

***Missio Dei: An ecclesiology of healing
and reconciliation in the Methodist
Church of Southern Africa in post-1994
South Africa***

MS Molale

 **orcid.org/0000-0001-8510-9643**

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Promoter: Prof JJ Knoetze

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Student number: 25743163



Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and all citations, references and borrowed ideas have been appropriately acknowledged. The thesis is in submission for a doctoral degree in Missiology at the Faculty of Theology of the North West University, Mafikeng Campus South Africa. No part of this work has ever been submitted previously for any degree or examination at any other university.

Student: **Rev M. S. Molale (25743163)**

Signed.....

Date.....

Abstract

[Keywords: *Missio Dei*; healing; reconciliation; transformation, MCSA; mission pillars; local church; ecclesiology]

Missio Dei: An ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) in post- 1994 South Africa. The events of pre 1994 South Africa were critical and fundamental to the witness of the MCSA and Christian church in general. Democratisation and liberation of South Africa in 1994 was a turning point in the history of the MCSA and South Africa in general. The democratisation and liberation of 1994 was a critical challenge for the church and community; and this was a fundamental period in the history of the MCSA, as it had to position itself for change and transition to democracy.

In the pre-1994, the MCSA had declared that it is the will of God for the MCSA to remain a one and undivided church. In post-1994 South Africa, God called the MCSA to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation. The pre- 1994 and post-1994 calls are significant calls for the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei* to contribute in the process of healing and reconciliation, for the transformation of society. Implications for the MCSA's participation in *missio Dei* is to be prophetic witness in the mission of healing and transformation. The fundamental principles of the mission pillars in the MCSA's ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation are transformation of church and societal structures for justice, service and transformation mission. Ecclesiologically, there are four mission pillars to claim and provide direction, vision and empowerment for transformation of the MCSA mission post-1994 South Africa. In its ecclesiology the MCSA seeks to include all people in the process of healing and reconciliation.

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Chapter One

History of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA

1.1 Background

The process of democratisation since 1994 taking place within the divided society of South Africa was not without influence in the MCSA. Therefore, the church found itself having to change its ministry from hierarchical or even autocratic ministry to be more diaconal in its ministry to contribute to the healing and reconciliation of a divided society. Despite declaring the MCSA “one and undivided”, the church was still divided along racial and economic lines. For the church to be relevant in a changing society it needs to undergo a process of transformation in its ecclesiology, as this will lead to a ministry of social transformation. It is not enough for the church to just embark on the changing of its structures and focus of ministry without looking at its nature and theological and missiological foundations. The process of transformation needs to be facilitated in a manner that encourages the maximum participation and dialogue of all its members. Examples of this were replete, particularly in previously white suburbs, where Methodist churches had a predominantly white membership and were characterised by having plenty of financial and human resources. On the other hand, the majority of black churches, situated in the townships were characterised by a lack of financial resources and poverty. The financial imbalance in these churches manifested itself when it came to the allocation of ministerial staff.

Another issue within the MCSA was with regard to the stationing of ministers, which had always been done according to racial grounds. The issue of racial and financial inequalities has been a thorn in the flesh of the MCSA and has not been fully attended to for fear that it might divide the church because of its sensitivity. Every time when it is raised at synods it raises emotions, as a result it is rare for it to be discussed.

The MCSA is not courageous and prophetic by creating a safe space for dialogue, where people can find one another, not only across the racial divide, but also on the class divide that has emerged. This safe space is vital for the MCSA if it wants to be successful in its mission work for it cannot be easy for a church that remains divided along racial and other lines to do mission with credibility in a democratic and non-racial society as South Africa in post-1994.

The challenge the MCSA faced was finding a way forward as well as an appropriate theology for the ministry of the church in a rapidly changing South Africa. Voices inside the church called for the church to change its direction of ministry. For instance, when looking at the future role of the church in society, John de Gruchy observed that “from a prophetic no to a yes”, “from resistance to assistance” (De Gruchy 2004:452).

The MCSA conference of 2006 notes with growing concern, that we are living in a racially separated society which is characterised by discrimination, suspicion and prejudice. It recognises that this is in large measure the result of our bondage to personal and corporate selfishness, and can only be changed if individuals and communities are liberated by Jesus Christ from such bondage.

From the above premise, the study desires to investigate the application of the mission statement of the MCSA as recorded in all official documents of the church that says: “God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the healing and transformation” (MCSA Year Book 2015:2). The MCSA mission statement portrays the church as pro healing and transformation. The mission statement poses a challenge for the church because there is evidence that many MCSA congregations have not yet fully engaged with implications of healing and transformation in their communities. This statement raises two profound theological concepts, healing and reconciliation, in post- 1994 South Africa; this is a church’s recognition of a broken society that is in need of God’s healing and restoration. This also raises a concern about the involvement of the MCSA in God’s mission in the current demographic shifts where there is pain and turmoil in Southern Africa. Reconciliation remains one of the biggest challenges in South African communities and churches. The church seems to be lagging behind in extending its footprint; evidence of this are the orders of ministries that exist in the MCSA, for example, the order of evangelism is still dominated by black people, there are no white people in it, and this order of ministers operates in black circuits and congregations only.

There are various men organisations which are still operating along racial lines creating the impression that reconciliation is impossible to achieve in the MCSA. There seems to be a lack of pushing mission frontiers, at times the leadership seems to be silent on public socio-economic and political issues facing the nation. There is a dire need to develop relevant material to equip the MCSA for its mission today. Hence the central question of the study is:

How will understanding mission as *missio Dei*, contribute to the mission of the MCSA to become an agent of healing and reconciliation in a post-1994 South Africa?

1.2. Clarification of Concepts

1.2.1. The BMC: (Black Methodist Consultation)

The BMC is a structure within the Methodist Church, whose membership is black and is aimed at representing the interests of the black members of the Methodist Church. It was formed in 1975, by black clergy who felt that rather than forming a separate church as a result of dissatisfaction in the Methodist Church whose leadership was white at the time, they would rather form a forum that would transform the church from within. It was inspired by the philosophy of the Black Consciousness movement. Among its founders were people such as Ernest Baartman, Khoza Mgojo, Enos Sikhakhane and Andrew Losaba.

1.2.2. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa's (MCSA) structural terminology

A 'Connexion' is similar to an archdiocese and is the name for a group of Districts. It is a distinctly Methodist term referring to the church at the national level under the leadership of the presiding bishop.

A 'District' is similar to a diocese and is the name for a group of geographically located Circuits.

A 'Circuit' is similar to a large parish and is comprised of several Societies.

A 'Society' is the name given to a local congregation.

1.2.3. SACC

South African Council of Churches

1.2.4. Missiology

Missiology is the study of mission; it includes Biblical, theological, historical and practical reflection. According to Bosch (2011:9), "Missiology, as a branch of the discipline of Christian theology, is not a disinterested or neutral enterprise; rather, it seeks to look at the world from the perspective of commitment to the Christian faith."

1.2.5. Church

According to the MCSA Laws and Disciplines (11th Edition 2007a:11), "The church is the company of the disciples of Jesus, consisting of those who confess Him as their Saviour and Lord,...who in the New Testament are described as 'Believers', 'People of God' and

‘Christians’ The MCSA embraces healing principles such as sharing God’s hope, love, peace and reconciliation with all people. This ecclesiology helps with the understanding of the role of the church and what the church is to be doing in regards to believers (worship and discipleship) and unbelievers (ministry and evangelism).”

The church is a community that lives a shared life, a common life in the spirit and that shares faith, hope and commitment, as well as various graces with which individuals have been endowed and by which they mutually enrich each other (Leith 1993:238).

1.2.6. Transformation

Transformation is usually understood as a process of radical change that the organisation embarks on or a process of renewal in the structures. In the Bible, transformation means change or renewal of mind and heart which implicates a life that no longer conforms to the ways of the world, but a life that pleases God (Romans 12:2).

1.2.7. Reconciliation

Reconciliation in Christian theology is an element of salvation that refers to the results of atonement. Reconciliation is the end of estrangement, caused by the original sin, between God and humanity. It is part of the message of salvation that brings people back together with God. Wepener (2009:49) defines reconciliation as “the continuous process through truth and justice aimed at the restoration of broken relationships so that a new reality which is qualitatively different to any previous relationships comes into being”

Reconciliation is clearly part of the biblical message. It concerns all the relationships that pertain to us: those with God, ourselves, our neighbours and lastly, with nature. To experience complete “*shalom*” (peace) one’s relationship with these four dimensions needs to be perfect. Reconciliation is God’s redeeming work in bringing back the human being to his/her intimate relationship with the Creator after the fall in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). The covenant God made with humankind is the central message of the Bible in which reconciliation is one of the aspects of God’s redeeming work on behalf of the whole universe (Romans 8:21).

1.2.8. Healing Ministry

The gospels are full of the accounts of Jesus’ healing ministry and Acts makes it clear that the apostles continued with this work. Mark 6:13 tells us, “Many sick people they anointed with oil and cured”. The purpose is definitely healing of the body but it is also accompanied by the

forgiveness of sins, with healing often seen as an image of salvation in Christ; healing involves the whole person.

Healing is an act of curing, restoring to a sound state, to cure disease or wounds and restore to soundness, or to that state of body in which the natural functions are regularly performed; to heal the sick. The church ministry to the sick has involved a variety of acts over the years. These have ranged from simple bedside prayer to the public healing services; recent years have seen a strong shift in practice on the part of the MCSA.

Actions towards healing and wholeness of life of persons and communities are an important expression of mission. Healing was not only a central feature of Jesus' ministry but also a feature of his call to his followers to continue his work (Matthew 10:1). Healing is also one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9; Acts 3). The Spirit empowers the church for a life-nurturing mission, which includes prayer, pastoral care and professional health care on the one hand, and prophetic denunciation of the root causes of suffering, transforming structures that dispense injustice, and the pursuit of scientific research on the other.

Health is more than physical and/or mental well-being and healing is not primarily medical. This understanding of health coheres with the biblical-theological tradition of the church, which sees a human being as a multidimensional unity and the body, soul and mind as interrelated and interdependent. It thus affirms the social, political and ecological dimensions of personhood and wholeness. Healing is also relational and in this sense closely related to reconciliation.

Healing processes could include praying with and for the sick, confession and forgiveness, the laying-on of hands, anointing with oil, and the use of charismatic spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12). It must however also be noted that inappropriate forms of Christian worship, including triumphalistic healing services in which the healer is glorified at the expense of God and where false expectations are raised, can deeply harm people. This is not to deny God's miraculous intervention of healing in some cases.

1.2.9. *Missio Dei*

According to Bosch (2011:401-2), "*Missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate ...*Missio Dei* means that God articulates Himself, without any need of assisting Him through our missionary efforts in this respect."

The term mission is understood as participation in the *missio Dei* (God's Mission) as well as *missio ecclesiae* (the mission of the church). Mission is the method by which humans participate in God's actions to extend his kingdom on earth until it shall come to be universal. According to Bosch (2011:9), "Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world, particularly as this was portrayed, first in the story of the covenant people of Israel and then, supremely, in the birth, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth."

Mission is the divine activity of sending intermediaries, whether supernatural or human, to speak on God's will so that his purpose for judgement or redemption to be fulfilled. Bosch (2011:402) states, "Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate."

1.2.10. Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is the study of the church. The word ecclesiology comes from two Greek words meaning "assembly" and the "word" combining to mean the study of the church. The church is the assembly of believers who belongs to God. According to Leith (1993:238), "In the New Testament we see the church primarily as a community held together by shared experience and enriched by mutuality of gifts. The necessity of offices, structures and institutional forms is also present from the beginning."

1.2.11. The Bible

In the Reformed Tradition, the Bible is viewed as the Word of God and therefore the highest authority of the Church. Leith (1993:270) submits, "The Bible is the church's memory, inspired by the Holy Spirit, of those events that are the foundation of the Christian life in history. It is the church's witness to the gospel and the content of its preaching. In the church the Bible is read devotionally as a means of God's grace. In theological reflection, it is the warrant for the Christian doctrine. The Bible is the original witness to and interpretation of God's revelation and work 'for us men and for our salvation' [sic] in Jesus Christ."

1.3. Introduction

Methodism was born in England amidst a real social concern which characterised the Church of England which was a domain of the wealthy and the titled (Oosthuizen 2012:ix). Oosthuizen (2012) further resonates that while the average congregation would be educated, not many members would have a university education. This in a way compromised the ecclesiological understanding in the Methodist church. Wright (2006:189) argues that the

church is empowered by the Holy Spirit and sent into the world to preach repentance and forgiveness to the ends of the earth. However, according to Oosthuizen (2012:23), in England, the Methodist church was doing the opposite. While the Church reached out to all people, only the better “classes” of people were allowed into the actual church during a service. The “lower” workers and their families would often gather outside the church, hoping to hear the prayers and sermon. The same pattern was evident in the MCSA which experienced disunity, which was contrary to its doctrine, teachings and usage. The congregational and institutional practices serve to contradict the claim of the MCSA being one and undivided¹.

To counteract disunity, division and segregation, which was prevalent in South Africa pre-1994, the MCSA took a resolution at its 1958 conference against the social concerns like apartheid by declaring its conviction that it is the will of God for “the Methodist church that it should be one and undivided, trusting to the leading of God to bring this ideal to ultimate fruition, and that this be the general basis of our (its) missionary policy.”(MCSA Book of Order 2014:230) In post-1994 South Africa, in many instances, the MCSA continued stationing its ministers racially thus ensuring that both black and white congregations are locked into their own separate cultural worlds instead of allowing them to be informed by one another.

1.3.1 The MCSA pre- 1994

The struggle in the MCSA was against racial discrimination within the church that led to black people openly questioning and challenging white domination; this resulted in the formation of the Black Methodist Ministers’ Consultation in 1975. The stationing and remuneration of ministers in the MCSA was questionable, done according to the skin colour (Balía 1991:94).

The racial issue is confirmed by Gaitskell (2009:517) who maintains that, “In 1963, Rev. Seth Mokitimi was elected as the first black president of the South African Methodist Conference. This bold statement is typical of the sort of extremely sparse and uninformative single sentence which is generally the only mention of Mokitimi in several standard works on South African Christianity in the 1960s.” However, from informed church sources,

¹ Balía argues that “In spite of the Methodist church consistently professing itself to being ‘one and undivided’ ...the black experience of this unity was peripheral. For many it simply did not exist on the empirical level. White racism continued to permeate much of religious life like a ‘monster’ as the church was characterised by relentless discriminatory practices.” (Balía 1991:87)

Mokitimi's election was an expression of confidence in the leadership of the MCSA as well as in Africans. However, his appointment impacted and influenced the South African politics and thinking. It further impacted on the importance of ecclesiology in the pre-1994 church which was not concerned about social issues. The election of black people into leadership positions pre- 1994 formed an essential part of the MCSA's prophetic witness in the struggle for justice, liberation and transformation in the divided land and was of paramount importance in *missio Dei*.

In complementing the above standpoint, Gaitskell (2009:518) argues, "even though Methodist church membership exists of much [sic] more black members than white members. The latter half of the 1960s took South Africa's mission churches into a very different era, with the development of Black Theology and black consciousness". The 1960s seem to represent the period of decolonisation of the MCSA rather than transformative corporate black self-assertion or the fulfilment of mission rather than achievement of racial justice and black advancement.

Balia (1991:88) indicates that, "for Methodism, black presidents of conference, rather than being recognised from above for valiant service, were thrust forward much more from below by their compatriots as a conscious racial reconfiguration of the church's public face in an increasingly oppressive political era. A body called Black Methodist Consultation took credit, at the beginning of the 1990s, for the election of its own members to the church's highest office since the BMC's (Black Methodist Consultation) foundation in 1975."

In response to a warning issued by Black representatives at the ecumenical consultation on racism held outside Pretoria in February 1980, the president of the MCSA conference, the Reverend Andrew Losaba, informed the White MCSA members that there was time for them to change. The call was for a united MCSA. While the church was bound to proclaim a gospel of love, justice and equality, her constituency was divided between masters for whom church was a middle-class phenomenon and servants whose experience of suffering and deprivation have caused them to turn to the church. However, this imbalance in the church was evident in the manner the MCSA was stationing ministers.

Inter alia, at the 1989 MCSA conference held in Cape Town, a decision was taken that all circuits must be integrated by 1 January 1990. A long resolution is set out in detail how this could be achieved (MCSA Minutes of Conference 1989). This was necessary since the MCSA did not deal prophetically with the issue of justice regarding stationing and stipend

distribution of her ministers. It also engages in questions about the quality of sermons and ethical teachings that accompanied the mission of the MCSA.

Within the life, ministry and mission of the wider MCSA which seeks to live out God's revelatory vision for a post-1994 South Africa, it is worth noting that:

“Methodists from six countries in Southern Africa came together on the East Rand in the midst of violence and the struggle for empowerment. We believe that God is calling us to participate in an experience of the Holy Spirit, which renews us inwardly, and sends us out in mission. We have listened to the hopes and dreams of our people and also to their pain and fears. We have heard the groaning of our sub-continent. We have also begun an experience of God's transforming power, which releases us from bondage to structure and enable us to celebrate people in all their rich variety. We have covenanted with one another to be instruments of this experience.” (MCSA Minutes 1993: 337)

The MCSA went on to say:

“We commit ourselves, trusting in God alone for grace: To enable the whole church, at every level, to participate in the renewal of its life and its ministry to the world; to overcome those influences, traditions and institutions in church and society which inhibit full participation and renewal for all our people; to promote and to protect the right of all people to be heard and to use their gifts in the life of the church and its witness to Christ in the world.” (MCSA Minutes 1993:374)

Retreats were held in Son Valley and Common Ground both of which are Methodist retreat centers. The call was emphasising the point that only a transformed church would be able to transform society (Participant's Manual “Get on Board” 1993:4). However, the problem is that there was no attempt to change the MCSA from its English heritage in terms of its theology of mission. The attempts did not deal with pertinent questions of healing and reconciliation. As a result, not much has been achieved as far as these mechanisms are concerned.

Villa-Vicencio was to argue that, “the challenge now facing the church is different. The complex options for a new South Africa require more than resistance. The church is obliged to begin the difficult task of saying ‘Yes’ to the unfolding process of what could culminate in a democratic, just and kinder order.” (Villa-Vicencio 1992:27)

During the 1980s and 1990s, a time when South Africa was experiencing a deep political crisis, opposition to the system of apartheid was growing and the leadership of the MCSA found itself challenged to oppose apartheid. That resulted in the church's participation in ecumenical movements such as the South African Council of Churches (SACC) that challenged the policies and legitimacy of the apartheid government. Since the 1980s the leadership of the MCSA focussed to disavow the systems of racial discrimination that was prevalent in the country.

The MCSA was challenged to share more deeply God's passion for healing and reconciliation. Like most of the mainline English-speaking churches during the years of apartheid, the MCSA possessed a character of its own. It was a church that had struggled to remain a one and undivided community of believers (MCSA Minutes of Conference 1958:371). It had been involved in the struggle against apartheid both from within and from the outside. In spite of this, the conference and synods have long since been non-racial. The idea of a one and undivided church has still to be realised at the congregational level. A number of activities, projects, conferences and stormy meetings had been held by the church to deal with the division problem.

In the face of the sudden political changes and the escalation of violence in black communities the South African Council of Churches (SACC) convened a conference in the town of Rustenburg in November 1990. The conference brought together 230 participants representing 97 denominations and 40 church associations as well as ecumenical agencies such as Diakonia and the Institute for Contextual Theology (Chikane and Alberts 1991:52; Walshe 1992:140). The main aim of the conference was to foster reconciliation in South Africa and to forge a way forward in the ministry of the church after apartheid (Chikane and Alberts 1991:10).

A further key aim of the conference according to Chikane and Alberts was "an attempt to work towards a united Christian witness in a changing South Africa (Chikane & Alberts 1991:10). After the Rustenburg Conference released its declaration, the executive of the MCSA adopted the declaration. The MCSA as a signatory to the declaration of the Rustenburg Conference committed the church to work towards the transformation and renewal of the South African society.

Hence, in 1991 the MCSA had assembled to listen to, and discern, what God wanted them to do as a church in their ministry and to take a stand against apartheid. They referred back to a

weeklong conference they had in 1981 which was to become popularly known as “*Obedience 81*” (Storey 1995:1). There was common agreement that a similar assembly or convocation should be called to set the course for a new era (Storey 1995:1). The process was to be called A Journey to a New Land. This came from the biblical paradigm of the Exodus from slavery to freedom inspired by the journey of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt to freedom in the new land of Canaan (Storey 1995:2). As the socio-political changes of 1990 were a period of disorientation for the church, it made sense that the church wanted to organise itself so that it could preserve its important role in society.

Frank Chikane, the then General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) at the time, speaking in Natal at Diakonia in August 1992, could observe that; “the church’s role was to mediate between government and political organisations and this mediation should be mediation with the commitment to justice” (in Walshe 1992:138).

This is the lament of the people who have seen injustice, misery and pain and want to make a difference in this bruised and broken society. This is a reminder to the MCSA to find its prophetic voice and give moral leadership to the people of South Africa post-1994.

1.3.2 The MCSA Post-1994

In early 1991 the MCSA began a process of canvassing all Circuits, Societies, and members to ascertain what “shape” the MCSA should take as the sub-continent journeyed towards a new beginning with all the political unfolding’s in South Africa. The responses from Circuits were fed to a convocation called in mid-1993. After a time of prayer, Scripture study, listening to God and one another, the Convocation finalised six “calls” that were to guide the Church as it journeyed into a period of healing and reconciliation in a new political and social dispensation:

- a deepened spirituality in the life of the church;
- a conscious move from maintenance to mission;
- a rediscovery of every-member ministry;
- an engagement with what it means “to be one so that the world may believe” (John 17:21);
- all ministry must be modeled on servant-leadership and discernment; and
- The clergy must be set free to exercise their primary vocation (i.e. preaching, teaching, spiritual guidance, and leadership).

This study has its origins in the persistent call for healing and transformation which emanated from the processes of renewal and transformation within Methodism known as ‘Journey to a New Land’ and ‘Mission congress mission’s four pillars’. Recurring themes within these processes are, every member ministry, and empowerment. Such calls, however, would be empty unless backed up by improved efforts to help equip God’s people for their various ministries.

When analysing the above mentioned six calls of the Journey to a New Land one is confronted by the quest for a transformed understanding of what it means to be church. In assessing the impact of the Journey to a New Land process in the MCSA for healing and transformation ministry it is important that people are made aware of the imperatives such as unity, reconciliation, healing and transformation for them to participate in the change with commitment.

However, the problem with the Journey to a New Land is that not all church members share its goals. The aim of the Journey to a New Land Programme was to transform the MCSA so that it would be able to minister to the post-1994 South Africa that was emerging as a transformed society. Lamenting the lack of progress in the transformation of the MCSA the former Presiding Bishop of the MCSA, Mvume Dandala, (in MCSA Minutes 1998:5) said “I am concerned that it appears that we have not yet all heard the emphasis of the call of the journey. For instance, debates relating to the place of the lay members of the church and the ordained ministry tend to evoke responses marked by selfish interest.”

Post- 1994 the political tide has certainly turned for the better and the MCSA needs no longer engage in the habitual tirade against the sin of the previous regime. While the prophetic aspects of the church’s mission never ceased to exist, it would be a futile exercise for Christians to persist in denouncing evils that are now transitory. This would imply that the future role of the MCSA be located and defined in the larger context of *missio Dei*.

South African Christians required the MCSA to move from prophetic resistance to a new prophetic participation in a process of discerning God’s mission and its message for the democratic South Africa, and for the kind of a church that is faithful to the witness of the gospel for the new challenges. Since political liberation in 1994 the MCSA has been searching for its role in a free Southern Africa. MCSA, together with South Africa’s people, seek to come to terms with the past. They struggle to free themselves from what has been done to them as well as what they have failed to do.

During the apartheid era many churches, including the MCSA, reflected the political structures of the apartheid government characterised by separate development, racial segregation and discrimination. Therefore, the political system before 1994 seemed to have influenced the ministry and the mission of the church and played a major role in the Christian community. The church operated along the lines of the political environment. However, the Bible has generated a significant reception history in pre-1994 South Africa. The reception history testifies to how the Bible was considered to be important across the spectrum of society, also contributing to believers' lives and sense of self.

There were in the MCSA both black members and white members, who sought to be faithful in word and deed, to the theological conviction of visible and structural unity of the MCSA. They were convinced that unity is the will of God and that it reflects the mind of Christ in his prayer that 'they all be one; so that the world may believe' (John 17: 21). The MCSA conference resolved to establish racial integrated circuits as an integral part of mission and the MCSA provided a number of leaders to the South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute, bodies that led the church's resistance to apartheid.

If the church (MCSA) was to be effective both in eradicating and overcoming the structural and other sins of apartheid, and also offering support and care for the increasingly impatient and militant victims of apartheid, it would need to restructure itself to take its members, and wider society, on a journey of healing and reconciliation. What is required is not just a statement of unity and solidarity, but rather a bold and courageous restructuring of the church and the rethinking of its ministry. The church is the best-positioned institution to support and encourage its members to make changes required for renewal of society. According to Villavicencio and De Gruchy (1994:119), "The gospel is, thus, a message about the kind of transformation that God seeks to bring about in our own personalities, our interpersonal relationships, our social context, our thoughts and paradigms, our churches and, indeed, in all of creation."

In 1998 the church embarked on the Millennium Mission Campaign, which was a massive nationwide fundraising drive for Mission. In the same year the MCSA tri-annual conference adopted a vision that would be a driving force for transformation, healing and reconciliation ministry in the post-1994 South Africa "God has given us the vision of a Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations." (MCSA Year Book 2013:2) The Methodist Church's mission statement declares healing and transformation to be its mission in the post-1994 South Africa.

“God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation.” (MCSA Year Book 2009:2)

The vision of the MCSA is a simple, but profound vision: “A Christ healed Africa... for the healing of the nations.” In pursuing the vision statement the MCSA convened a mission congress in Mthatha in 2004, which sought to revisit the mission vision and strategies which the MCSA seeks to fulfil; the vision to recognise God’s call “to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation”. The proclamation of the gospel was to be firmly based on the four pillars of mission:

- Spirituality;
- Economic Empowerment and Human Development;
- Evangelism and Church Growth; and
- Justice and Service.

1.3.4. Rationale

The premise of this study is that while an ecclesiology of healing and transformation is confessed by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), in practice, the theology of healing and transformation receives minimal attention in many congregations in the MCSA. A gap continues to exist between practice and theology and Connexion and congregations. For any church to be relevant in a changing society it needs to undergo a process of transformation in its ecclesiology and this in turn will enhance a ministry that will bring healing and transformation. It is not enough for the church to just embark on the changing of its structures and focus of ministry without looking at its theological and missiological foundations. The process of transformation needs to be discerned and facilitated in the local church in a manner that encourages the maximum participation and dialogue of all its members.

Although the desire of the MCSA, as expressed in statements recorded in the MCSA’s Year Books and through geographic or racially integrated circuits of 1989 conference resolution on for example gender equality, this has, for many years, not been implemented. The intention of the MCSA is that systems are put in place to ensure equal representation and to include clauses in the MCSA’s Laws and Discipline, which would be a tool to ensure that the Church and its leaders were held accountable to the process of healing and transformation. However, this is not the practice. Despite having as its mission, to be a church of healing and transformation, the MCSA continues to be racially divided in its ecclesiological practices

and, unless these systems are transformed, women and children will continue to be marginalised and excluded.

Therefore, the study seeks to reflect critically on how the programmes (mechanisms) adopted by the MCSA for healing and transformation mission in the post-1994 South Africa, impacted and contributed to the MCSA's ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa. It also wants to reflect critically on how the processes of implementing the four mission pillars have impacted on local congregations' ministry, as an agency of mission to bring healing and reconciliation in a wider MCSA. Will a paradigm shift in understanding and participating in the *missio Dei* enhance the healing and reconciliation process in the MCSA?

The title of thesis "*Missio Dei: An ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) in post-1994 South Africa*", is linked directly to the mission statement of the MCSA, "God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation". The central research question is: How will understanding mission as *missio Dei*, contribute to the mission of MCSA to become an agent of healing and reconciliation in a post-1994 South Africa?

The title has been chosen to draw particular attention to the fact that even though political equality has been attained in South Africa, many members in many MCSA Societies, more than half, do not yet experience healing and reconciliation in the MCSA, and although there are many broader issues at stake, specific attention is given, in this thesis, to the gap between theological policy and practice in the MCSA.

1.4. Problem Statement

All humanity is God's creation (Gen 1 & 2) and all humanity is contemplated in Genesis 12:1-3 as included in God's covenant of mercy and are therefore the objects of God's love and grace. This would be in the sense that God's people are signs and vehicles of God's healing, reconciliation and transformation for all humanity, and communicators of God's grace and healing to the world. The healing and reconciliation acts are of God and are continued and brought to the highest peak in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus identifies himself as the One sent for healing and transformation of the world (Luke 4:16-21). Jesus empowers his disciples with the Spirit that empowers him, and sends them (John 20:21-23) towards healing and transformation of all humanity (Matthew 28:18-20)

Although the desire of the MCSA, as expressed in statements recorded in the MCSA's Year Books and through the conferences' resolutions of unity and integration, this has, for many years, not been implemented successfully. The intention of the MCSA is that systems are put in place to ensure equal representation and to include clauses in the MCSA's Laws and Discipline, which would be a tool to ensure that the Church and its leaders were held accountable to the process of healing, unity, reconciliation, transformation and equality. However, this is not the practice.

An obstacle to advance healing and transformation in the MCSA post-1994 was a number of perceptions about opposing and diverse agendas within the church. For instance for the majority of white people the mission statement was a process that would allow them to belong to a church that encouraged healing of guilt, forgiveness and foster Christian unity. The church would also be a safe space for them to correct the mistakes of the apartheid years and allow them to participate in the new democratic society that was emerging. They were genuinely afraid of losing control of the church. At the same time for black people, especially those concretised by the BMC, the mission statement was an attempt by the white leadership to maintain the control of the church. For the clergy there was a fear of losing control of the church to the laity.

From the above, the study recognises that the MCSA did not go unscathed by the above development. That is why the study confirms that in every church denomination at different times in its history that denomination is confronted by crisis situations out of which grow much learning and contemplation. This is proven by the recordings of the Minutes of Conference which pre-1994 have reflected its concerns about the situation in South Africa, especially on apartheid (MCSA Year Book 2015:372-375).

The MCSA recognises that the healing and reconciliation are the acts of God's salvation and are intended for all humanity. However, these are not the only functions of the church's life, but they are definitive of the church's primary function; they signify the presence of God's coming reign, healing, restoration and renewal. Meanwhile, the mission and the ministry of the church are, to worship and participate in God's mission through service and evangelisation in the community. When the church gathers together for worship of God, it is to participate in the *missio Dei* through, prayer, fellowship, tending one another's wounds and empowering. After the worship service the participation in the *missio Dei* continues into the world fulfilling Jesus' words, as the Father sent me, so I send you, become real and active.

When the church's gathering is dispersed into the world to heal and transform lives of the people, she becomes truly missional.

Since April 1994, many efforts of healing and reconciliation were put in place by a new political dispensation in South Africa. With the first democratic elections and the inauguration of the first black president, a transition from apartheid to democracy was set in motion. The new dispensation in South Africa has a firm theoretical framework: moving towards a constitutional democracy, fine legislation such as The Labour Relations Act and Employment Equity Act has emerged since 1994.

The 1996 policies for urban renewal and rural development are some of the fruits of the new South Africa as reflected in the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). There is no denying the existence of the new political framework, but it is yet to deliver benefits of healing and reconciliation to the poorest of the poor. The new dispensation, in view of the poor, is currently only benefitting the middle and the upper classes creating new divisions in society. The failure of the new political dispensation to improve the lives of many poor South Africans, in a number of areas, has led to much disappointment and anger.

Under the Reconstruction and Development Programme 1994 (RDP), which was shelved in 1996 in favour of macro-economic plan of Growth, Employment and Redistribution(GEAR) to stimulate faster economic growth, numerous houses have been built across the country with a state subsidy. Free primary health care is being provided to children under the ages of five. A major deficit in delivery is that there has been very little job-creation. Since 1994 thousands of jobs have been lost in certain sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, motor, textile and mining industries. The 2008 to 2010 recession caused further damage to the ailing economy; as a result the levels of unemployment rose significantly. The government's macro-economic policy is not delivering to the unemployed. The gap between the rich and the poor is growing bigger. The economic inequalities are as stark as ever. A further phenomenon is casualisation of labour as a result of globalisation.

It is the Methodist belief that the Lordship of Christ extends to all of life including the political, social and economic areas of existence. In this regard the MCSA, reaffirms the basis of Romans 13 that "there is no authority except from God" (The MCSA Laws and Discipline: 2007:230a), and that where rulers are obedient to the law of God they are obliged to be obeyed. It is incumbent upon all in these matters to obey God rather than humans (Acts5:29). It is clearly as wrong as to quote a part of Romans 13 that the nature of the rule of such

authority, is of 'God', as it to quote Revelation 13, in isolation from all other scriptures, to suggest that all government authority is the incarnation of evil as symbolised by the beast. In concurring to the above, the presiding bishop's address at the Durban Conference 2010 alluded to the fact that the MCSA recognises that there are widely differing interpretations of the precise way in which the justice of God may be manifest in political or economic structures. It is therefore obliged from time to time to express its mind on specific political and economic matters. Therefore, it does so with tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect for all who seek to live responsibly before, but disagree with, the mind of the church at that particular time.

Although the desire of the MCSA, as expressed in statements recorded in the MCSA's Year Books and through the conferences' resolutions of unity and integration, this has, for many years, not been implemented successfully. The intention of the MCSA is that systems are put in place to ensure equal representation and to include clauses in the MCSA's Laws and Discipline, which would be tools to ensure that the Church and its leaders were held accountable to the process of healing, unity, reconciliation, transformation and equality. However, this is not the practice.

1.5. Central Research Question

The central question of this study is: How will the understandings of mission as *missio Dei*, contribute to the calling of the MCSA in all its structures to become an agent of healing and reconciliation in a post-1994 South Africa?

In understanding *missio Dei* as mission of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA, the study will ask the following questions:

1.5.1. Research questions

- What was the history of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA?
- What is the theology of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA?
- What does the Bible say on healing and reconciliation?
- What is the stance of *missio Dei* on healing and reconciliation?
- How can an ecclesiological mission assist the MCSA?

1.6. Aim

The aim of this study is to demonstrate how the *missio Dei* can influence the ecclesiology of the MCSA to continue to be influential in contributing towards healing and reconciliation of

society in a post- 1994 South Africa. To reach this aim it will reflect critically on how the mission pillars and six calls of the journey to the new land programmes adopted by MCSA for healing and transformation mission in the post-1994 South Africa impacted and contributed to the MCSA's ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa.

To reach the aim of this study the following objectives will be dealt with in the proposed chapters:

1.6.1. Objectives

- To expound on the history of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA
- To identify the theology of healing and reconciliation.
- To investigate the stance of the Bible on healing and reconciliation.
- To examine healing and reconciliation from the *missio Dei* perspective
- To propose an ecclesiological missional paradigm that can assist the MCSA.

1.7. Literature Review

This study is placed within the field of missiology since mission may be viewed as making God known in the world (Wright 2006). Missiology is about making God known in specific contexts, for example post- 1994 South Africa, with the purpose of healing and transforming societies to transformation with God. Much is written on healing and reconciliation from related fields such as politics, sociology and psychology. Within the African literature a holistic view on healing links it very closely to reconciliation and religion. Literature from the MCSA and its views on church and mission are available, but there are not much or detailed literature on MCSA's interpretation of healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa. Hence the study will focus on the gap that exists. A complete literature study will be done in chapter 2.

1.8. Research Methodology

This study will do a comparative literature study proceeding from *missio Dei* as interpreted, practised and understood in the ecclesiology of the MCSA in post- 1994 South Africa. Textual analysis as research methodology will mainly focus on the primary data, the source documents of the MCSA. These include the Laws and Discipline (the legal document of the MCSA) and the Year Books (the minutes of the Annual Conference, the decision-making body of the MCSA). Significant addresses and sermons of the Presiding Bishops are also referred to when relevant to the discussion. It is also essential to reflect upon, analyse and

evaluate the works of distinguished scholars in their respective fields. Critical scholarly reviews will, therefore, be done thematically throughout the thesis. Relevant literature and information gathered will identify strategies for mission in the MCSA, comparison as well as evaluation of scholarly works on the Methodist theology of mission. The written or recorded data produced by the MCSA may be extremely valuable for aspects of the MCSA's history, ministry and mission. For example, minutes of church board meetings, worship audio and video tapes, written transcripts of sermons, various types of church literature (from educational to theological), all informative literature, all reports to and from synods and other bodies would be helpful.

1.9. Study Limitations

The study will limit itself to an ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation within the MCSA. There are a number of other organisations that attend to the same and interrelated issues that this study cannot address and that calls for further research. The African context of the study is limited to the available comparative literature on, for example, African literature on healing; in other words there are still relevant studies which are presently in process that might oppose the relevance of the study on healing from an ecclesiological perspective. Despite this fact, the study lays an informed basis for future study, taking into cognisance the period in which the study has been done. It will be able to offer assistance on the set of issues that are appropriate to identify how different denominations, as missional communities, with a ministry of healing and reconciliation can assist in bringing healing and unity in a divided society.

Chapter Two

Critical Literature Review Theology of Healing and Reconciliation

2.1 Background

This study will give an analysis of literature on healing and reconciliation in South Africa with emphasis on the MCSA's ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa. This is done in view that South Africa supposedly entered the end of historical years marked by painful exclusion, racism, repression, prejudice, discrimination and collective violence. The church was not left unscathed. The MCSA was affected because its members were part of the church.

Mogoba (1994:77) says, "God's design for Methodists was to reform the nation, particularly the church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land. The nations, societies and especially the church and religious groups' still need reforming."

From a sociological perspective, the pre-1994 South African history is mostly remembered for its gross human rights violations and mass atrocities committed against the majority of black people by the then apartheid government. The then South Africa's government's apartheid system perpetuated the violence and repression that was used to maintain it. This resulted in the violent conflicts of 1980s, the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, and oppression by one group over another. These have torn apart the social fabric of communities in nearly every town, city and township in South Africa. Mogoba (1994:76) has this vision about a healed and reconciled society which is brought about by forgiveness and grace.

He says, "This is how a new society can be born: Sinners, discovering the forgiveness of God, find that they have a new power and together throw themselves into building a new society, a society of transformed people, with transformed economy, transformed values and transformed goals."

Pre-1994 and the ushering in 1994, there arose commissions such as Human Rights commission, Gender Equality and Judicial Service Commission (Constitution Act 108 of 1996:99), endeavours and intentions to address the abuse that happened pre-1994 for the purpose of healing and reconciliation. Thence, sequel to that above, Chapman (1999:1) asks

the following questions in the light of the transition from exclusion into inclusive democratic society:

“How do societies make a transition from the experience of conflict and violence to a more democratic future based on respect for human life and dignity? How do they achieve at least the modicum of healing and reconciliation among former adversaries necessary for people to live together and share a common future? Do Christian concepts of forgiveness (healing and reconciliation) have any relevance for a post-1994 South Africa?”

In addition Chapman (1999:1) resonates that recognition is given here that, many human rights organisations and practitioners advocate for retribution justice with the intention to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of significant human rights violations so as to assure accountability, justice, and respect for law in the future.

2.2. Introduction

From the above injunction, the study seeks to address some of the major issues as raised in the post-1994 South African societies, for example the balance among healing and reconciliation, forgiveness, and justice. The 1994 promises of a just, reconciled, equitable and sustainable society, free of racial, tribal, xenophobic and gender prejudices; free of corruption and deprivation, with enough food and shelter for every citizen have not materialised.

It is worth noting that the political changes of 1994 have not risen to the expectation of many people; the promise of a better life for all, remains a pipe dream for many people particularly the poor. It is carefully observed that not much has been done to advance the promise of a better life in a post-1994 South Africa. This is a clear indication that healing and reconciliation cannot be done by a political process, but it is part of the *missio Dei* of which the church is a participant. Mention will be made of the focus on the MCSA's stance on healing and reconciliation.

2.3 Defining the MCSA's Healing and Reconciliation position in Post-1994 South Africa

The literature quoted in this section sets a base or theoretical framework for understanding healing and reconciliation in the backdrop of MCSA's ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation of the past experience with reference to post-1994 South Africa. Thence, the scope of literature reflects the South African past with a hope to plot a way forward to healing and reconciliation.

The MCSA's theologies' expressions of healing and reconciliation is conceptualised by the doctrine of salvation by grace. "Reconciliation in its biblical and secular roots has to do with overcoming estrangement or changing attitudes that cause a relationship to be broken. The root word has commercial foundations. The word describes an exchange. In a biblical passage such as Romans 5:9-10, reconciliation describes a renewal so pervasive that it makes one a new creature, this remark points us to this understanding of a new relationship with God." (Tyson 1986:96) It is from this perspective that the study of healing and reconciliation forms part of the mission of God to all people through the ministry of the church.

Examining the theological synonyms the MCSA used for reconciliation indicates that it ran the whole range of redemption languages. Reconciliation includes being forgiven by grace or being justified. It means being purchased by God, generally through the agency of Christ's blood. Mogoba (1994: 76) points out that, the time has come for Christians, in particular the Methodists (MCSA) to take their new life out to into "the streets and byways, the cities and informal settlements of this land and there to set about transforming South Africa into new land by proclaiming and demonstrating the transforming power of our Saviour."

The results of the transforming power and saving grace lead to deliverance and assurance for the forgiveness of sins, which leads to healing and reconciliation with God. Thence, the MCSA "declares the universality of the grace of God by preaching the gospel of a free, full, present salvation for everyone who repents and believes upon Lord Jesus Christ. A change of heart wrought by the grace of God, issuing in a new birth, in a conscious personal experience of the forgiveness of sins..." (MCSA Book of Order 2014:12).

The theological views of the MCSA for healing and reconciliation seek to be in accordance with the values set upon the apostolic ministry in the New Testament and in the early Church. That is why the MCSA emphasises salvation for all by grace through faith, with the understanding that we are all saved by grace and we respond to God's love by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Whilst Orobator (2009:52) conceptualises the idea of grace by saying, "Grace means a favour that God freely gives to us; it is meant to help us in our journey of faith."

Orobator further asserts that "grace empowers us to respond to God's invitation to God's offer of love"; we are empowered by God to participate in the mission of healing and reconciliation through the works of mercy (Orobator 2009:52).

Thence, Hamber and Kelley (2005:18), aligning themselves with the MCSA, maintain that, “reconciliation has multiple meanings, which can vary from context to context. There is also often confusion between applying the term to the relationship between two individuals and to a broader political context of conflict between groups. At the same time, a detailed yet universal understanding of what reconciliation means is not available.”

From Hamber and Kelley (2005) the study assumes that the critical issue is understanding the operational context, that which give meaning and understanding in defining reconciliation. The issue is not so much whether there is too much or too little understanding, but the nature of that reconciliation process. This then will take us to the role of and possibilities for reconciliation and its relationship with healing, particularly as understood by the MCSA in a post-1994 South Africa.

Mogoba, one of the prominent leaders in the religious fraternity and past MCSA presiding Bishop in his book “Convicted by Hope” makes this observation:

“It is a grim and glorious thing to be gripped by reconciliation in South Africa today. It is grim because so many white Christians see reconciliation as political and therefore must be shunned, and most blacks see reconciliation as cheap and therefore to be ignored. But it is glorious too because it is central to the heart of Jesus, pivotal to the New Testament, and inescapable for South Africa.” (Mogoba 1994:56-57)

Mogoba’s assertion raises two significant issues about understanding the importance of reconciliation in South Africa post-1994, (‘shunned and ignored’) this suggests that reconciliation in this regard is understood as an event not a process, because an event is something that happens once, but a process suggests an intentional willingness on both parties to embark on a programme which seeks to bring a solution. However, Chapman (1999:2) suggests that the socio- political background had a significant impact on the lives of the black people that is why it can also be pointed out that the historical oppression of the majority of black people in South Africa contributes to the understanding that reconciliation in political context is cheap. From this premise it is important to ascertain what the scriptures say about healing, reconciliation and restoration of human dignity.

