God’s plan for the world, whether we call it —the wholeness of the humanity or the —total liberation through the gospel today, also need to challenge our own traditions and the new collusions with the more recent manifestations of evil. Missiology cannot be severed from the redemption that God wrought in Jesus Christ for His entire creation (Rom 8:18-30), which keeps on surprising us through the Holy Spirit as we continue to attempt to dance to its tunes. This means appreciation for this tradition, yet taking it to a deeper level (Nel, 2013:20-21).

Based on the two perspectives on the definitions of missiology and mission conjointly, the researcher resolves in proposing the definition of Mission for this study as the work of God through God’s people in spreading the gospel of Christ redeeming.

1.5.2 Missional

This term ‘missional’ is also another concept that is used widely nowadays in the discipline of missiology. Mostly when used in general, it used in the place of mission or missiology or missionary. Hooker (2009) in attesting to this says missional refers to not the plan of mission as is sometimes mistaken, but it refers to an understanding of the task of mission, which lies at the core of the very existence of the church (Hooker, 2009:2).

This term has also recently been welcomed into the discipline of Practical Theology due to a growth of missional ecclesiology being though the work of Practical Theology but at the same time in the Southern African context specifically,

Systematic Theology remains paramount for the investigation of ecclesiology (Nel, 2013:29).

1.5.3 Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology in itself is a very broad concept on its own because it has the ability and potential to cover any scope in the whole study of Theology with scholars and writers and just people in general developing their own ecclesiology to suit whatever philosophy that they live by or are formed by. The same with churches. For the purposes of this study however, the researcher is seeking to display a definition to this term in the context of mission.

According to Hooker, “simply put, ecclesiology is the discussion of what the Church is called to be and to do – its nature, its purpose, its hopes, its structure and practices. Every great Christian theological system contains an ecclesiology, a discussion about the nature of the Church. Our Reformed theological system is certainly no exception to this truth” (Hooker, 2009:2). Nel partly agrees with this notion by saying that ecclesiology “traditionally focuses on the essence and the nature of the church”, the only thing he adds that this focus uses a missiological point of departure to do this (Nel, 2013:37). Kärkkäinen (2002) refers to the concept of Missionary Ecclesiology which was drafted by Lesslie Newbigin. Here he argues that ecclesiology is centred around a ‘Pilgrim People’. By this, he means that the church is supposed to be a pilgrimage that is always on the move and its job in doing so solely being that of “beseeching all men to be reconciled to God” (Kärkkäinen, 2002:152). He continues to argue that if for any reason the church loses its missionality, then it is in contradiction of its very nature. This being the case, he states argues that ecclesiology follows three main streams, (Kärkkäinen, 2002:154-155) which he describes in the following ways. The first one ask the question of

where is the Church in the world? This question speaks to what visible signs there are in the world of the existence of the church at all. Kärkkäinen says that the only way that this question can be answered authentically is by the Church preaching the true Gospel and administering of the sacraments in their fullness. This is the approach that the Protestant Reformation follows. The second stream speaks to where the church is incorporated into its true historical self by actively sacramentally participating; this stream he attributes to the Catholic approach. The third stream speaks to when the most influential factor in the church being the Holy Spirit and its experience rather than word and Sacraments; this stream Kärkkäinen attributes to the Pentecostal approach. Kärkkäinen argues that as much as all these streams individually are valid as far as scripture is concerned, it is still not sufficient for one to try to sum up the whole church into just one or the other as they all have some ground on which they overlap onto one another and thus cannot stand completely against each other.

1.5.4 African

This term in itself can also be defined in many different ways depending on the context in which it is being utilised. For the purposes of this study, the definition of this term will be used in terms of the following two contexts; firstly, African as in the space of coming out of the African Continent (South African context specifically). Secondly, in this study, African will refer to the state of being a black person.

The afore mentioned two contexts are the majority of what will influence and guide the perspective from where the tabling out of all the information in this study will come.

1.5.5 Youth

According to UNESCO, ““Youth” is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group” (UNESCO, 2017). The researcher feels that this definition by the United Nations is appropriate because in it, it also mentions awareness of interdependence as members of a community. The reason therefore is that mostly this awareness takes place everywhere else in a person’s life but when it comes into the context of ecclesial institutions, it becomes ignored which is why in today’s time, one will seldom find any involvement from young people in most things that take place.

In this study also coming from a youth perspective, the aim is to show a glimpse of what the current thinking pattern is of the generation that is set to be the one that continues on with the advancement and development of current concepts and possibly even the invention of new concepts and theologies, specifically in this study, the field of mission and missional ecclesiology.

1.5.6 Methodist/Methodism

Truthfully, this term as we see it today is very different from what it originally began as because of how it has evolved over the centuries. That however is another topic that we can investigate in its own paper.

Methodism began in 1729 at Oxford University where John Wesley and His brother Charles Wesley began what was known as the Holiness Club. They were joined by a few of their colleagues in the campus and continued on in the gathering of sharing scripture, composing hymns and so forth. The reason that they ended up being

called Methodist is because of how serious the group was in their mandate and also how everything that they did in the group was done according to a specific method. At its inception, the Methodist movement was never intended to become a church on its own and it was not treated as such, as it existed as a division in the Church of England; to show this, Wesley never left priesthood in the Anglican Church. It continued however to evolve even after the death of the Wesley brothers and did so much so that it ended up being a church in the late 1700s and splitting up into three bodies in the early 1900s. British soldiers stationed at the Cape introduced Methodism to South Africa, and the first missionary was appointed in response to an appeal from their leader, Sergeant John Kendrick. The Rev J McKenny arrived in 1814 but was refused permission to preach and went on to Ceylon. The Rev Barnabas Shaw, who defied the Governor and began to preach without permission, followed him in 1816 along with his wife and family. Before long, he left Cape Town and settled among a group of Namaqua people at Lily Fountain in the Kamiesberg, about five hundred kilometres to the north (MCSA, 2017). The spread of Methodism in Southern Africa continued on from that time. Methodism reached the North of the Vaal River through the moving away from the Cape Lilyfontein station that was first overseen by the Reverend Barnabas Shaw. His colleagues Rev Thomas Hodgson and Rev Samuel Broadbent at this move made their way North and they settled at Makwassi where they set up the first Methodist Mission North of the Vaal River. They did not stay there long however, because of the riots that were taking place but while they were working there, they were in close relationship to Peter Links from Lilyfontein who also worked as their interpreter. The first minister to work in Pretoria was Reverend George Weavind (The WG in Atteridgeville to this day is called Weavind Wesley Guild). In collaboration with Rev Owen Watkins, he was

responsible for the trial Mission being established which lead also to the establishment of the Kilnerton training Institution in 1886. Some of our South African leaders and icons received their training from this institution and today it still acts as the Bishop's office of the Limpopo District. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe arrived there through an outreach that was being done there by the Revs Owen Watkins and Isaac Shimmin. Rev Watkins went back home after the Missionary journey but Rev. Shimmin stayed in Zimbabwe to continue the work of the Church there which resulted in Methodism remaining and spreading there. Today Zimbabwe stands as its own Connexion within the Methodist Church. In Mozambique, Methodism came through the vision of Rev. Robert Ndevu Mashaba. While he was in Port Elizabeth, he received a vision that inspired him to start a school and a church. Due to challenges from other denominations, however he had to leave but he continued ministering in the Transvaal. He was eventually allowed to go back to Mozambique however, this was at the end of his life. Despite this, Methodism in Mozambique did not die because others took up from where he had left off and continued to grow in their work. Methodism in the Free State came about from when the Barolong people were making their move from Plaatberg to a place that is today known as Thaba-Nchu. This happened through them being accompanied by the Rev James Archbell in their move. Today, Thaba-Nchu is still a very influential place when coming to Methodism.

1.5.7 Local Preacher

“From the earliest days of Methodism, it has been recognized that the office of the Local Preacher is one of great importance in the life and system of the Church” (The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 2017). This is true until today because in most

Methodist Churches that are still functioning, one is most likely to find a local preacher on the pulpit rather than a minister.

Missionaries and Local preachers are the main fuellers of the will to spread the Gospel in South Africa because they are the ones who take time to teach and train the people who say that they want to preach and spread the gospel to others. This is what leads to the different offices of preachers starting to come into play-Local preachers, Lay Agents and Evangelists. At time that Local Preachers began to come about, there were no formal training institutions for them and in effort of assisting them, John Wesley encouraged them to read and study as many books about the Bible as they could. At the reception of a preacher, Wesley took them in in three stages; on note where a preacher could not practice without supervision; on trial, where a preacher could conduct services independently but at a point will have to preach a trial sermon where Wesley or other preachers would examine the preacher. Only thereafter would they be received as full preachers. This is the system that is followed today as well however, the description thereof will follow later in this question. Women were also allowed to preach; however, they were never fully received as preachers until after the start of the 20th century where they began to be recognized. The MCSA recently celebrated the 40th Anniversary since the first woman MINISTER to be ordained.

The first preachers to practice in South Africa were lay officers as they were Soldiers who worked in the English army, which came to the Cape from the year 1806. Methodists in that time found it particularly difficult to operate because of the fact that the main church then was the Anglican Church which also operated in the army that was settled in the Cape (the first society at that time being under the leadership of Sergeant John Kendrick). Upon request, an ordained minister was sent to the

cape (Namaqualand area) so that the people there would be able to receive full sacraments. Subsequent to this stationing, there were many other preachers that were converted and received; among these were the Links brothers who we will refer to in the next answer. When Rev. Barnabas Shaw and his family made their move to the Northern Cape, the converts in the Namaqualand that were seeking guidance invited them. Among some of the people that received them was the Links family in Lilyfontein. The reason that this ended up being of major importance was that fact that Jacob Links and his brothers had learnt how to read the bible and write sermons that they actually preached. Jacob went on to be the first South African probationer in the year 1822 however sadly, he and two of his companions were killed in 1825. The remaining members of the Links family, Peter and Gert, continued on as local preachers along with other people that had been converted.

The same as in the Northern Cape, the first preachers that came to the Eastern Cape were English soldiers. Sergeant Majors Lucas and Prince were in charge of the base in Fort England in Grahamstown and they invited Rev William Shaw to come and conduct a service at Fort England. There were many local preachers that settled in the Eastern Cape at the invitation of Rev. Shaw and they all settled in the area of Salem, which was a small town just outside of Grahamstown; today called Makanda. Due to the fact they were scattered all over the area, Rev Shaw implemented a preaching plan amongst the local preachers. Upon the first local preachers Quarterly Meeting being held, a number of local preachers were proposed and received and amongst those were the likes of John Ayliff and James Allison who went on to being ordained Methodist ministers whose contributions are still recognized in the Methodist Church today. One of the African preachers that came out of the Eastern Cape was Chief William Shaw Kama and he was converted

by the preaching of the Rev. William Shaw. Missionaries and Local preachers were the main fuellers on the will to spread the Gospel in South Africa because they are the ones who took time to teach and train the people who said that they wanted to preach and spread the gospel to others. This led to the different offices of preachers starting to come into play-Local preachers, Lay Agents and Evangelists. In Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo, there are men who left their homes heading to the Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal. While they were there, they joined churches and educated themselves. When they went back to their residences, they established some Methodist Schools and societies. This made the job of the missionaries simple because when they arrived in those areas, they would find that there are already people that were calling themselves Methodists. Through the efforts of some of the local preachers that were there at the time; David Modibane, Hans Appie and Samuel Mathabathe to mention a few, there were reasons for the establishment of the Nzondelelo Movement that served the purpose of ensuring that all places had access to local preachers at all costs.

All preachers of today fall under the Local Preachers Department and the Local Preachers Association respectively and formal education is now a prerequisite. Training is done through the Theological Education from Extension College and the Education for Ministry and Mission Unit. There are however some preachers who acquire further education through the use of Universities and they complete Wesley studies through EMMU. Wesley Studies is important purely for creating the foundation of knowledge of the scriptural emphasis that is placed on the doctrines on which Methodism is founded.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS UNDER INVESTIGATION

For the purposes of investigation for this study, the researcher will be reflecting on the following research questions:

1. What is Missional Ecclesiology/ Missional Church?
 - 1.1. What are the main components that make up the Missional church?
2. What is the current state of the MCSA as Missional Church?
 - 2.1. What policies does the MCSA have regarding Missional Ecclesiology?
3. What is the current state of Youth Ministry?
 - 3.1. What is the general state of Youth Ministry in Africa?
 - 3.2. What are the policies regarding specifically youth ministry in the MCSA?
(State of Youth Ministry in the MCSA).
4. According to the youth, what are the practical aspects of missional church?
 - 4.1. In what ways can these aspects be practically applied not only in the church, but in the bigger society as well?
5. What is the role of the Youth Pastor/Local Preacher in the propelling/ driving of missional church?

1.7 RESEARCH GAP

There has been a lot of work lately that has been written about the topic of Missional Ecclesiology because many people have wanted to put in their stance of what they think of Missional Ecclesiology. The research gap however that the researcher has discovered in reading some of the material is in two points; firstly, there is not a lot of work about Missional Ecclesiology that has been written or layed out by African scholars, which gives more of a one-sided impression of the opinions that exist around it and secondly, not a lot of the work that is already in existence is written by

young scholars and researchers. In the MCSA as well, there is not a lot of scholarly work that has been completed around this topic. This is one of the things that the researcher hopes to address as well at the end of this dissertation.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

Before we can go into the detail of the methodology that will be used in this study, we must first look at the actual meaning of the concept so as to have a kind of departure point. According to the Oxford Dictionary of 2001, methodology is given the definition of “a system of methods used in a particular field” (Oxford Dictionary, 2001:529). This indicates already the fact that each and every field that is in existence has a particular way in which it looks at and analyses its data. Sifo (2010) in his Masters Dissertation quotes Johann Mouton in saying that “these methods are concerned with the questions: How do we attain knowledge? How do we ensure that we reach our research Goal? In other words, this is the knowledge of how to do things or the total set of means that scientists employ in reaching their goal of valid knowledge” (Sifo, 2010:27). In narrowing this a bit further, Clough and Nutbrown in their book define methodology as that “shows how research questions are articulated with questions asked in the field. Its effect is a claim about significance” (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012:25).

Larry Christensen says that a research design comprises of the plan and outline that is to be used to best answer the research questions that are in place (Christenden, 1985:155). The design that the researcher will be utilizing for this study will be primarily from a literature study however, it also includes an aspect of the mixed methods study, as there is also a case study example that is tabled in chapter 4. The researcher feels that this is the best method to use for the study because it will

best display the continued state of missional church and also show how some of the aspects of it can be practically applied to and utilised in real life situations and contexts. How this will be done is the researcher will be tabling the literature from various scholars that is already in existence focusing on the topic of missional church and how it applies to young people. As much as the focus will be on the literature itself, there will be a few points of new insight that the researcher will be mentioning as well to align the study in the direction of obtaining the aim of the study.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE/ RESEARCH PLAN

The rest of the chapters of this study will follow the layout of the research questions. This means that in each chapter, a question along with its sub questions will be answered.

In this Chapter, the researcher introduced and layed out the main points that are focused on in the rest of the dissertation. In chapter 2 of this dissertation, the researcher investigated a broader definition of what missional church is and how it relates or is relevant in the MCSA. In chapter 3, the researcher focused on the current state of missional church as it relates to youth ministry, looking more specifically in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. In Chapter 4, the researcher went into a broader part of the study in tabling out what the youth see as the most significant practical aspects of missional church relevant to them as well. Chapter 5 investigated the role of the youth pastor and local preacher as being an agent of driving missional church. In chapter 6, the researcher integrated all the sections of the study into a contextually relevant missional ecclesiology that is relevant to all youth ministry but more especially Methodist Youth. In the chapter, the study was

also concluded and the researcher offered recommendations that can be implemented and investigated for future study as well.

2. CHAPTER 2: DEFINING MISSIONAL CHURCH AND THE CURRENT STATE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AS MISSIONAL CHURCH.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

From the previous chapter, the researcher believes that has been a fairly clear picture of what this study is all about and all the aspects contained therein. In this chapter, the researcher investigated the question of what Missional Church is and the main components thereof. Furthermore, the researcher also investigated the state of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) as Missional Church. In so doing, he looked at the question of specifically what policies or practices that the MCSA has in place with regards to it being missional church. In the previous chapter in defining Methodism, the researcher went a little into the history of how it first came to South Africa by Rev. and Mrs Shaw and others from 1816; therefore, it will not be repeated much in this section, just certain parts therefrom as we progress in the chapter.

2.2 MISSIONAL CHURCH

2.2.1 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MISSIONAL CHURCH?

Before we can go further into the study, it is important to properly answer the question; what exactly do we mean by missional church? What makes it up really? Pillay (2017:33) argues that in order for one to be able to define properly what missional church is, they need to have a comprehensive understanding of what mission itself is and what it actually entails. The reason for this is that in some case,

when mission is being defined, it is usually place in a certain sphere such as worship, saving souls, church planting and so forth. While this is not an incorrect method, it still does not provide a comprehensive definition. Stetzer & Putman (2006) say that being missional requires a shift in thinking; this shift that emphasises the fact that the church of God is not one that has a mission in the world but the mission of God in the world has a church. They continue to say that this shift is in many cases difficult for the people who have to make it but truthfully, that is the only way that all people will fully appreciate what missional church is because it causes one to move away from the traditional way of doing church to a more biblically aligned one (Stetzer & Putman, 2006:9). The United Methodist Church (North Carolina Conference, 2018:2-3), in defining what makes up the missional church, says the following.

2.2.1.1. Missional just is purely a gathering of believers who, in their meeting, have no other purpose and goal other than that of fulfilling the mission of God in the world. In doing so, they are constantly rediscovering their sentness in Jesus Christ as what makes up their identity. In speaking of this identity, Nel (2018:26) argues that “we are because of God, because God is” and therefore we should be likewise.

