

**AN EXPLORATION OF GROOME'S SHARED PRAXIS  
APPROACH AS CONTEXTUAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
WITHIN A SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTIST TOWNSHIP  
CHURCH**

by

**DANIEL JOHN SUTCLIFFE-PRATT**

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## **Abstract**

The study commenced by identifying existing forms of Christian education using top-down education within South African Baptist Convention churches. The research established that current models of education were unsatisfactory, as they were individualist, spiritualised and lacking contextual insight. A need for Christian education showing greater sensitivity to context was highlighted. A descriptive study ensued implementing Osmer's *descriptive-empirical* tasks within the field of Practical Theology. Informed by literature relating to liberation theology, critical pedagogy and South African contextual theology, Groome's *Shared Praxis Approach* (SPA) to education was selected for exploration as a type of contextual Christian education. The research had two objectives. Firstly it explored the five educational movements of SPA, as they were outworked in the township church. Secondly, it sought to establish whether SPA could potentially serve as a type of contextual Christian education within the South African context.

SPA was therefore outworked within a Baptist Convention church in the township of Munsieville. Following a qualitative approach, the research observed two Bible Studies implementing SPA and undertook six semi-structured interviews. These were recorded and analysed. Conceptualisation of the data involved content analysis from which codes and categories emerged, as well as drawing on the literature as a lens to analyse and interpret that data. Inter-linked characteristics of contextual Christian education emerged from the data. These related to: contextual stories told by participants; cultural understandings of the Christian Story, and; critical reflection concerning praxis. The findings highlighted that SPA encouraged participants to engage in a participatory, praxis approach to education. Participants read the Christian Story dialogically; in community 'with' each other, as well as in relation to their context. Accordingly, the Christian education process emerged from the bottom-up, enabling participants and facilitator to co-create knowledge. The consequences of this education process indicated liberative characteristics. The implications of these findings were explored. The study's praxis cycle concludes by offering recommendations for both implementation and further study.

## **Key Terms**

Shared Praxis Approach; Contextual Christian education, Contextual Theology; Liberation Theology; Practical Theology; Grassroots theology; Emergence of contextual theologies; South Africa; Township; Baptist Convention

## Declaration

I hereby declare that AN EXPLORATION OF GROOME'S SHARED PRAXIS APPROACH AS CONTEXTUAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WITHIN A SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTIST TOWNSHIP CHURCH is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This dissertation is completed after deep research on the topic and is submitted to the University of South Africa (UNISA) and has not been submitted to any other institution or university in full or in parts. I declare that the research conducted hereof is original.

18 February 2014

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Signature

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Date

Revd Daniel Sutcliffe-Pratt

Student No: 47246774

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18 February 2015

## **Dedication**

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# Table of Contents

## Chapter 1 Introduction and Overview

<b>1.1 Introduction and Rational</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Problem Statement</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3 Background to the Research Problem</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1.4 Contribution to Practical Theology</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.5 Research Framework</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.5.1 Ontological Framework.....	9
1.5.2 Theoretical Framework.....	9
<b>1.6 Definition of Terms</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>1.7 Methodology: Qualitative Research</b> .....	<b>13</b>
1.7.1 Data Collection.....	15
1.7.1.1 Observation and Audio-recording of the Bible Studies using SPA.....	15
1.7.1.2 Semi-structured interviews.....	16
1.7.1.3 The Sample.....	16
1.7.2 Data Analysis .....	17
1.7.3 Ethical Considerations.....	18

## Chapter 2 Contextual Christian Education in South Africa

<b>2.1 The Historic Background</b> .....	<b>19</b>
2.1.1 Christianity and education promoting apartheid.....	20
2.1.2 Contextual theologies resisting apartheid.....	23
<b>2.2 The Current Situation of Contextual Christian Education</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>2.3 The Baptist Convention of South Africa</b> .....	<b>35</b>

## Chapter 3 The Relationship Between Christian Education and Contextual Theology

<b>3.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>3.2 Christian Education and Contextual Theology</b> .....	<b>41</b>
3.2.1 The emergence of contextual theologies.....	44
3.2.2 Who should be involved in the process of contextual theologising? .....	46
3.2.3 Contextual Christian education and liberation.....	49
3.2.3.1 Christian education and Latin American liberation theology.....	50
3.2.3.2 Christian education and critical pedagogy.....	55
3.2.3.3 Concepts.....	57
3.2.3.4 Recent approaches.....	60

<b>3.3 Groome’s Shared Praxis Approach.....</b>	<b>64</b>
3.3.1 Praxis and theological foundations.....	64
3.3.2 Theoretical foundations: Freire and critical theory.....	67
3.3.3 The ‘Shared’ aspects of Groome’s approach.....	69
3.3.4 Movements of the Shared Praxis Approach.....	70
3.3.4.1 Introduction: The focusing activity.....	71
3.3.4.2 Movement 1: Naming/expressing present action.....	72
3.3.4.3 Movement 2: Critical Reflection on present action.....	73
3.3.4.4 Movement 3: Making Accessible Christian Story and Vision.....	74
3.3.4.5 Movement 4: Dialectical hermeneutics to appropriate Story/Vision to participant’s stories and visions .....	75
3.3.4.6 Movement 5: Decision/response for lived Christian Faith.....	76
3.3.5 Conclusion.....	77

## **Chapter 4 Methodology, Data Analysis and Findings**

<b>Part 1: Methodology.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>4.1 Research Questions.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>4.2 Research Process.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>4.3 The Sample: Shekinah Glory Worship Centre.....</b>	<b>79</b>
4.3.1 Christian education within the church.....	80
<b>4.4 Data Collection.....</b>	<b>80</b>
4.4.1 Preparation for Data Collection.....	80
4.4.2 Observation Protocols.....	81
4.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews.....	82
4.4.4 The Sample: Participants and Interviewees.....	82
<b>4.5 Ethical Considerations: The Role of Researcher and Participant.....</b>	<b>84</b>
4.5.1 The role of the researcher.....	84
4.5.2 The role of the participant.....	85
<b>4.6 Data conceptualisation and analysis.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Part 2: Data Analysis and Findings: Sub-question one</b>	
<b>4.7 Introduction and Conceptualisation.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>4.8 Movement 1: Naming Life.....</b>	<b>89</b>
4.8.1 Introduction.....	89
4.8.2 Life Worlds.....	90
4.8.2.1 Township life.....	91



i. Focusing activity and encountering other people in the township.....	91
ii. Religious practices, poverty and crime.....	92
4.8.2.2 Home life.....	94
4.8.2.3 Church life.....	96
4.8.2.4 Wider society.....	97
4.8.3 Summary.....	99
<b>4.9 Movement 2: Critical Reflection</b>	
4.9.1 Introduction.....	99
4.9.2 Critical Reflection and Bible Study 1.....	101
4.9.2.1 Gangsterism within the church.....	101
4.9.2.2 Difficulties in loving neighbours.....	104
4.9.3 Critical Reflection and Bible Study 2.....	106
4.9.3.1 Limited critical reflection.....	106
4.9.3.2 Emerging contextual theology.....	108
4.9.4 Summary.....	110
<b>4.10 Movement 3: Christian Story.....</b>	<b>111</b>
4.10.1 Introduction.....	111
4.10.2 The hermeneutical task of the facilitator.....	111
4.10.2.1 Bible Study 1: Neighbours.....	111
4.10.2.2 Bible Study 2: Worrying.....	114
4.10.2.3 The facilitator's view of the Christian Story and context.....	117
4.10.3 Summary.....	118
<b>4.11 Movements 4 and 5: Appropriate Faith to life and Decision.....</b>	<b>119</b>
4.11.1 Introduction.....	119
4.11.2 Movement 4 and 5 within Bible Study 1: Neighbours.....	120
4.11.2.1 Neighbour: A contextual definition.....	120
4.11.2.2 'Ubuntu, you must help your neighbour'.....	122
4.11.2.3 Decision making.....	124
4.11.3 Movement 4 and 5 within Bible Study 2: Worries.....	125
4.11.3.1 Appropriating own knowledge of the Christian Story.....	125
4.11.3.2 Generating understandings of the Christian Story.....	126
4.11.3.3 Participant's Spirituality: faith and trust in God.....	129
4.11.4 M4 and M5 and Critical Reflection.....	131
4.11.5 Summary.....	133

### **Part 3: Data Analysis and Findings: Sub-question two**

<b>4.14 Introduction and Conceptualisation.....</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>4.15 Experience of previous Christian education.....</b>	<b>136</b>
4.15.1 Characteristics of previously experienced Christian education.....	137
4.15.2 Consequences of experienced Christian education.....	140
<b>4.16 Experience of the Shared Praxis Approach.....</b>	<b>142</b>
4.16.1 The importance of questioning within education.....	142
4.16.2 Learning together: putting the subject ‘on the table’.....	145
4.16.3 Socio-emotional dynamics.....	147
4.16.4 The freedom to make meaning.....	152
<b>4.17 Consequences of Participatory Education.....</b>	<b>153</b>
4.17.1 The Gap Closes: Lines of connection between life and Faith.....	154
4.17.2 Therapeutic education: ‘let the hurt out’.....	155
4.17.3 Education in community: diversity and richness.....	156

### **Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations**

<b>5.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>5.2 Discussion: The outworking of SPA’s movements and their liberating potential....</b>	<b>157</b>
5.2.1 Discussion of Movement 1: Naming Life.....	159
5.2.2 Discussion of Movement 2: Critical Reflection.....	160
5.2.3 Discussion of Movement 3: Christian Story.....	163
5.2.4 Discussion of Movement 4: Appropriate Faith to Life.....	166
5.2.5 Discussion of Movement 5: Decision.....	167
5.2.6 Discussion: Participants engaged in critical Praxis education.....	169
5.2.7 Summary.....	171
<b>5.3 Discussion: Could SPA potentially serve as a type of contextual Christian education?.....</b>	<b>171</b>
5.3.1 Discussion: Participatory pedagogy within the South African context.....	172
5.3.1.1 Discussion 1: SPA’s Participatory and liberatory Characteristics.....	172
5.3.1.2 Discussion 2: The importance of good facilitation.....	174
5.3.1.3 Discussion 3: The importance of positive group participation.....	176
5.3.1.4 Discussion 4: The emergence of community knowledge.....	176
5.3.1.5 Discussion 5: Communal education engaged the communal context....	178
5.3.2 SPA as contextual Christian education within the South African context.....	179
5.3.2.1 Holistic Christian education.....	180
5.3.2.2 Christian education for reconstruction.....	180
5.3.2.3 Multicultural Christian education.....	181

5.3.2.4 Storytelling Christian education.....	182
5.3.2.5 Restorative and liberative Christian education.....	183
5.3.2.6 Christian education nurturing contextual theology.....	184
<b>5.4 Contribution to Practical Theology.....</b>	<b>185</b>
5.4.1 Practical Theology and the Shared Praxis Approach.....	185
5.4.2 Practical Theology, Voice and Culture.....	186
5.4.3 Practical Theology and Opportunities for Future Research.....	187
<b>5.5 Limitations of the Study.....</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>5.6 Recommendations.....</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>5.7 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Works Cited.....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Appendix 3.....</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Appendix 4.....</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Appendix 5.....</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Appendix 6.....</b>	<b>229</b>

## Figures and Tables

### Figures

3.1 Bevans' three sources of theological enquiry.....	43
3.2 The Pastoral Cycle.....	52
4.1 Life worlds referenced within the Bible Studies.....	90
4.2 Content of facilitator's monologue showing the dialectic between Faith and life.....	113
4.3 Methods and consequences of participant's past educational experiences.....	141
5.1 The Praxis Cycle and SPA's Movements.....	169
5.2 Group dynamics between facilitator and participants.....	175
5.3 Communal Education Process.....	178

### Tables

3.1 The Five Movements of Groome's Shared Praxis Approach.....	71
4.1 Occurrences of Critical Reflection.....	101
4.2 Five stories showing the progression between life-Faith-life.....	109
4.3 Participant's perception of God: reasons for trust and faith in God.....	129
5.1 Inhibiting and liberating factors of education approaches.....	158
5.2 Experience and consequences of educational practices.....	172

## Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
BCSA	Baptist Convention of South Africa
BEC	Basic Ecclesial Communities
CBS	Contextual Bible Study
CE	Christian Education
CCE	Contextual Christian Education
BCC	Baptist Convention College
BCSA	Baptist Convention of South Africa
BS1	Bible Study 1
BS2	Bible Study 2
CEB	Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (Basic Church Communities)
M1 – M5	Movement 1 – Movement 5
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SAYA	Shekinah's Anointed Young Adults
SGWC	Shekinah Glory Worship Centre
SPA	Shared Praxis Approach
WCC	World Council of Churches

# Chapter 1

## Introduction and Overview

### 1.1 Introduction and Rationale

In 1995 the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) found itself at the end of a long struggle against Apartheid, having experienced segregation and marginalisation politically, economically, socially and spiritually. The BCSA had separated from being in association with the Baptist Union in December 1987, as ‘oppression, discrimination, and domination could be tolerated no longer’ (Hoffmeister & Gurney 1990:5). This separation was viewed as necessary as ‘the BU [Baptist Union] perpetuated apartheid within its own structures’ and promoted ‘a negative view of African life, culture and religious consciousness’ (Kretzschmar 1999:48, 52). During Apartheid the training of black pastors was regarded as separate from the training of white pastors. Therefore different Baptist colleges for white and black trainee pastors have been in effect since 1940. Kretzschmar writes that the education received for black pastors was ‘Euro-centered and privatised’:

This means that the questions, subject matter, books and lectures were predominantly based on European and North American theology. The significance of the rise of African, Black and Liberation theologies did not form part of the course. Social ethics, especially issues directly related to the South African context, received little or no emphasis (Kretzschmar 1990:30).

This resulted in pastors trained to focus on spiritual issues, while not being prepared to either deal with a context of political and economic oppression, or the African context and culture (Mhlophe 1990:54-55). Consequently, in post-Apartheid South Africa, the BCSA found itself ill-equipped trying to guide its eighty-six township churches into a complex new socio-political context (Msiza 2010:22).

Within the BCSA there are two educational challenges. The first challenge is to remove itself from the educational ideology and practices of the past. Secondly, the challenge is to remove itself from the ideology of the practices of the present where the oppressed becomes the oppressor (Freire 1996a). Within the BCSA, congregants within the townships are experiencing a double oppression. Individuals have been historically oppressed, politically, economically and racially. Congregants are now also oppressed by church educational ideology (Freire 1996a, 1996b), as well as the pastors who were sent to free them (Madolo 1990:60). It has been argued that pastors themselves are ‘still in the shackles of missionary domination and top-down theology’ (Molebatsi 1990:70) and who as a result of apartheid had ‘inferior theological training’ (Madolo 1990:60). It is noted that unconscious indoctrination occurs due to the fact that the teachers and pastors do not know any better (Harkness 2002).

In 1994 the BCSA responded to this crisis through developing the following mission statement:

The Baptist Convention of SA is a body of churches whose mission is to proclaim [sic] the Gospel of our Jesus Christ and enhance a prophetic witness to the world, by establishing and developing churches, providing theological education, developing leaders, social ministry, promoting economic empowerment and entering into partnership with like-minded organization (Msiza 2010:24).

The mission statement is a deliberate move away from 'Euro-centred and privatised' education, to a more holistic, transformational, participatory and contextualised expression of Christianity. Addressing the BCSA in post-Apartheid South Africa, Kretzschmar builds on the 1994 mission statement by proposing a holistic spirituality, relevant for the totality of life. She writes,

In South Africa as a whole, the challenge of the Gospel is for us as believers to review what we believe the Gospel teaches and to actually live out in our personal, family and social lives. We need to avoid the dualism, spiritualisation, lack of contextual awareness, and the individualism that has characterised so much of our (imported) theology, the activities of our churches, and the vision of our members (1995b:32).

Importance must therefore be put on developing Christian education within the BCSA that will avoid a privatised approach. This should rather focus on enabling ordinary believers to engage in contextually relevant Christian education relating to the totality of their lives. This Christian education would move away from a dualistic-spiritual method, only emphasising spiritual needs by separating reality into different spheres of the physical and spiritual; the sacred and the secular.

These educational challenges within the BCSA have been expressed more widely within Africa. Calling for more holistic, transformational, participatory and contextualised expressions of Christianity, Njoroge, urges African Christian educators to develop 'a curriculum that begins by exploring the causes of pain and suffering in the lives of our people and seeks to identify what has brought fullness of life to people in the midst of destruction and death' (2004:87). Kretzschmar, writes 'African Christians, in particular, need to integrate their African perception of the wholeness of life with the Christian gospel. They need to discard the dualisms of Western approaches which divide the world into separate physical and spiritual compartments' (1996:56-57).

South African biblical scholar Gerald West, having worked among specific poor communities within South Africa writes:

Received readings [of the Bible], reflecting the social interests of missionaries, ecclesiastical hierarchies, and other dominant sectors, offer little to live by, so poor and marginalized 'readers' must look in unlikely places and use unusual devices to forage for lines of connection between the God of life who is with them in the daily struggles and the biblical tradition as it has been proclaimed to them (1999a:78).

These lines of connection between daily struggles and the biblical tradition have also been missing within the BCSA. The schooling and banking teaching methods of pastors have offered limited support to real-life struggles that ordinary believers face in their communities (Molebatsi 1990:70). Consequently within the BCSA, it has been noted that ‘our churches are starving for lack of food from the pulpit’ (Madolo 1990:60). There has however been a lack of research or literature present within the BCSA focusing on these issues. Therefore, a greater emphasis on encouraging ordinary believers to make lines of connection between the Christian Story and their contexts is necessary. More contextual forms of Christian education (CE) are needed.

African educators (West 1995, 1999a, Njoroge 2004, Kumalo 2005a, 2005b) have been exploring more contextual models of education. The disciplines of liberation theology and critical pedagogy applied to CE are being explored. South African scholar, Kumalo writes, ‘For Christian Education to be transformational there has to be a paradigm shift, in such a way that it adopts lessons and insights from the liberative pedagogies of Paulo Freire and Creative Educators for social transformation from the African context’ (2005:59). Work connecting these educational philosophies to the grassroots level has been lacking. Especially, there has been a shortage of empirical research done within the South African context relating to contextual Christian education (CCE).

If grassroots churches in South Africa are to empower their congregants to encourage contextual theologies, the use of alternate pedagogical methods is necessary. The current methods of ‘banking’ (Freire 1996a) and ‘schooling’ education (Harkness 2001, Collinson 2004) are having limited impact within the BCSA or other grassroots ecclesial communities (Kumalo 2005b). This move within the BCSA to more ‘holistic and participatory theology’ means addressing the challenge of how to encourage participatory pedagogical practice within township churches. Through stressing specific socio-cultural-economic concerns CCE education deliberately places context at the centre of theological education. New forms of Christian education (CE) emphasising both context and participation are needed.

As the study establishes that current models of education are unsatisfactory, it explores Groome’s Shared Praxis Approach (SPA) as CCE within a South African Baptist township church (1980, 1991, 2011). SPA’s model of education applies aspects of liberation theology and critical pedagogy to its education process. The study firstly examines the educational movements of SPA as they were outworked in the township church. Secondly, it seeks to establish whether SPA could potentially serve as a type of CCE.

SPA has been chosen as it is viewed as a potentially relevant model of CCE for the South African context for several reasons:

1. SPA's approach to CE has been adopted within the field of Practical Theology, as it follows a similar cyclical praxis process of life-Faith-life (Browning 1991:217).
2. It follows a participatory approach to education. This is perceived as necessary for CE to become more effective both within the South African context as well as the Baptist Convention of South Africa.
3. It is influenced by liberation theology and critical pedagogy, which African educators view as relevant to the context (Hope & Timmel 1995a, Lo 1997, Cochrane 1999, Kumalo 2005a, Wilhelm 2003).
4. Groome's work, in contrast to some liberative theologians or educators (Freire & Shor 1987, Freire 1996a) puts greater emphasis on the importance of the Biblical tradition involved in the teaching and transformational process (Groome 1991). Within Christian education (Schipani 1988, Groome 1991, Astley 1994, Brueggemann 1996, Bass & Dykstra 2008, Mioski 2008:349) the Biblical tradition has been an essential element in promoting transformation in order to 'empower and mandate Christians to live for the coming of God's reign for all creation' (Groome 1991:215).
5. Liberative educators emphasise societal transformation, potentially at the expense of individual and especially ecclesial transformation. Groome in contrast highlights three areas of transformation: individuals; churches, and; society (1980:46-48, 96). This is viewed as important relating to the need for contextual education.
6. There has been no qualitative research relating SPA to the South African context. SPA has been applied to a variety of disciplines and contexts; such as being part of developing a Christian educational philosophy for Christian education as it touches the AIDS crisis (Street 1988), or for Bible Studies, such as studies based on Hosea 1: 1-11 (Lloyd & Lloyd 2010). Exploring SPA as CCE within the South African context will therefore be new research. South Africa's socio-cultural history of systematic oppression will provide a unique opportunity to trial a praxis approach to education.
7. Groome's SPA has also been chosen as it has been noted as 'one of the most important contributions to religious education in several decades' (Browning 1991:218-219). This view is echoed by other educators, who describe it as conceptually well-developed, and who have highlighted the importance of SPA within the field of Christian education (Boys 1989:170, Astley & Crowder 1996, Dykstra 1996, Marangos 1996, Collinson 2004, Reddie 2003a, 2003b, 2008, Schipani & Schertz 2004:444, Wong et al. 2009).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

As it has been established that current models of CE need to become more contextual and participatory, this research will focus its attention on the following subject:

An exploration of Groome's Shared Praxis Approach as contextual Christian education within a South African Baptist township church.



In response to this exploration, two sub-questions are asked:

Sub-question one: To ascertain whether each movement of SPA was adequately evident within the education process.

As SPA follows a process of five movements moving participants from life-Faith-life, this sub-question looks at each of SPA's movements. This question explores if the movements of SPA are adequately evident within the observed Bible Studies in the township church. Adequacy is assessed through Groome's definition and purpose of each movement. The definitions and their purpose culminate in Groome's definition of SPA as:

a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their sociocultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate it in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God's reign for all creation (1991:135).

As a researcher I accept using Groome's definitions and purpose for each movement as a gauge for adequateness. This is due to SPA's movements being conceptually well-developed and reputable within the field of CE (Browning 1991). Also, if all the movements are adhered to, it will indicate that participants engaged in a complete cycle of a Practical Theological praxis approach to education. The movements will also indicate that the education was dialogical in nature by encouraging participants to dialogue between the horizons of their contextual experience and the Christian Story.

Sub-question two: To establish whether SPA could potentially serve as a type of contextual Christian education.

The intent of this second sub-question is to consider the link or association between SPA and contextual Christian education (CCE) by investigating common characteristics found in both, and consider whether SPA could support the emergence of contextual theologies. If this is found in the affirmative, then a conclusion could be made that SPA could serve as a type of CCE.

These two sub-questions respond to the possibility of Groome's SPA as contextual Christian education within a township Baptist church context.

### **1.3 Background to the research problem**

Contextual theologians are promoting the view that 'there is no such thing as "theology"; there is only contextual theology' (Bevans 2002:3, Pears 2010). This emphasis upon the place of context as a source in the theological enquiry, along with Scripture and tradition has been an important development within contextual theology (Schreiter 1985:2, Bergmann 2003:16). Within South Africa,

contextual theology has been described as a form of liberation theology, as at the time of strict apartheid governance speaking of liberation was not safe (Cochrane 2001:8, Speckman & Kaufmann 2001:3). In post-apartheid South Africa it is argued that 'that contextual theology has lost the grassroots link' as contextual theologies are struggling to emerge among ordinary Christians (Botman 2001:116, Speckman 2001:394-5). Revised forms of contextual theology are being called for in order to impact a democratic South Africa (Speckman & Kaufmann 2001). Consequently, church denominations have been assessing the effectiveness of their CE within local churches. More contextual, participatory forms of education are being called for (Kretzschmar & Richards 1996, Mathole 2005, Mywayi 2000, Lo 1997, Kretzschmar & Ntlha 2005, Moloï 2008:34). Theologians and educators within South Africa have proposed ways for theology to be encouraged at the grassroots (Villa-Vicencio 1997, Cochrane 1999, 2001, Kretzschmar 2001, Landman 2001, van der Water 2001, Mpako 2008).

Within South Africa there is a need for more work to be done within liberationist Practical Theology, particularly relating to Christian education. Liberationist Practical Theology's importance has been stressed by Cahalan, who writes 'Liberation approaches to Practical Theology have made significant methodological and theological contributions to theology as a whole' (2005:91). Turpin notes that 'although all practical theology concerns itself with contextual specificity and increasingly faithful practice, liberationist practical theology turns its focus to situations of suffering and oppression that demand redress'. This is done through pursuing praxis 'the rich interplay of theory and practice, which increases justice and recognition of the full humanity and equality of all persons' (Turpin 2014:153). The practical life and experience of the Christian become central within the theological process, along with an emphasis on justice, action and social transformation (Browning 1991:217, Graham 1996:133, Cahalan 2005). Consequently, liberation practical theologians draw on the experiences of marginalised communities for both theological reflection and as a source of theological wisdom (Turpin 2014:158).

Within the South African context there is no use of a liberationist Practical Theological approach to Christian education. With the exception of research done by Cochrane (1999), Philpott (1993), Kumalo (2005b) and West (1995, 1997, 1999a, 2007, 2011, West et al 2004), there is a scarcity of resources regarding how contextual Christian education is practically outworked at the grassroots. Gerald West's work is the most developed and relates to working with the poor and how they read the Bible. He encourages the use of *Contextual Bible Study*, following a 'See-Judge-Act' method influenced by liberation theology. Specific contextual issues such as economic justice, community development and research and pedagogy are highlighted (2004:73-74). The need for both liberation theology and critical pedagogy within Practical Theology and Christian education has been expressed within South Africa (West 1995, Kretzschmar 1996, Lo 1997, Mywawi 2000, Wilhelm 2003, Kumalo 2005a, 2005b).

Liberative education views traditional CE as ‘deficient because it tends to deal with individuals and with content which insulates from the harsh realities of the world’ (Seymour 1996:6). Educators emphasising liberation such as Freire (1996a, 1996b), and Boff (1970) have focused on CE promoting social transformation. Freire warns against individualistic approaches to educational transformation:

Even when you individually feel yourself most free, if this feeling is not a social feeling, if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an individualist attitude towards empowerment or freedom (Freire & Shor 1987:109).

Through Freire’s influence, liberatory education views education as either for liberation or domestication (Freire 1996a, Lema 1977:i-ii). Education is therefore seen as a political act, either serving the status quo by conforming to prevailing ideologies, or liberating and empowering individuals to seek personal, social and political freedom through ‘conscientization’ (Freire 1996a, Freire & Shor 1987:109, Kirylo 2001). Conscientization is achieved through a synthesis of practices including dialogical pedagogy; the interplay between theory and praxis; situational pedagogy; critical reflection leading towards personal and social transformation and teaching for liberation (Freire 1996a, Freire & Shor 1987).

In terms of actual pedagogy, Freire is best-known for his reprove on “banking” concepts of education, in which the student is viewed as an empty vessel, to be filled by his/her teacher. Freire strongly criticised the teacher-student dichotomy and hierarchical methods of teaching, insisting that educator and student should share in democratic social relations of education, and through their interaction in dialogue create knowledge, starting with their immediate socio-cultural context (1996a). Therefore the hermeneutical starting point of liberatory education is the socio-cultural struggle of individuals as they exist in exploited or oppressed communities by wider socio-political practices (Boff 1970, Freire and Shor 1987, Gutierrez 1973, Rowland & Corner 1990, Mesters 1992). Liberatory education within the church has been described as ‘critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word’ (Marangos 1996:190). Participant’s lives are therefore an essential part within the contextual Christian education process.

This contextual emphasis is also seen within international forms of contextual and liberation theologies, which relate to CCE (Cone 1969, 1970, 1992, Hill & Treadway 1990, Isasi-Díaz 1990, Costas 1992, Ellis 1992, Ruether 1992, Grey 1999, Wielenga 1999, Raheb 2013, Tinker 2013). For example, within black CCE Reddie (1999a, 1999b, 2003a) and Wimberly (2005) have developed educational approaches for specific contexts facing specific struggles. Fiorenza within the field of feminist Biblical studies promotes an ‘emancipatory pedagogical model’ (2009:152).

Thomas Groome, influenced by both liberation theology and critical pedagogy developed his Shared Praxis Approach to Christian education (1980, 1991, 2011). Christian educators have highlighted the importance of SPA within the field of Christian education (Boys 1989:170, Collinson 2004, Astley & Crowder 1996, Dykstra 1996) as well as using SPA within their educational practice (Marangos 1996, Reddie 2003a, 2003b, 2008, Schipani & Schertz 2004:444, Wong et al. 2009). It is this educational approach which was applied to the township church context as a type of contextual Christian education.

#### **1.4 Contribution to Practical Theology**

This study is rooted within the discipline of Practical Theology (Browning 1991, Swinton & Mowat 2006, Osmer 2008). It is noted that ‘one of the main critical tasks of Practical Theology is to recognize distorted practice and to call the Church back to the theological significance of its practices and to enable it to engage faithfully with the mission of God.’ (Swinton & Mowat 2006:24-5). Within the South African context, there are few appropriate examples of education models enabling churches to facilitate CE at a basic level. The study is therefore a critique of CE within the South African context.

Within Practical Theology there is the desire to see revised forms of praxis. Practical Theology’s praxis movement, moving from practice to theory, to critical reflection on practice, to revised forms of practice was implemented (Gadamer 1979, Browning 1991, Swinton & Mowat 2006:255-256). As a Practical Theologian, in order to find a more contextually relevant pedagogy, I researched township young adults engaged in a praxis approach to CE. In order to do this, the research trialled a praxis education model, Groome’s *Shared Praxis Approach* (SPA) among township participants (1980, 1991, 2011). SPA follows the praxis movement within its education model. It is therefore placed within a framework of Practical Theology (Browning 1991:218). Within this research it was deemed appropriate to use a research approach following a dialectic movement to explore SPA, which also follows the same spiralling dialectic movement. SPA itself was therefore put through the praxis cycle. This study adds value to Practical Theology through empirical research being undertaken of Groome’s SPA within a South African township context. Reflection was undertaken regarding the whole praxis model within the township context. SPA was acted out as a reflective pedagogy and critical reflection on its location within the South African context was undertaken.

SPA’s participatory and praxis approach to education was explored for its relevance within the township Baptist church. As participants actively engaged in a praxis cycle, the research highlighted characteristics and implications. This included exploring the relationship between the participant’s context and the Biblical text. The role of critical reflection was also highlighted in relation to participants engaging in transformed thinking and action, as they made connections between life and Faith. In addition, the characteristics and implications of SPA’s participatory nature were explored. The dynamics of the education process were highlighted, including the nature and impact of local

facilitation and local participation. The research explored the extent that participant's contexts were emphasised within the pedagogy.

Value is added to Practical Theology as the grassroots experience of township young adults in relation to CCE, is brought to the forefront. The research therefore enables previously silenced voices to be heard and for those individuals to speak for themselves. Furthermore, contextual factors impacting the education process were explored. The research therefore critically reflects upon and explores the relevance of CCE within the field of Christian education within South Africa.

## **1.5 Framework of Research**

The following section will explore the ontological framework and theoretical framework upon which this study is based.

### **1.5.1 Ontological Framework**

My ontological position followed Gadamer's theory that states the researcher can never be truly detached from the object of interpretation. Gadamer therefore calls for a 'fusion of horizons', asserting that understanding only happens when the horizons of the researcher intersect with the horizon, context or standpoint of the objective enquiry (Gadamer 1979, Swinton & Mowat 2006:107-114). Consequently there was an ongoing conversation between the horizons of firstly the researcher and the church, through observation of Bible Studies and interviews and secondly, the researcher and external literature.

Rather than distancing myself from the research, I sought to become the tool that is being used to access the meanings of the situation (Swinton & Mowat 2006:59, Creswell 2013:21). This was done through personal reflexivity by noting presuppositions, biases, presuppositions, limitations and motives for the study. Critical self-reflection was needed throughout the research process that enables me to monitor and respond to my contribution in the proceedings (Swinton & Mowat 2006:61). As I described the encounter, personal values, beliefs, commitments, biases, limitations and social identity were taken into consideration.

### **1.5.2 Theoretical Framework**

In order to observe a Practical Theological approach to Christian education within South Africa, Groome's Shared Praxis Approach has been chosen. SPA is noted as being a liberationist Practical Theology approach to CE (Browning 1991:217). Groome's work will therefore provide the theoretical basis for this study.

The approach is modelled on five movements, enabling facilitator and participants to move together in dialogue towards appropriating the Reign of God within the given context.

- Movement 1: Naming Life. Participants are invited to name their own activity concerning the topic for attention.
- Movement 2: Critical Reflection invites participants ‘to reflect on why they do what they do, and what the likely or intended consequences of their actions are’.
- Movement 3: Christian Story. Within this movement ‘the educator makes present to the group the Christian community Story concerning the topic at hand and the faith response it invites’.
- Movement 4: Appropriating Faith to Life, invites participants to appropriate dialectically the Christian Story to their lives.
- Movement 5: Decision. In conclusion of appropriating Faith to life there is an opportunity to choose a personal faith response for the future (1980:207-208).

These five movements follow a praxis cycle of life-Faith-life. SPA consequently has potential to serve as contextual Christian education as Faith and life/context are woven together through the five movements. This is also seen through exploring Groome’s central theological foundation for CE. He highlights the biblical symbol of the Kingdom or reign of God as being the metapurpose of Christian religious education (1980:38, 1991:14). Groome writes:

Our primary question as Christian educators concerns the pastoral implications of Jesus’ preaching of God’s Kingdom for Christian faith today; in other words, what Kingdom of God means for people who attempt to live lives of Christian faith in our contemporary world. Our understanding of the Kingdom must be faithful to Jesus’ understanding, but we need to reinterpret the symbol and its meaning for our lives in light of contemporary experience and consciousness (1980:43).

Groome’s emphasis on relating the Christian Faith in practical ways in life is expressed through lives lived in ‘peace and justice, wholeness and completion, happiness and freedom’ (1980:38). For Groome, this is not privatised, but rather it occurs on three levels where he perceives the Kingdom of God being present. Firstly, it occurs on a personal level. Groome writes, ‘the Kingdom places on us the radical mandate of love as preached by Jesus.’ This transpires through conversion, which is viewed as ‘a constant turning toward God by turning toward our neighbour’. Secondly there is a call within the church to preach the word, celebrate the sacrament, become a community of faith, hope and love, as well as being called to a mission of service (1980-46-47). Finally, God’s kingdom is seen on a societal level:

While there are signs of the Kingdom already among us, there are social, political, economic, and cultural realities that actively prevent the values of the Kingdom from being promoted. Racism, sexism, oppression, and discrimination of any kind and on any basis; uncontrolled capitalism; atheistic communism; totalitarian regimes; rampant consumerism; and so on all stand condemned in light of the Kingdom of God (1980:48).

Groome encourages a move away from privatised, individualistic Christian education that promotes a sacred/secular dichotomy. Rather, SPA attempts to attend to what the Christian Story is saying about the contexts of participants, on a personal level, church level, or societal level respectively. Within the South African context, this highly holistic and contextual approach to Christian education could be extremely helpful. It has the potential of providing an opportunity for participants to be involved in questioning how to appropriate God's reign on a personal, ecclesial and societal level. The *shared* nature of SPA will now be explored.

Groome defines *shared* as 'one of mutual participation, and dialogue with oneself, with others, with God, and with Story/Vision of Christian faith' (1991:142). This constitutes two aspects of the process. Firstly 'the communal dynamics that are to take place within a teaching/learning event' (1991:143). This is to occur through partnership in an I/Thou relationship between teacher and participant. In conversation with participants, the teacher is willing to learn as well as teach, to be questioned as well as to question. Participation is also required where a shared environment is created. This occurs if 'we intentionally structure the process to encourage people to express, reflect, encounter, appropriate, and make decisions, while respecting each person's participative style' (1991:144). Having highlighted the need for participatory education within the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA), SPA's focus on communal, participatory dynamics in the education process is relevant to the context.

Secondly, *shared* is defined as 'the kind of dialogue and dialectic it encourages between participants' present praxis (stories/visions) and Christian Story/Vision' (1991:143). This is done through a process of critical hermeneutics and structural analysis by interpreting theological tradition and appropriating it into a given cultural context through contextual hermeneutics. It emphasises equally personal experience and Christian tradition, which Groome argues is rooted within the liberation theology base community movement (1991:151). Educators in Africa have highlighted the need for Christian education to apply theory from liberation theory and critical pedagogy. This theoretical basis of education is evident within SPA.

Groome's philosophy of education is based on the notion of praxis, which moves away from the dichotomy of theory and practice, which are instead viewed as 'twin moments of the same activity that are united dialectically' (1980:152). Theory is therefore seen as a reflective moment in praxis, upon which further praxis is generated (1980:152). Groome explores the notion of praxis through the historical philosophy of Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Kant and Hegel, as well as the contemporary philosophy of Marx, Habermas and Freire and critical theory. Groome defines praxis as 'our way of "being" as agent-subjects in place and time' (1991:136).

Groome writes that 'praxis can be viewed and pedagogically engaged from three perspectives: it has active, reflective, and creative aspects' (1991:136). The active aspect includes 'all the corporeal,

mental, and volitional-activities by which we intentionally realize ourselves as agent-subjects in place and time' (1991:137). It therefore includes what we are intentionally doing and making in the world. The reflective aspect of praxis 'is critical reflection on one's own and society's historical "actions"' (1991:137). This includes evidencing Freire's notion of critical consciousness (1996a). Finally, the creative aspect permeates the other two active and reflective aspects. It involves 'creative and social imagination' as people imagine what is yet to be done and made' (1991:138).

Through the definitions of *shared* and *praxis*, it is evident that SPA's education process is viewed as a journey. Using the etymology of the word, education, which comes from the Latin *ducare* (and its cognate *ducere*), meaning "to lead", and the prefix *e*, meaning "out", Groome states education, at its root meaning is an activity of "leading out". We learn there are three dimensions of "leading out": '1) a point from which, 2) a present process, and 3) a future toward which the leading is done' (1980:5). Therefore education has an "already," a "being realised" and finally a "not yet" dimension to it. This process is thus a journey, as people move through history toward our "end time". For Groome, this movement should be towards the reign of God.

The importance placed on participant's praxis, in relation to the Christian Story which in turn calls for revised praxis, provides an opportunity for SPA to serve as an effective type of CCE. The research will therefore qualitatively explore the outworking of Groome's SPA as contextual Christian education within a South African township church context.

### **1.6 Definition of Terms**

**Christian education:** Christian education is the educational process by which people learn to become Christian and learn Christian beliefs, attitudes, values, and dispositions in order to engage in Christian actions (Astley & Crowder 1996:x). Christian education is the educational activities of the Christian community, which as Kumalo describes, involves the Christian Story, its past, present and future, 'enabling the learning community to engage the Christian story in its context with the aim of individual, ecclesial and social transformation' (2005a:59-60).

**Contextual Christian education** is the educational process by which people learn to become Christian and learn Christian beliefs, attitudes, values, and dispositions in order to engage in Christian actions (Astley & Crowder 1996:x). It however shows sensitivity to context. The education process helps people towards a 'Christian interpretation of life that is conscious of its circumstances' (Bergmann 2003:16). Contextual Christian education within the South African context has a liberatory interest.



**Shared Praxis Approach:** Groome's definition will be used of SPA being:

a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their sociocultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate it in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God's reign for all creation (1991:135).

**Contextual Theology:** Bergmann's definition of contextual theology will be used:

By contextual theology we mean a Christian interpretation of life that is conscious of its circumstances. Contextual theology constitutes a reflection on experiences and expressions of the living and acting God in his/her multi-shaped revelations of the world (2003:16).

### **1.7 Methodology: Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research methodology was used within this study to implement SPA as contextual Christian education within the BCSA township church. This research will draw on insight from different theoretical studies including CE, Practical Theology, contextual and liberation theologies and critical theory and pedagogy. It contributes new knowledge in Practical Theology and Christian education relating to the context of a South Africa township church.

Creswell notes that 'a qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individuals experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern)' (2003:18). A qualitative paradigm enabled the researcher to explore the social world in an attempt to access and understand the unique ways that individuals and communities inhabit it. Open-ended emerging data was collected with the intent of developing themes from it.

The characteristics of qualitative research are relevant to the study as firstly, it is a way to listen to the views of participants within the study. Qualitative data is useful for uncovering emic (insider) views, and should therefore be qualitatively grounded (Guba & Lincoln 2004:106). Secondly, it is a way of questioning educational approaches which are rooted in a specific context, thereby placing importance on the educational experiences of ordinary township people. Guba and Lincoln note that qualitative research is essential in providing contextual information, relating directly to the subject of research, in this case, contextual Christian education (2004:106). Finally, Creswell writes that qualitative research 'has a role in advocating for change and bettering the lives of individuals' (2008:50).

This research is a descriptive study and implements Osmer's *descriptive-empirical* tasks within the field of Practical Theology (2008). The research was descriptive-empirical through exploring the literature of CE within South Africa, as well as observing the outworking of Groome's SPA within a

township church. I attempted to remain out of the process as an observer of the outworked pedagogy as local people implemented SPA within the township church.

The research was an observation of Bible Studies using SPA. SPA is embedded in the methodology of critical theory. As being critical is not the norm within CE within township church education, I was keen to show the value of the study because critical theory within SPA highlights unequal power relations within normal education processes. Critical theory (Guba & Lincoln 1989, Kincheloe & McLaren 2000) attempts 'to understand in a rationally responsible manner the oppressive features of a society such that this understanding stimulates its audience to transform society and thereby liberate themselves' (Fay 1987:4). Critical theory therefore not only aims to improve human existence by viewing knowledge for its emancipatory or repressive potential, but has the practical aim of encouraging its audience to transform society and liberate themselves (Fay 1987:4, McLaren & Giarelli 1995:2).

The study observed the value of previous CE as well as the value of the new experimental SPA model of education. Therefore cultural modes of contextual pedagogies were taken into account reflecting on whether they promote un-balanced power relations or marginalisation (McLaren & Giarelli 1995:11). Issues regarding power relations, domination, dialectical pedagogy, conscientization, as well as alienating or repressive factors were highlighted (Freire 1996a, Freire and Shor 1987, Stanley 1992, Fay 1987, Mouton 1993). As critical theory holds that knowledge is socially constructed, contextual, and dependent on interpretation (McLaren & Giarelli 1995:2), reality can only be known by those who experience it personally (Schurink 2001:247). Social constructs are therefore facets of knowledge and not objective truth (Guba, & Lincoln 1989:43). The study discovered reality constructs of individuals within the township church.

The study took into consideration historical, cultural, political and contextual issues relating to CE within a South African township. The study attempted to observe and discover rather than test and verify patterns of behaviour through exploring situation-by-situation contextual factors by determining to what extent a new pedagogical method fits into the particular situation (Mouton, 1996:133; Guba & Lincoln 1989: 59-61). It can therefore be seen as a case study.

Relating qualitative research to Practical Theology, Swinton and Mowat write:

Qualitative research assumes that the world is not simply 'out there' waiting to be discovered. Rather, it recognizes 'the world' as the locus of interpretive processes within which human beings struggle to make sense of their experiences including their experiences of God. Identifying and developing understandings of these meanings is the primary task of qualitative research (2006:29-30).

Within this research, the world explored was a township church. More specifically it highlighted the educational process created for the purposes of the research, to see and discover how it is implemented and received within the township young adults group. It was used to ‘struggle to make sense of their experiences including their experience of God’ within the education process. Description and interpretation were used throughout this process. The research followed a dialectical movement from practice to theory, to critical reflection on practice, to revised forms of practice developed in the light of this spiralling process (Browning 1991, Gadamer 1979, Swinton & Mowat 2006:255-256). This research utilised qualitative research to facilitate this dialectical movement. The purpose of this dialectical movement was to see if Groome’s SPA could serve as a type of CCE within the context.

### 1.7.1 Data Collection

The qualitative approach therefore employed observation, audio-recordings and interviews, in order to describe, interpret or reconstruct this interaction in terms of the meanings that the subjects attach to it (Schurink 2001:240). This was done within a Baptist Convention township church. Behaviour is viewed as purposive and expressive of deeper values and beliefs (Marshall & Rossman 1989:79).

#### 1.7.1.1 Observation and audio recordings of the Bible Studies using SPA

Observation was used to collect data. Creswell notes that ‘observation is one of the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research. It is the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting through the five senses of the observer, often with an instrument, and recording it for scientific purposes’ (2013:166). Observation is used when you need to know about a physical setting:

Seeing the place or environment where something takes place can help increase your understanding of the event, activity, or situation you are evaluating. For example, you can observe whether a classroom or training facility is conducive to learning (Department of Health and Human Sciences 2008:2).

Two Bible Studies were conducted, observed and audio recorded. Each Bible Study followed a different Biblical theme, with each following the entire SPA praxis cycle. The observations aimed to explore the outworking of SPA within the township context. This follows Savin-Baden & Major’s argument that structured observation ‘requires predetermined observation protocols derived from theory or research’ (2013:393). The observations intended to capture real-life data in a social environment, and have been chosen for their flexibility and quick results. The Bible Studies were conducted as a semi-structured open conversation in which each participant may ask questions of other participants or respond to comments by others, including the facilitator (Schurink, Schurink & Poggenpoel 2001:314). As I am an outsider, it was important to observe a local person facilitating the process with local participants. This enabled observation of the dynamics occurring in the educational process.

During the Bible Studies brief observation notes were made. However, to only make notes would have been inadequate to analyse the content and education process. Consequently audio recordings of the Bible Studies were carried out. These recordings replaced handwritten notes, which have been noted as becoming common place within qualitative research (Bloor & Wood 2006). The participants agreed to be audio recorded; however the recordings did not appear to alter the participant's behaviour. It is noted that audio recordings are a natural and unobtrusive way of capturing data (Bloor & Wood 2006).

These audio recordings were later transcribed and analysed. Observation from these audio recordings was therefore undertaken. Observation was deemed an appropriate method of data collection when exploring SPA's practical outworking within the township church. This was because the natural flow and cultural make-up of the setting would not be interrupted. Concepts, generalisations and theories that were grounded in, or reflect the knowledge of the participants were to be observed inductively. The purpose of the study was therefore to explore rather than to explain in any definitive sense (Babbie 2007:308-9).

#### 1.7.1.2 Semi-structured interviews

Six participants were interviewed. They were the same participants who were in the Bible Studies. Four of the interviewees were participants, and two were the facilitators of the Bible Studies. Interviews were chosen to give the opportunity for participants to voice their opinions regarding participation in the Bible Studies. It is noted that 'Interviewing can be used as a way to enable previously hidden, or silenced, voices to speak' (Rapley 2004:25). The interviews were semi-structured in nature with questions focusing on the participant's experiences of engaging in the observed Bible Studies implementing SPA. Semi-structured narrative interviews permitted the structuring of open ended questions while allowing for follow-up questions. These follow-up questions enabled further probing, clarification and elaboration of questions in order for thick descriptions to be given (Arksey & Knight 1999, May 2001:123, Warren 2001:85).

#### 1.7.1.3 The Sample

The context of the data collection was Shekinah Glory Worship Centre (SGWC), who in 2010 had changed their name from Munsieville Baptist Church. It is a member church of the Baptist Convention of South Africa. This sample met the criteria for selection. Firstly, the context of the township church met the socio-cultural criterion for SPA to be outworked within a grassroots community. The church also had characteristics representative of other Baptist Convention churches in South Africa. Secondly, the participants were familiar with this model of participatory education. The reason for this was I had worked as an associate minister within the church for eighteen months; during which time I regularly implemented participatory education with the young adult and youth groups. This familiarity with participatory education would enable SPA the best opportunity to encourage the CCE to occur.

Finally, permission had been gained from the leadership of the church and young adults for the study to be undertaken within the church.

Effort was made for the observed Bible Studies to be as similar as possible to the usual weekly Bible Study/young adult group. Participation within the observed Bible Studies was open for all young adults in the church to attend and who agreed to take part in the research. The number of young adults attending the Bible Studies was ten participants for the first audio-recorded study and twelve for the second.

Four young adult participants were selected for the interviews from the church's young adults group, as well as the two student facilitators from the Baptist Convention College (BCC) in Soweto. Through interviewing both facilitator and participant a broader range of experiences was expressed thereby providing triangulation of data. The sample for the semi-structured interviews was purposively selected according to the basis of their relevance to the topic under study (Babbie 2008:338). Participants were chosen according to who would be able to give both depth and breadth of experience (Schurink et al. 2001:317). As the interviews were conducted in English, there was a need for the participants to comprehend and communicate relatively well in the English language. Participants were similar in their socio-cultural identity in order to maximise the validity of findings. Although the participants were from the same church and regular attendees, close family members or friends were not selected thereby minimising problems caused by close familiarity (Schurink et al. 2001:314).

### 1.7.2 Data Analysis

The study attempted to discover rather than test and verify patterns of behaviour. This took into account situation by situation contextual factors through exploring Groome's SPA as a type of CCE (Guba & Lincoln 1989: 59-61, Mouton 1996:133). The main theoretical concepts or frameworks used to analyse the data were derived from the literature, while content analysis was used to develop the main themes for the research (Grbich 2007). Content analysis permits the exploration of large amounts of textual information while trends and patterns of words and themes are highlighted (Grbich 2007:112).

Codes and categories were developed which both reflected the data, and were rooted conceptually and empirically by the research questions and theory. From the codes and categories, themes emerged (Dey 1993:96-97, 103, Creswell 2013:123). To aid the process of data analysis the qualitative data analysis computer programme ATLAS.ti was used. The programme was chosen because it 'stores, organises, manages and reconfigures data to enable human analytical reflection' (Saldana 2009:22).

### 1.7.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were undertaken regarding my analysis of the data and the way the results will be reported to the scientific community. Firstly, the knowledge gained from the participants was presented in an ethically defensible way (Daniels 2006:139). Secondly, as I am the best person to know the studies technical failures and limitations, there is ‘an obligation to make such shortcomings known to their readers’ (Babbie 2008:73). Ethical norms regarding the participant’s voluntary contribution and a right to privacy became formalised through the process of informed consent. Practically these ethical norms were formalized through:

- 1) gaining ethical clearance for the research by the University’s higher degrees committee
- 2) permission from leaders within the Baptist Convention of South Africa to conduct research (Appendix 3)
- 3) distribution of a leaflet outlining the motivation, purpose and methods of the research to each participant
- 4) voluntary agreement of participation through an informed consent form, as well as optional agreement for information about them or given by them to be written in the final research report and other publications. The subjects therefore have the option of offering their voluntary participation in the research project on the full understanding of the possible risks involved as well as the underlying motivations and uses of the research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Contextual Christian Education in South Africa**

This chapter will explore Christian education and contextual theology within the South African context. The chapter will build an argument to show why current forms of CE have been ineffective. The problematic nature of CE within South Africa will be highlighted. Firstly, the South African historic background will be highlighted. This will explore CE and theology both promoting apartheid, as well as resisting it. Secondly, the current situation of contextual Christian education will be overviewed. This will highlight the historic context and how contextual theology began to influence and play a prominent role in CE in a democratic South Africa. Finally, the Baptist Convention of South Africa's historic and present approaches to contextual CE will be explored. Although the study's focus is on CE, literature relating to contextual Christian education within South Africa is limited. Therefore literature relating to South African contextual theology was referenced, as it can lead to and shares characteristics with contextual forms of CE. The chapter will highlight why there is a need for contextual forms of CE within the South African context.

#### **2.1 The Historic Background**

Within South Africa, the spread of Christianity had an uneasy start with the arrival of European settlers during the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. In the early 1800's a troubled relationship developed between the European missionaries and the Dutch, Huguenot and German settlers who both established reformed churches, while also importing slaves of Cape Dutch society (Kiernan 1990:12, Ward 1999:210). There was consequently disunity in the Church, as colonialism and denominationalism went hand in hand (Amanze 1990, Saayman 1990). It is argued that the early church identified itself with the West and promoted civilisation, assuming that Africans would follow suit. The spread of Christianity was seen by some local cultures as 'instruments of colonial espionage' (Ward 1999:211). Culturally insensitive expressions of Christianity among South Africans resulted in converts who 'ceased to be a Zulu among Zulus' (Kiernan 1990:18).

The spread of Christianity and education went hand in hand within South Africa. Missionaries particularly from the Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans started secondary schools, offering a good standard of western education. Missionaries such as William Wilcox (1850-1928) are noted as having empowered local people with education and hospitals. Wilcox was also involved in helping African people to own land, which at the time was being taken from them by the government (Kumalo 2013). Wilcox's emphasis in education highlights that some English speaking churches were proponents of black empowerment through education and mission. This is most notably seen relating to one of Wilcox's students, John Dube, who went onto become both a church minister as well as the first elected President of the African National Congress (Kumalo 2008). By the late nineteenth

century, educated elite among the Xhosa, Sotho and Zulus had emerged (Ward 1999:212, Kumalo 2008).

Although some methods of Christianity's propagation have been criticised, there is no doubt that it had a major impact within the country with 70% of the population claiming to be Christian by 1990 (De Gruchy 1990: 219, Kritzinger in Kiernan 1990:19).

Due to apartheid, the twentieth century held perhaps the most testing time for churches in the history of Christianity in South Africa. It has been noted that during apartheid there was a 'dual history' of the churches in South Africa; 'one characterised by a conservation of the status quo and one characterised by bold and courageous protest and action against it' (Cochrane 1990:92). Exploring this 'dual history', Christianity and education maintaining the status quo of apartheid, will be firstly highlighted. This will be done by over viewing the relationship between church and State in South Africa as well as the educational policy of the National Party. Secondly, contextual theology and education resisting nationalism will be explored. South African contextual theology will be explored in relation to Christian education within local churches 1) during apartheid in the form of the *Kairos* Document; 2) post-apartheid, and 3) its outworking among ordinary believers.

#### 2.1.1 Christianity and education promoting apartheid

During the years of the reign of the National Party (1948-1994), the Reformed view of the state being an extension of church, resulted in the state being seen as under God's reign. This relationship between church and State has been noted to have had 'far reaching implications for all policy making by the government, including education. Christianity, and more particularly a very specific section of Christianity, namely Calvinism, was promoted in education' (Dreyer 2007:40).

Hartshorne's *The Making of Education Policy in South Africa* gives an historic background to education in South Africa during the twentieth century. Hartshorne concludes that education during Apartheid in South Africa 'was characterized by three aspects. Firstly, education was characterised by 'inequality, fundamentally based on race and class'. He writes:

In racial terms, the historical separation of the peoples of South Africa, reinforced in the twentieth century by the dogma of Christian National Education, the doctrinaire ideology of Verwoerdian apartheid, theological rationalization, and 'fundamental pedagogics', served to entrench the education doctrine of separate development... (1999:70).

Education rooted in this skewed Christian philosophy was used by a minority of white elites 'to legitimize their illegal stay in power and to justify the separate but unequal systems of education' (Bassey 1999:7). The philosophy of education used was *fundamental pedagogics*, which argues that 'different cultural, racial and ethnic groups have different philosophies of life and worldviews and



therefore blacks and whites should not be educated together' (Bassey 1999:8). These inequalities outworked through provision and resource distribution resulted in African children faring the worst while white children fared best. This educational philosophy was promoted in society and churches.

The second characteristic that Hartshorne notes is that 'education policy was marked by lack of freedom, in that it had produced a strongly-centralized and highly authoritarian education system'. This lack of democratic culture, Hartshorne writes, ran through the entire education process including teaching styles and curriculum development (1999:71). Cognition and reasoning ability were consequently undesirable and not developed (Pfaffe 1996:27). This was reflected in church institutions, who are noted to have abused their power in regard to Christian education, as they constructed their 'own working hypothesis of God according to the oppressor's interests of continued domination'. This resulted in the educational outcome of an 'internalization of the oppressor's normative system' (Pfaffe 1996:52).

This 'internalization of the oppressor's system' is most clearly seen in the 1951 meeting of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church where God was perceived to determine the separate existence of peoples and nations and the separate development of races in society was promoted (in Le Roux 1999:250). Le Roux writes, 'These aspects now became the base of Christian Afrikaner society. The Church had now laid down its blueprint for a total approach to apartheid' (1999:250). Church education was at the very heart of promoting the values of the apartheid system through *fundamental pedagogics*, in order for social control to occur. Education was thus, totalitarian as it 'endorsed absolute domination by teachers in the teaching-learning processes', which is noted as 'an antithesis to critical pedagogy' (Bassey 1999:8). Bassey argues that education was seen as the backbone of apartheid in South Africa as children were indoctrinated through what Martin Buber calls an *I-It relationship* as opposed to *I-Thou* relationship, with myths to perpetuate apartheid policy. Thus, 'students are told to take their correct places in the learning process because they know nothing.' (Bassey 1999:85) Teachers thereby affirmed apartheid through a relationship of domination 'to educate African children in "accordance with their assigned opportunities in life"' (Bassey 1999:103).

Finally, although some church education provided quality education for African children; Hartshorne concludes that during this time education was marked by instability. He writes, 'Because of the lack of political representation and power on the part of the great majority of South Africans, social institutions such as the school, which were vulnerable to protest and resistance, became the centre of the struggle for liberation (1999:72). During the 1970's there was increased resistance to inferior education due to separation and isolation. The most notable student protest was June 16<sup>th</sup> 1976 in Soweto. In the same way, churches most notably within the townships were shaken, as they tried to make sense of their faith in relation to the oppression. Consequently some churches became places of revolution in protest to the societal context (Kairos Document 1986).

Summarising the three characteristics of education, Hartshorne notes that education policies became concerned with: 1) 'protecting group identities and interest'; 2) 'obedience to authority, particularly that of the state, instead of encouraging independent and creative thinking and tolerating dissent', and; 3) 'preparing people for their place in a white-dominated society and economy instead of liberating the potential of all the people so that all the resources of the country could be directed to major challenges such as those of poverty and unemployment' (1999:73). Education within South Africa was unequal, authoritarian and a method of social control to maintain an oppressive status quo. Churches followed suit in protecting group identities, mainly those of the privileged elite, as well as obeying authority and discouraging critical thinking.

De Gruchy's *Political Landmarks and the Response of Churches in South Africa* (2004), gives an overview of churches political responses during apartheid. He notes 'the settler churches, whether Afrikaans or English, generally reinforced white political, social and economic hegemony', with the English speaking churches (Anglican, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian) were 'generally more critical though often ambiguously so' (2004:4). Although some of these churches engaged in social issues affecting churches during Apartheid, a *confessional approach* to theology was largely apparent, emphasising personal piety and individual spirituality.

This lack of social critique had an impact within the education of both society and churches; marked by an absence of critical pedagogy. Education served to maintain the status quo, following hierarchical, authoritarian teaching models, dissuading critical thinking or consciousness-raising. Individuals in both society and churches were encouraged to be passive objects (through an I-It teacher-student relationship), rather than active creators of knowledge (through an I-Thou relationship) (Basse 1999, Pfaffe 1996). Democratic and dialogical education was strongly discouraged, thereby protecting the elite's group interests. Education became a means of control and individuals were treated as objects rather than subjects, denying their right to be free human agents in pursuing their vocation.

Grass-roots theologies were consequently discouraged as they would often stand against the meta-narrative of apartheid, resulting in imprisonment or worse. However, in contrast to *confessional approaches*, *contextual approaches* to theology began emerging, these emphasised social critique and more communal expressions of Christianity. In the face of such adversity Black theology and contextual theology had a profound impact upon the church within South Africa. In contrast to *fundamental pedagogics*, these theologies opened up opportunities for dialogue through implementing critical pedagogy and promoting democratic education.

### 2.1.2 Contextual theologies resisting apartheid

During apartheid some churches and theologians in South Africa refused to be socialised into the status quo of the ruling elite, acting rather in protest and action against it. One such movement was that of Black theology and the influence of liberation theology which emerged in South Africa in the late 1960s, bringing with it a new understanding of faith (Goba 1990, Mofokeng 1990, Villa-Vicencio 1999:154). Goba writes that Black theology in response to apartheid, firstly expressed itself through black religious experience being the point of departure. From this departure point questions were asked such as ‘how does our faith in Christ relate to our experience of oppression as Black people?’ (1990:24)

Secondly, Black theology implements critical theory, through questioning and opposing the ideology of apartheid. Goba writes, ‘To have faith in Jesus is to oppose apartheid’ (1990:21). He continues, ‘this faith challenges the Black Christian community to develop a critical understanding of the context. We must begin to do a social analysis that unravels the contradictions of the apartheid society’ (1990:23). Therefore, Black theology in South Africa, ‘challenges the prevailing distortions of white faith, a faith that continues to justify the ideology of apartheid’ as well as being a ‘new faith which seeks to vindicate the liberating word of God’ (1990:22).

Thirdly, privatised faith is replaced with communal praxis of faith. Goba writes, ‘There is an emphasis on theory and action, as ‘theological reflection becomes a communal effort’ or ‘communal praxis’ (1990:25). This communal praxis is expressed through solidarity of faith, which means that ‘theology is no longer the monopoly of professional theologians’ (Goba 1990:26). He expounds:

The church is no longer simply a group of individuals who share a common faith and yet are divided in their commitment to the struggles of justice and peace. The church represents a communal praxis of faith, one that critiques and opens the possibilities of transforming life. The pervasive individualism which we see in bourgeois liberal Christianity has no place in this new expression of faith (1990: 26).

Finally, Goba notes there is a focus on societal transformation through the following pedagogical process: ‘Social analysis begins by creative listening, especially to the anger and cries of the people.’ It also involves ‘critical understanding of all the instruments of repression, the ideological apparatus of the state which is reflected in the structures of society’. Theological reflection is then applied to social analysis. This outworks itself through communal praxis of faith committed to the transformation of social order (1990:26-28). This process reveals the influence of both Latin American liberation theology and critical theory upon Black theology promoting an educational cycle of practice-theory-practice.

There have however been criticisms of Black theology. Mosala argues that Black theology failed among the oppressed due to its class and ideological commitments, and 'remained the monopoly of educated black Christians' (1989:2-3). He continues, 'Furthermore, it has been unable to develop organic links with the popular struggles of especially the black working-class people, the most exploited segment of the black community' (1989:2). Mofokeng adds that Black theology suffered from a 'lack of self-critique' as theologians 'focussed their entire attention on the black community and its praxis as sources of material for reflection, and neglected public methodological debates' (1990:40).

Another source of contention is the critique that Black theology uses traditional readings of Scripture, which Mofokeng doubts will impact the working class of South Africa. In contrast, he writes, 'I suspect that they would prefer to read it in such a way that they would hear it addressing their working class problems' (1990:46). As Black theologians are noted as not approaching the Biblical text critically, but rather as the 'Word of God', Mofokeng argues that 'this mystification of the text still stands in the way of a rational and liberating reading and appropriation of it. It hides the class struggles which were going on in biblical communities of which the biblical text reports' (Mofokeng 1990:45-6). He therefore calls for the de-mystification of the Biblical text, highlighting the need for critical study of the contextual situation of both the Biblical text and the present day reader.

Black theology through the influence of liberation theology developed a praxis based methodology as outlined by Goba (1990). Starting with the experienced oppression of the black South African population, it critically related faith to lived experience. This resulted in opposing apartheid and seeking forms of liberation through communal action. The challenge was transferring this method from academia to the ordinary Christians suffering everyday oppression. Traditional rather than critical readings of Scripture were seen to hamper the liberating message of the Bible. Liberating Biblical exegesis was increasingly finding relevance within the black struggle for freedom.

Black theology however proved to be one of the main building bricks for another praxis based theology in the form of contextual theology, to emerge during apartheid (Kaufmann 2001:22). Contextual theology in South Africa began with the popularisation of liberation theology and black theology in the late 1970s. Its main dialogue partners are noted as being: 1) locally, South African Black theology, African theology, and African women's theology, and; 2) internationally, Black Theology in the USA, Latin American liberation theology and feminist theology (West 2001:170).

In developing contextual theology, Albert Nolan is cited as spreading the basic liberation theology method of 'SEE-JUDGE-ACT' among university and high school students and later within the Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT) (Speckman & Kaufmann 2001:5-6). The establishment of ICT in 1981 saw theologians coming from diverse theological backgrounds. Some came from the Black

Consciousness Movement and Black theology background including Simon Maimela, Bonganjalo Goba, Allan Boesak and Frank Chikane. Others came from the banned *Christian Institute*, including James Cochrane, Cedric Mayson and Beyers Naudé.

Contextual theology was described as a form of liberation theology (Cochrane 2001:8). However, at the time of strict apartheid governance ‘it was not wise or safe to talk about liberation. (It would have been banned almost immediately. Hence the choice of the name “contextual theology”)’ (Speckman & Kaufmann 2001:3). Even with this precaution, within two months of ICT being established, two of the four full time staff members had been arrested by the South African security forces (Kaufmann 2001:21). Cochrane writes, ‘In South Africa, at least, during the 1980s the term *contextual* became a widely used code word for resistance theology’ (1999: 54). Contextual theology within South Africa therefore ‘begins with an emancipatory interest’ grounded within the conditions of oppressed communities’ (Cochrane 1999:54).

Moila (2001) asserts that during apartheid, contextual theology was almost an umbrella term for other forms of contextual theology such as Black theology, Feminist theology and African theology. Moila writes,

Black theology’s focus was the liberation of blacks, Feminist theology’s focus was women’s liberation and African theology’s focus was the regeneration of African culture as a legitimate vehicle of God’s grace. Each of these theologies was dealing with one aspect of that context. It was indeed ridiculous for contextual theology to try to exist as a different theology as if those others were not contextual theologies (2001:104).

Contextual theology was described as ‘a people’s theology’, where ‘any practising Christian can do theology in the sense that they can theologize creatively about their faith’ (Nolan in Kaufmann 2001:25). De Gruchy writes that contextual theologies main dialogue partners during the struggle against apartheid were the social sciences, as they ‘enabled us to connect with reality and reflect critically on the praxis of the church’ (2011:27). Through conferences, workshops and publications, these theologians worked somewhat at the grassroots level, engaged ‘in critical reflection on the praxis of their faith in the South African context’ (Kaufmann 2001:25, Walshe 1995:116). Paulo Freire’s concept of *conscientization* was implemented during this time. Cochrane writes, ‘Conscientisation thus became a hallmark of the period for Christians, attempting to contribute to the new political ethos’ (1990:90). This is important as it clearly shows the influence of critical pedagogy during that time. Critical reflection upon the praxis of faith through the “see-judge-act” cycle occurred through conscientization thereby educating ordinary people (Cochrane 2001:76).

Cochrane continues ‘The right of the voice of the other to be heard in word, and thus the presence of the other be acknowledged in deed’ (2001:74). Cochrane defines who ‘the other’ is as those whose

voice is not heard, those who are oppressed, or whose interests are suppressed. He writes, 'This line of thinking binds contextual theology to several expressions of theology that seek to give voice, and space, to women, the poor, the disabled, the aged (in some contexts), and the like' (2001:75). In contrast to the hierarchical and oppressive education promoted under the apartheid system, contextual theology encouraged greater democratic education giving the voiceless an opportunity to speak.

A specific outworking of contextual theology came in the form of *Kairos* theology. At the height of civil unrest in 1985, the townships revolted against the apartheid regime. Church leaders and theologians saw the need to respond theologically, thereby developing the *Kairos Document* (1986). Professor Botman writes, 'Kairos theology is that brand of contextual theology that arose in South Africa from the flames of the townships in 1985' (2001:117). He continues:

These "flames of the township" united contextual theologians of all persuasions in South Africa – African theologians, Black theologians, Confessing Church theologians, Feminist theologians and liberation theologians – to consider the challenge to church-state relations in South Africa under the Apartheid regime. The document was signed by 153 Christians of these diverse traditions of contextual theology (Botman 2001:117).

The *Kairos* document denounced both State Theology and Church theology, stating 'both oppressor and oppressed claim loyalty to the same Church... There we sit in the same Church while outside Christian policemen and soldiers are beating up and killing Christian children' (1986:2). In the place of State and Church theology, Prophetic theology called for theology to: (a) start from the context of the oppressed; (b) undertake social analysis to be interpreted in light of the gospel; (c) respond with a call to action; (d) is confrontational as it denounces sin and announces salvation; (e) works towards the goal of Biblical good news in the forms of liberation, justice and peace (1986:17-19). Although the document does not specifically make reference to Christian education, it does encourage prophetic theology to be implemented within the churches, thereby undertaking education by problem-posing, social criticism and encouraging contextual theologies to emerge.

The *Kairos* document received a wide range of responses, from endorsement by some denominations, to total condemnation, most notably from the English speaking churches. Churches resisting the *Kairos* document were viewed to resist exploring their theological identity and God's option for the poor, being trapped in apartheid and institutionalism (van der Water 2001:36-40). Despite the *Kairos* document's condemnation by the apartheid regime and some English speaking churches, it was largely seen as a success, not only within South Africa, but it also sparked similar documents and movements to be produced around the world (Bergmann 2003:36, *Kairos* Europa, *Kairos* Palestine 2007). It united a broad range of Christian traditions in making a prophetic stand against the status quo.

One criticism documented about contextual theologies of liberation, is that they ‘have a tendency to interpret and represent context in a narrow way’ (Pears 2010:170). This was evident within the *Kairos* document. Firstly, it could be viewed as the product of scholars and church leaders, rather than that of ordinary Christians. Cochrane states another limitation:

Neither *The Kairos Document* nor its direct successor, *The Road to Damascus*, really goes much beyond protest, yet our present situation calls for a prophetic vision of the future which arises from and is constituted by the historical consciousness of the poor and oppressed (1999:124).

Although church leaders did well in protesting against apartheid, the document did not include voices of ordinary believers. Secondly, as the document was written by church leaders, it was by and large a product of its time, written mainly by men. Again, context was represented in a narrow way and largely excluded the voice of women. Womanist theologians in recent years have increasingly criticized theologies for representing black experience monolithically (Pears 2010:171). Within South Africa at that time there was little female theological representation.

Like Black theology, contextual theology was having trouble in its outworking among ordinary people. Interaction between contextual theology scholars and ordinary believers seems to have been lacking. This sentiment is shared by Cochrane who writes that contextual theology ‘has great difficulty relating to the myriad small ways in which people resist the oppressions of their local contexts, or find ways to survive them when the resources to resist them are too weak, or the threat so deep that a thick mask is the best defence’ (Cochrane 2001:80). This, Cochrane argues is most evident in the inability of contextual theology in South Africa to ‘find purchase’ among the millions of believers in the Africa Initiated Churches (AIC). Christian education in the AIC promoting contextual theology largely failed. The AIC were ‘given up on’ being viewed as ‘unconscientized’ or ‘apolitical’ (2001:80).

This however shows a large weakness in contextual theologies approach to education. Educational philosophers such as Freire would argue that no-one should be ‘given up on’ because they are ‘unconscientized’. All people have the ability and capability if educated in the right methodology to be empowered and through a process gain greater understanding and awareness of their situation (Freire 1973). During the years of post-apartheid South Africa there has been effort to address these issues. Although contextual theology and particularly the *Kairos* document have had a profound effect upon theological landscape of South Africa, the nation’s transition into democracy proved to be challenging for both contextual theology and Christian education.

## **2.2 The Current Situation of Contextual Christian Education**

The previous section highlighted that the historic-cultural context within South Africa led to the emergence of a specific type of contextual theology. This highlights how CE was impacted by

contextual theology as it sought to be relevant to the contextual situation. Both before and after the democratic elections other Christian education models were evident in addition to contextual forms. For example, traditional churches implemented traditional transmission modes of educating people. These traditional education models have been critiqued as they are perceived as leading to narrow forms of piety, removed from social justice (Kretzschmar 2001:269). For Kretzschmar, ‘discipleship, when it is not simply understood to be the sanctification of the individual leading to a narrow form of piety, is vital to the formation of Christians as agents of ethical transformation’ (2001:296). It has been noted that such dualisms are a key reason for a lack of involvement in social justice issues by charismatic congregations in South Africa (August & Bowers 2005:247-8). Although these other CE models are evident within the South African context, this research’s focus is on contextual forms of CE as they service participatory education.

The nation’s transition to democracy influenced developments within the field of contextual forms of CE. In the build up to and after the democratic elections, the church faced an ‘identity crisis’ resulting from the theological relationship between church and State. New questions were being asked: what is the mission of the church in a post-apartheid South Africa? How could theology help in the retrieval of a genuinely Christian faith and praxis in our new day of fresh opportunity? (De Gruchy in Cochrane 1999:viii). Botman states, ‘the kairos movement was unable to lead the country into a new theological debate for a post-apartheid South Africa’ (2001:116,118). During apartheid, contextual theology addressed a conflict between oppressors and oppressed. However this changed with the rise of the African National Congress (ANC). Political scientist R.W. Johnson writes,

Most Christian churches (with the exception of the Dutch Reformed Church) played a prominent part in the anti-apartheid struggle and many supported the UDF [United Democratic Front]. This enabled the ANC [African National Congress] to establish considerable influence and even control over such key institutions as the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and, via Archbishop Tutu, the Anglican Church.... By 1990 there was an almost automatic assumption among the ANC leadership that the Christian churches were part of the ‘progressive movement’ and should, accordingly, accept the general political leadership of the ANC (2009:309).

In post-democratic South Africa key church leaders involved in contextual theology and *Kairos* movement, such as Frank Chikane either stated allegiance or became advisors to the newly ruling ANC party. Consequently, prophetic theology became increasingly subjective regarding what was ‘seen’ and ‘judged’ (Botman 2001). No longer was there the clear dichotomy between oppressed and oppressor. Villa-Vicencio explores the complexity of the issue, noting that some Christians who were part of the revolutionary struggle joined the new government, while others have left politics to the politicians. He writes:



Ironically those who uncritically embrace the new age *and* those who sullenly resist it both fail to exploit the opportunities of renewal that exist at the political, economic and spiritual interface where the 'old' is dying and the 'new' is agonising to be born. The former baptise the revolution into complacency. The latter fail the revolution in not forcing it to deliver on its own agenda. Neither group grasps the opportunity to contribute theologically and *ethically* to the nation-building and reconstruction process (1999:154).

These issues highlight the complexity of both 'seeing' and 'judging'. Cochrane notes that the 'see-judge-act' model implemented by contextual theology became increasingly more difficult to use. He observes that one has to see correctly in order to judge. The issue of 'seeing' reality and 'judging' through social analysis is complex (2001:78-81). What happens when seeing is partial or different from what another sees? Secondly, when something has been seen, the next step is 'judging' where a certain amount of social analysis is needed. Cochrane asks 'who provides the categories by which an analysis may be grounded in reality?' (2001:79). This raises questions concerning pedagogical practice such as, to what extent can the 'see-judge-act' model be outworked in grassroots communities where there are not scholars to help the process? Where scholars are working with ordinary people, does the scholar hold too much power for authentic democratic education to occur? Equally, there must also be an emphasis on 'acting' once 'seeing' and 'judging' have occurred.

This raises another question, is it possible for contextual theology and Christian education to do more than promote pedagogies of resistance and critique? West argues:

But the prophetic struggle is not over, for there remains an important and achievable task. The challenge that remains is to find ways of enabling the prophetic theologies formed in particular struggles to shape the public theology of the church (2005:24).

These public theologies would be active and work towards transformation. Villa-Vicencio states that liberation theology should go beyond just resistance, arguing for a shift from resistance to reconstruction which needs to be rooted in a theological critique of economic theory and praxis (1999:159). Although the democratic elections occurred, Villa-Vicencio notes 'many of those out of whose oppression liberation theologies were first born, are still oppressed. They remain without houses. They are still denied adequate educational and health resources' (1999:154). For contextual Christian education for liberation in a South African context, the transition from resistance to reconstruction as a pedagogical purpose is an important one.

It is no wonder that Botman states that 'contextual theology is facing a crisis' (2001:116). The churches perceived close allegiance with the government was exemplified in 2001 when the South African Council of Churches (SACC) chairman, Molefe Tsele, delivered a speech on how 'The Church must once again become a nuisance to the nation' (in Johnson 2009:309). Consequently, there

was a three-fold need for contextual theology and Christian education: (1) not to lose its' prophetic voice by holding the new leaders accountable to the outworking of justice, peace and liberty; (2) for Christian leaders not to miss the opportunity of being 'salt and light' by joining the government and working towards nation building, and; (3) for ordinary believers to be mobilised and empowered to effectively 'see, judge and act', to become agents of societal change. There was thus a need for contextual theology to address new questions and concerns relating to the changes within South Africa.

Contextual theology was indeed facing a crisis on a national scale within South Africa. This crisis impacted CE within local churches as contextual theology informed CE. Denominations began assessing the effectiveness of their education practices. In 2005, Peter Storey, a retired Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa observed that 'the absence of meaningful Christian Education programmes for both adults and children in the majority of our congregations is a scandal that should not be tolerated' (in Moloï 2008:34). There were similar criticisms within other denominations who called for more contextual, dialogical, holistic and transformational theology and Christian education. These included the Wesleyan Church (Lo 1997: 173-4), the Baptist Convention (Mywayi 2000, Kretzschmar & Richards 1996) from within Pentecostal-Charismatic evangelicals (Mathole 2005) and more generally by The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA) (Kretzschmar & Ntlha 2005).

In response to contextual theology's crisis, South African contextual theologians began addressing some of these issues. Written just after the end of apartheid, James Cochrane's *Circles of Dignity* (1999) cites that contextual theologians 'are not free of the ambiguities of knowledge and power, or affluence and status' and often their work needs to be 'rooted in and redirected toward the less-visible local level' (1999:xix). He cites that 'One of the great failings of the great activist campaigns for which the prophetic or liberation church was known in the last decades has been to anchor its learnings at a local level' (Cochrane 1999:8). Consequently, Cochrane proposes 'to reclaim local wisdom as it appears in religious language, and to challenge certain dominant positions concerning the nature of the theological task and the doctrinal claims embodied in its results' (1999:2). This lack of anchoring theology at the local level as affirmed by Speckman, who states, 'The truth is that contextual theology's direction and mission presently are not clear... The problem, in my opinion, is that contextual theology has lost the grassroots link' (2001:394). In *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology* (Speckman & Kaufmann 2001) a revised contextual theology for a democratic South Africa is proposed with several recommendations for the way forward.

Moila, Professor of Contextual Theology at the University of Natal, defines contextual theology 'as both a descriptive and a practical science whose task is to study interaction between the gospel message and God's world (i.e. human contexts)' (2001:93). Contextual theology is therefore seen as a

practical means of ‘communicating the message of the Gospel’. This practical means of communicating the message of the Gospel is derived from five claims which Moila argues are at the foundation of contextual theology (2001:101-103). Firstly, ‘God seeks to understand socio-cultural contexts’, resulting in ‘the task of thoroughly analysing the context for the purpose of understanding it’. Secondly, ‘God seeks to bring about a minimum number of changes in socio-cultural contexts’. This results in seeking ‘to identify the negative and positive aspects of the socio-cultural context in order to enable culture to serve as a vehicle of God’s grace.’ Thirdly, ‘God seeks to communicate directly with people of specific culture’. This in turn ‘calls for an acceptance, respect and fair treatment of people’s culture’. Fourthly, ‘God interacts with culture through Christians’. This ‘calls for a clear understanding of how God interacted with humanity from the Biblical times to the present and how Christians should communicate the Gospel message in various cultural contexts’. Finally, ‘God seeks to transform and liberate both individual souls and socio-cultural structures’. This final claim calls for renewed ‘theological thinking which includes transformation of human perceptions or worldviews and liberation of individual souls and socio-cultural structures from whatever form of evil, e.g., oppression, pride, selfishness, suffering’.

Contextual theology’s commitment of working towards transformation has been affirmed through emphasising community transformation rather than only individual transformation (Kretzschmar 2001, Mayson 2001:339). Kretzschmar argues for, ‘A more holistic understanding of the Christian faith’. She writes, ‘African Christians, in particular, need to integrate their African perception of the wholeness of life with the Christian gospel. They need to discard the dualisms of Western approaches which divide the world into separate physical and spiritual compartments (1996:56-57). For Kretzschmar, contextual theology needs to encourage holistic and integrated Christian maturity at the grassroots, being ‘an essential part of forming transformed and transformative Christian communities’ (2001:299). This view is shared by Langefeld, who writes, ‘Conversion should be seen as moving ‘from individual and collective irresponsibility towards responsibility and accountability to oneself as a person, to the community and ultimately to God’ (2001:324). Communal responsibility reflects an affirmed commitment to the poor which is reasserted as a central concern of contextual theology (Mabuza 2001, van der Water 2001:62).

This perceiving of God within the wholeness of life encourages ordinary believers to engage within the theological process. Encouraging people to perceive God’s interaction with their culture is seen in Cochrane’s work (1999). Building on the doctrine of *sensus fidei*, ‘the sense of the faith present in the people of God generally’, he promotes *incipient theology* (1999:56). He writes:

It has been my contention that theology is not absent from this base, insofar as ordinary Christians reflect upon their faith in the light of their daily experiences and struggle for existence. Their reflection may be, and usually is, that of the theologically untrained mind: it may be naïve and precritical; it may be unsystematic and scattered; it may draw incongruently

on a range of symbols, rituals, narratives, and ideas that express the encounter with the sacred. In these senses, the theology present in communities of ordinary Christians is incipient rather than overtly articulated. Nevertheless, it remains theology (1999:145).

For Cochrane, incipient or emerging theology is generated by ordinary believers who are theologically untrained, often on the margins of society, but who reflect on their faith, and who 'possess a theologically and socially relevant wisdom about their situation and context' (1999:21). He argues that incipient theology is 'the necessary starting point for an authentic contextual theology that takes seriously the complexity of the interaction between tradition, criticism, and popular religion (1999:145). Cochrane however views incipient theology as not only being localised, but should relate to the wider Body of Christ 'broader theological discourses (national, international, ecumenical)' (1999:147). Through this discourse, Cochrane highlights how 'doctrinal traditions of the church are altered, affirmed, contradicted, or added to as the BEC theologically reflects on its context' (1999:145).

Cochrane (1999) illustrates the outworking of incipient theology through the Amawoti Basic Ecclesial Community (refer to Philpott 1993). The four year study was conducted among the community from Amawoti, who are part of large settlement of Inanda, near Durban. Among other findings the research highlights the importance of: the role of the facilitator in relation to the participants; culture within Biblical interpretation; the ordinary reader in constructing meaning, and; the Biblical text being read critically and with the possibility of multiple meanings as it is both interpreted and applied by participants relating to their context (Cochrane 1999). Examples of the Amawoti community's Christology and a theology of redemption are also given (Cochrane 1999:24-39). For Cochrane, the weekly Bible studies 'over time, provided members the leverage for a growing self-understanding and a measure of conscientization about their context' (1999:15).

Landman (2001) proposes a similar way forward to that of Cochrane's *incipient theologies* in the form of *vernacular theology*. This is described as being 'a theology of the people. It draws on the oral expressions of people's religiosity' and 'is a theology of "ordinary" people, based on their stories (2001:354). Landman argues that vernacular theologies in the form of people's memories and stories, should act as a source for academics who 'guide people towards a sensitivity for the social discourses on race, class and gender which are controlling their lives' (2001:361).

