NEW THOUGHT IN SOUTH AFRICA:
A PROFILE

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SUMMARY

Against the background of New Thought history in general, the dissertation researches the origins of the movement in South Africa. On the basis of primary documents, made available by leaders and other informants, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the roots and history of New Thought in South Africa has been reconstructed. Aspects of New Thought belief, such as God, Jesus, Christ, the Bible, prayer, meditation, wealth, prosperity, death and reincarnation are discussed. It becomes apparent that, with its syncretistic, flexible and open structure, as well as the unique way in which services (weddings, christenings, funerals) are conducted, New Thought offers an alternative to spiritual and religiously minded people in South Africa, and shows potential to play a dynamic role in the cross-cultural bridging that is taking place in a changing South Africa.
KEY TERMS

New Thought; New Age; alternative religion; power of the mind; healing; metaphysical interpretation of Bible; Divine Science; Religious Science; Unity School of Christianity; INTA (International New Thought Alliance); Ralph Waldo Emerson; Phineas Parkhurst Quimby; Mary Baker Eddy.
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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM AND APPROACH

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In this study I want to research the New Thought movement in South Africa by developing a profile in terms of a wide framework. First surveying the general history of New Thought in its wider context, I shall then focus on how it came to South Africa, and on the individuals responsible for this. I shall discuss what it was that attracted and motivated them to join the teaching and later to even become members and leaders within the movement, as well as the results of their efforts.

Since it will focus only on a profile of New Thought in South Africa, this work will not involve the research of any other period or time in which people had "new" ideas. This project is not about New Thought in general, it is not a discussion of its theology, nor an evaluation of any of its belief systems in general.

It is an attempt to understand what South African New Thoughters believe, how and where they conduct their services, the operation of the organisational structure and the membership involvement. Through this work I would like to determine the position of
New Thought in South Africa by looking at the past, the present and then the possibilities for any expansion for the future.

Is New Thought still actively alive in South Africa? What are its characteristic features and where will one find New Thought activity? Can it survive in a multireligious, multicultural country like South Africa? One needs to investigate the possibilities of New Thought as a contribution to the change of lives and the provision of answers and positive solutions to problems, as well as determining the conditions for its relevance in building bridges across a multidimensional land, allowing people from different backgrounds, language, culture, religion and political beliefs, to work towards a win-win situation where everyone can benefit and be happy.

This study proceeds from my personal, subjective conviction that New Thought has the historical resources to play a major part in bridging different cultures, languages, religious and political beliefs in these times of major change and adjustment. It is unmistakable that we are at a turning point in our history. "In every epoch", Teilhard de Chardin (1959:213) says, "man has thought himself at a 'turning-point of history'". The old must make way for the new. Jan Christian Smuts (1987[1926]:vi), the Boer general who was twice prime minister of South Africa, clearly stated this in the 1920s when he said that "the old concepts and formulas are no longer adequate to express our modern outlook. The old bottles will no longer hold the new wine. The spiritual temple of the future, while it will be built largely of the old well-proved materials, will require new
and ampler foundations in the light of the immense extension of our intellectual 
horizons". Ferguson (1980:25) feels that "the crises of our time are the necessary 
impetus for the revolution now under way".

In South Africa we have found this to be true. We are desperately seeking new and 
capable bottles to hold the new wine that change and crises have cultivated. New 
paradigms are in the process of being created, and we are thinking in new ways about 
old problems. On a personal level, I believe that New Thought can help us with this 
process as it presents to us a new form in which we can think and experience the old. 
But one cannot embrace the new, if one has not yet let go of the old.

A new thought or paradigm is not always accepted with open arms. More often it is 
treated with coolness, hostility and even mockery. As Zakkie Zuidmeer ([sa]:1) wrote in 
the late 1930s, "What happens to the bearer of an up to now slumbering truth, when he 
appears on the scene? Will he not be crucified and torn to pieces by the dogs of envy, 
craftiness and ignorance? The manner in which the world deals with a new truth, is first 
to mock it, then to be angry about it, and then to accept it and repeat it in pious gestures 
from the street corners, claiming that it had always been its opinion and point of view. 
In the meantime, the one who first taught this truth, had probably already died of a 
broken heart or been killed for what he had believed in" (translation MV).
1.2 SURVEY OF LITERATURE

As far as South African New Thought is concerned, one or two general and popular works have been published regarding the principles of New Thought (see chapter 3) but, to my knowledge, no academic research publications. Class notes exist, but these are inspired and compiled from text books and other publications by the different member groups existing as the New Thought movement. This will be a first attempt in South Africa to make an academic study of this subject.

I was given a short (eight pages) publication by the School of Truth on its history and the story of Nicol Campbell, the founder and leader (Braden 1963:481-489). A magazine, *The Path of Truth*, is a monthly publication circulated to all parts of the world.

*Eureka*, compiled and edited by Sandy van Sandwyk ([sa]), tells the story of the Act Centre (as it is known) and June Jones, the leader and minister of the Association of Creative Thought in Port Elizabeth. Fifteen years of metaphysical activity are compressed into an interesting and readable reference compendium. For Sandy van Sandwyk this publication was meant to be a gift to Act - "a Gift to Remember", as it tried to capture the spirit and the very essence of Act's history and of its members. Besides the personal input of information as told by students for whom the Teaching has worked, it contains "nuggets of deep thought ... a collection of aphorisms, carefully chosen and edited, to serve as thought startlers", and a treasure trove of "a selection of
meaningful metaphysical prose and poetry" (Van Sandwyk [sa]:43, 57). Initially only one hundred gift copies of this popular compendium were printed. Act also circulates a monthly magazine, ACTion, to its members.

Naomi le Roith's (1995) *How to achieve health, happiness, prosperity and success* tells the story of her introduction to New Thought, as well as guidelines on using the subconscious power within us.

1.3 METHOD

For this research project I decided on the qualitative method which is defined as "a research that produces descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior" (Taylor & Bogdan 1984:5). It concentrates "on qualities of human behaviour" (Mouton 1988:1). Descriptive data includes the writing on the general history of New Thought, its origin in South Africa, a look at the operational structure of the different organisations, services, liturgy and membership of some New Thought groups. From the interviewees' written and spoken words, the focus then shifts to the individual's own personal beliefs, the way they are thinking, understanding and seeing their role as leaders, ministers and individuals within the New Thought movement. This attempt to "understand on a personal level the motives and beliefs behind people's actions" is what the phenomenologist seeks to understand "through qualitative methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing and others that yield descriptive data" (Taylor & Bogdan 1984:2).
Looking at the above-mentioned data collection methods, the observer in the participant observation, collects his or her data by participating in the daily life of the participant. As an active member of the New Thought movement, I did participate in the various activities of groups. In order to get a better understanding of the individual, I made use of interviews, and all participants openly shared in these discussions. When asked for any documentary sources which might include autobiographies, letters, diaries, notes and memorandums, participants were not readily able to comply. One individual confessed that she never writes anything down, and if she does, it is on pieces of paper that never get filed away. Another extended an open invitation to me to come and work through all collected and filed data, but distance made this impossible.

I have used three types of unstructured interviews (Schurink 1988:139-141) in qualitative methodology. For this research project (to a more or lesser degree), I have made use of all three types of interviews. I did, however, make adjustments and moved beyond their explanatory boundaries in order to suit my own personal situation. In the "informal conversation type" or "in-depth" interview, researchers usually do not acquaint themselves with any of the existing literature, fearing the effect it may have on their objectivity. Although I am informed about the participants' background, and have read the available literature, I nevertheless did limit my own contribution to the interviews in order to obtain the maximum input from them.
With the second type of interview, the "unstructured interviews using a schedule", I made use of questions that seemed to act as guidelines for the interview. This specific line of questioning helped to control the interview situation as well as the data required.

The last type, the "open-ended interview", consists of a "set of previously formulated open questions on an interview guide, carefully arranged, that are put to all the subjects in a fairly similar sequence" (Schurink 1988:141). The disadvantage of this type seems to be the relatively little information one gains on the informant's "world". I did not have this experience. Although I kept to my questions as a guideline, the participants were relaxed and openly shared their feelings, hopes, fears and ideas with me. The actual guideline did not limit us to the given questions but, throughout the conversation, we addressed and discussed any other related issues that seemed to be important to the individual.

The fact that I know the background of my participants and that I share the same interests, was no disadvantage, but rather a great advantage in this research project. I knew exactly whom I wanted to interview and I either knew or had met with them prior to these sessions. A relationship of mutual trust and respect was immediately established between interviewer and participant, and they were very keen and willing to assist me with this project.
Initially eleven letters, in which I introduced and explained the aims of this research project, were sent to individuals, to which eight replied. At first my focus was on those who are still actively involved in New Thought, practising either from home or from an established centre, church or school. Secondly I contacted those who at the time were considering retirement from active involvement as ministers, having played major roles in establishing New Thought in South Africa. At a later stage I decided to have interviews with two newly ordained ministers in the Movement and with an individual who has left New Thought. Two letters were returned to me, address unknown. One individual neither returned any correspondence nor replied to it. Another individual has passed on during the course of this project and his daughter granted me an interview. Information on one individual, a pioneer figure in the New Thought movement, who had lived in the 1930s, and was now deceased, was supplied by members of the school and through existing literature.

After the initial contact by means of letters and questionnaires, I interviewed the individuals. I took notes and taped the conversations which were partly transcribed. Some of the interviewees gave me extra literature to read through.

Excluding the individual who was one of the early pioneers (I will deal with his school at a later stage), ten out of eleven participants are female. The one male passed away, as mentioned, but information about him and his centre is included in this profile. Their ages range from forty to seventy-nine years. Seven are English speaking, one speaks
Sotho and another Zulu, one is Afrikaans and another is fully bilingual, having been
brought up speaking Afrikaans as well as English. Nine are white, while two are black.

Regarding their marital status, two are still married, while the one who passed away
was married at the time. Four are divorced and two are widowed. There is one single
person and one single mother. Geographically speaking, one is from Durban, two from
Soweto, three from Port Elizabeth and five from Johannesburg.

Three participants had a Catholic religious upbringing, while another three had an
Anglican background. One was raised in the Jewish culture, one as a Methodist, one as
a Presbyterian and two as Dutch Reformed. Except for one individual, all the others
matriculated or obtained a similar qualification while abroad. Two trained as teachers,
one as a nurse and one holds a BSc degree. Two have postgraduate degrees (Social
Work, Psychology and Science of Religion). One had a doctorate degree in Business
and Philosophy, and another is busy with her degree in Theology. Three participants
received honorary doctorates from International New Thought individuals or groups.

Two individuals were attracted to the teaching in their early twenties, while the
majority became aware of it in their thirties, and three of them in their forties.
Except for one person, all participants are ordained ministers in the New Thought movement. They were all ordained by overseas members representing one of the many groups within the larger movement. Religious Science featured most often, with others ordained into Divine Science, Unity and independent groups. Seven individuals received their ordination in the United States of America, while three were ordained in South Africa, but by an overseas representative.

Nine of the participants started a centre, church or school. One took over a centre after the leader retired and although another has not started anything, she acts as associate minister and teacher at an established centre. Except for one who occupied part of an office building, all started off from home. At a later stage they rented rooms, made use of hotels, church and other halls, and eventually built or occupied their own building. Although some rely exclusively on their ministries to support them, others are doing this on a voluntary basis. Many of these individuals have trained other students who are now either ordained ministers themselves or teachers and practitioners.

1.4 RELEVANCE

New Thought in general, but especially in South Africa, is not widely acknowledged as a main religious movement, with its own unique history, philosophy and theology. Rather, it is looked upon as a syncretistic mixture of everything else, including thoughts and practices of reincarnation, life after death, regression and rebirthing, crystals, tarot
readings, astrology, meditation, holistic and alternative medicine, clairvoyance, yoga, numerology, psychic and spiritual healing, and many more.

It is partly New Thought's own fault for being "ignored" in academic and scholarly circles, for it "has not produced capable and credible scholars of the tradition. Those few scholars who have also been participants in the movement have found few if any academic resources within the movement. It is not uncommon for New Thought leaders to take an ambivalent, if not in fact hostile, stance towards higher education - especially theological education. New Thought has developed no scholarly societies, academic journals, or professional forums for dialogue and deliberation" (DeChant 1995:2). And this is specifically true of New Thought in South Africa.

Being at present the only active academic scholar of New Thought on a post-graduate level in South Africa, I felt it necessary to make a thorough academic analysis - the first - of this movement. This will contribute to the knowledge and wider understanding of the religious pluralism and religious dynamics of this movement, as well as the role and influence it has on South African society.

1.5 LAYOUT

There is a short description of the general history of New Thought in chapter two. Chapter three is about New Thought's origins in South Africa, and its major
contributors, while chapter four deals with New Thought beliefs as expressed and shared by the participants. In chapter five there is a descriptive explanation of typical New Thought services and liturgy. Chapter six has a look at the organisational structure as well as the membership, and the study is concluded in chapter seven.
ENDNOTES

1. See Appendix for questionnaire.

2. It has always been a characteristic of the New Thought movement that the majority of individuals in leadership positions and the members are women.

3. My personal involvement in New Thought includes the facts that I am an ordained minister in the New Thought movement, an executive Board Member of the International New Thought Alliance (INTA - see chapter 2, section 2.3), serving on the Board of Directors of the Society for the Study of Metaphysical Religion, the INTA District President for South Africa, and a member of the INTA Educational Standards and Accreditation Committee.
CHAPTER 2

NEW THOUGHT HISTORY

New Thought, a blend of religion and philosophy, founded in the United States in the late 19th century, was described by William James (1987[1902]:88-89) as the American people's "only decidedly original contribution to the systematic philosophy of life". Freedom of religion was the first right to be guaranteed by The Bill of Rights in 1791 in the United States of America and, as a response to this spirit of religious freedom and tolerance, New Thought arose in rebellion against faiths of fear and preaching rooted in concepts of sin and damnation.

As New Thought is not widely known, it seems essential to start with (2.1) a definition, followed by (2.2) a short overview of its history, roots and the acknowledgement of its forerunners and founders, (2.3) the International New Thought Alliance, (2.4) its relation to the New Age movement and the relevance of the term for today, as well as (2.5) the wide influence of New Thought.

2.1 WHAT IS NEW THOUGHT?

Because of the unusual dimensions and tolerance of the New Thought movement, it is not easily defined. Larson (1987 [1897]:ix) in his opening words, states clearly that
"New Thought is a basic attempt to reinterpret the conventional dogmas of historic religion". Braden (quoted in Larson 1987[1897]:ix) indicates through the title of his book, *Spirits in rebellion*, that the spokespeople of this movement were and still are in rebellion, even though they regard themselves as the true proponents of early Christianity.

As Braden (1963:9) indicates, New Thought is a term "one loosely used to cover a wide range of philosophical, theological, psychological and practical approaches to God, to the world, to life and its problems, that had its development within the last hundred years, chiefly in America, though under one name or another it has extended itself over much of the Western world".

Braden's (1963) book, the most complete survey on New Thought, goes on to describe that "New Thought is neither church, cult nor sect. It stands for Universal Brotherhood, teaches that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins, including the healing of the sick; that health, happiness and success are the birthright of every child of God. There is no future punishment. The individual rewards and punishes himself as he conforms to or opposes the Eternal Law of life. New Thought believes that the great need is not so much a theoretical Christianity as an applied one; that living the Christ life does not so much imply uniformity of creed or form, as being activated by the same inward Spirit, demonstrated by loving helpfulness to one's fellows...
It holds that all religions and all peoples are at different stages of growth. Every man has a right to live his own life in accordance with the highest dictates of his own conscience, for where truth is there must be freedom...

It is not a name of any fixed system of thought, philosophy, or religion, for when moulded into a system, it ceases to be 'New' Thought. But the following can be said of it: It practices in the twentieth century what Jesus taught in the first. He taught healing, ... it practices healing; He said 'Judge not', ... it sees the good in others; He said 'take no anxious thought for tomorrow', ... it practices divine supply; He taught love and brotherhood, ... it is demonstrating unity and cooperation...

The New Thought is the Christ Thought made new by being applied and proved in every day affairs. New Thought is positive, constructive, a philosophy of optimism, the recognition, realization and manifestation of God in Man" (Braden 1963:12).

Elmer Gifford (Braden 1963:12-13) says that "as Mind advances, the old forms die, because they no longer serve or satisfy men's needs ... New Thought can never therefore be a finished product and if it remains truly New Thought, it will never be completed enough to creedalize it. We think of New Thought as a Science, because Science is demonstrable and the knowledge of Truth is demonstrable. New Thought is definitely committed to finding and revealing the good and the beautiful in life. It is dedicated to the development of latent possibilities in man. New Thought is
constructive, never destructive. It teaches men to live not to die. The adherents of New Thought worship God Omnipotent in whom we live and move and have our being and of which we are perfect individualizations.

Many people have and still are, breaking away from the "old" - traditional dogmatic religious beliefs - to seek and to experience a new definition of God, Christ, Holy Spirit and other relevant topics. If the previous "old" form did not work, then let us give the "new" system an opportunity.

According to New Thought thinkers, Jesus was one of the most outstanding examples of a New Thoughter, because his thinking, believing and example were "new" thought in his day, opposing the "old" ways of the priesthood and its practices in those days. Jesus was a master and taught the process of paradigm shift, as he proclaimed in Matthew 9:17 "... Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine in fresh skins and both are preserved".

One of the early New Thought leaders, Sarah J Farmer (Anderson 1993:1), also makes mention of the shift to newness by defining New Thought as follows: "It is simply putting ourselves in new relation to the world about us by changing our thought concerning it. ... We are not creatures of circumstance; we are creators ...". Charles Fillmore (1981:140) defined New Thought as "a mental system that holds man as being
one with God (good) through the power of constructive thinking". For Szasz (1984:83) New Thought "is a system of doctrine (and practice) which stresses that the physical and mental circumstances of life may be controlled by consciously cultivating a "positive" attitude toward all things".

According to one of our more recent New Thought scholars, Alan Anderson (1993:1), "New Thought is a movement of philosophical-religious thought and action originating in the 19th century United States and emphasizing the attainment of health, wealth, and happiness through the control of one's conscious and non-conscious beliefs, attitudes, and expectations by means of deliberately practising the presence of a wholly benevolent deity".

For Dell deChant (1991b:16), another contemporary New Thought scholar, New Thought - like Christianity - "is a diverse religious movement, because both Christian and non-Christian groups can be found under this broad heading". In their series of lessons, the Unity-Progressive Council (DeChant 1991b:16) states that all New Thought groups affirm, at least that "Ultimate Reality is Good; Humanity is divine; Mind is primary and causative; The freedom of individuals in matters of religious belief".

2.2 HISTORY, ROOTS, FORERUNNERS AND FOUNDERS

2.2.1 Roots and forerunners
Although the origins of New Thought are complex, there is nothing "new" about New Thought. At first it was argued that it simply restated the spiritual message of Jesus in a very practical way. According to William James (1987[1902]:91) the movement had many sources, including the Gospels, the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Berkeleian idealism, spiritualism, the theory of evolution and Hinduism. Alan Anderson (1993:1) says in his paper that "although New Thought is of Western origin, it absorbed strong Eastern influences that continue to this day". He looked at some connections between New Thought and Eastern thought and explored how both these worlds "might fit into a larger pattern of thinking, which might lead to an universal theology or philosophy".