2.2.1.2. Missional Church realises the fact that in any given context, God is already present and working in whatever way. Therefore, its mandate is not that of establishing God in any place or introducing any new space that people need to move to in order to experience God and God’s work. Niemandt (2012:4) refers to the missional in this regard being incarnational because it “It implies Presence – to become part of the fabric of a community and to engage in the humanity of it all”. This being said

though Niemandt continues to argue that “At the heart of incarnation is ‘suffering alongside’” which entails that in being involved in the mission of God, a certain level of discomfort should be expected and endured.

2.2.1.3. Missional Church does not assume itself to have some special privilege or position in nay community in which it exists; instead, its missionality forces it to move out of itself into that community as its salt and light by planting continually all types of missional communities that can be imagined.

2.2.1.4. In all that it does, missional church relies on God and only God; totally dependent on prayer and devotion

As much as all of this is supposed to be the case, one finds that there are still many contexts where being missional church is claimed but the opposite of missional church is being done.

2.2.1.5. Missional Church is not a place of dispensing “religious goods and services” (North Carolina Conference, 2018:3) where people come to get their weekly dose and then forget.

2.2.1.6. Missional Church is not an environment where Christians come in order to have their own needs addressed. As much as this is the case Niemandt argues that missional church is communal and therefore “Christians participate in and practice the relationality of the Triune communion” and that happens not “as dogmas or ethical commands, but as a communion of love” (Niemandt, 2012:5).

2.2.1.7. Missional Church is not an environment where everything is about professionalism and doing church work. Paas (2017:233) argues that that type of setting comes from the secularisation of most spheres of society

and that is not what missional church is about. At the same time however, as much as the space is not for the use of hired professionals, Harrison states that those skills of the professionals should be used to build and further develop the church (Harrison, 2017:337) and not just to teach adults, young people and children about God outside of any responsibility.

2.2.1.8. Missional church is not the space for party-political activism. The aim should be that of following of the example of Jesus Christ who in all situations never took a side but always tried to find common ground between all parties.

2.2.2 WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF MISSIONAL CHURCH?

Above the researcher reflected briefly on what the missional church is and should look like. Here the researcher displayed briefly the main components of missional church that the researcher considers the above to flow out from.

2.2.2.1 Missional Church is missionary in nature

God is missionary Godself by nature, there are no two ways about it. This implies that anything that has to do with God has to have this component embedded into itself. So, as God is a missionary being, the missional church is sent by God into the world to be missionary too (Vicedom, 1965:9). The concept of this sending of the church into the world by God signifies the relationship that God has with the world as displayed in scripture.

Scripture is replete with sending language that speaks to the missionary nature of a Triune God. God the Father sends the Son, and God the Father and the Son sends the Spirit, and God the Father and the Son and the Spirit sends the church (North Carolina Conference, 2018:5).

This quote by the North Carolina Conference affirms the description of missional church by Knoetze (2016) (See chapter 1), where he argues that the Bible constitutes the missional church as it describes the sending nature of God for mission. Guder (1998) attests to this fact as well in arguing that whatever belief that anyone has about the church has to be based on the lessons that are found in the Bible. In addition to this, those particular lessons on which the church is based cannot be kept hidden; they need to be a testimony of God, through God's word continually forming the missionary movement (Guder, 1998:11) "The biblical testimony makes abundantly clear that the purpose of mission was not only to lead individuals to faith in Christ, but to form communities of Christian witness to continue that mission" (Guder, 2017:57).

2.2.2.2 Missional Church is Historical.

Guder argues that when missional church is shaped for a particular context and culture. In this being the case, he argues that the historical development of ours and other ecclesiologies should not be neglected because that is actually what will guide the direction that is to be followed and the methods that are to be used as the modus of missional church. He argues that "we are guided by the Christian Church in all its cultural expressions, those that precede us and those that are contemporary with us" (Guder, 1998:11). This just emphasises the common belief that is already in existence that one can never really know where they are going if they do not know where they are coming from. Guder (2017b) argues that "it is from that continuing process of calling, equipping, forming, and sending" that faithful missionary results are witnessed (Guder, 2017b:225).

2.2.2.3 Missional Church is Contextual and Incarnational.

People who have a missionary perspective of the church cease to see the church as a haven for those who are outside of the church. This is not to say that there is something wrong with doing that however missional church is more concerned about sending the people who are inside the church to meet and reach out to the people that are outside of the church. For this reason, Guder (1998) argues that the church is contextual as it finds its existence within a particular context. He further argues that the only way to “be church is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting” (Guder, 1998:11). This is only possible however if there are no major cultural barriers that have to be overcome, especially when it comes to the necessary move from outside to inside the church.

In being contextual and incarnational, missional church sees one of its primary functions as that of actively moving into a specific context and embodying it with all the aspects of the life, words and deeds of Jesus Christ into all places that it might be missing;

Alan Hirsch speaks of the “missional-incarnational impulse,” where the word “missional” expresses the sending nature of the church, while “incarnational” represents the “embedding” of the gospel into a local context. In other words, “missional” speaks to our direction – we are sent; while being “incarnational” is more about how we go, and what we do as we go (North Carolina Conference, 2018:6).

Bosch (1995) speaks to this point as well but the caution that he poses is that as much as missional church is contextual, it should not be made over contextualised to the point where it ceases to speak to its “distinctive character and challenge” (Bosch, 1995:58-59).

2.2.2.4 **Missional Church is about being actively involved in the mission of God.**

Again, the wrong assumption that has been made is that the church exists for God rather than that it exists because of God. Coming from this, is the notion that the space for God's work is in the church rather than it being in the world outside of the church. "The Church is God's instrument sent into the world to participate in His redemptive mission. God's primary activity in the world is THROUGH the Church" (North Carolina Conference, 2018:7). This is what distinguishes best between a church that has a mission program and a missional church. Harrison (2017) quotes Granberg-Michaelson where he argues that

A missional church places its commitment to participate in God's mission in the world at the centre of its life and identity. "Mission" places the focus on what God is doing in the world, recognizing that God's mission is always ahead of us, already active through the Spirit in the world ... For the missional church, mission is not an activity or a program; rather, it lies at the centre of the church's identity (Harrison, 2017:340).

In the spirit of its sentness, the missional church has clear knowledge of the fundamental fact that it is to be rooted in the *Missio Dei*, that being the sole duty to reconcile the people of God back unto Godself and as such the realisation is that the church as it is, cannot be seen as the centre of mission. Wright (2006:62) emphasises that "it is not so much that God has a mission for his church in the world, but that God has a church for his mission in the world".

2.2.2.5 Missional Church is eschatological

Guder (1998) states that the belief that is present is that the church needs to be ever-changing and ever adapting to the various times and contexts in which it exists. Stemming from this therefore is the notion that this should not be happening only for the present time but also be happening in preparation for the coming time of “God’s promised consummation of all things” (Guder, 1998:12). In between that time, there are different contexts and cultures that will emerge and those will come with different questions and enquiries that would have never been encountered before. The job of missional church is that of bearing witness in the answering of those questions and enquiries and the responses to those Guder argues, redefine how Christians function and continue to hope. Vicedom (1965) argues that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ imply a certain “presupposition of mission to the heathen” (Vicedom, 1965:41) which is brought to completion by the coming of the kingdom. This argument indicates therefore that mission is the visible proclamation of the kingdom and therefore;

through mission, the church must do nothing less than prepare for the arrival of Jesus. The end can only come when the message of the Kingdom is proclaimed to all nations as a sign over them (Vicedom, 1965:42).

He further argues that missional church is apocalyptic in addition to it being eschatological because of the fact that mission does not only relate to the coming of the kingdom, but it is already a sign of the coming;

The command is connected with the apocalyptic signs and woes. So, it belongs to the final signals which God gives to men before the end. The mission itself is an apocalyptic event. (Vicedom, 1965:42-43)

This view therefore of mission and missional church emphasises not only its importance to this day and age but also its significance in the historical narrative of salvation.

2.2.2.6 Missional Church can be practiced

Every theory that is in existence, in order to be validated, has to be proven and that results in it being used continually thereafter. The same is with missional church, “it can be translated into practice” (Guder, 1998:12). Guder continues to argue that theology exists as a medium of equipping people with the skills that they need in order for them to be able to fully exercise their calling and thus the church as well. Missional church has a calling to be just that, missional and in this being so, it shapes its Christians into bodies of missional action in witness; “a missional ecclesiology serves the church’s witness as it “makes disciples of all nations,...teaching them to obey everything that I [Jesus] have commanded you”” (Guder, 1998:12). In chapter 4, the researcher displays an example of how this is true.

And thus, the missional church looks as such;



Figure 3: Basic Components of Missional Church

These are but only a few components that make up the missional church. They are definitely not limited to these because as the researcher stated above, as the times continue to change, so does the operation of all things, including the missional church. It is important to say again that all these components are not there as a means for the church to plan its mission, but they are the mission of God that is exercised in the different spheres. Wright (2006:350-356) describes that the job of missional church cannot be said to really be over at any point because the mission of God itself is not and will not be anytime soon; this is backed up by the biblical text as well. He argues that

This is the omega point of the long sweep of covenantal history throughout the Bible. The covenants proclaim the mission of God as his committed promise to the nations and the whole of creation. The book of Revelation is the covenantal declaration “Mission accomplished” (Wright, 2006:356).

Until that time comes therefore, the work of the mission still continues.

2.3 STATE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AS MISSIONAL CHURCH

Recently in the year 2016, the MCSA was celebrating 200 years since the arrival of Methodism in Southern Africa. The biggest part of the celebrations that were taking place at that time were based on the heritage of the MCSA which was greatly if not completely centred around the mission of the church from its inception all the way up to today. In addition to this, this is the same time when the latest mission congress sat in Pietermaritzburg under the theme 'Methodists igniting mission, breaking barriers. Throughout time, there have been a lot of developments and changes that have taken place in the church and different bodies and theories have been introduced and utilised by the church due to the changing contexts and people in the church generally.

Before we can go anywhere further, let us go to the begin by asking the question of what the vision and mission of the MCSA is to begin with as this is what will give proper direction of the route that the church is following in terms of being missional. Firstly, the vision of the MCSA is, "A Christ-Healed Africa for the Healing of nations" (The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 2019:2). This is a clear and self-explanatory vision that the Church has. The fact that this vision implies also that the end goal that is anticipated is of total healing of every place in the world by Christ through the efforts of primarily Africa as the agent thereof going forth.

The mission statement of the MCSA states that "God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for Healing and Transformation" (The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 2019:2). There are various means that the church has in place in efforts of ensuring that the goal of the vision is achieved through this mission. Peter Storey when reflecting on this mission statement says, "All these

attempts at transformation took for their inspiration Wesley's own commitment to always make structures subservient to the mission of the church" (Storey, 2004:25).

2.3.1 POLICY OF MISSION IN THE MCSA

The MCSA generally has scripture at the centre of everything that takes place in the church as also noted in the following chapters in this study. The pursuit of mission therefore is also rooted in and guided by scripture. The mission policy of the MCSA is set up as follows (The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 2018:3-4). The MCSA;

- ❖ Emphasises that the sole source and foundation of all ministry and mission in the Church is centred around the person and work of Jesus;
- ❖ Acknowledges that the Church has been constituted by Jesus Christ for the sole purpose of mission - the Church as the body of Christ exists to carry on his mission (the *Missio Dei*) in the world according to John 20:21; Acts 1:8;
- ❖ Declares its commitment to Christ's Great Commission of making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-19) – presenting Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that persons should put their trust in God, and nurture them so that they grow into mature Christians who serve God in the world and through the Church;
- ❖ Urgently calls on people called Methodists to adhere to their fundamental mission of 'spreading Scriptural Holiness throughout the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith;
- ❖ Affirms the importance of the ministry to the whole person, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, setting free the captives, and the transformation of the socio-economic structures (Luke 4:18-19; Romans 8:21) as being integral to the mission task of the Church, and Methodism in particular.

Stemming froth from the above-mentioned, one of the key ways of ensuring that this take place authentically is that of constant transformation as stated in the mission statement of the MCSA. The following therefore are the focal points in the exercise of this transformation-the “calls” of the “Journey to a New Land” as tabled by John Wesley (Anon., 2019);

1. A deepened Spirituality

The researcher will refer to this point more in detail in the next point being the mission imperatives however, he thinks it is important to mention here that this is where everything else branches out of. The reason for this is that everything that takes place outwardly begins with an inward experience which authenticates it. Jørgensen (2018) when speaking on a similar concept says, “I absorb it inwardly to the extent that I can project it outwardly in symbolic correspondences” (Jørgensen, 2018:52), this emphasises the real importance of the process and what its job actually is.

2. A resolve to be guided by God’s mission.

In the beginning of the study, the researcher made the statement that the Church as a whole, needs to be reminded of the fact that mission is not just a part of the church, but it is what the church is made up of and it should be the only thing that it seeks to fulfil in its existence. This point speaks to this fact as well; the focus of the church should be just that-God’s work that is already taking place in the world.

3. A rediscovery of “every member ministry – “the priesthood of all believers”.

Hill & Hill start off immediately by saying that “the Priesthood of all Believers is the cornerstone and raison d’être of Congregationalism” (Hill & Hill, 2013:126). This statement itself emphasises the fact that this concept is one

of the most important that need to and should be embraced by the Church at large. They continue to say, “We should be like new-born babes eager to be fed with pure spiritual milk by the Lord Jesus who was the ‘living stone’, rejected by men, but who became the central stone in the new temple built by God. The new priesthood was to declare the praises of Jesus who has brought each believer out of darkness into light.” (Hill & Hill, 2013:127).

4. A commitment to “be one so the world may believe”.

“Believers in Jesus in the Early Church were drawn from many nations as was noted on the Day of Pentecost when Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims from many nations around the Mediterranean - 3000 of whom responded to the gospel. They were Jews and Greeks, young and old, male and female, slaves and free men, Roman citizens and others from many nationalities. They were all individuals from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds but once they responded to the gospel, they became one community in Christ.” (Hill & Hill, 2013:127-128). The researcher thinks this quote from Hill and Hill best explains the true purpose of what this point seeks to have served. In the church being a true agent of mission by its being, differences should not be something that is of note because after all the call of being in the *Missio Dei* is being a unit of fulfilling God’s work in the world we are in.

5. A re-emphasis of servant leadership and discernment as our ministry model.

In the sentiment of the ethos that Jesus Christ used when he was still waking the earth, this is where the emphasis of carrying out the mission of God lies. This also speaks to what the researcher referred to in Chapter 1 of this study where Johannes Knoetze says that the missional church is a discerning

community indicating that when mission is centred around God, the challenge of the church becomes that of discernment (Knoetze, 2016:5). When speaking on servant leadership, Hill and Hill say, “the role of leaders should not be one of making decisions FOR others but one of working WITH them” and in the same way “the role of members changes from being observers to being participants; and from assistants to active involvement as they are in the front line of action. They should always see themselves as ‘Ambassadors’ for Christ” (Hill & Hill, 2013:129). This is the model for leadership and decision-making in the MCSA.

6. A redefinition and authentication of the vocation of the ordained ministry.

This speaks to be a reminder to those who have actually offered themselves to being the agents and drivers of mission all over the church; these being Ministers, Preachers, Evangelists, Bible women and so forth. The researcher went into a bit of detail in the roles of these in Chapter 5 of this study.

2.3.2 MISSION IMPERATIVES OF THE MCSA



Figure 4: The Mission of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa from <https://methodist.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Mission-Pillars-A5-Greyscale.png>

The Church as a whole faced the struggle of repositioning itself in the new South Africa. Forster(2008) says that under apartheid, the enemy was clear and could be identified, however, in the new democracy it was a bit difficult to have that confidence because the social and economic issues that were present during apartheid were still lurking around making it seem as though there was no hope of any difference (Forster, 2008:17).In the MCSA, this is what led to the sitting of the mission congress in 2003 under the then Presiding Bishop Rev. Ivan Abrahams, where the current mission statement of the church(as tabled in the beginning of this chapter) was unveiled. Originally, at their inception, there were four imperatives; the

fifth one of Education and Christian formation was added recently in 2013, this too being a testament to the need to adjust based on the specific needs of the time. On the other hand, as with all things, there is nothing that does not have its flaws; Mkhonta in her thesis refers to Vika (2005) where he says “due to shortcomings with the implementation of the mission imperatives, the church seems to be experiencing immobility; this linked to the paralysis of its prophetic voice since the church abandoned its work of reconstruction to the fate of the state” (Mkhonta, 2016:7). Irrespective however, it is still a work in progress as the years are moving forward. Let us take a closer look at what each of the imperatives themselves entail.

2.3.2.1 SPIRITUALITY

Pillay (2017:40) argues that “spirituality must be the first building block to rebuild or reform both church and society. It reminds us that what we refer to as our mission is actually God’s mission”. When looking at figure 2.1 above, one can clearly see that in the way that the MCSA has chosen to lay out how the imperatives relate to each other, Spirituality forms the central part of everything and this suggests that it is the primary source from which all other components of mission come from; “Wesleyan Spirituality is a spirituality that fuses together the personal and social dimensions of Christian discipleship (Hudson, 2006:90). Deepened Spirituality as it is commonly referred to in the MCSA relates to the relationship with Christ that one possesses. This relationship is not in solitary however, it is among and with others “for the sake of the world” (Nyobole, 2015:6). For John Wesley, true spirituality lies in love; Storey (2004:37) quotes Wesley where he says

In a Christian believer, love sits upon the throne, which is erected in the inmost soul- namely the love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without any rival.