The ministry (of the MCSA) in a polarised, violent and divided society is always challenging and difficult. The debate about healing and reconciliation in a post-1994 South Africa has been raging for some time within the MCSA; there can be no genuine healing and

reconciliation without peace and justice. Any form of reconciliation that allows the sin of injustice and oppression to continue is a false one. This kind of reconciliation has nothing whatsoever to do with Christian faith. Storey (2004:81), while agreeing that there can be no reconciliation without justice, makes this appeal: "... with all white South Africans, need to know that God has been exceedingly gracious with us. God has given us a new chance to join the rest of humanity in the painful adventure of togetherness".

From what we can gather from experience, it appears history is repeating itself in post-1994 South Africa (Isaiah 1:21-23; Jeremiah 2:20-28). There is a definite self-indulgence in material riches at the expense of a healthy and eased conscience. Greed and self-indulgence have numbed any feelings of regard for a free, just and reconciled societies' principles laid out for a healthy and eased social order (Deuteronomy 24:6-22).

Mtshiselwa (2015:125) highlights a sad reality of the state of affairs in the post-1994 South Africa although he is not explicitly addressing healing and reconciliation; however, his assertion has a bearing on the social standing of South Africa ..."poverty, corruption, injustice and conflict could be viewed as areas that need immediate attention in post-apartheid South Africa".

The plea for a just society is echoed by those who experience injustice and are at the receiving end of the consequences of leaders' haughtiness in the shiny offices in the high echelons of power. There appears to be a heeding of the call in Joel 2:15-17.

2.4. Healing and Reconciliation

Healing and reconciliation is not an easy process because of the scars and wounds that are left in memories that cannot be contemplated. The above notion can be attributed to what Chapman (1999:3) asserts as follows as per pre- 1994 status-quo:

"During apartheid the suppression of opposition political parties and the incarceration of major black politicians left a void that the South African Council of Churches and some church related voluntary organisations tried to fill. Nevertheless, the influential Kairos Document, published in 1986 by a group of progressive black church leaders, attacked the role of the religious community, particularly what it termed "church theology," claiming it espoused a doctrine of "cheap reconciliation." The Kairos Document argued that reconciliation could only follow white repentance and a clear commitment to fundamental change."

On the contrary, it is important to note that the Scripture has a different view on reconciliation. The scripture, according to James 5:16 and Philemon 2:25, clearly states that in healing, acceptance is realised and forgiveness is imperative; then reconciliation is established through a loving relationship called *koinonia*. By acceptance and letting it go, forgiveness is brought about and reconciliation is inevitable. Christ has reconciled us with God and our neighbours through his death on the cross. Through the cross many barriers like social status, racial issues, and sex and personality differences have been broken down. This is evident that Jesus can heal and bring transformation that all who believes in him might have a peaceful healed life.

The above is confirmed by Boraine (2000:360) who links healing to reconciliation in this manner; “Healing is seen as a gift from God (reconciliation), which can be accepted but is not deserved. However, reconciliation with God always also involves reconciliation with one’s neighbours. There are a number of steps that take place in the reconciliation process: confession, repentance, restitution, and forgiveness. The focus in traditional Christian religion is very much on the covenant between God and the individual.

Pre-1994 South Africa it was evident that the church had a prophetic voice and it was a voice of the voiceless and the marginalised. The MCSA was also one of the churches that resonated about abuse experienced by many South Africans. However, post-1994 the church seems to be captured by the State who paralysed it. However, it is obvious in post-1994 South Africa the role of the church of being a voice of reason is slowly diminishing. Dolamo (2001:294) laments as follows, “Unfortunately, the dawn of this fragile democracy has meant, for many Christians, the end of the church's prophetic ministry. This prophetic lull is due to the fact that the church's prophets, who were very vocal during the apartheid era, have been roped in by the government into its myriad of structures.”

Dolamo (2001:294) further asserts that: “Virtually all religions recognise and acknowledge that things are not as they ought to be or supposed to be. As a result, they have devised a myriad of rituals or rites that are aimed at restoring the relationship between their subject (gods) and the adherents (worshippers).” These rituals are seen as signs and symbols that affirm a reconciled community that is striving for healing and peace (*shalom*). From a Christian perspective *missio Dei* is paramount in achieving reconciliation and healing. God’s reconciliation plan is the one which can bring peace and love.

The above is evident in the MCSA and its ministry. The ministry of reconciliation in the MCSA is an act of worship as based in the scriptures. Thereof healing and reconciliation is surely part of the *missio Dei*, as it concerns all relationships that pertain to us, those with God and our neighbours. Reconciliation is God's redeeming work in bringing back human beings to his covenantal relationship after the fall in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3); the implication of this assertion is that, without exception, the church has the privilege to participate in this mission. Orobator (2009:60) asserts that, "we all stand in need of the universal saving and liberating grace offered by Jesus Christ".

2.5. Reconciliation and the community

Reconciliation from past historical events in South Africa has led to suspicion and not healing among communities due to mistrust and non-genuineness from the parties partaking therein. That is why Boraine (2000:360) remarks as follows; "It is particularly the focus on forgiveness that has caused some practitioners to question the association here between politics and religion. This seems to be prompted by the view, whether correct or not, that when reconciliation is closely tied to religion it can become subsumed into a desire for forgiveness, or to move on to quickly undermining, for example, the anger or desire for justice of victims of violence."

Galtung (1998:3) describes reconciliation as "the process of healing the traumas of both victims and perpetrators after violence, providing a closure of the bad relations". However, healing and reconciliation in a socio-political context are tricky subjects in situations of repression and violence. For those oppressed it is an attempt of the oppressor to disempower. For the oppressor, oppression is a sign of power and control particularly in South Africa; this is evident in the violent protests, like the Marikana protests in 2012.

According to Chapman (1999:2), "The approach of the religious community has often been somewhat different. Religious thinkers are more inclined to stress forgiveness and reconciliation as important dimensions in coming to terms with, and overcoming the legacy of a divided past". Mogoba (1994:75) says, "If it were, there would be no point in going through all the trouble and pain. Forgiveness is the bridge that leads to new life, to new land."

The MCSA (1991:50) argues that, "Reconciliation is a shame as long as that which created the division in the first place remains unchanged. We might have to apologise for what we

have done, pay back what we have taken, repair what was broken, or put things right in some other way. But we cannot just ignore the problem or pretend it is not there.”

The notion of shame can be directly linked to two recent incidents in South Africa, Nkandla and the state of capture reports; on which the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in November 2016 lamented the gloomy state of a post-1994 South Africa saying:

“We are in a time of great instability - instability in the governing party the ANC, resulting in instability in government as a state of mistrust might then prevail in Cabinet, in the provinces and in local government. There is a growing disintegration of public trust and the decline of the mind-set of a common purpose of our citizenship.”

However, it is not just a statement of lament that the SACC released it; the responsibility of the church to respond prophetic and to act on in any meaningful ways to build a God fearing society so as to heal and reconcile all people.

The 2016 SACC November Press release calls for; “... Pray for a campaign that includes a serious look at the healing of our country, and the path of reconciliation, at the pain of poverty and inequality that looks at sustainable models for economic transformation, and the serious question of anchoring democracy and away from corruption, maladministration and the loss of public trust in public institutions.”

God has a clear task for the church, he calls it to listen, to pray, to search, to reflect, and then to obey. It is evident that healing and reconciliation through forgiveness and grace are what the church is called to advance. When the South African parliament in 2016 failed to hold government and the president accountable for the pain and gross violation of the constitution of the country as per the Public protector’s finding, and remedial actions there was a clear indication of how deeply sin is rooted in the political systems.

Orobator’s (2009:61) definition of the consequences of sin indicate a reality that post-1994 South Africa is faced with, his definition is “sin is a reality of a break, a rupture, and a loss of harmony”.

The idea of a rupture can be linked to the 2016 July ANC’s announcement of Didiza as a preferred mayoral candidate over Ramokgopa; the announcement led to violent tribal or ethnic motivated protest that disturbed the peace and harmony in Pretoria, prior to the local municipal elections.

However, in instances such as above, Mogoba (1994:74) argues that “Confession is the key that leads to forgiveness”. Christians believe that it is at the point of hopelessness that God takes the initiative and opens a new life of love for us through the cross.

Mogoba (1994:74), citing Feider says, “The movement towards true peace begins when we realise that things can be different, that there are alternative responses to life situations...we can find forgiveness and healing in Jesus.”

The church can participate in ministry healing and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of love and being involved in community peace keeping structures in which healing would be experienced through the act of caring.

Kittel and Friedrich (1985:41-42) say, “Reconciliation is connected with the conclusion of peace and new creation not merely removal of guilt.” Guilt must lead to confession and repentance if one is to be healed.

Because we are all sinners and cannot save ourselves, we need a Saviour. When sin came into the world it affected every person who had ever lived, (Rom 5:12, Gen 3:1-12). What we learn from Paul is that everyone has sinned and is far away from God’s saving presence. Sin involves both disobedience to God, and separation from God, as result of that, we need to be delivered from its power, only God can forgive sins. The assertion is that forgiveness is preceded by grace which is the saving work of Christ on the cross is a perfect example of God’s grace.

However, the political notion of reconciliation differs quite significantly from the Christian notion of reconciliation, according to August (2005:20). “National reconciliation does not necessarily involve forgiveness. Politically, people live together quite well without necessarily having to work through all that forgiveness involves. It involves peaceful coexistence, as the first step towards greater, perhaps even more intimate unity later.” It should be kept in mind, however, that these different views of reconciliation are not always kept neatly apart. It is here that the Christian gospel stands in radical contrast to other faiths. No other religion in the world preaches the sheer grace of God in this way.

The continuous work of the church (MCSA) post-1994 and for many years to come should be that of enabling polarised people with deep feelings of fear, hatred, and distrust to find each other and live together in the same country (Mogoba 1994:57).

In carrying forward the idea of forgiveness Desmond Tutu envisaged a nation that reflects unity in diversity, by coining famous phrase “Rainbow Nation” which was an optimistic anticipation of racial harmony. However, social demographics in post-1994 South Africa dispel Desmond Tutu’s famous phrase, rainbow nation, 20 years into democracy. Since South Africa still reflects the same social order and or demographics of inequality and exclusion.

The notion of a rainbow nation has hoped to embrace different cultural backgrounds which form the colours of the rainbow. The Rainbow nation theory was anticipated to ignite a fire for healing and reconciliation and to invoke a spirit of forgiveness as South Africa was rising from the ashes of destruction. When South Africa held its first democratic elections in 1994 ending the brutal era of apartheid, the country’s oppressed black majority thought racism had come to an end. The democracy held for them a promise of better life for all, but surprisingly 20 years after the end of apartheid, racism and inequality has remained alive in the rainbow nation.

According to De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio (1994:187), “In a society characterised by injustice, oppression and conflict, neutrality is impossible...” The MCSA (like any other reconciliatory institution) advocated peace and stability in South Africa because strikes and anarchy were rapidly becoming the norm.

According to Ackermann (2004:55), “...clearly no social reconciliation is possible without reconciled individuals. Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela are examples of reconciled people who are able to bring about social reconciliation. The processes by which reconciliation occur are different, as the one is internal and the other public. Thus the processes are similar, interrelated but nevertheless distinct.”

That is why reconciliation must lead to healing and has to be administered to quell the situation which was bringing more pain than healing to South African inhabitants.

2.6. Healing and community

Reconciliation is a prerequisite for the healing of post-1994 South Africa. It is in this regard that note has to be taken of Chapman’s (1999:3) remark: “In our situation in South Africa today it would be totally unchristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed... No reconciliation is possible in South Africa without justice.” From this it is taken that justice and healing is also closely related.

The economic inequality, poor service delivery and violent protest in many townships become more evident as signs of the injustices to poor people and the marginalised groups. The divided faith communities, dilapidating health care system and poor education system obstruct any true healing and reconciliation between social groups (the rich and the poor. Ndungane (2003:89) places emphasis that: “The responsibility for healing the wounds of those who have suffered most is shared by the whole nation of South Africa.” This clearly indicates that healing is a collective effort of the community, though the individuals are encouraged to participate in their own healing. Fisher (1968:82) already supports this view because “...full, successful reconciliation between alienated groups cannot take place without an adequate degree of genuine dialogue and conflict analysis of a mutual, interactive nature...”.

The MCSA (1991:50) states reconciliation with others involves understanding, “the amazing attitude of God in reconciling us with himself which must be reflected in amazing new attitudes on our part towards others. Our behaviour has to change; our relationships with God must in turn transform our relationship with others” . To establish new relationships with others is a need to forgive, to love our enemies, to seek reconciliation with those from whom we have been estranged. It will afford the MCSA an opportunity to participate in God’s mission of healing and reconciliation to fight against things like corruption, hatred, selfishness and revenge.

It is clear from the above assertion that, the MCSA needs to encourage awareness among members of a need for Christians to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation through social involvement which seeks to heal and bring dignity to all. Oneness and wholeness in Christ must be clearly seen in the community life of the church so that the world may believe that what we preach is true (John 17:22-23).

Mogoba (1994:49) says, “At the Methodist Conference (MCSA), it was agreed that if South Africa was to be saved we needed a new people and we needed power...a change from weak, helpless sinners to forgiven people with power to revolutionise our church and our country.” Healing leads to transformation (changed hearts, mind-set and attitudes) that brings reconciliation for all people.

Bentley puts this argument forward on the church’s contribution and role in healing and reconciliation. He asserts that: “For Christians, and especially Methodists, the gospel it

proclaims is a social gospel. It is foundational in the expression of one's faith that there is an interaction between one's love and commitment to God and one's love for your neighbour." (Bentley 2014a:3)

Social justice should be perceived as an act of fairness, which is proactive in seeking to create an environment where people can focus on restoring the dignity of the previously disadvantaged as a collective effort to redress the imbalances of the past. According to Bentley (2014a:3), "The primary locus of the Church's conviction to render social service, however, is rooted in its belief that there exists no other way to be a follower of Christ but to act in love within society." The MCSA Presiding Bishop Abrahams suggests that the legacy of the Methodist people is closely linked with the healing of the South African citizens from the past abuses. Tied with this notion is the idea which the church has envisioned for a long time, the idea of a "Christ Healed Africa for the Healing of Nations." The legacy that the Presiding Bishop touches on is a legacy that does not only seek to empower people but also seek to heal them even if they went through racial tension. This is echoed in his address to Conference of 2008, Rev. Abrahams said: "In the light of our legacy as a Methodist Movement that strives to support organisations and people that promote the restoration of human dignity, equality, peace, freedom and justice to all God's people" (MCSA yearbook 2009:7).

Bentley (2014a:6-7) draws this picture of how the MCSA is participating in the mission of healing: "In recent years it has been extremely encouraging to see how the MCSA is once again involved in community building projects. Schools are being built, often because government bureaucracy is delaying delivery of education services to communities. Moreover, clinics are being built, literacy courses are being offered, and Methodist health care professionals are offering their services as part of their tithes to provide consultations to those who cannot afford these services. Methodists in the legal sector are offering legal advice for free, prisons have become places of outreach for local church communities, counselling centres are being established, and community food gardens are being started. The list goes on."

2.7. Healing and Reconciliation as socio-economic justice and service

In violent and conflict situations it is a common course for parties to develop a sense of injustice regarding the behaviour and attitude of the person or group. Arising out of a conflict situation where an individual or group feels that they have been treated unjustly and

that the other party has caused a serious hurt that is undeserved. The wronged party would seek recourse for the injury they have suffered and to be compensated somehow.

Peachey (1989:303) resonates that “the impact of a serious breach in the relationship among individuals or groups stirs up emotions beyond those involved in situations of a conflict of interest. The psychological experience of injury resulting from one party acting outside established rules and norms is distinct from that of a simple conflict of interest - it leads to a desire for retribution or vengeance”. It is argued that justice is an interactive process requiring the participation of both parties. The desire for retribution is common among people who feel that their suffering was completely unjustifiable.

Ndungane (2003:89) argues, “Providing immunity from criminal and civil claims for those who committed serious human rights abuses leaves a serious level of resentment among victimised groups”. Letting go of the hatred of victimisers requires a process that deals with this sense of justice. Whether this would be addressed by some form of punishment, restitution by the victimisers or the state or through some form of grace and forgiveness in response to an expression of contrition depends on a range of factors. Very often the options for justice are presented as an all-or-nothing choice between harsh retributive measures or impunity.

Boesak (2008:650-651) argues that “the socio-economic injustices that plague our society are symptoms of the deeper malady that ails us: we are far from the reconciled society we claim to be. Those who disagree argue that South Africa is already experiencing a ‘rapid deracialisation of capital’”. He (2008:651) continues, “In 2003, Black Economic Empowerment deals amounted to over \$7 billion, but that staggering amount was divided amongst basically the wealthiest and most powerful six BEE groups in the country. That is not “deracialisation of capital” at all. That is pure myth making. All it means is that the tight circle of the new, empowered black elite have joined the white rich and powerful and the rich are still getting richer”.

The above can be linked to what Dolamo (2001:296-297) argued,

“With the majority of our people still unsheltered and unemployed, how are we going to deal with the problems of our Rand's poor performance against the world's major currencies, the unsatisfactory growth rate and the high interest rates? How are we to deal effectively with violence, crime and drug trafficking when law enforcement agents' complicity is surely not

just a work of a few rotten apples? Who stands to benefit from the government's June 1996 macro-economic strategy known as GEAR? Is it the government, big business, union leaders or the historically disadvantaged people?"

Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy (1994:201) say: "There is no necessary reason to accept that all these decisions are made best by experts, the wealthy, and the powerful or anonymous market forces. There is every reason to believe that God's justice requires the church to understand the material aspect of redemption as including the task of empowering the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised." Mogoba (1994:97) complements Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy's statement by pointing out that "God's justice helps people to work for justice in the world. People experience God's justice as creative, justified and self-creating justice. There is no peace where injustice and violence reign". Thence healing and reconciliation should be seen as grace and forgiveness.

2.8. Process of healing and reconciliation

Forgiveness and reconciliation are related the same as healing and reconciliation intertwines. However, forgiveness is usually described as one-sided, in contrast to reconciliation, which is mutual. According to Douglas and Tenney (1989:208), "It means giving up resentment or a claim to requital on account of an offense. The offense may be a depravation of a person's property, rights, or honour, or it may be a violation of moral law."

Chapman (1999:6) maintains "forgiveness does not imply forgetfulness". To forgive is not to forget. Shriver (1995:7) points out in 'Forgiveness of Enemies' that "remember and forgive" would be more accurate. "Forgiveness begins with a remembering and a moral judgment of wrong, injustice, and injury in the absence of a preliminary agreement between two or more parties that there is something from the past to be forgiven, forgiveness stalls at the starting gate."

From this contention, Shriver concludes that the development of a consensus about the wrongs mutually inflicted is therefore a prerequisite for the process of forgiveness between two antagonistic groups. This suggests that, in the case of violence, discrimination and oppression, forgiveness without appropriate actions by offenders may be cheap. The conditions of forgiveness are repentance and willingness to make reparation; hence forgiveness is restoration of both parties to the former state of the relationship. Forgiveness on the other hand is more moral in nature and starts as a private decision.

Chapman (1999:6-7) further argues that “finding out the truth is part of a process or remembrance. Remembrance in a reconciled society implies a joint memory of the past. The losses experienced by the various sides must come to be seen as the losses of the society as a whole. A common memory is an essential feature of a group for it to have a common identity”.

“A society cannot reconcile itself on the grounds of a divided memory, since memory is identity, this would result in a divided identity,” (Zalaquett 1994:13). It would thus be important to reveal the truth and so build a moral order.

According to Pendlebury and Enslin (2004:4), “Marginalisation and powerlessness, the faces most pertinent to present purposes, are structural forms of oppression resulting from institutional relations that constrain people’s material lives by restricting their access to resources and to concrete opportunities for developing and exercising their capacities. Marginalisation occurs when a whole category of people is excluded from meaningful participation in social life and is thus potentially vulnerable to deprivation and even extermination”.

Clark (1993: 51) argues, “Only when social values and institutions are required to give account of them, when their fundamental assumptions are questioned, is there any hope of creating a political culture which fulfils rather than frustrates human needs.” However, it is unlikely that in the short to medium term, many societies except those that have experienced near or complete breakdown would be ready to face the political implications of calling so much of the status quo into question.

In order to achieve reconciliation and healing there is a need to find the vehicle that can pioneer the objective. The church (MCSA) can be used as a vehicle for change.

2.9. The role of the church (MCSA) in healing and reconciliation

Burgess (1992:625) asserts that the role of the church in bringing about “reconciliation and healing, identifies the need to draw the victimisers into the process by holding out the prospect of re-incorporation. Without confession, there can be no forgiveness; it may be just as true, however, that without forgiveness, there will never be confession”. At some point in the healing and reconciliation process the dream of a reconciled society also needs to become real for those who would be classified as victimizers. Whilst efforts are being made to

address the issues of healing and reconciliation; contested viewpoints continue to emerge over the ownership of the healing and reconciliation as an act of empowering the victims.

The impact of a serious breach in the relationship among individuals or groups stirs up emotions beyond those involved in situations of a conflict of interest. The psychological experience of injury resulting from one party acting outside established rules and norms is distinct from that of a simple conflict of interest - it leads to a desire for retribution or vengeance” (Peachey 1989:303).

Reconciliation corrects the distortion which an act of evil establishes between two people or groups - the distortion of stolen power and enforced impotence and simultaneously an act of grace restores the dignity of both sides which leads to healing.

In the context of the church, the breaking of bread and drinking from the same cup during Holy Communion celebration are powerful symbols of reconciliation, but also of grace. Bentley (2011:1) points out to the MCSA’s understanding and practices of Holy Communion as a means of grace with powerful effect on reconciliation, he places Holy Communion in the centre of reconciliation in the context of the MCSA. He asserts, “Holy Communion as practiced by the Methodist tradition to bring people together who have been separated by the violence of abuse, segregation, and even of prejudice.” (Bentley 2011:13)

Furthermore Bentley (2011:13) points to this consideration:

“Belonging to a congregation which celebrates an Open Table, it is wonderful to participate in the Sacrament when this significance is explained. There is something of the Kingdom of God in looking at those kneeling at the rail and finding, placed right next to each other, politicians with strongly opposed views, the elderly, children, people of all races, people with different sexual orientations, the wealthy, the homeless, the mentally and physically impaired, those with a strong faith and those who need this Sacrament as if it were their last meal.”

Ackermann (2004:65) says, “The Eucharist is extraordinarily significant for reconciliation, in the Eucharist ...the promise of change, the embodied reality of our faith, the restoration of relationship and the need for restorative justice”. We not only share in the "one bread" of the communion, but we commit ourselves to share ourselves with those who are needy, alienated or simply "other," because this is what it means to become "bread for the world".

The Holy Communion table is a place of coming back to life of unity in diversity, as it offers partakers with a renewed hope of integration and deep sense of belonging together. Forgiveness is the predicate for either option, but reconciliation can only be the result of a willingness to cross out of the borderland, to take the former enemy into one's arms and be reconciled. Peace, then, is communion between former enemies. It is in the cross of Christ that the grace of forgiveness is found that leads to reconciliation. At the heart of the cross is Christ's stance of not letting the other remain an enemy and of creating space in himself for the offender to come in (Stott 1986:340).

The MCSA is the proponent of reconciliation and healing. This can be derived from their vision; "Christ healed Africa, Healing of Nations". The vision is the driving force of the mission imperatives that propel the values of peace, healing and reconciliation among the Methodist nation and their neighbours.

2.10. The role of community in healing and reconciliation

The African worldview offers some insights into how the uses of symbols are powerful and significant in the act of healing and reconciliation. In the Zulu tradition when there is a dispute between two individuals a third party is called in to mediate to reach resolution to both parties; there is an act that is performed which is called "*Ukuthelana amanzi*" (to pour over water) water mixed with ash and medicine, would be given to each person to wash their hands. The symbolic cooling effect of water points to a spiritual disposition of reconciliation. Another symbol is "...clasping hands with cow chyme (*mosoang*). Chyme is used because it has the same cooling effect as water, after this ceremony of reconciliation the enemies eat together, including their witnesses" (Tlhagale 1998:9). This point is to the idea that reconciliation is a communal process which unites the divided community and restores harmony. These cultural symbols have powerful significance into empowering the victims. In the context of the church the Holy Communion as sacrament includes the same meaning.

Shriver (1995: 217) argues: "No 'new integration' will ever be possible between enemies in a struggle over social justice without their mutual achievement of a new memory of the past, a new justice in the present, and a new hope for community in the still-to-be-achieved future."

For Shriver (1995: 8-9), "Forgiveness is a step in the pursuit of reconciliation which is seen only as the end of a process that forgiveness begins. Forgiveness in a political context is defined as 'an act that joins moral truth, forbearance, empathy, and commitment to repair a fractured human relation'." Apology and forgiveness imply a moral re-evaluation of the past

that must logically be based on a mutual knowledge and understanding of what has happened.”

In the context of the MCSA, reconciliation would need to be broadly conceptualised as a dynamic, inclusive, multi-dimensional adaptive process aimed at rebuilding and healing society; a process of change and redefinition of social and political relationships. For example, some would argue that if divisions within a nation are viewed as non-racial, non-ethnic and apolitical, then there would be less animosity between conflicting parties. However, because reconciliation in South Africa resonates with the dissolution of conflicting identities, rule of law and the guarantee of human rights grounded in racial divisions and political polarisation, some people are of the view that insisting on repentance and amnesty alone would encounter difficulties.

2.11. Forgiveness as a paradigm for healing and reconciliation

Boesak (2008:647) describes forgiveness as follows: “forgiveness is indeed a “gospel imperative” as Desmond Tutu says, but forgiveness is a willing response as an expression of our obedience to the prayer of Jesus that we should forgive “as our heavenly Parent has forgiven us”. He further adds that,

“Forgiveness is always freely given. If it is given as response to a confession which itself is a plea and need for forgiveness that is already remarkable enough. If it is given where the perpetrator sees nothing that he or she should be forgiven for, and there is no remorse or confession, it is extraordinary and an even greater cause for thanksgiving. But it can never be forced on anyone. No one should be coerced into forgiving, however subtly. Forgiveness is in itself an act of such sensitivity, such sacrificial self-giving, such enormous love that any attempt to coax it out of people robs it of its intrinsic value. It can never be taken for granted and is always the prerogative of the victim.”

Where these events happen it is often understood to indicate that reconciliation has in effect been achieved. They are thus treated as symbolic manifestations of an underlying change in the relationship between parties. They are, in essence, symbolic acts. Sometimes they are clearly empty symbols - open to manipulation, or purely expressions of a hope for change that never materialises. For most parties in conflict they are, however, still very potent symbols that are crucial in crystallising any change. They are also problematic in cross-cultural settings where they are used or interpreted differently depending on the party's cultural frame. Forgiveness should be accompanied or complemented by repentance.

Repentance and forgiveness also contain elements of identity change. To repent is to split oneself into two parts, the part that is guilty of an offense and the part that dissociates itself from the dual and affirms a belief in the offended rule (Goffman 1971). It is thus a process of confirming a change in one's identity, a distancing from who one was at the time of the offense. To forgive, in turn, implies that the victims do not define themselves in terms of the offense that was committed against them.

According to Avruch and Vejarano (2001:42), “One of the key problems here involves the concept of transfer effects – how to move reconciliation and forgiveness, even if affected at the individual level between victim and perpetrator. The South African case featured a few dramatic instances of this on the societal or national levels. Proponents of reconciliation do not limit its application to the individual (or psychologically therapeutic) level. However, it is precisely in trying to apply what may be therapeutically effective at the interpersonal level to the collective level that reconciliation often seems to lose clarity and become more ambiguous as an approach to peace building.”

According to Crouch (2006:3), “Love must be the basis for forgiveness. Repentance is the second one. Repentance means owning what has happened and acknowledging our responsibility in causing pain. It also includes changing one’s behaviour so our future behaviour is different and more loving. Repentance is turning from and turning to: turning from hurtful behaviours and turning to a more faithful and loving way of being in a relationship”.

2.12. Conclusion

The literature review has shown that the MCSA is not proactive on the restoration of human dignity which can be applicable through restorative justice. The study will address this shortcoming when formulating reconciliation and healing missional paradigm which will bring forth the restoration of human dignity. Human dignity is paramount for the well-being of humanity.

Healing, which seems to be playing second fiddle in the MCSA, needs to be given more attention due to lack of enough literature that expresses healing from the MCSA’s perspective. This is evident on how the MCSA aligns itself with reconciliation and healing which will be discussed further in this study.

Chapter Three

Healing and Reconciliation, Biblical perspectives

3.1. Background

Healing and reconciliation have played an important role in the dawn of the New South Africa. They culminated in the birth of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which was the vehicle which was seen as reconciliatory that would bring healing and reconciliation. The Chairperson was Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Vice Chairperson was Dr Alex Boraine who both were from the Christian fraternity. From the author's viewpoint, the fact that the TRC was headed by Christian personalities was a clear indication that the TRC was based on the Christian principles and dogma. If that was the case then the role of the TRC was biblical in seeking to bring balance between people.

It is suggested that there are different notions of reconciliation in South Africa, and these notions of reconciliation have influenced South African society's perceptions about reconciliation. One of the political examples of the achieved political reconciliation is what Botha (2008:556) calls a "Mandela paradigm of reconciliation" ; this type of reconciliation aimed at creating a social cohesion amongst citizens which sought to advance the course of peace and social (national) and political stability. In this chapter it is about more than just political reconciliation. The central question of the study is: How will understanding mission as *missio Dei*, contribute to the mission of the MCSA to become an agent of healing and reconciliation in a post- 1994 South Africa? The objective of the chapter is to get a clear biblical understanding on perspectives of healing and reconciliation.

From the above, the study will expound on the Old Testament overview perspective on healing and reconciliation and from there proceed to the early church reconciliatory perspectives in the New Testament as articulated in the Pauline letters and lastly the views of the MCSA on healing and reconciliation in the light of the Scripture.

3.2. Introduction

Throughout the Bible healing and reconciliation are anchor concepts of creation and relationships. Jesus Christ, as the corner stone, gave His life in rebuilding harmony and brought back all relations to its originality and functionality. When balance is restored through grace it leads to forgiveness and forgiveness is a gateway to reconciliation. De Gruchy (1991:157) says, "Our sinful nature is such that we can only be saved from our sins

and be set free to love and obey by God's grace in Jesus Christ alone." Needless to add, forgiveness is a result of God's grace which seeks to heal relationships. Forgiveness gives us life and restores our relationship with God; it is a process whereby God's image in us is recovered. According to Scott (2007:2), forgiveness is a gateway to reconciliation. Central to Scott's argument is the importance of apology in healing and reconciliation. He defines apology as "not just superficial sorry, but full, genuine and substantial". This notion has been experienced in the two Testaments in the Bible.

3.3. Healing and reconciliation in the Old Testament

The study learns from Genesis 1:26-28 that humanity was created by God in his image to be in a relationship with God, fellow human beings and nature. This relationship was intended to keep creation and the earth in balance as God desired. However, sin altered the relationships of humans with God, each other and nature.

The power of sin is at work in human existence and it exercises an inhibiting influence on human freedom to believe, to love and to hope. Yet the key factor that is often forgotten is that God's love precedes the state of human sinfulness, and God's love alone holds the key to redemption (Orobator 2009:59). According to Adam (2001:58), "People turn away from good to do evil", they run away from the living and the loving God to a life that is limited and perishable, but as a missional God, filled with grace, God continues to search and care. The mission of God for keeping creation as intended was not thwarted away but was affected by sin (Wright 2006:429).

Wright (2006:431) further explains that "sin spreads horizontally within a society and sin propagates itself vertically between generations. Sin becomes endemic, structural and embedded in history". That is why the Old Testament historians observed how the societies by then became addicted to the chaotic evil of wars, hatred, oppression and being power hungry. Isaiah in his narrative from chapter 1-10 focuses on and attacks those who legalise injustice by passing laws that give legacy to oppression and promoting oppression.

Baxter (2012:125) notes that "ultimately sin separates us from God, thus it is unquestionably the principal enemy and greatest problem we have". Besides, the sinfulness of humanity established a need for healing and reconciliation, thence a need for an agent. The agent is not self-appointed or self-impose but "is appointed and anointed by God to bind up the broken in a heart (Isaiah 61:1) by announcing good tidings" (Kittel & Friedrich 1985:345). What is clear is the link that God creates for humanity to participate in restoring the relationship

between God and humanity; agents are raised to collaborate with him (God) in bringing healing and reconciliation. MacNutt (1974:146) in his book on healing states that biblical healing is needed to overcome three forms of sickness. Firstly, sickness of our spirit which is caused by our own sin; secondly, emotional sickness and problems such as anxiety and depression caused by the emotional hurt of our past and present social situations; and thirdly, physical sickness in our bodies, caused by disease or accident.

The study can assert from MacNutt's description of sickness from a biblical point of view that none of the three types of sickness falls outside God's scope of healing and reconciliation. It is in such cases that the church (MCSA) is given the opportunity to participate in the mission of healing, pastoral and hospital visits, because visiting the sick is not only the works of mercy, but also the means of grace.

These Old Testament perspectives of sin point us to the understanding that brokenness between God and humanity caused separation and ill-being inhuman life and there is need for healing and reconciliation.

Baxter (2012:125) further states that: "Sin is the degenerative power in the human stream that makes man susceptible to disease, illness, death, and hell. It is the culprit in every broken marriage, disrupted home, shattered friendship, argument, pain, sorrow, and death. No wonder Scripture compares it to the venom of a snake and the stench of death."

Thence there is a need to make a deliberate move from a point of estrangement, separation and retaliation to harmony with an assurance of forgiveness and acceptance by fellow humans and God. Ackermann (2004:63) says forgiveness is an "active, willed change of heart that succeeds in overcoming naturally felt feelings of anger, resentment, vengeance and hatred it has a gift-like quality".

When forgiveness comes from grace it leads to healing through reconciliation. Orobator (2009:56) asserts that, "But God's offer of forgiveness is universal, always seeking to overcome evil and our resistance and excuse. Sin continues to hold us captive to the extent we resist the grace of God, but it does not diminish God's love for us". Even when we are out of balance God continues to search for us in love, and he brings us to reconciliation with him through grace.

Grace in the process of healing empowers Christians to respond freely and lovingly to God's invitation to love the other which leads to reconciliation. God in his grace gives believers

strength to reach beyond ourselves, so that they can love in the direction of God. When reaching out, love becomes a force that breaks down barriers of division and when barriers are broken down the process of healing starts which will lead to integration and reconciliation. When self-centredness and selfishness impose limits, grace helps us to transcend those obstacles

According to Kittel and Friedrich (1985:346), “Healing and forgiveness go closely together. ‘*Iasthai*’ denotes God’s gracious turning, with the binding up the wounds in the background.” They further indicate that “restoration of fellowship is the crucial thing from which physical and mental restoration flows”.

Healing in the Old Testament is defined as a process of making whole or well, the process of making well; wellness is a demonstration of God’s grace to restore to health. The Old Testament scriptures indicate that healing is both spiritual and physical. Therefore, healing must happen on individual level and communal level. The idea of healing being both spiritual and physical is supported by Ecclesiastes 3:3 stating there is a “time to heal” where the context suggests healing as both a spiritual and physical process, while Numbers 12:13 demonstrates God as the healer of people (initiator). Further, Psalm 6:2 points to being ‘worn out’ (people recipients), whilst Jeremiah 17:14 places healing as an act of God’s mercy.

The Old Testament further depicts healing as occurring in prayers for restoration. This notion is supported by Kittel and Friedrich (1985:345) who state, “Prayer plays an important role ... (in healing and reconciliation when God respond to us with love and grace) prayer is the chief means of healing, as in many Psalms (Pss.6:16-10, 38; 107:17) with their sequence of complaint, petition, and thanksgiving.”

The Psalmist demonstrates healing as a spiritual revival (Psalm 41:4) of the soul for spiritual health and a process of repairing the injuries caused by sin. Then again, Jeremiah 30:17 shows that healing is an act of repairing the wounds. The Old Testament further views healing as an act of recovery or rehabilitation and deliverance. Healing is also understood to apply to the forgiveness of sin as stated in Jeremiah 3:22. The Old Testament demonstrates healing to involve the total renewal of a person which leads to reconciliation with God, neighbours and nature.

Taking into account what is said, healing may be defined here as an act of repairing the damage which is caused by sin. Healing then is an act of reclaiming or buying back that which was lost. When a person is healed it may lead to reconciliation.

The above can be equalled to what Wagner (2009:21) articulated in arguing that; “reconciliation is from first to last the work of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Second, God's work of reconciliation unites humans to Christ through the Spirit, conforming their lives to the pattern of Christ's own self-giving as in the Spirit's power they become active participants in God's own on-going mission to the world”.

Participation in God's intended purpose of healing and reconciling the creation, God embarked on having covenants with his chosen nation which was on behalf of the whole creation (Gen 12; Jeremiah 31).

Healing that leads to reconciliation is a process of revival and recovery of relationships between people, between individuals and God, in a way that moves from brokenness to wholeness. This process of revival, recovery and change can only happen or be effective when there is movement from stereotypes, traditions and biases to a point of balance and compromise from all involved. For this movement of healing as rehabilitation to be effective recognition is to be given that reconciliation is an act of God which moves from love and grace which is consistent with the character and nature of God.

For God to execute his plan of reconciling himself with his creation after the fall there was a need for an agent who would carry out the responsibility to heal the people. Israel as a nation was chosen to participate in this mission through being an example to all the nations in living in an obedient relationship with God. God in his grace initiated a covenant relationship that made reconciliatory mission achievable. According to Wright (2006:75), the living God made himself known to Israel through His grace which they experienced through the Exodus from Egypt. The Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament described this as the great defining demonstration of YHWH's power, love, faithfulness and liberating intervention on behalf of his people. It was therefore a major act of self-revelation by God and also a massive learning experience for Israel.

Wright (2006) maintains that “notwithstanding the fact that Israel was a chosen nation, they were not holy: therefore, God punished them when they sinned. However, the punishment did not take away his fellowship relationship with them, but enhanced God's redemptive

salvation plan. That is why God used them in exile as executioners of his mission of *koinonia*.”

From the above assertion, we can comfortably assume that this *koinonia* was done bearing in mind that there was healing to be effected and that Israel was there as a participant in the *missio Dei* to bring reconciliation among the nations. This clearly alluded to what happened before exile, when Israel was “sick”, which led to exile when Israel was wounded but participated in the healing and reconciliation to the Babylonians through singing at the river basin of Babylon (Psalm 137; Jeremiah 10:19; & Jeremiah 8:20-22).

Testimony to the idea of covenant Baxter (2012:11) says, at the beginning of Scripture, we are confronted with the need of forgiveness when the perfect creation and the first couple disobeyed God’s injunction. Before sin, disobedience and rebellion infected our world. Before their disobedience Adam and Eve felt no guilt or shame. In other words they were in union with God and the whole of creation and lived in harmony, therefore, obedience to God is part of the healing process.

3.3.1. Reconciliation and Covenants

Despite the sinfulness of humanity, God was eager to reconcile with humanity. God initiated the covenantal agreements which in essence were the healing and reconciliatory instruments which God used to be in touch with humanity and execute his mission for his creation.

God’s love for the creatures made in God’s image never wavered. God sent a succession of witnesses (notably the prophets) to call people back to obedience and God’s fellowship. The missional God made several covenants (through Noah, Abraham and Moses) with wayward people, inviting them to return in penitence and faith, promising them new life; but they remained stubborn and self-willed. “Covenant is God’s initiative in fellowship to mankind, and as such it is a continuation and reaffirmation of his intentions with his creation. Man was created to be in fellowship with God: as such this is the establishment of fellowship” (Kruger 2017:566).

When humanity sinned, God initiated covenants of unconditional love in His intention to heal and reconcile humanity. Thence, Palmer Robertson (1980:29) shows the covenantal inauguration demonstrated unity and promoted peace at all times, and it brings people and God’s creation closer to him as the creator in a process of healing.

- When God initiated new covenantal relationships under Moses and David evidence indicates that God was intending to bring further stages of development the same redemption that had been promised earlier to Abraham. Instead of starting afresh and beginning anew, each successive covenant with Abraham's descendants advanced the original purposes of God to a higher level of realisation. When Israel cried to God because of Egyptian bondage, Scripture says that: "God heard their groaning; and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Israel and Jacob (Ex 2:24).
- Israel's life history was based on covenant because the covenant demonstrated unity rather than disunity. The past covenants did not annul the present covenants. What it illustrated was the continuation of the previous ones. That is why God always remembered the first covenant he made with Abraham when he referred to covenants thereafter e.g. the Mosaic and Davidic covenants.

From the above, the study's opinion in this chapter is based on what is written in the Old Testament that the kings, prophets and priests were appointed figures (link) that represented people before God as mediators. The figure of a mediator was powerfully connected to the idea of reconciliation. Traditionally, Christians have claimed that the answers to their questions can be found in the Bible. In the Old Testament, we read for instance, God led Israel out of Egypt; the house of slavery, in the Psalms God is praised as the one who liberates. The prophets refer to him as the saviour and liberator of his people. It could be said the people of Israel believed in a God who liberates, not in a God who enslaves. It is argued that Christian scriptures and tradition portray the human story that begins as an act of God's creation (Gen.1:13). "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," bringing order from chaos (Genesis 1:1).

In addition, the God of creation in the Exodus account is also portrayed and revealed as the God of the oppressed, Jehovah the Liberator. The God who sees the injustice levelled against the oppressed and acts with mercy against the oppression of the people of Israel. God is moved to bring justice to the sufferers through the act of liberation as described in the Exodus account (Ex. 3:4-10). This prophecy is confirmed by Isaiah 61, where the emphasis is to bring peace, harmony and reconciliation among the nations. The Isaiah confirmation is executed in the New Testament.

3.4. Reconciliation and healing in the New Testament

Kittel and Friedrich (1985: 331) state that, the word '*therapeuo*' when translated means to heal, serve, when used in secular Greek means to serve and to care for the sick, treat, and cure. On the basis of the definition given, one can assume that healing is both physical and spiritual; to heal is a functional or operative word, which means healing is an active act of service to correct any form of dysfunctionality. It is noted that the use of the phrase to heal does not necessary suggest medical treatment of sickness or disease but it defines in the real sense that Jesus brings healing and He has the power to heal.

Kittel and Friedrich (1985) further assert that Jesus' healing and miracles are unique demonstrations of God's love and grace for humanity. Because Jesus' primary concern is to free humanity from sin, and while he may use healing as a step in that direction, he also gives forgiveness first or even confers forgiveness where there is a need for healing. The use of miracles reveals and demonstrates the fulfilment that the promised Kingdom of God has come, (Kittel & Friedrich 1985:346-347).

However, healings as performed by Jesus may sometimes serve a pastoral point e.g. when performed in the context of dispute and or conflict (the Sabbath in Matthew 12:9ff, the right to forgive in Matthew 9:1ff). When disputes are addressed and conflict is resolved the process of recovery and or restoration starts which leads conflicting parties to forgive and reconcile their differences.

Jesus gave his disciples powers to heal as reflected in Mark 3:15. Those powers were not endowments for selfish use, but to equip for effective witness by acts of healing as well as in preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. Healing as stated in Mark 9:18 is not to be used for profit making (Mark 10:8), and healing may be exercised outside the apostolic circle when the name of Jesus is invoked (Kittel & Friedrich 1985:347).

1. It is in the light of the above background that it is asserted, the synoptic gospels portray Jesus as a healer and show healing as a sign of the coming of God's kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus uses healing as a means of spreading the message of the kingdom that breaks down territorial boundaries of ethnicity, gender and class through preaching. The message of forgiveness and grace, in which he seeks to demonstrate the true nature of God, as the loving, caring and compassionate Father in Heaven (Hiatt 2004:89). Matthew 4:23 tells us how Jesus travelled through Galilee and beyond, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom and he cured every disease

and sickness; that is a portrayal of healing as a sign of the kingdom of God. In the synoptic gospels we are confronted by Jesus who healed people who were suffering from different diseases. Whenever there is a need, even on the Sabbath, Jesus will heal (Matthew 12:10). The researcher also notes that demons represented a destructive force in the lives of the people which caused suffering, pain and disorder; driving out of demons is regarded as another form of healing, demons were commanded out and healing will happen through the word.

