

THE 1978 METHODIST SCHISM IN TRANSKEI:
A MISSIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

by

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SUMMARY**THE 1978 METHODIST SCHISM IN TRANSKEI:
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In 1977 the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa (MCSA) decided to discontinue its practice of sending messages of goodwill to the Heads of State of the Southern African region (including Transkei). The Prime Minister of Transkei interpreted this resolution as implying the non-recognition of Transkeian political independence, obtained from the Republic of South Africa in 1976, and expressed his intention to ban the MCSA in Transkei and replace it by the Methodist Church of Transkei (MCT).

The thesis presents, in narrative form (Chapter 2), a detailed description of the process of the schism (12 January 1978 to 2 June 1978). Chapter 3 analyses the political and ecclesial context of the schism comprehensively by examining three main issues: the Methodist tradition in the Eastern Cape and Transkei, the Methodist tradition of pledging loyalty to the Head of State and the emergence of Transkei as a geo-political state.

Chapter 4 focuses on the reaction of the Transkeian Methodists to the dispute between the Transkeian Government and the MCSA. The loyalties which influenced their reaction are identified and analysed. In this study the whole process of the schism is seen as an interplay between and clash of different loyalties.

Chapter 5 reviews the different models and typologies used to explain and interpret the African Independent/Initiated Church movement. The aim is to identify the elements in these models which are relevant for an understanding of this schism.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by considering five areas of missiological importance highlighted by the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei, namely: (1) the research questions, (2) mission and unity, (3) mission and ethnic issues, (4) prophetic mission, and (5) prophetic ambivalence.

Key words:

Methodist Church of South Africa; Methodist Church of Transkei; schism; Chief K.D. Matanzima; Black Ministers' Consultation; letters of greetings; Transkeian independence; homelands policy; loyalists; nationalists.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all Transkeian Methodists, both lay and ministers who were in the boat during the storm. The names of the ministers appear in Appendix VII. Some of them have already been called to Higher Service, may their souls rest in peace.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFTS	Associate of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa
ANC	African National Congress
BC	Black Consciousness
BMC	Black Ministers' Consultation
DP	Democratic Party
FedSem	Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa
LSC	Lindikhaya Steering Committee
MCO	Methodist Connexional Office
MCSA	Methodist Church of South Africa
MCT	Methodist Church of Transkei (1978)
MCT II	Methodist Church of Transkei (1986)
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
QM	Quarterly Meeting
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
TCC	Transkei Council of Churches
TNIP	Transkei National Independence Party
TNPP	Transkei National Progressive Party
UMCSA	United Methodist Church of Southern Africa
UNO	United Nations Organisation
WCC	World Council of Churches

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

The South African Government formulated a policy of creating Black ethnic states which would ultimately attain “independence”. In 1976 Transkei became the first of these states to gain its political “independence”. In 1978 the Prime Minister of the Republic of Transkei, Paramount Chief Kaiser Daliwonga Matanzima, banned the Methodist Church of South Africa (MCSA)¹ in Transkei. The reason given for this action was that the MCSA was refusing to recognise the “independence” of Transkei, which it had obtained from the Republic of South Africa (RSA). The MCSA and particularly the Transkeian Methodists had to take a position in the face of the impending banning of the MCSA in Transkei.

The banning led to the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei (MCT), which was renamed the United Methodist Church of Southern Africa in 1979. Most of its ministers and members returned to the MCSA in 1988 when General Bantu Holomisa lifted the ban on all organisations, including the MCSA, that had previously been banned by the Matanzima regime.

The purpose of this study is to examine the dynamics that led to this schism and it focuses on the period 12 January to 2 June 1978; that is, from the time when Chief Matanzima first mentioned his intention of banning the MCSA and replacing it by the MCT to the time when the MCSA was actually banned and the MCT was formed.

1.2 RELEVANCE

The 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei is a fairly recent event (which for some is still a very painful one). Although a large section of the United Methodist Church of Southern Africa

(UMCSA), formerly the Methodist Church of Transkei (MCT), was reabsorbed by the MCSA in 1988, it continues to exist even today (1995) and disputes between the MCSA in Transkei and the UMCSA over church buildings in some areas have not yet been settled by the Supreme Court. The 1978 episode is therefore not a closed book yet even though Transkei itself no longer exists as an “independent state” as it was reabsorbed by the Republic of South Africa after the first democratic elections in South Africa on 27 April 1994.

Even if the disputes were settled, however, the episode will never be a closed book because it involves personal experiences which can never be wished away and a church experience which, for better or worse, whether recognised or ignored, has made the MCSA a different church from what it was in 1978. It was never the same after that experience.

The issues which precipitated the schism are part of the broader South African political and church tradition. The incident should therefore not be isolated as something that could only happen in Transkei and the MCSA. All South Africans should be charitable enough to identify themselves with the Methodists who were caught up in the less charitable political and ecclesial traditions of apartheid South Africa.

This study was undertaken not to preserve a fading history on record but as part of the stuff of which living human and Christian traditions are made. It is the author's belief that, had similar studies been undertaken timeously on the previous Methodist schisms in the South African tradition, the 1978 one might not have taken place.

1.3 THE MISSIOLOGICAL FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Missiology, by its very nature, is an interdisciplinary field, making use of insights from systematic theology, church history, anthropology and communication science, amongst other things and yet, as Luzbetak (1988:14) points out, it

is not a mere conglomeration of disciplines but a network of disciplines that systematically interact with one another. Missiology is, therefore, more properly

regarded as a field rather than a discipline. It is a field that studies the expansion and growth of the mission of the Church in all its dimensions - communal, sacramental, kerygmatic, diaconal and institutional.

Consequently its themes are of interest to other academic disciplines, even those which fall outside the theological family, like history, social anthropology and political studies.

The theme chosen for this thesis, namely the formation of the MCT, could be of interest to the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University or the Abe Bailey Institute of Inter-racial Studies at the University of Cape Town - as was the schism of Nehemiah Tile and the Thembu Church. Saunders (1970) was funded by these Institutes for his research on Tile and the Thembu Church. This suggests that different perspectives distinguish the approaches of various academic disciplines and institutions to themes of common interest. To situate this study of the Methodist schism in Transkei (MCT) in the discipline of missiology, what is considered missiological about it will now be presented.

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Although, in simple terms, missiology as a discipline is about the study of mission, various definitions and models of mission have been developed with the result that its very definition has become a problem. Endorsing Neill (1976: 57), who said "If everything is mission, nothing is mission", Bosch (1980: 11) says "Mission is today a greater problem and more disputed than ever".

Perhaps the problem is not so much a dispute over the definition of mission but rather the different emphases. For instance, the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1928 defined mission as a "comprehensive approach" while its Whitby Meeting (1947) did so in terms of *kerygma* (preaching) and *koinonia* (fellowship) and the Willingen Conference (1952) added *martyria* (witness) as the overarching concept (Bosch 1991: 511).

Because of this wide range of models and definitions, it seems that an operational definition of missiology should be determined by the context or situation in which a specific missionary

activity is called into question or challenged.

As indicated above, the MCT was formed during a period in the evolution of a different political dispensation in Transkei. An operational definition which seems applicable therefore is one which concerns itself with the relationship between the church and the state in the light of the Gospel.

This was not a new problem for the church. It dates back to the Constantinian era when Christianity became a *religio licita* and later the state religion. The first person to work out a Christian rationale for this relationship was St Augustine in his twenty-two-volume work, *De Civitate Dei* ("City of God"). St Augustine's solution to the problem of the relationship between the church and the state was a compromise (give and take) situation in which the "regime would be blessed by the church, in exchange for which the state guaranteed to protect and support the church" (Bosch 1991:221). In the end the church has been the loser ever since because "he who sups with the devil had better have a longer spoon" (Berger 1973:37). This close link between the church and the state led to the development of a Christian tradition in which "if loyalty to the state meant loyalty to the church, the obverse was also true" (Bosch 1991:221).

Against blaming the Constantinian dispensation and the Augustinian solution for the compromised standing of the church in the world, Lesslie Newbigin (1986:100f) asks, "But could any other choice have been made? When the ancient classical world ... ran out of spiritual fuel and turned to the church as the one society that could hold a disintegrating world together, should the church have refused the appeal and washed its hands of responsibility for the political order? ... would God's purpose ... have been better served if the church had refused all political responsibility?"

Although Newbigin is talking here of a state in trouble and in this study we are dealing with a church in trouble, the end result is the same: it is the question of Christian presence in the state. In the case of the Transkeian Methodists, the prospect of the ban on the MCSA was

perceived as posing a choice between a marginalised presence and the elimination of the Methodist Church in the Transkei; between rejecting the formation of the MCT and a compromise that would ensure a continued presence. These options brought their loyalties into the spotlight and this, in turn, generated tension and conflict. For some Methodists what was uppermost in their response was what they stood to **gain** by making a compromise while for others it was what they stood to **lose** by a compromise.

Since this is a problem for the church in general, a study of the MCT may provide an interesting case study. It is therefore a relevant missiological project. It focuses on the tension in the relationship between the missionary activity of the church and the programmes of political powers.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the broad context of the South African apartheid system, the study is an examination of the impact of the homelands policy on the church and the response of the church to it. This study concentrates mainly on investigating why and how the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei came about. To do this, the study answers the following questions:

- (1) How did the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei unfold?
- (2) What factors played a role in this schism in Transkei?
- (3) How did different loyalties interact in the process of the schism?
- (4) What type of church schism was the MCT?

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

In missiology, as in other disciplines, various methodologies can be used depending on the nature of the data and the problem to be investigated (Leedy 1989: 139). If one is interested in observing a particular phenomenon occurring in a specific group, an empirical methodology

can be used. This involves analysing findings in the field. If one is interested in historical figures or events, a historical research methodology should be employed. This, as Leedy (1989:223) points out, involves rationally explaining the causes of events and logically interpreting the effects of such events, with the main objective of evaluating the significance of the historical figures or events.

Since the present study concerns a historical event, a historical research method will be used. A historical event can be approached in two ways. First, the event can be seen as epitomising a concept, an idea or a theory which the researcher has already formulated. For instance, Mosala uses the concept "struggle" as the hermeneutic key in his approach to African Independent Churches (1985) and Biblical exegesis (1989). Although no academic or scientific study can be approached without some preconceived idea(s) or external theory, such bold preconditioning becomes controversial. Both West (1990) and Bosch (1991) thus criticise Mosala (1989) for approaching Biblical hermeneutics from a perspective of "struggle".

In my approach I have decided to explore the historical facts without any preconceived theory so that my interaction with data may generate appropriate theories. In this regard my approach is similar to the "grounded theory" approach suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967). They (1967:1-2) were reacting to the excessive concern of some sociologists with verifying rather than generating theories. They observed that this concern led to attempts to fit or even force data into an already formulated theory. Their call is for a move towards generating a theory which explains data instead of testing how the data confirm or disconfirm an already existing theory. This grounded theory approach can prevent driving data towards a "tacked-on explanation taken from a logically deduced theory" (Glaser & Strauss 1967:4). This practice "arises from the fact that generally a sociologist has been trained only to research and verify his facts, not also to research and generate his explanation of them" and yet the interpretive framework should be generated from data in the course of the research (Glaser & Strauss 1967:4,6).

Grounded theory research allows for a more open and creative approach to the study of social processes. Because grounded theory does not mean that one can work without an interpretive

framework at all (Steyn 1994:12), four analytical procedures have been used in the historical research methodology in this study. This approach of using several theoretical frames of reference or perspectives is called triangulation (Duffy 1987:130-133). The aim is to obtain a deeper understanding of the research problem by approaching it from different perspectives. The other methods emerged from the narrative descriptive method used in chapter 2. Their relevance had not been anticipated but their use was generated by the narrative method which, in a way, became the “mother” of the other methods. This is already an indication of the validity of the grounded theory; it has a capacity to generate its own theories.

Chapter 2 employs a narrative method to “tell a story” of the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei; chapter 3 undertakes a contextual analysis of the issues precipitating the MCT; chapter 4 offers a conflictual analysis of the different loyalties that interacted during the formation of the MCT and chapter 5 uses the typology drawn up for analysing African Independent Churches (AIC) to categorise the nature of the MCT schism. These analytical procedures and their relevance for the MCT will be explained briefly.

1.5.1 The narrative method

Western approaches to historical study/research have often been dominated by rationalistic explanations and theories which were thus imposed on historical material. Much the same approach applies to theology. This overemphasis is now being questioned. For example, Belden (1982:17-21) asks, “Why have we in the traditional classical Christian theology been so often dependent on discursive reasoning alone? Why is our theologizing so often ethereal, cerebral and ahistorical, afloat with abstract definitions and practically unrelated to our selves as whole beings rooted in history?”

Theology is rooted in stories, the biblical stories of creation, the covenant, the story of Jesus the God-man, and so on. According to Weinrich (1973:45-56), story “is the method by which Christianity transmits itself from generation to generation in an endless chain of telling stories”. But, as Weinrich points out further, this fact has been overshadowed by the

theoretical and propositional language in which theological discourse is usually conducted.

At present there is a move to reinstate story as another legitimate method of theological discourse. Ironically, this move has been initiated in Europe and North America, the main culprits in reducing theological discourse to what Belden (1982: 17-21) calls an "academic and bloodless affair - a cerebral exercise with rational analysis, dissection and systematization".