Stemming from this reflection of Spirituality by Wesley, he continues to say that practical ways of executing spirituality are;

- ❖ Doing No harm, which entails refraining from doing anything of any sort that might be considered as being evil or hurtful to another person.
- ❖ Doing Good. By this, Wesley meant that at any cost and in any place where one goes, the sole mandate in being in that place is to do good to all people that one comes into contact with. Basically, what he meant by this, if we were to look at it in the current context of South Africa, is that deepened spirituality is rooted in the level of Ubuntu that one possesses and is able to exercise in one's daily life.
- ❖ Only at the end of attending to the points relating to others does Wesley say that attention can be given to the ordinances of God; these being worship, sacraments, scripture and so forth.

And so even up to today, this is the goal of deepened spirituality that the MCSA is aiming to reach and is practicing in the perpetuation of the mission of God through the church. In referring to the Context of South Africa specifically, Mtshiselwa (2015:125) says, "The deepening of spirituality would subsequently regenerate the moral fibre of South Africans because of the biblical fact that a relationship with God challenges one to live according to the principles of God". If this takes place efficiently, it leads us to the following imperatives where the effect of it should start to be seen.

2.3.2.2 JUSTICE, SERVICE AND RECONCILIATION

In the initial stages of his ministry, John Wesley had two main acts that he utilised; Works of Piety and Works of Mercy. In this being the case, his main focus was on ensuring the well-being of people that were considered as being poor or

underprivileged by the society-not only in material things but in spirit as well. This was also the initial reason for the establishment of what Wesley referred to as classes, where “simple people, almost all of them poor, regularly addressed the invitation to responsible discipleship”- one of the great definitions of the love for God and one’s neighbour. (Storey, 2004:38).

In contemporary Methodism, this imperative set out to remind members of the church of the fact that the church is not limited to the four walls of a building that people meet in every Sunday morning, there is a bigger world and society that exists outside of the walls and that is actually where what is being reflected on in church is actually supposed to be used and spread. Mtshiselwa says that in conjunction with the biblical text in Psalm 23, this imperative of the MCSA is in place as a medium of addressing the issue of on-going injustice in the church and our country South Africa as well (Mtshiselwa, 2016:126). This imperative therefore implies that the duty of the church, in the context of Southern Africa as a whole, is to be the agent of primarily raising awareness around the issues of injustices such as abuse, human and drug trafficking, poverty, slavery and others that exist. Not only to raise these issues but also to be advocates of eradicating them by way of educating members of the church and society on how they may be actively engaged and facilitate the finding of the solutions to these problems. In South Africa specifically, over the years there has been a great level of decline in the moral fibre of society; this resulting in a lot of events taking place in the various spheres of society. In most of these cases, the role of attending to these situations has been left to the state by way of law enforcement agencies for example. This has worked for the most yes but at the same time it has caused the church to relax and begin to take a back seat going back to what I mentioned earlier of the church losing its prophetic voice;

“When the church renegades its role to the state the people suffer especially the most vulnerable” (Mkhonta, 2016:17). This imperative therefore in light of this also plays the role of rebuilding the nation and more importantly moral regeneration in the societies in and surrounding the church. Lastly, The researcher mentioned in the beginning of this point that this imperative is also to remind the church of the existence of others outside of the circle of the church and in most cases, the ‘others’ are in vulnerable and compromised situations and therefore it is the job of the church to advocate for the rights of all vulnerable groups; In the words of John Wesley’s rules for living, “do all the good that you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can” (Nyobole, 2015:9).

2.3.2.3 EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

Jesus drew nearer to them and said to them, “ I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”-Matt. 28:18-20 GNB

He said to them, “Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all the people. -Mark 16:15 GNB

The great commission that Jesus Christ gave to his disciples before he ascended into heaven. This was the final instruction to the disciples of the job that they had to fulfil in the world after his ascension into heaven; the researcher believes that this is the first call of evangelism that was issued to human beings. “Evangelism is a clear command of Christ to the Church, because our God is an evangelistic God” (Nyobole, 2015:7). Mancini (2008:120) describes is as the missional mandate which

is “anchored in the ‘sentness’ of Jesus Christ reflected in the Great Commission as the Church’s sentness into the world”. The aspect of evangelism in general has been one that has been paramount in the Methodist movement from when it was started; this is ascribed to the fact that John Wesley is described as one of the most prominent evangelists of his time. This is ascribed to the social gospel that Wesley preached and it was done mostly by way of what Heitzerater called field preaching (a preaching style that Wesley learnt from his colleague George Whitfield) (Mkhonta, 2016:40). And so, this imperative is aimed at ensuring that that is what happens in every part that the church has an influence in in doing the following.

In Matthew 5:13, Christ described human being as being the salt of the world by way of being an example of a Christlike life in word and deed. This imperative calls for the same to take place in the world through people living out the ‘exemplary life of Christ’; this being done primarily the sharing of faith with all peoples in all spheres of the world and the offering of Christ and the salvation that comes with him to all people.

The researcher mentioned earlier that most of the policies of the MCSA are based primarily on scripture; so is this imperative by its operating as the means by which the spreading of scriptural holiness and in that way also exercising the core of evangelism that being the sharing of the gospel-Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ. .

Evangelism and Church Growth go hand in hand in the MCSA because if evangelism happens authentically and in wholeness, that directly leads to the growth of the church. This happens commonly happens through church planting in the places that the evangelism of the church reaches. Just to give a short definition, “Church Planting is creating new communities of Christian faith as part of the

Mission of God, to express his Kingdom in every geographic and cultural context” (Cray, 2004:29). This statement goes right back to what the researcher mentioned in chapter 1; the church is part of God’s Mission and not the other way around. If one were to have a visual of how evangelism and church growth looks, it would be as follows.

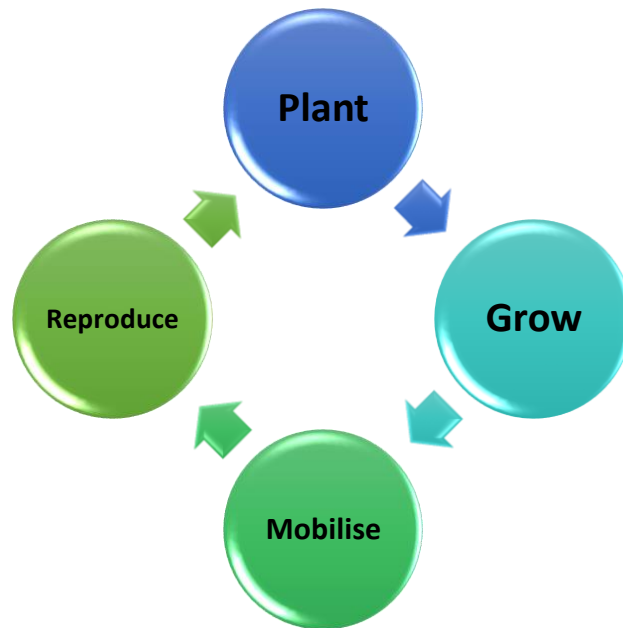


Figure 5: Operation of Evangelism and Church growth as adapted from Kraft (2008:139-140).

2.3.2.4 DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Poverty has been and still is a major social issue that is causing a lot of unrest in most communities within the country and continent. The most common reason, amongst others, that comes to light when inquiry is made into it is that of lack of resources caused by no development having taken place, economically more specifically. This is why this mission imperative is in exists. Mtshiselwa (2016:125) attests to this as well. Formerly this imperative was called Human Development and Economic Empowerment however, it was changed as a means of attempting to extend it to a broader scope.

This imperative calls for all (Methodists in particular) to be actively involved in the process of ensuring that all people and places are developed to the extent that they may be empowered economically. Earlier we referred to the works of piety and works of mercy that Wesley propelled in his ministry, Mtshiselwa (2016:125) says “it would make sense for the poor in South Africa to be the recipients of the ‘works of mercy’ that are in a form of employment or a loan to establish businesses, among other practical endeavours”. Mkhonta (2016:6) concurs as well saying that it “may assist to enhance the desired outcome of the MCSA in its mission strategy especially in the fight against the escalating poverty levels in South Africa”. In saying this, they are alluding to the extent to which the implementation of this imperative needs to reach in addition to other spheres in which poverty exists in; we will have a look at those in detail in chapter 4 of this study.

The researcher can say that that this is the most complex of all the mission imperatives of the MCSA because it is the one that actually poses a challenge against the others in the manner that it becomes a little bit difficult to attend to the other imperatives having ignored this one which the researcher would say encompasses the greater basic needs in it. The researcher has referred to the concept of Ubuntu a few times in this study; this imperative is one of the places, in light of its objectives, where it sometimes comes into play due to the fact that it promotes a commitment to sacrificial giving and living which entails people investing themselves, their time and their resources to not only the church, but others as well who are lacking of anything. This reverts to the statement by Wesley of doing all the good one can in all the places that one can. And this brings us to the final imperative.

2.3.2.5 EDUCATION AND CHRISITAN FORMATION

This is the youngest of the mission imperatives that was only added five and a half years ago at Conference 2013. The reason for its addition was because of the observation in the church regarding the decline in basic education that children all over and beyond the country were getting. This is also ascribed to the fact that “education has always been part of the Methodist mission which is attested by a well-documented history of successful involvement in education.” (Mkhonta, 2016:27). Mtshiselwa on the other hand takes it a bit deeper and says, “the significance of the imperative on education lies with this point: teaching pupils the history of black people in South Africa at the level of basic education as it is critical” (Mtshiselwa, 2016:126). At the same time, it was added due to the fact that as the researcher mentioned earlier that the moral fibre of society was beginning to go on a decline and therefore in the church, there was a greater need to maintain the Christian character of the different members of the church in all the places that they were.

To get a clearer picture of this imperative, one may look at the two components individually and observe the links that are integrated into the both of them.

Christian formation exists as a medium of the cultivation of one’s personal Christian character by way of intentionally nurturing people in the Christian faith and practice, evaluating their spiritual maturity and growing them into fruitful and productive disciples. Character building in essence lies at the core of Christian formation where the Christian and moral values such as Ubuntu, family life and structure, etc., that have been lost along the way are rekindled and reconstructed in people’s makeup. In Wesley’s time, this happened through cell groups, which are today being referred to as class meetings (Storey, 2004:37-39).

The education part of this imperative is there in efforts of rekindling the church's involvement in the education systems that are in place all around the Connexion of the MCSA-Connexion refers to all the structures of the MCSA; from the local society up to the office of the PB. The reason for this is that the church believes that every child who walks on the face of the planet deserves to have an opportunity to get educated. In addition to this, it does not end at the church advocating for this to take place but also it being actively part of ensuring that it happens as far as possible by way of "reclaiming the role of the church in education" and its systems by means of school chaplaincy, SGB participation and others. By doing so, it will ensure that the "upholding of Christian values in schools" and other educational facilities is maintained. This is paramount due to the threat of secularisation that is in existence currently, especially in South Africa in schools and it is now coming into some workplaces as well.

2.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The state of the MCSA as a missional church is fairly standard and appropriate as tabled in the above church because the way in which it is structured is in a comprehensive manner that is aimed at reaching all spheres possible. Now as Paul wrote in this epistle to the Philippians, this is not yet uhuru (Swahili word for freedom) in terms of the implementation of the mission policies in totality, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to ensure that this happens as quickly and as efficiently as possible in all the areas that the MCSA has reach in.

In this chapter, we dealt with the state of the MCSA as missional church. In such we looked at the policy of mission that the MCSA has and also the mission imperatives that the MCSA has in place as means to drive this mission policy. In

the following chapter, we are going to be investigating the state of youth ministry in and outside of the MCSA.

3. CHAPTER 3: THE CURRENT STATE OF YOUTH MINISTRY GENERALLY AND IN THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

When speaking about young people, the common statement that is made in most churches, even those outside of the traditional mainline stream, is that the youth is the church of tomorrow and that they need to be nurtured and cherished therefore. The researcher outright disagrees with this statement because if young people are the church of tomorrow then does it not render it a bit useless and redundant that they sit in the church today? The researcher thinks the answer to that question is clear; therefore what we need to start telling ourselves and emphasizing in the church is that rather than saying the youth is that church of tomorrow we must acknowledge that they are very much the church of today, the only difference that is there is that they possess the potential of ensuring that the church lives on to tomorrow and this is what brings us to the main focus of this chapter. In this chapter, the focus was on what is taking place currently and what has been taking place recently with respect to youth ministry. In addition to this, again in light of the nature of this study, the researcher will delve into what the MCSA says about this and what is happening in the church with regards to it. The researcher believes that this is important and necessary in this study because in order to be able to discern any way forward from the problem that the researcher stated in the first chapter, one needs to reflect on and acknowledge where we are coming from and more

importantly where we are so that we can take the steps in the right direction leading to where we want to go.

3.2 CURRENT/GENERAL STATE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

“Youth Ministry is about inviting young people into a way of life. Like John, we invite youth to repent and walk in the way of God” (Dean et al, 2001:155). Before going into any detail, the researcher believes that it is important to note that the reason that we struggle with a lot of concepts and other things in the African context is that most of the information that we possess surrounding whatever concept that is usually comes from American and European contexts and what we try to do is merely apply whatever recommendations we get in that information. Most of the time if not all of the time, this never works out because whether or not we would like to believe it, at no two places is the context ever the same and therefore the same measure cannot be implemented in the same way. It is not to say that those recommendations are not correct but rather what needs to happen is their implementation as is appropriate to the specific context, in fact, this is why Meylahn (2012) says that theological context studies even exists as a study domain; it is the only way of being able to ensure as much accuracy as possible. The question that might come up however, is how youth ministry relates to the nature of this study as it is mostly found in the discipline of Practical Theology; this is true but in this study the focus in bringing it in is to attempt to establish grounds for youth ministry to be used as a tool of the developing of the missional church by young people and for the youth as well specifically in the Methodist Church. Having stated the above, what is the current picture of what Youth Ministry looks like in the broader scope? To begin a response to this question if the researcher was writing his own article about

it, he would say that youth ministry right now is going through a liminal struggle due to the number of challenges that are still there globally but more especially in the Black African context. A few of those causes of this struggle are the following, specifically in the African context.

3.2.1. The voice of youth ministry is not completely audible and clear as yet.

In the beginning of this chapter, the researcher mentioned that the problem that is there in the African context is that of a lot of referral still being made to international writings which sometimes, well most of the time, cause discrepancies in the long run because the contexts are different. Weber (2015) says that the main issue that it all comes down to is the identity of young people with regards to faith and how it is cultivated in them. Nel (2018) describes this identity as “becoming who you already are, it means going back to God’s Creation of relationships” (Nel, 2018:247). The main problem that is there with young people is that they know what faith is and how it comes about in one however they are unable to pass it on to other people or their peers due to not actually understanding its essence. She continues to say that the bigger church is to blame for this because in most of the time, the language that is used in the church context and doctrine is ‘Christian’ language from a long time ago and has not changed over time; this then makes it, if not impossible, for young people of this time to be able to understand and apply all the doctrines and teachings of the church(the researcher would add that some of them are not even relevant anymore to the time let alone the context). “The church cannot assume that youth will merely join the dogmatic perspectives (core to fundamentalism) Christian churches used to have on life issues. The technological and information era

we live in has resulted in these youth being more informed about different religious traditions and life in general from a very early stage of life” (Weber, 2015:4).

What may be done however to attempt to combat this problem according to Weber is that the way that young people are taught and their faith framework should not be separated from each other. What this means is that even before one can think of developing or enforcing any kind of faith teaching on young people, primary consideration should be given to who they are firstly (identity) and where they are at that current point in time in terms of what is taking place with and around them. In so doing, the space will be authentically created where in the church creating policies, doctrines concerning what can be done in Youth Ministry, the relevance thereof, and the full comprehension thereof BY the young people themselves is present and working. Pete Ward in speaking of the importance of identity for young people in youth ministry says, “For young people, passing through adolescence means that they are in one way or another marginalized. The establishment of a sense of who they are in relation to others is a matter of survival and therefore necessary” (Ward, 1997:83-84).

3.2.2. The effects of colonisation remain a challenge.

Weber (2017) says that there is nowhere in the world where anyone can say that they have an established and unchanged method of exercising youth ministry (Weber, 2017:1). The reason for this assessment is that the ways change as per the different contexts that it exists in. In the context of Southern Africa, South Africa specifically, we cannot deny the fact that colonisation left a significant dent in the thought systems and processes

of many people because most if not all the aspects of colonialisation were imposed on people and embedded into their minds. The agenda of decolonialisation has been what has been on the forefront of most occurrences that have been taking place in Africa as a whole; in South Africa, the most recent outburst in this regard has been that of decolonialisation of the education systems in the country because the teachings have become irrelevant and of no significance anymore because all that the colonised education system teaches is what students and pupils should think and not HOW they should think. Anyway, youth ministry in South Africa is also included in the agenda of decolonialisation because looking back into the history of the institution of the church as a whole, it came to South Africa through the country being colonised by the British. Methodism itself was brought by British soldiers that were stationed as Local Preachers in the Cape in South Africa from 1806 with the grater church then being the (Anglican) Church of England (Education for Ministry and Mission Unit, 2018:10). In the pursuit of getting rid of the effects of colonialisation in youth ministry, what the researcher believes that it comes down to is again the issue of identity going hand in hand with faith Weber (2017) emphasises what she stated in her 2015 article as well that the best way in which this issue can be combatted is that of making sure that the faith make up of all the young people that are part of the different youth ministries in South Africa is not based on the teachings and practices of old but rather the context in which they exist be the biggest determinant of the direction that these ministries take. The fundamental principle however, that

one cannot at all know where they are going if they do not acknowledge where they come from and therefore Weber (2017) says that

“Discussions about decolonising or contextualising youth ministry models in Africa need to consider how foreign models have enhanced the faith formation of youth in this context. This then means that young leaders groomed from these models should be able to continue the work by using localised youth ministry models relevant to the context they are ministering into” (Weber, 2017:2).