Laying on of hands was significant in carrying out healing during Jesus' ministry and sometimes just by touching him they will be healed. All this was a demonstration of the healing power of Christ. (Mark 3:10-11; Mark 1:41). The sick will want to touch him to receive their healing or even touch his clothes for them to be healed (Mark 3:10; 5:28).

Jesus preached and demonstrated the good news of the kingdom by his holistic approach to healing and reconciliation ministry by "destroying the works of the devil". Jesus, when ministering to the seekers, who came to him, touched them at their points of need. He forgave sins and healed their diseases and sent them back to their communities of origin which is a sign of integration and or reconciliation.

Whilst John 5:1-18 tells us about the healing of a man who had been lying next to a healing pool for a long time and Jesus challenged him to walk and he was healed.

Matthew 11: 4-5 demonstrates that healing is a sign of the kingdom and this is clearly indicated by Jesus's response to John the Baptist's disciple's question "... are you the one John said who was going to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus' answer to John the Baptist's disciples revolves around healing. Practical evidence of that is, the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear (Luke 7:21-22), points to the Kingdom of heaven is dawning through Christ (Mark 9:25; Luke 11:20). All this is from God, who reconciled/reclaimed us to himself through Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit and has given us the ministry of healing for reconciliation.

Whereas in Mark 6:6, Jesus declares, many will come from the east and the west, will take their places at the feet of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven. What is clear is that Jesus's ministry of healing is universal. Jesus in Mark's text pictures an all-inclusive kingdom whereby Jews and gentiles are living together; implying Jesus envisions the universal, barrier-breaking thrust of the gospel of the kingdom, based on faith and not on ethnicity.

In Christ, God was reconciling the world to him, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us (2 Cor 5:17-19). Reconciliation through healing is a transformation that may occur when humans encounter God at their point of need.

The Gospels and the New Testament letters invite us as Christians to consider another goal, another task - the task of reconciliation. Worth noting, Mark 6:13 and Luke 9:6 relate the story of how the disciples continued the ministry of healing in the name of Jesus. Mark 6:13 and Luke 9:6 complemented by the writer of Acts 3:10, indicate that apostles will lay the hands on the sick and they will recover; we see this being practised and continued in the early Christian ministry. The church is the body of Christ and together we may participate in God's work of healing in worship and service to the world. The laying on of hands is commonly practiced in the Bible, as an act of commissioning and an act of healing.

The instructions in James 5:14-16 and Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 11:29-30, neither of which aims to provide a complete theology on healing is still applicable. Hudson and Bryant (2005:68-69) in essence indicate that these scriptures form the main Scriptural reference for the theology of faith healing and transformation. Other passages in Matthew 14:14, for example, clearly state that Jesus healed the sick in the crowd that followed Him, because He had compassion on them. Matthew 25:36 refers to those who will inherit the kingdom will be those who visited, not healed, the sick during their life on earth. In Paul's letters we read about his fellow workers Epaphroditus (Phil 2:26) and Erastus (2 Tim 4:20) who were ill while with him.

The New Testament Church understands itself as continuing within history, post Resurrection and Pentecost, the healing, reconciling, liberating and saving work of Jesus Christ and of Israel. (Acts 1:6-8) and recognises signs of the Reign of God within its own life (Acts 2:17-21; 43-47; 4:32-37). The Church, furthermore, recognises that the healing and reconciliation and the saving acts of God are intended for all humanity and not only Israel (Acts 2:1-11; 17; Acts 10). God's mercy and grace is understood by the followers of Jesus Christ to have been experienced by them precisely in ways that enable them to be instrumental in that mercy and grace reaching others in life affirming and transforming ways (2 Corinthians 5:11-6:10; Ephesians 2:1-10). On the basis of this calling and commission, the Church comes to understand itself as participating in Jesus Christ's ministry of healing and reconciliation with God for all humanity (2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 2:9-12). It is in this sense that the Church

as a whole is understood as a reconciled community and collectively exercises the ministry of healing and reconciliation, in partnership with Jesus Christ, in the relationship between God and the world.

3.4.1. Healing through fellowship meals and reconciliation in Luke's gospel

The gospel of Luke is chosen on the basis that it places the poor and the sick in the centre of Jesus' ministry of healing. Bosch (2011:85-86) asserts that,

“Luke was probably the only gentile author of a New Testament book amongst predominantly Jewish Christian writers writing for Jewish Christian community. Luke wrote for Christians who were predominantly of gentile origin. He appears to have had a view in many communities rather than one single community, as did Matthew.”

The above remark seeks to show or demonstrate that the Gospel of Luke presents Jesus as both the promised Saviour of Israel and as the Saviour of all people. Bosch (2011:86-87) indicates that, “the Christian communities of Luke's time with that of the first disciples were no longer possible (have significantly changed), they have transformed from being exclusively Jewish to being predominantly Gentile”. The dramatic change of the Christian communities posed a challenge for the message gospel to remain confined in a Jewish ‘monopoly’ and the word ‘monopoly’ is used sparingly in this context.

In the backdrop of this understanding this research seeks to demonstrate the significance of healing and reconciliation for all people in the gospel of Luke.

What seems critical in Luke's gospel is his inclination to address social and religious barriers in the society of his day and these barriers which run across interhuman relationships. The themes in Luke seek to demonstrate God's concern for the well-being of all people, for example his “concern for the poor is topping the list, justice and fairness, the work of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness and the acceptance of the enemy, women and the marginalised, to mention but few (Bosch 2011:87).

In Luke 9:1-2 Jesus is encountered sending his disciples on a mission to preach the message of the Kingdom of God and to heal and he gave them power and authority over the demons, and to cure diseases. However, what is clear in Luke is that healing is central to the ministry of Jesus. Bosch (2011:87) states that, “the entire ministry of Jesus and his relationships with all these and other marginalised people witness (in Luke's writings) to Jesus' practice of boundary-breaking compassion, which the church is called to emulate”.

Luke's writings bear witness that Jesus healed a great diverse number of people in Judea and beyond; what is evident is that there are two certain aspects of Jesus ministry, open table fellowship and healing, which is a demonstration of the *missio Dei*.

3.4.2. Open fellowships meals

Luke demonstrates that fellowship meals (tables) were embodiment of status, power and manipulation (Luke 18:9), [the rich are thus also the arrogant and the powerful who abuse power] the layout of the table reveals that, the rich and the famous are given places of honour and recognition. Suggesting that, the shape of the table might have been rectangular which allowed or encouraged status to be dominating.

According to Bosch (2011:100), "This is particularly true of those who are sick, Lazarus, the exemplary poor person in Luke, both poor and sick, primarily then, poverty is a social category in Luke."

Bosch's assertion is an indication that Luke's society was broken to the core by classism, wealth and power. Bosch (2011:100) further points to,

"[Luke's] concern is with social issues he [Luke] writes about: with the demons and evil forces in the first century society which deprived women, men and children of dignity and selfhood, of sight and voice and bread, and sought to control their lives for private gain; with the people's own selfishness and servility, and with the promises and possibilities of the poor and outcast."

Marginalisation, exclusion and rejection of the poor and the sick from participating in fellowship meals were regarded as normal and acceptable in the community (Luke 14:7-12). This picture is a clear indication of a society that is out of balance, that needed healing and reconciliation.

However, the presence of Jesus and His approach to fellowship meals as demonstrated in Luke 14:13-16 is barrier breaking between the haves and have nots, a feast inclusive of all. "When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind and you will be blessed..." When all are invited even the shape of the table changes from being a table of dominance and power to be a place of healing grace and reconciliation, because everyone is affirmed and included in the feast, all sit at equal position that will bring healing and restoration of relationships. The researcher concedes as Bosch (2011:109) states that, Jesus is, really, the one who invites the cripples and the outcast to a banquet. Worth noting, Jesus is

serious about sin and the need for people to turn their lives around, but he is not judgemental. In fact, he makes friends with sinners, eating, drinking and well partying with them. Luke portrays Jesus as giving central place to those who are otherwise classified as social rejects, such as widows, the poor, the blind and sinners (4:18-19; 5:27-32, 14:13,21; 15:1- 32). Luke demands that people love their neighbours and also help someone who is suffering (10:30-36).

According to Bosch 2011:108), “those who repent and whose sins are forgiven, experience *soteria*, salvation ... salvation means acceptance, fellowship, new life. Often this is expressed in the imagery of a banquet: Jesus has a table-fellowship with Zacchaeus, the prodigal son is treated with a feast and from the streets and alleys of the town... are invited ...” Whatever salvation means it includes the total renewal of human life, forgiveness of sin, healing from illness, liberation from any kind of captive or bondage. Salvation would mean reversing all destructive results of sin, against both creation and humanity.

When the message of the gospel and the mission of the church expand and move from regarding salvation as a private and only anthropocentric matter it enables individuals and communities to expand the mission to include all created orders.

Interestingly, Luke uses meals to provide central sitting for Jesus’s mission; the language and cultural practices around food served as basis for Jesus. (Luke 11:5-8; 15:17-23; 12:16-21). Eating (Luke 15:23) is seen as a sign of life. However, eating also symbolises the harsh realities for the marginalised and poor. This love of the fellowship and community setting around food is one of the primary distinctions of Jesus’ healing and reconciliation.

3.4.3. Healing through forgiveness and reconciliation

We further note from Bosch (2011:106) that the Gospel of Luke lays a solid foundation for the understanding that healing comes through forgiveness and reconciliation. The call for repentance and the offer of forgiveness is the foundational call of the Gospel of Luke. It is the offer of forgiveness that sets people free for action (Bosch 2011:106). Throughout his ministry, Jesus offers forgiveness of sins. He offers it to his disciples, to people who were considered sinful by the society and those who may be ill due to sin.

Luke 23:34 tells the story about people who are forgiven, and even how Jesus forgives those who executed him as he is dying on the cross. Luke’s story reveals some most powerful

stories of healing and reconciliation among people who received God's forgiveness through Jesus.

Most of Luke's characters in the gospel are one way or another portrayed as "excluded from the normal life of the community either by poverty, social contempt or illness" (Wright 2006:245). Wright's assertion is demonstrated by the following texts. Luke 13:10-16 tells a story of a woman who was healed on the Sabbath, and Luke 16:19- 31 tells a story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 19:1-10). These texts are clear evidence that healing should be a foundational transformation, a turning from one way of being to another of being. That means healing and reconciliations have to do with a total transformation, mind- change and behaviour- change.

It can be seen in the above-mentioned texts, healing through forgiveness and reconciliation is the transformation of people who need not only to transform themselves as individuals but also to transform the society. Luke envisioned a society that focuses on mercy and service toward the vulnerable.

3.4.4. Feet-washing (John 13:1-20) as example of healing and reconciliation

In executing the reconciliation and healing mission, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Knight and Powe (2010:39) explain this task as a union ceremony of bringing all aboard irrespective of greed, colour, gender and race "inviting community seeks to transform itself and others through love". All are one in Christ and Christ is one to them. Despite their differences, they are all washed as one. All this is a clear evidence that the church as a whole should never stop or fail to connect the work of ministry with humble service. This notion is as an act of one laying down his life for the sake of others, those who are being served. According to Baxter (2012:31), "Jesus' act of washing his disciples' feet was much more than an act of humility; it was a practical demonstration of God's forgiveness and cleansing of those who come to Him for forgiveness."

Baxter (2012:32) resonates that "forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God leads to a better relationship with each other. Through the foot washing and the subsequent communion service, individuals have the opportunity to be reconciled through giving and receiving forgiveness. As great as the sin problem, God's capacity to forgive is far greater".

Baxter (2012:35) further elaborates on the significance of this act by saying “through the foot washing and the subsequent communion service, individuals have the opportunity to be reconciled through giving and receiving forgiveness”.

In concurring to be the above, we conclude that the act of feet washing is a token of love and *koinonia* and symbolises humility and service as Jesus Christ expressed it to his disciples by doing a menial task which is meant for slaves according to Jewish custom. To wash the feet of another symbolises reconciliation and healing virtues in the same way that the Eucharist symbolises other Christian virtues of love, kindness, and patience

Healing and Reconciliation in the Eucharist:

In the Eucharist all people participate in the act of communion. In the act of communion the believers encounter the living God, who uses the symbols of bread and wine as the means by which God meets believers and sends them into the world to carry on Christ’s service to the world. Van de Laar (2005:15) sees the Eucharist as a call to the reconciliatory message of Christ, which draws humanity to each other and God in the difficult, but powerful, work of forgiveness”. The Eucharist is a spiritual communion that transcends and includes communion in *koinonia*. It indicates not only unity of hearts engendered by faith in the same Lord, but also the active manifestation of this unity on concrete exercise of sharing material goods. That is why the Christian tradition saw the Eucharist as the sacrament of communion with one another in the one body of Christ. All in the body of Christ does not segregate whether you Jew or Greek; black or white – in oneness all are reconciled with each other and with Jesus Christ. Ackermann (2004:65) says we not only share in the one loaf of the communion, “but we commit ourselves to share ourselves with those who are needy, alienated or simply other, because this is what it means to become bread for the world”.

A key passage to this regard is the Magnificent song in Luke’s (1:46-55) gospel particularly the words that say, “He has shown strength with his arm”. This is a statement about systemic change in the society, demonstrated and echoed by Simeon’s words of blessing, how Jesus will be the cause of the rise and the fall of many in Israel. In the light of that one compares Matthew and Luke’s beatitudes and come to realise that in Matthew beatitudes are spiritualised whereas in Luke they refer to real political and economic realities (Bosch 2011:100).

3.4.5. Lucan missionary Paradigm:

This paradigm reveals God's intention of equal and united society where there is peace, unity and harmony. The Lucan missionary paradigm for healing and reconciliation indicates that the work of the Holy Spirit in the life and the work of Christ becomes a catalyst in guiding and driving the force of mission. This leads and empowers Christians to be effective witnesses to the saving grace of God. When the church is empowered to participate in the mission it led to proclaim repentance, forgiveness and the message of salvation to the whole world.

If mission was understood as the correlation of the Jews' and Gentiles' mission, this then refers to the inclusive nature of the new community. This idea of being inclusive leads to the understanding that witness becomes appropriate for mission. When witness is developed it applies to others, then the concept of witness is broadened to include people, other than the apostles. The expanded scope of witnessing to the world will include the whole church in the task of proclaiming the gospel. When the gospel is proclaimed it leads to repentance, forgiveness and salvation. The witnessing of the church which is aimed at repentance and forgiveness will lead to salvation. Salvation is then an act of liberation from all bondages as well as new life in Christ.

The above notion is summarised in six dimensions: economic, social, political, physical, psychological and spiritual. It is also realised that the missionary paradigm in Luke is about the (establishing) new relationship between the rich and the poor (Bosch: 2011:18-20).

The Lucan missionary paradigm is therefore a vertical and horizontal dimension which points to the fact that first and foremost, mission is God's initiative and human beings are collaborators/partakers with God. Jesus' ministry was led and guided by the Spirit. The church is called to be a witnessing community to the mission of God in the world by sharing the good news of salvation. It is a mouthpiece of forgiveness in the name of Jesus.

Healing in Luke's gospel is consistently seen that the marginalised, the poor, the sick and the outcast of the society are brought in. This demonstrates the healing and reconciliation as an act of participation in the Kingdom.

These are the excluded from the society and the least, but in the kingdom as revealed by Jesus all are welcomed and included. Healing and reconciliation as demonstrated and expressed in Luke seeks a reversal in which domination and exclusion are ended and there is peace and is carried out by mercy.

In Acts the same pattern is portrayed whereby Jesus chooses an alternative lifestyle community. In this new community, people sell their possessions and distribute according to the needs of the people. People are healed, demons are driven out and the dead are raised. The community is open to all. This is understood as God's expression of peace and unity in communion.

From the above understanding the chapter fully supports partaking in the Eucharist as "eating" the flesh of Christ and "drinking" the blood of Christ. The feast know no discrimination or segregation, all who partake in the Holy Communion are equal before God and are healed by partaking in the Holy supper. The significance of celebration of the Sacrament was not only to share in communion with Christ, but to remember one's relationship with other people. (Bentley 2011:7; De Klerk 2007:611; & 1Cor 11:17- 34)

That is why it is very important to note that, as sinners we are not worthy to participate in the Holy Communion or to pick up the remnants that fall from the table of communion but on God's mercies we depend. Ackermann (2004:66) further states that, "The Eucharist is the bodily practice of grace. Suffering, despairing bodies can partake of the feast. Bodies are absolutely central to the Eucharist, our bodies and the body of Christ."

The Holy Communion makes all people humble due to the sacrifice that Jesus Christ is doing in reconciling the world to him and bringing healing to all who are wounded and all in despair. Van de Laar (2005:15) asserts that "there is the deep connection between worship in word and sacrament and God's mission: Jesus Christ, the crucified one, who draws all people, all things to himself (John 12:32-33), stands at the centre of the Christian assembly and directs us outward to the whole world as the object of God's life-giving purpose." So that they live in love with each other. Kok (2013:239) states: "Paul's ethics of reconciliation developed from his theology. In his mind there should not be divisions or unhealthy conflicts between Christians because he had a very particular view of God's reconciling mission to the world, one in which believers were called into a new family." Every Eucharist service should also remind Christians and the church of the commitment to share, the bread was broken to be shared.

3.4.6. Healing and Reconciliation in Love

Meiring (2007:739) argues, "Sin creates imbalance in the relationship between God and man or between man and man". Such distortions of balance have destructive outcomes not only for the offender but also the community, but in the gospel of John 3:16- 17, we are exposed to

an act of God's restoration of balance. John 3:16-17 exposes that healing and reconciliation as an act of God's love towards his creation as an act of self-giving and sacrifice. Because God loves this world and supports it through Jesus Christ, Christians have hope for themselves, for the community of nations and for creation.

However, Crouch (2006:3) says, "Love must be the basis for forgiveness thus leads to repentance which means owning what has happened and acknowledging and taking responsibility in causing pain".

In the light of the above statement, Jesus gave us a new commandment, "Love your neighbour as you love yourself" or "Love one other, as I have loved you, so you must love one other" (John 13:34-35). This was clearly articulated in the Old Testament, in the book Leviticus 19:18 which states as follows; "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord." The New Testament mandate is compulsory due to the sacrificial character which is embedded in that instruction. You must love unconditionally, because God loves you so. Meiring (2007:736) argues that the Christian concept of reconciliation is built on the presupposition that a "real and comprehensive restoration of mutually amicable human relations has its ground and motive in the reconciliation of God with humankind". This view is a clear demonstration of God's love for creation and humanity.

In explaining Love, Geisler (2010:39) mentioned *agape* type of love. This love is based on unending and non-conditional loving which knows no boundaries. This love knows no limit, knows no race, knows no gender, and knows no colour. It is the love that, when practised, brings healing and reconciliation. That is why Jesus refers to this love as the love that "brings all together as brother/sisters in Christ (1 John 4:20).

Baxter (2012:3) states that: "In the act of saving humankind, Jesus chooses not to save Himself from death by crucifixion since, in dying; Jesus gave the gift of forgiveness even before humans understood the meaning of His crucifixion. In spite of people's ignorance and lack of repentance, God did not withhold forgiveness. From the beginning with Adam and Eve the scripture records the recurring theme of a loving God offering to draw mankind into an act of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation to Him and to one another."

In brotherhood there is equality for all. Fitzgerald (2007:286) describes this equality which is horizontal, no master, no servant but all are equal. This equality is based on love. This can be

matched to Jesus' choosing his own disciples, not them choosing him. It implies that God loved them more as equals before they loved him. As recipients of love from Jesus, they were also recipients of grace which came with revelation. Revelation simultaneously liberated them from slavery and elevated them to the status of being Jesus' friends. Because they were freed, they could live in fellowship with one another. Meiring (2007:736) says, "The healing of the relationship with God brings about human reconciliation on social, economic and political levels".

The freeing and liberation was the main crux that started the early church which was the contention of self-giving and self-sacrifice by the founders like Paul and his entourage.

3.5 Reconciliation, healing and the early church

According to August (2005:14-29), a Judeo-Christian perspective of reconciliation places the importance of peacemaking as a key to end enmity, and also deal with the root cause of estrangement. However, August asserts that there is danger in wanting to reduce reconciliation to matter of forget and forgive, this trivialises the significance of reconciliation to be cheap and unsustainable. Interestingly, similarly the Apostle Paul deals with reconciliation in the same vein in which Paul emphasises that the root cause of enmity is the sin of immorality of humanity which leads to opposition to God (1 Corinthians 5:1-5). Further than that Paul proposes that for harmony to be restored sin must be uprooted and be dealt with. Sin is the cause of estrangement between God and humanity, the work of Christ is doing away with enmity. God in Christ works to restore the relationship back to balance; this is done through the power of the Holy Spirit. (2 Cor 5:17)

August's (2005) assertion is based on Paul's understanding and suggests that the Christian idea of reconciliation is understood as the atoning work of Christ. The Christian doctrine of atonement summarises the idea of reconciliation as costly and necessary. This idea of atonement is demonstrated through the cross of Christ. The cross illustrates to us that reconciliation is costly to God. God in Christ offers reconciliation and bears the cost of our refusal (August 2005:22).

Drawing from August, the study concludes that reconciliation is an act of restoration that is offered to all and then also seeks to bring end to suffering; it is the way of God to reclaim humanity back into fellowship with Him in a community. Yet the atonement is the most important instrument for reconciliation between the perpetrators of offence and their victims; the cross exposes the injustices and the suffering that is brought about by estrangement and

enmity, for this shows God in solidarity with the suffering victims. It is an act of self-giving and self-sacrifice which seeks to move us not into revenge but forgiveness. Reconciliation in a Christian thought emphasises the importance of forgiveness as a gift of God to human beings through the work of God in Christ through the power of the Spirit. Therefore, reconciliation and forgiveness must also be given as a gift to others.

The apostolic church regarded healing and reconciliation as a compassion of God evident in authority of Christ as the son of God who has power over demons, diseases, even nature, to the glory of the name of Christ (Acts 3:1-7; 5:12-16), purpose of God (1 Corinthians 12:8-12). However, differing theological perspectives of sin and healing has continued to affect the ministry of the church. Healing and reconciliation should address the fundamental brokenness experienced by people. It is a restoration of relationships between a person and God, then a person and him/herself, the person and others, and the person and the environment (Hiatt 2004:102).

Scott (2007:2) shares these insights elaborating on the importance of established relationships and the importance of apology in healing and reconciliation drawn from Matthew 5:23-24. He draws three valuable lessons which offer insights into the healing and reconciliation from a biblical perspective. These lessons are based on the context of broken relationships; each lesson requires both the offender and the victim an opportunity to re-establish the relationship.

- Taking action toward mending a broken relationship the offender takes the first step seeking to make amends, which calls the offender to be pro-active (accountability).
- To be reconciled is an act of restoration which is coming back to life. This suggests that the offender recognises the harm or offence committed against the other, by initiating a process of apologising to the victim. These two steps seem to suggest that healing and reconciliation cannot happen unless there is an intentional effort made to repairing and restoring the balance and harmony (Acknowledgement).
- When the first two steps have been completed then one begins with an act of offering the gift at the altar which starts a process of rebuilding the relationship with God by making an offering. Healing and reconciliation require intentional action towards restoring the broken relationships between individuals and individuals with God (Integrity).

Healing and reconciliation require intentional action from the offender to step forward to initiate the process by a way of acceptance of hurt caused by his/her actions towards the other person. This act is called pro-active moving out of the comfort zone; acceptance allows the offending party to account for the damaged caused and seeking to repair or to heal what is broken.

Wagner (2009:24-25) ascertains that exegetical points on the three apostolic writings 2 Corinthians, Philippians and 1 Peter, seek to show how the apostolic writing shapes the church life in accordance with the design of Christ's own faithful act of self-giving in service to God's mission of reconciliation. There is a strong emphasis on a Christ centred life and attitude in a community seeking to serve the greater need of God's self-communication, the church as embodiment of humility, love for the other, and community service. This warrants the argument that this section is consistent with the theme of nature and function of scripture in *missio Dei* that is pointed out by this quote, "Their Christ-like conduct grows out of the prior and ongoing work of God, who has mercifully given them new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Therefore, at the heart of Peter's soteriology and ethics, we find the same logic of interchange observed in Paul (2 Cor 5:21).

In this context reconciliation is a process that seeks to create a new humanity that is shaped in the passion, death and resurrection of Christ (Phil 3:10-11). Reconciliation is a process of restoration to new life and new creation as experienced in bringing both victim and offender to a new life or rebirth (2 Cor 5:17). Reconciliation is the work of God through Christ that goes about restoring human brokenness to wholeness, so that we can live with justice and love in a community. Reconciliation implies restoring harmony and also to bring back to balance that which was broken and lost.

Furthermore, reconciliation offers the offender to take the responsibility to build a bridge and to close the gap that was caused by the strained relationship; this process leads the victim and the offender to a place of asking and receiving forgiveness. When forgiveness is granted, both parties come to a place of healing and reconciliation, new relationships are established based on trust and respect. When a relationship is broken, trust is betrayed and reconciliation is impossible without full disclosure. Kok (2013:234) says, "We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud. Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability."

Crouch (2006:3) states that, “Part of what Jesus came to show us and teach us is that God never began to love us – the love was there from before the beginning. What a powerful idea that God loved us before we were even us. The power, the purpose of Jesus coming as the incarnated God, is that he is able to transform us to be the vehicle of our reconciliation with God.”

The question that needs to be asked here is, how has the MCSA reflected this understanding of *missio Dei* and how this understanding contributes in the ministry of healing and reconciliation post-1994?

3.6. Understanding salvation in the Bible as healing

The New Testament theology of salvation can be summed up as God’s desire to save every human being (1 Timothy 2:1;4:10) and according to Stuart Bate (2014:27-28) salvation in the New Testament can be placed under five headings. Those are the following:

1. Salvation as chosen on the day of judgement
2. Salvation as life
3. Salvation as the Kingdom of God
4. Salvation as repentance
5. Salvation as a believing in community

There is a clear and close link between salvation and healing in the sense that Jesus’ sole purpose was to show humanity the way towards its salvation. According to Maddox (2007:8), “truly holistic salvation, is where God’s forgiveness of sins is interwoven with God’s gracious healing of the damages that sin has wrought”.

Bosch (2011:403) asserts that there has been a shift in understanding the nature of salvation the church has mediated in its mission. From this we assume that this suggest the understanding that salvation is influenced by context and age and time. Bosch (2011:403) further says, for instance in Luke, salvation is present as it addresses a wide range of human circumstances and condition. This is demonstrated in the termination of poverty, discrimination, and illness; it also addresses social, political and spiritual suffering. Salvation is something that is realised in the present. Whilst Paul understands salvation as a process, initiated by one encounter with the living Christ, but salvation is still outstanding. Paul refers

to salvation which is linked to reconciliation. This is indicated by Romans (5:10), “for if we were enemies we were reconciled to God... much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life”.

God’s salvific activities were distinguished from his providential activities in respect of the well-being of individuals and society. It is evident that the interpretation of salvation that has emerged in recent missionary thinking and practice has introduced elements into the definition of salvation without which it would be dangerously narrow and anaemic, argued Bosch (2011:406).

Salvation points us to this truth sin has affected all humanity and we all need to be forgiven, healed and restored to fellowship with God and each other. That suggests we are equally the objects of God’s love. No one is beyond the reach of God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ. According to Bosch (2011:410), “the integral part character of salvation demands that the scope of the church’s mission be more comprehensive than has traditionally been the case. Salvation is as coherent, broad, and deep as the need and exigencies of human existence”.

The love and forgiveness of God comes to us in a form of personal assurance. The assurance that we can know is that we are God’s children (Romans 8:16). This assurance is that we can know the peace of sins forgiven and being reconciled with God.

Bosch (2011:410) says, “Mission means therefore being involved in the ongoing dialogue between God who offers his salvation, and the world, which- enmeshed in all kinds of evil- craves that salvation.”

3.7 Conclusion

According to Wagner (2009:20), “the theological nature and function of the scripture in the church is located in the broader context of the *missio Dei*. This is reflected in God’s self-revelation to the world through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is extrapolated by exegetical analysis of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Peter and I John”. He asserts that this illustrates fruitfulness of an apostolic hermeneutic. Wagner suggests that an apostolic hermeneutic attends to ways in which these texts address and form the church as the community of the reconciled and who are called into fellowship with the triune God as active participants in God’s work of reconciliation. He further illustrates his point saying God’ s mission is not an optional extra activity but part and parcel of the church; mission is a life

engine of the church, because it is a community formed in the act of reconciliation and it exists to re-establish fellowship to those who live as enemies of God.

God in reconciling human beings to Himself in Christ empowers people through the Spirit to participate in reconciliation as active recipients of the word of reconciliation.

Bentley (2014a:6) asserts that, “Christian agency is vested in at least three levels of influence. Firstly, on the structural level the denomination’s representation on bodies of national and international influence is reflected. Secondly, at the local level, ministerial leadership and presence provide for the local implementation of the Church’s vision. The most important level, and perhaps the most influential, is that of social integration, where the presence and agency of the Church are felt in the influence and ministry of laity in their respective fields of responsibility”.

Accordingly, Thesnaar (2010:35) maintains that the church as the body of Christ must be inclusive and also on the other hand must inspire members to act communally through their obedience to Christ. The church becomes a place of hospitality, healing and reconciliation; as a community it can also experience rejection, hurt and sometimes even violence. The basis of this is a reminder that God has offered his hospitality to the world in Christ. The church as the body of Christ is a moral community whose goal is not self-serving but the common good for all. Thesnaar (2010:55) further concludes that, “Such a community upholds the integrity of life values the dignity of the human person, it includes those who are on the margins or excluded, while not avoiding the reality of structural sin.”

Chapter Four

***Missio Dei* as a ministry of healing and Reconciliation in the MCSA**

This chapter will discuss the four mission imperatives of the MCSA and how these have changed the MCSA from a maintenance view to a mission-focused entity. Thereafter, it will highlight how these imperatives have impacted on the church and how that has contributed positively or negatively to reconciliation and healing within the church and the society. This will include inter alia the structure of the church, issues of gender and the democratisation of election in various structures of the church.

4.1. Background

The MCSA was involved in the mission against the injustices of apartheid and in a sense viewed themselves as in solidarity with the oppressed. In this regard the MCSA had the implications to preach the gospel with a focus to the oppressed and marginalised people. Worth noting is Bentley's (2014a:8) saying, "the MCSA in its progressive (missionary) role in building communities and facilitating processes (of healing and reconciliation that leads to transformation), on the one hand to expose injustice (in the society), but also served as instruments of communal healing and reconciliation". This means the MCSA post-1994 required to move from being a church which focused on the struggle for liberation and freedom of the oppressed to a church of healing and reconciliation. It needed to discern God's calling for post-1994 and the message for the society in general. The post-1994 South Africa's spiritual landscape has significantly changed and this change is a challenge to the Christian church, especially the church that seeks to be faith to the witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing.

4.2. The four mission pillars (imperatives) of the MCSA

February 1990 was a watershed in the political history of South Africa. In the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa President F.W. de Klerk announced the unbanning of the liberation movements and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Many South Africans experienced the Scripture: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations 'The Lord has done great things for them.' Great things indeed the Lord did for us and we rejoiced" (Psalm 126:1-3).

The MCSA began to ask, how can we move from a theology of protest and of resisting apartheid oppression to sharing in South Africa's reconstruction? From this question there flowed six calls for the MCSA mission:

- For deepened spirituality for all our people in the life of our church.
- That the life and work of the church be directed towards mission rather than maintenance.
- The rediscovery of every member's ministry or the priesthood of all believers.
- To truly express what it means "to be one so that the world may believe".
- To re-emphasise servant leadership and discernment as our model for leadership and decision-making.
- To set ordained ministers free for their primary vocation of preaching, teaching and spiritual guidance.

The four mission pillars of the MCSA are lenses/strategies by which to visualise and actualise the ministry and mission of healing and reconciliation in a post-1994 South Africa. Thence, the aim of this chapter seeks to demonstrate how the *missio Dei* can influence the ecclesiology of the MCSA to continue to be influential in contributing towards healing and reconciliation of society in a post- 1994 South Africa.

In this section focus is turned to the local church as a centre of healing based on the four mission pillars, seeking to demonstrate the significant role that the local church can play in advancing the course of transformation and healing within the MCSA.

4.2.1. Spirituality as participation in *missio Dei*

The MCSA believes that God's missional grace is for all, no one is beyond God's love, and no one is beyond God's saving grace. Salvation is by faith in Christ alone and must be received by every person. However, it is a personal choice whether or not to receive the saving grace that God offers. The MCSA believes that as people live their lives of faith, the Holy Spirit is at work, doing the work of sanctification, transforming people to be like Christ to attain the goal of perfect love (Oosthuizen 2012:16,18).

However, a crucial key to healing and reconciliation spirituality is the rediscovery of Wesleyan spirituality which is a key for the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei*,

especially if applied in this regard. Accordingly, the key principles of Wesleyan spirituality is that it fuses together the personal and social dimensions of Christian discipleship, it is the spirituality that affirms the corporate nature of Christian faith, it is the spirituality that emphasises mutual accountability and also inviting others into a lifelong journey of transformation. Personal and social transformation is an integral part of what the gospel of Christ is all about (Malinga & Richardson 2005:89-94).

Furthermore, the application of Wesleyan spirituality in the healing and reconciliation process in the MCSA encourages thoughtful and sustained participation in the means of grace which emphasises God's grace that is able to change people from inside out, to transform them. According to Oosthuizen (2012:41), "God has ordained certain means of grace through which his Holy Spirit ministers his grace and wholeness". Biblically and experientially people may come to see that salvation is God's gracious gift in Christ received by faith alone and that when Christ's offer of a saving relationship is accepted one comes under the divine obligation to work out that salvation in the world (Malinga and Richardson 2005:92-93).

The MCSA believes that God's Spirit gives assurance of salvation, which is a source of great joy. The MCSA's spirituality of healing and reconciliation encourages a balance in the approach to theology and life. Especially in regard to reflecting on faith using scripture and tradition, experience and reason, this model of reflection helps to inform people's idea and understanding of God. According to Knight and Powe (2010:50), "We may learn to receive as well as to give. We begin to see things a bit more from God's perspective, and in so doing come to know God's love more deeply".

Spirituality of healing helps Christians to understand and affirm God as one but experienced in three different ways that is as Father, Son and as Holy Spirit. That is the doctrine of the Trinity. God cannot be fully understood or known, but in the doctrine of the Trinity Christians try to describe the God of their faith. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct persons with their own functions, yet exist in unity, harmony and fellowship. The Father is the Creator (Genesis 1), a righteous lawgiver to be obeyed and worshipped (Exodus 20). The Son is Jesus Christ, who was in the beginning, who became flesh (John 1) the Saviour who died and rose for our salvation. The Holy Spirit is the creative power of God who is at work in the world and in believers enabling them to be Christ-like (Romans 8:9-17). This affirmation is a biblically based spirituality as it defines a set of beliefs, values and way of

life that reflect the biblical teaching. Therefore, there is growth and transformation as believers draw closer to God and become like Christ.

The MCSA's spirituality teaches that Christians are in a sense not perfect - just like all human beings. They are imperfect in knowledge, understanding scripture, and in succumbing to temptations. The MCSA's teaching on Christian perfection is to be understood in the context of its teaching on salvation. Salvation is something that God does for us. God's grace "Prevenient grace" precedes human salvation as it awakens people to their need for God and enables them to respond in faith. When people respond, God declares them righteous - no longer guilty in God's eyes (Justification). Oosthuizen (2012:17) says: "Humanity was created in the image of God. This means we were originally holy and sinless, able to love the Lord our God with all our heart, our soul, our mind and our strength". The point that is emphasised by Oosthuizen is a recurring theme in the MCSA and the Christian church that, all people are sinners and so are separated from God and his love. However, by God's grace, through faith in Christ's humanity is set free from sin and is restored into relationship with God and they are made perfect in God's love.

It is further recognised that in Christ all people are reconciled to God and restored in spiritual completeness meaning that is why the MCSA spirituality pursues both personal and social holiness; in other words it is a spirituality that does not only seek to express faith in a way a person lives, but works towards a just and godly society. It is a spirituality that seeks a balance through following Jesus's way through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Christian perfection, that is sanctification, then is a change that the Holy Spirit works in humans through grace. It is a process of growth in which Christians come to be more like Christ (transformed). According to Chilcote (2005:9), "Charles Wesley conveyed this vision of a glorious Christian life in his hymn love divine, all loves excelling". While this process of transformation is done by God and the Holy Spirit, Christians are not passive in the process of healing. The Holy Spirit as a giver of life enables growth towards perfection and Christian response is through practices of spiritual disciplines that deepen their relationship with God, as they practice doing good works as they learn more about Trinity. However, Oosthuizen (2012:18) asserts that, "justification, in its simplest form, means the forgiveness of sin, this means that we are forgiven, freed from condemnation and set in the path of living the life of God that is ours in Christ Jesus". If a person falters and falls knows that the grace of God is sufficient, and asks for forgiveness and goes on the journey of healing by faith until they sin no more.

In this regard is important to note that the MCSA's spirituality of healing is committed in the ministry of every member, which is inclusive of all people and particularly in a church that embraces and believes in ecumenical cooperation and lives in relationship with other churches for transformation. However, the MCSA's spirituality is committed to offer with the poor which includes a practical ministry and works of mercy. This aspect of the MCSA faith and action is important and cannot be neglected. Giving has always been a spiritual discipline for the people of God, for it opens their hearts to God's grace in a special way. It is important, therefore, for all who want to heal and be healed to grow in grace through giving to others as response to God's grace and love for the world. Oosthuizen (2012:81) says: "When linked to our giving, prayer and fasting opens us to God's grace and blessing, but also enable us to be his blessing to others too". Then this suggests healing is a sacrifice that is made of behalf of God for others as an act of love.

However, we concede in South Africa post-1994, the MCSA in particular is seeking to be faithful to the witness of the gospel, by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and reconciliation for transformation of the society. However, there is a significant challenge for healing and transformation of the society; this is extrapolated in the continual challenges such as abuse of the belief systems of the people and inequalities that need also to be responded to *a-new*, and other challenges of injustices. These challenges necessitate the understanding of the spirituality pillar as participation in the *missio Dei*, in order for the MCSA to make valuable contributions to healing and transformation of society.

According to Malinga and Richardson (2005:89),

"We live in a day and age that is characterised by a deep hunger for Spirituality. This hunger is expressed in many ways: in the rapid growth of Pentecostal and independent churches, [healing ministries]; in the search amongst many for an authentic life of discipleship; in the quest for secular messiahs and devotion to human ideologies; in the different varieties of the packaged religion in which; usually for a fee, God-consciousness can be acquired."

Hence, recently there have been unethical practices in the area of spirituality to a point that has necessitated an investigation to the abuse of people belief systems. In recent years, scores of churches, religious organisations, and traditional healing practices have mushroomed throughout the country, changing the face of the religious communities and practices

irreversibly. Streets are marked with signs and advertisements with promises of miracles, ranging from healing to prosperity.

In the context of the above assertions, it is observed and noted that post-1994 South Africa has been challenged by emergences of different expressions of spirituality, even within the MCSA and Christian churches in general. Challenged by different expressions of spirituality that have been characterised by self-centredness rather than God-centredness, some of these practices can only be described as foreign to the biblical tradition and Christian witness. These different expressions of spirituality are, “false spiritualities that undermine the sacramental and incarnational dimensions of the Spirituality in the Christian tradition”. (Malinga and Richardson 2005:90). The researcher therefore concludes the above is an indication that, healing ministry has generated a significant reception in post-1994 South Africa society and in the Church in general, and in the MCSA in particular. Under this assertion the MCSA is called to embrace the basics of the Christian faith that is following Jesus Christ. The calling is to learn from Him to live as his disciples. This pillar of spirituality is a calling that means to take prayer as priority. Chilcote (2005:18) asserts that, “Jesus was a man of prayer. He linked prayer directly with life and helped people into a restored and intimate relationship with God”. The critical point of Chilcote is that prayer restores what was broken which is a relationship; restoration is an important element of healing. Significantly prayer is an essential part of *missio Dei* as it engages Christian values of love and respect. In this regard it is believed that the Trinitarian approach to spirituality of healing is the most appropriate one as it is inclusive. The justification of this assertion is that for Christians it is impossible to separate experiences of self from experiences of God.

As demonstrated above this raises a significant need for the MCSA to respond to this state of affairs in anticipation that the spirituality pillars would contribute meaningfully to the healing and reconciliation within the MCSA’s participation in the *missio Dei*. However, the participation in the *missio Dei* needs a collective involvement of the Christian church in the healing and reconciliation ministry. Collective participation in the *missio Dei* signifies the importance of ecumenical structures such as S.A.C.C. The church’s collective participation is very important across the spectrum of society, as it contributes significantly to believers’ lives and sense of self-worth.

Worth noting is that, spirituality is concerned for all of a person’s life, the MCSA’s spirituality, emphasises spiritual growth or nurtures that which is truly developed in the

Christian community rather than separating spiritual and socio-economic components in life. Thence, spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting are critical instruments for healing and reconciliation in the MCSA ministry. In this regard worth noting is a practical aspect of the spirituality pillar which is a class system that is set as a means of mutual accountability between members. It is in the classes where members are accounted on their private or personal discipleship as well as their participation in the public worship. This MCSA practice is critical as it fuses personal and social spirituality for Christian discipleship. Through the class system people are invited to a life long journey of transformation. Critical to this is the MCSA's emphasis on communion with God which is central to the MCSA rules of life that of, doing no harm, avoiding evil of every kind, being merciful after one's power and attendance upon all ordinances of God, that is worship, sacrament, private prayer, Bible study and self- discipline. In this process of transformation is what Outler (1996: 122) is pointing out which is significant to healing and reconciliation, "The sense of God's unmerited favour prompts an inner transformation, a new disposition toward God and neighbour, a new self-understanding, a new outlook and hope".

Inter alia to the above; Sheldrake (1998:14) suggests that "the vulnerability and powerlessness of the cross is a radical challenge to an unbalanced emphasis on God's glory". In this regard Sheldrake's suggestion equally challenges the ultimate meaninglessness and hopelessness of human suffering. Healing and reconciliation spirituality is a lived experience of God's power and mercy through the effort to apply relevant elements of the Christian faith.

Thence Sheldrake (1998:12) says: "Social and cultural agendas are just as present in particular approaches to spirituality" of healing and reconciliation. Over and above social and cultural agendas which are present in the approaches of spirituality it is the notion of community that is critical in the spirituality of healing and reconciliation. Furthermore, the aim of this spirituality pillar is about connecting to the life giving resources of faith that make for moral regeneration and becoming a holy people in the world. This pillar propagates that in connecting to the life giving resources of faith it makes for moral regeneration and becoming holy people in the world. It is a spirituality that has to do with people experiencing God and with the transformation of human consciousness and life as an outcome of that experience.

Notions of community are important because, for the MCSA, religious experience is never simply the product of the individual person who is isolated from a community of faith. Spirituality of healing as participation in the *missio Dei* is a process of spiritual formation

and making disciples of Jesus Christ for an authentic Christian life in the present world; involving bringing together the fundamental tenets of Christian truths and the experience of living in God's presence, grace and love in our daily lives. It is Trinitarian, incarnational, and grace-filled living. The Christian community (MCSA) affirms not simply that through the human Jesus, God speaks, but rather that in the very person of Jesus is God – become-flesh. (Sheldrake 1998:14) Spirituality of healing will always treat this idea about Jesus as the basic reference point.

As already alluded to above, the Spirituality pillar as participation in the *missio Dei* within the MCSA practice is an emphasis on the individual and community's relationship with God and with other people, which is achieved through prayer; worship; communion; Bible study; giving; fasting; and caring. However, worth noting is Oosthuizen (2012:43) saying, 'Using means of grace cannot be equated with salvation by works. Using the means of grace does not mean that we are denying that God is the worker of grace and growth in our lives: the means of grace are God's way for the Holy Spirit to minister into our lives.' It is in a process of participation in the *missio Dei* that the MCSA encourages members' deepening spirituality of healing, within circuits and societies through following programmes such as classes/cells' Bible studies (in groups); Alpha courses; Emmaus; discipleship courses and retreats. (MCSA yearbook 2016:76)

The Spirituality pillar in essence of the above is a pillar that is rooted in the *missio Dei*, encouraging mutual support, study of scriptures, regular reception of the Eucharist, observance of the fasts and service to the poor for healing and reconciliation (Healey 1981:329; Oosthuizen 2012:42-43). In this regard the transformational effect of the spirituality pillar is implied that participation in *missio Dei* is an empowering tool; that it is affirming, and brings forth an awareness and appreciation of God's gifts to the church. The empowering and affirming aspects of other people's participation in the *missio Dei* facilitates their growth. Sheldrake (1998:15) says: "What is significant is that this belief embodies a specific understanding of God and God's self-disclosure. This understanding is sustained in a community of faith, the church".