The rediscovery of the importance of narrative theology has, of necessity, led to the rediscovery of the richness of the narrative method, of a story - especially a historical story as against a fable or myth - because it conveys the "historical facticity of persons and events" (Goldberg 1982: 214). The story is now recognised as giving order to certain events with a rational structure of a plot, conflict and resolution (Williams 1986: 24).

The narrative method has been used in this study not only to satisfy enquirers who want to know what happened, but also as a way of providing data based on the role of different participants in the drama as well as their mood, motivations and actions as the drama unfolds as a single movement. In the story there is a story-teller and those who act in the story. In the story of the MCT in this study the author is the story-teller and is telling his own story because he was personally involved. He himself is therefore **inside** the story. It is not his story alone because there were many others who were also involved so it is their story, too. Then there are others who were not involved but who, through reading and hearing about this story, will find echoes of their own stories in their own situations and circumstances and those echoes make this their story, too. Through this story we can all see the participants with whom we can identify. This identification makes the past event a present human reality because a true human story depicts a present reality which is characterised by plot, coherence, movement and climax (Fackre 1983: 343). Although a story is cast in a historical framework, as if it depicts what happened in the past, its significance is in depicting a present human reality.

This story method is relevant not only to the MCT but also to most theologising in the African context, as Hollenweger (1967; 1976: 77) points out: "Western Christianity and Judaism are

religions of the book. In Africa the medium of communication is not the definition but the description, not the statement but the story, not the doctrine but the testimony, not the book but the parable, not the *summa theologica* but the song....”

A narrative approach does not, however, exhaust the significance of an event. Particularly in an academic study, other underlying dynamics of the event have to be teased out by giving attention to context, conflict and typology. These methods are explained briefly below.

1.5.2 Contextual analysis

The inadequacy of a narrative method is that it does not provide sufficient information about the historical circumstances in which an event took place. For an academic study, then, it does not adequately answer questions such as why people acted in the way they did.

The debate on the contextuality of theological formulations highlights the importance of the context. The main problem in contextual theology concerns its status. What is debated is whether this refers to the content of theology or a method of doing theology. The question is whether it is another type of theology “like political theology, theology of liberation, theology of the world, black theology, white theology, theology of reason, theology of hope” (König 1981: 37-43).

König (1981: 37-43) dismisses the idea of contextual theology as another *type* of theology because “all theologies are contextual - each theology lets the questions which are put to the Bible be (co-)determined by the situation in which the theology is practised. Contextual theology is therefore a characteristic of all theology.”

Mosala (1985: 104) follows the same line of argument when he says that the claim that “contextual theology [is] an attempt to do theology differently is simply tautological and theoretically bankrupt. This is because all theology is contextual theology. To claim to do theology contextually is therefore not to claim to do anything new.”

If contextual theology refers neither to the *type* nor to the *method* of theology, then what is the debate all about? The answer to this problem may be found in Kritzinger's (1991: 219) suggestion that "a contextual theology is not merely *influenced* by its context; it is a theology in which conscious analysis of the context is correlated with the interpretation of the Christian tradition." This definition suggests a very close relationship between theology and context analysis so that theology is not seen as distinct from its context.

But then, what is meant by "context"? The term is used to refer to the total human situation from which people derive their meaning system. An approach that focuses only on some aspects of the human situation would not be the total context. Earlier theological concerns with the human situation tended to focus only on the cultural dimensions and were therefore not the total context. Such concerns led to the introduction of the concepts of indigenization or inculturation.

Bevans (1992: 20-22) argues for the case of replacing both indigenization and inculturation by the term *contextualization*. He maintains that contextualization has a broader meaning, which includes culture, cultural change and popular religiosity. Torres and Fabella (1978: 269) make the meaning of "culture" even much broader by including in its meaning both the political and economic systems.

This broad meaning of context to which theology should be applied raises objections from some quarters, particularly the fundamentalists, who see contextual theology as an attempt to make theology subservient to the historical situation (Kritzinger 1991: 219). But a theology which does not address people in their cultural, political and economic condition would be the poorer. A conscious analysis of these human situations is therefore an imperative in order to formulate a relevant theology.

This study employs contextual analysis in order to provide a more adequate understanding of the issues that precipitated the MCT schism. This approach answers the second research question of what factors played a role in the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei by

considering its political and ecclesial contexts. Knowing that enables one to look at the conflicts generated among Transkeian Methodists by those contexts.

1.5.3 Conflictual analysis

The conflict which occurred between the MCSA and the Transkeian Government in 1978 could not have taken place in a South African region which better epitomised the conflict inherent in South African apartheid society than Transkei. This inherent conflict could be seen in the political, cultural, religious, economic and other spheres. Transkei represented a confluence of these spheres of conflict. For instance, one could see the missionary domination in the church and at the same time the rejection of that domination expressed by the rise of the indigenous church movement (see de Gruchy 1985: 89), and the political ideals of self-determination which were manipulated by ideological experimentation and led to the "independence" of Transkei in 1976.

Clearly, then, an analysis of the MCT that did not take up the matter of conflict would be inadequate. Conflict is an inherent component of the story of the MCT. This study employs a conflictual analysis to show how different loyalties and interests divided the participants in the story of the MCT. The structural development of the conflict occurred in three stages.

(1) First stage: At this stage the Transkeian Government was interacting with the international community in an attempt to gain recognition of its independence. The United Nations' Organisation (UNO) met on 26 October 1976 and adopted a resolution rejecting the Transkeian independence (see 3.3.4.3). The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) adopted a similar position (see 3.3.4.3).

(2) Second stage: By adopting the 1977 Conference resolution to discontinue the practice of sending letters of greeting to the Heads of the Southern African states, the MCSA was perceived by the Transkeian Government to have identified itself with the international community (especially the WCC) in its campaign to deny Transkei the recognition of its independence.

(3) **Third stage:** This occurred when the Transkeian Methodists were divided: one section identifying itself with the wishes of the Transkeian Government and the other with the MCSA.

Chapter 4 of this study does a conflictual analysis of the role played by the clash of different loyalties and interests in the process of the schism.

1.5.4 Typological analysis

Chapter 5 provides a typological analysis drawn from the study of African Independent Churches (AIC) schisms as an aid to understanding the nature and type of the MCT within the broad movement of African church independency.

The African church independency movement in South Africa started in 1883 with the Nehemiah Tile schism. In 1948 Sundkler's *Bantu Prophets* opened the missiological debate on this movement.

The question of whether the typological framework of interpreting the AICs schisms is relevant for the MCT will be considered next. The inconclusive debate on the relevant terms to be used when referring to the African Christian Churches makes it necessary to do so. The most popular term, which has been used since interest was first shown in this phenomenon, is "independent". That this debate is inconclusive is shown by the fact that Sundkler (1961: 18), the very man who introduced it into missiological circulation, later had reservations about its continued use (Turner 1984: 104).

Originally the official designation given to them was "the Native Separatist Churches" (Sundkler 1961: 18), but because of the unacceptability of the terms "native" and "separatist", missiologists replaced them with "African" and "independent", respectively. The problem with the use of the term "independent" is that it defines these African Churches in relation to and in terms of "mainline" or "historical" churches. Pato (1990: 24) suggests that this is no issue to be ashamed of because the term "independent" defines these churches correctly in the South

African political context and says that the “notion of ‘independence’ [is] a reincarnation in ecclesiastical terms of what had been lost in political and cultural terms”. In his view, the term “independent” ought to be retained when referring to these churches not in spite of but precisely because of its political connotation. It is a declaration that the Africans who are not politically independent are, at least, ecclesiastically independent.

According to Sundkler (1961: 70), there was an ecclesiastical connotation to the original intention of the term and this was to describe a church which was “independent and free from direct and effective European control”. This definition was given a political context with the intention of restricting the registration of (African) marriage officers and the right to address (African Church) meetings during the Bambata Rebellion of 1906 (Sundkler 1961: 70).

To load the term with political connotations, as Pato suggests, may create some problems: Is the term still relevant in the 1994 South African political situation? Who still lacks political independence? If lack of political independence is all that is in the AIC movement, surely at least some of the African Independent Churches should have started returning to the mission/mainline/historical churches since 27 April 1994? And would the term not have been dropped long ago in other Southern African states like Swaziland and Zimbabwe?

Daneel (1987: 31-32) suggests that the term “independent” should be retained, even if only provisionally, because it is not pejorative nor does it imply a value judgement. For him, “independent” refers to churches that never had links with the Western-oriented historical or mission churches. This would therefore exclude the “protest movements” within the historical churches. This approach arises from Daneel's (1974: 13) earlier research findings that the majority of the members of the African Independent Churches never had links with the “historical” or “established” churches. Hayes (1992: 44) points out that Daneel's use of the terms “historical” and “independent” creates some problems. The African Independent Churches are not ahistorical; the Ethiopian Church is as independent from the Methodist Church as the latter was from the Church of England. Hayes (1992: 45) proposes to designate the AICs as African Initiated Churches (still abbreviated AICs!), a designation which should

eliminate the idea of reaction to mission but, as Hayes admits, "the problem remains" because even when we designate such Churches as "African Initiated Churches", the context and motivation for such initiatives may be a form of reaction to the contact with the historical churches.

Attempts to eliminate the element of negation are a futile exercise because both negation and affirmation are essential elements in theological discourse. One cannot use only one of them and ignore the other. Kritzinger (1988) has shown this in his evaluation of Black Theology. Maluleke (1994: 253) even goes so far as to argue that the Western theology which defends itself against the "negative" Black Theology is itself "negative in relation to the Christian Gospel". It would therefore seem that Daneel's suggestion (1987: 31) of retaining the term "independent" (in spite of its negative connotation) should be accepted, even if only provisionally.

Since Chief Matanzima wanted a Transkeian Church that would be run by Transkeians, this places the MCT in the category of churches which are "free from direct and effective European control", a definition that does not exclude protest movements within the "historical" or "established" churches. For this reason, the typology of African Independent Churches is certainly relevant to the present study and will be employed in chapter 5 as one of the complementary perspectives.

1.6 SOURCES

Since this study deals with a past event the major source of data has been the primary documents in an attempt to go back as closely as possible to the original event. To retrieve relevant information, minutes of meetings and newspaper reports were among the primary documents consulted. The four main sources of data are described below.

1.6.1 Printed mass media

The *Daily Dispatch* of East London and *Imvo ZabaNtsundu* of King William's Town were the two main media sources as these newspapers usually give adequate coverage of events in Transkei. The official Methodist documents used were *Dimension*, a monthly Methodist newspaper printed in Johannesburg, and the *Minutes* of the various Methodist Conferences.

1.6.2 Personal archives

Here “personal archives” means church documents, like minutes of meetings, which have not been deposited in the church archives but kept by individuals as personal collections. Three sets of personal archives were used as sources.

1.6.2.1 Fikeni Papers

These are Rev. F.H.T. Fikeni's personal notes on some church meetings which he has kept as he was the Chairman² of the Clarkebury District at the time of the schism (1978). In the study the reference “Fikeni Papers” is given to indicate information obtained from this source.

1.6.2.2 Wilkins Papers

Reverend Cyril Wilkins was the Secretary of the Conference (MCSA) at the time (1978). To keep the ministers of the MCSA well informed on the state of the Church, he periodically issued church circular letters from his office in the Methodist Connexional Office in Durban. This source is referred to as “Wilkins Papers” in the study.

1.6.2.3 Lungu Papers (BMC and LSC Minutes)

As Secretary of the Black Ministers' Consultation (BMC) (as it was called at the time before being changed to Black Methodist Consultation in 1980), Clarkebury District Branch and

Secretary of the Lindikhaya Steering Committee (LSC), the author took notes, which he has kept. This source is referred to either as “BMC Minutes” or “LSC Minutes” followed by the date of the meeting.

1.6.3 Interviews

Additional information was obtained by interviewing people from the different groups which emerged during the process of the schism. This information was used to supplement what was obtained from primary documents. For instance, the researcher found that copies of MCSA press statements are no longer available at the Methodist Connexional Office.

1.6.4 Oral sources

However, much more information was obtained from general interaction with people who had been involved and were now able to stand back and reflect on what happened. Although it is not possible to mention any specific people in this regard, this interaction was found to be more informative than the interviews on specific issues. The MCT episode has become part of Methodist folklore for the laity and the ministers in Transkei.

As the researcher was personally involved both as secretary at some meetings and as one of the participants in others, certain things are part of his memory. In the study use has been made of his personal recollection of events, debates and personalities where this has been deemed to furnish “missing factors” in matters of detail. Such information is acknowledged by the reference “Oral sources”. In some cases remembrance and interpretation were checked by general interaction with other participants in the process of the schism.

1.7 A REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH ON THE MCT

To date (1995) only two academic research projects have been written on the subject: one at the University of Cape Town (Mahlasela 1986) and the other at FedSem³ (Makalima 1989). These study projects will now be reviewed in an attempt to determine how the researchers

categorised the MCT and how their approaches differ from this research.

1.7.1 J.F.M. Mahlasela (1986)

Mahlasela's study on the MCT was an "extended essay" in partial fulfilment of his BA (Hons) degree at UCT. The aim of the study was to examine the causes of the schism of the Transkei Church from the MCSA and the response of both Black and White members of the Methodist Church to the formation of the new Church (Mahlasela 1986:2).