In exploring a way forward for contextual theology, other recommendations have also been made. An important emphasis is called for in the re-implementation of the foundational but abandoned 'see-judge-act' cycle. There has been a call for contextual social analysis rooted in the Biblical faith is outworked through grassroots contextual theology projects (Speckman 2001:395, van der Water 2001:62). Within this area, Gerald West's *Contextual Bible Study (CBS)* is arguably the most

developed contextual approach to Biblical Studies and Christian education (1999a, 2011). West's foundations lie in his seminal *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context* (1995). The book outlines a hermeneutic of liberation through critiquing and building upon the work of: (1) South African black theologians, Mosala and Boesak, and (2) Latin American liberation theologians (West 1995).

West notes that CBS's hermeneutic 'works within the framework of the "See-Judge-Act" approach to social transformation' (2011:445). Intentionality can be seen in attempting to re-connect contextual theology's grassroots link. West writes 'contextual Bible study plays an important role in breaking the "culture of silence" of the poor and oppressed, by enabling them to see reality from the perspective of God's project of liberation, to speak with their own voices, and to know themselves as active subjects and co-workers in God's project of liberation' (1995:227). This is accomplished through West's four commitments in the process of Bible study:

- 1) the Bible is read from the perspective of poor and oppressed
- 2) the Bible is read in community 'with' each other – where power relations are neutralized
- 3) the Bible is read critically – with whatever resources are available
- 4) the aim of examining the contextual situation and the Bible is individual and social transformation (1995:220, 1999a:25)

CBS therefore starts with social analysis, proceeding to reading the Biblical text and then action. West focuses on 'the shape' of God's will for the world, as reflected in the Bible when re-read from the margins, which is used to 'interrogate "lived" reality'. Issues of power are important for West, which is translated into encouraging ordinary believers to read the Bible 'critically'. West writes, 'the story of the Bible in South Africa remains complex and ambiguous: for most of the people in South Africa, the majority of whom are Christian, the Bible has been both oppressor and liberatory; it has supported apartheid and struggled against apartheid; it stands against them and it stands with them' (1999a:18). He continues, 'our struggle against apartheid demanded new readings and theologies of us. Our struggle for full liberation and life requires that we build on what we have learned (1999a:19). West is therefore concerned with developing biblical scholars who have chosen to collaborate with the poor and marginalized in their struggles for survival, liberation and life (1999a:11).

Consequently, West developed *The Institute for the Study of the Bible* and later the *Ujamaa Centre* in Pietermaritzburg. West's Contextual Bible Study provides a good philosophical basis and approach to the Biblical studies and Christian education (West 1995, 1997, 1999a, West et al 2004). The Institute had the following objectives: (1) to develop contextualised study materials; (2) to train facilitators in contextual Bible study; (3) to learn from the poor and how they read the Bible, and; (4) to work for social transformation in South Africa (West 1995:219). The institute focused on specific contextual issues such as economic justice, community development and research and pedagogy (2004:73-74).

Education of students occurs both within the institute as well as at the grassroots level. West writes that for students within the Institute, 'The community of the poor, the working-class, and the marginalized is an indispensable site for learning' (2004:75). For West the pursuit and struggle for survival, liberation, and abundant life requires 'collaboration' with the social movements of the marginalized (2011:449).

West and those at the Ujamaa Centre have also increasingly sought to develop CBS' methodology and teaching pedagogy. This has most notably occurred through the Ujamaa Centre's *Doing Contextual Bible Study: A Resource Manuel*, available on-line (West & Ujamaa Centre Staff 2011). This practical Manuel briefly examines the structure of CBS using the 'See-Judge-Act' method, the role of the facilitator and the role of participants. In addition the Manuel gives twenty-three Bible study outlines, covering contextual topics such as, rape, violence against women, HIV / Aids, Jesus and gender, and land and dispossession.

Following in West's footsteps, there has been a recent wealth of material from African liberative Bible interpreters. They are increasingly calling for the Bible to be liberated for socio-political, economic and cultural oppression, so that it can be reinterpreted by the poor, marginalised and oppressed. Biblical studies are therefore seen to enable ordinary people to create new theologies from the perspective of the poor, which in turn bring freedom, empowerment and social transformation (Mukonyora, Cox & Verstraelen 1993, Banana 1993, Chimhanda 2000, Upkong 2000, West & Dube 2000, Kumalo 2005b). One such theologian is Raymond Kumalo, Director of the Ujamaa Centre (2005a, 2005b).

Arguing that 'the Christian Church has a moral and missional responsibility to participate and contribute to the process of transformation', Kumalo proposes a 'transformation centred approach to Christian education' (2005b:41). Influenced by Paulo Freire and other African creative educators, Kumalo within his doctoral research develops a dialogical and participatory educational methodology. This pedagogy is tested within Howick Methodist church, KwaZulu Natal. Five phases are presented to encourage ordinary believers to engage in Christian education: 1) formation of the teaching and learning community; 2) generation of themes; 3) analysis of texts; 4) theological reflection, and; 5) praxis (2005b:263). Although participants do not specifically engage in the praxis cycle within each educational event, there are strengths to these phases. Ordinary believers are encouraged to be part of developing the curriculum which is based on their contextual reality. Importance is placed on the lived experience and stories of participants as well as the Christian Story/Biblical text. Reflection and action are also encouraged. Kumalo's concern is that Christian education is contextually relevant in order to bring transformation on a personal level as well as a social level within South African society.

Theologians are increasingly engaging in contextual Christian education within grassroots community groups. The Christian Faith and the lived experiences of participants are placed centre stage in order to

support the emergence of contextual theologies which encourage communal action. Although CCE is moving in the right direction, there is a lot more work to be done as only a small number of educators, scholars and ordinary people collaborate. Incipient theologies are beginning to dialogue and challenge prevailing theological narratives (Cochrane 1999). West's contextual Bible study (1999a, 2011) has perhaps been one of the most successful out workings of CE in local churches. There are however many more Christian communities in South Africa who do not have access to contextual Christian educators or scholars. There is consequently a need for more Christian educators to be trained in order to empower grassroots communities to engage in the theological process.

There is thus a need for Christian educators to improve methods and models which are participatory, empowering and transformational. In order to do this there has been encouragement for educators to listen to people at the grassroots level. Once ordinary people are involved in the education process, churches have the potential to become centres of contextual educational teaching for holistic transformation (West 1995, 1999, Njoroge 2004, Kumalo 2005a, 2005b). Christian education in Africa has urged educators not to perpetuate privatised spirituality. They are rather encouraging educators to pursue pedagogical practices as found within contextual Christian education for liberation, taking into account the holistic needs of participants (West 1995, Kretzschmar 1996, Lo 1997, Mywawi 2000, Wilhelm 2003, Kumalo, 2005a).

As literature indicated that South African contextual theology lost its link with ordinary people, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996a) has been encouraged as a possible way to help Christian education re-establish that link and empower ordinary people (Hope & Timmel 1995a, Lo 1997, Cochrane 1999, Kumalo 2005a, 2005b, Wilhelm 2003). South African scholar, Kumalo goes as far as calling for a paradigm shift within Christian education to adopt principles from the liberative pedagogies of Freire (2005a:59). Lo (1997) promotes Freire's pedagogical approach while analysing the *Theological Education by Extension (TEE)* program of the Wesleyan Church in Southern Africa. For CE to be more contextually relevant, Lo proposes that Freireian concepts such as liberation, dialogue, justice must be thought about within the socio-economic context, while interacting with the 'gospel message'. This view is shared by Cochrane who expresses the need for both Freire's concepts of praxis and conscientization within a South African township church. For Cochrane, these help the church to gather disparate discourses into a coherent perspective on the common struggles and aspirations of the community (1999:15, 38). Wilhelm also proposes that within Africa, 'Freire's educational philosophy contributes a relevant and effectual approach to theological education to fulfil its mission' (2003:35). Wilhelm writes that 'Freire's greatest value for the theological educator lies in his example of how educators should go about their task' which will in turn 'enable both theological education and the church to recapture its missionary vision and praxis' (2003:173-4).

As helpful as Freire's work is, literature however indicated it is viewed as deficient when relating to how a praxis model of education could be outworked within Christian education. Groome writes, 'it is not at all clear how one might attempt to construct an intentional pedagogical activity by a praxis approach in something other than a literacy program' (1980:176). Groome therefore developed Freire's work on praxis by placing it within an approach to Christian education (1980, 1991, 2011). This research explores Groome's work within the South African context.

### **2.3 The Baptist Convention of South Africa**

This section will explore how the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) responded to South Africa's turbulent history relating to Christian education and contextual theology. Like other denominations in South Africa, the BCSA faced a crisis of identity due to societal and ecclesial changes. This was reflected in its approach to Christian education. During Apartheid the training of black pastors was regarded as separate from the training of white pastors. Different Baptist colleges for white and black trainee pastors were in effect since 1940. Kretschmar writes that the education received for black pastors was 'predominantly based on European and North American theology' resulting in contextual theologies such as African, Black and Liberation theologies not included within the curriculum. Education is noted as being 'privatised resulting in issues related to the South African context receiving little emphasis' (1990:30). For Kretschmar this privatised education resulted in theology being: 1) spiritualised, disconnecting the Gospel from physical life; 2) a-contextual, as faith was disengaged from the contextual situation; 3) individualistic, as it ignored social aspects of faith, and; 4) dualistic, separating reality to different spheres of spiritual and physical (1995b: 33-34). It is noted that 'Missionary domination' was exerted through a 'top down' education model (Molebatsi 1990:70). Mhlophe writes, 'The curriculum was foreign in all respects. It became an insult to our dignity and humanness' (1990:54). In 1987 the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) separated from being in association with the Baptist Union as 'oppression, discrimination, and domination could be tolerated no longer' (Hoffmeister & Gurney 1990:5).

In 1990, the BCSA held *The Barkley West National Awareness Workshop*. A more contextual approach was encouraged as it was declared 'the mission and ministry of the church is indivisible from "the total South African context in which we live and worship"' (in Kretschmar 1999:8). Through this workshop Kretschmar, addressing the BCSA urged the BCSA to develop more contextual, liberatory theologies:

Baptists need to develop a theology (and Theological Colleges) that prepare both pastors and congregants to be true witnesses of the Gospel in the present context within South Africa. Not simply a Gospel that legitimates the powers that be, or the powers that will be, but which exercises a prophetic, healing and liberating function (1990:31).



At the same workshop Mywayi addressed challenges that BCSA churches were having in the townships; namely that of encouraging contextual South African theology, and bringing a new understanding of Scripture in the face of socio-political pressures (1990:64). He therefore recommends that this ‘theological education will emanate preaching that is contextual, and sermons that interpret what the Bible is saying in a new, empowered and empowering manner’ (1990:65). In order to accomplish this, Mywawi (1990:64-65) proposes that theological education would:

1. Take seriously both the crucial roles of the Bible as well as social reality;
2. Reject the over-spiritualizing of the Bible to the extend [sic] that its socio-political and cultural content is left out, as well as the secularization of the Bible without recognizing the reality of its faith content;
3. Encourage and enable critical skills from both the theological and sociological disciplines;
4. Be both affirmative and critical of the evangelical tradition;
5. Be formulated within the South African situation and done by South Africans who suffer and experience this situation;
6. Be in dialogue with different theologies and traditions being done locally;
7. Build into its practice socio-analytical and pastoral skills relevant to the South African situation;
8. Be consciously and critically engaged with the transformation processes presently taking place in Southern Africa;
9. Be supported and backed by local evangelical church leadership.

Interestingly Mywawi sees the need for theological education to be done in context (in the South African situation) by South Africans, who know what it is to suffer and experience the context. Unfortunately Mywawi does not clarify who should be involved in this educational process; whether it is church pastors and educators, ordinary people, or both. Although these broad objectives were a helpful way forward, they did not make recommendations regarding how CE could accomplish these goals. Also, as Mywawi only refers to preaching and sermons as CE, participatory models of education were not explored.

Another major step in the history of the BCSA was that in 1994 the BCSA developed a new Mission Statement:

The Baptist Convention of South Africa is a fellowship of member churches whose mission is to develop and proclaim a holistic, Afro-centric, and participatory understanding of the Gospel of Jesus and thereby to equip its constituencies to facilitate the dynamic transformation of societies (Msiza 2010:24).

This new statement placed context at its centre through being: 1) holistic, ‘an inclusive term incorporating the spiritual, social, mental, physical, political and economic dimensions of the Gospel

in society’; 2) Afro-centric, placing African culture at the centre of the theological process, and; 3) participatory, ‘exercising and utilising the full capacities of all persons belonging to an organisation.’ (Kretzschmar 1995a:3). Msiza writes that this mission statement was however revised as it ‘was interpreted as liberal because it emphasized a contextual approach to the Scriptures’. He continues, ‘many members identified with the words, holistic, Afro-centric and participatory’ but the same words alienate the BCSA from other Baptist groups in the country’ (Msiza 2010:24). The words were consequently removed within the new mission statement:

The Baptist Convention of SA is a body of churches whose mission is to proclaim [sic] the Gospel of our Jesus Christ and enhance a prophetic witness to the world, by establishing and developing churches, providing theological education, developing leaders, social ministry, promoting economic empowerment and entering into partnership with like-minded organization (Msiza 2010:24).

After years of foreign and individualist theology being imposed on the BCSA, the original mission statement was a deliberate move towards more African, contextual, participatory and holistic identity. Unfortunately this initial boldness was thwarted at the risk of offending and isolating other Baptist groups in the country.

In subsequent years, the limited literature from the BCSA put emphasis on engagement with the contextual situation, particularly relating to the socio-economic context in which ministry was done (Nthane & Mogashoa 2001, 2002). Relating to Christian education, the literature focuses almost exclusively on preaching. It called for more therapeutic forms of preaching, emphasising pastoral care and being nurture based. Holistic preaching was also encouraged through ‘rigorous explication and compassionate interpretation of the Scriptures concerning the dilemmas faced by common people who simply want common needs met’ (Hayashida 1999:52-53).

Mogase writes that ‘many preachers pontificate so eloquently from the pulpit, but their messages are often irrelevant and lack the substance that addresses the questions asked by our communities and the burdens that people carry. This is so because they do not exegete the text properly neither do they even attempt to exegete the community’ (2001:133). To help solve this issue Mogase sees the need for exegesis of both Scripture and community to occur. Mogase therefore proposes that the BCSA needs a ‘liberative hermeneutical perspective that will inspire us to see the truth about poverty and come up with realistic solutions (2001:127).

Hayashida writes of the need for ‘preaching that conscientises humanity to the need for communication and advocacy for common goals...’ (1999:57). Interestingly for Hayashida, this is done in the form of preaching, rather than through group participation, which Freire (1996a) would argue is essential for the process of conscientization. It seemed that participatory education was not on

the educational radar of the BCSA, who were rather concerned with top-down education models. It is however important to note that Freire's conscientization was engaged with in the BCSA. This is evident from Hayashida (1999), as well as Msiza who notes that workshops that occurred in 1990 whose purpose was to 'conscientize ministers and members about the challenge of apartheid practices in the church' (2010:22).

The best overview of Christian education within the BCSA comes from Matshiga (2001), whose doctoral thesis *Christian Education in the Baptist Convention of South Africa* explores Christian education particularly relating to churches in the Transvaal. Matshiga writes that although pastors within the BCSA have been trained well to preach systematically, they have not been well trained in the area of Christian education (2001:201). Pastors are cited as using banking education, 'where the learner knew nothing and the teacher knew everything' (2001:308). Criteria for educators to teach within churches are that they are 'saved' rather than having adequate teaching skills. This resulted in questionable pedagogy. Matshiga writes 'Due to lack of purpose, support, and teaching material, teachers are discouraged and therefore tend to be irregular' (2001:221-2).

Matshiga makes several recommendations for CE to develop within the BCSA. Firstly, he states that education must be deliberate, well planned for, and with a clear purpose. Secondly, 'a good administrative structure' should develop to plan and evaluate CE. Thirdly, relevant contextual curriculum should be used. Fourthly, 'Christian education must be 'abreast with modern methods of teaching, e.g., the dialogical method where the teacher and the learner are both learners and teachers alike' (2001:195-196). Matshiga briefly explores the 'dialogical method' highlighting that in dialogue there is a need for 'humility, openness to learn, and willingness to be criticized by both teacher and learner, so as to arrive at collective insight' (2001:313). Although Matshiga makes these recommendations there is no suggestion regarding how these recommendations can practically take place, nor is there acknowledgement of the issues related to implementing these 'modern methods of teaching'.

However, a transition is however within the BCSA's approach to education. This is most notably seen from Professor Naidoo's research concerning spiritual formation at the Baptist Convention College (2011, 2012a, 2012b). The empirical research indicates that BCC has more than an awareness of spiritual formation, and is in a process of 'awakening' through 'moving towards a more deliberate intent to focus on real-life application. This is evidenced by increased intentional activity towards practices with a strong relational and community focus' (2012a:163,165). This highlights the classroom is moving away from the historical privatised, indoctrinated expressions of Christianity and finding connection with the contextual reality of students. There is however a need for this to become common place within the CE of local churches.

Literature regarding Christian education within the BCSA reveals a process of identity formation as the BCSA transitioned to autonomy from the Baptist Union. This combined with the new socio-cultural context of South Africa transition to democracy saw the BCSA moving towards more contextual and holistic approaches to ministry. These transitions called for a re-assessment within Christian education, moving towards liberatory hermeneutics, conscientization, dialogue, contextual curriculum, interaction with the social sciences, therapeutic preaching and exploring new teaching methods. Lacking from these recommendations was a specific pedagogy that could be implemented within the BCSA's 183 churches (Msiza 2010:76).

Within the literature there was also a distinct lack regarding how CE could empower and liberate grassroots believers. Literature indicates the perception that CE is undertaken by educators to the masses. There was modest indication regarding issues of how to engage ordinary believers within a participatory education process. Consequently, the idea of education empowering and liberating people at the grass-roots level was deficient. From the literature, although top-down theology had been spoken against, it was still evident as there was no discussion regarding how ordinary people could be involved in the theological process.

There is consequently a challenge for the BCSA to think through how contextual Christian education can empower ordinary believers in more holistic, participatory models of education. This notion of empowering each person within the church is central to Baptist ecclesiology. Kretzschmar writes:

As Protestants and Baptists we believe in the priesthood of all believers and congregational governments... Each believer is a part of the body of Christ and is called to serve God in using these gifts. We are to participate in the work of the Church because we are called to be followers and disciples, not more observers (1995a:2).

The turbulent historic-cultural context has resulted in present forms of Christian education being problematic. For CE to become more effective there is a need for new forms pedagogy to be implemented within the South African context, and more specifically within the township location. This education must take into account the historic, social and cultural contexts of participants. The pedagogical process as well as its content should be informed by the South African context. Contextual forms of CE should offer possible ways forward for ordinary people to be equipped in service to God, the church and their communities.

## Chapter 3

### The Relationship between Christian Education and Contextual Theology

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the literature on Christian education and its historical development in South Africa and the impact of contextual theology on that development. This chapter attempts to bridge the gap between Christian education and contextual theology. The chapter will explore some of the characteristics and commonalities that contextual theology and CE share and also indicate how traditional CE can be considered as contextual Christian education. This is done to build a background to the literature that attempts to set the stage for research sub-question research two.

This chapter will firstly overview the relationship between Christian education and contextual theology. Secondly, there will be an overview of the emergence of contextual theologies. This will include asking: who should be involved in the process of contextual theologizing? The characteristics and influence of South American liberation theology will be explored as it was among the first contextual theologies to provide a theoretical and practical framework for contextual Christian education. This will lead to highlighting concepts and recent examples of Contextual Christian Education emphasising liberation. In the final section Thomas Groome's *Shared Praxis Approach (SPA)* will be discussed as this is the theory that is implemented in this empirical study. SPA is one of the most noted approaches within a liberation paradigm of Christian education (1980, 1991, 2011). SPA's theoretical, theological and pedagogical foundations will be highlighted, as well as how its five movements are outworked.

#### 3.2 Christian Education and Contextual Theology

Christian education in the twentieth Century saw a new emphasis, as educators promoted the view that CE should not only encourage personal and privatised faith formation, but also focus on the contextual and social reality of participants. This contextual focus emphasised relating Christian Faith to the participant's lived experiences, including their challenges and concerns. Individual transformation became central within the education process, but also an emphasis on societal transformation. These developments progressed rapidly due to Christian education's interaction with the social sciences including psychology, human development, politics, sociology and anthropology (Pazmiño 1997:128).

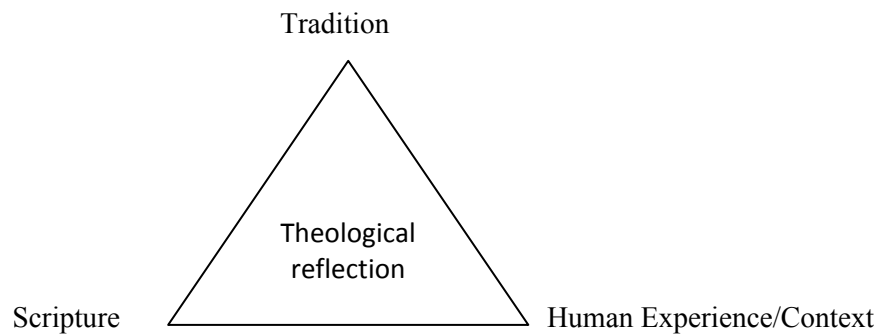
Christian educator Pazmiño writes, 'A philosophy of education attempts to articulate a systematic scheme of thought which can guide practice' (1997:81). Within personal faith formation, the individual's spiritual life is the context for education (Seymour 1982). Developmental educators such as Fowler (1981, 1987, 2000) relied on psychologists such as Erikson (1980) who specialised in psychosocial development and Kohlberg (1981), a specialist in moral development, to discover the psychological and sociological progression of a person's life, which in turn impacts their spiritual

growth. Christian educational theorists however differed on how individual faith formation should take place. Varying views of a philosophy of CE were therefore developed in the twentieth century covering a spectrum from formal education to non-formal or informal education (Pazmiño 1997:81-122).

At the formal end of the spectrum is religious instruction or schooling. Religious instruction's goal is to transmit Christian religious understanding and practices. The discipline of education provides the structure for a program of Christian education. The teacher therefore structures the learning environment to enable the learner to acquire CE (Seymour, 1982). Religious instruction is concerned with right or true thinking being the primary goal of the church's instructional ministry (Little 1982). Seymour (1982) indicates although one strength of this method is it applied educational research to the church, in doing so, it was biased toward more formal settings and learning of content. Religious instruction does not however emphasise the contextual realities of the participants. Rather, theology has been perceived as a transmission of a supra-cultural gospel, unrelated to culture (Schreiter 1985:8).

Westerhoff writes that individuals are socialised into church life. He states, 'By socialization I mean all those formal and informal influences through which persons acquire their understanding and ways of living' (2000:14). Informal influences, Westerhoff claims, are 'hidden curriculums' and are viewed as more influential than 'formal curriculum'. Consequently, due to these hidden curriculums 'the schooling-instruction paradigm will always be less than inadequate for the evaluation and planning of Christian education' (Westerhoff 2000:15). Calls to move away from traditional schooling techniques of CE are evident, opting for more integrated educational approaches and ways of living (Westerhoff 2000:14).

The emergence of contextual theologies has informed more integrated educational approaches. At the centre of contextual theology is the debate regarding which sources are legitimate in theological enquiry. It therefore questions where revelation of God is to be found? Bevans (2002) notes that classical theology conceived theology as having two theological sources, Scripture and tradition, which to some extent are influenced by context. However, contextual theologians push beyond this, arguing in actuality, what makes theological contextual 'is the recognition of the validity of another *locus theologicus*: present human experience' (Bevans 2002:3-4). If human experience is viewed as a valid source for theological expression, there are consequently 'three sources or *loci theologici*: scripture, tradition, and present human experience – or context' (Bevans 2002:4).



**Figure 3.1** Bevans’ three sources of theological enquiry (2002:4)

Coinciding with the rise of contextual theologies, such as liberation theology, CE has questioned approaches towards pedagogy and curriculum (Senior & Weber, 1994; Kirylo 2001:70, 74). A new emphasis has been placed on the contextual reality of participants at the centre of the education process, resulting in a variety of contextual approaches within CE (Seymour 1996). Rather than Christian Faith being removed from the reality and experience of everyday life, it seeks to make connections between life and Faith.

One of these contextual approaches is CE focusing on liberation. Seymour notes that within the liberation approach of education, ‘traditional Christian education is thought to be deficient because it tends to deal with individuals and with content which insulates from the harsh realities of the world’. He adds, ‘The goal is to enable the church and its members to be faithful to the calling of the kingdom of God’ (1996:6). Liberation theology’s influence is evident within this model of CE. This is primarily through the focus on contextual reality of the oppressed relating to the Kingdom of God. Westerhoff argues that ‘liberation theology provides the most helpful theological system for Christian education today’. For Westerhoff, this is due to its emphasis on both Christian tradition as well a concern for justice and social order (2000:29). Westerhoff writes, ‘liberation theology understands theology as critical reflection on the activity of God in history... This form of practical theology brings action and reflection together; it unites Scripture, tradition, and experience’ (2000:29).

Praxis is strongly evident within liberatory CE. Browning states that liberation approaches to education emphasize praxis: ‘a practice-theory-practice model of reflection’ and social transformation, making ‘the practical life of the Christian the center of education, not doctrine or church teaching as such’ (Browning 1991:217). This is an important transition, as historically within CE, doctrine or dogma has been the point of departure, and elevated above context. To raise ‘the practical life of the Christian’ to the centre of the education process makes the participant of central importance. Life experience and perceiving God acting in context becomes the starting point for education and essential within the curriculum. The important development of praxis within CE is viewed as encouraging revised forms of practice in the light of Christian doctrine (Browning 1991, Groome 1991).

Liberation theology's approach to CE was not however without criticism. A major critique was made for placing greater importance on context than on the Bible. Pazmiño writes 'liberationists have tended to address the hermeneutics of the world. In so doing, they have too readily dismissed the demands of the word' (1997:169). Relating to the issue of Biblical interpretation Mesters notes the importance placed upon 'reality' when reading the Bible has the potential to lead to a 'subjectivistic interpretation'. He argues that there a need for some scientific exegesis as well as critical ability in order to effectively interpret the Bible, which participants may lack (Mesters 1992:53-5).

### 3.2.1 The emergence of contextual theologies

*Constructing Local Theologies* (1985), written by Schreier, is a foundational work within contextual theology. Schreier explores the relationship between culture, context, and the Christian tradition. Schreier notes there had been a 'shift in perspective' in global theology, which first came to the world's attention in the 1950s in parts of Africa and Asia, where there was 'a growing sense that theologies being inherited from the older churches of the North Atlantic community did not fit well into these quite different circumstances' (1985:1). Consequently he questions the authenticity of universal theology and concepts, writing that new questions asked within these contexts could not be answered by traditional frameworks of theology (1985:3).

Schreier elevates the place of human experience within theological reflection. He differentiates between 'the wisdom style of theology (*sapientia*) over the sure-knowledge style (*scientia*) preferred in academic settings' (1985:25). For Schreier, theology as wisdom (*sapientia*) has been 'one of the predominant forms of theology in Christianity' (1985:85). He argues 'human life represents the highest form of this creation in the visible sphere knowable to us; hence a study of human life is the surest way to wisdom' (Schreier 1985:85). Pears notes that 'Schreier places the loci of orthodoxy with the local community and is not based on or tied to a magisterial, central theology' (2010:20). This is arguably Schreier's biggest contribution to the field.

This growing awareness of culture's influence on theology was evident within the 1970s within both Protestant and Catholic theologies and expressed through using terms such as "localization," "adaptation" "contextualization," "indigenization," and "inculturation" of theology (Schreier 1985:2). Exploring each of the terms, Schreier argues that 'despite slightly different nuances in meaning, all of these terms point to the need for and responsibility of Christians to make their response to the gospel as concrete and lively as possible' (1985:1). Contextual theology has been commonly used, replacing other terms such as indigenous theology (Bevans 2002:80). Schreier and others (Sedmak 2002) however favour the term 'local theology', as it 'allows the overtone of the "local church" to be sounded'.



Arguably the most significant text in the field, Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology* (2002), states, 'there is no such thing as "theology"; there is only contextual theology: feminist theology, black theology, liberation theology, Filipino theology, Asian-American theology, African theology, and so forth' (2002:3). This view challenged Western theology, which was seen to have been transported and imposed on other contexts and cultures (Pears 2010:8). These developments had implications within field of CE, as educators became increasingly aware of the 'hidden curriculum' of imported theology. Schillebeeckx writes, 'Western theologians came to the realization that their own theology has just as much sociocultural bias as any other' (in Schreiter 1985:ix). The detrimental effects of Christianity and imperialism have been noted (Stanley 1990, Walls 2002). Bergmann writes that Christians in the South 'convincingly criticize their siblings in the North for having disregarded the local and contextual character of their generalizing way of thinking' (2002:17, 45). Bergmann notes that in the 1970s and 1980s developments in the 'south' began to put context at the centre of the theological enterprise through the development of Latin American liberation, *minjung* and feminist theologies (2003).

Bevans highlights reasons why contextual theology is important, noting that in non-Western contexts, Christians became aware that 'traditional approaches to theology do not really make sense within their own cultural patterns and thought forms' (2002:9-10). Traditional theology was viewed as being 'oppressive', for example in the way they have ignored Black experience. Greater understanding of local culture has been helped by the development of social sciences, thereby aiding contextual theologies. Bevans also highlights contextual theology's importance by noting, 'the growing identity of local churches is contributing to the necessity of the development of truly contextual theologies.' (Bevans 2002:10).

As contextual theologies place different emphases upon Scripture, tradition and context. Bevans helpfully presents six models of contextual theology (2002). The models are an attempt in 'simplifying a complex reality' (Bevans 2002:31). They are plotted on a scale according to the value that each model puts on the importance of experience of the present (context) at one end of the axis, and experience of the past (Scripture and tradition) at the other end.

Recently, the idea of *missio Dei* raises the importance of human experience within theological reflection. Bosch writes, 'the *missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate' (1991:391). God's activity within both the world and church has encouraged theologians to look for 'the fingerprints of God' and his activity within human experience, thereby elevating its importance within theological reflection. Applied to CE, education practices began to promote participants to look for 'God's fingerprints' in their context. For example, Latin American liberation theology is noted as applying this practice within their methodology (Westerhoff 2000:29). *Missio Dei* is reflected in Bergmann's book *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology*, which states 'the book wants to encourage the

contextualization of theology from below as a manifold, polycentric and transcultural reflection on and expression of the acting God in both well-known and still unknown places' (2003:xiv).

The central argument of *God in Context* is that God reveals himself through contextual expressions. Bergmann writes, 'Contextual theology is incarnation theology about the Son and inhabitation theology about the Holy Spirit who dwells in and around us'. He continues, 'Contextual theology constitutes a reflection on experiences and expressions of the living and acting God in his/her multi-shaped revelations in the world' (2003:16). A definition is therefore given; 'By contextual theology we mean a Christian interpretation of life that is conscious of its circumstances' (2003:16). Bergmann describes contextual theology's theological method as an 'interpretation of Christian faith, which arises in the consciousness of its context' (2003:4). The interpretation of "God today" occurs in connection and in dialogue with people, phenomena and traditions in our age and the surrounding world' (Bergmann 2003:4). This has implications within CE that places experience and context at the centre of its theological enquiry. Contextual CE therefore intentionally encourages participants to reflect on their lived experience and reflect on *missio Dei*; God's activity in the world around them. Contextual theologies and CCE therefore recognise God's revelation not only in Scripture and tradition, but also within human experience.

### 3.2.2 Who should be involved in the process of contextual theologising?

As contextual theology emphasises the importance of context and experience within theological reflection, the question arises, *who should be involved in the process of contextual theologizing?* This question relates directly to contextual CE as it questions who participates within education processes which support the emergence of contextual theologies. Schreier identifies three types of local theologies, which overlap somewhat with Bevans' models (1985). These are characterised by their 'relation between theology and the community in which it takes place' (Schreier 1985:6). Schreier firstly explores the *translation model* which 'frees the Christian message as much as possible from its previous cultural accretions'. Revelation is then seen to 'stand freely', ready for the second step of 'translation' into the new situation (1985:7). The picture of the kernel and husk, is used to describe this model, as Christian revelation is viewed as the kernel, and the previous cultural context is the husk. Deciding what is kernel and what is husk is therefore increasingly difficult and problematic (1985:8). This model has been used within missionary endeavours going into a new context with the gospel. It was consequently largely missionaries from outside the culture who were engaged in the contextual theological process. However a weakness with the kernel and husk theory is that it assumes biblical revelation belongs to a 'surpracultural sphere' and can be totally removed from the husk.

Secondly, there is the *adaptation model*, which seeks a 'more fundamental encounter between Christianity and culture' than the translation model (1985:9). Three different adaptation models are used. Firstly, relying on Western philosophy, expatriates and local leaders together develop an

‘explicit philosophy’ of the worldview of the culture. Secondly, this model was later refined, as local leaders were trained using Western categories to give expression to the world-view of their people. Although this gave local leaders more power in the process, a weakness included trying to ‘force cultural data into foreign categories’ (1985:10). A third kind of adaptation approach does not rely on philosophical models from the West. Vincent Donovan (2001) in his evangelization among the Masai in East Africa explores the planting the seed of faith, permitting interaction with local soil which leads the new growth of Christianity, which is faithful to the new culture and Christian tradition (1985:10).

Finally, the third type of local theologies are *contextual models*, which ‘concentrate more directly on the cultural context in which Christianity takes root and receives expression’ (1985:12). Although differentiating between *ethnographic approaches*, and *liberation approaches*, Schreiter states that for both, reflection begins with the cultural context (1985:13). *Ethnographic approaches* focus on cultural identity. In contrast to the adaptation approaches, the *ethnographic approach* starts with the contextual questions of people and then moves to the faith tradition (Schreiter 1985:13).

*Liberation approaches* concentrate especially upon the dynamics of social change in human societies (1985:14). Schreiter writes that ‘theologically liberation models are keenly concerned with salvation. Liberation models analyze the lived experience of a people to uncover the forces of oppression, struggle, violence, and power...’ (1985:15). The participant is therefore placed at the centre of the theological process. A strength of this approach is noted as ‘what can happen when the realities of a people are genuinely and intimately coupled with the saving word of God’ (1985:15). Weaknesses of liberation approaches are cited as being ‘better at hearing the cries of the people than at listening to the biblical witness or the testimonies of other churches’ (Schreiter 1985:15). Schreiter highlights the importance of liberation theologies, affirming they are the ‘major force’ in contextual theologies (1985:15).

Schreiter’s approaches highlight that within models of contextual theology, missionaries, local church leaders and ordinary local people are involved in the theological process to varying degrees. The strength of the liberation approach is that the ordinary person is placed at the centre of the education process. This liberation approach is similar to Bevans’ *praxis model* of contextual theology which ‘focuses on the identity of Christians within a culture as that culture is understood in terms of social change’ (2002:70). The praxis model views that ‘culture is a human product’, and ‘is therefore essentially good. But culture can be perverted, and in need of liberation and healing’ (2002:75). Reflective action is therefore an essential part of the praxis model, as liberation is actively sought. Bevans writes, ‘the praxis model understands revelation as the presence of God in history – in the events of everyday life, in social and economic structures, in situations of oppression, in the experience of the poor and the marginalized’ (2002:68). Concerning this model Bevans writes:

God's presence is one of beckoning and invitation, calling men and women of faith to locate God and cooperate with God in God's work of healing, reconciling, liberating. We best know God by acting in partnership with God (2002:75).

The ordinary believer is therefore the theologian. The praxis model is known for a strong epistemological basis, and is 'generally acknowledged as the most important development in theology the latter half of the twentieth century' (Bevans 2002:77). Its critique has been its close connection with Marxism.

There is increasing consensus that local people in each given context are those who should be doing theology (Bevans 2002, Sedmak 2002, Pears 2010). This raises the importance of Schreiter's *contextual models*, of both *ethnographic approaches* and *liberation approaches*. However questions are raised relating to Christian education practices and the extent that ordinary people have the resources and knowledge to interact with Scripture and tradition. Bevans writes:

What seems important is to conceive theology in terms of a constant dialogue between the people - who are the subjects of culture and cultural change and so have a preeminent place in the enterprise of seeking to understand Christian faith in a particular context - and the professional theologian who articulates, deepens, and broadens the people's faith expression with his or her wider knowledge of the Christian tradition and, perhaps, the articulation of faith in other contexts (2002:18).

South African scholar Cochrane writes that 'contextual theologians, like other theologians and trained intellectuals generally, are not free of the ambiguities of knowledge and power, of affluence and status'. He argues that these contextual theologies which are often done within "higher" public levels needs to be rooted in and redirected toward the less-visible local level' (Cochrane 1999:xix). For Cochrane, an emphasis is needed for contextual theologies to give a voice to ordinary believers at the 'less-visible local' level. He writes:

The various theologies of liberation, whether self-designated as black, Africa, prophetic, feminist, or contextual, all assume such a voice. All make various claims based upon the authenticity of this voice. Yet it is not often clear whose voice is meant. Nor is it clear who really speaks when a theology supposedly represents the voice of others (1999 xix).

A gap has been evident between academic theologians who write within the field of contextual theology and local, ordinary believers (West 1999a, 2007). The challenge for contextual theologies is to remain linked to the grassroots level. This must be a key aspect of development within Christian education, placing ordinary people and their context at the centre of the process. However there has been little research undertaken regarding how Christian education can support the emergence of contextual theologies.

Sedmak, in *Doing Local Theology* (2002) advocates a dialogue between theologian and ordinary people. He calls for an ‘intellectual life of solidarity’, acknowledging the treasures within everyone and thereby making theological resources available for all (2002:3). Sedmak argues that ‘theologians are called to serve a community of believers’ and consequently ‘there must not be a gap between professional and nonprofessional theologians’. He continues, ‘doing local theology is a service, like washing feet. You have to be close to the ground to do that’ (2002:17). Consequently, Sedmak promotes *local theologies*, which he describes as ‘village theologies, the theologies that are created within a village, using the available material. Local theologies, however, are also constant invitations to leave the village, to think beyond the village traditions and rules’ (2002:17).

For Sedmak, community building is an important aspect of theologising. He writes: ‘Jesus did theology to build up community. He called everyone into community, a community that is constantly “on the move”. Doing theology as Jesus did is a community-building enterprise’ (2002:15, 31). In order to do this, Sedmak encourages the use of local questions, concerns, stories as a starting point for what he identifies as *little theologies*. He writes: ‘Little theologies inspire people to do theology because they talk about people’s lives and questions and concerns (2002:129). He expands:

Little theologies are called to three tasks: (1) To point to the positive richness and goodness of local contexts; (2) to challenge the local context by inviting people to see and go beyond its limits; and (3) to inspire and encourage by opening eyes to previously unseen visions and ears to unheard sounds. Little theologies invite people to do theology themselves. When little theologies function properly, they empower (2002:125-126).

For Sedmak, a *hopeful culture* is one of the fruits of theology. He writes, ‘We do theology because we see that people suffer and out of the conviction that new life can blossom. We do theology in order to make people’s lives better (2002:158). For Sedmak local theologies encourage societal transformation and action, writing, ‘doing theology is an attempt to renew the face of the earth. It is an invitation to dream a courageous dream’ (2002:9). Although Sedmak’s work is fresh and insightful, as with other contextual theologians, it is limited regarding the actual pedagogical practices of how *little theologies* are actively encouraged. The challenge for theologians and Christians educators is how to encourage this dreaming among ordinary believers; to hope and act together for a better future (2009:95).

### 3.2.3 Contextual Christian education and liberation

Having surveyed theoretical aspects of contextual theology, this section will explore how contextual liberation theologies have emerged at a grassroots level through Christian education. The focus will be on contextual liberation theologies for several reasons. Firstly, of the spectrum of models of contextual theology, the importance of liberation theologies has been noted as ‘the major force’ in contextual theologies (Schreiter 1985:15). Secondly, Latin American liberation theologies were among the first

contextual theologies to emerge, developing a strong theoretical foundation. Thirdly, Latin American liberation theologies have been one of the most successful contextual theologies to outwork a successful pedagogy at the grass-roots level. Finally, as this study is focusing on South African contextual theologies, these contextual theologies have emerged from a liberation paradigm. After having explored education practices within Latin American liberation theology, concepts characterising CCE emphasising liberation will be overviewed. Finally, recent examples of CCE with a liberation paradigm will be highlighted.

### 3.2.3.1 Christian education and Latin American liberation theology

Liberation theology emerged in Latin America from the 1960s, as largely Roman Catholic progressive theologians began to theologically challenge the socio-political and economic status quo (Boff 1970, 1986, 1989, Bonino 1975, 1984, Gutiérrez 1973, 1974, 2013a, 2013b, Segundo 1975, Sobrino 1994). God's preferential option for the poor and the theme of justice became key concepts within liberation theology (Gutiérrez 1973). This placed the poor centrally within the theological process. God was seen to dwell with the poor in the midst of their sufferings and was perceived to be explicitly interested in their needs. Justice was therefore seen as a central task (Boff 1997:107, Gutiérrez 2003:290, Rowland 1999b:5).

In practice, liberation theology's preferential option for the poor became rooted in the basic church communities within Latin America. Liberation theologians, educators and priests helped shape these CEBs (an acronym formed from their Spanish title, *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base*), consisting of 'persons at the lowest echelons of society, the poor, the labourer, the marginalised' (Boff 1970:26). These communities formed within many countries in Central and South America. As of 2007, it was estimated there were 80,000 CEBs in Brazil alone (Rohter 2007).

Through these CEBs, the Latin American church took on a new shape which Boff describes as, 'one that is more *communio* and *diakonia* than society and hierarchy' (1970:23). Boff writes, 'the basic church communities represent a genuine "ecclesio-genesis", a birth of the Church, deep within the faith of a people in poverty' (1970:26). This ecclesio-genesis represents what Boff calls 'a new social structuring of the church' (1986:33), where equality of members replaces alienating hierarchical ecclesial structures. The restructuring of the church changed oppressive hierarchical structures as the poor were empowered to work towards social transformation and justice within their churches. The poor and marginalised through dialogue were 'formulating new concepts in theology' regarding how to live out their faith in their historic reality (Boff 1986:2).

The Roman Catholic Church opposed the CEB's radical approach of ecclesiology. In this situation critical pedagogues would argue that the Roman Catholic Church, who were the dominant structure through this opposition were attempting to maintain the status quo. Leonardo Boff's views regarding

apostolicity, catholicity, oneness and holiness of the church, resulted in disciplinary action from the Catholic Church in 1985 and again in 1991. The disciplinary action was viewed by some as European cultural hegemony and religious imperialism which it was argued, that liberation theology sought to be liberated from (Cox 1992:107).

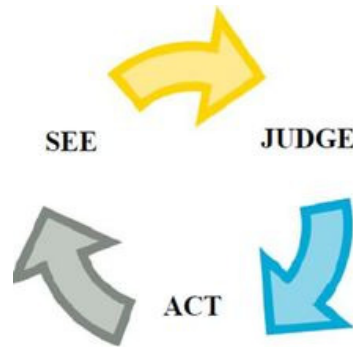
The central role of CE among these base communities has been stressed (Schipani 1988:239). Prevailing pedagogical models distinguishing between ‘teachers’ and ‘learners’ on the basis of schooling or age were rejected (Schipani 1988:244). Rather ‘a pedagogical process that works “from the bottom up”, in which the authorities, the teachers, listen to the people, discuss with them the pilgrim journey of the Church, and supervise the implementation of decisions made jointly with them’ (Boff 1970:26). It has been noted that the CEB’s pedagogy is “radical” and often rooted in Freire’s *pedagogy of the oppressed* (1996a) and critical pedagogy in which illiterate people literally ‘learn to “read” their lives with acuity’ (Boys 1989:139). As the experience of poverty and oppression is viewed as important as Scripture, God’s word it is noted ‘is to be found in the dialectic between the literary memory of the people of God and the continuing story to be discerned in the contemporary world, particularly among those people with whom God has chosen to be identified’ (Rowland 1999b:7-8).

Within the CEBs pedagogy, Freire’s insights from critical theory began to emerge firstly within liberation theology. The influence of Freire and critical pedagogy within liberation theology and CE emerge has been considerable. This will be explored later in greater detail.

Along with Freire, Gutierrez puts an emphasis on humans as free agents of their own actions. Gutiérrez (1973) set the foundation for the poor and oppressed in the CEBs to ‘see’ their context and social conditions in relation to their faith. Gutiérrez however, departs from Freire’s humanism, by using the theological language of ‘sin’, which causes injustice and oppression. Faith is no longer spiritualised, but it relates concretely to an individual’s contextual situation. The CEB’s aim was to empower the marginalised through conscientizing education and action, empowering marginalised individuals to control their own lives and thereby pursue justice (Barbé 1992, Boff 1997:122).

Importantly, the education process to encourage contextual theologies of liberation, follows one of dialogue, as participants work together with the facilitator or theologian. Lorscheider, a Priest in Fortaleza, Brazil, acted in changing his approach to pedagogy within his parish. He describes how he initially used banking methods of education, ‘I carried the faith to the people like a ready-made story, without reflecting much on its meaning in the socio-political-cultural sphere in which those people lived’ (1984:47). Following the pedagogy of liberation theology, he ‘began to listen to people’ and realised that his congregants were acting out the world of God in their lives, being ‘very specific in the way they applied the Word of God to their experience of life in a deeply evangelising way’ (1984:48).

This grassroots pedagogy found its expression through the influential *Pastoral Cycle* (Figure 2.2). Juan Luis Segundo's *The Liberation of Theology* (1976), took the work of Roman Catholic Priests in Europe, and applied and refined them to the South American context through the Pastoral Cycle. Father Joseph Cardijn, a Belgian priest encouraged Catholic workers and students to engage in careful theological analysis of their situation by asking them to 'See, Judge and Act' upon their experiences (Green 2009:18). Boff notes that the threefold pedagogy of 1) seeing; 2) judging, and; 3) acting reveals how liberation theology's central emphasis on justice and hope for the poor was outworked in the basic ecclesial communities (Boff 1997:109-110).



**Figure 3.2** The Pastoral Cycle

The Pastoral Cycle's historical and continued success (Wijsen, Henriot & Mejia 2005) enabled facilitators and participants within education process to engage in a praxis approach to education. The Pastoral Cycle is noted as being influenced by Paulo Freire's 'circle of praxis' (Sobrinho 2005:xxi). Praxis became an important concept within liberation theology. Clodovis Boff's, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* (1987) argues in detail for praxis and the need for unity between theory and practice; reflection and action. Gutiérrez emphasised praxis over doctrine, promoting a circular relationship between orthodoxy and orthopraxis (1973). Orthodoxy is seen to be only achieved through orthopraxis; right belief is therefore achieved through right action. Once again, the Roman Catholic Church protested, criticising the emphasis put on praxis and orthodoxy. Ratzinger critiqued this approach for raising orthopraxis to the level of orthodoxy as well as being too influenced by Marxism (1985). Despite its criticism, liberation theology's emphasis on praxis was central to the success of the BECs within South America. It permitted a greater freedom for the Biblical text to dialogue with the contextual situation for the purpose of liberation (Mesters 1992). The *see, judge, act* cycle will now be explored as it was outworked within the education process.

Firstly within the education process, participants are involved in 'seeing' or observing their contextual reality. The hermeneutical starting point of both liberation theology and critical pedagogy is the socio-cultural struggle of individuals as they exist in exploited or oppressed communities by wider socio-political practices (Boff 1970, Gutierrez 1973, Freire and Shor 1987, Friere 1996a, Rowland & Corner 1990, Mesters 1992). Boff writes, 'liberation theology's starting point is the anti-reality, the cry of the



oppressed, the open wounds that have been bleeding for centuries' (1997:109). He continues, 'the option for the poor, against their poverty and for their liberation, has constituted and continues to constitute the core of liberation theology. To opt for the poor entails a practice; it means assuming the place of the poor, their cause, their struggle, and at the limit, their often tragic fate' (1997:107). Within the educational process, oppression of the poor was brought to people's attention through both the use of generative themes and problem-posing (Freire 1996a). In this way, participants within the CEBs 'see' and name contextual issues affecting their lives and are encouraged to name the injustice that is occurring around them. Participant's lived experiences and realities are consequently the starting point of the education process.

Secondly, participants 'judge' their contextual reality. Boff writes that liberation theology is a 'critical reflection on human praxis – the praxis engaged in by men and women in general and Christians in particular – in light of the practice of Jesus and the exigencies of faith' (Boff 1970:14). Boff reveals that the process of analytical judging is twofold. Firstly through critical awareness participants analyse their contextual reality, and secondly participants apply a dialectical hermeneutic as their faith is related to their situation, thereby judging their reality according to Christian tradition and Bible study (Boff 1997:109). Critical awareness within the CEBs was encouraged through Freire's *conscientization* (1996a). Boff writes, 'what pastoral ministry, what ecclesial practice, will help a people of the poor to have their consciousness raised, to become "conscientized", with respect to the sin of oppression of which they are the victims, and to enter into the grace of solidarity and the birth of justice' (1970:13). In dialogue within the CEBs, consciousness-raising was implemented by sociological analysis aiming to uncover the causes of oppression. For example, the cause of poverty was partly examined by looking at the theory of dependence (Moltmann 1998:62).

Participants judge their reality according to the Christian tradition. This is one of the key differences between critical pedagogy and liberation theology. Within critical pedagogy, Freire notes that the purpose of education is for subjects to reach their 'vocation' – to be humanized social agents in the world, where liberation from any form of oppression is achieved (Freire 1996a). Subjects achieve this liberation and humanization in community with others. However, within liberation theology it is through Jesus that liberation is achieved. Gutiérrez writes, 'The salvation of Christ is in fact so full that nothing escapes it. Evangelization is liberating because it is a message of total liberation which necessarily includes a demand for the transformation of the historical and political conditions in which men live' (1974:74). Christ is viewed as the *Liberator* from sin and oppression (Boff 1980, 1989, Sobrino 1991, Giblin 1992) who brings what Boff terms *integral liberation*, which is economic, political, pedagogical and spiritual (1970:25, 1989:59-60).

Liberation theology in viewing Christ as Liberator focuses on the utopian hope promised in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God. Boff writes, 'the Kingdom of God expresses man's utopian longing for liberation from everything that alienates him, factors such as anguish, pain, hunger, injustice and

death, and not only man but all creation. The Kingdom of God is the term used to convey the absolute lordship of God over the world stricken and oppressed by diabolic forces' (1974:80-81). Consequently Gutiérrez writes, 'The annunciation of the Gospel thus has a conscientizing function, or in other words, a politicizing function (1992:178). The reign of God therefore functions as the ground of social critique or prophetic criticism, judging unjust social, political and economic structures as well as upon cultural arrangements (Nuhumara 2002:210). Schipani's book *Religious Education encounters Liberation Theology* highlights the importance of the concept of God's reign and conscientization in relation to Christian education. He writes, 'we assume that religious education partakes of the whole purpose and mission of the church. Therefore the key question is what features and form should the ecclesial community have or strive for in order to serve as context for conscientization, nurture, and transformation in light of the reign of God?' (1988:244)

Finally, participants are encouraged to 'act'. Through the dialogical hermeneutic interplay between contextual reality and the Christian tradition, liberating theologies are developed in order to finally act. The education process urged participants towards what they hoped for in the present, to struggle for a more just and peaceful society. Therefore as present reality is critiqued through the study of the Bible and compared with utopian hope, a liberatory hermeneutic is employed. In seeking transformation according to the utopian hope of God's Kingdom there is a turning away from sin and selfishness and a turning to God. Gutiérrez notes, 'To sin is to deny loving God and others' (1998:115). Turning to God is practically outworked through loving neighbour, which Gutiérrez highlights is not the person next to me, but rather the poor, the marginalised, the exploited. He continues, 'solidarity with the poor implies the transformation of the existing social order. It implies a liberating social praxis: that is, a transforming activity directed towards the creation of a just, free society' (Gutiérrez 1974:59-60). Justice and social transformation inspired by Jesus' teaching on the reign of God were consequently key concepts within liberation theology's education process. Mesters writes, 'the rediscovery of the Bible as "our book" gives rise to a sense of commitment and a militancy that can overcome the world. Once they discover that God is with them in their struggles, no one can really stop them or deter them' (1992:50-1).

Christian Faith was seen to relate to the holistic needs of the people and takes into full account the value of the experience of life (Rowland 1999b:7). Boff writes, 'Christian faith must make its contribution in the transformation of relationship of injustice into relationships that foster greater life and happiness due to living in participation and in a decent quality of life for all' (Boff 1997:109). Consequently, the BECs addressed and mobilised their communities in corporate action, working towards justice and social transformation among the poor. This often started with basic human rights, such as 'the right to life and the means of life – food, health, housing, employment, education' (Boff 1970:27). For example, in Nicaragua, El Riguero university students identified themselves with the poor and found creative ways to obtain milk for children (Oliú 1984:4).

Rowland writes that the initial dynamism of liberation theology was from Latin America, but parallel movements have emerged in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. He writes, 'not all of these are called liberation theology. Contextual theology is a term now widely used to designate theological reflection which explicitly explores the dialogue between social context and Scripture and /tradition' (1999a: xiii-xiv). The success of liberation theology's theological basis, as well as the Pastoral Cycle's education process within these basic church communities encouraged Christian educators from outside South America to take note and apply principles from their education model to other contexts (Schipani 1988, Groome 1980, 1991, Marangos 1996, Kirylo 2001, Wijssen, Henriot & Mejia 2005). The following section will explore Freire and critical pedagogy's contribution to contextual Christian education emphasising liberation.

### 3.2.3.2 Christian education and critical pedagogy

Liberation and praxis approaches to CE have been an important development in the latter part of the twentieth century. Critical theory, critical pedagogy (in particular Freire's work), along with Latin American liberation theology have been influential in the emergence of contextual liberation theologies. The discipline of critical social science had its origins in the Frankfurt School of critical philosophy (Institut für Sozialforschung) in Germany. Rooted within Marxism, social philosophy and science, the school's aim was the struggle against domination of all forms towards a more just society (Darder, Baltodano & Torres 2003:2).

Paulo Freire, a Christian humanist (Freire 1996a, Pazmiño 1997:76, Wilhelm 2003:35) was influenced by critical theory and the Frankfurt School's emphasis on theory and practice. Arguing that the whole activity of education is political in nature, Freire views education as being used as an oppressing force for domestication to maintain the status quo of the dominant (Freire 1996a:33, Shor 1993:27). By focusing on combating the political struggles against exploitation and domination, Freire believed that education should serve an 'ontological vocation' of becoming human, thereby liberating both oppressed and oppressors (Freire 1996a:26, 2003:67, Darder et al. 2003:6). Influences upon Freire's work include liberation theology (Schipani 1988, Freire 1996b) and Buber's theory of dialogue through his I-thou philosophy (Freire 1973:52, 1996a:135, Buber 1970). Latin American liberation theology and Freire's work emerged at a similar time with each influencing the other.

Freire's work relating critical theory to pedagogy became known as critical pedagogy. For many, Freire is considered to be the most influential educational philosopher in the development of critical pedagogical thought and practice (Darder et al. 2003:5). The first textbook use of the term critical pedagogy is found in Henry Giroux's *Theory and Resistance in Education*, published in 1983 (Darder, et al. 2003:2). During the 1980s and 1990s Giroux's work along with Paulo Freire (1996a), Maxine

Greene (1978), Ivan Illich (1971, 1976), Peter McLaren (1995, McLaren & Giarelli 1995) and Ira Shor (1993, Shor & Freire 2003), revitalised the education debate concerning democratic schooling.

Critical pedagogy emerged from a long history of radical social thought and progressive educational movements, aiming to link schooling to democratic societal principles and to transformative social action in the interest of oppressed communities (Darder et al. 2003:3). Consequently it has been referred to as 'liberatory pedagogy'. Critical pedagogy has been noted as 'a general term' that refers to 'among other things, revisionist education history, the "new sociology" of education, reconceptualist curriculum theory, cultural studies, feminist scholarship, critical theory, and various forms of postmodern and poststructuralist analysis' (Stanley 1992:2, Pippin 1999:178).

Commencing with Freire's notion of education being political in nature, critical pedagogy argues that a political economy is established through the dominant class seeking to keep power through schools promoting a philosophical status quo and class reproduction. Freire and subsequent critical pedagogues sought to challenge and unmask claims that education provides equal opportunity for all thereby exposing social, economic and political relationships governing sectors of the social world (Stanley 1992:62, 206, McLaren 1995:30, Freire, 1996a, Darder et al. 2003:11-12).

Building upon the idea of political economy and ideology within education, critical pedagogy uses the term hegemony which is 'a process of social control that is carried out through the moral and intellectual leadership of a dominant sociocultural class over subordinate groups' (Gramsci in Darder et al. 2003:13). Educators are therefore challenged to critique and transform classroom conditions tied to hegemonic practices that perpetuate the marginalisation of subordinate groups. Understanding hegemony reveals how domination is maintained, and how it can be challenged and overcome through resistance, critique and social action (Stanley 1992:98, Kanpol 1994:174, Darder et al. 2003:13). Counter-hegemony refers to intellectual or social spaces where power relationships are reconstructed, making central the voices and experiences of those who have been historically within the margins of mainstream institutions (McLaren 1995:54, 83, Darder et al. 2003:14).

Freire's work was influential on a global level within Christian education. Freire's concept of *critical consciousness* emerged 'as the major priority' for the educational office of the World Council of Churches (WCC) as it was seen as aiding in the 'deschooling of the church' (Illich 1971, Kennedy 1975:41-42). Critical consciousness was viewed to help the church move away from 'school-type education', which contributed to religious alienation. Subsequently, Kennedy writes, 'specific seminars on this subject and related educational and social concerns have been held on every continent and in many countries, and Freire has become probably the most widely published and read staff member in the history of the WCC' (1975:9). The consequence of this, Kennedy notes is that:

great numbers of church educators and others have made commitments to new goals, forms and style of education. Beyond that, the contextual analysis demanded by self-education into a critical consciousness has forced them to see education as closely related to and dependent upon larger economic and political systems of society (1975:9).

This is significant as it shows the dispersion of Freire's theories and pedagogy among both Christian educators and within churches around the world. This dispersion of Freire's work resulted in Christian educators questioning and rejecting instructional and banking models of CE. There has been an emerging emphasis to apply Freire's pedagogy to CE. Among Western Christian educators to have been influenced by Freire are Kennedy (1975), Groome (1980, 1991, 2011), Schipani (1984, 1988), Moore (1991) Pazmiño (1997), Reddie (2003a, 2003b) and Fiorenza (2009). The importance of Freire's pedagogy has also been highlighted within Christian education in Africa (Hope & Timmel 1995a, Lo 1997, Cochrane 1999, Kumalo 2005, Wilhelm 2003). One question is, why has Freire's education theory and praxis been so influential among Christian educators? According to Boys, Freire's influence on the field of religious education 'can perhaps be summarized by two words integral to his work: "conscientization" and "praxis" (1989:126). These concepts will be explored in more detail in the following section.

### 3.2.3.2 Concepts

Having overviewed critical pedagogy and in particular Freire's work, as well as Latin American liberation theology, key concepts from these disciplines relating to CCE emphasising liberation will be highlighted. Latin American liberation theology's theological basis has informed CCE by firstly emphasising the utopian hope promised in Jesus' preaching of the Reign of God (Gutiérrez 1973 2013a, Boff 1974, Schipani 1988). Boff notes the Reign of God is 'used to convey the absolute lordship of God over the world stricken and oppressed by diabolic forces' (1974:80-81). The reign of God as evident within Scripture and tradition functions as grounds for social critique or prophetic criticism. Consequently for Gutiérrez 'the annunciation of the Gospel thus has a conscientising function' (1992:178). This judges unjust social, cultural, political and economic structures.

Secondly, liberation theology's theological emphasis on *justice* for the poor is a key concept within CCE emphasising liberation. God is seen to take an explicit interest in the poor's needs (Boff 1970:27, 1989 1997, Gutiérrez 1973, 2003, Segundo 1976). Christ is viewed as the 'Liberator' from sin and oppression (Boff 1980, 1989, Sobrino 1991, Giblin 1992) who brings what Boff terms as 'integral liberation', which is economic, political, pedagogical and spiritual (1970:25, 1989:59-60). The tradition of justice located at the centre of liberation theologies and Christianity has been noted to be 'interpreted in different ways and identified and recovered using different tools, particularly to specific liberation theologies' (Turpin 2014:176). Thirdly relating to the issue of justice, *social transformation* is called for, as oppressive structures are challenged and transformed (Gutiérrez 1974, 2013a, Segundo

1976). Boff writes, 'Christian faith must make its contribution in the transformation of relationship of injustice into relationships that foster greater life and happiness due to living in participation and in a decent quality of life for all' (Boff 1997:109).

The education theory undergirding liberatory education includes several elements. Firstly, *praxis* is a central concept within liberatory education (Gutiérrez 1973, Boff 1987, Freire 1996a, Groome 1980, McLaren 1995). For Freire, praxis occurs through human activity which is 'theory and practice; it is reflection and action' (1996a:106). He writes, 'liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it' (Freire 2003:62). Green writes, 'praxis is the intertwining of action and reflection, of commitment and spirituality, reminding us that any action without reflection may well be irresponsible, but reflection without action is sterile' (2009:6). Through praxis, the process of action and reflection, subjects construct and reconstruct their social world (Raduntz 1992:2). Groome's important application of praxis to CE will be explored in more detail in the next section (1980, 1991).

Secondly, to engage participants within the education process in praxis, emphasis is placed on the *lived experience* and context of participants, especially within oppressive contexts (Boff 1970, Gutierrez 1973, Freire and Shor 1987, Mesters 1992, Friere 1996a, 2013a, 2013b, Turpin 2014). Boff writes, 'liberation theology's starting point is the anti-reality, the cry of the oppressed' (1997:109). Freire's emphasis on finding 'generative themes' from participant's lives within the educational process, places experiences at the centre of the pedagogical process (1996a). The lived experience of participants therefore is the subject matter of the education process.

Thirdly, participant's lived experiences are reflected upon through a process of *problem-posing* (Freire 1996a). Participants within the education process are encouraged to 'see' and 'judge' what is going on around them, as well as what is being carried out by them (Segundo 1976, Boff 1997, Green 2009). Boff writes that liberation theology is a 'critical reflection on human praxis' (Boff 1970:14) as through discussion individuals 'develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world' (Freire 2003:65). CCE emphasising liberation therefore 'challenges domination by illuminating reality for what it is, a culture where people have the power to confront manipulation' (Shor in Freire & Shor 1987:173).

Fourthly, this process involves Freire's concept of *consientization* (1996a), which 'represents the *development* of the awakening of critical awareness' (Freire 1973:19). Only after revealing and challenging 'inherited assumptions' can new, more valid premises for faith claims and actions be appropriated. Through examining the political economy and ideology of contextual Christianity, existing power relations and ideology are revealed which influence present action. Critical pedagogy gives the tools to perceive whether CE is being used to promote hegemony or domestication. Boff

writes, ‘what pastoral ministry, what ecclesial practice, will help a people of the poor to have their consciousness raised, to become “conscientized”, with respect to the sin of oppression of which they are the victims, and to enter into the grace of solidarity and the birth of justice’ (1970:13). Through conscientization, participants can question whether education is liberating from oppression and if it is not, counter-hegemony can be pursued as power relationships are reconstructed (Groome 1980, 1991, Freire & Shor 1987:109, Schipani 1988, Freire 1996a, Kirylo 2001).

Relating to the pedagogical process, participatory elements are foundational within liberatory education. Firstly, *democratic education* is necessary in encouraging conscientization and dialogue. Shor writes, ‘liberatory dialogue is a democratic communication which disconfirms domination and illuminates while affirming the freedom of the participants to re-make their culture’ (in Freire & Shor, 1987:99). Within democratic education knowledge is co-created between facilitator and student, rather than deposits of information given from teacher to learner (Freire 1996a, 2003, Freire & Shor 1987). Although a teacher may find generative themes, direct the discussion and bring guidance, knowledge is ultimately co-created between the lived experiences of everyone involved. Education is therefore dialogical, democratic, and longitudinal, rather than hierarchical. This was evident in the pedagogical processes of Latin America through *ecclesiogenesis*, which Boff writes represents ‘a new social structuring of the church’ (1986:33). This *ecclesiogenesis* was characterised as ‘one of more *communio* and *diakonia* than society and hierarchy’ (1970:23). Freire writes, ‘democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in men, on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, the problems of democracy itself. Education is an act of life, and thus an act of courage’ (Freire 1973:38).

Secondly, *openness to dialogue and difference* is viewed an essential concept to encourage both democratic education and conscientization. In dialogue with others, participants move away from banking methods of education. They are encouraged to question and probe their assumptions. Freire writes ‘dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it’ (in Freire & Shor 1987:98). Within an educational setting, participants bring their experience and knowledge to the table which can challenge dominant educational discourses, thereby empowering the participants. Genuine openness to learn from others who are different from oneself is therefore required. Within critical pedagogy, dialogue refers to an emancipatory education process that is committed to the empowerment of the students through challenging dominant educational discourse and revealing the right and freedom of students to become subjects of their world (Darder et al. 2003:15). Within Latin America it is noted that the poor and marginalised through dialogue were ‘formulating new concepts in theology’ regarding how to live out their faith in their historic reality (Boff 1986:2). Boff highlights the importance of dialogue in the emergence of contextual theologies.

Finally, within the pedagogical process of CCE emphasising liberation, there is an emphasis on *communal action* which provides liberation and freedom from injustice (Gutiérrez 1974, Groome 1980, Freire 1996a). Educationalists such as Freire (1996a, 1996b), and Boff (1970) have primarily focused on CE promoting social reform. Freire writes, ‘education is not gulping down books, here, but is transformational of the relationships between students, teacher, school and society’ (Freire & Shor 1987:86). Within liberation theology’s pedagogy, the poor, those at the grass-roots and educators/theologians are viewed as agents of change working together for justice and social transformation in light of God’s Reign. Freire writes:

Even when you individually feel yourself most free, if this feeling is not a social feeling, if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an individualist attitude towards empowerment or freedom (Freire & Shor 1987:109).

The following section will highlight recent examples of contextual Christian education focusing on liberation.

#### 3.2.3.4 Recent approaches

Latin American liberation theology, critical theory and critical pedagogy have been influential in the emergence of contextual liberation theologies, such as Black theology (Cone 1969, 1970, 1992); Feminist theology (Ruether 1992, Gebara 2003); Asian liberation theology (Wielenga 1999); Hispanic liberation theologies (Costas 1992); *Mujerista* theology, arising from Hispanic Women in the United States (Isasi-Díaz 1990, Grey 1999), Gay and Lesbian liberation theology (Hill & Treadway 1990) and Jewish theology of liberation (Ellis 1992). By definition liberation theologies emerge out of liberation struggles. Paris writes, ‘each liberation theology claims not only to have emerged out of some liberation movement but to have as its goal the enhancement of that struggle’ (1992:134). Christian educators working within these varying contextual theologies have merged elements within their specific liberation struggle with contextually appropriate pedagogies. Some examples will now be explored.

Contextual Christian education emphasising liberation has been evident within the field of Black theology, which approaches theology from the perspective of slavery in the past and racism in the present (Cone 1969, 1970, 1992). It is described as ‘a critical search for a historically black Christian form of reflection on issues of racial justice and liberation’ (Antonio 1999:63). Recent Black Theology approaches to CE have included Anne Wimberly’s *Soul Stories* (2005). Wimberly encourages the use of story telling as a pedagogical method of bringing liberation within seven areas of life (spiritual, ethical, material, socio-political, psychosocial, educational and communal). Employing a process similar to the Pastoral Cycle, Wimberly’s pedagogy encourages a four step process: 1) engage the everyday story of participants; 2) engage the Christian faith story in the Bible; 3) engage Christian



faith stories from the African American tradition, and; 4) engage in Christian ethical decision making (2005:34). This revolves around a process of story-telling done by participants and facilitator. It is an attempt to bring together the participant's experiences, the Christian Story, and Black theology's traditions and insights in order to bring about liberation.

In the UK, Anthony Reddie developed what he claimed as 'the first African-centered Black Christian Education of Liberation for the British context' (2003a:221). Reddie proposed that 'any specific pedagogy for the Christian education of African Caribbean children has to be informed by the historical factors that led to the systematic negation of the Black self' (2003a:226). Twenty-six inner-city, Black majority British churches were researched. This resulted in the proposition of a new paradigm of CE using Freire's conscientization, Black and Womanist theology and liberation education (2003a:228). In his work, Reddie in particular focuses on the importance of conscientization and praxis through the interaction of reflection and action (2003a:228-229). Reddie is also influenced by Hope & Timmel (1995a) and their work across southern Africa. Using Freirian concepts, they provide what Reddie describes as 'actualised models of conscientized, dialogical education that attempt to raise the critical consciousness of disempowered African people' (2003a:229). Two curriculums were developed by Reddie for implementation in local churches (1998a, 1998b).

Feminist contextual theologies have also contributed to the field of CCE. Described as a 'global theology', or 'a family of contextual theologies, feminist theologies are committed to the struggle for justice for women and the transformation of society (Grey 1999:89). Gebara notes that in the 1970s and 1980s within the Christian tradition, women began to recover an "other history", which 'had been concealed by a patriarchal conception of history that reduced the feminine to the private sphere' (2003:251). Feminist theology has promoted a hermeneutic of suspicion as it explored patriarchy. Gebara writes, 'Feminism introduced the hermeneutics of suspicion in relation to the organization of the patriarchal world, with all of its cultural dimensions, including the sciences and religions' (2003:250). Gender biases and presuppositions within academic theology and the local church are taken into consideration (Ruether 1992:51, Deifelt 2003:243).

Within feminist Biblical studies, Fiorenza promotes 'feminist hermeneutics of liberation', which intentionally avoids dualisms between 'ordinary readers', particularly women, and the academy and 'expert readers' (2009:97). Valuing contextual theologies (such as African and Asian) as well as Freire's work and critical pedagogy, Fiorenza encourages the pedagogical processes of conscientization and democratic education (2009:119,125). Within *Democratizing Biblical Studies*, Fiorenza promotes an 'emancipatory pedagogical model', power and knowledge are democratized between teacher and student (2009:152). For Fiorenza, this means that 'both teacher and students bring their different capabilities and knowledges to the task of creating new knowledge in a way that is critically interactive with the body of knowledge and scholarship already available' (2009:153).

CCE emphasising liberation from Asia has also been informative. Wielenga writes about liberation theology in Asia, stating ‘what is specific about Asia, especially in contrast with Latin America, is the religio-cultural context. The overwhelming majority of the poor and oppressed in Asia are non-Christians...’ (1999:39). Therefore:

the crucial task of liberation theology in Asia: to speak from the core of the biblical messages in such a way that the solidarity between Christian and non-Christian Asians in their sufferings and struggles gets expressed and enhanced, without obliterating their specific identities (Wielenga 1999:46).

Within Asia, liberative responses to social and political oppression have been primarily through ecumenical gathers, study centres, individual theologians and some theological seminaries (Pieris 1988, Amaladoss 1997, Wielenga 1999:44).

Korean Minjung theology, one of the most developed contextual liberation theologies in Asia, has been born in the context of imperialist suffering and corporate struggles within Korea (Bock 1983). The Minjung, or common people, used liberative texts such as Exodus as a revolutionary text while opposing Japanese rule, resulting in the Japanese government banning the Bible (Wielenga 1999:48). Ro notes that in contrast to other forms of liberation theologies which are logical, analytical and dependent on Western thought, Minjung theology in contrast is ‘synthetic and dialogical’. This dialogical method is ‘not separated into black and white, good and evil, God and human, male and female, etc.’ (Ro 1990:44). This is important, as patterns of cognitive thought vary between country to country. If theology is to be done by the Minjung, or common people, it should adapt accordingly into their contextual cognitive patterns of development for it to be effective.

Another example comes from Buyong Lee (2010) who argues there is ethnocentrism in many liberation pedagogies. He therefore proposes a postcolonial intercultural pedagogy. Lee writes that marginalised communities often reflect on theology from their sociocultural perspective, but there is no conversation across communities, resulting in misunderstandings. Often marginalised communities only respond to issues related to the centre, or dominant culture, and there is no conversation with other oppressed groups, different from themselves. Lee argues that the result is that the communities compete with each other to be ‘the privileged dialogue partner of the dominant culture’s center’ (2010:285). Lee pursues *Liberating Interdependence* as the purpose of pedagogy. For Lee, educators:

need to ask whether our pedagogy brings the liberation of those who are the most marginalized among and beyond our community. When someone is suffering due to exclusion and oppression, while we are pursuing justice for our own community alone, no one will take our work for world transformation seriously (2010:291).

Examples of contextual Christian education emphasising liberation from the South African context were given in the previous chapter. Each of these types of CCE for liberation is informed specifically by the context they are in, giving their education specific characteristics. Liberation is emphasised through exploring issues related to oppression or marginalisation within their context. Pedagogies are outworked in relation to their socio-cultural contextual situation and culturally appropriate learning styles. Informed by Latin American liberation theology and the social sciences including critical theory and critical pedagogy (Freire 1996a), it is evident that each context is adaptable and implements the tools necessary to provide contextually liberating forms of CE.

There have however been criticisms regarding the emergence of contextual theologies. Cooper notes there has been ‘a fragmenting within Liberation Theology as different forms have been labelled as contextual theologies and been granted academic niches’. The recommendation is therefore made: ‘liberation theologies need to talk with each other and act together. And in truth some of us need to be liberated from our own oppressive practices’ (Cooper 2013:3). This view is shared by Pears, who writes that liberation theologies ‘often share a problematic tendency towards narrow understandings of context’ (2010:167). Pears highlights another weakness arguing ‘liberation theologies have themselves failed to live up to the challenge that they have laid down to theology in general. They have repeated some of the same mistakes and even created new exclusions in their theologies’ (Pears 2010:170). These criticisms highlight the issues that CCE has when implementing a liberatory approach.

The importance of principles from liberation theology sparked new conversations in the twenty-first century exploring how they relate to various contexts around the world (Pears 2010, Cooper 2013, Griffin & Block 2013, Sinclair 2013, Tee Paa 2013, Turpin 2014). Tee Paa writes that a prime concern of within liberation theology in the twenty-first century is its use as an educational instrument. However she notes that ‘its curriculum, pedagogy, ideological, and political presuppositions and assessments, must all first be reopened to critical interrogation’ (Tee Paa 2013:142). Although there has been an increase of qualitative research methods by liberation Practical Theologians, little has been done within the field of Christian education (Turpin 2014:158-166). As the experiences of marginalized communities are viewed as a source of theological wisdom there is a need for qualitative research to be undertaken relating to CCE emphasising liberation.

One of the main contributions within the field of Christian education is Thomas Groome’s Shared Praxis Approach (1980, 1991, 2011). SPA is noted as being influenced by liberation theology, Freire and liberatory approaches to Christian education (Browning 1991:217, Turpin 2014:160). The following section will highlight the key aspects of Groome’s work and lay a foundation to explore if the SPA could serve as a practical model of contextual Christian within the South African context.

### 3.3 Groome's Shared Praxis Approach

Since writing *Christian Religious Education* (1980), *Sharing Faith* (1991) and *Will there be Faith?* (2011) Thomas Groome's Shared Praxis Approach (SPA) for Christian education has received much attention from Christian educators and Practical Theologians. Described as conceptually well-developed, Christian educators have highlighted the importance of SPA within the field of Christian education (Astley & Crowder 1996, Boys 1989:170, Collinson 2004, Dykstra 1996) as well as using SPA within their educational practice (Marangos 1996, Reddie 2003a, 2003b, 2008, Schipani & Schertz 2004:444, Wong et al. 2009). Groome's education approach is noted as being rooted within practical theology and described as 'one of the most important contributions to religious education in several decades' (Browning 1991:217-8).

Groome's approach 'is a pedagogy that encourages people to bring their lives to the Faith and their Faith to their lives' (Groome 2011:262). To bring life to Faith and Faith to life, Groome recommends a pattern that Christian educators can follow in a teaching/learning event. This pedagogy involves 'a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith' (1980:184). This section will highlight the development of Groome's Shared Praxis Approach. This will be done through exploring SPA's: 1) Praxis and Theological Foundations; 2) Theoretical foundations of Freire and critical theory; 3) 'Shared' aspects, and its; 4) Five movements.

#### 3.3.1 Praxis and theological foundations

Groome highlights the importance that Freire's work had on him, noting that it was after meeting Freire and reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1972, that he attempted to use a praxis approach in religious education' (1980:175). Groome highlights that 'Freire is the most significant exponent of a praxis approach to education today. He argues for such an approach precisely because he believes it is capable of promoting human emancipation' (1980:175). Human activity is understood as emerging from ongoing interaction of reflection, dialogue and action, which Freire emphasises as praxis. Freire writes, 'liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it' (2003:62). Within critical pedagogy, praxis became a foundational concept. Darder et al. write, 'a dialectical view of knowledge supports the notion that theory and practice are inextricably linked to our understanding of the world and the actions we take in our daily lives' (2003:13-14).

Although applying much of Freire's theory of education to his work, Groome also criticised Freire by stating 'one shortcoming in his writings so far is that nowhere does he explain clearly what he means by praxis. As a result, it is not at all clear how one might attempt to construct an intentional pedagogical activity by a praxis approach in something other than a literacy program' (1980:176). This is significant, as Groome highlighted a gap within Freire's work, and saw the importance of

praxis when applied to other disciplines, and especially that of Christian education. This resulted in Groome developing his Shared Praxis Approach to CE.

For Groome 'praxis refers to purposeful human activity, what we do reflectively as deliberate and imaginative – towards some desired end' (2011:275). Praxis moves away from the dichotomy of theory and practice, which are instead viewed as 'twin moments of the same activity that are united dialectically' (1980:152). Within praxis there is intended action, while also learning from that action (2011:275). Theory is therefore seen as a reflective moment in praxis, upon which further praxis is generated (1980:152). Groome's praxis construct draws selectively from thought from Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Kant and Hegel, as well as the contemporary philosophy of Marx, Habermas and Freire and critical theory (Groome 1980, 1991). Praxis is enabled through Freire's concept of conscientization, of developing a critical social consciousness in order to empower and emancipate individuals to re-create the social conditions that shape lives (Freire 1996a, 2003).

Groome however critiques Freire's approach for not developing a biblical or theological base for his educational philosophy (1980:176). Groome therefore builds on Freire's theory of praxis and develops a theological basis within SPA. Groome proposes that there has been an epistemological shift within Christian religious education towards a more practical way of 'knowing' of learning by action and reflection. Groome writes that although often forgotten, this kind of epistemology has been evident within history through the theory and practice of Comenius, Locke, Rouseau, Pestalozzi, Frobel, Piaget as well as John Dewey (1966:145). Groome notes that this shift has also been evident in the socialization model of Christian education found in the literature of Elliot (1940), Westerhoff (1976), and Miller (1961). Groome's philosophy of education of a more practical way of knowing is outworked within praxis.

The basis of Groome's epistemology is from the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament. Groome writes, 'the Hebrew scriptures speak about "knowing the Lord" as an activity in which God takes the initiative, and this initiative is always encountered in lived experience – in events, in relationships, in creation, and so on' (1980:141). Groome writes, 'to know God is a dynamic, experiential, relational activity involving the whole person and finding expression in a lived response of loving obedience to God's will' (1980:144).

Groome, however critiques Freire in the same way as he did with Habermas, for emphasising the present and future, to the almost total neglect of the past. Groome writes, 'I attempt to correct this in the shared praxis approach by insisting that the Story of the faith community be constantly remembered. Groome cautions educators that knowing is not only in the present, but should also be informed by people's past history and God's promises to them. According to Groome, 'knowing is informed by and interpreted through the Story that has arisen from the previous "knowing" of God's

people, and is shaped by the hopes they have in God's promise for their future' (1980:145). Groome calls for dialectical movement writing, 'if the past is forgotten and left unreclaimed, it will determine and control our present. If it is critically appropriated, it can be emancipatory' (1980:176-177). This reflects Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons'. Gadamer writes, 'every encounter with tradition that takes place within historical consciousness involves the experience of the tension between the text and the present' (Gadamer 1979:273). For Groome, the addition of the biblical story and story of the faith community is a key component to the education process being emancipatory.

Groome's theological foundations are influenced by liberation theology. They are rooted in what Groome perceives to be the biblical symbol that evokes the metapurpose of Christian religious education, the "reign of God". Groome writes of God's Kingdom or God's reign as being at the centre of Jesus' preaching. Groome writes, 'our primary questions as Christian religious educators concerns the pastoral implications of Jesus' preaching of God's Kingdom for Christian faith today; in other words, what Kingdom of God means for people who attempt to live lives of Christian faith in our contemporary world' (1980:43). For Groome, God's reign is outworked on three levels, personal, church and society (1980:46-7). Groome helpfully gives ten criteria and statements regarding the reign of God for guiding educators within the pedagogical process (Groome 1991:16-17). For example, one statement expands Groome's notion of God's reign:

Reign of God evokes both God's intentions for and God's activity in history: it symbolizes God's intentions of peace and justice, love and freedom, wholeness and fullness of life for all, and for the well-being of creation (*shalom*), and it symbolizes that God is active in partnership with human agency to effect these universal intentions (1991:16).

Groome proposes that within the ultimate purpose of God's reign, Christian religious education has twin purposes; Christian faith and human freedom. 'Christian faith lived in response to the kingdom of God has the consequence of human freedom' (1980:82-84). Jesus is viewed as both *Model* and *Liberator*. Jesus is firstly a *Model* for Christians to follow, who acts with 'compassion, mercy, and faithful love for all, but especially the poor, for sinners, the outcast, the victimized, and those whose life is threatened' (1991:436-7). Secondly liberation theology's motif of Jesus as *Liberator* who brings "freedom from" and "freedom for" is emphasised. Firstly, 'freedom from' is 'when Jesus is understood to have freed us from sin that is both personal and social' (1980:95). Groome promotes the view that there is a mutually supporting relationship between personal and social sins, as, 'personal sins give rise to social structures that are sinful' (1980:93).

"Freedom for" is 'becoming what we are called to become, which is a freedom for union with God that finds expression in a freedom for communion with and service to other people' (1980:88). Therefore freedom in God consists of *knowing*, *choosing* and *doing* good (1980:85). People experience freedom in growing in the likeness of God in order to become 'fully alive' in the world

(1991:429). To be 'fully alive' is to grow towards freedom in community with God, self, others, and creation, reflecting relationships of love, peace and justice. Therefore we are free primarily "for God", and consequently we find freedom "for ourselves" and "for others". Groome's focus on God in active partnership with human agency results in Christian spirituality and education never being privatised (1980:26). 'Freedom from' sin is therefore both personal and collective. This echoes Freire's warning concerning individualistic approaches to educational transformation:

Even when you individually feel yourself most free, if this feeling is not a social feeling, if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an individualist attitude towards empowerment or freedom (Freire & Shor 1987:109).