The means of grace is a foundational characteristic of spirituality of healing; MCSA members are encouraged to avail themselves to the means of grace which God especially uses to work in the lives of people. Through the means of grace such as reading of Scripture, preaching, prayer, singing, baptism, and the Lord's Supper people will receive healing. The essence of

this pillar is that it seeks to emphasise God's universal love, salvation by faith and a new birth, God's prevenient free grace and the assurance of faith provided by the Holy Spirit within the believer as practiced in the MCSA teachings and ministry. Spirituality as participation in *missio Dei* is a process of healing one's own wounds and by using one's own experience to heal others. The spirituality pillar places significant emphasis on communion with God, which is central in the MCSA spiritual disciplines of, prayer, Bible study, and meditation. This pillar is about the quest to fulfil and authenticate healing and reconciliation for people to experience the existence of God's transforming love and grace. The pillar of spirituality involves the joining together of the fundamental principles of Christianity and the whole experience of participation in the *missio Dei* (McGrath 1999:2). Hence the MCSA spirituality begins with God. It is a call to restoration, through conversion which continues with spiritual formation. It involves the integration of lives as they are restored by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:13-16; John 3:3-8; Acts 2:38-39).

The MCSA teaches generosity, by doing all the good, by all means, to all people. According to Oosthuizen (2012:85), "We are to live our lives with our eyes fixed firmly on Jesus and on what he wants us to do." Oosthuizen contends that, "this is especially true when it comes to our money and possessions... we must live in such a way that we transform the lives of others, as God transforms and grow in us". The MCSA's spirituality as participation in the *missio Dei* emphasises a holistic and integrative approach that takes into account the whole person. Hence, Healey (1981) acknowledges and affirms the idea of the 'whole person' involvement as critical part of Christian spirituality as "Interpersonal, relational, and communitarian dimensions receive a great deal of attention" (Healey 1981:406). The MCSA integrates this notion of a whole person in its formations such as Young Men's Guild (YMG) and the Women's organisation, which have shown renewed interest in personal and social spirituality that has taken different directions, through various retreat experiences which have been developed to meet spiritual needs of many people who are seeking opportunities for silence, solitude, and renewal, and many types of prayers. Social justice is also an important focus for the MCSA spirituality. Spirituality as participation in the *missio Dei* is promoting the connection between a balanced service of faith and the promotion of the spirituality of justice. A central place is given to the personal experience of God in the firm circumstances of life. There is recognition and appreciation of individual differences and the various ways people are drawn to God in prayer and service (Healey 1981:406).

What is clear from the above is attendance to these formations which is a priority for many people including women in the MCSA. However, crucial to participation is that quite a large number of people are sharing in worship which is of primary importance for spiritual healing and fellowship with others which seems to be the key to transformation. The spirituality pillar focuses on the prayers, worship and praise, inviting God to guide, lead and strengthen their faith in Him through the Scriptures. Members are encouraged to be faithful in attending the means of grace such as Holy Communion, the class meetings and the church services.

Furthermore, formations such as women organisations and the YMG continue to participate in the mission of God through practical ways. For members of these formations/organisations this means a real sense of belonging as a family or a community, a holding of beliefs in common and in being united in a purpose. These elements are not necessarily verbalised, however, the evidence here is the warmth that is shown when people in the organisation share about their experiences.

As indicated in their reports that they read and share the word of God to restore and revive spirits as members have burdens both their own and others that they pray for God to ease, release and relieve through his grace. The MCSA Yearbook (2016:227) indicates the following: Healing services, visits to the orphanages, hospital visits, giving to the needy, participating in marches against women and children abuse, 16 days of activism; they also planted olive trees in Marikana as symbol of hope and reconciliation. All these efforts are aimed at bringing healing as a gift of love that seeks to promote reconciliation for transformation of society.

Members are encouraged to have trust and pin hopes unto God and continue to pray faithfully and not to abandon their faith when faced with trials and tribulations of this world. Testimonies are also shared during these prayer sessions to show God's wonderful works that indeed he listens and answers prayers (MCSA yearbook 2016:27-40).

One of the prime aims of this pillar is to promote the healing ministry. Local churches are encouraged to hold regular healing services whereby they use the laying on of hands, the usage of symbols as holy oil, incense, water and candles during these services. The responsibility is carried out by local ministers, Evangelists, Bible-women and Deacons and will be monitored by the Superintendents and Bishops of the districts. It is important to know what the MCSA's doctrines are really attempting to express about God. The point of seeking

a doctrinal clarity is always to express, promote and protect a quite distinctive experience of God along with its practical implications for participation in the *missio Dei*.

What is critical from the above is that the MCSA calls members to a process of discernment which will empower people to distinguish the call of God for healing. There is a general move in the MCSA towards individualistic spirituality, which leads to the privatisation of faith with a non- prophetic stance towards the existing social order that will deny people a corporate belonging to each other in Christ. Many members of the MCSA are engaged in various aspects of ministry, retreat directors, spiritual directors, Sunday school teachers, class leaders and organisational leaders, and they bring to the church's ministry sincere interest and a strong motivation for a deepened spirituality. As committed Christians who are seeking to deepen their awareness of God's presence in their lives and to broaden their knowledge of Christian spirituality so that they may be effective in exercising their Christian calling and to assist others in their spiritual formation. The other aspect is to deepen the understanding and growing of African and other spiritualities as one the important aspects for healing and reconciliation ministry. According to Sheldrake (1998:17), "Spiritualities that are disengaged from the world rather than committed to it, and to its transformation, fail to reflect the irrevocable commitment of God to the world in Jesus Christ."

The concept of spirituality is not limited to the Christian religion and is in fact increasingly used beyond explicitly religious circles. As a result, there have been attempts to define spirituality generally. Such definitions seek to transcend the assumptions of specific religious traditions. Though that be the understanding in the Christian faith, spirituality concerns how people subjectively appropriate traditional beliefs about God, human person, creation, and their relationship (Sheldrake 1998:34).

Inter alia to the above be that, spirituality of healing has become more expressed in the specific historical and cultural contexts. Healing spirituality operates on the frontier between religious experience and inherited tradition. Thence, a suggestion of collective appropriation of the legacy of African spirituality is certainly intended, not merely in the sense of increasing knowledge of people and movements, but a desired goal is to attain the overall view that would enable members to move to healing and reconciliation and to recognise and understand various schools of thoughts.

Sheldrake (1998:36) says: "It has become increasingly clear that spiritual traditions are embodied first of all in people rather than in doctrine and begin with experiences rather than

abstract ideas.” African symbols like the drums, cymbals, horns, harp, lyre, pipes, flutes and whistles during the worship services have a potential to transform human interactions in the worship. However, worth noting, Mbiti (1975:144) cautions by saying, “Some of the objects and places are regarded as sacred, but many others are simply used for particular religious purpose and occasion, without necessarily being sacred or holy as such. ... but beliefs and sentiments change from time to time, and some of the objects and places are discarded or turned into common use once more.” However, Thorpe (1991:121) contends that, “Rituals in African cultures are meaningful not only because of their stated, overt purpose- to purify or to facilitate a change status- but also because they are rich in symbols. They express a community’s beliefs, not so much in words as in acts and art forms”.

The contention holds that, African people who use symbols give a sense of identity and self-understanding within the community and among their associates. Mbiti (1975:175) further argues “each person in African traditional life lives in or as part of a family; family covers wide range of members... the family is the most basic unit of life which represents in miniature the life of the entire people”. By so doing, it will facilitate growth of members towards spiritual maturity. Christian beliefs put their faith in Christ, however, in many ways black people have attempted to integrate their African traditional beliefs into Christian faith. In spite of this difficulty, Christianity has made a great impact upon transforming many African people through its faith, its teaching, its ideals, and its schools and hospitals which have often accompanied the preaching of the gospel. It was in these Christian schools the majority of African leaders of today were educated. It is also by the Christian ideals of justice, human dignity, and love that African leaders were inspired (Mbiti 1975:183).

Consequently there is a new culture within the MCSA particularly in African (black) sections of the church which is occupied with signs and symbols. Africans (blacks) are occupied with signs and symbols of healing, so much so that all the MCSA convention programmes have a slot for a healing service. It is this Semiotic engagement with signs and symbols that virtual hope is created which leads to the belief that healing will come from the elements. However, the Bible teaches that God must be worshipped in spirit and truth, said Jesus. What this means is that, at least in part, Christians must keep the ancient stories of Christian faith in their central place. Christian spirituality, its significance and wisdom can regularly impact the lives of Christians who gather for worship. Liturgies and hymns, sacraments and symbols connect people with the memory of the Christian community, treasured through the years,

and ensure that people retain their identity as those who seek to imitate Christ (Van de Laar 2010:61).

Symbols offer a community a gift of shared beliefs and intimate life, when the community appreciates the community's shared and common story, they are able to participate in the healing and transformation of the society. Therefore, in the symbolic meal of the Lord's Supper, Christians are invited to remember and to participate in the Christian community and celebrate God's act of reconciliation. Waruta (1995:110) argues that, "for the African people, they are now in a state of confusion. They are faced with a deep antagonism between Africa's spiritual values and the materialist, mercantilist spirit that is dominating the world today". He asserts that, "this antagonism is at the very bottom of the crisis affecting us all, whether at the individual level, or at the level of families, of Christian communities or African society as a whole". In essence Waruta calls for recognition into the shift that involves alternative social structures, symbols, rituals, myths and interpretation of Africa's spiritual and social reality by Africans themselves. More interestingly Van der Laar (2010) argues "the history of fragmentation, suffering and religious strife which stains the church is a testimony to the fallaciousness of this thinking. Human community is a difficult and painful enterprise, as the human story reveals. But, it is also the source of tremendous gifts and healing for those who engage in it" (Van der Laar 2010:97).

In relation to the above is in fact that many of the MCSA African (black) congregations are shifting towards use of symbols and they are convinced that the use of signs and symbols in any healing service prepares the ground for the healing process to take place. Within the African context, belief has always been that, depending on the extent to which healing is taking place, the Semiotic presentation of such signs and symbols is to convey or simplify the hidden message in the act performed. Matthew (5:13-14) uses light and salt, both these metaphors are powerful images of transformation. In John 9:6-7 mud and water is used to illustrate the power of healing. However, generally in the MCSA tradition to participate and share in the Eucharist without sharing in the suffering of humanity is to reduce the meal to mere sentimentality (Van der Laar 2010:85).

The study has observed and witnessed variations in the way healing services are conducted in the MCSA especially in the African (black) churches, and there seems to be a deliberate distortion that it is the symbols that bring the healing, instead of the Holy Spirit using the elements as a medium for healing. However, the church may have failed in its mission of

teaching and in the demonstration of God's love and character in the use of symbols, healing still remains a visible and practical indication of God's plan and purpose for human existence. Building upon the overview, members of the MCSA will continue to expand their knowledge and understanding with further reading and study according to their local contexts. The essential message of the church's being is that the purpose of God is consistently fulfilled in communities which recognise the interdependence and interrelatedness of the individuals, and who join together to realise life's purposes (Van der Laar 2010:97).

Finally, in regard to this pillar of spirituality as participation the *missio Dei*, the researcher observes that, despite the frequent use of the word spirituality, there is a great deal of confusion about the exact definition of spirituality. The current taste for optional spiritualities in post-1994 South Africa is detached from faith traditions, they tend to bypass issues of commitment. Such spiritualities do not readily help people in general to distinguish between different version of sacred and their implications for healing and reconciliation. Critical to this a question how far this optional approach to spirituality can challenge people's uncritical desire for human fulfilment. It is certainly important for the MCSA to find a prophetic voice within the conversations that are taking place about spiritual transformation of the society. The researcher believes that there is no doubt that the MCSA tradition, belief and practice has to rediscover the potential to offer in the healing and reconciliation mission (Sheldrake 1998:197-199).

4.2.2. Evangelism as *missio Dei*

Bosch (2011:400) views mission of salvation in the following way, "it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world", and it is the mission of the Triune God which includes the church. This view of mission is very profound for healing and reconciliation as the church stands as an instrument in the hands of God. Bosch's view can be linked directly to the Genesis story of creation when God planted human beings in the garden to be co-workers with God. The church serves the *missio Dei* in the world and when it points to God at work in world it appears that the God does the primary work of salvation (Bosch 2011: 401).

In view of Bosch view of salvation as mission, the MCSA theology teaches that salvation is a gift of God to humanity; salvation is by grace not as a result of works. However, it needs to be put clearly that salvation transforms people. Salvation is a gift of new life and as such

cannot be stored away; thence worth noting in this regard the MCSA Laws and Discipline (2007a:187) says,

“Let us preach constantly the leading and vital doctrines of the gospel: repentance toward God; a present, free and full salvation from sin, a salvation flowing from the grace of God alone, through redemption that is in Christ Jesus...a salvation which begins with the forgiveness of sins (this forgiveness being certified to the penitent believer by the Holy Spirit and by means of this witness, but by the power of that Divine Spirit who bears witness) a change of heart; a salvation which itself is the only entrance to a course of practical holiness.”

The MCSA’ s view of salvation raises three critical points and they are stated as, free and full salvation from sin, a salvation flowing from grace, and salvation which begins with forgiveness.

Firstly, the MCSA emphasises free and full salvation because it deems that as the saving work and purpose of God for humanity to be fully restored to his image. Hence full salvation becomes the MCSA favourite emphasis for the doctrine of sanctification. It means an undoing of the effects of sin and its corruption of human nature, through God’s intervention through his divine love that heals a corrupted humanity. The Holy Spirit accomplishes in humans transformation by reconciling people to God. God’s saving intention or purpose is to bring wholeness to people by freeing humanity from selfishness and sin as the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer’s heart and mind (1Thessalonian 2:8; Romans 8:1 &15-16; John 11:42-43; 2 Corinthians 1:12). Oosthuizen (2012:27) says that, “the person who is in Christ Jesus not only knows him as their Saviour and Lord, but lives by the power of the Spirit... any sin still in their life does not separate them from their God, but draws them deeper into life in his love and Spirit”. This is an indication that salvation is a process, initiated by an encounter with Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the gift of life (Rom 8:23). Salvation becomes a gift of renewal, meaning salvation is present, past and future however reconciliation happens here and now and it is the act of God. Bosch (2011:405) further says, salvation becomes vertical, “guilt and salvation no longer primarily divide and unite God and humans, but humans among themselves”. Reconciliation is restorative and then salvation brings people into complete surrender and obedience to the will of God.

Inter alia to the above, it is recognised that because of the sinful nature of the human situation, forgiveness is received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Evangelism calls human beings response to God's gift of grace by faith a true and lively faith, which is the gift of God to heal the human situation. Salvation and forgiveness notably remain gifts of love from God, while forgiveness creates an opportunity for every believer to respond to God's gift for reconciliation through repentance, hope, love, and the fear of God is the sign of transformation. Evangelism becomes transportation that delivers the goods, news of God's forgiveness and saving grace, hence the MCSA emphasises that salvation comes from nothing else but God's grace and a person's faith in Christ. Evangelism communicates to humanity God's grace which is freely given as God's gift of love; it also demands the change of heart that is brought about by repentance, which marks the beginning of a person's journey towards new life in Christ which leads to transformation. Evangelism is a call to serve, calling people to join God in the work of his kingdom (Bosch 2011:428). Evangelism is to win people to God through the ministry of healing and reconciliation to be re-created and the image of God to be restored in people's lives and relationships.

Evangelism in this regard leads to repentance which is a Christian initiation to the experience of God's love that results in renewal and assurance of God's forgiveness. Accordingly, Tyson (1986:184) says: "Love is basic to human happiness and holiness, and it transforms the loving soul into the image of the One loved". Repentance is the beginning of the journey towards transformation which reshapes and/or restores the image of God in humanity. Restoration, renewal and reshaping that is brought about by repentance in this regard. According to Tyson (1986:185) it is "the path of love marked out by contemplation of God's love, participation in Christian disciplines, and avoidance of that affections which are contrary to the establishment of the love of God in the human soul (pride, selfishness, and worldliness)". Accordingly, evangelism in the MCSA emphasises the universality of free and full salvation that is an all-encompassing/inclusive nature. Hence the scope of evangelism is to invite all people to come to God through faith in Christ. Certainly the MCSA's emphasis that God's love is a force for renewal, a force that produces works of mercy. Evangelism as *missio Dei* is calling all people to mission to carry the cross and invite them into a new relationship within a new community (Bosch 2011:428).

Secondly, the MCSA teachings and doctrines emphasises salvation is by grace, as illustrated in Ephesians 2:8-10:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God- not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

This underlies God’s deep sense of love for the whole world. Closely linked to Paul’s understanding of God’s grace, wherein the MCSA’s application of the universal scope of God’s salvation is articulated in the doctrine of prevenient grace, which is understood as the grace that prepares for receiving the good news. Prevenient grace is God’s enabling sinners to receive saving grace. Hulley (1987:68) asserts that “a measure of grace is given to every human being that enables that person to judge in moral matters”. How much more is grace than a commonly used word in the MCSA’s theology and ministry, as means to describe healing and reconciliation as a gift of God for the transformation of society?

According to Knight and Powe (2010:15), “not only does God love every person and offer them new life, but everyone needs the life that only God can give. What underlies this is a corresponding sense of the universality of human sin... but sin is not only what we do, it is a condition”. What is clearly argued here is an affirmation that the grace of God is ours in Christ, and through Christ alone we receive God’s grace and his favour.

Critical to this affirmation is that God’s grace to humanity is a clear demonstration of grace as a transforming power of God which cleans, heals and reconciles people to God and one another. In evangelism it is grace that allows people to participate in the announcement of the kingdom of God by being witness to the saving and transforming grace of God.

According to Bosch (2011:422),

“Evangelism involves witnessing to what God has done, is doing, and will do..., [it] is announcing that God, Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history...through the person and the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.”

Evangelism is an invitation of people to turn to God as they are drawn by God’s love, not because they are pushed to it for fear of hell. It is only in the light of experience of God’s grace in Christ.

In this regard, according to Knight and Powe (2010:17), “Evangelism is our sharing and inviting others to experience the good news that God loves us and invites us into a

transforming relationship through which we are forgiven, receive new life, and are restored to the image of God, which is love”. The connection between sharing, inviting others and new life is an indication of transformative evangelism located in a healing and reconciliation ministry. More often, however, the connection between love and new life is established in the gift of healing and reconciliation. This, according to Bosch (2011:426), is a “prophetic evangelism” necessary for the building of the kingdom of God. Through practising the spiritual disciplines, people enter into a relationship with God which leads to experiencing forgiveness and a new life.

Prophetic evangelism is further understood as activities that involve the spreading of the gospel. In the MCSA practice activities that are involved in spreading of the gospel are, “conversion, baptism, the rule of life including spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting and the Lord’s Supper” (Knight and Powe 2010:25). This underscores the importance for evangelism to be linked into class systems, spiritual disciplines and Christian formation groups such as Bible study groups.

Prophetic evangelism is the sharing of the good news through ways and means that contribute to the transformation, witnessing through proclamation, testimony, and sharing the love of God which leads to affirmation and recognition of people as the image of God. Evangelism in this regard enables people to begin a journey of faith, hope and love and for people to have lives that bear much fruit with healing and reconciliation as its goal.

Evangelism is a call to conversion, as said to begin a journey towards a new life that is shared in a loving and caring community. Evangelism is a continuous call to societies and nations to repent and convert, a call which does not only emphasise personal transformation when people convert, it also emphasises the important role the community plays in that transformation. Evangelism calls a community to live out in practical ways the love and mercy of God (Acts 2:43-47). The act of reaching out to others in evangelism is an invitation to new life, which uses a variety of means to witness the love of God that enables people to receive and experience a new life in Christ. A new life is about bearing fruit: faith, hope, humility and this new life must be rooted in and nourished by a relationship with Christ. To be transformed is to become so filled with the love of Christ that human relationships are transformed for the better.

Evangelism points to reconciliation through Christ, renewal of Christians in the image of God for healing, is often linked to God’s grace which is a transforming gift of love which leads to

salvation and continued spiritual growth. This implies a change of heart, attitude and moral conduct, a change that marks the beginning of the process of healing which leads towards reconciliation. Evangelism is a window which invites others into a relationship with God. Healing begins at the acceptance of the invitation (Bosch 2011:419).

Prophetic evangelism that is grounded in and motivated by the love of God is transformative and healing in a sense represents a community that is transformed by the love of Christ for healing. At the same time prophetically announcing and calling people to personal encounter with the living Christ for the forgiveness of sins as God's gift of grace. This prophetic evangelism is demonstrated in the process of personal encounter with Christ that allows individuals to make a commitment to new life and to accept a call to discipleship. Lastly evangelism involves prophetic preaching, teaching, and visiting. Street revivals and evangelical campaigns were conducted, new members were received and welcomed into the church membership and there is evidence of spiritual growth. Evangelism in this instance becomes a life-transforming gift.

The MCSA District reports on the Evangelism pillar indicate that a call to evangelism is the church's response to share in God's mission in the world and to respond to the real needs of the people of God. District reports on evangelism affirm the notion that says evangelism is integral to mission as is argued by Bosch (2011:422). An indication that is clearly demonstrated in the MCSA's participation in evangelism activities as a church is a witness to the hope that is in Christ. Knight and Powe (2010:9) state that,

“Evangelism is more relational than confrontational, more communal than solitary, and is more a beginning point than an end. Evangelism involves not only sharing our faith with others, but also welcoming them into a community and enabling them to grow in their faith. Above all evangelism is about love: God's love for us in Jesus, our love for our neighbour, and the invitation to receive and grow in new life that is characterised by love.”

The MCSA's evangelism is grounded in what God has done for human salvation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and relies completely on the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly Knight and Powe (2010:17) argue: “The good news is shared through proclamation and testimony, and experienced in community through vital worship, caring fellowship, regular personal devotions, and acts of compassion and justice to others”.

The central motive to the MCSA's pillar of evangelism is not recruiting new members for the church but is extending an invitation to the love and the grace of God through Jesus Christ. It is, instead, a demonstration of a profound gratitude to God and deep compassion for others. According to Bosch (2011:423), evangelism in this regard conveys a positive message, hope for the world.

Evangelism in the MCSA Circuits is a process of conveying the message of hope by engaging in house to house, street, and revival campaigns to proclaim God's amazing love for all people and the promise of transformation that is brought about by the love of God. What underlies this is a profound sense of God's universal love. The MCSA model of evangelism is that which reaches out and welcomes, invites and nurtures and speaks to both head and heart which is done during revival services (open air preaching) and conducted by circuits. According to Knight and Powe (2010:33), "An evangelistic community, however, needs to do more than gather for worship one day a week. It should be a community of believers committed to growing in the love of Christ together." The MCSA model of evangelism can contribute to a new version for evangelism which enables people to be more faithful and effective in their ministry of sharing the good news; above all the MCSA's approach to evangelism that is grounded in and motivated by the love of God has the potential to develop relationships with each other that moves beyond images of a broken and corrupt society in general. Acts 2:47 says, "... day by day the Lord added to their number". The Acts text illustrates that the early church was an inviting community seeking to meet the needs of others. One of the strengths of the MCSA revival is reaching out to those who are ignored and neglected. As indicated earlier, the MCSA street preaching through streets revivals have potential to reach many people who may not have attended nor had contact with a church. This type of evangelism is believed to be more important for the gospel to reach those in need than the gospel to preach within a church hall. The MCSA, however, do not just preach and leave the people on their own, they develop a relationship with them by inviting them to a class system or congregation. The Class system helps the MCSA to build a structure where people can maintain the essence of personal and communal relationship with Christ, but evidence of this relationship is social. An evangelising church is one that is relational and invites others to hear and experience the gospel of healing and transformation. An evangelising church is both inviting and assisting newcomers to grow in faith.

The above suggests that, evangelism cannot be separated from the preaching and the practice of justice and service, this can refer to public witnessing. “The witness of life of the believing community prepares the way for the gospel, where this is absent the credibility of our evangelism is dangerously impaired” (Bosch 2011:424). Hence, the MCSA emphasises the prominence which should be properly given in the pulpits to preach salvation by faith through grace. The MCSA calls on all those involved in the evangelism ministry to be diligent in evangelically preaching the precepts as well as the privileges of the gospel (The MCSA Laws and Discipline 2007a:184). For the MCSA, evangelism engages in concrete expressions of faith by reaching out to others. The MCSA through its organisations reaches out to the poor, uneducated and those in prisons. Reaching out to the marginalised for the MCSA is contributing towards healing of the nation for transformation of lives. The MCSA insists upon actual physical contact with those who are in need. An evangelising church makes contact with those that they reach out to in an effort to make them part of the church.

For the MCSA, evangelism as healing seeks to transform the church and others through love. The MCSA may be successful in reaching others and inviting them into fellowship because the MCSA brings them hope of God’s love and forgiveness. The local churches are instrumental in shaping and forming evangelism as a healing process. Using local churches as a means of evangelism is critical to the MCSA’s participation in the *missio Dei*, as the MCSA Laws and Discipline (2007a:184) implores the MCSA’s local churches to be the centres that build up people in knowledge and holiness, urging them to fidelity in family duties, and especially in the godly training of their children, and in general to follow after the things which make peace, and things wherewith one may edify other.

For newcomers local churches are the places where they can go and learn more about the love of Christ and God’s forgiveness. The local church does not only invite newcomers into fellowship, they strive to maintain them on the journey towards healing and reconciliation.

Worth noting that, the MCSA’s local churches are a driving force behind evangelism through street revivals, primarily the uniformed movements such as Young Men’s Guild (YMG) and Women’s Manyano (Mothers Union). This approach signifies the important role that the local church community plays in the transformation of the society. In this instance the community is called to live out in practical ways the love, mercy and justice of God (Knight and Powe 2010:29). The role that is played by local church community is that of inviting and sustaining believers on the journey towards healing and reconciliation as indicated above.

The role that the local church community plays in this pillar of evangelism is immeasurable being fully persuaded that the regular and frequent meetings of the local church are of vital importance to the prosperity and perpetuation of the work of God amongst the people.

However, the challenges many of the MCSA local churches face is to maintain the balance between being inviting to others and sustaining current members on their journey towards healing. This challenge can be attributed to many factors however; the researcher surmises that television (TV) evangelism and healing ministries could be the cause since people seek healing. Hudson and Bryant (2005:56) say: “Every one of us hurts in some way or another. Some of us are caught up in broken relationships...we all sit next to a pool of tears.” The MCSA believes the local church is an intentional means for spreading the gospel of healing, because all people need God’s healing presence in their lives, thence, local churches should be centres for practicing a healing ministry. Hudson and Bryant (2005:56) further say: “Healing touches us individually and touches our common life”. Hence worth noting are Hiatt’s comments:

“If healing ministry is to be effective through the local church, then the church must be convinced of the necessity and efficaciousness of healing in the lives of ordinary people. God does really heal in response to prayer. Healing opens doors for the church’s outreach to the community. Healing demonstrates in tangible ways the power of God to do something about people’s wretched situations, signals the arrival of the kingdom of God. Healing addresses the fundamental brokenness experienced by people. Healing is the restoration of relationships, between people and God. When the world sees transformation in these areas in someone’s life it is clear that a powerful force of evangelism is at work reconciling the people.” (Hiatt 2004:102)

Therefore, the local church as a means of evangelism, for the MCSA is a centre of healing working for reconciliation, because the local church that practises healing understands that God created the community of believers to the overcoming of divisions to reveal the act of healing as demonstration of God’s love which is able to act in a broken world and bring wholeness.

However, noting that evangelism in some of the MCSA’s local churches is to a large extent still done within the church through various mission groups as main participators. These MCSA’s evangelical endeavours have remained confined to familiar comfort zones. This resulted in limited success. Changing social demographics are contributing to the limited

success of evangelism. Bosch (2011:427) observes that the “micro-ethical terms, such as regular church attendance, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and daily Bible reading and prayer limits the evangelistic message to an offer of release from loneliness, peace of mind and success in what we undertake and aims at satisfying rather than transforming people”.

What mitigates for the above is the MCSA’s prophetic witness in the struggle for justice, liberation and reconciliation in the divided land. This is of paramount importance to the participation in the *missio Dei*. According to Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy (1994:19), “The gospel is, thus, a message about the kind of transformation that God seeks to bring about in our own personalities, our interpersonal relationships, our social context, our thoughts and paradigms, our churches and, indeed, in all of creation.”

According to Goody (2009:653),

“The universal message of the gospel is directed to all nations and all peoples, and it is concerned with all aspects of human beings and the full development of every person... A central dimension of this mission is Jesus’ ministry of reconciliation, which deals largely with overcoming human constructions that divide the insider from the outsider, particularly those constructions generated by law in its various forms.”

The genesis of the MCSA had been an evangelical movement, seeking to share the Gospel with all, and particularly so with the intention of emphasising the need to strive to honour God by seeking to attain Christian perfection throughout the world (Forster 2008:4). One of the critical areas in the mission of the MCSA is prison ministries to the inmates. The prison ministry addresses personal and communal needs and develops strategies which are best suited in the immediate community to become centres of human empowerment which will lead to healing. The MCSA evangelism pillar declares that “we therefore resolve to give ourselves afresh and more fully to this part of our work; and we agree to devote regularly certain portions of our time for the purpose of visiting the members of our societies from house to house, and we will strive our visits profitable to the people by kindly enquiry into their Christian experience...” (The MCSA laws and disciplines 2007a:187).

Then secondly, the critical function of the local church reaches out to spread the love of Christ and the gospel message to believers and unbelievers in the world (oversight of the young people, care for the children and Sunday schools) (MCSA 2007a:187; Matthew 28:19-20). So the purpose of the (the MCSA) church is to minister to believers and unbelievers. The

church, both in universal and in a local sense, is important because it is one of the main vehicles through which God carries out his purpose of healing and transformation on earth. Significantly this can happen through street revivals, Bible study groups and by participating in community structures such as policing forums by sending church representatives. Sues (2003:554) says, “Evangelisation and missionary proclamation are therefore always addressed both to our own church and to those outside it.”

Evangelism as healing and reconciliation at local church level is an act of worship, believers are able to build and to live in relationship with other believers, they break and share the bread together (Holy Communion), pray (worship) for each other, disciple, and strengthen one another (fellowship). At the same time, believers are members of the universal church. The universal (the body of Christ) church is made up of every single person who has exercised faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Evangelism as healing contributes to social transformation when it is located in the context of suffering. Storey (2004:72) argues that, “While some noble work is being done in the inner cities, the millions of struggling human beings in the informal settlements are hardly being touched.” As the MCSA seeks to respond to the challenges of post- 1994, there are legitimate fears among traditionally deprived groups in the MCSA regarding integration and disempowerment. Hence, worth noting, Bosch (2011:424) asserts “evangelism is only possible when the community that evangelises – the church – is a radiant manifestation of the Christian faith and exhibits an attractive lifestyle”. The MCSA through the evangelism pillar is witnessing to what God has done, is doing, and will do, which is sensitive to the social, political and economic realities and again seek to read the signs of the times to actively participate in the public discourse to transform society and the world.

4.2.3. Justice and Service

The existence of the justice and service pillar within the MCSA is entirely consistent with the MCSA’s mission praxis. Within such mission pillar no dualism exists between evangelism and social responsibility. Noting that, John Wesley’s social holiness paradigm provides the MCSA with this model for the justice and service pillar. So much so that John Wesley was regarded as a vibrant evangelist and itinerant preacher, who proclaimed the gospel in a manner that inspired and caused people to embrace social causes in the name of Christ (Hulley 19987:73; Knight and Powe 2010:30-31). They attest to the fact that social holiness (justice and service) influences the cause of transformation.

Significantly to *missio Dei*, justice and service give rise to a new social conscience born in transformed minds and hearts. The effects of justice and service as participation in the *missio Dei* upon society are dramatic and measurable in the MCSA's involvement in the prisoners' rehabilitation and integration programme, contributing towards good and quality health services, advocating for improved working conditions in factories and mines, making housing and education accessible to the poor, the justice and service pillar seeks to work towards a renewed passion for social justice.

The MCSA in the process of participating in social conversation contributes significantly to the transformation and reconciliation of society in post-1994 South Africa. The MCSA is providing the South African community with members who contributed towards a reconciliation process within and outside the church. To name but few, the deputy chief justice Dikgang Moseneke, rev Alex Boraine deputy chair of TRC, who are amongst the MCSA preachers of gospel and social righteousness. This contribution is integral to the vision that defines justice and service as indivisible part of Christian mission that continues to shape the thinking and actions of the church. The justice and service pillar functions in a manner that demonstrably gives expression to mission that combines both personal and social holiness.

According to Knight and Powe (2010:63), "These types of actions [justice and service] made the gospel come alive in a different way for many people who had not experienced a holistic approach to the word." That is a clear demonstration that justice and service is integral to the mission of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA as it defines mission as 'works of mercy and works of piety' which are inseparable parts of the MCSA's ministry and witness, as they express the holistic understanding participation in the *missio Dei* within the MCSA tradition.

However, worth noting, Tyson (1986:304) says, "The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social, no holiness, but social holiness... Wesley proclaimed that there is no corner of creation into which the love of God cannot shine with restorative and liberating light, and that light overcomes the darkness of sin." Tyson's view (1986) expresses the MCSA's conviction that the justice and service pillars in essence proclaims and inaugurates a radically new and different social dispensation for post-1994 South Africa, embracing values and ethics that challenge the prevailing challenges of inequalities, prejudices and discrimination.

Justice and service as healing constantly challenge the church to strengthen its endeavours to pursue justice to remove the causes of human need and transform social structures.

People live in a society that is ravaged by brokenness, family split, financial hardships, unemployment and lack of trust. However, striving towards justice and service is another way of working towards transformation within the MCSA tradition. In the post-1994 South Africa it is incumbent upon the MCSA to work cooperatively in union with other stakeholders in respect of social action and transformation that have become increasingly important. The MCSA seeks to be a forum that listens carefully to the pain and the suffering in order to speak prophetically, authoritatively and compassionately throughout South Africa whenever poverty, deprivation, injustice and marginalisation are inflicted on human beings. Healing and reconciliation through the application of works of mercy and piety defines actions of compassion and justice which is done for the other person, neighbour, and the works of piety are the actions of worship and fellowship that are directed to God. The objective of justice and service is to strengthen the prophetic voice of the MCSA as an intrinsic counterpart to the vibrant preacher message so that the fullest dimensions of salvation in Christ may be manifested. Justice and service also serve as a spur to evoke deepened conscience and sensitivity within the discourse and activities of the MCSA seeking to ensure that the social response and intentional actions of the MCSA are well researched, bearing the hallmark of theological integrity. The kingdom of God comes not only when individuals repent and turn to Christ also when society is transformed in accordance with God's revealed moral and social standards.

The MCSA's mission pillar of justice and service as participation in the *missio Dei* seeks to reveal that faith communities that do not contribute to human dignity and empowers all members of the society that are spiritually dead faith communities. The justice and service pillar underlines that in the MCSA's ecclesiology of healing is the capacity to see the image of God in every member of the community as well as to give birth and to nurture structures of justice at all levels of communities and the church.

The justice and service pillar underlines that healing is a capacity to ensure that every member of the MCSA and community is given space to flourish. A justice and service church subscribes to the ethos of compassion as it seeks to be in reconciliatory solidarity to bring about healing. The works of compassionate justice within the MCSA seek to deliver justice for all which is moved by solidarity for human dignity. The MCSA cannot avoid

acknowledging that, for healing to be realised as God's saving and justifying grace, MCSA would need to restructure itself to take its members, and wider society, on a journey of healing and reconciliation. What is required is not just a statement of unity and solidarity, but rather a bold and courageous restructuring of the church that could best be position to support and encourage its members to make changes required for restoring human dignity for reconciliation. According to Bosch (2011:383), "New Testament books list many gifts conferred on individuals for the benefit of all: teaching, healing, etc." If these gifts are used in the service of the gospel the church will be enriched to work towards healing and restoration of humanity.

Through the justice and service pillar the church plays a role of enriching the human values of "dynamic love, sharing, and mutual growth through acceptance and participation" (Gerloff 2003:147). *Missio Dei* advance in both personal and social dimensions of life. The two cannot be separated; the good news through justice and service is about the transformation of all aspects of creation and life in accordance with the purpose expressed in scriptures. Some of the components of justice and service include: awareness of social issues and matters of national concern, advocacy in respect of a particular issues or causes, action where such may be appropriate, acknowledgement of churches and members who are involved in ministries that have a transforming and healing impact on particular situations of brokenness and injustice and affirmation of affected people throughout the country in the midst of their struggle for healing and reconciliation.

The MCSA Laws and Discipline (2007a:25) states:

"All persons are welcomed into membership who sincerely desire to be saved from their sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and show the same in life and conduct, and who seek to have communion with Christ himself and his people."

It is in that regard that the justice and service pillar is a dynamic love and powerful force that seek to move a local church to a place of healing and reconciling. Especially when local church is moved to mission of witness and service the church becomes a place that no longer discriminates against any of its members on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity and disability.

However, in spite of the above-mentioned membership policy of the MCSA of being open and inclusive to all people, there are instances in some local churches that still exclude and

marginalise people based either on gender or race. According Storey (2004: 90), “in each of these forms of exclusion, people are being discriminated against because of something over which they have no control...”. That poses a challenge to the MCSA to examine the pastoral integrity of some current attitudes. Storey’s assertion challenges the MCSA to examine its members’ attitude towards homophobic tendencies. The essence of Storey’s (2004) assertion is that the MCSA’s local churches, especially those that still harbour patriarchal and homophobic tendencies or any form of discrimination in their message, structures, policies and ethos are a demonstration of an ill church.

Recognising that exclusion creates brokenness, marginalisation and it perpetuate injustices, the MCSA Doctrine, Ethics and Worship Committee’s call upon local churches to facilitate and or participate in ways and means that promote healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa. The MCSA Doctrine, ethics and worship committee’s call is an indication that the justice and service pillar refers to God’s movement towards people which in return makes people move towards God in prayer. (MCSA yearbook 2017:252; MCSA yearbook 2016:227)

As indicated in the MCSA membership policy stated earlier, through the justice and service pillar the MCSA seeks to give a renewed missional image to the local churches which in turn influences the MCSA’s participation in *missio Dei*. However, in essence the justice and service pillar intend to reinforce the idea that local churches’ mission should be carried out not as the primary activity of the church, but as an attribute of God’ s love for the world.

The mission unity is a task with all missional programmes and initiatives within the MCSA, of which justice and service is one the programmes that are currently addressed under the mission unit and several other mission desks. The mission unit is given the task of determining needs and or deficiencies, to inform and deliberate regarding reconciliation and transformation issues, to train personnel for Christian mission and to deliver service to all people of the affected communities on behalf of the church. In carrying out God’s mission of healing the MCSA calls upon her members to engage in good works that bring encouragement, warmth, love and freedom to all people. This is part of worship to God; Christians are called to welcome and to strengthen others in the bond of fellowship. As they participate in God’s mission through witness in a way that brings healing.

The 2003 conference resolved to renew the commitment of the MCSA, in keeping with the original Wesleyan imperative to be in solidarity with the poor. (MCSA Resolutions of Conference and Connexional Executive 2003-2015:61). Critical to the 2003 conference resolution is an indication that the justice and service pillar from a material point of view, seeks to enhance human dignity, which leads to self-reliance and people are empowered, a process of healing begins which will eventually result into transformation of the society.

In view of the 2003 conference, justice and service is a response to the gospel's call of healing and transformation to empower people to eradicate poverty, as poverty eradication does not lie solely with the government. The 2003 conference resolution is an indication that a faith based organisation is ideally positioned to address poverty amongst the people. (The MCSA Resolutions of Conference and Executive 2003-2015: 61).

The question remains, how can the MCSA empower people to eradicate poverty? The answer to the question lies at establishing just and servant relationships by means of identifying problems and encourage positive attitudes through facilitation of coordinated programmes that promote healing and reconciliation. Meaningful relationships lead towards a self-discovery and self-expression which are central ingredients for transformation of individuals and society.

The emphasis of justice and service is motivated by the love of God that knows and appreciates the person as the *imago Dei*. Striving towards a goal of enhancing human dignity through just and servant ministry contribute to reconciliation of the society. The researcher asserts that from the justice and service perspective self-discovery and self-expression are the very essence of the gospel of healing and reconciliation. Justice and service call to proclaim emphatically that all people are created in the image of God and they are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ which is core to the MCSA's witness. Thus realising that all people are in God's image the dignity of the needy is enhanced. In this pillar the concept of God is being advanced as one in Christ who is in partnership with his people –the church as co-workers–liberating humanity and assisting them individually to re-enter society.

Both old and new Testaments' passages reflect God's concern for the poor, sick and powerless, for example, Isaiah 58, Micah 6:6-8 and Luke 8:40-56 have a concrete meaning for life in the present. God's concern for justice and mercy should be evidence in personal and social lives.

Breedt and Niemandt (2013:1) say, “Christian community should therefore be a relational and missional community, or it cannot be seen as a community that lives in fellowship with the Triune God.” This suggests that justice and service is a relationship building process which seeks to empower people to work towards healing and reconciliation. The 2004 MCSA’s mission congress came as a result of the acknowledgement and recognition that Christian people and groups, whilst responsible for contributing towards the solution of the problem of humanity by discerning God’s will in the situation of post-1994 South Africa, they themselves are deeply involved in these problems.

The MCSA is keeping with the original Wesleyan imperative to be in solidarity with the poor. Congregations should strengthen their ministry of justice and service alongside the poor in united determination to combat poverty which leads to restoration of human dignity and reconciliation.

Recognising the impact multidimensional disunity has had on the witness of the church, ongoing attention should be given to the stresses of diversity and disunity within the MCSA. The local church is a catalyst to facilitate the bridge building between rural groups, rich and poor, laity and clergy. One major disunity factor in the MCSA that needs urgent attention is the disparity between the rich and the poor. It is tragic because often ministry within the MCSA tends to be restricted to those who can afford it. This is also based on God’s covenant with his people and acted out by his only begotten son, Jesus Christ. In His ministry Jesus ministered to the sick, marginalised, and others bear witness to his compassion for the people of God

The local church is better positioned to come up with initiatives to address imbalances caused by pain of poverty, for example it can establish a mission fund to subsidise poorer and rural churches to increase agency in those areas. Other creative initiatives such as the Malihambe Mission Resource Fund, Pula Fund and Mission and Extension Fund to make ministry more affordable to rural areas are also being developed. Promoting ways in which previously disconnected communities may encounter each other and be affirmed by each other is an important part of justice and service.

When unjust factors are addressed the local church becomes an agent of spiritual and social upliftment of all people; the local church is an important vehicle for justice and service in the community. “Healing is never meant to be self-centred, but drives the healed ones to invite

others, and to be unremitting intercessors, trusting in the prevenient grace of God. This we believe: in Christ there is healing.” (MCSA yearbook 2013:75)

What is central and critical to this conversation is what Bosch (2011:395) says, “There will never be a time when the world, with all its political, social and economic issues, ceases to be the agenda of the church. At the same time, the church can go out to the edges of the society, not fearful of being distorted or confused by the world’s agenda, but confident and capable of recognising that God is already there.” Pertinent to Bosch’s indication is how far the structures of the MCSA in their current form or shape have enabled ordinary members of the MCSA to be involved in carrying out the mission of justice and service in their local communities.

According to Matthey (2002:580),

“*Missio Dei* plays a similar critical function [in the local church] to the message of the kingdom of God in the New Testament...*missio Dei* also helped to open up the realms of politics and economics so that they became an integral part of the mission agenda.”

The researcher asserts that, the conversations around justice and service in the structural renewal, if aligned with the four mission pillars, will enable the local churches within the MCSA structures to be the primary agents, but not the only agents of God’s mission and ministry in the world. The local church must be outward looking, so that the process of justice and service become the central point. Bosch (2011:400) says, “It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church.”