H. F. Burgess in his 2000 chapter in the book *Reclaiming indigenous voice and vision* where he proposes five phases that are relevant in the process of decolonialisation (Laenui, 2000:152-158);

3.2.2.1. Rediscovery and Recovery.

When colonialisation first took place, the people who were already established in Southern Africa did have their own ways and methods of doing things and they did have their own beliefs as well that they practiced. The colonisers and new insights however, as the researcher mentioned earlier in this section, stripped all this completely away from them and practices were introduced to them and embedded in them as well to make sure that they felt inferior. Burgess therefore says that the first step in the eradication process is to look back at who and what we used to be and what we used to do and go back to that as best as possible in the different contexts in which we are. What he warns against however is that the actual groundwork should not be ignored because of attempting to hard to convince people outside of contexts

that rediscovery has actually taken place because until today, it is not a process that has been totally completed as more and more detail of what was stripped away keeps becoming known.

3.2.2.2. Mourning.

Colonialisation essentially turned people into blatant victims of the system and we cannot avoid the fact that that created and harboured some or other form of anger inside those people due to their being made powerless over their own existence. Burgess says therefore that the phase of mourning is important in the road to healing because it allows people to try and face what actually happened to them in their lives and process it as best as possible in the pursuit of moving on from it. He continues to warn however in saying that there is a thin line when it comes to this phase that causes people to get stuck in this phase because in thinking about whatever has happened to one, it tends to overlap back into the first phase of recovery which often leads to long term mourning creating the opportunity for more perpetuation of anger.

3.2.2.3. Dreaming

This phase according to Burgess is the most significant because of the fact that it is the one that actually carries the potential to dictate what the future will be and what it can hold. The only way that in youth ministry, a new order can be established is through the envision by the current occupiers of the ministry of what can be done to ensure proper growth and existence in the future. Over and above that, the dreams that come out of this phase should not remain that but be realised and

spread out to all the corners of the continent and youth ministry be in existence not only abstractly but on the ground in all the places. Weber quotes A. Mbebe where he says, “this stage would include these young people inventing a set of creative practices that ultimately make it impossible for official structures to ignore them” (Weber, 2017:7) but she again cautions against over accelerating the process because it is inevitable that some of the issues that need to be rectified are more intense and complicated than others and will therefore require more attention and time; this is what leads to the final phase in the process.

3.2.2.4. Commit.

Upon authentic dreaming taking place and a sense of direction being present in what has to be done in order for the cuffs of colonialisation to be broken, it is only then where young people will be able to fully commit to addressing and eradicating any and all traces of past wrongs that might be still present and affecting progress in the current context. Weber says “this can only fully take place when people have not been forced to a premature resolution of historical injustices” as this is the only way of ensuring total confidence from all people in the fact that nobody has lost anything in the road to decolonialisation. “Only once consensus and commitment is reached can people move on to a decolonized society” (Weber, 2017:7-8).

3.2.3. The individuality of Youth Ministry is still a challenge.

The researcher mentioned in the beginning of this study that one of the problems that are still there in the church is that of considering children and young people and the ministries that they are in as the breeding ground of

the church of tomorrow and not that of today. This is one of the things that show that there is no individual identity of youth ministry in the church but rather it is treated as a commodity that ensures the continuation of the church, which in the researcher's view, is completely inappropriate and a bit ignorant to a certain extent. Nel (2003) says that the starting point in the process of individuality begins with individualisation, where the young person discovers first who they are in themselves and secondly their position in the social sphere, and individuation where the psychological makeup of the young person comes in to play. He quotes Richard Osmer where he says,

Individuation involves the psychological work of disembedding the self from the various roles, relationships, and symbolic meanings that compose an adolescent's world in order to construct a self that is brought to and expressed through the roles, relationships, and symbolic meaning (Nel, 2003:162).

Only stemming from these two points can all other factors remaining begin to be understood and articulated. Nel continues to mention a few points that need to be addressed in the pursuit of this.

3.2.3.1. The use of Theology in different Youth Ministries.

What Nel argues with regards to this point is that all that it comes down to is the basic reading of the Bible because that is what influences the type of Theology that is developed and utilised in the specific context and everything else that follows flows from that theology. Peter Ward in this regard says that the other factor is a discernment of the differences because "there is a difference between a theology of youth ministry and a theology of young people. It is when groups of young people begin to speak of their encounter with God that a theology which is indigenous to

them begins to emerge” (Ward, 1997:25). Subsequent to this happening authentically can it be that a clear sense of strategic direction becomes present and can be used. The reason that Nel speaks to this is the fact that in most cases, from general observation, that one finds in today’s time is that most youth ministries exist and, in their existence, they follow and believe in a certain theology. What one finds however is that that theology is either not properly used or is totally unused at all and that is what results in a lot of issues in the future of those ministries. Nel highlights some of the theological issues that come up as:

3.2.3.1.1. The understanding of the concept of everything being done in Corpus

Christi- even though we all exist individually, unity in the Holy Spirit and Body of Christ remains paramount. (Nel, 2003:154)

3.2.3.1.2. The spirit is that of Koinonia (fellowship and society) but it is not always possible because of the individualistic ways of the people that are involved there. Hingangaroa-Smith (2000) in reflection of this says “the new focus on individual rights and freedoms and on individual choice is at once in conflict with one of the fundamental values associated with indigenous peoples; the recognition of our collective solidarity” (Hingangaroa-Smith, 2000:214-215). The challenge therefore is that of creating a fellowship that not only goes against individualism in itself and creates individuals that revolved and exist for fellowship. (Nel, 2003:154)

3.2.3.1.3. The minimal understanding of the principle that the only way of further growth and development is that of love being authentic only self-giving service to others at all times. Nel refers to Earl Shelp and Edson Sunderland where they say “This is the only way of being Christian: without it there is indeed no communication of who God is, no

communication of the gospel, faith, no ministry and no church” (Nel, 2003:156).

3.2.3.2. The purpose towards which some youth ministries exist.

“The first and in some ways the most important piece of the formula, is the driving theological mandate of the ministry, or the purpose of the youth ministry task” (Dean et al, 2001:114). In the establishment of youth ministries, all of them, wherever they are, begin with a certain purpose, which they believe will be a guidance mechanism in the direction that they follow. This however does not always happen consistently because of the fact that in some cases one finds that there are inconsistencies in those ministries between the actual purpose that they would like to follow and the theology that precedes it; that in turn leads to many challenges coming up because of this. In the same way as Nel argues, if there is not a theology at all that forms a basis, the same result of there not being any purpose driven direction is imminent. He says, “The purpose of youth ministry is closely, if not directly, related to the theological departure points, or lack thereof” (Nel, 2003:156). In some cases, one finds that a specific theological aspect is what is used as an expression of the purpose of youth ministries. While this in itself is not a problem because it is but one of the ways of discerning the direction that is to be followed but Nel argues that what becomes a bit problematic is when that aspect becomes understood in a narrow way which then limits its scope. To conclude the challenge of purpose in youth ministry Nel argues that the only way that it will be properly addressed is by embedding in youth ministries wherever they are, that the purpose should be to facilitate the formation of adolescents in terms of their personality which refers to the comprehensive

process that leads to the full formation of personality; this should also include spiritual formation as well because that is what will make it possible that proper understanding of some of the concepts that they would come across in the future.-everything else flows from there going onwards but in the same spirit it is only when personality itself is understood and properly defined. Nel continues to say the purpose “is about helping them to become the persons God intended them to be as a part of the new humanity (the church) and of society at large” (Nel, 2003:158).

As Nel states it in his article, everything gets its roots from theology and how it is used; this is what dictates the clear purpose in the establishment of youth ministry as well. This is where the researcher concurs as well, with regards to how the challenge of the individuality of youth ministry can be addressed.

The researcher can say that based on all the above information, it practically goes back to the root of identity, in this case, theological identity as that is what informs purpose and dictates direction accordingly. In all this not forgetting as well, that this is not an independent process to the members of different youth ministries but “the church should mediate the personality formation and individuation of all these people as representatives of God, created for a purpose” (Nel, 2003:190).

3.2.4. Youth Ministry is not completely relevant in the space/environment of the church.

The researcher can say, from personal experience, this remains a major challenge in the majority of the faith community. The prevalent reason for this that the researcher can mention off the bat is a lack of understanding between the various generations in the faith community, which leads to

clashes in certain activities, and practices between youth ministry and the more elderly formations that exist in the different spheres of the faith community. Nel and Thesnaar (2006) table some of the challenges that contribute to such taking place however, the researcher highlights only one of them for the purposes of this section. The researcher thinks it is necessary to mention it in this study because the primary reason for the struggle of youth ministry in today's time still stems from this challenge that has been on-going in most if not all the different faith communities of our time.

3.2.4.1. The need for passion of God which provides us with identity.

Nel highlights the fact that when evaluating the young people of today generally, one finds that their passion and identity go hand in hand and are practically inseparable from one another because young people will not identify with something that they are not passionate about in any way. This is the same in the community of the church as well because "This provides us with our true identity. If and when it is absent, they will go and look for it elsewhere, often where it is not to be found." (Nel & Thesnaar, 2006:94). In the faith community specifically, the problem is not the lack of passion when it comes to young people but the nurturing and maintaining of that passion in them that gives them their identity and stability that proves to be difficult. This is why one finds the contemporary challenge of young people hopping around different churches trying to find this nurturing of their passion; in the most severe cases, they end up leaving the church totally due to the lack of passion that is there which leads to the lack of identity in themselves and in the churches that they are in and "also

due to the fact that they are not made to feel that they are part of the church. The church also does not really try to understand their needs and culture. This has forced the youth to try to find "church" elsewhere" (Nel & Thesnaar, 2006:96)-This will continue until such time that they find something or somewhere that is worth expanding themselves on.

In attempting to respond to this challenge, Nel and Thesnaar (2006:108-109) reflect on what would entail the attempt of making youth ministry more relevant in whatever context it exists.

3.2.4.2. A comprehensive understanding of identity in all its respects needs to be embedded into every young person; preferably from even a very young age as this is what will make sure that there is a solid basis for them as they grow up which will make it easier if not natural for the young people to be able to interactive and proactive in the faith community more particularly in the propelling of the ministerial aspect.

3.2.4.3. Having accomplished the above point accurately will it only be possible that the church be able to do the one thing that has been in question generally; meeting the youth and its ministries where they are and not bombard them with a world that is "foreign, irrelevant, and even occasionally offensive" (Senter III et al, 2001:81). "This compels the church to know the world the young people live in" and in so doing also calls the church into the space of allowing itself to get to know the different culture of young people and how to go around accommodating it. After all this is all that it comes down to when one looks at it in detail and if the church can at all cost exhaust all avenues to "build relationships with young people" based on the "relational understanding

of faith and truth” of both worlds in one. Nel refers to such an act as “the reconciliation of generations as part of an inclusive understanding of the faith community as such” (Nel & Thesnaar, 2006:109).

The researcher mentioned in the beginning of this section that the state of youth ministry may be summarised as being in a state of struggle. If there were to be a space of attempting to relieve that struggle anywhere around the globe, the four points that the researcher reflected on above should be the starting point. Maybe in doing so, half the work in the attempt to develop a contextual youth missional ecclesiology would already have been done.

3.3 CURRENT STATE OF YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

It was argued in the beginning of this chapter that the mistake that is commonly made when coming to youth ministry is that of considering the young people in it as the church of tomorrow and not of today. This mistake is what was constantly taking place in the MCSA in the recent past and the consequences of it are that the church ended up losing a lot of its youth to Charismatic churches as that there would be no place for them to be after moving out of the traditional Sunday school setup; the only remaining option would be to find somewhere where they would feel as though they are part of the life of the church and not just commodities thereof. Some branches of the church did attempt to bridge the gap that was being experienced and it led to some youth groups existing in some of the churches. As helpful as this was in itself, it began to pose a bit of a problem for the general structure because the youth structure began to become a bit fragmented and scattered. In noticing the trend that was happening throughout the church in general, the leadership of the church, in

consultation with the various structures that were in existence at that time, decided to establish an umbrella entity of the church which would encompass all of these youth groups; this entity is called the Methodist Youth Unit (herein after referred to as the MYU). As stated in chapter 2 as well that the MCSA had adopted an approach of being missional church; this was also one of the initiatives that was aimed at ensuring the missional focus that the youth of the church were to focus on as well.



Figure 6: Methodist Youth Unit Emblem from www.methodist.org.za/units/youthunit

The MYU was established officially in the year 2008 as a means of reconciling all youth bodies and organisations that existed in the MCSA. The aims and objectives of the unit as stated in the latest Constitution of the MYU drafted by the Revs (Ngcayisa & Mabinyane, 2011:2-3) are;

- ❖ To promote discipleship in Christ amongst young people *and children* inside and outside the Church, in particular those within the *Youth* unit, through practical implementation of credible youth programs as employed within the diverse youth groupings.
- ❖ To encourage young people *and children* to play a vital role in the growth and development of their church by receiving and exercising the grace of Christ.

- ❖ To help acquaint young people *and children* with biblical knowledge and to encourage them to actively participate in Christian Evangelistic programs that foster a Christ-like lifestyle.
- ❖ To promote enthusiasm and loyalty for the work of God as exercised through the Church in particular.
- ❖ To present God to the world through the Church.
- ❖ To live as Christ would have us live: unblemished lives that are morally upright and without reproach

All these were aimed and are still aimed at creating a stable and functional body of the youth in the MCSA being able to fulfil their own missional calling in the world in the different spheres in which they exist as will be reflected on below and at the same time being recognised and active members of the church at large.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, the MYU was established as an umbrella body and in it, it consists of different entities that are, in most places in the Connexion, fully functional and consistent in the fulfilment of the missional calling of the church as a whole. I will give a brief outline of all the entities and what their purpose is in the make-up of the youth structure.

3.3.1. Children's Ministry (CM)



Figure 7: Methodist Children's Ministry emblem from www.methodist.org.za/units/youthunit/entities

‘Feed My Lambs...Tyisa izimvu Zam...Alosa dinkwana tsa ka’, this is the motto by which the CM goes because this is primarily what takes place in the body. In the Bible, Jesus Christ compels the world to prioritise children in all that is done because at the end of it all, they are the one who will remain to receive the full reward of the gifts of the Kingdom of God. This is primarily the response that the CM gives to the youngest in the generation of the church. The question is there however, of what difference this makes in the mission mandate of the church; the answer to this question is fairly simple. In the MCSA, the CM is the base inlet source of the church because what the children are taught there is what they keep in them for the rest of their lives in some or other form and that which they are taught is what they in turn inject into the life of the church in continuity. The mistake that is to be rectified is that of thinking that mission is just a part of what the church does but that it is actually what the church is and what it exists for. In the CM this is what is taught to the children that are part of it as plainly as possible and the one thing that the researcher likes as well about the way in which it done is that they are not indoctrinated into anything but rather what is said from that young age is that each child, in fulfilling the commandments of Christ in the world, should be what they want to see happening in all that they say and do in the church. This is what ends up encouraging and motivating them as well because the feeling already from there is that of being part of the life and breath of the church already even at the tender and formative age. Not only is this done in the CM, but Biblical studies is also a great part of it and is

treated as an academic discipline for which actual recognition can be given in terms of achievement.

3.3.2. Young Adult Movement (YAM)



Figure 8: Young Adults Movement emblem from www.mcsamyu.org.za/entities/youngadultmovement

The MCSA generally, especially in the Black context, is a uniformed church differing between the different organisations that are in the church. In the most recent years, one of the things that have been causing 'discomfort', if we may call it that, is the issue of uniform and its significance. The biggest issue however was that of uniform being a bit exclusive of certain young people in the church because one would find that they want to be part of the things that were taking place in the church but felt as if they could not because of not having the necessary uniform. This fact is primarily where the YAM comes from and the total membership of YAM consists of young adults, commonly between the ages of 25 and 35. These are people who wish to be part of the life of the church but not as part of any uniformed organisation that is in the church. In the researcher's view, this movement knows what it would like to do as part of fulfilling mission, but it has proven difficult because there are still a lot of gaps of confusion that are there in some places in the Connexion. As much as it is still a work in progress, the researcher believes that it will be successful in reaching its full potential as the mandate of the movement is clear in it being one that aims to

spread mission by young people from Cape all the way to Cairo. A current indication of this is that the Limpopo District (to change to Limpopo Synod in 2020) of the MCSA has already the privilege of hosting the first YAM Spiritual Retreat at the end of November 2018.

3.3.3. Methodist Student Society (MethSSoc)



**Figure 9: Methodist Student Society Emblem from
www.methodist.org.za/units/youthunit/entities/methssoc**

‘To Bring about Change...Let us show ourselves’. The researcher argued earlier in this chapter that one of the concerns of the MCSA in terms of the youth was that they end up moving out of the church into the realm of Charismatic Churches as a means of finding somewhere to belong. The primary stage where this was taking place was when young people moved into the space of tertiary educational institutions where the presence of the MCSA was very poor. This is what led to the establishing of the MethSSoc as a means by the church to try to ensure that students who were Methodists would be able to continue living out and spreading the Methodist Ethos on the different campuses that they are on. When it came to formulating a constitution for MethSSoc, it proved a bit difficult for the initiators because, as was seen in the recent past #feesmustfall movement, that the challenges

and state of students was different in all the places that they were. Consultation did take place however through the different mediums that the church had in place and the general consensus that came from that was that the three main things that would make up the mission of MethSSoc are;

- ❖ To ensure that all students establish and maintain a living relationship with God and have Personal Holiness as a lifestyle.
- ❖ To ensure that all students have financial stability and adequate and appropriate social interactions while maintaining a principled life of purpose.
- ❖ To ensure that every student maintains the utmost academic excellence throughout all his or her years of study and beyond if opted for.