Prior to the acceptance of the present name "New Thought", the movement was known by other names, such as Mind Cure, Mental Science and The Metaphysical movement, to mention the most well-known ones. Dorothy Elder (1992:9) comfortably uses the names Metaphysical and New Thought interchangeably for this philosophy. New Thought's present approach to Biblical exegesis is known as the metaphysical interpretation, but Dell deChant is of the opinion that it should correctly be called "allegorical". To him it is not a question of whether "we are metaphysical, but what is the basis of our metaphysics" and he clearly terms it "idealistic allegorical exegesis" (DeChant 1994:2). Yet it seems as if the popular name "metaphysical interpretation", for allegorical exegesis, has remained with New Thought. In discussing one of the major New Thought movements, Steven Sadleir (1992:152) classifies Religious Science (founded by Ernest Holmes), under the heading of Metaphysical Teachings.
New Thought's philosophical and religious roots may be traced back as far as the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato (428-348 BCE). In the History and culture series of the Unity-Progressive Theological Seminary, there is a complete and in-depth study of the history of philosophy and its influence on New Thought (DeChant 1992). Philosophically, New Thought is seen as a brand of Idealism, directly linked with Plato's doctrine of The Forms, in which he affirmed that "ideas - The Forms - are primary and metaphysically prior to material objects" (DeChant 1992[Class2]:2).

Dell deChant (1991b:19) defines Idealism as "any system of thinking/believing/understanding that recognizes that (in one way or another) the highest reality is mental". Tracing the term "Idealism" back to a text of Gottfried Leibniz (1648-1716) in which he used it to describe Plato's philosophy as well as to distinguish it from the materialist philosophy of Epicurus (341-270 BCE), it has since been universally accepted and today, "Plato is recognized as the first Idealist" (DeChant 1992[Class2]:2).

Other thinkers, acknowledged by New Thought as precursors of the movement, include Origen (185-254 CE), Augustine (354-430 CE), John Scotus Erigena (810-877), Anselm (1033-1109), medieval scholasticism, Descartes (1596-1650), Spinoza (1632-1677), Hegel (1770-1831), and mysticism (DeChant 1991b:19).
Although there are many differences of thought and practice in New Thought, there seem to be two emphases: practical healing and an ideology or theology (Idealism) that explains the sources of the healing power. According to Braden (1963:26-27) the really important thing about New Thought is the merging of the two emphases. He continues, saying that "the idealistic philosophers never carried out what New Thought sees as the logical implications of their thought, namely the healing of disease, and many who were working practically toward the cure of disease by mental means found no support in religion or philosophy for the methods they sought to employ. It was in New Thought that these two were combined, and it was in the person of PP Quimby (1802-1866) that they were first linked together in ways which ultimately produced what is known today as New Thought".

An important philosophical seed of what is now known as New Thought, is found in Hegel’s Absolute Idealism. This seed needed the soil of the American culture in order to grow, and was cultivated by Transcendentalism, the mental healing movement, and Christian Science.

Rationalism, the theory that the exercise of reason provides the only valid basis for and source of knowledge, was considered a subclass of Idealism. Because some of the Rationalists, like Descartes (1596-1650), Spinoza (1632-1677), Leibniz (1646-1716) and Berkeley (1684-1753) were classified as Idealists, it is not surprising that they are included in the historic trajectory of Idealism. The distinction between Rationalism and
Idealism may be understood according to DeChant (1992[Class2]:6) in the sense that the "former tends to be especially concerned with issues related to epistemology (theory of knowledge) and philosophic method and the latter tends to be a comprehensive philosophic system which utilizes all the subdisciplines of philosophy".

The Civil War (1861-1865) has been the hallmark event in American history in the 19th century. It changed the whole of American society and, with its radical changes, it prepared the way for a modern America. Postwar America witnessed the full eruption of secularisation and modernisation. It was a period influenced by industrialisation, urbanisation and the developing of a mass society. Other influences were the emerging of a middle class, literacy increase, expansion of education, the westward move, increase in European immigration and the appearance of female empowerment movements.

The European influences had quite an effect on the precursors of New Thought. Besides the impact of the Idealists and Rationalists, the names of Mesmer, Swedenborg and Emerson, may be mentioned.

2.2.1.1 Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815)

Franz Anton Mesmer, who used hypnotism (then known as mesmerism) in healing, is mentioned for his influence on Quimby, the first great exponent of New Thought in
America. Mesmer’s theories confirmed what had been claimed for millennia that the use of the imaginative faculty in a person can exert a beneficial influence on health. This (hypnosis) was considered to be the beginning of the sciences of psychiatry or psychoanalysis and metaphysics.

2.2.1.2 Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772)

Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish seer (also assessor, scientist, philosopher, expert in anatomy, metallurgy, psychology, cosmology, physics, chemistry and various other scientific disciplines, statesman and economist, revelationist and prophet), had a great impact on the Transcendentalist movement, as well as on Quimby and Evans. After a religious experience that changed his life, he developed a religious system, revitalised the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation and established the Church of the New Jerusalem.

His Doctrine of Correspondences reminds one of Platonic Idealism. He states that "objects and phenomena in the physical/material world are the reflection of objects in the spiritual realm" (DeChant 1992[Class3]:3). He is best classified as a Neoplatonist for "his belief in spiritual intermediaries and his radical depreciation of the material world" (DeChant 1992[Class3]:3).4
2.2.1.3 Hegel (1770-1831)

The impact of Hegel on the development of New Thought is noticeable. His Idealism reached the American populace by the end of the Civil War, and emerged as New Thought. Hegel's influence was felt in Transcendentalism (which came to an end around 1860), an American intellectual and religious movement which came into existence before the Civil War.

2.2.1.4 Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism arose in reaction to the sensationalism (as John Locke's theory of knowledge was labelled) of the Unitarians who were influenced by this theory and who, in their time, strongly reacted against the rigid tradition of Orthodox Christianity.

A group of young Unitarians in revolt against Unitarianism met together at times to participate in deep conversation and, in due course, the movement became known as Transcendentalism. For Protestant Christianity at the time, only a favoured few (those in the Bible or the elect), were able to receive knowledge through a revelation or by intuition. The Transcendentalists claimed this for ALL people. One of their unique characteristics that had a direct influence on New Thought is their belief in humanity's spiritual nature - "the supreme dignity of the individual man" (Braden 1963:31). Another quality, common in New Thought today, is the support of the enfranchisement of women and their equal rights. The Unitarians were also among the first Americans to
read and study translations of Eastern scriptures, including the Upanishads. Thus the influence of oriental thought was clearly seen in their work.

2.2.1.5 Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

The leader of the Transcendentalists and the one who seems to have had the greatest influence on New Thought, was Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was claimed by some New Thought leaders as the Father of New Thought. According to Frederick Bailes (in Braden 1963:35-36), Emerson suffered from tuberculosis and it seems that he unconsciously used the true method to heal himself. He wrote that "we are healed by what we turn TO rather than by what we turn FROM". He did not focus on overcoming his illness, but rather "dwelt deep in the sense of oneness with the Over-Soul" and was healed "as an effect of his dominant inward thought patterns". Emerson (in Braden 1963:37) writes, "we live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the Eternal ONE ... the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and object are one. Consciousness is the only reality ... the only God there is". If we could learn to place ourselves in the midst of that great stream of power and wisdom we are, according to Bailes (quoted in Braden 1963:37), living the whole secret of Emerson's philosophy.

Two other schools of thought that act as precursors for New Thought are Spiritualism (emerging around 1850) and Theosophy (emerging around 1875). New Thought
attracted Spiritualists who made use of their facilities and publications to spread their own teachings. Without going into any detail regarding the origin and development of Spiritualism, we might just mention that New Thought rejects its teachings. The magus of Theosophy was Helena Petrovan Blavatsky (1831-1891). These teachings introduced new religious dimensions to the American society, and thus helped to prepare the way for New Thought.

2.2.1.6 Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866)

As mentioned before, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, considered by some to be the founder of the New Thought movement (Braden 1963:68), was deeply influenced by Mesmer and Swedenborg. Clockmaker, faith healer and inventor, he was inspired by the science of mesmerism. He not only did practise it, but developed it much further and into "Quimbyism", a theory of mental healing. Having had a "mental" healing himself (he was told that horse riding would cure the pain in his back, and by doing so, he did feel better), he realised that disease had no reality except in a person's belief. "Disease", he said, "is something made by belief or forced upon us by our parents or public opinion ... Now if you can face the error and argue it down then you can cure the sick. Disease is false reasoning" (Braden 1963:59). The cure of any disease does not lie in the medicine, but in the confidence of the patient in the doctor or medium. So sickness and disease have no reality except as they are created by the mind. And truth is the cure. He maintained that the exact science he used to heal diseases, was the science and method used by Jesus Christ.
According to Ervin Seale (quoted in Braden 1963:85), Quimby taught that "all our actions are really reactions. All that you and I say and do and engage ourselves in, are not direct actions of our conscious will; they are really reactions of our subjective conditioning. Modern psychology has just come to that point. But it was Quimbyism". He investigated the mind and discovered that what we believe, we create; that what we are, we do; and that people act as they are acted upon. We are all under orders from the Divine Will within.

Dell deChant gives Quimby the credit for laying the foundation for New Thought, but does not acknowledge him as its founder. This honour goes to Emma Curtis Hopkins, "the teacher of teachers" (see page 31).

2.2.1.7 Warren Felt Evans (1817-1889)

Warren Felt Evans was a Methodist minister, psychotherapist and healer. He was one of the many cured by Quimby and as a result became a devoted student of this method of healing. Although less original than Quimby, he was the first to write of the new healing and its principles as taught and practised by Quimby. That's why Braden (1963:89) calls him the Pioneer Writer of New Thought. He was the first to link New Thought with the intellectual history of the West. He is recognised especially for his contribution to the philosophical and theological development of New Thought and was considered the most influential literary figure in its early period. But in the New
Thoughter's attempt to develop a popular and practical religion, they abandoned any attempt to develop an academic profile - in other words, they forgot all about Evans.

Evans clearly states the influence, directly or indirectly, of the other religions of the world on the leaders of this movement, when he identifies the essential teaching and ideas of Christianity with oriental thought, especially that of Hinduism and Buddhism (apart from Platonism, Hermetic Philosophy and the Kabbala). To the list of those who influenced Evans, Teahan (1979:64) adds Swedenborg, philosophical Idealism, mysticism, modern science and what he termed "esoteric Christianity".8

The list of other significant leaders and individuals, includes Julius and Annetta Dresser, Ursula Gestefeld, Annie Rix Militz, Elizabeth Towne, Horatio Dresser, Thomas Troward, Emmet Fox, Joel Goldsmith, Ralph Waldo Trine and many others.9

2.2.2 Leaders of organisational movements and subsequent history

Both Quimby and Evans, as well as many other founders of movements, had no interest in the forming of an organised movement. But their students, usually healed by them, started to teach and preach their methods and, through their devotion and eagerness to spread this teaching, formal organisations started to develop.
2.2.2.1 Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910)

She was the first to really organise a healing ministry. Having been described as a highly-strung, intelligent woman, who manifested obvious neurotic tendencies from childhood Mary, an invalid for many years, was healed by Quimby's message. Then after a bad accident (near death experience) while reading Matthew 9:2-7 she recovered completely and was healed. "From this event", stated Sadleir (1992:74), "grew one of America's major religious denominations, which is represented around the world". She is also said to have received a revelation in that hour, that proclaimed that she embodied the Second Manifestation of Christ, now revealed in the Superior Female (Larson 1987[1897]:126).

In 1879 Eddy founded and formally established the Christian Science church. This, as well as the publishing of her manuscript Science and health, helped to lay the groundwork for New Thought. Although many were attracted to her and her teachings, her rigid rule, her claims to divinity and her reputation for greed and self-glorification became intolerable to some of her followers. She also denied that she ever drew from Quimby's ideas and insisted that Christian Science was a product of a divine revelation. Having feared that her followers might draw inspiration from sources other than herself, she declared that no student could "buy, sell, nor circulate Christian Science literature which is not thoroughly correct" (Larson 1987 [1897]:109). She even expelled those who dared to deviate from her strict teachings.
The students who left Mrs Eddy now joined forces in the general New Thought movement. So Christian Science and New Thought had split into two streams, even before 1900. There were many aspects on which both agreed: their concern with physical health and that their promoting of bodily health should not be the major part of their work; and they both believed that the solution to any problem may be found through discovering the Divine Nature of reality and allowing it to transform one's understanding first and then one's circumstances; they both accepted that God is ALL.

However, there are major differences between New Thought and Christian Science, of which the first is the status of matter. "New Thought embraces traditional Western idealism, which maintains that although matter is not real in the sense of having existence apart from mind, it is real in the sense of being an appearance of mind or spirit. Christian Science maintains that matter is a mere illusion" (Anderson 1993:4). Another difference is the one of dogma. New Thought, unlike Christian Science, is nondogmatic. It experiences freedom of thought and has no unchanging and authoritative textbook. It relies on voluntary contributions for healing work and many of its followers believe in reincarnation. Medicine is another point of conflict. New Thought, though obviously preferring nonmedical means, does acknowledge and accept medical assistance, whereas Christian Science exclusively emphasises spiritual healing. According to them the causes of sickness, evil and death, cannot come from God, and are therefore not based on reality.
Mrs Eddy, and her Christian Science, always seems to be a topic of controversy. Yet, "without her it is doubtful that the New Thought movement would have been more than a ripple on the American religious stream" (Szasz 1984:84). And Braden (1963:130) asks, "Would New Thought have emerged as a distinct movement if Christian Science had not appeared? Who can know? What is definitely known is that at Quimby's passing there was no movement. He had no successor". Eddy, being a typical student, began to criticise her teacher, expand on his ideas, and eagerly began to teach her new-found methods to interested students. From these students who broke away from her because of her authoritarian possessiveness, structured movements began.

DeChant (1991b:22) lists the following as Eddy's most notable contributions: "Establishment of a popular religion based on the principles of Idealism. Creation of the first education program (mental healers and practitioners) and publication of a serious and systematic exposition of the religious teachings on which her movement was based". It also seems as if, for its allegorical exegesis, New Thought can trace the name "metaphysical interpretation", back to Eddy and her student Hopkins, who writes, "material terms are used to convey great spiritual truths, and physical transactions, descriptions and namings should have metaphysical interpretations" (DeChant 1994:5).

2.2.2.2 Emma Curtis Hopkins (1853-1925)

Despite the fact that the biographical information on her life is very inconsistent, Emma Curtis Hopkins is still hailed as the "Teacher of Teachers", "The Mother of New
Thought", "The Great Influence", a "Prophetess of her Age", a "genuine mystic", the "Founder of New Thought", the "Ultimate New Thought Mystic" and the "Grand Lady of New Thought". She, more than any other single teacher, influenced New Thought.

She was one of the students who left Eddy (1885) because she believed that truth comes through many religions, while Eddy believed it came only through her. She was the most outstanding student of Eddy's movement, as well as the editor of the Christian Science Journal.

With her enthusiasm for life, her integrity and her philosophy, she often challenged her students to prove the principles in their own lives. For her the teaching was more important than the teacher. She insisted on mental discipline.

The people attracted to her teaching, were those who were no longer satisfied with orthodox religions. Her teachings were universal: she included all the great truths and united all major religions of the world, including bringing the Eastern teachings into harmony with the West.

She addressed her students from day one as if they already knew all that is to be known. She never claimed any thought as original to her, but knew that her idea of God was a basic ingredient of all religions and philosophies (Anderson 1981:57). She focused on
the Christ within each individual, and throughout the universe. The basis of her healing therapy was that sickness, sin or death will disappear as if it does not exist if one directs one’s thoughts toward the All. For her "the truth is that Good is God and God is omnipresent and omnipotent, thus the Good is omnipresent. If the Good is omnipresent, the evil is nowhere present and there is no apartness" (Hopkins [sa]:39).

Not only did she train students, teachers or practitioners, but she was the first to educate ministers and have them ordained. It is noted in American history that she was also the first woman to ordain women. Hopkins agreed with the women’s movement by emphasising the idea of a feminine deity, by referring to God as "motherhood" and not just in the well known and accepted form of "fatherhood". She believed in the oneness of God and saw no distinction of sex in God. Her organisational strategies were carried on by her students and gave rise to the great movements of New Thought: Divine Science (Cramer and Brooks), Unity (the Fillmores) and Religious Science (Holmes).

Her major contributions to New Thought are summarised by DeChant (1991b:23) as follows: "Establishment of a seminary, ordination of ministers, and 'sending' of ministers to all parts of America; Creation of a non-dogmatic doctrine; Emphasis on Christianity; Separation from Eddy's movement; Development of a primary organizational structure for the New Thought movement; and teaching of the founders of the major New Thought groups".
It was said of her that "she is undoubtedly the most successful teacher in the world" and that "never before on this planet were such words of burning truth so eloquently spoken through woman" (Larson 1987[1897]:145).

She influenced the minds of many thousands of people, of whom five deserve special attention, as they were responsible for three major movements in New Thought.

2.2.2.3 Melinda Cramer (died 1907) and Nona L Brooks (1861-1945) : DIVINE SCIENCE (1898)

The Divine Science movement, considered the third largest New Thought group, and notable for its loose organisation, had two separate beginnings in the persons of Cramer and Brooks, although the names of other women are also mentioned as founders. Both Cramer and Brooks had a "divine" healing which made them study the method, becoming teachers and healers in their own right.

The success of Divine Science really revolved around the figure of Brooks. She often reminded her students not to argue about religion, but to live their views. She never claimed that Divine Science teachings were exclusive. Instead she said, "Our only wish is that if you are a member of the Presbyterian Church, you will be a better Presbyterian" (quoted in Szasz 1984:85-86).
Brooks and her two sisters laid the foundation for the institutional establishment of Divine Science, while Cramer was responsible for the organisational input. The omnipresence of God is the basic principle of Divine Science. God is everywhere and for this reason human beings must also be divine and partake of His nature. The term "science" is used frequently in New Thought and Divine Science stresses the close relationship between science and the Christ religion. It is divine science because it is based on the omnipresence of God and proves by the law of expression that, innately, a person can be only what God really is.

2.2.2.4 Myrtle (1845-1931) and Charles (1854-1948) Fillmore: UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY (1889)

Myrtle Fillmore had a miraculous healing from tuberculosis when one sentence from a lecturer turned her life around ... "I am a child of God, and therefore I do not inherit sickness". Charles Fillmore, at first doubtful, investigated New Thought and also experienced a healing from an earlier hip injury. He was now convinced about the power and the effectiveness of spiritual prayer treatment based on Truth Principles.