Within the educational process, these theological foundations raise questions regarding praxis relating to freedom: 'what does it mean to be free from our sin without our historical context, and what is the historical task posed by such a freedom?' (1980:88) Groome, in enabling participants to engage with this issue writes, 'our educational activity must be designed to foster greater degrees of Christian critical consciousness so that our people may respond to the demands of the Kingdom in their own personal, social, and political contexts' (1980:99). This is intentionally done within SPA through Groome encouraging educators and participants to focus on firstly the *Christian Story*, which is 'a metaphor for the historical roots and realization of Christian faith over time and in its present community – the church' (1991:216). And secondly, the *Christian Vision* is the promise and demand arising from the Story that empower and mandate Christians to live for the coming of God's reign for all creation (1991:215). Through Groome's emphasis upon a strong theological foundation within the education approach, he redresses the critique frequently directed towards liberation theology that 'the hemereneutics of the world' and 'too readily dismissed the demands of the world' (Pazmiño 1997:169). Groome's theological basis within his praxis approach to Christian education is a major reason why SPA is described as being 'conceptually well developed' (Browning 1991)

### 3.3.2 Theoretical foundations: Freire and critical theory

Groome was also influenced by Freire's emphasis on the political nature of education, that 'education is never neutral' (Groome 1980:176). Groome notes that education is a 'political activity', writing 'educational activity cannot be confined to some private sphere. As a deliberate and structured intervention in people's lives, education in time is eminently political' (1980:15). For Groome, Freire sees 'the authentic political task of educators as enabling them to deal critically and creatively with their social reality, rather than just fitting them into it' (1980:15).

Groome argues, 'Christian religious educators should recognize that "politics" permeates their whole curriculum – what they teach through content, process, and environment' (1991:13). He therefore asks what version of the Christian story is chosen to be presented? Versions of the Christian tradition

possibly 'legitimizes present ecclesial and social/political arrangements' or they can 'uncover and make accessible the subversive and emancipatory memories from the tradition that call our lives and situations into question and heighten our commitment to the socio-political responsibilities of Christian faith' (1991:13). The educator's responsibility is therefore to make choices regarding whether education is oppressive or liberating in nature. Education is seen as a political act, either serving the status quo by conforming to prevailing ideologies, or liberating and empowering individuals to seek personal, social and political freedom through 'conscientization' or consciousness-raising (Freire & Shor 1987:109, Groome 1991, Freire 1996a).

In order to address this political nature of education, Groome relies on the critical sciences and the work of Habermas and Gadamer, writing:

The key ingredient of the critical sciences is a critical self-reflection that uncovers the personal and social genesis of one's attitude and unmask the interest of one's present action, within the context of societal action. As such they involve both a self-critique and a social critique (1980:172).

Critical theory recognises that many of people's actions are caused by social conditions over which they have no control and therefore not from conscious knowledge or choice. Critical social theory therefore seeks to uncover those systems of social relationships which determine those actions (Mouton 1993:90). As critical theory challenges the status quo which promotes forms of oppression in society, it is not neutral asking questions concerning issues of power or marginalisation (May 2001:39).

Within critical theory, ontological beliefs argue that 'reality is based on power and identity struggles. Privilege or oppression based on race or ethnicity, class, gender, mental abilities, sexual preference' (Creswell 2013:37). The criteria for judging the value of an inquiry are firstly, the historical situatedness of the inquiry (taking into account the social, political, cultural and ethnic context). Secondly, 'the extent to which the inquiry acts to erode ignorance and misapprehensions, and the extent to which it provides a stimulus to action, that is, to the transformation of the existing structure' (Guba and Lincoln 2004:114). Guba and Lincoln note that 'knowledge consists of a series of structural/historical insights that will be transformed as time passes. Transformations will occur when ignorance and misapprehensions give way to more informed insights by means of a dialectical interaction' (2004:113). The purpose of inquiry is therefore 'the critique and transformation of the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind, by engagement in confrontation, even conflict' (Guba and Lincoln 2004:113).

Groome therefore implements critical hermeneutics and structural analysis through interpreting theological tradition and appropriating it into a given cultural context through contextual



hermeneutics. Groome states education, at its root meaning is an activity of “leading out”. Groome describes people as *Pilgrims*, who consider the past, with its stories, symbols, institutions and customs, which in turn makes sense of the present. *Pilgrims* move from their past and present towards a creative future, that makes new discoveries (1980:14-15). Groome relates this education in time with the Christian community’s story, primarily expressed in Jesus Christ, and the Vision of God’s completed Kingdom. This emphasis on past, present and future is consequently outworked in the five movements of SPA and has implications regarding pedagogical procedures. As *Pilgrims* live in the present moving towards the future, they live in a historical community. Groome’s emphasis on education over time is important as he defines what he calls *Christian religious education*:

Christian religious education is a political activity with pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with them to the activity of God in our present, to the Story of the Christian faith community, and to the Vision of God’s Kingdom, the seeds of which are already among us (Groome 1980: 25).

### 3.3.3 The ‘Shared’ aspects of Groome’s approach

The shared praxis approach is described as ‘a participative and dialogical pedagogy’ (Groome 1991:135). The ‘shared’ component within SPA constitutes two aspects of the process: ‘(1) the communal dynamic that are to take place within a teaching/learning event; (2) the kind of dialogue and dialectic it encourages between participants’ present praxis (stories/visions) and Christian Story/Vision’ (1991:143). Firstly, the communal dynamic in a learning event is characterised by partnership, participation and dialogue. Partnership reflects an I/Thou relationship (Buber 1970) which means ‘being willing to learn as well as to teach, to listen as well as to talk, to be questioned as well as to question, to use one’s training and resources to empower rather than to control the teaching/learning partnership’ (Groome 1991:143).

Groome is informed by Freire’s concept of “banking” education, where the student is viewed as an empty vessel to be filled, thereby serving the interests of the oppressor to maintain the status quo (Freire 1996a, Groome 1991:54). In contrast, SPA emphasises the participative dimension of the education process, meaning, ‘we intentionally structure the process to encourage people to express, reflect, encounter, appropriate, and make decisions, while respecting each person’s participative style’ (1991:144). Education therefore becomes dialogical, democratic, and longitudinal rather than hierarchical. Groome writes dialogue and conversations are to be fostered ‘with oneself, with others, and with God’. This should be a process of honest mutual discovery and discernment affirming both self and others as well as confronting self and others (1991:144). The consequences of this participatory model of education are indicated by Shor, as ‘co-intentionality’ is developed between student and teacher, as mutual intentions, which make the study collectively owned, not just the teacher’s property, are developed (1993:26).

The second aspect of 'shared' within SPA's process is the dialogue and dialectic between 'praxis' and 'Christian'. Groome writes that 'shared praxis invites people to hermeneutics that are critical in a dialectic sense of their own and of their society's praxis'. Next, as educators make the Christian Story/Vision accessible in the pedagogy, participants 'bring hermeneutics of retrieval, suspicion and creativity to their interpretation and explanation of it'. When these two sources are placed in dialogue with each other, Groome describes this two-way dynamic as 'dialectical hermeneutics'. As participants bring the Christian Story/Vision to interpret present praxis, aspects of the Story/Vision may affirm, reject, or call for a change that present praxis. Likewise, through present praxis interpreting Christian Story/Vision there may be elements which may be affirmed, cherished, called into question or even rejected due to 'distortions' within the Story (1991:145).

Groome accepts Gadamer's hermeneutical theory. Gadamer's *fusion of horizons* is explained through interpretation, explanation and application. The interpretation of a text, which is the original meaning of the text for its creator and first audience, is viewed in contrast with the explanation of that text by the interpreter. Groome writes, 'The hermeneute steps back and forth between the interpretation and explanation' (1991:224), which Gadamer likens to the process of a conversation (1979:270). For Gadamer, application is the final stage where the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter meet. A fusion takes place where 'the interpreter recognizes her or his own horizon as reflected in and expanded by the horizon prompted by but also beyond the situation of the text itself' (Groome 1991:224). Critical awareness of oneself as interpreter and interpreted within the education process should therefore be encouraged. For Groome the outcome of this shared dialectic between praxis and Christian are more appropriate understandings of the Story and ways of living more faithfully into the Vision of God's reign. These understandings are shared together in dialogue through the participatory education process.

### 3.3.4 Movements of the Shared Praxis Approach

SPA's educational process follows a *Focusing Activity* and *5 Movements* enabling facilitator and participants to move together in dialogue towards appropriating the Reign of God within the given context (Groome 1991:146-7). Each of these movements will be explored.

Table 2.1 outlines SPA's movements. The first column shows the praxis progression from life-Faith-life as each movement progresses. The third column gives the name for each movement. The fourth column defines the purpose of each movement.

**Table 3.1** The Five Movements of Groome’s Shared Praxis Approach

<b>LIFE</b>	<b>Movement 1</b>	<b>Naming Life</b>	<b>Expressing the theme in present praxis</b>
	<b>Movement 2</b>	<b>Critical Reflection</b>	<b>Reflecting critically on the life or faith theme</b>
<b>FAITH</b>	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Christian Story</b>	<b>Re-presenting Christian Story and Vision with meaning and persuasion</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>Movement 4</b>	<b>Appropriating Faith to Life</b>	<b>Appropriating the truths and wisdom of Christian faith into life</b>
	<b>Movement 5</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Making decisions in light of Christian faith</b>

#### 3.3.4.1 Introduction: The focusing activity

The focusing activity ‘turns people to their own “being” in place and time, to their present praxis, and establishes a focus for the curriculum’ (Groome 1991:283).

The purpose of the focusing activity is to turn the participants towards their own time and place by identifying an aspect of their present praxis in their historical reality (Groome 1991:283). It engages the interest and participation of people, as agent-subjects, in the learning event and brings a shared focus of attention among participants (Groome 1991:157). This is done through identifying what Freire promotes as a generative theme for the teaching/learning event. Groome writes, ‘a generative theme is some historical issue – question, value, belief, concept, event, situation, and so on- that is likely to draw participants into active engagement because it has important meaning for their lives’ (1991:156). The interests and needs of participants are considered when selecting the generative theme. It should therefore engage the participant’s attention to their current praxis, which in turn moves them towards a shared sense of their common curriculum as it relates to their present context. Emphasis is put on partnership, participation and dialogue which should encourage participation from the learners (1991:164-5). For Shor, generative themes are an important part of a liberative classroom as it ‘democratizes pedagogy because the curriculum is built around the themes and conditions of people’s lives’ (Shor 1993:30-31).

Groome’s rationale for using a focusing activity is twofold. Firstly, Groome writes that by participants focusing on present praxis in place and time, it shows God reveals himself in the everyday history of people’s lives in the word. Secondly, ‘people are agent-subjects within events of God’s self-disclosure and can actively encounter and recognize God’s revelation in their own historicity through reflection on their present action in the world’ (1991:160). Although Groome gives primary consideration to

people's praxis, he also promotes selecting a theme which 'makes accessible the narrative practical wisdom of Christian faith' (1991:166).

In selecting a generative theme, Groome writes that the theme can be religious, or have nothing to do with faith. What is important however, is that: (1) it should relate to present praxis that is, be likely to engage people's active participation in the teaching/learning event because it has meaning for their lives in the world; (2) it should be consistent with the commitments of a shared-praxis approach – with its shared dynamics of partnership, participation, and dialogue; (3) the theme should be relevant to both present praxis and the Christian Vision/Story (1991:164-6).

#### 3.3.4.2 Movement 1: Naming/expressing present action

The participants are invited 'to express themselves in response to the generative theme as they encounter it in their present lives' (Groome 2011:309).

Within movement 1 (M1) participants are invited to name their own activity concerning the topic for attention. This is done around the generative theme. Participants reflect on why they do what they do, and what are the likely or intended consequences of their actions. Consciousness emerges as they see themselves as agent-subjects-in-relationship by naming their present actions, or what they observe within society. This moves away from banking education, as participants are placed at the centre of the education process. Freire writes, 'Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between man and the world; man is merely in the world, not with the world or with others, man is spectator, not re-creator' (2003:60).

Groome's rationale for naming present action is that it brings people 'to express their own consciousness of present praxis', and secondly it places their expression of praxis 'in dialogue with other people's expressions' which 'is essential for responsible freedom and transformation' (1991:179-180). To name isn't viewed as just theory, as naming in itself is a moment of praxis. Groome writes that participants 'bring to expression their consciousness of whatever is "being done" by them, through them, around them, or to them, by others and to others' (1991:177). They can express consciousness of (1) their own praxis, or (2) their society's praxis, or their perception of (3) both (1991:176). Groome notes that personal and social praxis are linked together and therefore there is no dichotomy between them.

Groome writes that participants 'can express such consciousness as their sentiments, attitudes, feelings, or intuitions as they look to an aspect of present praxis' (1991:177). Every expression made regarding present praxis is viewed as 'already an interpretation and one shaped by the person's sociocultural context in place and time' (Groome 1991:178). Everyone's expression should therefore be welcomed as an authentic interpretation, but should not be treated as 'objective' or 'value free'.

What is important is that people's expressions are truly their own, rather than what they feel is expected from the group (1991:178). Groome follows Freire's insight that "speaking one's word" in dialogue is related to "transforming reality". Groome writes, 'participants in every struggle for emancipation and social transformation are empowered by naming reality as they see it and testing their expressions in a community of dialogue; from this, the critical consciousness needed for emancipatory action is likely to emerge' (1991:180).

#### 3.3.4.3 Movement 2: Critical reflection on present action

Participants are invited to reflect on why they do what they do, and what the likely or intended consequences of their actions are (Groome 1991:146-7, 283-293).

The purpose of movement 2 (M2) is to 'bring participants to critical consciousness of present praxis in that they recognize the personal and social origins of it and reasons for it, envision how it might or ought to be refashioned, and test their discernment in a community of dialogue' (1991:193). Groome relies on Freire's concept of critical consciousness being a process of decoding reality, 'stripping it down so as to get to know the myths that deceive and perpetuate the dominating structure' (Groome 1980:176). Conscientization 'represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness' and is a process of dialogue and seeking personal, social and political freedom through challenging the world and prevailing ideologies rather than conforming to predominant and established patterns of thought (Freire 1973:19, 1996a, Freire & Shor 1987:109).

For Groome, M1 encourages critical reflection on what was expressed as 'present action'. Groome writes, 'the intent is to deepen the reflective moment and bring participants to a critical consciousness of present praxis: its reasons, interests, assumptions, prejudices, and ideologies (reason); its socio-historical and biographical sources (memory); its intended, likely, and preferred consequences (imagination)' (1991:187). Groome uses Freire's concept of 'unveiling reality', writing that 'critical reflection on present praxis is constituted by an emancipatory interest in that it intends to "decode" the historical reality that our location in place and time mediates to us "coded"' (1991:189). Critical reflection therefore allows for personal and social biases and ideologies to be uncovered. Within critical pedagogy ideology can be used to unmask contradictions between mainstream culture of educational settings and the lived experiences and knowledge that students use to mediate the reality of educational life. Ideology therefore provides a means for a critique of educational curricular, texts and practices in relation to the lived experiences of students (Darder et al 2003:13).

For Groome, M2 is characterised as a 'critical and creative hermeneutic of present praxis' which discerns what to affirm and what to refuse, as well as what needs transforming in the participants historical reality (1991:188). This process is hermeneutical as people interpret and explain to each other and themselves the meaning or value of an aspect of what they are doing, or what is being done

in their context. It is critical as they seek to affirm, question, or refuse that present praxis. It is also creative as they envision possibilities of new praxis (Groome 1991:190). Groome writes, ‘creative and social imagining enables participants to see the intended and likely consequences of present praxis for both self and society and empowers them to imagine and make ethical choices for praxis that is personally and socially transforming’ (1991:188-9).

Groome relates critical reflection to theology, writing, ‘the more deeply we move into a truly critical consciousness of our lives in the world, the more likely we are to uncover God’s revelation therein of how we are to live as a people of God. Both critical reflection and a community of dialogue heighten both’ (1991:197). Dialogue within the group is viewed as important in both encouraging critical consciousness as well as for living more faithfully as people of God. Groome however recognises that people’s ability for critical reflection emerges gradually and corresponds to stages of human development as outlined by Piaget and others (1991:188).

#### 3.3.4.4 Movement 3: Making accessible Christian Story and Vision

Share the Story and Vision of Christian faith in ways that are pertinent to the theme and meaningful for this group, context and occasion (Groome 2011:200).

In this movement, the educator brings critical hermeneutics to the texts and contexts of the Christian Story/Vision, as it relates to the critical interpretation of the context of the participants lives (1991:215). For Groome, the Christian Story is ‘a metaphor for the historical roots and realization of Christian faith over time and in its present community – the church’ (1991:216). It encompasses God’s historical revelation of God’s covenant with Israel, in Jesus Christ and in the community of Jesus’ disciples and is mediated and expressed in many ways (1991:216). The Christian Vision is the promise and demand arising from the Story that empower and mandate Christians to live for the coming of God’s reign for all creation (1991:215). As the Christian Story has various implications and initiations for how Christians live their lives, the Christian Vision is a metaphor of the promises and responsibilities that arise from the Story for the lives of people who claim it as their own (1991:217). The Christian Story and Vision is made accessible as it relates to the focused theme. The educator makes present to the group the Christian Story concerning the topic at hand and the faith response it invites (Groome 1991:146-7, 283-293).

Groome encourages educators to teach the Christian Story and propose its Vision ‘as something immediate and historical, calling people to do God’s will on earth now as if God’s reign is at hand, and as something new and ultimate, in that it always calls people beyond their present horizons of praxis in faith until they finally rest in God’ (1991:217). Groome writes that ‘the Vision should reflect God’s promises of shalom and wholeness, yet empower people in their historical responsibility to work in partnership for the realization of what God wills – peace and justice, love and freedom,

wholeness and fullness of life for all' (1991:217). The task for the educator is therefore primarily a hermeneutical one.

Groome's implements Gadamer and Ricoeur's hermeneutical theory by outlining the educator's responsibilities. Firstly Groome is concerned with the pre-understandings of the educator regarding the Story/Vision from previous experiences in a Christian community. Educators are encouraged to be aware that they bring their own life's interests and perspectives from their context to the text of Christian Story/Vision. Secondly, Groome emphasises the need for a hermeneutic of retrieval, suspicion and creative commitment to the 'Text' (1991:232).

Through retrieval, the educator reclaims and makes accessible the truths and values in the text. The educator then applies a hermeneutic of suspicion, to uncover mystification and distortions in the dominant interpretations of the text and to reclaim its dangerous memories. It therefore examines forms of oppression in the text (1991:232). Finally, the educator employs a hermeneutic of creative commitment to construct more adequate understandings of Christian Story/Vision and to envision more faithful ways of living it with personal and social transformation (1991:234).

Groome proposes 'marks of authenticity' for explanation and application of Christian Story/Vision. These include: 1) the *continuity* of guiding truths, principles and values within the whole Christian Story/Vision; 2) the *consequences* of the application of the Christian Story/Vision is measured by its promotion of God's reign, and finally; 3) the *community* is a guideline in that authentic explanation of an expression of the text is informed by the understanding of the church, and is adequate to the praxis of this community of participants (1991:236-7).

#### 3.3.4.5 Movement 4: Dialectical hermeneutics to appropriate Story/Vision to participant's stories and visions

The participants are invited to appropriate and integrate Christian faith with life (Groome 1991:146-7, 283-293, 2011:300). The purpose of movement 4 (M4) is 'to enable participants to critically appropriate the faith community's Story/Vision to their own lives and contexts' (1991:250). Therefore 'participants place their critical understanding of present praxis around a generative theme or symbol in dialectical hermeneutics with Christian Story/Vision'. They question: how does present praxis affirm and critically appropriate the version of Story/Vision made accessible in M3, and how are we to live more faithfully toward the vision of God's reign? (1991:249) Groome asserts the participant's 'praxis' and the 'Christian' component of the approach are brought into a shared relationship (1991:251). This dialectical hermeneutic involves a two-way asking of three questions, to reflect the three aspects of the dialectical encounter.

Firstly, moving from community faith to participant's lives, they are asked:

- (1) In what ways does this symbol of Christian faith affirm present praxis and help us recognize its truth and values?
- (2) In what ways is present praxis questioned and called into judgement by it?
- (3) How does this Story call us beyond present praxis to live more faithfully into the Vision of God reign?

Secondly, moving from present praxis to Christian Story/Vision, participants are asked:

- (1) What do we recognize as true and valuable in this symbol of Christian faith?
- (2) What do we find problematic or perhaps refuse in the version made accessible to us?
- (3) What do we need to reformulate in our understanding of this Story to live more faithfully into the Vision of God's reign? (Groome 1991:251)

The pedagogy therefore attempts 'to stimulate and draw out what is really going on inside of people – in response to the conversation and presentation of the previous movements'. It helps participants in how they can 'make the M3 Presentation of Christian faith their own, appropriating in into their lives as spiritual wisdom and with personal conviction' (2011:325).

#### 3.3.4.6 Movement 5: Decision/response for lived Christian Faith

'Invite people to make a decision – cognitive, affective, or behavioural in response to the whole process' (Groome 2011:300).

Movement 5 (M5) is a culmination of the process of previous movements. It is an invitation for participants to make decisions regarding how to live Christian Faith within their context. M5 encourages participants to make decisions faithful to God's reign in what is humanizing and life-giving to all. It gives the opportunity for participants to make decisions regarding their praxis, as well as aiming 'to form them in the habit of making decisions conceptually and morally appropriate to Christian faith' (1991:267). Therefore it enables people to make immediate decisions, as well as enabling them to reflect on who they want to become over time. Groome notes this movement 'engages people's whole "being" in "place" and "time" toward "truth" that is cognitive, relational, and moral' depending on the generative theme. It therefore may relate to the personal, interpersonal, or social/political levels of the participants lives' (1991:266).

Groome highlights four categories of decision making that the educator can encourage in M5. There can be many combinations and variations across and within these categories, yet the decisions '(1) can emphasize cognitive, affective, or behavioural forms; (2) be invited on personal, interpersonal, or social/political levels; (3) pertain to individual or communal activities; and (4) be effected within the immediate group or outside it' (1991:268). Decisions usually depend on the type of generative theme, regarding if they are primarily cognitive, affective or behavioural decisions, however they should not



usually be exclusively one or another. Groome notes that ‘doctrinal themes tend to invite a more cognitive decision, spiritual themes a more affective response, and ethical issues elicit a response of over activity’ (1991:268).

Decisions can be personal or communal. Personal decisions relate to understanding oneself, Christian identity, convictions and responsibilities. Communal decision occurs through dialogue within the immediate group and within an ecclesial community; therefore there are times when the whole community chooses a common response to act upon together (Groome 1991:270). Decisions may also be on a social/political level and move people towards action for social/ecclesial transformation toward God’s reign. For example critical consciousness of social realities could move participants to a greater level of solidarity with victims of unjust social structures (Groome 1991:270). Groome writes, ‘as people intentionally choose and realize the fullness of life that God wills for all creation, such praxis brings them “closer to God”’ (Groome 1991:272).

### 3.3.5 Conclusion

This section highlighted the foundations of Groome’s Shared Praxis Approach. Influenced by both liberation theology and Freire’s pedagogy, SPA is a participatory model of Christian education. From literature relating to CE within South Africa it is evident that a participatory model of education would be relevant within the context. It would potentially move away from present forms of ‘banking education’ to engage the ordinary person within the education process. Through problem-posing and questioning being implemented within the pedagogy, it could enable participants to participate more and share their contextual experiences.

Groome’s SPA also offers a Practical Theology Christian education model which follows a praxis approach. Following SPA’s five movements, participants and facilitators engage in a Christian education process, placing their contexts and experiences centre stage with the Christian Story. SPA’s praxis cycle of life-Faith-life has potential to enable participants to engage in critical reflection on their lived praxis. It is these qualities which indicate that SPA could potentially serve as type of contextual Christian education within a township church. The following chapter will highlight the key findings of SPA’s education model being outworked within a Baptist township church.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology, Data Analysis and Findings

#### Part 1: Methodology

##### 4.1 Research Questions

This chapter will critically explore Groome's Shared Praxis Approach being used as contextual Christian education. The research title of this study is:

*An exploration of Groome's Shared Praxis Approach as contextual Christian education within a South African Baptist township church.*

In response to this subject, two sub-questions are asked:

Sub-question one: *To ascertain whether each movement of SPA was adequately evident within the education process.*

Sub-question two: *To establish whether SPA could potentially serve as a type of contextual Christian education.*

Sub-question one asks if each of SPA's five movements were adequately outworked within the observed Bible Studies in the township church. Each of these movements as it was outworked within the church will be analysed and findings presented. Sub-question two focuses on *whether SPA could potentially serve as a type of contextual Christian education*. The intent of this second sub-question is to consider the link or association between SPA and contextual Christian education (CCE) by investigating common characteristics found in both, and consider whether SPA could support the emergence of contextual theologies.

##### 4.2 Research Process

To explore these questions a qualitative paradigm was employed using *observation, audio-recording* the SPA process *and semi-structured interviews*. These were implemented in order to describe, interpret or reconstruct interaction in terms of the meanings that the subjects attach to it (Schurink 2001:240). The study attempted to discover rather than test and verify patterns of behaviour through taking into account situation-by situation contextual factors through determining to what extent SPA is beneficial in the particular situation (Mouton, 1996:133, Guba & Lincoln 1989:59-61).

The research followed a dialectical movement and praxis cycle as promoted within Practical Theology. This dialectic moves from practice to theory, to critical reflection on practice, to revised forms of practice developed in the light of this spiralling process (Browning 1991, Gadamer 1979,

Swinton & Mowat 2006:255-256). Description and interpretation were used throughout this process. This dialectic or spiralling movement promotes change and altered behaviour.

Browning writes, 'in my view transformation follows the dynamics of dialogue in a practice-theory-practice rhythm. Because it is dialogical, the transformative process is mutual' (1991:279). This transformation process results in action, which Swinton and Mowat write, 'has the goal of interacting with situations and challenging practices in order that individuals and communities can be enabled to remain faithful to God and to participate faithfully in God's continuing mission to the world' (2006:257).

Browning notes that Groome's theory of Christian education is placed within a framework of Practical Theology (1991:218). It was therefore appropriate to use a research approach following a dialectic movement, which researches SPA following the same spiralling process. Within Practical Theology there is the desire to see revised forms of praxis. Groome's SPA was therefore put through the praxis cycle. Qualitative data collection and analysis reviewed this dialectical movement. The purpose of this dialectical movement was to ascertain if SPA could serve as a type of contextual Christian education. It also desired to improve Christian education within the township Baptist church, as well as exploring further implications for Baptist Convention churches within South Africa.

#### **4.3 The Sample: Shekinah Glory Worship Centre**

Shekinah Glory Worship Centre (SGWC) is situated in the township of Munsieville (named in 1941), one of the oldest black townships in the West Rand, Johannesburg. Presently Munsieville consists of both clearly laid out sections of government provided housing and shacks located mostly in informal settlements. Thirty-nine percent of the population live in tin shack housing lacking electricity, running water and sanitation. According to the 2001 census, unemployment in Munsieville was almost fifty percent, with seventy-eight percent of young people being unemployed. Low literacy, landlessness, homelessness, infrastructure development problems and HIV/AIDS are priority issues within the area (in Stevenson 2011:220, in Ngwetsheni, Ntshabelang & Tlokana 2005). For a short overview of the history of the township of Munsieville refer to Appendix 1.

SGWC describes itself as 'a body of believers coming from all backgrounds, called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, existing to proclaim the whole Gospel for total transformation of persons, beginning in our families, our society and the whole world'. There is an emphasis within the church to 'develop and proclaim a holistic, Afrocentric and participatory understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ' (SGWC website).

Being over one hundred years old, SGWC is one of the oldest churches in the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA). Although part of the BCSA, the church is ecumenical in outlook and establishes

networks with other churches in the area. Each week over one hundred people attend the church's lively Pentecostal Sunday services, including many children, youth and young adults. Struggling to find space in the small building, people often stand at the back or outside. The church itself is a small rectangular brick structure with a tin roof (Appendix 1). SGWC is majority black, with two or three non-black regular attendees. Languages spoken in the services and by the church's attendees are Tswana, Zulu, Sotho and English.

#### 4.3.1 Christian education within the church

Christian education within the church comprised of Sunday sermons, cell group Bible Studies and departmental meetings. Sunday sermons last between forty-five minutes to two hours. The sermon, although mostly a monologue, often includes visual illustrations and audience participation. Cell groups of up to thirty people meet in member's homes. These meetings are open for all and include Bible study, discussion, prayer and worship. Departments for youth, young adults, and women also meet on a weekly basis. The men's department met less regularly due to smaller numbers of men within the church. In these groups a range of education takes place from one person sharing from the Bible, to interactive workshops including discussion and group participation.

The young adults group, Shekinah's Anointed Young Adults (SAYA), within SGWC was the context for data collection. The group started in January 2011. Previously the young adults were incorporated into the youth group, with ages from 13 to 26. The wide age-range stopped many of the young adults from attending due to the large developmental gap between ages. SAYA meet on average for two hours each Friday evening, with attendees ranging from six to fourteen in number. Activities include Bible studies, prayer, worship, social activities and outreach in the local community. The Bible studies focus mostly on topical subjects relating to life. These were chosen by the group, exploring subjects such as *relationships, how to know God's will for your future, careers, and love*.

### 4.4 Data Collection

The data collection included observations of SPA being outworked within two Bible Studies. Six interviews were also conducted with participants of the Bible Studies. Those participants were asked questions about their perceptions and experiences of the Bible Studies using SPA. The data collections were audio-recorded for the data to be analysed. From these two structured observations and six interviews data was collected and analysed.

#### 4.4.1 Preparation for Data Collection

For SPA to be tested within Bible Studies, local leaders had to be trained. This was necessary in order for Groome's SPA to be outworked as authentically as possible within a township context. For the purposes of this research, facilitators were trained in Groome's SPA through an optional course in

*Christian Education for Liberation* offered to all ministerial students at the Baptist Convention College (BCC) in Soweto.

The course included thirty hours of class time over a period of twelve weeks, involving both theory and practice. Students were given the opportunity to practically apply Groome's SPA through facilitating Bible Studies using SPA. A deliberate attempt was made to give SPA the best opportunity to succeed within the township church. Therefore the following measures were taken to first enable as effectively as possible the student's understanding and facilitation of SPA, and; secondly develop in partnership with the facilitator's material for Bible Studies following the movements of SPA, which would be contextually relevant, engaging and understandable. For an outline of the Bible Studies refer to Appendix 2. Most participants were familiar with taking part in participatory education models which I regularly employed in my role in the church of associate pastor during a period of eighteen months.

#### 4.4.2 Observation protocols

Observation and audio recordings were used to collect data. As I am an outsider, it was important to observe a local person facilitating the process with local participants. This enabled me to observe the dynamics occurring in the educational process. Observation was therefore deemed an appropriate method of data collection when to analyse SPA's practical outworking within the township church. As the goal of observation was related to how it served the research question, the data collection used structured observation. It was structured, as 'the researcher has decided in a rather precise and mutually exclusive way the observation categories in advance'. Structured observations are noted to be 'focused, look selectively at the social phenomena, and can be used to test hypothesis' (University of Strathclyde). Audio-recordings of the Bible Studies replaced detailed handwritten notes (Bloor & Wood 2006). As the audio-recordings were later transcribed and analysed, observation from the Bible Studies using these recordings was undertaken.

Although the Bible Studies were conducted in as much of a natural setting as possible within the church, (i.e. at the normal weekly time and location), SPA's education process was created artificially. It is noted, 'in experimental research, the relevant conditions (independent variables) are manipulated or contrived in systematic ways and the effect of these conditions on specified behaviours (dependent variables) is measured' (University of Strathclyde). SPA's education process was deliberately planned before the Bible Studies took place. It is therefore important to note the artificial nature of implementation.

The Bible Studies included four sessions spread over four consecutive weeks. Data analysis was undertaken on two out of four of the Bible Studies. As the study sought to explore the outworking of each SPA movement in depth within each Bible Study, two studies were chosen to permit such content

analysis. As the research also explored content, as well as the educational methodology, each Bible Study exhibited rich data offering between 80-90 minutes of transcribed data material. Two studies were therefore adequate for the purposes of this study. The topics under discussion were predetermined and sequenced in a logical way following the five movements of SPA. The Bible Studies used for data analysis focused on two Biblical texts: Luke 10:25-37. The *Good Samaritan: Love your neighbour as you love yourself*. The second Bible Study, explored: Matthew 6:25-33. *Do not worry but seek first the Kingdom of God*. Each Bible Study was trialled by the facilitator with a different group and adjustments were made in collaboration between the facilitator and the researcher. Even though the theme and study outline was predetermined, the facilitator's responses were not rehearsed, nor were the participant's contributions. All responses were spontaneous and true to life.

#### 4.4.3 Semi-structured interviews

After the Bible Study was completed semi-structured interviews were conducted with six interviewees (four participants and two facilitators). Six interviews was viewed as sufficient for the purposes of the the research to indicate how the participants experienced the education process. As the interviews followed a qualitative semi-structured approach, the quantity of data collected was broad enough to give a range of experiences, while also being specific enough to permit in-depth content analysis of the data. Three interviewees were interviewed within forty-eight hours after the first Bible Study used for data analysis, in order to collect information about the first Bible Study. Another three participants were interviewed forty-eight hours after the second Bible Study. Interview questions differed slightly in content for the participants and facilitators respectively. The interview questions were formulated to question how the participants felt and experienced the process of the Bible Study, and how it spoke to their life situation (May 2001:123). Questions were open-ended, allowing participants to take the lead in reflecting on their experience. For interview questions refer to Appendix 4.

Cultural issues during the cross-cultural interviews were taken into consideration (Ryen 2001). A white British researcher interviewing black Southern Africans has the potential for loss of meaning in the communication process. Interviews were conducted in English, which was not the first language for any of the interviewees. Language and cultural differences could impact understanding questions, as well as freedom of expression in responding. Care was taken in constructing the interview questions, intending they were simple to understand. Back-up questions were also written, in case misunderstandings occurred. Questions were piloted on two individuals from the township, to assess their appropriateness and effectiveness for comprehension.

#### 4.4.4 The Sample: Participants and Interviewees

During the four Bible Studies there were a total of sixteen young adult participants, whose frequency in participation varied from one to all four Bible Studies. The number of participants attending over the course of four weeks ranged from seven to twelve participants each week. This diversity of

participation created an authentic research environment, where fluctuation of attendance in the group varies from week to week. All participants were black South African, whose first languages included *Tswana* and *Zulu*. They all lived or were from the township of Munsieville. Six interviewees were selected from the participants according to their relevance for the research as well as their ability to express themselves in English. Names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants. A profile of each interviewee follows:

*Masego Thokoa*: Aged 24. A single mother who lived with her aunt and step-brother. Her first language was Tswana. She was unemployed and desired to finish her school studies. Masego was from and living in the township of Munsieville.

*Kitso Masilo*: Aged 19. She lived with her mother and younger sister, after her father had left them. Her first language was Tswana. She was a student working towards matriculation. Kitso had moved with her family from the Northern rural regions to the township of Munsieville several years previously.

*Siya Zulu*: Aged 21. He lived with his aunt and two cousins. His first language was iSiZulu. Siya had recently finished studies at school and was unemployed. Originally from Kwa-Zulu Natal, Siya had moved to Munsieville several years previously.

*Sechaba Matebesi*: Aged 24. He had grown up in Munsieville, but had found work in Sasolburg, a town two hours from Munsieville. His family, including father, sister and step-mother were living in Munsieville. He therefore made regular trips back to the township and the church.

The two Baptist Convention College (BCC) students who facilitated Groome's SPA within the Bible Studies were also interviewed:

*Sarafja Kondgeni*: Aged 31. Originally from northern Namibia. She had come to the BCC in Soweto to train for pastoral ministry within the Baptist denomination. She had been in South Africa for nine months when the research was undertaken. Chibamba was her first language speaker. After completing two years training her plan was to return to Namibia to work as a church minister.

*Mbongeni Dlamini*: Aged 22. He was a Xhosa first language speaker from Mamelodi, a township north of Pretoria. He was in his second year of a three year degree course in Theology at the BBC in Soweto. He was also training for pastoral ministry within the Baptist denomination. After completing his training his plans were to church plant in Soweto.

## **4.5 Ethical Considerations**

### **4.5.1 The role of the researcher**

Qualitative research demands reflexivity and sensitivity on behalf of the researcher. Critical self-reflection was needed throughout the research process that enables me to monitor and respond to my contribution in the proceedings (Swinton & Mowat 2006:61). Although I described the encounter, there is awareness that I am a co-creator of the mode and content of the encounter. Personal reflexivity takes seriously the idea that all research is to some extent autobiographical. It is therefore important to state that although I had been a part of the township church for two years within which the research was carried out, I was also an outsider. I originally come from Britain; I am white and perceived as being relatively wealthy. I also do not speak local languages. Although I had developed relationships with participants with whom the research was being undertaken, I was not fully integrated within that community. I consequently tried to keep the research process as natural as possible by staying outside of it. This 'outsider' position permitted a certain degree of objectivity and perspective.

A negative aspect of being an 'outsider' was relating to cultural power issues. There was a need for awareness of the historical context of Apartheid and on-going impact of racial tension within South Africa was necessary while conducting interviews. It was therefore important to note power issues relating to researcher and interviewee, to ensure the interviewee felt as in control of the interview process as possible. As an outsider, awareness was necessary that some responses could be 'filtered' and not accurately represents the participant's authentic reflections. However, a relationship of trust having been built during the two years before the interviews was valuable in encouraging participants to give honest and authentic responses to questions asked.

As a white British researcher, there were also linguistic issues relating to researching with a black township context. This was due to the researcher not being able to speak the local languages. This resulted in interviewees needing to conduct their interviews in English, which was often a third or fourth language. This had potential for the interviewees to be disempowered and not to be able to express themselves in the manner they would like, thereby limiting the depth of content. For the interviews it was therefore important to construct questions that were easy to understand, as well as as back-up questions in the case of mis-understandings.

As well as cultural and linguistic differences, my role as a college lecturer and associate pastor is considered during the data analysis of the interviews. It was important to be aware of the power dynamic, and whether the ordinary believers saw me as being in an 'authoritative' position, and how this may alter responses. Although intentionally pursuing an atmosphere of equality, trust and openness within the interviews, caution was taken in the data analysis regarding prescribed answers or the desire to only give pleasing answers rather than honest, critical reflection. In preparing for this research I had built trust and been given access within the context as a result of immersion in the



context for thirty months prior to the start of the study (May 2001:157). This was while functioning as a lecturer at BCC and an associate church pastor of SGWC. The relationship I had built with each interviewee over the course of one to three years respectively could be argued to be a positive aspect in the interview process. Positive rapport with students and young adults as well as increased levels of trust developed over time had the potential for honest and open discussion.

As reflexivity on behalf of the researcher has the potential of impacting the findings, it was necessary to note presuppositions, biases, and motives for the study. For example, I became aware while doing data analysis that I wanted the experimental model of education to succeed and was biased towards this. I therefore intentionally and hopefully adequately focused attention on the limitations and weaknesses of the educational model within the data.

#### 4.5.2 The role of the participant

As the issue of power is a central ethical issue within critical theory embedded in the methodology of SPA, consideration during the research and particularly the interview process is necessary. Through ethical procedures such as gaining ethical clearance from the University and informed consent from participants, the participants were aware of what the research they were participating in.

As the interviewer is in a position of power in knowing the research process, deciding which information is important and what will end up in the final product, there is a need to not control, abuse, or misrepresent the person s/he is encountering. Literature reveals that if there is no awareness of power relations between the researcher and participant, the researcher could 'easily and unknowingly fall prey to the very error that critical educators seek to correct, that duplicate the original silencing of the Other, that replicate the concepts and systems of power they seek to revoke, that re-legitimate the very terms they seek to reject' (McLaren & Giarelli 1995:9-10).

The participant should be enabled to tell their real story as well as hold accountable the researcher as information is reported and represented (Daniels 2006:139, Swinton & Mowat 2006:65). Care was taken that although the researcher has an agenda (of wanting to find more effective pedagogies), that it should not be imposed onto the interviewee. Sensitivity towards the complex dynamics of the interview situation was essential. Within the observations of the Bible Studies and interviews, care was taken regarding how questions were asked, intonation, eye-contact and body language. These aspects would affect power-relations between interviewer and interviewee and the way the participants tell their stories, thereby implicating the data (Swinton & Mowat 2006:61).

In desiring for the voice of the participants to be active within this research, I chose a narrative style of writing which incorporated as much dialogue from the observed Bible Studies and interviews as possible. Although the analysis was my interpretation of this data collected, the recorded observations

and interviews and are included in the appendix for reference. This gives the reader to opportunity to verify what was said in relation to the wider discussion, thereby providing greater context and clarity. In reporting the findings and undertaking the data analysis, Guba's model for assessing the trustworthiness and quality of qualitative data was utilised in attempting: 1) truth value and credibility; 2) applicability; 3) consistency; and 4) neutrality (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

#### **4.6 Data conceptualisation and analysis**

Within the process of data analysis, the semi-structured interviews and audio-recordings from the observed Bible Studies were transcribed. A notation system as recommended by Poland was used to encourage consistency and accuracy between transcripts (2001:637, 641). A research assistant was employed whose first language was Sesotho and also spoke several other South African languages, enabling them to translate speech from the recorded observations of the Bible Studies which were in South African languages as well as slang and colloquial language. The transcriptions were reviewed to minimise inconsistencies and were taken to minimise 'ruptures in understanding' (Poland 2001:640). Refer to Appendix 6 for transcriptions of the observed Bible Studies and semi-structured interviews, and; Appendix 2 for a summary of the observed Bible Study process. To answer both research questions all data from both audio recordings, short observation notes and interviews were analysed. Units of analysis included: (1) the participant's utterances relating to the whole group as well as the individual participants within the Bible Studies; (2) observation of the group dynamics and interactive nature of the Bible Study, and; (3) participant's reflections of the Bible Studies in the individual interviews (Wilkinson 2011:170).

The data was analysed and re-conceptualised while using the software data analysis programme ATLAS.ti. The programme was chosen because it 'stores, organises, manages and reconfigures data to enable human analytical reflection' (Saldana 2009:22). In this way ATLAS.ti codes data according to the researcher's conceptualisation through a coding system of formats, such as hierarchies and networks. These enabled easy user reference through retrieving the data electronically (Grbich 2007:225, 229-233). The transcriptions were entered into the program. The data was then analysed through a process of: 1) an initial reading of the data; 2) dividing the text into segments of information; 3) highlighting key words from the segments to make into codes; 4) reducing overlapping and redundancy of codes, 5) clustering the codes (92 codes in total) into categories (19 in total), and 5) forming themes from the categories. The research findings stemmed from the themes, which are defined as 'broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea' (Creswell 2013:186). Refer to Appendix 5 for a full list of codes and categories.

Content analysis was used to establish codes, categories and eventually themes (Dey 1993:96-97, 103, Schurink et al. 2001:330, Grbich 2007:185-186, Johnson & Christensen 2011:525-6). Content analysis permits the exploration of large amounts of textual information. Trends and patterns of words and

themes indicate their frequency, relationship and the structures and discourses of communication (Grbich 2007:112). For example, segments of the text indicated key words relating to locations of interaction for the young adults. From the following example, the words **home** and **church** were made into codes respectively.

Siya: Okay, you are stressed that you gonna pass with distinctions and then you find yourself next year not having money to pay for your studies and then you just sitting at **home** doing nothing (5:106).

Kitso: Cause like this **church** is a very helpful **church** especially when it comes to funerals 'cause I've seen almost three funerals of people that are not members but they came to us, to ask our Pastor to bury. (1:282)

Other segments relating to either **home** or **church** were also coded. In this way, other locations of participant's interaction were highlighted from the text, these included, **township** and **wider society**. From these codes, the category **Location** was given. As these locations referenced spheres of interaction for the township young adults, the theme **Life World** was explored in the research findings.

**Codes:** Church, Home, Township, Wider society  
**Category:** Location  
**Theme:** Life world

Content analysis was conducted through four frameworks that guided answering the two research questions. These included: LIFE CONTEXT, CHRISTIAN FAITH, CRITICAL REFLECTION and PARTICIPATION. These frameworks were chosen from the literature as they were identified incorporating the central characteristics of both contextual Christian education and SPA (Buber 1970, Groome 1980, Freire 1996a, Boys 1999, Poland 2001, Woods 2004). Only these frameworks from the literature were chosen as they were seen to be broad enough to: highlight SPA's characteristics in relation to CCE, and; permit flexibility in enabling both inductive and deductive analysis. Examples will be given before each research question is answered.

For research question one, the SPA model is implemented and involves a praxis cycle (process). It was therefore important to explore the content generated that supports that process. Hence *Life Context* and *Christian Faith* were chosen to focus on content. As seen from the literature relating to CCE and SPA, both *Life Context* (contextual situation of participants) and *Christian Faith* (Scripture and Tradition) are essential content. Content generated within the education process regarding Life and Faith was indicated within SPA's education process. Through these two frameworks it was possible for

categories and codes to emerge to indicate the extent they were evident within the education process. As seen from the example of the codes above (*home, church*) these frameworks permitted inductive analysis implementing grounded theory to inform codes (Schurink et al. 2001:330).

*Critical Reflection* was also chosen as a framework or theoretical concept as it is viewed by literature as an essential component in enabling the praxis cycle to occur. *Critical Reflection's* framework responds to question one as it directly relates to the content generated by the SPA process of the praxis cycle. Critical Reflection is encouraged throughout all five of SPA's movements and is specifically the purpose of Movement 2. It was therefore necessary to include it as a framework for question one's analysis.

Research question two explores whether SPA could serve as contextual Christian education. The framework *Participation* was primarily used to analyse the data. *Participation* was chosen as it is viewed an essential characteristics within CCE emphasising liberation as well as within SPA's methodology. The framework of *Participation* explores the extent and limit of both the facilitator and participant's contributions. Exploring the nature of participation enabled the research to see the influence this has had on enabling the education process to be contextual. As the praxis process influenced this participatory contextual outworking, the other frameworks of *Life Context, Christian Faith* and *Critical Reflection*, were drawn on to respond to question two.

The conceptualisation of each research question will be explored in more details when responding each research question respectively. References within the text from the transcripts can be found in Appendix 6. The reference system includes two numbers: the first number refers to the transcript; the second number refers to the line number within the transcript.

## **Part 2 Data Analysis and Findings: Sub-question one**

### **4.7 Introduction and Conceptualisation**

Sub-question one: To ascertain whether each movement of SPA was adequately evident within the education process.

As outlined in the literature survey, SPA follows a praxis process moving participants from life-Faith-life. The process and content of what was discussed will be reflected upon, as to understand the process, the content is important. Sub-question one will explore each of SPA's five movements in turn, as they were outworked within the observed Bible Studies in the township church. The themes for the two Bible Studies were taken from two Gospel passages: Matthew 6:25-33 (Do not worry but seek first the Kingdom of God), and Luke 10:25-37 (The Good Samaritan: Love your neighbour as you love yourself). For an outline of the Bible Studies refer to Appendix 2.

Conceptualisation of sub-question one occurred from the three frameworks of *Life Context*, *Christian Faith* and *Critical Reflection*. These were implemented as the first sub-question primarily explores the praxis process, with the content of Life Context and Christian Faith being an important factor in this. Critical Reflection is also viewed as an essential component within the praxis process.

Relating to *Life Context* and *Christian Faith*, codes and categories emerged from the data. For example, within *Life Context*, five categories emerged. These included: *Location*, *Social Context*, *Church Nature*, *Neighbour*, and *Worries*. The category of *Church Nature* was formed from the codes: *church community*, *church education*, *church and foreigners*, *church and gangsterism*, *church identity*, *church and others*, and *critique of church*. Examples of data that these codes were formed from include:

Code assigned: *church and gangsterism*

*Sechaba*: So it's kind of hard for me to fit in 'cause everybody separates themselves in that group.... So that's part of gangsterism, that's what I mean. Everybody wants to associate themselves with a certain group that they are used to. We let certain people fall through the cracks. (3:101).

Code assigned: *church education*

*Siya*: You get different Pastors, someone can be a teacher someone be a prophet and teach different ways. Some, you understand them. Okay he is going this way. Some you can't ask questions at church; they be preaching you know (2:26).

Conceptual-level analysis was undertaken, through using analytic tools such as the query and co-occurrence tools that ATLAS.ti provides (Friese 2012:229-234). In this way relationship between the data became evident. For example, the code *church and gangsterism* was part of the category *Church Nature*, as it was a characteristic of the participant's experience of church life. *Gangsterism* (forming cliques) related to and impacted the other codes as through the participant's *critique of church*, *gangsterism* was seen to negatively impact the *church community*, and *church identity*.

The analysis is therefore *abductive* using both *inductive* analysis to inform codes, as well as *deductive* analysis from theory and literature (Schurink et al. 2001:330).

## **4.8 Movement 1: Naming Life**

### 4.8.1 Introduction

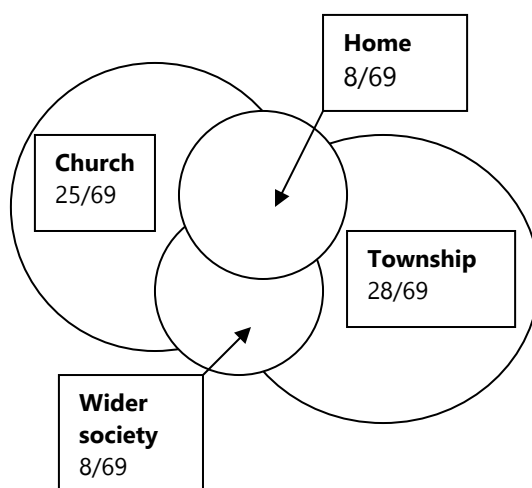
Any educational process encouraging the generation of contextual theology must encourage participants to name and explore their cultural context from their perspective. SPA places participant's

contexts centrally within the educational process (Groome 2011:309). This section therefore asks *does the Shared Praxis Approach enable participants to explore the theme of the Bible studies in relation to their lives?* Following the five movements of SPA, this section will focus on *Movement 1: Naming Life*. I understood M1: Naming Life to be ‘that people “pay attention” to the theme as they recognize it in their lives and then that they bring to expression their own description and consciousness of it’ (2011:309). Within each of the Bible Studies, the purpose of M1: Naming Life for Groome would include expression of the participant’s “present praxis” of the theme, ‘how they do it, engage it, or observe it in their “life world”’ (2011:309).

#### 4.8.2 Life Worlds

The Bible Studies began by exploring their themes of *Loving your Neighbour* and *Worries*, by engaging the participants in thinking about these themes in relation to their contexts. As participants gave expression to the theme in relation to their context, data reveals that participants Named Life concerning four LOCATIONS of interaction, or *Life Worlds*. The participants related the themes of the Bible Studies in relation to: 1) *township life*, 2) *home life*, 3) *church life*, and; 4) *life in wider society*. This section therefore explores the content of the participants Naming Life and expressing ‘present praxis’ of the Bible Study’s themes in relation to these four life worlds.

Within the two Bible Studies there were a total of sixty nine references to life worlds where participants interacted. The data indicated four life worlds that participants referred to: 1) township life (28 references); 2) home life (8 references), 3) church life (25 references); and; 4) wider society (8 references). Each life world will be explored relating to the extent content was generated from experience of the participants and secondly, influenced by the participant’s concerns (Figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1** Life worlds referenced within the Bible Studies. Frequency of occurrences stated

Secondly, codes were formed from themes drawn from the participant's Naming Life. These included: *crime, cultural roles, family roles, poverty* and a *sacred/secular divide*. In undertaking data analysis the family codes were cross referenced with each other. This highlighted instances where for example crime or poverty was experienced in the location of family or any of the other locations. The life worlds were not mutually exclusive, but overlapped. These cross references enabled themes to be pulled from the data. Through exploring the participant's experiences in these life worlds, insight is shed on M1: Naming Life encouraged participants to name experiences in their lives and to focus on the theme of the Bible study in relation to their lives. Each of the life worlds will now be explored.

#### 4.8.2.1 Township Life

The majority of references where participants *Named Life* was within the context of township life. Twenty eight out of sixty nine references were related to the township, (not including home and church). Participants told stories and made references to their experience of township life. Themes generated from the data included the township being a place where participants encountered: 1) other people; 2) differing religious practices; 3) poverty and; 4) crime. These will now be explored.

##### i. Focusing activity and encountering other people in the township

Groome begins SPA with a focusing activity which 'turns people to their own "being" in place and time, to their present praxis, and establishes a focus for the curriculum' (Groome 1991:283). The theme of the Bible Study is therefore introduced through the focusing activity. Within the Bible Study, exploring what the parable of the Good Samaritan would mean within the participant's context, the facilitator began by showing photos of different people from within the townships (mother, child, youth, tsotsi, drunk, shack dweller, professional, and immigrant).

The question asked by the facilitator to the group was: *who would be the easiest to help if they were in trouble?* The data indicates participants perceptions of helping others is influenced by their cultural context. Some individuals within the township were considered easier to relate to than others. Several participants indicated the children and mother would be the easiest people to help. The children because 'the mind of a kid' is 'easy to mould'; 'if you give a child love.... the next day when he sees you he wants more love, he'll come' (Sechaba 1:68). The woman was viewed as 'someone who is special' who was the 'caregiver', looking after children. Both of these reflections indicate those easiest to help are those who will appreciate the help, and in the case of the children are receptive to being helped.

Asked the question, *who would be the hardest person to help if they were in trouble*, participants responded that it was the men, the father, pastor and young man who would be the most difficult to help. For Siya, the 'father' pictured sitting next to a shack was seen as the hardest to help. The father was seen as 'the head of the house', needing to set the 'example' within the house who 'must go and

do their work (laughter) as a father' before going outside to look for help (1:80). Refilwe thought the 'young guy', who Mbongeni described as 'trying to earn a living through recycling' would be difficult to help as 'they are also kind of stubborn', 'controlling' and 'don't like to be told' (1:102-111).

Within the group there was also a difference of opinion expressed in what kind of help they would offer. Siya spoke of offering practical help to the mother who had no food. Poverty was seen as a source of stress for the woman that Siya felt he could ease some of the pressure (1:73). Sechaba however, sees the need for help in more spiritual ways, in terms of helping others journey towards God. He associates helping others as 'molding' minds. He states that the Moruti (Pastor) would be 'the hardest to save' 'because they know the truth already'. Sechaba perceives that a pastor needs help because he has 'backslidden' (losing Christian Faith): 'it's hardest to save a man who has backslidden than teaching somebody new'. He adds, 'I'm a newcomer, and who am I to save him from that truth?' (1:87-97).

The focusing activity was effective in turning the participants 'towards their own time and place' and encouraging them to perceive how they would respond to the people within the context of the photos (Groome 1991:283). In undertaking cultural exegesis, the data shows the group was able to reflect upon social situations while being aware of some of the complex nature of issues involved. They draw to the surface the ambiguous nature assessing the needs of others, whether they would be in a position to offer the sort of help needed, and if it was offered, whether it would be received. In this way, the participant's interests were engaged and they responded as 'agent-subjects' within the learning event rather than as passive subjects, which for Groome is key within the focusing activity (1991:157). The focusing activity goes onto lay the foundation for the remaining movements within SPA.

#### ii. Religious practices, poverty and crime

Within the township, participants Named Life, relating to how they treated others whose religious practices were different to their own. Participants expressed a 'clash' of beliefs with those they encountered with the township. This was evident particularly with their neighbors who practiced African traditional religion, who 'believe in gods, like ancestors', and practice 'ceremonies' and 'rituals' (Kitso 7:47). Participants name how they separated themselves from these practices as they are Christians. Masego states, 'I don't practice what they practice, I believe in Jesus' (1:244). To do so would be considered syncretistic, with Christianity and traditional African religion mixing. This was frowned upon and church goers were warned by preachers that this was incompatible with Christian faith.

Participant's Named Life within the township as one of poverty, where access to basic amenities was limited. The majority of these references came from participants naming times they helped people around them who faced economic hardship. Participants describe helping neighbours who had no



nappies for their children; giving breakfast regularly to a man who had no pension, and; wanting to help a neighbour living in a shack with water so that she doesn't have to walk a distance to fetch it (3:74; 1:424, 1:173). Poverty was evident in both the participant's home life world and their township life world. Lack of material resources was a cause of worry in the participant's life worlds. The consequences of lack of resources indicate disempowerment, hopelessness and the marginalization of potential contribution to the socio-cultural context.

Finally, participants named crime within the townships. Participants describe an environment of theft, being mugged, and humiliation by the police, sexual abuse and drug possession and arrest. It was a place where the safety of children was at risk. The data revealed two themes relating to crime; the boldness to name crimes, and secondly, injustice.

During the Bible Study on the theme *Worries*, there was one reference to sexual abuse occurring within the township. During my experience of four years working in the townships sexual abuse was rarely talked about. Although statistics show high rates of abuse among both adults and children, the subject is taboo within both society and church. The Bible Study provided an opportunity for a participant to name the cultural taboo of sexual abuse within the township community. Participants were asked to write on a large piece of paper things that they worried about. Wisdom wrote 'sexual abuse' as a cause of worry. He explains to the group why he wrote it:

*Wisdom:* I wrote down sexual abuse. Not to my side no, but it's affecting us in all ways, whether you are a Christian or not, because we see people abusing each other. Plus even us we grew up in those situations like these and even if we are Christians we can't just stay and say 'eish'! It's hitting us. Yes (5:114).

A Bible study from Ghana sheds light on the taboo nature of sexual abuse within Africa: 'In Ghana, even if somebody abuses you, you had better not say it, because the words you will use to report will be words that have sex in it' (Kool 2004:241). Naming the abuse is viewed to give it power, as 'the words you will use... have sex in it'. This infers there is shame and disgrace not only in the abuse itself, but also in speaking of it. Wisdom however names the taboo, but is quick to point out that he hasn't been affected by sexual abuse, which maybe makes it easier for him to talk about it. He states that 'we see people abusing each other'. Although not explaining exactly what he means by this, Wisdom states that this is part of their lives in the townships.

This example reveals within SPA, that M1: Naming Life encouraged participants to 'name' their reality. Within M1 of SPA, naming life enables participants 'bring to expression their consciousness of whatever is "being done" by them, through them, around them, or to them, by others and to others' (1991:177). Wisdom names and points to the common consciousness that abuse is occurring. Wisdom

then draws both Christians and non-Christians into one category by stating ‘it’s affecting us in all ways... even us we grew up in those situations like these’ (5:114). Wisdom exhorts the group not to be passive towards the issue, ‘even if we are Christians we can’t just stay and say ‘eish’! It’s hitting us.’ The common expression of ‘eish’ in the townships can denote a sense of not knowing what to say or how to respond to something. Wisdom indicates that more is called for than just saying ‘eish’ as he states, ‘It’s hitting us.’ It implies there is a laissez-faire attitude towards this issue, with little done in response to this crime (5:114). Groome follows Freire’s insight that “speaking one’s word” in dialogue is related to “transforming reality”. Therefore in order to bring about transformation, the first step is to name reality (1991:1980).

M1: Naming Life also permitted participants to ‘name’ issues of injustice in relation how the police responds to crime within the township. Thapelo tells a story from the day of the Bible Study, that he saw police ‘chasing’ a ‘Shangaan guy’. The Shangaan ethnic group have mixed South African ancestry including Tsongan heritage. Thapelo recalls a situation where the police were chasing a Shangaan man, who was put in ‘one of those ugly vans’, which he describes as a ‘form of humiliation (1:372). Thapelo infers that the man was discriminated against due to his cultural background ‘Shangaans if you start speaking Shangaan then you know there’s trouble’; in this case being humiliated at the hands of the police.

Oupa also describes being arrested by police for drug possession of mandrax. He speaks of himself and a friend being intimidated and having inflated bail charges by the police, who threatened that he would be charged for possession of drugs and sentenced ‘for four years each’. Also, ‘they said bail we gonna need R4000 each and it was zero’. When Oupa could not pay the R4000 for bail, ‘after three days they called me and said “man go out” and we know that after three days you’ll be back because we know people of drugs are irresponsible at home’ (5:199-201). Oupa experienced intimidation at the hands of the police, who threatened him with four years in jail. Inflated bail charges were also evident of R4000 (around £350), and when Oupa couldn’t pay, he was let out of jail for nothing. Intimidation and inconsistency on behalf of the police reveals injustice towards Oupa who had perpetrated the crime of drug possession. From the data, crime was expressed as something which happened to people and which the participants had no control over. A lack of justice was expressed in relation to these crimes.

#### 4.8.2.2 Home Life

The second life world the data highlighted was that of the participant’s home life. This section will explore how the participants described or expressed consciousness of the Bible Study themes in relation to their home lives. Out of the sixty-nine references to spheres of life, eight were related to home life. Participants shared experiences and observations of home life which revealed a location of familial interactions. Participants described events and experiences in relation to others around them

including their mothers, fathers, siblings and step-siblings. Interestingly, all eight references to home life were during the Bible Study concerning *worrying*, revealing home life was a cause of concern and worry for the participants. The causes of concern and worry were due to the threat of well being to both the participants as well as their families. Wisdom states, 'some parents they will worry about their kids, for a better future for their kids' (5:75). For the participants, these threats to well-being came in the following forms: inability to study; unemployment; health and death; and crime.

Firstly, participants Named Life through expressing worries regarding the inability to study, which in turn impacted their experience of home life. For example, Siya expressed that one of his biggest concerns was to pass his high school matriculation exams 'with distinctions and then you find yourself next year not having money to pay for your studies and then you just sitting at home doing nothing' (5:106). For Siya, home becomes a place associated with negative socio-emotional feelings, of boredom, inactivity and even marginalization from access to further education. Secondly, there was a lack of opportunity to find employment, which in turn impacted their experience of home life. Refilwe states: 'So I was like really worried and stressed that I don't have a job. I'm 24 years old. And I want to work. I want to help my mom at the house you know things like that' (5:177-179).

Thirdly, another named experience of home life was that of the threat of illness within the home. From the data there were two stories of death or sickness relating to family members. Masego gives an example of health threatening her family situation. She shares with the group what it was like to nearly lose her diabetic father after the nurse and doctors told her 'your dad is dying'. She states, 'Oh, my God then I became so worried. How can I live without my dad, God?' (5:213). Finally, crime was expressed to affect participant's home lives. Wisdom speaks of 'sexual abuse' and admits 'even us we grew up in those situations like these' (5:114).

From the data the Naming of Life within the life sphere of home was significant within the educational process. Within home-life, participants clearly expressed through stating concern for themselves and the well-being of those within their home life. Seven out of eight of these examples were to do with issues outside the participant's control, related to sickness, death, abuse, unemployment or lack of resources. These were heightened by the social location of the participants through the various threats to their family's well-being. Participants named home life as a location of concern and socio-emotional feelings, of boredom, inactivity and even marginalization from access to further education due to lack of resources.

Groome writes that within M1: Naming Life, participants 'can express such consciousness as their sentiments, attitudes, feelings, or intuitions as they look to an aspect of present praxis' (1991:177). This was evident from the data concerning home life. Participants indicated familial responsibility towards those they encountered within the home environment, which in turn caused worry. Lack of

resources (unemployment, finances, no opportunity to study, limited health care) accentuated this worry. Participants were aware of the part they should play towards contributing to the well-being of home-life, however their inability to work or study weighed upon the participants. Firstly, there was the concern and responsibility that the young adults felt towards members of their family, such as Masego caring for her sick father, and Refilwe wanting to work in order help her mom at home. Secondly, there was concern expressed regarding the awareness of the burden they put on others, such as Kitso's mother without a job or husband caring for Kitso and her sister. These instances reveal the concern participants had for the well being of those around them who experienced, unemployment, the inability to study, sickness, bereavement, or have crimes committed against them, such as sexual abuse.

#### 4.8.2.3 Church Life

The third life world that participants spoke of in relation to the themes of the Bible Studies was that of church life. Twenty-five out of sixty-nine references related to the sphere of church life. Understandings of church for the participants were centred on church being a group of people in community together rather than being the physical structure of a church building. These experiences of church life stemmed directly from the participants interactions with others within the church community, as well as descriptions of socialised patterns of behavior within the church. The data generated three themes relating to the participant's experience of church life.

Firstly, participants named experiences of belonging within church. These were characterised by their positive relationships and commitment to the church. They spoke of people encountered in the church including mothers, fathers, the pastor, their friends within the church, the Sunday school, the young adults group (SAYA), the home groups and visitors to the church (1:280; 1:282; 1:369). A strong sense of family-like belonging experienced at the centre of church life with benefits of community support was named. The church community represented familial characteristics and gave support and guidance for practical life situations.

Secondly, participants named that those on the edges of church and less involved to the church community would experience less positive socio-emotional feelings to church life. Reflection by participants on church life at the margins evidenced experiences of marginalization through cliques or 'gangs' formed within the church. Concern was expressed regarding the extent people felt ignored, thereby resulting in their 'humiliation' (3:101).

Finally, participant's named their experience and views of what it means for them to live as members of their church and as Christians, while living in the township and wider society. The data indicated the participant's sense of identity and belonging was constructed in contrast to 'the other', outside the church. Participants experienced difficulty and tension in encountering the 'other' or those outside the

church. Participants emphasised there should be a marked difference between themselves, as 'Christians' or 'born again' and their non-Christian neighbours who had differing religio-cultural philosophies and practices. There was an us/them dichotomy, as participants saw the need to be separate from their non-believing neighbours (3:45). The 'other' was the person who believes and practices differing things to themselves such as ancestral worship (7:47). A distinction was therefore made concerning both belief and practice and whether or not to associate with as 'born again Christians'.

The examples above reveal the participants exhibited consciousness of their own praxis in how they related to others from both within and outside the church. For Groome, consciousness of one's own practice is an important aspect within M1: Naming Life (1991:176). This consciousness was evident through an awareness of belonging at the centre of church life, but on the edges and margins there was expressed feelings of concern regarding the extent that others felt welcome. The further individuals travelled out of the church, the greater the challenge there was in living out an authentic Christian life, while interacting with others who had differing religious-cultural philosophies and practices.

#### 4.8.2.4 Wider Society

The fourth life world of the participants, the data highlighted, was that of wider society. This section will explore how the participants described or expressed consciousness of the Bible Study themes in relation to their experience of wider society. The amount of experiences named concerning outside of the township was significantly smaller than those concerning the township. There were only eight references regarding wider society out of a total sixty-nine related to the different life worlds. For most of the young adults their primary experiences named were within the townships. References were however given to wider geographical locations including Krugersdorp - the nearest town to Munsieville, central Johannesburg, Sasolburg and the north-west region of South Africa. Participant's experiences of wider society were largely negative. Four themes emerged from the data.

The first theme in the participant's naming of interactions with wider society was that of crime. Kitso describes her experience of going back to the rural areas in the north-west of South Africa during the summer holidays, where her extended family lived. During these trips she encountered the poverty of her unemployed neighbours, surviving with many children. She describes she would 'buy some clothes for them and give to them so that they can dress'. But Kitso explains that when she would hang clothes on the washing line: 'They would steal our clothes. You are helping them but at the same time they are stealing you pants'. She acknowledges that 'we get very angry, it's not easy. In this situation her neighbour's response to her kindness, by stealing discourages Kitso from continuing to help them (1:167-170; 1:189-195).

Kitso named the reality that crime had a negative effect on her willingness to help those who are abusing her goodwill. This relates to the second theme, of suspicion and distrust, which is evident from Kitso's story. Refilwe also highlights how people have expressed suspicion, mistrust or pride in wider society towards her, even when she was trying to help them. She states some people refuse to be helped as they 'have pride', but others 'like to be helped', and then asks the group 'have you seen that in town?' (1:220) For Refilwe, the local town is a place where people respond unpredictably and perhaps with suspicion, even when she tries to help them, stating people respond either 'liking to be helped' or 'with pride'. Refilwe, asks the group 'have you seen that in town', wondering if she's not the only one to make that observation. This indicates that there is opportunity while Naming Life, to gain assurances from others within the group about life issues and circumstances. The town is a location where there is more social interaction between cultures and economic backgrounds. This is possibly why there is uncertainty for Refilwe regarding how people will respond to her wanting to help them.

Thirdly, when reflecting on Life in wider society, a broader worldview was expressed by the participants. At the time of the Bible Studies all participants apart from Sechaba lived within the township. Sechaba who had grown up in Munsieville moved to Sasolburg for work, a town one hundred kilometres from Munsieville. He however made frequent visits back to the township, where his family were based. Sechaba seemed to have an ability to take a step back and think reflectively about his experience of life in the township and church. From the data this stemmed from his experience of wider society. This experience brought a greater sense of critique within the immediate context of Munsieville. Viewing different ways of living and experiencing life made Sechaba question what could they learn within the township and what has the possibility of change? This broader perspective is given through interaction with the wider world, which results in questioning the status quo of the township life world where he grew up (1:288; 3:51).

The final theme emerging from the data was that of the participant's exclusion from wider society. Limited reference to wider society outside the township questions the reasons for this? It is possible that had the subject matter of the Bible Studies specifically focused on wider experiences from society there would have been more data. All experiences recounted about life in wider society had negative socio-emotional feelings attached to them. The examples of crime, suspicion and distrust within wider society do not encourage the participants to continue actively participating in wider society if it perceived as a place of hostility and danger.

Another possibility is that participants experienced exclusion from wider society. Marginalisation is revealed by the effect that poverty has on the participant's interactions with the wider world. The participants describe a world in which they have limited control of their lives. Siya's fear of 'sitting at home doing nothing' due to not having money to participate in education, expresses a fear of

marginalization and segregation from societies activities (5:106). Exclusion is exemplified in the cases of unemployment for the participant's or their family members. Mohasi defines marginalisation in Lesotho as 'a situation where people are disempowered because they do not have sufficient opportunities that enable them to fully control their lives'. This would include no access to basic human rights, but also as 'a result of societal norms, traditions, beliefs, attitudes or stereotypes' (2006:160). The participants describe a world in which they are denied access to education and employment, which in turn robs them and their community of access to adequate housing, water, land and healthcare. Although these shared experiences of life in wider society were largely negative, participants exhibited resilience and the desire to use these negative experiences to change their own community.

#### 4.8.3 Summary

The abundance of contextual data of participants reflecting on their praxis highlights that M1: Naming Life was adequately outworked. Movement 1 was effective in encouraging participants to engage with the theme from the Bible Studies, and express consciousness of it in relation to their location and contextual reality. M1 encouraged the naming of not only exploring the participant's context, but also from their perspective. The data collected from the outworking of SPA's M1 indicate that participant's contributions were not privatised or spiritualised. Rather, M1: Naming Life encouraged participants to share their experiences and consciousness within four overlapping life worlds. This highlights the effectiveness of M1: Naming Life in rooting the Bible Studies themes within the everyday reality of the participant's contexts of: the township, their family life, the church and wider society. SPA's M1 brings the context of participants to the centre of the education process. As the township young adults spoke of their experiences within the lived experience and life worlds, they drew attention to specific concerns, such as crime, poverty and unemployment. SPA's M1 enabled the Christian education process to be deeply rooted within the context, while also exploring the concerns of a group of young adults within a marginalised community.

### **4.9 Movement 2: Critical Reflection**

#### 4.9.1 Introduction

Christian educators have highlighted the necessity of critical reflection among participants in order to bring transformation (Groome 1991, 2010, Schipani 1984, 1988, West 1995, Gormon 2001:40-41). SPA emphasises the importance of pedagogy being both participatory as well as encouraging critical reflection by participants. Groome defines SPA as 'a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their sociocultural reality' (Groome 1991:135). For Groome, critical reflection is a key process of the pedagogy of SPA. Although critical reflection is encouraged through all SPA movements, it is specifically outworked in M2. Groome defines M2: Critical Reflection as 'reflecting critically on the life or faith theme' (2011:303). I understood that the purpose of M2 is 'to have participants reflect critically together on

the theme in their lives, on their own expressions about it, and to share this in conversation' (2011:313).

The framework used to analyse the extent that SPA encouraged critical thinking is taken from Groome's proposal that critical thinking needs to be undertaken by participants in three areas of their past, their present and towards their future. For Groome education is a journey in which participants reflect on their past, present and future:

I name the nature of education activity as a political activity with pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with people to our present, to the past heritage it embodies, and to the future possibility it holds for the total person and community (1980:21).

Groome argues that critical thinking must therefore encourage individuals to look at and analyse these aspects in their past, present and future actions (1991:90-98). From the literature, Groome notes firstly, that the past is important as throughout history, people have learned from their experience. Groome writes that without concern for past knowledge, 'our present is impoverished and our future diminished' (1980:7). Secondly, present experience is viewed as having the possibility of knowing what was not previously known. 'The present does not merely appropriate and rediscover what was already known; it adds to the heritage of knowledge' (1980:8).

Finally, Groome refers to the "not yet" dimension of leading out; 'if we are to have a usable future, we must educate toward it' (1980:9). Therefore education should ensure that all can have a future. Groome reference to Freire's utopian character of education theory and practice also notes a transformation of the present as being essential if there is to be a new future. Groome however writes, 'concern for the future as a transforming force has rarely been adequately realized over the history of educational activity' (1980:9).

Within the Bible Studies, as participants had Named Life, they were then intentionally encouraged participants to reflect critically together on what they had expressed and named. In analysing the Bible Studies, codes were developed relating to evidence of critical thinking regarding the past, present and future. The occurrences that critical thinking was evident within the data are shown in Figure 4.6. The top line of the table indicates the individual data collections undertaken. Firstly, there is Bible Study 1 and Bible Study 2. The left column indicates evidence of critical thinking concerning participant's experience of the: 1) past; 2) present, and; 3) future.



**Table 4.1** Occurrences of Critical Reflection

Critical thinking	Bible Study 1	Bible Study 2	TOTAL
Past	17	1	18
Present	24	11	35
Future	14	1	15
TOTAL	55	13	68

Figure 4.1 indicates the data reveals that critical thinking was encouraged in each of these three areas of past, present and future. This is also evidenced by Masego, who when asked about how she found the educational process of SPA responds: ‘it makes me to think where I come from, were I am standing now and the future tomorrow so for me it was quite challenging, but I like the challenge (6:66, 60:60). This section will outline how critical thinking was evident within the data in respect to the participant’s past and present action. Critical reflection regarding the future will be explored later within the section on *Movement 4: Appropriating Faith to Life*.

The data shows that Groome’s SPA encouraged participants to think critically. A total of 68 instances of critical reflection are recorded during the outworked SPA in the two Bible Studies. There were also another 120 made during the six semi-structured interviews while interviewees reflected on both the content and pedagogy of SPA. The data indicates there were eighteen instances of critical reflection concerning the past during the Bible Studies. Seventeen of these instances occurred within BS1: Neighbour and one instance occurred in BS2: Worries. Each of the Bible Studies will now be explored.

#### 4.9.2 Critical Reflection and Bible Study 1

##### 4.9.2.1 Gangsterism within the church

Within BS1: Neighbour, the following dialogue exemplifies critical reflection of the past by responding to the question, how the church could improve at loving their neighbour?

Sechaba: Stop gangsterism in the church (laughter).

*Mbongeni*: Cause you are the kingpin right?

*Sechaba:* Haa, no like. Seriously I think we develop gangs. And this is the problem we had ever since I remember and that's donkey year's back. Since those days we made cliques in the church you know, we made cliques. Ke skima bale, gare skime bale (Tswana street language - 'we associate with that group, not that other one'). We make gangs, and if we break those barriers of us making cliques I think we can outreach to many people. I'm thinking about the people in our street. I don't think none of them come to our church. It means there's something he's not seeing in us that we should be showing him (1:286-288).

Sechaba speaks from his personal experience and observation. Highlighting that exclusive group association is evident in the life of the church; he argues that 'we must break those barriers' in order for outreach to be more effective. Citing that none of the church's physical neighbours come to the church, Sechaba highlights that some form of the church's practice is missing, as a neighbour is 'not seeing us that which we should be showing him.'

During Sechaba's personal interview, Sechaba discusses the issue of 'gangsterism'. He explains where his awareness of 'gangsterism' within the church comes from; of personal experience of him visiting another church in Sasolburg where he was working.

*Sechaba:* I'm not based in Munsieville. So Munsivielle is my home and my church. I've been in the church for years and years ever since I was born I was born into it. I've seen it change a lot of times. And then now I'm in Sasolburg it's a new environment. When I visit a church I finally feel what it feels like to be a visitor and then I see everybody has cliques, groups. So it's kind of hard for me to fit in 'cause everybody separates themselves in that group. So I started thinking about my church that when I was youth I used to do that (laughing). So that's part of gangsterism that's what I mean. Everybody wants to associate themselves with a certain group that they are used to. That we let certain people fall through the cracks. So now I'm in Sasol I understand it now. 'Cause when I was in Munsieville I couldn't see them doing anything wrong. I mean we are friends. We like each other but then I realized how many people have we let go because we didn't say 'hi, how are you doing? Hey we are this. This is what we are about and then went to your friends, we talk, we shake hands, start smiling but we forgot to shake the other peoples hands. So that part of gangsterism. I think we must get rid of it (3:101).

In this section we see a progression of critical thinking of past experience, to present experience, and desired future action. Sechaba takes the personal past experience of relocating to another city and being an 'outsider' and 'visitor' which enables him to think critically about why it is hard to fit in. Being the outsider of previously formed groups and cliques has given him a feeling of 'separation' and 'falling through the crack'. This draws him to critical thinking concerning present practice. This

experience has enabled him to review community practice of the church where he grew up. He explores how visitors must feel when they visit SGWC, and states that the church lets ‘certain people fall through the cracks’. He assertively states that this form of gangsterism within church must be removed: ‘we must get rid of it’. He doesn’t want outsiders to fall through the cracks, by only talking with friends and forgetting to shake other people’s hands.

Groome refers to the need for critical reflection to ‘recognise historical influences that shape our action’ (1991:104). He writes:

Remembering is not only a looking backward to the personal and social biographies of individual and community. It also requires a looking outward, a re-membering of our present action with the source of that action in its present social context. It is becoming aware of the world of which we are members and how that membership shapes our present action (1991:186).

The group was impacted by Sechaba’s analysis of gangsterism concerning behaviour within their church community. Both Sechaba and Siya recognise that their actions of only associating with their friendship groups can cause harm within the wider community. Siya highlights that like the wounded, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the wounded in their community are ‘foreigners’ or strangers who come to their church:

*Siya:* Like, we don’t give them the love that we that they are expecting us to give them. They feel like rejected. Like if you can notice if someone visits our church... its not literally you will speak to her the way I speak to Thapelo. I will usually speak to Thapelo because I’m used to Thapelo. That’s why like you will feel there is no communication between. Lack of communication - humiliation (1:369-371).

Siya notes that individuals who come to church are among those who are ‘wounded’. They are wounded through feeling ‘rejected’ and ‘lack of communication’ from other people in the church, which results in ‘humiliation’. Siya takes responsibility for taking part in this wounding, as he acknowledges he is more comfortable speaking with Thapelo, as this is familiar. This theme of gangsterism and cliques within church builds as Siya recognises the damage non-inclusivity has on the community.

Groome writes that critical reflection ‘looks inward, insofar as possible and appropriate in a pedagogical event, to uncover the patterns of agency embedded in participants’ own psyches’ (2011:202). Sechaba and Siya’s reflections analyse the interests of assumptions and prejudices of those in the cliques (Groome 1991:188). Groome also calls for both personal and social remembering. Firstly, there is the need for ‘analytical remembering of one’s biography’ (1991:202), which attempts

to uncover and recognise how personal stories are shaping present praxis. This is evident in both Sechaba's reflections of being an 'outsider' in another church community. Secondly, 'social remembering enables us to see our identity and actions in their historical context, to notice for ourselves the influence on who we are, what we do, and what we "see" of where we have been and who we have been with' (Groome 1991:104-5). This is evident through both Sechaba's and Siya's analysis of the church communities welcome to those outside, and the damage caused to 'foreigners' who come to the church but are not welcomed.

#### 4.9.2.2 Difficulties in loving neighbours

Instances relating to critical reflection on present practice within BS1: Neighbours will now be explored. There were 35 instances of critical reflection on present practice in both Bible Studies. Within BS1: Neighbours there were 24 instances of critical reflection upon present action. These were encouraged by the importance placed on Naming Life, resulting in a strong emphasis on the contextual experience of participants.

The question posed by the facilitator within BS1: Neighbours encouraged critical thinking about the present. For example in response to the question: *from your experience is loving your neighbour an easy thing to do*, the group not only shared their experiences of helping others, but also reflected on those experiences, drawing to the surface the issues they had experienced in helping others. In response to this question, the data shows that there was consensus that loving their neighbour wasn't easy to do. This data was evident through running the category, NEIGHBOURS (with its 12 sub-codes) through the filter and co-occurrence data capturer, together with the codes Context\_cultural roles, Context\_family roles and Context\_poverty. The themes which emerged revealed that loving neighbours wasn't easy due to: 1) negative experiences of helping others; and 2) selfishness discouraged them from helping; 3) there was sacrifice involved in helping others.

Firstly the participants recounted negative experiences of helping others, where participants didn't receive positive responses from others when they made the initiative to help. Refilwe notes it isn't easy to help people because although some like to be helped, 'others have pride' and don't want to be helped (1:223). Siya also states that when he tried to greet his neighbours they respond with silence. These factors discouraged participants from being active in helping others.

There was also the negative experience of not being thanked for the help given. Sechaba talks about his family helping a pensioner neighbour who didn't have a pension as a result of not having an identification document. The family would give him tea and food each day. When he stopped coming to them as his pension had been organised, Sechaba states, 'and I saw my aunt was mad because he doesn't come anymore cause now he's okay. So I think, then the Bible Study happened and it started speaking to me that we expected something back from this guy, a thank you or something but she

didn't get that' (3:74). Sechaba becomes aware of their expectation to receive something in return for helping others, which was not fulfilled.

Secondly, selfishness was raised in response to the question, why do we find it difficult to be a good neighbour? The data indicated there was selfishness of 1) possessions/resources, and; 2) time and attention given to others. Mbongeni raises the issue of being selfish with resources, stating, 'I'm selfish man'. He elaborates 'All that I have belongs to me I don't like sharing, you know... and I don't consider much about the next person until I really need their help' (1:260). These thoughts also resonated with Siya and Sechaba who agreed with selfishness being a reason of why it was difficult to help others.

Selfishness was also exhibited through lack of time and attention given to others, through not spending time with others as well as lack of listening to others. Sechaba notes, 'I've never taken my time to listen to their stories or whatever or what they are actually thinking. So I'm thinking now I'm gonna try change and listen to their cries. In that way if I cannot help physically, I can pray about it, 'cause I know their needs and what not' (1:418). Siya also highlights Sechaba's contribution, 'like Sechaba mentioned, we don't listen. I always talk but I don't listen to my neighbor what he really wanna need. I think we have to listen' (2:92).

Thirdly, participants told stories which involved sacrificing belongings, or inconveniencing themselves in order to help others. The data reveals that prompting participants to think more deeply encourages them to envision the consequences of present action. It becomes clear to the group that there is sacrifice involved in helping neighbours. Masego states she 'sacrificed money' to help a neighbour buy nappies for a child in need (1:173). Sechaba helped a neighbour who had an epileptic fit and was consequently 'late for church' (1:164).