Mahlasela begins by probing into the Methodist missionary policy, especially Rev. William Shaw's "chain of mission stations" by which Methodism was established in Transkei. He concludes this section by noting (or agreeing with Mears 1973:15) that it was a fine missionary effort (Mahlasela 1986:4). However, he does not indicate whether the missionary policy contained within itself seeds for a later schism or whether the MCT was a betrayal of that missionary effort.

He then identifies the deeper causes of the schism as:

1.7.1.1 The MCSA's acceptance of the viability of the homelands policy

Mahlasela (1986:4) accuses the White Methodist Church of tacit admission of the viability of the homelands policy. This assumption or accusation is not argued in the essay. It would need to be, however, especially in the face of various Methodist Conferences' consistent rejection of the South African Government's homelands policy. For example, the 1977 Conference Resolution (MCSA 1977:192-193) states: "The Conference is of the opinion that this policy is divisive and disrupting the mission and the unity of the church. The Conference calls upon the Prime Minister to reconsider the Homelands Policy before the consequences of this policy result in devastating effects on the nation as a whole."

1.7.1.2 *The triumph of "Xhosaism"*

Mahlasela (1986:43) interprets the creation of the MCT as a triumph for "Xhosaism". He uses this term to highlight the dominance of the Xhosa-speaking people in the MCSA and sees a connection between this "Xhosaism" in the MCSA and the fact that the Methodists who seceded are predominantly Xhosa-speaking.

Mahlasela (1986:43) argues that "the fact that Transkei was the first Black National State within South Africa to opt for independence is another possible hypothesis which played not a minor role in the decision to opt for religious independence, which was inevitable for the so-called political independence".

1.7.1.3 *Black aspirations for leadership*

Mahlasela (1986:3) notes that by 1971 "the idea of an indigenous, self-propagating, all African Christian Community within Methodism became a reality in Transkei". This was when the last White missionary had left the Clarkebury District.

He then offers a detailed analysis of the administration of the MCSA, highlighting issues like the racial imbalances in leadership positions, racial representation in the District Synods and the Annual Conference, racial stipend scales and even the theological literature prescribed for probationer ministers. All these racial imbalances show a bias in favour of the White section of the MCSA. These racial imbalances are highlighted in order to argue that they could have contributed to the schism. However, he does not commit himself by stating categorically that this was, indeed, the case. It was not the intention of the Transkeian Methodists to "reform" the Methodist Church in Transkei (see 2.14.5).

1.7.1.4 *Responses*

Mahlasela then reviews the different responses by both the Black and the White Methodists

to the MCT.

The responses of the Black members are contained in the resolutions taken by the Black Ministers' Consultation (BMC). In the BMC some expressed a sympathetic understanding of the schism while others denounced the action of the Transkeian Methodists for having "gone it alone" thereby damaging Black solidarity, which had a common experience of oppression within the MCSA (Mahlasela 1986: 28). The statement (*BMC Minutes 1978*) reads:

... the banning of the Methodist Church of South Africa and the forming of a Methodist Church of Transkei, failed to find sympathy and acceptance from Black Brethren. For:

- (a) In our opinion, the action was taken too quickly and without sufficient opportunity for reflection by all concerned.
- (b) An action taken so precipitately would not give scope for inclusion of truly indigenous ingredients in the re-formed church.
- (c) Not sufficient consideration to the financial implications involved in the running of the envisaged church could have been given in such a short time.
- (d) It was felt that the move would lead to a severance of the solidarity and fellowship of Black people in their struggle for a meaningful place in the church.

About half the volume of Mahlasela's essay deals with the MCT/UMCSA after 2 June 1978. This period is outside the scope of the present study. It would therefore not be proper to engage him in some issues which have not been addressed here. However, his study is quite informative on some issues. He highlights that the policy of the BMC was to work for the return of the MCT to the MCSA rather than for the creation of a Black Methodist Church and that the BMC also committed itself to work for the complete transformation of the MCSA into a truly non-racial Church (Mahlasela 1986: 31).

With reference to the response by White members, Mahlasela (1986: 32) highlights the involvement of the top Executive of the MCSA (the President, ex-President, Secretary, and others) in the negotiations with the Transkeian Government for the lifting of the ban on the

MCSA. The BMC Consultation felt that this kind of structure excluded “a meaningful Black representation in attempts at resolving this issue (the banning of the MCSA)” (Mahlasela 1986:29).

From Mahlasela's presentation, three images of the MCT can be clearly identified:

(1) It is a quest for a Black Methodist Church which was shared by some BMC members as one delegate suggested, “Let us speak about the Black autonomous Methodist Church of South Africa ... We will not say (to the Prime Minister of Transkei) that we do not want the Methodist Church of Transkei. What we will say to the Transkeians is that they must wait for us because we want to create a Black Church in S.A.” (Mahlasela 1986:27).

(2) It is an expression of Transkeianism (Mahlasela 1986:27). This image is presented in order to counter the first image. In Mahlasela's presentation this image is formed by the creation of “an indigenous ... all African Christian community within Methodism”, the Clarkebury District (Mahlasela 1986:3) and “the first independent Black National State within South Africa”, the Transkei (Mahlasela 1986:43).

(3) It is an expression of “Xhosaism” (Mahlasela 1986:43). This represents Mahlasela's own views while the first two images represent views of some BMC participants.

The author's assessment of these images is that Mahlasela's presentation could at best be characterised as showing the MCT as an attempt to promote Transkeianism. This image was ignored by both the BMC and Mahlasela; the BMC almost endorsed the formation of a Black Church but was deterred by the fact that the Transkei State had taken the initiative; Mahlasela belabours the point of the Xhosa dominance in the MCSA and yet all his Xhosa interviewees were Transkeians. Xhosaism should extend beyond the borders of Transkei and that is exactly what Chief Matanzima did not want except to include only the Transkeians.

Mahlasela's essay does not adequately provide what it promises: an analysis of the response

of both Black and White to the formation of the new Church (1986:2). He succeeds in giving an analysis only of the BMC. How far the views of the BMC were an indication of the general feelings of the Black Methodists is difficult to ascertain. Equally problematic is his equating the “official” Church response (which he gives) with the White response.

1.7.2 S.N. Makalima (1989)

In the introduction to his study, which was an AFTS (Associate of the Federal Theological Seminary) essay submitted at Fedsem, Makalima (1989:1) declares that the “expectation in the minds of many was that the Methodist Church in Transkei would, for some time at least, continue as part of the Methodist Church of South Africa ... as has been the case with Methodist Churches in Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Mozambique. This expectation was shaken by the banning of the MCSA in Transkei in 1978.” This statement indicates the perspective from which Makalima approaches the subject, namely to investigate why the Transkeian Methodists opted for breaking away from the MCSA.

Makalima (1989:10) is of the opinion that the MCT was orchestrated by some Methodist ministers who prevailed upon the Prime Minister to ban the MCSA even at the stage when Chief Matanzima was prepared to drop the matter.

In his dissertation Makalima approaches the subject from a historical and a biblical perspective and although he covers it fairly comprehensively, his review of the ten-year period is rather superficial and there are several inaccuracies.

1.7.2.1 Historical approach

Much use is made of the comparison between Henry VIII of England and Chief Matanzima in their attempts to manipulate the church for their own personal gain (Makalima 1989:18, 38). Both had marriage problems and used the church to legitimise their matrimonial position.

The Transkei Marriage Act of 1978 was intended to legitimise Chief Matanzima's position. This issue will be taken up again in 2.14.4.

1.7.2.2 *Biblical approach*

The whole event is seen as a modern replica of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews. Makalima sees the ten-year period (1978-1988) as a period of suffering for those who had remained in the MCT/UMCSA.

In his re-unification sermon on 31 July 1988, Rev. K.E. Mgojo used the same paradigm of the Babylonian Captivity, but to denounce the "prostitution" of the Methodist tradition by those who had remained in the MCT/UMCSA and refused to return to the MCSA.

1.7.2.3 *Makalima's review of the ten-year period*

This period (1978-1988), which (as he concedes) he was not able to penetrate sufficiently, receives very superficial treatment. He devotes more space to the talks for the reunification of the MCSA and the MCT/UMCSA than on what happened during the ten-year period. This superficial treatment of such an important period suggests that he had little sympathy for those who had formed the MCT in the first place because (according to him) they had been motivated by personal ambition and self-interest (Makalima 1989: 8, 10) but many people who suffered, especially some ministers, had not even been in the forefront during the period of the schism. His study seems to have been circumscribed by investigating the roles played by some individuals, like Gaba, Fikeni, Dabula and Lungu. His sympathy is for the lay people who had no option but to become part of the MCT/UMCSA and for those ministers who left Transkei when the MCT was formed (Makalima 1989: 14-16).

Had Makalima taken more pains to research this period, his treatment of "the suffering during the period" would have enriched his study. He could have investigated the circumstances leading to the sacking of Rev. Gaba as the Secretary of the Conference, the church and civil

court cases against Revs Mavuma and Zweni, both of whom were Chairman of the Mfundisweni District but at different times. In terms of subject coverage, Makalima's study is fairly comprehensive, covering events from 1978 to 1988. However, several inaccuracies need to be pointed out. The following should be noted:

1.7.2.4 *Incorrect details*

Although most of the pertinent issues are dealt with, Makalima did not take enough pains to check some facts so that he could put them in their correct context. Consequently, there are several inaccuracies and this inevitably leads to faulty judgement. A few of these could be mentioned.

First, Makalima uses what was said in June 1978 to explain Rev. Gaba's behaviour in April 1978. This anachronism is then used to support the view that the MCT was formed as a result of some Methodist ministers in Transkei who rejected the discipline of their Church (Makalima 1989:10-11).

Secondly, he (1989:10) refers to a clandestine meeting which was held on 21 March 1978 in the village of Ngqeleni. In fact, the meeting held on 21 March 1978 was of the BMC and was not clandestine at all (see 2.7.7). If Makalima wanted to refer to the meeting which the *Daily Dispatch* regarded as "secret", that one was held in Buntingville on 14 February 1978 (see 2.7.3).

Thirdly, he states (1989:12) that Rev. Fikeni claimed on 25 April 1978 that "in the New Church he was made Treasurer which amounted to little more than a Bookkeeper.... Thus from a position of authority in the Church as Chairman of the Clarkebury District he had been reduced to nothing but a mediocre status." Reverend Fikeni could not have said that on 25 April 1978 because at that time he was still the Chairman of the Clarkebury District and the new Church of which he later became Treasurer, had not yet been born.

Finally, he (1989:16) says that “Rev. Mbabane's belongings had to be moved out of the manse and Lungu's furniture [moved] in ... His entire property was seized by the Transkei Police and later by the New Church”.

Reverend Mbabane remained in the main manse for some days after the arrival of Rev. Lungu, who occupied the second manse (which had previously been occupied by the Church agricultural officer). When Rev. Mbabane eventually moved out, the removal truck with his personal belongings was intercepted by the Transkeian Police, who ordered it to return to the Lay Centre because its load included 17 wardrobes, cutlery and other property of the Centre.

Reverend Mbabane's belongings were finally released to Mr Guzana in October 1978 when he produced Rev. Mbabane's personal inventory (Oral sources). Makalima's weakness seems to have been his failure to interview relevant people on specific issues. Nowhere in his paper is a specific issue attributed to a particular interviewee. The names of interviewees appear only in his bibliography.

1.7.3 A general assessment of the two research projects

The MCT schism is a very important episode in the history of the Church in South Africa and particularly of the MCSA. Any study, from whatever perspective, should therefore evoke some interest. Both Mahlasela and Makalima's studies provide this quite sufficiently.

Mahlasela focuses on the responses of both Black and White Methodists to the schism in Transkei and sees the schism as an indictment on the racial practices of the MCSA. Makalima focuses on the personal interests of both Chief Matanzima and some Transkeian Methodist ministers who sacrificed the unity of the Church.

Studies of this nature should involve more than focusing on the perceived harm done to the Church and should also investigate the contexts in which actions take place. The two researchers, especially Makalima, seem to have simply arrived at their conclusions without

first analysing the dynamics at play. Although both researchers are interpreting the Methodist schism in Transkei, they approach the issue from perspectives which are outside Transkei and therefore out of context. Since Mahlasela's approach was intended to be so, his deficiency on the Transkei perspective is understandable.

One of the main aims of this study is to give a detailed account of how the schism happened and to analyse the factors contributing to the process of the schism. This should also serve to fill in some of the missing elements in the studies of Mahlasela and Makalima. A Transkei perspective should (hopefully) throw more light on the issue.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organised around the four research questions formulated in 1.4. Chapter 1 is a general introduction to the scope, approach and method of the study.

Chapter 2 addresses the first research question: How did the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei unfold? This is answered by means of a detailed historical description (narrative) of the process of the schism.

Chapter 3 addresses the second research question: What factors played a role in the schism? This is answered by considering the ecclesial context of the Methodist practice of church greetings to the Heads of State and the political context of the Transkeian Government's need for the recognition of Transkeian independence.

Chapter 4 addresses the third research question: How did different loyalties interact in the process of the schism? This is answered by identifying and analysing the different loyalties which emerged during the schism and divided the Transkeian Methodists.