They both recognised Hopkins as their great teacher. The early years of their work were highlighted by healing and the publication of periodicals. Myrtle's healing was the beginning and became the inspiration for the origin of Unity, while Charles was responsible for its early growth and development. Today, Unity is claimed to be the largest and the most successful of the New Thought groups, although the Fillmores had
no desire to function as a church. Unity is an enormous operation, functioning only upon voluntary love offerings, serving the community and the world by means of their teachings, its publications, radio and television programs, prayer and healing ministries and many other services.

A possible difference between Unity and New Thought, and seemingly the one that was responsible for Unity's withdrawal as a member from the International New Thought Alliance, may be found in the degree of emphasis upon what Fillmore called the Jesus Christ teaching. His teaching is much closer in its use of language to the orthodox Christian faith. When his proposal for adding the word "Christian" to the official name of the Alliance was ignored, he finally separated from it. Fillmore (1949:31) says that "to one who gains even a meager quickening of the Spirit, Christianity ceases to be a theory; it becomes a demonstrable science of the mind". He never really wanted to write a statement of belief, as he said "we may change our mind tomorrow, and if we do we shall feel free to make a new statement of faith in harmony with the new viewpoint" (Braden 1963:260).

DeChant (1991b:30-31) summarises Unity's statements in short as follows: "Ultimate Reality is God/Good; Humanity is divine; Mind is primary and causative; Freedom of individuals (in matters of faith and expression); Christianity (the acceptance of spiritually interpreted Christian doctrine as normative)".
2.2.2.5 Ernest S Holmes (1887-1960): RELIGIOUS SCIENCE (1927)

Holmes grew up on the teachings of Emerson, through whose work he experienced a healing. Both Larson's and Trine's writings had a great influence on Holmes' mental healing system. He studied mysticism privately with the then elderly Hopkins and, only after this period, did he begin with his movement. He admitted that his predecessors in the New Thought movement had made his task much easier and that he, unlike some of the others, had had no real opposition.

In 1926 he produced a classic, The science of mind textbook. DeChant (1992[Class5]:7) states that it is considered to be one of the "most thorough and comprehensive texts on spiritual healing ever produced". Although Holmes does not claim any special revelations for Religious Science, he does admit that "the intelligent law of creative force may consciously be directed and definitely used", as the "greatest discovery of all time" (Holmes 1938:31).

In 1954 Religious Science was represented by two groups. They are known today as the United Church of Religious Science and Religious Science International.

2.3 THE INTERNATIONAL NEW THOUGHT ALLIANCE (INTA)

The INTA, previously known by other names, was founded in 1914. It is a loose association of New Thought churches, diverse religious groups and individuals and is
considered the most important attempt to assemble all of New Thought under a single umbrella. Its followers had a need to share a commonality of purpose and experience. With its annual meetings (Congresses, now called "Expos"), it gives members the opportunity to meet one another and to share their thoughts and ideas of interest and importance to the movement, through dialogue, debates and discussions.

With headquarters located in Mesa, Arizona since 1974, and with Rev Blaine Mays as president, it publishes the quarterly periodical, the *New Thought*. A second building was constructed and it now houses the Addington-INTA Archives and Research Centre.

INTA is an incorporated nonprofit religious organisation, governed by an Executive Board consisting of fourteen members including the president, one Canadian and one South African. Some of the standing committees, through which work is carried out, include the educational standards and accreditation, church growth and development, disability outreach, society for study of metaphysical religions, media, ministerial support, archives and television outreach.

As popularly advertised, INTA is a vehicle for disseminating transformational ideas that empower and connect individuals globally. It serves people who are seeking to help themselves and/or others to experience and express wholeness. It is distinctive for honouring and bringing together the common thread of all inspired thought. It believes in the intrinsic goodness of the individual. It helps individuals to discover and draw
upon the power of God within them to live fully. Its vision for the future is to be an ever widening circle of constructive influence.

2.4 THE RELATION TO THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

The term New Age means different things to different people. It is not the objective of this dissertation to provide a complete analysis of this controversial topic, but merely to indicate its relation to the New Thought Movement.

One dominant aspect of the New Age is that it introduces the concept of change on all levels of a person's existence. It signifies a period in which humankind was and still is prepared for this major transformation. Creme (1979:24) says, "We are moving into a period of climax, leading to events which will fundamentally alter life as we know it. Tremendous changes are taking place in all departments of life...".

Marilyn Ferguson (1980:19), in writing of this personal and social transformation in the 1980s, decided to use the title *The Aquarian conspiracy* for her book to indicate what is happening. The now well known term "Aquarian" (synonymous for the New Age), symbolises for her the "flow and the quenching of an ancient thirst", while "conspire" in its literal sense, means "to breathe together". This era of worldly brotherhood will be the result of the new spiritual awakening which is taking place everywhere.
For Spangler (quoted in May 1989: 10, 87-88) the New Age should represent that which helps us meet the challenges of our time. Although he believes that the New Age encompasses many things - a myth, a metaphor, a metamorphosis and even a menace - he ultimately asks the question, "In what way will this make my world a better place for my children?" Defining New Age in just three images, "children, earth and the change of mind", he believes one has a far better chance of keeping clarity on what it is really all about.

Einstein's statement that "the significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at, when we created them" (quoted in Covey 1992:42), seems to summarise the need for change in an age of transformation.

In her doctoral thesis on this subject, Chrissie Steyn (1992:5) treats the New Age as a movement and states that "the movement is not an organisation which people can join and it has no creed that everyone should confess. It is a remarkably fluid phenomenon that confounds all attempts to capture it in fixed constructs". It is not a unitary movement, but rather a pluralistic phenomenon. As Sadleir (1992:147) said, "No one organization is conducting the movement, or transition, but rather various individuals and groups are mobilizing, to address the needs of individual seekers". Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:76) summarise New Age as representing "a confluence of interests in the occult, apocalyptic events, personal and planetary healing and transformation, scientific advances and Eastern philosophy and religion. Individual New Agers pick and
choose in varying proportions from this smorgasbord of concerns, and by no means do they agree about or share an interest in all of them". One should therefore be careful not to overgeneralise the concept, New Age, as many people are not comfortable with being confined to the preconceived structure termed "New Age".

For the lay person, the New Thought Movement is considered to be New Age, but for DeChant, although there are significant similarities, there are also prominent differences. For his study of a comparative analysis of the historical and theological origins of New Thought and the New Age, he defined both as religions, in so far "as they are distinctively religious in character and social manifestation" (DeChant 1991a:68, 74).

New Thought (19th century), although at least one century older than New Age (20th century), corresponds to the latter in the fact that in the establishment and development of both, women played an extraordinary important role - New Thought in the person of Emma Curtis Hopkins and New Age through Alice Bailey. Although other precursors could be claimed by these movements, DeChant (1991a:70) felt that in "these women the respective movements are given both their first large-scale publicly articulated ideological foundation and an institutional model for carrying the ideology into practice and history". Women are still playing important leadership roles within these movements. Although their approaches differ significantly, both movements have personal transformation and healing in common. The word "new" indicates that they are
both relatively young as religions go. DeChant (1991a:74) points out further similarities in the fact that they are both "New World, countercultural movements", that they are considered "Romantic" ("New Thought, to a certain degree, is an outgrowth of nineteenth century Romanticism, and the New Age is an outgrowth of America's mid-twentieth century Romanticism") and that both are still in the process of growing and developing.

Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:77-79) add to this list the fact that "both believe in a direct relationship with the Ultimate, however conceived", and "neither movement favours hierarchical organizations". Optimism is strongly present in both, as well as the influence of Eastern religions and the training of the mind, which is considered extremely powerful. A growing interest in panentheism (ALL is in God) is noticed in both movements. New Age and New Thought are fascinated with the new physics which supports their philosophical idealistic roots.

DeChant (1991a:74-75) summarises the differences between these two movements under three headings. Historically speaking, New Thought is older than New Age, they have different (historical) origins and are nurtured by different social forces:

(a) New Thought, the gospel of happiness and prosperity, emerged on American soil at a time when there was a strong and optimistic middle class rising, in need of this new faith. Considered the "religious gilt of America's Gilded Age", it puts an "optimistic
spin on advancing secularization, increasing industrialization and rapid urbanization" (DeChant 1991a:71). New Age, as a social phenomenon, manifested in the early 1950s, but became noticeable in the 1960s when there was a strong belief in a radical change to the existing world in which peace and love would be the true rulers. Known as the "baby-boom" generation, it "continues to experiment with beliefs and ideologies which are at best distinct from those of capitalism, mainline Christianity and participatory democracy" (DeChant 1991a:72).

(b) Viewed in the light of its religious foundation and spiritual motive, New Thought's ideology is considered to be a religious Idealism (life is consciousness), tracing its historical roots as far back as Plato (428-348 BCE). New Age, on the other hand, is cosmological-apocalyptic. It seems that the "historical novel marriage of apocalypticism" (mainly Christian) and the "cosmological religious vision" (mainly pagan), has its origin in the person of Alice Bailey (DeChant 1991a:73-74). DeChant traces "apocalypticism (the belief in an imminent end to the world - or its radical transformation)" as far back as the "radical religious dualism of Zoroastrianism and its founder Zoroaster (628-551 BCE)" (DeChant 1991a:72). DeChant notices the lack of Christian eschatological symbols within the New Age apocalyptism, which have been "exchanged for those derived from cosmological/naturalistic religious premises". The latter are "typified in religious expressions such as (symbols) primal animism, and archaic religious naturalism and, in its advanced form, institutional polytheism" (DeChant 1991a:73).
(c) The third point, as noted above, shows the difference in their historical precursors. DeChant (1991a:75) makes a further observation to the effect that the New Age worldview is "essentially materialistic" and that New Thought's "theological idealism is the diametric opposite of theological materialism".

Steyn (1992:9), like DeChant (1991a:75-76), correctly notes that older traditions, and particularly New Thought, paved the way for New Age to develop. According to Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:71), New Thought is "not just a part of the New Age, but its very core". New Age found in New Thought an existing teaching with recognisable themes, a well developed platform in the sense of a structured historical movement, and an instant and very willing audience. After it took what it could from New Thought, New Age continued to develop and promote its own growth, goods and religious products to such an extent, that it now overshadows New Thought. DeChant (1991a:75) maintains that New Thought now imports the material, systems and visions of New Age. The reason is that "New Thought has failed to establish practical and academic relationships with mainstream churches", and it has neither promoted "its own intellectual development nor pursued its unique spiritual and ideological refreshment".

That is why there is a growing resistance to New Age in some New Thought circles. Because both movements are young and in a growing, evolving and changing process, tensions in the above-mentioned areas may cause further separation between the two groups. Both these movements are faced with challenges. DeChant (1991a:76) sees
New Thought's difficulties as "largely internal and manifested denominational", something which is not unique to New Thought, but rather a trend common to many adolescent religions. Of these problems "born of struggles with institutionalization, cultural sophistication, and theologization", the latter seems to be New Thought's greatest challenge. DeChant (1991a:76) says, "It is not that New Thought groups cannot engage in the theological enterprise, it is simply that they lack the resolve to invest the resources and develop the intellectual talents that are necessary to theological maturation".

New Age experiences challenges both externally and internally. DeChant (1991a:77) maintains that, on an external level, the "loss of cultural legitimacy" is at stake, as apocalypticism, one of the major elements in the New Age movement, is "inevitably short-lived". Internally, New Age struggles with the challenges common to religions in their infancy - "basic organizational order, cultural communication, and the establishment of foundational teachings", of which the latter is considered to be the greatest (DeChant 1991a:77).

Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:84) predict that "New Thought will continue, largely in its current organizational ways", while "many New Agers will find their way to New Thought organizations, but probably most will remain outside any organized religion or even organized spirituality". The fact remains that "we have entered a promising new
age, and New Thought will remain an important and distinguishable part of it" (Anderson & Whitehouse 1995:84).

2.5 THE WIDE INFLUENCE OF NEW THOUGHT

Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:xii) believe that the influence of New Thought is widely discernible in South African society, although it is not often recognised as New Thought. Many people not belonging to New Thought groups as such, or adhering to its teaching, have nevertheless "heard of positive thinking or have even read the book *The power of positive thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale, or listened to or read Robert Schuller on possibility thinking or power thinking, all without knowing that they are absorbing New Thought a step or two away from its direct expressions". In South Africa everyone knew about Reg Barrett (see page 64) and his famous radio program *Living your life*, although they had never heard of New Thought before.

The question as to whether New Thought still has a distinctive place in the sun, as it had a century ago, is answered in the affirmative by Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:xiii), "partly because its very history deserves attention, but chiefly because it offers more clearly than does any other outlook a spiritual-practical path for moving beyond being stuck in one's troubles. It does this in a spiritual way, but not a superstitiously supernatural way".
One of the major aspects of New Thought which has influenced the wider society, is its focus on "whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve". "Thought is the creative power. All cause is in mind. The law is exact. It never fails to give us back what we think about ourselves" (Bitzer 1991:4). James (1987[1902]:103) discovered that the doctrine most mind-curers brought in was that "thoughts are forces, and that, by virtue of a law that like attracts like, one man's thoughts draw to themselves as allies all the thoughts of the same character that exist the world over". "Your thoughts determine your experiences", says Susan Smith Jones (1992:10), and "each of us has the freedom to accept and embrace whatever thoughts we choose".

What is termed New Thought today, was expressed by Martin Seligman: "One of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think" (Anderson & Whitehouse 1995:8). These authors also quote William James as saying "the greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude and mind". In Proverbs 23:7 Solomon wrote "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he", and Jesus said in Romans 8:13 "as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee".

Prosperity teachings today are echoing New Thought in saying that it is one's thoughts about money and wealth, that either create poverty or prosperity. It depends on one's attitude. Successful writers like Napoleon Hill, Claude Bristol, Dale Carnegie and James Allen, who are influencing the business world were either active in New Thought

Stephen Covey, coming from outside the New Thought movement, is receiving more and more popularity among New Thought readers as well as business people. His best selling books, are used for class work in study groups, seminars and even in sermon preparation because, according to Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:114), he deals with "principle-centered, character-based, inside-out approach to life".

South African Kobus Neethling (1993:9), a leader in the field of the development of creative skills in all human beings, realised "that creativity is an experience, a new approach to life in which one sees oneself, one's personal life, business, organisation, even one's country and the world in a new light". André Pretorius, Director of Life Skills International, a firm committed to building personal excellence in all people, is another South African who extensively makes use of New Thought principles or quotes from New Thought literature in his articles. Two other motivational speakers, who fall into this category, are Steve Harris and Gerhard Ferreira.

"Numerous clergy of various denominations have adapted New Thought teachings for their congregations, or at least read its literature for inspiration and sermon ideas. Without doubt the two strongest purveyors of New Thought principles outside the
movement itself have been Reformed Church ministers Norman Vincent Peale (1898-1993) and his disciple Robert Schuller" (Anderson & Whitehouse 1995:62). Both men apparently, in one way or another, acknowledged their debt to New Thought in their lives and ministries. Emmet Fox (1886-1951) was another well-known figure in New Thought who gained recognition outside the movement. His writings were widely used, especially by Alcoholics Anonymous.

New Thought with its branch of optimism and healthy-minded attitudes, paved the way for the more modern psychological approach that maintains that mind is the source of most of what ails people physically, mentally, and spiritually. While psychologists like Alfred Adler and those who followed him, emphasised the importance of how one's thinking can effect one's happiness, other like the behaviourists and materialists, thought of it as a false optimism that cannot be proved by scientific research. Yet today, psychologists like Martin Seligman, have proved that optimism can be learned and that "optimism not only feels good, but optimists actually outperform pessimists on most measures" (Whitehouse 1993:6-7). When one is confronted by adversity, one acts spontaneously in terms of the belief system one has been brought up in or believes in, and will experience the consequences accordingly.

Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:124) believe that New Thought begins with what you give your attention to, and studies in psychology confirm this by saying that "what you give your attention to, grows". What a person expects in life, he or she will get. The
psychiatrist Scott Peck (1978:41, 288), adds to this choice and expectation, the idea of responsibility. Stephen Covey (1992:69-71) also writes extensively about a person's ability to respond to any stimulus and the freedom of choice lying between every stimulus and one's reaction to it.

New Thought teaches that if one changes one's thinking or thoughts, one can change one's reality. It is interesting to note that "current physics teaches that the act of observing, changes what is observed" (Anderson & Whitehouse 1995:4).

Modern physics expresses the same character found in both New Thought and the Eastern philosophies, namely, the awareness of the unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events, the experience of all phenomena in the world as manifestations of a basic oneness. All things are seen as interdependent and inseparable parts of this ultimate reality. "All science is the search for unity in hidden likenesses" (Bronowski 1965:13).

According to Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:127), "New Thought has always been optimistic, believing as it does in one Presence and one Power, which is good. Now science has come up with support for such beliefs". The very popular books of Fritjof Capra (The tao of physics), Gary Zukav (The dancing wu li masters) and Amaury de Riencourt (The eye of shiva: Eastern mysticism and science), demonstrate this unity.
New Thought, since its beginning, has emphasised healing of body, mind and spirit by concentrating on the power of the mind (Williamson 1993:239). In its earlier days, New Thought was referred to as the Mind-Cure movement or the religion of healthy-mindness (as named by William James).

Today many individuals, whether belonging to New Thought groups or not, are seeking alternative medicine, rather than orthodox medicine. With greater understanding of the power of the mind, people are realising the cause of disease and are looking for appropriate holistic healing methods. Louise Hay (1989 & 1993) is well known for her books on the mental causes for physical illness and the metaphysical way to overcome them.

Physician Larry Dossey showed through his extensive studies the power of prayer to heal, especially if the "prayer is some version of 'Thy will be done' or a 'let go and let God' approach" (Anderson & Whitehouse 1995:128). Other popular New Thought and New Age physicians supporting the healing power of the mind, are Deepak Chopra and Bernie Siegel.

Patlian (1995:6), focusing on Romans 12:2, is pleading for a move from healing to transformation. He says that "for more than 100 years, New Thought's intention was to heal, aid in recovery, and nurture those wounded by life. Those are noble intentions, but as the new millennium approaches, we must broaden our mandate and our intention
to embrace all who will come. To be truly inclusive is to emphasize spiritual health, not healing" (Patlian 1995:7).

In the context of South Africa, one could page through the *Odyssey*, a South African published magazine, which offers one an adventure in more conscious living, to notice the vast resources of alternative therapy, healing, networking and contacts. It is clear that New Thought principles, together with the more popular New Age teachings and methods, are very active in this country.

In the field of education, New Thought principles, although not recognised as such, are noticed in the form of the Montessori teaching and the Waldorf schools. Both are well known in South Africa, and although there are no historical connections between New Thought and these educational systems, it is especially those people who are entertaining "new" thought or any other alternative thought, who are more inclined to enrol their children in these schools.

Dr Maria Montessori (1871-1952) believed that education begins at birth. Knowing that a child's mind acts as an "absorbent mind" because of its great ability to learn and assimilate effortlessly and unconsciously from the world around, she created a method that develops the whole personality of the child.
The Waldorf schools also focus on educating the whole child towards creative responsibility. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), the Austrian teacher and philosopher who developed anthroposophy, used his insight into child development to enable him to indicate ways in which Waldorf schools could methodically work to develop qualities such as inner strength, intellectual flexibility, empathy and sound independent judgement.

Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:119) observed correctly that "whether or not recent New Thought literature has emphasized the development of character, New Thought - albeit unrecognized as such - has crept into our culture to a remarkable degree".
1. Information regarding New Thought is now readily available to all keen researchers, as the collected and stored archival materials (started in the 1950s) are now housed in the Addington-INTA Archives and Research Centre in Meza, Arizona. However, the largest existing New Thought collection is located at the Library of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

2. The books by Braden and Larson, as general introductions to New Thought, presented a wealth of material. However, today Dell deChant (1995:2) considers Braden's text long out of date and "somewhat out of focus". Gordon Melton (1995:36) found Larson's attempt to upgrade Braden inadequate. I did not refer to Horatio Dresser (1919) which was the first and, for a very long period of time, the only written history of New Thought.

3. I have found the works by Anderson and DeChant, two contemporary scholars, refreshing, objective, academically orientated and a real asset to New Thought. With their knowledge and through their commitment they have already begun to rectify and clarify "the slights and glosses of the past" (DeChant 1995:3).

4. For more information on this remarkable man, see Larson (1987[1897]) who dedicated a whole chapter to the life and influences of Swedenborg.
5. Although Spiritualism may be traced back to the two Fox sisters who had communication with the disembodied spirit of a man, it was Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1885) who gave "popular legitimacy to the belief that spirits dwell among us and can be contacted by those who are sensitive to their presence" (DeChant 1992[Class3]:5).

6. Theosophy, the study of the science of God and making use of all the world's spiritual teachings, is an attempt to "gather the oldest of the tenets together and to make of them one harmonious and unbroken whole". Being a synthesis of science, religion and philosophy, its objectives are as follows: "to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour; to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science; to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man" (Sadleir 1992:150-151).

7. The reasons are that "he was anti-religion, he had no intention of founding a church and took no steps to facilitate the formation of a religion; although he suggests a spiritual basis for healing, and occasionally links his work with the work of Jesus, the spiritual element is not developed in detail; although he calls his healing method "science", in practice, and contrary to New Thought healing treatment, he relied on his own clairvoyant skills in diagnosis and approached the healing treatment as a struggle" (DeChant 1991b:21).

9. Braden (1963) and Larson (1987[1897]) may be consulted for further information on these individuals.

10. Interesting changes took place at the recent INTA Expo, held in Los Angeles (August 1996), when a completely new Board was chosen by the membership, with a new president in the person of Dr Marguerite Goodall.

11. Covey's books are listed in the bibliography.

12. Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will" (The Holy Bible).
CHAPTER 3

THE ORIGINS OF NEW THOUGHT IN SOUTH AFRICA,

AND THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

Whenever someone changes an old concept into a new one, transcends an existing thought pattern, becomes transformed into a new level of understanding and awareness, it was because of a "new" thought. This makes the task of tracing the history of New Thought in South Africa extremely difficult.

3.1 ORIGINS

The seedbed in which New Thought took root in South Africa, was prepared by many people, situations and conditions. Not very well known to the wider public and in academic circles, it has often been confused with, or labelled as, New Age. Since, in the earlier years, many feared this new method of applying the Christ principles in every-day life, it was ridiculed, condemned as satanic or something "airy fairy" and, with its focus on "God in us, as us", considered to be blasphemous. This open antagonism from the more fundamental religious movements towards this new teaching made New Thought retreat to very small groups, often meeting in private homes.
As from the early decades of the twentieth century, forms of alternative thought developed in South Africa and were seen as forerunners of New Thought. For example, Johanna Brandt, the wife of the moderator of the "Nederduitsche Hervormde Kerk in Afrika", was actively involved in a "new" way of thinking and living, and although she was advocating this way of life, she remained a member of her church (Steyn 1992:111-113). Jan Christiaan Smuts with his holistic thinking is seen by South African New Thoughters as a possible forerunner of this alternative thought movement.

New Thought as a discrete religious movement within South Africa, may be traced back to the early 1900s. For the more recent history, one is dependent on available information, oral history and the memory of individuals as expressed in the interviews.

According to Braden (1963:481) it was reported that a Unity centre existed in Johannesburg in 1919. INTA representatives in the persons of Hooper, Lister and Gaze visited South Africa in the early 1930s. It was during one of these visits that a South African section of INTA was formed with Mrs Masterson nominated as the president. She was assisted by Miss Alice Burney.

3.2 MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

3.2.1 Hester Brunt
The recollection of many of the participants goes back to the persons of Brunt and Campbell. Hester Brunt, born in Cape Town, was educated at the Good Hope Seminary. In 1908 she married JP Joubert Brunt, thus becoming related to the Brunt family who owned the historical residence Klein Constantia, dating back to the 1830s. Brunt joined the Women's Freemasonry in England and became the treasurer in the Ionic Lodge No 5, in London.

Brunt studied metaphysics in the United States and, at the age of fifty-six, gained a doctorate of metaphysics. In 1945 she was ordained as a minister of Religious Science by Dr Ernest Holmes personally. She established the first school of metaphysics in Montreal, Canada, and in 1947 returned to South Africa at the request of Holmes. She was responsible for bringing Religious Science to this country and began the first church of Religious Science of Mind in Cape Town. It is believed that she gave her first official lecture in the Hofmeyr Theatre in the Groote Kerk building on November 1st 1948. Thereafter weekly lectures were given in the Rondebosch Town Hall. Many studied under her or through her well-trained students. She served as the district president for the Union of South Africa. Brunt died in Rondebosch at the age of eighty-three (Wilson 1996).

3.2.2 Nicol Campbell (1907-1992)

When Hester Brunt met Nicol Campbell in 1948, she introduced him to INTA of which he became a life member. It was said that Nicol Campbell, raised as a Presbyterian and
a very keen student of the Bible, was a lonely, confused and fearful young man when he left home with no money to put to proof the Gospel that he had been taught. Alone, poor and hungry, he was utterly dependent on God for all his physical needs. Braden (1963:483-484) relates that he held an unpaid job in Johannesburg, because he refused to name a salary, which resulted in his employer taking advantage of the situation and paying him nothing. The turning point in his life came when he wanted to mail a letter but had no money for a stamp. The caretaker, wanting him to take letters to the post office, gave him a stamp for his own letter. This proved to him that his trust in God was not misplaced. From this day onward he preached utter reliance on God as the Source of supply. He started off working with only a few other persons and remained always a seeker and investigator. His meditation on the words "I and My Father are One", led him to new spiritual heights. Not all his followers agreed with this statement and fell away, but he persisted in his belief that all there is, is God.

Although his work is New Thought in its general outlook, it seems to be closer to orthodox Christianity. He made use of old familiar vocabulary but gave it a new meaning which was especially appealing to those seekers who had left the traditional churches in their search for spiritual enlightenment.

With headquarters in Johannesburg, he established the School of Practical Christianity in 1937 and it later changed its name to the School of Truth. It is still an active group, led by the late Campbell's son, Drummond Campbell, presenting lectures in all the
major cities of South Africa, offering services to those in need, as well as prayer sessions. Its magazine (*The path of truth*) has a wide (also international) circulation and it answers thousands of letters every month sent by inquirers. Trained counsellors collect letters and then respond to them from home in their own time, where they are then collected later in the week to be administered from head office.

Campbell is fondly remembered by many South Africans who were introduced to the New Thought Teaching through his many classes and lectures. Although he remained a member of the International New Thought Alliance, he never affiliated with the other South African groups.

Today, Drummond Campbell sees the School of Truth as "nonpolitical", only "teaching love". They do not have a dogma, because for him dogma is "static and denies evolvement" and they "believe evolvement should be there". Campbell sees himself as "the acorn that has fallen off the oak tree". The tree is the history of this group and the "acorn inside is all the ideas my dad taught me - but that acorn has to be planted and I have to re-establish the new tree and update ...". Members of the group see change as necessary and have expressed their willingness to participate wherever they can (Campbell 1994:10-12).
3.2.3 Lynda Clark

Lynda Clark, a student of Hester Brunt, came into New Thought when she was introduced to the *Science of mind magazine*, while in hospital. She noticed a fellow patient totally absorbed and interested in reading a specific magazine, as well as projecting a positive, cheerful and contented way of dealing with life. Lynda's curiosity led to her read this magazine (History [sa]: 1-7).

The daughter of parents who studied *New thought pioneer* in the 1920s and who were also familiar with other New Thought books of the time, she attended St James in Sea Point and was a member of the Anglican Church. Although she appreciated her Christian heritage, she felt she could not comfortably recite the words "miserable sinners" and other such phrases. She was looking for something more gentle and positive and found it in the New Thought teaching, after having read the above-mentioned magazine.

After receiving her practitionership from Hester Brunt, Clark started a group in Johannesburg in 1958. It was called the Science of Mind Society. She presented very popular classes and many studied seriously under her. As the classes grew, they looked for larger accommodation and made use of office buildings, till they eventually bought their own properties - first in Parktown and then later in Hillbrow-Berea. Funds for these purchases came from class fees, donations at the lectures, as well as from consultations (History [sa]:4).
Together with Betty Cohen, they visited Pretoria once a week and Potgietersrus once a month to present lectures and do counselling. Clark invited overseas speakers to this country, and organised tours to the States as well, thereby strengthening the spiritual bonds between the two countries. She was also a member of the International New Thought Alliance. Many of today's leaders, teachers and practitioners have been inspired by her classes. Lynda Clark retired at the age of fifty when her husband Jake was given an early retirement and they went to live on Ibiza Island.² According to oral sources, both Clark and her husband Jake have passed on.

3.2.4 Betty Cohen (born 1910)

Betty Cohen heard about New Thought (Science of Mind) through her brother who was helped by Hester Brunt in Cape Town. Eager to find something similar in Johannesburg, she came across an advertisement in the paper for classes run by Lynda Clark. One of the students to join Betty Cohen in these classes was Johanna Meiring who, as a nursing sister, "saved" Betty's life when she had gone into postoperative shock after an operation (History [sa]:4).

Betty Cohen became Lynda Clark's Girl Friday on Saturdays while they still occupied offices in the Bradlows building. Cohen, who had to work full-time in order to help pay the bond, experienced a "miracle" when her father-in-law ("who was not at all a giving man"), offered to pay for the bond, thus enabling her to work on a full time basis for Clark. Still being a student, Betty Cohen was asked by Lynda Clark to take some of the
classes while she would be away. Terrified of this responsibility she experienced a
demonstration that evening when she clearly heard a voice saying "The Christ is within
you". Thinking that she was going "crazy" she again heard the voice, "The Christ is
within you NOW". This to her was clearly a message from God telling her what to do.

Together with Clark, they travelled to Pretoria and Potgietersrus to present lectures.
Eventually Cohen took over by herself until she, in turn, had trained sufficient people to
take over from her. When Lynda Clark retired, Reg Barrett, who was one of Brunt's
students and who later joined Clark's group in Johannesburg, left as well, and Betty
Cohen took over the Science of Mind Society.

Betty Cohen, as far as I could establish, was the only New Thought student in South
Africa who completed a written thesis in order to receive an ordination. Today, she is
living with her husband in the frail care centre of St Michael's Village, Weltevreden
Park in Johannesburg.

3.2.5 Reg Barrett (1916-1994)

In 1947 English born Reg Barrett settled in South Africa with his family and joined the
Industrial Development Corporation. An active serving member on the Board of
Directors of various companies, he retired from industry and commerce in 1971, and
founded the Association of Creative Thought (ACT), "an organisation dedicated to
obtain, through a positive mental attitude, a greater understanding of all peoples". He was a student of both Brunt and Clark. A holder of degrees in Psychology, Business Administration and Accountancy, he became a household name in South Africa through his popular, daily, early morning radio program, Living your life, which apparently received the largest listenership of any program in the country at that time. One of the most popular speakers who lectured throughout South Africa and the United States of America to industry, commerce, schools, foundations, organisations and the general public, he is remembered as a man of love. Everything he did and spoke of, was love. A good friend and admirer remembers him saying that his "whole purpose in life was to make people THINK and his business in life was LOVE" (De Villiers 1995:3). He was a man with a great sense of humour and everything he spoke on and of was from personal experience. The golden key to total living, according to him, was a "positive mental attitude - to keep our thoughts on God, the One Presence, One Mind, One Power that is All".

His books3 and many other publications have been widely acclaimed. How to succeed by setting your goals, was written as a guide to happier and prosperous living and offers the reader an opportunity to complete the self-evaluation questionnaires at the back. He wrote The super man, because he believed that married life is the foundation of happiness. You are vital, was compiled to help those serving South Africa in the Defence Force to cope with their challenges. Living your life consists of daily readings.
Other publications are *Keys to a better life, How to make the most of your life, Joy of living* and *As a man thinks*.

### 3.2.6 June Jones (1916-)

June Jones, born in Ireland, came to South Africa in 1923 with her family. As a former teacher trained in English literature and Speech and Drama, she was convinced that speech as the tool of thought was the key to communication. A person with a keen interest in comparative religions, she realised that she had always had her feet firmly in what is now known as New Thought, to which she was introduced to in 1939. After leaving Religious Science in 1974, she joined Reg Barrett and became the leader of the Association of Creative Thought (ACT) in the Eastern Cape.

Jones experienced a miraculous healing from a heart complaint. Having retired to Plettenberg Bay, she came to the conclusion that there was more to do in life and that this illness and early retirement were by no means the end of the road. It seemed to her that people around her were saying, by attitude and looks: "Well ... poor thing, let her just stay. She is happy for a little while. We don't know for how long she is going to be around the place anyhow"! This she said, "gave me a hell of a jolt" (Van Sandwyk [sa]:5-6). When she came to this realisation, she discovered that she was healed.

In Port Elizabeth, classes commenced with small numbers, and different venues were used (hotels, church halls and private homes), until ACT finally moved into its own
building in Target Kloof. Special fund-raising projects, donations from members and the Jones' own investment (after selling their house to move into the ACT complex), provided the money to buy this property. Besides the normal classes, workshops and weekend retreats that were offered, June Jones was also responsible for bringing to South Africa, some of the big names in New Thought. During her reign as INTA's District President and a member of the INTA Executive Board (1981-1989), she organised very successful congresses with many overseas speakers addressing large crowds.

In association with Margaret Stevens and the Santa Anita Ministerial School (Arcadia, Los Angeles), she formulated a course for young New Thought students from South Africa to attend. This was a great opportunity to develop spiritually and at the same time to receive a special training in teaching the New Thought principles. (I was one of those people who attended this course and later, because of this exposure, was ordained along with many others, by Margaret Stevens).

June Jones is widely regarded in New Thought circles as a person who will do whatever needs to be done, to assist other individuals in their commitment to spiritual growth. Her "patience is infinite with people who really want to learn and grow". When she perceives any opportunity, vision, potential and willingness she "zooms in with faith, knowing that if it is God's will, it will be". She is one of those leaders who evolved with time. She never stagnated and was always aware of the younger ones with their "new"
input and ideas. A true New Thoughter, she allowed and encouraged "new" thinking amongst her students.

The theme Jones most frequently stresses, besides the realisation of God and the importance of tuning into God through meditation and treatment, is learning to live. She repeatedly reminds one that "there are higher levels of consciousness within us and our inner need is to advance into these aspects of ourselves. Transition to a higher consciousness is not possible without an expansion of our thinking and our values, which we learn in our daily living" (Jones J. 1991:3). On our divine heritage she writes, "Each one of us is a creation of God, made of God Stuff, an incarnation of spirit - this is you, whether you believe it or not - whatever you are, whatever you are doing, you are God in Action at your level of belief" (Jones J. 1993:3).

June Jones's advice to students regarding the many changes and challenges that are taking place at this time, is to live a conscious and active life, being aware of one's spiritual nature and to keep on thinking "new" positive thoughts and to share them. By doing this "we will expand awareness beyond narrow boundaries and become ambassadors of divine ideas" (Jones J. 1992b:4).

Her energy, dedication and love towards the work of New Thought in this country, was acknowledged by INTA at their July 1995 Expo in Portland, Oregon, where she was the recipient of the Joseph Murphy Award - the first ever received by any South African. It
is an accolade by the late Joseph Murphy who paid homage to her by awarding an honorary doctorate to her, something he did only a few times in his entire life.

3.2.7 Naomi Le Roith (1917-)

After Naomi Le Roith's divorce and illness, it was Betty Cohen who helped and taught her by introducing New Thought to her. Through Cohen's treatment, she was helped tremendously. Although she had been brought up in a Jewish home, she had a problem with Jewish ritual. New Thought was readily accepted by her because it taught her principles with which she could identify and apply in her life - especially the metaphysical interpretation of the Bible.

After completing her school career (in Grahamstown), the South African born Naomi le Roith came to Johannesburg where she then worked, and in 1934 she qualified as a speech teacher. It was at a school amateur society meeting that Le Roith met Cohen for the first time and was introduced to "Truth" (in 1961). For Le Roith "Truth" is knowing that "we are One with the Creative Power of the Universe and we can use it according to its Nature which is harmony, peace and love". She believes that this "oneness with God", which is "the Truth", will set one free as she recalls John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (Le Roith 1995b).

Le Roith's leaving Religious Science was a great disappointment to Lynda Clark. She started her own school in 1979. It was first called the North East Religious Science
Society, then it changed to the Johannesburg Religious Science Society and today it is called the School of Metaphysics. The Society first met at Dunrobin Street, Sydenham in Johannesburg, and in 1979, they bought a Methodist Church in Sandringham (Corner Victoria and Edward Avenue), which they extended. This came about after "treatments" conducted in aid of a building fund, which manifested when someone sent Le Roith a cheque to "use at her discretion". With this "nucleus" in the Building Society, the fund grew steadily (Le Roith 1995a:19). The School offered to its members and students a church service, many classes and seminars, including the study of the Science of Mind textbook (by Ernest Holmes) and the teachings of Judge Thomas Troward (Braden 1963:418). Today, they once again operate from Naomi's home in Dunrobin Street.

Naomi le Roith introduced Raymond Halliwell to South Africa and she completed a Bachelor of Metaphysics under his tutelage. It is said of her that "she is the mother of New Thought in South Africa" as she has trained just about all of the present leaders at one time or another. The first two black practitioners came from her school. She is also the author of four books. How to achieve health, happiness, prosperity and success (using the subconscious power within) is her most recent publication and it is written to help one to discover the power of one's thoughts and achieve one's heart's desires by changing one's thinking and keeping it changed. One of her most popular books, How to overcome the worry habit, describes a method, based on personal experiences, of dealing with this problem. Speak your word contains short affirmations and treatments.
In *Metaphysics: How to use the power of mind constructively*, Le Roith shares proven principles and positive methods of overcoming any difficulty or problems.