For Groome, critical thinking is about discovering the interest in present action as well as critiquing the ideology that maintains it. He writes, 'by a critical evaluative analysis we can attempt to discover the interest in present action, critique the ideology that maintains it, and recognise the assumptions upon which it is based' (1980:185). A question during the Bible Studies that helped to do these was: why is it not easy to love a neighbor? Sechaba reflects on Masego giving the nappies, 'you see when you help someone always it takes a part of you. Like I needed to do something with this but I sacrificed to give you that' (1:199). Within a context of material lack, to give away personal items is a greater sacrifice than in contexts where there is abundance. Kitso shares that her family gave clothes to neighbours in need, only for their kindness to be repaid by being stolen from:

*Kitso:* The family that I've been talking about that we give clothes to, like every time when we like hang our clothes on that thing (laughter), like they would steal our clothes (laughter). You are helping them but at the same time like they...

*Masego:* (overlapping) they are stealing your pants

*Kitso:* Ee (Tswana: 'Yes') especially our underwear. So we get very angry. It's not easy (1:189-191).

In Kitso's situation they are acting sacrificially in helping their neighbours, only to have that generosity exploited as they are stolen from. There was an awareness that in helping others it required inconvenience or sacrifice from themselves. There was awareness within the discussion that helping others was 'very painful' 'to take something of yours and give it away' (3:40). The unspoken ethical dilemma for Kitso is how to respond, to continue helping their neighbours or not.

All of these issues highlighted for the participants why they found it difficult to love their neighbour. Examples and stories helped them root the question within their experience of reality. Sechaba is challenged from the session that 'helping someone actually it will hurt. It's like taking a part of you, yourself and giving it to somebody' (3:36). The group contribution to knowledge gave them a greater awareness of why they found it difficult to love their neighbour.

Groome cites that for critical reflection to take place, a 'new awareness of the present' occurs. This is concerned with seeing the present with greater clarity or noticing what is no longer seen, or taken as inevitable' (1980:185). Through realising that to help neighbours can have large personal cost, the group understand why it is difficult to practice, and why their own behaviour follows certain patterns. In this way, they realise that in teaching the story about the Good Samaritan that loving others is a deliberate, costly choice, which he encourages his followers to do. This 'interest in present action' is revealed through Sechaba's response to the question about the Bible Study, did anything bring new thinking from the Bible Study:

*Sechaba:* A challenge was the one we discussed, that helping someone actually it will hurt. It's like taking a part of you, yourself and giving it to somebody. It always takes us to do something for the greater being of another human being. So that was another challenge that sometimes if we gonna help somebody expect that it's gonna have to hurt you (3:36).

#### 4.9.3 Critical Reflection and Bible Study 2: Worries

##### 4.9.3.1 Limited critical reflection

BS1: Neighbours contained a considerable amount of critical reflection concerning past action, whereas in contrast Bible Study 2: Worries contained very little. There was only one instance of

critical reflection on the past within BS2. Questions were prepared before hand which should have encouraged participants to a greater consciousness of the past included: 1) why do we worry? 2) do we have control over the things that we worry about? These questions were intended to encourage the participants to reflect analytically on their biographies. Although these questions had the potential for developing critical thinking, further probing was needed. In response to the first question of why do we worry? Siya says, 'I will say it's something that is given in us you know like it's a nature thing'. This view is affirmed by Sechaba and Masego who state that worry is 'in-born disease' and 'human disease' (5:159-164). No probing questions were asked. Instead the facilitator asks the next question on the facilitation plan: do we have control over the things that we worry about? In response three participants state 'some of them'. The facilitator replies, 'because we don't have any power to control them' (5:170). No exploration of these views by the facilitator is encouraged and the next question is asked.

In the example above, the feedback from the participants regarding control over worries is that we have control over some things we worry about. Within M2: Critical Reflection, the facilitator should encourage participants to reflect critically on the theme in conversation together (Groome 1991:187). Within BS2: Worries, critical reflection is not encouraged by the facilitator. A probing question would have helped, such as, why are some worries out of our control? Perhaps this question should have been on the Bible Study facilitation plan, rather than expecting a relatively inexperienced facilitator to probe further. Rather than questioning further, the facilitator summarizes the brief conversation by saying 'Because we don't have any power to control them'. This does not reflect what has been expressed by the participants, and promotes a fatalistic view of the world in which subjects do not have the power to change anything. Critical pedagogues as well as Groome urge for a moving away from fatalism as it does not promote critical consciousness (Freire 1973, Groome 1991).

Although facilitators were encouraged and trained within the course to ask probing questions, in order to prompt people to fuller expressions of present action, this does not occur in this instance. The only instance of critical thinking that occurred among the participants was to acknowledge that they have had control over some of the things they worry about. However for greater critical thinking to occur, further questions were necessary such as: what are the worries that we have control over, and what are those worries we have no control over?

As soon as the facilitator gains responses from the participants, she moves onto the next question. Groome states that within SPA's M2, 'the primary task is always to enable participants (the educator included) to reflect critically on their present action, their reasons for it, and the consequences of it' (2010:184). With skimming over the questions so quickly, critical reflection is limited. Rather, by stating that worry is 'in born disease', it displays what Freire calls semi-intransitivity, where a person sees everything as natural. Freire notes, 'this consciousness fails to perceive many of reality's

challenges, or perceives them in a distorted way' (1985:75). Consequently, to view worrying in this fatalistic way implies that worrying is part of life and cannot be controlled or minimised.

Continuing with the assigned questions the facilitator asks: *have you experienced God in the midst of those worries?* Participants reflected on their biographies and four told detailed stories of how they had experienced God in their worries. These examples show that each participant turned to God when they were faced with a crisis in their life. But the question is, was critical reflection evident within this process?

Mezirow's seminal book *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood* (1990b) can possibly help answer this question. It has helped highlight the need and informed the development of critical thinking within Christian education (Gormon 2001:40-41). For Mezirow, 'critical reflection involves a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built' (1990a:1). Existing frames of reference ('the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions') are critiqued resulting in new frames of reference through transforming points of view (Mezirow 2000:16). This is achieved through Freirian problem-solving and finding new, more valid premises upon which the problem is defined.


It is evident that *a critique of the presuppositions on which beliefs had been built* (Mezirow 1990a:1) did not take place. However if a remembering and heightened awareness of the past and present can also be defined as critical reflection, as Groome suggests (1991:86-87), then this was evident. The group were Naming Life concerning the theme of worries, as stories were told regarding situations outside of their control. These are expressions of remembering given by participants revealing how the participants appropriated aspects of the Christian Story into aspects of their lives and into complex contextual situations. Admittedly more critical reflection could have been beneficial, especially concerning the participant's experiences of God and what they learnt from their doubt and within those challenging circumstances. For critical thinking to occur additional probing of questions was needed.

#### 4.9.3.2 Emerging contextual theology

Although limited critical thinking was evident in response to the question *have you experienced God in the midst of those worries?* There was evidence of emerging contextual theology as life and Faith integrated. Within SPA this is expected to happen more in M4, which will be explored later. It is however worth highlighting what happened in M2 in BS2: Worries. Table 4.2 overviews the progression of the contextual expressions of theology.



**Table 4.2** Five stories showing the progression between life-Faith-life

5. Transformation - God changes circumstance		LIFE
4. Powerlessness transformed into power through prayer		
3. Look to God to intervene through prayer (experience of trust, faith and doubt)		FAITH
2. No control over circumstances - powerlessness		
1. Difficult circumstances		LIFE

Participants firstly gave examples of facing difficult circumstances such as unemployment, extreme sickness within the family or being arrested for drug possession. All five stories began with the participant stating the nature of their problem and the stress caused. Refilwe states, 'I was really worried and stressed that I don't have a job'. Masego explains that her dad lost his sight and after becoming paralysed the nurse told her he would die. She states, 'Oh, my God then I became so worried'. Secondly, the circumstances described were as being outside the control of the individuals. They experienced powerlessness in the face of their adverse circumstance.

Thirdly, the participants therefore looked to God to intervene. They expressed faith and trust that God would bring change in their situations. This was exhibited through fourthly, praying to God with participants believing their situations would be changed. The reason participant's indicated that they prayed, as prayer was perceived to change circumstances for the better and thereby reduce worry. Four out of the five stories then speak how they prayed to God for help in their situation. In the midst of difficulties and worries, the participants turned to God to answer their prayers and to bring a change in their circumstances.

Although a strong faith in God was evident, doubt and unbelief was also indicated. Oupa also tells the group that he prayed to God after being arrested for drug possession: 'I was praying hard and I thought God was not there. I said "ahh this thing of God, God is not existing!" (5:201). Masego describes while praying for a job for her brother 'I lost my hope. I lost my faith' and 'sometimes I felt like I'm a failure'. In these examples Oupa and Masego encountered doubt and unbelief in God when after praying nothing in their situation changed. Further critical reflection concerning these doubts could have been beneficial, regarding why they doubted, what they learnt from the doubt, how they perceive doubting in the Christian life.

Fourthly, their stories indicated that through prayer, powerlessness was transformed into a sense of power, believing that God would respond. Describing how they were praying, fervency of prayer was

expressed. Both Ouma and Refilwe state, 'I was praying hard' while in the midst of their worries. Finally, participants told of transformation as God changed their circumstances. Participants told of experiencing God in their lives in the midst of their worries. Four of the examples explicitly express belief that God intervened in their circumstances and brought change. Refilwe states 'I got a permanent job'; 'the Lord just answered my prayer' (5:181). Masego's brother also found a job to which Masego responds, 'God is really good and He restored the soul of Thabiso in a way'. Oupa was released from jail after three days which he attributes to God working in the situation: 'it's where I saw God' (5:201).

This progression was evident from each of the participants giving examples from their lives of when they had experienced God in the midst of their worries. The progression for each of them started with life, moved to Faith, and returned to life. In this way there is a clear indication of how faith was appropriated or applied within their life context to bring about transformation. These stories reveal an emerging contextual theology of these township young adults in relation to their faith/trust/doubt in God, and how prayer transforms their powerlessness into power resulting in transformation.

#### 4.9.4 Summary

The data from the Bible Studies shows that Groome's SPA can be effective in promoting critical thinking. This was especially shown in BS1: Neighbours. The data reveals that SPA encourages critical thinking about the present as participants seek to question, affirm or refuse past and present praxis. Critical reflection concerning future action will be explored in relation to Movements 4 and 5. The data however indicated that critical thinking is not a given. Groome relies on Freire who writes that conscientization 'represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness' (1973:19). Groome encourages intentionality in developing this otherwise it's unlikely to take place (1980:127). This was affirmed within Bible Study 2 which contained little critical reflection. Data highlighted that more probing questions elicited deeper understanding and thought regarding the reasons and consequences of participant's actions. Intentionality in encouraging critical reflection within M2 is therefore essential.

For Groome, Christian education should encourage critical thinking as it promotes people to think socially as well as personally (1991:25). He writes:

It must raise the critical consciousness of Christians. In this sense it must be an education which enables people to be aware of, to affirm and to be thankful for, how Christian our community is already. But it must also question, critique, and bring the consciousness the not-yetness both in our own community and in the world, and call us forward toward being more faithful Christians in response to the Kingdom (1980:126-7).

Although there being few instances of critical reflection with BS2: Worries, participants gave contextual expressions of theology as they told stories of experiencing God in their worries. In this way the participants questioned and critiqued their present situation and through trust and faith in God moved forward in being ‘more faithful Christians in response to the Kingdom’. This was an unforeseen consequence of M2. There was however limited awareness regarding the socio-contextual factors which contributed to their concerns of unemployment or sickness.

#### **4.10 Movement 3: Christian Story**

##### 4.10.1 Introduction

Groome’s Movement 3: Christian Story will now be explored as it was outworked within the SPA process within the township church. I understood the purpose of M3: Christian Story to ‘re-present to people’s lives the teachings and spiritual wisdom of Christian Story and Vision around a theme’ (Groome 2011:318). Groome places a great deal of emphasis upon the facilitator presenting the Christian Story to the participants. In exploring if M3 was adequately outworked, it is necessary to explore the facilitator’s relationship to the Christian Story within the education process. For this reason, codes were developed relating to the facilitator’s interaction with the Christian Story (Appendix 5). From these codes and categories, this section will explore the interaction of the facilitator implementing M3: Christian Story.

##### 4.10.2 The hermeneutical task of the facilitator

The word *hermeneutics* comes from the Greek word *hermēneuin*, meaning to interpret, exegete, explain, or translate. Groome writes concerning the facilitator’s responsibility of presenting the Christian Story during Movement 3:

The educator’s activity in movement 3 is essentially a hermeneutical one; she or he interprets and explains the aspects of Christian community Story/Vision as appropriate to the generative theme(s) or symbol(s) of the occasion and in dialogue with the stories/visions of participants (1991:223).

The hermeneutical task of the facilitator is an important one as they interpret the Christian Story in relation to the generative theme of the Bible Study. It is this interaction between the Biblical text and the generative theme which will be explored.

##### 4.10.2.1 Bible Study 1: Neighbours

Within BS1: Neighbour, the generative theme was *Loving your Neighbour*. Participants began with a focusing activity, viewing photographs of scenes from the township and discussed who they would find easy and hard to help. The facilitator then encouraged the group to read the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37. Each person in the group read a verse from the story. Verse 29 was then repeated to the group, where Jesus questions: ‘Who is my neighbour?’ With no interpretation from the

facilitator, the group discussed their understanding of who their neighbour is in their context and in light of the Bible passage. The passage was then discussed in greater detail later in the group.

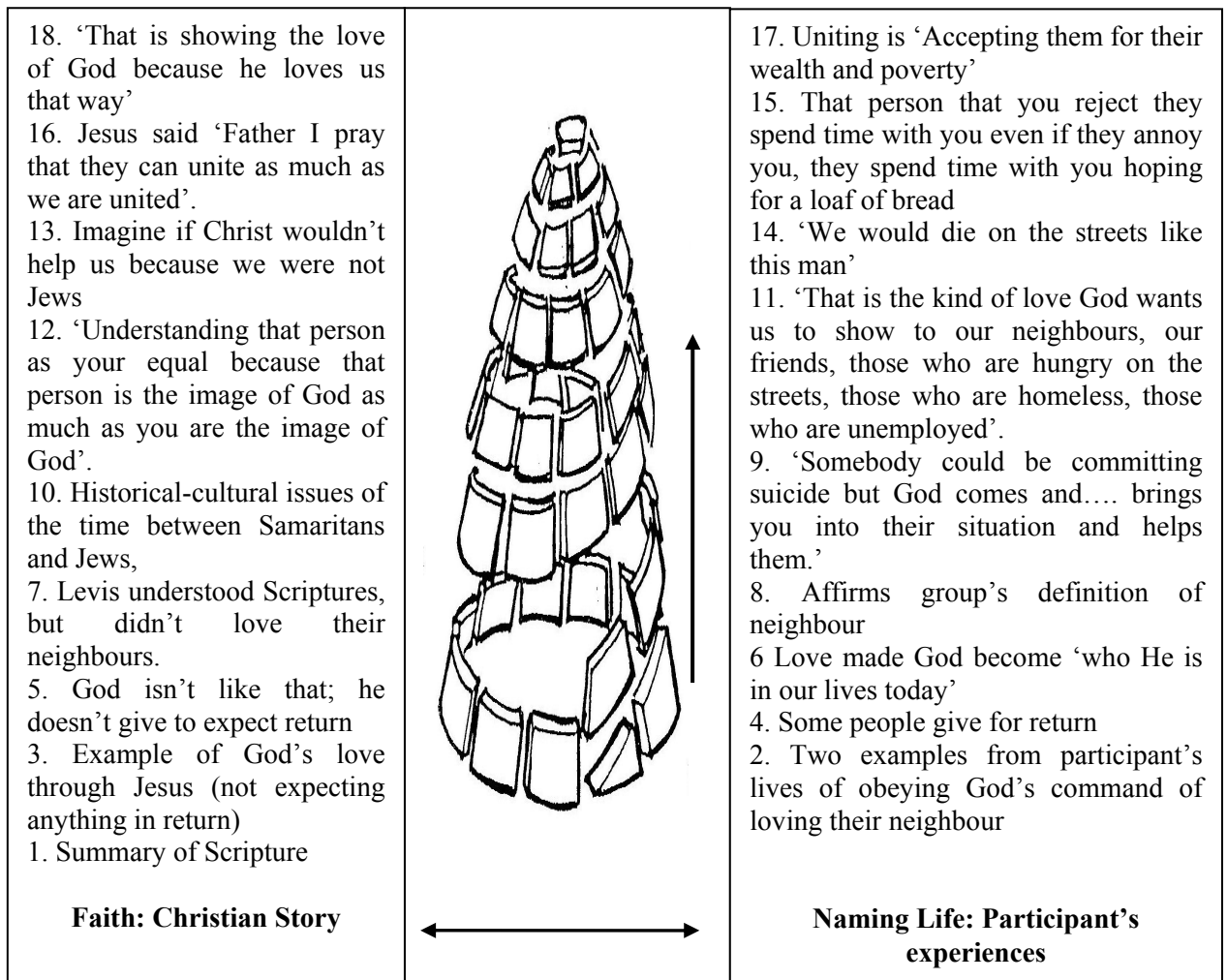
After doing the focusing activity and having read Luke 10:25-37 there was further twenty-two minutes of discussion relating to: 1) the participants of helping their neighbours and whether it was easy to love them to do so, and; 2) whether they thought the church was good at loving people. Mbongeni then proceeded to explore the text of Luke 10:25-37 and how it related with their context through a monologue for six minutes (1:305-310).

The data indicates that throughout this monologue Mbongeni dialogically interweaves Faith and life together. The diagram shows how Mbongeni engages in contextual Christian education, from the bottom up, interweaving the Christian Story and the participant's contexts. Figure 4.2 shows the instances the facilitator draws on references from either: 1) the *Christian Story*, or, 2) occasions where participants *Named Life*. It reveals a constant movement between Faith and life.

Although Mbongeni had undertaken historical-cultural exegesis relating to the Scripture passage in preparation for the Bible Study, he does not start with this. He immediately starts by summarizing what he perceives as the main point of the passage (1): 'the most important principle or teaching that Christ is giving is that people should learn to love one another regardless of where they come from, regardless of how they look, regardless of their situation'. This summary is however done in relation to both Kitso and Sechaba's stories (2) of having helped others, which he affirms:

*Mbongeni:* You were saving a person's life when you were helping them with the epileptic problem.  
You were helping someone else get some form of clothing and have dignity in the community because they have something to wear that people can look at them with respect again

Mbongeni draws 'lines of connection' between the practice of the participants and the text. He affirms to the group that they were already following Christ's teaching, by drawing on two examples.



**Figure 4.2** Content of facilitator's monologue showing the dialectic between Faith and life

Next he draws on the Christian Story showing the participants how God gave each of them selfless love through Jesus Christ (3). He states, that God is the example, that 'He didn't want us to pay Him back with some form of price, because some people would try to help you with some form of expectation, you scratch my back I scratch your back' (4). He affirms that God isn't like man in the respect of wanting a return, but rather gave selfless love (5). This is then related to God's activity in the participant's lives: 'It's LOVE that made Him become what He was, who He is in our lives today' (6). The Christian Story is then referred to again, as Mbongeni shares historical understanding with the group about the Levis being the 'ones who understood the scriptures better. But they could not show the simplest message of the scripture, LOVE to your neighbor'.

Next there are two parts related to context. Firstly, Mbongeni affirms the group's definition of neighbour, being 'a person you meet everyday in your life, that somebody that needs you to help them (8). Next, he gives a contextual hypothetical example, stating, 'somebody could be committing suicide but God comes and.... brings you into their situation and helps them' (9). Finally Mbongeni outlines the cultural issues of the time between Samaritans and Jews, thereby indicating the cultural

connotations of the text and how revolutionary it was that a Jew took care of the Samaritan (10). Mboneni goes on, ‘that is the kind of love God wants us to show to our neighbours, our friends, those who are hungry on the streets, those who are homeless, those who are unemployed’. He concludes, ‘it is not about moving mountains. It’s about that one step drawing closer to knowing and understanding that person as your equal because that person is the image of God as much as you are the image of God’ (12).

Mbongeni encourages the participants to imagine a different outcome from Scripture (13). He asks participants to ‘Imagine if Christ said to Himself that no I’m not gonna help you because you are not Jews. We would also have DIED... on the streets like this man’ (14). The horizons of the Christian Story and the participants are brought together as Mbongeni encourages them to imagine the implications of certain actions. Another real-life situation is given in attempting to help participants connect the text with life, giving an example of someone spending time with you ‘hoping for a loaf of bread’ (15).

Then another Scripture passage is drawn on from memory (John 17:22-23) as Mbongeni assertively begins to conclude: ‘But God wants us to show that love through helping other people because at the end of the day he sees us as one. He said father, I pray that they can unite as much as we are united’ (16). This is then concluded with applying the Scripture to their context: ‘And uniting with somebody is accepting somebody with their right and wrong. Accepting them for their evil and goodness. Accepting them for their wealth and poverty’ (17). Finally, he brings the text and life together in one final statement, ‘that is showing the love of God because he loves us that way’ (18) (1:305-310).

According to Gadamer, hermeneutics has the task of translating meaning from one “world” to another. He states that there is a *fusion of horizons*: ‘every encounter with tradition that takes place within historical consciousness involves the experience of the tension between the text and the present’ (1979:273). Fiorenza notes that there is a hermeneutical spiral, where there is a ‘to-and-fro action’ between the text and the reader and their context. The consequence should be a continuous movement between the text and reader and between the past and present (2009:76-77). This is what we can see from Figure 4.2. Rather than the two worlds of text and reader being separated, they are drawn together by Mboneni. The interweaving spiral of faith-life has eighteen segments with nine distinct connections between life and Faith occurring within the six minutes of monologue. Through referencing the stories participants have shared in relation to the Christian Story, Mbongeni puts value on each area as a source of knowledge which is legitimate and the link between Faith and life. This has been helped by the twenty-three minutes of discussion of context before Mbongeni approached the text in detail. The data indicates that the success of this interweaving relied on the opportunity for participants to *Name Life* concerning the generative theme.

From this example, Mbongeni is able to use the ‘bottom up’ methodology of incorporating people’s experiences to the text. Although Mbongeni had previously done a course on hermeneutics as part of his theology degree course, the course predominantly taught a top-down’ methodology of interpretation and rooted within the critical-scientific-modern paradigm (Fiorenza 2009:63). Mbongeni however takes the skills learnt learning how to facilitate SPA and successfully applies them here. He also uses historical interpretative skills from his hermeneutics course and effectively adds depth and scholarship to the discussion.

Groome writes that, ‘the Christian faith should connect with the participants souls, make sense to their minds, ring true to their experience, and be an enticing way to make meaning out of life’ (2011:318). Therefore the facilitator must ‘share the Story and Vision of Christian faith in ways that are pertinent to the theme and meaningful for this group, context, and occasion’ (Groome 2011:318). From the example above, Mbongeni was successful in accomplishing this. The example above highlights how this was practically outworked within the township Church while implementing SPA. The relationship between the facilitator within the second Bible Study and the Christian Story will now be explored.

#### 4.10.2.2 Bible Study 2: Worrying

Within BS2: Worries, the generative theme was centred on *Worrying*. The facilitator brought three Scripture passages to the group throughout the course of the study. Twenty-six minutes into the Bible Study, Matthew 6:25-33 was read, where Jesus encourages his hearers not to worry as they are more valuable to God than the birds of the sky, was reflected upon by the facilitator and then the group. Fifty minutes into the Bible Study, another two Scriptures were read, including Romans 14:17-18 and Matthew 13:44. These passages related to seeking God’s kingdom and were discussed by the group questioning how seeking God’s kingdom helps take away worries.

This spiral from life and Faith was also evident within BS2: Worries. Questions prepared beforehand were asked to participants encouraging them to relate the Christian Story to life (Appendix 2). For example, having read the passage from Matthew 6:25-33, the group were asked: *how does this passage encourage you not to worry?* These Bible passages and questions gave structure to the discussion.

After Matthew 6:25-33 was read, Sarafia, the facilitator spoke for six minutes about it. This initially consisted of paraphrasing and summarising the passage. Next, the facilitator linked previous discussion about worries in life and the Bible passage together: ‘God knows that we all worry about something and here He says, “therefore I tell you do not worry about your life, about your future, about money, about whatever you worry today”’. She goes onto list aspects that participants said they worried about, such as ‘food’, ‘clothes’, ‘school fees’, ‘our families’. Subsequently Sarafia focused on God and who he is: ‘He is God. He is in control. He is our helper even if you are not working, He is

there for you. He is there for me... and He says don't worry about your life about your future' (5:218-220).

Sarafía then exhorts the participants not to do things that aren't pleasing to God, 'don't go around and do something which is not good to Him... Don't go and steal because you know that now I'm being worried and I know that there's no one who can help me. There's no money. There's no food.' She then goes back to the text, stating, 'We need to trust in God. He gives us this illustration for the birds... "These birds they didn't sow or reap". No! They just feed from God.' Human existence and life are then referred to in relation to the Christian Story, 'What about us human beings..? He said "don't worry about your life." Yes I know that maybe when you sit in the room of examination you worry about, "God am I going to do it?" But God is there... trust in Him' (5:218-220).

This cycle of life to Faith to life occurs as Sarafía addresses some of the questions people possibly face during times of worry, such as: "maybe am I alone in this world, why has such thing just come to me?" She continues, 'how can I trust you? How can I know you are there? But what He says seek first His kingdom and everything shall be added. That's why I said tonight God has the answer for your situation, for your worry' (5:218-223).

Although Sarafía engaged in 'bottom up' theology, there was a lack of resources drawn from Biblical scholarship. Unlike Mbongeni, she did not draw on historical-criticism concerning the text. Rather, what was stated was a reiteration of the text. This was then related to life situations. The question arises; did this have an effect on the text-life cycle? Within the development of Gerald West's *contextual Bible study*, he argues that the Biblical scholar who is trained and resourced in theology works in partnership with the faith community. Cochrane adds, if... the untrained readers are left unchallenged by the knowledge of the trained reader, the world of the text is often reduced to a particular experience or context' (1999:11). Without relating the historical background of the text, Sarafía's interpretation of the text was primarily reduced to the participant's experiences and context, thereby affirming Cochrane's observation. Sarafía's simple interpretation did not hinder meaning from going back and forth between text and context, as 'lines of connection' were formed.

Although Sarafía was a Bible College student, she was only two months into her course and had not undertaken any Biblical Studies. At this stage of her education Sarafía would not be considered a Biblical scholar. She did not come from a strong educational background and would be more on the side of the 'ordinary believer' rather than a scholar. She had however learnt how to facilitate SPA and her ability to interweave text and context without Biblical scholarship revealed that although Biblical scholarship could help ordinary believers, the educational process was not hindered by an ordinary believer facilitating the process.



#### 4.10.2.3 The facilitator's view of the Christian Story and context

This section will highlight characteristics of the educator's facilitation in relation to how they view the interaction between the Christian Story and participant's context. Firstly, the facilitators put importance on Scripture and the Christian Story as being authoritative and being divinely inspired as the 'word of God' (8:13). Mbongeni, after reading the Christian Story states, 'now as we have seen in this passage that the most important principle or teaching that Christ is giving is that people should learn to love one another regardless of where they come from..., regardless of how they look..., regardless of their situation' (1:305). For Sarafia, Scripture was viewed as something to be obeyed. She urges the group: 'what God wants us is to trust in Him is to seek first His kingdom, His will, to read His word and to obey His command. To do what He tells us' (5:223).

Within the Bible Studies, studying God's word was presented as God's provision for the group. While introducing the topic of worries, Sarafia states: 'and I know that each of us we know we all and we have the thing that we worry make us to worry about it... That's why God provide this topic for you and for me tonight to discuss. So God says, "don't worry about your future, about your situation, about your problems, about money"' (5:11). Scripture is viewed as having answers and help problems in their lives.

During the personal interview, when asked the question: 'what do you feel you've gained from that way of teaching?' Sarafia responds, 'I enjoyed it, as it will help me to know how to teach. So that made me to feel good. Ja because it is all about the word of God and the will of God' (8:13). Sarafia places importance within the educational process of being equipped in knowing how to facilitate a study on 'God's word'. Her positive emotional response of 'feeling good' was due to being equipped to facilitate understanding concerning the 'word of God' and 'the will of God', again emphasizing the high view of Scripture that she has.

The data indicates that the facilitators had a high view of Scripture; viewed as highly important and authoritative. This was seen from both the content that they generated from looking at the Scripture passages as seen above, as well as well as how they referred to Scripture more generally. Scripture is presented as providing solutions to everyday problems and facilitators encourage participants to obey and respect it. It has been evidenced that within other contextual Bible Studies within townships in South Africa, groups have had 'high esteem for the Bible as authoritative Word of God' (Van Zyl 2004:201). This is interesting as Schreier critiques liberation approaches to contextual theology for being 'better at hearing the cries of the people than at listening to the biblical witness or the testimonies of other churches' (Schrieter 1985:15). In contrast, this data indicates that importance was put on 'biblical witness'. This is important to note while considering SPA as contextual Christian education. It highlights that context does not need to come at the expense of the Christian Story. The

emphasis put on the Christian Story and its successful outworking within M3 is an important aspect of the data.

Secondly, the data indicates within M3 that the facilitators had a high view of the context of participants. This is highlighted through the facilitator's encouragement of participants to Name Life, and to share their experiences of the world. The amount of data generated concerning participant's life worlds indicates the importance the facilitators placed on encouraging such data generation. The facilitators encouraged this generation through problem-posing, eliciting and probing for further information regarding context, as well as affirming the participant's contributions. Furthermore the facilitators referred to the participant's stories and Named Life when exploring the Christian Story. This 'to and fro motion' between life and Faith highlights the value the facilitators placed on the participant's contributions about life. This highlights the relevance of M1 and M2 exploring *life*, before M3, as it is possible for the facilitators to draw on the content of M1 and M2 during the outworking of M3.

Context is viewed by the facilitators as something which is changeable rather than static. Context is not perceived in a fatalistic way, where the life-world cannot be changed or altered. It is rather seen by the facilitators as something which the participant's, with God's help, have the power to change and alter for the better. This follows Bevan's *praxis model* of contextual theology, which 'focuses on the identity of Christians within a culture as that culture is understood in terms of social change' (2002:70). The praxis model views that 'culture is a human product', and 'is therefore essentially good. But culture can be perverted, and in need of liberation and healing' (2002:75). Through placing importance upon the life worlds of the participants, the facilitators encourage the reading of the Bible from the participant's context, which according to West is viewed as an essential part of the contextual Bible Study process (West 1999a:63). Reflective action is therefore an essential part of the praxis model, as liberation is actively sought.

#### 4.10.3 Summary

The data indicated the Christian Story was central to the education process and was adequately outworked. The role of the facilitator was important in helping SPA serve as contextual Christian education through starting with the contextual stories and experience of participants generated discussion from below, rather than above. The facilitators, although varying in approach and academic prowess both outworked a 'to and fro' or spiral movement between the text and reader and between the past and present (Fiorenza 2009:76-77). In turn, this encouraged interpretation of the Christian Faith arising out of consciousness of the participant's context.

The data indicates that within both Bible Studies, the Christian Story connected well with the preceding and following SPA movements. This was evidenced in the way the discussion flowed

within the Bible Studies as participants interacted with the Scripture passages relating to their own context and Named Life. The facilitator's high view of both the Christian Story and the participant's context and stories, gave value to the content generated within the education process. This created an environment where the Christian Story was viewed as authoritative and relevant for speaking to the participant's contexts.

#### **4.11 Movement 4: Appropriate Christian Faith to life and Movement 5: Decision**

##### 4.11.1 Introduction

As the preceding section highlighted the facilitator's role in interacting with the Christian Story, this section will explore the participant's interaction with it. Following the five movements of SPA, this section will focus on *Movement 4: Appropriate Faith to life* and *Movement 5: Decision*. Groome notes that it is not easy or necessary to keep M4 and M5 apart (2011:325). Data indicated that these two movements overlapped substantially. For these reasons, they will be dealt with in the same section. Groome describes the combined dynamic of these two movements as 'the integration of life and Faith into lived Christian faith. These movements have two aspects: '(a) to recognize and see for oneself what this Faith might mean for one's life (judgement), and (b) to make choices accordingly (decision)' (2011:324).

I understood M4: Appropriate Faith to life to mean participants coming 'to see for themselves what the teaching and wisdom of Christian Faith might mean for their everyday lives' (Groome 2011:324-325). For participants responding to the outworking of previous movements, Groome's question is:

How does present praxis affirm and critically appropriate the version of Story/Vision made accessible in movement 3, and how are we to live more faithfully toward the vision of God's reign? (1991:249)

Movement 5 is the culmination of the process of previous movements. I understood M5: Decision to be an invitation for participants to make a decision regarding how to live Christian Faith in their context. It encourages participants to make decisions faithful to God's reign in what is humanizing and life-giving to all. It gives the opportunity for participants to make decisions regarding their praxis, as well as aiming 'to form them in the habit of making decisions conceptually and morally appropriate to Christian faith' (Groome 1991:267). The return to life in M5 renews people choice and effort to live their faith in place and time.

This section will explore the participant's interaction with the Christian Story in appropriating it to their lives. The participant's interaction with the Christian Story was one characterized by dialogical interaction with their socio-cultural context. The data indicates that M4 and M5 encouraged participants to appropriate the Christian Faith to their lives. New awareness of reality was evident as participants merging the horizon of the text with their contextual horizon. Lines of connection between

participant's experience and the Christian Faith created the opportunity for a new awareness to occur and for participants to appropriate faith to life. M4 and M5 will be explored within each of the two Bible Studies as undertaken within the township church.

#### 4.11.2 Movement 4 and 5 within Bible Study 1: Neighbours

Within BS1: Neighbours, the data revealed instances where the participants recognised for themselves what the Christian Story meant for their lives. These Faith themes were then appropriated to life through choices being made in light of this new understanding. These examples highlight the nature of contextual Christian education occurring through M4 and M5 through: 1) contextual definition of neighbour; 2) appropriating the Christian Story with the traditional African value of *Ubuntu*, and; 3) decision making.

##### 4.11.2.1 Neighbour: A contextual definition

Having explored the Biblical text of Luke 10:25-36: The Good Samaritan, to encourage participants in M4: Appropriating Faith to Life, Mbongeni asks participants: what kind of neighbours does God call us to be in Munsieville? (1:374). In response to this question, participants answer 'helping one another', being 'respectful, 'loving one another' (1:379-384). Sechaba responds 'I think God wants us to be active neighbours'. Mbongeni asks, 'active neighbours? In what way?'

*Sechaba:* In a way, I like the point you made earlier 'tit for tat, butter for fat'. Instead of us focusing on returns let's focus on being active. You mean lots of ways, one where it takes first steps, you know. It takes one step to help someone (1:388).

Sechaba's response critiques ideology within present action. Citing 'tit for tat, butter for fat', this expression conveys the idea that generosity and kindness are given in return for something. The culmination of SPA's previous movements results in Sechaba imagining a preferable future action and challenges the group to 'take first steps', and to 'be active', showing generosity and kindness to others first.

As the discussion continues, Sechaba states, 'its hard to us to be good to our neighbours is we don't understand the word neighbour properly'. Although the group had responded to the question 'who is my neighbour?' Sechaba isn't satisfied with the short definitions given, and asks the question once again. This occurs 33 minutes into the Bible Study. Through more discussion, a wider understanding of neighbour was proposed and the following interaction takes place:

*Mbongeni:* Okay, you don't understand the meaning of the word neighbour.

*Sechaba:* I'm taking it into context about the verse we read, 'cause that guy was a stranger to the guy who was beaten down. So our meaning and the question you asked who is your neighbour. Ja, I think that's where we are thinking a neighbour as literal. In a box (laughs), as people around me. But when I look, I think about the verse we read a neighbour can be anyone, anyone on the street, bend down that's your neighbour you have to (1:250-254).

Having had more time to think about the Bible passage, as well as being involved in the group discussion Naming Life, a greater level of critical thinking is done, generating a deeper understanding of the word neighbour. Sechaba isn't satisfied with the first time that it was discussed with the answer being someone living next to you. He responds that it's difficult to be a good neighbour because there isn't an adequate definition of the word. This leads to further discussion of the definition. The data indicates that the interaction between the participants re-defining the word neighbour, was generated in relation to the Biblical text read. In the dialogue above, Sechaba directly refers to the Biblical text: 'I think about the verse we read...' This process again reveals the legitimacy of the participants in the meaning-making process. Sechaba's probing adds depth to the discussion and adds greater critical thinking concerning both the Christian Faith and how it relates to life.

This greater understanding of the word 'neighbour' made an impact within the wider group. The interview data reveals that when asked if there was anything new the interviewees had come to understand during the Bible Studies, the new understanding of the word 'neighbour' was still impacting the participants.

*Siya:* It helped me so much because of what Mbongeni said about the neighbours I also thought my neighbour is the house next door. A neighbour is someone else like wherever I go the person next to me is my neighbour (2:13)

*Sechaba:* Well neighbours, it still speaks to me even today for the mere fact that we loose the concept of the word neighbour. I think we basically take it out of context and we think a neighbour, cause in a Zulu culture is makhelwane (Zulu - 'Neighbour'). So normally makhelwane (Zulu - 'Neighbour') is somebody who builds next to you. But then it's something deeper as the context of the verse said that makhelwane (Zulu - 'Neighbour') a neighbour is somebody who (pause) who needs helps at a certain time you're at. If you share a space with someone next to you that's your neighbour at that time (3:21-23).

Within M4, Groome questions *in what ways is present praxis questioned and called into judgement by it?* Understanding from the Biblical text brought greater insight to their context, as Sechaba compares the traditional Zulu understanding of the word makhelwane/neighbour, with the new revelation that the text and group discussion has brought. Groome again questions: *How does this Story call us*

*beyond present praxis to live more faithfully into the Vision of God reign?* (Groome 1991:251) This new definition of neighbour for both Siya and Sechaba calls them beyond their present understanding and praxis. Both reflect on the revised meaning of the word neighbour, and the implications it has for them in trying to love their neighbour who occupies the space next to them.

Reflecting on the Bible Study, Mbongeni affirms that he ‘sensed’ participants began to see things in a different way. He highlights that the discussion enabled new meaning to occur regarding the definition of neighbour. He states that the Bible Study for the participants ‘was more informative than expected, more challenging than expected’ (4:19, 36:36). Through exploring both the Christian Story as well as Naming Life re-defined their definition of the word neighbour. The participants repeatedly referred to the Biblical text and using critical analysis appropriated the meaning within their context.

#### 4.11.2.2 ‘Ubuntu, you must help your neighbor’

BS1: Neighbour, revealed appropriating the Christian Story with the traditional South African values. For example, Sechaba places himself by sharing an experience of his Roman Catholic aunty who gave breakfast each morning to an epileptic neighbour:

*Sechaba:* it’s like my aunty became the Good Samaritan. We were the Levites who were walking past. So that taught me and my little sister that we have to give. We must start giving ‘cause when my aunt is not home and the guy comes it’s up to us to initiate that’. So that was what my aunty was teaching me that here this is a normal thing as ubuntu, you must help your next neighbour (3:80).

Sechaba inhabits the text and provides the group with an appropriation of the Christian Story within a story from his life. He identifies his aunty as the Good Samaritan and himself in the story as a ‘Levite who were walking past’ those who were injured. He continues, ‘I felt convicted that there’s a lot of things that we have not been doing for our neighbour. So ja I think we are not being good Samaritans (3:45).

Sechaba’s relates the South African principle of ubuntu with helping his neighbour, stating ‘you must help your neighbour’. South African theologians (Ramasamy & Krezschmar 2000, Villa-Vicencio 1995, 1997, 1999) have also related the principle of ubuntu to contextual theology within South Africa. Villa-Vicencio writes:

Traditional African understandings of ubuntu affirm the organic wholeness of humanity – a wholeness realised in and through other people. The notion is enshrined in the Xhosa proverb: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through persons). This is a belief that recognizes within other people the presence of the divine through which a person attains full

humanity. Ubuntu involves the realisation that for better and worse we are shaped by a host of others with whom we share our lives (1999:169).

The traditional African wisdom of ubuntu is seeing humanity as being linked to and in relationship with others (Ramasamy & Krezschmar 2005:167). Identity is therefore found in the African sense of community which includes and unites (Villa-Vicencio 1995:70). This therefore shows the wisdom of Sechaba in relating the Bible passage of loving neighbours to the idea of ubuntu, stating ‘this is a normal thing as ubuntu, you must help your next neighbor’.

Mogoba relates ubuntu with Christianity in arguing: “the Gospel is about enabling people to realize their full humanity... and ubuntu is an African understanding of humanity that this country will do well to rediscover. It has to do with realizing one’s full potential as a person” (in Villa-Vicencio 1997:38). Mogobo links ubuntu with ‘realizing full humanity’, which is evidently seen being accomplished in community with others. Ubuntu has also simply been defined as means humanness in community, and is viewed as a possibility for overcoming ‘individualistic greed and selfishness’ (Ramasamy & Krezschmar 2005:167).

Ubuntu informs Sechaba’s understanding of the Christian Story within his context. Sechaba during the personal interviews defines the word neighbour as someone who he ‘shares a space with’. In response I question him how the Bible passage relates with the context: ‘In the Bible passage of the Good Samaritan how does that relate into your context seeing your neighbour as someone who you share space with? He replies:

*Sechaba:* Being the Good Samaritan would mean in that moment in time I share space with someone and then somebody needs my help. As a good neighbor I’m supposed to jump in and help that person. As a good neighbor that’s what the story talks about to me because I’m pretty sure that the guy who needed help from the Samaritan they were not living next to each other. For that moment they shared a space. The Good Samaritan saw a need and he decided to help out. And then that’s why I like the question that Christ after that whole scene He asked, ‘then who is a good neighbor?’ after that whole scene then the Samaritan was a good neighbor because he saw a need and he decided to help. So that’s what it showed me that in every space I’m at, if I share it with someone and somebody need, is in a need as a good neighbor I’m supposed to step in and help (3:34).

This is a clear example of contextual Christian education as Sechaba applies the principle of ubuntu to the new definition of neighbour generated within the Bible sStudy. Lines of connection between the Christian Story and life are evident within Sechaba’s contextual analysis. Sechaba’s hermeneutical approach of living within the text, through a spiral hermeneutic shows the capability of an ‘ordinary’

believer' to proceed the 'to and fro' movement between the horizons of the text and life, helping contextual understandings of theology emerge. This encouraged participant's to 'inhabit the text', to apply principles and wisdom from the Christian Story into their Life and contextual reality. Although Sechaba is an ordinary believer, he makes this line of connection between Christian tradition and African culture, in the same way that academic theologians do. This emphasises the capacity of ordinary believers to derive contextual theology from the grass-roots, through appropriating the Christian Story to life. In this way the participants made their own lines of connection between the text and their socio-cultural contexts.

#### 4.11.2.3 Decision making

Within M4 and M5 participants are prompted to imagine actions which are life-giving for those around them, pedagogy must also encourage volitional committing: 'volitional committing, then, is both expression and source of human conscience – of what enables us to discern rightly and to do what is fitting, true, and good' (1991:97). For Groome, pedagogy must encourage regenerating, which 'reflects the will to future well-being' (1991:95). Groome writes that our bodies have a disposition for regenerating ourselves and prompts us to be life-giving for others, and society (1991:95). This has been evidenced in the examples above relating to Sechaba. This is also evidenced by Siya, who admitted that he does not greet his neighbour: 'even though I want to greet her, something is holding me back, you know, not to greet her. Because of last I did greet she just look at me you know (laughter) that made me to say okay (1:178). Although Siya admits there is something holding him back from greeting them, he knows that his actions need to change especially as he is a Christian:

*Siya:* What I noticed yesterday... what I have to work on; I don't greet my neighbours. And I call myself a Christian, you know. And when they look at me they will say, "all Christians are the same". Like what I do maybe another Christian are doing and whereby I know I'm wrong, you know, I have to greet them (2:89).

Siya firstly critiques the cause of present action of not greeting his neighbour, due to the past action of his neighbour not reciprocating his greeting. He maintains that his present thinking is incorrect and knows that as a Christian he should be greeting them, thereby giving them respect and dignity. Consequently he imagines a preferable future that would be more life-giving in his relationship with his neighbour. He refuses to duplicate what is given and then commits to changing his action, concluding that 'I have to greet them' (1980:186). These examples reveal that critical reflection concerning future action was encouraged through SPA. The aspects Groome noted as being essential for critical thinking of imagining, regenerating and committing, occurred within the Bible Study.

An example of changed behaviour due to the Christian Story is Refilwe's commitment to help her neighbour who lives in a shack in an informal settlement next to her house.



*Refilwe*: Like for example there's this ko gae ke strata so then fo pele (Tswana - 'at my home there's a street which in front of'). It's just a corporate space so go na le mekhukhu (Tswana - 'there are shacks'). So batho bateng (Tswana - 'the people who live there') they need water like gaba batla metsi baya ko tlase kwa bailo kga metse (Tswana - 'when they need water they go down there to fetch water'), so last nake nagana gore why ke sa re nkoko ole le yena atlo kga ko gae (Tswana- 'I was thinking of telling the other granny to come and fetch water from my home') cause we got a tap so I'm going to start telling her gore akanna atla akga metse ko gae (Tswana - 'that she can come to fetch water from my home') (1:424).

Groome writes that decisions can be 'behavioral' [sic] where 'participants can make choices about the morals and ethics, values and virtues by which they live their lives (2011:330). Refilwe imagines a preferable future in deciding to physically act in a way which would be life giving to others. This is through responding to the specific need of providing water for a poor elderly neighbour. Refilwe says with resolve 'I'm going to start tomorrow', helping the granny in the shack (1:161, 423:425). In response to the workshop on loving your neighbour, Refilwe has seen a need of her neighbor, imagined a preferable future and committed to taking action to solve that problem. In this way they perceive what they can do to create a preferable future for those around them as well as themselves, through turning to their neighbour.

#### 4.11.3 Movement 4 and 5 within Bible Study 2: Worries

In exploring M4 and M5 within Bible Study 2: Worries, the data developed several themes relating to the participant's: 1) appropriating own knowledge of the Christian Story; 2) generating understandings of the Christian Story, and; 3) perceptions of God and His agency in the world. These again highlight aspects of how SPA supported the development of contextual Christian education. These will now be highlighted.

##### 4.11.3.1 Appropriating own knowledge of the Christian Story

Within the Bible Studies the participants did not only rely on the facilitators for input from the Christian Story. They added their own sources of knowledge relating to the Christian Story. These sources of knowledge built upon the Christian Story as related by the facilitator within the Bible Study. The participants then appropriated this joint knowledge (from both facilitator and themselves) to life. Interestingly, although most participant's had brought Bibles with them to the Bible Studies, participant's referenced Bible passages from memory. This was evident from five participants adding their own knowledge of the Bible to the discussion.

For example, Masego added Bible verses she knew to the discussion three times. In response to reading Matthew 6:25-33 and answering *how does the passage encourage you not to worry*, Masego

adds to the Christian Story that has already been shared. She cites Psalm 24:1 and Jeremiah 29:11 which she knows by heart. She applies both passages to the question of what causes her not to worry. She cites “the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it” (Psalm 24:1), adding: ‘The earth, everything, me, my family, the very same exam that I’m writing that I’m worried about - I don’t have to worry about it because God knows about my future already.’ Masego then immediately cites Jeremiah 29:11, ‘where God says ... “I’ve got plans for you”’. In application Masego states, ‘So why should I worry about tomorrow? Whereas God He’s giving me tomorrow already because it’s the plan of God, because everything that is in the world is God’s (5:234). Masego builds on previous knowledge of the Christian Story, applies it to the theme of Worries within the Bible Study and appropriates this to her life. Four other participants also drew on their own knowledge of the Christian Story to relate it to theme of the Bible Study.

Participants referencing the Christian Story from their own knowledge give an indication of the church’s emphasis on members and attendees knowing Scripture. Within the life of the church, Scripture played an important part in the traditions and rituals of community life together. This was outworked in sermons given through preaching twice on a Sunday; through mid-week Bible study meetings in participant’s homes; as well as through the youth and young adult’s groups. Encouragement was also given for church attendees to read their Bibles individually, or with their families on a daily basis. This reveals the important place of the Christian Story within the life of the church, and is reflected through the knowledge that participant’s contributed within the Bible Studies.

This however raises the question of where this Biblical knowledge is coming from and whether the hermeneutical process is contextual or rather imported from other contexts such as teachings inherited from American television evangelists or foreign missionaries. It is the group’s responsibility to name what they perceive to be authentic within their context. South African theologians have cautioned awareness of these issues (Cochrane 1999:9, West 1993). Gerald West emphasises the need for critical reflection of the Bible arguing that, ‘if we do not find ways of reading the Bible which are transformative and liberating in our context then we are abandoning the Bible to those who use it to legitimate domination and oppression’ (West 1993:19). From the participant’s input of Christian Story and tradition, it is evident that they seek to appropriate the liberating and transforming nature of the Christian Story within their context. The data highlights that SPA enables participants to add to the richness of the group’s understanding of the Christian story by inputting their own knowledge, interpretation and application to the discussion as well as their context.

#### 4.11.3.2 Generating understandings of the Christian Story

As previously seen, the facilitators interpreted the text through the hermeneutical spiral of relating the Christian Story to life. The data indicates the participants brought a substantial amount of their own reflections of the text, also exhibiting a strong interaction between life and Faith. Understanding the

text was evidenced to be a communal activity. This process was for the most-part enabled by the facilitator asking questions about the text: For example, having read Romans 14:17-18 and Matthew 13:44, which refers to Jesus saying, ‘the kingdom of God is like heaven buried in a field...’ the group were asked: *what is God’s kingdom?* Responses from participants varied, from ‘it’s everything’ to citing their own knowledge of the Bible. Participants offered their own understanding of the Christian Story. Ofentge contributes his own Bible knowledge, which resonates with other members of the group:

*Ofentge:* I believe that in His kingdom somewhere in the bible it says in my kingdom there’s no worry, there’s no tears-

*Siya:* (overlapping) Sorrow-

*Ofentge:* (overlapping) There’s no sorrow, there’s no -

*Kitso:* There’s no sickness.

*Ofentge:* There’s no sickness in His kingdom. His kingdom is very special. It doesn’t accommodate problems (5:310-314).

Ofentge references a passage from the book of Revelation 21:4 which reads that in the New Jerusalem, God ‘will wipe every tear from their eye. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’. The kingdom of God is therefore referred to as a perfect state of being where there’s no tears, sorrow, sickness and which ‘doesn’t accommodate problems’. The contributions from both Siya and Kitso indicate they are aware of the same text, as they overlap with Ofentge in reciting it. This is a clear example of multiple participants contributing their knowledge of the Christian Story to the education process.

Siya however acknowledges the tension of the perfections of God’s kingdom as something which is worked towards, ‘We are not perfect but we are striving to be perfect, you know’. He continues ‘When you push you know it’s where you get there. By exercising your faith it’s where you getting what you want’.... That’s the kingdom of God because you have to fight like you believe in it, you have to push’ (5:308). This view shows the passion and aggression which Siya expresses regarding the Kingdom of God. This principle, which Siya is possibly referring to, is found in Matthew 11:12, where Jesus states, ‘the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it’. The group has contributed meaning together with several people building on the knowledge contributed previously by another participant.

Within BS2: Worries, another question asked encouraging M4: Appropriate Faith to Life was: *What does it mean to seek God’s kingdom?* Participants added their own interpretations concerning seeking

God's kingdom, 'I think it's to let go of the negative things', 'to forget about yourself', 'concentrating on your spiritual being', 'to seek God's will... through reading the Bible'. Refilwe states, 'I think that to seek God's kingdom, it's just obeying His commands, obeying His word' (5:338). Interestingly, all these interpretations related the participant's directly to the outworking of God's kingdom. It was a concept which the participants were seeking to make together more real in their lives. Rather, the cycle between life and faith continued, as the participant's applied the Christian Story into their situation.

In adding their own interpretation and application of what it means to seek God's kingdom, participants stated the consequences of doing so. These included receiving God's blessing, receiving revelation of 'the heavens' and 'unseen things' as well as purification. Refilwe and Masego highlight their understanding of the cause and effect nature of seeking God's kingdom.

*Refilwe:* Yes because by you being obedient He will be able to bless you but you can't expect Him to always bless you when you're being disobedient, when you go against His commands because He wants us to be faithful to His word, yes, as His children (5:342).

*Masego:* I think that it means to be thirsty and hungry for the word of God and once your spirit is hungry and when you feed your spirit it's whereby by you gonna be obedient. Whereby you gonna follow the commands of God and you gonna be the doer of the word of God. And by being the doer of the word of God, God will open up your spiritual eyes to see. He will reveal you know the heavens, the beauty. Ja it's whereby you being obedient, God will open up, will reveal the unseen things (5:350).

Masego emphasizes that seeking the kingdom of God must be rooted in action. She highlights that faith is rooted in action, being 'obedient', 'follow the commands of God' and 'be a doer of the word of God'. For Masego, God's Kingdom will come in her life through obedience to the Christian Story. She perceives that through obedience 'God will open up, will reveal the unseen things' of His Kingdom.

For Siya seeking God's kingdom involves the removal of the burdens of worries so that God can purify him: 'I will say to ask God to purify you, you know. To purify you in a way by when you come to Him you know, that everything that you've been through your worries, your burdens or I will say burdens. He has taken them away that He can purify you.' Although there was some repetition of what the facilitator had said during her talk on the text, there were also some fresh insights from the participants, such as Masego stating she was created and valued by God and therefore shouldn't worry.

These examples reveal that although different members contribute understanding from the Christian Story, the group does not negate what one person has said, but rather builds on the knowledge created. Different individuals contribute their reflections, creating a communal understanding, which is broader and more varied than one person's interpretation. The appropriation of the Christian Story to life is

evident in this process. Sedmak writes, ‘The many faces of faith in the many saints give us a taste of the healthy pluralism in the reappropriation of the tradition. This goes far beyond intellectual reappropriation. It uncovers spiritual reality’ (2002:63).

#### 4.11.3.3 Participant’s Spirituality: faith and trust in God

Finally, the data highlighted the participant’s spirituality appropriating Faith to life, especially relating to their faith and trust in God. As indicated, participants had faith and trust in God to transform their situations. A large part of this was built on their previous knowledge of God. The Bible Studies added to this knowledge of the Christian Story, which was then appropriated to their lives. Participants believed God was a good God who had plans for their lives. This section will explore the participant’s theology regarding God’s nature. Table 4.3 outlines the participant’s perception of God as found within the data.

**Table 4.3** Participant’s perception of God: reasons for trust and faith in God

<p><b>God is viewed as:</b> 'Creator' 'Teacher' Omnipresent: 'there through thick and thin' 'Good' 'Our helper' Dependable and faithful: 'He is there for you, he is there for me' 'Provider' He 'restores souls'. Giver of power: 'God has given us the power' 'In control' He 'prunes' He 'gives' a 'light' burden, and 'won't give you more than you can bear'</p>
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During BS2: Worries, participants read the passage Matthew 6:5-33 and were asked the question, how does this passage encourage us not to worry? In response to this question participants saw God as a provider and helper in the midst of difficulties. Wisdom states: 'like by just knowing that God is the provider that each time if you have a problem you go to God ask Him to assist you in everything. Then you'll know that God is there for you and there's nothing difficult to overcome'. Other participants also saw God as providing in different ways in the midst of their worries: Siya states that when he 'casts all his burdens onto Him', God 'gives' a 'light' burden instead to help him. This sentiment is echoed by Wisdom who states, 'He won't give you something that you know you won't be able to do'. Masego states 'God has given us the power' to overcome difficulties (5:288; 5:224). Faith and trust in God is expressed through stating belief in who God is, in relationship to them. God is seen as the provider and helper who controls and regulates the challenges with which the participants are faced.

God is described by the participants as being the 'creator' who is 'good' and who 'restores souls'. He is described as being 'our helper' and 'teacher' who 'prunes' to release gifting in participant's lives. He is described as being 'in control', 'our helper' and 'He is there for you, he is there for me' (5:219). There is also the faith that God is speaking through the discussion of the group. Sarafia notes that 'once the people are speaking out then the Holy Spirit also says something through us' (8:97-98). Two other participants also affirm this view in their individual interviews. These views of God reveal the participants believe that God is active in their reality throughout the Bible Studies. Stating that God is good, a restorer and pruner infer the participants expect God to bring about transformation for the better within their lives.

God is perceived as dependable and faithful. Wisdom states: 'that no matter how hard the situation you should always know that God is always there for you. He won't give you something that you know you won't be able to do. He's always there for you (5:280). Other participants also express God's faithfulness in their situations. Oftenge states, 'For every situation in your way you must know that God is there for us' (5:298). Refilwe adds: 'He'll see us through no matter what!' (5:227-228). Oupa adds: 'God is there through thick and thin' (5:403-404). There is a clear interweaving of the Christian Story to life as the participants apply what they have learnt about God into their immediate situation.

Groome writes that within M5, decisions can be 'affective' as 'participants can decide about their relationship with God' (2011:330). From the examples above, participants expressed their belief that God was in control of their situation and circumstance. He is expressed as dependable and faithful with the ability to provide and help. This is evident in Kitso's reflection that she learnt, 'do not worry about tomorrow cause God really already knew about what's gonna happen tomorrow, so like we need not have to worry about anything because our life lies on God's hand (7:23). To state that 'our life lies in God's hand' indicates that not only God is powerful controlling events, but he is also all knowing as God 'already knew about what's gonna happen tomorrow'. Kitso also affirms her belief that God has a purpose for her. She states, 'I realized in the Bible Study oh, my purpose is to live for God, is to pray, is to live holy, try to live holy you know and do not worry' (7:51:51).

Participants expressed relationship between themselves and God. The relationship was expressed through a sense of active partnership with God in life. Several participants indicated that for God to intervene in their life or circumstance it required an act from them to encourage that movement. For example Siya expresses that he must 'give my burdens to God' who will then give a lighter load each day (5:224). Masego refers to the worries and challenges in her life as mountains. She states that in order to 'tell the mountains to shift but we need to apply faith. Through faith it's where we shall see the greatness of God' (5:296). Both Siya and Masego express the need for them to act before God responds, 'to give burdens', or to 'apply faith' and 'tell the mountains to shift'. It is after this is done

that God is imagined to act, in either giving a lighter load to Siya, or by displaying God's glory by shifting the mountains.

Ofentge states 'I believe God says when we take one step for Him He shall take two for us. When we take two for Him He'll take four for us' (5:298). Ofentge through using the phrase 'taking a step for God' it indicates movement towards God or God's will. Ofentge believes that God will respond to that movement by doubling the amount of that movement 'for us'. This could indicate Ofentge's belief that God moves closer to him, or makes His will come to pass more rapidly when Ofentge moves towards God.

On the flip side, people's non-activity in relation to God was also expressed. This non-activity was evident through state of mind and awareness of God in life. For example, Kitso states 'those are things that we worry about and we forget that like God is there and our lives lie on God's hand. Those things we forget. And like last night mama Sarafia reminded us of "do not worry because God is there" (7:23). She goes onto state that the study 'It really helped us to have more faith in God and pushes us more closer to Him (7:77).

Masego describes losing faith and hope in the midst of worrying about helping her brother find a job. She says, 'In a way that, you know I lost my hope. I lost my faith. But by meditating upon the word of God, the word of encouragement they were right in the Bible (5:195). You know sometimes pastor Dan, you come to the Bible Studies with your issues although we know that God is always there for us, but challenges are also there. You can't deny that. We can't deny that sometimes you feel weak (6:76). For both Kitso and Masego they expressed a need to re-orientate themselves back to God to trusting that God was with them in their difficulties. For Kitso the Bible Studies 'pushed' her closer to God and to have more faith. For Masego she found hope by 'meditating upon the word of God'.

The participant's theology of God and his interaction in their lives reveals why they turned to Him with trust and faith in the midst of the harsh realities of their lives. Their situations, often marked by a sense of powerlessness were transformed through trusting God, and finding a sense of power and hope that He would bring breakthrough or change in their context. They believe that God is interested in them personally, and will help them overcome the worries they face. Affective decisions were made in the participant's relationship with God through their recommitment to trust Him in the midst of their worries. There is a theology of God partnering with them in their contextual situation to help them overcome. In this way the Christian Story was appropriated into the lives of the participants.

#### 4.11.4 M4 and M5 and Critical Reflection

Within M4 and M5 critical reflection is important. Groome desires for participants to engage in critical reflection involving Naming Life and the Christian Story results in participants 'moving beyond' their

present way of being, to 'more faithful Christian living'. As life and Faith interact and a new awareness of reality develops, 'participants can construct a more appropriate understanding of the Story and ways of living more faithfully into the Vision of God's reign' (Groome 1991:145). Although critical reflection is important within each of SPA's movements, M4 and M5 specifically enable critical reflection oriented towards the future, to occur. This is because revised thought and practice are called for in light of M3: Christian Story. M4 and M5 require participants '(a) to recognize and see for oneself what this Faith might mean for one's life (judgement), and (b) to make choices accordingly (decision)' (2011:324). To make judgement and decision concerning future thought and action, critical reflection is necessary.

For Groome, critical reflection oriented towards the future is an essential part of the SPA process. This must encourage critical reflection which encourages imagining, regenerating and committing. Firstly it 'imagines what future would be preferable' and 'to alter the present in the direction of the preferred consequences' (Groome 1980:186). Groome continues, 'pedagogy for conation must intentionally engage participants in imaginative activities to express the consciousness that arises from their acts of imagination, and to see for themselves what is and its consequences, what is not yet but can be or should be' (1991:96-7). This helps participants make decisions in light of the education process for a preferred future.

The data revealed that Groome's SPA encouraged critical reflection through participants thinking about the future through imagining, regenerating and committing. There were a total of 44 instances of critical reflection on the future. There were 15 instances during the Bible Studies and 29 instances during the personal interviews reflecting on the Bible Studies. Problem-posing questions were central to prompting participants to think about the future. These questions encouraged the use of imagination and in prompting participants to imagine a preferable future.

Within M4 and M5 there was evidence of critical reflection. For example, there was analysis of the unhealthy church practice of 'gangsterism'. Participant's also critiqued themselves, seeing that to love others practically, in the way the parable of the Good Samaritan encourages, would cost them something. In both scenarios, participant's reality was critiqued, and through new understanding given a choice about whether they would continue previous habits, or if their lives would be transformed by the Story. Through engaging in critical thinking regarding experience of past, present and future action, and interaction with the Biblical text, it was evident that a transformation took place. Sedmak writes:

When two cultures meet, cultural stories are exchanged. When two cultural stories meet, established meanings (stories) and newly introduced ones mingle and overlap. A transformation of meanings take place. This is when issues of truth become very complicated,



and cultural identities have to be renegotiated in the face of different, perhaps incompatible cultural stories (Sedmak 2002:92).

The data indicated new awareness of reality through participants merging the horizon of the text with their contextual horizon. For the participants, this exchange of cultural stories or fusion of horizons enabled a process of transformed meaning to take place. This was particularly evident in the discussion re-defining neighbours and relating the South African principle of ubuntu to generate new meaning of what it means to help neighbours. As life and Faith interacted, lines of connection between participant's experience and the Christian faith created the opportunity for a new awareness to occur.

West argues that ordinary readers 'read the Bible pre-critically because they have not been trained in the critical modes of reading that characterize biblical scholarship' (1999a:90). West states that ordinary readers, even though they may be 'conscientized' towards society, 'do not have the historical and sociological tools to engage critically with the biblical text' in the way that Biblical scholars do (1995:199). This maybe true, however the data of this study reveals that this does not stop ordinary believers from engaging in critical thought regarding the Biblical text and context. West goes onto write:

As I have argued, local communities of poor and marginalized believers have their own hermeneutics of resistance and survival within which they 're-member' the Bible and construct their 'working' theologies. They may be naïve and precritical, unsystematic and scattered, and they may draw incongruously on a range of symbols, rituals, readings and ideas, but they are theirs – they are what they live by (West 1999a:112).

Although these working theologies within the data were not complex, but at times were 'unsystematic' and 'scattered', they were still very meaningful to the group. In fact, the amount of critical thinking generated by the Bible Studies revealed the participants were engaging in constructing new meaning and sense, both to the Christian Story, as well as their context. To say that they are 'pre-critical' would be a damning description belittling their critical thinking capacities.

#### 4.11.5 Summary

The themes of the Bible Studies as well as the questioning and probing of the facilitators encouraged participants to actively talk about God in relation to their lives. Within both Bible Studies the participants spoke of God with ease and familiarity. Possible reasons could be related to firstly, being socialised within the church, where God and God's activity in the world is discussed regularly. Secondly, within South African culture an awareness of God is strongly evident, as is a strong view of spiritual things affecting every day life. The data indicates that participants did not feel God was mutually exclusive from their socio-cultural location. Rather God was talked about with confidence

acting in their lives and situations. A connection between life and Faith was therefore seen through the participant's perception of God's agency in the world and in their lives.

Within Bible Study 1, M4: Appropriating Faith to life, the group's analysis of their contextual reality and of the Christian Story encouraged them to revise existing definitions of the word *neighbour*. This was significant as participants were challenged to move beyond their present understanding and praxis. There was also the appropriation to the Christian Story of the South African cultural concept of *ubuntu*. This highlights lines of connection being made by participants between the Christian Story and their contextual reality. The group's increased understanding of both Scripture and their context encouraged them to imagine a preferable future and engage in M5: Decision. Participants make volitional commitments to change their behaviour to those around them through practical action.

The outworking of M4 and M5 within Bible Study 2 indicated that participants did not rely only on the facilitator for knowledge of the Christian Story. Rather participants referenced the Christian Story from their own knowledge and understanding. In doing so the participant's rich spirituality became apparent. Participants shared past stories of their faith and trust in God, as well as committing to affective decision through ongoing Christian belief and practice. These characteristics highlight that both M4 and M5 were adequately outworked within the context.

The participant's exhibited a hermeneutical approach of living within the text, through a spiral hermeneutic shows the capability of an 'ordinary' believer' to proceed the 'to and fro' movement between the horizons of the text and life, bringing contextual understandings of theology. Critical thinking was found to be an essential part within the educational process for M4 and M5 to be outworked. Within this 'to and fro' movement through critical thinking, the participant's perceptions and understanding of their contextual reality shifted as it was re-negotiated while interacting with the text. Participants made lines of connection between Christian tradition and African culture, in the same way that academic theologians have done. This emphasises the capacity and capability of ordinary believers to derive contextual theology from the grass-roots, through making their own lines of connection between their socio-cultural contexts and the Christian Faith. Through engaging in critical thinking regarding experience of past, present and future action, and interaction with the Christian Story, it was evident that within M4 and M5 participants judged what the Christian Story meant for them in their context. Decisions for revised patterns of thinking emerged, as well as agency for revised action.

### **Part 3: Data Analysis and Findings: Sub-question two**

#### **4.14 Introduction and Conceptualisation**

Sub-question two focuses on *whether SPA could potentially serve as a type of contextual Christian education*.

Christian education is noted as being ‘the educational process by which people learn to become Christian’. It therefore encourages people ‘to learn Christian beliefs, attitudes, values, and dispositions in order to engage in Christian actions’ (Astley & Crowder 1996:x). Contextual Christian education therefore enables this to happen while also being sensitive to context in both pedagogy and the content of the learning event. In South Africa, CCE will therefore be sensitive to the nation’s historical and socio-cultural context. Specifically within the township context, CCE will help people towards a ‘Christian interpretation of life that is conscious of its circumstances’ within the township (Bergmann 2003:16).

The previous section outlined the relevance of SPA in engaging in a praxis process and enabling contextual content to be generated within the learning event. The research findings showed that rather than the content of CE being spiritualised, individualistic and lacking contextual awareness, it was holistic, communal and contextual. However CCE does not only attend to content generated within an education event. The pedagogical practices within the learning event impact the extent that CE is indeed contextual. This section explores SPA’s pedagogical process that enabled the contextual content to be generated. It highlights the ‘shared’ aspect of SPA, as a participatory education process.

This question therefore explores SPA’s definition of being a ‘participative and dialogical pedagogy’ (Groome 1991:135) in relation to serving as a type of CCE. In order for CE to become truly localised, literature calls for church education to be democratized, encouraging local believers to participate in the education process and create knowledge (Cochrane 1999, West 1999a, Sedmak 2002, Fiorenza 2009). Through ‘reading’ in community ‘with’ each other, the education process enables theology to become contextualised (West 1995, 2007, Pears 2010). Consequently, the experiences of those participating in the education process were of central importance to this question. The participants past experiences of education are compared and contrasted with their experience of SPA’s pedagogical process.

In data analysis the framework *Participation* was used to explore the second sub-question, seeking to establish whether SPA could potentially serve as a type of CCE. Codes were created from the data. Examples of data codes were assigned to, include:

Code assigned: *facilitator as a learner with students*

*Mbongeni*: Nice to meet you all. I really hope we enjoy ourselves here as we gonna teach each other a bit more about God's word and well it's not about me telling you everything. But it's about all of us saying something and teaching each other and there's no one superior towards anybody. We all equal in this session. I just come up with the topic and we all just discuss that, alright (1:56).

Code Assigned: *facilitator questioning*

*Sechaba*: I don't see it as a teaching. It was a discussion because we opened up with the verse and then everybody said, okay there were questions asked and then everybody contributed by answering those questions. (3:64).

Codes relating to the facilitators role were created, including the facilitator: *as a learner with students*; *discouraging participation*; *encouraging participation*; *imposing understanding*, and; *questioning*. These codes created a category, *Facilitator and Participation*. Within the framework *Participation*, six categories were created from twenty-four codes. Categories included: *Facilitator and Participation*, *Meaning Making*, *Facilitator and Critical Reflection*, *Socio-emotional Feelings*, *Dialogue with Others*, and *Pedagogy*. For example the category *Dialogue with Others* was made from codes emerging from the data relating to group interaction. Instances of *respect of others in dialogue* and also *disrespect of others in dialogue* were recorded (Groome 1991, Freire 1996a, Woods 2004)). Instances of individuals within the group *questioning* each other or ideas were coded, as were instances of dialogue encouraging *group enrichment*. Finally examples of where dialogue between participants was subject-subject and subject-object were coded *I/It* and *I/Thou* (Buber 1970). For example, the literature indicates that the facilitator's role in either encouraging or discouraging participation is important within the participatory education. A category was therefore given of *Facilitator and Participation*.

Using the Atlas.ti co-occurrence tool, these codes and categories were cross-referenced with other categories and codes relating to the sub-question two. This enabled themes to be developed. For example, the category *Pedagogy*, included codes relating to *non-dialogical pedagogy* and *dialogical pedagogy*. When related to the other categories, including *Facilitator and Participation*, characteristics emerged of participant's experiences of previous education, as well as their experience of SPA. Themes therefore emerged out of the characteristics of the participant's experiences of previous education and also SPA.

#### **4.15 Experience of previous Christian education**

This section will highlight the participant's previous experiences of Christian education. This will then be contrasted with the participant's experiences of SPA within the following section. This will serve to

highlight the differences between instructional and contextual Christian education. The data was analysed by cross referencing the codes *non-dialogical pedagogy* with the other categories for sub-question two, including: *Facilitator and Participation*, *Facilitator encouraging critical thinking*, *Dialogue with others*, *Meaning-making*, and *Socio-emotional feelings*. Several themes emerged relating to characteristics of previously experienced CE. These characteristics will be outlined as well as consequences of previously experienced CE.

#### 4.15.1 Characteristics of previously experienced Christian education

Relating to past educational experiences, the participants expressed several aspects which did not encourage them to learn. Firstly, participants indicated that there's an educational 'gap' between those educating, and those receiving the education. The style of church education participants referred to when speaking of past experiences was one of more traditional education, where the preacher or teacher spoke from the front, to a group of church congregants or students.

*Masego*: If one person will teach us, we will keep on saying "amen". If you don't understand you'll keep on saying "amen" (laughter), you know (6:70).

*Sechaba*: There's a lot of teaching like with all this information around (long pause) but we're not learning nothing. So there's a gap we're missing.... I think the Bible Study is very important cause on Sunday (laughs) we don't have time to learn 'cause the pastor is on another level. There's no that sitting down; you ask questions, and I question back what you were saying. The pastor is just giving information, giving, giving, giving. We have to receive, receive (3:94-95).

*Mbongeni*: Sometimes people get confused and never have a chance to really understand (4:96).

Both Masego and Mbongeni highlight that education within churches does not connect between those educating and those being educated. Masego describes the situation where one person teaches, and where people respond 'amen', which indicates agreement, even if they don't understand. The pastor is therefore educating, while the congregation absorb passively, stating agreement, even if there is lack of comprehension. Mbongeni frankly admits that within church 'people get confused and never have a chance to really understand'.

Sechaba expresses frustration that 'with all this information around but we're not learning nothing'. He cites reasons for this gap. Firstly 'the pastor is on another level'. The gap for Sechaba is due to the pastor's disconnection from the congregation. This disconnection is created due to the pedagogical process, 'there's no sitting down; you ask questions, and I question back what you were saying'. The pastor is expressed as 'giving, giving, giving. We have to receive, receive' (3:94-95). This results in them 'learning nothing'. Sechaba describes an educational process where the pastor/educator is seen as possessing all the information, and where they are 'empty vessels' ready to be filled. This is however ineffective.

The participants describe a culture of church education which implements Freire's 'banking' model of education, where church members are viewed as empty vessels to be filled by the pastor who possesses the information (Freire 1996a). Freire writes, 'implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between man and the world; man is merely *in* the world, not *with* the world or with others, man is spectator, not re-creator' (2003:60). For Freire, the consequence of banking education is that as the participant is excluded from participating within the educational process, they are reduced to being spectators, thereby inhibiting the potential of transformation. Participants describe an educational gap while the banking model of education is implemented in church where they 'learn nothing', resulting in confusion and incomprehension. Effectively the participants are excluded and disempowered from the educational process which consequently lacks transformational potential. This educational process inhibits contextual Christian education from taking place as participants are not active agents within the educational process.

Secondly, the data found that within past experiences of church education, participants highlighted an inability to participate within the education process. A need to discuss and ask questions was subsequently expressed by participants.

*Kitso:* Like on the person who's standing there talking you will be the only who is talking. What if I don't understand? She or he has to ask me a question to see if I understand what is happening (7:95).

*Siya:* You get different pastors someone can be a teacher someone be a prophet and teach different ways. Some you understand them okay he is going to this way. Some you can't ask questions at church they be preaching you know. I'm in young adults I find it easier if we can discuss you know and put it on the table and then we discuss about it. How did you see it? (2:26).

*Masego:* Cause if one person will teach us, we will keep on saying "amen". If you don't understand you'll keep on saying "amen" (laughter), you know, and sometimes you've got a question or you want to add, or you understand what I'm saying? But you don't have that opportunity (6:70).

The participants are perceptive to describe the limitations of the 'lecture' style of education. This was expressed through participants stating there isn't the opportunity to interact with the 'educator', or to ask questions to help clarify understanding. Kitso states that with no questioning from the educator, there is no way to check comprehension 'what if I don't understand? She or he has to ask me a question to see if I understand what is happening'. For Kitso, importance is put on the educator asking questions. Masego however goes one step further. She recognizes that 'sometimes you've got a question or you want to add... But you don't have that opportunity'. Masego is aware that she should be involved and participating in the educational process, either through asking questions, or 'adding' thereby contributing to the knowledge and discussion.

Participants describe 'banking' education' and what Freire calls the "castration of curiosity" where 'the educator, generally, produces answers without having been asked anything!' (Freire & Faundez 1989:35). In contrast, within critical pedagogy, importance is put on both the educator asking questions, as well as participants asking questions. Critical pedagogues affirm this. Shor, writes, 'a Freirean critical teacher is a problem-poser who asks thought-provoking questions and who encourages students to ask their own questions. Through problem-posing, students learn to question answers rather than merely to answer questions' (1993:26). Faundez notes that 'it is a profoundly democratic thing to begin to learn to ask questions' (Freire & Faundez 1989:34).

Thirdly, the importance of the attitude and practice of the educator within the education process was highlighted. Mbongeni highlights that within traditional church education where a church pastor 'stands in front of the congregation'; he 'tries to bring that picture [of the original context of the Biblical text] to people already with his knowledge of how this book is supposed to be portrayed in people's lives. So it's more of informing them and enforcing his will on them' (4:96). He continues:

*Mbongeni:* 'the facilitator will come in with an attitude that makes them feel like they are inferior and he is superior, all informed and they aren't... uninformed. And he comes with all the answers, they ask questions and he gives them, he just feeds them with information and does not want to understand their approach and understanding (4:26).

Mbongeni describes how education within churches limits the contribution of participants, and how an educator would 'enforce his will' on the congregation. Freire notes that 'the imposition of one's individual's choices upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness' (Freire 1996a:29). The consequences of this are lack of faith in others. If ignorance is projected onto others there is a lack of faith in their ability and power to make and remake, and to re-form the world. Self-sufficiency is therefore felt by the banking educator who is aware of other people's ignorance and unaware of his/her own (Freire 1996a:70). This reflects an authoritarian attitude to pedagogy, which for Freire is a sectarian stance of only truth, which must be imposed on others. Freire writes, 'It is in their truth that others' salvation resides. Their knowledge "illuminates" the obscurity or the ignorance of others, who then must be subjected to the knowledge and arrogance of the authoritarian (1998:40). He continues, 'They talk from top to bottom, certain of their correctness and of the truth of what they say' (1998:64-5).

A final characteristic of previously experienced education is that the participant's 'contemporary context is not much accommodated'.

*Mbongeni:* You know with Bible Study sessions sometimes people get confused and never have a chance to get to really understand. The matter is passed. They go on to the next, and its all about the original context. But their contemporary context is not much accommodated (4:96).

The lack of focus on the contextual reality of the participants is forgotten through focusing only the original context of the Biblical text. This is potentially one reason for the educational ‘gap’, highlighted by Sechaba, as lines of connection between the everyday lives of the congregation and the text are missing. Mbongeni expands through replying to the question: How relevant would the participatory model of education used in the Bible Studies, be for the church situation that you are in?

*Mbongeni:* Well VERY, because the one thing I’ve come to learn with this session is it has taught me a great deal of dynamics of people’s lives and characters. In a church situation sometimes everything gets bottled up into one glass and everybody is expected to put that bottle into that whether the jar is square or circular. But you find that they try to squeeze a circular bottle in a square glass. They are not really able to put everything into practice in their lives with the old fashion style of learning (4:92).

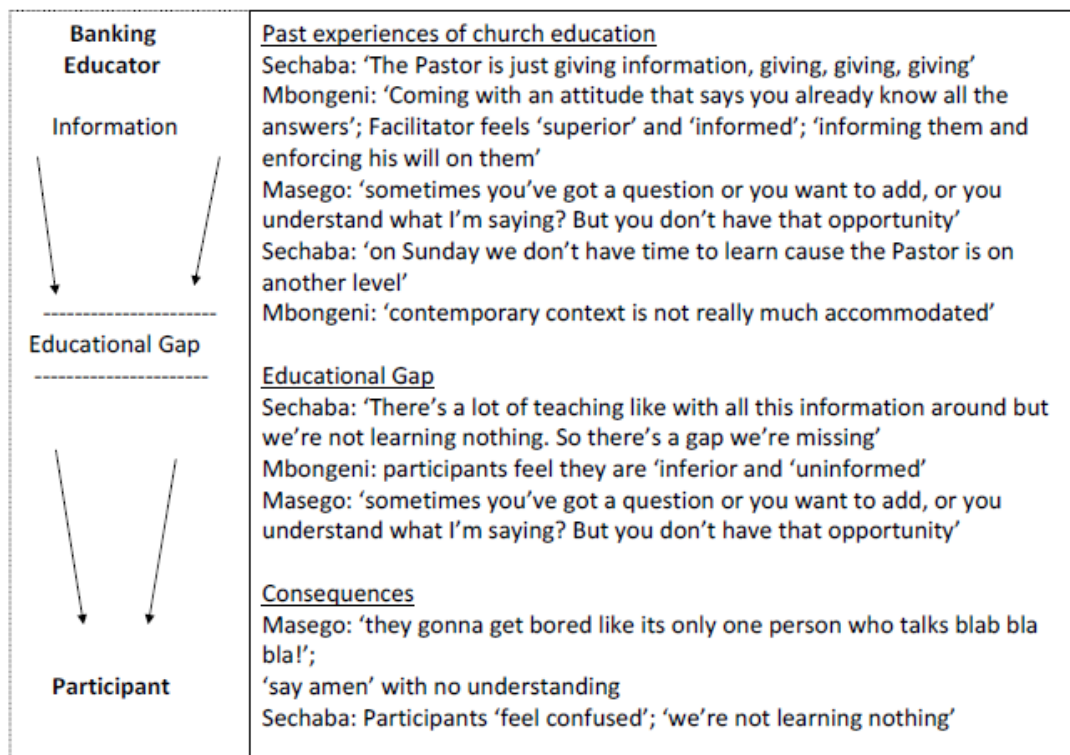
By highlighting that, ‘in a church situation sometimes everything gets bottled up into one glass’, he explains that there is a prescribed way of educating, a kind of ‘one size fits all’ approach. He highlights the need to take into consideration the ‘dynamics of people’s lives and characters’ in the educational process, being aware that different shapes can’t all be ‘squeezed’ into the same mould. The result of this is that there is disconnect between what is taught and the reality of people’s lives, as they are not really able to put everything into practice in their lives with the old fashion style of learning’.

#### 4.15.2 Consequences of previously experienced Christian education

From the data above, the description of participant’s experiences of Christian education within churches indicates they do not nurture or encourage the development contextual theologies. Participants described previous experiences of church education as receiving knowledge passively, stating agreement, even if there is lack of comprehension. This indicates that Freire’s concept of ‘banking education’ was being implemented, where the teacher makes ‘deposits’ of knowledge to inactive students (1996a). Figure 4.3 summarizes from the perspective of the participants why this is the case.

Banking education results in an educational gap between the teacher and participant. Experienced CE includes imposed understandings from the preacher, who attempts to apply lessons from the text to the hearer’s lives. This lack of democratic education detaches the participants from the educational process. It decreases their sense of agency and ownership within the pedagogy, as they become passive recipients to espoused application. This results in a ‘one size fits all’ mentality, resulting in lines of connection between the Christian Story and the everyday lives of participants being lost.





**Figure 4.3** Methods and consequences of participant's past educational experiences

Both Masego and Mbongeni highlight that education within churches does not connect between those educating and those being educated. Masego describes the situation where one person teaches, and were people respond 'amen', which indicates agreement, even if they don't understand. The pastor is therefore educating, while the congregation absorb passively, stating agreement, even if there is lack of comprehension. Lack of understanding and comprehension was strongly evident from the participant's stories. Sechaba notes, 'on Sunday we don't have time to learn cause the pastor is on another level'. Siya notes, 'pastors... some you understand', inferring that others you don't understand. Participants also 'feel confused' during top down education. Masego also notes negative responses to top down education, stating that participants: 'they gonna get bored like its only one person who talks blab bla bla!'