Chapter 5 addresses the fourth research question: What type of church schism was the MCT? This is answered by considering the causal and typological models of the AIC movement to

see into which model the MCT fits.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by considering some missiological issues raised by the Methodist schism in Transkei.

ENDNOTES

1. The Methodist Church of South Africa was renamed the Methodist Church of Southern Africa towards the end of 1978.

2. The episcopal designation of Bishop was introduced in the MCSA towards the end of 1988. Before then the highest official in a Methodist District was designated as Chairman of the District presently the District Bishop and the highest official of the MCSA was the President of Conference presently the Presiding Bishop. At the time of the study there were no women ministers in the MCSA and the Chairman of a District who was not a male was therefore unthinkable. The sexist language will therefore be retained to conform with the ideas of the time.

3. *Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa*

This institution was established in 1963 in Alice. It trained ministers of the Anglican (CPSA), Methodist (MCSA), Presbyterian (PCSA, Tsonga P.C. etc.), and Congregational churches. In 1975 the South African government expropriated the FedSem property in Alice, ostensibly because it needed more land for the expansion of the University of Fort Hare.

The FedSem was then moved to Umtata where it was temporarily accommodated in the glebe of St Bede's Theological College (CPSA). In 1974 the Seminary students held a pro-Frelimo rally to celebrate Mozambique's independence from Portugal. This rally offended Chief Matanzima who accused the FedSem of spreading dangerous leftist ideologies in Transkei and threatened to take action against St Bedes Theological College unless it expelled the FedSem from its grounds (Streek & Wicksteed 1980:274f). The FedSem was then re-located to Imbali Township near Pietermaritzburg.

CHAPTER 2

A STORY OF THE SCHISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in 1.7, this is the third research project to date (1995) on the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei. The main difference between this study and the earlier projects by Mahlasela (1986) and Makalima (1989) is that my intention is to “tell a detailed story” of the process of the schism in this chapter while chapters 3, 4 and 5 will be analytical in nature.

In telling this story a narrative approach (see 1.5.1) will be used to describe the actual process of the schism. It is essential to tell the story of the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei since no detailed account has been given before. Any interpretation of the schism (including this one) must be based on a detailed description of what actually happened, analysing the role of different parties and the issues debated.

The story in this study begins, then, with the press statement of the Prime Minister of Transkei on 12 January 1978 in Umtata and ends with the ultimate banning of the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei on 2 June 1978 and the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei on the same day. This was a very active period with different parties interacting on a number of issues at different meetings. *Appendix I* provides a diagram to facilitate an understanding of the sequence of events.

2.2 THE POSITION STATEMENTS

The process of the schism was triggered off on 12 January 1978 when the Prime Minister made a statement to which the top executive¹ of the Methodist Church of South Africa (MCSA) reacted by its own statement on 16 January 1978. The two statements will be juxtaposed below so that the issues involved can be seen together from both points of view.

Prime Minister's Statement:**12-01-1978**

1: *The Dimension* (November 7, 1977) reports that "a Conference of the Church (MCSA) ... had decided to discontinue sending messages of goodwill and loyalty to the State President of South Africa because it would involve sending similar messages to the Transkei President. This would militate against the views of the Methodist clergy who were opposed to and did not recognise the independence of Transkei."

2: The decision the Government has taken (to ban the MCSA) only concerns the Methodist Church of South Africa and will have no bearing whatsoever on the other churches in Transkei.

3: It was clear that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa was taking instructions from the World Council of Churches which had openly declared its opposition to the recognition of Transkei.²

4: "The Government has no intention whatsoever of interfering with the religious activities of its subjects but has a duty to protect the integrity and dignity of the Head of State, Government and the people of Transkei."

5: ... the Cabinet has resolved to pass a law through Parliament banning the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei. An Act would also be passed to establish the Methodist Church of Transkei which would have circuits in Transkei and in South African work centres where Transkeians were employed. A meeting will discuss the ways and means of taking over the assets and liabilities of the church in Transkei, and taking control by drawing up a constitution for the church ... members of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa would be expelled from Transkei.

6: The Methodists in Transkei should be calm and continue their services as if nothing has happened.

(*Daily Dispatch*, 13 January 1978:1).

MCSA Statement:**16-01-1978**

1: The growing complexity of the political situation in the nations served by this church has made it more and more difficult for the Conference to send letters of greetings in their traditional form. The Conference, therefore, decided to discontinue the practice of sending these letters. In the debate on this issue, some of those who spoke said that they themselves did not recognise Transkei. This, however, was not the issue before the Conference and the independence of Transkei was not debated.

2: The Methodist Church of South Africa has a long and very honourable history of loyal service in Transkei and other parts of Southern Africa.

3: We strongly reject suggestions that the Methodist Church of South Africa takes instructions from the World Council of Churches or any other body. The Methodist Church of South Africa is completely autonomous, making its decisions in the light of its understanding of the will of God as revealed through Holy Scripture.

4: Let us continue to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and to proclaim His Gospel, recognising Him as the Head of His people in every nation.

5: We believe that we can serve the people of Southern Africa best in the name of God by remaining undivided.

6: We commend this matter to the prayers of our people.

(*Fikeni Papers* – see Appendix II)

This dialogue through the press did not resolve the issue. Then personal contact was made through a meeting between the MCSA delegation and the Transkei Cabinet on 26 January 1978. This meeting did not go beyond clarifying their respective positions, which had already been explained by their respective statements.

The Transkeian Government restated its position in a meeting on 31 January 1978. The meeting was called by the Prime Minister of Transkei through the Chairman of Clarkebury District. By this meeting the Prime Minister wanted to convey to the Transkeian Methodist ministers his intention to have the MCSA banned in Transkei and to replace it by the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei.

2.3 MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE METHODIST MINISTERS

This meeting was held at the Ncambedlana Lay Centre, Umtata on 31 January 1978. In attendance were the Transkeian Methodist ministers appointed to circuits both in Transkei and the Republic of South Africa and non-Transkeian Methodist ministers appointed to circuits in Transkei. The non-Transkeian Methodist ministers were White ministers appointed to White circuits within Transkei Methodist Districts (Clarkebury and Queenstown), like Butterworth, Umtata, Kokstad and Matatiele, and non-Transkeian Black ministers appointed to circuits in Transkei, such as Xhosas from the Eastern Cape and/or Ciskei, Zulus from Natal and elsewhere in the Republic of South Africa, and non-Transkeian Sothos.

Reverend F.H.T. Fikeni³ presided over the meeting. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Cabinet Ministers T. Letlaka, R. Madikizela and H. Pamla and other government officials.

The Prime Minister delivered his speech in Xhosa. The substance thereof was the same as his press statement of 12 January 1978 (see 2.2).

During question time Rev. H.L. Qambela criticised the Prime Minister for what he termed a "defective vision" and suggested that the Prime Minister should have considered banning all the White Churches so that a United Church of Transkei could be formed (Oral sources).

The Prime Minister responded by saying,

Other Christian churches such as the Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians would not have the same action applied to them as they had not tampered in politics as the Methodist Church had. ... We cannot pay our money to a conference where we will be insulted. I have every reason to believe the Methodist Church of South Africa has communication with the World Council of Churches. We cannot have divided loyalties. The Church is an autonomous body, but must not interfere with the State (*Daily Dispatch*, February 1, 1978:1).

Reverend R.I. Thompson, fluent in Xhosa, who had been the last White Chairman of the Clarkebury District (Mears 1973:73) and was already retired, expressed concern over the coming Bill to establish the Methodist Church of Transkei, maintaining that the South African Government had never legislated for the existence of a church in South Africa.⁴ He was convinced that the banning of the MCSA would be too severe a blow to a church which had done a great deal of good work in Transkei, especially in the field of education (Oral sources).

Mr Letlaka, an Anglican and former Pan Africanist Congress member, who had returned from exile and joined the Matanzima Government as Minister of Finance, responded to this by saying that "Mr Thompson's speech was typical missionary talk. Transkeians did not owe anything to the missionaries" (*Daily Dispatch*, February 1, 1978:1). The missionaries "came here and were accepted by Transkeians when they brought the Word of God. This did not give them any mandate to dominate the scene. All we are asking the Methodist Church is that it must not interfere" (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978:4). Referring to King Henry VIII⁵ of England, who broke away from the Roman Catholic Church to establish the Church of England in 1534 (see 5.5.5), Mr Letlaka went on to say that it was not true that "churches were not formed by the State. The Church of England was formed by the Government and King of Britain. ... [The Transkeian Government was] going to legislate, and not the South African Government, for a church in an independent country. The proposed bill was intended to obviate the conflict of loyalties" (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978:4). He maintained that it was also wrong to say the Government would be interfering with the church because the Methodist Church had shown it was "politically motivated" (*Daily Dispatch*, January 13, 1978:1).

Then Rev. Thompson suggested that the two parties concerned liaise in an effort to resolve the issue peacefully. Mr Letlaka's response was that both parties were united in the move to

ban the MCSA and that the "Methodist ministers were making a big mistake to say they were dealing with a party as far as the matter is concerned" (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978:4). In support of his claim, he quoted the comments of Mr Cromwell Diko, leader of the Opposition in the Transkei Parliament, and of Dr Lennox Sebe of Ciskei, who was by no means a friend of Transkei.

During the heated exchange between Rev. Thompson and Mr Letlaka, it became obvious that when Rev. Thompson spoke of the "parties", he had the Government of Transkei and the MCSA in mind but Mr Letlaka understood the term in the political sense of meaning political parties. Streek and Wicksteed (1980:277) suggest that this was a typical Mantanzima strategy, which Mr Letlaka had learnt too well - the misunderstanding may have been deliberate.

Mr Pamla then challenged Rev. Thompson to explain the existence of the two Methodist churches in Umtata within one mile of each other: the Leeds Road Methodist Church for Blacks and the Frere Road Methodist Church for Whites (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978:4). Reverend Thompson had no answer.

Mr Pamla went on to argue that Transkei was non-racial in almost all aspects of its life with the exception of the Church and that such an anomaly had to stop. He also said "We know that the Methodist Church of South Africa is legally White in South Africa although the majority of its members are Africans" (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978:4).

Responding to a question from Rev. A.F. Diko on how people could be convinced to join a Church which had been formed by a State, the Prime Minister said the Transkeian ministers who were stationed in the Republic of South Africa should simply sing, "Noyana ..." and make the announcement "The Chief says ...". People would listen and respond positively because they still respected their chiefs. Most Black people in Cape Town were the AbaThembu and most in Durban were the AmaMpondo. Most Xhosa-speaking people in Aliwal North (where Rev. Diko was stationed) were the AbaThembu of the Hala clan.

He went on to say there should be no mistake, he was not suggesting a State church as in the case of the Church of England since this "Methodist Church would be allowed to operate

as an autonomous body in Transkei and its constitution would not be interfered with" (*Daily Dispatch*, January 13, 1978:1) because "what Transkeians wanted was an independent Transkei Methodist Church to be run by Black Transkeians and free from the foreign White domination of the Methodist Church of South Africa [but] the Whites can stay in our church and they will be accepted in one Transkei Methodist Church" (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978:4).

Reverend Tom Mbabane then requested that the Prime Minister leave the matter to the ministers, who would pursue it through ecclesiastical channels. The Prime Minister promised to consider the request and said Parliament would still pass legislation enabling it to ban the Methodist Church of South Africa and form an independent Methodist Church of Transkei. However, the Bill would be delayed if the ministers came forward and made their stand on the matter clear. The step taken by the Transkei Cabinet was in the interest of the Methodist Church followers and their ministers in Transkei (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978:4).

Reverend Fikeni then called upon Rev. Dr E.K. Mgojo, a lecturer at the Federal Theological Seminary in Pietermaritzburg at the time, to pass a vote of thanks. Dr Mgojo thanked the Prime Minister for inviting the ministers to a consultation on such a serious issue, something the Vorsters of South Africa would never dream of doing (a reference to Mr B.J. Vorster, Prime Minister of South Africa at the time). A long ovation endorsed Dr Mgojo's speech.

2.4 METHODIST MINISTERS' SESSION

After the Prime Minister and his entourage left, the ministers remained to discuss the matter. Their aim was to formulate their response to the Prime Minister's intention of banning the Methodist Church of South Africa and having a Methodist Church of Transkei formed. Reverend Fikeni presided over the meeting with Rev. Tom Mbabane recording.

Three proposals were put forward and duly discussed. The first came from Rev. Mvume Dandala who said the envisaged Methodist Church of Transkei would essentially be a Black Church and argued that a breakaway by only the Transkeian section of the Methodist Church of South Africa would not only harm it but also be very damaging to Black solidarity. He

proposed that the matter therefore be referred to the Black Ministers' Consultation (BMC)⁷, a Black caucus within the Methodist Church of South Africa, formed by Rev. E.N. Baartman and Rev. Dr Mgojo in 1975 to act as a pressure group challenging the racist practices of the MCSA (Balía 1991). Reverend Dr Mgojo, Secretary of the Black Ministers' Consultation, rejected this proposal, pointing out that the BMC had no *locus standi* in the Church as the polity of the MCSA did not make provision for the existence and operations of a body like the BMC.

The second came from Rev. W.B.S. Gaba, who pointed out that the ministers of the Church were its bona fide leaders and even the Prime Minister had recognised that fact hence his inviting only the ministers to his meeting. The ministers should therefore express their opinion on the issue.