All of these based on the mission imperatives of the MCSA that we looked at in chapter 2, as one of the purposes of its establishment was to be an agent of these imperatives. Of course, there are some challenges with regards to the regulation of how MethSSoc work because in some cases in the past, there have been some that ended up operating separate from the greater church and that is what lead to a clause being added to the constitution in 2011 stating that it is subject to section 2 of the Methodist Book of Order in all its operations. This was done to make sure that all MethSSoc stayed in line with the mandate of the greater church. The latest MethSSoc society that has been established is at our very own University of Pretoria (UPMethSSoc) in 2017.

3.3.4. Boys and Girls Brigades



Figure 10: Junior Manyano emblem from www.methodist.org.za/organisations/juniormanyano

In addition to the CM, there are other brigades in which all young children in the MCSA can be part of. The functions of these brigades is exactly the same as that of the CM but the only difference or rather addition in this case is that over and above the Biblical and academic teachings that are given in the CM, general life skills and social skills are embedded into the children that are part of these brigades as a way of attempting to instil a holistic composition of every child in the MCSA in each of their continued growth and membership in the church.

3.3.5. Wesley Guild (WG)



Figure 11: Wesley Guild Emblem from www.mcsamyu.org.za/entities/wesleyguild

“One Heart...One Way”. The researcher opted to end with the Wesley Guild because it is the entity that carries the greatest amount of membership throughout the Connexion and is also the oldest entity in the MYU. If the researcher were to attempt to go into the history and evolution of the Wesley Guild at this stage, he would have to write a thesis on the topic on its own as it is very vast and long spanning from the hands of Rev. W. Blackburn Fitzgerald and Rev. Charles Henry Kelly in 1896. In short, however, the Wesley Guild began as the ‘Guild of the good life’ in Leeds, England. At its inception the main goals it had was to have young people being part of the life of the church in taking up some form of leadership and also to act as an agent of bridging the gap between the Sunday School and other organisations in the church (this indicates that the problem of losing young people in the church is not a new thing and has been a challenge for the longest of time). Over the years and centuries, it continued to spread and evolve throughout all the different contexts in which the Methodist Church found itself being established. John Wesley who was the founder of Methodism had what was referred to as the four alls that formed the basis of

his theological journey. George Earys added A fifth 'all' in 1909 and they were affirmed by William Sangster in 1951. They stand as follows;

- ❖ All need to be saved
- ❖ All can be saved
- ❖ All can know that they are saved
- ❖ All can be saved to the uttermost
- ❖ All can bear witness to their salvation

These 'alls' formed also the ethos from which the Wesley Guild walked. Again, in continuous evolution, the aims of the Wesley Guild until this day have been based on what is referred to as the four C's. We may refer to these as the missional aims of the Wesley Guild as well. What makes them all the more significant and relevant is that the focus of these aims is not directed externally only but also internally relating to the members of the movement as well. In the researcher's view, the Wesley Guild in the way he has observed it over some time, is the only movement that does not do mission as part of its plan but has mission as its plan-Christ being at the centre of it all at all times.

The four Cs of Christ, as they are commonly referred to stand as follows;

3.3.5.1. Consecration.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, to consecrate means to "give entirely to a specific person, activity, or cause" (Oxford Dictionary, 2001:251). This is exactly what is done in the Wesley Guild. The dominant belief is that in order to be able to do things for others, they need to be aware of themselves and take care of their own well-being first. This is what the Wesley Guild promotes for all of its members but

the way in which they advise this taking place is by cultivating and developing a personal relationship with God and Christ between each and every member of the movement, which is to be used as a source of being for each person in the movement; this channelling the willingness to be missional in each person. In Chapter 4, poverty of being is one concept that we will reflect on as one of the challenges in the response of the missional church to poverty.

3.3.5.2. Creativity.

In establishing one's identity in Christ and beginning a stable journey with God, what happens usually is that that person begins to discover the gifts and talents that have been placed in them by God but in some people's cases, they do not take these seriously or use them as much as they are supposed to. The creativity C acts as the agent of identifying and developing these gifts and talent in every member and ensuring that the person uses them to the fullest ability that they have and in every place that they go to because in some cases, the gifts are not only meant to benefit the person but to influence the lives of other people as well. The Wesley Guild guidelines state that this goes to the extent of extending young people's awareness of the world around them; the way in which it operates; structures of government, policy making, traditional authority, language and other institutions; all these will mingle with programmes which enhance the lives of Guilders through acceptance of cultural traditions and changing lifestyles.

3.3.5.3. Comradeship.

When one has discovered the gifts that they possess, the aim becomes that of having them developed and shaped to the point where other people will be able to benefit from them. This is however a bit difficult sometimes if a person has to do it on his or her own constantly. This is where the role of comradeship comes into play. In comradeship, the space is created where everyone has the opportunity to tap into each other's spirit and in severe circumstances, find themselves in the other person or people; this then leading to relationships that are more personal between members of the guild developing and growing, even to the point where they exist outside the Wesley Guild.

3.3.5.4. Community Development.

In the establishment of relationships outside of the boundaries of the Wesley Guild, the fundamental occurrence naturally in the nature of people is that of interest in what is taking place in other people's life-
The researcher mentioned above that consecration leads to influence- and this is what community development spawns from. In his view, Comm. Dev. acts as the sealant of the missional drive by the other three and actually has the capacity to reach the widest people range in terms of the influence that it carries.

In summing 4 C's up, we can say that the element of being missional that they possess is an inward out process as the results that come from exercising them are influenced by the traits that the specific member of the Wesley Guild possesses as well.

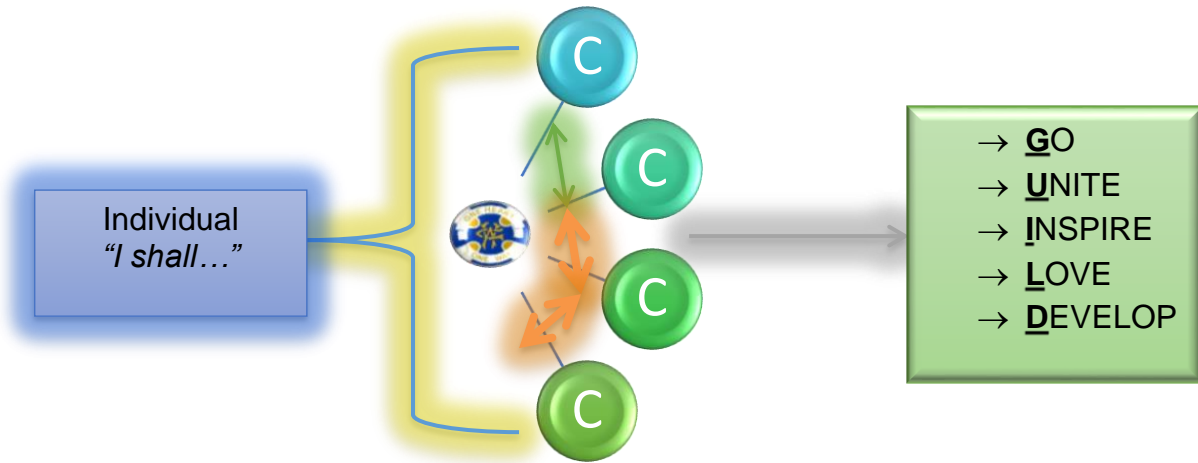


Figure 12: Framework of How Wesley Guild Operates as Missional Church Agent.

3.3.4. "SHAPING TOMORROW TODAY".



Figure 13: Official MCSA Conference Logo 2018 from www.methodist.org.za/events/conference-2018-Maputo

The MCSA sat for its 129th Conference in September of 2018 in Maputo, Mozambique. The theme that the whole event was centred around was "Shaping Tomorrow Today". The purpose of this theme by the church was to try to begin the

emphasis process on the fact that young people and children in particular are a more integral part of the church and not just a commodity. The basis scripture for this theme is found in Matthew 18:1-20 however, the focus points in the passage are ““he called a little child and had him stand among them... And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.” (Matthew 18:2 and 5 NIV). “But if you give them (these little ones) a hard time, bullying or taking advantage of their simple trust, you will soon wish you hadn’t. (Matthew 18:6, Message)” (Siwa, 2018:1). The main aim of the theme by the Presiding Bishop (PB) is highlighted in his message being the fact that “children are a central part of the Family of God, not a gift for the future but our very life blood. Children are able to contribute to the life of the church in every way” (Siwa, 2018:1).

The PB in issuing the challenge to the rest of the church stated the fact that yes, young people and children in particular have a place of sort in the structure and practices of the church, but those spaces still operate in a secluded and isolated areas, almost making them seem as separate from the bigger church. Therefore, the call is for a change because “the church has to be actively involved in actions that create a transformed future, especially in the real-life issues of young people. We have to be relevant and active now. It is imperative because our action or inaction will shape tomorrow” (Siwa, 2018:2)-This is what Nel is alluding to as well in his article as is tabled in the preceding point saying that the youth needs to be met where they are and developed from there. “The care of children cannot just be relegated to the work of the Youth Unit, but should be the work of the whole church” (Siwa, 2018:4).

To begin the ground work to making this a full scale reality within the whole church, the following are the resolutions on the work of the MCSA to ensure the realisation

and practice of the theme of conference going further...all taking place under the broad theme of “Igniting Mission...Breaking Barriers” (See Chapter 2);

- 3.3.4.1. It is good that we speak about the development of children and young people in the church however if it remains just that, talk, then it is futile. Concrete financial investment needs to be made in children and youth ministry in the church; this is what will show real missional prioritising by the church in efforts of “shaping the future now” (Siwa, 2018:5).
- 3.3.4.2. It is true that youth ministry is based in the church; however, they also exist in the community outside of the church. It is therefore important to also address the various social and family issues that they may encounter. “The church must be at the forefront of fighting the scourge of abuse and violence especially against women and children” (Siwa, 2018:7).
- 3.3.4.3. Administratively, the Education for Ministry and Mission Unit (EMMU), which is responsible for the training of the clergy in the church, has been tasked with the formulation of a module that will deal specifically with the inclusivity of youth children’s ministries in the MCSA-the key feature of this module not being only about youth and children but also include them in it as well in turn making it as relevant as possible (Conference Resolutions, 2019:96-97).
- 3.3.4.4. Also, administratively, the MYU that is reflected on above will also have its name altered to being the Methodist Children and Youth Unit (MCYU). This being done so as to also incorporate the importance of the representation of Children’s Ministry as well in the missional practices of the church-They too have been a forgotten group in the

past. In the same sentiment, the MCYU Connexional Executive Committee will be expanded to include a Connexional Children's Ministry Convener; this is so expected in all the other structures of the church as well. (Conference Resolutions, 2019:97).

- 3.3.4.5. As part of the Methodist ethos, John Wesley taught from that time that ministry to children and young people is paramount. For this fact, Presbyters and Preachers all around the MCSA have and are being reminded of this teaching by Wesley;

“[W]e must meet them at least an hour every week; talk with them whenever we see any of them at home; pray in earnest for them; diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses. Some will say, “I have no gift for this.” Gift or no gift, you are to do this, or else you are not called to be a Methodist Preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use every help God hath put into your way, in order to attain it. Preach expressly on the education [once a year]” (DeSilva, 2004:9). (Conference Resolutions, 2019:97).

C. S. Lewis is quoted Desmond Tutu in his book *No future without forgiveness* where he says, “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” (Tutu, 1999: 85). The PB refers to this quote and in so doing, he says that it is true that the church in general was created and stands for a different purpose and for that reason it had to stand out from the rest of the world. The caution however is that the wounds that the world carries should not be ignored because the people who come into the church come from the world. Adding to this it is

the young people in the church that also need attention because as much as we do not want to acknowledge it, their wounds come from inside the church through its ignorance; “We have to be followers of the Lord to make this happen. That we do with our words, because words have a power to create, but we do not end there; we commit to actions and investments that shape the future in a positive way. The way has been opened by God and as disciples of a transforming discipleship movement; we have to walk the talk. (Siwa, 2018, p. 8)...‘Shaping Tomorrow Today’.

3.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

So where are we now? Youth Ministry generally is a work in progress because of the extensive changes that are taking place and the challenges that are still there in the different contexts all over the globe. This is true also in the MCSA because as much as there has been a response from the church as explained above, there are still a lot of places throughout the Connexion where there are still challenges and fragments caused by various things, especially in the rural areas of the Connexion. In spite of all of this though, through what the church has embarked on, one can already make the distinction that there is already positive development towards achieving the goal of relevant missional ecclesiology with young people being at the centre of it all; what remains ahead, is the task of actual implementation. Recommendations on how to further improve this will follow in chapter 6 where everything will be properly wrapped up and consolidated.

This chapter has dealt with the state of youth ministry in and outside of the MCSA. In the following chapter, we are going to be investigating the core aspects of missional church according to young people.

4. CHAPTER 4: PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF MISSIONAL CHURCH; IN THE EYE OF THE YOUTH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the aim is to as best as possible outline the basic practical aspects of missional church this answering the third research question of this study. We will be looking at this point from the eye of a young person in the MCSA looking at the current state of how it is taking place. In addition to this, a practical example of how these can be implemented was investigated. This reflection is not however intended as a statement of how incorrectly it is currently being done in the church but rather it is to show where the actual and primary focus should lie to ensure a continuation of the church as reintroduced as being missional in nature. In doing so, we are going to state the two primary points that would actually, if used properly, result in the proper flow of the starting point of the mandate of missional church going forth into the future generations. These points are;

- Missional Church as a response to poverty.
- Missional Church the driver of the creation of sustainable communities.

4.2 MISSIONAL CHURCH AS A RESPONSE TO POVERTY

All throughout the history of civilisation in the 21st century especially, one of the key aims has been to attempt to address the issue of poverty. Currently, number one on the list of sustainable development goals that were put in place by the United Nations General Assembly is zero poverty because “eradicating poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity” (UNDP, 2018). The only difference however between general society and the missional church is that in

the church, the concept is not taken only at face value but it looks at addressing the problem in the wholeness of the person meaning that both the inside and the outside ought to be taken care of for one to say they have done the job completely. This section of this chapter attends to poverty, recognising that, for young people, or more specifically young Methodist Christians, this is the departure point before doing anything else because if it is addressed adequately, then everything else flows out naturally, as it is supposed to. In so doing, the following questions were answered;

- ❖ What is poverty?
- ❖ What are the types of poverty?
- ❖ What can/ should the response of the Missional Church be?

4.2.1 WHAT IS POVERTY?

The researcher mentioned in the beginning of this chapter that various structures and organisations have their different opinions and definitions when it comes to defining the concept of poverty. The one thing however, that is always missed in doing this is that all the definitions that are given regarding poverty come from the perspective of the outside person, never from the people that find themselves actually being in the situation. The result of this is then that there is never an authentic definition thereof but rather what the outside forces perceive or think is poverty.

Poverty can be and is defined in different ways by the people who are experiencing and are living in it because in all cases it means different things. Corbett and Fikkert (2009) display the results from a survey that was conducted by the World Bank in trying to find out how people see their own situations and describe them as well. In reflecting on the responses, they found that “poor people typically talk in terms of shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression,

social isolation and voicelessness” (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009:53) and due to these statements from people, it is clearly shown that if the mentality does not change, it will prove difficult if not impossible to propose poverty alleviation strategies. In light of this, the angle of analysis was changed a bit and the focal point became from a scriptural or rather biblical perspective. The biggest contributor there in that sphere that perpetuates poverty is that of foundational relationships that need to work with each other and function properly. “When these relationships are functioning properly, people are able to fulfil their calling of glorifying God by working and supporting themselves and their families with the fruit of that work” (Corbett and Fikkert, 2009:57). Figure 4.1 below, shows how these foundational relationships look and link.



Figure 14: Four Foundational Relationships adapted from Corbett and Fikkert (2009:57-58)

In summing the definition up in light of the figure above, Corbett and Fikkert say that in truth “Poverty is the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom (peace) in all of its meanings” (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009:62).

To bring it home a little bit more, we must also reflect on how poverty is defined and experienced in the African context because as much as the above displayed information is relevant, it was compiled using a different context and as the researcher mentioned in the beginning of this section of this chapter that it means different things to different people depending on the specific place and context that they are in.

Robert N’Kwim reflects on the definition of poverty in the African context in the 21st century and is so doing he also agrees with Corbett and Fikkert saying that according to the Bible as well, there are many terms that are used to describe poverty and those are mostly based on the Greek and Latin origin from which the word ‘poor’ comes from (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:92). N’Kwim however goes further to say that as much as there are many definitions based on different disciplines, in his book his focus in “on the African approach that stigmatises more the meaning of ‘human poverty’ where Africans living in countries that have enormous natural resources but who have not any means to exploit them for diverse reasons” (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:93). In light of this statement, he continues to say that in many African countries, the concept of poverty is understood in two ways; firstly, it refers to people who are subject to a general lack of the necessary basic needs of survival and secondly, people who are subject to oppression and “are powerless victims of injustice”. When one takes a look at the state of most of the places and countries in Africa specifically, one finds that more rather than less, the situations in the lives of the people in those places indicate both of these factors taking place flowing from each other if not simultaneously- People do not have enough to sustain themselves and that is as a direct result of the state of economic injustice in those particular areas.

Looking at the reflection N’Kwim makes in the attempt to discern poverty, the conclusion that he makes is not that of summarising all of the statements into a single definition but rather he says that in light of all of the statements, “the church in Africa should give the response to eradicate poverty” (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:95) and the researcher agrees completely with this statement of N’Kwim because it is futile to attach definitions to things but never actual solutions to how those problems can be combatted and completely eradicated.