These lines of connection are lost due to the contemporary context not being accommodated in the educational process. Freire writes of the importance of the contextual reality of students within democratic education: 'the democratic school should not only be permanently open to its students' contextual reality in order to understand them better and to exercise its teaching activity better, but it should also be disposed to learn of its relationship with the concrete context' (1998:74). For Freire the consequence of doing this is that 'students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge' (2003:62).

As seen above, the educator's role in the educational process is fundamental to the participant's experiences. Participants described experiencing of inability to ask questions or adding their own knowledge and insights to the process. This in turn creates what Freire calls 'castration of curiosity', as participants receive passively the information dispensed to them. Lack of participation disempowers the participants from the educational process, creating greater power for the authoritarian educator to 'impose his will' on those being educated, thereby maintaining the status quo. Lack of the contextual reality of participants was also noted as being evident within top down church education, as pastors focused more on the reality of the Biblical text.

Due to the reasons above, the education process experienced by participants in the township church does not encourage contextual Christian education as the participants are not involved in the process. Theology therefore does not develop and change in relation to the contextual situation as it is rather imposed in a top-down manner. Sheared writes that within decision making, 'if one's voice is not heard then one's views are not part of the changes made' (2006:186). Equal participation is important for change and transformation to take place in relation to Christian education nurturing the emergence of contextual theologies.

#### **4.16 Experience of the Shared Praxis Approach**

This section will explore the participant's experiences of the Bible Studies using SPA. It will highlight the characteristics of the pedagogy as experienced by the participants regarding what they experienced and how they experienced it. The characteristics of SPA will be highlighted from the data. Analysis involved cross referencing *dialogic pedagogy* with all other categories relating to the framework *Participation*. These included: *Facilitator and Participation*, *Facilitator encouraging critical thinking*, *Dialogue with others*, *Meaning-making*, and *Socio-emotional feelings*. This resulted in several themes emerging highlighting the characteristics of: questioning; learning together; positive socio-emotional dynamics, and; the freedom to make meaning within CE.

##### 4.16.1 The importance of questioning within education

Before implementing SPA within the Bible Studies, the facilitators were trained in question-posing. Groome's SPA follows a progression of five movements which cause the participants to problem-pose on a given theme. A progression of problem-posing questions in line with Groome's commitments for each movement was constructed before the sessions. This was done in consultation with each facilitator (Appendix 2). This was so that they had an outline to use during the Bible Studies, in order to give them the best opportunity of succeeding within the context. The data indicates that during the Bible Studies the pedagogical practice strongly reflected this commitment by the facilitators to question-posing. There were a total of one hundred and twenty-nine questions during the two Bible Studies.

For analytical purposes the construction of questions can be broken into two categories. Firstly, there were the open-ended questions prepared before the Bible Studies. Secondly, there were improvised probing questions which the facilitators asked to encourage further reflection concerning a subject. Both Mbongeni and Sarafia posed prompting questions, which Groome notes encourages people to fuller expressions, but which must be done without sounding like an interrogator (1991:184-5, 208). Mbongeni asked a total of seventy-four questions during the one Bible Study. Nineteen of these questions were prepared in advance. Sarafia asked a total of fifty-five questions while facilitating her group. Seventeen questions were prepared in advance. These questions included both problem-posing as well as encouraging participation through eliciting responses from the group. Through asking so many questions the object of study does not only belong to the teacher, 'but as the object of reflection by himself and the students' (Freire 2003:61). The learning environment is therefore democratized permitting others to contribute.

The effect that questioning had on the educational process was that it first democratized the learning environment, encouraging participants to contribute. It secondly encouraged, through opening the conversation with further questions and eliciting the responses above, the conversation continues beyond this example as participants eagerly share stories of how they helped strangers. Problem-posing education is foundational to SPA. Groome writes that the facilitator needs to go from being an "answer person" to being a "question poser" (1991:183):

Partnership does not mean a false egalitarianism in which teachers forgo their responsibilities as enablers and resource persons; it means being willing to learn as well as to teach, to listen as well as to talk, to be questioned as well as to question, to use one's training and resources to empower rather than to control the teaching/learning partnership (Groome 1991:143).

Although the data indicates that both Sarafia and Mbongeni strongly encouraged dialogue and participation, there were however a couple of aspects of facilitation which did not aid a participatory process of education. These will be highlighted in the final chapter's section on limitations. Although facilitating SPA was relatively new for both facilitators, data from the Bible Studies reveals that overall, the facilitators encouraged participation. This was evident as the facilitators showing sensitivity within the pedagogical process towards participants. Facilitators also encouraged participants to participate through both verbal and non-verbal encouragements. There was also a willingness on behalf of the facilitators to democratize the learning environment being co-learners and co-creators with others. This commitment was strongly reflected by the facilitators through the high number of questions posed, both prepared beforehand and through eliciting responses, thereby encouraging participation. The facilitators input and practical facilitation, as well as their self-perception in the role of facilitating encouraged an environment of participation.

The data highlighted the benefits the participants felt from being asked questions and group participation. Participants also appreciated the opportunity to ask their own questions and to explore issues together. The following responses were given when the participants were asked if they preferred one person teaching, or to be asked questions with everyone participating:

*Masego:* Where everybody participates... Cause if one person will teach us, we will keep on saying “amen”. If you don’t understand you’ll keep on saying “amen” (laughter), you know, and sometimes you’ve got a question or you want to add, or you understand what I’m saying? But you don’t have that opportunity. But if everybody is involved it’s much better. Because some of the people they gonna get bored like its only one person who talks “bla bla bla!” (6:70)

*Kitso:* I prefer the question one. Like on the person whose standing there talking you will be the only who is talking. What if I don’t understand? She or he has to ask me a question to see if I understand what is happening (7:95).

Both Kitso and Masego viewed participation within the educational process as essential in the learning process. For Kitso, questioning was viewed as something done by the educator to check her comprehension ‘to see if I understand what is happening’. But for Masego, questioning was viewed as something done by herself to help clarify understanding. She also views herself as co-creating knowledge within the educational process, stating, ‘sometimes... you want to add’. Like Kitso, Sechaba views interaction as an opportunity to have his understanding checked, regarding if it is right or wrong:

*Sechaba:* The Pastor is just giving information, giving, giving, giving. We have to receive, receive. There’s not that, ‘okay I understand it like this so does that mean my understanding is wrong?’ And the perfect time of doing that is at the bible study where you have the questions and people answering those questions (3:95).

Sechaba wants affirmation from the educator regarding whether he has understood something or not. He is still seeking affirmation that his understanding is correct. In this way, both Kitso and Sechaba do not view education as co-creating; questioning and participation is rather to see if they have understood the information given. Freire writes, ‘dialogue is a challenge to existing domination.... In our case of education, knowledge of the object to be known is not the sole possession of the teacher, who gives knowledge to the students in a gracious gesture’ (Freire & Shor 1987:99). There is consequently a need for dialogue within the educational process to challenge the perception that knowledge is the sole possession of the teacher of pastor. Participants need to be encouraged to a new self-perception that they are no long recipients of knowledge co-creators of knowledge with the educator and other participants.

#### 4.16.2 Learning together: putting the subject 'on the table'

The participants were asked to express how they found the Bible Studies. Their responses indicated that all participants found it to be inclusive and participatory.

*Masego:* But if everybody is involved it's much better. Cause I believe that we learn from each other, you know, we learn from each other (6:70).

*Siya:* I'm in young adults I find it easier if we can discuss you know and put it on the table and then we discuss about it. How did you see it? (2:26)

*Sechaba:* I don't see it as a teaching. It was a discussion because we opened up with the verse and then everybody said (pause). Okay there were questions asked and then everybody contributed by answering those questions. So that part of us contributing to answer the questions shows that we were interested in the subject or topic that was brought forth (3:64).

Masego, Siya and Sechaba describe the democratic nature of the education they had experienced. Siya states a preference for education enabling discussion, by putting the subject matter 'on the table' encouraging a variety of responses to express 'how did you see it?' Sechaba describes the problem-posing educational process, where participants responded to questions, highlighting that their contributions were evidence that they were 'interested in the subject'. Woods highlights that the distribution of voice is essential in promoting what he calls 'democratic rationality'. Within the educational process this explores the possibility for 'open debate and dialogic democracy' (2004:11-12). The participant's experience of the Bible Studies indicates that there was possibility for open debate and dialogue, where there was freedom of voice and ability to contribute. This is evidenced in Masego's reflections on the educational process.

*Dan:* Which way do you find more helpful?

*Masego:* Many people participating. Cause I believe that we learn from each other, you know, we learn from each other.... it's easy for me by the way to learn from others.... But if everybody is more involved it's much more easy cause you feel comfortable. You don't have that pressure that I have to answer because it's only me, that you know that you've got your spiritual sister will support you (6:69-70).

Masego's emphasis on group learning within the Bible Studies reveals it generated positive socio-emotional responses as she felt 'comfortable' with 'support' from those around her. A characteristic within the learning process that Masego highlights is being 'easy... to learn from others'. Participants indicated that they positively experienced a participatory environment, enabling them to speak, give opinions and participate.

In contrast to banking education previously experienced in church, the data indicates the facilitators were significant in encouraging an environment of participation. They viewed themselves as co-learners within the participants. Awareness is evident that it is not only themselves that contribute to the creation of knowledge, but that all participants have the right to participate for the well-being of the group. For example, firstly Mbongeni sets the parameters of himself 'being with' and 'co-creating with' the participants, through his introductory remarks to the group:

*Mbongeni:* Nice to meet you all. I really hope we enjoy ourselves here as we gonna teach each other a bit more about God's word and well it's not about me telling you everything. But it's about all of us saying something and teaching each other and there's no one superior towards anybody. We all equal in this session. I just come up with the topic and we all just discuss that, alright (1:56).

Mbongeni emphasizes the equal power relations between himself and the group by stating, 'there's no one superior towards anybody. We all equal in this session'. This he explains, will be practically outworked as 'we gonna teach each other a bit more about God's word and well it's not about me telling you everything'. Groome writes that the SPA's pedagogy 'asks the educator to activate and draw upon people's own agency for knowing and creating knowledge, to encourage participants to reason, remember, and imagine, to probe, question, and analyze (self and society), to discover and see for themselves' (2011:293). Mbongeni clearly works towards this goal, as at the beginning of the Bible Study, he states that everyone has the right to participate, and removes any expectations that he is there to teach them. This puts responsibility on the participants from the beginning and encourages them to contribute. Freire writes, 'the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach' (2003:61).

The data also reveals that the educator viewed himself as a co-creator of knowledge together with the participants. During Mbongeni's personal interview, he cites that his reflections were re-formed in light of the participant's reflections: 'I've come to learn a lot more from hearing what other people are saying. It got my thought a bit broader about the topic and how people perceive life' (4:10). He goes onto admit:

*Mbongeni:* Well as a person who facilitates a session or a lesson you may come up with your own answers at the back of your mind. But when you look at another person's understanding it helps you see that its not just your answers that seem to be correct and accepted for that certain lesson but there are other parts of the lesson that are being opened up to your thoughts (4:14).

This section highlights the tension for facilitators, that they genuinely want to encourage all to participate, and create knowledge together, and yet the temptation was to have his 'own answers'

rather than expecting others to contribute to those answers. Mbongeni seems somewhat surprised by this and admits that interaction with others creates ‘broader’ thinking concerning ‘the topic and how people perceive life’. Mbongeni states how ‘another person’s understanding’ can be ‘correct and accepted’. This is important in encouraging others to have the right to participate. With learning this important lesson, there is greater possibility of Mbongeni to listen and learn from others while using this model of education.

Mbongeni’s experiences what Freire writes that the ‘educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students’ (Freire 2003:64). Groome also writes concerning moving towards partnership between facilitator and participant: ‘true partnership demands a kind of ongoing conversion of all participants. It calls the teacher to a new self-image, away from answer person to controller of knowledge and into “being with” participants in a subject-to-subject relationship (1991:143).

#### 4.16.3 Socio-emotional dynamics

Another reason why participants expressed positive reflections regarding the Bible Study’s education process was due to positive feelings of involvement. Woods notes that therapeutic democratic rationality is essential through creating a sense of well-being, social cohesion and positive feelings of involvement. Within the educational process it is therefore important to explore if there was a distribution of esteem within the group, through positive feelings of involvement (Woods 2004:11-12).

The data indicates that the facilitators encouraged the creation of a positive atmosphere within the Bible Studies. Their self perception of being co-learners and co-creators with participants was important in how they practically outworked the educational process. For example, welcoming participation played an important role in creating an atmosphere where there was distribution of voice and the possibility of open debate. This was done through facilitators respecting participants, and responding encouragingly through both verbal and non-verbal communication. They provided an opportunity for all to speak without forcing participation, which for Groome is a key aspect of facilitation (1991:208). Verbal encouragements were exhibited throughout the Bible Studies. Sarafia frequently stated ‘yes welcome’ (5:102), when participants needed encouragement to speak. She also thanked individuals who had contributed (5:300). Mbongeni questioned and probed in a respectful manner. For example, ‘why is that, Sir?’ (1:198). These aspects created a positive atmosphere of participation and showed respect to the participants.

Non-verbal encouragements for participation were evidenced. Kitso, while referring to how she experienced the facilitator’s leading admits that she is ‘not a really open person. Like I’m kind of like shy and like they came here and they made us feel open and to say whatever we wanna say’. She continues, ‘You could see on their faces and then they could say like say whatever you wanna say...’

(7:15). Kitso's reference to seeing 'on their faces', gives an indication of positive non-verbal encouragements, which enabled Kitso to 'say whatever you wanna say'.

The data collected from both the Bible Studies and interviews indicates a high level of positive socio-emotional dynamics concerning the Bible Studies. A total of eighty-six quotations from the data collection directly referred to positive socio-emotional dynamics. All interviewees reported positive feelings of participation in the workshops:

*Masego*: Everything was for my side was good. Everything was helpful. I have never found anything that is not helpful (6:10).

*Siya*: I was feeling comfortable [I] guess (laughs) I was talking a lot in that, (laughter) yeah! Yeah! I felt comfortable, yeah! I think really it's an easy way you can gain some other stuff than to stand on the pulpit and you preach and I don't understand other stuff. I think it's better if you can discuss. I felt comfortable I don't know about others. But I will say they were comfortable when I look at them (2:24).

*Kitzo*: This is the best workshop I have ever went to. You know discussing. You know feeling free. You know making some jokes nyana (Tswana - 'just a little bit') there. You know talking, socializing, knowing gore (Tswana - 'that') okay that person thinks this way and this way. Like opening a Scripture and then saying like your own understanding of that Scripture you know. Having different ideas okay this one thinks ja, ja okay like it's really, it's really, it was really exciting this past four weeks. I really enjoyed it (7:37).

*Refilwe*: It encouraged us. It just like inspired us you know. Yes the Pastor's do preach on Sunday. Yes we hear the word but this was like different. It was fun you know. It was always exciting. We looked forward to coming here you know just looking forward like to know what's the topic today cause it was very encouraging (5:493).

In analysing the data for reasons attributed to why the participants found the workshops a positive experience, there were several feelings highlighted evident from the data. Firstly, a feeling of love within the group is noted as being present. Refilwe reflects, 'it's like you know it's just a lot of love, you know. Okile wa bona? (Tswana - 'have you ever seen that?') I'm always looking forward to coming ko SAYA cause I know eish ke ile bona Kitso, Kitso otlo ntshegisa you know (Tswana - 'I'm going to see Kitso, Kitso is going to make me laugh') (1:269). Refilwe adds critically, that although love is the prevailing attribute in the group, the group historically does have its negative moments: 'Okay we do have discussions sometimes and then we just um, you know like (pause) ebe re hlabana ka mafoko (Tswana - 'we pierce each other with words') but not like hard core and then everything ebe goba (Tswana - 'then all is well') sharp (1:269).



Both Freire and Groome highlight the importance of love being a characteristic of dialogue. Freire writes 'because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others' (Freire 1996a:70). Groome notes that love occurs when participants truly listen to others. It is the desire not to just wait for the other person to stop talking, but to really understand what the other person is saying (Groome 1991:144). This is evident in Kitso's comment that the group created an atmosphere of freedom, 'like on this one I felt free to say anything you know. There was giving me encouragement you know. Like I really felt like free like saying my mind you know (7:85). Further dynamics of dialogue will be examined later under the heading of 'dialogue with others'.

Secondly, a feeling of being 'uplifted' and 'hope' was evident within the group. Referring to the Bible Studies, Masego responds, 'for me I wish it could be like everyday 'cause it uplifts us and it teaches us a lot' (6:7-8). Being uplifted and a feeling of hope were evident in Kitso's response to the question of, *did you find telling stories together in the Bible Study helpful or unhelpful?*

*Kitso:* I think it is very helpful. It is encouraging. It uplifting our spiritual being like you know, like you know you have this problem and Masego comes here he has the same problem that you have and like he shares gore (Tswana - 'that') you know how to overcome that situation and you say haa bathong kante (Tswana - 'oh, people I didn't know) this works and then you take that from her and there's another person sharing a story okay I can do that also mos (street language). You know like it's really uplifting us and giving us hope and giving us more faith ... (7:33).

From Kitso's response the sense of talking about problems removes a sense of isolation, in realising that others in the group have a similar problem. Together they can then find solutions, which results in being uplifted, and encourages hope and faith. This sense of hope, Groome notes, is an essential characteristic in dialogue 'as participants move beyond fear, defensiveness and hardness, to be open to what is discovered together' (1991:144). Hope as a sense of communal discovery is also highlighted by Freire, 'hope is rooted in men's incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search - a search which can be carried out only in communion with others'. In contrast, for Freire 'hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it' (Freire 1996a:72).

Thirdly, within the data a sense of faith was evident. Both Sechaba and Masego express a sense of faith in the pedagogical process they experienced. This faith stems primarily from the participatory process, of responding to questions, finding interest in the subject, and learning from others.

*Sechaba:* Okay there were questions asked and then everybody contributed by answering those questions. So that part of us contributing to answer the questions shows that we were

interested in the subject or topic that was brought forth. So it makes us open up more and more and more, cause I was very comfortable answering, cause it was like a practical, taking a Scripture and trying to make it as practical as possible (3:64).

*Masego*: So I think everything that we did being in the group listening for, you know, listening and learning from others so I think that it did take part of changing the way that I think and the way that I maybe behaved (6:24).

Faith was also evidenced from the facilitator's about including others in the dialogue. Both Mbongeni and Sarafia recognised the importance of involving others and drawing out their contributions for the benefit of the group.

*Mbongeni*: It's a conducive means of communication and it helps people learn, emerge you know like it helps them to discover new things about themselves, discover their capabilities of contributing to another person's life in a conversation and making the community a better place (4:20).

*Sarafia*: It was helpful. It helped also me to know and to see how the children of God serve their Father. How they preach God, and how they know God (8:35).

Participants expressed faith in the contributions of their co-learners within the communal educational process. Kitso describes how there was a sense of unity in the group which was 'helpful' and resulted them 'enjoying themselves'. Siya also describes a sense of expectation and encouragement from looking around at the group, who were engaged and 'going somewhere'.

*Kitso*: Everything, everything was so helpful, everything (pause). The Spirit that was amongst us, one spirit, one mind (long pause). Nothing went wrong. Everything was just fine and enjoying ourselves. Ja (7:81).

*Siya*: You can also look when you sit around look at those faces you will see that, we are going somewhere, we are going somewhere (2:120).

For Freire, 'dialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human' (Freire 1996a:70). This faith in humankind was evident within the group, which contributed to positive socio-emotional feelings. Groome also puts an emphasis on the importance of faith, stating that there must be faith in the communal process, in oneself, in others, and in God's Spirit to move in the educational process (Groome 1991:144).

These positive socio-emotional feelings of love, hope and faith, resulting in participants feeling 'uplifted' and encouraged, were important for participants with negative education experiences to participate. Kitso contrasts her negative experiences of doing a presentation in class with her experience of the Bible Studies:

*Kitso:* Like when you make like one mistake they would laugh you, you know, making jokes of you, you know. And like that really made me I don't know it discouraged me and brought me down like don't ever say anything in public or in discussion. Like on this one I felt free to say anything you know. There was giving me encouragement you know. Like I really felt like free like saying my mind you know (7:85).

Kitso's negative experience of contributing in class meant it 'discouraged me and brought me down', resulting in her wanting to shut down, 'don't ever say anything in public or in discussion'. This negative experience had an effect on her within the Bible Study, which she had to overcome. She states that the Bible Study educational process was different as, 'I felt free to say anything you know', and 'I really felt like free like saying my mind'. The reason given for this was that 'there was giving me encouragement'. This reveals how important it is to take into consideration participants past educational experiences, and that they may need encouragement and a positive socio-emotional environment to be free. There is consequently the necessity that democratic educational spaces are those of safety, where if someone does make a mistake people won't laugh at them. Although it is the group's responsibility for this, ultimately the task of developing a safe educational culture is that of the facilitator who brokers the educational space.

The data indicates that although the socio-emotional dynamics were nearly all positive, there was one isolated instance of negative socio-emotional dynamics which occurred during the second analysed Bible Study. Masego, a single 26 year old mother, was enthusiastically contributing within the Bible Study. Although receiving encouragements from other participants throughout the Bible Study, the patience of one participant wears thin. After a total of six monologues, plus one prayer at the end which Masego gives for just under seven minutes, it is interesting to note the response from another group member saying, 'you've spoken too long. The way you talk!' (5:499). Negative socio-emotional feelings are present between this disgruntled participant, Masego, and possibly more within the wider group. In response Masego explains that 'something is keeping like pushing inside like just say it'. However in response to the protest of her speaking too much she states she will internalize what she's wanting to say 'I will talk with my God' which will then 'release others'.

Interestingly, during Masego's interview no acknowledgement is made by her having spoken too much. Rather she says: 'it was just you know a topic but during the discussion you know God released so many scriptures in me like. I wish that everybody could just be still and let me just (laughter) talk

talk talk talk...’ (6:52). The Bible Study released thoughts, ideas and inspiration within her, which she refers to as God working in her life. However the desire to talk without listening to others indicates a lack of faith in others to co-create solutions and responses. Masego found freedom to express within the group, however by doing so dominated somewhat the conversation thereby denying others the right to contribute.

The data show high levels of socio-emotional dynamics, including the creation of well-being, good social cohesion and positive feelings of involvement. These were expressed by feelings of love, being uplifted, hope, faith in themselves, others, God and the pedagogical process. Literature indicates that for participative and dialogical pedagogy to be effective it is necessary that positive socio-emotional dynamics are present within the pedagogy (Freire 1996a:70, Groome 1991:144, Woods 2004:11-12). Woods writes that distribution of esteem is essential in democratic education, including positive feelings of involvement, the creation of well-being and social cohesion (Woods 2004:11-12).

#### 4.16.4 The freedom to make meaning

Within democratic education, importance is placed on participants being legitimate in the meaning making process. Education cannot be democratic if there are only one or two individuals are counted as legitimate in contributing to emerging truth and meaning in the context (Woods 2004:11-12). Within this process, Freire highlights the importance of ‘naming the world’; for individuals to express their experience. Freire writes that ‘to exist humanly, is to name the world, to change it’ (Freire 1996a:69). Within a group setting, it is important to consider who is legitimate in ‘naming the world’, thereby contributing to the knowledge created (Woods 2004:11-12). If certain people are excluded, then the democratic nature of the educational process breaks down. Within the data, participants expressed a high level of willingness and motivation to ‘name the world’, indicating that they perceived themselves as legitimate in meaning making.

*Kitso*: Like I really felt like free like saying my mind you know (7:85).

*Masego*: So I think everything that we did being in the group listening for, you know, listening and learning from others so I think that it did take part of changing the way that I think and the way that I maybe behaved (6:24).

*Mbongeni*: It helps people learn, emerge you know like it helps them to discover new things about themselves, discover their capabilities of contributing to another person’s life in a conversation and making the community a better place (4:20).

Masego states that through ‘listening and learning from others’ helped to change ‘the way I think’ and ‘maybe behave’. Masego deems others contributions within the group as valuable to her learning

process, which helped bring transformation. Mbongeni notes that the education process enabled the participants to ‘discover new things about themselves’ as well as ‘discover their capabilities of contributing to another person’s life in a conversation’. As the facilitator, Mbongeni is clear that participants are legitimate in the meaning-making process. Mbongeni also refers to participants taking ownership of the educational process together, stating it ‘helps people to own up’. This individual responsibility within the process is important for Mbongeni as it ‘makes everybody feel important’. Mbongeni reflects that through participants contributing and being legitimate in the meaning-making process ownership of the educational process occurs, as they ‘own it up’.

Masego also highlights that although people from different backgrounds have different challenges, there is opportunity in the educational process to ‘know each other better’, ‘teach one another the word of God’ resulting in together ‘striving to be perfect’:

*Masego:* Okay, Ja! You know we come from different families and we’ve got different thoughts and different challenges but if we can have a bible study like this where everybody can be open to say something, I think we will know each other better and we gonna teach one another the word of God. I think that’s where we gonna strive to be perfect (6:66)

The data from the actual Bible Studies highlighting the high proportion of interactions between participants, as well as the data showing participants naming their life-worlds, indicates that participants owned the meaning making. There was however one instance where the world was named for the participants, by the facilitator.

The facilitator interpreted a series of photographs included within the Bible Study, rather than permitting the participants to interpret for themselves (1:56). Freire writes authoritarians ‘speak to, for, and about the learners. They talk from top to bottom, certain of their correctness and of the truth of what they say...’ (1998:64-5). This indicates that although the facilitator knew in theory about democratic education, in practice it was more difficult to move away from banking models of education. This highlights the need for more practice in facilitating democratic education and Groome’s SPA.

#### **4.17 Consequences of Participatory Education**

The data reveals that participatory and democratic education was promoted within the Bible Studies implementing SPA. In contrast to previous ‘schooling’ or ‘banking’ models of education experienced in church, the participants preferred the more participatory, democratic model of education. This was experienced through problem-posing education, aimed at encouraging participants to ‘name the world’ and give meaning to their life-worlds in relation to the subject discussed. Participant’s ‘owned’ the educational process, being legitimate in the meaning-making process. Positive socio-emotional

feelings were expressed about participation, as participant's interaction showed an interest and faith in the education process as well as each other to journey together in co-creating knowledge.

On a more theoretical level, this section will explore the outcomes of the participatory educational process on the emergence of contextual theology. Discussion will focus on: 1) lines of connection between life and Faith; 2) therapeutic education, and; 3) education in community with diverse understandings.

#### 4.17.1 The Gap Closes: Lines of connection between life and Faith

Implementing SPA encouraged lines of connection between life and Faith being made. This is evident from the data collected concerning the content of the discussion, relating to the *Life Worlds* of the participants as the Christian Story being evident. Sechaba sees the need for connecting the Bible and 'its jargon' with life, to 'make it as real as possible'. He states that for him he likes the Bible Studies if they can do this.

*Sechaba:* I like the teaching of the Bible Study if you can connect the Bible and all its jargon, faith and what-knot and make it as real as possible, practical as possible .... I think it would be easy to trust the power of God (3:94).

These reflections were in contrast to church education previously experienced of which Sechaba noted 'we're not learning nothing. So there's a gap' as the 'pastor is on another level.... just giving information' (3:94-95), Sechaba highlights the 'connect' within the educational model of the Bible Study. He continues:

*Sechaba:* So it makes us open up more and more and more, 'cause I was very comfortable answering, cause it was like a practical, taking a Scripture and trying to make it as practical as possible. Ja so you could relate, 'cause we had neighbours and then we all see what my neighbour is doing. So you see we could relate. We had one similarity that we all share neighbours somewhere, somehow (3:64).

Sechaba describes the Bible Study as 'practical' and 'taking a Scripture and trying to make it as practical as possible'. He gives an example of how this was worked out, stating 'we could relate' 'cause we had neighbours'. Sechaba is stating that the pedagogy was rooted within their immediate context, with which everyone could relate. There was therefore a connection between the Bible 'and all its jargon' and their contextual situation. Groome writes 'the more a teaching/learning event brings both into play, life and Faith, the more likely are participants to integrate the two into lived faith (2011:283). The data indicated that as participants discussed life and Faith, integration between the two occurred.

#### 4.17.2 Therapeutic education: 'let the hurt out'

An unforeseen consequence of participatory education was that it is therapeutic and somewhat restorative. This therapeutic connection between life and faith is evident from Sarafia being asked: do you think that this way of doing a Bible Study speaks to their lives or situations?

*Sarafia:* Yes. I'm sure that this really helped the people because sometimes, once people stay alone or live far away from each other... then this person just starts thinking, 'maybe I'm just alone'. He or she feel lonely or stressed about her or his life. But once it comes to the Bible study; this is really helping her. It really helps this person to think that, 'no God really loves me. God really care for me. He knows my situation. He knows my life. He knows'. I think that it really helped them and even me (8:100).

Sarafia reveals that through a sense of community and belonging established within the group, the feeling of isolation was diminished. Strength in the midst of challenges faced, was gained through the interaction with other participants. This was also expressed by Siya. When asked if he found everyone contributing in the discussion helpful or unhelpful, Siya replies:

*Siya:* To me IT IS helpful because even though we can be Christian and non Christian, BY TALKING to let things out I think it helps a person a lot because if you lock inside of you its whereby you get more hurt, hurt and wounded you know (laughter). What I'm saying its better to take them out when we discuss them you'll find okay the word of God says this and this. And that is where, when we discuss it you'll understand I'll have to do one two and three. By talking I think its helpful (2:41).

Siya goes onto state, 'let the pain out by discussing yeah! When you are alone you know that hatred and so forth it comes to you. It's better just to get it out.' Siya honestly reflects that 'when you are alone you know that hatred and so forth it comes to you. It's better just to get it out'. He recognizes that it is not easy for this pain to be taken away, but asserts that the Bible Study helps this process. He asserts, 'but at the end of the day God will take it out, maybe you'll take it out; you'll polish it. And maybe you are not alone who is feeling that way, and some person will say me too, I feel one, two and three.' He perceptively states that by 'locking' things inside 'you get more hurt, hurt and wounded'.

For Siya, relief from this pain comes from three areas. Firstly, relief is found through expressing those things locked within, the sense of isolation and loneliness is broken. Secondly, relief comes from being with others. He states, 'and maybe you are not alone who is feeling that way, and some person will say me too, I feel one, two and three'. For Siya there is a sense of solidarity, as others join with him in his struggle and as they face their struggles. The pain is taken away through being in community with others and talking with them about what is real in his life. Finally, relief is found from thinking about those things locked inside in relation to Scripture and discovering what 'the word

of God says this and this'. For Siya, God is active within this process of letting the pain out, while also not denying his own responsibility in the process as well as the role of the other participants.

#### 4.17.3 Education in community: diversity and richness

The participatory nature of the Bible studies resulted in participants contributing their understandings to the topic. They brought their own understandings and reflections concerning their context, the Christian Story, and how they related together. Kitso responding to the question of which education style (with more or less participation), she found the most helpful, highlights that different perspectives added richness to the discussion with a variety of different responses from participants:

*Kitso:* The question one. Like when he or she asks a question I answer and he or she asks the next person the same question. Like we will come up with a different answer and like you'll have to pick from like anyone like whose answer is like really makes something in you or really related to what you needed. So ja I prefer the question one (7:99).

Kitso reveals that different people's answers resonated with her in different ways. She states there was freedom 'to pick' a response that connected with her which 'makes something in you or really related to what you needed'. This highlights that more 'lines of connection' were made, enabling the content of other participant's responses to 'resonate' within Kitso's life, thereby helping her. The benefits of diversity were also highlighted by Mbongeni.

*Mbongeni:* But rather with this Bible Study session you learn to see that people come from different views of life and different backgrounds. Therefore they learn to see how different they are from other people and how special they are from other people and how their practical lives can unite and complement each other because challenges of life are very different for every person but one thing is solutions can be brought in a similar way... If we have such a lesson maybe on a certain topic it may help us see the picture a whole lot broader than we had expected (4:92).

The Bible Studies enabled participants to be diverse and express a range of applications. Mbongeni states that as the Bible Study enabled participation, 'different views of life and different backgrounds' were expressed. The consequence of this is that diversity is celebrated, as the participants 'learn to see how different they are from other people and how special they are from other people'. This diversity brings richness within the learning context as experience from 'their practical lives can unite and complement each other'. The result of this educational experience according to Mbongeni is that 'it may help us see the picture a whole lot broader than we had expected'. In this way diversity and a range of experiences are celebrated, as the group shares and creates knowledge together, resulting in seeing a 'broader picture'.



## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Recommendations


#### 5.1-Introduction

The previous chapter included data analysis exploring *Groome's Shared Praxis Approach as contextual Christian education within a South African Baptist township church*. This section will firstly construct a developmental argument from the main findings of the research relating to the research questions. Firstly, the outworking of SPA's movements in relation to the South African context will be explored. Secondly, there will be a discussion regarding the possibility of SPA serving as a type of contextual Christian education. The contribution this study makes to the discipline of Practical Theology will then be outlined. Finally, limitations of the study and recommendations for implementation will be defined.

#### 5.2 Discussion: The outworking of SPA's movements and their liberating potential

The data analysis highlighted the outworking of SPA's five movements, indicating whether each movement was adequately outworked within the context. This section will firstly summarise the main research findings from the outworking of SPA within the township church. It will highlight the characteristics of SPA's five movements in relation to the participant's previous educational experiences. This will be done through the lens of inhibiting and liberating factors within education approaches. The specific characteristics of SPA as an education process are highlighted within Table 5.1. On left side of the table are the participant's past educational experiences, and on the right side the experiences and characteristics of SPA. Each dyad reveals the tensions between the two education models. Liberating factors as well as limiting factors within the education process were evident. While not every tension was experienced by each participant, taken as a whole these paradoxes contributed to the experience of education among the township young adults. These interconnecting frameworks have been conceptualized under the following headings: 1a) *content and experience*; 1b) *content and Christian Story* and; 2) *critical reflection*. The summary in Table 5.1 will be developed through highlighting the findings of each of SPA's movements in relation to past education experiences.

**Table 5.1** Inhibiting and liberating factors of education approaches

<b>Restraining / Inhibiting factors</b>		<b>Empowering / Liberating factors</b>
<b>Past educational experiences</b>		<b>Shared Praxis Approach</b>
<b>1a. Content: Context</b>		
Participant's context 'not much accommodated'		Participant's context is important
Spiritual matters main subject matter		Participant's holistic experience and being is subject matter
Participant's concerns not addressed as much		Participant's concerns are central to discussion
Lower view of participant's context		Higher view of participant's context
<b>1b. Content: Christian story</b>		
Knowledge of Christian Story given by teacher		Knowledge of Christian Story given by facilitator and participants
Focus mainly on Biblical text		Interweaving between Biblical text and participant's context - 'to-and-fro' movement
Sources of Christian Story primarily from Bible		Sources of Christian Story from Bible, participant's tradition and personal faith stories
Read from above (removed from context)		Read from below (in light of participant's context)
God's agency and character seen by one person		God's agency and character seen by many people
Interpretation undertaken by teacher		Interpretation undertaken by all
Application undertaken by teacher		Application undertaken by all
<b>1.c Consequences of content</b>		
Individual reading of Christian story (one 'seed' of truth)		Communal reading of Christian story (multiple 'seeds' of truth)
Individual reading and understanding		Communal reading and understanding
Disconnection between context and story		Connection between context and Christian Story
Limited understanding God's agency in situation		Multiple understandings of God's agency in situation
Narrow picture		Broad picture: diversity and richness
Limited interaction with Christian Story		Greater interaction among participants with Christian Story
Limited ownership of Christian story		Greater ownership of Christian Story
		Cultural interpretations and definitions of Scripture
		Dialogue and appropriation between African culture and text
<b>2a. Critical reflection</b>		
Critical reflection not actively encouraged		Critical reflection was encouraged
Information dispensed: no questions/no probing		Questioning, problem-posing and probing encouraged critical reflection
Limited critical reflection undertaken by participants		Participants critically reflect on past, present and future
<b>2b. Consequences of critical reflection</b>		
Limited contextual awareness		Greater self-awareness of personal and communal stories
Acceptance of status-quo		Opportunity to question the status-quo
Limited agency or awareness for change		New understanding promotes agency and possibility for change
Participants not engaged in praxis process		Participant's praxis was questioned, affirmed or refused
Limited potential for revised action		Greater potential for revised action
<b>Restraining / Inhibiting factors</b>		<b>Empowering / Liberating factors</b>

### 5.2.1 Discussion of Movement 1 Naming Life

Contextual Christian education's foundations rely on the context of participants being a central part of the educational process. The research found that within M1: Naming Life, participants were asked questions resulting in the participant's contextual knowledge and experience being shared (Table 5.1. part 1a). Relating to the theme of the Bible Studies, participants shared their own experiences and concerns, as well as socio-cultural stories rooted in their everyday reality. The data showed a high view and importance placed upon of the participant's contexts. This was in contrast to previously experienced Christian education (CE) where the participant's context was 'not much accommodated'.

Within the South African context, where education approaches have been privatised and lacked contextual awareness, SPA's M1 placed context centrally within the education process. This was evident through the participant's sharing their life experiences from four *Life Worlds*: home life; church life; township life, and; wider society. In this way the content moved from being individualist, to relating to community interaction, as participants named society's praxis as well as their own. This enabled the discussion to be rooted within time and place. The data indicated a richness of contextual stories relating to the participant's socio-cultural location, as they interacted in these life-worlds.

Within South African CE, where education has been used to oppress, control and manipulate, liberatory models of education are needed. Liberation theology and liberatory approaches to education emphasise that content must be: 'influenced by specific human concerns and contexts'; evidence a 'preferential option for the poor' (2010:167-8), and; whose struggle is viewed as the starting point of theological reflection (Boff 1997:107). The research findings indicate township participant's concerns were of central importance and as well as the starting point of theological reflection. Participants shared their worries as well as concerning experiences of interaction with others. This was seen through references to social issues such as poverty, crime and violence.

Rather than the discussion focusing only on spiritual matters, which was the emphasis of past CE, the participant's holistic experiences and concerns were of central importance within the education process. Consequently, rather than the educational process being detached from their reality, their concerns and experiences played a central role in the education process. Within the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) it has been noted there has been a sacred/secular divide, where spirituality was removed from everyday life. Through SPA's M1, context is put at the centre of the Christian education process, thereby breaking this sacred/secular divide, as context and Christian Story interact. M1 encourages participants to view their lives and contexts as a place where God mediates and is active.

In order for this emphasis on context to be sustained within CCE, there is firstly the need for facilitators to write Bible Study material which take themes from the Christian Story and make them

relevant to life. The success of M1 relied on the questions asked by the facilitators. These questions engaged participants to respond to the Bible Study's theme, as it related to their lives. Participants therefore shared stories about their contextual reality.

Secondly, a *high view* of the participant's contexts is needed within the education process. Both facilitator and participants valued and respected the stories and experiences being told. This *high view* of context enabled the participant's existing praxis within their life-worlds to become an integral part of the knowledge being created. This was in contrast to that of previously experienced education, where a *low view* of the participant's contexts was evident, with little emphasis put on them within the learning event. The lived experience of participants provided the 'soil' for which the 'seeds' of the Christian Story were placed.

### 5.2.2 Discussion of Movement 2 Critical Reflection

SPA's M2 encouraged participants to engage in critical reflection concerning their lived experience. The data indicated that SPA encouraged participants to engage in critical praxis. Critical thinking was necessary to support CCE which was faithful to the Christian Story and authentic to the contextual situation. Through a process of critical thinking and questioning, participants affirmed or questioned what was contributed to the learning event. In this way the soil of the contextual experience and seeds of the Christian Story are cultivated. This cultivation occurred through critical reflection: encouraging a process of rejecting and removing invalid understandings; affirming what is good and true within the learning event, and; to move beyond to more valid understandings.

For Groome, critical reflection within the education process is concerned with 'seeing the present with greater clarity or noticing what is no longer seen, or taken as inevitable' (1980:185). This was evident through the participants engaging in critical reflection on the past and present (Table 5.1, part 2a). Firstly, there was an uncovering and recognition of how past personal stories were shaping present praxis. Also evident was what Groome notes as a 'social remembering' of seeing identity and actions in historical context (1991:104-5, 202). Secondly, the data revealed critical thinking about the present was strongly apparent. Evidence indicated the education model encouraged participants to question, affirm or refuse present praxis. As participants critically reflected, through interpreting and explaining to each other the meaning or value of an aspect of lived experience, they affirmed or critiqued their praxis. This enabled greater possibilities for revised forms of praxis to occur.

The data indicated this was achieved through SPA's emphasis on Freirian questioning, problem-solving and finding new, more valid premises upon which the problem is defined. Through a process of problem posing and questioning, critical reflection was undertaken by participants, concerning their past and present experiences within each of their *Life Worlds* (family, township, church, and society). As the questioning of participants was directly related to the level of critical reflection in which they

engaged, highlights previously experienced Christian education. As the participant's past educational experiences involved information being dispensed, with little questioning or problem-posing, it indicates that critical reflection undertaken by participants would be minimal. The data also indicated the Southern African facilitators were able to encourage critical reflection.

Critical reflection is an important issue within South African education. Especially as during Apartheid critical thinking was not encouraged within national education. Cognition and reasoning ability were consequently undesirable and not developed (Pfaffe 1996:27, Bassey 1999:7, Hartshorne 1999:73). The question has been raised regarding whether 'critical' is a western concept? (West 2004:78). Although the term 'critical' is noted as being a Western term, West notes that 'critical thinking' is used across disciplines to mean 'structured and systematic questioning', however each discipline (including African traditions) has its own set of structured and systematic questions. Interestingly, it is also noted that most academic modules in South African tertiary institutions is 'to develop critical thinking' in students (West 2004:78-79). Critical reflection is therefore being actively encouraged within South African education.

The consequences of participants engaged in critical reflection were firstly, an opportunity for greater self-awareness. As participants reflected upon their praxis and society's praxis, the group became increasingly aware of their personal and communal stories. This provided opportunity for the awakening of consciousness in the form of conscientization. In contrast, previously experienced education provided limited opportunities for increased awareness regarding personal or social praxis. This was primarily due to participants being passive within the education process and receiving information through the banking education model. Secondly, increased awareness and questioning encouraged participants to question the status-quo. M2: Critical Reflection encouraged participants to examine the nature of their reality, regarding the reasons why people acted, as well as to perceive the consequences of those actions in the form of future praxis.

Thirdly participants were encouraged to view their reality and experience as possible to change. Rather than accepting the world around them as static and unchangeable, participants through critical reflection on their praxis, critiqued that praxis and saw the possibility for revised forms of praxis. This gave participants a sense of agency resulting in fourthly, a greater potential for revised action. Through questioning, the participants were challenged to analyze their assumptions and reasons for behavior and thought patterns. M2 encouraged participants to engage in being concerned with 'the reasons for and consequences of what we do' (Mezirow 1990a:13). Existing frames of reference ('the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions') were critiqued resulting in new frames of reference through transforming points of view (Mezirow 2000:16). SPA thereby encouraged the process of raising the critical consciousness of the participants, enabling greater possibility for questioning the status quo and revised action. In contrast, previously experienced CE exhibited limited critical reflection resulting in participants having a limited

awareness for change, thereby reducing the possibility for revised action. Although critical reflection is primarily emphasized and evident within M2, it was however evident throughout SPA's other movements.

There have however been criticisms regarding the critical nature of SPA. Clement questions if Groome 'has successfully synthesised diverse and sometimes contradictory sources of thought' (2010:11). He gives an example asking, 'does the subsuming of Habermas's critical epistemology into a Gadamer-like hermeneutic create an uneasy tension?' Arguably, this tension has resulted in Lovat (1988) and Raduntz (1992) stating that Groome's critical thrust is not taken far enough. Raduntz argues that SPA rather than being rooted within critical praxis is rather 'supporting hegemony through the ideologies of unity and consensus' (1992:120). For Raduntz, Groome 'wants a religious education program which will safeguard the Christian tradition and the ongoing unity and communion of the church, yet educate Christians who will become critically conscious change agents within a conservative parish and school institutional structure' (1992:100). Raduntz argues that Groome does not push critical praxis far enough by not subjecting critique to his context of Christians or the Catholic Church and thereby supporting its hegemony and limiting emancipatory practice.

Within liberation theologies, liberation is achieved to the extent that there is critical analysis of oppressive social structures. Fiorenza observes that for contextual pedagogy the principle of: "'Reading With' is not a radical democratic endeavour as long as it does not engage in a critical analysis of oppressive social structures and understand itself as a process of conscientization" (2009:143). Within the Bible Studies there was no deep analysis of oppressive social structures, and yet I would argue that the education process initiated 'radical democratic endeavours' and encouraged liberation.

As 'oppressive social structures' were not explicitly critiqued within the Bible Studies, does not mean that the effects of this education process were not liberatory nor radically democratic? The findings of the research revealed examples of critical analysis regarding church actions of both its members and leaders. These included the actions of church members who participated in 'gangsterism' within the church through excluding others. While some participants seemed uninhibited to critique the church, others through their silence were perhaps reluctant. Critique was also undertaken regarding the church minister's methods of church education and being on 'another level' while preaching. The facilitators provided an environment which was free for individuals to critique church practice and to some extent the status-quo was questioned. This however for Raduntz may still not be critical enough.

Responsibility does not lie specifically with SPA as an education process. Rather, the pre-prepared questions within SPA's process relate directly to how far participants are encouraged to be critical. Therefore if critical questions are asked, SPA as an education process has potential for being

extremely critical. Two Bible Studies using Groome's SPA will be limited in their content, however the data indicates that they were a helpful way forward to initiate further 'radical democratic endeavours'. The critical thrust would therefore lie with the individual writing the Bible Study material implementing SPA, and the questions asked of participants. Within the South African context there is consequently a need for writers of Bible Study material using SPA who can insert a 'critical thrust' within the material. This would potentially provide the foundation for socio-cultural critique to be carried out.

This is an important issue within South Africa, as post-democratic education is increasingly moving away from learners passively absorbing what they are taught towards critical forms of education. In order for transformation to occur it is essential for Christian education to encourage critical reflection within its churches. In order for this to become sustainable there is a need for church educators and leaders to actively encourage their congregants to critically reflect. The data indicated that the greater the facilitator's ability to think critically, the more likely they were to be able to encourage critical reflection. Emphasis must therefore be put on encouraging the critical reflecting abilities of leaders within churches. If CE educators can learn to problem-pose, ask questions and probe their congregations, critical capabilities will be expanded. Church leaders must not encourage the perception that they having all the answers, but rather be viewed as facilitators who encourage ordinary people to engage in critical reflection.

### 5.2.3 Discussion of Movement 3: Christian Story

Within M3: Christian Story, the facilitator contributed his/her understanding of the Christian Story to the education event. The data indicated the facilitators did not present the Christian Story removed or detached from the participant's experiences. Rather, the facilitators started with the participant's contributions within M1 and M2. In this way the Biblical text was read from below, in light of the participant's contextual experiences. These seeds of the Christian Story were added to the soil of the participant's contextual stories. The two facilitators, although varying in approach and academic prowess, both outworked a 'to and fro' or spiral movement between the text and reader and between the past and present (Fiorenza 2009:76-77).

The dialectic between the participant's contextual stories and Christian Story resulted in 'lines of connection' being made between life and Faith. Interpretation of the Christian Faith therefore arose out of consciousness of the participant's context. Groome writes that, 'the Christian faith should connect with the participants souls, make sense to their minds, ring true to their experience, and be an enticing way to make meaning out of life' (Groome 2011:318). The data indicated that a high value was placed on the Christian tradition, as well as a high view of the participant's experiences. This high view of the Christian Faith encouraged a connection with the participants to 'ring true to their experience'. If there is a low view of either context or tradition it arguably detracts from the value of

the meaning making; either from the participant's or the text's contribution to the education process. This would consequently detract from the effectiveness of the meaning-making process within CCE.

The research findings indicate that it was not only the facilitators who gave input regarding the Christian Story. The participants were also active in drawing upon their own knowledge of the Christian Story through referring to Scripture and tradition. These related to both the text they were studying together as a group, as well as their own knowledge of additional sources. These secondary contributions were from previous knowledge prior to the education event. The data indicates that participants came to the education event with a reasonable understanding of the Christian Story. In turn, these encouraged expression of how the Christian Story was already integrated within participant's lives. In this way content of the Christian Story was not something totally new being imported into the contextual environment. The participant's drew on their own and communal resources of understanding to assign and appropriate meaning to the Christian Story.

As the education process drew from the knowledge of participants, contextual Christian education was thereby encouraged as a communal process, rather than one person attempting to appropriate the Christian Story on behalf of many others. The Christian Story was therefore read from below, from the location and context of the ordinary believers. Sedmak argues that 'doing theology means listening to the voices of those without voice, seeing the power of those without power, honouring the life of those without life' (2002:10). Communal understandings were broader and more varied than only one person's interpretation. In this way the content of the Christian Story within the education process was liberatory as unusually heard voices gave input. They added value to the meaning-making process through appropriating Faith to life. These connections helped authenticity within the discussion, as participants told stories of how they had seen God's agency in their lives and contexts.

The consequences of both facilitator and participants engaged in telling the Christian Story resulted in multiple understandings of God's revelation through Scripture. Rather than an individual interpreting the Christian Story, as experienced in previous education, multiple interpretations provided greater ownership of the Christian Story within the education process. These interpretations permit a broader picture to emerge which encourages diversity and richness. As interpretation of the Christian Story is undertaken communally, so was the application of Faith to life. This provided an opportunity for individual interpretations to be verified and counted as authentic by the group. This has the potential to highlight inaccurate interpretations, in a way that traditional forms of CE cannot. This is due to multiple expressions of the Christian Story being given, rather than only the educators.

The participant's contribution of interpreting the Christian Story was an unforeseen occurrence of M3, as for Groome it is the facilitator who presents M3. This highlights the impact the context had on SPA. It speaks of the township young adult's understanding and respect for Scripture, as well as their Christian spirituality. It also indicates that existing forms of CE were having an impact, as



participant's evidenced understanding of Scripture they gained from previous church experience. This indicates that SPA enabled participants to build on rather than negate past CE, as they verbalise their own knowledge of the Christian Story. This is important as it indicates that SPA can complement existing forms of CE. In order for SPA to become sustainable within the context, it is necessary for churches to understand that SPA can complement existing forms of CE. This would potentially help church leaders to engage with SPA, rather than thinking that all existing educational practices must be done away with.

The importance placed upon the Christian Story within SPA's education process is significant. Liberation theology and liberatory education has been critiqued for being 'better at hearing the cries of the people than at listening to the biblical witness or the testimonies of other churches' (Schreier 1985:15). SPA's liberatory approach however places a great deal of emphasis on Scripture and tradition. The research findings indicated that the Christian Story was placed centrally with context within the education process. Participants were called to review and change their beliefs and behaviour in light of the Christian Story. This is important for CCE, as both the contextual and Christian aspects of the education process were emphasised.

The findings however indicated that an aspect of M3 being outworked within the context was deficient. Although critical reflection concerning the participant's praxis was undertaken, critical reflection in relation to Movement 3: Christian Story was lacking. This affirms Lovat's critique on Groome, who states, 'it seems that he may not leave sufficient room in his third stage for genuine critical appraisal of the inspirational story' (1988:34). He writes that Habermas and critical education 'insist that criticism must always be invited from outside any system of thought in question and must include a constant critique of the content (including supposed authorities) and criteria, as well as the world itself, of any educational process' (Lovat 1988:34). Data from the research revealed there was no critique of the Christian Story within the SPA process in the township. The Bible passages were read with a high, authoritative view of Scripture, taken at face value. For both Lovat and Raduntz (1992), this does not take the critical aspect of Groome's praxis approach far enough.

Critical theorists would argue that within critical pedagogy, participants must actively critique all structures to review oppressive potential. Indeed, within South Africa where the Bible has been used to oppress through the system of Apartheid, this kind of criticism is necessary. However this potentially leads to contradictions, as Raduntz writes, 'The role and status of the Church's Story and Vision, for instance is ambiguous. On the one hand it is presented as the norm against which participants' praxis is to be measured, and on the other, it is supposed to be subject to critical analysis and reform' (1992:114). South African Biblical scholars such as Gerald West (1993, 1999a, 1999b), argues for a critique of the Bible as central to Contextual Bible Studies.

Given the history of oppression within South Africa, for SPA to be implemented as effectively as possible within the context, a critical examination of the Christian Story is needed. A greater critical thrust within M3 should be applied. This responsibility would lie with the person(s) constructing the Bible Study's outlines. As the data highlighted that both facilitator and participants contributed within M3, both should be encouraged to think critically about the Christian Story. The facilitator must therefore be given the skills to approach the Biblical text from a critical perspective. Again, the importance of the facilitator's critical abilities was highlighted. Rather than M3 being perceived as a monologue, questions should be asked to participants about the Christian Story that will help them engage with it in a critical manner. Further research regarding critical Biblical hermeneutics as well as further qualitative research within this area would be beneficial.

#### 5.2.4 Discussion of Movement 4: Appropriate Faith to life

M4: Appropriate Faith to life saw the Christian Story acting as corrective, encouraging participants to change oppressive behaviour and to imagine a preferable future permitting greater possibility for transformation. Critical thinking particularly relating to the future encouraged participants towards viewing their reality and experience as open and possible to change.

A sense of agency was evidenced on behalf of the participant, motivated to be an agent of change. Critical thinking and the 'to and fro' motion of interaction between life and Faith helped provide 'lines of connection' between context and the Christian Story, encouraging interpretation of the Christian Faith arising out of consciousness of the participant's context. Faith was therefore appropriated to life. Therefore a continuous movement between the text and reader and between the past and present occurred (Fiorenza 2009:76-77). The data indicates a high level of movement and appropriation between life and Faith. This enabled cultural interpretations and definitions of Scripture to occur, such as exploring the concept of *ubuntu*, in relation to The Good Samaritan. In this way, the dialogue and appropriation between African culture and the Biblical text supported the occurrence of contextual Christian education (Table 5.1, part 1c).

The way in which participants interacted with the Christian Story evidenced no difficulty and confidence with which to do so. The consequence of this mixing of the context 'soil' and Christian Story 'seeds', was the participant's perceiving God's agency and activity not only within Scripture, but also in the world and more immediately in their lives. This resulted in strong connections between life and Faith, with participants expressing awareness of God's activity in their daily lives. The communal reading of the Christian Story enabled what Bergmann describes as contextual theology's theological method, an 'interpretation of Christian faith, which arises in the consciousness of its context'. 'The interpretation of "God today" occurs in connection and in dialogue with people, phenomena and traditions in our age and the surrounding world' (Bergmann 2003:4). Participants expressed faith and trust in God, who they saw as a source of power who could bring transformation and change within

their context in the midst of their sense of powerlessness. The participant's doctrine of God and his perceived agency in their lives reveals why they turned to Him with trust and faith in the midst of the harsh realities of their lives.

This allowed for a breadth of interpretation and application as the participants fluidly interacted with the 'horizons' of the Christian faith and their lives. Rather than planting the 'kernel' of the word in the 'soil' of the context, as in Bevan's 'translation model' of contextual theology (2002:43), there is rather a fluid spiral of mixing the many 'seeds' or interpretations of Scripture, with the context, so that new meaning is created as both context and Christian Story interact. These multiple interpretations, experiences and appropriations enabled fresh understandings to occur. Knowledge was seen to be co-created by the group, resulting in communal understanding. This is viewed by Sedmak as 'healthy pluralism in the reappropriation of the tradition' resulting in the uncovering of 'spiritual reality' (2002:63).

This is one of the most positive attributes of SPA's contextual outworking. Contextual Christian education was encouraged as a communal process, rather than one person attempting to appropriate the Christian Story on behalf of many others. The Christian Story was read from below, from the location and context of the ordinary believers. These connections were helped through an emphasis on holistic rather than spiritualised interpretations, as participants told stories of how they had seen God's agency in their Life Worlds. This important aspect of holistic CE will be highlighted later. In contrast to previously experienced education where the facilitator interacted, interpreted and applied to Christian Story to life, the participants were rather involved in this process. This in turn enabled a broader theological reflection to occur, as many individuals brought diversity and richness to the Christian education process. Participants took ownership not only in the education process, but also the hermeneutical process, as their communal understandings of life and Faith broadened their perspectives.

#### 5.2.5 Discussion of Movement 5: Decision

Movement 5: Decision saw participants primarily make personal decisions regarding their continued faith in God. Participants took ownership in both the education process and the hermeneutical process. This resulted in their communal understandings of life and Faith broadening their perspectives. Participants were therefore able to appropriate Faith to life and make decisions affirming new and revised understandings of the Christian Story. This was especially true relating to their faith and trust in God, which was largely built on their previous knowledge of God. The Bible Studies added to this knowledge of the Christian Story, which was then appropriated to their lives. As participants believed God was a good God who had plans for their lives, they made decisions to have faith and trust in God to transform their situations. This shows evidence of what Groome notes as decisions being 'affective' as 'participants can decide about their relationship with God' (2011:330).

The data highlighted the connection between the need for critical thinking and decision making. Through questioning and problem-posing, the possibility for revised action was seen particularly between the interaction of M4 and M5. Within M4, the Christian Story acted as corrective, encouraging participants to change oppressive behavior and to imagine a preferable future, towards the reign of God, permitting greater possibility for transformation (Groome 1980: 126-7). Through critical thinking, participants were able to establish more lines of connection between their context and the Biblical Story, enabling cultural definitions to emerge, and dialogue and appropriation between African culture and the Biblical text, thereby enabling contextual theologies to emerge. This affirms Marangos' definition of liberation education being 'critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word' (1996:190). Through critical reflection, it was evident that decisions for revised patterns of thinking emerged, as well as agency for revised action. For example, during the study of The Good Samaritan, participants made decisions regarding how they could practically love their neighbours more.

An objection to Groome's work however, is that SPA has 'an individualist framework' where participants resolve to revise their actions in the world as individuals rather than through communal endeavours (Fleisher 2004). This relates to SPA's Movement 5: Decision, where participants are encouraged to make a decision regarding their praxis about how to live the Christian faith in their context. Fleisher argues the need for participants to engage in 'communal or corporate praxis' rather than what she cites as occurring, 'being "sent" individually for action' (2004:317).

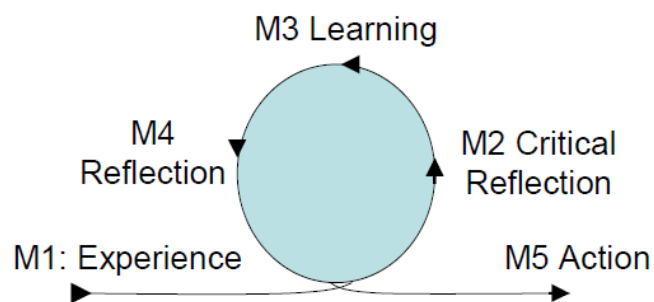
The data from this research affirms Fleisher's argument. The data indicates that the emphasis on communal action was limited. Though implementing Groome's SPA, the township young adults focused on individual actions they would fulfil, such as one participant enabling an elderly woman living in a shack to have water from their yard. All other actions expressed were also individual. SPA's process had been communal and participatory in nature until this application point. To provide continuity, participatory application and decision making would have been preferable. Within a South African setting, communal action is arguably a more appropriate form of response within M5: Decision, due to the communal nature of African culture. Previous and existing forms of CE within South Africa have indicated that individualistic and privatised approaches to education have limited impact and are not relevant to the context. Consequently CE has encouraged a move towards more communal approaches.

This however is not so much a problem with Groome's SPA, but more the emphasis of the person(s) constructing each of SPA's movements within the Bible Study. Groome promotes personal decision making; however he also promotes communal decision making, which could occur on 'personal, interpersonal, or social/political levels' (1991:266-270). In order for this to become sustainable within

the context, responsibility would rest again with the facilitator compiling the questions/activities for M5 which would promote communal decision making. In order to emphasise decision making for social transformation and communal action depends on how the SPA Bible Studies are written, and the outcomes emphasized. The participants would then have the opportunity to communally make decisions regarding possible communal action. This communal emphasis should be emphasised in any future outworking of SPA within the township church.

#### 5.2.6 Discussion: Participants engaged in critical praxis education

The research found that SPA's education approach encouraged participants to engage in the praxis cycle. This was evident through the participants engaging critically in a cycle of experience-reflection-learning-action. With Groome developing a specifically praxis approach to education, SPA's five movements guided participants through this cycle. This can be seen from Figure 5.1



**Figure 5.1** The Praxis Cycle and SPA's Movements

This diagram indicates how SPA is a Practical Theology approach to education. The findings indicate that within the South African context, SPA's five movement were effective in leading participants through this praxis approach to learning from life to Faith to life. Within the South African context, the Pastoral Cycle in the form of the See-Judge-Act model has been active. West has been an advocate for the See-Judge-Act method within his Contextual Bible Study (2011:445). CBS is a helpful model and has many positive characteristics for the South African context. As it is the most developed CCE model within South Africa, I am using it to compare and contrast SPA and therefore critique it. Contextual Bible Study (CBS) is noted as being a product of praxis, which is defined as 'a cycle of action and reflection' (West & Ujamaa Centre Staff 2011:3). However CBS' pedagogical outlines indicate that there was little emphasis on the participant's lived experience. Within CBS the majority of Bible Studies outlines begin with the Biblical text, asking participants 'what is the text about?' (West & Ujamaa Centre Staff 2011). Only in applying the Biblical text to the contextual situation was emphasis put on lived experience. In following the See-Judge-Act model of education, CBS states it 'begins with analysis of the local context (See)' (West & Ujamaa Centre Staff 2011:4). It is not however the participants who are engaged in 'seeing', rather it is the academic/Bible Study writer

planning the content of education event, who 'sees' the local context informing the theme for study. Within the education process itself, participants begin with 'seeing' the Biblical text rather than exploring context.

The implication of this is that participants within CBS do not engage in a praxis cycle of life-Faith-life. In following the praxis based See-Judge-Act cycle, CBS should engage participants in praxis. However its pedagogical approach does not ensure that a praxis cycle occurs. Rather within the education event it follows a Faith-Faith-life progression. It is rather the Biblical scholar before the education event who starts with a Life issue. It seems that the scholar engages in a praxis cycle, however not necessarily the participants. In contrast SPA engages the participants in a praxis approach to education, following a life-Faith-life cycle. Although West argues that CBS is rooted within praxis, his 'praxis approach' is seen to differ from Groome's. One reason for this is that there have been varying approaches to praxis within theology resulting in different ways theologians approach its outworking (Gutiérrez 1973, Segundo, 1976, Boff 1987, Markey 1995). These varying approaches can influence how educators approach to praxis within pedagogy.

In contrast to CBS' cycle of Faith-Faith-life, SPA's progression of life-Faith-life starts with contextual reality. This difference is notable within the actual education event as SPA's starting point is the lived experience or praxis of participants. They are invited to name lived experience, and then to reflect critically upon it. By starting with critical reflection on participant's praxis, more 'lines of connection' within the Christian Story are made possible. Consequently this permits greater possibility for a 'to-and-fro' movement or 'fusion of horizons' between life and Faith. This is an essential part of the process as it gives participants a sense of agency with possibility for change (Freire 1996a, Groome 1980, 1991). SPA in following a life-Faith-life process ensures that participants are engaged in critically reflecting on the praxis cycle.

Within CBS, emphasis is not initially put on the participant's stories of lived experience. It is therefore questionable regarding the extent that critical thinking and conscientization is undertaken regarding context. Questioning present action is not intentionally encouraged within CBS as it is within SPA. The value of questioning present action is that it permits false presuppositions about lived experience to be exposed and true facts affirmed. This is an essential part of the process of conscientization. Not only does critical reflection on life and Faith encourage connections to be made between the two, it also encourages transformation. In developing the Shared Praxis Approach, Groome took the concept of praxis and the See-Judge-Act methodology, adapted them and moved beyond. Groome's Shared Praxis Approach, encourages participants to engage in the praxis cycle thereby giving opportunity for transformation to occur within the education process.

The importance of critical thinking is highlighted by the findings from this research that there was correlation between critical thinking and revised forms of thinking and proposed action. Through SPA encouraging participants to critically reflect on praxis, revised forms of praxis were encouraged in light of the Christian Story. Critical reflection occurred when participants took an active role in the learning process. This affirms findings from other studies that have indicated student's learning was most constructive when there was a process of critical reflection relating to personal experience, resulting in a transformation of thinking (Lynch & Pattinson 2005:149). Therefore if participants actively engage in the praxis cycle, there are more opportunities for transformation. This affirms Groome's view that 'critical reason is essential for a transforming human praxis'. He does however caution that 'critical reflection is not inevitably emancipatory; it only has the possibility of being so' (1980:174-5).

If critical thinking concerning praxis is directly related to participant's transformation, then SPA's approach to education provides an opportunity for churches within South Africa to encourage transformation for their congregants. For transformation to be encouraged, a process of critical reflection regarding both lived experience and the Christian Story is needed. SPA's emphasis on participants thinking critically about their contexts enables the possibility for them to move beyond the status quo to work for transformation.

#### 5.2.7 Summary

In summary, this section has overviewed the outworking of each of SPA's five movements. The research discussion indicates that each movement was adequately outworked within the township context. However some of the movements were outworked more adequately than others. For example, Movement 5: Decision lacked communal decision making. This section highlighted the interconnecting characteristics of 1a) content and experience; 1b) content and Christian Story and; 2) critical reflection. The impact of the context upon SPA was also highlighted. The study revealed that SPA engaged participants in an entire praxis process. SPA's characteristics were seen to be more liberatory and empowering for participants when compared with the participant's previous education experiences.

### **5.3 Discussion: Could SPA potentially serve as a type of contextual Christian education?**

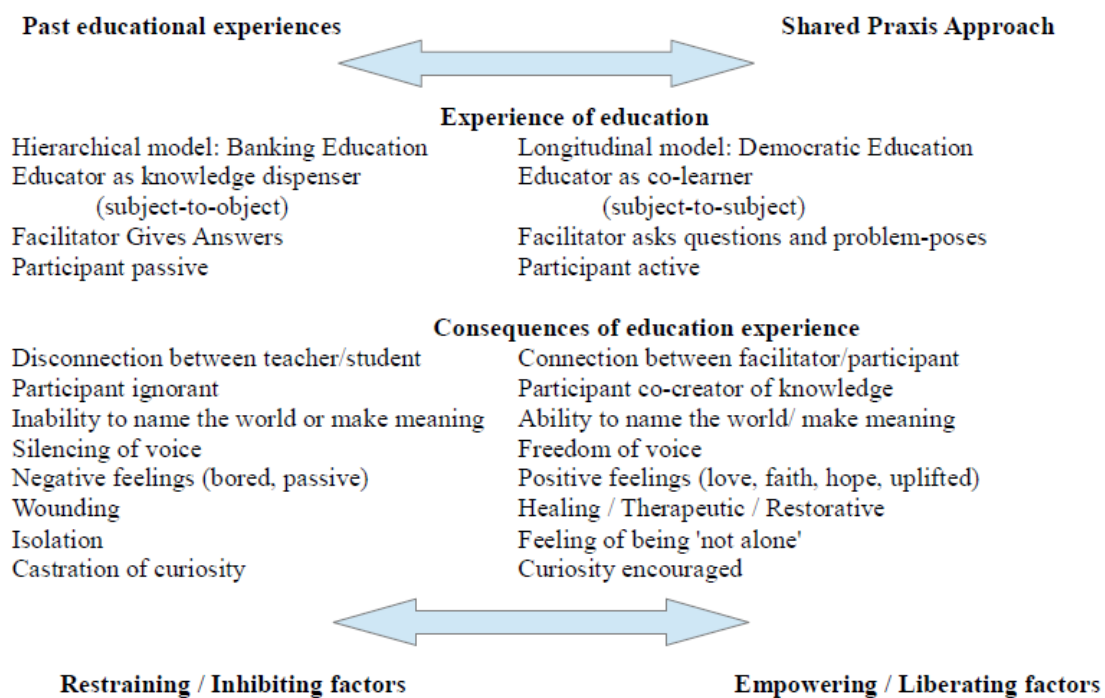
The second sub-question asks: could Groome's Shared Praxis Approach serve as a type of contextual Christian education? This question considers the link or association between SPA and contextual Christian education by investigating common characteristics found in both, and consider whether SPA could support the emergence of contextual theologies. In responding to this question, this section will highlight SPA as a participatory and dialogical pedagogy within the South African context. If this is found in the affirmative, then a conclusion could be made that SPA could serve as a type of CCE.

### 5.3.1 Discussion: Participatory pedagogy within the South African context

This section discusses the findings regarding the dynamics and consequences of SPA’s participatory educational process. A discussion regarding the outworking of SPA’s five movements within the township context would not be complete without exploring it from the perspective of being a ‘participatory and dialogical’ pedagogy. Without the participatory nature of SPA, its five movements would not have been adequately outworked, nor would the rich content from participants have been evident. This will be discussed in relation to the experience of the participant’s previous educational experiences, as well as from literature concerning existing CE models in South Africa.

In contrast to previously experienced Christian education, the participants experienced SPA more positively. This is indicated in Table 5.2 where the participant’s experiences of past education and their experiences of SPA are highlighted. The table includes an axis which reveals liberating and inhibiting characteristics of these education processes.

**Table 5.2** Experience and consequences of educational practices



#### 5.3.1.1 Discussion 1: SPA’s participatory and liberatory characteristics

Firstly, the township young adults described previous experiences of educational practice within their church setting (Table 5.2). These experiences were characterized by a hierarchical, non-participatory educational process, where participants were unable to either ask questions or contribute their own knowledge and insights. Participants described a banking model of education where they were passive receivers, stating agreement, even if there was lack of comprehension. Consequently they felt dis-



empowered from the educational process as the pastor 'gives, gives, gives' while they had to 'receive'. This resulted in an educational 'gap', between the educator and learner. This affirms literature within the Baptist Convention of South Africa, that congregants are oppressed by church educational ideology and by the pastors who were sent to free them (Madolo 2000:60). The participant's experience of church education was being silenced, as passive receivers. Through the banking model of education, it seems that unconscious indoctrination is occurring due to the fact that the teachers and pastors do not know any better (Harkness 2002).

Previous experiences of church education showed signs of what Freire noted as a "castration of curiosity" on behalf of participants, as they revealed a lack of comprehension, passivity, and disempowerment within the education process. In contrast, the research findings revealed the facilitators within SPA's process encouraged participation through their willingness to democratise the learning environment. The education process therefore became longitudinal, as participant-facilitator related equally together rather than hierarchical, where facilitator passed information down to participant. An environment of participation and dialogue was enabled through the use of language as well as verbal and non-verbal encouragements. With SPA's process, the participant's curiosity was encouraged within the education process, leading to feelings of empowerment, rather than disempowerment, as previously experienced.

Through problem-posing, the facilitators encouraged freedom for participants to have a voice and to give honest reflections concerning their experiences. This occurred through the facilitator asking questions, rather than giving answers. This, Groome writes, 'means being willing to learn as well as to teach, to listen as well as to talk, to be questioned as well as to question, to use one's training and resources to empower rather than to control the teaching/learning partnership' (1991:143). Rather than being silenced, freedom of voice permitted participants to name the world, and to make meaning. Liberation is thereby possible for the participant, who is empowered to construct meaning, knowledge and ultimately work in community for transformation. The teacher also finds freedom through empowering others to grow and develop, as well as having his/her own understanding re-created in light of the partnership with students.

The consequences of SPA's education process highlight that participants experienced an empowering and liberating potential. Participants were enabled to ask questions and to explore the issues together, giving them the experience of an inclusive and participatory pedagogy. This possibility for open debate and dialogue gave the participants an experience of legitimacy in the meaning making process, as they 'named the world'. As participants found support from others around them, their input was respected and treated with dignity, which in turn provided the opportunity for them to learn from each other. As Mbongeni notes, 'this process learning style helps people to own up... It makes everybody feel important' (4:52, 96:96). Participants are empowered to take responsibility while their views and

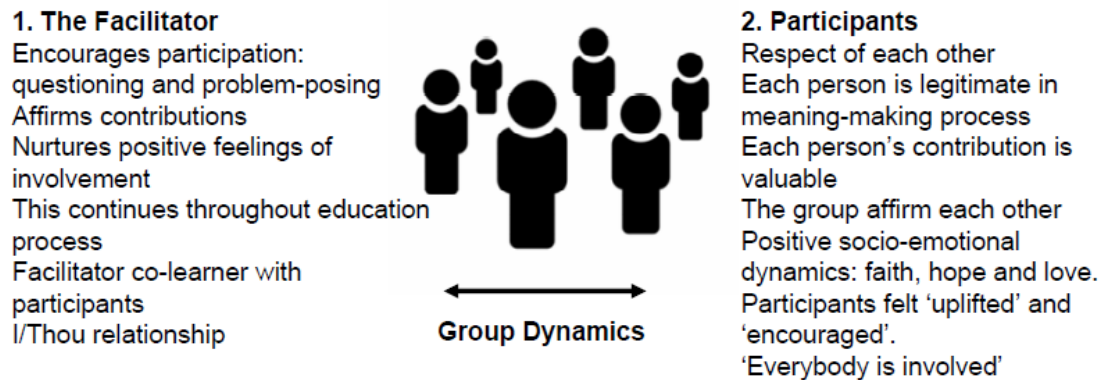
knowledge is given worth and dignity. Participants were considered legitimate subjects in the meaning-making process, thereby encouraging CCE to occur.

The consequences of the participant's experiences of the educational process are significant relating to CCE. The democratic style of the education process enabled participants to experience positive socio-emotional feelings in contrast to feelings of boredom in previous educational settings. A sense of well-being, social cohesion and positive feelings of involvement were evident. These positive feelings also related to the connection between participant-participant and the participant-facilitator, as a sense of positive community and support was felt. In contrast to previously experienced individualistic education, there was a sense of community.

Openness to dialogue and difference was apparent as participants freely conversed with each other and gave differing opinions. Diversity and richness were evident as the group shared together and created knowledge resulting in seeing a 'broader picture'. Knowledge was co-created with feelings of being 'not alone' evident. These group readings enabled: 1) a sense of community strength in the face of isolation; 2) greater 'lines of connection' between the Christian Story and their contextual situation, and; 3) the pedagogy to be therapeutic and restorative as it 'takes the pain away'. These findings indicate that within the South African township church, SPA brought a sense of liberation through enabling the participant's freedom to engage in the theological process and relate it to their township context.

#### 5.3.1.2 Discussion 2: The importance of good facilitation

The facilitator was instrumental for setting the tone and nature of the education event. In contrast the banking education, the facilitators encouraged a participatory education style where participants were invited to the learning event as co-learners. This was done through asking open-ended questions. This affirms research indicating that questioning is 'the single most important action a teacher can take to shift the interaction from monologue to dialogic' (Wells 2009:59). Through questioning, the facilitators encouraged participants to contribute their knowledge and experiences to the learning event. The many questions posed also created an atmosphere of participation. Participants and facilitators experienced knowledge being co-created subject-to-subject rather the teacher being the source of knowledge, dispensing information to students, subject-to-object. In this way the facilitator encouraged freedom within the learning dynamic for participants to have a voice and give honest reflections concerning their experiences. Rather than being silenced, freedom of voice permitted participants to name their experiences, and thus to make meaning within the education process (Figure 5.2).



**Figure 5.2** Group dynamics between facilitator and participants

A critique of SPA's pedagogy however comes from SteinhoffSmith, who describes the facilitator of SPA as the 'hermeneutic practitioner' who 'construct human others as problematic textual objects to be transformed by the hermeneutics' superior interpretive power'. The participants are consequently viewed as 'manipulated objects' that the hermeneutic practitioner exerts power over (1997:447). There was no indication from the findings that participants were treated as 'manipulated objects'. In contrast, the findings revealed an I/Thou relationship between facilitator/participant. Although the facilitator guided the education process and at times follow Groome's desire for the Christian Story to be presented in a 'persuasive' and 'meaningful' way (2011:318) there was no indication that this resulted in indoctrination or manipulation. In contrast, positive socio-emotional feelings were expressed within the learning process by both facilitator and participant. These positive feelings within the learning process were partly due to equal power relations with the facilitator where they were co-learners together in the education process.

This importance of facilitation promoting participation is especially important within the South African context. In a historical context 'marked by lack of freedom and 'highly authoritarian' education system (Hartshorne 1999:71), facilitation actively promoting democratic models of education is extremely important. This was also true within the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) where top-down educational methods are noted as having been used resulting in indoctrination and oppression of ordinary believers (Madolo 1990:60, Molebatsi 1990:70). Within churches it is evident that Christian leaders are not effectively trained in Christian education. This resulted in inherited models of education being implemented, which often do not effectively engage their congregants in the learning process. The challenge for the church is to move away from embedded practices of banking education to educators implementing democratic models of education. Consequently, there is need to train educators in the skill of good facilitation. This would include developing skills in problem-posing, asking probing questions, creating positive group dynamics and other issues relating to democratic education.

The findings however revealed that SPA's facilitator did not have to be a trained theologian or Biblical scholar to see SPA's five movement adequately outworked. This immediately impacts how sustainable and transferable SPA would be within a township context. This is in contrast to West's Contextual Bible Study (CBS) which requires a Biblical scholar for its facilitation (West 1993, 1999a, West & Ujamaa Centre Staff 2011). As CBS is written from the discipline of Biblical Studies rather than Christian education, its content is for the most part related to Biblical text. Emphasis is put on readings *behind the text* (the text's socio-historical world), *on the text* (the text as a literary composition), and *in front of the text* (what the text means in the world of the reader) (West & Ujamaa Centre Staff 2011:9). To engage with the Biblical text in this way the facilitator of CBS must have substantial Biblical training. West encourages Biblical scholars to engage in 'collaborative Bible reading' with poor communities (1999a:36). For West ordinary believers read the Bible 'pre-critically' and 'the critical modes of reading that characterize biblical scholarship' (West 1999a:90). This emphasis on the Biblical scholar could disempower the participants within a democratic education process, as knowledge and power largely remain with the Biblical scholar. This model potentially encourages Freire's 'banking education', rather than knowledge being co-created among participants (Freire 1996a). It seems that ordinary believers are not able to facilitate CBS due to the depth of knowledge required. Consequently, this limits the outworking of CBS at the grassroots level as Biblical scholars are not available to every local Christian community.

In contrast, although Groome's SPA emphasises the Biblical text and tradition, SPA does not rely as heavily as CBS on Biblical exegesis and historical-critical scholarship. As SPA follows five pedagogical movements, ordinary believers with limited Biblical knowledge, but with basic training could facilitate the outworking of SPA. This research highlights how an ordinary believer, highlighted as having limited Biblical knowledge was able to effectively facilitate the Bible Study. More Biblical knowledge would have been helpful and added depth, however SPA was effectively outworked at the grassroots level. This makes SPA more transferable and accessible than CBS to South African grassroots communities. Additionally, as SPA offers more participation from local Christians, rather than an imported Biblical scholar, it arguably increases the level of local and group ownership of the education process.

#### 5.3.1.3 Discussion 3: The importance of positive group participation

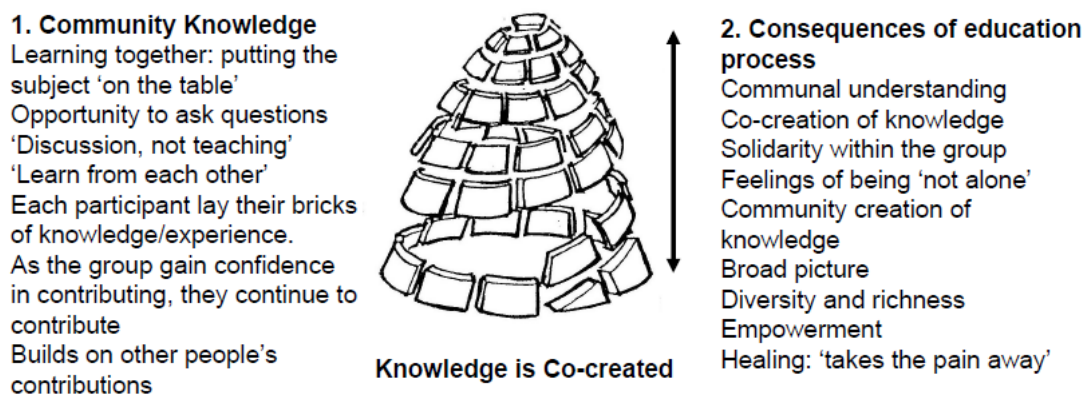
Although the facilitator's role is extremely important in initially creating positive group dynamics, the participants were essential in helping to maintain those group dynamics throughout the education process. This is due to the education event being initially grounded by the facilitator, who nurtures the educational environment. The participant's interactions have a deep impact upon the socio-emotional culture within the group. Figure 5.1 highlights the role of both: 1) *facilitator* and 2) *participants* in creating a positive educational experience.

The research shows that positive group dynamics were enabled through participants respecting each other and valuing each other's contributions. It was evident that the group affirmed each other's contributions resulting in each person being legitimate within the meaning-making process. It was noted that 'everybody is involved' within the education process, which encouraged feelings of being 'uplifted' and 'encouraged'. This resulted in feelings of 'faith, hope and love' within the group.

Within the historical South African context, education has been used as a means of subjugation, resulting in negative experiences among learners. Enabling learners to have positive experiences within the education process must therefore be a priority to encourage cognition. In contrast to negative feelings in previous educational settings, positive socio-emotional feelings were felt by the group regarding the education experience. All participants and facilitators without exception expressed preference for the participatory nature of SPA, rather than top-down education. Participatory education serves as a key aspect of enabling positive socio-emotional dynamics within learning events. The challenge however, is to encourage participants to move from perceiving themselves as 'passive objects', which previous education had conditioned them to believe, to being 'active subjects'. Positive group dynamics were essential for the educational process to engage participants as 'active subjects'. SPA would not have been adequately outworked within the Bible Studies without the participant's contributions. The research shows that through positive group participation, SPA encouraged participants to read the Christian Story dialogically; both in community 'with' each other, as well as in relation to their context. The findings from the data indicate the group dynamics within the learning event influenced the quality of content generated within the learning event.

#### 5.3.1.4 Discussion 4: The emergence of community knowledge

In terms of the pedagogy being outworked, the democratic philosophy of education encouraged active participation among participants. Participants made contributions to the learning event through deposits of knowledge. Figure 5.3 shows the communal education process and how knowledge was created 'brick' by 'brick', from the ground up. Facilitator and participant added one 'brick of knowledge' at a time. Each 'brick of knowledge' was laid on what had been contributed before. It would therefore add to rather than detract from previous contributions. As the positive group dynamics continued throughout the education experience, participants continued to add their contributions, thereby supplementing previous contributions. Consequently, the quantity of offerings from participants was substantial, resulting in a rich tapestry of knowledge. The reading of the Christian Story was from the bottom-up, rather than top-down, thereby permitting contextual Christian education and 'base' theologies to emerge. What emerged was unique to those who contributed in time and place.