The third proposal came from Rev. A.G. Mposelwa, who suggested that the matter be referred to another meeting attended by both the ministers and the circuit stewards. He pointed out moreover (in response to Rev. Gaba's proposal perhaps) that the Church, in fact, belongs to the laity and it was therefore their sole right to express a decisive opinion on the issue.

The meeting finally settled for Rev. Mposelwa's suggestion, which led to the meeting of 21 February 1978.

2.5 MEETING OF MINISTERS AND LAY LEADERS, 21 FEBRUARY 1978

This meeting was held at the Ncambedlana Lay Centre in Umtata.

2.5.1 Constitution

In attendance were the Transkeian and non-Transkeian Methodist ministers appointed to the three Transkeian Methodist Districts of Clarkebury (circuits east of the Bashee River up to the Natal border of the Umzimkulu River but including East Griqualand [Kokstad and Matatielé, which are in Natal]), Queenstown (circuits west of the Bashee River up to the Kei

River), and Kimberley and Bloemfontein (circuits in the north-west of Transkei [Herschel magisterial district]) (see map, Appendix III), circuit stewards and some prominent lay people, who were neither circuit stewards nor members of the District Synods and/or Conference, but were regarded as prominent Methodists in their own personal capacity, from the three Methodist Districts.

Reverend F.H.T. Fikeni, Chairman of the Clarkebury District, presided over the meeting with Rev. T.B. Mbabane, then Secretary of the Clarkebury District Synod, recording. Reverend Fikeni read a telegram banning the foreigners from the meeting (see 2.7.2). The telegram, signed by Transkei's Minister of Justice, read "Prime Minister has directed that all church meetings of the Methodist Church in Transkei be for Transkeians only. Foreigners attending will be dealt with" (*Dimension*, 5 March 1978:1). Having read the telegram, Rev. Fikeni asked all the non-Transkeians to recuse themselves from the meeting in compliance with the banning order. Nobody left the hall but some people simply moved back to occupy seats along the wall near the entrance (*Oral sources*).

2.5.2 Mr K.M.N. Guzana vs Mr M.V.D. Lila

Mr Guzana, a lawyer and member of the Methodist Conference, challenged Mr Lila, a former minister of the MCSA who had resigned in 1974 for personal reasons and was then working for the Transkei Government in the Department of Foreign Affairs, to withdraw from the meeting because he was neither a minister nor a circuit steward. Some delegates pointed out that there were several other people in the meeting who did not qualify in terms of that criterion (*Fikeni Papers*).⁸ Reverend D.D. Dabula referred the meeting to the order paper which extended the invitation to "ministers, circuit stewards and other prominent Methodists to attend the meeting". He then pointed out that, although Mr Lila was neither a minister nor a circuit steward, there was no criterion by which he could be denied the status of a prominent Methodist, if he perceived himself as such (*Oral sources*).

2.5.3 Mr Guzana on the "secret meetings"

Mr Guzana then challenged the ministers to tell the truth and declare their stand on the "secret meetings" which had been reported in the February 15 and 16 editions of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper. The reports had disclosed that there had been "secret meetings" of ministers who were for the "nationalisation" of the Methodist Church in Transkei.

Reverend Dabula responded by reminding the meeting that it had been convened to discuss a very serious matter and not to investigate "secret meetings" and should proceed with its valid agenda (*Oral sources*).

Although Mr Guzana did not pursue the matter any further, he did not abandon his witch hunt for the ministers who had attended the "secret meetings" and persisted in taunting the ministers throughout the meeting to declare how they felt about the "secret meetings" and whether they had attended. Mr Lila remained in the hall for the duration of the meeting.

2.5.4 Objectives of the meeting

Reverend Fikeni then reviewed the events leading up to the meeting of 21 February 1978, starting with the Prime Minister's press statement on 12 January 1978, the Methodist Church of South Africa's official reaction (see 2.2) and a report of the MCSA delegations to the Transkei Government on 26 January and 16 February 1978. Reverend Fikeni emphasised that the Prime Minister was adamant about introducing a Bill at the next Parliamentary session in February 1978 and was urgently awaiting the Church's reaction to his intentions.

2.5.5 Report on the 1977 Beuoni Conference

The Chairman then reported on the 1977 MCSA Conference debate on the issue of greetings. The report was substantially similar to the MCSA position statement in section 2.2. above.

2.5.6 The *Dimension* report

The questions of why the Church had not corrected the statement made by a reporter from *Dimension* and what the Church had done about the reporter were raised. It was pointed out that reporters are free to report what they regard as news as long as they complied with the rules of journalism (*Fikeni Papers*).

2.5.7 Rev. W.B.S. Gaba vs Rev. Dr E.K. Mgojo

After Rev. Fikeni called for comments Rev. Dr Mgojo suggested that the idea of forming the Methodist Church of Transkei should be rejected because, in his theological view, the idea of a church formed by the State was theologically unheard of, wrong and a sin.

Reverend Gaba was outraged at this and the first to respond:

Ungasifaki emgxobhozweni mfondini! (Don't push us into a quagmire!) The issue is not theological at all! This is an issue of administration. Do we cease to be Methodists if we become the Methodist Church of Transkei? What is the theological justification for having the Methodist Connexional Office in Durban served by an all-White staff? To me, the issue is very clear: it is the issue of Transkei independence. Come out clearly, all of you who are in the Republic of South Africa. Do you recognise the independence of Transkei or not? (*Oral sources*).

An uproar broke out as many appealed to Rev. Gaba. He protested and addressed the Chairman, "No, no, no. Mr Chairman, these people must come out clearly. We who are in Transkei are now in this mess because of Transkei independence ..." (*Oral sources*). It was also argued that faith, the Kingdom of God, Scripture, theology and church history were irrelevant to the issue and should therefore be put aside. The problem was that of administration (*Fikeni Papers*).

Against this view it was argued that the intended formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei could not be supported by Scripture, theology or any models of church history.

Church autonomy was not bad per se, provided the Methodists in Transkei asked for it if and when they were ready for it. The case of the Methodist Church of Zimbabwe, which was granted autonomy by the British Methodist Conference in 1977, was cited to illustrate the point. Church autonomy should therefore not be imposed by the State.

State sponsored autonomy would cripple the Church's witness as it would not be able to say "Thus says the Lord ...". Besides, a church created by the State would be denied fellowship with the rest of the Christian community (*Fikeni Papers*).

2.5.8 Resolutions

A suggestion was then made that formal resolutions be tabled. The first motion came from Mr Guzana:

In the light of the request from the Prime Minister of the Transkei for a reaction from the Church to his decision to ban the Methodist Church of South Africa and establish the Methodist Church of Transkei, this body sitting today (21/2/1978) decides that, as it is still part of the Methodist Church of South Africa, it cannot make a final decision and therefore refers this matter to Conference through Synod (*Fikeni Papers*).

He was seconded by Mr Jolobe. In support of this motion Mr Guzana maintained that Christians are part of the Church, which is the Body of Christ. We could not be chopped away without suffering the effects. Compartmentalisation of the Church along colour lines was scripturally unsupportable (*Fikeni Papers*).

The second motion came from Mr H.M. Canca, circuit steward of Osborn Circuit, who had moved the motion asking for Transkei independence in the Transkei Legislative Assembly (see 3.3.4.3): "I move that this meeting should accept the idea of creating the Methodist Church of Transkei". He was seconded by Rev. N. Jafta (*Fikeni Papers*). In support of his motion Mr Canca maintained that "it would be useless to oppose the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei as that would not change the decision of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to ban the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei. As an independent

state, Transkei needs its own Church" (*Fikeni Papers*).

A prolonged debate over the first motion followed. Reverend Gaba argued that Rev. Mbabane's amendment of Mr Guzana's motion (by adding the words "... as we are still part of the Methodist Church ... refer the matter to Conference through Synod") had made the first motion substantially the same as the second. The two motions could now be read together as follows:

We accept the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei in principle (Motion 2) and since we are still part of the Methodist Church of South Africa, we refer the matter to Conference through Synod (Motion 1) (*Oral sources*).

Accepting Rev. Gaba's reasoning, some members suggested it was not necessary to vote on the two motions but they should be read as one in the manner Rev. Gaba had suggested and then presented to the Prime Minister.

Both Mr Guzana and Rev. Mbabane rejected Rev. Gaba's reasoning and insisted on a vote on the motions. While Rev. Dandala was still pursuing the argument that the motions were substantially the same and that voting for either did not imply rejecting the other, the Chairman called for votes for motion 2. Mr Guzana hastily responded to Rev. Dandala by saying: "Mfundisi, this is quite simple. If you were in Buntingville [a reference to the 'secret meetings'], you have to vote for motion 2" (*Oral sources*).

The first motion (proposed by Mr Guzana) was carried by 70 votes to 40 (*Fikeni Papers*). Amidst considerable excitement, some delegates were heard to shout "Buntingville defeated!" and the meeting settled down with a great deal of difficulty as many of the delegates were still emotionally excited (*Oral sources*).

2.5.9 The Interim Committee

It was then decided to appoint an Interim Committee that would accompany the Chairman of the District whenever he was called by the Prime Minister. The committee consisted of

Revs F.H.T. Fikeni (Convenor), T.B. Mbabane (Secretary), E.K. Mgojo, T.Z.A. Bam and W.B.S. Gaba, and Messrs K.M.N. Guzana, J.N. Bam and H.M. Canca.

2.6 THE CLARKEBURY DISTRICT SPECIAL SYNOD, 21 FEBRUARY 1978

When the meeting of ministers and lay leaders (2.5) had ended, Reverend Fikeni went on to constitute a Ministerial Session of the Clarkebury District Special Synod. His reason for this special synod was that he had received a petition signed by nine ministers (Revs H. Dzingwe, A.S. Fadane, W.B.S. Gaba, P.P. Mjali, A.G. Mposelwa, R.D. Ntatu, J.N. Silwanyana, P.M. Waqu and E.S. Zihlangu (Dzingwe 1991) of the District demanding that he convene a District Special Synod to explain the suspension of three District ministers (Revs W. Mazule, N. Mrubata and W.C. Zweni) by the 1977 Methodist Annual Conference.

The main objectives of this Special Synod are not relevant to this study therefore only the schism will be considered. Mr C.S. Mda, Leader of the Opposition Party in the Transkei Parliament, said in Parliament that ministers who refused to submit to the discipline of their (Methodist) Church had forced the Prime Minister to ban their Church (*Daily Dispatch*, 16 June 1978). Makalima (1989) accepts this view, but the author does not (see 3.4.5).

At the Special Synod two senior ministers, Revs G.G.K. Madikiza and L.T. Nkamba, asked the Chairman to comment on the media disclosure of "secret meetings" in the District and Black Ministers' Consultation activities going on which sought to undermine his authority in the District. Reverend Fikeni angrily denounced the existence of the BMC in a District that was already under Black control. He pointed out that the BMC was a thorn in the flesh not only of the Clarkebury District but of the whole Church. But he did concede that, although the BMC had no official standing in the Church, its existence was well known.

Reverends Madikiza and Nkamba then denounced the BMC for meddling carelessly in serious church issues. They argued that the tone of the discussions earlier that day on the issue of the MCSA ban was evidence of this meddling.

2.7 THE ROLE OF THE BMC

At this point it is necessary to go back a few steps in order to explain why and how the BMC became controversial. After the meeting of 31 January 1978 some ministers of the Clarkebury District felt that the meeting had not treated the issue of the impending ban with the urgency it deserved. In addition, others felt having to wait for 21 days (from 31 January to 21 February 1978) to know the direction of events was unbearably long. They then requested the Clarkebury District BMC branch executive to convene a meeting where they could discuss the issue.

In preparation for that meeting, which was scheduled for 14 February 1978, the Clarkebury-Queenstown BMC executive decided to consult with Rev. Dr Mgojo, who was then the Secretary of the Connexional (national) BMC.

2.7.1 The BMC Executive visit to Rev. Dr Mgojo

A delegation, consisting of Revs D.D. Dabula, C.A.N. Bubesi and F. de Waal Mahlasela of the Queenstown District and W.B.S. Gaba and M.T. Lungu of the Clarkebury District, went to Pietermaritzburg on 8 February 1978.

The delegation was given a very cold reception by Dr Mgojo. Piecing together information from him and a certain Mr Ntloko, a Methodist lawyer (whom they met separately), the delegation gained a clear impression that the idea of the formation of an MCT was unacceptable to the two men. They were also informed that the MCSA was planning to send prominent Methodist theologians to the meeting on 21 February 1978 to guide the thinking of the meeting.⁹

These revelations raised some questions in the minds of the BMC delegation:

- (1) Was the decision to defer adopting a position on the matter so that the laity could have a decisive say in the issue (ie, the proposal made by Rev Mposelwa at the meeting on 31 January 1978 [see 2.4]) merely a pretext or a Trojan horse to bring in White theologians to guide the thinking of the Blacks?

(2) At what stage would Blacks have a right to decide on issues that affected them directly?

The delegation returned to Transkei angry and with the feeling that Rev Dr Mgojo had done an about-turn.¹⁰

2.7.2 The telegram banning the "foreigners"

In some way Chief George Matanzima (Minister of Justice) obtained this information and that was the background to his telegram banning all "foreigners" from attending the meeting on 21 February 1978. On 10 February 1978 he sent a telegram to Rev Fikeni, Chairman of the Clarkebury District, banning any foreigner from attending the meeting. As reported in *Dimension* (5 March 1978: 1), the telegram read "Prime Minister has directed that all church meetings of the Methodist Church in Transkei be for Transkeians only. Foreigners attending them will be dealt with."