In light of all the above mentioned, we must acknowledge that before we can go any further into trying to find solutions, we need to be dead sure of the severity of the diagnosed problem; in a similar way in which a doctor will make sure of the exact state of a patient before he or she can administer surgery on that specific patient. Oladipo (2000) says that the reason for this is that “it is being recognized that the causes of poverty are complex and include some which are even contradictory” and therefore “Based on this view of the multidimensional nature of the causes of poverty, holistic approaches to poverty alleviation are being promoted” (Olapido, 2000:146). This in itself has its implications as is noted later in this section of the chapter.

Mills (2011) says that one reason that many places in Africa find themselves in a state of poverty is that the leadership of those countries decided that that should be the case. He further argues that records have shown that if the decisions that are taken in some countries would be take in the best interest of the country and its people and most importantly, are sound, then there would be a visible increase in the potential of the economy of that country (Mills, 2011:1-2). That being said, it is not to say that those leaders are completely to blame for the situation as it is, they too sometimes find themselves in situations where they have to act spontaneously

and under pressure in their decision-making; Mills argues however that even in those cases, those times should be considered as “obstacles to be overcome, not as permanent excuses for failure” (Mills, 2011:2). To substantiate the argument that Mills makes, he states the following. 1, the poverty in Africa is not because of the fact that expertise is not available; in the same way that other continents can externally source expertise, so can Africa. 2, Africa’s poverty is not because its people do not work hard, there are various other factors that influence the level of productivity that comes from the continent. 3, Africa’s poverty is not because there are not natural resources; Compared to other continents on the planet, Africa is rich in native resources, they have just not been used accordingly and have only benefited the rich and powerful. 4, Lastly, Africa’s poverty is not because of a lack of private wealth; many different private companies and individuals exist but the problem comes where these entities exist only to serve personal interests and the only real beneficiaries are those who are linked directly to these. Mills emphasises that poverty in Africa exists because of the decisions that country leaders make surrounding the above-mentioned factors. African leaders have unequivocally managed to ‘outsource’ their problems to external parties and that is the biggest contributor to poverty because there has been a lack of management of these external parties and “money flows according to the democratic reform and delivery record of the recipients” (Mills, 2011:12-14). To a bigger detriment, these leaders are never brought to account for such continually taking place (Mills, 2011:229-230). Mills’ argument may be added onto the list that Corbett and Fikkert table of the reason for the existence of poverty. This topic of leadership as driver is touched on in chapter 5 of this study as well.

4.2.2 WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF POVERTY?

In the above point, we looked in as simplest detail as possible at the gist of what poverty is and how it is experienced in different contexts. In this point, the researcher wants to try to touch a bit on the specifics of how or rather why poverty is experienced which is what leads to the different responses that come forth in the enquiry of it. The following are the four types of Poverty as adapted from Corbett and Fikkert (2009:61). Prior to going into the details, it is necessary to mention that as displayed in the first part of this section, everything stems forth from the deprivation of attention to the external factors associated to each of the types as displayed.

4.2.2.1. Poverty of Being

If we can for a little bit of time take off the academic hat and put on the hat of the pastor. In the beginning of all creation, God created everything in the world in accordance to what God saw as fit however when God made human beings, there was a level of difference that God made in them by way that they were to have dominion over all things that God Had created; in addition to this, human beings were made in the image of God as well. Putting back the academic hat, we can say that through this process, people can be classified as having the same being as God or rather that they flow exclusively from the being of God. Now the poverty of being come into the picture because human beings lose, for some reason, their being in God which results in them also deteriorating in the knowledge of themselves, sort of like a drop in the Godly self-esteem that they possess. In a nutshell, poverty of being is as a result of detachment from the being of God in one.

This is the first point in the chain reaction of things as is seen in the following points.

4.2.2.2. Poverty of Community

When one becomes detached from their source of being and existence, naturally the result is to try to find something or someone to attach him\herself to in order to have some kind of meaning. This does take place but most of the time these associations and attachments do not last very long because the natural personality trait that is predominant is that of selfishness and self-centeredness. This is the primary if not the sole reason why one finds in some places that people end up being used and exploited for no reason at all and no problem being seen with that either. Poverty of community comes as a result of a lack of identity in the person and therefore leading to the creation or establishing of a state of isolation.

4.2.2.3. Poverty of Stewardship

When human beings were first placed in the world, the primary duty that they possessed was that of having dominion over all things that God had created and in so doing, they also had the role of taking care of the things that God created as well. Now due to the fact that people themselves lose the purpose that they have in the world and begin to centre all around themselves, it continues to lead on to people beginning to ignore that purpose as well of being stewards over the gifts they have been given by God. The belief that stems forth is that the creation around people matters not any longer and there is no reason or rather there is no longer a need for it to be taken care of because people no longer receive what they think is due to them and therefore declare creation as cursed and despicable; we see this in our

current context as well because things like global warming and climate change are taking place as a direct result of human action however it is very seldom where you will hear a plain admission to this effect but rather one hears responses such as that it is the “earth’s fault” that this is even taking place to begin with and that is a direct stem of the laziness and unwillingness of people to even own up to anything. Poverty of stewardship plainly comes from people refusing any responsibility or obligation to the creation that surrounds them and that they live in.

4.2.2.4. Poverty of Spiritual Intimacy

In the first point, the researcher mentioned that all of these are part of a chain reaction that comes from the main detachment from God taking place. It is therefore important to note that there is no way that anything can stay normal anyway because one breach upsets the entire flow of things. Due to materialism and a lack of responsibility being the overarching present factors in people, there ends up being no necessity for the belief in the existence of God as being and creator and that makes it all the more easy to deny that God is there and that the reason for everything being in existence (including people themselves by the way) is by and because of God. The authority of God that he possesses over people becomes invalid due to the fact that God Godself has no longer a place in the ‘day to day operations’ of people’s lives. The dynamic that remains however is that according some scientists and anthropologists, a person can survive on their own however it is unlikely that it will last for a very long time because for a definite sense of security, a person needs some or other kind of ‘higher power’ that they need to believe in or even of it is not a power or being, the need is to believe in or believe

something. The problem that comes with this however is the fact that when it does take place, people do not go back to God that they know, instead they seek something else or someone else to serve that purpose and as we see in our context today as well, many people are today fall victim or rather willingly fall into the realm of being taken in by spirits and also into the worship of false gods and in more severe circumstances, false human idols who normally take advantage in that instance.

These are but a few of the many different types of poverty that are experienced by people in the different spaces in which they are. The significant dynamic however in all of them that is present is the chain flow that they carry from each other irrespective of where or what the point of departure is.

The job of the missional church is supposed to be creating the bridge that tries to meet the challenge of poverty in its entirety through primarily addressing the causes that lead up to the abovementioned types of poverty. A proposal thereof is what we will look at in this following point.

4.2.3 WHAT CAN/SHOULD THE RESPONSE OF THE MISSIONAL CHURCH BE?

It was mentioned above in the description of the components of missional church (see chapter 2), that missional church is Missionary, Historical, Contextual & Incarnational, Active in the Missio Dei, Eschatological, Practical. These components are the ones that should be the point of departure in terms of this point; they should be the ones that answer the question of 'What is the church going to do about it?' This is the question that is typically comes up in most times from people in general when reflecting on situations. The problem that the researcher has observed in general is not really that of the church not knowing what it ought to do but rather the

biggest issue is how they need to do what needs to be done. This is what results in a lot of confusion taking place and the wrong things end up taking place or rather things take place in an inappropriate and non-beneficial way.

Under normal circumstances, the general expectation is that the state is the entity that is supposed to be responsible for ensuring that all citizens and occupants of a certain country or residential area. This is the case in some places in Africa as well however it is not very wildly seen because the concept of the separation of the external entities and the government is also not something that is common either; The Dutch Reformed Church states that people need to be aware of the fact that missional church is centred around words and actions; as much as the separation of these two has been perpetuated in many contexts, in the case of missional church, this cannot and never will be so for the sole reason that mission is both talk and walk (General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, 2013:10).

N’Kwim (2016) quotes Silvio Ferrari where he says

“The central role recognised to civil society engages the Christian faithful” and this is what also compels the church in a way to also be involved in the addressing of the pressing issue of poverty especially in the African context as it affects the majority of people living here. Ferrari continues to say “the distinction between religion and politics. Church and State, that is traditional in Christian thought, has sometimes been misunderstood and interpreted as something that limits the responsibility of Christians to spiritual affairs”.

This in itself is not true, and we can assume that it is directly the cause of why it has overcome over the past years (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:95).

N’Kwim says that the point of departure in the attempt to alleviate poverty is that of trying as best as possible to make sure that all people actually know exactly their

worth in their spiritual lives primarily and stemming forth from that what they actually need to and have been called to do; this is then what will discern to them the direction that they need to follow in the social and economic sphere that will open the door to the passage leading out of the situation of poverty (N’Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:95-96). This statement of N’Kwim is in agreement with Corbett and Fikkert because in responding to this question they say that the reason that people get hurt rather than helped by the church in most cases is because the church comes in very aggressively at times and ends up doing a lot of things for people but at the end of that, those people are still left with nothing that they actually need. They therefore resolve in saying that relief is not always the answer because when the aftereffects thereof have gone past, the affected people are returned back to square one where they were. The safest option opposed to giving things to people or doing things for them, the missional church should play the role of supporting and guiding the affected people back into their own redemption and rebuilding and subsequently a total overcoming of the situation of poverty. (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009:64-71). For African people, this is of utmost importance as well because in most cases generally, the encouragement to do something in one’s life or implementing something in one’s life come from seeing someone else doing it and it working wonders in that person’s context. Not going against the Bible however in this case, envy is allowed.

The process of facilitating the above is a bit easier for the church according to Olapido (2000:146-147) and the following are the reasons therefore;

- ❖ The church does not have any specific group of people that it affiliates itself to or a specific group of people that it serves; the church is open and available to all people and is available to assist anyone and everyone who

comes through its doors and all of this, it does and should do non-judgmentally.

- ❖ The church does not possess the ability to stop existing with people leaving and people coming in. Olapido makes an example to political organisations where the stress constantly there is of what will take place at the following election time and the worry of officials being unseated due to various issues. The church does not fall into this category because the church remains as is even when the people in the church change around at whatever time that takes place.
- ❖ The way in which the church does things does not change in a regular cycle and therefore people always know what is going to take place and the things necessary for everything to take place is readily available.
- ❖ The reason that people are prone to more easily receive the things that the church does is because the church acts also as the subconscious voice of people that guides or rather determines some of the decisions that people make and the way in which they do things as well.
- ❖ The purpose of the existence of the church, which we can also say is the core of what the church is, is mission and that mission being aimed at bettering the lives of all marginalized and excluded by standards of general society. This goes hand in hand with the service of the people of God that they give in the attempt of ensuring that this takes place.
- ❖ Lastly, hope is the main theology of the church and in poverty alleviation, the primary goal that exists is that all people at the end of it all possess this and use it in all that they do and go through in their own lives.

To summarise briefly, to answer the questions in this section; Poverty is a general lack of resources that one experience. This is not limited to only material resources such as money but also stretches to different spheres of one's life. Types of poverty include but are not limited to poverty of Being, Community, Stewardship and Spiritual Intimacy. These all linked to the disrupted foundational relationships of human beings with God, Self, Others and the Rest of Creation. Poverty in all its forms continues to be a problem in society because more and more people find themselves being subjected to it. The role of the Church therefore in the attempt to alleviate poverty, is to make sure that all people know their real worth in whatever situation they are in. This in turn is what will create the space for them to see their actual need too and the direction that needs to be followed around that need. N'Kwim argues that in every social and economic sphere, this is what will open the door to the passage leading out of the situation of poverty (N'Kwim Bibi-Bikan, 2016:96). Rather than just temporary relief, this is the best response that the church can offer; also for purposes of sustainability. Marais (2017) argues that "the most sustainable way to combat poverty, or injustice, to heal and restore trust, is to participate together in a new missional community" (Marais, 2017:72).

4.3 MISSIONAL CHURCH AS THE CREATOR OF SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Missional Church is contextual and incarnational which means that it needs to take the form of whatever place it finds itself having to be in. This being the case, because the researcher stated in chapter to that mission is part of a covenantal relationship that God has with the earth and as such is continuous, missional church needs to in

that same spirit be continuous itself and it its work and thus this is where the dynamic of sustainability comes into play.

In contemporary society, in everything that is proposed, the question of sustainability and continuity is paramount. The reason for that is that the goal at the ultimate end of everything is that a project, for example, will be able to carry itself on even after a certain group of people have moved on from it and with growth, might even expand to other parts of that country or place in general. In that being said, there has always been the tension between sustainable development and sustainability with the main question there being which of the two is better or more preferable. According to Robinson (2004), the two are not necessarily supposed to be separated because sustainable development tends to look at a more broader scope of things and is looked at with the intention of establishing and sustainability gives specific attention to whether people will be able to survive and live in certain environmental situations therefore the two concepts are not interchangeable but rather they feed off each other in the same vision (Robinson, 2004:369).

Herein this section of this chapter, the idea of sustainable communities in Southern Africa in relation to the missional church was investigated. In so doing, the following questions were looked at:

- ❖ What is the origin of the idea of sustainable communities?
- ❖ How does it form part of the missional calling of the church?
- ❖ What is the role of the church in promoting sustainable communities?
- ❖ Which resources are available to the church, and what are the problems and obstacles?
- ❖ How must the church approach this matter in practice?
- ❖ How important is lifestyle?

❖ What have we missed?

In addition to this, we will also lay out a practical example of how the answers to the above questions can be implemented in a real life situation.

4.3.1 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

According to Mutavhatsindi (2015), the concept of sustainable communities is only a part of the extended study of sustainable living, society, development etc. because both the terms 'sustainable' and 'community' are quite broad terms themselves because they can be extended onto every sphere of life as we know it in their different forms of implementation and explanation and therefore they are individually subject to definition themselves in the effort of understanding the concept as a whole (Mutavhatsindi, 2015:1).

4.3.2 WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

In the general world, the belief or assumption is that all fields that operate are different from each other and therefore cannot and do not have influence in each other. This is however not entirely the truth. The reason for this is that, specifically in Southern Africa, the various industries influence each other regardless of whether it is to a greater or lesser extent. For example, in South Africa, the price of petrol will directly influence the price of the tin of baked beans that one buys at the shop. The same takes place as well with other fields and sectors in all of Southern Africa. Now, as stated in the introduction of this section, that the term community is a broad term; in this case it refers to all the different sectors and fields that are in existence and influence each other to however much extent. The idea of sustainable communities

comes from the goal of having the uniformity of each and every sector that exist being at a stance and place where they are sustainable in everything that they do because that is the goal that is anticipated, not only in Southern Africa, but the entire world. This is the reason for various centres and institutions of sustainability being established in all places from the academic sphere all the way to the workplace. Sustainable community refers to all being uniform in the stance of sustainability (not sustainable development...).

4.3.3 HOW DOES IT FORM PART OF THE MISSIONAL CALLING OF THE CHURCH?

The term that was being used is 'missionary', however over the past short while the term 'missional' has come into play being used interchangeably and sometimes to replace. The significant question in this regard is how important the sudden change is and what would a typical congregation do in efforts of meeting this change in their specific context (Mutavhatsindi, 2015:3). The change is significant because missionary typically referred to a specific place or purpose that is being addressed however missional seeks not to depicts any specific context and in that not making any differentiation whatsoever between all the peoples by way of race, gender, ethnicity etc.

Therefore, in saying this, sustainable communities play a role in the missional calling of the church because what the concept seeks to do is the same as what the church generally aims to make known to all; the fact that we should realise that all of us are the same and we should treat each other and do things the same irrespective of the few differences in opinion.

4.3.4 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

The Church as an institution has the basic role of bridging sustainability in efforts of meeting all the other communities halfway and perpetuating it further through them. Vallance et al. (2011) when referring to this argue that “rather than hoping, or simply expecting, that positive biophysical environmental outcomes will follow development, a second strand of social sustainability literature actively and explicitly explores ways of promoting ‘eco-friendly’ behaviour or stronger environmental ethics” (Vallance et al, 2011:344). When saying this, they were saying that all the various disciplines that are in existence should have the goal of building and establishing more bridges to each other in efforts of knowing what is happening in each other and subsequently having some or other sort of influence in that.

This is also the role that the church has to play in the issue of sustainable communities. The most efficient way in which they can do this is simply through carrying out mission but not just any mission, mission that will serve a purpose and have a long lasting effect in whatever context it is done as is described by Guder (1998:11). This however is should not end in the church itself but as stated above, should enable bridges to be built into other fields that might be of assistance and relevance to them. In addition to this task, Bosch (1995) argues that mission also has to be ecological in the form that it cannot ignore the effects that take place on the environment as a result of some of the activities of mission (Bosch, 1995:55-56). Wright (2010:267) attests to this fact as well where he argues that “ecologically responsible behaviour is an integral facet of the church’s mission and part of Christian discipleship”. Niemandt (2015) refers to Carl Laferton where he argues that integral and integrated mission is important because it is what assists people to

gain a deeper and more comprehensive meaning of what mission actually entails (Niemandt, 2015:4). And so, to go back to the initial question of this point, outside of the church, there are many other spheres that exist and each has its own components to which attention needs to be given; the role of missional church is to find common ground with all of these other spheres and work with and within them to advance the agenda of mission.

4.3.5 WHICH RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO THE CHURCH, AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES?

Especially in the government sector in Southern Africa, the common excuse that is brought up in most instances when something cannot be done or even started is that there are not enough resources to do it and therefore it ends up failing to take place. With regards to what we are discussing, as stated in the above question, the missional approach that can be used is the building of bridges between the church and other fields. In looking at resources, the church can look internally at itself and see what they have and in the event that there is more that is needed, the church can make use of those bridges to try and source resources that they can be able to use internally and externally in extending their missional claim.