With her motto on living in the "NOW and living a meditative life in the presence of God", it was her mission to help people and to train them by offering them classes, qualifying them as teachers, practitioners and ordaining them as ministers in New Thought and especially Religious Science. She was awarded two honorary doctorates, one in Religious Science by Dr Bitzer and the other in Christian Philosophy by Drs Gloria and Phil Rye.

Considered by some of her students as a real "life saver", she is admired for her honesty, sincerity and "straight talking", and as someone who shows a sincere and loving interest in her students' evolvement and growth.

3.2.8 Johanna Meiring (1919-)

A student of Le Roith as well as of Brunt, Clark and Barrett, Johanna Meiring came into New Thought after she coincidentally picked up a little booklet on a bus. This was written by Nicol Campbell. She attended many of his classes and they motivated her. At this point, while nursing, she felt like something to uplift her personally. She found it in the New Thought teaching. Coming from a Reformed background, she was influenced by her father who was a humanitarian and who taught her to love and respect the black
people. She left the church because she did not like the criticism against other religions. To her, "God is a God of love and not one of punishment". In 1980 she started her own Centre for Creative Living, in Linden, Johannesburg, teaching a variety of classes to successful business people. Having studied with Dr Carlton Whitehead in Chicago, Illinois, she received her ordination in 1988. One of the many other rewards she received, was a lifetime honorary membership by the First Church of Religious Science (Chicago, Illinois).

She is making a significant contribution to the Afrikaans-speaking population in South Africa, having translated New Thought books into Afrikaans. Her mission is to do even more. Experienced by those who studied with her as a "very gentle and loving person", she believes that "God is in charge and that one can never be separated from his love". According to Meiring's students, "she radiates enthusiasm, warmth, sincerity" and is someone with "great determination".

3.2.9 Gladys Harrison (1928-)

For Gladys Harrison the path towards New Thought was long and difficult. In a personal interview she shares her story. Handicapped by internal deformities from birth, told that she would die in her early twenties, she was bowed down by illnesses. Bankrupt and lonely, she found this the most devastating experience of her life. Then there was no God, none of her prayers were answered and she experienced anger and frustration with the limitations of church groups. One day, after falling asleep in the veld, she was
awoken by a piece of grass. At first she was annoyed and angry with it for disturbing her peace, but then she realised that "this was what God is". "Everything is God, Life itself". She started reading New Thought books. The turning point in her life came after "a very rocky experience" in England. She was very sick and dying. Acting the role of a martyr, wrapped in self pity, she thought that everyone would be very sorry when she died. She realised, however, that in reality no one cared.

After returning to South Africa, she worked at a rehabilitation centre for prisoners. She heard New Thought speakers from overseas and wanted to learn more about this teaching in order to apply it to her prisoners. She started in Religious Science a study group and, in 1983, she opened the doors of the First Church of United Religious Science in South Africa in Aberdeen Street, Westdene, Johannesburg.

Knowing that the teaching works, she feels we should "quit being unreal and start to be real", to reach out to people who need us and to give people the "how to" tools to enable them to think for themselves and to try the principles. She sees a wonderful opportunity of bringing this teaching to the larger black population. But she emphasises in an interview that all "New Thought material needs to be rewritten for our own unique situation in this country, as the American outlook is just so different to ours". She acknowledges the changes taking place, and would like to see a greater variety of religious practices emerging in the future in South Africa.
3.2.10 Sheila Szczawinsky (1935-)

Durban born Sheila Szczawinsky, a student of Naomi le Roith, Betty Cohen and Lynda Clark, as well as acting as the latter's secretary, was fascinated with the classes she attended after being introduced to them by a friend's sister. Having been the perfect traditional Catholic ("they did a good job with me"), not querying anything, she was intrigued by Le Roith's concept of Jesus Christ, which was as she said, "that of a Jew" (Szczawinsky 1995). It made her start thinking of "Jesus as a man, as a human being", a way she never thought of him before. Eagerly she started to reread the Gospels with the help of metaphysical interpretations, and mentions that "from that moment my conditioned concepts of Jesus Christ (which were the Roman Catholic Church's doctrines) changed radically" (Szczawinsky 1995).

Her burning ambition to learn, took her from class to class and in 1972 she graduated as a practitioner of Religious Science and opened the Science of Mind Centre in Durban - it occupied offices in the Davenport Square Building in Clark Road. After having attended ministerial classes in New York under the tutelage of Dr Raymond Charles Barker and in Chicago with Dr Carlton Whitehead, she was ordained a licentiate minister at Asilomar in Monterey, California. In 1982 she was granted full ordination and in 1984 she was awarded an honorary doctorate of Religious Science, both in San Diego, California. As representative of the President of Religious Science International in South Africa, she founded the Association of Religious Science Ministers in South Africa (1987). Although she felt capable of handling this position she nevertheless
feared the reaction of the other ministers in South Africa. From experience she had observed that none of "those ministers in Johannesburg had ever tried to work together before" and mentions that "I later found that my fears were justified".

In a letter to me Szczawinski (1995) emphasised the fact that "New Thought as such, does not mean much to me. My teaching has been the Science of Mind and I was ordained a Minister of Religious Science". In sharing any of her ideas and contributions, she would like to be associated with the teaching of the Science of Mind and not New Thought.

Still a student, she offers a service to individuals of the community on the level of each one's needs. She feels that her involvement with various religious studies, has helped her to understand people and it enables her to serve them better. During an interview session she mentioned the group's total belief in the power of prayer. She is appreciated by her followers as someone who is "always there to assist people with their problems", and she is known for her very "powerful treatments". It is said that when she treats a person the "earth moves" and that she has the ability to put across a truth principle in such a way that "it sticks".

3.2.11 Aileen Jones (1954-)

Australian born Aileen Jones, daughter-in-law of June Jones, has taken over the ACT Centre in Port Elizabeth after June's retirement in 1993 and is now the leader of this
centre. In 1995 she received full ordination from the Christian Ministry of New Thought and Divine Science. She explained in an interview that at a time when her "life was a disaster", she wanted to "know more". After having read many books and listened to advice, her awakening came when she realised that she "has a mind". Using the reasoning faculty of her mind, she discovered that she could change her circumstances.

Brought up as a Catholic, she wanted to become a nun, but she rebelled against their ideas and the church's dogma of preaching damnation. Having been exposed to different versions of religious thought (Judaism when she was teaching at a Jewish day school, Islam during her stay on the Maldives, and metaphysics as a teacher), she started to look at their similarities. By applying the principles of the different religious practices she encountered, she demonstrated truth, as it "became real for me".

Trained in music and drama she assisted June Jones as a singer at the ACT Centre. This talent opened doors for her to move into the townships, where she became the coordinator for Port Elizabeth's Music Active, an attempt to bring together the different senior schools in Port Elizabeth. Including all races, they put together a "rainbow presentation", where musicals and songs were written and performed around a South African theme. Today she and her volunteers are successfully and actively involved in education, feeding, bonding and empowerment programs in the adjacent townships.
She focuses on action. For her you have to "feel and act out the Godness (or goodness) of life. You have to love it, feel it, live it, and be it". In other words, "learn to live in the moment, the Eternal Now". She is aware of the tremendous changes taking place and she reminds her readers that "as spiritual beings we need to train ourselves to move into the changes and into the new conditions without being thrown out of balance" (Jones A. 1995:16). "Love", another important principle, "is not something we acquire or go and get, but it is an ISNESS, a power, and we are in it right now" (Jones A. 1994a:14).

She believes that it is important to leave religious dogma behind and to go forth with service, love and education, keeping one's focus on the one omnipresent God. "Now is our time", she says and "we need to remain open-minded, universal in our thinking and action, and then we will be able to offer people many pathways". From personal discussions with some of her students, it emerged that they find her "tremendous enthusiasm and her total commitment to truth" encouraging in their search for the truth.

3.2.12 Colleen Deane (1942-)

Colleen Deane, who also received her ordination in 1995 from the Christian Ministry of New Thought and Divine Science, assists Aileen Jones at the ACT Centre in Port Elizabeth. As a student she started to question religious issues and working together with Gladys Harrison on a marketing research project, was introduced to New Thought. As a cartoonist, she always sees and enjoys the humour in life. With majors in Botany and Zoology, she turns to nature, especially the plant, sea and animal kingdoms, to find
analogies for her New Thought beliefs and principles. These, she believes, are so descriptive that any one can understand and apply them.

As a true New Thought student she sees the pattern of oneness in all things. "Looking at an individual ant" she says, "one might think that there is no mind or thought, but observing a mass of ants together, one begins to observe it thinking, planning and calculating. It is an intelligence, a kind of live computer, with crawling bits for its wits! There is without doubt a linkage that holds all life together in an inseparable kinship and oneness" (Deane 1995:24).

Looking at Fynbos being smothered by the fast-growing Port Jackson and certain pines, she relates it to a "living treasure within us but we hang onto all the negative thoughts and fears until they smother all the wonder and potential within" (Deane 1994:24-25). Noting that nothing grows beneath a Port Jackson, Deane reminds the reader that while entertaining negative thoughts, nothing good can grow, until one weeds it out. She teaches us not only to preserve our Natural Kingdom, but also to preserve the Kingdom within.

Being involved in community work, as well as nature conservation, she sees New Thought as the answer to this country's problems. But, as she states, "we need to present this teaching in a new package". Remaining open-minded, she suggests a package not only consisting of intellectual ideas, but also filled with practical tools and
skills, to enable the person in the market place to understand, grasp and apply in his or her life. With her drawing and her descriptive writing skills, as well as her extensive knowledge and awareness of her surroundings, she represents New Thought principles in a new, entertaining and refreshing way.

3.2.13 Naledi Deane (1952-) and Thandi Mathibela (1955-)

Naledi Deane and Thandi Mathibela are two very eager African New Thought students. After seeing an article about the School of Truth in a magazine, they studied and trained as practitioners under the leadership of Naomi le Roith. Prior to this, one read The power of positive thinking (by Norman Vincent Peale), given to her by a friend, while the other went through a divorce and was seeking for answers - or the truth. Both attended a Buddhist Retreat, and while there, read the above-mentioned article which put them in touch with New Thought.

Naledi Deane, recently ordained in South Africa (1994), runs the Hillside Fountain in Soweto, Johannesburg, while Thandi Mathibela is the spiritual founder and leader at The Light of Mind Centre, also in Soweto. Both groups were conceived out of need. Although not large in membership, they saw the need among their people to develop and grow spiritually. They are aware of the ability of their members to transcend their present challenges. As the cultural link is very strong, music plays an important role in their approach.
Deane, a postgraduate social worker, sees herself as an instrument in teaching women the truth of their African heritage, in order for them to realise how valuable they are and to come into their own right. Believing in New Thought principles as the tool to bridge this challenge, she involves herself in the training of nurses and teachers, who carry this unique concept back to the grass roots of their community centres.

Thandi Mathibela operates from home as a licensed practitioner of Science of Mind, doing class work (*master-minding*) with professional women in the form of a Sunday support group. She is also serving on the executive committee of the National Association of Women Business Owners and runs her own business. She and her group presented a proposal for a bookstore/reading room in downtown Johannesburg which is predominantly black, as the good bookstores have moved to predominantly white affluent suburbs of the north because of the high crime rate. Knowing that the city of Johannesburg is easily accessible from all the major black townships, the members of the Light of Mind Group feel that they have "a social responsibility in the upliftment of our city".

The aim of the New Thought bookstore would be "aligned to the Principles of INTA; to raise consciousness; to create an environment of love and sharing; to create a supportive environment where individuals can grow to reveal their true potential; to have a quiet, safe place for meditation and study; to expand and get new people into the New Thought movement by exposure to its literature; to bring about light at a point where
we are; and to help in the healing and reconciliation process in our country" (Mathibela 1995).

Being aware of their optimism about life and their looking forward to a better and spiritually fulfilling future in which people from all walks of life can live, work and worship together in harmony and peace, one cannot help but notice the individuality of groups - yet their separateness. They all mentioned how they started off together or were students of one another, but how each one has now gone his or her own way. The reason given for this separation was control of power and competition. One participant recalls that "we were like one then" in the 1970s. Another emphasises the aspect of jealousy and egoism and states that this is "not what it is all about. We need to get the real teaching across in order to have a very different South Africa. People pay lip service and don't really do anything about it".

From this profile it is clear that "new" or alternative thought has always existed in South Africa in many forms and under different names. New Thought in this country seems to act as a bridge to those people who are leaving the familiar paths of traditional religion and who are not yet clear about their alternatives. With its origin and emphasis rooted in Jesus's teachings, it can accommodate those with similar backgrounds, in their transitional period.
Around the 1970s one notices great activity which is characterised by strong charismatic leaders attracting large audiences. Most of these leaders in the earlier years were white and predominantly English speaking women. As the group structure centred around the person of the leader, one observes a strong internal integrated system within the groups. There is a gap of ten to fifteen years between these leaders and those who have recently been ordained into the movement. It is understandable that the structure and leadership position has to change if New Thought is to survive.
ENDNOTES

1. See chapter 1, section 1.2.

2. The third largest of the Balearic Islands, in the Mediterranean Sea, and the one nearest the east coast of Spain (Reader's Digest Great Illustrated Dictionary. 1984. SV "Ibiza island").

3. How to succeed by setting your goals (1982); The super man; Joy of living; As a man thinks; You are vital (1984); Living your life; Keys to a better life; How to make the most of your life (1992).

4. The Joseph Murphy Award is annually presented to an individual in appreciation and recognition of his or her outstanding service and leadership given to the New Thought movement.

5. In treatment one turns entirely away from the condition, because as long as one looks at it, one cannot overcome it. "Treatment is the science of inducing, within the Mind, concepts, acceptances and realisations of peace, poise, power, plenty - health, happiness and success - or whatever the particular need may be" (Holmes 1938:164).

6. How to achieve health, happiness, prosperity and success (1995); How to overcome the worry habit (1975); Speak your word (1975); Metaphysics: How to use the power of mind constructively ([sa]).
7. She has translated John Kehoe's *Mind power* into Afrikaans under the title *Mag van die gemoed*. She also translated the following books: Jack and Cornelia Addington's *The perfect power within you* (*Die perfekte mag wat in jou woon*); Dr Whitehead's *Can you keep it a secret* (*Kan jy dit geheim hou*), *Mind and medicine* (*Gemoed en medisyne*) and *It is YOUR Life and financial security* (*Dit is JOU Lewe en finansiële vryheid*). At present she is busy translating Dr Kübler-Ross' *Life after death* (*Lewe na die dood*). These translations are for sale at the monthly meetings of the John Kehoe's "Thought Dynamics" group in Johannesburg.

8. Future projects include Dr Whitehead's translation and publishing in book form of the classes taught on cassette, Kehoe's *Money, success and you*, as well as the content of the classes on Metaphysical Bible interpretation.

9. "Fynbos is an Afrikaans word meaning 'fine bush' and describes the narrow-leaved plants which characterize most of the vegetation of the southern and south-western Cape." (Deane 1994:23).
CHAPTER 4

NEW THOUGHT BELIEFS

In this chapter I shall not discuss New Thought theology as found in the literature. Rather, I shall describe and analyse the religious thoughts and personal beliefs of my interviewees, based on their own experiences and individual understanding.

It seems that almost all of the subjects had strong religious convictions in their youth. Although they stated that they had always "lived close to their Creator", in due course many felt trapped by institutions, and dogmatic fundamentalism. They questioned the church and rebelled against the static and rigid practices. One participant recalled how she felt she could no longer comfortably recite the words "miserable sinners" and other such phrases. Another was of the opinion that the phrase "a God of punishment" must be wrong. Under these circumstances, many found the New Thought teaching refreshing, uplifting, inspiring, enlightening, transforming and "just the thing for me".

To determine the origin of their New Thought beliefs, from one short interview session, is an impossible task. What is evident, however, is a core teaching, based on the teachings of Jesus, which is the belief in the possibility of a tremendous sense of inner
strength and peace, a positive outlook on life (accepting both the successes and failures), a consciousness of prosperity and abundance, which is derived from a knowledge that "all is in God", and because God is good, everywhere present, all powerful and all knowing. Life is good.

To this basic belief system, one could add all the other accumulated knowledge that influenced this core understanding. Many of the participants experienced a healing (physical, mental or spiritual) which developed and added to their basic thoughts. Others, throughout the years, studied widely and extensively, investigated the many paths offered to them through New Thought's open-minded approach, and in doing so, created a highly personal belief structure, rather than an exact or academic one.

One could say they believe the way they believe, not because it is intellectually conceptualised in an available form, but because in applying the principles, it worked for them. The emphasis lies in a practical healing experience (rather than in a closed absolute systematics) providing a loose structure of guiding theoretical principles.

In the interviews the participants were asked to share their thoughts on the following pressing issues related to theology in general. In giving their personal interpretations of these concepts, one can determine the differences and/or similarities between the more orthodox thinking and the so-called New Thought understanding. They include (4.1) the concept of GOD; (4.2) their perception of JESUS and the meaning of the term CHRIST;
(4.3) BIBLE interpretation; (4.4) PRAYER and MEDITATION; (4.5) WEALTH and PROSPERITY; as well as (4.6) their understanding and interpretation of DEATH, and whether they believe in REINCARNATION or not.

4.1 GOD

One participant said that "all my beliefs cannot determine what God is, or not, because the truth of God, simply IS". The majority of interviewees immediately stated that "God is Creator", the "reason for everything" and the One who "creates all things". To this is added that God is the "one and only Source", everywhere present (omnipresent), all knowing (omniscient) and all powerful (omnipotent).

They do accept the idea of the Trinity as New Thought is based on the teachings of Jesus. One person said that "there has to be a Trinity as it is explained in all religions", but the meaning thereof, does depend on one's "interpretation". For Science of Mind, "the Trinity does not only remain in its fundamental aspect but also evolves as Spirit, Soul and Body" (Szczawinski 1995). Another uses the Trinity to explain how the mind is divided and to show its different workings as "the conscious (choosing), the subconscious (creative medium) and the result", which is "the creative process".

That God is love, was mentioned by all. God is experienced as the "warm presence within me", the "immediate and universal presence" that could be seen everywhere in
creation and in everything. It is a "living intelligence", "changeless" and "eternal". It is said that "God is eternally 'First Cause' - eternally aware of Itself and that which It is forever expressing (pressing out) of Itself" (Meiring & Swanepoel 1990:1).

God is seen as a "many-faceted being", a great "Power and all-pervading Energy", the "creative life force in total oneness with everything else", a "cosmic consciousness" and a "great mysterious unknowing light". It took Naomi le Roith (1995a:2) many years to learn "that God was not a far-off Deity in the sky but a Living Presence of power and love that dwelt within me". June Jones (1990:3) wrote that "even in this modern technical age we have a tendency to visualise God somewhere far off in the 'beyond' behind the pearly gates", but as we come to a full understanding of the nature of God, "we realise that God is available as a full time partner in our daily lives".

Except for two participants who spoke of God in the male gender, 'Father', all the others choose a form of address that is gender free. God is not a "person" to them, as God is not seen or understood in an anthropomorphic form, although they loving talked about God as "my companion and friend", the One who always "answers prayer". They felt that one could "see God everywhere in humanity". "God IS", or "It IS".