This telegram caused waves of alarm among the Methodist hierarchy and many of the lay people. It was seen as an indication that the Transkei Government was determined to ban the MCSA. Reverend Hendricks, the President of the Conference, was the first to concede this possibility although he did cautiously point out that "it has to be honestly stated at this point that things have not gone as well as we had hoped. The situation is most unhappy and disturbing" (*Dimension*, 5 March 1978: 1).

The "foreigners" who were banned from the meeting were the MCSA President himself, any White ministers (including those stationed in the Umtata, Butterworth, Kokstad and Matatiele circuits) who were working in Transkei circuits and any Black ministers who were not Transkeian citizens. Since this telegram and its use of the term "foreigners" proved to be a decisive turning point in the process leading up to the schism, it will be dealt with in 6.4.

2.7.3 The Buntingville BMC meeting

This Clarkebury District BMC branch meeting was held in Buntingville on 14 February 1978

and was attended by 22 ministers¹¹ from the Clarkebury and Queenstown Districts. Reverend W.B.S. Gaba presided with Rev. M.T. Lungu recording. The meeting was intended as a think-tank to formulate a common stand among the ministers before meeting the lay leaders on 21 February 1978 (see 2.4). This was in pursuance of Rev. Gaba's suggestion that the ministers were the people who had to take the initiative in responding to the crisis; a suggestion which had been rejected by the meeting on 31 January 1978 (see 2.4). In support of this view Rev. Dabula pointed out that at the meeting on 21 February the lay people would outnumber the ministers by a ratio of 3:1.¹² It was thus imperative that the ministers have a strong strategy for the meeting since they were the group likely to be affected most by the impending ban.

Reverend Gaba raised the manner in which negotiations to settle the dispute between the Transkeian Government and the top leadership of the Methodist Church of South Africa had been conducted. He felt that what was needed was to send a man who was an expert in tribal protocol, like Nyikiny'ubhoxo (Rev. N. Jafta), to Paramount Chief Matanzima to say, "*Ngxe ... ngxe ... Mhlekezi*" (Sorry ... sorry ... Sir ...). This is based on the notion that you do not need to explain anything to a Chief; you simply apologise, even for wrongs you have not done.

Formal proposals on a common stand were then called for. Three views were expressed but there was no attempt to reconcile them or eliminate others in favour of adopting a common stand.

Reverend A.Z. Poyo expressed a view of pragmatic consideration: Since the Prime Minister was inflexible and would ban the Methodist Church of South Africa in spite of negotiations, there was no point in opposing the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei. Instead, the Transkeian Methodists should work for its formation and extract the best deal possible from the Transkeian Government in case they were abandoned by the Methodist Church of South Africa. This option could be achieved by negotiating the autonomy of the Transkeian Methodists with the Methodist Church of South Africa.

Others reacted to the suggestion of possible abandonment by the Methodist Church of South

Africa. They pointed out that, by intending to address the meeting of 21 February 1978, the Methodist Church of South Africa was signalling its unequivocal support for and interest in the Transkeian Methodists - a signal which had, unfortunately, been intercepted by the ban on "foreigners" (see 2.7.2).

Some members wanted to know how the Minister of Justice (who had decreed the ban) had come to know in the first place that the Methodist Church of South Africa would send a delegation to the meeting on 21 February 1978. The question was ruled out as a digression since nobody could answer it (see 3.3.4.5). But Mr Lila disclosed that the Transkei Security Branch already knew what had been said in Durban and who had been proposed to address the meeting on 21 February.¹³ Due to the far-reaching implications of this statement for the process of the schism, it will be covered in 3.3.4.5.

Reverend W.L. Pupuma expressed the view that it was not the task or responsibility of the Transkeian Methodists to resolve the dispute between the Transkeian Government and the Methodist Church of South Africa. The Transkeian Government should therefore proceed with their intention of banning the Methodist Church of South Africa and forming the Methodist Church of Transkei in whatever manner they deemed fit.

Reverends C.A.N. Bubesi and M.M.D. Mdolo were of the view that Transkeian Methodists should commit themselves and work for the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei in compliance with the Prime Minister's wishes. The issue of oppression within the Methodist Church of South Africa, as suggested by the Prime Minister, and the Methodist Church of South Africa's negotiations with the Transkeian Government were irrelevant.

Some members expressed reservations about the fact that the meeting on 21 February would be presided over by Rev. Fikeni, Chairman of the Clarkebury District, whereas the matter involved other Districts as well (see 2.5.1). It was then suggested and agreed that a supernumerary (retired) minister be proposed to preside over the meeting, not because he could be trusted more than the Chairman of the Clarkebury District but in order to protect Rev. Fikeni's name because the top executive of the Methodist Church of South Africa could suspect him of wanting to form his own Methodist Church of Transkei. Reverend F. de Waal

Mahlasela was then proposed and accepted (*BMC Minutes* 14 February 1978).

2.7.4 The *Daily Dispatch* reports

The *Daily Dispatch* of 15 February 1978 reported that there had been "secret meetings" in Clarkebury Institution (subsequently corrected by the February 16 edition, which stated that the meetings had, in fact, been held in Buntingville Institution on 14 February 1978) by the "nationalist" ministers, who supported the nationalisation of the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei. It also reported that the Chairman of the Clarkebury District, Rev. Fikeni, had been "ousted" and Rev. D.D. Dabula of Queenstown was to be the new Chairman of the new Transkei Church.

2.7.5 The Black Ministers' Consultation and the *Daily Dispatch* report

After the meeting on 21 February 1978 the Black Ministers' Consultation Executive met to consider the damage done to its image by the *Daily Dispatch* report. Its findings were that some of those who had attended the meeting in Buntingville had different expectations of the meeting. They had not come to formulate a common stand on Chief Matanzima's intention of banning their Church and replacing it with the Methodist Church of Transkei. Some ministers of the Clarkebury District had thought the meeting was a caucus meeting in preparation for the Clarkebury District Special Synod at which the issue of the suspended ministers would be raised. The general suspicion was that either of the suspended ministers who were disillusioned with the outcome of the meeting might have decided to damage the Black Ministers' Consultation by giving distorted information to the press. According to Rev. Zweni (1994), it was Rev. Mbabane who did the damage by sending Rev. A.V. Manitshana to the Buntingville meeting to be his "ear".¹⁴ Reverend Zweni had pinned his hopes of reinstatement on the Transkeian Methodists breaking away from the Methodist Church of South Africa. Reverend N. Mrubata, on the other hand, pinned his hopes on the Clarkebury District Black Ministers' Consultation exerting pressure on Rev. Fikeni at the Clarkebury District Special Synod. He was disappointed that the Black Ministers' Consultation meeting in Buntingville did not even mention the Special Synod.

The Black Ministers' Consultation decided to send a delegation to Rev. Fikeni, Chairman of the Clarkebury District, not to apologise but to explain to him what had been discussed in Buntingville, inform him of the constitution of a Black Ministers' Consultation branch in the Clarkebury District and, if possible, wean him from the Loyalists (who rejected the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei; see 2.5.8) and win him over to the viewpoint of the local Black Ministers' Consultation.

2.7.6 The Black Ministers' Consultation and Rev. Fikeni

The meeting was held in Mount Frere early in March 1978 and started on a very tense note. After hard and open discussion Rev. Fikeni seemed satisfied. The Black Ministers' Consultation delegation consisted of Revs Gaba, Lungu and Mjali from the Clarkebury District and Bubesi, Dabula and de Waal Mahlasela from the Queenstown District. Rev. Fikeni was also invited to attend the Black Ministers' Consultation branch meeting scheduled for 21 March 1978 as an observer to prevent any further misunderstanding or disinformation (*Oral sources*).

2.7.7 Black Ministers' Consultation meeting: Lay Centre, Umtata on 21 March 1978

Twenty-six ministers attended this meeting, which had been called to consider:

- (1) the National Black Ministers' Consultation Conference in Bloemfontein, 29-31 May 1978
- (2) the local situation.

A welcome was extended to Rev. Fikeni, Chairman of the Clarkebury District, and appreciation expressed for his attending the meeting as an observer. In response to the castigation of the branch (and its activities) by the Clarkebury District Special Synod on 21 February, the right of the Black Ministers' Consultation branch to address the issue of the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei was firmly restated.

The question of whether to send a delegation to the National Black Ministers' Consultation Conference in Bloemfontein on 29 to 31 May 1978 was discussed. It was finally decided not

to send a delegation although members could attend as individuals. On the local situation it was noted that the Methodist Connexional Office (MCO) had frozen car loans to ministers in the Transkei.¹⁵ In reaction to this development, it was suggested that circuits in Transkei freeze paying their assessments to the MCO.

Reverend Fikeni then informed the meeting that the MCO was already sorting out the question of liabilities, assets and investments in Transkei circuits should the Methodist Church of Transkei be formed. He urged the circuits to continue paying their monthly assessments to the MCO. He also informed the meeting that he would be attending the Chairmen's Meeting in Durban on 7 April 1978. He wanted to know the opinion of the people 'on the spot' on the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei, in anticipation of such a question from the Chairmen's Meeting.

One member responded with the question: If the MCO was already working on the assumption that the Methodist Church of Transkei was going to be formed by freezing car loans for ministers working in Transkei circuits and withholding payment of the hostel accounts,¹⁶ why should the Transkeian ministers work on a different assumption?

Reverend Mahlasela was more direct and to the point. He moved that the Black Ministers' Consultation branch commit itself and work for the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei. Reverend H. Dzingwe seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted.

In support of this position Rev. B.B. Mazwana pointed out that the top executive of the Methodist Church of South Africa had never even consulted the people on the spot, but were satisfied with discussing the issue of the ban outside Transkei. Reverend Fikeni contradicted this by saying that the MCO had intended addressing the meeting on 21 February 1978 but had been barred from attending by the ban on "foreigners". To this a member replied that that was no excuse as the MCO could have changed the venue to Kokstad, a border town in the Republic of South Africa which also falls within Clarkebury District.

Reverend Mahlasela then suggested that the Interim Committee appointed on 21 February 1978

(see 2.5.9) be replaced by the Steering Committee, which would work for the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei. This was seconded by Rev. W.B.S. Gaba and it was decided to table this proposal at the forthcoming meeting convened by the Interim Committee (*BMC Minutes* 21 March 1978).

2.8 PLENARY SESSION OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE, 12 APRIL 1978

This meeting was convened by Rev. Fikeni in his capacity as Convener of the Interim Committee appointed on 21 February 1978 (see 2.5.9). The aim of the meeting was to brief ministers and lay people on developments since their last meeting on 21 February.

After the meeting had been formally opened and constituted, some members requested confirmation or denial of the rumours that the Interim Committee had had a sharp and embarrassing internal disagreement at the Chairmen's Meeting in Durban on 7 April 1978. According to the rumours, the Interim Committee allegedly reported to the Chairmen's Meeting that the Black Ministers' Consultation meeting of 21 March (see 2.7.7) had been convened by Rev. Fikeni in his capacity as Chairman of the District and attended by over fifty ministers of the Clarkebury District. It was further alleged that when Rev. Fikeni disputed the report, a member of the Interim Committee (identified by Makalima [1989:12] as Rev. Tom Mbabane) accused Rev. Fikeni of "telling lies"!

It was confirmed that "unfortunately" the rumours were true. The reaction of the meeting was dismay and anger.

The meeting then accused the Interim Committee of having exceeded its terms of reference by:

- (1) arranging a meeting with the Prime Minister as the meeting of 21 February 1978 had appointed the Interim Committee only to accompany Rev. Fikeni whenever he was called by the Prime Minister
- (2) going to Durban to attend the Chairmen's Meeting on 7 April 1978 as this had not even been mentioned in the meeting on 21 February 1978 (*Oral sources*).

The Interim Committee was then thanked and dissolved (*Fikeni Papers*).

Reporting on the meeting of 7 April 1978, Rev. Fikeni said that the Chairmen's Meeting had decided to adopt the Interim Committee as the official link between the top executive of the Methodist Church of South Africa and the Methodists in Transkei. This was no longer of any consequence as it had been discredited and dissolved by the body which had created it.

From the report it was clear that the Chairmen of Districts were very negative about the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei although Mr Gorven, the Connexional Lay-Treasurer, had suggested at the same meeting that the Methodist Church of South Africa should work with a pragmatic attitude towards the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei by constitutional means. His suggestion was that the Clarkebury District Synod should forward a motion to the October 1978 Annual Conference requesting autonomy for the Methodist Church of Transkei, which would comprise all the circuits falling within the "State" of Transkei.

This seemed to be the position adopted by the Chairmen's Meeting of 7 April 1978 and was accepted by the Transkeian meeting on 12 April 1978 with great excitement and appreciation.

It was decided that any Circuit Quarterly Meeting could send a motion to the Clarkebury District Synod requesting an autonomous Methodist Church of Transkei. In the meantime the Methodists in Transkei should prepare themselves for the new church (*Oral sources*).