The local church in its worship and activities should embody the justice and service pillar as a channel of healing and reconciliation in its context. When the local church exercises pastoral care healing and restoration of human dignity will happen, and the nurturing of members toward spiritual maturity will bring reconciliation. Bosch (2011:400) further argues that “to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love”.

Wright (2006:321) makes this important assertion, “Holistic mission needs the whole church”. The fragmentation of mission outreach as one of the ministries of the church weakens the church’s capacity to be effective in witnessing to the world in a meaningful way.

Without a unity of words and acts, there could be no trust and this would hinder the mission. Unity is the very nature of the church's mission; it is also an indication that the message and the vision must be integrated into action. Although the local churches may have clear mission statements the significance of these statements are in participation in *missio Dei*, which will be assessed by its social interaction (Gerloff 2003:487).

Justice and service is not dependent on the statements of intent, it is a significant feature of *missio Dei*. According to Suess (2003:552), "Christians seek the ground of mission, which they understand as a mission of hope and love in faith, in God, who is unfathomable." This emphasis on evangelism is fundamental for bearing witness to the mission of a triune God which forms a critical part of articulating and expressing the MCSA's theology of healing and reconciliation. However, Breedt and Niemandt (2013:2) state, "The missional church knows that it is God who is on a mission and that the church joins him in reaching out to the world. It is imperative that the church finds out what God is doing and joins in it." This is fundamental to understand God's salvation as a call for justice that calls the church to be a participator in God's mission. The evidence suggests that Christians', particularly the MCSA, justice and service goes far back even before it was adopted as pillar.

The above assertion is demonstrated in the following; Bentley (2013:266) puts it slightly differently but with the same emphasis and impact on understanding the MCSA's contribution, and a call for the Church is to engage its new society by doing the following:

- To be the example of peace, racial tolerance, democracy and caring.
- To be the instrument of understanding, healing and reconciliation.
- To be part of the delivery of social services.
- To initiate projects for social and economic development.
- To resolve disputes between communities and government.
- To fight against crime and corruption.
- To assist with the internalising of the values of society's newfound freedom.

Central to the healing and reconciliation theme is that Christians at local churches have been called by God to fulfil a mission of justice and service in the world, and obedience to this call

means full participation in the life of the world. The theological understanding is articulated as incarnation of the gospel, whereby believers participate in the mission with the poor. The church (MCSA) can participate in justice and service by pushing mission frontiers, at times by providing prophetic leadership, and prophetic voice on public issues facing the nation, socio-economic and political. Outler (1996:24) argues that, “God’s love lived out in daily round – in speculum – God’s imperatives to justice and human dignity translated into service and self-denying love.”

The MCSA’s involvement in the justice and service ministry is an expression of practical healing, participating in the mission of God through social upliftment programmes such as hospital visitation, prison ministries and soup kitchens. Outler (1996:25) further argues, “Christian experience as a distinctive way of life rooted in the love of God and love of neighbour and expressed in meaningful social action guided by neighbourly love is still a clue for renewal in the contemporary church that will not in fact corrupt it.”

It is thus the critical task of the church to proclaim anew that, life is God’s gift, and the church is called to be to God’s people a sign of grace. Hence many local churches explore other forms of social engagement which manifest in the struggles for justice and human dignity, to cultivate and strengthen individual and collective participation for healing.

This view is complemented by Bosch (2011:400) saying, “In its mission, the church witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God’s reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the powers of darkness and evil”.

In some areas the MCSA has sought to build people power in solidarity with the victims of injustices as they shape a more participatory society. This is encouragement and a sign of new life in a transformed church. According to Breedt and Niemandt (2013:1), “Christ’s followers want to be part of a church that is an active change agent in the world. Christians with this passion face huge challenges and these will not be resolved unless the church involves itself in the world around it”. It is worth noting that there are indications in the MCSA yearbooks how in various ways the local churches are involved in justice mission be it feeding schemes, hospital ministry, care for the orphans, or street children ministries.

The local church exists within a context of brokenness and the mission of the local church is to bring Christ’s gospel of healing in the disfigured and hurt communities. It is in the context

of disfiguration and hurt that the church in post-1994 South Africa endeavours to be faithful to the gospel of the kingdom. The MCSA Yearbook (2013:75) states that:

“...A man who had surrendered his life to brokenness like so many today. As Jesus recognised him as a person, looking beyond the labels he had been given that denigrated his humanity, we need to look beyond the labels people are given in our society and offer them healing...as broken people find a new identity in Christ, healing can take place from the inside out. ...as Methodists reaffirm the God-given responsibility of all and rejoice that that grace is free”.

The above means justice and service is unavoidable if South Africa is to achieve healing and reconciliation; it means giving people back their human dignity, through sharing living space, creating employment and parity of wages. This is the task of the church for many years to come advocating for an equitable society. Christ has given the church a transcending vision to resist structures of injustices. Therefore, saved by grace and justified by faith, people struggle to affirm justice and service as a sign of the *missio Dei*. “The *missio Dei* is God’s activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate” (Bosch 2011:401).

The local church should not and cannot be immune to the suffering and brokenness of the local community with which it shares the understanding of God’s love. Breedt and Niemandt (2013:2) says: “The church is incarnational and as the body of Christ represents the *missio Dei* in any community and culture it finds itself in”. It is noticeable that in some local churches this is addressed in bringing about healing and transformation. The MCSA as the church itself is working towards healing and transformation as God’s instruments of human empowerment and economic development. According to Bosch (2011:478), “The church is called again and again to be a prophetic sign and foretaste of the unity and renewal of the human family as envisioned in God’s promised reign.”

4.2.4. Human empowerment and Economic development

Through the human empowerment and economic development pillar the MCSA seeks to address economic and empowerment issues according to God’s righteousness. There are many local communities that are faced with challenges of economic injustices, hence with the notion of God who does not live outside the pale of economic realities it are important in understanding that the church is participating in the mission of God. Many local communities and churches continue to wrestle with the question of economic empowerment, especially as

it relates to healing the social relationships of power that exist in the South African society. The MCSA continues to inquire about God, economics and empowerment as they seek to enhance participation faithfully, imaginatively, and to find creative ways of responding to the challenges of economic empowerment.

Local churches established missional projects aiming to address economic empowerment and human development issues. Projects that have been undertaken by local churches include amongst many literacy classes, and staff training for childcare. In order to achieve empowerment and development goals, the suggested projects should go through the following phases: (1) initiating and (2) planning. Since human empowerment and economic development is about empowering people rather than paralysing them it should always be linked to transformational objectives of ensuring people's self-determination. It is evident that human empowerment and economic development programmes within local churches aim at removing deficiencies that bring about endless dependency. It needs, however, strategic planning that focuses on the future and beyond current challenges. The strategic planning which takes into account variables such as the economic situation and stability which will make such projects relevant.

This pillar can therefore be perceived as helping to heal broken relationships if it is motivated by the love of God that heals and transforms people regardless of their economic status. The operations deploy for human empowerment and economic development should be communicative symbols that seek to provide social and spiritual relief for healing that promote reconciliation.

Mgojo, former MCSA president, suggest more practical ways in which the church can participate in the mission of healing and reconciliation and of the ways that the church participate are through the human empowerment and economic pillar. Mgojo asserts that "Jesus' mission was orientated to the needs of the poor and the oppressed those who were discriminated against, the oppressed, the hungry, the naked. All these were the victims of unjust structures and the special objects of God's attention, and had a place in God's heart. Hence these are the starting points for Christian mission". (Mgojo & Irvine 2001:4).

In view of the above, Bosch presents contrasts to Mgojo's assertion about the starting point of mission, Bosch says, Christian mission "has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit. As for the *missiones ecclesiae* (the missionary activities of the church) the *missio Dei* has important consequences" (Bosch 2011:400). In Bosch's view the Christian mission in its

missionary activities encounters humanity and the world in which God's salvation which has already been operative secretly, through the Spirit, lives. Bosch's view is central to the Christian faith because Christians are sent by Christ; it is his will, wish and command. It is Christ's mandate (Matthew 28:16; Mark 16:14-18). On the other hand, Christians live in different communities and God continues to use the church for human empowerment and human development. Significantly, Bosch (2011:400) argues further saying, "Our (church) missionary activities are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God. The church stand in the service of God's turning to the world". The Christian church it has to be service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God...."

However, it is most unfortunate that in post-1994 South Africa the poor are left to reach desperation levels aggravated already by vicious poverty cycles, which threatens humanity as a whole. This reality presents the church with a major theological challenge and opportunity to participate in human development projects to bring healing and reconciliation.

In response to the challenges of economic marginalisation and inequalities on the human development programme, the MCSA introduced a mission programme called the Millennium Mission Campaign. In order to allow the church to participate in this mission in 1998 the MCSA established a mission fund called the Millennium fund, as resource for mission. This reaffirms the fact that healing is not only about the bringing back to the original situation of healthiness, but rather the radical transformation of the mind and soul to recognise and affirm that tomorrow is a day filled with hope and a new outlook on life is imminent. Healing has to do with transformation of the mind (Romans 12:2). The infusion into the subject's being that things will be better, a confidence that says to people they have all the tools to overcome whatever has been inflicted on them (Philippians 4:13), and that the physical ailment cannot be the qualifier of their quality of life.

This effort in fact marks the birth of an attempt to address anew the economic and development problem which post-1994 South African communities are encountering, namely the relationship between human empowerment and economic development. Over time, this endeavour took shape, inspiring the MCSA in particular to come up with initiatives.

The Millennium mission fund established to enable the MCSA to facilitate every member's participation in mission work as empowerment and economic development by reaching out with compassion in practical ways. This includes caring for the poor, healing services,

counselling, educating, empowering, developing, and providing basic needs for the downtrodden, including children. There is a definite self-indulgence in material riches at the expense of empowerment and economic development. Greed and self-indulgence have numbing effects on the developmental principles as laid out in Deuteronomy (24:6:22) for a just social order.

However, the biblical commandment, spelt out in Leviticus 25, and the Christian concepts of healing and reconciliation both emphasise that the jubilee means the year of return, restoring to the people that which has been taken away, and therefore a source for hope and benefit to all, if applied in human empowerment and economic development. The Bible deals with empowerment and economic development in the most practical way when the principle of the Sabbath, the Sabbath year and the jubilee is introduced. The Deuteronomic tradition presents society as a neighbourhood and enjoins attitudes and policies that enhance neighbourliness. Deuteronomy insists that economic life must be organised to ensure the well-being of widows, orphans and immigrants.

This is a clear and direct response to the human empowerment and economic development pillar which insists on maintaining a public economy of compassion and justice which is a way to move people beyond despair. "You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice. You shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. Remember you were a slave in Egypt ...," Deuteronomy (24:12-14) commands. A society that cannot be generous to those in need will always be a broken society. Deuteronomy commands that, "Every seventh year you shall grant a remission of debts.... Do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbour. You shall rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be" (Deuteronomy 15:1-4).

According to Wright (2006:296-7), "The jubilee thus stands as a critique not only of massive private accumulation of land and related wealth but also of large-scale forms of collectivism or nationalisation that destroy any meaningful sense of personal or family ownership". The jubilee idea serves as a reminder that the church is called to a broken world that seeks human empowerment, economic development, justice and restoration of dignity. The MCSA yearbook (2012:215) indicates that, "women's Auxiliary has established a jubilee fund for financial assistance to widows and dependent children of Methodist Ministers".

From the Bible we learn that mission is done best in partnership and this is a call to the church to partner with other institutions and organisations such as Sonke Justice, People

against women and child abuse, Legal Aid and South African law society if it wants to make a real impact in the empowerment and development of people. In the light of the economic and human development pillar the MCSA can form networks with business and cooperates to improve and empower the lives of the poor by supporting and opening its local churches as centres of training and development. This view is affirmed by what Bosch (2011:426) is alluding to; we cannot be indifferent to the numbers, for God is “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance”.

Jesus developed the human resource for mission by calling men and women to be his co-partners in mission. The disciples were sent out in twos in Mark 6:7, 13 and Luke 10:17, this is evidence of partnership in mission. Mission is universal in nature and character as the disciples are summoned to go into the whole world to make disciples of all nations; this is based on the Great commission mandate. It is evident from the Gospel of Mark 16:15, mission as empowerment and development has to do also with God’s creation.

Partnership forms an integral part of the MCSA mission; partnership was initiated in the church to continue to contribute meaningfully to the lives of many people in South Africa, through such partnership it was reported that 6000 children received school uniforms. Partnerships such as chain of hope and the United Methodist church of Germany continue to provide valuable support to needy children (The MCSA yearbook 2009:185).

According to the Mission Unit report to conference 2012, in carrying out healing mission through partnerships the MCSA has forged new partnerships with “World Vision SA” (MCSA Yearbook 2012:176). Partnerships if used to provide relief to human suffering are a continuous effort to enable wider participation in mission of human empowerment and economic development.

Mission in the MCSA is a combination of empowerment and development expressing the purpose of God’s love and grace towards needy people. Since healing and reconciliation involves all projects which transform not only the church but also the community, those projects give dignity to the community. The early founders of the MCSA under their ministry, signs of the kingdom were established in spreading the gospel in South Africa through development projects such as hospitals, community centres and schools. These were projects that benefited and gave dignity to the whole community. These projects were used as part of the mission outreach (Mgojo & Irvine 2001:67).

It is important to note that the disciples were to be mission agents resourcing others for mission. They had to provide human support and skills development needed for effective mission. According to Acts 1:8 the mission had to begin at the local church in Jerusalem and then move outward into all of Judea, to Samaria and to the end of the world. Since local churches are in the forefront of mission in local communities there is a definite need for more education and training of both ministers and laity on the mission of human empowerment and development ministries for reconciliation to empower and develop projects for the community. The challenge for the MCSA is to create a platform for ministry and mission that takes the church outside the walls of the church building and into the life space of people in need of healing and transformation. If this is to happen effectively some policies and procedures of the church will need to be reconsidered in order for individual local churches to become intentional in meeting the empowerment and development needs within their communities. Furthermore, the challenges and the demands of post-1994 South African society makes it imperative that the MCSA, through its various structures and organisations, is able to respond appropriately to human empowerment and development needs of the people and the communities.

Deacons and clergy are strategically appointed in stations with a clear diaconal and missional emphasis and their appointments can significantly address such issues of human development and empowerment. In order for that to happen, local churches need to recognise the place for ministry and mission outside of the normal church structures and facilitate such a mission of empowerment. The challenge for the MCSA is to grow its capacity so that the ever-increasing needs of the community can be addressed through this pillar. The practical effect of this pillar will be seen in the MCSA's relationship with other stakeholders. The practical impact of this pillar is intertwining with other mission pillars for the MCSA's participation in *missio Dei*.

4.3. Critical reflection on the four mission pillars

It is common to see posters of the four mission pillars on the walls in many of the MCSA's local churches, but often the members do not sufficiently know or understand the meaning or the challenge of these mission pillars for the local church. The MCSA, in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the mission strategy and implementation, needs to embark on a deliberate education programme for local churches. This will be done, not to undermine the efforts of the districts and local churches, but it is important that those efforts are reinforced by

deliberate and an agreed upon programme of education. Having noted this it is necessary that the MCSA evaluates the progress made in the implementation of the mission pillars.

Critically reflecting on the mission pillars as strategies for implementation and monitoring of mission in the MCSA is required. The analysis seeks to demonstrate how Districts and Church mission groups have interpreted the mission pillars theologically and practically. The analysis is based on the information contained in the MCSA official records with specific reference made to the yearbooks 2006-2016 as they contain conference decisions. The analysis seeks to demonstrate whether the mission pillars are achieving the intended aims. This will be done by dealing with each pillar individually or collectively.

The implementation of the four mission pillars at local churches will provide the MCSA with an understanding of the nature, the scope and extent in which the mission outreach is done at local communities. The MCSA conference recognises the important role the local church plays in facilitating mission outreach within the MCSA. The four mission pillars at local church level seek to empower and to support members' contribution in healing and transformation of the society.

However, the General Secretary's report reflects moral challenge facing the MCSA (MCSA Yearbook 2014:15). The report stated that:

“The church (MCSA) is faced with moral crisis. Societal moral degeneration is hastily making inroads into the church's life. The church is becoming morally bankrupt judging from what has been in the public and social media, in correspondence, reports and telephone calls that come through our office. These range from sexual abuse, promiscuity, family violence, unashamed blatant abuse of power, alcohol abuse- especially amongst ministers- and pornography addiction...These are the signs of a church that is rotting at its core. If this trend is not arrested it will destroy the very fibre of our Church community and compromise our witness.”

For the MCSA to be able to address this crisis it needs intentional review of the mission pillars' efficiency for transformation. However, one can conclude that for the MCSA to be able to address adequately the moral crisis that it is faced with, it will need a monitoring and evaluation committee. Is an indictment on local churches' failure to implement mission pillars; this failure is creating a moral crisis for both the church and the society. In this regard, in order for the church to address the moral crisis that leads to the broken church, it requires

members to make necessary changes to their moral conduct and to allow God's grace to restore their human dignity and to ask for God's forgiveness.

In order for members to make the necessary changes in their moral conduct the General Secretary suggests,

“We need a new kind of Church that is able to adapt to the prevailing changes without losing its essence in the process. A kind of church where people can find forgiveness, healing and a different way to live that only Jesus Christ offers; a new kind of a church that steps out in faith and is on a disciple –making mission.” (MCSA Yearbook 2014:16-17)

Critical to the above suggestion is for the MCSA to actively create platforms for training, empowering and equipping members to participate in eradicating and overcoming the current social ills, by reviving class meeting (fellowship groups) systems. The class systems create a more intimate fellowship that offers moral support and pastoral care to the backsliders.

The MCSA mission pillars have brought the church to an acknowledgement that its mission needs to work from for a holistic healing and reconciliation. The MCSA vision has revealed that social oppressions are interconnected and that Christian salvation should handle all forms of oppressions, exclusions, marginalisation, poverty, racism, gender based violence, economic injustice, disempowerment, and marginalisation of people with disabilities. The MCSA has shown that to proclaim the gospel of healing and reconciliation for transformation, the healing gospel of Christ must address all forms of oppression. The MCSA needs to seek to work for ethical structures and communities that enable individuals to exercise their moral agency and to live out their salvation in Christ.

The MCSA's stance on mission as stated in the book of order (2014:95) says: “Conference affirms the importance of ministry to the whole person, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, setting free the captives, and transformation of socio-economic structures (Luke 4:18-19; Romans 8:21) as being integral to the mission task of the church, Methodism in particular.”

The four mission pillars call the MCSA to proclaim healing and to bear the good news of reconciliation. The church cannot work in isolation, for the church remains in the world and it will not be taken out of the world (John 17:15). Participation in *missio Dei* must be done through networking and working with other stakeholders in local communities. The Christ healed church must maintain its prophetic voice, to remain in perpetual search for healing and

justice and in reconciliatory transformative solidarity with the marginalised and the oppressed. The service and justice pillar for healing and reconciliation has revealed that the MCSA mission should seek to heal all broken relationships that have denied people their God given dignity. The MCSA mission pillar of justice and service underlined the imperative to a new birth in mission activities.

4.4. The MCSA theology and mission practice for healing and reconciliation

Inter alia to the above the researcher submit that, the beliefs people hold dear about God, human nature, the broken world and the Church do impact on the MCSA's understanding of her missional calling and task of healing and reconciliation. The MCSA throughout its history and development as a Wesleyan movement shared with the broader Christian church the belief in a God who is the creator of heaven and earth. This is the holy God who sustains life and saves the world from its own self-destruction and creates a new world order where God reigns.

One of the challenges for the MCSA which emerged from the 2004 mission congress is expressed in the Charter as follows: "...building meaningful relationships that transcend racism, sexism and all other forms of discrimination..." This, along with other challenges, was envisaged as a work of "... intentional and sustained action..." for the whole Church (Mission Charter 2004:1). Healing and transformation mission work in the MCSA is to build sound relationships for reconciliation through grace.

However, noting that, twelve years later, the MCSA still struggles with spiritual and social ills of marginalisation and exclusions of one form or the other, be it racism or sexism in the Church. Clearly, the work of "building meaningful relationships" is still in progress. The Church is a community that celebrates diversity, as a community of belonging, openness, caring, co-operation, healing and growth, forgiveness, patience, weakness and strength.

The MCSA is a diverse community that has to engage their own spiritual and social ills such as inequality, sexism, tribalism and racism. The MCSA needs to interrogate her structures and policies, to explore courageous conversations, to listen, read, ask, and challenge her constructively. Meyer (2011:96) asserts that, "Living as persons in communion, right relationships, is the meaning of salvation and the ideal of Christian faith." This assertion includes amongst many our relationship with God, ourselves, and with our neighbours, and these relationships are expressed through just living and social justice.

However, the only resolution which begins to raise awareness of the need for intentional relationship building since Conference in 2011 is found in Yearbook (2013:80) – resolution 7, re cross-cultural ministry preparation. The Book of Order (2014:230), in the section containing Miscellaneous Resolutions, has two resolutions, one calling on ‘...all Methodists to continue striving against all forms of racism in Church and Society...’ and the other a follow-up on the 1958 ‘One and Undivided’ resolution, calling for ‘...conversations on the practices of disunity ...in our Connexion...’ and for programmes to manage diversity while new structural solutions are sought.

The broader Christian church insists that God has not given up on the world and its current broken state. God is committed to saving the world because indeed “God so loved the world ...” God has a plan to renew this world and bring it back to what it was intended to be and fulfil its good purposes that God has set from the beginning. This plan from God for creation is one of justice, reconciliation, peace and prosperity in a covenantal relationship with God. It is aptly reflected in Isaiah’s eschatological vision in chapter 65:17ff;

“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind... No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime... for one who dies at a hundred. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabits; they shall not plant and another eats; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”

The MCSA theology teaches that the church is a community of love called by God into existence to reflect God’s revealed grace for the transformation of the world which God loves dearly. Through baptism individuals are reconciled to God and enter into this community to be shaped and formed as servants of God’s mission in the world. They become holy, set aside, so as to fulfil that sacred calling of being agents of God’s kingdom in a broken world in deep need of God’s love that reconciles and heals all divisions (MCSA book of order 2014:13).

According to Bosch (2011:422) “Authentic evangelism is imbedded in total mission of the church.” This assertion highlights the fact the church is called to witness to the world the love of God which was revealed in God’s story of redemption and salvation of humanity through Jesus Christ. The four mission pillars are aimed at rediscovering and revitalising the

prophetic voice of the church as a sign of revival and renewal of human dignity (MCSA yearbook 2017:3 & 4).

Like the two MCSA sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist which are the outward visible signs of grace, the church itself becomes a Community of God's love and visible means of grace (MCSA book of order 2014:13-14). The church itself is the body of Christ in solidarity with the broken ones, the little ones of God, broken for many, for the forgiveness of sin and renewal of all. This church places itself with all its vulnerability, its resources and talents at the disposal of God in service to the world. This is the church that is not the dominator of the world but instead, like salt, finds its power in disappearing in service. It finds its power by pointing away from itself and communicating the presence of this reckless transforming grace to an undeserving world. The MCSA in the South African Connexion have discerned the powerful vision of "A Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations." The MCSA however, have the moral responsibility to do a soul search and frankly to ask whether they truly believe in this [South] Africa that can be restored – the risen Africa that has the latent ability to bring healing to the world and the rest of humanity through the four mission pillars. As recorded, the MCSA seeks to work for a Christ-healed Africa and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation.

4.5. *Missio Dei*: the MCSA structures at service of mission

The current structures of the MCSA from top to bottom; connexion, districts, circuits and societies were designed for the effectiveness of monitoring mission work in the church. The MCSA structures were aimed to facilitate the implementation of the mission and vision of the MCSA to promote, support and sustain the MCSA's mission at all levels.

In a Connexion, the entire mission is held in trust by the collective to cooperate together rather than compete against each other. It is a polity that is the opposite of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism where individual congregations are somehow autonomous. This polity has implications on the unnecessary debate and tension on the demands between the local church and the Connexional office. A strong Connexion is able to provide strategic and empowering leadership that creates an enabling environment to the local church to implement the four mission pillars. This ecclesiology is further driven by a spirituality of solidarity and sharing of resources where the community resources are available to the collective needs of the community regardless of their origins.

However, some advocates of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA may argue that, these church structures are too institutional and obstruct the church to do God's mission. However, George Peters argues: "We may not be able to define conclusively the form and structure, nor design a form and structure for all times and cultures, but it is a certainty that no organism exists without, a form, structure and organisation..." (Peters 1972:205). What is lacking is how these structures may help to maximise missional impact on local communities.

It is in the spirit of Connexionalism that the Mission Unit must be given the room to serve as the heartbeat of the MCSA's existence, the custodian of the MCSA strategy and plans and hub where the other units and organisations are held together in a synergic manner in order that they can cooperate and contribute to a common missional goal. Each and every unit must demonstrate in theory and practice how it is contributing to the bigger missional picture of the Church. All organisations must be held accountable to do the same.

Indeed, the MCSA structures and discipline must be servants to mission, not mission seeking to adapt to structures. Purpose must determine structure and not the other way around. The MCSA book of order (2014:73, 86, 94) gives clear indication on how structures should implement the mission pillars firstly; the circuit is entrusted with the mission work of the church in the local community. Secondly, the work of circuit is to spread the gospel and extend the work of the church by planning, promoting and monitoring and to control and administer the affairs of the circuit. Thirdly, to appoint fellowship leaders (class leaders) to have a spiritual oversight of a number of members and should be trained for such work. The duty of a class leader amongst others is to assist the members of the class in their spiritual life and growth, making this the primary aim of the class meetings.

The MCSA affirms the importance of the ministry of every member to the whole person as participation in the mission of healing through, feeding the hungry, healing the sick and the transformation of the socio-economic structures based on Luke 4:18-19 and Romans 8:21 as being integral to the mission task of the church, and the MCSA in particular.

However, the MCSA structures are no longer serving their intended objectives and purpose of healing and transformation which lead to reconciliation. By default they have become more administrative than missional and they are creating unnecessary blockages to the local church's participation in mission.

Worth noting in this regard is the General Secretary's report to conference 2014 stating, "we (MCSA) are still trapped in the apartheid ghetto which will in time reverse gains made in the past 20 years of moving towards a 'one and undivided' Church. ... as a matter of urgency the MCSA needs to create platforms for life giving, wet cement conversations [sic] - thoughts that are open to reshaping, rethinking and reconsidering at all levels of our structure (society, Circuit, District and Connexion)" (MCSA Yearbook 2014:15). This concern for the church structure is based on the conviction that even though the church could not be equated with its visible structure, its structures should be part of its witness to gospel of healing and transformation. To bear witness to Christ, the church itself needs to transform on an evangelical basis and to become a witness to the gospel (of healing and reconciliation) (De Gruchy 1991:204).

This researcher concludes that the MCSA structures are outdated in many ways for the following reasons. The MCSA structures are no longer fully effective in post-1994 as they continue to be tools of ascending to power rather than to be of service to the witness of the gospel. De Gruchy (1991:204) maintains that the true church lived by proclaiming the gospel and thus confessing Christ according to the scripture. In post-1994 South Africa the MCSA order and ecclesiastical legalism often prevents local churches from being able to move responsibly against injustice.

The MCSA's structures in their current form fail to proactively engage complex changes taking place in the MCSA and the society in general. They should be renewed for healing and reconciliation taking into account the changes happening which include the complexity of cultures and political changes in South Africa.

De Gruchy (1991:215) states that,

"...the God who has revealed himself in Christ is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged and calls his church to follow him in this means that the church must therefore stand by the people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice..."

The MCSA as the possession of God must stand where God stands, against injustice, tribalism, and in following Christ. The MCSA must witness against all the powerful and privileged whose selfishly seek their own interest and thus control and harm others. For

transformation mission is a challenge to the unjust abuse and misuse of power and to the structures that exclude and marginalise the poor, the needy and the vulnerable. “The church is a wounded community, but at the same time we are under divine commission to offer healing. As a church community we need to open our life for healing others” (MCSA Yearbook 2013:75). When due recognition is given to the centrality of the local church in mission within the MCSA structures, the local church will become a transformational agent. As Bosch (2011:395) states: “The church is called to be a prophetic sign a prophetic community through which and by which the transformation of the world can take place. It is only a church which goes out from its Eucharistic Centre, strengthened by word and sacrament and thus strengthened in its own identity that can take the world on its agenda.”

In view of the above we read in the MCSA book of order chapter 8, paragraph 8.9.1,

“Conference acknowledges that the church has been constituted by Jesus Christ for mission. The conference declares the church’s commitment to Christ’s commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-19)”.

This commission involves presenting Christ in the Power of the Holy Spirit so that all persons should put their trust in Jesus Christ, and nurture them to grow into mature Christians who will serve God in the world. Furthermore, if sacraments are duly administered as signs of God’s transforming grace in a broken and divided society it will result to healing and reconciliation. Sacraments are instruments of God’s healing grace and reconciliation of the broken and divided society. In the MCSA sacraments particularly the Holy Communion it is believed that people are built up and strengthened in their faith and spiritual life. People join with Christ in his intercession for the world and participate in His mission to world. (MCSA book of order 2014:11, MCSA Laws and Discipline 2007a:14).

The MCSA’s stance for particular groups, who are disadvantaged and oppressed in a given historical context, is a response to Christ’s to heal and reconciling gospel of love. Baptism and Holy Communion as practiced in the MCSA are the outward signs of the new life which God offers to all people, whilst Holy Communion is the outward sign of God’s forgiveness for their sins and salvation of their souls. Thence the MCSA’s open table approach to the Holy Communion offers individuals and communities an opportunity to come the experience of God’s grace and for the world irrespective of membership of the church. These sacraments are visible signs that communicate and proclaim and celebrate the gift of new life in union

with Christ. Through the sacraments the whole church is involved in each local community by offering and proclaiming the message of hope and healing. As people partake in one loaf and common cup around the same table at the invitation of the same Lord, the church is built up as members of his undivided body, and called to care for, and suffer and rejoice with, all other members in love.

4.6.1. Local churches centres of healing and reconciliation

The MCSA recognises that there are widely differing interpretations of the precise way in which healing and reconciliation in the MCSA's practices and usages may be manifest in political or economic structures. The MCSA therefore is obliged/ challenged from time to time to express its mind on specific political and economic matters and reflect theologically on matters. It does so with tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect for all who seek to live responsibly before God, but disagree with the mind of the church at that particular time.

The MCSA, in common with Christians throughout the ages and in all parts of the world, holds to certain essential and non-negotiable beliefs concerning human existence under God. This is evident in post-1994 South Africa, which faces high levels of intergenerational poverty, stubborn unemployment and the rising inequality in which the gap between the few super rich and the poor is increasing at an alarming rate. The church is observing a deep alienation and disconnect from institutions that hold society together for many South African people in general.

Where and when the situation requires it, the MCSA people are obliged before God to affirm and strive for ideals of human dignity, justice and equity. In doing so the church (the MCSA) acknowledges that these are interpretations of the will of God which are offered as a responsible contribution toward healing and the welfare of our society. Contextualisation in South Africa is necessary in developing a theological thought that is relevant in the process of theologising; cultural, socio-economic as well as the political contexts are taken into consideration.

Christian mission is the synthesis of evangelism and social concern expressing the purpose of God's love and grace towards needy people. Social concern involves all those projects which empower not only the church but also the community, those projects that give dignity to the community. Evangelism without empowering projects may be a part of mission, but it is not the fully balanced mission endeavour as practiced by the early MCSA. Under their ministry signs of transformation were visible in spreading the Gospel in South Africa through

development projects such as hospitals, community centres, schools and agriculture. These projects were used as part of mission outreach.

It should further be noted that the MCSA conference of 2013 resolved that the local circuits and societies should give greater priority to ministries and services of healing and to explore the greater depth by means of which this vital aspect of Christian ministry may be exercised within the MCSA Connexion in a manner that is scriptural, contextual, inclusive and holistic. (MCSA book of order 2014:214)

However, many the MCSA congregations define mission in terms of attending church services and church activities; most congregations are essentially built on what has been called come-structure. The churches are set up in areas as places to which people are expected to come. No provision is made for a go-structure. Congregations seem to spend more time discussing ways of getting people interested in church programmes than equipping the members for mission outside the church. This assertion lacks theological and missional interpretation of what the church is and is doing.

The MCSA resolved to take intentional action to implement mission of healing and reconciliation in the following approach:

“Deepening the understanding of African and other spiritualities; to have coordinated programmes of Christian education, information and communication; building meaningful relationships that transcend racism, sexism and all other forms of discrimination; a vigorous response to the crisis of HIV and AIDS; informing prophetic ministry by research into socio-economic issues; identifying land for sustainable livelihood; sacrificial giving. Becoming a church in solidarity with the poor; providing training in evangelism; training ministers for the African context; implementing anti-bias training; becoming a more youth and child-cantered church (MCSA yearbook 2015:2).

The researcher asserts that, the MCSA mission pillars seek to move the church into mission that is informed by the contextual issues.

Secondly, the MCSA resolved to be a church that “allows mission to be its organising function” as pointed out by Le Roux (2011:109). Indicating that, in a larger extent “the Methodist church allows mission of the church to organise how we worship, how we equip disciples and we build a community.” Mission pillars are tools which the church adopted and

used to assess the impact and contribution of the MCSA in the *missio Dei*. Le Roux further suggests that a “missional church critically evaluates the culture of the day and how the church relates to it... the church no longer sees itself as a sending church but as a church that is sent” (Le Roux 2011:109).

From the smallest task of worship to the largest tasks of word and action the MCSA should involve its entire membership. Le Roux (2011:107) suggests that “every member should adopt St. Paul’s challenge that all members of the congregation are ambassadors for Christ and each one should have a vision of participating in the mission of God”.

Much of the MCSA revivals are to the same audience who have developed fairly critical skills in being able to evaluate effective preaching. Unfortunately, however, all preaching in the world has little effect on the ability to solve conflict convincingly.

What has emerged as critical in the MCSA is that evangelism needs a different approach contrary to popular street revivals. In the context of ongoing fundamentalism a more nuanced gospel seems inaccessible.

4.6.2. The MCSA liturgies and healing

The MCSA’s liturgies need to be revolutionised and the MCSA’s relevance needs to be revisited; this is particularly true in many black MCSA churches who still use old liturgies which were adopted from the Anglican church of Britain during Queen Elizabeth 1’ reign from England. Bosch (2011:414) offers this helpful critique to the MCSA’s methods of evangelism, he argues, “evangelism relates to social responsibility as seed relates to fruit; evangelism remains the primary task of the church but it generates social involvement and improves social conditions among those who have been evangelised”.

The ministry of reconciliation in the MCSA is an act of worship as based in the scriptures. Reconciliation is God’s redeeming work in bringing back human beings to his covenantal relationship after the fall in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). As is the case with every church, the social and political climate of the day plays a significant role in the development and appropriation of the MCSA theology on South African soil (Forster 2008:4). The most significant and disturbing social and political changes began to take effect in South Africa during 1994. However, the South African society needs a type of church that takes evangelism to where it hurts most, the MCSA evangelism methods seem to be lacking, to

contribute significantly to healing and reconciliation. Breedt and Niemandt (2013:1) states that:

“Mission is also what God is in his deepest self: perfect love and affection, creating, healing and redeeming. God gave his Son without holding back and keeps pouring out divine goodness on the world.”

The understanding therefore is that the MCSA knows that it is God who is on a mission and that the church joins him in reaching out to the world. It is imperative that the church finds out what God is doing and then join in it (Breedt and Niemandt 2013: 2).

According to Bosch (2011:9), “Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world, particularly as this was portrayed first in the story of the covenant people of Israel and supremely, in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth.”

The MCSA needs to make changes to their approach of evangelism as a mission of healing and reconciliation in accordance with what is necessary in the context. The 2011 conference lamented that; “...The MCSA seems to be lagging behind in extending its footprint in new developing areas. There is apparent lack of enthusiasm to push our mission frontier”. (MCSA Yearbook 2012:23). However, mission outreach programmes should be intentional in helping the needy and the poor, by setting aside a certain portion of the church’s income towards the relief of the burdened.

Therefore, local churches are called to be agents of healing and reconciliation in the community and this can be realised if the MCSA is intentional about evangelism and mission. When the church gathers together for worship of God, it is to participate in the *missio Dei* through, prayer, fellowship, tending one another’s wounds and empowering which creates restoration. After the worship service the participation in the *missio Dei* continues into the world fulfilling Jesus’s words, “as the Father sent me, so I send you”, become real and active. When the church gathering is dispersed into the world to heal and transform lives of the people, she becomes truly missional.

Malphurs and Mancini (2006:89-90) state that,

“The church needs to provide a plan for evangelism that church members can understand and embrace. The first step is to identify the ways evangelism may already

be taking place in the church. Usually there is a predominant evangelistic tool or strength in the church.”

Many MCSA local churches have participated in healing ministries, engaged with asylum seekers and refugees, and have sought ways of integrating them into the communities appropriately and integration happens, reconciliation is experienced. In fact, records indicate that some of the most effective integration of refugees into the society has taken place because of the work of the church.

4.7. Critique of the MCSA on mission

The MCSA’s mission pillars serve as a plan for mission and evangelism in local churches. Bosch argues (2011:428) “evangelism, then, is calling people to mission”. In the local church context this means authentic living and faithful proclamation; local communities are crying out for authentic congregations shaped by the Gospel, immersed in the story of God’s love. In this regard it is worth noting Breedt and Niemandt (2013:2) who state that:

“The journey of discovering the community and its relationship in the Trinity as well as the community and relationship of Trinity to creation, sets an example and standard of who and what the church should be. God is love and there is a missional relationship between the Godhead and creation.”

While the prophetic aspects of the church’s mission never ceased to exist, it would be a futile exercise for Christians to persist in denouncing evils that are now transitory. This would imply that the future role of the MCSA be located and defined in the larger context of *missio Dei*.

In the justice and service mission pillar the MCSA congregations seek to change with time according to the socio- economic and geographical challenges of their context. This narration is affirmed by what Hendriks (2004:146-147) is saying:

“People need a meaningful work for a meaningful life. They need to contribute and be thanked for their contribution, they need to take part in the transformation of a broken society to accept ownership and take responsibility for that society.”

Whereas mission has to be focused on individuals, on communities, on structures, and on systems, there is also a need to understand mission as preservation of the creation of the

broken environment. The jubilee idea serves as a reminder that the church is called to a broken world that seeks justice and restoration.

The MCSA's social involvement is an attempt of serving out love, by being exposed to the conditions of the poor; hence mission projects are established to respond to emerging challenges in the communities. Most congregations have at least one mission project that seeks to care tangibly for the poor and needy. However, there are some concerns around these activities (projects); they lack coordination in order to have impact on the MCSA's interpretation of *missio Dei* in post-1994. Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy (1994:21) argue: "Christians in South Africa, likewise, could reflect their commitment to Christ by involving themselves in the restructuring of the country's education and health systems, transforming local government structures ..."

The MCSA mission pillars seek to redefine its social involvement to expose social systems that oppress, discriminate and deny justice and dignity to the poor and all people. Service and justice mission pillar's impact on the understanding of the MCSA's interpretation and influence on *missio Dei* post-1994. Bosch argues, "Evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ" (Bosch 2011:415).

Why does the MCSA continue to be untransformed, even though its mission is to be a church of healing and transformation? Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy (1994:21) argue, "The churches must stand alongside people to empower them and to assist them to devise possible solutions to their problems. But churches too need to be delivered from oppressive structures, false teachers and repressive forms of religion."

The overall impression is that the church sees itself as a body waiting for people to join, rather than a body that must go out to where people are. In many instances the MCSA acts as if people owe it something, rather than being the servant community willing to walk that extra pastoral or outreach mile. At the same time the church (the MCSA) urgently needs to learn the language of dialogue and the practice of partnership if it is to become a mission church capable of holistic transformation.

What is needed to transform the MCSA is that, "In mission, people encounter Christ in the midst of those who suffer, be it from political oppression, or economic or ecological

disasters” (Matthey 2002:583). The Christian theology has spent much effort defining the image of God in church language structures and capacities of human existence that make possible a personal response to God. According to Leith (1993:100), “The uniqueness of human existence can also be described in terms of language which is a means of human self-transcendence as well as a means by which human beings can engage in deeply mutual relationships.” Leith is moved by the uniqueness of human beings as human beings can build from the memory and the achievements of the past.

Suess (2003:552) states that:

“This loving God cannot remain alone and withdrawn but has to give him/herself in relationship. This unfathomable and transcendent God has left visible tracks not just in creation but, for Christians, above all in the revelation and incarnation of the *logos*.”

The challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in communities are critical challenges for the MCSA in the post-1994 South African society. Manyaka (2014:3) elaborates “Black people were excluded from sharing the wealth of the country and slipped into generational poverty. ‘Poverty carries with it not only economic burdens but also psychological difficulties.’”.

The assertion made above is supported by the survey report which was presented in 2013 by Chipkin and Meny-Gibert (2013:7). The social justice sector report indicates:

“One of the innovations of the Theory of National Democratic Revolution was that it identified two primary sources of injustice in South Africa. In the first place, black South Africans were oppressed by a racist, white regime. In the second instance, black South Africans were exploited by capitalists. On these terms, advancing the social justice agenda needed to advance on these two fronts: transforming the state and the economy.”

The results of the report are clear indications of the challenge faced by the majority of African townships dwellers which are somehow exacerbated by the mushrooming informal settlement and lack of political leadership. This perpetuates poverty and unemployment in township areas, the result of that is struggle for survival which leads to violent crimes.

Manyaka (2014:3) further argues that, “The doors to opportunities in the economy, education, employment and managerial positions must be opened to all.” In addressing the issues as highlighted in the preceding remark, Breedt and Niemandt (2013:1) agree with Manyaka’s argument on leadership, they indicate “...an organisational challenge, and the nature of the church determines the nature of appropriate leadership.”

This section highlights one area that has been a barrier for MCSA to advance the ministry of healing within its structures. Clearly gender and women issues continue to be a pain for women ministers and leadership. The context of post-1994 South Africa continues to challenge all of us in terms of sexism, and gender issues. South Africa’s constitution provides for the recognition of equality and basic human rights for all people, but in practice these principles are often ignored and violated. Even though August is Women’s month in South Africa, and every year the campaign for 16 days of activism against women and child abuse is highly publicised, and yet the rate of rape and sexual abuse, and domestic violence and abuse of the elderly are still on the increase.

Some of the key issues that the church must witness against are gender inequality, tribalism, and economic injustice. Regrettably the 2014 conference notes that the current structures have limiting factors and shortfalls which are prohibiting a local church to fully implement the mission pillars for healing and transformation; this necessitates a call for the MCSA structures to be simplified and streamlined to remove blockages and unnecessary bureaucracy, and to facilitate a process of delivery and implementation of mission pillars to enable the MCSA to achieve objectives of healing and reconciliation of the church.

In terms of gender issues / sexism, the Statement on Women is found in the Miscellaneous Resolutions section of the MCSA Book of Order (2014:227). This Statement contains the oft referred to ‘...all structures within the Church should include at least 40% women...’ – and much more. However, given the struggle which continues on all levels of Church structures to adhere to the 40% requirement, the researcher wonders how seriously the Church takes its own statements on gender justice.

The Yearbooks from 2012 onwards all contain resolutions on gender issues as follows: Yearbook (2012:88) – representation of women and youth; Yearbook (2013:79) – women ministers and gender concerns; Yearbook (2014:91 & 92) – gender based violence and abuse of children and sexual harassment; Yearbook (2015:85) – the MCSA resolved to wear black clothes in solidarity with women and this is to be known as Thursdays in Black and policy on

sexual harassment. The Yearbook (2016:87), possibly in the light of the 40th anniversary of the Ordination of Women Ministers in this year, contains three resolutions relating to Women in Ministry: Woman Ministers, Nomination of Women Ministers into positions of leadership, and Appointment of Women Ministers as Superintendents. However, these resolutions all reveal that gender justice, certainly for women ministers, is still a long way off.