**Figure 5.3** Communal education process

#### 5.3.1.5 Discussion 5: Communal education engaged the communal context

The communal education process was extremely successful within the context. Figure 5.3 highlights how *community knowledge* emerged. It shows the participants were adept in learning from each other, asking questions, and discussing the subject at hand. Each individual comes to the group with their own experience and knowledge, and contribute to the collective well being of the group. They build on other participant's contributions and put what they have to offer 'on the table'. African culture is known for its communal nature, which surely had implications upon this participatory education process. Within this communal education process a core African proverb is evident: "a person is a human through other people" (Xhosa: "*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*") (van Zyl 2004:203). Just as people become more human in relation to other people, so knowledge and understanding is created in relation to other people. The communal nature of the context is evident from the data. It has been noted how 'African culture is renowned for its collectivistic and holistic worldview' (van Zyl 2004:203). This was reflected through the education process.

These findings relating to democratic, participatory education are important within the South African context, where authoritarian, privatised education during apartheid, both within society and church was a means of control. There has consequently been a call for South African CE to move away from privatised forms, to more inclusive and participatory models (West 1995, Kretzschmar 1996, Lo 1997, Mywawi 2000, Wilhelm 2003, Kumalo, 2005b). This contrast to the participant's feeling controlled or isolated within the education process. Figure 5.3 highlights the *consequences of the education process*.

The outcomes of co-creating community knowledge reveal a broad, diverse, and rich picture. The effects upon the participants are notable. They experienced a sense of removing isolation, of finding solidarity with others, and empowerment. There is also a restorative aspect, as this co-creation and group understanding was noted as helping to 'take the pain away'. Through the education process, as each person contributes, the group themselves are changed; they find solidarity, empowerment and

healing. In this way it is not only the communal knowledge that is important, but also the transformation of participants through taking part in the education process.

It was evident from the data that participants found the process healing, therapeutic and restorative. The data highlights that curiosity was encouraged within the education process, leading to feelings of empowerment, rather than dis-empowerment, as previously experienced. In contrast to previously experienced education which was individualistic, there was a strong sense of community within the experimental learning process. Knowledge was co-created with feelings of being 'not alone' evident. This resulted in a 'broader picture' of diversity and richness facilitated through the communal process of education. This communal characteristic within the education process was important in helping new contextual theologies emerge. The content generated within the group was rich and extensive, drawing on the wisdom from each person both from their lived experiences and from their understandings of the Christian Story. These, contributions were critically reflected upon, resulting in re-formed understandings of both their lived reality and the Christian Story. This re-formed and new knowledge helped contextual theologies emerge to move beyond what was already present towards the vision of God's reign.

This research therefore responds to Speckman's critique of contextual theology within South Africa having 'lost the grassroots link' (2001:394-5). SPA's education process provides an opportunity for the 'gap' between educator and participants to be closed. Rather than educator exercising power over the participant, participatory education would enable them to 'serve a community of believers' This would in turn provide the opportunity for theology to become a 'communal enterprise' resulting in the emergence of contextual theologies (Sedmak 2002:15). SPA therefore has potential in serving as a type of contextual Christian education, supporting the emergence of contextual theologies.

### 5.3.2 SPA as Contextual Christian education within the South African context

These research findings indicate that SPA could serve as a type of contextual Christian education. Due to SPA's participatory nature which is rooted in a praxis approach to education, the content is rooted in the everyday lives and experiences of those who take part. As with contextual theology's emphasis on three theological loci, SPA emphasises the same three sources of theological revelation: Scripture, Christian Tradition and Context. SPA encourages participants to theologically reflect not only on the Christian Story, but also their experiences of God in everyday life. This is an important finding: that everyone's experiences of God are equally valued. As participants reflect on their present and past praxis, they are encouraged to see the 'fingerprints of God' acting in their lives. This section will highlight some of the implications of SPA serving as a type of contextual Christian education within the South African context.

### 5.3.2.1 Holistic Christian education

SPA's methodology provides an opportunity for Christian education to reconnect the sacred/secular divide that has been present in much CE within South Africa. Participants are encouraged to name their everyday experiences of God being active in their lives. Within the South African context, there is a need to move away from dualistic-spiritual educational methods. Education models have emphasised spiritual needs by separating reality into different spheres of the physical and spiritual; the sacred and the secular. African culture however is one of wholeness and inter-connected systems, where divisions between sacred and secular are a foreign concept. Contextual Christian education is therefore needed promoting a holistic and integrated worldview, where God is viewed as active within the lived reality of communities and individuals. This breaks the sacred/secular dichotomy. As God is active within the participant's lived experiences, their lives become sacred and spirituality becomes integrated and holistic. CCE that takes into account the holistic needs of the people, while perceiving God being active in the midst of their struggles, must become a priority.

Within an education process intent on exploring holistic spirituality, there would be a need for educators to produce a series of studies relating to contextual issues relevant for the South African context. Maluleke highlights new issues that African contextual theology is starting to address such as, HIV-AIDS, ecology and sexual orientation. He is convinced that African theology 'is anything but ONE', rather it is diverse and multi-faceted (Maluleke 2001:389). Theologies are emerging under the umbrella of contextual theology building on the Kairos Document's call to move towards 'prophetic theology'. These include a theology of reconstruction, constructive theology, grassroots theology, a theology of power and developmental theology (van der Water 2001:58, Speckman 2001). In helping ordinary believers engage with contextual issues facing South Africa, these themes could be the starting point and themes for Bible Studies implementing SPA. Consequently, ordinary believers are empowered to access contextually relevant issues impacting their everyday lives, while interweaving them with the Christian Story. The education process thus becomes holistic in nature.

### 5.3.2.2 Christian education for reconstruction

Taking the example above of contextual theology for reconstruction, there is a need for contextual Christian education to engage with the matter of nation-building. In democratic South Africa, Villa-Vicencio notes that principles from liberation theologies and theologies of resistance need to move beyond to reconstruction (1999:154-159). Issues of unemployment, identity, xenophobia, blacklisting and violence against women and children have also been highlighted as areas for development (Botha 2010:193). The challenge however, is for not only national and community leaders to be involved in the nation building process, but for ordinary people to also engage in the process. In this way ordinary people explore what it would mean for their communities to be reconstructed, to pursue healing and wholeness.



With an emphasis on critical reflection on a community's past and present praxis, SPA could contribute to broader society by facilitating a critical education process regarding the nature of a community. SPA's theological underpinnings of Jesus' teaching about the Reign of God would enable a community to critically and theologically reflect upon their community's future. This could provide a community with the tools 'to struggle for justice and reconciliation, for a more humane society and a more sustainable environment' (de Gruchy 2011:31). To aid this process it would be interesting to see if SPA would be flexible enough to incorporate the social sciences within its education process. For example, economic theory, the natural sciences and developmental issues could aid the dialogue (Villa-Vicencio 1999:154-159). In this way, SPA could enable grassroots communities with the help of scholars to engage in developing theologies of reconstruction, thereby serving public-practical theology.

### 5.3.2.3 Multicultural Christian education

In exploring reconstruction, there is the need for theologies of reconciliation to emerge. Within the turbulent history of the rainbow nation, with its different religions, traditions, culture and memories, unification and reconciliation are a priority. Villa-Vicencio writes 'Gustavo Guitierrez speaks of the need for people to drink from their own wells. Nation-building in South Africa demands more than this. It requires us to discover the subterranean rivers on which the different wells draw.' For Villa-Vicencio there is a need to discover this unifying source through encountering others in the search for common values and ideals that provide purpose and hope (1999:171).

Dialogue with 'the other' is an essential part of exploring common values and purpose. As seen from the findings of this research, SPA provides an opportunity for people to dialogue together around a common theme subject-to-subject. SPA was successfully outworked in a context with different cultures and languages represented. Knowledge and understanding were co-created, as each participant contributed their experience and understanding of a theme. It provides potential for people with more diverse histories and traditions to dialogue together to create communal understanding in pursuing common values.

Interestingly, Ospino critiques SPA along with other Catholic education approaches for not having 'explicitly approached cultural diversity as a primary focus' (2009:310). In qualitatively analysing the outworking of SPA within the unique contextual situation of a poor, multi-cultural South African township church, this research explores the issue of SPA as multicultural education. The findings show that SPA was effective in exploring issues of culture, language, race and poverty within an educational environment. It highlights the educational experiences of South African township young adults, sharing their cultural experiences of life and understandings of the Christian Story. The result was culturally sensitive theology emerging through SPA's CCE model.

Another objection to Groome's SPA is that it has been written from a mainly Western academic perspective and although recognizing varying cultural and religious perspectives, it lacks substantive treatment of the issues of culture, race, gender and class (Kujuwa 1993). Other voices such as 'women, the poor, and other ethnic groups', have been encouraged to respond to Groome's educational model, rather than just 'middle class white Americans' (Sutherland 1984:139). This study however adds to Practical Theology through qualitatively examining the implementation of SPA within a poor, South African township context. It revealed that SPA enabled participants to have a voice, to co-create knowledge in community through permitting them to tell stories about their realities. It empowered the young adults to create new meanings about their realities and the Christian Story as those two horizons met. These factors indicate that SPA could potentially serve as a type of multi-cultural Christian education.

#### 5.3.2.4 Storytelling Christian education

If contextual Christian education within South Africa is to move away from foreign and imposed curriculums of missionaries and other cultural groups, there is also a need to assess teaching methods. Traditional teaching methods have not only involved instruction and banking models, but also follow logic and linear patterns of thought. Villa-Vicencio calls for contextual and liberation theology to 'change in expression, as it is more deeply appropriated into the culture of the ordinary people' (1997). Within the South African context, culturally appropriate forms of learning must be explored, moving away from pre-defined patterns of thought and expression.

Within African culture, storytelling has been a central way for information to be passed from generation to generation and community to community. Stories of origin and identity, common ancestry and folklore have been an important part of many cultures within South Africa. Everyday life is also filled with stories, as people share experiences with others. This raises the question of storytelling within CCE. Rather than logic and linear patterns of thought being prioritised, there is a greater need for storytelling within South African churches.

Within education, the written word is usually prioritised. However in contexts where there is illiteracy, storytelling permits everyone to contribute equally. Additionally, within South African churches, illiteracy is still an issue, particularly in relation to the senior generations. CCE should therefore take into account issues of illiteracy, to ensure pedagogies do not isolate some and are thus accessible to everyone.

As SPA encourages storytelling within its education process, this indicates that SPA could be relevant in helping Christian education within South Africa move away from linear and logic thought patterns. The findings of the data indicate that through participants sharing their experiences and stories, there was greater opportunity for the Christian Story to be appropriated to their lives. The telling of stories

was therefore instrumental in permitting greater potential for revised action and thought. Interestingly, when the participants contributed their understandings of the Christian Story, this was not read from the Bible. Rather, participants told the Christian Story from memory. This highlights the importance of storytelling from both the perspective of the participant's experiences as well as storytelling from the Christian tradition.

The importance of storytelling within South Africa has been affirmed by Villa-Vicencio who writes, 'we need to tell one another stories. It is perhaps the only basis for recognizing and yet transcending our differences. It is perhaps the only basis for gaining an understanding of both ourselves and the hopes and fears of others' (1997:31). Storytelling provides an opportunity for nation building particularly within a multi-cultural context, as differences are transcended and stories of oppression and freedom are released. In this way, Rowland indicates new forms of theology are 'an oral theology in which story, experience, and biblical reflection are intertwined with the community's life of sorrow and joy, reflecting the Scriptures themselves, which are the written deposit of a people bearing witness to their story of oppression, bewildered and longing for deliverance' (1999c:250). SPA offers an education process that could serve as a type of storytelling pedagogy within the South African context.

#### 5.3.2.5 Restorative and liberative Christian education

It is noted that storytelling of lived experiences and understandings of reality are essential in order to provide both healing (Landman 2001:361, Mpako 2008) and greater communal understanding (Villa-Vicencio 1997:30, 37). The findings of this research indicate the consequences of SPA being outworked within the township context resulted in the education having the potential of being restorative, liberative and empowering. Restorative and liberative characteristics were expressed through firstly removing a sense of isolation and loneliness among participants. The data indicated that a sense of community and belonging established within the group, resulting in the feeling of isolation diminishing (2:41; 8:100). SPA also indicated potential for being liberative and healing through participants being able to 'unlock' the hurt within them and 'to let things out' through sharing their stories (Siya 2:41). A sense of solidarity was experienced, as others also related to the issues being shared. Empowerment was evident through a freedom of voice, as participants expressed their experiences and feelings.

These consequences of the education approach are extremely important in the South African context, where through national education, education was used to control, manipulate and oppress. Within a context emphasising nation building, reconstruction and reconciliation, a restorative and liberative CCE would be extremely relevant. Within the South African context, the range of complex social issues such as poverty and high crime rates impacts communities and individuals. There is a need within problematic societies for individuals to be authentic and real, to begin to address personal and communal issues. Contextual Christian education should intentionally be seeking to promote

authenticity and honesty within education programmes. If this occurs there is the possibility for education to be restorative, liberative and therapeutic in nature for those who participate.

#### 5.3.2.6 Christian education nurturing contextual theology

As SPA has been noted as having the potential to serve as a type of CCE within the South African context, it raises the question regarding the possibility of nurturing the emergence of contextual theologies within local churches. Sedmak highlights three tasks that contextual theologies are called to: they point to the richness and goodness of local context; they challenge the local context by encouraging people 'to see and go beyond its limits', and; finally they encouraged new insights and expressions of life and Faith (2002:126). From the research findings, it is evident that SPA encouraged each of these three characteristics. Firstly local context was celebrated through the participant's wide ranging references and stories. Secondly, through critical reflection on praxis, participants saw and moved beyond existing practice and understanding. Finally, new insights were evident concerning both life and Faith.

For Cochrane, incipient or emerging theology is generated by ordinary believers who are theologically untrained, often on the margins of society, but who reflect on their faith, and who 'possess a theologically and socially relevant wisdom about their situation and context' (1999:21). SPA's education process enabled the facilitator and participants to unlock this theological and social 'wisdom about their situation and context'. The emergence of contextual theology is a complex process, however the findings of this study highlight that SPA supported the emergence of contextual theology through: the formation and pedagogical process of the education event; the content generated within the discussion relating to the participant's context and knowledge; the facilitator's understanding of the Christian Story; the participant's understanding of the Christian Story; critical thinking relating to the content; appropriating Faith to life, and; engaging the entire praxis process. Consequently, SPA as an education process has the potential to intentionally facilitate ordinary people being active in the nurturing the generation of contextual theology.

In contrast to existing spiritualised, individualistic and privatised forms of CE within South Africa, SPA offers an education process that is holistic, communal and has potential for impacting the public arena. Being well received as an education model by both facilitators and participants, it encouraged a participatory, praxis approach to Christian education. Through active engagement and critical reflection, participants progressed through a praxis cycle providing potential for transformation. This encouraged a fusion of horizons between their context and the Christian Story. Within the South African context, SPA offers a model of education that could serve as a type of contextual Christian education.

## **5.4 Theoretical Contribution to Practical Theology**

### **5.4.1 Practical Theology and the Shared Praxis Approach**

Practical Theology's praxis cycle moving from practice to theory, to critical reflection on practice, to revised forms of practice was implemented within this study (Browning 1991, Gadamer 1979, Swinton & Mowat 2006:255-256). Groome's Shared Praxis Approach follows this praxis cycle within its education model. For this reason SPA has been placed within the discipline of Practical Theology, as it is a Practical Theological approach to education (Browning 1991:218).

As a Practical Theologian I am concerned about seeing new praxis, which in turn can be reintroduced to the praxis cycle. Although SPA follows a praxis approach to education, it was itself put through Practical Theology's praxis cycle. The results were reported within this study. It highlights the adequacy of each SPA movement, in relation to the contextual situation. In light of SPA being put through Practical Theology's praxis cycle, strengths and weaknesses of SPA's education model were highlighted. Through further recommendations SPA could re-engage in praxis cycle to view the impact of those revisions.

The findings of this research indicate that SPA encouraged participants to engage in the praxis cycle through its education process. The research indicated that through participating in SPA, there was potential for participants to make 'lines of connection' between life and Faith. Through a process of critical reflection and the praxis process opportunity were indicated for participants to engage in transformed thinking and action. This adds value to the discipline of Practical Theology through observing the outworking and consequences of this praxis cycle among township young adults. Contextual factors relating to the participants outworking of the praxis cycle were also highlighted.

Lynch and Pattison have noted that despite growing literature on how to facilitate Practical Theological education, 'comparatively little work has been done on what students learn and value from their training in practical theology'. They highlight that 'beyond the personal experience of teachers in this field, there is little public knowledge of how useful students find methods of practical theological education or what benefits they believe they gain through participating in practical theological education' (2005:144). This study however has added value to this discipline through empirical research relating to education within a township context. It outlined the experiences and outcomes of the education process, thereby contributing to the field of Practical Theology.

The findings indicate the importance of participatory education within the South African context. Issues of sustainability were highlighted regarding the importance of good facilitation and positive group participation. These factors related to how community knowledge was formed through the participatory praxis process. The study therefore showed the process of SPA and its application to the township context as well as speaking to the relevance of contextual Christian education.

In the South African context, there are very few examples of user friendly education models enabling churches to facilitate Christian education at a basic level. Nor is there a liberatory Practical Theology approach to education. SPA offers an education model that is accessible, and that has been successfully trialled among township participants, with Southern African facilitators hosting the education event. It is a liberatory Practical Theology education model which compels participants to engage in critical praxis, thereby offering potential for transformation and liberation. SPA offers a praxis approach to Christian education which is rooted within Practical Theology, for the South African context.

#### 5.4.2 Practical Theology, Voice and Culture

Browning argues that Practical Theologians should go beyond writing for the academia, but rather write for the ordinary person 'on the street'. In order to do this Browning states that Practical Theologians 'should both describe their effective histories and use scientific distancing [sic] to identify the social and cultural forces that shape their lives'. For Browning this is done through employing empirical research 'in both its hermeneutic-descriptive and explanatory forms' (2007:196). Within this empirical study observations and interviews were employed, which sought to permit diverse voices and perspectives to be heard. In this way the research goes beyond writing *for* the person 'on the street'. The education process permits the person 'on the street' to have a voice, to speak for themselves within and about the contextual Christian education process.

Within qualitative research it is noted that 'ideographic knowledge assumes that no two people experience the same event in the same way' (Swinton & Mowat 2006:43). Consequently, the various voices from within the research process were heard. Swinton and Mowat argue that 'ideographic knowledge is also an integral part of the experiences and situations that Practical Theology seek to reflect upon' (Swinton & Mowat 2006:43). Participants described their effective experiences in relation to the education process, which in turn permits the identification of social and cultural forces that shape their life-worlds. As Browning notes, the empirical is used in its hermeneutic-descriptive and explanatory forms (2007:196). However the researcher does not speak on-behalf of, rather the participants were given a voice to participate in and shape the education process.

Through this research, previously hidden voices came to the forefront. As Practical Theology's starting point is human experience, value is added to the discipline from the township cultural context. The empirical research saw the township participants placed central within the study. The study revealed the participant's rich spirituality. Having worked for four years in the townships, I never met one African who did not believe in God. This study went beyond pragmatic belief; it revealed the participant's strong awareness of God being actively involved in their daily lives. Respect and devotion to God were evident. Participants told stories of facing adverse situations within the township

and then putting their trust and faith in God to deliver them. God was not described as being far from them, or removed from their suffering. God was with them in the midst of their suffering and difficulties. These township young adults expressed a deep love for God. This in turn resulted in a dynamic spirituality and emergence of contextualised theology, as reflected in the data.

Value is added to Practical Theology through these ordinary believers having a voice and being involved in the contextual theology process. The research reveals how SPA encouraged the co-creation of knowledge emerging from the ground up. This highlighted the process of how ordinary participants were involved in relating life to Faith and forming new expressions of contextual theology. The participant's awareness of God acting in their lives enabled an integrated and holistic theology to emerge through the education process. The opportunity for storytelling within the education process related well within the African context. Value is also seen from the consequences of this communal education process and its emphasis on storytelling. As different voices shared experiences and stories, an empowering and liberative dynamic occurred within the education process. Through participation and storytelling, participants expressed the restorative and healing nature that SPA facilitated. As Swinton and Mowat note, theological reflection within Practical Theology takes seriously the actions of God in the present and offers a necessary contextual voice to the process of theology and theological development (2006:6).

#### 5.4.3 Practical Theology and opportunities for future research

The study's findings raise further issues relating to opportunities for further research within Practical Theology. Firstly, this would include exploring SPA as a type of contextual Christian education within other contexts. Within this study, the township context and experience of participants contributed significantly. Further research could explore the significance of the South African context. In a county with eleven official languages and described as a 'melting pot' of cultures, what would these variables bring to the experimental educational process and to the forming of contextual theologies? Cross-cultural, multi-cultural education and multi-generational educational studies relating to contextual Christian education would be valuable to explore.

Secondly, a longitudinal study would be beneficial to reveal how SPA would fare in the long-term within a specific context. In particular, reviewing the relationship between the five movements of SPA over a period of time would be interesting. One line of investigation could ask if critical readings of the Christian Story or communal decision making (which were lacking in this research) become more evident. Thirdly, exploring life-stage development in relation to how people interact with SPA's pedagogical process could be beneficial. As individuals experience stages of development in their cognitive growth, research regarding interaction in participatory, critical and praxis models of education in these life stages could be insightful.

Fourthly, through the implementation of SPA over a period of time, the extent and manner that participants experienced transformation could be analysed. For example, through consistently using SPA, to what extent would capacities for critical thinking among participants be developed, and what would the implications be? Transformation could be explored from several perspectives, including from an individual perspective or a communal perspective. This could explore how an individual or group's thinking and action were transformed within their ecclesial and social contexts.

Finally, within these various contexts it would be helpful to research the relationship between SPA and the emergence of localised contextual theologies. Could SPA be a vehicle for encouraging the emergence of well developed contextual theologies? Also, what is the potential for SPA to give rise to new expressions of township spirituality and theology? These contextual theologies would in turn require research asking: where do they lead? Contextual issues highlighted such as HIV-AIDS, xenophobia, blacklisting and violence against women and children could be possible avenues for investigations. These issues could relate to theologies of reconstruction and nation-building, with Practical Theology relating to the public sphere.

Research could also question if these emerging contextual theologies be different from other forms of liberatory contextual theology such as Black theology? Would SPA's synthesis between context and the Christian story give rise to expressions for the global church offering correlative or corrective practices? (Cochrane 1999:145) And how, as West asks, can these local theologies be brought into the public realm? (2005:26) In the rich cultural context of South Africa it is certain that if CCE is outworked, there is no opportunity for the interaction between the Christian Story and the South African context to become static, dull or mono-theology. Rather, supporting contextual Christian education and the emergence of grass-roots contextual theologies in the rainbow nation will ensure vibrancy, creativity and diversity.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

Although the study produced extensive and rich data, there are also a number of limitations. One challenge was lack of literature regarding Christian education within South African churches, and more specifically within the Baptist Convention. This is especially true regarding empirical educational research. Although there was a good supply of material relating to South African contextual theology, there is a lack regarding Christian education emphasising context. This was also true regarding literature of how contextual theology practically emerges at a grass-roots level. Consequently there were challenges in problematising the literature, which should have guided the study.

A second limitation lay in the artificial nature of SPA being outworked within the context. Challenges lay in adequately embedding SPA within the context. Although the SPA education process was taught to ministerial students at the Baptist Convention College, the question arises as to whether the training



was enough to adequately outwork and represent SPA? Equally, it could be argued that this training is what would be possible realistically within a developing grassroots context, and therefore the results were positive given the training facilitators had. This artificial nature of SPA being outworked within the context was also seen within the actual Bible Studies. Although the Bible Studies were conducted as authentically as possible within the weekly young adults group, they contained variables not normally experienced by the young adults. These included having 'guest facilitators' from the Baptist Convention College, as well as being a series of four special studies which participants could attend. It is possible there was a greater sense of excitement, expectation and support from the participants during the data collection, than within the normal week to week group. The results showed an enthusiasm of participants to actively participate and contribute, thereby giving rich data. It raises the question, would their enthusiasm to participate occur to the same extent over a longer period of time?

Thirdly, a broader sample would be beneficial. Although the data collected was rich, it was also limited to one church. It would be useful to conduct this research at more churches, to observe how SPA would be outworked in a variety of contexts. These church contexts could vary regarding their urban/rural locations, as well as trialling SPA with different generations, or within a multi-generational approach.

The data indicates there were several factors limiting the effectiveness of SPA being used as a type of contextual Christian education. One such challenge was the difficulty the facilitators experienced in the progression of questions. Although the facilitators had worked on an outline of questions developed in advance, additional questions were added by the facilitators spontaneously within the Bible Studies. These additional questions however did not build on previous contributions but rather diverted from the topic at hand. Also, the data revealed that another weakness in the facilitator's questioning was a lack of probing. The participant's responses needed further probing to help them firstly uncover reasons for present praxis, and secondly to deliberately uncover the origins of why participants or society thinks and acts like they do. Both of these aspects Groome cites as being important in critical reflection (1991:188-9). Although there were some questions which probed within the lesson plan outlines, more probing questions would have been beneficial to help participants think more deeply.

Another challenge in facilitating SPA within the context was question stacking. There were three incidences where multiple questions were asked by the facilitator before participants could respond. The result was confusion for the participants in knowing to which question to respond. The participants needed time to think before responding to a question. For the facilitators there was a need to not be afraid of times of silence in the midst of questioning. The facilitators seemed to want to fill any silence among the group with repeating questions or summarizing what has been said. Groome encourages times of silence during the SPA as 'silent periods may be the most effective times for dialogue with oneself and with what others have already shared' (1991:185).

Clarity in communication was also an issue which did not promote participation and stunted the pedagogical process. English was not a first language for the facilitator who had limited experience in facilitating groups in English. There were three occasions during the Bible Study where clarity of expression resulted in participants asking for clarification due to not understanding. This reveals one challenge the educational process experienced due to cross-cultural communication, and implies that some meaning was lost in the communication process. Research on cross-cultural communication within township churches would be an interesting topic of study to explore further, especially given the multi-cultural nature of churches in the townships.

A final limitation lies within the methodology of the research. This study used a descriptive-empirical approach through observing the outworking of Groome's SPA within a township church. However, it must be noted that a direct methodology using critical theory could have been beneficial. SPA is influenced by critical theory and encourages critical thinking among participants. This was evident through participants questioning practices of education within the church. 'Distorted practices' within the church were also highlighted, such as 'gangsterism'. However it would have been interesting for critical theory to have been intentionally used when constructing questions for the Bible Studies, using SPA's process. This could have encouraged participants to question the structures and power relations of both the church and society around them. This could start with questions such as: who is setting the agenda of 'true and right' thinking within the Christian community? Through using critical theory, it would highlight if participants would want to bring about change. South Africa's socio-cultural history of systematic oppression would provide a unique opportunity to trial a critical theory approach to Christian education.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

The research indicates that SPA was beneficial within the young adult's group at Shekinah Glory Worship Centre (SGWC) as a type of contextual Christian education. It actively engaged the participants in the praxis cycle, enabling them to reflect critically about their world. This in turn promoted opportunities for transformation. For SGWC, I firstly recommend that SPA is integrated and rooted within the life of the church. This would include implementation of SPA regularly within the young adults group, as well as within the cell-groups, the men's and women's groups, youth and children's groups. SPA could also be outworked within the Sunday services, where sermons are replaced with more participatory and communal pedagogy. In order to embed this model within the life of the church, banking models of education need to be gradually reduced. The church leaders and department heads would need to change their educational approach to more participatory and inclusive models of education. It would therefore be beneficial for leaders to be trained in facilitating SPA and its five movements.

SGCW is also recommended to reflect on the wealth of knowledge and experience located within the community. Rather than drawing on external preachers and Christian educators, there is an opportunity to use local expertise within the life and education of the church. SPA provides a user-friendly education process. Ordinary believers with little theological training could be trained to implement SPA. Within the SPA process, facilitators encourage participants to share their expertise and experience. In this way, both facilitators and participants are empowered. This would encourage local believers to move from dependency within the education process towards empowerment. If local knowledge and experience is used, SPA could be sustained within the life of the church.

The research indicated that participants co-created knowledge and understanding together. This gave the participants a sense of value and worth, as their contributions were valued within the meaning-making process. Through participants sharing their life and Faith experiences, there is an opportunity for SGWC's congregants to help each other make sense of their existence together as a church within the township context. This offers an opportunity for a greater sense of ecclesial identity to be formed, as congregants explore who God has called them to be within their context. As participants co-created knowledge they took ownership of the education process. This arguably helped develop the participant's towards greater maturity as they worked in appropriating Faith to life, as well as having their critical abilities challenged. Participants were encouraged to greater levels of ingenuity through supporting revised thinking and patterns of behaviour.

The research revealed that SPA encouraged local voices to be heard. Participants told stories about both their life and Faith experiences. This was found to be 'therapeutic', 'healing' and restorative. For SGWC, SPA provides an opportunity for congregant's voices and stories to be heard. Within the township context where the community has faced oppression, violence, poverty and silencing, storytelling offers restorative opportunities. A recommendation is therefore made to permit greater opportunity for stories and experiences to be told by congregants. SPA offers an opportunity for stories and shared narratives about life experience. If implemented within the church, SPA's education process has the potential of being both therapeutic and healing for the participants.

A final recommendation would be for leaders within SGWC to be trained and encouraged to develop resource material implementing SPA. These could be workshop/Bible Study outlines similar to those used by the facilitators for this research (Appendix 2). This material would take into account the results of this research regarding the many factors needed in order for contextual theology to be enabled within a township context. Ideally, the writing of this material would involve action research, thereby involving Christians at the grass-roots level to establish the material within their context. Themes coming out of this research which could be used as a starting point would include exploring issues of community building, poverty, violence and sexual abuse, from a Christian perspective. Material written could be distributed among SCWC's departments (i.e youth, cell groups, men's and lady's groups). In this way material would be written for the church, by the church.

The results of this research as well as broader literature relating to participatory education within South Africa indicate that SPA could be sustainable if changes were made within Christian education. Other studies show that education within Africa using Freirian concepts and critical pedagogy have been successful. For example Hope & Timmel's work (1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1999) has empowered African communities in their pursuit of social transformation and justice. Participatory and praxis related Christian education also been extremely effective within South America's church base communities (CEBs) (Boff 1986, 1997, Rohter 2007, Green 2009). Both these examples of sustainable and successful models of education employ pedagogies with similar characteristics to SPA, indicating that SPA's process could be meaningfully applied to broader contexts.

Relating to wider recommendations, as the research was undertaken within one church context, transferability cannot be generalised. The application of the model however, could be relevantly applied into other contexts. The church context in Munsieville exhibited characteristics typical of other Baptist township churches: the historical-socio context; being located within a marginalised poor community; a multiplicity of languages; the ecclesial-cultural context. These characteristics indicate that SPA could be meaningfully applied into other churches within the Baptist Convention of South Africa. SPA was taught to students and practically implemented outside of the church context within both the Baptist Convention College in Soweto, as well as within other township churches in three different regions of South Africa. The educational process was well received and indicated positive results within this broader context. It is therefore recommended that SPA be implemented within more churches of the Baptist Convention of South Africa.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Literature regarding Christian education has often been theoretical and academic, undertaken by theologians rather than ordinary believers. It is therefore essential that research continues regarding how contextual Christian education can be actively encouraged in practice at the grassroots level. This study explored the outworking of Groome's Shared Praxis Approach as a type of contextual Christian education among South African township young adults. The research reveals that SPA's movements were adequately outworked within the context. It also showed great potential in serving as a type of contextual Christian education. Consequently, this study proposes a way forward for South African contextual theology to re-establish the 'lost grassroots link'.

In a context where Christian education has been spiritualised, individualistic and separated from the culture of the people, there have been calls for revised educational practices which are contextual, dialogical and holistic. This research reveals the suitability and relevance of the Shared Praxis Approach as model of education within a township context. Not only did it place importance on the contextual and holistic situation of participants, it also strongly interacted with the Bible. Its participatory education model enables participants to engage in storytelling which in turn had

therapeutic and liberatory qualities. Through engaging in a critical, praxis approach to Christian education, the research indicated that participants were given the opportunity to revise and transform their thinking and actions. This research provides a way forward for SPA to be implemented as a type of contextual Christian education within the South African context.

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# Appendix 1

## Munsieville's Historic Background and Photos

Munsieville (named in 1941), is one of the oldest black townships in the West Rand, Johannesburg. Munsieville, while under the control of the Krugersdorp Town Council from 1905 the entry of Africans into this location was controlled through a permit system. The township was expanded in 1911, The permit system, which became more refined over time, controlled the movement and residence of individuals within Munsieville. A curfew in the early 1910s ensured that no Africans would be in the white town between specified hours, thereby reducing freedom of movement within the black population. The permit system also restricted ownership of land. The central government's prohibition of black freehold tenure was an attempt to restrict independence as well as protecting white wealthy land owners from black competition (Proctor 1985:168).

Lack of services, open drains and the location of the municipal refuse dump near Munsieville created unpleasant living conditions. Overcrowding was a major issue. In 1934 the older location of Munsieville had on average 32 people per dwelling, while the newer location had on average 10 per dwelling (Proctor 1985:169). The inhabitants resisted control by the council over the types of structures they could live in. Tin shelters were erected alongside Council and privately constructed dwellings. Resistance also came in the form of squatter camps which sprung up in the area surrounding Munsieville. During the 1950's the closure of mines in the area, saw factories emerging on the mine sites. These new industrial sites attracted workers into the area for employment (Proctor 1985:168-9).

In the late 1950's and early 1960's the Council decided to move a proportion of the Munsieville location to a neighbouring township *Kagiso 2*, 'as expanding white suburbs could not, following *apartheid* policy, share the hillside with black residents' (Proctor 1985:170). Despite this move, the population of Munsieville continued to increase. During the 1950's the closure of mines in the area, saw factories emerging on the mine sites. These new industrial sites attracted workers into the area for employment (Proctor 1985:168-9).

Following the election of the National Party to government in 1948, additional controls were put into effect over the black population in Munsieville. A policy was introduced allowing only those employed in the municipal locations could be housed within municipal locations. Therefore members of families not employed in the same municipal area were forbidden to live together. In 1949 residents responded in protest to these policies and the oppression experienced in 'all spheres of life'. Two days of violence ensued in which two residents were killed by police gunfire (Proctor 1985:171). The local

council relinquished control of all locations in 1972-73, permitting the State to centralise administration of its locations. Overcrowding within Munsieville remained a major problem.

The democratic elections brought with it a schism within Munsieville. Those who pursued jobs in government or business were seen to drive luxury cars around the township as well as vastly improving their homes. Others within black bourgeoisies chose to leave the township and move into richer, formerly white suburbs. Class conflict continues to exist, as for the majority of people they have seen little change (Stevenson 2011:220).

According to the 2001 census, unemployment in Munsieville was at almost fifty percent. Thirty-nine percent were living in shacks in informal settlements. Formal township houses accommodate many tin shacks within their yards to house the high population. Fifty-five percent of households had no refrigerator. Just over half of households used electricity for lighting. Almost ten percent of the population had never been to school (in Stevenson 2011:220, Ngwetsheni, Ntshabelang, & Tlokana 2005:26). Reconstruction within Munsieville is therefore a high priority.

In a recent study focusing on the challenges of young adults within the local council area (now known as Mogale City) of which Munsieville is part, it is noted that 'Poverty in this area has discouraged youth from pursuing careers.... Many even fail to complete Matric, as they are forced to leave school because there is no food on the table at home, or they do not have the money to pay for school fees'. In order for change in behavioural patterns, the study argues that youth programmes must 'address the educational, economic and psycho-social needs of young people' (Ngwetsheni, Ntshabelang, & Tlokana 2005:28, 44).

**Photos of Munsieville (2011)**



**Photos of Shekinah Glory Worship Centre**

Previously known as Munsieville Baptist Church, Munsieville, Gauteng (2012)



## Appendix 2 Bible Study 1: Luke 10:25-37 - Love your Neighbour

The Movements of SPA	Teacher's commitment	Luke 10:25-37: Love your neighbour as you love yourself: The Good Samaritan
Focusing activity	Engage people with a real life or faith theme	Show photos of different people from within the townships (mother, child, youth, tsotsi, drunk, shack dweller, professional, and immigrant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who would be the easiest person to help if they were in trouble? Why?</li> <li>○ Who would be the hardest person to help if they were in trouble? Why?</li> <li>○ Read Luke 10:25-29</li> </ul>
<b>M 1:</b> Naming/expressing present action	Have people respond to the theme as it pertains to their lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Repeat v 29, and ask the group, 'Who is my neighbour?'</li> <li>○ Can you give an example of when you practically helped a neighbour?</li> <li>○ From your experience, is loving your neighbour an easy thing to do? Why is that?</li> <li>○ Is it easier helping someone you know, rather than a stranger? Why?</li> </ul>
<b>M 2:</b> Critical reflection on present action	Encourage them to reflect critically on the theme in conversation together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are some of the things that make it difficult for us to be a good neighbour?</li> <li>○ Do you think the church is good at loving their neighbours?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How could the church improve at loving their neighbours?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ How would we feel if we needed help and no-one was there for us?</li> </ul>
<b>M 3:</b> Share the Story and Vision of	Share the Story and Vision of Christian faith	As we read the Bible passage, think what it might mean for our context and situation. Christian Story - Luke 10:25-37

Christian Faith		<p>5 minute presentation of the passage</p> <p>Christian Vision – Offer suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What it might mean to be someone’s neighbour and to love them. The joy and the life it would bring.</li> <li>○ How people might recognise us as Christians by the way we treat our neighbour.</li> </ul>
<b>M 4:</b> Appropriating the truths and wisdom of Christian faith into life	Encourage participants to appropriate and integrate Christian faith with life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Like the man in the story, who are the wounded individuals in our situation in Munsieville? (Write down on piece of people) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Would anyone like to share what they have written?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ How are people wounded around us? (Write down on piece of people next to what you have previously written) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Would anyone like to share what they have written?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ What kind of neighbour does God call us to be in Munsieville?</li> <li>○ How will you try to live and grow as someone who loves their neighbour as themselves?</li> </ul>
<b>M 5:</b> Invites people to make a decision	Invite people to make a decision in response to the whole process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can we practically love and help our neighbours more in Munsieville?</li> <li>● Write down one thing you can do this week which will be an act of love to your neighbour</li> <li>● Does anyone want to share what they have written?</li> </ul> <p>Finish with prayer</p>

## 1. Observation of Bible Study 1

### 1.1 Details

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011

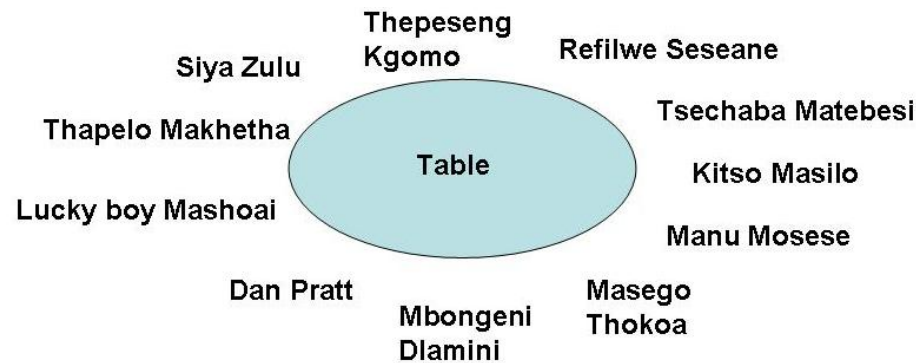
Time: 7-9pm

Theme: Loving your Neighbour

Facilitator: Mbongeni

Location: Mission house, Shekinah Glory Worship Centre, Munsieville, Gauteng

## 1.2 Attendees and location in education event



## 1.3 Facilitator

The facilitator was relaxed, confident and engaged well with participants. There was good eye-contact throughout with open body language. He made an effort to include all and drew people into the discussion. He was relaxed, made jokes, which in turn helped everyone else was relaxed. The participants responded well to him. A variety of languages were used which promoted an inclusive environment.

## 1.4 Participants

The participants were initially fairly quiet before starting the session, with people talking in pairs. At the beginning they were tentative, seemingly not knowing what to expect. Following the facilitators jokes and friendly introduction, they relaxed and increasingly wanted to contribute within the discussion.

During the focusing activity pictures were presented. There was some unspoken interaction not recorded with participants pointing to pictures. During the discussion the participant's were asked who is the person hardest to love? Thepeseng said the father is the hardest (and pointed to the young man recycling) – It's possible this was an English language issue. Note for data collection.

During the question: does the church love its neighbours? There was silence. It seemed that there was reluctance to speak out. Two participants whispered to each other. It seemed that when one person was brave enough to speak, it gave courage to the other to speak. This was encouraged with positive non-verbal communication from participants such as smiles and nods of head.

## Bible Study 2: Matthew 6:25-33 - Do Not Worry

The Movements	Teacher's commitment	Matthew 6:25-33: Do not worry but seek first the Kingdom of God
Focusing activity	Engage people with a real life or faith theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm – Using a large piece of paper, write ‘Worries’ in the middle. Write down anything that people worry about.</li> </ul>
<b>M 1:</b> Naming/expressing present action	Have people respond to the theme as it pertains to their lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a piece of paper to each participant and ask them to write down one or two worries they personally face in their lives at the moment.</li> <li>• Ask for volunteers to share what they have written</li> <li>• Ask group: How do your worries make you feel?</li> </ul>
<b>M 2:</b> Critical reflection on present action	Encourage them to reflect critically on the theme in conversation together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do we worry?</li> <li>• Do we have control over the things that we worry about?</li> <li>• Have you experienced God in the midst of those worries? If so, how?</li> </ul>
<b>M 3:</b> Share the Story and Vision of Christian faith	Share the Story and Vision of Christian faith	Christian Story - Matthew 6:25-33 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this passage encourage you not to worry?</li> </ul> Christian Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does seeking God's Kingdom take away our worries?</li> </ul>
<b>M 4:</b> Appropriating the truths and wisdom of Christian faith into life	Encourage participants to appropriate and integrate Christian faith with life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is God's Kingdom? (Read Rom 14:17-18 and Matt 13:44)</li> <li>• What does it mean to seek God's Kingdom?</li> <li>• How can you practically seek God's kingdom in your own life more?</li> <li>• What is the best thing you have learnt from this study?</li> </ul>
<b>M 5:</b> Invites people to make a decision	Invite people to make a decision in response to the whole process	Write down on the piece of paper given to you at the start: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One thing you learnt that can help you trust in God this week with your worry.</li> <li>• One way that you can seek God's kingdom this week.</li> </ul> Would anyone like to share these things that you have written down? Time of prayer: Pray about what you are writing or reflecting on



## 2. Observation of Bible Study 2

### 2.1 Details

Date 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011

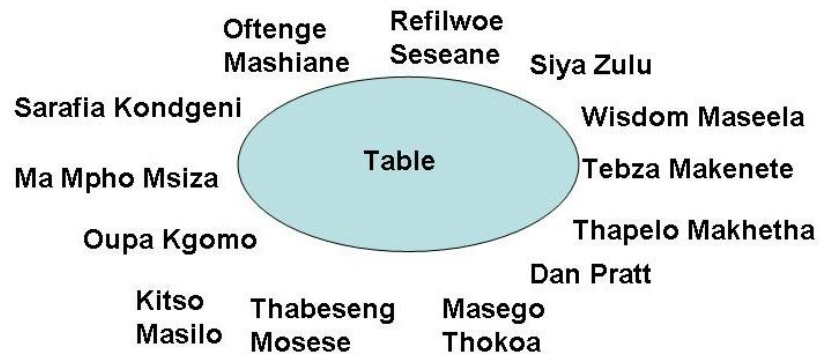
Time: 7-9pm

Theme: Do not worry, but seek first the Kingdom of God

Facilitator: Sarafia

Location: Mission house, Shekinah Glory Worship Centre, Munsieville, Gauteng

### 2.2 Attendees and location in education event



### 2.3 Facilitator

The facilitator stepped in on the day to facilitate the Bible Study due to the original facilitator cancelling last minute. She therefore wasn't able to do a practice run, however she had been a participant within the same study with the original facilitator leading.

The facilitator was relaxed, friendly and engaged well with participants. There was good eye-contact throughout with open body language. She drew people into the discussion. Being Namibian, the common language within the group was English. Therefore less local languages were used that within Bible Study 1. The facilitator brought a sense of expectation to the group which seemed to be contagious among participants. The participants responded well to her.

## **2.4 Participants**

Throughout the workshop there were lots of coming and goings during the workshop (3 people left part of the way through). Tebza (after 10 minutes). Oupa and Thapelo left during movement 5 (after 1 hour). People were getting up to answer their phone during the workshop (maybe 4/5 different times). Also 3 times people stood up to get drinks or go out and come back in. These comings and goings seemed to be a fairly normal part of doing Bible Studies among young adults. There seems to be a challenge for participants to present and active in the learning experience during the entire session. This illustrates the challenges that facilitators have within the education process.

Participants engaged in the discussion with some sharing personal stories. There was a healthy level of vulnerability and willingness to share beyond skin-deep.

## Appendix 3



### BAPTIST CONVENTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Fountain Baptist House, 24 Raleigh Street, Yeoville, 2198; P O Box 93521, Yeoville, 2143

Tel: (011) 648 9136/8/9; Cell 082906 7038/7095 Fax: (011) 487 3675

E-mail: [baptistconvention@telkomsa.net](mailto:baptistconvention@telkomsa.net)

Reg. No. 028-361-NPO

SECTION 21 Reg. No. 1998/017970/08

“IMPACTING LIVES”

Vision Jubilee - 2010

18 March 2011

#### To Whom It May Concern

This is to confirm that Daniel Sutcliffe-Pratt, a lecturer at the Baptist Convention College, has requested permission to undertake research within the Baptist Convention of South Africa. Daniel is undertaking a Doctoral of Theology in Practical Theology at the University of South Africa. Through a process of observation, focus groups and narrative interviews, Daniel is proposing to research liberation models of Christian education within the Baptist Convention. Within the Baptist Convention, we have granted him permission for this research to be undertaken and will do everything possible to support and assist in its completion.

I recommend that he be assisted with his application for the above mentioned.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours truly,

-----  
**Reverend Ngwedla Paul Msiza**  
**General Secretary**

# Appendix 4

## Semi-Structured Interview Questions

### 1. Interview questions for four participants

#### General Interview Question

1. Did you find this way of doing Bible study helpful or unhelpful?

- Tell me if you thought this Bible study as helpful or not helpful?

#### Democratic education

2. How did you feel and experience taking part in the Bible study?

- How did you feel about participating in the Bible study?

#### Contextual Bible Study

3. Did the Bible study speak to your life or situation?

- Did the Bible study relate to your real life situation?

#### Critical Consciousness

4. Was there any discussion in the Bible study that made you see yourself and your situation differently?

- Did the Bible study and discussion encourage you to look at your life or situation in a different way?
- What helped you to see it differently?
- What made you to see your life in the way you did before?

#### Final Question

Before we finish, is there anything else that you would like to say?

## **2. Interview for two facilitators**

### General Interview Question

1. Do you find this way of facilitating a Bible study helpful or unhelpful?

### Democratic education

2. How did you feel about facilitating a Bible study where everyone participates?

### Contextual Bible Study

3. Do you think way of doing a Bible study speaks to the participant's lives or situation?

### Critical Consciousness

4. How do you think this way of studying the Bible helps the participants see themselves or their situations differently?

### Final Question

Before we finish, is there anything else that you would like to say?

## Appendix 5

### Atlas ti. Category and Code List

#### 1. Sub-Question One: Categories and Codes

From the data, thirteen categories were developed

##### 1.1 Categories and Codes relating to Content of SPA

When analysed, the eight categories below related to the content generated by the education process of SPA's five movements M1: Naming Life, M2: Critical Thinking M3: Christian Story, M4: Appropriating Faith to Life, and M5: Decision.

<p><b>Life World</b></p> <p>Lifeworld_church</p> <p>Lifeworld_home</p> <p>Lifeworld_township</p> <p>Lifeworld_widersociety</p>	<p><b>NEIGHBOUR</b></p> <p>Neighbour_definition</p> <p>Neighbour_inconvenience of helping others</p> <p>Neighbour_own story</p> <p>Neighbour_pain feeling</p> <p>Neighbour_practical help</p> <p>Neighbour_reasons to help</p> <p>Neighbour_response from</p> <p>Neighbour_walk the talk</p> <p>Neighbour_why difficult to help</p> <p>Neighbours_Christian</p> <p>Neighbours_non-Christian</p> <p>Neighbours_stories of helping others</p>
<p><b>SOCIAL CONTEXT</b></p> <p>Context_crime</p> <p>Context_cultural roles</p> <p>Context_family roles</p> <p>Context_poverty</p> <p>Context_sacred/secular divide</p>	<p><b>WORRIES</b></p> <p>Worries_naming of</p> <p>Worries_overcome</p> <p>Worries_own story</p>
<p><b>CHURCH NATURE</b></p> <p>Church_community</p> <p>Church_education</p> <p>Church_foreigners</p> <p>Church_gansterism</p> <p>Church_identity</p> <p>Church_others</p> <p>Church_citique</p>	<p><b>STORY</b></p> <p>Story_group</p> <p>Story_personal</p> <p>Story_society</p>

<p><b>GOD</b></p> <p>God_active in life</p> <p>God_as example</p> <p>God_character/attributes</p> <p>God_Devil</p> <p>God_disconnect with</p> <p>God_faith and contradictions</p> <p>God_faith/trust in him</p> <p>God_his desire for us</p> <p>God_prayer to</p> <p>God_provider</p> <p>God_purpose in life</p> <p>God_response to him</p> <p>God_transformation</p> <p>God_values us</p> <p>God_what we want from him</p>	<p><b>CHRISTIAN STORY</b></p> <p>Christian story_group enlightenment</p> <p>Christian story_life and faith</p> <p>Christian story_own interpretation/theology</p> <p>Christian story_source outside study_Bible</p> <p>Christian story_text within study</p>
---	--

**1.2 Categories and Codes relating to Critical Reflection within SPA**

<p><b>PAST AWARENESS</b></p> <p>Self_Past_eval_critical memory of self</p> <p>Self_Past_eval_historical influences of our actions</p>	<p><b>PRESENT AWARENESS</b></p> <p>Self_Present_eval_critique_ideology</p> <p>Self_Present_eval_critique_present_action</p> <p>Self_Present_eval_cseq_present_action</p> <p>Self_Present_eval_new_aware_present</p> <p>Self_Present_eval_reasons_present_praxis</p>
<p><b>FUTURE AWARENESS</b></p> <p>Self_Future_Eval_consequences of present action</p> <p>Self_Future_Eval_imgaine a preferable future</p>	<p><b>LACK OF AWARENESS</b></p> <p>Lack_critical understanding</p> <p>Lack_fatalistic thought</p> <p>Lack_over-simplification of problems</p>
<p><b>FACILITATOR ENC CRIT REFLECTION</b></p> <p>Facilitator_encouraging critical thinking</p> <p>Facilitator_problem-posing</p>	

## 2. Sub-Question Two: Categories and Codes

From the data six categories were developed. Codes within each category are listed below. These categories and codes relate to the experience of SPA as an education process, and if it was a dialogical and participatory pedagogy.

<p><b>FACILITATOR AND PARTICIPATION</b></p> <p>Fac_ learner with students  Fac_ discouraging participation  Fac_ encourage participation  Fac_ imposing understanding  Fac_ questioning</p>	<p><b>MEANING MAKING</b></p> <p>MM_ facilitator legitimate  MM_ participant legitimate  MM_sub affirming  MM_imposition of Christian Story/Vision  MM_limit situation  MM_moving beyond</p>
<p><b>FACILITATOR ENCOURAGING  CRITICAL THINKING</b></p> <p>Facilitator_probing  Facilitator_problem-posing</p>	<p><b>SOCIO-EMOTIONAL FEELINGS</b></p> <p>SE_negative feelings  SE_negative feelings of participation  SE_positive feelings of participation</p>
<p><b>DIALOGUE WITH OTHERS</b></p> <p>Dia_questioning  Dia_disrespect of others in dialogue  Dia_group enrichment  Dia_I/It  Dia_I/Thou  Dia_respect of others in dialogue</p>	<p><b>PEDAGOGY</b></p> <p>Ped_non-dialogical pedagogy  Ped_dialogic pedagogy</p>



## Appendix 6

Transcript 1	Bible Study 1: Luke 10:25-37, Love your Neighbour
Transcript 2	Interview with Siya
Transcript 3	Interview with Sechaba
Transcript 4	Interview with Mbongeni
Transcript 5	Bible Study 2: Matthew 6:25-33, Do not worry
Transcript 6	Interview with Masego
Transcript 7	Interview with Kitso
Transcript 8	Interview with Sarafia

001

002 **Transcript 1 Bible Study 1: Love your Neighbour**

003

004 Dan: Tonight we would like to welcome a special guest speaker and he can introduce himself and then perhaps we can go round and you can introduce yourselves as well. But it's really a privilege to have Mbongeni here. He's a third year student at the college and I see him several times a week which is fun, you know we enjoy learning together. It's really a joy to have him here in this group. So welcome Mbongeni. Please feel free, feel at home, feel easy and over to you.

005 Mbongeni: Thank you Moruti. I'm grateful and appreciative of this opportunity. It is been a while since I last been here, I see some regular faces, some faces I do not know. But my name is Mbongeni Lwandile Mjekula from Jubilee Baptist church in Pretoria, Mamelodi East. I am a born again Christian who's doing his third year study, I mean third year in his theological studies at the Baptist Convention College. Son of Reverend Mzukisi Mjekula, who studied with Reverend Sandile David Qangule at the Baptist Bible Institute. I am not married, single and enjoying myself with God. Bless His holy name. And I'd like to know you buti (Xhosa word meaning brother).

006 Siya: Okay. I'm Siya and I'm born again.

007 Mbongeni: Okay.

008 Siya: And this is my home.

009 Mbongeni: This is your home?

010 Siya: Yes I won't say Munsieville Baptist church, Shekinah Glory Worship Centre.

011 Mbongeni: I saw that it has changed.

012 Siya: Yeah.

013 Mbongeni: Okay. Yes ma'am.

014 Nthabiseng: I'm Nthabiseng and Ja, I'm also a born again. I love God. And this is also my home, Shekinah Glory Worshipping Centre.

015 Mbongeni: Nice to meet you.

016 Refiloe: Okay. My name is Refiloe Matabane. I stay here in Mansinville. I'm a born again Christian as well. Aah! This is my church, my home. You probably don't know me cause I only joined it like last year.

017 Mbongeni: Oh! Okay.

018 Refilwe: Yes.

019 Sechaba: Hola Mjake's (street language for greeting someone).

020 Mbongeni: Heita'da (street language for responding to someone's greeting) (laughter) Feeder? (street language for asking someone 'how are they doing?').

021 Sechaba: Aowa gamonate (Tswana - meaning 'No. I'm doing well').

022 Mbongeni: Sweet.

023 Sechaba: Nna ka leina ke (Tswana - meaning 'My name is') Kgabaephiri Sechaba Kgongwane. Twitter scribbler, facebook ga re iphihle (Tswana words meaning 'we don't hide ourselves') (laughter). I was born to this church.

024 Mbongeni: Okay.

025 Sechaba: In the times of Reverend Qangule. In the times ba e bitsa (Tswana - 'they called it') Munsieville Baptist Church. In the times of the toilets (laughter). Ja, I'm a born again Christian and it's been how many years have I walked with God, eleven years, twelve? Going for the twelfth year walking with God and it's been a merciful one cause I was born to this church but I never knew salvation until Jesus decided to touch me personally. That's why I say it's eleven years. I've been in the church for twenty seven years but personally it's been eleven years...

- 026 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Eleven years.
- 027 Sechaba: Years with God.
- 028 Mbongeni: Okay. ...
- 029 Kitso: Hi.
- 030 Mbongeni: Hi. How'zt?
- 031 Kitso: Sharp. My name is Kitso Kgabatsi.
- 032 Mbongeni: Kitso Kgabatsi.
- 033 Kitso: Yes. I'm a member here, Shekinah Glory Worship Centre and I'm also singing in praise and worship team.
- 034 Mbongeni: Okay. Nice to meet you. Mats ww ala.
- 035 Kgotso: Hola! Hola! (street name for either greeting or responding to someone's greeting).
- 036 Mbongeni: Sharp, sharp.
- 037 Kgotso: Nna ke (Tswana - 'I am') Kgotso, Manu and I live in Mansinville. I'm a born again Christian and THIS IS HOME. I also sing at praise and worship team.
- 038 Mbongeni: Masego.
- 039 Masego: Age Rra (Tswana words meaning 'greetings Sir') (laughter).
- 040 Mbongeni: Long time long see.
- 041 Masego: My name ke (Tswana word for 'is') Masego waga (Tswana - 'of') Mahlabe. I'm a child of God.
- 042 Mbongeni: Amen.
- 043 Masego: I do love God with all my heart. I'm a worshipper. This is home Shekinah Glory. And I'm a full member of SAYA and deputy organizer for SAYA (long pause).
- 044 Mbongeni: Okay.
- 045 Dan: Hello everybody (laughter). My name is DJ and this has become my-
- 046 Masego: (overlapping) Moruti Mpho.
- 047 Dan: Home church (laughter).
- 048 Masego: Moruti Mpho.
- 049 Dan: Moruti Mpho. And I've been here almost three years which, the time is passing fast. I am also a child of God and I am enjoying being with you all here in Munsieville.
- 050 Lucky: Nna ke nna Lucky (Tswana - 'I am') (laughter).
- 051 Masego: Lucky o shy (This statement means 'Lucky is shy').
- 052 Lucky: Nna ke ko (Tswana words meaning 'I am in') praise and worship team. I'm a drummer ke tlo mo tagisa da (Tswana - 'I'm there to glorify Him').
- 053 Mbongeni: I never knew gore this guy is also a drummer. I've seen, what's his name? Sean?
- 054 Lucky: Ja!
- 055
- 056 Mbongeni: I saw him this week. Nice to meet you all and I really hope we enjoy ourselves here as we gonna teach each other a bit more about God's word and well it's not about me telling you everything. But it's about all of us saying something and teaching each other and there's no one superior towards anybody. We all equal in this session. I just come up with the topic and we all just discuss that, alright. I'd like us all to come over to these pictures and have a look at them. Those of us who can't see them from there, maybe you can just come a bit closer. Right and I will just I'll explain to you what is happening here basically. With this lady we see that

she's somebody who's hanging her clothes probably from the community that's under privileged, probably unemployed. This is a man who is unemployed and poverty stricken living in quite appalling circumstances. This is a Pastor who has visited the community coming to share some of his time and efforts and energy to this community and embracing them for, with God's love as they were showing, I mean they were making some form of outreach to the community. This is a guy who is into recycling I think as you can see there's a bit of metal behind there, probably trying to earn a living through recycling. These are children who are homeless playing in the open spaces, in the velds, just trying to have fun on the road. The very last picture there is a homeless guy as well as the picture behind that collage. Right and Thank you. We could all just sit down. Would like to ask you this very first question. Who would be the easiest person (pause) to help if they were in trouble and why?

057 Refiloe: The easiest person?

058 Mbongeni: That you would help if they were in trouble and why? If you desire you could go a bit further let's say really there's a drug addict, there's a TSOTSI (a Tswana word meaning 'a criminal') whatever, any body you would help when they are in trouble, the easiest and why? (long pause) (whispers in the background).

059 Refiloe: Why and why (laughter). Who would be easy?

060 Mbongeni: Who would be easy to help and why? (long pause). It could be your brother, it could be you sister, it could be your friend. Who could be the easiest person that you could think of that needs your help? Who could be the easiest to help and why? (long pause)

061

Sechaba: I'll go for the kids.

062

Mbongeni: You'd go for the kids? Why?

063

Sechaba: Get them while they are still young (laughter).

064

Mbongeni: Get them out while they are still young.

065

Sechaba: Ja!

066

Mbongeni: Okay. (pause) Before they are yet messed up?

067

068 Sechaba: There's no need giving up on the elder's and what-not but I believe that a kid you can groom they are xxx to groom. An elderly guy who is in that kind of situation it's gonna be hard to ... try and explain something simple as faith. There's this quote, my friend, me and my friend we were discussing he says, "do you know why did Jesus say I want kids more..., everybody must be like a kid in order to get into the kingdom of heaven?" We were discussing that quote and my friend said "the reason God said we must be like kids because a child, if you give a child love the next day when he sees you he want more love, he'll come. If you take a kid and you throw him up in the air and you put him down, everyday he'll come nketse gape, nketse gape (Tswana words meaning 'Do it again, do it again'), you get tired of it he doesn't get tired. So the mind is easy to mould the mind of a kid.

069

070 Mbongeni: Alright. Anybody else? Who would be the easiest to help? Who would be the easiest to help when they are in trouble? (long pause)

071 Siya: I will go with the woman over here.

072

Mbongeni: Okay.

073

Siya: Okay. I will say a woman is someone who is special you know, look after the kids as Sechaba said you know. Without food the woman gets stressed whereby there is no food there is no nothing, electricity because of he has to look after the children... the children. I will say I will help the woman to can feed this home with the food. Okay, a father okay I won't say much about the father I don't think he will care so much like the mother. That's why I will say I will help this woman a mother to can raise the kids.

074 Mbongeni: So she cares more.

075

Siya: Yes she cares more. Like you know she's a care giver.

076

077

Mbongeni: Alright (pause). Anybody else with any thought (long pause). Alright then who would be THE HARDEST to help and why? (long pause)

- 078 Siya: I would say the fathers (laughter).
- 079 Refiloe: The fathers (laughter).
- 080 Siya: Because of the father is the head before the children. The children is looking at the head. The father is the head of the house. He must do some examples before he must go outside and look for the heroes and such and so forth. I will say the fathers because the fathers (pause) must go and do their work (laughter) as a father. Yeah. I would probably say that.
- 081 Mbongeni: Alright. So the children are the easiest and the ladies-
- 082 : (overlapping) Minors.
- 083 Mbongeni: The hardest are the men because -
- 084
- 085 Sechaba: (overlapping) Nna kere ntate Moruti (Tswana - 'I say the Pastor') is the hardest (laughter).
- 086 Mbongeni: Ntate Moruti (Tswana words meaning 'a Pastor'), wow (laughter).
- 087 Sechaba: Ntate Moruti would be the hardest to save I mean (long pause) (coughs) I think Ntate Moruti would be the hardest cause they know the truth already.
- 088 Mbongeni: Okay. Alright. Because he knows the tools already.
- 089 Sechaba: The truth-
- 090 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Oh, the truth.
- 091 Sechaba: And I'm a newcomer and who am I to save him from that truth. There will always be that argument.
- 092 Mbongeni: So but don't you think there's his human nature that could arise.
- 093 Sechaba: Human nature could arise as well gore (Tswana - 'that') "you are coming to save me when I'm in connection with God" (laughter).
- 094 Mbongeni: A Pastor doesn't he lose connection with God at some point? (laughter). Are right you know? (laughter) It's a bit of electric-
- 095 Sechaba: (overlapping) Ja! But there's that thing it's hardest to save a man who has backslidden than teaching somebody new.
- 096 Mbongeni: Okay, okay.
- 097 Sechaba: So I think the Pastor would be the hardest cause he has all this information about the word of God and I believe God still talks to Pastor's even though they decide not to listen.
- 098 Mbongeni: Not to listen.
- 099 Masego: Okay.
- 100 Mbongeni: Alright. Anybody else? Who's the hardest to help and why? (long pause) This is tough ne!
- 101
- 102 Refiloe: Okay. Akere (a Tswana word for beginning a statement meaning 'Well') Siya said the father nna (Tswana word meaning 'as for me') I would also go for the young-
- 103 Masego: (overlapping) young guy.
- 104 Refiloe: (overlapping) young guy. Because they are also kind of stubborn (laughter). Gore (Tswana word meaning 'Because') like they are growing to be the fathers so they will be the head hae nna ke tla yo, hae ke tlailo phanda (Tswana - 'I will go and, I will go and fend for my self') you know. So I think le bone- (Tswana - 'they too')
- 105 Mbongeni: (overlapping) They are the hardest to help. So when you are a man it's harder to help than a woman or a child.

- 106 Refiloe: Cause they like controlling. Akere- (Tswana word for beginning a statement meaning 'Well')
- 107 : (overlapping) They think they know.
- 108 Refiloe: They don't like to be told and they don't like to be told. They like to stress (laughter).
- 109 Mbongeni: Okay, I thought those were the Zulu men and the Xhosa men (laughter).
- 110 Refiloe: Every man (laughter).
- 111 Mbongeni: So every man is like this (laughter).
- 112 Masego: Example. Example. Example (laughter). Except my [little Pat?] (laughter).
- 113
- 114 Mbongeni: Okay. I'm just gonna read from Luke chapter ten verses twenty five to twenty nine.
- 115 Background: (One lady is requesting Masego to give her bible back but Masego says why? She is stressing because she also wants to read it. Besides, it is God's word.)
- 116 Mbongeni: In fact I'd like us to just read one verse each.
- 117 Refiloe: Luke?
- 118 Mbongeni: Ten verse twenty five to twenty nine. Just one verse each (long pause)
- 119 : Mm! chapter mang? (Tswana word for 'what')
- 120 Mbongeni: Ten.
- 121 Masego: Verse?
- 122 Mbongeni: Twenty five to twenty nine (long pause). Okay I'll just read one verse and then the next person will follow. Right. It reads as follows, 'On one occasion, an expert in the Law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
- 123 Nthabiseng: Jesus replied, "What does the Law of Moses say, how do you read it?"
- 124 Kitso: (pause) The man answered, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your spirit and all your mind and love your neighbors, you neighbor as yourself".
- 125 Siya: "Right," Jesus told them "Do this and you will be, and you will live".
- 126 : (long pause) The man wanted-
- 127 Kgotsi: The man wanted to justify his actions so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
- 128 Dan: Jesus answered and said, "A certain man went down from Jericho, from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves who stripped him his clothing, wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead."
- 129 : (long pause) By chance a Jewish priest came along but when he saw the man lying there he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.
- 130 Mbongeni: So too a Levite when he came to the place and saw him passed by on the other side.
- 131 Kitso: Then a despised Samaritan came along and when he saw the man he felt compassion for him.
- 132 Dan: So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn and took care of him.
- 133 Mbongeni: The next day he took out two denari and gave them to the inn-keeper. "Look after him", he said, "and when I return I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."
- 134 : Verse?
- 135 Mbongeni: Thirty six.
- 136 Kitso: Thirty six (long pause). "Now which of these three would you say was a, WAS a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.

- 137 Kgotso: The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy". Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same" (long pause).
- 138
- 139 Mbongeni: I'd like to repeat this verse twenty nine.
- 140 Siya: Twenty nine?
- 141 Mbongeni: And I'd like you to tell me (long pause) "and who is my neighbor?" (long pause)
- 142 : The neighbor is the person who sits next to me.
- 143 Mbongeni: The person that sits next to you. (long pause)
- 144 Refiloe: Your home neighbor.
- 145 Mbongeni: Your home neighbor. Okay.
- 146 Sechaba: Someone on the street...
- 147 Mbongeni: Okay. Someone on the street.
- 148 : Class mate.
- 149 Mbongeni: Class mate.
- 150 : Friends (long pause)
- 151 Mbongeni: Friends.
- 152 Masego: Etcetera (laughter).
- 153 Refiloe: Etcetera is your neighbor?
- 154 Masego: No. Akere (Tswana word for beginning a statement meaning 'Well') (laughter) letlo ntswalla akere (Tswana - 'well you are going to close me outside') (laughter) akere? (meaning 'it is so?'). I can say Sechaba.
- 155 Sechaba: xxxx xxxxx (laughter).
- 156
- 157 Mbongeni: Can you give an example where you practically helped a neighbor? An example where you saw yourself practically helping a neighbor (long pause).
- 158 Kitso: In the exam room (laughter). My friend needed a pen (laughter).
- 159 : Eya. Ke itsitse, ke itsitse (Tswana - 'Yes. I knew it, I knew it') (laughter).
- 160 Mbongeni: Was it wrapped with paper during a session.
- 161 Kitso: No. (laughter)
- 162 Mbongeni: No I'm just checking, just checking. Your friend they gonna pay you to get that pen. Okay. Well you are a friend indeed. Yes Sir.
- 163
- 164 Sechaba: At my place, at my grannies place where I live when I'm in Munsieville (pause) we have a neighbor this old guy he has no family. Entlik (meaning 'In fact') he has a family but they are both old, they are brothers. The other one has lost a leg and the other one is epileptic. On fathers day the guy who's epileptic always comes in the morning to have tea in my place to get tea. On fathers day I was coming to church then when I got up by the gate I found him down. He was caught in that state, and I was late for church. So I remembered the little line about doing the whole xxxxx getting everything out of the mouth, putting the head straight. I wouldn't say I have done a first aid course but that was basically it helped him.
- 165 Mbongeni: Alright. Helping an epileptic neighbor. From the pen to an epileptic neighbor. Okay. When have you seen yourself (long pause) anything you've done practically to help your neighbor? Anybody else? (long pause)

166

167 Kitso: Um! (pause) Where I come from, from North West, like our neighbors (long pause, she waits for the disruption to stop - Thapelo enters the group and finds a seat) Yeah. Like our neighbors ne! in North West where I come from (long pause). Like the whole family is unemployed and there's a lot of children there. They don't go to school (whispers in the background), they won't dress like you know (pause) properly. So like every, I can't say every year, but SOMETIMES when we have like sort of like clothes that we don't use or shoes or sometimes we buy some clothes for them and give to them so that -

168 : (overlapping) They can dress.

169 Kitso: Yes

170 Mbongeni: So you share what you have with your family?

171 : Yes.

172 Mbongeni: Alright. (long pause) Anybody else?

173 Masego: Okay. I've helped this lady kopa gose boi bitso lage (Tswana - meaning 'can I please not mention her name'). Ngwana gage one a sena (Tswana - 'her child didn't have') (long pause) mengato ne (Tswana - 'nappies') (long pause) go sena di nappy (Tswana - meaning 'there were no nappies'). Then I've sacrificed some of the things tse na ke tshwantse ke di etse ka (Tswana - 'that I was supposed to with') that money and then ebe ke mofa (Tswana - 'then I gave her') the money to go and buy the nappies.

174 Mbongeni: Can I interpret? This lady she's saying there was a lady who had a baby and needed nappies so she (long pause) sacrificed for some of her needs to go and help her buy nappies for the baby (long pause). From your experience, is loving your neighbor an easy thing to do and why is that? (long pause).

175

176 Siya: No. (laughter).

177 Mbongeni: Why? (laughter).

178 Siya: No. Like I will tell you about my neighbor who is, okay, okay, the one on the I think left hand side, like the GRANNY (laughter) OVER THERE, like they don't speak like I don't know. You don't have that connection you know with her, like, even though I want to greet her like something is holding me back, you know, not to greet her. Because of last I did greet she just look at me you know (laughter) that made me to say okay-

179 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Just let it go.

180 Siya: xxxx your mother (laughter).

181 Mbongeni: So it's not easy to greet your neighbor, I mean to love your neighbor cause you can't even greet them. Anybody else?

182 : Come [again? there? back?].

183

184 Mbongeni: From your experience is loving your neighbor an easy thing to do and why is that?

185 Kitso: It's not easy

186 Mbongeni: It's easy?

187 Kitso: It's not easy.

188 Mbongeni: (laughter) Why isn't it easy?

189 Kitso: No. Like (long pause) the family that I've been talking about that we give clothes to, like every time when we like hang our, our clothes on that thing (laughter), like they would steal our clothes (laughter). You are helping them but at the same time like they- (whispers in the background) (long pause)

190 Masego: (overlapping) xxxx they are stealing you pants xxx.

191 : Ee (Tswana word for 'Yes') especially our (long pause) underwear's.

192 Mbongeni: Eish!



- 193 Kitso : Ja they steal them.
- 194 Mbongeni: I thought they were gonna pick next time please give me that top I wanna xxxxx just pick and take.
- 195 Kitso : So we get very angry. It's not easy.
- 196
- 197 Sechaba: It's not easy.
- 198 Mbongeni: It's not easy. Why is that, Sir?
- 199 Sechaba: Well I'm thinking about the example that Masego made. You see when you help someone always it takes a part of you. Like I needed to do something with this but I sacrificed to give you that. So that part of you had desires of the, or whatever you had to do with that and then you take it and giving it to somebody hae! (meaning 'No') It's heartbreaking (laughter)
- 200 Mbongeni: It's heartbreaking. It's not easy. Tell me about it. So even if the person is epileptic xxx you gonna party you are late for church (laughter).
- 201 Siya: He would have to fight for his seat now xxxxx (laughter).
- 202 Mbongeni: No. I feel you man (laughter).
- 203
- 204 Mbongeni: Is it easier, is it easier helping someone you know rather than a stranger (long pause) and why?
- 205 Masego: Oh! My God. Is it? (laughter).
- 206 Mbongeni: Is it easier to help somebody that you know than to help a stranger and why is that?
- 207 Nthabiseng: It is easy. It's easy.
- 208 Mbongeni: It's easy? Why?
- 209 Nthabiseng: Cause you know that person but the stranger is gonna get tell you to get off. So it is easy.
- 210 Masego: Ya, I think it's easy to help somebody that you know than a stranger because if I will help uSechaba, Sechaba will take it okay it comes from sister Masego hallelujah! But then if I help a stranger you know that person might say Jo! Jo! Jo! you undermine me or you, you understand?
- 211 Mbongeni: Okay they might have pride in some way?
- 212 Masego: Ja!
- 213 : Mara ba bang gaba- (Tswana - 'others are not like')
- 214 Siya: (overlapping) It goes hand to hand-
- 215 Refiloe: (overlapping) Yalo- (Tswana - 'that')
- 216 : (overlapping) Ya lenna- (Tswana - 'I also') I just think it depends
- 217 Siya: (overlapping) Okay. You know -
- 218 Refiloe: (overlapping) On what's the situation.
- 219 Mbongeni: Okay xxx (laughter), okay ladies first.
- 220 Refiloe: Ja! lenna kere (Tswana- 'I also say') like sometimes it depends o kile wa bona (Tswana- 'have you ever seen that?') cause you get somebody like today whereby President Hyper. Like it was raining so hard ne and I was at the side of the road and I had an umbrella. So I just helped this other granny cause she wanted also to cross to go to Prisident Hyper so le yena (Tswana- 'she too') she agreed to go with the umbrella and then we just like ra qoqa ra qoqa (Tswana - ' we chatted') and then we just went to President Hyper ke mo apesitse umbrella wa bona so yena na sa complaine (Tswana- ' I had covered her with an umbrella, you see, and she wasn't complaining') or anything like that like so like it just depends gore like cause ba bang bana le pride vela but ba bang (Tswana - 'others have pride but others') liked to be helped like especially like grannies okile wa bona mo di tropong (Tswana - 'have you seen that in town) and stuff.

- 221 Mbongeni: Alright. So it depends on the age? (long pause)
- 222 Group: Mixture of responses 'Yes/No'
- 223 Refiloe: No, no cause like le monkanaka (Tswana- 'even my friend/ peer') maybe ha nka tshwara umbrella ebe kere no tla ke go, tla reye wa bona (Tswana - 'if I carry an umbrella and say lets go, you see') she'd also go wa bona (Tswana - 'you see') she wouldn't say, so I'll just say like it depends cause ba bang okile wa bona monkane waka a ipone a ashota ka ranta (Tswana - others like my peer/friend you find that he/she is one rand short) maybe aka se batle nna ke mo efe otlare ke mang nare ka e batla? (Tswana - 'maybe he/she wouldn't want me to give him/her the money. He/ she will say who said I want it?).
- 224 Masego: (overlapping) That's what I'm saying.
- 225 Mbongeni: Basically what she's saying xxx-
- 226 Masego: (overlapping) Oh! Sorry Pastor D (laughter).
- 227 D: Its fine really, really no problem (laughter).
- 228 Mbongeni: She's saying it depends on the situation. If you find that maybe it's a rainy season as it is now and maybe it's an old lady who needs to cross over the road and she's carrying an umbrella, she could help her carry, I mean cross the road with her under the umbrella. But if it's somebody who needs like one rand to a catch a taxi sometimes you try to help them that person would think, would ask you who [told you to? who asked you to?] give me [one rand? money?] (laughter) their pride xxxx. So it depends on the situation.... . And I also thought maybe it also depends on age because it's an old lady who needs to cross the road but the young just sprint through. So you are saying it depends on the person's character?
- 229 : Ja! (Two people agree)
- 230 Mbongeni: Okay. So it's not really always a matter of being easy to help someone you know than a stranger?
- 231 Mesago: Mm! (meaning 'yes')
- 232
- 233 Mbongeni: What are some of the things that make it difficult for us to be a good neighbor?
- 234 Masego: Mm! (laughs)
- 235 : Sorry?
- 236 Mbongeni: What are some of the things that make it difficult for us to be good-
- 237 Masego: (overlapping) Neighbors.
- 238 Mbongeni: Neighbors (long pause). Is it your voice bro when you try to greet the granny xxx (laughter).
- 239 Siya: I will say the actions. The actions, yeah.
- 240
- 241 Mbongeni: So what makes it difficult for us to be a good neighbor? (long pause)
- 242 Masego: Sometimes we are quick to judge.
- 243 Mbongeni: Being quick to judge. Okay (long pause). Like the priest and the Levite they were just quick to pass through the road, going to the other side of the road because he is Samaritan (laughter). I mean there is being judgmental so probably some situations like that-
- 244 Masego: (overlapping) I can say that because with my neighbor, we've got these issues that I'm a born again, I'm a born Christian and they are not, so it seems like there's a problem cause I don't practice what they practice, I believe in JESUS. So most of the time when they do the rituals and stuff I don't go, I have no, I don't want to be part of that. So it seems like-
- 245 Mbongeni: (overlapping) It causes conflict?
- 246 Masego: A big conflict
- 247
- 248 Sechaba: I say the only reason it's hard for us to judge or its hard to us to be good to our neighbors is we don't

- understand the word neighbor properly.
- 249 Mbongeni: Okay (coughs) you don't understand the meaning of the word xxx.
- 250 Sechaba: I'm taking it into context about the verse we read, cause that guy was a stranger to the guy who was bitten down. So our meaning and the question you asked who is your-
- 251 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Is a neighbor.
- 252 Sechaba: Ja, I think that's where we are thinking a neighbor as-
- 253 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Literal.
- 254 Sechaba: In a box (laughs) as people around me. But when I look (coughs), I think about the verse we read a neighbor can be anyone (long pause) anyone on the street, bend down that's your neighbor you have to.
- 255 Mbongeni: So what makes it hard or difficult for you to BE a good neighbor? You say it's because we don't understand the meaning-
- 256 Sechaba: (overlapping) Understand the meaning.
- 257 Mbongeni: Of the word neighbor.
- 258 Sechaba: Ja.
- 259
- 260 Mbongeni: Anybody else? Or for me being a difficult neighbor, I mean a hard neighbor to get along with or to accept is that (long pause) I'm selfish man (laughter), PERIOD. All that I have belongs to me I don't like sharing, you know and I don't really ask myself or I don't consider much about the next person until I really need their help, you know. It's either my way or the high way, you know. That's being me, you know I don't know about you, but hey that's me, that's why it's a bit difficult for me to be a neighbor who is good. Maybe I still need to understand the meaning of the word, alright? Alright.
- 261
- 262 Mbongeni: Do you think the church is good at loving their neighbors, Shekinah Glory, hallelujah (laughter). Is it good at showing love to its neighbor or NEIGBORS?
- 263 Refiloe: Is it good?
- 264 Mbongeni: Yes. Is it able to show it in a good way? Is it able to show (long pause) its good relationship or good practice towards loving their neighbor? (long pause)
- 265 Refiloe: Yes I would say yes.
- 266 Mbongeni: How so?
- 267 Refiloe: Like since actually I've joined this ne, I haven't really like had like problems with anybody or if like arguing or just fighting with anybody. It's just like everybody is showing love from the Moruti to the Sunday school children-
- 268 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Wow!
- 269 Refiloe: Especially SAYA, you know we are just friends. Okay we do have discussions sometimes and then we just um! you know like (pause) ebe re hlabana ka mafoko (Tswana - 'we pierce each other with words') but not like hard core and then everything just xxx (coughs) ebe goba (Tswana - 'then all is well') sharp. Kore hase ntwaeleng gore wa itsi keng (Tswana - 'It's not a fight that you know') (long pause), after church is after church, no (laughter). It's like you know it's just a lot of love, you know. Okile wa bona? (Tswana - 'have you ever seen that?') I'm always looking forward to coming ko SAYA cause I know Eish! ke ile bona Kitso, Kitso otlo ntshegisa you know- (Tswana - 'I'm going to see Kitso, Kitso is going to make me laugh')
- 270 Mbongeni: (overlapping) So-
- 271 Refiloe: (overlapping) I'm always like keya kerekeng. Ko bona Bentwalky. Bentwalky wa tshagisa (Tswana - 'I'm going to church. I'm going to see Bentwalky. Bentwalky is funny') you know, Ja.
- 272
- 273 Mbongeni: So does everybody surrounding this neighborhood smile when they hear the name Shekinah Glory

- because they know they gonna experience love?
- 274 : xxx (laughter).
- 275 Mbongeni: xxx Munsieville Baptist church.
- 276 : He? (Tswana - meaning 'what?')
- 277 Mbongeni : Or either Shekinah Glory of Munsieville Baptist church when they say, when they hear that word do they really have a smile on their faces and say no we really have experienced love from them? Because I've heard you telling me about SAYA, the Pastor to the -
- 278 Refiloe: (overlapping) Eya, mara ke bua nnete- (Tswana - 'Yes, but I'm telling the truth')
- 279 Mbongeni: (overlapping) I wish to be a part of that church, I wish to. You know, no quarrels nothing. But then the person that has lived here, or is living in this (pause) surrounding area, do they really have the same feeling as you do about this church when they think about it?
- 280 Refiloe: I don't know (laughter) I don't know ne! Mara nna (Tswana - 'but for me') one person okileng like kamo inviter a ba atla (Tswana - 'that I invited and came') to this church, like she was she came back wa bona (Tswana - 'you see?'), my cousin she came back again and said that uhe-e! (street slang for praising someone or something) 'that church is nice xxxxx I'm coming there'. xxxxxx Limpopo. So I'll say you know, I think le ene o filile (Tswana - 'she also felt') that love when she came mara ke sa itsi batho ba bang (Tswana - 'but I don't know about other people'). Because hanke ke bua le bone. Akitsi ke reng (Tswana - 'I never talk to them. I don't know what to say') (laughs).
- 281 Mbongeni: Okay. Anybody else?
- 282 Kitso: Yes cause like um! I've been in Shekinah Glory for almost, I think three years, yes I don't really remember. Cause like this church is a very helpful church especially when it comes to funerals cause I've seen almost three funerals of people that are not members but they came to us, to ask our Pastor to bury their xxxxx.
- 283 Mbongeni: Wow, I really wish to be a part of this church the more I hear about it, Eish! So (pause) how could the church improve at loving their neighbors, we see that they bury people (long pause), but then where can they improve because nothing is hundred percent perfect.
- 284 Masego: Mm! (meaning 'yes').
- 285
- 286 Sechaba: Stop gangsterism in the church (laughter).
- 287 Mbongeni: (laughter) Cause you are the kingpin right?
- 288 Sechaba: Haa, no like. Seriously I think we develop gang and this is the problem we had ever since I remember and that's donkey years back, donkey years xxxxx. Since those days we made cliques in the church you know, we made cliques. Ke skima bale, gare skime bale (Tswana - street language meaning 'we associate with that group, not that other one'), rona re SAYA, hare SAYI (Tswana - 'we are SAYA, we are not SAYI') (laughter). We make gangs like we and if we break those barriers.... of us making cliques I think we can outreach to many people. Cause I'm thinking since other questions do the people around here know, I'm thinking about the people in our street I don't think none of them come to our church (laughter). So it makes me worry, we all come from; hey I'm from Sasolburg (laughter) coming to this church. Hai! Mara (Tswana - 'But' with an exclamation) the guy across the street -
- 289 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Is he coming to church?
- 290 Sechaba: It means there's something he's not seeing in us that we should be showing him.
- 291
- 292 Mbongeni: How would we feel (pause) (coughs), how would we feel if we needed help and no one is there for us? I'm selfish cause you heard right but when people don't really help me sulk I become a little baby, you know I feel like life is unfair. But I wanna know from you, how you would feel if someone were not to, was not to help you if you needed their help?
- 293 Refiloe: Sad and lonely
- 294 Siya: (overlapping) Disappointed actually
- 295 : Sad and-

296 : (overlapping) Sad and lonely.