This meeting, having dissolved the Interim Committee, decided to replace it with the Lindikhaya Steering Committee (LSC) - an idea which was first mooted by the Black Ministers' Consultation meeting on 21 March 1978 (see 2.7.7). The word "lindikhaya" means "homeguard" - to safeguard and protect the interests of Transkeians. Four subcommittees of the Lindikhaya Steering Committee were appointed to deal with (1) Finance, (2) Constitution, (3) Theology and (4) Administration of the Methodist Church of Transkei, if it should be formed. The subcommittees were charged with the task of the formation of a separate church (*Wilkins Papers*).

Most of those who had been members of the (dissolved) Interim Committee were again elected to the Lindikhaya Steering Committee (LSC), some as convenors of the subcommittees. This was probably an attempt to say that the Interim Committee had been rejected for what it had done but its members, as individuals, still enjoyed the confidence of the meeting. Reverend Fikeni was elected Convenor and Rev. Tom Mbabane, Secretary - yet another attempt to reconcile them despite their differences.

2.9 THE MCSA CHAIRMEN'S MEETING, 2 MAY 1978

As Chairman of the Clarkebury District, Rev. Fikeni attended this meeting in Durban at which he reported that the Prime Minister was still adamant that the Methodist Church of Transkei be established and would not wait beyond the October 1978 Conference.

He advised that the Church take the initiative and grant the Methodists in Transkei autonomy so that fellowship between the Methodist Church of South Africa and the Methodist Church of Transkei be maintained since it would be unChristian for the Methodist Church of Transkei to compete with the Methodist Church of South Africa in the Republic of South Africa. Reverend Fikeni seemed to have anticipated such competition in view of Chief Matanzima's insistence on 31 January 1978 that the Methodist Church of Transkei have circuits even in the Republic (see 2.2). In his view, a church initiative would preempt any such development.

Far from treating the matter as urgent, however, the Chairmen's response was to stick to the normal ecclesiastical procedure by waiting for the Clarkebury District Synod resolution, which would be tabled before the October Conference.

Reverend Fikeni also appealed for financial assistance for the LSC. The President, Rev. Abel Hendricks, ruled out any rights of the LSC to such benefits but the Secretary of the Conference, Rev. Cyril Wilkins, promised to look into the matter.

2.10 THE LINDIKHAYA STEERING COMMITTEE (LSC)

The LSC subcommittees worked on their respective assignments and met twice: on 19 April and 12 May 1978. On 24 May 1978 they submitted their reports and recommendations to the LSC Plenary Session, the proceedings of which will be outlined.

2.10.1 The First Plenary Session of the LSC, 24 May 1978

This meeting was held at the Ncambedlana Lay Centre, Umtata for the purpose of considering the reports of the LSC subcommittees.

Reverend Fikeni, as Convenor, presided over the meeting. Immediately after the meeting had been constituted Rev. Mbabane resigned as Secretary of the LSC and Rev. M.T. Lungu was appointed to replace him. The reports of the subcommittees were then tabled.

2.10.2 Administration subcommittee: Rev. M.M.V. Njongwe

The subcommittee recommended that the Methodist Church of Transkei be established in the Transkei only and no MCT circuits outside Transkei. However, if for any reason, Transkeians outside Transkei needed the pastoral ministry of the MCT, they would not be denied that right. The status of such engagement (outside Transkei) would be defined and approved by the Conference of the MCT (MCT, *Laws and Discipline* 1978:6). This recommendation was unanimously approved and adopted.

2.10.3 Finance subcommittee: Rev. W.B.S. Gaba

From the meeting with the MCO in Durban on 25 April 1978 it emerged that there were no monies belonging to Transkei as such. Monies were only due to the ministers as individuals in the form of pensions and some benefits.

The Finance subcommittee noted with shock and dismay that the Clarkebury District alone owed about R35 000,00 out of a total of R80 000,00 due in unpaid assessments for the eight

Districts of the Methodist Church of South Africa! The subcommittee had been informed that, should the Methodist Church of Transkei be formed, it would get its share of the capital account less any debts owing in arrears on assessments and loans.

The meeting recommended that circuits pay their assessments to the MCO and that any amount deducted by the MCO of the Methodist Church of South Africa in lieu of debts be reclaimed by the MCO of the Methodist Church of Transkei from the defaulting Transkei circuits.

2.10.4 Theology subcommittee: Rev. M.T. Lungu

The *Preamble* (see Appendix IV) to the Constitution of the Methodist Church of Transkei stated categorically that no "new" Church was envisaged in the sense of different doctrines, practices and procedures. The Methodists in Transkei would have to remain in Transkei and continue witnessing for Christ in the Methodist tradition and practices they knew even in this new situation of being cut off from the Methodist Church of South Africa.

The subcommittee also emphasised that it would be more Christian for the Transkeian Methodist ministers to remain in Transkei to continue exercising their pastoral ministry to the Transkeian Methodists than to seek appointments in the Republic of South Africa to prove their loyalty to the Methodist Church of South Africa.

After much discussion, the *Preamble* was finally adopted.

2.10.5 The Constitution of the Methodist Church of Transkei

Reverend Fikeni then distributed copies of the *Draft Constitution* of the Methodist Church of Transkei. Some reservations were expressed about this step since the LSC had no mandate to draw up a constitution for the Methodist Church of Transkei, which had not been approved by the Methodist Church of South Africa.

However, it was pointed out that the LSC had acted within the mandate of the meeting of

12 April 1978 (see 2.8) because looking at the constitutional, financial, administrative and theological implications of forming a Methodist Church of Transkei meant drawing up its constitution and that was within the main charge of preparing for the new Church. Reverend Gaba challenged anyone to show him the section in the *Laws and Discipline* of the Methodist Church of South Africa dealing with forming a new church. He also asked whether a committee drafting the Constitution of the Methodist Church of Transkei would be constitutional simply because it had been appointed by Hendricks and whether such a Constitution (of the MCT) would be valid and constitutional simply because it had been drawn up by Hendricks and the Methodist Connexional Office. No answers were necessary to these rhetorical questions (*Oral sources*). A printed copy of the *Draft Constitution* was then read. It was identical to the *Laws and Discipline* of the Methodist Church of South Africa except that all references to South Africa had been deleted and replaced with references to the Transkei.

Some members felt that this was too simplistic an approach because there was much that needed to be changed in the *Laws and Discipline* of the Methodist Church of South Africa. Others opposed this view arguing that the object of the whole exercise was not to constitute a "Reformed" Methodist Church but to continue the Methodist Church of South Africa as it was known but only under a different name, namely the Methodist Church of Transkei (*LSC Minutes* 24 May 1978).

The *Draft Constitution* was finally accepted and it was agreed that it would be presented to the Synod of the Clarkebury District on 9 June 1978. The Synod would then forward it to the October 1978 Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa together with the motion requesting an autonomous Methodist Church of Transkei.

2.11 THE UNDESIRABLE ORGANISATIONS ACT, 9 OF 1978

On 26 May 1978 the Transkei Government declared the Methodist Church of South Africa an undesirable organisation in accordance with the Undesirable Organisations Act, 9 of 1978 (see Appendix V).

On the same day the Prime Minister released a press statement in which he said:

The declaration of the Methodist Church as an undesirable organisation is not aimed at the ordinary Transkeian members of the Church, but at its governing body based in South Africa (*Daily Dispatch* May 27, 1978).

In the same press statement he urged Methodist congregations in Transkei to continue with normal church services and other church activities (*Daily Dispatch* May 27, 1978).

Reverend Fikeni also released a press statement saying that he had been

"assured in his capacity as Chairman of the controlling body of the Methodist Church in Transkei that there would be no government interference in normal Church activities"

and further

"... the MCSA has not been declared an 'unlawful' organisation but only an 'undesirable' organisation. I therefore appeal to all (Methodist) members to remain calm and to continue with Church services and activities as before"

and also announced

"... the meeting of all Transkeian Methodist ministers in and around Transkei, circuit stewards and lay representatives scheduled for 9 June will now be held on June 2 at the Lay Centre, Umtata. The declaration of the Church as an undesirable organisation will be discussed at the meeting" (*Daily Dispatch* May 27, 1978).

If it were "unlawful", its activities would be a contravention of the law and it (or at least its members) would be liable for legal prosecution. Being "undesirable" meant it was not liked or looked upon with favour and its existence was a threat to some interests. As for the meeting mentioned in the press statement, no meeting other than the Synod of the Clarkebury

District had been planned for 9 June 1978 (see 2.10.5).

Reverend Abel Hendricks, the President of the Methodist Conference, issued a statement deploring the "banning" of the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei:

The banning of a church which has openly proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ for over a century in the Transkei, and which has provided the backbone of education, is one which must be rejected in the strongest terms" (*Daily Dispatch* May 27, 1978).

He went on to say, "But we shall not despair at the unity of the church being ruptured by a political action. The Transkei is not the first government to silence the church and it undoubtedly won't be the last... 26 May should be remembered as a sad day in the history of Transkei and South African Methodism."

To the Methodists in Transkei he said, "Be assured that whatever may be the political actions or manipulations, you are in our prayers as you yourselves struggle to understand the ways and actions of men. Man in his political actions may issue decrees banning churches. But in that we proclaim God as the ultimate authority, let me say I do not accept a political ban on our church" (*Daily Dispatch*, 27 May 1978).

Archbishop Bill Burnett of Cape Town said, "Fellow Christians must be disturbed by the decision of any government to declare part of the Church of God an undesirable organisation. I know of no action of the Methodist Church which could have deserved so severe a response from the state" (*Daily Dispatch*, 27 May 1978).

Archbishop Denis Hurley of the Catholic Church said he did not understand how one could ban a church and thought it unlikely that the ban could be enforced (*Daily Dispatch*, 27 May 1978).

2.12 SECOND PLENARY SESSION OF THE LSC: FORMATION OF THE MCT

This meeting on 2 June 1978 at the Lay Centre in Umtata was convened by Rev. Fikeni to

consider the implications of the Transkeian Government's declaration of the Methodist Church of South Africa as an undesirable organisation.

On the same day the Transkeian Government published the *Gazette* banning the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei (see Appendix VI). After the formal opening of the meeting Rev. Fikeni read the *Gazette* and then pointed out that, under the conditions imposed by the ban, the meeting was illegal unless it regarded itself simply as a meeting of individuals of like minds. He then suggested that the Methodist Church of Transkei be formed because "it was better than having no Methodist Church in Transkei" (*Daily Dispatch*, June 3, 1978, *Dimension*, July 2, 1978: 2). He himself had ceased to be the Chairman of the Clarkebury District of the Methodist Church of South Africa but was presiding over the meeting as the Convenor of the LSC.

Reverend W. Pupuma moved that those willing to form the new Church should sign their names and move up to the stage in the hall. This was seconded by Rev. O.K. Mbele. Mr T.N. Bam moved that anyone not willing to join the new Church should leave the hall. This was seconded by Mr L.N. Nkukwana (*LSC Minutes 2 June 1978*).

At that point Revs A. Fadane, T. Mbabane, H.Z. Mbuli, A.G. Mposelwa, O. Ngcatshe, P. Shone and J.N. Silwanyana left the hall protesting (*Dimension*, July 2, 1978: 2). (A complete list of the ministers who refused to join the Methodist Church of Transkei and those who joined is given in Appendix VII.) It was pointed out to them that there was nothing they could do because all the business that would be conducted concerned only the Methodist Church of Transkei since the Methodist Church of South Africa had been banned (*LSC Minutes 2 June 1978*).

The signing of the register of the new Church was a very emotional experience. The *Daily Dispatch* reported that the event was characterised by "exuberance" and had a "theatrical touch". Reverend Fikeni, who was "deadly serious about the whole business" summed up the anxieties of many when he said, "I pray that this is not going to hurt anyone" (*Daily Dispatch*, June 3, 1978). As the ministers signed the register they gave expression to their feelings in remarks like "... we have nothing to lose ... we shall start afresh ... this looks like

a play to me ...". One minister described his personal feelings as he signed the register as "the pain of cutting the umbilical cord" with tears running down his cheeks (*Oral sources*).

The meeting proceeded to appoint Rev. F. de Waal Mahlasela as President of the Methodist Church of Transkei and Rev. Wellington B.S. Gaba as Secretary of the Conference and other top officials of the new Church. It was then decided that a full Conference of the Methodist Church of Transkei would be held on June 4, 1978 to complete the constituting of the Methodist Church of Transkei and set the machinery of church administration in full motion.

2.13 REACTIONS TO THE FORMATION OF THE MCT

In 2.11 it was pointed out that some church leaders reacted to the declaration of the MCSA as an undesirable organisation as if it were a banning decree. When the banning order was ultimately proclaimed, the reactions of some people focused only on the formation of the MCT and categorised the Transkeian Methodist ministers in terms of loyalty and disloyalty to the MCSA.

2.13.1 Rev. Abel Hendricks

Commenting only on the formation of the MCT, Rev. Hendricks said that the new Church (MCT) was an "ecclesiastical disaster" and elaborated on that by declaring it "a disaster for those ministers who have elected to join it and thus resign their ministry in the Methodist Church of SA as, in the short term at least, the new Church - created by pressure and action of the political state - had no hope of recognition by world Methodism" (*Dimension*, July 1978: 1). He also said it was a disaster for "the countless ordinary Methodists in Transkei who will be confused at the mind-boggling non-theological actions of some of their ministers and some of their lay leaders who have cut their ties with Methodism in Southern Africa" (*Dimension*, July 1978: 1).