The point of departure to address that, according to Leene and Hendriks (2010:167) is, "... the identity of the church is to be found in the Triune God who reveals Himself in his Word". However, as indicated above the MCSA documents and reports to conference indicate contrary to Leene and Hendriks' view. It is further noted in this regard the discrepancies in the stationing of women ministers and women appointments to leadership positions, in the MCSA demonstrated patriarchal tendencies. The MCSA in over 132 years of existence since 1883 does not present a perfect image of herself as a church for healing and transformation through the leadership structures in recent times. This is attributed to the fact the first woman minister was ordained in 1976 (39 years ago). The MCSA has only 133 active female ministers, 111 of them in circuit appointment, only 16 of them are Circuit Superintendents, none of them are Bishops, 6 of them are in some senior leadership at District or Connexional level. These however, highlight some of the challenges faced by the MCSA in its attempt to be a church of transformation.

The above observations question the MCSA's ability to recognise pains and hurt within her structures. According to the MCSA yearbook (2011:25) which states "that women ministers continue to be discriminated against" especially when it comes to stationing; this is a clear indication that the MCSA still has work to do in addressing women issues in her witnessing to the gospel.

Though it is a well-known fact that the MCSA has a majority of women in their membership, it must be confessed that the MCSA's practices and usages are patriarchal in nature and disadvantage the emancipation of women, lay and clergy, in the leadership and ministry of the church.

According to the MCSA Yearbook (2016:21), the General Secretary, Reverend Charmaine Morgan further remarked:

"Starting now, we celebrate the Year of celebrating Women Clergy. 40 years after the Ordination of the first woman as a minister, 17% of our clergy are women, 4% of our

Superintendents are women, and no women are Bishops. We will celebrate our victories in the coming year in various ways, but we still have a far way to go before we can say we have achieved our goals.”

4.8. Conclusion

Healing and reconciliation in the context of the MCSA has a long history which is informed by the understanding that God is calling the MCSA to share in the ministry of healing and reconciliation. This mission of healing and reconciliation is placed in the local church as she is central to the life of the community, however, it is recognised that there are still social challenges in post-1994 South Africa which require a collective effort of the church and government. It is from this point of view that the mission of healing and reconciliation should be contextualised. The role of missional leadership is significant in advancing healing in African townships.

The MCSA mission pillars can advance the mission of God if they are well articulated for greater benefit of all. When churches open their doors to community programmes the majority of people regain their full potential to make their lives better.

The MCSA has however, struggled with issues of reconciliation within its structures which need to be addressed. Lastly, healing and reconciliation remains the gift of God to the whole of humanity.

Poverty and inequality remain a threat to the advancement of a reconciled society; it is also noticeable that many social ills can be eradicated if there are developmental programmes in a poor community, financial and material resources should be invested in those communities that need infrastructure to advance human development.

Chapter Five:

Ecclesiological paradigm for participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA

5.1. Introduction

This chapter investigates the MCSA's ecclesiological paradigm and its implication for participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA. It does so by reflecting on the MCSA's programmes and recent initiatives in its mission-based strategies of mission pillars for healing. The MCSA significantly puts emphasis on healing and reconciliation as its key calling for mission. In order to establish the MCSA's ecclesiological paradigm for healing and reconciliation, which is entirely consistent with the MCSA calling and praxis, it will be influenced by the implementation of the mission pillars. The implications of this paradigm for participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA it is viewed through ecclesiological structures, which are designed to create a common missional vision and strategy to facilitate, co-ordinate and to support local churches in mission work.

It is worth noting that, the MCSA 2009 conference raised concerns that the MCSA is faced with ecclesiological challenges regarding transformational programmes. The 2009 conference's concern is an indication that there is a lack of empowerment and support for the local church to implement the transformative proposals from various structures of the Connexion (MCSA Yearbook 2009:26&27). The impact and effect of the lack of support and the implementation of transformational proposals inhibit the ability of the local churches to be transforming a discipleship community. Thence we assert that the implementation of the four mission pillars at local churches is critical for the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei*. The four mission pillars in this regard remain critical bricks for the MCSA's ecclesiological influence in regard to healing and reconciliation and for the building of genuinely transformed relationships in post-1994 South Africa.

Having noted the above, it is clear that the four mission pillars form the bases in which the MCSA remain a critical participator in *missio Dei* post-1994 South Africa. Furthermore the mission pillars as missional strategies for the continued ecclesiological paradigm and its implications for participation in *missio Dei* for healing and reconciliation seek to influence the local churches' missional response to the communal challenges.

It is significant to consider Mashau's (2016:3) assertion in this regard. He says, "Healing is administering grace, healing is administering reconciliation and healing is *shalom*".

5.2. Ecclesiological paradigm for participation in *missio Dei*.

The MCSA's laws and disciplines put forward the distinct emphases of Wesleyan theology on God's all-encompassing grace and humanity's responses in holy and sacrificial living (MCSA Book of Order 2014:173). This same understanding applies to healing and reconciliation. The whole church bears the responsibility for participating with God in God's mission of working for healing of the nations. As a result the MCSA structures and strategies of ministry are to reflect *missio Dei* and MCSA's participation in *missio Dei*. This captures the character not only common to the MCSA's preaching, but also practices of such as open table communion, invitation to membership, formation of class meeting systems and social holiness, through which the MCSA have tried to live out its mission. On the basis of this calling to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation, the MCSA comes to understand itself as participating in *missio Dei*. This study asserts it is not surprising that most people in South Africa particularly in black townships have come to associate themselves with the MCSA because of its practices of social justice.

These practices include the hymns, prayers, liturgical order, conduct of the sacrament and language. Far from implying that theology is not important to the MCSA's identity, this assertion only suggests that what is available for missional reflection and dialogue is the lived and practised theology. From 1958-2004, mission congresses of the MCSA have tended to structure its missional statements around methods of theological reflections and missional practices. An example of this is its mission statement which is the statement of task, method and missional practice. The notion of healing and transformation is mostly expressed in the four mission pillars which have an important contribution and function to perform in order for the MCSA to achieve the plan that God has for God's people, the plan of establishing a healed and reconciled society.

It is from the above understanding that it can be asserted that the implementation of the MCSA four mission pillars seek to reflect the transforming love of God, so as to enable local churches to bring the message of the gospel which is able to transform realities, changes lives and strive for justice, peace and dignity of all people. The interaction of the MCSA as a community of witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ of healing and transformation is its ecclesiological involvement in human needs both social and spiritual. Healing and

reconciliation is the source of missiological engagement. The role of each pillar is important in the ministry of the MCSA, each pillar expresses God's calling for the MCSA in different ways, however, the goal is the same which is healing and reconciliation for participation in *missio Dei* for the MCSA. The implication of the healing and reconciliation mission is centred in the mission pillars which seek to give the MCSA a new language for proclaiming the gospel of Christ. The healing and reconciliation paradigm is a way that invites faith, without threatening potential converts with exclusion. The mission pillars' strategy of healing is one of few efforts that the MCSA is articulating in its understanding of healing and reconciliation as *missio Dei* and also its commitment to empower local churches to embody healing and reconciliation as its transformation mission. A critical issue to the healing and reconciliation ecclesiological paradigm is the message of hope in a country of continual gender and racial injustices, ethnic conflicts and unemployment crises.

The above assertion signifies that, the MCSA's ecclesiological paradigm lies in the diverse and flexible approaches to the mission pillars, with the aim of moving the local church to a point where it can respond missionally to cultural stereotypes and traditions and socio-economic injustices which inflict pain and brokenness on all people irrespective of race and gender. The implication for participation of the MCSA in *missio Dei* is to offer humanity hope for healing and reconciliation in the post-1994 South Africa. To further build transformational and close relationships which are based on the importance of a ministry of sharing, caring and fellowship which are significant characteristics of transformation for participation in the mission of God.

Considering that the MCSA's four mission pillars is a paradigm for mission, its impact and influence for healing can be measured on the strength of the local church's ability to empower members' participation and contribution in addressing painful human conditions. Worth considering is Mashau who suggest that healing is, "from medical, anthropological, psychological, cultural, political and religious perspectives" (Mashau 2016:2). The MCSA has always been by nature a missional church bursting with prophetic activism and energy for the mission of transformation especially in the communities that have experienced traumatic and painful incidents.

There is a clear indication in the post-1994 South Africa that people in general are seeking for healing; as a result people hop between churches and healing ministries of different expressions. The MCSA has touched people of many diverse cultures, economic and social

backgrounds especially in areas of healing and transformation. People's movement in search of healing is a clear demonstration that churches are preferred communities for healing; hence the emphasis that local churches within the MCSA must be centres of healing ministries. However, healing should be grounded faithfully in the rich Christian tradition.

A healing and reconciliation paradigm is recognition of the pain of brokenness and marginalisation that people are experiencing in the post-1994 South African community. There is a cry for a healing that is theologically sound and enriched by some cultural values embedded in the respect of human life and dignity which is deeply connected to human realities of the post-1994 South African context. Thence, the MCSA's missional agenda as participation in *missio Dei* is seeking to work towards establishing sharing, caring and fellowship communities that resemble the biblical concept of *koinonia*. Thence it can be asserted that the four mission pillars are indispensable requirements for the MCSA's participation in *missio Dei*, not only religiously, but also socially and economically. Therefore, the paradigm of healing and reconciliation as in the four mission pillars at local church level contributes to the ecclesiological participation for the MCSA, for which four mission pillars are a key to bring humanity into the presence of God, especially when applied for transforming the church and community in general for participation in the *missio Dei*.

It is against this backdrop, that the objective of this chapter is to establish a missional paradigm based in the *missio Dei* that can influence and impact on the beliefs and practices for healing and reconciliation in the MCSA. In order to achieve this objective the chapter will apply the following approaches for healing and reconciliation based on the four mission pillars as stated below. The MCSA's ministry of healing and reconciliation is expressed through the following mission pillars:

- Justice and service pillar as *Diakonia* or service of neighbours
- Human empowerment and economic development (as *Koinonia* or formation of the community of faith or *ecclesia*).
- *Missio Dei* as Spirituality
- *Missio Dei* as Evangelism (as *kerygma*, preaching, proclamation and witnessing).

5.2.1. *Missio Dei*: justice and service as *Diakonia*

The MCSA in its long history of social involvement and a compassionate concern for the poor and the marginalised is defined by its definition of doing well in the rule of life. The MCSA's rule of life is as a paraphrase of Matthew 25, giving food to the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick or the imprisoned has healing and transformation effects. *Diakonia* is a significant paradigm for the MCSA to carry out its missional mandate of healing and reconciliation in its ministry. The MCSA through its justice and service mission pillar seeks to articulate and proclaim the gospel of healing in a practical manner that inspires social justice and causes the people to embrace social causes in the name of Christ. However, the transforming kingdom of God does not only come when individuals repent and turn to Christ, but it is revealed in practical efforts and it is realised when a society is transformed in accordance with God's revealed will and in moral and transformed social standards (MCSA yearbook 2009:105).

Firstly the researcher concede there is a deep sense that life is reduced to 'having and possessing' to the extent of trivial entertainment; this is what is increasingly witnessed in post-1994 South African society. This reduction of life to 'having and possessing' is a clear signal and measure of a devastating disease that is prevalent in the South African social order. Secondly, the diseases in the social order that is evident in recent uprisings in communities across South Africa. The MCSA's ecclesiological paradigm of healing and reconciliation is best expressed in the four mission pillars; these pillars signify a plea for a just society. A need for healing and transformation is echoed by those who experience injustices, pain and brokenness and who are at the receiving end of the consequences of leaders' corruption and marginalisation of people in general.

A need for healing and transformation is an awareness of injustices which continue to grow and worsen by the scandals of corruption and power abuse of government officials. This awareness of injustice and marginalisation of other people have been growing even before the 1994 transition. It was worsened in 2016 and 2017 by the Africa National Congress' president (ANC) who recalled two of South African finance ministers unjustly. The 2016 and 2017 decision of firing the finance ministers led to a certain kind of brokenness which constitutes injustice to all people. The changing situation in the ANC led to a new kind of post-1994 social order of protest and uprisings. It is however this notable change which was

at the same time leading to a new socio-political situation post-1994. It is this growing awareness of a new socio-political situation that challenges the church and the MCSA in particular to continuously visit its missionary responsibility in the society seeking healing and reconciliation.

The MCSA in its response to socio-political and social changes of the post 1994 South Africa, through the justice and service mission pillar as *diakonia*, stands at the heart of the MCSA's witness for the transformation and reconciliation mission. By putting more emphasis and focus on the implementation of the justice and service mission pillar as *diakonia* for healing and reconciliation is a demonstrating the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei*. The justice and service pillar in the MCSA's holistic approach to the *missio Dei* seeks to demonstrate God's love for the world. It is however, within the complexity of social challenges that signify the need for the MCSA to focus on the local church as a locus of ministry at local community. The healing and reconciliation paradigm seeks to influence the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei*. It seeks to empower every member within the local churches to perform the simplest acts of service such as caring, which will enable the potential of justice and service to convey the good news of healing and reconciliation in a powerful way. In the course of healing and reconciliation as *missio Dei*, it is worth noting Bosch (2011:550) saying, "It is the calling of the community, to which each Christian's vocation is integrally related, to be sent to the world, to participate in the course of human affairs and events as the evidence that God's redeeming work in Christ has happened."

Diakonia is an expression of a local church's service which is key in understanding the influence of the mission pillar of justice within the MCSA ecclesiology to make connections in a range of different senses. *Diakonia* as participation in the *missio Dei* aims at creating spaces and opportunities for connections. *Diakonia* as a paradigm of mission is essential in enabling formation of new connections and in reinforcing existing relationships between diverse communities inside, outside and with those people on the margins the church. Probably through, *diakonia* as a service to neighbours through the justice and service pillar the MCSA seeks to enable, encourage and equip the local church to respond to needs of the community. *Diakonia* is equally important to ecclesiological participation and influence, in this instance in the role of the local church to bring the concerns, perspectives and insights to the MCSA Connexional structure for further evaluation of the mission pillar.

The measure in which *diakonia* influences participation of the local church's service to the neighbour may be reflected in the mission pillar of justice and service. However, the influence and participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA is reflected in the mission pillar's ability to move local churches from inward looking mission entities to an outward look mission church. The MCSA through the mission pillar of justice and service seeks to be a force that moves local churches to be a transforming discipleship movement.

The MCSA's ecclesiological paradigm of healing and reconciliation mission is significantly important to the vision and mission statement of the MCSA as it inspires local churches to make a connection between healing and transformation as its mission focus. *Missio Dei* in an ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation is an indication and a demonstration of the mission of God to the world; it is the MCSA's clear intention to relate the mission pillar to a variety of situations. According to Bosch (2011:551), "the missional church is part of civil society to create and strengthen the fabrics that fashion life-giving and life-accountable world" .

Diakonia or service to neighbour is a clear demonstration that transformation is not static. Hence the MCSA's approach to healing and transformation is and may not only be affected by current developments in theology within, but also by the changing patterns of life in South Africa post-1994. The MCSA's service to the neighbour continues to contribute to the ecclesiological influence and the church's response to the growing needs of neighbour for healing and reconciliation. Currently it is noticed that the South African government is going through a political crisis in the leadership. This is also true in the Christian churches such as Shembe Christian Nazarene Church and the International Pentecostal church, which calls for attention to the challenges of society and the church in general. The situation at hand signifies a need for true healing and reconciliation which is a critical necessity that must be related to service in the people's context.

This means for the MCSA to respond missionally and accordingly to the societal crisis, the implementation of justice and the service mission pillar are of critical importance for participation in the *missio Dei*. The implementation and promotion of this mission pillar at the local church is deemed critical. Healing and reconciliation as the main characteristic of transformation has to be meaningful and creatively relevant to meet the spiritual and moral needs of the people. Thence, the underlying implications of justice and service as *missio Dei*

to the neighbour is to inform and give guidance to local churches' response to societal activities and aspirations.

The intended ecclesiological influence of the MCSA mission through the implementation of the mission pillar of justice and service at local level is to empower and to increase the determination of the poor and marginalised communities of South African; to assert control over their social, economic and spiritual destinies. Given the existing inequalities within South Africa communities and in the MCSA in particular, the influences of the mission pillar's aim is to give structural support to the local church and social organisation to enable the poor and disempowered members to address social needs for transformation. The MCSA's structural support to local churches and social organisation can significantly contribute towards social healing and human empowerment for restoration of human dignity for healing and reconciliation.

Its Connexional structure which is set to govern the church by one annual conference sets the MCSA apart from other denominations such as Presbyterian and Congregational churches which are organised either by a diocesan or congregational lines. In essence the Connexional structure gives maximum flexibility in disposal of personnel and financial resources for service of neighbour. The Connexional structure furthermore is helpful in ensuring uniform policy and practice and ecclesiological identity. Thence the MCSA missional influence is exerted by the Connexional structural design that continues to provide a uniform approach to ecclesiological participation in the *missio Dei*.

In carrying out the mission of God for transformation, it is noticeable that the MCSA in its call to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and reconciliation, in its ministry and practice it resolved to emphasise the importance of every member's ministry which is crucial for *diakonia* for the MCSA to spread scriptural holiness. The resolution to implement and to continue every member ministry at the local church advances the participation in ministry service such as healing, empowerment, development and transformation to continue the process of restoring human dignity.

The MCSA's ecclesiological influence has over the years been recognised by the adopted transformational mechanisms such as 'One and undivided unity statement (1958)', 'the Journey to the new land convocation (1993)', 'Millennium mission campaign (1998)' and the 'Mission congress (2004)'. All these transformational, ecclesiological and missional

endeavours are clear indications and affirmations that Christian mission begins in the heart of God and is therefore God's mission. It is the loving God who calls and empowers the church to participate in his mission of love, service and justice (Bosch 2011:400).

The *diakonia* influence on a missional church is realised by the services it develops to empower and reconcile members to participate in God's world to transform lives, however, it is these services that give the MCSA local churches a distinctive ecclesiological mark of mission. The influence of *diakonia* as applied in the mission pillar of justice and service affirms the faith in the Triune God who is acknowledged as the creator, saviour and giver of life (Bosch 2011:422). The *diakonia* mechanisms are a clear demonstration of a belief that, God calls and commissions the church to celebrate and to proclaim the gospel for healing and transformation through the implementation of the mission pillar. However, it needs to be noted that the emphasis on the MCSA ecclesiological influence on mission must be reflected in the practices and usages of local churches as it transmits the transforming love of God for the world to be healed and reconciled. According to Knight and Powe (2010:86), "spreading the good news means loving God and neighbour and cannot be just afterthoughts. We must practice as individuals and communities what it means to be in a relationship with God and with neighbours. It is only being in a relationship with God that we are transformed and can reflect and report that love to others".

5.2.2. *Missio Dei*: service and justice as *Diakonia* in a context of class system

Watson (2007:2) at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society cites Watson (1985:67) defining the class system as "The basic structure that John Wesley organised consisted of societies, classes, and bands. Wesley instituted this structure because he 'was convinced that only through an accountable fellowship could Christian discipleship be nurtured and made effective'"²

The class system has been at the heart of the MCSA since its early stages. Justice and service in the MCSA is rooted in the class and it is because of the class that the MCSA is able to produce solid, fruit bearing disciples. An accompanying conviction is that the success of the justice and service pillar as mission strategy for serving the neighbour within the MCSA depends largely on the class (Malinga and Richardson 2005:139). From the beginning the class system has proven to be the most effective way of integration and of maintaining communion in the Christian experience. It is in the class system that members get to know

² The class system is a basic structure that John Wesley organised consisting of societies, classes, and bands.

and be known in the church, they are developed into mature members of the church's spiritual formation and transformation.

The MCSA class system as a mission tool for service and justice grew out of a practical necessity, to enforce discipline, a discipline of committing to daily prayers, scripture reading, fasting and doing well. The justice and service mission pillar is a necessary initiative for healing and reconciliation for building transformed relationships. In an attempt to respond to the growing need for human social relationships, the MCSA in its missionary praxis developed a class system as a mechanism to empowering and developing members for mission and to build relationships. The success of this mission pillar is through rediscovering transformational purposes and significance of the class system which is critical for the MCSA's participation in *missio Dei*.

The purpose of a class meeting in the context of this chapter is to demonstrate the ability of the class to integrate new members into a church. It is in the class that members are developed in the following, (1) Class teaches self-understanding. In this regard members can contribute to the well-being of the community; it is in the class that each member is helped to reach self- understanding, which releases them to actively be involved in the ministry of the church. (2) Class contributes significantly to the members' understanding of others as members come from different backgrounds. These differences may cause tensions and non-acceptance. It is in the class that members are helped to understand, love and accept each other. This has a potential to influence the relationships beyond the group. (3) Class helps members to understand faith; this is the main purpose of the class as it teaches members about the faith in Jesus Christ.

The above indications of what the purpose is signify a need to rediscovery of the class system that can influence the transformation of a local church's implementation of the mission pillar of service and justice for caring and healing. It is interesting to note that, since 1995 in the spirit of transformation, there is a re-emphasis on the small group meetings in an effort to grow the MCSA's people's spirituality, not only that but also to participate in the life and ministry of the church.

Worth noting is that the class system approach to healing and reconciliation is reciprocal. With the implementation of the mission pillar, the class system seeks to empower members for empowering others for mission. There is a realisation that being in a class one contributes to the ministry of the church.

The rediscovery or renewal of the class system is important for spiritual growth which leads people to serve others in the name of Christ. The class in a caring environment encourages and promotes corporate worship as a place of healing, where people can receive and give forgiveness and which is an important element of *diakonia* for experiencing mutual encouragement. The class system in the context of the mission pillar is a structure that promotes proclamation of the gospel for social transformation, (mission as evangelism beginning at the personal level), teaching, equipping with mission skills (human empowerment and development), and mission as making disciples (Mgojo and Irvine: 2001:22).

Missio Dei as service and justice promoted within context of a class breaks down barriers and it ignites mission passion to serve others with no exceptions to all within the family of God, which is not white nor black, male nor female, and creates a platform for mutual recognition of each other's dignity. That is why the MCSA's emphasis on the transforming love of God that the class system may provide to individuals within a space of love and affirmation to share and to receive God's transforming love. Significantly to the mission pillar of justice and service the class system is important for transforming the church, people and communities to advance the MCSA's aim of reconciliation and of being one undivided church.

Mission as service to neighbour is transmission whereby all people are welcomed and received in the community; *diakonia* which is service as in and through the class system is making the MCSA to be the resident church among the poor and the marginalised of post-1994 South Africa for building transformed relationships. The class system is a means to spread the Gospel of love and in building genuine relationships for transformation of the community.

The overarching function of the *diakonia* as a means of participation in *missio Dei* is an ideal instrument used to nurture the new converts and to grow mature Christians. The influence of *diakonia* within the MCSA is for effectiveness in building disciplined and accountable congregations. The idea is supported by Storey (2004:24-25); Malinga and Richardson (2005:103)' and Knight and Powe 2010:95, who agree that a class is an effective system for service. Their emphasise that the essential purpose of the class system in the MCSA is to provide an environment in which spiritual growth as well a bonding of fellowship is developed and nurtured. Certainly, the class meeting system enables and influences the MCSA to establish a ministry of witness and service for the whole person as well as the

whole community which empowers individuals to participate in healing and reconciliation ministries.

One of the other transformational indicators of the influence of the class system is the delivery of the good news on personal level, which is often preceded by service to the people in general as a means of building healing relationships. The MCSA yearbooks give evidence of the influence of the class system as a witness that empowers individuals and community in the establishment of institutions including health care centres, primary schools for educating children, as well as inculcating basic skills (MCSA yearbook 2010:59&60; 2013:190&191; 2016:237). When people are empowered they are able to go back into the community to help others, operating as partners with God. This type of service is transformational as it supports positive activities; people are served and ministered to in order to engage in social activities that brings healing and reconciliation. When individuals and communities are empowered for ministry they become mediators and reconcilers, encouraging community engagement in the process.

Creatively the class system serves as a platform for accountability and encouragement for building fellowship and a missional community with an outward expression of an inner spiritual experience in the community. According to Bosch (2011:523), “mission means both that mission is to be understood as an activity that transforms reality and that there is a constant need for mission itself to be transformed”. The healing and transforming effect of a class is that people are invited to tell their stories, to share their experiences of their healing and transformation in the worship and service together and to consider how their healing expresses the greater healing story of God’s mission in the world. The whole class is arranged in a pattern of worship, partly because praise of God is the central act of the church, and partly because worship is the form through which healing occurs in which Christians seek to discern God’s leading to reconciliation. Service and justice mission pillar is deep and significant for healing and reconciliation by God’s grace from the creativity and vitality of members who find their healing in an act of worship.

The imperative of ecclesiological paradigm for participation is the healing and reconciliation mission pillar in the context of *diakonia* which clearly defines healing and reconciliation as the gift of God. Those who receive this gift serve as part of the *missio Dei* and accept God’s gift of forgiveness of sins and are able to share with others their healing, which is the expression of a fellowship community and the community that is in fellowship with God and

neighbour. Service and justice as *missio Dei* lead members in the class to an encounter with the world through social interaction. The class is critical to the MCSA's transformational model of mission which is expressed through spirituality of healing, fellowship and social engagements which intended to impact and transform the society (Malinga & Richardson 2005:104).

The critical influence of justice and service- *diakonia* as a means of participation in *missio Dei* is advocating for service and witnessing to the entire community as the mission of God which culminates into building fellowship with others beyond the walls. Bosch (2011:524) offers the following understanding to, "mission is a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting..."

Clearly the missional paradigm of healing and reconciliation has an influence on the ecclesiological structure of the class system; this gives some idea of the nature and the quality of such a multidimensional mission. The MCSA mission is evidence of a multidimensional experience of participation in *missio Dei*, especially when people are encouraged and empowered to go forth to share the good news of the saving grace of God and inviting others (disciples) into a fellowship with Christ that unites all people (discipleship).

The transforming effect of the *diakonia* is deepening spirituality and breaking down of barriers. The breaking down of barriers has both *diakonia* and *koinonia* elements that happens through the class system which influences every member's participation in the *missio Dei*. The effect of the cross of Christ is at the centre for breaking down any dividing barriers that exist within the church. To carry out God's mission of healing and reconciliation within the MCSA, the class system functions as *diakonia* aimed at equipping members for participation in the mission of reconciliation for transforming the community. Spirituality, fellowship and social engagement are indicators of the MCSA's participation in God's mission. (Knight and Powe 2010:21)

In the case and context of *missio Dei* as healing and reconciliation classes through witness and service are strategic for transformation, in other words *missio Dei* calls all people to engage in good works that bring encouragement, warmth, love and empowerment to all people. However, in this regard it would be a mistake to think of ecclesiological influence and fellowship as only applicable in the class system. In the MCSA's witness and service

participation in *missio Dei*, it is also influenced by other formations within the MCSA that serve as places of witness and service.

In an act of service the formations like the Women's Auxiliary, Wesley Guild, Young Men's Guild, Local Preacher Association and others are the organs of the church to provide a place and space for ecclesiological healing that influences transformation of the community. The ecclesiological influence of these organs is multidimensional in spirituality; fellowship and social engagement through nurtured relations.

Healing and transformation as characteristics of participation in *missio Dei*, in the class system and other of the MCSA formations as mentioned above are organised in such a way that they encourage the three dimensional relationship that is spirituality, fellowship and social engagement. They are essential to witnessing to God's mission through service (outreach), they provide caring, clothing, and shelter and resources are shared. According to Knight and Powe (2010:86), "Spreading the good news means loving God and neighbour..." In serving and witnessing to the neighbour, the concept of participation in *missio Dei* is being advanced when the church is one with Christ in partnership. In this regard the researcher asserts that the class system should be empowering rather than disabling and should always be linked to mission, ensuring healing and reconciliation is attained at levels of the MCSA's witness and service.

Healing and reconciliation in service and witness goes together with proclamation of good news, service and justice is influential in administering healing to the people and for the establishment of reconciled communities. If the *diakonia* is implemented in the correct way, service and witness will constitute a programme of restoration, of reconciliation and healing culminating in the service of neighbour. In the MCSA ecclesiology healing and proclamation is the essence of participation in *missio Dei*; the proclamation of the gospel is a recognition that all people are created in the image of God and have been redeemed by Christ. Reconciliation does not, of course, mean a mere sentimental harmonising of conflicting groups (Bosch 2011:526).

Furthermore, it can therefore be concluded, *diakonia* actualises God's transforming love in its everyday life and in which justice and righteousness are made present and operative. (Bosch 2011:529). The church exists only as an organic and integral part of the community helping or empowering people to recognise their spiritual gifts. Even its worship, its celebration of

the Eucharist, does not fall outside this missionary of all the activities (Bosch 2011:529), for example, the gift of hospitality, of ministering to the poor and the needy. Accordingly the MCSA class system is a classless society which forms a community that is called and committed to the values of God's reign. The class system is an announcement of a new order where people meet as people and they are recognised for whom they are, and not for their social status (Malinga and Richardson 2005:143).

In the MCSA this system proves to have the ability to see a situation from another point of view that allows people to be moved into action. In this approach to mission there is coordination rather than subordination. It is service and witness motivated by the love of God that knows and appreciates the other person. The operations deploy communicative symbols that provide social, psychological and spiritual healings that promote self-expression. Here the rich and the poor, educated and the illiterate, the employer and the employee meet as peers and equals (Malinga and Richardson 2005:143). It is unfortunate that sometimes people are often left to reach desperation levels before they are helped.

5.2.3. *Missio Dei* as *diakonia* for reconciliation

Mission (*missio Dei*) requires the church to be one in Christ (united) in spite of differences because divisions and conflicts hinder mission. According to Storey (2004:80), "it would be good if the MCSA could point to being the cutting edge of integration, and there are congregations who made remarkable progress in becoming truly inclusive in fellowship, liturgy and practice". Storey advocates for mission as service and witness for building missional communities for healing and reconciliation. Storey further asserts that, the MCSA can become the place of healing and reconciliation for its members and community at large without sinking into a superficial faith community. However, the researcher maintains that if *missio Dei* is to be realised as service and witness for healing and transformation, three objectives must constantly be engaged namely openness to all, openness to dialogue and a community spirit (Storey 2004:80).

If the MCSA as a church seeks to be open to all people she needs to guard against tendencies of exclusions in witness and service to the community. Storey (2004:80), citing the former Executive Secretaries of the MCSA conference saying, "Our (MCSA) failure to embrace diversity has robbed us of the gospel opportunity to experience the length and breadth and height and depth of Christian grace." This suggests that service and witness cannot be a Christian witness to *missio Dei* if it exclude or eliminate others from participation in the

mission of God. Service and witness by implication enforce the concept of communal responsibility and accountability, meaning that, the church is a place of healing and reconciliation, the church as a place of healing should not despise the people of God based on racial differences or cultural diversity.

Missio Dei as service and witness gives expression to the idea that God's grace is not limited to those who are part of a certain race or gender within a certain church or denomination, God's grace cannot be institutionalised. The church is a witness of a reality wider than itself namely the kingdom of God (Bosch 2011). Significantly, the church has a duty to perform which is to call people to repentance which is a missional calling to proclaim the gospel of Christ for healing and reconciliation. It has to be at the level of the local church that this witness is made. According to Storey (2004:81), the strength of every local congregation is linked to the wider life of the circuit. However, a troubling sign is the way some integrated circuits have down-graded the Quarterly meeting instead of using it as an opportunity to build interracial bridges, and how bodies that should be exploring unity, such as circuit local preachers meetings, are still manipulated into segregated practice (Storey 2004:81).

Service and witness as participation in the *missio Dei* is the basic condition for healing characterised by openness to reconciliation. However, service and witness initiatives have met much institutional resistance because for too many the MCSA structural means had become ends in themselves. Nevertheless the integrated circuits were planned with a view to have remarkable ecclesiological influence. Service and justice in this regard is a process providing the MCSA with the new missional programme needed for post-1994 South Africa. The MCSA's imperative for mission still lies at the heart of the MCSA's commitment to four mission pillars to healing and reconciliation for a Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations' vision.

The above observations pose a challenge to the well-being of the society in general, thence it is important to ask this question, how best can the MCSA initiatives and four mission pillars assist the MCSA to respond to God's call to proclaim the gospel of healing and reconciliation post-1994 South Africa? Bentley (2014b:8) asserts that, "Methodism (MCSA) in South Africa adds a renewed perspective to ecclesiology. By committing itself to the Journey to the New Land project and the Mission Charter..." This chapter engages various forms of mission in order to arrive to the intended objective.

5.2.4. *Missio Dei* as *diakonia* for healing and transformation

Diakonia as healing and transformation is critical to the MCSA's ecclesiological paradigm as it seeks to explore and articulate the influence and implication for participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA. The *missio Dei* as *diakonia* or caring is interrelated to *koinonia*. From an African perspective *botho* is a critical element of transformation in South Africa, especially when it is expressed in *kerygma* preaching, proclamation and witnessing. According to Scholtz (2012:131), "the Methodist (MCSA) needs to regain that balance of realising the power of the Risen Christ into the hearts of individual men and women and reforming the nations and the world". Scholtz contends that, the best place to begin the work is in the local church.

However for Bosch (2011) it is the Triune God who is the origin of mission and mission is the mode of existence of God. Christian mission is derived from God's mission. Christian mission find expression in the local church. Thence the MCSA maintains that it was raised by God to spread scriptural holiness for restoration of human dignity. This suggests that the church is only a channel of realisation of *missio Dei* leading to healing and the reconciliation of the community for participating in the building of the kingdom of God.

According to Scholtz (2012:131), "The four imperatives (pillars) of mission—evangelism and church growth; spirituality; justice and service; human and economic development and empowerment, and the vision of a Christ – healed Africa for the healing of nations, offer a clear direction for the church."

The key to understanding the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei* lies in the implementation of missional *diakonia* approach for healing and reconciliation. However, the impact of this missional approach seemingly is often misunderstood or ignored in local churches, there is clear evidence that the mission pillar of service and justice has somehow been institutionalised and has become reporting criteria. Justice and service is treated as a programme of doing mission not as an essential and integral part of mission. The underlying purpose, assumptions and spirit of the justice and service mission pillar is about transforming mission work within the MCSA. However, if *diakonia* is rightly understood and applied in all the MCSA missional work, the true spirit and effectiveness of the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei* will emerge in the lives of the MCSA's societies and circuits as well as individuals.

In this regard it is learnt that, four mission pillars are the lenses which the MCSA uses to receive, view, absorb, interpret and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and reconciliation. Each pillar if carefully considered gives the MCSA's local churches guidance to interpret its traditions, doctrinal emphasis and ecclesiological strength for mission.

Thence the MCSA Mission Unit (MU) emphasises the importance of implementing the four mission pillars at local church level. The MCSA 2017 conference mandated the MU to facilitate, coordinate and support mission efforts around the MCSA Connexion. MU shares this understanding that; mission belongs to God—*missio Dei*. Because of the conviction that mission belongs to God, MU director asserts that there is evidence that more people called Methodist continue to grow in understanding that mission is of God (MCSA yearbook 2017:179).

The MCSA Mission Unit provides a fine example of the blend of compassion with the demand of structural transformation. In addition to many projects to help and care for the victims of injustice, dislocation and natural disaster, the Mission Unit (MU) regularly urged the conference to protest at the highest level

Signifying the implication for participation in the *missio Dei*, the main focus of the *diakonia* is to provide confirmation, strengthening and encouragement to the local churches to experience God's transforming grace. God's transforming grace which can be experienced in ministry, through the formation of missional committees of small groups of few people bound together by the shared desire to be spiritually and morally transformed by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The small group's task is to facilitate the formulation and the implementation of the vision and the mission statement for local churches' of the four mission pillars.

Strategically the MCSA took a resolution to move local churches forward, "To take intentional and sustained action to implement these imperatives (pillars) in such areas as: the healing ministry, deepening our understanding of African and other spiritualities; co-ordinated programmes of Christian education...; becoming a church in solidarity with the poor..." (MCSA mission charter 2004:1). This is a demonstration of the power of prophetic presence of the church in the realities of human life. Clearly the prophetic presence is crucial for the church's witness and the healing and transformation of South African communities. That presence should be nurtured, advanced and financed (Scholtz 2012:114).

Thence, Bishop Siwa in the opening address to 2015 conference says: “The call for the MCSA as a transforming discipleship movement is that, the MCSA should be the followers of Jesus in a way that visibly reflects our (the MCSA) identity as the agents of genuine forgiveness, restoration and healing, touching the world with Scriptural holiness” (MCSA yearbook 2016:8). Bishop Siwa’s call to the MCSA in essence, implies that sharing the love of God for restoration of human dignity, means the MCSA should continuously be practicing faith sharing ministries through outreach programmes. Knight and Powe (2006:77) assert that, “our sharing and inviting others to experience good news that God loves us and invites us into a transforming relationship through which we are forgiven, receive new life, and are restored to the image of God, which is love”.

Inter alia to the above, the underlying implication for participation in the *missio Dei* is what Forster (2008:1) refers to as “social holiness”. However, in order to fully implement the four mission pillars and to move the MCSA to be a missional church, it is important that, the MCSA leadership, especially the bishops and clergy must guard against the temptation of status and power, “but to exercise their authority in the spirit of servant leadership and in the interests of mission” for healing and reconciliation (Malinga and Richardson 2005:67). However, other than being socially relevant the MCSA should also preach and proclaim the new life with God which is firmly based on the truths of scripture.

The *diakonia* is a vital approach to the life-renewing encounter of broken and desperate people with the gracious and loving God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. Healing is through Christ who bears the marks of the people’s pain in his own body on the Cross (Malinga & Richardson 2005:62). However, the assumptions underlying the *diakonia* are that it is vital in understanding the spirit of the vision and the mission statement of the MCSA of “A Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations”. One of the prophetic tasks of the MCSA is that of mission pillars probably to know their value and apply them to every facet of community, socio-economic and national level. This task can be undertaken both at Connexional and local level. Added to this task is to move the local churches to be centres of education and Christian formation, human and economic development for empowerment, justice and service actions, and evangelism. Pre-eminent transformation comes through preaching the gospel of saving grace, “inclusivity and justice” (Scholtz 2012:118).

It is a significant statement which subliminally appreciates the protective environment created by the church, but it obviously pledges its mission to the call of God. Although the

manifesting of this mission will impact on local communities, its horizons are wider: ‘A Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations.’ Another pivotal aspect of the Church’s mission is that it is not purely focused on evangelising, but that it clearly stipulates that the role of the church is to act in communities in the name of Jesus, inspiring social change which brings dignity, healing and transformation (Bentley 2013:266, 2014a:5 ; Kumalo 2006:251).

Bentley (2014a:3) further asserts that, the MCSA pillars stem from one pillar which is authentic spirituality and from which grows the branches of mission. The impact of the church on the world does not depend on the financial resources and human strength but on God who can make all things new. The focus is on hope of a healed and transformed society.

Coincidentally the mission statement poses a challenge for the local church because there is evidence that many of the MCSA congregations have not yet fully engaged with the implications of healing and transformation in their communities. However, in essence the MCSA theology of mission demonstrates that the church is a community of love called by God into existence to reflect God’s revealed grace for the transformation of the world which God loves dearly. It is through the baptism that individuals are reconciled to God and enter into this community of love to be shaped and formed as servants of God’s mission in the world. A community that is called to invite people to healing and reconciliation, a community that needs to rediscover what it means to be inviting in practical ways by showing love, mercy and to work towards justice and transformation.

However, the post-1994 South African political, socio-economic and demographic landscape is rapidly changing. There are different reasons for the shift, some are the harsh conditions created by conflicts and economic realities. In spite of that the MCSA seeks to be a transforming and healing church with a diversity of approaches and gifts which God can use to heal South Africa from the ill-being of corruption, inequality and lack of quality service delivery.

5.2.5. *Missio Dei* as *diakonia* caring for neighbours

There is a startling difference between viewing the MCSA’s history of mission through a paradigm of healing and reconciliation and experiencing an emerging mission of transformation. The MCSA is encompassing many missional initiatives and or ways for becoming a healing community. It is these initiatives of healing that have brought the MCSA’s reconciliation and transformation mission to this point that runs deep through its

history of mission. The study has demonstrated that the MCSA has always been by nature a church that is bursting with social involvement for mission.

The MCSA in its mission of healing and reconciliation as participation in the *missio Dei* touches people of different cultural backgrounds, economic and social locations. *Diakonia* as a paradigm for participation in the *missio Dei* creates a new form of the MCSA's involvement in mission which is far more suited to understanding emerging contours of the MCSA of the future. Contours that a paradigm of healing and reconciliation filters as significant for post-1994 South African community.

There is evidence that, the MCSA has a long history of passionate concern for the poor, marginalised and vulnerable people. According to Scholtz (2012:126), "Such a community stands in strong contrast to large parts of society where persons each look after their own interest and do not care about anyone." As participation in the *missio Dei* the MCSA in its justice and service pillar works towards caring for the neighbour for building an inclusive and committed ministry of caring to be a compassionate community in the world.

Luke 10:25-37 demonstrates how caring in justice and service as *missio Dei* is expressed. It can be learnt from Luke's text that the act of caring for the neighbour is an act that has no reference to race, colour, or class distinction. Luke's text is an indication that, a neighbour is everyone who needs our help. The act of service in Luke's text to the neighbour means to cross the borders of class, race and gender divides.

However, in this regard the question is how can people be helped or assisted by the MCSA's justice and service pillar to experience the church as a caring community? The following paragraphs will attempt to answer this question, by pointing to the MCSA's social involvement as participation in the *missio Dei*.

In the light of the above question it is recognised and acknowledged that many of the MCSA's local churches may suffer from some of the same dysfunctions as society. However, the difference is how the MCSA understands God's call for her in her brokenness. Jesus in Matthew 25 coupled with MCSA rule of life to do good, partly gives us the image of a caring church and a clue for the type of service that is required for the fulfilment of mission by the MCSA. Matthew 25 gives a view of the church that serves the purpose of God by feeding the hungry and the thirsty finding satisfaction and the naked are clothed. Such a church in Bosch's (2011:478) view becomes the "prophetic sign and the foretaste of the unity and

renewal of the human family as envisioned in God's promised reign" for God's dream of healing the nations. Matthew 25 calls for a contrast society. The MCSA's significance in carrying out the mandate of caring or *diakonia* is that, gradually caring programmes or ministries became institutionalised in schools, hospitals and in many other services such as old age homes and children's homes.

Significantly, the challenges of post-1994 South Africa to the MCSA's witness continue to be the marginalised of the poor and vulnerable people, which is a pressing need for caring. A significant challenge to justice and service mission pillar as *missio Dei* in the South African system of migrant labour contributes greatly to the loss of family and community cohesion. Driven by the economic necessity many people from rural areas have moved to cities; this movement has the same effect. Another factor that contributes to the loss of family relationships is technology which also plays a part in the loss of personal and communal relations and erosion of a caring and compassionate community (Scholtz 2012:126). This contention makes the justice and service pillar critical to the witness of the church for healing and reconciliation, when the MCSA cares to develop people to be Disciples of Christ. Justice is a divine gift and its importance in mission should not be discredited, whilst service draws people into a sense of belonging both to God and one another.

Justice and service as a mission pillar is not primarily about charity, though it does not exclude it. It seeks to facilitate mission as caring. It is also about joining hands with all including the poor and the vulnerable in working for justice and eradication of all those things that rob God's people of dignity. The justice and service mission pillar as caring for our neighbour is lifting up the downtrodden. A caring ministering in the immediate context means local churches should be attentive to reflect social demographics of the area, inclusive of the poor, wealthy, strangers and the wounded joining together in seeing each other as human beings made in the image of God.

In carrying out mission as caring and service to the neighbour note is taken of Pendlebury and Enslin's (2004:37) assertion that, "Marginalisation occurs when a whole category of people is excluded from meaningful participation in social life and is thus potentially vulnerable to deprivation and even extermination. Marginal groups include old people, single mothers and their children, people with disabilities, and the rural poor". It is in this regard that the MCSA needs to repurpose its ministry of caring for healing and reconciliation.

It is in the context of mission as *diakonia* that the MCSA ministry of healing and reconciliation if located in a service to the community can contribute to healing of the affected and infected. Bentley (2014a:7) says, the MCSA has adopted this vision and with its proximity to the poor and its agency through the empowered clergy will for the foreseeable future not only bring about social change in the Name of Jesus, but fulfil its constitutional role in participating in the building of society for the well-being of all. *Missio Dei* as justice and service, Breedt and Niemandt (2013:3) say it is when, “The church engages in Kingdom acts through relationships, such as reconciliation, healing, caring and ministering to the needy and in doing so participate in God’s redemption and restoration”.