It is inevitable however that there might be problems or obstacles that the church might meet in the endeavour of approaching the fields with which they have built bridges. To mention a few of many, the most common obstacle that the church would meet are;

- ❖ Some of the fields that the church approaches might say that in efforts of preserving their policies, they are not able to assist religious efforts.
- ❖ Resources might be offered by some or other field, but those resources are not relevant to what the church would like to do.

- ❖ Lastly, the biggest obstacle would be that of there not being any resources even to offer from any of the fields because of the economic state that most of the countries in Southern Africa are in which prevent any excess to be left over.

These and more are the common obstacles that might be encountered and as limiting as they are, they should not be the dead-end of everything. Robison says, “We may run up against the social consequences of the Western Model” however that is before we reach our actual limits (Robinson, 2004:375).

4.3.6 HOW MUST THE CHURCH APPROACH THIS MATTER IN PRACTICE?

The past above mentioned two points have dealt with the church doing something from a theoretical point of view and that is not all that has to be done in order for the role of the church in sustainable communities to be completed effectively. The only thing that remains of the church to do in the practical sense is to actually go out into the social community in efforts of executing their missional objectives and goals with whatever they have and can do. As mentioned in the second point, executing this in practice might end up being even more beneficial because the approach will be much more contextual in nature, which would result in a greater community benefit taking place. In it being contextual Robinson says, “The social imperative is to provide systems of governance that propagate the values that people want to live by” (Robinson, 2004:381).

4.3.7 HOW IMPORTANT IS LIFESTYLE?

Mutavhatsindi says “Lifestyle has become a central theme also in evangelical circles, as can be seen in the statement of Christopher Wright, an Old Testament

scholar from the evangelical tradition: "...ethics stands as the mid-term between election and mission. Ethics is the purpose of election and the basis of mission... the ethical quality of life of the people of God is the vital link between their calling and their mission. God's intention to bless the nations is inseparable from God's ethical demand on the people he has created to be the agent of that blessing. There is no biblical mission without biblical ethics" (Wright, 2010:252) (Mutavhatsindi, 2015:21). With regards to sustainable communities, it is a significant concept because in order for whatever projects and initiatives that are started to continue to exist, whatever they come with needs to become part of the lifestyle that is led. That is the only way through which it will be sustained and kept alive. The way that that can be achieved successfully is through the use of the concept of subsidiarity, which according to Mutavhatsindi means, "one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry" (Mutavhatsindi, 2015:21). This means that as much as sustainability is a collaborative effort, it also relies on individuals' commitment and subsidiarial spirit. Smith (2014:59-78) in reflecting on this says that when it comes to the issue of lifestyle, the example of the Jesus lifestyle needs to be followed and everything therein needs to flow together in a certain rhythm; "Disciples desire to imitate the lifestyle of their rabbi, not just parrot his teachings" (Smith, 2014:183) and "the best way to start a movement for the kingdom of God is to show what it means to follow Jesus"(Cordier & Niemandt, 2015:6). Smith further argues that in missional church and in church planting, the common mistake that is made is the belief that it is all about having the masses in a building and moving forward with those masses in whatever the goal is. This is however not true because in order for everything to be

successful in whatever spiritual sphere, the starting point should be that of Christ as he is the “metaphorical guider” who’s lifestyle is actually the compass.

If we were to put this statement into an image, it would look as follows:

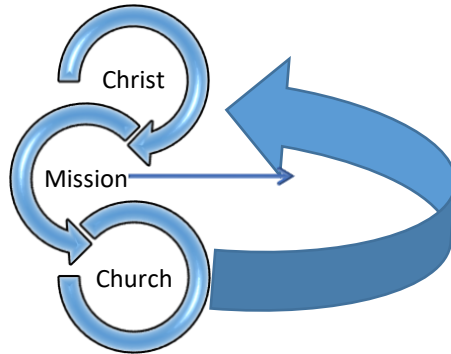


Figure 15: Jesus lifestyle as missional compass.

Even in this being displayed, the responsibility remains with the individual to ensure that they know the question to the answer being ‘Who is Christ?’ and ‘how do we follow his example of mission in the world?’ so that they will be able to make a proper departure from that point.

Subsequent to the departure point being successful, the following points are key in working towards (not ensuring) further success:

- ❖ We need to refrain from the usual stance of expecting that things or people in this case will come as soon as a certain announcement is made; for the missional process to begin functioning an actual meeting or encounter has to take place. To add, this is actually a true reflection of what God does with us as well, in order for us to come closer to Him; we first need to meet Him- Jesus did this as he walked the Earth.
- ❖ There are many things that we are taught as we grow up, and they are embedded in us and in every action that we make. Some of these things are what actually stand in the way of a certain level of growth both spiritually and practically in the instance of missional church. We need to

‘detox’ ourselves of those habits and begin to shape our minds or switch them on to the Kingdom mode.

- ❖ Going back missional church being contextual, wherever it is established, it is also important to determine if it has opportunity to grow into something bigger. Therefore, context and location are of paramount significance.
- ❖ It is okay if missional church does not work completely. There are various reasons for why that could have taken place. The danger comes when one refuses to acknowledge that death; that is what leads its continued existence dysfunctional and in more severe circumstances, deadly.

4.3.8 WHAT HAVE WE MISSED?

What is left behind at the end of it all is the fact that that at times we find that it is difficult for sustainable communities to remain as such in Southern Africa because too much attention is given to some things and too little to others that actually matter. Referring to the church specifically, what we have missed is the primary purpose of what the essence of the church is. The primary way of the church creating sustainable communities is through mission and in most contexts, as stated above; in most cases too little attention is given to that therefore sustainability through the church becomes non-existent.

4.4 CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

4.4.1. INTRODUCTION

The disclaimer that the researcher makes in terms of this section is that it is merely an example of how the points mentioned above may be implemented in practice.

This comes from the personal observation of the researcher in consulting some sources for this study.

The problem of substance abuse has been very prominent in all spheres of society and life as a whole. In South Africa specifically, it directly has an influence on society and the lives of many people because the effects thereof are mostly experienced by all other people besides the person who is participating in the use of drugs. In this short case study or analysis, we will be looking at the NGO called Second Chance Recovery Centre in the Far East of Pretoria. This NGO focuses specifically on the rehabilitation and reintegration of drug users and addicts into society. In looking at this facility, we will be investigating the role that the Church can play in ensuring the sustainability of such a place. The relevance of this is to try also to validate what Julius Olapido says in his article on the response of the church. He says, “The two sides bring their distinctive strengths together to serve the poor” (Olapido, 2000:151).

The way in which we will be doing this is looking at the Centre with an appreciative eye and trying to merge whatever aspects that we discover there with what the church could be offering. To make sure that the Centre stays sustainable and developable in whatever light possible.

At the end of this, the outcome that hopefully will be revealed is how the church’s role has made a difference in improving the eradication of the problem of substance abuse through this centre and how those proposed solutions can remain usable so as ensuring sustainability of the community through its efforts.

4.4.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Perhaps when just using the umbrella term of ‘substance abuse’, one might be restricted to generalizing however the main problem that will be assessed in this

case study is that of the detrimental effect that the abuse of drugs has on the general life of the users and the people in the society that they directly associate themselves with. In some instances, one will find that their family and friends because of the fact that their abuse of drugs has gone out of hand beyond what they can do have discarded a certain individual.

Drug abuse is a huge problem in the whole country because when one looks at the trends and occurrences around drug situations, one finds that they are the reason for other issues such as theft, unemployment, hostility in the community and so forth because a drug addict or user will do almost anything humanly possible to get their next fix, especially if they are not financially stable.

To show further how much of a problem this issue is, we can look at the general statistics that say that the number of drug spots in the country is almost equal to the number of areas that exist in the country. For me, that is an unacceptable figure for a country that has so many systems of safety and law enforcement in place.

4.4.3. OBJECTIVES

By the time this project ends, we hope to have achieved the following primarily:

- ❖ A significant drop in the number of drug users and abusers in the community.
- ❖ The establishment of a full-time strictly rehabilitative centre that will focus on the addicts' full recovery.
- ❖ A programme for the community that will teach members of the community to be weary of the signs should someone they know be involved with drugs
- ❖ A permanent partnership with the church must have been established to assist with any all spiritual issues that might arise from users of the Centre; extension even to their families.

Having achieved all of these objectives will qualify us to say the partnership will have been a success for both the church and the community.

4.4.4. PROPOSED SOLUTION

As with any problem that arises in any situation, there is obviously going to be difficulty in terms of finding a concrete solution that will be sustainable and not just provide temporary relief of that specific situation.

As stated in the beginning of this case study, the primary objective is for the church to collaborate with this specific NGO to try to ensure the sustainability of the work that they do in the community of Mamelodi west.

From enquiry, the biggest problem that the centre experiences is that of relapses of the recovering addicts taking place as it then causes them to in a way work backwards instead of forward in the rehabilitation process. The solution that we as the church are proposing is that in the partnership with the facility, the job of ensuring that the recovering addicts do not go into relapse should be given to the church. The church can assist in this regard by providing counselling to the individuals and their families. Spiritual guidance and support can also be offered to them because it is undoubted that their regaining of themselves after rehabilitation will be a process that will require guidance. Re-integration into the community can also be provided by the church by means of re-introducing of the individuals into the life and movement of the community so that their being accepted back into the community could be a little more pleasurable and easier for them.

On the more supportive side of the partnership, it is inevitable that funding is a necessity for anything in today's world to function appropriate therefore the church can also source some or other sort of funding that will assist in the day to day running to the rehabilitation centre itself, for example in the MCSA, we have what is called

the mission unit(which the researcher referred to in the previous chapter) and that assists in any social issues that need attention from the church, more especially for funding in order for a community assistant programme to continue. Such avenues can be explored by the church in efforts of ensuring sustainability and continuity for good.

4.4.5. REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

The main reason that this partnership would be beneficial and sustainable for both the church and the community is that Second Chance recovery centre's main aim in its work is to give every person that has fallen victim to drugs a second chance at a new life in society again. In the same light, the church's duty is to provide reconciliation and restoration through acceptance to every person that desires it and that would be the case with the drug addicts.

This partnership will start in the community of Mamelodi, however with enough growth and commitment from everybody who is involved; it can grow even to the extent of reaching out to drug addicts all over the country.

4.5 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter that these points are not the only ones that are important in missional church however, the researcher believes in reflecting on the Methodist context, that this is the primary point of departure that might influence the spreading into other areas of mission.

Poverty remains a problem that we are facing still even in the 21st century that we are living in today. It is not to say that the responsibility thereof remains solely on the efforts of the missional church but all that is being said in this reflection is that all the more a difference may come about through the contribution of the missional

church in having a response to poverty being a priority in all activities it conducts and planning thereof. The MCSA has begun this process into both the aspects we spoke about in this chapter as we reflected in chapter 3 of this study. Sustainable communities in Southern Africa are not something that should remain an abstract idea and concept of things that need to happen and they never take place, more especially in the context of the missional church; there is also a practical aspect connected to the idea so that the potential of it is actually realised. There are of course going to be numerous challenges along the way but those should not be seen as dead-end definers but enlighteners that pave the way to making initiatives better and bolder. Lastly, sustainable communities require treatment as lifestyle and not a short-term initiative as that is the only manner by which they will remain sustainable in all entirety. If the church as a whole would have some or other response in this, the researcher believes that the first of many steps in the right direction will have been taken. The case study example that is tabled above is but one of many ways in which real impact can begin to happen in the various spheres of society around the church. Young people of today have a level of philanthropy as part of their being and the exercise thereof is often preferred not to be limited to just theory but actual practice to which reference can be made at a later stage.

In this chapter, the researcher tabled and explained what the practical aspects of missional church are, specifically for young people, and the components thereof. In the following chapter, the investigation into the role of the youth pastor/local preacher in the driving of missional church is tabled.

5. CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH PASTOR/LOCAL PREACHER AS THE DRIVER OF MISSIONAL CHURCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a common saying in the English language which says that when a fish begins to rot, it does so beginning at the head and thereafter the rest of the body follows bit by bit until there is no longer anything left. In real life as well, in the same way, if any organisation or structure struggles to function or begins to deteriorate in operation, the likelihood in most if not all cases is that the problem lies at the top structures; the leadership. In the case of the Church, usually that leader is the minister, pastor or local preacher. This study involves the investigation of youth bodies and therefore in this chapter the researcher investigated the final research question of this study being; What is the role of the Youth Pastor or Local Preacher in driving Missional Church?

5.2 THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH PASTOR/LOCAL PREACHER AS DRIVER OF MISSIONAL CHURCH

The task and influence of a Pastor and Local Preacher extend far beyond the bounds of Sunday worship in Church. Because of his special knowledge and experience, his fellow-Christians look to him for a lead in offering a Christian witness at their place of work and in other spheres of social activity. He can commend the Gospel and the Church as effectively there as in the pulpit (Anon., 1964).

If this entire chapter were to be summarised into one single paragraph, this would be it.

The reason, from the researcher's own observation, that churches, especially mainline, have begun to decline over the years is the fact that there is no longer a lot of authenticity in the clergy that has been in existence through the time. For Missional Church to be able to thrive, it is necessary to have leaders who are missional themselves and not focused on other and irrelevant things; Cordier & Niemandt(2015) say that he/she has to undergo a 'missional conversion' which in turn allows them to possess the necessary missional calling(Cordier & Niemandt, 2015:6); fundamentally, a leader is one who is able to mobilise masses on the journey to whatever future that they hope for(Niemandt,2015:79). Failing which, there will be no direction at all and that leads to ultimate destruction; Lemons (2008: i) says "The best role for a pastor to assume while helping to shift the church culture is that of a missionary who takes seriously the unique culture of every congregation". Therefore, let us look briefly at the role that the youth pastor and local preacher need to play as adapted from Roxburgh & Romanuk (2006:146-164). This chapter is fairly shorter than the rest of the chapters in this study as the components in it are straightforward and there is no two ways that one can really go about anything in it.

5.2.1 Fostering of a Missional Imagination in themselves and the people they serve by being a visionary

Now the term of imagination may seem as though it is a bit irrelevant and irrational when one is dealing with sensitive issues such as these. This is however not completely true because of the fact that imagination is the "capacity to use forms of thinking other than the linear, cause-effected, ordered" (Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006:147) and narrow-minded, imagination allows one to be able to venture into parts of viewing things that have not been treaded on before in the aims of finding new ways that can be utilised in accomplishing something or the other. Cordier &

Niemandt argue that from the abovementioned missional conversion that the leader goes through, comes a missional calling which goes hand in hand with a specific vision (Cordier & Niemandt, 2015:6).

When imagination is used, the pastor or preacher creates the space for members of the congregation to look at things that they know and have taken for granted in a completely new and different light (this is important because it is not about the minister him/herself; he/she and the congregation are a team. (Cordier & Niemandt, 2015:6)). This is what in turn allows them to be able to construct a new approach to addressing whatever aspect it is that they are dealing with; as much as it works to do or treat something in the same way for as long as it exists, it also does not hurt to adopt a new and fresh approach to it. Niemandt argues that “vision that appeals to followers and followers are expected to play a bigger role in the execution of the vision to create the preferred future” (2019:79)

“Imagination also deals with the capacity to entertain what is not yet present but can be encouraged to emerge from the core of one’s deepest convictions” (Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006:148). This essentially means that one is, through the use of imagination, able to access parts of anything that have never been accessed before and maybe even have been said to be inaccessible. Briefly, having said this, what it comes down to is that the key role of the youth pastor and local preacher is that of being a visionary but not just that but also a visionary who is able to take calculated risks and enter into territories that have not been treaded into before. Niemandt argues that “the power of visionary leaders comes from position, reference power, personal charisma, the vision itself and followers’ emotional attachments. Responsibility and accountability for outcomes still reside with the leader” (Niemandt, 2019:79). The transition in doing that however, should not be

expected to be smooth sailing and just easy; this is an unrealistic expectation. In most congregations right up to today, there is the notion of not needing to fix something that is not broken because one runs the risk of actually breaking it; the job then becomes that of convincing people of the fact that the process is not to enforce “wholesale change” on the congregation but it is to imagine the possibilities that remain unexplored and in pursuit of those possibilities, develop and take “small steps and experiments”. This is what will level the ground and allow work to take place because this task of imagination is not just for the sake of doing it but more importantly it is for movement towards missional action; “When missionary pastors allow culture and change to dance together, a powerful movement toward a more missional church can develop” (Lemons, 2008:4).

5.2.2 Cultivator of Growth

“There has been a revival of worship and mission in many parts of the Church, and the Local Preacher has a large part to play in fostering and expressing this” (Anon., 1964).

Before going too much further, the researcher wishes to look at the core concept of this point; Cultivation. This term comes from the agricultural sector and basically, it is a process where a farmer prepares the land to use for the planting of crops or for gardening. What is important however as well is that for the farmer to be sure that whatever he wants to plant is actually going to grow, he/she needs to ensure that the ground is properly cultivated and is suitable for that specific crop or plant. The process does not end there, after planting the farmer goes on a journey with the plant in its growth all the way to when it has reached its peak and may be harvested. The youth pastor or local preacher has exactly the same role to execute in driving the missional church. Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006:152) argue that this concept

is mostly misunderstood because people try to box it into the conventional phases of growth. As much as they are important as well, it does not end there because remember in using imagination as described in the previous point, the local preacher would have created a complete shift into an often uncomfortable place for mission. Now in an instance like that the congregation will bear with the discomfort for a limited time but will eventually want to go back to what they know and are used to. In cultivating growth, the main objective is that of teaching the congregation how to live and operate in that discomfort to the point where it becomes the norm and what they are used to. In this case, of the MCSA, one of the practices of doing this would be the constant reminding that “the Wesleyan heritage is rooted in mission. Methodism was a mission-movement long before it became a church” (Olivier, 2006:4). How the Pastor and preacher do this is by engaging in practices that in him/herself help to grow and include other people that will hold them and each other accountable in a simple setting such as that of the worship space of in engaging in the sacraments. “pastors have no right asking or expecting anyone to value or practice anything that they do not value or practice themselves” (Lemons, 2008:6).