The participants all grew up with a "Father-God" image and some already address God as "Father-Mother-God", the currently popular way of addressing the godhead. Nevertheless, I think they would all appreciate and chuckle at Anderson and
Whitehouse's (1995:40) statement, when talking about God, that "SHE has a sense of humour".

A great belief in the direct relationship with the Infinite Source (God), was observed. Participants see themselves as the "individualisation of God", that "because God is, I am", and that "one cannot be separated from God". Because God is everywhere present, there is always good in every situation, however grim it may seem.

The interviewees' beliefs and experiences about the concept God, have changed throughout the years. In their youth they learnt in church about the many gods (Old Testament and Mythologies). Then the emphasis changed to the One and Only, first experienced as immanent and then as a transcendent being. Today, many have brought God back (from the "far-off in the sky Deity") to their everyday personal existence as "I have my existence in God", or "because of God". This is in line with the general understanding in New Thought, where there has been a move from a belief in pantheism (all is God) to a more panentheistic structure (all is in God).\(^1\)

4.2 JESUS AND CHRIST

Participants made a distinction between Jesus and the Christ. They saw Jesus as a person, like all of us. He was divine (made in God's image), but so are we. They lovingly refer to him as the "most wise and loving teacher ever", the "Way Shower" and
consider him the "greatest metaphysician that ever lived". True to New Thought a metaphysician is understood as "one skilled in the science of Being; a student and teacher of the laws of Spirit", which is derived from the term metaphysics, meaning "the systematic study of the science of Being; that which transcends the physical - a clear understanding of the realm of ideas and their legitimate expression" (Fillmore 1981:132). One person described him as "the first son of God, because he was the first human to be hundred percent obedient to God". Another mentioned that she is "tired of the name Jesus Christ". She wishes that they would refer to Jesus as "Immanuel".

For the majority of participants, Christ is principle. They strongly indicate that Christ is "within us". It is not a person (like Jesus who was a "man of flesh and blood"), but the "divinity within us all". In agreement with New Thought, they believe that "Christ is a title that we can all earn by following Jesus' example" (Anderson & Whitehouse 1995:63); that "Christ existed long before Jesus", because "Christ is the divine man" and "Jesus is the name that represents an individual expression of the Christ idea" (Fillmore 1981:34). Christ is a "powerful healing and renewing consciousness", the "comforter within" or as someone stated, "the word of God moving and demonstrating in and through each of us". Other descriptions include "perfection within all", the "spirituality of man".

As Jesus was considered to be "fully Christ", one could summarise the overall impression that the message of Jesus was to tell, show and demonstrate to us that the
Christ is within every person. "Jesus lived his Christhood", and was seen as the one who "truly lived out the New Thought teaching in those earlier days". It is said that when Jesus discovered the "divinity within himself, he became the Christ" and he then lived according to it and taught it. He is also appreciated for being the one who "taught us how to use our minds and that God is within us". The impression one gets from the participants is that Christ is "God in you"; it is that "perfect God part of you"; it is "a point of awareness in the mind of God"; and it is "our true essence". Jesus was the person who totally understood it, believed it, and lived according to it, in the hope that those who would follow in his footsteps, would come to claim their Christ title too.

The participants' views on Jesus and Christ reflect the interesting differentiation that Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:45) make between the traditional churches' teaching of "believe in Jesus", meaning that what you have been taught about the man Jesus and what he has done or can do, to their suggestion of "believe Jesus", meaning believe what he said and then do it (do as the man told you to do). As one participant observed, "this is what New Thought is all about - living the teaching and principles of Jesus the Christ".

4.3 THE BIBLE

The Bible is considered by many as a "library of sacred books", and a "psychological textbook". It is acclaimed as the "greatest and most accurate manual for living", as the most "wonderful and beautifully written" book. As the "absolute authority", it is seen
and appreciated as "an everlasting book", and a "record of man's search for God (which is his own identity)".

All participants expressed their love for this book and their extensive usage thereof. It teaches them how to live and it offers "enlightenment to the degree that I am willing to receive it". One group makes use of all religious scriptures in their teaching, although the members focus mainly on the Christian Bible as it is the easiest one to understand on a metaphysical level.

The majority of the participants were adamant that the Bible should not be taken literally. It is a "psychological book" with a deeper inner and spiritual meaning. Many are in favour of a more metaphysical (raising the consciousness above the physical and the literal, to encounter the spiritual) interpretation, which according to one participant, "... makes more sense".

4.4 PRAYER AND MEDITATION

The overall impression one gets from the ideas of the interviewees regarding prayer (and meditation), is that it is very vital and very important in their lives. They use it, apply it, teach it, and as one said, "I live with God all the time. I live a meditated life". Another expressed the thought that every idea one has, every thought that one thinks or acts on, is prayer. Prayer is considered to be "good medicine", to be "good for your
health and to have a definite effect on the body". It "helps to lower the blood pressure, makes you aware of God, of others and of yourself". It is "needed in business and day-to-day living", as "it is communication" (Barrett [Living your life]:11).

Although many talked about prayer and meditation as if these were one and the same thing, the majority visualised a distinction. In prayer one "acknowledges God": it is to "align ourselves with Spirit" and it is "vital for drawing closer to God and to be taught of God through the Holy Spirit". Prayer "leads to action" as it is seen "going to God for God's sake". Prayer is not perceived as a means of asking for anything, or as one individual put it: "Prayer is neither to placate God nor to persuade Him to grant requests". In prayer "you do not have to beg anything or anyone outside of yourself. You just convince your own mind as to what you want and 'guidance' will come" (Le Roith 1995a:3). It is rather the "recognition of God as omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent". Prayer is "acceptance, recognition, unification and realisation" of our "oneness with God". "True prayer is union in God". It must be uttered with "body, emotion, mind and soul" (Jones J. 1992a:3).

Meditation on the other hand, is considered to enter the "silence", to "listen", to be in "absolute stillness and withdrawal". It is to be "quiet and to be alone with God completely". There is no "asking", no "action", only the "contemplation and recognition of the God within us" and the "certainty of our oneness with the whole". Someone explains it as "an open receptivity or listening to God without jamming the switchboard
with the chatter of the critical, defensive ego within us all". It is an opportunity to "seek the power within ourselves", to "move inside oneself and to listen to the message that comes forth from deep within oneself". It is considered to be "intuition", "allowing the I Am to manifest" and an "overwhelming feeling of oneness with God ... when we 'touch' God". For Aileen Jones (1994b:19) "prayer and meditation don't exist in time, they exist in the moment - that moment by moment revelation of the Divine".

4.5 WEALTH AND PROSPERITY

Without really explaining the detail, many participants stated that they do indeed teach the principles of wealth and prosperity. It has been said that "God did love a prosperous man" and that money is there to "be used and enjoyed" as "we create our own wealth and prosperity". Reg Barrett wrote that "it is spiritual to be prosperous" and that we were "meant to have abundance" (Barrett [Living your life]:7). Gladys Harrison (1990:6) stated that although many people feel good acknowledging that they do not love money, they still entertain worry, anxiety and general negativity "when we are at the other end of the scale and feel that we don't have enough. Frequently, even more of our mental space is taken up with money when we are in this condition than when we have plenty". She makes a further statement that "success and prosperity are spiritual attributes belonging to all people, but not necessarily used by all".

Prosperity is believing in an abundant universe with plenty for all. Someone said, "Prosperity is knowing that everything in the universe is for us and part of us. We lack
nothing. Although wealth usually represents assets such as a car, house or bank balance, participants have a more holistic understanding of wealth and prosperity. It is "to walk with God", a "consciousness". It is said that one should include aspects such as "health, love, peace, joy, happiness and understanding". "Prosperity does not just mean money - it means abundance, a flow of every good thing in life" (Le Roith 1995a:42). It is "when we realise that life is for us unconditionally then we will reveal our own prosperity. There are no conditions, no limitations (only our own), because God has provided and freely given".

To the question of whether New Thought's prosperous teaching has a solution to a poverty crises in a Third World country, some answered that they did not know. Others said that one cannot experience prosperity and wealth if one does not believe in oneself and in one's potential. Therefore the people in need have to "lift their consciousness", and their "minds have to change to accept more and also to get into action". Another maintained that to survive harmoniously on this planet, "we have to take note of all ecological problems and try to solve them as best we can".

As a black South African, Naledi Deane is absolutely convinced that New Thought is the ultimate answer to the South African economic difficulties. For her, after years of living in a "field of darkness", created by the "blaming game" between Blacks and Whites, New Thought embodies a new and fresh outlook, as the thinking is elevated to oneness and cooperation. She believes that poverty is only "a state of mind", and that
people have to be "sensitised to the existence of higher power and be taught how to tap it, rather than focusing on existing circumstances". Although New Thought is seen as having a message of hope, Deane nevertheless foresees the need for New Thought teachers and leaders to "evolve strongly as real ambassadors of God and step out in faith" (Deane 1996).

Money is not seen as evil. When one experiences lack, limitation or debt, then it is in "the consciousness" of that person. As someone said, "we discredit both God and ourselves by demonstrating poverty, lack and limitation. God gave us the Kingdom and poverty blinds us to this unlimited supply already given". Prosperity is seen as "a natural thing, especially if God had given you the potential".

There was total agreement by many participants on the aspect of tithing. They whole-heartedly approve of this, believe in the principle of "giving back to the source", teach it, and implement it in their teaching as well as in their respective churches and centres. Tithing was explained by one person as "the little seed within us, that part of us, that belongs to God. It is God and this is our tithe". It is like giving back to God what belongs to God.

Naomi le Roith writes that "the law of the universe seems to be based on a tenfold return on everything given out". Tithing "is giving a tenth of your weekly or monthly gross earnings to the nearest point of your spiritual help. It is the simplest way to
cooperate with the source of Infinite Supply and is based on the law of gratitude and expansion" (Le Roith 1995a:44-45).

In a magazine article (Tithing 1990:6-7) published by the ACT Centre in Port Elizabeth, tithing is explained as follows: it is "your practical, physical, joyous thanksgiving offering for ALL that God has done for you in the past, is doing now, and will do for you in the future". It is considered to be the "practical application of the first commandment to love God above all things". Secondly, tithing is seen as the fulfilment of the second part of the One Great Commandment, "love your neighbour as yourself". Whatever one has received in life, one makes available to another and thus everyone benefits. Thirdly, tithing is "a straight fulfilment of the Law of 'as you sow, so shall you reap' and 'give and it shall be given unto you ...".

When prosperity thinking is taught in classes, students and members expect the church or centre to be prosperous. I did notice generally, and from conversations with some of the members of the different groups, that although an individual has experienced some kind of prosperity in his or her life, that there is still a consciousness of "shortage" in the groups. Basically all groups are suffering financially. It has been said that South African New Thought groups have allowed the lack and limited consciousness of the country's poor economic situation to influence and affect them. While American groups are a symbol of prosperity thinking, many a South African group demonstrated lack and limitation. This does not rhyme with the prosperity philosophy taught by New Thought
and could be a reflection of a possible existential crises for New Thought in South Africa. Yet, individuals will be adamant that they have never "lacked anything in life, for God is their source of supply".

4.6 DEATH AND REINCARNATION

There was total agreement regarding the issue of death. For the participants there is NO death, in the sense of no further consciousness or existence. "God is life". "In God there is no death of the Spirit". Human beings are seen as "spiritual beings living in a physical world", and during the process called death, it is only the "physical that dies" - the decomposition of the physical body. Death was not meant to indicate a "final end" to an existence, but rather "a period of stillness where great soul assessment takes place until the next birth" (Warch 1990:89). It is seen as a "journey", "another experience", a "transition" and a "new beginning".

Individuals are not afraid of death, as it is "not a finished chapter". Life goes on. It is "limitless, timeless and deathless". Life is seen as "going from plane to plane", where one has to learn specific lessons, till one "reaches the God quality where one is supreme". Therefore death is seen as only "one part of our lives".

The issue of reincarnation brought about an interesting response. There were those who confidently and with total conviction accept and believe the process of reincarnation
(the rebirth of the soul in a new body). One stated that it "makes you realise that you
better do the best you can do while you are here. For if not, you'll reincarnate to learn
the same lesson". Another sees reincarnation as "an opportunity". It is explained as "an
evolutionary process to unfold the true potential of each soul (or consciousness)". "It
states that we are not our bodies, but that we are divine".

Although "many believe that we return to this plane and live again, perhaps to relearn
lessons we avoided the last time around, I believe" says one person, "that we are given a
choice as to whether we return to this earthly plane or enter the next learning
experience, carrying all that excess baggage with us, that is the unlearned lessons in this
lifetime". For yet another participant, the aspect of "choice" is very important, as it is
"about creating your own life".

On the other hand, there are those interviewees who honestly say that they "do not
know", that they have "no clue", that they are "not sure" or that they "do not believe in
it". One said that it was "not of real importance", for "what does it matter what I was?
What is important is what I am now, and what I am going to do with this life now". For
another who is not sure and who still needs to come to grips with it, it focuses one's
mind on the "now" ... to "live in the now".

Szczawinski came to the conclusion that she was taught by the Old School of Religious
Science. Her teachers included Cohen and Clark from South Africa and American's
Bitzer, Barker and Whitehead. Through them she learnt to interpret the Science of Mind **analogically**, looking for similar strains in all religions. She writes that she "never found them to be critical of anyone else personally or even another religion" (Szczawinski 1995). On the other hand, those South Africans (she includes Le Roith and others) who never had a formal education through any of the above-mentioned teachers, "taught the Science of Mind **metaphorically**, always emphasising "the difference or what they found to be wrong in other people or religions in comparison to what they were doing or teaching" (Szczawinski 1995). Although she experienced this "looking for the differences and the wrong in other people", while attending classes with Le Roith, she was able to maintain an analogical viewpoint and search for the similarities in the teaching because of her Roman Catholic upbringing and her eagerness to study the Science of Mind.

It is very clear, however, that the participants' belief structure, originates from Christianity. Many have been involved in their respective churches, while using New Thought principles. This teaching, with its openness and flexibility, gave them a new interpretation of their existing ideas. As June Jones said during an interview, "I did not find fulfilment in fundamental religion. With New Thought I could apply the teachings to my own personal life. It answered so many questions that I was not allowed to ask. New Thought gave me the answers". She also states that one's "beliefs keep on changing as one moves forward".
The belief in reincarnation, which is an example of the thought pattern of the participants, indicates the openness and flexibility of New Thought towards other religious thought and ideas. It seems that New Thought in South Africa is syncretistic in its structure. Individuals took and received their inspiration from as many teachers, teachings and different avenues of religious thought as they were exposed to, in order to evolve, enlarge and reinterpret their basic belief structure, which stems from the teachings of Jesus.

Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:3-4) summarise the general trend of New Thoughters as follows: "New Thought is what all Christianity could have become if it had been able to avoid the stultifying tendencies needed to compete with other outlooks for the title of official religion of the Roman Empire. It is what all Christianity could have become if it had allowed freedom of belief, concentrating on following the loving, healing example of Jesus rather than developing a rigid superstructure of teachings about Jesus".

From this study it appears that participants agree with Anderson and Whitehouse (1995:4) who explain in a nutshell what New Thought is: "New Thought is expressed in Romans 12:2, 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind'. New Thoughters seek nothing less than total life transformation, empowerment through changing their thoughts and keeping them changed".
1. The following books may be consulted for more information on New Thought's concept of "God":


CHAPTER 5

SERVICES AND LITURGY

New Thought offers a wide variety of services to its members and the general public. They are extremely popular as they appeal to those individuals who have left a traditional church and who are looking for a new, creative and refreshing approach to what they perceive to be the old, cold and impersonal services of the past.

5.1 BUILDINGS

Symbolising a "new" approach to the way and the manner in which one worships, New Thoughters in South Africa have occupied buildings less traditional in style. Although one finds beautiful architecturally styled churches in the United States as a symbol of a creative, "new" and prosperous era, New Thought gatherings and services in South Africa are taking place in private homes, renovated houses and business premises, old church buildings, office buildings and rented halls.

Nevertheless, many have reconstructed the building into a practical and functional unit, with offices, lecture halls, catering facilities for functions, chapels and
sanctuaries. The largest centre can seat two hundred and twenty people in its sanctuary, while the others average between fifty to one hundred.

There are many reasons for the less traditionally religious architecture of the buildings. In many cases there was no need for the formal worship, as many of the members had broken away from or left their churches and were looking for something less traditional.

The market New Thought was catering for, did not reflect strength in numbers, although there are records showing that in the earlier years New Thought speakers drew very large crowds. Those meetings took place at rented venues such as hotels.

Another reason was finance. As formal membership was not a prerequisite for joining a New Thought group and, as many people were still involved with their own religious congregations, capital was scarce. A reason not to be overlooked is that many New Thoughters in South Africa - contrary to their prosperity thinking - have allowed the limited, poverty-stricken and insufficient economy of this country to influence and affect them.

Because of discrimination against this new movement in the earlier years, many doors were closed to any public development or involvement. As this teaching encompasses
all cultural groups, some centres battled to find suitable buildings and venues where they would not be infringing the very real Groups Area Act.

5.2 CELEBRATIONS

Humankind has always partaken in religious celebrations, whether it was primitive, traditional or clothed under a new banner. New Thought is no exception to this rule.

5.2.1 Sunday services

There is a Sunday service or gathering for members and interested persons. These services are held in an appropriate sanctuary, chapel or room and last for about forty five minutes to an hour. Although there are no set rules according to which a service must be officiated, many are following the procedures of their different affiliation groups. In South Africa the congregation and procedures tend to revolve around the person of the individual minister.

All New Thought groups start the celebration with an opening prayer, meditation or treatment. These terminologies are used interchangeably to set the atmosphere for the rest of the service, to acknowledge the presence and the power of the "Most High" as the source and substance of all life, to still the mind from other opposing thoughts and to set the direction of what is to come.
A spiritual, motivational or interpretative talk is then given by the minister or any other person performing this task. For Science of Mind² the service begins with scriptural reading. Others do read from the Bible, but only if it is appropriate to their selected subject. There are those individuals who do not read from the Bible, yet quote from it to make or illustrate a point during the lecture. The reason is that they respect those belonging to other religions. There is no prescribed manner in which the service has to be set out, but the nature of the message is always inspiring and uplifting, and is intended to assist listeners to increase their level of consciousness and spiritual evolvement. The atmosphere in which this is done, is relaxed, informal, warm and caring. On some occasions an assistant or student may be asked to share the platform by telling others what has worked in his or her life. The service is concluded with a prayer, treatment or meditation.

Music and singing of hymns or any other appropriate songs, are used by many centres. Some traditional songs, like the Lord's Prayer, still have a place in many services. The words of well-known songs are often changed to demonstrate the "new" interpretation. Music and songs may be either relatively modern, that is, lively, joyous and entertaining, or rather solemn and very inspirational.

The following songs are typical of a New Thought nature:³

Let's Be

Let's be what we're made to be. Isn't this our destiny?
Let's get started now today. Upward on our way.