One of the observations is that, many South African communities are wrought with gender-based violence, rape, alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDs stigma and drug abuse, which are some of the key drivers to the injustices of the society. The researcher asserts that if these injustices as indicated are not properly addressed they will continue to create a deep sense of marginalisation, vulnerability and exclusion of the affected parties. Being aware of the need for healing and reconciliation for those affected. Justice and service is a sacramental gift of God to the church. Scholtz (2012:128) says, “Just as the bread and wine of Holy Communion are visible and tangible elements of the invisible grace-filled presence of Christ who gave himself for the world, so the church (in places of injustices) is a visible tangible reality of the invisible presence and action of God...”

The justice and service pillar if understood as a sacramental moment moves the church to the place of self-emptying for healing and reconciliation as a significant contribution of this pillar is providing support to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS through Christian education programmes and with partnering NGOs.

Therefore, a process towards attaining the MCSA’s call for a continued healing and transformation is a quest which local churches should engage in. This includes the local community’s participation in the mission of healing and reconciliation, through forming caring ministries. Bentley (2011:2) argues, “the Methodist movement addressed matters such as education, medical care, conditions in prisons, alcoholism, labour conditions and so forth” (Bentley 2010:556; Gooch 2006:79).

The researcher asserts a *diakonia* approach is ideal for building broken relationships, when the church is involved in the act of rebuilding relationships by forming restored communities. The process of rebuilding can be facilitated by appointing church stewards. The church is

empowered by the Holy Spirit to be stewards of creation and the environment, and also to move from being passive actors to be actively involved in rebuilding relationships.

According to Pilch (1995: 323), “What is required is a restoration of order by placing the threat in its proper framework, by controlling the disruptive effect on the sick person and that person's network, and by making the entire experience personally and socially meaningful”. It is noticeable that, especially when we reflect on scriptures, creation history is actually salvation history.

Foster clearly indicates that the MCSA’s mission is *diakonial* inclined, through:

- The establishment of homes for orphans and senior citizens.
- The development and publication of Christian literature” (Forster 2008:5)

The adopted missional position gives the MCSA a distinctive ecclesiological response to the ministry of healing and reconciliation. As such the MCSA becomes a place where God’s healing love is experienced and God’s promise of fullness of life is made freely available through ministry of caring.

In the Mission Charter, the MCSA places itself in solidarity with the poor. The Church has a responsibility to speak from this position with integrity. For this reason, the MCSA is heeding its own call by making deliberate decisions as to where conferences, conventions and other Church events are to be hosted (Bentley 2014a:6).

The MCSA’s ecclesiological relevance is determined by the extent to which the MCSA responds to human challenges. The MCSA Mission Unit as entrust unit for planning should educate, resource and provide capacity for local churches to contribute meaningfully to mission. Bentley (2014a:3) maintains that, “For Christians, and especially Methodists, the gospel it proclaims is a social gospel. It is foundational in the expression of one’s faith that there is an interaction between one’s love and commitment to God and one’s love for your neighbour” .

As a result of the missional position the MCSA took in 1994 of healing and reconciliation and the four mission pillars as strategies for mission, McPhee (2009:9) says: “Nothing it (local church) does will be self-serving. It will fully participate in God's mission in the world, not out of obligation but by nature.” Because of the justice and service pillar and the adopted

missional position of healing and reconciliation, it is incumbent for the MCSA to assign the diaconal order to co-ordinate the ministry of caring, especially involving different church organisations for outreach ministries.

However, organisations such as Women Auxiliary, Women Manyano and Bible Women form one order of ministry which might have a greater impact on the lives of people. The impact of the caring mission of the MCSA is compromised by un-co-ordinated programmes which suggest that, the ministry of caring for healing and reconciliation should be a local church's priority. Justice and service as participation in *missio Dei* within the MCSA context is expressed by works of mercy for restoring human dignity through shelter, medical care, food parcels, gardening projects, support for families affected by HIV/AIDS and the protection of the children against abuse and other forms of social and material support to the needy and marginalised (MCSA yearbook 2009:182-189). However, in order for the MCSA to sustain the caring ministry more funding is needed to proclaim the gospel of healing and transformation. It is noted that, the availability of financial resources to sustain mission projects remains a major challenge not only for the MCSA mission unit but for the whole church. Despite financial constrained experiences by the MCSA, some local churches boast mission projects that are a pride to the entire church. McPhee (2009:9) argues that,

“Because the church is the fruit of God's emerging kingdom, the church will be missional. Because the Spirit of Christ indwells it, the church will spontaneously carry on with the errand on which Christ came. In loving acts and faithful witness it will boldly herald God's new reality.”

Justice and service requires a prophetic stance as is recorded in the MCSA yearbook 2012 that, “the plight of the poor, the demons of racism, discrimination and sexism, the struggle of the landless, and the curse of corruption all this demands that we strengthen our commitment to join faithful, fruitful and prophetic ministry” (Yearbook 2012:101).

In Wesleyan spirituality the love for one's neighbour is an extension of one's love and worship of God and thus places the MCSA movement in a prime position to facilitate social change for healing and reconciliation (Bentley 2014a:8).

5.3. *Missio Dei* as *Koinonia* for formation of faith community: Human empowerment and economic development

The ecclesiological paradigm of healing and reconciliation and the implication for participation in *missio Dei* for the MCSA is the capacity of the mission pillars to promote

healing, reconciliation and transformation missions. It is contended that ecclesologically the impact of the MCSA's mission pillars to the heal communities, to transform individuals' moral conduct and to work towards reconciling in the post-1994 South African communities is transformational. The mission pillars in the process of healing and reconciliation bring forth the reality of God as initiator of mission and the church as participator in the mission of God with all that exists and finally with human beings. The MCSA's mission pillars as missionary strategies reignite the church's passion for healing and in the process extend invitation communities to contribution towards the building of a healed and transformed post-1994 South Africa. The mission pillars ignite the passion for mission to break down barriers, particularly in multi-racial contexts, which is an essential part of providing individuals and communities the opportunity to participate with God in the work of restoration of human dignity.

The mission pillars are critical instruments in creating caring ministries and they are important in forming teams that work towards the renewal and transformation of both creation and society. Clearly the MCSA's mission pillars as missionary strategies have been captivated by the profound significance of the call to proclaim the gospel of Jesus for healing and transformation as stated in the mission statement of the MCSA. The *missio Dei* as healing and reconciliation in the mission pillars is articulating the social involvement of the church. The MCSA through its vision and mission statements invites the community to healing and transformation, seeks to invite all members in the community to participate with God in healing and reconciliation with a deeper awareness that God called the MCSA to proclaim the gospel of healing and reconciliation. However, the MCSA needs to ensure that her ministers and laity know and believe these declarations passionately, and that they practise them in their work places and homes for healing and reconciliation. Thence the MCSA, through her mission pillars, responded to the calling to proclaim healing and reconciliation creating a safe environment where people encounter a living God. This enables them to participate in Christ's mission of healing and reconciliation in their communities Thence the distinctive marks of the MCSA are the class meeting, love feast, and the covenant service are based upon the assumption that those who love the Lord Jesus [within MCSA] community and seek to do his will shall become helpers of one another (MCSA book of order 2014:25).

This Mission pillar ecclesologically provides a context of understanding mission as *koinonia* for formation of healing and reconciliation as transformation necessity in post-1994 South

Africa. Knoetze (2014) elaborated on this in his article *Transforming a fragmented South African society through a spirituality of koinonia coram Deo*. Mission pillars as *missio Dei* is critical in articulating the theological significance of *koinonia* with God for personal and communal healing and reconciliation. A missional church is a community that is called to live out mission of healing in practical ways the love, mercy and justice in *koinonia* with God and each other for transformation of the land. The MCSA's ecclesiological institutions of class meetings, the love feast and covenant service seek to provide a framework for the mission pillars for healing and reconciliation of society. The mission pillars as applied in the scriptures provide the foundation for understanding that the nature and the shape the faith community is participating in *missio Dei*. In accordance with scriptures the mission pillars' influence is a church that builds on Jesus' model of an inclusive and affirming community. What makes this pillar of justice and service significant to healing and reconciliation is a call of preferential option for the poor, and the call to minister to the oppressed and marginalised people of the society. Thence, over a period of time the MCSA has been emphatic on Luke 4:18-19 with particular reference to its theological articulations which form and inform the basis of human empowerment and the economic development pillar among the poor and the marginalised. The message of Luke 4 is one of comfort and consolation for those who have suffered. This call defines the MCSA as a church community committed to political, economic and social justice (Scholtz 2012:132).

The economic empowerment and human development pillar intends to shape the preaching and to determine the missional priority for the MCSA. Bentley (2014a:3) asserts that, Methodism (MCSA) in South Africa has made the following theological contributions. Regarding soteriology the notion of salvation is not to be understood in exclusively spiritual terms. Social upliftment and the empowering of communities through education and other forms of social service express an understanding of a physical form of salvation which is directly connected to the church's call to work towards the spiritual renewal of society.

The economic empowerment and human development pillar is a critique of the society where the income gap between the rich and the poor is huge, working for a healing and reconciliation in the society for the liberation of the oppressed and the poor is a true calling of Christian mission. The material poverty has lasting effect for generations to come. Current poverty levels are a direct result of the economic disadvantages of the past which were imposed on the majority of South Africans by the past regime's policies (Scholtz 2012:132).

He contends that, they made for a toxic mix of deprivation, from which our society still struggles to recover.

As participation in *missio Dei*, the human and economic mission pillar offers a radical approach to the ministry of transformation. Through the establishment of this mission pillar the MCSA seeks to offer or provide life's basic essentials to the poorest of the poor. Establishing working networks is a powerful tool for healing and reconciliation, significantly to economic empowerment and self- development as a transformative result.

Forster (2008:432) draws this implication saying, "After the peaceful democratic elections of April 1994 the function and responsibility of the Church had to change from that of a prophetic activism against apartheid, to a role of the reconstruction and development of society. This led to the dawning of a new era, and expression, of social holiness in Southern African Methodism (MCSA)". Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa the church has been challenged by corruption in high places which is out of control. Such corruption must be regarded as an instrument of oppression of the poor. If corruption is not having crippling effects such as nepotism and incompetence in service delivery there are other instruments that are regarded as other forms of oppression. There is a need for empowerment and economic development that is matched to the healing and reconciliation. A task of the church in this regard as participating in *missio Dei* is to witness against corruption and nepotism.

The formation of mission caring and development ministries is a sign that the church is a place of healing and as such it continues to offer empowerment to the community. The MCSA represents the body of Christ, which seeks to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation. Forming projects for carrying out the ministry of healing and reconciliation within the MCSA will enable the church to fully live the mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation. Worth noting is Bentley's (2014a: 8) argument that, "it (the church) occupies a prophetic position to speak and act against the powers (even if it stems from the State) which rob people of dignity and life". As an alternative to histories like these, the people of God have a great gift to offer—the message of reconciliation. "In Christ God was reconciling (transforming) the world to himself... and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us (the church)" (2Corinthians 5:18).

When the church engages in economic empowerment and economic development as participation in the *missio Dei* it can be involved in poverty alleviation as mission. McPhee (2009:9) alludes to that,

“The missional church proclaims the incarnate, crucified, resurrected, ascended Christ who, present in the Spirit, is continuing God's mission of establishing the kingdom. And what it preaches it also confirms in ministries of love to its own members and everyone else—even enemies. In priestly service, prophetic speaking and actions, and advocacy for peace and justice, the church models the meaning of kingdom citizenship.”

Regarding human empowerment and economic development as *missio Dei*, Bentley (2014a:6-7) asserts that,

“In recent years it has been extremely encouraging to see how the MCSA is once again involved in community building projects. Schools are being built, often because government bureaucracy is delaying delivery of education services to communities. Moreover, clinics are being built, literacy courses are being offered, and Methodist health care professionals are offering their services as part of their tithes to provide consultations to those who cannot afford these services. Methodists in the legal sector are offering legal advice for free, prisons have become places of outreach for local church communities, counselling centres are being established, and community food gardens are being started.”

Viewing *missio Dei* as empowerment, the MCSA's ecclesiological mandate for participation in the mission of God as response to a vision of “A Christ healed Africa for the healing of nations”, is critical to the HIV/AIDS ministry which has emerged out of humble efforts made by the MCSA members around the Connexion. This was clearly indicated in the 2009 MCSA mission unit report to the conference, “irrespective of the increased involvement of religious institutions, NGOs, FBOs, civil society and governments of the countries of the connexion, infection rate continues to grow at alarming rate”.

It is this growing number of new infections that makes human empowerment instrumental for the MCSA's caring ministry. It is in such ministries that the MCSA's missional call of healing and transformation finds relevance. That is why the MCSA should use such

ministries to continue to participate in the mission of *diakonia*. In support of the empowerment and development pillars McPhee (2009:10) states that,

“When we make the *missio Dei* our priority and ‘seek first the kingdom’, we must deal with a host of such issues. Collaterally, in the light of the Scriptures, we are obliged to appraise the reasons for many of our practices. As we do, we are confronted with the inevitability of transformation in ourselves, our churches, and our church institutions.”

Hence the local church in this instance cannot stand alone in facing this huge national challenge. It is here that the church as a community becomes an important player in the transformation of lives. Thence the practical efforts in the MCSA ministry of healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa continue to demonstrate that MCSA’s approach to mission is for transforming lives. Whilst healing and reconciliation is best administered in the daily life experiences of the people it is in the midst of life experiences that the missional mandate of caring is delivered and lived out and people’s lives are changed.

Inter alia to the above Bentley (2014a:7) says,

“Hopefully by the Church empowering local communities to affect change, it will lead to greater ownership of the freedoms of democracy by society. By this I mean that the thinking that government alone is responsible for delivering services will change into society becoming proactive in bringing about change through service and development. Wesley was convinced that the Church should be an agent of transformation and justice.”

It is then that the MCSA needs the economic empowerment and human development pillar for healing and reconciliation ecclesiology that will be a reminder of the church’s role in the mission of God. Such an ecclesiology will be a reminder that the church is called to be a servant of God’s mission. The challenge for the MCSA post-1994 South Africa is to be better informed about its own ecclesiological position in healing and reconciliation. Ecclesiological influence rather is to be seen and understood as a missional church that participates in the *missio Dei* by providing service to God and the community. Many of the MCSA’s local churches have implemented programmes to assist with transportation, nutrition, education, visitations and in many other areas where caring is needed.

Economic empowerment and human development as *missio Dei* must address social issues,

“Although one hails the advances in social redress and acknowledges that South Africa is still an economic powerhouse on the African continent, there is concern for the long-term well-being of the country. In the past decade, South Africa has seen an increase in the economic disparities between the rich and the poor” (Bentley 2014a:1).

This pillar is the MCSA’s insistence that the well-being of humankind depends on thriving human empowerment to develop transformative relationships. It is the member’s responsibility to bring about a new social paradigm and set of values in order to bring about the change needed for just and thriving communities. Empowerment is one of Christianity’s strongest contributions to healing and reconciliation, and the Church has potential to be a powerful voice for human development. It is, however, a noticeable fact that almost everywhere in South Africa there are a lot of developments going, and human settlement going on in hazard prone areas, especially in the informal settlement areas that affect human health and high levels of pollution and dumping sites are growing. The fundamental principle of the church’s participation in *missio Dei* is understanding empowerment as *missio Dei*, which Bentley (2014a: 3) suggests that, “the primary locus of the Church’s conviction to render social service, however, is rooted in its belief that there exists no other way to be a follower of Christ but to act in love within society”.

The above point resonates with the MCSA’s vision which is directly linked to the mission, whilst Bentley complements this view, “the Church’s mission is that it is not purely focused on evangelising, but that it clearly stipulates that the role of the church is to act in communities in the Name of Jesus, inspiring social change which brings dignity, healing and transformation” (Bentley 2014a:5. The implication is that the MCSA can be viewed to be a place where God’s healing love can be experienced and God’s promise of fullness of life is made freely available through service and caring ministries. However, the MCSA like any other Christian denomination is potentially located in widely differing and diverse socio-economic situations; from the high dense urban metropolitan societies to rural isolated traditional communities. Empowerment as participation in *missio Dei* gives recognition to the different realities of a country like South Africa post-1994. In areas affected by crisis many MCSA local churches respond without hesitation by offering shelter, food, spiritual and emotional support to the victims. Seeing the mission as a service for healing of neighbour offers the MCSA opportunity to become a prophetic sign of the kingdom of God in making tangible the care and love of Christ in its proclamation, service, worship and liturgy.

Bentley (2014b:7) argues that agency, influence and integration must always be intentional. Part of this intentionality is for the Church to clearly demonstrate the integration and wholeness it would like to see exist in the world. It would be one thing for instance for the Church to proclaim racial integration in society, but if it does not lead by example this prophetic voice is muted. This particular example leads to the break of credibility in many Christian denominations in South Africa that despite promoting the notion of racial integration, are structurally divided along racial lines. Although the MCSA has some way to go in achieving true racial integration in its worship and service, the MCSA Conference of 1958 declared the MCSA as 'one and undivided'. It was this ecclesiological unity that has helped the denomination to build bridges between people of diverse beliefs and cultures; it also informs its current position on same-sex relationships (MCSA yearbook 2008:81).

However, it is Bentley (2014a:7) who suggests that,

“Social upliftment and the empowering of communities through education and other forms of social service express an understanding of a physical form of salvation which is directly connected to the Church’s call to work towards the spiritual renewal of society.”

Forster (2008:18) maintains that, “... (The MCSA) expresses the truth that God still has a mission and a plan for the Methodist Church here in South Africa, and throughout the world. We were raised up by God for Christian perfection, and clearly the world is not yet perfect, so we still have a role to play”. In spite of challenges such as poor service delivery by government, violence against women and children and poverty, the MCSA continues to open the doors for all people to participate in *missio Dei* by being the caring hands of God.

The MCSA by ministering to the poor and the vulnerable in the different communities through acts of caring becomes the empowering hands of God. Thirdly, the MCSA enters into the suffering communities participating in God’s mission to administer healing. Lastly, by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation, the MCSA is the vehicle God uses to transport and carry the good news of healing and reconciliation to the broken community, the saving gospel of Jesus Christ who becomes visible to the world through caring ministries to the vulnerable and the marginalised.

5.3.1. *Missio Dei* as *Koinonia* for transforming community

This researcher asserts from Forster's (2008:17) argument earlier that, the MCSA's early work was inclined to bring about holistic transformation still continues to influence the MCSA's mission of restoration of human dignity through caring and service. Understanding that mission is through the church, for the community by the community leads to greater participation of every person in *missio Dei* to bring about healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa.

Critical to Forster's (2008:17) argument, this researcher suggests that there will be no healing of the country without transformation in the hearts of its people. South Africans' cries are the cries of the heart, and they highlight the racism, tribalism, sexism, xenophobia prejudices that reside in of South Africans. These cries absolutise the relevance of the MCSA's ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation, which is deep, rooted in transformation call of the people and the society to achieve the reconciliation objective of rebuilding national moral integrity. Although the manifesting of this ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation will impact on local communities, its horizons must be broadened. The MCSA vision of 'A Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations' is a pivotal aspect of the MCSA's mission that is not purely focused on evangelising, but that it clearly stipulates that the role of the church is to act in communities in the Name of Jesus, inspiring social change which brings dignity, healing and transformation (Bentley 2014a:4-5).

Missio Dei's transformative caring is what Mashau (2016:7) suggests as,

“... teaches humanity that a holistic approach to healing will always include more than just curative aspects; death can also be regarded as a form of healing as long as the suffering person dies with a sense of inner peace that can only be experienced when one is truly reconciled to God in Christ. Healing in this instance can be understood as *shalom*.”

It is therefore crucial for the church to remain vigilant and prayerful. Irrespective of the challenges, the MCSA's scope of mission entails the whole spectrum of the church's work in response to the Connexion's call to become a healing community, in particular circuits, societies and church organisations. It is evident in the MCSA reports from districts and organisations to the MCSA annual conference, that, there is a constant desire to hold in dynamic tension the MCSA's ethos of personal and social healing and reconciliation, with a

heart set on seeing the dawn of the Godly justice and improvement of human lives in post-1994 South Africa.

Transformative caring is imperative for personal morality across the society. Transformative caring seeks to transform institutions to improve the quality of the environment and the quality of life for those living in poverty. Perhaps the most compelling model of a caring ministry is that of a world community in which all people receive equal care and respect. An ethic of care gives intrinsic value to everything else in the community, but it also means learning and paying attention to what they need to flourish; as church members need to take the time to know and care about each other. Caring about the other implies that they have rights and deserve justice.

In its programmes the MCSA has engaged in justice, reconciliation and healing ministries, in poverty eradication programmes, and in health; many of these issues are addressed at local church level and many of these programmes have reached impoverished and marginalised communities. Accordingly the MCSA yearbook (2012:101),

“The charter in Luke 4, encapsulating the direct action of the Holy Spirit and the prophetic thread discernible throughout the Scriptures, constantly challenges the church to strengthen its endeavours to pursue justice, remove the cause of human need and transform social structures. The doctrines of creation and redemption, the ethics of God’s kingdom and the mission of love leave us with no other alternative.”

Inter alia to the above is understanding *missio Dei* as formation of a missional community and human empowerment and economic development as indicator of the church’s participation in the *missio Dei*, for healing and reconciliation. The MCSA’s social practice is that, the visible reality of the true church consists of essentially its coming together as the Christian community. The missional community is formed in response to God’s initiative of grace. In the Old Testament is seen, Israel is brought into being as the people of God, by God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 14-15; Deut 32:6). However, it is the Exodus event which gives us the picture of a God who freely enters into human history in an act of grace towards his people. The Exodus events are clear indication of God’s love towards humanity; it is this act of deliverance that demonstrates God’s grace for humanity. It is God who constituted Israel as a community and Israel in its response to God’s love became a missional community at Mount Sinai and it accepted the covenant as a response to God’s salvation. Breedt and Niemandt (2013:1) argue that,

“God is a missional God. The self-diffusive, gathering, and sending nature of God means that missionality starts with a relationship, a going beyond oneself, being in relation and calling others to relation. ‘God is love’ (1 Jn 4:8) is the core and essence of God. It is because of this ἀγάπη [love] that is shared within the Trinity and with his creation that God sent his Son as redeemer to a lost world to restore the broken relationship between the world and him”.

In the New Testament it is learnt that God’s grace in Jesus Christ initiates and calls humanity into being a missional community. Acts 2 portrays the church as a missional community which was formed out of the Pentecost experience and its response to God’s grace was made possible by God’s Spirit (Acts 2). The newly constituted missional community in Acts 2, which was in Jerusalem, immediately sets to work organising its life in patterns of worship, common life, and missional activity in the world which is consistent with the grace they have received in Jesus Christ.

In the MCSA a missional community is formed around the shared Christian history and vision of making disciples of all nations. The MCSA’s vision is oriented to anticipating what God is doing in the world and to align the church’s life to serve that action of God’s grace. A human empowerment and economic development is a missional community which stands with one foot rooted in a historic evangelical tradition from which it draws its identity. It further envisions the future with the other foot firmly planted in the reality of God’s call. Mission as *koinonia* is based in the anticipation of the fulfilment of God’s desire for healing, reconciliation, love, justice and wholeness.

Economic empowerment and human development as *missio Dei* to testify to God’s grace that makes a difference in relationship with God and other people of faith and to one’s neighbour in the world. We learn in both the Old and New Testaments that, missional communities are called to model life as alternative communities of shared experience of grace and love. However, most importantly to that is the church’s witness that establishes the identity and character of the missional community. The MCSA as a shaped missional community plays a primary role in forming transformed communities. In an attempt to work towards forming and shaping missional communities for healing and reconciliation the MCSA took a stance of unconditional acceptance of all people into its membership. Critical to the membership into the MCSA missional communities is unconditional acceptance and it embraces all people which have an empowering effect. From the book of order the following:

“The conditions, privileges and duties of membership in the Methodist church follow the tradition common to the Methodist people from the beginning. Membership is not conditional upon the profession of theological tenets, or dependent upon traditional authority or ecclesiastical ritual. It is based upon a personal experience of the Lord Jesus Christ, brought about by the Spirit...” (MCSA book of order 2014:25)

The MCSA membership policy is crucial for its missional position in post-1994 South Africa and is inspired by its vision of a Christ-healed Africa, for the healing of nations, which informs the MCSA’s ecclesiological stance and position for healing and reconciliation as demonstrated in her membership policy. As much as membership in a church is important, it needs to be meaningful and have a transformational effect, and it must be accompanied by serious opportunity for renewing or building up missional communities and relationships. Preparation into membership must involve study of scriptures, reflections, and prayer by potential members with assistance of mentors from the church. This over a period of time can have a deep and profound effect on the church’s healing and reconciliation ministry and openness to new relations of and with the church life (Mogabgab 1995:75).

The MCSA’s membership policy creates an environment for all people to belong and to experience God’s grace. The MCSA’s membership policy clearly seeks to define the MCSA in post-1994 South Africa as a church open to all people; this gives the MCSA a clear definition of what it means to be a missional community for healing and reconciliation. Thence in this instance *koinonia* is defined in a context of building up or forming the body of Christ for mission, with a clear commitment or total devotion to Jesus Christ’s call of healing and transformation. Thus nurturing is central to the missional community for healing and reconciliation.

Mission as *koinonia* seeks to create an environment whereby every person is welcomed and valued and together they seek meaning and purpose for life. Missional communities are places where relationships are built for fellowship, worship and sharing since healing and reconciliation is crucial in the post-1994 South Africa. Empowering the laity and clergy for the mission of healing and reconciliation, the clergy should not be the principal guardians of mission but co-workers.

In summary it is worth recognising that most of the MCSA circuits reflect a uni-racial nature which excludes and denies the people the rich experience of diverse fellowship and worship. This uni-racial nature of the MCSA circuits is attributed to a number of factors, such as

historical development of the MCSA along parallel lines as a mission church, the language barriers and distinctive forms of worship that was exacerbated by the old dispensation (MCSA book of order 2014: 228). The conference declaration of 1958 of being one and undivided church is still relevant in post-1994 as it continues to give guidance to the MCSA missionary policy for inclusivity. The MCSA's conviction that God calls the MCSA post-1994 to continue to work towards an ideal of being One undivided church in South Africa for the formation of a multi-cultural missional community for healing and reconciliation. *Missio Dei* as a human empowerment and economic development is a crucial characteristic of reconciliation.

One of the distinctive marks of the MCSA's ecclesiological influence and implications for participation in *missio Dei* is the importance of working towards racially integrated circuits and societies. A multi-racial church gives the MCSA a natural expression of the true church of Christ in post-1994. The MCSA's policy on the multi-racial churches or circuits is an integral part of the MCSA ecclesiological policy. Healing and reconciliation in the multi-racial circuits will express the essential nature of the MCSA ecclesiology, demonstrating the reconciliation which Christ has won for all of the creation. The MCSA's multi-racial circuits in the post-1994 South Africa is essential for the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei*. The MCSA's prophetic witness in the struggle for healing, justice, liberation and reconciliation in the post-1994 South Africa will contribute in building faith communities for mission.

5.4. *Missio Dei* as Spirituality

Missio Dei as spirituality in the MCSA's ecclesiological practices and usages affirms biblical cosmology, creation is seen as a closed universe, of which people are a part of the surrounding – they understood it to be one world, one creation of God. This pillar of spirituality is emphasised to the significance of “the Doctrines of the evangelical faith, which the MCSA has held from the beginning and still holds, are based upon the divine revelation recorded in scripture. The MCSA acknowledges that this revelation as the supreme rule of faith and practice” (MCSA book of order 2014:15).

At the very heart of *missio Dei* as spirituality pillar is the emphasis of Christian faith in the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the three in one, bound together in relationship of pure love. At the centre of Christian faith journey as individuals and as God's church, is the movement towards a right relationship with God, with one another as humans and with every component of God's creation. It is a belief which affirms, Robert James Berry's view (2012:

177) that the Bible story of salvation wrought by a loving God focuses on the importance of relationship. Therefore, the biblical authenticity of the stewardship model of human's care of the earth and the ethical challenges posed by claims regarding the relationship of humans to creation remain problematic (Berry 2012:179). A cardinal aspect of this view is Hudson & Bryant (2005:67) ... "deep in the human heart, there is a longing to belong, to connect, to be in communion, to be in the family. The MCSA believes in the use of the Bible to aid the process of healing, in Mark Jesus starts his ministry with a simple proclamation that summarised Jesus' mission: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the good news'" (Mark 1:15). Salvation comes as God's gift—a gift of God's restorative action. Its treatment can be carried out in the mission; Jesus combined his teaching with his healing activity.

However, Jesus realised that living out his message includes suffering. He links his suffering with the suffering his followers will face. "If any wants to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." (Mk 8:34–35)

Spirituality as *missio Dei* is to restore human relationship with the Triune God for the mission of healing reconciliation in the context of this study. The essence of the spirituality pillar is participation in *missio Dei*. The Bible gives credence to the origin of the Christian community as a restored community; in essence the Christian community is a channel of realisation of the kingdom of God on earth. According to Bosch (1991:222), "the church is the community of believers, gathered by divine elections, calling, new birth, and conversion, which lives in communion with Triune God, is granted the forgiveness of sins, and sent to serve the world in solidarity with mankind [sic]."

From observations it appears that the history of brokenness is repeating itself in post-1994 South African society. There is a definite self-indulgence in material riches at the expense of the poor and vulnerable people. Greed and self-indulgence have numbed any feelings of regard for the democratic principles laid down in South Africa for a non-racial, non-sexist democratic society (The constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996). This constitutes a serious ill-being of society especially when leaders, political and religious, renege on promises made in the constitution. The greatest disease of society occurs when leadership

turns corrupt. The application of this pillar is profound in leading people to healing and reconciliation.

It is in this regard that the church as a community of believers gathered by divine calling in communion with God is sent to serve the world in solidarity with all people for the forgiveness of sins. The Christian community becomes an alternative community. The church in this instance becomes God's new creation for restoration and healing (Bosch 1991:223).

Missio Dei as spirituality creates a sense of mutual solidarity within this alternative community which is not prescribed by loyalties; it is a loyalty to the Trinitarian God that transcends all the differences. It was Bosch (1991:223) who said, "The church is however, discipleship in-community. The church is a single new humanity in Christ, who has broken down the dividing wall and has reconciled Jew and Gentile in a single body to God through the cross".

Therefore, the MCSA's post-1994 local churches as centres of mission contribute to the quality of spirituality that is needed for transformation and healing as it teaches its membership to throw away individualism mentality, which creates room for corruption and tribalism to thrive. The MCSA in its vision of a Christ healed Africa for healing of nations seeks to create an alternative community where all citizens recognise themselves as part of the community with civil responsibilities. Whilst the MCSA mission is to proclaim the gospel of healing and transformation, it is through its spirituality pillar that it participates in *missio Dei*, however, the MCSA can speak and listen to and emphasise the reciprocity of human actions. As a result of participation in *missio Dei*, people learn values that transcend self and enhance communal values. The MCSA's mission of healing and reconciliation has often centred on participation and communal life. Thus, the communal value of the MCSA can be brought to bear on post-1994 South Africa.

According to Storey (2004:50), the MCSA vision declares that:

- In Christ, every person, especially those who have been marginalised and rejected, is loved by God and given infinite value by God's grace.
- In Christ, the scars of the past, whether caused by the acts of others, or self-inflicted through our own wrongdoing, can be healed and forgiven.

- In Christ, we are nailed to our neighbour, without whom we cannot be truly human, and we are called to kindness and servanthood in our relationships.
- In Christ, all, without exception, can be empowered to live lives with dignity, honesty and moral purity.

Missio Dei as spirituality of healing leads to transformation of human life. Healing and reconciliation in the MCSA is more than just one individual's life that is transformed, but that a community and even society may be transformed through the celebration of sacraments, particularly the sacrament of baptism as it leads to a renewal of a person into the transformed image of Christ. As it is indicated in the mission pillars, the spirituality pillar practised and applied in the missionary policy of the MCSA seeks to provide for social transformation. Through the pillar of spirituality in particular it is observed that, critical to ecclesiological influence of the mission pillars, it is the class meeting system in the MCSA which creates a classless society, where people meet as persons and they are recognised for whom they are and not for their social status. Accordingly, baptism is administered to serve as a school for enhancing responsible citizenship, as well as building agents for societal transformation. *Missio Dei* as spirituality is a vital force to help foster a faith community of a Christ healed Africa for healing of communities.

Then the class meeting system cannot be overstated as it is the core of the church's spiritual transformation (Malinga & Richardson 2005:143; Mgojo & Irvine 2001:97; Knight and Powe 2010:40).

The missional spirituality makes the Bible teachings real in the lives of the MCSA people for healing. The spirituality pillar becomes the primary means of grace for thousands of the MCSA congregation to experience healing and reconciliation (Mgojo & Irvine 2001:97). In the class meeting system the Methodists learn to live out their faith by being accountable to one another. The class structure is a place where people are able to sustain one another through prayer (Knight and Powe 2010:40).

When the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion are celebrated in the MCSA tradition they are celebrated as outward signs of the means of grace. Baptism leads to the new life which God offers to all people through the work of Christ, and baptism marks the entry of the person baptised into God's family which is the church. The act of "Baptism therefore

proclaims God's grace and looks forward to life-long growth into Christ in the fellowship of the church" (MCSA book of order 2014:13).

Missio Dei as spirituality in the Holy Communion service is a reminder that every time and place when people meet to participate in Holy Communion they become united with God and with each other for building fellowship. The MCSA believes that when people celebrate Holy Communion, "they remember the death and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in other words they are reconciled to God and one another, through which they receive healing which is forgiveness for their sins and the salvation which is transformation for their soul. In the act of celebration of Holy Communion the MCSA people enter into a new covenant of God with God's people –a new dispensation of grace instead of the old dispensation of law" (MCSA book of order 2014:15).

In the MCSA tradition, baptism calls for the response of "faith that is also a life-long process"; healing is faith seeking response towards transformation and reconciliation, when individuals respond to this call in the MCSA they begin a journey towards transformation. As indicated earlier in this chapter that the membership policy of the MCSA embraces all people irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity or status of health. The MCSA membership policy is a clear sign and indication that healing and reconciliation that seeks to transform the society should be inclusive of all. The MCSA membership policy is a demonstration of spirituality of healing as participation in the *missio Dei*, an open invitation to all people, a journey of healing and reconciliation.

However, an inviting community should be a sustaining community; the substance of this is through the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Van de Laar (2005:15) says, a Sacrament, as a meal "makes God's word visible and tangible, and expresses the truth of the gospel in proclamation... we celebrate the shared life of the (*koinonia*) community of faith, as it centres on the Lord's Table". However, to participate in a life with God is a sign, instrument and real foretaste of God's kingdom, which is called to visibly demonstrate God's final purpose for restoration of human dignity. Participation in the *missio Dei* calls the believer to fellowship together, for the purposes of distributing or giving to the needy, to breaking bread together in celebration of the new life received from Christ. It includes to worship together through singing and praying and to come together to welcome the new converts (Acts 2:43-47).

However, the biggest challenge for the MCSA is maintaining the balance between inviting new members and sustaining the current members on the journey towards healing and reconciliation. This challenge can be addressed through a radical transformation of missional theology, ethics, and ministry of healing and spiritual practices in the MCSA.

However, it would be rather difficult to avoid Storey's (2004:48-49) indication of a crying country which is crying out for people of integrity, especially in leadership whose lives are driven by principle, truth, and compassion and who are willing to hold themselves accountable to their fellow South Africans irrespective of political affiliation, religion, gender and race. South Africa needs to rediscover its much-vaunted spirit of *Ubuntu*, which has been badly eroded. *Missio Dei* as spirituality holds a hope for a transformed people and society leading to a journey of self- discovery in the transforming presence of God.

A response to the cries of South Africa as indicated in the above paragraph is the spirituality of healing, and the researcher asserts that, when the two sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism are celebrated as practised in the MCSA tradition, they serve as outwards signs of God's offer of healing and reconciliation for post-1994 South Africa. It is in the MCSA's practice in particular that baptism and Holy Communion is celebrated as proclamation of God's grace for all people for healing and reconciliation. The purpose of the spirituality of healing in the two sacraments is to build up the community of faith and for members to be instruments of healing and reconciliation, whereby in the process of healing every person is encouraged to find meaning in life to experience peace which is a characteristic of transformation. Interestingly and critically to healing spirituality is Van de Laar's (2005:15) argument,

“Both Christian sign-acts—the font and the table—are effective for faith-building and nurturing, but is the meal of Jesus, the sharing of bread and wine, more frequent and repeatable than baptism, that offers the primary means to establish the faith community and touch those in search of Christ.”

Van de Laar's 2005 argument hold a critical metaphor which is of importance to understand the role the Christian community plays in enabling and assisting individuals to experience healing and reconciliation through the transforming grace of God through Christ. Thence is crucial to observe the two sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion as practice in the MCSA tradition to be a means to invite all people to a new life experience with Christ particularly in the context of healing and reconciliation.

Mission spirituality ecclesologically is informed by the principle of a mission which belongs to God, who does it through the church, for the world, with the church, and by the church. In this instance the presence of the kingdom of God is made real, undergirded by abundant life for all. Throughout this study the researcher has maintained that the MCSA's vision portrays it as a church that seeks to be in partnership with Christ for healing nations and the world, for building and maintaining the whole of the South African community as sacred.

It can therefore be concluded that participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA is a quest for healing and reconciliation which seeks to bring communities to a transformation experience of God's grace. The essence of this assertion is that which demonstrates the meaning of a church as a called community of fellowship that shares the love of God with the broken society for healing and reconciliation.

Even though, Storey points out the sad and painful realities of communities in South Africa. Storey's (2004:48) argument is, "The cries of Africa are not just personal, they raise moral and spiritual questions about systemic issues that require determined communal action". Thence mission as healing and reconciliation includes the activities of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ that seeks to create a fellowship community for mission of transformation is carried out by agents of healing and reconciliation into the community in response to the great commission with the aim of making the kingdom of God a reality in any sphere of life in post-1994 South Africa (Storey 2004:51).

5.5. *Missio Dei* as evangelism (*kerygma*, preaching, proclamation and witnessing)

5.5.1. *Missio Dei* as Evangelism

The original purpose and calling of the MCSA is to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land and this is ever regarded as the first and great calling of Methodist people. To preach the leading and vital doctrines of the gospel: repentance toward God; a present free, and full salvation from sin; a salvation flowing from the grace of God alone, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and salvation which begins with forgiveness of sins (MCSA book of Order 2014:184). Evangelism as a proclamation of good news we read in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to end of the age."

The Great Commission is a charter for making disciples by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ for healing, reconciliation and transformation. The church proclaims God's love

for all people because she is called by Jesus to make disciples through preaching/teaching the gospel of hope to the end of the world, to all people. The church participates in the proclamation of the gospel because it is God's calling of the church to participate in the mission of God. The church proclaims the gospel as a servant and disciple of Jesus Christ.

Making disciples through teaching or proclaiming is about sharing the story of all that God has done and is doing for his people. Furthermore, preaching is about witnessing to the love, grace and forgiveness which is extended to all people by God's infinite love. Preaching as participation in the *missio Dei* is glorifying God. All of the teaching must be about the triune God, not human centred. Teaching proclaims what God through Christ has done, is doing and will do.

Just as the MCSA is inspired by the vision of a Christ healed Africa, for the healing of the nations, it also needs to think boldly about how to transform local churches and communities. A teaching like loving one's neighbour does not only mean caring for a human neighbour, it also involves creation care and sustainable living. There is a need for a radical transformation of theology, ethics, mission and spiritual practices in the MCSA if the ministry of healing and reconciliation is to be realised.

At the 2011 conference the Presiding bishop reminded the MCSA that the 2010 conference resolved to equip MCSA people for radical service that heals and transforms. He stated that, "our healing challenge remains to work for elimination of structures still based on exclusions... if the church is to become a place of healing, wholeness and transformation..." (MCSA Yearbook 2012: 7-8).

Bentley (2014a:6) asserts that, "the most important level, and perhaps the most influential, is that of social integration, where the presence and agency of the Church is felt in the influence and ministry of laity in their respective fields of responsibility".

Whilst *Diakonia* (2006:24) asserts that God's economy concerns how the bounty of the world in terms of earth, water, air, and plants help human life to flourish. Environmental justice cannot be separated from healing and reconciliation. God has called his disciples for relationships, justice and equality, reconciliation and the flourishing of all creation. To preserve the intended state of nature, humanity participate by being the hands, eyes, ears and feet of God in the process of restoring the balance in creation by advocating God's plan of

stewardship, for a just, equitable society, for reconciliation that leads to transformation of the environment..

Forster (2008:17) argued that,

“The goal of this ministry was sometimes seen as auxiliary to mission, proper hospitals were built to give people an opportunity to hear the gospel and to respond to Christ’s call. The four mission pillars’ strategy for mission in the MCSA laid a solid foundation for lay workers, class leaders, local preachers, teachers and evangelists who were part of the MCSA system.”

Forster (2008:5) indicates that, it is not only about the teaching of the Gospel for personal relationship with God, but the Gospel bears the fruit of social transformation and development of missional communities.

The MCSA believes that God’s mission is the reason the Church exists, and that evangelism is at the heart of God’s mission. The MCSA by adhering to three specific rules participates in the *missio Dei*. The intention here, however, is less of an evaluation of the MCSA’s rule of life *per se* and more of a proposal that the rule of life fits as an example of *missio Dei* as proclamation of healing and reconciliation.

According to Thompson (2013: 9),

“The General Rules are then enumerated as follows, Firstly, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind, especially that which is most generally practised... Secondly, By doing good, by being in every way merciful after their power, as they have opportunity of doing good of every possible sort and as far as is possible to all men: To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison. To their souls, by instructing, reprovng, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils that ‘we are not to do good unless our heart be free to it.’ Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are: The public worship of God; The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; the Supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting or abstinence.”

Significantly Bentley (2014a:7) maintains that,

“The Church’s salvific mission recognises all factors which affect the Christian community’s call to love God and to love your neighbour. Social upliftment and the empowering of communities through education and other forms of social service express an understanding of a physical form of salvation which is directly connected to the Church’s call to work towards the spiritual renewal of society.”

Good news has to be shared with all people! Whether it be the birth of a grandchild, a win at football, or passing an exam, people want their friends to know about it so much so that sometimes we describe them as ‘bursting to speak’. The MCSA members who have encountered the risen Lord Jesus in their lives have not wanted to keep Him to themselves. They’ve wanted to share their good news. God is reaching out to all creation.

The significance of the rule of life affirms the notion that a Church exists to increase awareness of God’s presence and to celebrate God’s love. It exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care. It exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice. But it can only do so in the long term by fulfilling the other part of its calling: the Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ. God loves everybody and is at work everywhere. If we love God, God calls us to love other people. We prove our faith by living a life of service, an ever-growing love for God and other people. Disciples don’t just follow Jesus they serve and obey Jesus. Jesus also asks us to help people to be changed by faith in him, and to change the world by our words and deeds.

5.5.2. *Missio Dei* as proclamation of healing

Local churches as centres of mission embrace the idea of God’s mission which is bigger than the church but God uses the church as a visible symbol of the transforming presence of God. The tune must be taken from God all the time. God’s mission will always survive in spite of us (MCSA yearbook 2016:10). Scholtz (2012:124) asserts that “The purpose of the local church and of the wider church is to give a fuller meaning to the universal church as God’s creation, God’s relentless pursuit in grace to redeem and sanctify the world”. However, Bishop Siwa observes that, many local congregations within the MCSA have lost their sense of purpose and have gone under where the concern becomes the survival of a particular group interest and they take their eyes off the purpose of God which goes beyond any particular group interest (MCSA yearbook 2016:10). In spite of Bishop Siwa’s observations, it is worth noting that, the MCSA yearbooks from 2005 -2016 record that, the MCSA circuits and societies all around the MCSA Connexion have taken time to make an effort to implement the four mission pillars to develop well-rounded ecclesiology which will serve as a working plan for mission.

The job of telling the good news belongs to every ordinary believer, not just to the super-spiritual or those with the particular gift of evangelism. Throughout the MCSA's history, most evangelism has not depended on professional clergymen. It was the 'ordinary person in the pew' who shared the gospel most effectively, because people are more likely to listen to satisfied customers than to professional sales reps! Here are some historical examples: "For the MCSA, the call to evangelism means believing in the good news that God is with us" (These were recorded as being John Wesley's dying words). Faith isn't just about a personal reservation in heaven; it is also about being part of a community that helps people to see God's presence and actions here on earth. The MCSA calls this social engagement for healing and transformation of lives, because together as Christians they help one another to love God better, and they work together for a better transformed world in order to help other people to know God's healing love.