5.2.3 Theologian and Cultivator of Language

Cordier & Niemandt (2015:6-7) say that when a pastor or minister has a certain proposition surrounding missional that he has in mind for his/her congregation, he/she has the job of coming up with the language to use with that congregation in order for them to end up buying in whatever idea or proposition. It does not end there, it needs to be bought into to the extent that it becomes embedded into the very fibre of the congregation so much that it is adopted into the ministry of that congregation. They continue to argue that this should happen in two ways;

- ❖ The minister/pastor has the responsibility of ensuring the further development of the different concepts of missional church that will keep coming up and also the new language that will be coming with those concepts. This is to ensure that the congregation that the journey is commenced with does not get lost or left behind along the way. This is particularly important to not when dealing with young people because they do not particularly have a lot of patience and when they begin to feel uninvolved, they lose interest and move on which is subsequently what leads to the problem statement of this study.
- ❖ Secondly, due to the fact that in whatever congregation a pastor or minister is in, there are people who observe for certain things that take place within the church. In the mainline churches, there are doctrines and rules that need to be followed when doing certain things. For this reason, for whatever implementation that takes place in missional church, the minister or pastor has to table the theological basis for it.

Cordier and Niemandt (2015:6-7) agree that if these are attended to accordingly, then the minister moves towards being the caretaker of the missional call and the shaper of the identity of the congregation that he/she is in.

5.2.4 Teaching people to face and embrace the various changes that take place in their lives

Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006:159-160) argue that people often fail to discern the difference between change and transition; Niemandt (2019:75-76) refers to these as Continuous (Technical) change and Discontinuous (Adaptive) change. The latter is usually the one that takes place when it comes to the alteration of the practices of a certain community; in this case, the move to missional church. This is the reason why people end up being frustrated by or frustrating others with the wrong use and

implementation of the two. Change impacts directly on the emotive responses of people and transition directs how one responds to the change itself. Niemandt (2019) argues that “adaptive change is a deep change in the complete system of the organisation. It requires courage and usually involves change in the values and attitudes of the organisation. It effects the whole system” (Niemandt, 2019:76). In dealing with this concept, the job of the youth pastor or local preacher is to be the one that tries to find the balance between the two; Lemons (2008:28) describes this as identifying “facilitating and interfering factors—an ability that flows out of a pastor’s self-understanding”; Cordier & Niemandt agree with his as well as they also argue that “the minister as missional leader facilitates the process of adaptive cultural change within the congregation”(Cordier & Niemandt, 2015:7). Every person has a specific way in which they respond to change and that it is attributed to all the aspects that one internalised in their personal make-up. The job of the pastor as missional leader according to Niemandt(2019b) is “helping people to adapt to change and changing contexts. The challenge lies in the understanding of change, especially if the nature of change has changed!” (Niemandt,2019b:157). This factor is what makes it of paramount importance that when it is taking place, the youth pastor and local preacher make it a point to know how it happening affects the people on the ground. Now what happens, due to the frustration that the researcher referred to a bit earlier, is that pastors end up being so overwhelmed by it that they opt out of executing change; It however is a normal thing that takes place and the frustration that they undergo is not that of saying they should give up on the job but rather they need to find better ways of dealing with the natural responses of people and where it is possible, also influence the direction that the transition also takes. This is actually a very vital point because especially in today’s time mostly, a whole

lot of changes are being decided on and implemented in congregations and other institutions as well however there is no real consideration of how to address the transition coming with those changes; that in the end leads to the changes that were supposed to take place falling flat and failing, not because it is not good or necessary, but because there was no sufficient attention that was given to the transition and aftermath thereof.

Another very vital point that Cordier & Niemandt argue is that the primary point of departure in the pastor or minister facilitating adaptive change is that he/she should lead by example by committing to the process of missional change in their personal capacity first and then when the rest of the congregation begin to see it, he/she can then pose the challenge of doing the same to them (Cordier & Niemandt, 2015:7). Coming from this point, he/she then takes those members of the congregation who are in sync with his/her vision and equips them with the necessary tools to work within the team of missional church. To ensure that this process remains intact and functional, the minister or pastor needs to ensure that continuous discernment in the leadership; this is what assists in making sure that the goals of missional church are reached and that the core traditions of whatever church are still observed and maintained (Cordier & Niemandt, 2015:8).

5.2.5 Creating space for dialogue, energy and experimentation among the members of the congregation

Even with the three points above that the researcher has tabled above, one needs to be mindful of the fact that the role of driving missional church is not a one-man show that is limited to the jurisdiction of the youth pastor and local preacher, although that is how many people perceive it to be. The youth pastor and local preacher also need to create the space for other members of the congregation and

the church at large to also be part of the process by mentoring and equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge-All this linked to the nurturing of imagination, growth and monitoring transition. Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006:163) describe this as coalition and it refers to “growing together”. Now naturally, especially in the church setting, when you put people into groups or rather encourage them to go into groups, the first thing that is thought of in that group is treating it as though it is for Bible study or some similar purpose; however, in this case, that is not the aim but rather it is where the pastor or preacher who is the leader in this particular context creates the space where people can communicate to and with each other about concerns such as wrestling with the role that the church has to play in the mission of God-In the context of the MCSA, the class meeting and the different organisations of the church are a good example of how this takes place; Hirsch (2016:135-158) describes it as the Mission-Incarnational impulse.

In its inception stages, doing this seems as though it is not a productive exercise for the church because of, for example, the size of whatever groups but if they are maintained properly, they have the potential to “give birth to mission through the people and the Holy Spirit”. The major role of the minister, pastor or preacher in this instance, becomes that of being the spiritual mentor and director to the members of the congregation. Cordier & Niemandt (2015:8-9) argue that this has to happen in two ways;

- ❖ As a spiritual leader, the pastor needs to have a spirit of discernment leading him/her and he/she utilises that discernment in order to establish what is or is not necessary in the congregation. Niemandt (2019:72) refers to van Kooten and Barret who argue that discernment lies embedded in the vocation

of missional church. This should go further into him/her passing this discernment also to the team and congregation that surrounds him/her.

- ❖ The researcher referred to the Jesus lifestyle proposed by Smith (2014:59-78) in chapter 4. Sitting at the core of following this lifestyle is the call to also be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as a disciple of Christ him/herself, the minister or pastor has the main focus of cultivating his\her fellow leadership and rest of the congregation into being the same in totality. One of the calls of mission in the MCSA is that of a priesthood of all believers which is one of the things that discipleship comes with. Niemandt (2019) says that as much as this is important in its own right, leadership thereof remains important as well as a guiding mechanism (Niemandt, 2019:72).

This whole study so far has displayed an image of how discernment is one of the crucial starting points in terms of missional church because it is what enables one to determine which course of action would pose the best interest of whatever it is that they are doing or would like to do; according to Niemandt(2019b:162), “discernment flows from spirituality and nurtures wisdom—it is about making wise choices”. Cordier & Niemandt (2015:9) emphasises this aspect saying that “discernment is the first and most decisive step on the journey towards missional renewal’ and is a key aspect of missional leadership”. Niemandt further concurs in saying “missional leadership requires a life of prayer, discernment and contemplation, and liturgical participation” (Niemandt, 2019:88).

5.3 SUMMARY

In summarising this chapter, the role of the youth pastor and local preacher as driver of missional church is five-fold;

- ❖ He/ She needs to be a visionary who does not remain in rigid scoped but allows the depths of imagination to dictate his/her course of direction.
- ❖ He/ She, having established the vision, needs to ensure that cultivation of growth takes place not only in him/herself but also in the congregation and church that they are in to the furthest extent as is possible.
- ❖ In addition to cultivating growth, he/ she has the duty of also making sound, theological contributions to the vision but at the same time, to avoid the frustration of the changes that might have to come, the pastor or preacher needs to cultivate the language that will be appropriate to the specific context and congregation on which these changes would be implemented.
- ❖ In the process of instilling change from the vision and growth, he /she also needs to be conscious of the fact that change is not a spontaneous and easy thing and therefore should not be abruptly and carelessly done without consideration of the proper transition that needs to take place.
- ❖ Lastly, but not limited to, he/she needs to ensure the fact that the leading and driving of the missional church does not remain a single handed effort by themselves and that from his/her visionary imagination, coalitions of the various other members of the congregation and the church are formed and continue the process.

If one were to create a visual of the role of the youth pastor and local preacher, it would look as follows;

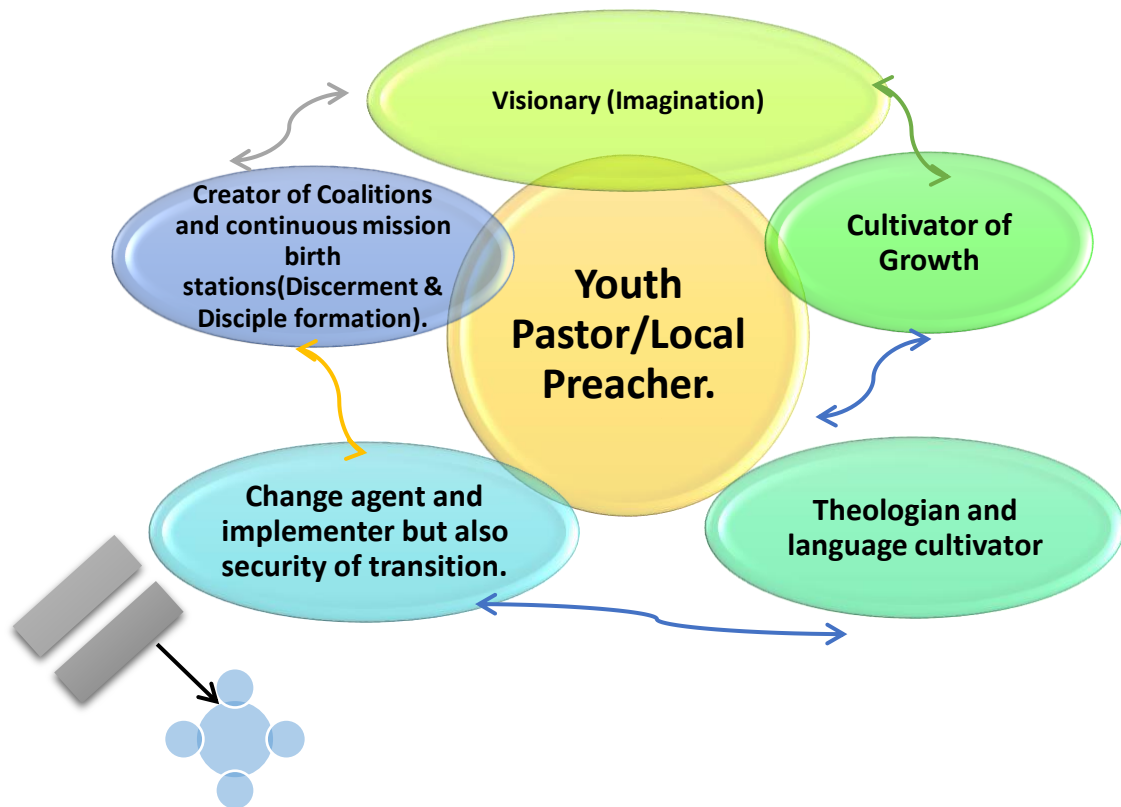


Figure 16: The Role of the Youth Pastor/Local Preacher as driver of Missional Church. As adapted from Roxburgh & Romanuk (2006:146-164).

5.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

One might ask themselves in this chapter why the focus is on the Youth Pastor and Local Preacher and not the Minister or other clergyperson. There are two reasons therefore. Firstly, this study is a medium addressed at empowering young people of the church and these offices are where they are likely to receive the most exposure. Secondly, especially in the MCSA, the people who end up being in the position of clergy in the church as Ministers, Deacons, Evangelists, Bible Women and so forth, all begin in these positions. Therefore if it were to be cracked at the entry stages, there would not be a need for much work be done in the higher structures any longer because the people who would be there, all the way to the PB, would be conscious of the crucial need for them to be missional servants and therefore the rest of the

church in all its structures would be cultivated into missional beings who do not dictate what the mission is but rather play a full part in the mission of God that already exists.

This chapter investigated the role of the youth pastor and local preacher in the driving of missional church. In the next chapter, we are going to be performing the integration process of the study and conclude with a few recommendations for further research.

6. CHAPTER 6: INTEGRATION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

And so, at the end of it all, where are we? What does all of this that has been tabled in this study mean for Missional Church and how it relates to young people?

In this final chapter, we are going to be bringing together the various aspects of this study in effort to display a missional ecclesiology that is appropriate for young people, particularly in the MCSA.

6.2 INTEGRATON

In the beginning of this study, the researcher stated that the real problem is the fact that missional church has begun over the past while to lose its essence and significance due to the fact that in most places the mistake of putting the church before the Mission of God has sadly taken place; In the MCSA specifically, it has gone to the point where it has forgotten the existence of young people and therefore become somewhat irrelevant especially to young African youth. Therefore, in light of this, what does the picture of youth-friendly missional church look like?

6.2.1 Mission-Driven...Not driven by mission

One might read this statement and say that both parts of it mean exactly the same thing. This is however not the case, especially having gone through the different chapters of this study. Throughout the study, the researcher has been highlighting the fact that where people get it wrong is by thinking that mission comes from the church whereas the opposite is true.

The mandate of creating disciples in the entire world is an instruction that was left with Jesus Christ at his ascension; that became automatically the mission that was at present to the disciples. Because we still read the Bible today and apply it to ourselves, that task still applies to us as well. Now the establishment of the church was as a means of being able to structure and monitor how the mission of Christ is being executed in the world. Therefore, the mandate of missional church is to be mission driven in any direction that the mission of God dictates is necessary and not to try and orchestrate what that mission should be because that is where there is potential for things to go in a completely different and often unintended direction where it ends us doing damage rather than production.

6.2.2 Youth are part of...Not Optional

Again, in the mainline churches most especially, there is no relevance to young people because of the fact that they are considered as leader and members of tomorrow of the church. This is the mind-set that needs to change because the reality is that those young people and children do not exist in tomorrow, but they are here today, and they should be recognised as such in all fullness. In the researcher's view, young people are actually vital for the survival of the church for it to even see that tomorrow; after all, some of them are the visionaries (see chapter 5) that are living today and they carry the capacity by their mere existence, of making a huge difference in the life and continuity of the missional church. In the MCSA as tabled in chapter 3, there is an attempt to do this by making the focus of the church going forward that of creating a more child and youth-centred church.

6.2.3 Realistic, tangible Missional Engagement

Missional practices need to change from being approved concepts on paper only in church, but they need to become physical things that one needs to be able to point to many generations later. Missional Church has been too focused on providing the easiest form of relief to the world; while this is necessary, more often than not it is not helpful and the scenario goes back to its original state waiting for the next relief source. Young people doing missional church is driven by the fact that there needs to be tangible evidence of something having been done to address the need in a particular place; this revolves around not paying attention much to the symptoms of a certain problem, but rather using it to get to the root cause of the problem. Following this is to ensure that the missional effort that is engaged is permanent and self-sustainable for future continuation and development.

And so, a Missional Ecclesiology appropriate to young African people does not totally discard that which already exists, but rather it calls for it to be rooted in its original identity but at the same time, also relevant to the time and various contexts in which it exists.

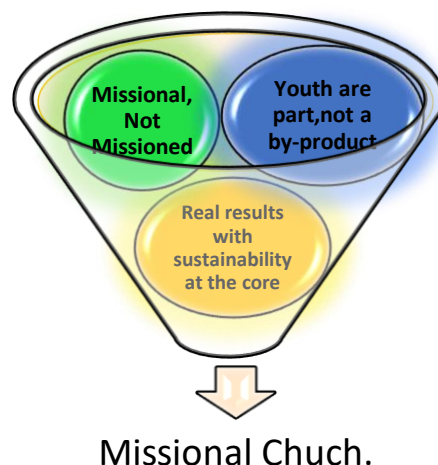


Figure 17: A Missional Ecclesiology Appropriate to African and Methodist Youth

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In engaging with this study, the researcher noticed that the concept of missional church runs much deeper than the scope that he limited himself to. In addition to this, the researcher has also seen that there are still a lot of places that are either misinformed or inadequately informed about this concept and what it entails; this coming from observation.

This study was not done on a very large scale owing to the fact that it was limited to being a literature study. Owing to this as well, it would be difficult to conclusively attribute the discussion to individual societies in the MCSA and the broader community of faith and as such the recommendation that the researcher makes is that for this to be attained, further and more empirical has to be done primarily in the MCSA and if necessary, also into the sister mainline churches. That research would have to evaluate the trends that would be in existence owing to the new shift that has taken place in the MCSA since last year.

Furthermore, if there were lucrative results from empirical research, then such research would have to be extended as well outside of the MCSA but also to other mainline church that are missional by nature

6.4 CONCLUSION

‘One Heart...One Way’; this is the motto that is most commonly used as the greeting in the MCSA though it is attributed to specific organisations of the church. Missional Ecclesiology remains a work in progress in the MCSA particularly and as such, the hope is that at some point, whenever that is, it shall be that every aspect of it is perfectly aligned and functional in one heart and one way. This study has highlighted a little bit of what needs to be addressed as this time goes on. Until that particular

time comes, the researcher concludes this study with the words of Nelson Mandela, a great missional being in his own right, 'It will always seems impossible, until it is done!'

Grace and Peace!

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