Let's be what we really are. Seek and find our inner star.
Let's go forward in the Light. Faces shining bright.

Sons of God unlimited are we. Let us prove the Truth that sets us free.
Let's accept our highest good. Knowing we're in brotherhood.
Now the good in all we see. Let's don't wait, let's be!

Open my eyes that I may see
Open my eyes that I may see. Glimpses of truth you have for me.
Place in my hand the wonderful key. That shall unlock and set me free.
Silently now I wait for you. Ready, my God, your will to do;
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit Divine.

Open my ears that I may hear. Voices of truth so sharp and clear.
And while the message sounds in my ear, everything else will disappear.
Silently now I wait for you. Ready, my God, your will to do;
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit Divine.

Open my mouth; let me declare. Words of assurance everywhere.
Open my heart and let me prepare. Your loving kindness' to share.
Silently now I wait for you. Ready, my God, your will to do;
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit Divine.

I remember
I remember, I remember that God and I are one.
There is only one power, there is only one Power.
That power and I are one!
Confident Living
Confident living, power of my life,
Comes from the Spirit with glorious light.
Confident living cleanses my soul,
Giving the Spirit all It's control.
Confident living rights every wrong,
Dynamic Power helps me be strong.
Confident living comforts my heart,
From such blessing I cannot depart.

Confident living helps me expand,
Visions of value the kingdom has planned.
Confident living, talent to win,
Gift of the Spirit moves from within.
Confident living rights every wrong,
Dynamic Power helps me be strong.
Confident living comforts my heart,
From such a blessing you cannot depart.

It's in every one of us
It's in every one of us, to be wise.
Find your heart, open up both your eyes.
We can all know everything
Without ever knowing how.
It's in every one of us
Here and now.

It's in every one of us, we are free.
Find you Self, open your eyes and see.
We can all have everything
Without ever knowing how.
It's in every one of us
Here and now.

Gladys Harrison's group says the following in place of "Our Father".

Our Creator, which is present within us, as us,
Wholeness and Fullness is Your nature.
Your dominion is established
and Your will is done in seen form as it is created in the unseen.
You give us today and every day all that we need for our maintenance,
growth and increase.
You release us from our errors as we release those
whose errors appear to be directed against us.
You never lead us into trials. You save us from our errors.
For Your's is the Rulership of the Whole Creation,
All the Power and all the Glory for ever. Amen.

Most of the songs used by South African groups, have been written by New Thought
people in the United States. Religious Science International\textsuperscript{4} has its own hymnal.
Instrumental meditative music is often played (compact discs and/or tape recordings)
while a guided meditation or visualisation exercise is done. The choice of music
depends on the result needed. The very well known Peace Song, today used by many
schools and church groups, is sung at the end of a service. For this, members hold
hands to symbolise the unity, peace and love that has been generated.
The Peace Song (adapted by the ACT Centre)

Let there be love on earth, and let it begin with me,
Let there be love on earth, the love that was meant to be.
With God as our Father, Brothers all are we;
Let me walk with my brother, in perfect harmony.

Let love begin with me, let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow,
To take each moment and live each moment in love eternally;
Let there be love on earth and let it begin with ME!

(Other New Thought groups in the United States have changed words in order to accommodate all gender forms).

Love offerings in the form of donations and tithes are collected during the service or, as with other occasions, people can place their gifts in donation baskets. Giving is voluntary.

In the United States of America ministers often wear a gown or robe during a Sunday service, although this is not the case in South Africa. Speakers are usually dressed in a smart casual manner while those attending, could be dressed in whatever they found comfortable.

5.2.2 Weddings

Probably the most popular services offered to the wider public, marriage ceremonies are described by individuals who were involved as "the best service I have ever
attended; this has been the warmest, most caring and unique ceremony I have ever listened to; I have never come across such a touching and uplifting message ever; the personal, individual and warm way in which you have addressed the couple, as well as involved the rest of the guests or congregation, has been noticed and appreciated by everyone present".

Not all New Thought ministers are marriage officers, which means that many may only perform the spiritual service and blessing, while the legal solemnisation of a marriage has to be done by a government appointed marriage officer. Of the eleven participants interviewed, only three are government appointed marriage officers. Many people view this as a discrimination against New Thought.

For the legal solemnisation of a marriage, an officer must adhere to the written laws of the Marriage Act. With this structure, as laid down by law, officers as well as ministers, are willing to perform the ceremony wherever and whenever the couple desire it. This openness and flexibility places ministers at the service of people. They offer a ceremony with which couples can identify and which they enjoy, and such ceremonies are in great demand. One minister allows the couple to choose from various readings and vows, or allows them to write their own dedications, which enables them to identify with whatever is being said or performed during the ceremony. This individual believes that when people have the opportunity for a personal input in the compilation of their service, it has special meaning to them.
Couples (and others) are often touched by the personalised ritual that they can participate in their ceremony. The symbolism of candles and roses used by many New Thought ministers creates a concrete and real experience of the essence of what is happening in the wedding service.

With the candle ceremony, there is one big candle burning, flanked by two individual candles. The large candle represents the Almighty, the great and tender Presence (God), while the burning flame symbolises light and life. It is explained that everyone is part of this light and life, for all were created in God's image. When the two individuals light their candles from the large one, they acknowledge their origin from the light and life, and therefore from God. They are reminded as they look at the flame, that this is the light present within them and, as a married couple, they need to do their utmost to keep this light burning within both self and partner. Instead of trying to extinguish another's light, they should bring the flames of their individual candles together, in order to see and experience a bigger and brighter light, which is the purpose of their commitment. Then they are asked to separate their candles and are reminded that whatever happens in life, they will always remain (as they were created to be) individuals with their own very special light and life.

During the rose ceremony each partner is handed a red rose. The explanation is that, in the language of flowers the red rose symbolises love, which is everyone's gift to them. They are then asked to exchange their roses, thereby giving each other their first gift
as husband and wife, the gift of love. This is followed by the wish that, on each succeeding anniversary of this occasion, they will each bring a red rose to an especially appointed place in their home as a reminder of the vows they have made, a restatement of their love and a recommitment to life.

New Thought ministers in South Africa will marry anyone, irrespective of race, religion, language or culture. Ministers and marriage officers strive to accommodate those individuals otherwise refused and turned away by the more traditional churches for reasons such as divorce, children born out of wedlock, different religious backgrounds and lack of membership (not having been confirmed, christened or counselled in the traditional ways of the denomination). Ministers do not force premarital counselling on the prospective couple, but endeavour to encourage them to participate. Others are happy to counsel a couple if they should have marital problems and to talk to them about their commitment to and communication with each other.

Sheila Szczawinski (1995) said that "there is one part that I do insist on when conducting the service and that is 'blessing' the couple. I mention this", she said, "because I was horrified to be told by a Methodist Minister that only those couples who attend premarital counselling get a blessing from him and the others will receive what he terms a secular wedding service where he does not bless them".
5.2.3 Christenings

In a typical christening service, the emphasis will be on the divinity within a child rather than on the traditional fact that a child has been conceived and born in sin. The ritual is to baptise the person in the spirit of Christ. Christenings are performed for those who ask for them, irrespective of age. Sprinkling of water on the forehead is the most popular means of executing the ritual, although rose petals and oil have been used when requested. The New Testament symbol of water is used by New Thought ministers as this is based on the teachings of Jesus.

In one New Thought congregation the following formula is used to christen and bless the individual: "...in the Name of the Father, in whom you live, and in the Son, the Christ within you, and in the Holy Spirit, the moving creative principle of life". Another minister places water on the forehead to signify God as the Head, "... in the name of the Father in whom you live, and move and have your being", under the chin to signify the Son, "...the Christ Spirit within" and in the nape of the neck signifying the Holy Ghost, "... the creative principle of life". The symbolism of the candle is used by one group during the ceremony.

This service, conducted according to the family's wishes, is considered by participants as warm, open, loving, which makes it well-received. It is conducted in a church, sanctuary or in the privacy of a private home. According to relieved parents, they prefer the promise to "teach their child the truth of his or her divine being in ways of
love and truth according to their best understanding", to the binding commitment to
one specific denomination.

5.2.4 Funerals

In a typical memorial service, the focus is on eternal life. In one case, "death" is
explained by the minister as "a rest between two notes of an unfinished symphony, the
turning of a page in the book of life or as a door through which one passes into
another room. One does not say "good-bye" to a loved one, but rather God speed on
their way to a greater fulfilment". The service is filled with appreciation, love and joy
as the deceased is wished well on his or her graduation day.

New Thought ministers prefer to do a memorial service without the presence of the
coffin, to conducting a burial (open grave ceremony). Yet, the final choice lies with
the family. Most people making use of a New Thought service, prefer it this way and
opt for a cremation. Services are done at a funeral parlour, a church or at a private
home. Many members, understanding and not fearing the process called death, preplan
their service, thereby making it very personal, special and unique.

Some ministers make use of the candle symbolism (see previous endnote) to explain
the origin and continuation of life in God. During the music graduation, in certain
services, a special song or piece of music is played (personally chosen by those who have preplanned their service), to send a loved one on the way to new horizons.

5.2.5 Other services

Christmas and Easter services are conducted by those groups with a larger following. One centre is now closed over the December and January period, and no longer celebrates the Christmas service.

To my knowledge, it is only the ACT Centre in Port Elizabeth which celebrates these special services (Christmas, Easter, Confirmation and Graduation ceremonies) with the serving of communion. These are performed because the Centre believes in the symbolism and power of ritual. Services are attended on voluntary basis and grape juice rather than wine is served. This is to respect and show consideration for those with an alcohol problem. Bread is used to symbolise substance, the spiritual food of the soul, which is truth, while the symbol of wine (grape juice) represents the life force within a person. In a communion service of this nature, it is said, one is reminded not only about the person or event one is celebrating, but also about applying the teaching in one's own life, appropriating this purpose, and receiving an injection of enthusiasm and excitement. Transformation should take place in body, mind and soul.
Ministers or officiators always wear an appropriate robe or gown while performing any special service. The style and colour is left to the individual's choice.

New Thought services are thus known for their flexibility, uniqueness and openness. No service is ever compulsory. Services are conducted and performed according to the minister's personal style, interpretation and understanding.
1. See chapter 4, section 4.4, for an interpretation of prayer and meditation and, chapter 3, endnote 5, for a definition of treatment. In short, "treatment" is talking to God within oneself, while "prayer" is asking and talking to God out there. "Meditation" is going beyond everything into the stillness.

2. Sheila Szczawinski's group in particular.

3. Songs sung at the ACT Centre in Port Elizabeth and at Gladys Harrison's church.

4. Sheila Szczawinski's group in particular.

5. See p. 112 for the explanation of the symbolism of the candle.
6.1 MEMBERSHIP

There are no formal criteria for membership at any of the New Thought centres, groups or churches in South Africa - only a desire or willingness to learn, grow, develop and to change. Membership is free. There are no criteria for expulsion nor has anyone ever been expelled, since people have free choice and a right to attend or not. Gladys Harrison (1996) says she cannot imagine what reasons there could be to expel any one, as "it refutes the 'right to change', which is so vital to the whole teaching".

This free and open situation with no criteria for joining, makes New Thought attractive to the person who has experienced expulsion from one of the traditional churches or who has been refused membership. No questions about the past of the prospective members are asked here, no judgement of the way they have lived their lives and no rules they must keep in order to belong.
Those attending New Thought services and classes often still retain membership of other denominations. The reason is that, while they are not satisfied with what they receive at more conventional institutions, they do not always have an alternative solution. While still feeling safe and secure in a situation they know, they start exploring the parameters of other teachings, which include investigating New Thought. For them, if they do not like what they have experienced, they can always return to the familiar doctrines.

Usually when followers of this movement were asked why they joined or why they have a special interest in the New Thought, the answers were similar. Larson (1987[1897]:322) gives the following answers: "They were disappointed with the religious organizations in which they were reared; their questions were never resolved satisfactorily; they received no help for personal problems; they suffered intensely from condemnation or a sense of guilt or from frustration; or they felt useless, worthless or rejected". These reasons are the same for many South African New Thoughters. As June Jones said during a telephone conversation, "New Thought gave me the answers to the questions that I was not allowed to ask in fundamental religion". A member of the ACT Centre appreciates the fact that there is "no competition or hypocrisy among members". She makes the paradoxical observation that "the church who says we are sinners, lives as if they are all perfect and the group (New Thought) who says we are perfect and whole, does not mind to acknowledge their imperfection". She also enjoys the no "holier than thou" attitude within New Thought, as well as the fact that people
are encouraged to think for themselves, to ask questions and to be aware of what is going on around them, rather than the "keep quiet and accept what we tell you, as you need not understand, only to believe" approach. Someone else expressed delight in having found an "inclusive" spiritual teaching, rather than the "normal exclusiveness of Christianity".

Attendance at classes and services can vary between twenty and two hundred. Two participants interviewed, who have just started classes from home, reported the attendance of four to five people. Except for one centre which showed an increase in numbers, all the others have experienced a decrease in their following. The reason for this is probably that New Thought leadership has restructured itself. Reg Barrett has died and others have retired. The charisma of strong leaders has dissipated and the groups and followers of the individuals have broken apart in confusion. The relapse Naomi le Roith experienced after the death of her eldest son, gave rise to the decision to sell the school in order to give her a retirement allowance from the invested capital. Many students left as they felt "a bit disheartened". Many are reported to have left the country. In Gladys Harrison's case, it was the direct result of the physical relocation of the church from offices in Northcliff, to a church building in Westdene, an area known for its high crime rate. Ultimately, it was Harrison's health problems, culminating in her retirement, that brought about a drop in the congregation, as well as in the financial support which had been run exclusively on gifts and tithes from the congregation. The
lack of sufficient structure and preparation of leaders to take over, is a severe handicap for New Thought and its infrastructure in South Africa.

Aileen Jones remarked during an interview that if a centre experiences a decrease in membership or attendance, it is because of the structure that is changing. She says that "as we are living in changing times, structures have to change too. They have to be fluid and flexible". She has noticed that the members who are still actively involved, are those who have committed themselves to group consciousness and who are holding the vision for the whole community. "Commitment is about giving", Jones says, and "not to get any more". Those who are not comfortable with these changes, often leave, but "this is no reason to be alarmed". She is convinced that "the breaking down of structure must exist".

Although New Thought centres, groups and churches have mixed races attending, in white areas the majority is white, and in black areas the majority is black. While, in the earlier years, apartheid kept groups from different cultural backgrounds apart, Black, White, Coloured and Indian members were worshipping together in New Thought groups. The vast background differences in the culture, history, politics, geography, religious practices and languages spoken, make successful mixed audiences a great difficulty in this country. Logistics that need to be overcome are personal transport, vast distances between areas and political violence within black townships.
English is the language used, except for the two black groups where Sotho is spoken in conjunction with English. Those persons who are fluent in Afrikaans, will do personal counselling and special services in that language.

Counselling plays an important role and is a service available to members if they should request it. In the courses June Jones has taught in collaboration with those overseas, all deal with counselling in their syllabuses. Students who have studied through the ACT Centre in Port Elizabeth, were advised to attend at least one year of psychology at a university (for non-degree purposes). Students have also been trained and advised by therapists from Famsa (Family and Marriage Society of South Africa), as well as AA (Alcoholics Anonymous). Practitioners and ministers do only spiritual counselling, while all other cases are sent to professional psychologists or psychiatrists.

Students of Science of Mind are required to study for four years. Naomi le Roith has personally trained all her practitioners for this same period. According to her they are not allowed to give advice, as they do not have "dominion over others". They would help and assist in problems involving relationships, marriage, prosperity, sickness, abuse, spiritual and religious matters. Only well-trained personnel may assist Gladys Harrison in counselling. These sessions are arranged at a booked time and an hour allowed for each session, which is treated with the utmost confidentiality and remunerated by way of a love offering. Counselling in emergencies usually takes place over the phone.
There is very little or no ranking order between a minister, practitioner and leader as they are there to "support and help one another". According to Religious Science, and this is probably true for all other groups, a "minister" is an ordained minister. A "practitioner" is one who has studied and received accreditation, the one who fulfils a leadership role in the many activities performed and offered. A minister is always a practitioner.

New Thought is known for the role women play in leadership positions and for allowing women professional status in a society totally dominated by men. In South Africa, women feature as ministers, leaders, practitioners as well as members and interested adherents.

Most of the existing members and leaders joined New Thought because of an inner quest for "something more". On the other hand, one finds many are just floating members. An interesting feature is the existence of second and third generation members. Someone from the younger generation recalled what a revelation it was to go to a New Thought church and actually have "fun". She continues by saying, "Where else on earth could I have arrived with spiked, bleached and dyed hair, dressed in black, and have everyone throw their arms around me and tell me they loved me? Kind of took the spice out of being a rebel, to say the least" (Veenker 1993:8). She believes that New Thought gave her the assurance that "the real me, beyond the behaviour and the dress,
was perfect and whole and loveable - capable of anything I believed possible" (Veenker 1993:8).

A teenage boy attending the ACT Centre in Port Elizabeth said, "I could go along with New Thought, because it does not always tell me I'm a sinner" and a nine-year-old girl said that "we are taught that God made us good and beautiful". Another youth from Harrison's church said, "It is amazing to find a place where you are encouraged to take your mind into classes or services, instead of leaving them parked outside with your bike". Someone made the comment that "it is wonderful to be in a class where you are encouraged to disagree with something said, and then given a chance to justify your point of view". A young lady who had been part of Szczawinski's Junior Church and who left for a while and returned, gave the following explanation for her being a member: "I belong to the Religious Science Church because it is teaching me how to create what I want in my life. And it teaches me about God in a personal way. It shows me how to discover the God Qualities in myself and others. The most important aspect of Science of Mind is its very strong spiritual foundation" (Szczawinski 1995).

6.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organisational structure within New Thought groups is very loose. Many groups are affiliated with one or other of the major international movements. For Szczawinski (1995), affiliation means "loyalty to the Head Quarters or Home Department where one has received ordination". It does mean "subscribing to certain rules" which are always
"in line with Science of Mind principles". Yet, "each church is autonomous with freedom within the Guidelines set out in each church's constitution". Szczawinski's group has a Constitution which relates to South African law and which was approved and sanctioned by Religious Science International. According to her "some ministers/churches have misused their position" (Szczawinski 1995).

Le Roith, who was affiliated to Religious Science International, resigned after she could not pay the fee insisted upon by rules and regulations, due to Reserve Bank restriction as well as some other personal matters. She was happy to be "free of American restrictions" (Le Roith 1995b).

In an interview, June Jones said that she enjoys being affiliated as "we need the authority and expertise of overseas groups". This does not mean doing things in a certain way, because "in South Africa", she says, "we are not prepared to follow rules and regulations of those in the United States". According to Jones, there has neither been an umbrella, or controlling body in South Africa, nor the need for one, as long as individuals teach the principles of New Thought and Oneness.