The MCSA statement of faith has always emphasis that,

"We are saved by God's grace through faith, so that the image of God is restored, we read from the Bible that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). This fact might be restored in the lives of those of us who believe. Coming to faith begins the process of growth into a life of ever-increasing love for God and for others. The means (faith) get us to the goal (love) and visa-versa. It's our relationship with God which holds faith and love together: a love which is self-giving and always puts others first. That's the example of Jesus which we are called to follow. It's not enough to know that we are saved. We also need to know why we are saved."

Bentley (2011:3) says, "It has also become an instrument through which the Methodist people have shown solidarity with those who have been marginalised and affected negatively by the violence of society at large. Not only has it shown solidarity, but it has been the witness of the unity which God's restorative grace can offer through the Sacrament".

Sometimes worship might involve prayer and meditation engaged in through all the senses, or in order to help people find God in a way that is comfortable for them. However, Bentley (2011:4) articulates this viewpoint by saying "it is at these services that people, who have been marginalised and directly affected by the violation of their humanity, are able to kneel alongside the people who identify themselves as ordinary members of the church and of society".

5.5.3. *Missio Dei* as witness to healing

According to the MCSA book of order (2014:15), “The Methodist church (MCSA) claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the Body of Christ”. The term catholic suggests boundedness or the unity of the church, which signifies the act of sharing and living in communion and communication with Christ and with others. This statement in essence summarises how community of faith in the MCSA is viewed. The mission pillars as *missio Dei* in MCSA’s communal life and belief systems place emphasis on Christian values of love, justice, peace and harmony. What remains constant in the MCSA’s view is the concept of salvation by grace which informs and forms individuals into community life.

In *missio Dei* as witness we observe the MCSA’s ecclesiology has a prophetic responsibility to speak and to witness to the nations the light of God’s healing and reconciling word. Such a prophetic responsibility may be directed first in condemning the ills of the society – the perversion of justice, the corruption that is becoming institutionalised. The prophetic witness is significant to the Public protector’s findings on Nkandla 2015, the State of Capture report 2016, firing of the Minister of Finance Nene in 2016 and subsequently to that Minister Gordhan in 2017. All these reports are clear indications of broken relationships. However, there is hope for healing and transformation because the essence of the church is that it exists for others. Thence the church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell people of every nation what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others (Bosch 1991:225). In other words the church exists to be the salt of the earth that transforms the society to be the agent of healing and reconciliation.

The hope for healing and reconciling South African societies have commonalities in a number of areas such as value systems, beliefs and practices which can probably lead the country into transformation. These commonalities largely constitute the South African worldview. Manda (2017:2) affirms this view and he asserts that, “healing according to the biblical understanding of reconciliation is not very far from the (South) African understanding since in both cosmologies the word restoration of relationship is key. As broken relationships spells disaster for the individual and, by extension, for the rest of the family and society at large”.

In view of the above, the MCSA in its vision of a Christ healed Africa for healing of nations, should not only seek to align with politicians, but must seek to promote evangelism that will influence society and thus offer solutions and remedies to the South African problems of the

post-1994 community. The MCSA operates in a mixture of diverse cultures and backgrounds but which are solidly united, thence the reconciling power of the evangelism pillar should be extended outside the church. However, Manda (2017:2) argues,

“Although reconciliation is understood as the healing of broken interpersonal relationships, and that this is not a unique understanding of reconciliation within the framework of a South African cosmology, the findings suggest that within an African cosmology healing involves God, the spirits, other people and the whole of creation.”

Missio Dei as witness signifies a long held view that says, the church is always and at the same time called out of the world and sent into the world for healing and reconciliation (Bosch 1991:225). *Missio Dei* as evangelism implies that the MCSA’s healing methods have the capacity to see the image of God restored in every member of the community. Such a view of evangelism is critical to a call of working towards eliminating discriminatory tendencies against people. A Christ healed Africa for healing of the nations’ vision subscribes to the ethic of compassion that seeks to be in transformative solidarity to bring about healing and reconciliation. Evangelism as *missio Dei* is working towards elimination of discriminatory tendencies such evangelism. According to Breedts and Niemandt (2013:3), “To empower the church to live a God-incarnated life, the Holy Spirit was sent to comfort, teach, remind and guide the church. The Holy Spirit leads by empowering; when he is seen in the context of a teacher and comforter, it suggests an ongoing relational leadership.”

However, it is a noticeable fact the MCSA’s circuits and or local churches still practise a ministry of evangelism within the church walls. This reality is also echoed by the MCSA’s presiding bishop’s address to the conference of 2011 saying, “ conference themes have not sufficiently informed the MCSA’s ecclesiological practices at the grass roots” (MCSA Yearbook 2012:9).

Thence at this point the researcher submits that evangelism involves a process, of which a personal interior feeling of remorse and guilt is only one stage. The other stages include a public confession, that is, in the presence of the community or extended (or more immediate) family (Orobator 2009:63).

Healing in regard to *missio Dei* in a witness perspective is therefore regathered as working towards the establishment and maintenance of affirming relationships for all members of the community. Evangelism of healing and reconciliation infused in the African worldview is an

integral part of the African belief system that states persons do not live for themselves, but they live for the community. Such a communalistic approach to life fosters the well-being of the entire community and is transformative. These include socio-cultural, economic, moral, political, religious, environmental and ecological aspects. Manda (2017:7) argues that,

“The community includes God, the spirits, other people and the rest of creation. Therefore, the concepts of healing and reconciliation work hand-in-hand in African cosmology. The study also established that healing of the community is more significant in African cosmology than the healing of individual persons. However, whether it is the individual or community that is broken and bruised, rituals play significant role to restore the communal moral and social order” (Manda 2017:7).

Mashau (2016:2) says: “In the South African context, African traditional healing is not only part of the African culture, but is also essential for the health and well-being of a great part of the black population”. However, Manda’s (2017:2) view has already been argued by Mbiti (1975:175) and Pilch (1995:323), they maintain that “to be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community, this process sought to recover or revive or to bring back to wholeness relationships in the communities”.

However, Pilch (1995: 323) offers an anthropological view of healing which is significant for evangelism, for reconciliation and transformation of the church and the society. Pilch’s (1995) view is that “Culture’s greatest contribution is the meaning given to the illness experience. This is also the first stage of experiencing healing, because the experience can be acknowledged and recognised as something specific which charts the initial path toward an appropriate response” (Pilch 1995:323). Pilch’s view is complemented by Orobator (2009:146) who maintains this, “African spirituality recognises the vital connection between human life and the environment; it is a spirituality of balance, harmony and wholeness, sustained by an active faith in creation as God’s gift”.

If the MCSA wants to impart a message of hope and reconciliation to South Africans for healing of the nations, it should take shape in the African context. Bentley (2014a: 5) argues, “Another pivotal aspect of the Church’s mission is that it is not purely focused on evangelising, but that it clearly stipulates that the role of the church is to act in communities in the Name of Jesus, inspiring social change which brings dignity, healing and transformation”. Whilst Storey (2004:52) records that, “the traditional spirituality of Africa

too, is one of holism, believing that religion must infuse all of life”. The MCSA mission unit’s reports explain how this can happen and indicate that: “The MCSA’s goal is to educate, facilitate, train, empower, develop, network, promote and resource local churches to become centres for healing and transformation – places where spiritual growth can take place and where justice and people-centred development is practised in the quest for “A Christ healed Africa” (MCSA yearbook 2015:158).

However, the observation is that sometimes for ordinary MCSA members, it can be surprisingly difficult to get a handle on mission. Thence the implementation of the four mission pillars seeks to assist local churches and church organisations with doing mission. The assertion is that the four mission pillars aim is not to cover all the bases, and neither to give all the answers, but seeks to provide a framework for the mission of healing and reconciliation.

5.5.4. *Missio Dei* as proclamation of transformation

As stated earlier, Manda (2017:2) argues that, “healing and reconciliation are not only focussed on interpersonal relationships but rather the inclusion of the whole of creation and the spirit world”. The MCSA’s mission pillars emphasise the importance of justice, restoration, healing and reconciliation. The ministry of Jesus is rife with admonitions to care for the poor and oppressed. His parables teach of overturning the accepted social hierarchies and his acts of healing underscores that physical health and wholeness is a means to salvation. Healing and reconciliation is an incorporation of the Church’s historic sense of justice as proclamation of *missio Dei*.

Thence noting that the MCSA’s vision and mission statement begins with scriptural mandate for mission. Whilst the four mission pillars attempt to give some practical frame for identifying mission needs, mission people and mission equipment. Healing and reconciliation modalities offered to South Africans since 1994 have been greatly compromised and affected by persistent poverty, unemployment, violent crime and xenophobic attacks. Tim Attwell a retired MCSA minister, writing in the MCSA newspaper ‘The New Dimension’ in November 2016 says, “change/ transformation is inevitable, it has happened and is happening whether we like it or not. The major transformation is in the scale of human interactions as the modern world arrives at our doorstep”. What is critical to Attwell’s point is that transformation is observed throughout the MCSA Connexion, in every new settlement area, as well as in old

previously abandoned areas, where there is a return of people and in most cases the change is exciting as it brings many people of different languages and backgrounds together.

This means change must be taken seriously especially in areas of worship, because these changes cannot be reversed. Therefore the mission pillars should be a powerful tool that shapes the lives of the people for mission as they worship together. Mission as participation in the mission of God means the MCSA should constantly reflect on its ecclesiological foundations, the motives and the aim as well as the nature of mission. Thence mission pillars are critical for the MCSA mission, to assist every MCSA member to reflect theologically about the life and witness of the MCSA in the mission of God.

In essence it seems as if many of the MCSA ministers are more familiar with sociology, rather than the Methodist theology. This is compounded by the presiding Bishop Abrahams who at the 2010 conference also lamented the vagueness of the MCSA ministers' theology. From this lamentation it can safely be concluded that, there is a creeping sense of sociology that is being embraced. It is sociology of church growth which analyses environment produces plans for the church in a form of marketing strategies rather than missional plans.

Olivier asserts that, "Church sociology says, let's try and understand the world so that we can adapt ourselves to it and become palatable enough for people to join us". This understanding of church sociology is contrary to Biblical theology that says let's understand the world in order to be reminded of its powers and principalities and therefore the scope and size of the challenge before us. It is a clear imperative that the MCSA should reflect on its mission with theological integrity (Olivier in Malinga & Richardson 2005:2).

It is imperative that as people of God we seek to change human institutions to improve the quality of the environment and the quality of life for those living in poverty. Perhaps the most compelling model of healing and reconciliation is that of the MCSA's rule of life and community in which all people receive equal care and respect. An ethic of care gives intrinsic value to everything else in the community, but it also means learning and paying attention to what they need in order to flourish.

The changing demands of post-1994 South Africa either positive or negative continue to challenge the church and the society at large. The growing challenges of poverty, unemployment, corruption, environmental injustice in many communities, make it imperative

that the MCSA, through its various structures and organisations to respond appropriately to the spiritual and social needs of such communities.

5.6. Conclusions

The MCSA upholds a model of *missio Dei* that is based on the doctrine of Trinity. Christians believe in one God who is an initiator of mission. The MCSA emphasises salvation by grace for all people, salvation by faith; an ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation means that the MCSA is called to proclaim the gospel of Christ for healing and transformation. This means that the MCSA does not only proclaim good news but makes the good news tangible for all people. The MCSA's ministry of healing and reconciliation is understood as a ministry of community whereby together laity and clergy bear the responsibility for participating in the *missio Dei*. The MCSA's healing and reconciliation ministry is working towards a goal of a Christ-healed Africa. In this regard, in the MCSA Christian community is not to be understood just as a conceptual, but is to be understood as a practical community.

This view of Christian community has been articulated based on the healing and reconciliation efforts of the MCSA post-1994. The MCSA ecclesiological paradigm in the participation of *missio Dei* finds clear expression in the implementation of the four mission pillars. The four mission pillars provide the MCSA with an opportunity to reflect on its ecclesiological influence and missional mandate of healing. These pillars in the chapter have proven to be necessary for the MCSA's participation in the *missio Dei* in areas of healing and reconciliation ministry. These four mission pillars have an equal value in a sense that they exert the communal spirit in diverse ways. Consequently, mission pillars offer influential perspectives for the renewal of the established programmes of transformation through the participation of every member's ministry who are devoted to the community life of love. Mission pillars can be seen as the wellsprings of renewal in the MCSA, whereby, the MCSA in local communities can become a place of reconciliation between divided communities and congregations. Thence the MCSA's local churches can play a role as mediator of reconciliation among divided local communities.

The four mission pillars in this context are the essence of the MCSA's ecclesiology, a realisation of participation in the *missio Dei*, a way of healing and reconciliation, and

witnessing the gospel through community life. The four mission pillars' design is to facilitate the process of healing and transformation which will assist the MCSA to strengthen its missional base of healing and to recover a reconciliation balance which re-affirms the MCSA's primary mission of the local churches. They are the nuts and bolts that tighten the building of the called community. They connect the local church beyond itself in terms of resources, tradition, training and a sense of wider community and belonging.

The above is not a deviation of the MCSA's ecclesiological influence which is rooted in mission. Historically the MCSA was known to be a missional movement long before it became a church. The MCSA was born out of a revival, an evangelical mission of the 18th century. Central to this is the MCSA's belief that they are a sent people of the sending God. To proclaim the Gospel of healing and reconciliation, for the healing of nations, the implication for participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA is the intentional movement towards *missio Dei* as a ministry of healing. The central concern here is to enable the local church to reinstitute the theology of mission pillars for healing and transforming ministries, patterned in the participation of the people in the *missio Dei*. The MCSA believes that the true church can be realised through the reconciled discipleship movement. The MCSA ideally is a Christian community of people who seek to be reconciled to God and to each other. The MCSA, by seeking to live as a corporate body in a trusting relationship, constitutes a love-response to God's grace.

Chapter Six

Findings and Recommendations

6.1 Ecclesiological and missional findings on healing and reconciliation

The central question this study answered is: How will understanding mission as *missio Dei*, contribute to the calling of the MCSA in all its structures to become an agent of healing and reconciliation in a post- 1994 South Africa? The study demonstrated how the *missio Dei* can influence the ecclesiology of the MCSA to continue to be influential in contributing towards healing and reconciliation of society in a post- 1994 South Africa. On the basis of the central question and the aim of the study this research answers the research question as follows.

The MCSA's practices and usages of healing and reconciliation as unity for transforming lives is the most important ecclesiological contribution the MCSA is making in the process of healing. A missiological reflection has been the framework of this study which demonstrated the MCSA's ecclesiological approach to healing and reconciliation which has always been a Christocentric one. Although much of the healing and reconciliation approach is Christological, the missional and theological reflections and debates within the MCSA are centred on the Trinitarian perspective. Considering that the genesis of the MCSA is the evangelical revival faith, it was within this understanding that the MCSA believes it was raised by God to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land. In the post-1994 South Africa context the MCSA sought to be bring about an approach of healing and reconciliation for transformation that is free from political influences and pressure but that is filled with God's love that celebrates diversity without dividing and the reality of being graciously uniting with God and with all the people whom God loves, it includes a society that reflects the values of God's kingdom.

The MCSA conference of 2006 noted with growing concern that we [South Africans irrespective of social standing] are living in a racially separated society which is characterised by discrimination, suspicion and prejudice. It recognises that this in large measure is the result of our bondage to personal and corporate selfishness and can only be changed if individuals and communities are liberated by Jesus Christ from such bondage.

Missio Dei as ministry of healing and reconciliation is the method by which humans participate in God's actions to extend his kingdom on earth until it shall come to be universal. According to Bosch (2011:9), "Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world, particularly as this was portrayed, first in the story

of the covenant people of Israel and then, supremely, in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth.”

Thence, the study notes that, there were many transformational processes that have been undertaken by the MCSA to advance the ecclesiastical transformation agenda with particular emphasis on healing and reconciliation post-1994. Those transformational processes have been explained earlier in the study. In early 1991 the MCSA began a process of canvassing all Circuits, Societies, and Members to ascertain what “shape” the MCSA should take as the sub-continent journeyed towards a new beginning with all the political unfolding in South Africa. From this process of canvassing came the responses from circuits which were fed to a convocation called in mid-1993. After a time of prayer, Scripture study, listening to God and one another, the Convocation finalised six “calls” that were to guide the Church as it journeyed into a period of healing and reconciliation in a new political and social dispensation.

Following the 1993 convocation was the 1998 Millennium Mission Campaign, which was a massive nationwide fundraising drive for mission. In pursuing the vision statement, the MCSA convened a mission congress in Mthatha in 2004, which sought to revisit the mission, vision and strategies which the MCSA seeks to fulfil by recognising God’s call “to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation”. The proclamation of the gospel was to be firmly based on the four pillars of mission.

The study further noted that the call for healing and transformation which emanated from the processes of renewal and transformation within MCSA known as ‘Journey to a New Land’ and Mission congress adopted four mission pillars. Recurring themes within these processes emphasised every member ministry and healing reconciliation leading to empowerment. Such calls, however, would remain empty unless backed up by improved efforts to help equip God’s people for their various ministries.

In spite of the political system pre-1994 which seemed to have influenced the ministry and the mission of the church and played a major role in the formation of certain types of Christian communities. The MCSA also operated along the lines of the political environment of the time. Thence it is worth noting in this instance that mission is the divine activity of sending intermediaries, whether supernatural or human, to speak on God’s will so that his purpose for judgement or redemption be fulfilled. Bosch (2011:402) states: “Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for

the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate”. In the past two decades of democracy in South Africa, the Christian Church in general has made significant contributions to the best and worst of South Africa’s history. Christianity has had an immeasurable impact on just about every aspect of South African life. As is the case with the Church throughout the world, the social and political climate of the day plays a significant role in the development of appropriation of the Christian ministry.

The primary indication from the above is that, ecclesiological transformation has been on the agenda of the MCSA for a long time. Since ecclesiological transformation was intensified through the indicated processes. However, in the post-1994 South Africa, the MCSA’s conferences and synods still continue to produce resolutions for healing and reconciliation which is an indication that transformation is an ongoing process. Some of the produced resolutions on healing and reconciliation have not taken the MCSA mission of healing and reconciliation further than a statement of intent, for instance, the nature of ministry of healing and reconciliation and missional position have not been significantly considered broadly as part of the process of transformation debates.

The above is supplemented by Wright (2006: 189) who argues that the church is empowered by the Holy Spirit and sent into the world to preach repentance and forgiveness to the ends of the earth. According to Oosthuizen (2012: 23), historically in England, the Methodist church was doing the opposite. While the Church reached out to all people, only the better “classes” of people were allowed into the actual church during a service. The “lower” workers and their families would often gather outside the church, hoping to hear the prayers and sermon. The same pattern was evident in the MCSA which experienced disunity, which was contrary to its doctrine, teachings and usage. The congregational and institutional practices serve to contradict the claim of the MCSA being one and undivided.

The post-1994 the notion of healing and reconciliation for the MCSA was a fundamental commitment that was born out of the charter of the mission congress of the MCSA adopted in Mthatha in November 2004 with a deep conviction for mission. The MCSA in 2004 made this commitment saying, “In trust and obedience we commit ourselves anew to the four pillars of mission in our time...” (MCSA Year Book 2017:3). From the MCSA vision of a Christ healed Africa we ascertain that healing in this missional context is the restoration of all the relationships that individuals and communities inhabit. Ill-being does not mean lack of

bodily pains; it rather refers to the whole well-being of individuals and communities in all aspects of life.

Missionally healing means working for the restoration and maintenance of healthy relationships for members of the community, however, if healing is understood as such the MCSA should be working against all forms of discrimination that seek to alienate people from good relationships. The study further ascertained that the MCSA mission should seek to promote and liberate individuals and communities to work toward promoting reconciliation in local churches through every member's contribution in the ministry of transformation as a holistic ministry. In so doing the MCSA will not be far from living out her mission of seeking to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and reconciliation. The MCSA's missional theology of healing and reconciliation is centred on the events of Jesus, which influences the reading and interpretation of scriptures; it is a Christological perspective. All the MCSA's theological assertions are interpreted and understood through the Bible. With a particular interest in the ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation, that is based on the MCSA vision of "A Christ healed Africa for the healing of nations" which has become for the MCSA more than just an empty public relations slogan.

The study demonstrated that the pre-1994 context laid a specific ecclesiological foundation for the MCSA's processes on healing and reconciliation as *missio Dei* to counteract disunity, division and segregation, which were prevalent in South Africa pre- 1994. The MCSA took a resolution at its 1958 conference to participate in the *missio Dei* against the social concerns like apartheid by declaring its conviction that it is the will of God for "the Methodist church that it should be one and undivided. Significantly the MCSA was trusting in the leading of God to bring this ideal to ultimate fruition, and that this conviction constituted the general basis of our (its) missionary policy" (MCSA Book of Order 2014:230).

The study demonstrated that processes of healing and ecclesiastical transformation in the MCSA started in 1958 with the declaration of being "one undivided church." This declaration has given birth to another process of ecclesiastical transformation which is still ongoing. The practical implication of these processes was the election of a black person as the president of the MCSA conference 1964. The MCSA continued with more transformational endeavours such as the Obedience 81 and the 1990-1992 the Journey to the new land convocation. The declaration of one undivided church and other processes of transformation were the processes with which the MCSA was refusing to succumb to unjust and discrimination policies of the

old dispensation. Thence the MCSA took a prophetic stance of being one undivided church. The one undivided church declaration defined the purpose and the goal for an ecclesiastical transformation process.

However, despite the unity declaration and the attempts of healing and reconciliation the MCSA was still divided along racial, ethnic and economic lines. For the MCSA in post-1994 South Africa to be relevant in a changing society it still needs to undergo a process of transformation in its ecclesiology as this will lead to a ministry of social transformation. In spite of the initial ecclesiological challenge and difficult processes of healing and reconciliation another issue within the MCSA which was difficult to change was, and still is, the process of stationing of ministers, which had always been done according to racial and ethnic grounds.

In developing an ecclesiological paradigm on healing and reconciliation for participation in the *missio Dei*, the study indicated that the MCSA has to develop clear transformational goals, to deal with the implementation process of the mission pillars. Part of the challenge is the clarification of the concept transformation. In the study's view the main ecclesiological task is to communicate and to teach the theological and missiological concepts plainly for every member to understand. The starting point of such theological and missiological teachings is the Bible. The other important point is the teaching of ecumenical theology. In order to achieve a clear understanding of the MCSA's ecclesiology of mission, the emphasis in adopting the mission pillars approach is to understand the core of the MCSA theological teachings as reflected in the *missio Dei*. The MCSA's theology is authentic to the interpretations of all mission initiatives.

An ecclesiastical process of healing and reconciliation in society begins the moment when Kingdom structures are identified and engaged in with the view of implementing them for transforming society. The issue of racial, ethnic and financial inequalities has been a thorn in the flesh of the MCSA and has not been fully attended to out of fear that it might divide the church further because of its sensitivity. Every time when it is raised at synods it raises emotions, as a result it is rare for it to be discussed.

The summary of the above indications is that, the socio-political changes of 1990 were a period of disorientation for the church; it made sense that the church wanted to organise itself so that it could preserve its important role in society. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that, subsequently in 1991 the MCSA had assembled to listen to, and discern what God

wanted them to do as a church in their ministry, and to take a stand against apartheid. They referred back to previous conferences they had since 1981 which was to be popularly known as “Obedience 81” (Storey 1995:1). There was a common agreement that a similar assembly or convocation should be called to set the course for a new era (Storey 1995:1).

When analysing the above-mentioned processes of ecclesiastical transformation within the MCSA and the impact thereof, it was important that people are made aware of the imperatives such as unity, reconciliation, healing, and transformation for them to participate in the change with commitment. The ecclesiological and missional paradigm of healing and reconciliation for the MCSA’s participation in the *missio Dei* is a clear indication of the creative response that validated the importance of the gospel of transformation. The positive aspect of this paradigm is that it is reclaiming the Christian ministry of reconciliation for the post-1994 South African transformation process. The emergence of an ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation, post-1994 South Africa, it needed everyone to understand and recognise the negative impact of the past. Despite the painful experiences of the old dispensation the MCSA had to continue to embrace the Christian mission and the message of healing and reconciliation for transformation of society.

However, the problem with the transformational processes the MCSA adopted is that not all church members share its goals. The aim of the transformational processes was to transform the MCSA so that it would be able to minister to the post-1994 South Africa that was emerging as a transformed society.

It was in 1998 when the MCSA embarked on the Millennium Mission Campaign, which was a massive nationwide fundraising drive for Mission. It is noted that, in the same year (1998) the MCSA’s tri-annual conference adopted a vision that would be a driving force for transformation, healing and reconciliation ministry in the post-1994 South Africa. “God has given us the vision of a Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations.” (MCSA Year Book 2013:2) The Methodist Church’s mission statement declares healing and transformation to be its mission in the post- 1994 South Africa. “God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation” (MCSA Year Book 2009:2).

Thence the study points out that, the MCSA’ s history of mission is centred on a Christocentric approach, and that is influential to the MCSA approach to healing and reconciliation. The researcher asserts that the MCSA will make no progress until she

empowers her members through training and teaching to confront the post-1994 South Africa's ill-being and continuing scars of greed and corruption that South African leaders have and are continuing to inflict on their people, for example, Marikana's brutal killing of protestors. Post-1994 South Africa faces high levels of intergenerational poverty, stubborn unemployment and the rising inequality in which the gap between the few superrich and the poor is increasing at an alarming rate.

The study further indicated the challenges of migration and xenophobic attacks continue to undermine the vision of "A Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations". A deep alienation and disconnect from institutions that hold society together for many of South African people are observed. State organs and chapter 9 institutions have been under political pressure. It is apparent that healing and reconciliation mechanisms of transformation within the MCSA were shaping the church and the community for participation in the *missio Dei*. In the MCSA's healing and reconciliation ministry the restoration of human dignity is the goal, as it utilises a variety of methods to enable everyone to both hear and experience restoration. The MCSA's approach to healing is about more than just individuals' personal lives. The MCSA believes individuals and even societies can be transformed into the image of Christ and all things are renewed.

The study proposes that missiology as a theology of mission is linked with ecclesiology. The mission pillars challenge the MCSA to be actively involved in the surrounding communities by helping them to enter into a new relationship with Christ. Clawson (2012:5) says: "In knowing that the injustices of the world can and one day will be changed, Christians are to actively anticipate an earth where righteousness will dwell. To wait therefore means to resist injustice as every bit of righteousness done in the present anticipates the future reconciliation of all things".

In the mission pillars, the MCSA seeks to invite all people on a journey to develop a meaningful relationship with Christ. The mission pillars invite missional thought to rediscover the original ecclesiological implementation of healing and reconciliation that have become distorted, or simply lost meaning, as churches have become exposed to the full glare of the post-1994 South African culture and secularisation processes. The process of transformation in the MCSA challenges the restrictive interpretation and implementation of the four mission pillars. These mission pillars are given meaning beyond the church. Through the process of implementation the mission pillars are freed from the narrow interpretation in

order to be promoted within the broader missional context. If the mission pillars are not institutionalised the MCSA will continue to bear witness to God's healing and reconciliation act. This transformation will have an impact on both the individuals and the community; however, it is a dimension which appears to be lost in the current MCSA practice.

Within the context of mission, the transformation process assumes a new meaning, not only as social transformation but as missional transformation. The ministry of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA is an act of worship. *Missio Dei* as an act of community outreach is intended to invite people into a process of being transformed and made whole by Jesus Christ. To be made whole or restored is to be healed through the love of Christ so that the individual's relationships with the community and others are transformed and reconciled for a better life. In a sense, healing and reconciliation post-1994 in the MCSA represents a community so radically transformed by the love of Christ for a better life that it is inviting others to participate in the process of healing. The MCSA in this instance has dual responsibility of inviting all people into the relationship with Christ and it also needs to help them to sustain this relationship as they are transformed into the image of Christ. How is this understanding being expressed in the ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA post-1994 South Africa? From the study we can highlight following observations:

In spite of the initial difficult process of understanding healing and reconciliation as participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA the latter eventually yielded the impact of transformation. The MCSA as a community of healing and reconciliation has sustainable programmes of participation in *missio Dei* that they use to empower and develop all people. The MCSA as a Christian community proclaims a gospel of healing and transformation. The MCSA throughout this process has the responsibility to keep and to maintain the relationship with Christ so that all will continue to grow in grace. A healing and transforming church should always seek to be more welcoming and empowering, which means finding ways and mechanisms to strengthen their relationship with God and their neighbours.

The study asserts that the MCSA's vision of A Christ healed Africa for the healing of nations, acts as a lens through which the MCSA seeks to visualise the mission work. The study recognised that there are many issues that break people daily, rejection, betrayal, oppression both past and present; the lingering trauma of racism; and violence and exclusion. The ministry of healing for the people starts with knowing that they are loved and that God is love and that every situation is redeemable.

In the context of “A Christ healed Africa” (vision) and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation (mission), the MCSA invites the people of God throughout South Africa to join in carrying forward God’s mission. The MCSA’s participation in the *missio Dei* seeks to take up three points to proclaim the kingdom of God (*kerygma*) to erect signs of the kingdom through the caring ministries by implementing the four mission pillars for healing and reconciliation (*diakonia*). In its fellowship (*koinonia*) and worship the MCSA encourages people to encounter God’s dynamic love, grace and forgiveness. This healing can start with silence; singing; prayer; meditation; stress and trauma debriefings; meeting in small accountability groups and transforming minds.

However, as noted earlier in the study the ill-being of socio-economic injustices is still prevalent in the MCSA and the South African society. The MCSA’s mission statement notes that mission should be seen as movement from pain, brokenness, hurt, and disunity to healing and reconciliation. The MCSA calls for the recognition of the pain and brokenness in the society as possibilities for mission. It is there that mission is affirmed as transformation.

Whilst assessing the MCSA’s four mission pillars for healing and reconciliation in post-1994 South Africa. The study discovered that the goal of the processes was to allow the Christian message of healing and reconciliation to express itself in the church. The strength of this view of the ministry of healing and reconciliation as *missio Dei* affirms the view that mission begins with God. Even though participation in the *missio Dei* for the MCSA begins at different ecclesiological levels which are identified and discussed with the view of transforming them.

The mission pillars are in fact the actualisation of the mission of healing and reconciliation, which is Trinitarian inclined through proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation in post-1994 South Africa. (1) The MCSA mission pillars embody a serious call to mission that begins with the scriptural mandate for mission. (2) The mission pillars seek to confront some of the matters in MCSA that block mission. (3) The mission pillars further seek to build on those matters in MCSA’s local churches which can enhance mission. (4) The four mission pillars attempt to give some practical help for identifying mission needs, mission people and mission equipment.

Worth noting in this regard is the mission pillar of spirituality seeks to highlight that the MCSA should seek a deep engagement with the poor (Matt 25:31 ff). The poor mediate the grace of God in Christ to those who allow themselves to see. However, it is grace that scalds

and burns, challenging every value structure by which people live, forcing people to replace consumerism with commitment.

6.2. Recommendations:

As the study reflects on the various processes addressed by the MCSA the sense of ecclesiology concerns which reflected particular context is experienced. However, there is clearly a special focus on the whole issue of healing and reconciliation, that is, an interpretive process that seeks to express the MCSA's theology in mission. This process, as have been seen in the different mechanisms applied, takes different forms and addresses complex issues. For instance, the issue of unity is central and seeks to inform the MCSA's witness. The MCSA vision of a Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations is a critical lens in which the MCSA seeks to apply the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation. The MCSA's vision and mission statements and the mission pillars as written places emphasise healing and reconciliation as the acts of God, because it is God who forgives, reconciles, and transforms the whole creation.

The MCSA further acknowledges and maintains that it was "raised up to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land by the proclamation of the Evangelical Faith" (MCSA Book of Order 2014:11). Healing and reconciliation represents the delicate balance between mission and participation. It is an opportunity to work toward breaking down barriers and to invite the whole church community together to transformation.

However, there are three challenges that need to be acknowledged about the MCSA's vision and mission statements. (a) The witness of the church must be held in balance with the four mission pillars for healing and reconciliation in a post-1994 South African context. (b) The MCSA's vision and mission suggest that there can be no witness to healing and reconciliation that is separated from understanding Africa as a broken and a bleeding continent, thence healing of Africa and the nations is of paramount importance. (c) The central motive of the mission pillars is not to recruit new members for the church. It is, instead, a profound response to proclaim the gospel of healing and transformation with deep compassion for others.

The central message of healing and reconciliation in the MCSA mission statement can be summarised in four points.

- The MCSA understands that Christ's healing is offered to every person. Thence the MCSA believes God's grace is at work in every human heart, enabling and inviting persons to turn towards God. This means God has already been at work preparing all people for the good news of healing and reconciliation through proclamation of the Word. What underlies this is profound sense of God's universal love.
- Everyone needs healing and reconciliation, not only does God love every person and offers new life, but everyone needs the life that only God can give. What underlies this is a corresponding sense of the universality of human sin. As such, all need not only forgiveness but transformation.
- Everyone can be healed; God deals with the guilt of sin by offering forgiveness. The gift of forgiveness is received through faith alone trusting in what God has done for humanity in the cross of Christ. As a result all are reconciled to God and enters into a new relationship with God.
- Everyone can receive healing and reconciliation into a new life, meaning this new life affects everything about humanity's relationships, values, lifestyle and commitment to transformation.

Clawson (2012:1) writes: "In a world caught up in pain and suffering, full of broken relationships that yearn for reconciliation, people expect their belief system to speak into the reality of their experiences. For Christians especially, to talk about a God who created the world requires that one addresses not only the pain present in that world, but how one can have transformative hope in response to it".

Healing and reconciliation is a result of sharing the MCSA's attempt to share and to invite others to experience the good news that God loves all people and to invite them all into a transforming relationship through forgiveness; they are offered new life and all are restored to the image of God, which is love. Healing comes through the proclamation of the gospel of Christ for transformation and reconciliation. God calls the MCSA to respond to God's challenge to proclaiming the gospel of healing and transformation, by implementing every member ministry in local churches. The vision and the mission statements represent what it means to struggle together as a community and that God's healing and reconciliation acts are active in that healing and transformation. Acts of healing and reconciliation are shared through proclamation and testimony, and experienced in the community through worship,

caring ministries, fellowship and through acts of compassion and justice and service ministries.

Inter alia to the above is the transformational process that the MCSA embarked on, attempting to reposition itself for the inevitable change that was coming with the unbanning of liberation movements. Thence it convened the convocation at Benoni that was to set the tone for the process of healing and reconciliation within the MCSA.

The MCSA emphasis is on service to the Kingdom and the whole activity of the church is for healing and reconciliation which is undertaken in order to continue God's mission of reaching out to his people. In order to be of service or to enhance every member ministry. The MCSA recognises that, every member has a ministry which is based on the gifts of the spirit which needs to be acknowledged and enhanced; it is of the uttermost importance for healing and reconciliation. Six calls of transformation challenges the MCSA post-1994 to create a healing community whereby many people are encouraged to participate in community outreach ministries. The MCSA as a church pro- healing and transformation needs to avoid the temptation of focusing on its own needs and members; it has a responsibility to demonstrate the love of Christ to others. A Christian community that ceases to reach out to others is one that will eventually cease to be a reconciling community.

The act of breaking of bread in Holy Communion is the most important point in Christian ministry of healing and reconciliation when Christians break bread together in their local churches. They are deepening their relationship with God and with each other in the community and relationships are restored. Breaking of bread is a way for the participants to deepen their relationship with God and each other by sharing. The act of sharing the bread signals a different type of transformative relationship. In the act of sharing and breaking of bread together is a way of breaking the barriers that used to separate people. When the walls are broken down a church attracts others to become part of a reconciled community. The MCSA's four mission pillars push the church toward a model of a church that is transforming and taking building of relationships with God and neighbour seriously. The mission pillars challenge the MCSA to inward transformation that manifests in outward actions of healing and reconciliation.

How will understanding mission as *missio Dei*, contribute to the mission of the MCSA to become an agent of healing and reconciliation in a post- 1994 South Africa? In response to the question the MCSA through the mission congress resolved to take intentional and

sustained action to implement the four mission pillars in such areas as: healing ministry, deepening MCSA's understanding of African and other spiritualities; building meaningful relationships that transcend racism, gender and all other forms of discrimination; and becoming a church in solidarity with the poor. The work of the MCSA in South Africa underlines how critical post-1994 South Africa is in the life of the church and the nation. In its mission work the church is confronted by the painful cries of the people who face daily struggles for survival, people who are crushed by poverty, injustices and violence. Perhaps the most important lesson the MCSA can learn from this particular expression of the Christian faith is that the context in which *missio Dei* and healing and reconciliation take place is critical in shaping the ministry of the Church in post-1994 South Africa. A second important lesson would be that the MCSA should avoid the temptation of judging success in ministry by numerical growth as was shown, in some instances numerical growth is an indicator of need rather than success.

What is certain is that the Church in South Africa is faced with a number of complex contextual challenges which will require a great deal of courage and faithfulness if the Christian faith is to continue to make a positive impact upon society.

The critical task of an ecclesiology of healing transformations compels the MCSA to proclaim anew that life is God's gift. The post-1994 South Africa is not so much a geographical concept as it is a definition of an emerging consciousness of a deepened spirituality, justice and service, evangelism and human empowerment, and economic development. The MCSA's churches exist within such a context to bring Christ's gospel of healing and reconciliation to transform nations.

The study reveals that healing and reconciliation in the MCSA ecclesiology is a journey in which the MCSA invites people into having a relationship with Christ through the pillar of spirituality. Healing and reconciliation are essentially relational, especially when applied in the process of transformation. Drawing upon the mission pillars the findings point to the vital role that local churches play as places where a life-giving mission is taking place. It is further noted that in order to discover the MCSA's ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation post-1994 is to understand that God is both Creator and Redeemer. The implementation of all four mission pillars must be applied collectively and as such all people are actively involved in transforming lives so that they can reflect the image.

Under the mission pillars the following observations:

The Spirituality pillar: a call to a deepened spirituality has led the MCSA's people in local churches to the firm conclusion that faith needs to be renewed by the mystery of the triune God. For deepened spirituality the MCSA sought guidance, insights and inspiration from the biblical norms that lead to a new spiritual energy. The spirituality of the MCSA in the real sense of building up the body of Christ is to be effective in the task of extending the kingdom of God. Many of the MCSA's local churches are still in an exploratory stage of other forms of worship through which spirituality is manifested in the struggles for justice and human dignity, to cultivate and strengthen individual and corporate spiritual life among people through prayer, Bible study and worship.

The Justice and service mission pillar challenges many of the MCSA's local churches to make a significant progress in the area of justice, service and reconciliation. There is increased awareness of a deepened and broadened struggle for human dignity as churches engage issues of injustice in various areas of life. In some areas the MCSA has sought to build people's power in solidarity with the victims of injustice for shaping a participatory society for healing and transformation.

The Human empowerment and economic development pillar projects have been undertaken; those projects have been detailed in the body of this study.

The Evangelism pillar is a call to evangelism and mission as a call to share in God's mission in the world and to respond to the real needs of the people as the church's witness to the hope that is in Christ.

Following from the above it is recognised that mission consists in word and deed; the MCSA's way of mission is a general outlook, sensitive to the needs of others. The MCSA's mission is a synthesis of evangelism and social concern expressing the purpose of God's love and grace towards the needy, marginalised and the vulnerable. The MCSA's social concern involves all those projects that give dignity to the community. Post-1994 South African society is still characterised by a deep sense of marginalisation of the majority of the people. Economic and social marginalisation is evident in many areas of many people in the society. Post-1994 South Africa resembles a broken society that is demonstrated by violent protests that are experienced throughout the country. The pain of poverty and inequality displaces itself in many communities across the board.

The MCSA as a church that seek to do the mission of healing and transformation by proclaiming the gospel of healing and reconciliation which can be done through varieties of testimony:

Prayer services for healing: the strength of this type of service is interactive and helps people to speak openly about their faith. In general in this service there is a time of testifying, singing and praying (Knight & Power 2010:69).

The MCSA as a healing and reconciliation church chose to do mission by identifying with the broken, socially marginalised, economically vulnerable, stigmatised, discriminated and oppressed people. Prayer service is a vital component of healing and reconciliation ministries in the church and is centred around the poor, to give voice and to hear the voice of the poor. The prophetic healing voice of the church stands a much better chance by listening to the voice of the oppressed in the church.

The economically vulnerable who live with a sense of brokenness and poverty, in their families, in their communities and societies participate by sharing their pain. They are the least of those who constitute the face of Christ in a diseased society. Reviving class meetings (fellowship groups) as places of healing and reconciliation whereby people are afforded the opportunity to share their stories, they contribute in the restoration of their dignity; class meetings if properly run can be places of caring and support.

Class meetings can serve as places where members can experience corporate worship in a small group. It is a place where each person is afforded an opportunity to give account of his or her spiritual growth, prayer will be central to their meeting. In this regard people participate in the mission through prayer; in general there will be time of testifying, singing and praying. Class meetings are significant for every member to talk about their life stories and experiences. The strength of this approach to healing is that it is interactive and helps people to share and be listened to.

The healing and reconciliation church should be critically aware that most of theologies, ethics and structures have limitations in guarding against the human dignity especially of the vulnerable. A healing and reconciliation mission should be characterised by commitment to ensuring that the poor, the vulnerable and marginalised are not subsumed under unethical systems that exclude their interests. The healing and transforming church identifies with the marginalised, the vulnerable, the poor and the oppressed not only that they can speak for the

marginalised, the vulnerable and the poor, but so they can make the church a space where the entire class of the oppressed people can be heard and listened to.

Prayer service can create space where the testimonies and the stories of the oppressed can be listened to and heard. A place where they can express their true feelings, a healing and transformation church has the capacity to preach healing. Prayer service is to help people to become comfortable in talking about the transformation God is effecting in their lives. Practising and involving the prayer service with those oppressed and broken the MCSA will give them the confidence to share testimonies for building relationships with those outside the church. Prayer services will encourage people to listen and be able to hear the stories of others.

Songs for reconciliation: this form of communal songs is evangelistic because the songs reach a broad audience made up of believers and seekers. The song is transformative because the community has experienced God's help in the past and the expectation is they will experience it again in the future. Communal testimony is a way of sharing how God is working in the community. The church can develop communal testimonies into liturgies of healing and reconciliation that can help the old and the new members to understand God's working in their lives. Many churches have stories concerning acts of kindness in the community, justice stances or even of the survival of the church during tough times (Knight & Power 2010:71).

The MCSA should carry out mission in the community by remembering those who died in violent xenophobic attacks. In the act of communal testimony the church remembers those who suffered and died waiting for shelter. In communal testimony the church remembers those who died alone, stigmatised and discriminated against by families and neighbours. In a quest of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation the MCSA should ensure that those who died did not die in vain. When remembered, it heals memories, it commemorates. The MCSA should endeavour to be a ministry of creating healing relationships, communities.

6.3. Conclusion

As the study comes to close, the study takes cognisance that there might be other studies that are engaged in similar subject and that calls for further investigation. It must also be noted

that the missiological aspects as illustrated in the study point to the MCSA as an entity but inter alia to the Christian nation. The missiological aspects and pillars as pointed out in the study point to the direction that the MCSA took to participate in the *missio Dei*: an ecclesiology of healing and reconciliation in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) in post-1994 South Africa. What is required for this mission of healing and reconciliation is a measure of flexibility that allows an interaction between what the MCSA believes and what it does, an approach to faith that recognises and celebrates the truth of who God is.

The MCSA post-1994 has taken a stance of bringing healing and reconciliation by addressing amongst others the oppression of women and forging to implement equality between white people and white ministers and among white people and black people, black people and black people. The above findings and recommendations do not in any way reflect the total sum of issues of the MCSA's ecclesiology. They present a section of issues which provides an overview of the kinds of issues that challenge and inform the MCSA ministry. Besides, as missiological reality, the MCSA mission is never a closed story, it is always open to dialogue. If the MCSA will address these shortcomings God will be glorified and the *missio Dei* will take effect.

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