297 Mbongeni: Sad, angry, lonely. What a shame (laughter). Anybody else? How would you feel? You help someone else but you don't get help when you need it? How would you feel?

298 : Stressed.

299 Mbongeni: Stressed? Okay (long pause). Or you don't get help from people and you don't help people either so how would you feel (whispers in the background).

300 : Mm? (meaning 'what?') (laughter).

301 : If you don't help people what do you expect? (laughter)

302 Mbongeni: So it's tit for tat, butter for fat (laughter).

303 : Yeah. (laughter)

304

305 Mbongeni: Now as we have seen in this passage that the most important principle or teaching that Christ is giving is that people should learn to love one another regardless of where they come from, regardless of how they look, regardless of their situation. That little bit that you do makes a difference in that person's life. You were saving a person's life when you were helping them with the epileptic....problem. You were helping someone else get some form of clothing and have dignity in the community because they have something to wear that people can look at them with respect again (pause).

306 The thing that we need to learn to understand here is that the love of God covers everything. He was able to give us love through Jesus Christ. He did not care about where we were standing. He did not care about how much pain we've been causing Him. He wanted to see us becoming better. He didn't want us to pay Him back with some form of price, because some people would try to help you with some form of expectation, you know we do it for, you scratch my back I scratch your back. It wasn't the way Christ was brought to the earth for, that's not the reason. It's LOVE that made Him become what He was, who He is in our lives today. If we could look into these words the Levi and the (coughs) priests they were people who were known to being the closest to God. They were known to be the one's who understood the scriptures better. But they could not show the simplest message of the scripture, LOVE to your neighbor.

307 Your neighbor is not just that somebody that knocks on your door and you can see on the other side when you do your gardening and all those things. But your neighbor is a person you meet everyday in your life, that somebody that needs you to help them. Somebody could be committing suicide but God comes and.... brings you into their situation and helps them. This man was stripped off everything. They took his clothes. They took his money. They took everything. No one else cared about him. But that man from Samaria, though rejected by the community, though hated by the Jews, they couldn't even say Samaria they said the man who helped him because they believed it was a word that degraded their.... culture that degraded their pride and it was more of like a curse to say the word Samaria simply because those people were Jews and they married Assyrians, people who were outside the Jewish culture. They hated them for the rest of their lives and judged them but that man showed, showed that poor Jew LOVE to the extent that he said "take care of him until I come back to pay you back". That is the kind of love God wants us to show to our neighbors, our friends, those who are hungry on the streets, those who are homeless, those who are unemployed.

308 Making that difference of putting bread on the table. Making that difference of helping them have a top to wear when its cold, that cup of tea that cup of soup it makes them become better people and it makes us also better people because this world is changed by our little step of accepting one another. It is not about moving mountains. It's about that one step drawing closer to knowing and understanding that person as your equal because that person is the image of God as much as you are the image of God (pause). Imagine if God did not want (coughs), if Christ said to Himself that no I'm not gonna help you because you are not Jews. We would also have DIED on the streets like this man. That person that you reject they spend time with you even if they annoy you, they spend time with you hoping for a loaf of bread at least it's something that they can have for that day. You don't know if that's the only meal they have for the day. And if we were to turn that around you wouldn't like that you be the person who needs that help and not being helped.

309 : Amen.

310 Mbongeni: BUT GOD wants us to show that love through helping other people because at the end of the day he sees us as one. He said father, I pray that they can unite as much as we are united. And uniting with somebody is accepting somebody with their right and wrong. Accepting them for their evil and goodness. Accepting them for their wealth and poverty. It is about us seeing God in everybody that we meet. The way we speak. The way we think. The way we act towards that next person. It is about the love of God that we have in us that we desires for them to receive (pause). And it starts with these little steps that we take everyday. We are not perfect but being perfected by God everyday. By knowing how to accept that next person for who they are and

not what they are. The way we speak to them we could help them fix their mistakes and not just to say you need to take a bath but rather help them even if you give them a bar of soap or speak with them with humility that they need to take care of their health. That is showing the love of God because he loves us that way (pause).

311 : Amen.

312

313 Mbongeni: Like the man in the story, who are the wounded individuals in our situation here in Mansinville? Who are the wounded? I would like us to think about that and now we are going to write on this paper (pause). You could turn and make some space. I'd like us to be [heard?], to be [heard?] xxx the injured.

314 (Everybody moves to their group. They start discussing and writing while conversing about other stuff)

315 Mbongeni: Write anything that you think of. Who are the wounded?

316 Masego says it's obvious that women are the wounded ones. Sechaba agrees with her then he writes down something that makes the group to laugh. Then others suggest that they get an anointing oil to anoint him. Sechaba also says the nation is hurt but others don't seem to agree with him. Then he writes something about the girls and his group starts laughing. The group starts complaining about how Sechaba wants to fill up their paper with his thoughts and they suggest that he remains where he is and never come to their side.

317

318

319 Mbongeni: Thank you. Right then. Um! I'd like to know from you now that you have written the wounded in your community Munsieville. How people wounded? In fact could you share for us, how are they, I mean who are the wounded in the community?

320 Siya: Okay we said in our group the church

321 Mbongeni: The church.

322 Siya: Yeah.

323 Mbongeni: Okay.

324 Siya: Yes we said that um! I'll count a few that I think it's important. We said the church, the foreigners and we said the loneliness, the community, the rapist, the abused ones and the (pause) sick you know. I think its goes on and on (whispers).

325 Mbongeni: Sexually abused?

326 Siya: Yes (coughs).

327

328 Mbongeni: Thank you. Now on this side? What have you written as the wounded?

329 Refiloe: Okay ba kwetse (Tswana - 'they have written') (laughter) wounded basadi (Tswana - 'women'), wives, daughters, girls xxx (whistling) xxxx (laughter) nations another. Bakwetse (Tswana - 'they have written') women. Bakwetse ke eng fo? (Tswana - 'what have they written here?') Drug addicts. Bakwetse (Tswana-'they have written') the needy, poor, homeless people, the unsaved....., keng fo? (Tswana - 'What is this here?')

330 Sechaba: Drunkards.

331 Refiloe: Drunkards, marriage, families, household, divorced. Sechaba he e fa? (Tswana-'Sechaba no. What about here?') (laughter).

332 Sechaba: Unwanted man! (laughter).

333 Refiloe: Unwanted, xxxx, drug addict, the unloved.

334 Sechaba: Women, basadi (Tswana - 'women'), wives, daughters (laughter).

335 Refiloe: Girls.

336 Sechaba: Girls

- 337 Mbongeni: Vrou. mense! (Afrikaans -- 'Women. people!')
- 338 Refiloe: Chicks. Chicks.
- 339 Mbongeni: Okay now I would like you to pick one out of those you've written and what I would like you to do is write down any suggestions o nhow, I mean the people around us ne! How can we help them? I'd like you to tell me how do they feel in these little corners, just one and tell me how you think they feel?
- 340 They start discussing writing
- 341 Mbongeni: How are they wounded? I'd like you to tell me how are they wounded in that little corner? Just one.
- 342 They continue discussing writing
- 343 : What is the question again?
- 344 Mbongeni: I'd like you to tell me like write down,
- 345 : Only one right?
- 346 Mbongeni: Yeah, just pick one of those that you've written. Tell me how are they wounded?
- 347 : How?
- 348 Sechaba: How? (laughter).
- 349 The two groups continue with their discussions. Siya's group seems to be more disciplined and their focus is on the foreigners in church; who are they, how are they treated, the right way of relating with them etcetera. Sechaba's group comments on how the other group is speaking English and how fresh it is. The group laughs. Then they start talking about love relationships. Sechaba says when a man's heart has been crushed by a woman he refuses to eat. The other lady says "no men cry". The group laughs. He continues to say "but when a woman's heart has been crushed by a man she doesn't want to hear anything about men". Masego says men are heartbreakers and are always responsible for hurting ladies. Thereafter they start focusing on answering the question that Mbongeni asked. They share ideas and start writing. While writing Masego starts talking about how at times she would wish that the earth would just open and swallow her especially when faced with relationship problems. The other girls agree with her. Then the group laughs.
- 350 Mbongeni: Can anyone share for us (pause) what they've written? (long pause)
- 351 : xxx xxx [Why don't you start?].
- 352 Siya: No. You can start.
- 353 Refiloe: No. You can start (laughter).
- 354 Siya: You can start.
- 355 Refiloe: You can start.
- 356 Siya: You can start (laughter).
- 357
- 358 Mbongeni: Sechaba, what have you written there my friend?
- 359 Sechaba: We focused on the unloved ne! (coughs). We said the wounded. They feel betrayed. There's no point 'cause, they feel rejected, unwanted, heartbroken (laughter), disrespected, stressed cause everybody needs that affection of love, that feeling of love. They feel lost.
- 360 : Ojampile (Tswana - 'you have left-out the other one') (laughter).
- 361 Sechaba: Ke tla boa (Tswana - 'I'll come back') (laughter). Okay they feel lost; they feel emotionally unstable and suicidal in a case. And then this one it goes to the point they feel like I don't know how to put it but cry baby syndrome where they cry all the time (laughter).
- 362 Mbongeni: So they are emotional.
- 363 Sechaba: Yeah they are emotionally unstable (coughs)
- 364 Mbongeni: Thank you Sir that's a very nice evaluation. Meneer (Afrikaans - Sir). On this side?

365

366 Siya: Okay we said here the foreigners in church. Okay the word foreigners is not literally the foreigners as coming from Zimbabwe, England wherever like you know, like we said it can be xxx (laughter).

367 Dan: I am wounded, we are wounded xx (laughter).

368 : Welcome to real life (laughter).

369 Siya: Welcome to the real life, Ja! As I said its not only the Zimbabwean's right. It can be also in our community it can be someone else coming to church, in our church (pause). Like we don't give them the love that we that they are expecting us to give them. They feel like rejected. Like if you can notice like if someone visitor in our church (pause), its not literally you will speak to her like the way you, I speak to Thapelo. I will usually speak to Thapelo because I'm used to thapelo, that's why like you will feel like there is no communication between... (pause)

370 Masego: (overlapping) Lack of communication.

371 Siya: Lack of communication (long pause). You'll um! Humiliation.

372 Thapelo: They'll feel humiliated cause I've used an example today I've seen, ne and the guy was, he was Shangaan. Basically you know Shangaans if you start speaking Shangaan then you know there's trouble (laughter). This guy was being chased by police so BUT REALLY BAD cause they were you know how they, they take them and put them in those ugly vans what what. Basically it's some form of humiliation (long pause).

373 Mbongeni: That's very, very sad man. Now thank you very much.

374

375 Mbongeni: I would also like us to also think, what kind of neighbors and I'd like us to talk about this. What kind of neighbors does God call us to be in Munsieville?

376 : Good neighbors?

377 Mbongeni: Good neighbors.

378 : [What? How?] kind?

379 Mbongeni: What kind of neighbors does God call us to be in Mansinville? We are good we are kind yes but how far can we show our goodness and kindness?

380 Siya: Helping one another

381 Mbongeni: Help one another, okay. (long pause)

382 Refiloe: Respectful

383 Mbongeni: Be respectful towards other people. Okay.

384 Refiloe: Love other people. Love one another.

385 Mbongeni: Love one another. Well I'll have to start learning how to share my stuff, I mean, Eish!. Much as I love being so, but I'll have to learn to be selfless because of the love of God, you know. So I'm part of this community I have to show MY LOVE by sharing what I have with somebody.

386 Sechaba: I think God wants us xxx. But I think God wants us to (long pause) to be active neighbors.

387 Mbongeni: Active neighbors? In what way?

388 Sechaba: In a way of (pause) I like the point you made earlier "tit for tat, butter for fat". Instead of us focusing on returns let's focus on actively, being active. You mean lots of ways, one where it takes first steps, you know. It takes one step to help someone. Then let's be the one's who takes the first steps cause ke mang a kileng a tshwarwa poo ko Jozi? (Tswana - 'who has ever been mugged at Johannesburg?') (street language for Johannesburg is Jozi) (laughter).

389 Mbongeni: He's asking who has ever been mugged in central Joburg?

390 Dan: Okay.

391 Sechaba: So I've been, ke ile ka tshwarwa poo-



- 392 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Been mugged.
- 393 Sechaba: I've been mugged in Jozi. They held me xxx (laughter). They held me a cow (laughter). So I was (laughter) coming back from school and then cause this is a very active area that the way I walk and everybody is around. So all of a sudden these four guys jumped out, "YES! Tlisa phone baba" (Tswana - 'bring the phone man') (laughter) and I'm like .... everybody starts walking around and everybody steps back...
- 394 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Mm.
- 395 Sechaba: (overlapping) and starts looking...
- 396 Mbongeni: Looking. Mm (pause).
- 397 Sechaba: And then when my phone is taken, "ha if it was me I was gonna take that phone (laughter). So I want us to be, let' us be the active (coughs), let's not sit back and watch when somebody when our neighbor needs help. Let us be those active one's the first ones to say "okay what do you need? Where can I help?" I think let's be active neighbors.
- 398 Mbongeni: Okay so we need to be the one's who take the first step. We need to show love. We need to show care and concern and respect towards other people. Have you ever imagined Munsieville in that state where everybody is taking a first step making a difference how would it be? (pause) Have you ever, do you ever see it in that state where everybody is able to love the next person as they love themselves? If we started with us imagine how different it would be for us to be in this world. No more being mugged. No more being separated or rejected by other people. No more pain and suffering and stress because we know that we are not alone. Now I have (pause), how will we try to live and grow as someone who loves their neighbor as themselves? Okay I'll ask the question again. How will you try to live and grow as someone who loves their neighbor as themselves? (pause)
- 399 Dan: I think that it's a little like what Sechaba was saying just now. It is not about what we can receive. It's about taking the first step of action. And I liked what you said before about loving other people or helping people being costly because I really think it is something that cost us something. And I think that that is a like a deliberate decision on our part because it doesn't come naturally you know like Mbongeni was saying, "I'm selfish". You know, I'm selfish (laughter). I think probably all of us are selfish. I think that it's about a deliberate decision in saying even though it costs something I'm going to make a step. But then how do we do that? You know its one thing thinking that but then how do we actually do that?
- 400
- 401 Mbongeni: Well I guess we all know that we have to take that first step and see ourselves make a difference in our lives and community. With these papers I'd like us now to write down. Okay, how we can practically love and help our neighbors more in Munsieville. Now this is where you gonna sit and, I mean this is now, after today when you go back home something that you can and probably will do to make a difference in someone else's life practically. I'd like you to just pass the paper.
- 402 (Group passes the papers and pens around)
- 403 Mbongeni: I'd like us to write down how can we practically love and help our neighbors more in Munsieville? Just one thing that we can do this week that will be an act of love to our neighbor. Just one thing that when you walk...
- 404 : (overlapping) Only one?
- 405 Mbongeni: Just one thing if you have more then shandai to that, it will be wonderful. But just one thing that you will practically put to action, when you get out of this place probably tomorrow maybe into the next into the new week. One thing that you will do or can do in fact rather WILL DO to make a difference in someone else life by showing your love to your neighbor.
- 406 (They are busy writing)
- 407 Mbongeni: Can anybody just share (pause) what they've written. Share with us what you have written. Anybody?
- 408 Siya: I said to walk the talk.
- 409 Mbongeni: To walk the talk. When you say you walk the talk what do you mean like you just gonna walk there x xx (laughter).
- 410 Siya: No. Whatever it comes clear to help your neighbor do it, walk it.
- 411 Mbongeni: But that's what-

- 412 Siya: (overlapping) It starts with the heart-
- 413 Mbongeni: (overlapping) So you gonna start with the heart-
- 414 Siya: (overlapping) Listen to my heart what it's telling me to do, listening to the Holy Spirit then I can walk the talk. If He says "I have to give" I will give.
- 415 Mbongeni: So you want to be flexible to what the Holy Spirit says. Alright.
- 416 Sechaba: I say I will start listening.
- 417 Mbongeni: Start listening
- 418 Sechaba: Ya, because I think like we as Christians there's this listening part we miss. That's why after we pray we disconnect with God because we don't do, there's a quote I like: "Prayer (coughs) is you sending a request to God. Mediation is God responding to your request". So that listening part we miss a lot. Cause I'm thinking about my neighbors aba hlala next door nabo aphe ekhaya nase (Zulu - 'who are my next door neighbors at) Sasol. I've never taken my time to listen to their stories or whatever or what they are actually thinking. Most of the time I talk about Pirates, cause we are Pirates fan. So I'm thinking now im gonna try change and listen to their cries. In that way if I cannot help physically I can pray about it cause I know their needs and what not
- 419 Mbongeni: Listening to the Holy Spirit, giving the Holy Spirit time to talk to you in prayer.
- 420 Sechaba: xxxxx
- 421 Mbongeni: Alright. Anybody else?
- 422 Refiloe: Nna (Tswana - 'I') I'm just gonna start [doing? do it?] wa bona (Tswana - 'you see') like...
- 423 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Just do it! Nike
- 424 Refiloe: Ja, like if (laughter) like for example there's this like ko gae ke strata so then fo pele ( (Tswana - 'at my home there's a street which in front of') like it's just a corporate space so go na le mekhukhu (Tswana - 'there are shacks') like shacks. So batho bateng (Tswana - 'the people who live there') like they need water like gaba batla metsi baya ko tlase kwa bailo kga metse (Tswana - 'when they need water they go down there to fetch water'), so like last nake nagana gore why ke sa re nkoko ole le yena atlo kga ko gae (Tswana- 'I was thinking of telling the other granny to come and fetch water from my home') cause we got a tap so I'm going to start doing by telling her gore akanna atla akga metse ko gae (Tswana - 'that she can come to fetch water from my home').
- 425 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Provided mama is not gonna shapa (Tswana - 'your mother is not going to beat') you.
- 426 Refiloe: Ke tla a reka mesti. Akere a rekiwa? (Tswana - 'I will buy water. Don't they buy it?') (laughter). Cause kere (Tswana- 'I'm saying') I'm going to start tomorrow.
- 427 Mbongeni: She's saying she's decided to help her neighbors who are having problem with taps rather instead of them taking a long walk to go get water she can just open her home for them to get water and she'll pay for it.
- 428 Masego: Okay. It's my turn now. Mosadi wa bua (Tswana - 'A woman is speaking') (laughter). I will say that (long pause) the special thing that I'm gonna do, its something special hey. I will start sharing (pause) the Lord (pause) like (long pause) giving like never before (coughs) xxxx to give.
- 429 Mbongeni: Okay. Giving like never before. Giving your time, giving...
- 430 Masego: (overlapping) My everything...
- 431 Mbongeni: (overlapping) Your energy. Giving your money...
- 432 Masego: (overlapping) My everything.
- 433 Mbongeni: Your everything. Hallelujah! mamama! (laughter) God is worthy to be praised. Anybody else? (pause)
- 434 Kitso: Well (long pause) I will show respect.
- 435 Mbongeni: Show respect. So you usually you have a problem with sh...
- 436 Kitso: (overlapping) No I xxx respect like the elders and (long pause) show God's love.... and be kind.
- 437 Mbongeni: Show respect, God's love and be kind to other people.

438 Kitso: Yes.

439 Mbongeni: Mm! it's quite a challenge. Anybody else? (long pause) Okay then. I would just like us to just pray. I would like us to pray for God's help to truly show to help us have faithfulness to Him in loving our neighbors. Not just talk, but really do it (pause) as soon as possible. Because He didn't reject, I mean He didn't take long to show His love for us.... with His Son He gave Him to us before we were born before He even created the universe. So for us to be more like Him we need to be able to act like Him soon as possible. So I would like us all to just pray for that (pause). Let's pray. Father thank you for teaching us...

440 (Everybody is praying thereafter Masego continues praying alone)

441 Masego: Precious heavenly Father I pray Ntate ya galalelang (Tswana - 'glorious Father') for everything Ntate ya lokileng ere re ratang go e etsa rele batsha Ntate ya lokileng (Tswana - 'good Father that we would like to do as young people good Father'). Let it be tlaseng ga tlotliso ya lebitso la gago Modimo ya lokileng (Tswana - 'to the glory of your name good God'). Help us my God to act Father God in the name of Jesus. Heavenly Father you've got a purpose with our lives Ntate ya lokileng (Tswana - 'good Father'). You have loved us Ntate ya lokileng before even today Ntate ya lokileng o sampane o re rata (Tswana - 'you still love us') Father God. Help us Ntate ya lokileng to take the love that you have given us Ntate ya lokileng to our neighbors. Help us Ntate ya lokileng to meditate Ntate ya lokileng upon your word so that we can do the right thing Ntate ya lokileng in the mighty name of Jesus (coughs). Father God as batsha Papa ya lokileng (Tswana - 'youth good Father') we gonna stand Modimo waka ya loking (Tswana - 'the God who is good') in the gap Ntate ya lokileng and do what is right Ntate ya lokileng ka lebitso le le matla la Morena Jesu (Tswana - 'good Father in the powerful name of our Lord Jesus'). Heavenly Father I send your consuming fire Ntate ya lokileng, Papa ya lokileng in our minds Ntate ya lokileng. Father God I send your consuming fire daddy papa ya lokileng upon our lips. Let everything etswang Papa ya lokileng ka gare ga di lips tsa rona enne le bophelo Modimo yaka ya lokileng (Tswana - 'that comes out of our lips have life good God') for you have given us the life Ntate ya matla ohle (Tswana - 'the All-powerful Father'). Papa ya lokileng I pray Modimo ya galalelang (Tswana - 'glorious God') for your power Modimo e bonagale (Tswana - 'God to be seen') through us re le bana ba gao Modimo waka ya lokileng (Tswana - 'as your children my good God'). Ka lebitso le matla la Morena Jesu (Tswana - 'In the powerful name of our Lord Jesus') I thank you Amen.

442 Dan: Okay. Just before we want to thank Mbongeni just like we did last week we just asked a few of you to just share your thoughts about the bible study. I mean is there anything that anyone wants to say about how you found it tonight (long pause).

443 Refiloe: I'd say I found it very inspiring, encouraging, you know like always like in a way it reminded me nna gore (Tswana - 'that I') I must always love other people and give more help you know. I'm not going lie. I won't say I have been helping people or I have not, you know, but it just reminded me you know like the word of God just reminded me gore, I have to help and love other people wherever I can.

444 Dan: Yeah. Great.

445 Sechaba: It was like that verse these are the stories we forget xxxxxx and I thank Pastor Mjake's for reminding us that the neighbors is not somebody xxxx that's a fresh term I've met that a neighbor is not somebody who is standing by who needs your help by yeah, that's a fresh term. I praise Jesus.

446 Dan: Anyone else?

447 Kitso: From SAYA Shekinah Anointed Young Adult, we would really like to thank you for giving us your time and energy. And we really thank God for the word that He has placed in your heart to share with us and I hope and I believe that what you have shared today it will stay in our hearts and our minds forever.

448 Mbongeni: Amen.

449 Kitso: And may the good God bless you.

450

451

001 **Transcript 2** **Interview with Siya**

002

003 D: So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

004 S: Oh! Okay, thank you DJ.

005 D: Maybe you can just start by introducing yourself.

006 S: I'm Siya. I live in Munsieville ... I go to church to Shekinah Glory Worship Center and I'm a born again Christian as a young man and I'm (pause) in young adults, yah (pause ) and I love God yes, I really do.

007

008 D: Wonderful, okay. So thank you for, for talking to me about how you found the bible study. My first question is do you find this way of doing a bible study helpful or unhelpful?

009 S: To me it's helpful you know when we based on outside people (long pause). As a Christian I would I say need it so much to know the roots of the bible where to they can take me to, to whereby if I can get a challenge outside because we get challenges everywhere by we don't get some answers. I think it could help me whereby I can, I can speak to another person alive to get them to realize there is a God and so forth.

010 D: So you found it helpful in prompting your thinking. Okay. That's good.

011 S: Also to grow myself not to just to gain to give others also I need to grow whereby about the word of God.

012 D: And with growing with the word of God, have you found, like the bible study yesterday, has that helped you?

013 S: It help me so much because of what Mbongiseni said about the neighbors. I also thought my neighbor who is the house next door. By the way by a neighbor is someone else like wherever I go the person next to me is my neighbor. Not to just be selfish of myself or think of myself that are my neighbors too.

014 D: Yeah! Okay.

015 S: As God said in His word love your neighbor as you love yourself. You know.

016 D: Yes and that's not easy.

017 S: It's not easy, but, Ja!

018

019 D: And did you find the discussion where everyone was talking about that, was that helpful having everyone contributing?

020 S: It was helpful because of, you can hear what's another person is saying. Whereby okay maybe I'll be afraid to say that and someone else will just pick it up you know and say it and we can discuss it and we come with the one solution and present on the table. That was good.

021 D: And do you feel that people feel comfortable or uncomfortable contributing?

022 S: Contributing?

023 D: Mm!

024 S: I was feeling comfortable I guess (laughs). I was talking a lot in that, (laughter) yeah! Yeah! I felt comfortable, yeah! I think really it's an easy way you can gain some other stuff than to stand on the pulpit and you preach and I don't understand other stuff I think its better if you can discuss. I felt comfortable I don't know about others. But I will say they were comfortable when I look at them.

025 D: Okay, okay. So you mentioned about, you know, someone just standing up and speaking. Which method of bible study do you find most helpful? Do you find someone standing up and speaking helpful or is it more helpful or unhelpful for everyone to contribute?

026 S: Um! It goes to hand to hand because of you get different Pastors someone can be a teacher someone be a prophet and teach different ways some you understand them okay he is going to this way, some you can't ask questions at church they be preaching you know I'll find it (pause) as I'm in young adults I find it easier if we

can discuss you know and put it on the table and then we discuss about it how did you see it .

027

028 D: Was there anything that anyone said yesterday that you thought 'gosh that's interesting' or 'I haven't thought about that?'

029 S: Yeah! Um! Is the one that we wrote about the wounded and we said 'church'. That was interesting one I never thought-

030 D: It was?

031 S: Yes because of when you said 'wounded' and we said 'church' because we are all foreigners you know like. It doesn't I'm living here in South Africa and Zimbabwe, when we come together in a church. I just talk to you just because of I know you I forget with another person you know like, you will feel lonely and so forth.

032 D: That's interesting.

033 S: Yeah!

034 D: So when you say, what we were talking about the wounded in church can you explain a little bit more, you explained a bit already.

035 S: Okay, to explain about the wounded?

036 D: Mm! like how did you see that differently about the wounded being in church?

037 S: The wounded in church. Um! Basically, people come with their own problems you get different agendas you know like someone will be sick someone will be seeking you know that healing someone will be seeking a job . We are too different some will be needing anything from God, you know. All of them fall under the church because of you get everything in church. You get sick people in church; you get rich people in church, all of them at the end of the day they are falling under the church that's why we said 'the wounded is at church'.

038 D: Okay, that's interesting. What ways do you think that we can help the wounded within church? Was there anything that you came away from the bible study thinking, okay, 'this is something that we can do'?

039 S: You know, I will basically say what I said yesterday you know (long pause). It has to start with you, you know. I think when I ask God to, when I pray to God, I ask if I can walk the talk. If its something in my heart that I can reach to that person and help him, help him or her in such a way that God wants me to help that particular person.

040 D: That's really good. And with everyone contributing yesterday, you know everyone is talking and do you think that that kind of participation do you think it helps people or do you think that sometimes it can be unhelpful with everyone contributing?

041 S: To me IT IS helpful because as I said even though we can be Christian and non Christian. BY TALKING to let things out I think it helps a person a lot because if you lock inside of you its whereby you get more hurt, hurt and wounded you know (laughter). What I'm saying its better to take them out when we discuss them you'll find okay the word of God says this and this and that is whereby okay when we discuss it okay, you'll understand I'll have to do one two and three. By talking I think it's helpful.

042 D: Right, okay. So you are saying that it can help people let it let the pain out-

043 S: (overlapping) Let the pain out by discussing yeah! When you are alone you know that hatred and so forth it comes to you. It's better just to get it out.

044 D: And that is not sometimes an easy process

045 S: To take out.

046 D: Yeah!

047 S: Its not easy but (pause) I think with the bible study that we are doing even though it can be hard, but you will find the easiest way to say it than the difficult way. But at the end of the day God will take it out, maybe you'll take it out with (pause) you'll polish it and we will come with it. Maybe you are not alone who is feeling that way and some person will say me too, I feel one, two and three.

048 D: So then it makes you feel like you are not alone-

- 049 S: (overlapping) That you are not alone in that particular situation.
- 050 D: And with some of the questions in the bible study, sometimes they were looking at our lives or the society around us. Did you find that helpful or was it not so unhelpful?
- 051 S: As I said it was helpful because we were based on the neighbors and I found it I was also selfish, because of you know. You always think about yourself, about others it's a second. To me I think I have to put another person first than to put myself first you know. Ja! (pause) I don't know but yeah!
- 052 D: So with the bible study you are saying it spoke in to your life-
- 053 S: (overlapping) yah! its speaking to me individually, I can say that.
- 054 D: And with bible studies do you appreciate it when it speaks into your specific life or into your situation?
- 055 S: I would say both you know, maybe the answer that I was longing for I get it there, you know, (long pause). Even though it okay I may not find it, but I find it maybe we can discuss it and find it okay I can walk in this and this and that.
- 056
- 057 D: That's helpful. Did you find any of the questions unhelpful, thinking about this week as well as the previous week?
- 058 S: Wow!
- 059 D: There was a lot of questions (laughs).
- 060 S: There was a lot of questions, yes. But what I love about the last week, not this weekend, the last week one, I never thought about that topic, its what inspired me. You know like, I was asking myself okay wow! (pause), okay, when God said He loves me how much should I love him. Its UNEXPLAINABLE you know to say I love God and this and this and this. When I look and say I don't know how to experience it, to say it how much I love Him. Ja!
- 061 D: So there weren't any questions which you felt uncomfortable -
- 062 S: (overlapping) Uncomfortable, No! no! It was good questions. I think it helps xx. Actually it helps me you know, to grow.
- 063
- 064 D: And with the discussions in the bible study was there anything, you've already mentioned this a little bit, but was there anything that made you see your life differently (long pause) or perhaps your context?
- 065 S: I would say my context you know um! (pause) because I have to reach to them even though I'm scared to talk to them you know. As we mentioned like in our church street there is no one who is actually in the church and we are not reaching to those people -
- 066 D: (overlapping ) In the church street where the church is?
- 067 S: Yes, the people living there is not even one [for Saturday?] in our church. It's a question by this means there's something wrong that maybe we are doing or we don't walk the talk as we have to walk the talk, yeah!
- 068 D: And do you have any ideas about why you think or what we can do to improve for us to show our neighbors that we love them, on that street?
- 069 S: To that street? (long pause) Maybe to correct our actions, to show more love even though we showed little love to them, to show love to them and go out and help them in a way whereby they could see, yeah! we are born again, we are not the same, you know.
- 070 D: When you say we could correct our actions, what do you think needs correcting?
- 071 S: Our actions, I'll say when I walk, okay I will say when I walk I have a friend who is not born again. But when we walk in the street you wont say, 'okay Siya is born again' and okay, 'Tebogo is not born again'. We are in the level by whereby they have to see me as a born again.
- 072 D: So you are saying there needs to be some kind of difference, a visible difference?
- 073 S: Yes a visible difference they can see why is Siya living that life and I'm born again, you know, that life.

- 074 D: And you mentioned 'walking the talk'. Can you just explain what that means to you?
- 075 S: What it means to me like when I say 'walk the talk' you know, (pause) they taught me like, um! okay, that I'm the letter whatever you see me saying or doing is what people are reading about me, you know. So when I say 'walk the talk' like, whatever I say to that person I just have to do it with the action.
- 076 D: Right okay, so you are saying if you say that you love that person ...? -
- 077 S: (overlapping) To love that person you must particularly see it before I will come to that particular person.
- 078 D: So they need to see your actions before you even -
- 079 S: (overlapping) even do the particular thing that I have to do.
- 080 D: And with loving our neighbor we talked little a bit yesterday about doing evangelism, do you think that's the main area or would there also be other areas?
- 081 S: There can be also the others, you know. Not to focus only on our community, to reach out there because of.. It may not be our community who needs us it can be another community as to reach out to them.
- 082 D: Going back to what you said about releasing the pain that's inside and coming together to talk about issues you know sometimes that can be costly -
- 083 S: (overlapping) costly, yeah!
- 084 D: And it can be painful and it's uncomfortable sometimes for people to do that (pause). Do you think that people are willing to come together, that they want to come together to be able to do that?
- 085 S: (long pause) I think because of okay when I say okay, I'm in the bible study and hereby, I hear you speaking some of the people are brave to take out. But the end of the day or the weeks you will also be able to take out, to take out those heavy loads you'll be able to take out little by little you know. You don't have to rush and (claps his hand).. put them all in one xx you can take it one by one, I think its whereby you can get help for yourself.
- 086 D: You mentioned like over a process of time, you know if people are being open about what they are doing, do you think, would that be helpful for other people?
- 087 S: It will be, it will be because of if we discuss like we discuss you know you will reach out in a point whereby, you'll also want to be helped with the situation that you are into and I think it's whereby you'll also take out what is eating you inside.
- 088 D: And what for you, what would be the purpose or the aim of taking those things out?
- 089 S: (long pause) The purpose of to taking them out? (pause) I believe the way we do things, I think I found it easier to take it out that way, you know, because what I noticed yesterday as well I said (long pause), what I have to work on... I don't greet my neighbors like you know and I call myself a Christian, you know. And when they look at me they will say "all Christians are the same". Like what I do maybe another Christian are doing and whereby I know I'm wrong, you know. I have to greet them .Yeah!
- 090
- 091 D: Was there anything else within the bible study that maybe that encouraged you to see things in a different way?
- 092 S: To see, Yea! Because of I don't know if it was Mbongeni or you who came with the pictures, you know, we never reach out to the people who are really in need our help we don't really go to them. Like visiting um! Like there are children without mothers and fathers and are mothers who needs a really job. But we just, no passing, we don't know like what does my neighbor need. Like Sechabas mentioned like we don't listen. I always talk but I don't listen to my neighbor what he really wanna need. I think we have to listen.
- 093 D: Yeah! I think you are right.
- 094 S: I think we have to reach out and listen.
- 095 D: So thinking about the bible study what do you think was the most helpful thing in helping you to see things differently?
- 096 S: To not be selfish, you know. To reach out, there's people, you know, (pause) who really needs help than I do. I would say I'm fortunate to be in this situation where I'm to learn about the word of God what about the others, you know, they don't know about the word of God and with those who really know seeks something really badly. I can go to someone and say, okay, Pastor Dan can you help me with this and this, there's some

- people there don't even know where to go to, to lean on, you know.
- 097 D: It's a really big challenge.
- 098 S: It's a big challenge, it is a big challenge.
- 099 D: And with the bible studies is there anything that you could think of which could improve them?
- 100 S: To improve them? (long pause) I think, it will... If we can bring you know another person not us only to gain you know. Like we can bring another people maybe they could see another version that we are singing they can also see okay we do one two and three maybe its whereby they will also I think its whereby we can increase another people to see they are not alone out there.
- 101 D: Would that be encouraging other Christians or people in the community?
- 102 S: I would say Christians and non-Christians, you know. I think we are the same because of a (long pause) Christian is a job and a non Christian is a job. You need a promotion to certain things, I think the whole community, the whole community.
- 103 D: And with the actual bible part of it we looked at the good Samaritan, did you feel like that story, did it speak into your life or your situation that you were in? Or was it still a little bit abstract or far away?
- 104 S: No it was not far away from me, you know. I look at my situation about my neighbors you know when I read to those verse xx and what God said to those people. When the word of God says 'love your neighbor', I was like okay, 'love your neighbor'? This means to me if I don't love my neighbor I don't love God as I imagine I say 'I love God'. I think it's whereby I have to fix (pause) my problems.
- 105 D: That's helpful. Both of the studies which we've done for the last two weeks, they've been looking very much into the community. Do you find bible studies like that helpful and unhelpful?
- 106 S: It is helpful, to me it is, and I must really say I'm grateful to learn some other stuff that I didn't know. You know, it is helpful.
- 107 D: And what, can you give an example of something you didn't know.
- 108 S: I will say about this week. I didn't know how much the neighbors they need the people as I said about those pictures, you know (pause), there are really people who need help. There are really needy people and I think we are not so.. we don't consider the reality so seriously. I'll take okay no, I know DJ like why don't I help you then, whereby you don't needed it really but that one need it very hardly.
- 109
- 110 D: That's interesting. And would there be anything else that you would love to learn about or to study (long pause), with the bible studies that we are doing at the moment?
- 111 S: (long pause) (laughs) You know the things the way are going I'm starting to grow in me now (long pause), anything to me it will be fine. Anything that, that particular person comes with the topic I think it will be fine, because so far I'm growing. I must say I'm growing .
- 112 D: This is a difficult question, but how do you know you are growing?
- 113 S: How do I?, I'm growing whereby I thought I know whereby I don't know anything. When I'm growing you know like we say we read this xxxxx I open and when I first okay, whereby I didn't know about that thing. Like last week I was way out and I even asked my mother she was also speechless, she was like, 'wow what a question!' I was like yeah it's a question I think I know I don't know. I still need some growing I think. I'm growing by knowing about the word of God.
- 114 D: Which was the question that you asked your mother?
- 115 S: I asked my mother, 'can you tell me (pause) how do you love God?' You know (long pause), and she mentioned few but I still asking xxx (laughter) I told her okay, no, it's a few question ask yourself the question 'how much does God love you?' She was speechless. God loves me in her way, you know. It's unexplainable but you know, yah!
- 116
- 117 D: That's great, that's interesting. I think we are coming to the end of the interview. Is there anything that you want to say or to add before we finish?
- 118 S: No! Literally I will say I will love to thank you, you know.. I think you are a blessing to us DJ, you are really



are, by coming with the people its helping us to grow self. I think also in them in situation whereby they didn't notice whereby they know whereby they didn't know. I think yeah! I must thank a lot you (pause) most of all God to send you to us to grow.

119 D: No thank you, I appreciate that (laughs). Alright well thank you for your time and for doing this. You know what you said is really valuable and it help us with knowing how to be better with the bible study.

120 S: It was helpful; I think we should do it, you know. It doesn't matter how old are you, whereby there's some people will need it you can also look when you sit around look at those faces you will see that, we are going somewhere, we are going somewhere.

121 D: Yeah! That's great. Alright, thanks Siya.

122

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125



020 Dan: With the bible study, did you feel that it spoke into your context or your life or your situation?

021 Sechaba: Ja (laughing) I think it really did. Well neighbors, it still speaks to me even today for the mere fact that I (pause), as I said we loose the concept of the word neighbor. I think we basically take it out of context and we think a neighbor, cause in a Zulu culture is makhelwane (Zulu - 'Neighbor'). So normally makhelwane (Zulu - 'Neighbor') is somebody who builds next to you.

022 Dan: Okay.

023 Sechaba: So we think neighbor begins here and ends - somebody who builds next to you. But then it's something deeper as the context of the verse said that makhe ...(Zulu - 'Neighbor') a neighbor is somebody who needs helps at a certain time you're at. If you share a space with someone next to you, that's your neighbor at that time.

024 Dan: Okay.

025 Sechaba: So yeah. I think that it was very helpful cause I didn't see it like that. I always saw it as makhelwane (Zulu - 'Neighbor') somebody who builds next to me.

026 Dan: Okay. So your understating of neighbor it became ...-

027 Sechaba: (overlapping) It became-

028 Dan: (overlapping) Broader-

029 Sechaba: (overlapping) Broader. Yeah.

030 Dan: So who would you now see your neighbor as being?

031 Sechaba: Um the neighbor as I said is somebody I share the space with. Somebody who every time is all around. I might be walking somebody might be passing by for that brief moment that person is my neighbor. So if I share a space with someone, that's my neighbor at that moment in time.

04:44

032

033 Dan: Okay. And then with the bible passage that we looked at, it was the good Samaritan. How does that relate into your context; seeing your neighbor as someone who you share space with?

034 Sechaba: Being the good Samaritan would mean in that moment in time I share space with someone and then somebody needs my help. As a good neighbor I'm supposed to jump in and help that person. As a good neighbor that's what the story talks about to me because I'm pretty sure that the guy who needed help from the Samaritan they were not living next to each other. For that moment they shared a space. The good Samaritan saw a need and he decided to help out. And then that's why I like the question that Christ after that whole scene He asked, 'Then who is a good neighbor?', after that whole scene then the Samaritan was a good neighbor because he saw a need and he decided to help. So that's what it showed me that in every space I'm at. If I share it with someone and somebody need, is in a need, as a good neighbor I'm supposed to step in and help.

035 Dan: Yeah. So stepping in and helping, was there anything from the discussion on Friday night which brought new thinking or challenged you about the issue of stepping in?

036 Sechaba: A lot. A lot challenged me. A lot as I said. The fact that (pause), the first one was the realization of

what's a good neighbor. That challenged me 'cause I've been letting many of my neighbors without help. That challenged me a lot and then another challenge is the one we discussed that, another challenge was the one we discussed that helping someone actually it will hurt. It's like taking a part of you, yourself and giving it to somebody. It always takes us to do something for the greater being of another human being. So that was another challenge that sometimes if we gonna help somebody expect .... that it's gonna have to hurt you.

037 Dan: Okay.

038 Sechaba: To follow somebody. I like the word. We have much more today, we have much more. But Christ, God knew that much more was needed. That's why Christ died so we can have much more. So ja it's us being that living sacrifice and saying I'm gonna sacrifice something for the better of someone so that they can have more than you, you gonna break. That was challenging that I'm gonna have to break something from me. It makes me appreciate what Christ did more.

039 Dan: So when you say that it's going hurt to give something away, can you say a little bit more about that? Like explain it a little to me.

040 Sechaba: Ja I think we, we had a thing where we said. Some of us are very selfish and I know cause I'm the second born. I'm the only boy in the house. So I've been taught that I have toys like cars these are my cars. So I was brought up knowing that my sisters wouldn't wanna play with my cars (laughs). These are my cars. But then we had cousins over .... and then like getting to take your toy and share it with someone. It's very painful (laughter). Yes from a kid to now, I mean, if you have to take something of yours and giving it away, because you own it, you love it, it's yours but then you have to give it away to save somebody or help someone out. It's definitely gonna hurt cause you feel like you're losing a part of yourself. It might be time. It might be money. It might be something you had in your closet that somebody needs that you love it so much (laughs) you don't want to you let it go. You know what I mean?

041 Dan: (overlapping) You just want to hold on to it.

042 Sechaba: You want to hold on to it. So that separation from what you love to giving it to someone else is gonna hurt I tell you.

043 Dan: Okay. And like can you think back to the bible study that we did, what was it that has encouraged this change in thinking?

044

045 Sechaba: (coughs) The fact that when we were talking about it I realized a lot of things that we have not, we have not been doing, like the Levites walking past. Ja it helped me realize that (pause), I mean the Spirit of God talks to us. Ja I felt convicted that there's a lot of things that we have not been doing for our neighbors. Ja cause there's this thing that we think because we saw the life of Christ we wanna separate ourselves much from reality but then we forget that these other people we live with, these are our neighbors. Then we separate ourselves so far that we don't even see (pause) the surrounding. Our neighbors needs help cause we think that once we have salvation then we are okay. We forget the first thing that Christ said to the kids that, 'if, the doctor will never go a person who is healthy. He's gonna look for a person who is sick. So I've come in here for those who are sick, those who need, those who ...' So that way I remember that we are holding so much back of ourselves that we ...we do not share even the good news that saved us in the first place. So ja, I think we are not being good Samaritans (laughter).

046 So ja it challenged me in that sense that now I look at things in that context that sometimes a person doesn't

need for me to give him money. Sometimes he needs me to give him the word ... that I've learned ...at church, an encouraging word or something for me to listen. That's why my resolution was I'm gonna, I wanna listen more cause I feel like I'm doing a whole lot of talking but I'm missing out on the hearing part. So I wanna listen to my neighbors. Maybe there's something they need and I'm missing cause I'm also talking. So I think that was challenging for me cause I'm doing a whole lot of talking (laughter).

047 Dan: Yes, I think you are right you know as Christians we need to be listening more to people. You've just mentioned that sometimes we separate ourselves because we see ourselves as saved. There was a little bit of talking on Friday about how effectively does the church love their neighbor. Could you maybe just say a little bit about what you think of that?

048 Sechaba: (laughing) Ja I think (pause) the church is a very important institution and I've seen it in my life for the mere fact that growing up in a place like Munsieville where going to church is not seen as the coolest thing. But then the church became an institution. Especially for me like personally my mother passed away when I was young and my mom brought us to the church. So the church has always had that motherly role model, for me you know we had all these women. And sometimes I feel bad but, it seems like they did only me a favor, 'cause there are many kids who don't have mothers out there and then as good neighbors that role. It seems like we give it to our own mum. We don't try to expand cause my father does not go to our church but I found fatherly role models, ja at the church. So the church as an institution I think it has a huge role to play but it's not preaching out enough, to save many lost souls. So in that way I think the church is also lacking behind in becoming the good Samaritans. Because I mean, I'm the testimony of what the church can do to a young man and what not. So I think as a church we need to reach out more to the people cause everybody needs to hear this gospel we talk about. Not only hear it but see the love that we proclaim we have so they can begin to grow.

049

050 Dan: Okay. That's really helpful. And with the bible study it was very much focused on not thinking so much about ourselves but actually reaching out into the community. Do you do you feel that the bible study was helpful in looking at our context that we find ourselves in? Or could it have been done differently to improve it?

051 Sechaba: I think the bible study was very, very, very on point. In that sense of for us in order to be those good Samaritans we have to go out and help so that the bible study was good in that part. And I made a point that we look at our church street, ja neighbors around but yet none of them come to our church. So it seems like we are holding back in this outreaching part. So as good neighbors we are supposed to go. I like the, the white neighborhoods. When a new neighbor comes in the neighbor from next door come. I baked you a cake (laughing) so we can eat that. We also do it here but there are also some important things that we also need to do as neighbors. We need to go to those people who are nearby and attract them first. That way I think, but the bible study did teach us that they are your neighbors. That's what I liked about that. That's one word I took out, a neighbor, understanding who is our neighbor and who do we see as neighbors? It opened my eyes in the sense that we need to go reach out for the people. Be fishermen of men. That's what the bible says

052 Dan: Okay. And when you are saying be a good neighbor, how would you see us being able to (pause), to be a good neighbor like the good Samaritan?

053 Sechaba: You guys had cold drinks and cakes (laughing), that's a good start (laughter).

054 Dan: Ja it is. It is. Keeping them awake (laughter).

055 Sechaba: That's a good start (laughter). But it's good to see that young people taking that initiative, saying we gonna learn how to be something good. As I said, 'catch them while they are young. Catch them while they are

young. If they learn principles now of being good neighbors they'll make better fathers and teach better kids to become good neighbors. So I think at the young adult club, ja I think if it continues at this rate I think I see growth. Like I was, I was amazed that people would come and they support everything that happens. So I was very impressed cause it was my first time coming.

056 Dan: Okay, that's great.

057 Sechaba: I was impressed.

058 Dan: And how did you find the experience of participating?

059 Sechaba: It was nice. Ja, it's always nice sharing the word of God as children of God.

060

061 Dan: Did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable contributing cause there was a lot of discussion? What was your experience of being able to participate?

062 Sechaba: It was very, as I said it was very interactive because we even broke up into groups and then we discussed certain things like 'the wounded'. Everybody pitches in with a point. Everybody had a pen. So you write what you want to write there. There was no, 'no this is wrong'. You write what you feel is said. So that interactive part and then it forces the next person to ask but why did you write this and then you explain why I put this down. And then that part of back and forth it makes everybody become comfortable and easy because everybody had his own marker and then you write what you think, how you view certain things. So that part of interaction actually makes you very comfortable to start talking and opening up your....

063 Dan: That's good because sometimes in a group people can be shy. You know some people are loud. Some people are quiet. To what extent do you think there was freedom for people to share what was in their heart?

064 Sechaba: Ja well it's like every, every meeting, or formal meeting when it begins there is a bit of people holding back. Ja but then as I said it was, I don't see it as it was a teaching. It was a discussion because we opened up with the verse and then everybody said okay there were questions asked and then everybody contributed by answering those questions. So that part of us, contributing to answer the questions shows that we were interested in the subject or topic that was brought forth. So it makes us open up more and more and more, cause I was very comfortable answering, cause it was like a practical, taking a scripture and trying to make it as practical as possible. Ja so you could relate cause we had neighbors and then we all see what my neighbor is doing. So you see we could relate. We had one similarity that we all share neighbors somewhere somehow.

065 Dan: So there was the common experience

066 Sechaba: (overlapping) The common experience.

067 Dan: Which people were able to talk about. Was there anything that anyone said from the group discussion where everyone was contributing that perhaps challenged your thinking or changed your thinking?

068 Sechaba: Aah, 'tit for tat, butter for fat' (laughter). Ja that got to me that when you do something for people you always expect God to be watching and then you expect something good to come back. I like the point that he raised that sometimes we have to understand it won't happen like that, that sometimes you have to give and expect nothing so that God may be glorified. Ja that point challenged my thinking cause I always think okay God is watching - 'what would Jesus do?' (laughter)

069 Dan: Yeah, that's right (laughter).

070 Sechaba: So let me help that Jesus will do something (laughter).

071 Dan: Yeah. Yeah.

072 Sechaba: Ja so it challenged me that to the point of, it changed my thinking. Totally that this has to change, sometimes do my best and God will do the rest. Then, ja, if He wants to bless me He will bless me but what I must do is to initiate the first step of my helping someone.

073 Dan: Okay. That's helpful. With the 'tit for tat butter for fat' you know, that's not an easy thing to do. Do you think that there was enough discussion about that? Sometimes with bible studies it feels like we're scratching the surface. How deep did you feel like the discussion went?

074 Sechaba: I honestly thought we could have spent more time on that. But then it was, it was like a mini revival to me cause at my place I told about that guy we give tea every morning. Funny enough the day before I went to the bible study (pause) I was asking my aunt 'cause it's been, I've been here home for like there days and I haven't seen him come. So I'm asking my aunt what happened to the neighbor who used to come? And then my aunty tells me, 'No, this guy cause he didn't have an ID so it was hard for him to get the pension, government pension'. So now that they fixed this stuff he doesn't come anymore. And I saw my aunt was mad because he doesn't come anymore cause now he's okay. So I think, then the bible study happened and it started speaking to me that we expected something back from this guy.

075 Dan: Okay.

076 Sechaba: I think my aunty expected something back from this guy, a thank you or something but she didn't get that. So that made my aunty a bit bitter. So after the bible study I went to her and we started talking about that 'tit for tat butter for fat' that sometimes that's all you need to do. And I liked the example that Moruti Fele used, the snake.

077 Dan: Okay.

078 Sechaba: So the verse has been speaking to me.

079 Dan: And just remind me with the man who was coming for tea, why was he coming for tea? Cause he was in need.

080 Sechaba: Ja there was a need we saw and then my aunty decided okay let me do this guy some tea. Like every morning because he's epileptic and then we were not sure that he gets enough food. So to at least if we had wake up, you sleep eight hours, that's the longest time you go without having a meal in-between. So at least if you have some nourishment in the morning then in the afternoon it was up to him to come. But the morning stuff he knew that every morning he used to come with his cup. We made him tea, gave him some bread. Ja so we saw that need that it was needed there. So my aunty decided to initiate by giving. And that was a lesson for us as well because my aunty is a Roman Catholic, doesn't come to our church. But the lesson was, a need, it's like my aunty became the good Samaritan. We were the Levites who were walking past. So that taught us, me and my little sister that we have to give, we must start giving cause when my aunt is not home and the guy comes. It's up to us to initiate that. So that was what my aunty was teaching me .... that here this is a normal thing as Ubuntu (Zulu) you must help your next neighbor so that can be ready to help them.

081 Dan: Was he living next door to you, or living in the community?

082 Sechaba: Ja he was living next door with us.

083 Dan: Yeah that's a brilliant example. You know (laughing) sometimes real examples they speak louder than than things we read. The bible study, we've talked about a couple of things at a deeper level but did you feel that there was enough depth from the bible study, that, that you came away with something which was significant for you ?

084 Sechaba: Ja I think there was depth and we had homework as well (laughter).

085 Dan: Remind me what the homework was?

086 Sechaba: The homework was, we got a piece of paper where we wrote one thing 'from now you gonna do ... for your neighbor'.

087 Dan: Okay.

088 Sechaba: And then I believe that was homework cause it didn't end there. It's transformation of self. I have to work within me, how I'm gonna change that. That became a homework that Jo! I have to become a good neighbor and by writing that I was binding myself that I'm gonna try and do this so that I can be the best neighbor I can, ja, so.

089 Dan: Okay.

090 Sechaba: So the lesson still continues (laughter).

091 Dan: That's good. And how are you doing with practicing what you wrote?

092 Sechaba: I'm realizing that my neighbors are very funny people (laughing) cause now we, when was it? Yesterday, before the soccer game, Pirates versus Swallows I was sitting with my neighbor they're Chiefs fan, I'm a Pirates fan. So we start talking and then we talk and then I'm realizing that I'm not giving. I've not been giving them this opportunity of conversation and this has been keeping me away from them you know what I mean. Cause you can learn a lot by talking to someone. I realized they view me in a different light than I thought I was. They view me as one of those snob guys (laughing) and me not talking to them I think I made it worse. So I've learned something that okay I must start talking to these people, start listening to their need, start praying for them. That's my job as a neighbor.

093 Dan: It's encouraging to hear that the bible study it has made some impact even its small you know. I think that I'm coming to the end of the questions. Is there anything that you want to add about anything we've discussed or the bible study that you haven't said already?

094 Sechaba: I think that the thing that, but then we need, we need to do more, is teach, teach a lot. There's a lot of teaching like with all this information around but we're not learning nothing. So there's a gap we're missing. There's something else we're missing. But I like the teaching of the bible study if you can connect the bible and all its jargon, faith and what-not and make it as real as possible, practical as possible. I think it would be easy to trust the power of God. Ja I think it would be easier especially for, for young people where we're in that interfaith stage where we see we're growing up but we still looking for our selves within the community, within the church, within .... the bible itself. I think we need more teaching now, cause this is the time that will determine, are we gonna be good parents or better parents or are we just gonna be parents? So if we had a basic instructions before living earth ,information we'd know that half of the battle is done.

095 I think the bible study is very important cause on Sunday (laughs) we don't have time to learn cause the Pastor



is on another level. There's no that sitting down, you ask questions and I question back what you were saying. The Pastor is just giving information, giving, giving, giving. We have to receive, receive. There's no, okay I understand it like this so does that mean my understanding is wrong? And the perfect time of doing that is at the bible study where you have the questions and people answering those questions. So I'm for the bible study. I've been a bible study boy all my life (laughing). So I think we need to keep it up and do more, more of this teaching. But it mustn't end at the young adults. It must, it must, it must go as low as possible. I'm concerned about the kids. It must go as low as possible and as high as possible.

096 Dan: Yeah. So that it covers everyone-

097 Sechaba: (overlapping) Ja-

098 Dan: What you've said has been incredibly helpful you know, you know it's, you know you are a deep thinker (laughter). It's really great to get feedback on that level. So really thank you -

099 Sechaba: Thank you

100 Dan: So much for your time. And there was one more question which I had. You said something on Friday, which was, you made a joke about 'gangsterism' (laughter) in the church and actually when I was interviewing a couple of the other guys they referred to it and so it resonated with them and they were agreeing with you. So I was just wondering if you could maybe just explain what you meant about that.

101 Sechaba: Aah the thing is I've, like now I'm not I'm not based in Munsieville. So Munsiville is my home and my church. I've been in the church for (pause) years and years ever since I was born I was born into it. I've seen it change a lot of times. And then now I'm in Sasolburg where it's a new environment and I'm not sure if I'm gonna stay there forever or not. So when I visit a church I finally feel what it feels like to be a visitor and then I see everybody has clicks, groups. So it's kind of hard for me to fit in cause everybody separates themselves in that group. So I started thinking about my church that when I was youth I used to do that (laughing). So that part of gangsterism that's what I mean. Everybody wants to associate themselves with a certain group that they are used to. That we let certain people fall through the cracks. So now I'm in Sasol I understand it now cause when I was in Munsieville I couldn't see them doing anything wrong. I mean we are friends. We like each other but then I realized how many people have we let go because we didn't say 'hi, how are you doing? Hey we are this. This is what we are about and then went to your friends, we talk, we shake hands, start smiling but we forgot to shake the other peoples hands. So that part of gangsterism, I think we must get rid of it.

102 Dan: I think you are right and I mean it's the same in most churches. I think of my churches back home and it's really the same in England as well. But I like the term that you used (laughter) you know, because it's true you know and it makes it real for the young people. So was there anything finally you wanted to add or-

103 Sechaba: (overlapping) No. I'm good.

104

105

106

001

**Transcript 4****Interview with Mbongeni**

002

D: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

003

M: My pleasure.

004

D: We are just trying to evaluate the effectiveness of this teaching method. What you have to say is going to be very valuable.

006

M: Okay.

007

D: Maybe you can just introduce yourself, please.

008

M: My name is Mbongeni Lwandile Mjekula from the Baptist Convention College. I facilitated last night the 4<sup>th</sup> of November's... Bible study session at Munsieville Baptist church with the young adults.

009

D: Okay, great. And how did you find facilitating yesterday?

010

M: I found it very informative and educative, because I've come to learn a lot more from hearing what other people are saying. It got my thought a bit broader about the topic and how people perceive life. So that was quite interesting.

011

D: That's good. You said 'it made your thinking a bit broader'

012

M: Yes.

013

D: Can you explain a little bit?

014

M: Well, as a person who facilitates a session or a lesson you may come up with your own answers at the back of your mind. But when you look at another person's understanding, it helps you see that its not just your answers that seem to be correct and accepted for that certain lesson, but there are other parts of the lesson that are being opened up to your thoughts. For instance if I speak about LOVE, in terms of affection towards somebody, someone else can teach me about love in terms of learning how to forgive and accept them for who they are. So, those were the things that I came to learn rather than just giving all the answers to people.

015

D: So you said 'rather than giving the answers to people', you were learning through the dialogue.

016

M: Yes.

017

D: How do you think, do you feel that that way of doing education is helpful or unhelpful?

018

M: It's certainly helpful. In our church we usually have a family bible hour, which is in a similar setting and it teaches us a lot you know, because you see how people react differently to certain situations. And some have answers to your problem that, you find that they have a solution to your problem in a better way than you thought. And sometimes you see that you are not the only one who has really faced troubles or certain problems in life but there are others who have been there and have a better solution for you spiritually in a biblical manner of course.

019

D: Right. That's interesting. With this education style it encourages people to participate. Can you maybe just explain, if you think that way of doing education is helpful, can you just speak a little bit more about why you feel its helpful for everyone to contribute?

020

M: Well for starters it helps people understand that they are important and they are also intellectual enough to contribute valuable, inputs on the lesson. Everybody is equal within that environment. There is no one who seems superior and more informed than the others. Rather its a conducive means of communication and it helps people learn, emerge you know like it helps them to discover new things about themselves, discover their capabilities of contributing to another person's life in a conversation and making the community a better place.

021

D: Right, okay, okay. And do you feel that people feel comfortable or uncomfortable participating?

022

M: Well I, majority would feel comfortable. Also it depends on the facilitator's mood as well as approach towards that lesson. If I were to facilitate as if I'm in a class, in a lecture class, I wouldn't really have so much participation encouraged. But if I were to clear it, clear up, I mean if I have an ice breaker or something within the beginning of the lesson and I encourage people by telling them that all are equal and their values of, I mean their contributions are very much valuable, then I allow people to freely contribute their thoughts to the lesson.

- 023 D: Right, okay. You've mentioned it depends a little bit on the facilitator.
- 024 M: Yes.
- 025 D: You've mentioned the positive things that a facilitator can do to make people feel comfortable. What would be the negative things to make them feel uncomfortable?
- 026 M: Well with the negative, the facilitator will come in with an attitude that thinks, that makes them feel like they are inferior and he is superior, all informed and they aren't..., uninformed, and he comes with all the answers, they ask questions and he gives them, he just feeds them with information and does not want to understand their approach and understanding from the natural perspective before you bring in an educative perspective. So, if I want to be an unfair or an (pause) unapproachable facilitator I would come with the approach of just feeding them with information and that is it.
- 027 D: And do you think the way of doing bible study that you did yesterday, do you think it speaks to the participants lives or their situation?
- 028 M: Certainly, it does. When I heard them respond in their answers it showed me that they have overlooked the importance of their personal lives. Being highly, well scrutinized as to how much do they show God's love to the people surrounding them whether in good or bad situations, you know. They started reflecting critically within themselves that how well have they portrayed God's love? How well have they fulfilled this commandment? Because it's easy to live your own life and just concentrate on yourself and forget the next person and find that that next person really would have had a better life with your help somehow.
- 029 D: And you mentioned 'it helps them to reflect critically'. Can you maybe give an example or two examples of how it would help them to do that?
- 030 M: So, well if for instance if we speak about 'loving your neighbor as you love yourself', a critical reflection would be (pause) how serious do you take that next person, or rather 'when somebody is hungry', are you able to feed them if you have the ability to? Or do you rather keep the food for yourself until it grow stale, because sometimes you know we keep things for ourselves and that we don't really need but somebody else needs it and we still just don't bother ourselves to try and help them but ironically God gave Jesus Christ unselfishly to the world to receive salvation. So, if we act that kind of love out we'll be portraying Gods' love through Jesus Christ to the next person.
- 031 D: Do you think that the bible study helped to bring change in the participant's lives?
- 032 M: Yes I believe so. I believe it has, I don't believe that it's just an informative lesson that they just keep in the back of their minds. But it's very practical you know, because some where challenged to go and help their neighbors. One said that after today, I mean after last night they would go and open their tap to their neighbor who needs water. They don't have much access to water so she was willing allow to herself to be that help, that access to water.
- 033 D: That a good example. How easy do you think it is to get participants to think critically or to think discerningly about their situation or about the bible?
- 034 M: Well, that's a very good question (laughter). I'd say maybe it depends on my way of thought and the way I put my questions together for starters. I could easily ask a rhetorical questions or I could also think into... digging deeper by putting them on the spotlight, as to, if ever they needed any form of help and no one came to help them, how would they feel, and then they would give their answers of pain and rejection, anger. And then I'd say to them now, I would ask a question like now since you would feel that way how does that next person feel every time they need your help and you turn them away? Because we'd like to do unto others as we'd like to be done unto us, so if we don't do what we would like. If we don't give some form of good gesture to somebody else and expect it back to us it won't be reciprocal. So it's a practical matter of knowing that you help someone else because you would also desire to be helped not expecting any form of return of favor but knowing that someday you too would get some help when you need it, you know, that's what its all about .
- 035 D: Did you feel that, that the participants when they were thinking about, some of these issues are quite deep. Did you get a sense of any of them having a change of opinion or... becoming aware of something that was different to what they knew before?
- 036 M: Yes I sensed that a lot, because I asked in the beginning of my session the question, 'WHO IS your neighbor?' And I asked it about twice and they started telling me about those who habit next to them, you know, in their surrounding area. And then I further taught about the story on the good Samaritan about teaching who is a good neighbor and they saw that its not really somebody that you live with but rather somebody who needs your help out there, who is looking like you, who is in the image of God as you are and rather needing some form of help now that would be your neighbor, not necessarily someone that's next to you. So they saw that it was more informative than expected, more challenging than expected. So ja!

- 037 D: That's a really good example. Can you think of another example where perhaps someone said something and maybe people began to see things in a different way?
- 038 M: I heard one gentlemen say that "It first begins with you", you know. "Knowing how to make the world change, you need to look at other people with a different eye". He said, "do not just look at people with a thought or eye that says that they don't have any problems, they're just good neighbors that you can joke around with and speak about, speak sport about. But rather be a willing to go that deeper route or level of understanding their pain and suffering and seeing how can God help you? How can God use you to help them... get rid of that pain or get rid of that challenge they are faced with in life because we can look at somebody smiling in their outside but inwardly they are in deep pain so rather getting to know the person intimately is better than just knowing them socially". So he was challenging us with that as well.
- 039 D: When we facilitate, we also learn ourselves. Was there anything that perhaps changed your way of thinking as result of the discussion yesterday?
- 040 M: Yes, although I kind of understood a bit of what the message was portraying when I was first facilitating but hearing other peoples' thoughts and understanding helped me realize that it's not about information but more about practice. So I learned that sometimes you can easily know all the answers to your problem but that step that we take to make us, to bring about change is the actual challenge that one has to fulfill.
- 041 D: Can you give an example of what you've just said?
- 042 M: Okay. It's easy for one to say that I can open my door to you when its raining but reality strikes cause sometimes people are selfish and not even able to think clearly that now this is a time where I'm supposed to practice this love that I've been preaching. So for instance there's a time when I remember there was a man who was hungry and I went to make him a bit of a lunch. When I came back he was gone. And I never took the initiative of trying to find him or seeing where he is, you know, or even wait for the next day for him to come back. But sometimes we just close the door we never really open it ever again. So it really is a challenge.
- 043 D: Yes. It is. For myself, I really enjoyed hearing what everyone was saying about their neighbor and thinking about it practically like you just said. The bible study it was looking at their practical lives to some extent. Can you maybe talk a little bit more about that? Do you think that the bible study, how effective do you think it is this MODEL of bible study in speaking to people's real lives or their situations?
- 044 M: Yes well I'll start off by firstly implying the purpose of Jesus Christ's teachings especially in the Sermon of the Mount. He was mainly dealing with people's characters being changed in the heart. Now this bible study what it has taught me is that it deals with people's hearts and minds first, before going out to impact anybody out there, you know. So it's more practical in the sense of challenging your faith, challenging your approach to life and seeing whether are you just all talk and no action or are you able to talk and act out what you have said. So that's the greatest thing about it that I find, because people tend to know everything and do nothing. It's one thing to hear somebody tell you that they have a problem. Like one time I had a problem at home my cousin woke me up at three-o'clock in the morning she wanted me to help her because she was being harassed by somebody in her room. So as a person who is studying theology you can learn theoretically how to handle such matters. But when the real time comes you don't know whether should you call the police or should you bang the door open with a baseball bat to get them out by force because.. life scenarios are a whole lot different than what theory may teach. So it starts with the heart and the mind knowing whether are you ready to make that change or not and if you are when the opportunity avails itself you cease it.
- 045 D: You mentioned about theory being sometimes different from practice-
- 046 M: (overlapping) Yes.
- 047 D: How effective do you feel that the bible study... that you participated in yesterday, how effective was it in bringing those two together, theory and practice?
- 048 M: Well I'd say they (pause) were quite a good combination. Though sometimes theory has a lot of complexities, however, when you put into practice it's a matter of just knowing how to put the needles together from one thread to another, you know (pause), put the thread through each needle, you know, sowing up a little pattern. Well it has to start with understanding the main focus of the lesson moving onto the questions and practical, well the focus would be practical illustration and then the questions will come with theory that practically challenges somebody. So I believe that they work together.
- 049 D: And yesterday with the bible study, there was quite a lot of talking about people's own lives and their situation as well as the bible. Do you think that dialogue between the bible and peoples' lives is that helpful or unhelpful?
- 050 M: It is helpful provided also that the people are going to be challenged to make a difference because usually the tendency with bible studies was that it only impacts a person's life in terms of knowledge you know. They just keep that head knowledge to themselves and not easily go out and share it in the practical form with those

- around them. But with this learning process it takes us a step further it helps us to learn theoretically or to get some form of information that is practically going to be usable in another person's life. So it is communal rather than personal.
- 051 D: To what extent do you think people like to look at their own lives and their situations in the context of the bible study?
- 052 M: Well people look at what makes them feel content at that moment in time. If they see themselves improving in their level of knowledge biblically their tithes, you know their financial stability and faithfulness to God starts improving. They see themselves having their little cocoon really well built up into a butterfly that they want to have, then they are content. But they wouldn't care about the next person whether is their cocoon also growing or is it just stagnant. So with this bible study program it helps us at least not to focus on those things that we are used to in past eras of our spiritual lives because we used to have this thing of saying "its got to start with me". Yes its true but it ends up just being you and never going out to the next person, unless its somebody you highly favor that you decide to help but anybody else you don't really care about. So that's the advantage of this bible study program. It is unselfish.
- 053 D: Okay.
- 054 M: And very challenging.
- 055 D: What do you feel are the most challenging parts about the bible study process?
- 056 M: Well (laughs) the most challenging are the ones with critical reflection.
- 057 D: (overlapping) Okay.
- 058 M: Especially movements two and four.
- 059 D: Right, okay.
- 060 M: With movement two it's where you get to start making the person own up. I mean, question themselves about the topic as to how real do they see it happening in their lives. And then at movement four it's when you make them reflect on how they can bring about change. Movement two you show them the problem and how effective it is, how much it affects their lives, at movement four you show them how can the change come about for the problem to be alleviated. So those are the most challenging.
- 061 D: Why do you feel that those are the most challenging?
- 062 M: Because they are very personal.
- 063 D: Okay.
- 064 M: Yes, they reveal secrets (laughs), they may now open up wounds to other people, you know. So it is a part where their healing process emerges.
- 065 D: To what extent do you feel that people are comfortable critically reflecting, cause you said its very personal-
- 066 M: (overlapping) Personal, yeah.
- 067 D: To what extent do you think they are comfortable doing that?
- 068 M: Well I'd say about 80-90% because nobody can reach a hundred, you know. But it really makes them see life at a different angle and view you know. They don't see it in black and white any longer, they start filling in a few colors of reality. Yes and about 80% to that extent-
- 069 D: (overlapping) That they are comfortable-
- 070 M: (overlapping) Comfortable-
- 071 D: (overlapping) With doing it-
- 072 M: (overlapping) With doing it. They get to see themselves important. They get to see themselves special in some way, you know. They feel, they now see that they are valuable in that lesson. They are not always passive but also contributive.
- 073 D: And with this bible study process for you what would be perhaps the most helpful thing about it? And then after that I'll ask you about the most unhelpful thing (laughter).
- 074 M: Okay, (laughter). The most helpful (long pause) oh, that's a good one! Okay let's start with the most

- unhelpful.
- 075 D: Okay.
- 076 M: The most unhelpful for me is coming to that session (pause) without the desire to learn and having very few people participative.
- 077 D: Okay. So coming to which session like the bible study?-
- 078 M: (overlapping) The bible study. Ja! Because, okay. Can you please repeat the question?
- 079 D: So for you having looked at the whole process of the bible study,
- 080 M: Yes.
- 081 D: What would be the most helpful and the most unhelpful -
- 082 M: (overlapping) Right-
- 083 D: (overlapping) Thing about it.
- 084 M: About it. The most helpful is giving everybody an opportunity to own it up.
- 085 D: Okay
- 086 M: Getting to see themselves really a part of this session, personally and socially. The most unhelpful is if you come there already with the mind that has all the answers with an attitude that says they know nothing and you know everything. That will deprive you from learning something new if you don't show them any form of respect and attention. It will deprive you from learning something new about life and about faith about the bible study session in its completeness.
- 087 D: So with the most helpful part of it you are saying everyone is able to own it.
- 088 M: (overlapping) Yes.
- 089 D: And to be able to contribute-
- 090 M: (overlapping) Contribute, yes.
- 091 D: How relevant would that be for the church situation that you are in?
- 092 M: Well VERY, because the one thing I've come to learn with this session is it has taught me a great deal of dynamics of people's lives and characters. In a church situation sometimes everything gets bottled up into one glass and everybody is expected to put that bottle into that whether the jar is square or circular. But you find that they try to squeeze a circular bottle in a square glass. They are not really able to put everything into practice in their lives with the old fashion style of learning. But rather with this bible study session you learn to see that people come from different views of life and different backgrounds. Therefore they learn to see how different they are from other people and how special they are from other people and how their practical lives can unite and complement each other because challenges of life are very different for every person but one thing is solutions can be brought in a similar way. But then I know that I said that I don't put in a square glass (laughter) into a- but I mean that if we have such a lesson maybe on a certain topic it may help us see the picture a whole lot broader than we had expected .
- 093 D: What helps us to see the picture broader? What enables this method of education to be a little more flexible? You are talking about "putting a round peg into a square hole". So what makes this broader or more flexible?
- 094 M: Well, firstly it does not discriminate people, because sometimes certain people would expect answers from certain people and others wouldn't feel so comfortable to participate because they are not at ease with the facilitator or the lecturer, you know. With this kind of lesson everybody is important therefore whatever that they say shows you that they are intelligent, it shows you that they know something. Maybe somebody knows how to drive the car with theoretic understanding but someone else knows how to drive the car practically. Therefore even though they may not know all the knowledge with theory but they know the practice and therefore they know the reality of driving the car. So sometimes we can come with our own understanding of how should one live their life. But being in their shoes it's a whole different story. So it helps us realize that everybody has their own challenge and relationship with God in their own special way and God strengthens our faith through each other in his special way. We need to just embrace them and let them feel free to participate
- 095 D: That's really helpful. You mentioned the old fashioned way of bible study. Can you maybe explain what you

- mean by that?
- 096 M: Alright for instance the old fashioned style would be a theologian standing in front of the congregation and teaching them about a certain biblical book or topic. He would start off by telling them who was the book written by, at what time, where, for what reason. And then he starts unpacking all the matters, the contextual matters that affected the community and that led to him writing the book. And now he tries to bring that picture to people already with his knowledge of how this book is supposed to be portrayed in people's lives. So it's more of informing them and enforcing his will on them. But rather this process learning style helps people to own up, I keep on encouraging that statement because it makes everybody feel important. They know something they include it. You know with bible study sessions sometimes people get confused and never have a chance to get to really understand. The matter is passed they go on to the next, and its all about the original context, contextual knowledge that they get filled but their contemporary context is not really much, its not much accommodated.
- 097 D: Just going back to the parts where you were talking about the most unhelpful aspects of this process of bible study, just remind me what you said?
- 098 M: I spoke about being, coming with an attitude that says you already know all the answers-
- 099 D: (overlapping) Right
- 100 M: And not really embracing other peoples' point of views.
- 101 D: So if someone was to come and do that that would be the most unhelpful-
- 102 M: (overlapping) Yes to...
- 103 D: (overlapping) thing?
- 104 M: Personally it would be to me because what is meant to be with this program, all learn something-
- 105 D: (overlapping) Yes.
- 106 M: Therefore if you come with the thought that you are going to facilitate and no one can tell you anything much. In fact it wouldn't really be facilitation now, but it would be a lecture, a lecture. So facilitation is allowing everybody to contribute and you just sum up the matter where necessary and however necessary. But it's not a matter of saying that you dishonor other people's value of thought but you honor it and you value it with just your touch of contribution once in a while.
- 107 D: That's helpful. I understand. And with the actual process of this kind of bible study would you change anything about it?
- 108 M: Personally I don't think I could change anything. I think it is right as it is. What I like about it is that it's FLEXIBLE in terms of how many questions can you ask and how long do you want it to be, how long can you run the program and ja! But otherwise I think it's a good model.
- 109 D: And do you see yourself using this model of learning in your ministry in the future?
- 110 M: Yes, yes, I do, I do. With young people, with bible study classes, I see it working in my ministry, a lot.
- 111 D: Alright. I think we are coming to the end of the interview, is there anything that you want to say that you've not already said or perhaps a question which I haven't asked which you would love to answer?
- 112 M: (overlapping) No, thanks. That was all.
- 113 D: Okay. No, well thank you for BOTH doing the interview now and for facilitating last night.
- 114 M: My pleasure.
- 115
- 116
- 117
- 118
- 119

001 **Transcript 5** **Bible Study 2: Do Not Worry**

002 Dan: Sister Sarafia welcome. Feel at home you know please be with us. Feel free. Be open and just say what you need to say and we know that God's spirit is leading you. Okay so over to you.

003 Sara: Amen.

004 : Amen.

005 Sara: Thank you Moruti. This evening I want to greet you in the name of Jesus.

006 : Amen.

007 Sara: So I'm very happy to be with you once more AGAIN. Yes and I thank God for it and for us to be here. And what I'm going to talk about today or tonight we are going to talk about our worry. And I know that God knows that we are worry about something and that something God have the answer of it...

008 Masego: (overlapping) Amen.

009 Sara: ...tonight.

010 Masego: Yes.

011 Sara: And I know that each of us we know we all and we have the thing that we worry make us to worry about it. Either is one I can't mention it now but you know, I know. That's why God provide this topic for you and for me tonight to discuss it and to see how our problem or how our worry will be ended. So God say don't worry about your future, about your situation, about your problem, about money, about whatever I don't know. But first seek His Kingdom and everything shall be added. Ja I know that it's tough. Wow it's tough.

012 Masego: Yes.

013 Sara: Ja. Okay from now on I have this paper here in the middle of the paper. Write down worry then here maybe this one it will be (long pause) ja this group from here they are going to write it here. You are going to write down anything that people worry about.

014 : Ake kgone go kwala ka left mos (Tswana - 'I can't write with a left hand').

015 Sara: Anything.

016 : Anything?

017 Sara: Ja anything. Just write down. You are going to write down anything that people worry about (long pause - they are busy writing). Anything that people worry about?

018 Masego: Future twice? (laughter)

019 Sara: Anything that people worry about.

020 Refilwe: Pastor Dan wena mos odi kwala tse tsohle mos (Tswana- 'You are writing everything') (laughter).

021 Sara: Anything that people worry about. Ja we know (long pause) yes anything that people worry about. I think we're done.

022 Dan: Mm.

023 Sara: Okay thank you . Ja maybe, my group here can share with us what they wrote down. So maybe one thing or two thing or three, what they wrote down, about that things that make people to be worry (long pause).

024

025 Paulina: People are worry about money.

026 Sara: They worry about money.

027 Paulina: Future.

028 Sara: Future.



029 Paulina: Exams.  
030 Sara: Exams.  
031 Paulina: Then their children  
032 Sara: (overlapping) Money for what? Money for what? Money how? They worry about money.  
033 : (overlapping) To buy what they want.  
034 Sara: Excuse?  
035 : To buy what they want.  
036 Sara: To buy what they want, need. Okay and future, future how?  
037 Paulina: What they are going to [do? happen?]-  
038 Masego: (overlapping) ... to happen  
039 Siya: (overlapping) in the next five years to come.  
040 Sara: In the next five years to come. Okay and exam. How exam?  
041 Group: Whether they are going to pass or fail (laughter).  
042 Masego: (overlapping) Whether they are going to make it or not (laughter).  
043 Sara: Okay. What do you say?  
044 Kitso: What to eat and what to wear (laughter).  
045 Sara: What to eat and what to wear.  
046 Thabeseng: E (Tswana - 'yes') they worry.  
047 Sara: Yes.  
048 : xxxx xxxx (laughter) xxxx.  
049 Wisdom: Hey, hey wena bua nnete (Tswana- 'Hey you tell the truth').  
050 Sara: They are going to eat.  
051 Masego: Mmh!  
052 Sara: And to wear.  
053 Masego: Mmh!  
054 Sara: Okay. Ja that's good.  
055 Thabeseng: Financial problems.  
056 Sara: Financial problems.  
057 : xxx money.  
058 Sara: Okay.  
059 Thabeseng: Being a loser?  
060 Sara: Being a loser?  
061 Thabeseng: Sexual abuse  
062 Sara: Sexual abuse.  
063 Thabeseng: Family problems

064 Sara: Family problems. Wow. So which means people are worry yes.

065 Thabeseng: Yes.

066

067 Sara: Okay. What about my colleagues there? (2nd Group)

068 Wisdom: More or less the same. Jobs.

069 Refilwe: Financial, physical

070 : Health.

071 : Hurricane.

072 Refilwe: Losing loved ones.

073 Wisdom: I wrote kids here.

074 : Yes kids.

075 Wisdom: Some parents they will do worry about their kids, for a better future for their kids.

076 Thebiseng: And their safety.

077 Sara: Do you think that it's good for people to have faith?.

078 : Faith?

079 Sara: [Faith? health?].

080 : To have what?

081 Sara: [faith? health?]

082 : Health?

083 Sara: Mm!

084 Siya: Yes.

085 Masego: No! (long pause)

086 Sara: Why are you saying yes, yes, yes? (laughter). Ja it's not about him but we can discuss.

087 Masego: If you are not healthy you gonna worry that you gonna die

088 Sara: Okay. So thank you very much. And now I'm going to give you once more again-

089 Wisdom: (overlapping) Exam (laughter)

090 Sara: Don't be tired. Exam (laughter) Ja.

091 Masego: I'm worried.

092 Sara: I just give you a piece of paper and from that piece of paper that I give to you now you are going to write down one or two worries that your personal worries that you are facing. Now you are going to write down your own YOUR PERSONAL WORRY that you are facing it. (long pause- they are busy writing). Write down your personal. Maybe you can write two or one or two that make you worry, personal one that you are facing in your life. Yes your personal worry that you are facing in your life at the moment. Are we done? Okay now I need a volunteer to share with us what she or he written down.

093 Masego: (laughs).

094 Wisdom: You said personal (laughter).

095 Sara: Okay, I know that is personal but maybe if there is someone, there is anyone who want to share with us even if its not so maybe ....

096 Wisdom: Okay.

097 Sara: Ja maybe you can share with us if you see that it is necessary for us to....

098 Wisdom: xxxx.

099 Sara: I know that me I don't have an answer but God have the answer .... Okay.

100 Wisdom: Brother.

101 Sara: Brother.

102 Wisdom: You [may? can?] start.

103 Sara: Yes welcome.

104 Siya: Okay. It's based on my life cause like you know when you matric right you worry whether if you pass where you gonna go next year, who's gonna pay for your fees something like that.