Many groups function in terms of a constitution with the necessary legal position, name, objects, board membership, council, president and officers, reports and accounts, funds and powers. Realising that groups operate individually and autonomously, it remains a difficult task to determine their functions as organisations with constitutions.
When Noami le Roith had her School, they had meetings with five board members, but the ultimate power to make decisions lay with her. Today, she still has a bookkeeper, and her auditor continues to send in their income tax report to the Receiver, although they have no tax to pay.

Gladys Harrison's church is governed by a constitution and affiliation agreement and the headquarters of the movement is run by a Board of Trustees in the United States of America. The Board Members are elected by the registered membership at the annual general meeting, for a three-year term. These members are elected on a rotating basis so as to ensure some continuity of experience and expertise. The major functions of the Board of Trustees is to take control of any property belonging to the church or the rented premises. In short, it is responsible for all of the functioning of the Ministry apart from ecclesiastical matters. All ecclesiastical matters are the sole responsibility of the minister who is an employee of the Board, receiving a salary and various allowances, such as travelling expenses and the renting of an appropriate house in which to live. The Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the amount of all salaries and allowances. The minister receives ten percent of class fees and the balance goes to the church. In the case of workshops arranged by the individual minister, all the income, apart from expenses, are personally earned.

In the constitution and rules of the Association of Creative Thought, the objects are listed as: "(a) To help people, individually or collectively, in any manner, but
particularly regarding the advancement of religious, moral, social and charitable matters.

(b) To counsel with people and give them advice regarding the advancement of religious, moral, social and charitable matters.

(c) To listen to people's difficulties and problems and suggest ways of solving them.

(d) To refer people to other organisations or individuals for help.

(e) To promote cordial relationships in every field.

(f) To publish and distribute books, literature, newsletters and any other printed matter concerned with the activities of the Association or within the definition of these objectives.

(g) To conduct or organise meetings or retreats for the purpose of promoting the objects of the Association in any part of the world.

(h) To provide a centre or centres which will be freely available to all people irrespective of denomination or creed.

(i) To do all such things as may be necessary for or incidental to the attainment of the foregoing objects.¹

The Council of this Association consists of neither less than three nor more than ten members. It manages and controls the Association and acts as Trustee for it. The President is elected by a majority vote of members of the Council. Reg Barrett was the
President of this Association until his death in 1994. This position has not yet been filled. The Council has the authority to appoint any officers, and it prepares annual accounts to be audited. The Association offers all services free of charge and depends wholly on free-will offerings and voluntary donations.

Although groups are affiliated to others, locally and/or internationally, the power and the authority lies very much with the individual leader. Aileen Jones is of the opinion that churches have too much structure and that groups need to restructure regularly themselves in order to remain more fluid and flexible. The ideal situation for her is one where there are no leaders as such, but different speakers all coming together to evolve their centre or group - an interrelationship. "We are not in a preaching ministry any more", she says in an interview, but in "a teaching ministry". She correctly realises that New Thought in South Africa had charismatic leaders teaching truth principles, but believes that present leaders now need to "mobilise themselves into the New Era where vision holders must be created, without a leader". For her it is about "forming groups of souls into an universal spirituality". Centres should be there in order to give those in need a safe haven and to act as a resource centre for them to empower themselves as individuals.

6.3 TRAINING

The training of students to become teachers and practitioners is done locally, although many students received their training while studying overseas. Groups affiliated to a
specific "denomination", follow a set training program and ordination of ministers. This has to be done by head office or certain individuals empowered and authorised to perform it. Independent ministries can either ordain their own students or have someone from a recognised institute, to perform the ceremony. In the past students have had to go overseas to get the necessary training, but some centres (like the Association of Creative Thought in Port Elizabeth) have started their own courses, with the expertise, input and assistance of international groups and individuals.

Sponsored by Dr Margaret Stevens and the Margaret Stevens Institute, Rev Mary Reninger (both from the United States of America) compiled a two-year curriculum for ministerial students at the ACT Centre. The study program consisted of two three-hour night classes a week. The first year of study included the following:

- History of New Thought (4 weeks)
- Philosophical Foundation of New Thought (4 weeks)
- Christian Symbols - Christmas Rituals (1 week)
- Metaphysics (4 weeks)
- Old Testament (metaphysical interpretation) (6 weeks)
- New Testament (metaphysical interpretation) (6 weeks)
- History of Christianity (3 weeks)
- World Religions (5 weeks)

The second year covered the following:

- Mysticism (3 weeks)
- Meditation (2 weeks)
A formal degree in theology or philosophy is no prerequisite for individuals to pursue studies and training in New Thought. Courses are followed in collaboration with established international groups, ministries and schools. Thereafter individuals are trained in the policies of their chosen "denomination". One of the reasons why New Thought is not enjoying the acclaim it should, is because of the lack of scholars. A critique of New Thought is that one can easily get a qualification and become an ordained minister in this movement.

It is obvious that, in its membership, New Thought groups incorporate organisational structures and training programs, a sense of openness, freedom and flexibility. Although affiliated to other groups or head offices, the final decision lies with the leader. Yet, one observes the dissipation of charismatic leadership and structure as groups prepare for a "new era" teaching.
ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

New Thought as a discrete religious movement in South Africa, may be traced back to the early 1900s. As with New Thought in general, women played an important and dominant role in establishing this movement in South Africa. Today, after two prominent male leaders have passed on, only women remain in the existing leadership positions. Their ages range from forty to seventy-nine. They represent a diverse range of religious backgrounds, educational training, language abilities, as well as different cultural and racial groups. Several have initiated the building or organisation of a church, centre or group, where they successfully run services, classes and further training in ministerial work. Although some are still affiliated to their respective head quarters in the United States of America, others operate independently. New Thought services, especially the wedding ceremonies, christenings and memorials, are extremely popular with the public, as they reflect an openness and flexibility which participants can freely identify with and relate to.

The interviewees have definite religious thoughts and beliefs regarding God, Jesus, Christ, the Bible, prayer and meditation, wealth and prosperity, death and reincarnation. God, perceived as love, power and an all-pervading energy is understood to be in total
oneness with everything else. Participants believe that, as a cosmic consciousness, changeless and eternal, each person is the individualisation of God, and that no-one can ever be separated from this source. Jesus is seen as a person, a loving teacher and the great way-shower, whereas Christ is considered a principle, the divinity within a human being. The Bible, appreciated by all as a library of sacred books, is interpreted in a "metaphysical" (ie allegorical) way and not taken literally. Whilst prayer is understood as the means of acknowledging and recognising God as omnipresent and omnipotent, and of bringing about union with God, meditation is seen as entry into the silence, as moving inside oneself and listening silently, contemplating the Divinity within. Wealth and prosperity are generally understood and experienced in a holistic way, and are not considered to include just material possessions. Prosperity entails believing in an abundant universe and realising that life is there unconditionally for everyone to partake of. Tithing is accepted as the principle of joyously giving back to the source in gratitude for all the wonders that one has received. Individuals feel that there is no death, and the ending of earthly life is not the final end. Instead death means that a part of life continues on another level of existence. Interesting is the response to reincarnation. Several accept it and believe in the rebirth of the soul in a new body, whilst others are not clear on this matter. However, according to some, it does help them to focus their minds on the present moment, and to remind them to live in the "now". Most of the participants, prior to joining New Thought, belonged to one of the major religious denominations, but all felt trapped by what they referred to as their dogmatic fundamentalism. They found in the New Thought teaching a refreshing, uplifting, inspiring, enlightening and transforming experience.
It seems that the future role of New Thought in South Africa is not going to be one of a highly structured new, religious movement, but rather one of offering people an opportunity to "transcend" their present religious thought and to keep on transcending it without necessarily leaving it. People do not need to change their religious affiliation to implement New Thought principles. New Thought awareness benefits the individual at conscious level at any given moment in time, in any given set of circumstances.

South African New Thought is heavily dependent on its American connection for training and ongoing exposure to knowledge and the most recent trends within the movement. Of even greater importance, is the expressed need to experience togetherness with like-minded people and not to be isolated from interaction and sharing. Through this research, I came to the realisation that, although many have expressed the ideal of a true South African identity as necessary for the survival of New Thought in this country, South African New Thoughters seem to have difficulty in making it work, either because of a lack of interest, or a lack of strength.

The reasons for the lack of structure in South African New Thought at this stage seem to be the following:

1. *Lack of integration between the different groups, accentuated by great geographical distances and insufficient funds.* It seems as if groups prefer operating independently, to pooling their resources in order to make New Thought survive and thrive in this country. This lack of cohesion between the different groups is a
reflection of the competition between groups, a struggle for control and power, and the need to survive.

2. Death and retirement of leaders. Some of the most prominent and well-known leaders of New Thought in South Africa have either passed on or retired, or are in the process of stepping down due to age or illnesses. This leaves a gap in leadership as there are not enough adequately qualified ministers to take over. Because of the lack of integration and interaction between groups, the teaching often dies an early death with its leader.

3. Changes in patterns of New Thought leadership and organisational structure. There is a noticeable shift from strong individual charismatic leaders in the past to the present leaders who tend more to see themselves as operative parts of a larger system, and as part of the representative vision of the community as a whole.

4. The age gap between those presently in positions of leadership and those who have newly been ordained. For many years, after the initial training of the previous generation of leaders, no students were prepared and educated to take over. This has now resulted in a widely felt absence of appropriate leadership, as well as in the younger generation holding different views on operation and organisation.

5. Weaknesses in proper local training of students and ministers, as well as inadequate academic qualifications. Because of the different affiliations to specific "denominations" in the United States of America (Religious Science, Divine Science, Unity and the many independent groups), training differs widely, and there
are no structured or standardised programs that are followed uniformly. Various
groups have their own educational syllabus because their needs, for and their
understanding of, the required qualifications vary. This leads to a situation where
leaders in certain groups are adequately trained, while others have entered the
ministry with a lesser degree of preparedness. With no formal degree in theology or
philosophy as a prerequisite, the ministry has attracted the label of gaining "easy
qualification".

6. Close affiliation with head office. Being controlled and monitored by another,
foreign office, makes easy integration with other South African groups very difficult
and in some cases, even impossible.

Because of structural weaknesses and the lack of coordination between South African
New Thought groups, the survival of New Thought as an independent religious
movement alongside other well established bodies as experienced in the United States of
America, is critical and needs to be addressed seriously. Nevertheless, according to the
perception of people within New Thought, it has sufficient strong points to play an
important role in the "cross-cultural bracketing", which is so important to Smart
(1987:3-23) as he advocates a more global approach to the understanding of religions.

The appeal of New Thought to its adherents is its "optimistic scheme of life" (James
1987 [1902]:91). At yet another turning point in history, where the old must make way
for the new, New Thought seems to offer an alternative religious experience to those
religious people who have been disappointed by present organised religions. The following characteristics of New Thought seem to hold out the promise of a positive change and contribution to a multicultural and changing country.

1. *Its doctrinal openness and flexibility.* The investigation of the different thought patterns of participants in chapter four confirms New Thought's ability to be flexible and sensitive to widely divergent religious thoughts and ideas. This syncretistic tendency seems to be ideal and essential in a country like South Africa with its multicultural and multireligious diversity. From this survey it appears that participants have received their belief profile (which is based on the teachings of Jesus), from several teachers, teachings and streams of religious thought they were exposed to. Since this variety seems even more relevant today, some participants include a wide selection of material in their syllabuses and classes.

2. *Its loose organisational structure.* Participants are not alarmed by the changes and the looseness of structure within groups. They are aware of the fact that it takes the dismantling of existing structures, to bring about a breakthrough. As the times change, so they feel, the structures should too. Someone like Aileen Jones has expressed the urgency of restructuring groups, becoming more fluid and flexible, and creating an awareness that because individuals are interrelated and connected they should mobilise themselves, regarding themselves as those with a vision of an universal spirituality.

3. *Its unique liturgy.* Its multifarious ways of conducting services, offer an alternative to the more formal and stereotyped services of most churches. These ceremonies are
becoming the major attraction for New Thought's existence and it is becoming the popular vehicle through which New Thought is making a contribution to the religious lives of individuals in South Africa.

Despite the fact that, compared with the extensive growth in the earlier years, the present is a time of bleeding because of the lack of cohesion and integration among groups, as well as power struggle, it is nevertheless a positive sign to see New Thought structures changing within certain groups.

With the focus on the future of New Thought in South Africa, three possible scenarios emerge.

1. It could undergo an early and unnecessary disintegration, through lack of proper cohesion between the different groups, ineffective leadership, inadequate education and training and the underlying power struggle among individuals in the various groups.

2. It could survive by addressing those areas in which it lacks direction at present. This seems to be the time for the younger leaders with a vision of joining in a universal spirituality, to come forward. The existing institutional structure, depending on charismatic leadership needs to change, from a leadership centred in an individual to a leadership forged by the interconnectedness of a group.
One recommendation is that New Thought expand by encompassing some of the major South African black languages in its discourse. The possibilities of training people in their mother tongue, as well as delivering the teaching in a language known to them, are promising. It is obvious that black leaders would be in a unique position to meet the needs arising in these transitional times. At present the only two qualified black New Thoughters in South Africa, Naledi Deane and Thandi Mathibela, are products of New Thought's persistence during the time of the Groups Act of the apartheid regime. The active involvement of black leaders, and the availability of training material as well as written literature in one or more of the major black languages would undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the survival of New Thought.

A central body created for South Africans by South Africans would coordinate the ongoing interaction among groups and the positive influence of New Thought on a changing society.

Standardisation and intensification of training among prospective New Thought students would lead to proper recognition, prestige and the required professional efficiency. If New Thought is considered to require a stronger profile and an identity of its own, it will have to address the above-mentioned suggestions in order to fulfil its potential.

3. An alternative suggestion for the survival of New Thought would be to implement none of the above-mentioned strategies, but to continue the role of a "backstage assistant", assisting and preparing people for the changing times and shifts in thought
patterns. With its openness, flexibility and nondogmatic teaching, it can provide people the space to make the necessary changes and to risk development outside their traditional frameworks. However, fulfilling this unnoticeable role of a midwife, gently preparing, pushing and guiding humanity into the next evolutionary step of spiritual awakening, could indeed lead to its decline as an acknowledged and known religious power among others. Even if there is a strong possibility that New Thought may, due to this subtle role, no longer be known by its present name, its teaching will nevertheless continue to be disseminated and practised in a loosely structured and syncretistic way, together and interrelated with many other practices that are increasingly gaining influence. Even if New Thought is content with the role of facilitator, it may nevertheless continue to be a force with an expanding focus in the near future as more and more people awake to their own spirituality.

Although many consider New Thought to be New Age, and although there are indeed similarities as indicated in this dissertation, this study nevertheless shows the prominent differences. New Thought in South Africa is not widely accepted as a mainstream religious movement with its own unique history, philosophy and theology. To the observer of the religious scene, it is a syncretistic mixture of many thoughts and practices. However, New Thought has the potential to play a significant role by influencing the wider society with its discovery and application of the fact that a person can alter his or her life, by altering their attitude and mind. New Thought "is not so much an institution as an influence. Consciously or unconsciously it has literally affected
millions of people" (What is New Thought? 1993:13). With its focus on "whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve", or "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind", New Thought may have the historical resources to play a major part in South Africa to provide bridges between different cultures, languages, religious and political beliefs in times of major change and adjustment.

I agree with Anderson (1993:17) when he says that "what the world needs most is a religion that lovingly includes diversity, that invites all people to turn within themselves to find their individualisation of the universal Reality (of whatever name, or none), a religion that offers techniques for using their awareness of the ultimate presence to solve their daily problems. New Thought has been doing this for more than a century of inspiring people, healing them, and encouraging them to engage in what is new thought and practice for them". Anderson believes that participation in New Thought "means reserving the right to change one's mind, to be 'open at the top' for new growth stimulated by whatever new light may come, open to God's ever-new self-revelation in ourselves". "Whatever our faiths", he concludes, "may we all welcome whatever new thought we discover, with or without capital letters" (Anderson 1993:18). I strongly believe that New Thought, in the way it is known to the larger public, can fulfil and assist in this process in a country such as South Africa.
APPENDIXES

Questionnaire 1: New Thought in South Africa and New Thought beliefs

The following questions were initially mailed to selected participants in order to determine their involvement in the New Thought movement. It acted as basis and framework for interviews and further discussions.

1. Name
2. Address
3. Biographical details
4. How did you come into New Thought? (Was it through reading books, listening to lectures, the radio/TV, a personal healing or any other experience/happening?)
5. When did this happen (date) and where (place)?
6. Give a short background history of yourself, describing your religious upbringing (including ideas about your parents, your views and perceptions as a youth and then as an adult, details about education or any other training, information about interests and social commitments).
7. Did you start any centre, school or church? If so, when, where and how? Are you an ordained minister? If so, through which organisation, church or school did you study and who ordained you?
8. Have you trained students? Have any of them been ordained? Are they practising as practitioners, ministers or teachers?
9. Do you belong to any affiliation, or are you independent? If applicable, mention the affiliation to which you did belong and why you decided to become independent?
10. Have you retired from your profession or are you thinking about the possibility? If so what is going to happen to your organisation, church, centre or school? Will any one in particular be taking over?
11. In short, what are your focused ideas/beliefs about New Thought and its teaching? Express your views and understanding on the following subjects: God, Jesus and Christ, the Bible, prayer and meditation, wealth and prosperity, death and reincarnation.
12. If, in a few words, I needed to sum up your role in the New Thought movement in South Africa, what would you have me say?
13. Do you have any visions, missions or dreams for New Thought in South Africa? Any suggestions of how it should be organised or taught among the people of this country?
14. Are there any books or individuals that inspired, motivated or challenged you?

15. Is there any other related topic or piece of information you find important enough to mention, that has not been dealt with above?
Questionnaire 2: Services and organisational structure

These questions (adapted to meet my needs) were taken from a larger research project conducted by the Department of Religious Studies and the Research Institute for Theology and Religion at the University of South Africa.

1. What is unique about your group?

2. Membership
   2.1 Numbers
      2.1.1 Internationally
      2.1.2 In South Africa
   2.2 Language
   2.3 Race
   2.4 Gender (M/F ratio)
   2.5 Other socio-economic factors
   2.6 Criteria for membership
   2.7 Criteria for expulsion

3. Organisational structure
   3.1 Internationally
   3.2 In South Africa
   3.3 How are leaders appointed?

4. Training of office bearers
   4.1 Gender of office bearers

5. Buildings
   5.1 How many?
   5.2 Where?
   5.3 Architectural style?
   5.4 Size?

6. Events, services and liturgy
   6.1 When?
   6.2 How long?
6.3 How?
6.4 Dress
6.5 Funerals, weddings, christenings

7. Attitudes towards wider society
   7.1 Importance of education
   7.2 War, military service and political conflict
   7.3 Other

8. Social services (old age homes etc.)

9. Attitude towards people with different beliefs
   9.1 Other denominations
   9.2 Other religions

10. Networking
    10.1 Internationally
    10.2 In South Africa

    New Thought's relation to New Age, Scientology, Spiritualism, etc.

11. Mission and propagation

12. Views on the present and the future of the country, and on religion in South Africa

13. Anything else
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