105 Sara: Okay.

106 Siya: Okay you are stressed that you gonna pass with distinctions and then you find yourself next year not having money to pay for your studies and then you just sitting at home doing nothing.

107 Sara: Okay.

108 Siya: Ja.

109 Sara: So ja that's good.

110 Dan: Mm.

111 Sara: And I think also me I have also worry about my exam as well. How am I going to pass and so on? But I know that God is there to help us. I know that God is there to help you He knows our future. Okay maybe are there anyone?

112 Wisdom: I wrote down sexual abuse.

113 Sara: Sexual abuse.

114 Wisdom: Not to my side no, but it's affecting us in always, whether you are a Christian or not, because of I say we see people abusing each other. Plus even us we grew up in those situations like these and even if we are Christians we can't just stay and say 'eish!' It's hitting us. Yes

115 Sara: That's real. That's really true. We are facing that. If there's anyone?

116 Paulina: I wrote that how I am going to start to work for the Lord when I finish my studies?

117 Sara: So you worry about your future?

118 Paulina: Yes.

119 Sara: Okay. How you are going to start serving God-

120 Paulina: (overlapping) When I finish-

121 Sara: (overlapping) After finishing your study? Okay. Can I have anyone?

122 Siya: Losing someone that you love so much. It's based on family you know when you lose someone that you love in your family it's probably hard you know. Yea I would say losing someone that you love so much you know. Like okay I understand that xxxxx but the mothers losing their young it's kind of difficult you know like.

123 Sara: Ja, that's very true (coughs). I know that everyone is having his...

124 Masego: (overlapping) xxx.

125 Sara: Ja is facing something, something, worry about many things. Now how do your worries make you feel?

126 Masego: Mhmm?

127

128 Sara: Your worry, how do they make you to feel? When you are in worry how do you feel?

129 : Sad.

130 : Sad.

131 Sara: Sad.

132 : Stressed.

133 : Stressed you know.

134 : Anger.

135 Sara: Anger.

136 : xxx

137 Sara: Okay. You feel that you're alone in this world

138 Masego: Lonely.

139 Sara: Lonely.

140 : You feel down.

141 Sara: And what you say now?

142 : Feel stressed

143 Sara: Feel stressed. Okay. What others saying?

144 : Depressed.

145 Sara: Oppressed.

146 : Depressed.

147 Sara: Oh, depressed. Okay.

148 Wisdom: Sometimes useless.

149

150 Sara: Sometimes useless. Why do we worry? Why do we worry? Most of the time we worry about our exam if we are going to pass and if or maybe we just stay we are going to just stay in our home and we worry about the financial and money and exam and future. We worry about many things. Now why do we worry? So if, even us here cause now we worry about why we are Christian.

151 Dan: Mm.

152 Sara: Why do we worry now?

153 Siya: I will say it's something that is given in us you know like it's a nature thing. Like a human being you have to worry in somehow you know. Even though you don't have problems um with the financial stuff but something you, you have to worry about...

154 Masego: (overlapping) have to worry about.

155 Siya: You know, like it's not everything that is given unto you. You can worry about your exams something even little you know. I think it's something that is given in us as a human being.

156 Sechaba: In-born disease (laughter).

157 Masego: Human disease (laughter).

158 Sara: Ja I think that even now we just think about why I'm calling a Christian or why I'm serving God or why I'm calling to be a Pastor? Why someone? Some people they just start thinking why God made me to be a lady or

- a man why He didn't make me to be a woman something like that.
- 159
- 160 Sara: Do we have control over the things that we worry about?
- 161 Siya: Some of them.
- 162 Refilwe: Some of them.
- 163 Ofentge: Some of them.
- 164 Sara: Some of them.
- 165 Siya: Ja not all of them.
- 166 Sara: Not all of them. Okay. That's why sometime we find ourselves got anger and stressed and.
- 167 : And high blood
- 168 Sara: High blood.
- 169 : High blood pressure (laughter).
- 170 Sara: Because we don't have any power to control them or (long pause). Okay. Have you experienced God in the midst of those worries if so how? Have you experienced God in the midst of those worries if so how? Maybe one day you were worry about something now, maybe God you see God or maybe you see I don't know how you see someone helping you or I don't know. Have you ever experienced even God or the power of God?
- 171 Refilwe: Yes.
- 172 Sara: Ye-
- 173 Refilwe: (overlapping) Yes I have-
- 174 Sara: (overlapping) Yes-
- 175 Refilwe: (overlapping) I have and it's like recently. Yes because, like I was really worried like at the beginning of the year cause I used to volunteer as a paramedic.
- 176 Sara: Okay.
- 177 Refilwe: So I was like really worried and like stressed that I don't have a job. I'm 24 years old.
- 178 Sara: Okay.
- 179 Refilwe: And I want to work. I want to help my mom at the house you know things like that. So and then I started just praying and then I was applying like for other jobs and then I got a permanent job that I'm working at now.
- 180 Sara: Wow!
- 181 Refilwe: That's in xxx street. So it's like cause I was really praying hard. I also we once praying here in SAYA so then I just told them like I'm really like looking for a job. Like a stable job and then we prayed you know. We prayed and I also prayed with my mom at home and then the Lord just answered my prayer
- 182 Sara: That's good. Wonderful. Are there anyone?
- 183 Thabeseng: Okay nna (Tswana - 'I') I won't say, I won't say it's God. I was xxxx at school. I'm doing my N4. So my bursary was finished then I was worried about next year how would I go again for my N5. So they called me to renew my bursary for next year.
- 184 Sara: That's good. God's power.
- 185 Thabeseng: It's God's power.
- 186 Sara: Yes. Wonderful.
- 187 Masego: Okay I say yes I saw, you know I can sing that song (starts singing) 'amazing grace'.

- 188 Ofentge: Oh, yea!
- 189 Masego: 'How sweet'. In the midst of everything God was there. Although I won't say God did something physically but spiritually He did a lot. I was worried with my family. There were ups and downs between my family. And I've got a younger brother. He is a brother from another mother xxx. Yes Pastor Dan (laughter). Then you know I was worried about the guy (coughs) that how could I help this guy to go to school? How could I help this guy to get a job, you know. But then it happened one day at the home cell. At the home cell we picked up the names and the guy was my prayer partner. God had a purpose, why? I did pray for a guy. Yesterday there comes my younger brother from nowhere and then he told me that "you know what, I'm gonna start working tomorrow", which is today.
- 190 Sara: (overlapping) Wow!
- 191 Masego: "At Shoprite".
- 192 Refilwe: Amen.
- 193 Masego: So you know God is really good and He restored the soul of Thabiso in a way that...
- 194 Female: Kgale o bua (Tswana - 'you spoke too long').
- 195 Masego: Okay. In a way that, you know I lost my hope. I lost my faith. But by meditating upon the word of God, the word of encouragement they were right in the bible. Although sometimes I felt like I'm a failure, I failed uThabiso. But I thank God that even today he is still saved and trusting the Lord.
- 196 Sara: Amen. Thank you.
- 197 : (overlapping) And me...
- 198 Sara: (overlapping) Okay.
- 199 Oupa: Hey I was worried, it was one day they found me with drugs. They arrested me and I was very worried, really, really worried and then they said alright we arrest you with this mandrax and we gonna charge you each for 4 years each and it was [for eight years?] and they said bail we gonna need R4000 each and it was zero and my mother didn't know I was into drugs.
- 200 Sara: Okay.
- 201 Oupa: Aye, aye, aye, then I was shocked and worried aye, worried and my parents, my friends at home, people I know, at church. And they said alright here's a bail for you R4000 each for eight xx and God that time came in other ways to me. They arrest me for three days I thought three days, aye man. I was praying hard and I thought God was not there. I said ahh this thing of God, God is not existing. After three days they called me and said man go out and we know that after three days you'll be back because we know people of drugs are, they are irresponsible at home and its where I saw God and.
- 202 Sara: You saw him helping you.
- 203 Oupa: And I came out of there.
- 204 Sara: Okay.
- 205 Oupa: I come out.
- 206 Sara: You come out. Okay. Thank you. Anyone? (long pause). Have you ever experienced God in the midst of those worries if so how?
- 207 Masego: It's me again.
- 208 Sara: Okay (laughs)
- 209 Masego: You know-
- 210 Sara: (overlapping) Okay (laughter).
- 211 Masego: No like guys I hope you don't mind.
- 212 Ofentge: Nope!
- 213 Masego: Cause like its coming like you know. Okay. There was a time my dad, my God why should I go there? But it's fine. It's early this year my dad (pause). He doesn't believe that Jesus is alive THEN. My dad

was like you know if I tell my dad with Jesus then I'm saying something to my dad. But I remember there was a time whereby my dad lost his sight. He woke up one day he couldn't see anything. Okay one week goes, two weeks he can't even feel anything. Then when we take him to the hospital they tell us no he's sugar diabetic. Then okay after four weeks my dad was paralyzed and I remember I was alone going with my dad because everyone was angry with my dad with the past. So I was at doctor (doctor's name) and the other sister the nurse came to me and said, "You know what, there is no life here. Your dad is dying", like dying you know. And I said, "Wow, are you saying my dad is dying?" and the lady said, "your dad is dying." Oh, my God then I became so worried. How can I live without my dad God? How could, you know asking God all those questions. But then God reminds me that "I am the Creator". So I remember I went to the hospital with mama Dorci the other day. When we get there my dad really he was like dying and I said, "mama Dorci, you know maybe these nurses this is true my dad is dying". Mama Dorci said, "you don't have to lose faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. If you don't have words to tell God why can't you just declare the fire and the name and the blood of Jesus upon your dad". Then I did that and I was aggressive like I was angry with the devil I did tell the devil, I did give the devil a piece of my mind. I remember I was doing that and nate (Tswana - 'Mr') Machete said oh Masego "it's like you are insane" when I did that. But I remember two weeks later when I go to the hospital when I get in the ward my dad was sitting like this. He said, "Masego really it's you, it's you". I said, "Wow, do you see me?" he said, "Yes you are wearing a blue jean with a white shirt". Then I said, "Wow praise God!" And today my dad will tell you that Jesus is Lord.

214

215 Sara: Amen. Thank you. That's powerful. That's good. Can we open our bibles, from the book of Matthew chapter six. Matthew, chapter six verse twenty five. Matthew six verse twenty five to thirty three. Maybe someone can read for us. Mathew six verse twenty five to thirty three.

216 Dan: Therefore I say to you do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink. Nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one measure to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow they neither toil or spin and yet I say to you even Solomon in all of his glory was not displayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the gentiles seek. Your heavenly father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself.

217

218 Sara: Thank you Moruti. I know that as I said God knows that we all worry about something and here He say that, "Therefore I tell you do not worry about your life", about your future, about your whatever, about money, about whatever you worry today. Don't worry about your life. What you will eat as you say that some people they worry about food. How, what they are going to wear? They need blankets. The money of paying school. We worry about our life; our family and what we say tonight for us? We say don't worry about your life. Don't worry about your life, about your situation.

219 I know that as we are sitting here tonight, yes God is God as we said already here through what we have discussed. He is God. He is in control. He is our helper even if you are not working, He is there for you. He is there for me and He says don't worry about your life about your future about... Yes I know that we worry about it as we said that it's something that is given to us in our life. I understand and what He says, "don't worry about your life. Is not life more important than food" than anything that we will worry about because sometime when we worry about something we find ourselves in anger we got anger and we got sometime high blood pressure and so on. And now tonight He says, "don't worry about your life, your situation even if you are not working." Don't go around and do something which is not good to Him. Don't go and steal because you know that now I'm being worried and I know that there's no one who can help me. There's no money. There's no food. Maybe people they don't like me and so on. Don't go outside (long pause).

220 Everything that you worry about it is not important than our life. Our life is important than anything. Yes I know that we need this and this. We need to trust in God. He gives us this illustration for the birds. Then He says, "These birds they didn't sow or reap". No! They just feed from God. God feeds them. What about us human beings who God gives some knowledge? Who God gives some understanding and power and He give us many things? He gives us how we can stand up and do something. He said "don't worry about your life." Yes I know that maybe when you sit in the room of examination you worry about, "God am I going to do it?" But God is there, trust in Him. This is very very powerful. And He says "which one of you will add even maybe an hour to his life or maybe a second or minutes to his life?" And I think what I think I don't know maybe you can tell me. Me I say "there is no one". I don't know what you say maybe you say there is someone.

221 What do you say? Do you agree with me that there's no one who can add even an hour to his life? Don't worry about your future, about tomorrow because tomorrow is another day. And God knows that tomorrow this will

- happen and I will help this person my daughter and my boy. I will do everything that he needs. What we need is only to trust on Him. Don't worry about your time or about your future; about your family. Yes I know that you worry about "maybe am I alone in this world? Why is such thing just come to me and pass by" and so on? What God says tonight to us to you He says "don't worry about your future but first, seek first His kingdom and everything shall be added."
- 222 Masego: Oh, yes.
- 223 Sara: Seek first His kingdom. What God wants us is to trust in Him is to seek first His kingdom, His will (pause), to read His word and to obey His command. To do what He tell us. Sometimes God speaks to us, we don't have time to listen to Him. We know that no we are God we are in problem now facing this now no but, how can I trust you? How can I know you are there? But what He says seek first His kingdom and everything shall be added. That's why I said tonight God have the answer for your situation, for your worry. What make you worry? He is here tonight for you and for me. I want to ask you, how does this passage encourage you not to worry? How does this passage that we have read now encourage you not to worry about that and that?
- 224 Siya: Probably I would say um, it tells me um that God is God. And every burden that I have I just have to just give it to Him He'll give me the light. He'll give me the light that I can carry each and every day. So probably I just have to you know, cast all my burdens unto Him.
- 225 Sara: Okay. Thank you.
- 226 Refilwe: Ja it just occurred just like have faith in Him
- 227 Sara: Have in Him.
- 228 Refilwe: Yes, that He'll see us through no matter what!
- 229 Sara: No matter what! Then it's not easy... sometime you know. Yes I want to say that sometimes it's not easy. Then it needs your FAITH. Yes it needs your faith. Okay what is others say?
- 230 Masego: Okay, when we read Psalms 24.
- 231 Sara: Psalm 24.
- 232 Masego: Yes verse one
- 233 Sara: Verse one
- 234 Masego: Here o utlwa (Tswana - 'You hear') David. David says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it". When David says that, you know I just imagine the situation that David was going through and it means I am the God's creator. So as the God's creator; creation, I believe in Jeremiah 29 verse 11 where God says "I've got plans for you". So if God has plans for me I don't have to worry about anything because those plans will make me prosper. So why should I worry about tomorrow? Whereas God He's giving me tomorrow already because it's the plan of God, because everything that is in the world is God's. The earth, everything, me, everything, my family, the very same exam that I'm writing that I'm worried about I don't have to worry about it because God knows about my future already. God has planned my future already. When we read the book of Genesis I have forget the chapter God says, "I have given you the power over everything. I've given you the dominion over everything". Then now God makes the example about the birds whereas God has given me the power, the authority and dominion over the birds. It means I'm better than everything. So it teaches me to just to let everything, let everything go you know-
- 235 Refilwe: (overlapping) let go and let God
- 236 Masego: (overlapping) And You know-
- 237 Ofentge: (overlapping) Let go and let God
- 238 Masego: (overlapping) I have to let God yes (laughs). You know I don't know what she's saying
- 239 Sara: Okay.
- 240 Masego: But I think maybe you guys understand. I wish you could understand...
- 241 Group: (overlapping) We understand.
- 242 Masego: The way I understand it and the way I feel.
- 243 Refilwe: We understand.



- 244 Masego: You know if you allow me I will speak up until tomorrow.
- 245 Ofentge: YES. GO AHEAD.
- 246 Sara: That's good. Wonderful. Yes it's powerful. That's how we need to trust God. That's how we need to say God. And I know that through our life, there's many challenges that make us to worry but we need to trust in God.
- 247 Masego: Oh, yes.
- 248 Sara: Yes I know that we are young . We are not old and everything is open in our eyes. And what God says if you trust in Him you'll get what you want, if you put your trust in God. Just test Him, as I say it's not easy, but just test Him. Someone says just push.
- 249 Masego: Oh, yes.
- 250 Sara: Until something happen.
- 251 Masego: Oh, yes.
- 252 Sara: Push until something happen.
- 253 Ofentge: (overlapping) Yes!
- 254 Sara: You know. It's not easy to push. Sometimes you are tired. Sometimes you are feeling somehow but yes push till something happens.
- 255 Masego: Through Christ who strengthens me.
- 256 Sara: Are there anyone want to share with us what this passage teaching him or her? Let's just say.
- 257 Refilwe: Masego bara wena. Ka dlala (Tswana - 'Masego they are referring to you. I'm just joking') (quiet laughter).
- 258 Sara: We are here to learn tonight. We are here to share the powerful of God.
- 259 Masego: Oh, yes!
- 260 Sara: You know. As I said God is here and He wants to change us. He knows what we facing. Yes He knows. He knows your situation. He knows my situation. He knows me very well out and in (pause). What you have learnt form this passage? God doesn't want, He only want a person to say something but He knows that YOU ALSO ARE HAVING SOMETHING.
- 261 Refilwe: Thabeseng. (Someone calls Thabeseng with the purpose of signaling her to respond to Sarah's question). I thought you wanted to say something (quiet laughter).
- 262
- 263 Sara: (laughs) No. Okay can I ask you once more again? How does seeking God's kingdom take away our worries?
- 264 Siya: Seeking God's kingdom?
- 265 Sara: How does seeking God's kingdom take away our worries? (long pause) We learn, we read that first we must seek what?
- 266 Group: The kingdom of God.
- 267 Sara: The kingdom of God. Now my question is, how does seeking God's kingdom take way our worries?
- 268 Siya: By praying.
- 269 Sara: By praying. Yes.
- 270 Siya: By praying in your situation that you are facing.
- 271 Sara: Okay. Yes.
- 272 Thabeseng: Also by meditating.

- 273 Sara: Okay, meditating.
- 274 Kitso: Trusting God's promise.
- 275 Sara: Trusting God's promise. Okay, now I want everybody to say something because the kingdom of God is not...
- 276 Masego: (overlapping) Oh, yes-
- 277 Sara: (overlapping) For one person. It's for everyone who believes.
- 278 : Mmm! (long pause).
- 279 Refilwe: It's tough.
- 280 Wisdom: I think I'm not sure why but I think by trusting that God is the provider. That no matter how hard the situation you should always know that God is always there for you. He won't give you something that you know you won't be able to do. He's always there for you. You'll be Eish! I don't know how to say it but...
- 281 Sara: (overlapping) Yes it's what you saying okay. Say it.
- 282 Wisdom: Okay.
- 283 Sara: Say it.
- 284 Wisdom: I xxxxxxxx (laughter).
- 285 Sara: Just for me
- 286 Siya: I say speak a lot you know.
- 287 Sara: Continue.
- 288 Wisdom: Like by just knowing that God is the provider that each time if you have a problem you go to God ask Him to assist you in everything. Then you'll know that God is there for you and there's nothing difficult to overcome
- 289 Sara: Thank you.
- 290 Masego: Are you done guys?
- 291 Sara: Something to say. Okay. Welcome.
- 292 Masego: It seems like I'm talking like too much because you always say... (laughter).
- 293 Wisdom: You are welcome.
- 294 Masego: (laughs).
- 295 Sara: You talk too much. It's good.
- 296 Masego: You know (pause) if you meditate upon the word you'll know who to consult during in the midst of the troubles. I think we should learn to worship the Lord through the, in the midst of the problem, you understand? We need to recognize, when I face a difficult situation you know I must look that situation because God says, the word of God says, "God has given us the power" and He has given us, our tongues you know my tongue has the power. Everything that I say, Oh, my God, will come to pass. So we need to address the worries. You know, to tell the mountains to shift but we need to apply faith. Through faith it's where re tla bonagng (Tswana - 'We shall see') the greatness of God. And as young people we should look the situation and we should say, "This is a stepping stone for me. It's not a blocking stone but it's a stepping stone to be a conqueror". I wish I can rest you know (laughter).
- 297 Sara: Okay are there anyone to say something?
- 298 Ofentge: Yes. I believe God says when we take one step for Him He shall take two for us. When we take two for Him He'll take four for us. For every situation in your way you must know that God is there for us. Like you said before we must push on.
- 299 : Oh, yes.

- 300 Sara: Thank you. Yes brother.
- 301 Thapelo: Yes I'm just imagining especially if the person is seeking a Shebeen (adults drinking house), I will tell you what are the consequences of seeking the Shebeen. So by seeking God obviously you gonna have the consequences of seeking God. So you measure of seeking God and something else that is not of God. Basically there's a way somewhere.
- 302 Sara: Ja. That's good. That's wonderful. You know God loves us SO MUCH. That's why He provided this nice topic for us tonight. Okay. Now let me ask you once more again, what is God's kingdom?
- 303 Siya: What is God's kingdom?
- 304 Masego: What is God's kingdom? Wow.
- 305 Sara: What is God's kingdom? What is God's kingdom?
- 306 Thabeseng: God's Kingdom it's everything. I would say it's everything. Why? Because everything we are doing. Yes.
- 307 Sara: Okay .... . Everything.
- 308 Siya: God's kingdom. God's kingdom I will say that it's us that are given the worries you know. We are not perfect but we are striving to be perfect, you know. I will say it's us that you know that when it comes to the kingdom of God I will say you don't just come as an easy way. As you said "push, push". When you push you know it's where you get there. By exercising your faith it's where you getting what you want. That's why the kingdom of God I will say the sinners, that's the kingdom of God because you have to fight like you believe in it, you have to push.
- 309 Sara: Okay.
- 310 Ofentge: Somewhere in the Bible it says "seek my kingdom, everything will be added on you". I believe that in His kingdom somewhere in the bible it says "in my kingdom there's no worry, there's no tears"..
- 311 Siya: (overlapping) "Sorrow"
- 312 Ofentge: (overlapping) "There's no sorrow, there's no.."
- 313 Kitso: "There's no sickness"
- 314 Ofentge: THERE'S NO SICKNESS in His kingdom. His kingdom is very special. It doesn't accommodate problems.
- 315 Paulina: I can say God's kingdom is something that is precious and when you have received it, it cost you to lose everything because of it (laughs).
- 316 Sara: Okay (pause).
- 317 Masego: Jesus.
- 318
- 319 Sara: Let's read from the book of Romans chapter fourteen verse seventeen to eighteen. Romans chapter fourteen verse seventeen to eighteen.
- 320 Group: Romans?
- 321 Sara: Romans fourteen. Chapter fourteen verse seventeen to eighteen (coughs).
- 322 Refilwe: Chapter?
- 323 Sara: Fourteen, seventeen to eighteen. "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men". We talk about the kingdom of God and we heard that the kingdom of God is not about the matter of eating, drinking and whatever but it's what? Through what you reading, is what...?
- 324 Paulina: Peace, righteousness.
- 325 Sara: Righteousness.

- 326 Paulina: Peace.
- 327 Sara: Peace.
- 328 Group: Joy.
- 329 Sara: Joy.
- 330 Group: Happiness.
- 331 Sara: Happiness.
- 332 Group: Truth
- 333
- 334 Sara: Okay. That's the kingdom of God. Okay once more again lets read Matthew chapter thirteen. The Gospel of Matthew chapter thirteen verse forty-four.
- 335 Paulina: Matthew thirteen?
- 336 Sara: Matthew thirteen verse forty-four. Matthew thirteen verse forty-four. "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field". We talk about the kingdom of God. Seek first the kingdom of God. Seek first the kingdom of God and everything shall be added. And now we talk about the kingdom of heaven, is like treasure hidden in the field . So I know that everybody in this world he want to seek this kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God. Everyone in this world he wants to know this. He wants to seek this and not everybody is having it. Seek first His kingdom and everything shall be added. Okay. What does it mean to seek God's kingdom? What does it mean to seek God's kingdom?
- 337
- 338 Refilwe: Well I think that to seek God's kingdom ne (Tswana 'Right!) it's just like, obeying His commands, obeying His word.
- 339 Sara: Obeying His command. Obey...
- 340 Refilwe:(overlapping) Yes because...
- 341 Sara: ...His word.
- 342 Refilwe: Yes because by you being obedient He will be able to bless you but you can't expect Him to always bless you when you're being disobedient, when you go against His commands because He wants us to be faithful to His word, yes, as His Children.
- 343 Sara: Seek His kingdom. Seek His kingdom. What does it mean to seek God's kingdom?
- 344
- 345 Kitso: I think it's to let go of the negative things, yes.
- 346 Sara: Okay (long pause).
- 347 Wisdom: Forget, to forget about yourself.
- 348 Sara: Forget about yourself.
- 349 Wisdom: Concentrating on your spiritual being.
- 350 Sara: What does it mean to seek God's kingdom?
- 351 Masego: I think that it means to be thirsty and hungry for the word of God and once your spirit is hungry and when you feed your spirit it's whereby by you gonna be obedient. Whereby you gonna follow the commands of God and you gonna be the doer of the word of God. And by being the doer of the word of God, God, is where God will you know, how should I put this? Will open up your spiritual eyes to see you know, He will reveal you know the heavens, the beauty. You know it's whereby, I don't know how to put it Pastor Dan you know I'm trying but it's here, it's here I can feel it. Ja it's whereby you can you know (pause) will, being obedient God will open up, will reveal the unseen things. Something that I as a man I can't see with my eyes, my physical eyes.

- Do you understand? Ke maker (Tswana - 'Am I making') sense? Do I make sense?
- 352 Refilwe: Wa bua obvious (Tswana -'You are talking') (laughter).
- 353 Masego: I don't know what's happening with me today.
- 354 Siya: I will say shortly, I will say to ask God to purify you, you know. To purify you in a way by when you come to Him you know, that everything that you've been through your worries, your burdens or I will say burdens. He has taken them away that He can purify you.
- 355 Paulina: I can say to seek God's kingdom is to seek God's will.
- 356 Sara: To seek God's will. How can I seek God's will?
- 357 Paulina: You can seek God's will through reading the Bible.
- 358 Sara: Through reading the Bible. Okay. That's good. How can you practically seek Gods' kingdom in your own life MORE? How can you practically seek Gods' kingdom in your own life MORE?
- 359 Refilwe: Practically?
- 360 Sara: Mm!
- 361 Refilwe: Practically? (coughs, laughter)
- 362 Sara: How can you practically seek God's kingdom in your own life MORE. That's why we ask this question we know that you know Him but how more? (phone rings)
- 363 Siya: By praying.
- 364 Kitso: More and more.
- 365 Sara: By praying.
- 366 Kitso: By praying.
- 367 Sara: More. By praying.
- 368 Siya: And to read the word of God.
- 369 Masego: Meditating on the word.
- 370 Ofenge: Practice what I preach.
- 371 Sara: Okay. Practice what you preach.
- 372 Siya: Walk the talk hey (laughter). Walk the talk. Walk the talk.
- 373 Refilwe: Yes work out your salvation more.
- 374 Sara: Okay.
- 375 Oupa: Sacrifice for Him.
- 376 Sara: Sacrifice for Him.
- 377 Wisdom: Seek more and more and more (laughter).
- 378 Sara: Seek more and more and more (laughter). Yes, yes.
- 379 Ofenge: Don't make appointments
- 380 Unknown: Don't make... (laughter).
- 381 Ofenge: Why otshwanetse o etse di appointments ha o tshwanetse otle kerekeng? (Tswana - 'Why do you make appointments when you're supposed to come to church?') (laughter)
- 382 Siya: O tshwanetse otle kerekeng otlo rapela (Tswana - 'You must come to church to pray').
- 383 Masego: And I think we need to fulfill our promises if like when I've made this kereng (Tswana- 'What should I

- say?') this vow that God I'm gonna pray everyday. I'm gonna give you two hours of my time to let me just fulfill that.
- 384 Sara: Okay.
- 385 Masego: Yes.
- 386 Refilwe: By staying faithful to Him.
- 387 Sara: What is the best thing, the best thing you have learned from this study? The BEST THING you have learned from this study?
- 388 Ofentge: Hey dingata (Tswana - 'They are many').
- 389 Masego: They are so many.
- 390 Sara: They are so many.
- 391 Siya: I will say that God to take my burdens.
- 392 Sara: God to take your burdens.
- 393 Siya: Ja, to purify me.
- 394
- 395 Sara: What is the best thing, the best thing you learn from this study? What is the best thing that you learnt from this study?
- 396 Masego: Okay...
- 397 Sara: (overlapping) I know that maybe you learnt something. What is that? The best.
- 398 Thabiseng: Not to worry anymore. To leave everything to God.
- 399 Sara: To leave everything to God. Okay. Sister, yes.
- 400 Masego: (laughs) Okay. Oh, my God. This is good. Okay, what I've learned is the best of the best. The best (laughs) is that surely I have to stand firm yes and trust in the lord.
- 401 Sara: Thank you. What is the best, the best, the best?
- 402 Siya: And the best is not to worry about material stuff.
- 403 Sara: Okay. That's good. The best. The best
- 404 Oupa: That God is there through thick and thin.
- 405 Sara: Okay. That's good. He's there. (long pause)
- 406 Ofentge: I learnt to respect and love today.
- 407 Sara: The best thing, the best. We talk about the kingdom of God, to seek the kingdom of God is not to worry about our situation. If it was in the exam, how much will get. The best thing that we have learned today is what? Or just we didn't feel it.
- 408 Masego: I feel it again that my Jesus is a mighty warrior.
- 409 Sara: My Jesus. You say your Jesus, my Jesus, your Jesus.
- 410 Masego: (laughs) mine
- 411 Sara: Me I say mine.(laughter) It's only two, she say "mine" and I say "mine". What about you? Okay, now from the piece of paper that I have given you, write down one thing you learned that can help you to trust in God this week with your worries. Just write one thing that you have learned from what we have discussed about it, that can help you to trust in God this week in your worry. One thing you have learned while we discussed. I know that you leaned something. What is that? That can help you this week to trust in God in your walk? Okay if you are done just write down one thing that you have learned today that can help you to trust in God this week in your worry. Okay if you're done. Okay once more again write down one way that you

can seek God's kingdom this week.

412 : Mhmm?

413 Sara: Once more again write down one way...

414 : One way?

415

416 Sara: Mm! One way, that you can seek God's Kingdom this week. Write down one way that you can seek God's kingdom this week. One way that you can seek God's kingdom this week (long pause). One way that you can seek God's kingdom this week. Okay. If we are done thank you very much and I would like you or maybe someone to share with us what you have written down. I WOULD like you, or someone to volunteer to share with us what have you written down.

417 Paulina: I've said I can seek God's kingdom by reading the word of God and through prayer.

418 Sara: You can seek God's kingdom by reading the word.

419 Paulina: By reading the word of God.

420 Sara: By reading the word of God

421 Paulina: And prayer.

422 Sara: And prayer. What's yours? Someone maybe

423 Kitso: I wrote down reading more of His word so that I can know what He expect, what He expects from me.

424

425 Sara: Thank you. Reading more...

426 Kitso: (overlapping) ...of His word.

427 Sara: Of His word.

428 Kitso: So that I can know.

429 Sara: So that you can know.

430 Kitso: What He expects.

431 Sara: What He expects for you. Okay thank you. Wow that's good. Yes that's good. Maybe are there anyone?

432 Siya: To help others.

433 Sara: To help others. That's good. Okay to help others.

434 Refilwe: What was the question? What was the question again?

435 Sara: My question, have you written one thing? You already write that one.

436 Refilwe: Yes.

437 Sara: Okay. Now my question is, I asked you to share with us, if you would like to share with us what you have written down in your piece of paper.

438 Refilwe: Mm!

439 Sara: Yes.

440 Dan: Maybe just repeat the two questions again.

441 Sara: Okay. Thank you Moruti. First I say write down one thing you learned that can help you to trust in God this week with your worry (pause). One thing you learned that you can help you to trust in God this week with your worry. And second I say one way that you can seek God's kingdom this week. Is it clear?

442 Refilwe: Yes.

443 Sara: Is it clear?

444 Refilwe: Yes. The second one.

445 Sara: You can even share with us the first or the second.

446 Refilwe: Yes, I'm talking about the second one.

447 Sara: Okay.

448 Refilwe: How am I going to seek...

449 Sara: (overlapping) One way...

450 Refilwe: (overlapping) The kingdom of God...

451 Sara: (overlapping) Mhh!

452 Refilwe: Yes by praying and staying faithful and obedient to Him.

453 Sara: Okay.

454 Refilwe: Yes.

455 Sara: That's good. That's good .... . Are there anyone? (long pause)

456 Refilwe: La sheba kwa? (Tswana - 'You all looked the other way?') (laughter)

457 Masego: No.

458 Sara: Okay as I finish then we can go pray for this what we have shared with you this evening. It was wonderful and powerful. I know that you bless me, I bless you through the word of God. God bless you .... so much. I thank God for you and I know that your presence here this evening is not, you'll not go and you'll not go to get something. So it means that God as I say it already that God have provided something to help you in your worry, in your situation just believe it and accept it.

459 : Amen.

460 Sara: Just believe and accept it. God is there. Jesus is there. He is our helper as our sister said my Jesus all of us we say my Jesus. Let us say that word my Jesus.

461 Group: My Jesus.

462 Sara: My Jesus.

463 Group: My Jesus.

464 Sara: Yes He is our provider. He is our protector. He is our everything as I say it already this is not easy but as we push...

465 Masego: (overlapping) It's worth it.

466 Sara: Until something happen.

467 Masego: It's worth it.

468 Sara: Yes. So I thank God for you this evening. Thank you Moruti for you as well. Thank you. And I would like us to stand up and maybe to sing one, or one, maybe one verse so that you have in your spirit and.

469 (Masego is leading a song and the group sings along)

470 We bless your name. Almighty God.

471 We bow before your throne.

472 We glorify your holy name.



473 Qawe lama qawe  
474 We bless your name. Almighty God.  
475 We bow before your throne.  
476 We magnify your holy name  
477  
478 Sara: Let us pray.  
479 Everybody prays.  
480 Masego's prayer: Father God we bless your holy name my God. There's no one like you my God. There's no one xxxxxx xxxxxx. There's no one xxxxx. Father God we bless you this precious name. We bless you Modimo ya halalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God'). Your glory mighty God. We thank you. Through everything my God you are still God, our God xxx. My God we thank you Modimo ya galalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God'). We thank you. We bless you my father. We bow before you. Father God you deserve to be worshipped. Through everything we uplift Modimo ya galalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God') your name. Throughout father God the circumstances. Through our troubles my God when we look at you we father God re bona bogolo ba gago Modimo (Tswana - 'God we see your greatness'). Father God we thank you for your presence. We thank you for the blood of Jesus. We thank you for the consuming fire that is burning in us, in the name of Jesus my God xxxxx. In the name of Jesus we thank you for this wonderful name. My God there is no one like you. There is no one. There is no one like you. Father God we thank you so much. We love you daddy, we love you so much. Precious heavenly father we thank you for this day. Father God my heart father God e tletse ka gogo galaletsa (Tswana - 'Is filled with praising you'). Father God you deserve to be worshipped. Raise up Modimo wa matla ohle (Tswana - 'Mighty God') the true worshippers where we gonna worship you in truth and in spirit. For you are great. You are the great God mighty God. There is no one father God to be compared with you. We thank you my father. We thank you so much Modimo ya halalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God'). Through everything father God we learn to trust in you Modimo ya lukileng (Tswana - 'Good God'). Today father God we cast all our burdens unto you Modimo ya galalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God'). Father God we address our situations Modimo ya lukileng (Tswana - 'Good God') for you said every knee shall bow before you papa ya lukileng (Tswana - 'Good father'). You said every tongue will confess that you are Lord. Father God today we command our situations to bow before your throne. Father God we declare the power of Jesus upon them. Papa matla ohle (Tswana - 'Mighty father') we are more than conquerors through you father God, the one who strengthens us. We know that father God you have given us the power Modimo ya halalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God') and the authority. That is why this evening we say we father God, uplift father God our eyes, father God where our help come form. Father God our help comes from you my God. Father God we know that when we call upon the name of Jesus every situation will start to listen Modimo ya halalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God'). Right now Modimo wa matla ohle (Tswana - 'Mighty God') we turn everything into order. For your word says, "everything must be done decently and in order". We call everything into order. We rebuke everything that is not yours father God in the name of Jesus. Lord God purify us Modimo ya halalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God'). Father God release your consuming fire to burn in us, oh, mighty God. Let it continue to burn in us my father my God. Modimo ya galalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God') there is no one like you Lord Jesus. Father God we send your fire, your consuming fire. Through everything we learn to trust in you, to meditate on you. Father God as young people, father God I send your consuming fire in our monies. Father God to think positive in the mighty name of Jesus. Father God we start, starting from this evening we gonna walk tall Modimo ya hahalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God') with you. Father God our footprint it will be the mark of the blood of Jesus. Father God we gonna change our speech. Everything that we say we will bring our lives in the mighty name of Jesus. Father God I bring Modimo ya halalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God') life father God in our situations. Everything that the devil papa matla ohle (Tswana - 'Mighty father') has stolen from us we claim it back in the name of Jesus. Everything that the devil has locked we unlock it in the name of Jesus. For you are Jehovah Jireh. For you are Jehovah Shalom. For you are Jehovah Tsidkenu. For you are Jehova xxxxx. Father God we bless your name. Father God the devil is a liar. The devil will never Modimo ya matla ohle (Tswana - 'Mighty God') steal papa wa matla ohle (Tswana - 'Mighty father') from us as your children Modimo ya halalelang (Tswana - 'Glorious/Holy God') for we know Modimo ya matla ohle (Tswana - 'Mighty God') that with you we can be able to stand my God in the name of Jesus. Lord God I thank you. I thank you my God. I thank you. I thank you (She prays in other tongues) . In the name of Jesus (she prays in other tongues) . . In the name of Jesus Lord God we thank you my God.

481 Sara leads a song and the group sings along:  
482 There is no one  
483 There is no one like Jesus

- 484 There is no one
- 485 Sara: Thank you. Thank you. Amen and amen. Thank you Moruti.
- 486 Dan: Thank you. Maybe we could just ask Kitso, do you mind just thanking Sarafia on behalf of the young adults?
- 487 Kitso: Yea right! (coughs, laughter). From the youth of SAYA. maybe we could have brought you some sweets nyana (Tswana - 'even if they aren't many') to thank you. But we just pray that God will continue to show Himself in your lives. And we just wanna thank you for giving you, for giving us your time. It has been for three weeks or two weeks?
- 488 : Three weeks.
- 489 : Three weeks.
- 490 Kitso: Three weeks. We really spent a lot of time with you guys and we really learnt a lot from you and thank you for making this workshop successful. And may the good God bless you. May you continue to do the good will of God. And thank you, thank you, thank you very much (clapping hands).
- 491 Dan: Maybe if we just had an opportunity just for a couple of people to say how they found the workshop. So if anyone wants to add anything now, now is the time. Just a reflection of how you found it (phone rings).
- 492 Thabeseng: Everything was great (coughs). We have really learnt a lot from it and there is something's like, you know something's that I really took for myself you know that I really needed I took them. And I'm gonna make use of this workshop. It really helped us to change where we needed to change and ja it was really interesting and powerful and I thank God for it (coughs).
- 493 Refilwe: I would say (coughs) it was very encouraging. It was sort of like I don't know if you all know what's a refresher course. Like if maybe you've done like a course of some sort, maybe let's say you've done IT and then they take you to school again just to go refresh you. So it was like kind of like a refresher course. Refreshing us like ere gopoditse ka setswana (Tswana - 'In Tswana we say it reminded us') you know. It encouraged us. It just like inspired us you know. Yes the Pastor's do preach on Sunday. Yes we hear the word but this was like different. It was fun you know. It was always exciting. We looked forward to coming here you know just looking forward like to know what's the topic today cause it was very encouraging. Like at my house we usually have like every night at half past eight we usually pray maybe like share some verses. This bible study helped me a lot because when we shared those verses I just took the ones that we get here and then I shared them at my house with my mom and my little sister. So it was very nice of you guys to come you know teach us more and remind us more of the word of God. Thank you very much.
- 494 Siya: Probably I'll say um! I just want to thank you. I just want to thank you for mama Msiza and our guest of today. I will say there is a song saying 'feed me until I want no more'. I'm probably I feel that we should meditate on that song, 'feed me till I want no more'. Thank you for that and um, thank you to realize that our burdens to have to take it to God. We just wanna thank you. We just want to thank you with what you shared with us. To push on and on, to strive for it xxx to not to worry about our worries and to seek the most important one is to seek the kingdom of God. I personally just want to thank you for the message.
- 495 Masego: Okay. Oh my God okay. I'd like to thank you for your prayers as well as you, thank you Pastor Dan for giving us this opportunity. The whole workshop we you know. Something is burning inside, I can't say. The whole workshop it was good really. But I'd like to thank the Almighty for this opportunity ....., the knowledge cause when we read in the bible it says, "My people they perish because of lack of knowledge". But then God has given us this opportunity .... and He has given us this knowledge for us as young people not to perish (pause). Aah, what I've learned is to .... is to love more, to care more and to do everything, to be the doer of the word of God. And it has pruned me you know. The word of God you know it's you know sometimes Pastor Dan it rebukes.
- 496 So I thank God that God has rebuked my flesh. God has you know He has killed my flesh like, like killing my flesh seriously and I thank God. I wish you could come next week and may the Lord bless you. May the Lord truly bless you. Let the fire you know, the fire of God let it cover you cause you are the most important people in God's eyes. What you are doing to us as, oh my God ke bua thata ne? (Tswana - 'I talk a lot right?')
- 497 : Mmm!-
- 498 Masego: (overlapping) I'm sorry, I'm sorry but okay ka concluder (Tswana - 'I'm concluding') I'm sorry-
- 499 : (overlapping) Kgale o bua tlhe. The way o buang- (Tswana - 'You've spoken too long. The way you talk-').

500 Masego: (overlapping) No I'm sorry you know but seriously and honestly Pastor Dan I feel like what really God,  
the thing that the Lord has prepared for us as young people guys its something that is good.

501 : Amen!

502

01 **Transcript 6** **Interview with Masego**

02

03 D: Thank you for participating in the interview. Maybe you could just introduce yourself, please.

04 M: My name is Masego Mahlabe. Shekinah Glory is my home. And I am pleased to be here in this interview.

05 D: Thank you. With the bible studies did you find this way of doing a bible helpful or unhelpful?

06 M: Oh! For my own understanding I think it's helpful more especially for the young people cause I think as young people and as well as Christians we need to learn more about the word of God, so I think it's a good thing.

07 D: Okay.

08 M: For me I wish it could be like everyday cause it uplifts us and it teaches us a lot.

09 D: Okay, that's helpful. And was there anything that you found unhelpful about the Bible studies?

10 M: No! everything was for my side everything was good. Everything was helpful cause okay, the first session I was not here but the sessions that I've attended I think for my side everything is just good. I have never find anything that is not helpful

11 D: Okay. And for you what were one or two of the most helpful things?

12 M: (overlapping) Pardon

13 D: What were one or two of the most helpful things of the bible study?

14 M: (overlapping) That I've picked from the bible study?

15 D: Yeah!

16 M: Okay, I will speak about the first session that I've attended. The guy the message there, you know, it has changed my life, you know, the way I have seen things the way maybe I have talked before it has changed my speech. I've learned that I have to be helpful and to care more and not to take anybody for granted. So I think that and the session of yesterday WOW! It was excellent, you know, by that I have picked that I don't have to worry about anything and it reminds me that God is always there.

17 D: And you said that the first session you were at it helped you to change your-

18 M: (overlapping) my imagination, my thinking, my speech.

19 D: Okay, can you just describe that?

20 M: Okay, before then I could say some of the things like there was a time whereby when somebody says something I was ignorant I can say that. I wouldn't be like more involved in such things because I think I thought that it was best for me but then it changed me now I've realize that even though somebody she could say something that I think is not important but by listening by giving that person the attention is to show the love and the care of God and who I am in Christ.

21 D: Before you said that you weren't listening?

22 M: Yes.

23 D: What has made you want to listen more to show the love of Christ?

24 M: Okay, WOW! there If I'm not mistaken I don't remember the title that much but whatever that we have discussed here, I remember the question was 'what is what are the most people ba eleng gore (Tswana words meaning 'that are') they gonna be hurt like? 'What is that I'll willing to do?' Because when I remember well last time I made a vow you know. After the session I've made a vow that I'm going to be this caring person you know. So I think everything that we did being in the group listening for, you know listening and learning from others. So I think that it did take part of changing the way that I think and the way that I maybe behaved.

25 D: Okay. And you said listening to others. How did you find that?

26 M: (long pause) How did I find out about?

27 D: What was your experience of everyone...

28 M: (overlapping) Of everyone in the bible study?

29 D: Yeah, of them contributing and you listening.

30 M: Okay, wow! I would say that it was the first time like listening like seriously and (laughter) paying attention like seriously you know. Cause some of the members of SAYA [Shekinah Anointed Young Adults] they were here most of the time when they talk I know that okay its this person okay, I know already that this person will say this, so noted. But then with everybody being here IT WAS GOOD. It was good. I don't know how to explain it but it was GOOD.

31 D: Okay. So you were saying that sometimes you know what people are going to say?

32 M: Yeah! I'm used to them (laughs).

33 D: But did that change for you during these bible studies?

34 M: Yes, it did change even though I'm used to somebody like them I've realized that it is a time to give God my attention. Everybody is well and fearfully created in the image of God. So I think it's it just clicked in my mind that you know you have to give each and every person the attention.

35 D: And do you feel that your behavior has changed in anyway since doing that session?

36 M: YES A LOT! Everything like everything, everything, even the way that I used to take things you know, cause I used to be angry sometimes. There were situations whereby I couldn't handle. But with the sessions I think that I am different this is the new Masego (laughter). If could say that. This is new me.

37 D: And how did you feel like you've become new?

38 M: The way that I speak the way that I handle things

39 D: Okay, so what's changed?

40 M: Okay, should I go like into details?

41 D: If you would like to you are welcome to.

42 M: Maybe I can just give you an example of one of the things that have changed. I used to be angry with my younger brother because you know he is a teenager he got all this, so he doesn't always listen to me because he is a guy. So I before you know I wouldn't handle my younger brother I would be angry for the whole day for him, but now the session has taught me how to respect a person in the middle of the trials.

43 D: Okay

44 M: And how to lead by an example if I want him to be a better person let it be me, let it begin with me to be a better person so that I can be a good example so that he can follow.

45 D: That's wonderful (laughter). And have you been able to do that?

46 M: Yes

47 D: To-

48 M: (overlapping) Yes. cause yesterday it was challenging a lot and this morning he said "you know I expected that you gonna beat me but you didn't". I said "no I don't have time with that" and I thank God that you know he pruned Masego to become a good adviser and a prayer warrior because you know by praying God will reveal things to you God would teach you how to talk and how to handle some of the things, so its just that.

49 D: That's really encouraging (laughs). And how did you feel about participating?

50 M: WOW! I was talking too much by the way so (laughter) it made me to feel good and excited cause .. before the bible studies I did pray that "let God use me the way He wants me to be". I just laid my everything before God. Then I believe that everything that I've said you know the way that I've acts during this bible study I believe that it was God moving in my life, yes.

51 D: Can you give an example of that?

52 M: Okay, okay, let me use the last session of the bible study. You know (laughs) the topic was that "we don't have to worry", that "we don't have to worry". It was just you know a topic but during the discussion you know

God released so many scriptures in me like. I wish that everybody could just be still and let me just (laughter) talk talk talk talk but it didn't ends here you know. I walked with it even now I'm still feeling that, I'm still feeling I wish that I could tell everybody you don't have to worry you don't have to worry and give a reason (laughter). Yes and that you know it helped a lot because the very same yesterday it was challenging my mom and my younger brother they were fighting. And through everything I said to them "you know guys you don't have to worry about anything, why can't you just calm down? Let's sit and talk instead of fighting, we rather talk". And my mom said "I've got nothing to say to your younger brother", and I said "you know ma' you've got something to say as a mother let God release whatever you have to say to my younger brother and I think God will open the ears for him to listen". And it did help because today everybody is happy.

53 D: And with the bible studies did they speak to your life and your situation that you are in?

54 M: Yes, the bible study, it spoke about my life as an individual. My life as in a family, my family, and yes it has included everything, everything, everything.

55 D: And so with it speaking into your life I know you have already given a couple of examples is it possible to (laughter) have another one (laughter).

56 M: Okay, as an individual it spoke to me that everything we have discussed let it begin with Masego, and let it overflow to the generation to come because I think whatever that I do today, it will affect the generations to come. And when I say "it spoke with my family", you know the situations that was happening before in my family they were like it it was like directly speaking with that situation directly and God has changed that, by hearing somebody say you need to care for your neighbor you know it made a difference in my family because somebody in my family my one of my family members does ignorant with neighbors, but now God has done His part with him.

57 D: And with this kind of bible study there was a lot of questions...

58 M: (overlapping ) Yes lot of questions (laughter).

59 D: How did you find that?

60 M: Aah (pause) sometimes it was difficult to answer because you wonder, "Oh my God when I say this is, is a right thing to say?" You know you wonder that is a right, I'm in the right track here you know. But again it's good because.. you exercise your mind you think deep you know you don't just say okay this is a question then you answer. But you take time you put more effort in there I don't know about other people but me you know, it makes me to think where I come from, were I am standing now and the future tomorrow so for me it was quite challenging, but I like the challenge.

61 D: Yeah..that's great. And you said that the questions you weren't sure if you were gonna answer in the right way, what do you mean by that?

62 M: Oh! Like should I use the session of yesterday? I liked the session (laughs).

63 D: Okay.

64 M: You know the question that came and like I've questioned "Lord I'm in the right track" is when that mama Sarafia said, "what makes us..." no! "What", what was the question oh! My God the devil is the liar (laughter) stealing this question from me (laughter). Okay, Mama Sarafia said to us that (pause) "what is the kingdom of God" and for me was like "ha!" This question, how can I explain this and I started to listen cause listening is a skill, then something in me just told me "why can't you just say what you're having in your mind". I said "no my father I want to be in the right track, I don't want just to say things cause I believe that everything must be done decently and in order. So for your kingdom let me just do things in order, reveal to me your kingdom so that I can be able to answer and to help some of the members."

65 D: Thank you, that's helpful. You just said you wanted to help some of the members. Do find that this way of doing the bible study allows people to help each other?

66 M: Okay, Ja! You know we come from different families and we've got different thoughts and different challenges, but if we can have a bible study like this where everybody can be open to say something, I think we will know each other better and we gonna teach one another the word of God. I think that's where we gonna strive to be perfect.

67 D: And do you think, sometimes with the bible studies it's one person teaching others and with this bible study there was more group interaction...

68 M: (overlapping) Yes everybody was involved.

69 D: Which way do you find more helpful?

70 M: Where everybody participates cause you know as an individual you grow spiritually you've got this time to ask and you've got the time to answer. So where you lack, is where God will fulfill everything. You understand what I'm saying? Cause if one person will teach us, we will keep on saying "amen". If you don't understand you'll keep on saying "amen" (laughter), you know, and sometimes you've got a question or you want to add, or you understand what I'm saying? But you don't have that opportunity. But if everybody is involved it's much more better. 'Cause some of the people they gonna get bored like its only one person who talks blab bla bla!

71 D: Which way of doing it do you learn the most form; one person teaching or many people participating?

72 M: Many people participating.

73 D: So why do think you learn more?

74 M: Cause I believe that we learn form each other, you know, we learn from each other. I can't, it's easy for me by the way to learn from others. Unlike me being alone there or being me and you, you talking like listening it's quite depressing. But if everybody like is more involved its much more easy cause you feel comfortable you don't have that pressure that I have to answer because its only me, that you know that you've got your spiritual sister will support you.

75 D: Why do you find it depressing with one person talking?

76 M: You know sometimes Pastor Dan, you come to the bible studies with your issues although we know that God is always there for us, but challenges are also there. You can't deny that. We can't deny that sometimes you feel weak. So you can imagine somebody coming to the bible study with that burden and you start to teach, and my mind is somewhere and you raise up a question and I'm gonna say "ha" you know. You understand what I'm trying to say. With many people I think its better.

77 D: Yeah! I do.

78 M: So with many people I think its better.

79 D: Thank you so much for answering the questions. You know what you've said has been very very helpful. Is there anything before we finish that you want to say that you haven't yet said?

80 M: Okay for me I would like that maybe as young people we must start to be united and to form groups were we gonna discuss with the word of God. Nothing else but the word of God. I think again, as young people we need to have maybe one on one with somebody who is more older or somebody who is matured, I can say that. To have one on one session whereby we gonna discuss about our issues where we gonna if will be able to tell you things that I could not tell anybody and that's that. And maybe we should have all night prayer (laughter) but I think the most important thing that we need as young people is to dwell in the word of God so that we should go in the right direction, and to lead by example. We should be the different youth the loving caring youth for God.

81 D: Thank you so much for your contribution that has really being helpful.

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**Transcript 7** **Interview with Kitso**

001

Dan: So thank you for taking part. And maybe you can just introduce yourself.

002

003 Kitso: Okay. My name is Kitso and my surname is Kgabatsi. I'm a nineteen year old girl from Shekinah Glory  
Worship Centre. I'm a member and ja (Afrikaans - 'yes'). I stay in Munsieville. My parents and ja, I'm a  
member of Praise and Worship team and I'm really enjoying myself.

004

Dan: Okay that's great. So you've been taking part in the bible studies?

005

Kitso: Yes I have.

006

Dan: And how many have you been to?

007

Kitso: I have been to all of them.

008

Dan: Okay all four of them?

009

Kitso: All four of them and I'm enjoying myself continuously.

010

Dan: Okay that's great. Maybe you can just say why did you enjoy yourself?

011

Kitso: Um, first time like I came and I was like really looking forward for the workshop. And we came here we  
have a really nice workshop with Mme maMsiza and sis... I can't remember her name but those two um-

012

Dan: (overlapping) Mama Sarafia.

013

Kitso: Yes mama Sarafia they really like blessed us and they really like, they are really creative when coming to  
Bible discussion and we really enjoyed ourselves. Like me I'm not a really open person. Like I'm kind of like  
shy and like they came here and they made us like, feel like, feel open and to say whatever we wanna say and  
ja.

014

Dan: Mmh. And how do you think they made you feel open to say whatever you wanted to say?

015

Kitso: Like you could see like on their faces like and them they could say like say whatever you wanna say we  
know that God has laid something in your heart just say it you know. Like encouraging us to say whatever we  
wanna say.

016

Dan: Mmh.

017

Kitso: Ja!

018

Dan: Mmh. Okay. And did you feel able to say whatever you wanted to say?

019

Kitso: Ja because like the topics really, the topics was really nice. I enjoyed all of the topics and I really wanted  
to say something on each and every topic we discussed-

020

Dan: (overlapping) Mmh.

021

Kitso: Those past four weeks.

022

Dan: Okay, can you maybe think of, of one example of the topics that you found interesting?



023 Kitso: The topic that I found interesting is 'Do not worry'. The topic that we discussed last, last night. Like it was really nice like you know, like most of us and let me say majority of us, especially youth we worry a lot. Especially when like this other guy said, said, what he said last night he said that you know like "us matriculants like we, we really stress about what if I finish school and there's, there's no money to um ... to, to" ...., what can I, how can I put it, "to further my studies, like to go to university or go to college". So that is really worrying us. Like we are worried about passing the year and again we are worried about what is gonna happen to us next week, next year. And like we stress about, like if our parents are not working you know like the, the, the situation of our families. Those are things that we worry about and we forget that like God is there and our lives lie on God's hand. Those things we forget. And like last night mama Sarafia reminded us of "do not worry because God is there. Do not worry about tomorrow cause God really .... already knew about what's gonna happen tomorrow", so like we need not have to worry about anything because our life lies on God's hand.

024 Dan: And with the bible study "do not worry", was there any discussion in the bible study that made you see either yourself or your situation differently?

025 Kitso: Ja it really did that. Like for, four years back like my mother, she lost her job and my father moved out. So like life was a bit like hectic you know. Like my mother not working. I have to go to school. We have to eat. We have to clothe. We have to pay rent like life was a bit difficult. But then like God showed Himself in that situation. We never slept without eating but my mother was not working and like it showed me gore (Tswana - 'that') you know like God is there, God is really there.

026 Dan: Mmh.

027 Kitso: Ja.

028 Dan: And with the bible study, was there anything that anyone said that maybe impacted you or made you think differently?

029 Kitso: Ja. Like I can't remember which, which week we were talking about .... "love your neighbor" ... cause like God loves us like and you know like let's care for one another. No like you know I used to live like nje (Zulu - 'just / anyway') you know like okay I know Pastor Dan he lives there okay fine. You know, not giving him that love you know like that *agape* love that God you know gave us. And Sechaba shared with us she said that, "there was this other guy and I was coming to church and I was like late. So he just fell in front of my house and like I had to help him but on the other hand I had to go to church and I didn't know what to do to that guy." So like you know like that, that what he has done like really touched me a lot and really you know like did something inside of me.

030 Dan: So his story, it made an impact?

031 Kitso: Ja it really made an impact in my life.

032 Dan: And, and do you think that telling stories together in the Bible study, do you find that helpful or is it unhelpful in any way?

033 Kitso: I think it is very helpful. It is encouraging. It uplifting our spiritual being like you know, like you know you have this problem and Masego comes here he has the same problem that you have and like he shares gore (Tswana - 'that') you know how to overcome that situation and you say haa bathong kante (Tswana - 'oh, people I didn't know) this works and then you take that from her and there's another person sharing a story okay I can do that also mos (street language). You know like it's really .... uplifting us and ... giving us hope

... and giving us more faith ... Ja.

034 Dan: Okay. And why do you think it uplifts you or gives you more faith?

035 Kitso: Like, like I've said like you know when you have a problem ... and another person has a problem ... and then you share together that problem that maybe God reveals something on that person and that person say the same thing that is needed in you. And then you like okay thank you very much for, for that word. I really needed something like that and I really appreciate it.

036 Dan: And how did you feel about participating in the Bible study?

037 Kitso: I was really excited Pastor Dan (laughter) I was really excited. Every Friday I was looking forward for every Friday. Like I have been writing my exams but I told my mother that, "no mama this Friday can't, plus it's the last Friday". Like yesterday it can be like I'm writing Economics. So I was like I had to study you know like but I said, "no, no, no I'm going, I'm going" (laughter). This is the best workshop I have ever went to like. You know discussing. You know feeling free. You know making some jokes nyana (Tswana - 'just a little bit') there. You know talking, socializing, knowing gore (Tswana - 'that') okay that person thinks this way and this way. Like opening Scripture and then saying like your own understanding of that scripture you know. Having different ideas okay this one thinks ja, ja okay like it's really, it's really, it was really exciting this past four weeks. I really enjoyed it.

038 Dan: And why did it make you excited? What was it about the Bible study that made you excited?

039 Kitso: Can you repeat that.

040 Dan: So you said that you were excited to come to the group.

041 Kitso: Ja!

042 Dan: What was it that made you excited?

043 Kitso: Like the discussion, the topics ... like I expected topics like you know like those topics those difficult ones like but then it was like a two topic like love your neighbor and what's the other one? Um....

044 Dan: Do not worry.

045 Kitso: "Do not worry" you know those kind of topic, "your purpose" you know. Topics that is happening around us and like I was really looking forward to discussing, having ideas, having new ideas, learning more you know like ja.

046 Dan: And when you said that the topics are happening around us what do you mean?

047 Kitso: Like you know, like your purpose like my purpose you know. Like most of us don't know what's our, like we're just living nje (Tswana - 'just/ anyway') because like God created us or God chose us to be in this earth you know. Some of us don't really know our purpose. Like even me I wasn't thinking about my purpose. Like my purpose, wow, what a question (laughing) and I was like, wow, my purpose. What is my purpose in this world? You know like loving your neighbors. Like most of us you know like especially Christians we don't get along with our neighbors and we don't know how, like maybe let's say my next door neighbors they, they believe in gods, like ancestors and I believe in God and every time they make like a ceremony or something there and they invite me and then I tell them you know what I can't come to that thing because of one two, two I believe in God and I don't believe in ancestors and there's a clash right there and you know like we don't ...

- get along and like I've learnt gore (Tswana - 'that') how to overcome that circumstances you just have to pray you know to the neighbors. Just continue to love them. Ja.
- 048 Dan: Okay. And since the workshop that we did on loving your neighbor, do you feel like you've been able to do something practically?
- 049 Kitso: Yeah I have. I really learned to love like even though I know what you've done to me I forgive you and I love you. You know like I used to get very angry and when I get very angry with you I don't talk to you anymore. Like you just, you, I don't know when I see you I get more angry but then I've learned that you know what, I need to love and forgive and ja. That is what I'm doing right now. I'm praying and I'm praying very hard to love in regardless of what you have done to me. Just love and be kind.
- 050 Dan: Okay that's interesting. And with the Bible studies, you've spoken a little bit about the bible studies speaking into life or your situation. Do you think that they were helpful or unhelpful in speaking into your context or situational life?
- 051 Kitso: It was really helpful .... cause like you know as I've said I did not know my purpose you know like I realized like on the bible study oh, my purpose is to live for God, is to pray, is to live holy, try to live holy you know and ... um ... do not worry as I've said you know us youth we mostly worry about like things you know our future especially when your parents like they are a little bit you know like poor or like not really work and loving your neighbor you know as I've said like I'm trying really hard like to. Like we discussed things that I really needed in me and like right now I'm trying really hard you know to, to , to close that space as the bible study has really, really given me a lot that I needed in my life. Like all of the topics they were meant for me (laughing). Ja.
- 052 Dan: Ccan you maybe just give an example. You said the topics were meant for you.
- 053 Kitso: Ja.
- 054 Dan: So you've already talked about purpose and loving your neighbor could you maybe just give another example?
- 055 Kitso: Another, what can I talk about now? You know now I forgot my notes. Like we forgot about purpose, loving your neighbor and do not worry.
- 056 Dan: Worrying
- 057 Kitso: And ... I forgot the fourth one (pause). I (pause) (laughter) what was it?
- 058 Dan: Ja I've forgotten it as well (laughter).
- 059 Kitso: What was it?
- 060 Kitso: Why, do you love?, Jesus loves me.
- 061 Dan: It was, it was the one which Sarafia did and she asked that question but then the it was about oppression, how Christ came to bring freedom for the prisoners and freedom for the oppressed.
- 062 Kitso: Ooh!
- 063 Dan: But it was along time ago.

- 064 Kitso: (overlapping) Ja (laughter) I even forgot about that.
- 065 Dan: Okay. No-
- 066 Kitso: (overlapping) Ja.
- 067 Dan: No, its no problem. That's fine. Okay. And, and was there any discussion in the Bible study that helped you to change your opinion about anything?
- 068 Kitso: Um (pause) the "do not worry" one. Ja it changed like you know like I was worried. Like I wrote my accounting paper like that was the most difficult paper I've ever wrote - December on a final exam like. But I said when I wrote the paper I just said, "You know what God I trust you on this paper", but then when I left the exam room like I was so worried. I was saying you know what God I studied but like I, I failed, this one I have failed. So like yesterday when we talked about worry I said "you know what God whatever marks that is coming I accept it the way they are and help me to try and study harder and do not worry".
- 069 Dan: Okay. And was there anything else that encouraged you to look at your like or your situation in a different way?
- 070 Kitso: Um, like .... most of the time you know like Pastor Dan the friends that I have like they are more, you know like, they have more things than I have. And I was like why, why did my father go? I wouldn't have been in this situation you know. And like yesterday I was saying to myself, "you know what, I will not worry about anything". What I have to do is to ... work harder, improve my education and make life better and pray to God to help.
- 071 Dan: And with the workshop (pause) you know all of us have got worries and you know difficult situations. They may be different for, for-
- 072 Kitso: (overlapping) Ja-
- 073 Dan: (overlapping) Each of us.
- 074 Dan: And I think it just helps us to fix our eyes back on- ...
- 075 Kitso and Dan: (overlapping, simultaneously) On God.
- 076 Dan: Yeah. And not the situation.
- 077 Kitso: It really helped us to have more faith in God .... and pushes, pushes us more closer to Him.
- 078 Dan: And (pause) what, what helped you to see that in different way? What was it? Was it something that someone said or...?
- 079 Kitso: I read some Scripture in the Bible. I says um .... "My life that it's in God's hand" and mama Sarafia said yesterday we need to press on and on and we need to test God in everything and see if, He wont, we won't pass in Him. So ja.
- 080 Dan: And was there anything that you found unhelpful about the bible study?
- 081 Kitso: No. Everything, everything was so helpful, everything. The spirit that was amongst us, one spirit, one mind (long pause). Nothing went wrong. Everything was just fine and enjoying ourselves. Ja.

082 Dan: 'With the one spirit, one mind', can you just explain what you mean by that?

083 Kitso: Like we all spoke like different things but referring to one thing. Like speaking about one God who we all trust you know .... like, yes one spirit you know flowing amongst us. There was no, you know like arguments or .... let's say debate amongst one thing like we all like supporting one another on the statements that they have made like you know like ja. I also think that is why an adding and you know. There was no subtractions there was only adding, adding, adding.

084 Dan: And with participating in the group you said before that you felt that people were free to participate .... . Why do you think there was freedom?

085 Kitso: Like .... mostly we used to make like presentations in class. Like when you make like one mistake they would laugh you, you know, making jokes of you, you know. And like that really made me I don't know it discouraged me and brought me down like don't ever say anything in public or in discussion. Like on this one I felt free to say anything you know. There was giving me encouragement you know .... Like I really felt like free like saying my mind you know.

086 Dan: And you said that you didn't find anything unhelpful. For you what was the most helpful things? Not maybe about the subject but just maybe about the teaching style or the group.

087 Kitso: Aah, the question ....the way, the way they were brought questions unto us. You know questions help us to think more you know and like to, to it helps us to UNDERSTAND EXACTLY (pause) what's going on with the topic you know.

088 Dan: And with questions why do you think it helps you to understand?

089 Kitso: You know like when you are writing an exam you know like they are discussing something in class, especially something maybe like business management and then .... they are saying to you tomorrow you gonna write a test and they give you this long, this shorter, let me say .... shorter (pause), maybe let's say a business report and then they give you TWENTY questions to answer .... You know like they want you to, you know like think a little bit more about that small thing. It might be small but there's a bigger picture on the other side of that particular (pause) let me say topic. Ja.

090 Dan: So you felt that it was similar with the questions that were-

091 Kitso: (overlapping) Yes-

092 Dan: (overlapping) Were asked during the bible study?

093 Kitso: Ja it was.

094 Dan: With, with some education styles sometimes there's different methods. There could be a someone standing up and speaking and then other times there's more questions ...., which one do you find the most helpful?

095 Kitso: I prefer the question one. Like on the person whose standing there talking you will be the only who is talking. What if I don't understand she or he has to ask me a question to see if I understand what is happening.

096 Dan: And which method do you think you learn the most from?

097 Kitso: Like?

098 Dan: So either someone standing and talking or someone asking questions?

099 Kitso: The question one. Like when he or she ask a question I answer and he or she ask the next person the same question. Like we will come up with a different answer and like you'll have to pick from like anyone like whose answer is like really makes something in you or really related to what you needed. So ja I prefer the question one.

100 Dan: That's really helpful. So thank you for taking part in the interview. Just before we finish is there anything that you want to add that you haven't said and would like to say or is that everything?

101 Kitso: What I would like to say is that I hope this workshop will just continue you know, (laughing), like continue, help us to grow spiritually, make us active in our .... belief in God like ja I really enjoyed it.

102 Dan: Okay we'll do our best to have that continue (laughter).

103 Kitso: Okay thank you very much.

104

**Transcript 8                      Interview with Sarafia**

001

Dan: Thank you for agreeing to do the interview.

002

Sarah: Okay.

003

Dan: And maybe you can just tell me, do you find this way of facilitating a bible study helpful or unhelpful?

004

Sarah: I find it helpful.

005

Dan: Okay. So can you tell me why?

006

Sarah: Because I have gained more, and I understand how to teach especially the youth and even the member of the church. Then I know that this course is really helped me, [people?] to know more about God and also to understand way of teaching

007

Dan: And, what do you feel you've GAINED from that way of teaching?

008

Sarah: I feel good.

009

Dan: Okay.

010

Sarah: Yes.

011

Dan: Why do you feel good?

012

Sarah: Ja because I enjoyed it and (pause) another [one?] is also will help me (pause) ja to know, how to teach. So that made me to feel good. Ja because it's all about the word of God (pause) and the will of God.

013

Dan: So, so why do you think you enjoy it?

014

Sarah: Why I think I enjoy it?

015

Dan: Mmh.

016

Sarah: Ja (long pause) I say I enjoy it because I learn something from it.

017

Dan: Okay.

018

Sarah: Ja. How to follow the movements and of course how to ask the questions. Ja.

019

Dan: Okay. And with asking questions, do you find, is that helpful or unhelpful?

020

Sarah: It's helpful ja to ask questions. It's very helpful.

021

Dan: Okay.

022

Sarah: Yes (long pause) because is to make people to think (long pause). And it also make them to understand who are they and to understand also the (pause) bible.

023

Dan: And you said that the bible study method howed you how to teach. So what have you learned about teaching in this way.

024

025 Sarah: What have I learned about teaching?

026 Dan: Mmh.

027 Sarah: Well what can I say I learned how to make them to understand. To make the people understand. And also I learned how to teach the people, to teach them .... the way of teaching. To make them to understand or to make them to think more (pause). Even if they know it but through this course they will ... think more and do more. Then this, this will help them to understand more and more and to know God and to please Him.

028 Dan: And you said it helps them to think more, why is that, why does it help them to think more?

029 Sarah: Ja because sometimes we only know (pause) the word (pause) for what to know but once, through this process they need, once they think they will know .... better than what they were knowing before.

030 Dan: Okay.

031 Sarah: Yes. Then it helped them ja. I know that it help them to make them to grow.

032 Dan: That's good. And how did you feel about facilitating a bible study where everyone participates?

033 Sarah: I was feeling very good (laughing). Yes because the kingdom of God is not only about one person. But it's about everyone. So when we talk about the kingdom of God then everybody is having something ... to share with others. It's not only about the elder or the Pastor or someone who know maybe something or maybe someone who was at the college or something like that but is for everyone. Because when God says that I (pause), I give you my spirit, then He give to everyone. Then He, when I think in the book of (pause) John chapter one verse twelve is where He's saying, "He called everyone who believes in His name calling him His children". That's why I say that the kingdom of God is not for one person. It's for everybody. So God can use even the small children.

034 Dan: And (pause) did you feel .... when you were facilitating the bible study tonight, um (pause) what was the, what were you feeling ... as everyone was participating?

035 Sarah: I was feeling VERY GOOD. Yes it was good. It was helpful. It helped also me to know and to see how the children of God serve their Father. How they preach God and how they know ... they also know God. Yes that is why I say it was very good.

036 Dan: And .... do you (pause) think this method of bible study it's participatory. It encourages everyone to participate. You've mentioned the positive things .... do you think there are any (pause) negative .... things about that?

037 Sarah: Negative things?

038 Dan: Mmh.

039 Sarah: Ja maybe the negativity would be when the facilitator make this (pause) method of teaching then if sometimes, if people are just quiet then sometimes it's not good. It shows that .... something is not ... good. They feel not good or maybe they are not free or something like that. Cause God needs the people to share or to talk what they know, even IN ONE WORD.

040 Dan: And why do you think that people might not feel free (pause) to participate?



041

Sarah: Why do I...?

042

043

Dan: You mentioned that (pause) perhaps sometimes people don't feel free to participate? Why do you think that is?

044

Sarah: Maybe they don't understand or you can say maybe they don't understand on that moment because sometimes, you can feel sometimes when the facilitator (long pause) start speaking the topic or something like that, then maybe when they don't understand or maybe .. I don't know what can I say now. Ja if they don't understand .... or maybe if FEAR ... they can also be fear if they are afraid to say anything in one word then .... this will be a problem.

045

Dan: And why do you think people would be afraid?

046

Sarah: You know they're just afraid for each other, what others says (long pause).

047

Dan: About them?

048

Sarah: Mmh.

049

Dan: Okay.

050

Sarah: What others say, 'if I say this word maybe some of my colleagues will laugh' -

051

Dan: (overlapping) Okay-

052

Sarah: (overlapping) To me or maybe ja like that or maybe they can say, "no you like talking too much".

053

Dan: Okay.

054

Sarah: Yes.

055

Dan: So they're worried about what people might think of them?

056

Sarah: Yes.

057

Dan: Okay.

058

Sarah: Yes. Or shame sometimes.

059

Dan: Shame. Okay and do you think that this bible study (pause) method is it, is it helpful or unhelpful in (long pause) enabling people to feel free?

060

Sarah: I think it is helpful (long pause). It is helpful ja. (long pause)

061

Dan: Why? Can you explain?

062

Sarah: I think because through this process of learning then everyone is going to see now that oh, I'm welcome to say or to participate. Yes. They will feel that no me also I know God it's not only about one, or this, or who, but me also I know God. And once I've said something then people they just feel good.

063

Dan: And you were facilitating tonight. Is it easy or is it challenging to facilitate in this method?

064 Sarah: Ja sometimes you can say it's a challenge, ja but its also easy. Ja anyway-

065 Dan: (overlapping) Okay-

066 Sarah: (overlapping) It can be a challenge. Ja anyway it's easy also.

067 Dan: Okay. Firstly why is it easy?

068 Sarah: Why is easy? (pause) Because it's all about the word of God (pause) and God says that to Him is nothing is impossible everything is possible to Him. Even if we feel that no maybe we can't, it's difficult or something like that. But to God, God will make it easy for you and to have a desire to do it.

069 Dan: Okay. And is there anything within the actual teaching method that enables some parts of it to be easy?

070 Sarah: To me?

071 Dan: Mmh.

072 Sarah: Ja (long pause). Yes (long pause).

073 Dan: Can you explain?

074 Sarah: I think that there is many things it will be easy to me to facilitate. Ja (long pause). What can I say? (laughter)

075 Dan: What do you find easy about it?

076 Sarah: (sighs) You know sometimes we just like to preach, as Mama Msiza says I like preaching (laughter).

077 Dan: So with movement three, you find movement three easy? (laughter)

078 Sarah: So anyway from the movement three, I find it's easy ja although it's a challenge but it's easy because it made me, also me to also open. It opened me and how to make it.

079 Dan: What does 'open' mean?

080 Sarah: It open means to see how the people participate. And it also open my spirit to see how God works through (long pause) our groups.

081 Dan: And do you feel like you saw God work?

082 Sarah: YES

083 Dan: Tonight?

084 Sarah: Yes. Exactly.

085 Dan: Can you-

086 Sarah: (overlapping) I was-

087 Dan: (overlapping) Perhaps describe that?

088 Sarah: I was feeling it even before I reach the place. I saw that God will do something tonight ... yes I knew it

already. Once I was speak with the youth, there I saw it but only because the time was short. [Note: Sarafia/Sarah also did the session with the youth group before the recorded time with the Young Adults]. Ja but I see how people ...explained how they experienced God (pause). How they know, how see Him through their problems as they give their testimony. So this show me that God, God is always. He is there. He is helping the people. Ja. This show me how God is, who God is and it showed me also His power.

089 Dan: And was there anything that anyone said tonight that encouraged you to think that God was there? You mentioned through their testimonies, did anything stand out or come to the front of your mind?

090 Sarah: Through their testimony?

091 Dan: About what they said. Ja or anything that anyone said tonight.

092 Sarah: Ja I say (pause) even one, that mama said that she saw God while her father was in the hospital. Then she prayed to God and God answered her prayer. That is also really good. It really encouraged me. And even the way (pause) how they speak (pause), how they participate (pause) ja it really touched me and it really helped me and it give me this desire of teaching more and more.

093 Dan: Mmh.

094 Sarah: Ja.

095 Dan: So why do you think it encourages you to teach more?

096 Sarah: Ja you know the way the people participate it's the way, it's also the way God is showing His power.

097 Dan: Mmh.

098 Sarah: Ja, it's also the way God shows His power because once the people are speaking out then the Holy Spirit also say something. Yes through us.

099 Dan: Okay that's interesting (pause). And you've talked a little bit about people speaking about their lives or their situations. Do you think that this way of doing a bible study does it speak to their lives or situations?

100 Sarah: Yes. As I said, as I said it already that once I reached the place I saw God, how He will work, through our session tonight (pause). I see and I know, I'm sure that this really helped the people because sometimes, once people (pause) stay alone or live far away from each other or his friend or his sister or brother, then this person just starts thinking, 'Maybe I'm just alone'. He or she feel lonely or she feel stressed and something about her or his life. But once it comes to the bible study this really helping on her. It really help this person to think that, 'No God really loves me. God really cares for me. He knows my situation. He knows my life. He knows'. I think that it really helped them even me.

101 Dan: So, why do you think it enables them to believe that God knows their situation?

102 Sarah: Why do I think?

103 Dan: That it shows them that God knows their situation?

104 Sarah: Okay. Aah (long pause), I think that through their, their speaking so this will show them that God really helps them or hears them or care; takes care of them through what they are speaking or discussions like that. I know that this really show them that God, you know even if we are just sitting like this as a circle you know that I need you and you need me. She need me and I need her. So when God created us, He created us with His

purpose to help each other. So God said that His church is a Body (long pause) the body of Christ. So when God say or when Paul say that the church is the Body of Christ so which means each of, everyone in the church is, he is there or she is there to helping (pause) his brother or his sister. So he is there, you are there, I am there for helping somebody (pause). Even it's not helping you, even you are not there to helping me but you are there to help somebody. I don't know who is somebody but helping somebody (laughter).

105 Dan: So you are saying, are you saying that the bible study, through people contributing they are able to help?

106 Sarah and Dan: (simultaneously) each other?

107 Sarah: Yes. Yes because when I have any problem you know ....., I didn't speak out that I'm having a problem. But God knows I have a problem. But once we gather and speak, discuss, through our discussion God will answer my prayer or will help me through my problem. He will solve this problem, because once we sit down or gather together God is having a purpose because He said that His message it will not turn back to Him without doing what she commanded it to do. That's why I say that once we are sitting or discuss. So through discussion God shows me my breakthrough.

108 Dan: He shows you your breakthrough?

109 Sarah: Yes. Yes. He shows me how can I overcome this problem? How can I (Ipause) overcome this evil thought or maybe this problem that I'm facing? No matter what kind of problem.

110 Dan: So you are saying that there's power in what is spoken?

111 Sarah: Even the bible says I don't know which, which scripture say that through our testimony, in our testimony there is power there is freedom. Once people are discussing (long pause) there is something that God provide or put in them, to set somebody free (long pause) or to heal somebody.

112 Dan: Yeah.

113 Sarah: Ja.

114 Dan: And how do you think this way of studying the bible helps the participants see themselves or their situations differently?

115 Sarah: To see themselves?

116 Dan: So how does this way of studying the bible help them to see themselves or their situations differently in a different way?

117 Sarah: So I think (long pause) through this process of teaching you know the kingdom of God or the word of God (long pause). It doesn't say that no because you are the facilitator maybe you just go and speak to somebody (pause), you do not speak to yourself, no. This bible study or the process of teaching is for everyone. So that's why this helps the facilitator to make some change because through this process she or he gain also something. Gains some knowledge, wisdom, how he can (pause) establish this study method.

118 Dan: And was there anything tonight that made you see anything differently? So you were facilitating the group but you also said before that we are all learning together, so was there anything that you saw in a different way?

119 Sarah: Ja (laughter) I can say yes. Why I say yes because (long pause) through this learning especially tonight, ja tonight, let me say tonight. I see how really God, when God say "do not worry about your future, your situation, do not worry .... about for tomorrow". This has really shocked me that even me, sometimes I feel worry and God say do not worry about the day of tomorrow. Do not worry what you're going to eat or drink. Ja, this has shown me really how also I can trust God more and more as my brother and sister said that they need to trust God and to seek His face, to praise Him, to serve Him and also to help others. Ja it really helped me also to see how can I help others, how can I trust God, how can I please Him in the midst of my, my worries. It really helped me.

120 Dan: So wwhat was it that helped you? I know this is a difficult question but can you think what was it that made you change your mind? You know, you were thinking this ... and then through something that happened tonight you then thought in a different way.

121 Sarah: When my colleagues say that they mentioned different thoughts: how they worry about their life, about their situation. Ja, me also I understand and I see that no me also I just start thinking and worry about many things and some of them I can't control them. Then now this make me to change to see how can I trust God and ask God to help me, through, in the midst of my worry. Ja especially today (laughter) before I got there then (laughs) I was sitting in my room. Then I, I don't know God will show me something that I was about to make some mistake but I didn't. Then now I just started to thinking God, how this God is, how He is. Sometimes I feel, I want to pay evil with evil. Sometimes I feel like that and this is, is for long time maybe one year has passed and I see this picture and I start to ask myself God what do you want to tell me about this thing. It's only God who prevented me not to pay the evils. But also I think that God was teaching me to know that if I want to teach somebody, someone I need also to teach myself (laughter).

122 Dan: You need to practice what you preach (laughter).

123 Sarah: Yes (laughter). Not only to preach to others but also to preach to myself, yes and to see that God if I say, cause there is (pause) also one scripture I can't remember it. It says that, 'why do you want to tell somebody not to steal but you are stealing? So either stop stealing and tell somebody not to steal'. So whenever I would tell somebody (pause) not to worry so then I need also to tell myself that no Sarah don't worry about the day of tomorrow but the burden or give everything to God. So now I need to see that God is there for me and for you.

124 Dan: That's helpful. And perhaps just one final question, do you think that this way of doing bible study, would it be helpful or unhelpful in Namibia? Obviously you come from Namibia, so I'm interested to know what you think about whether it could work or not.

125 Sarah: Okay I will say it works.

126 Dan: It would work?

127 Sarah: Yes and it will be very, very, very helpful because our people if we just maybe having the time of preaching. In the preaching (pause) will not be able to answer the question that people are having in their life. So but through this program, teaching, so people they will have a time to ask their question and sometimes they will .... let me say they will find the solution of their problem and through this program people they will know ....and they will defend themselves that they are the representor of Jesus Christ. Even the youth or the young adults or the elder they know that who are they and what they believe. Who are they follow that they are the ambassador of Jesus Christ. Not only about even the Sunday school they need this. Ja, they need this because in this world ... people now there is many things. There is many questions. Now but if we teach our

children or our young, youth and young adults and the woman or the husbands and like that we teach them. So through this process of teaching they will see themselves growing, growing and growing more to be like Christ as we say it we want to be like Christ. So this is not easy to be like Christ. So we need to study the bible, the word of God. We need to study. We need also to pray to ask God to help us and to give us His desire of learning, reading His word more and more so that we can grow .... spiritually and also physically. Yes. Yes.

128 Dan: Thank you that's very helpful. You know what you've said is very helpful for knowing about this method of bible study. Before we finish is there anything that you want to say, that perhaps I haven't asked you or a final comment or anything?

129 Sarah: My final word is only to thank God who has provided this method of study to open our brains to grow more and more to be like Christ. And I know that God is not ... He's not coming from His throne or wherever He is and come down and teaching us but He uses some people as He use you. So let me appreciate you. Thank you may the Lord bless you very much.

130 Dan: Thank you very much (laughter).

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