He then called on the new Church to reconsider its position "in the interests of Christian unity and of theological and Biblical truth; in the interest of obeying God rather than man" and commended the seventeen ministers who had refused to join the new Church,

saying "it is encouraging that as many as 17 men have remained loyal" (*Dimension*, July 1978: 1).

2.13.2 Rev Dr Charles Villa-Vicencio

In an article, "Transkei Church - a cry for liberation or heresy?" in *Dimension*, August 6, 1978, Villa-Vicencio suggested that the creation of the MCT was more probably a symptom of the rise of Bantustanism than of Black nationalism or an expression of Black discontent with dominant White leadership of the Church. Reacting to Rev. Hendricks' finding it "encouraging that as many as 17 men have remained loyal", Villa-Vicencio asked why "it was not equally noted that at least twice this number have not remained loyal" (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978). In fact, they were three times that number (see Appendix VII).

Villa-Vicencio then examines the significance of being "loyal" to one's church and concludes by saying that this is sometimes overrated - Luther was not loyal to the church of his ordination and it is a little controversial as to just how loyal Wesley was to Anglicanism. He then suggests that the most important thing is loyalty to Christ the Lord (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978).

This issue will be discussed in chapter 4.

2.13.3 Rev. Wilfred Hartley

Reverend Hartley was an ex-President of the MCSA (1965) and former Chairman of the Queenstown District under which a section of Transkei fell. He took up the debate on loyalty and advised calmness and understanding of "those ministers whom some would call disloyal to the Methodist Church" (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978: 10).

He also pointed out that he himself would have agonised over whether to stay with "my people who would need my ministry more than ever. Let us not therefore, by implication, suggest that ministers who have stayed on in Transkei are not loyal. Let us continue to treat them as brethren who see the Kingdom of God as something very much greater than the

Methodist Church of South Africa" (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978: 10).

2.13.4 Rev. Dr D.W. Bandey

Dr Bandey, too, advised calmness and pointed out that the critiques of the events in Transkei were concerned with what people in Transkei had done and had not thought of what God could do in Transkei. He personally was surprised that "anyone who knew Transkei was surprised at the move towards an autonomous Methodist Church there" (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978: 10).

He then advised calmness and patience and watching God working at His own speed in His own way in Transkei, and that the new Church (MCT) be given chance "to recover from the shock of its premature birth". It was time to regain poise and see what God intended doing through the "disloyal ministers" in Transkei. The MCT could be a success story because it "had the Bible as the basis for Christian teaching and Jesus Christ as its Lord; there will be prayers and worship as sincere as anywhere in the world" (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978: 10).

Since the idea of loyalty expressed in these (and other) responses was so crucial in the 1978 Methodist schism, the issue will be taken up in the conflictual analysis of the schism in chapter 4 of this study.

2.14 POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF THE EARLY BAN

When Chief George Matanzima, Minister of Justice, was asked why Transkei had taken that sudden action when the Church (Transkeian Methodists) were expected to seek autonomy by constitutional means later in the year (see 2.10.5), he replied that it had been necessitated by certain (undisclosed) circumstances. When pressed further for the Government's response to a telegram from the MCSA requesting him to reconsider his action of banning the MCSA, he said that would depend on whether the Church had reconsidered its decision not to recognise Transkei (*Daily Dispatch* June 3, 1978).

Any or all of the following could have been the undisclosed "certain circumstances":

2.14.1 Actions of the Transkeian Methodists

When asked in England by the Ecumenical Council of the British Council of Churches why the Transkeian Government had banned the MCSA, Mr Digby Koyana, Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that "the Government's action against the Methodist Church of South Africa was motivated by Transkei's Methodists" (*Daily Dispatch* July 14, 1978). This could either have been a diplomatic trick to save face or else he was referring to specific actions that the Transkeian Methodists had taken. Here the following facts should be considered:

Although the nationalists favoured the formation of the MCT, there was no intention of breaking away from the MCSA. They were satisfied that the Conference would accept a Synod resolution from the Clarkebury District Synod.

However, fed by rumours, there was speculation amongst the Transkeian Methodists that the Transkeian ministers in the loyalist bloc had resigned from the Lindikhaya Steering Committee because they would, in any case, be brought back by the MCSA to lead the MCSA sponsored MCT. These fears were strengthened by the rumours that the MCSA was planning to transfer some ministers out of Transkei, especially those who were in the Lindikhaya Steering Committee. The rumours could not easily be dismissed, especially after Rev. Hendricks, President of Conference, issued a strong statement on 29 May 1978 challenging the Transkeian ministers to decide one way or another where they stood. He also stated that the Church would no longer continue to tolerate people who hunted with the hounds while running with the foxes (Makalima 1989:13).

In the light of these developments the Lindikhaya Steering Committee, which met on the evening of the same day, declared themselves an "underground" MCT. This move was meant to pre-empt two possible developments should the MCSA be banned before the MCT could be constituted. First, the move was aimed at preventing the MCSA from transferring its properties in Transkei to another church to pre-empt expropriation by the Transkeian Government. Secondly, it was aimed at preventing another church, say, for instance, the Bantu Methodist Church in Transkei, from suddenly reconstituting itself as a Methodist Church of Transkei in order to inherit properties expropriated from the MCSA.

This action (of forming an “underground” MCT) was conveyed to Chief George Matanzima on 30 May 1978. This was after his speech of 27 May 1978 therefore this development could not have been part of the “certain circumstances” to which he referred. However, as the MCSA was banned on 2 June 1978, one cannot altogether dismiss the possibility that the formation of the “underground” MCT on 29 May 1978 could have had a bearing on that development. Moreover, this could also explain the coincidence of the meeting of the Transkeian Methodists and the gazetting of the ban on the same day, 2 June 1978.

2.14.2 Political defections

Another possibility is that the undisclosed circumstances precipitating the ban had to do with the political tension in Transkei since March 1978. The ruling Transkei National Independence Party had lost some members through the defection of its members in Eastern Pondoland. Some members of Matanzima's TNIP broke away and formed their own political party, the Transkei National Progressive Party (T.N.P.P.) on 21 March 1978. By April 1978 this party had grown to 16 members under the leadership of Mr. C.S. Mda (Streek and Wicksteed 1980: 56).

It could be that the Matanzimas felt that they should reduce the political tension in Transkei by quickly disposing of the church tension by banning the MCSA since they were committed to the formation of the MCT rather than waiting for the October Conference.

2.14.3 The Thembu feud

Besides the defections in Eastern Pondoland, another possible direct cause of the ban could have been the political tension due to a feud between Paramount Chief Matanzima of Western Thembuland and Paramount Chief Sabata Dalindyebo of Thembuland. This feud dragged on until 1979.

Paramount Chief Sabata Dalindyebo strongly opposed the homelands policy. He was charged with undermining the dignity of the State President (Paramount Chief Matanzima) and found guilty. He was deposed and fled to Lusaka where he later died (Streek & Wicksteed

1980:308-334). His remains were brought back to Transkei in 1990 and reinterred in his Great Place. Perhaps the Matanzimas felt that the church tension was opening another front, which could possibly cause more instability, and therefore decided to ban the MCSA quickly to reduce tension.

2.14.4 The Transkei Marriage Act , 21 of 1978

The final possibility is that the "undisclosed circumstances" leading to the ban could be related to the issue of polygamy. The *Sunday Times* of June 4, 1978 declared that the secret of Kaiser's banned church was a bid to force a polygamy law on the Methodists. The ban on the MCSA was to be used "to force Methodist ministers remaining Transkei to accept polygamy ... legalising polygamy will serve to rationalise Chief Matanzima's own position. He has three wives and is a Methodist lay preacher" (*Sunday Times* 4 June 1978).

According to the article, "confirmation that the polygamy issue is the reason behind the church banning" came from an official close to Chief Matanzima and from the Methodist Church President, Rev. Abel Hendricks, who said that the Methodist Church officers in Transkei had told him that the recognition of polygamy lay behind the banning (*Sunday Times*, 4 June 1978).

This Marriage Act was passed in May 1978. It does not explain why the MCSA was banned but it could explain why Chief Matanzima did not wait for the formation of the MCT in October of the same year by constitutional means. It is the researcher's belief that the key reason behind the ban remains the issue of the recognition of the independence of Transkei.

The Marriage Act had the potential to provoke a strong reaction from the churches because it supported polygamy. According to the *Manual: Solemnization and Registration of Marriages* (1978:2), article 17 of the Marriage Act states that

A male person may contract a customary marriage -

(a) if he is a single person (i.e. not a party to any subsisting civil or customary marriage); OR

(b) if he is a party to any subsisting customary marriage or civil marriage *out*

of community of property.

In order to contain such opposition, the Transkeian Government might have felt it expedient to ban the MCSA in Transkei quickly because it had the largest following and could therefore mount a serious challenge to the Act.

The factors as outlined from 2.14.1 to 2.14.4 may have combined to move the Transkeian Government actually to ban the MCSA (as threatened in the press statement of 12 January 1978) rather than wait for the Church to form the MCT by constitutional means.

2.15 PERSECUTION OF THE "REBEL" MINISTERS

The June 10, 1978 edition of *Imvo ZabaNtsundu* used the term "rebel" to describe the seventeen ministers (whom the Methodist Church of South Africa called "Loyalists") who rejected the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei. Different reasons were given for their rejection of the new Church. Reverend T.B. Mbabane claimed that their "rebellion" against the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei was governed by faith while another, who wished to remain anonymous, held that their concern centred on four main issues, namely whether the new Church would be able to pay the salaries and the pensions of its ministers, educate their children, and accommodate all Transkeian Methodist ministers who might be forced to come back to Transkei from the Republic of South Africa (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, June 10, 1978):

In the process of the transition from the Methodist Church of South Africa to the Methodist Church of Transkei, there were some unpleasant incidents between the Transkei Police and some of the ministers occasioned by the ministers withdrawing large sums of Church money from the bank and removing church property such as curtains, items of furniture and vehicles with the intention of taking them to the Methodist Church of South Africa in the Republic of South Africa. Those who were wardens of the hostels, except Rev. J.N. Silwanyana, withdrew the money from the banks (before the Transkei Government froze all the Methodist bank accounts) so that they could feed the students in the hostels (Silwanyana 1993).

Reverend Amos S. Fadane was arrested by the Transkei Police for saying in Kokstad that Transkei was a police state (Fadane 1992). Reverend O.B. Ngcatshe was summoned to the office of the Prime Minister, who persuaded or pressurised him to remain in Transkei (Streek & Wicksteed 1980:280; *Dimension* July 6, 1978). Reverend P.C. Shone was served with a deportation order and escorted by the Transkei Police to the Kei River border post (Streek & Wicksteed 1980:280). The case of Rev. Mbabane has been considered in section 1.7.2.

2.16 CONCLUSION

From the above narrative description of the Methodist schism in Transkei, it is clear that, although the dispute was initially between the Transkeian Government and the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Transkeian Methodists eventually played the decisive role. It is also clear that they themselves held different views on a number of issues.

The Methodist schism in Transkei in its broader political and ecclesial context, its nature in relation to other schisms in the broader South African Christian tradition and, finally, the conflict of the different loyalties which determined the role played by the different parties will be analysed in the following chapters on the basis of the content of this chapter.

ENDNOTES

1. The designation "top executive" will be used throughout this study to refer to the President of the Conference in council with the Secretary of the Conference and the Chairmen of Districts.
2. For the WCC's views on the "independence" of Transkei see 3.3.4.3.
3. Reverend F.H.T. Fikeni was the Chairman of the Clarkebury District at the time. His presiding over the meeting became contentious because two other Districts (Queenstown and the Kimberley and Bloemfontein Districts) were also affected by the ban (see 2.7.3 and Appendix III).
4. This was, in fact, incorrect since the Union Parliament had passed The Methodist Church of South Africa Act (Private Act 12 of 1932), uniting the three Methodist Churches in South Africa, the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa, the Transvaal Missions and the Primitive Methodist Missions (*Laws and Discipline* 1992: 11-12).
5. This was a reference to King Henry VIII of England who broke away from the Roman Catholic Church to establish the Church of England in 1534.

6. This was a reference to hymn No. 262 in the Methodist Xhosa hymn book which is very popular in the Young Men's Guild (a Methodist men's association for evangelism).

7. This was a Black caucus within the Methodist Church of South Africa formed by Rev. E.N. Baartman and Rev. Dr E.K. Mgojo in 1975 to act as a pressure group challenging the racist practices of the MCSA. This forum was originally known as the Black Ministers' Consultation (BMC). In the face of the apartheid system the MCSA declared in 1958 that it was a "one and undivided church." This policy statement has, since then, been reaffirmed by all the subsequent Conferences of the MCSA. Black Methodists have, ever since, wanted to see this policy statement translated into practice in the face of the obvious discriminatory practices within a church which had declared itself non-racial (see Mbangula 1986:90). The awakening of Black Methodists to the injustices of the apartheid system in general may be attributed to Rev Alex Boraine, who was the General Secretary of the Christian Education and Youth Department from 1964 to 1971. Dr Boraine focused on the broader South African way of life and was once embarrassed by the Prime Minister of South Africa, Mr B.J. Vorster, who rebutted his challenge to the apartheid system by pointing out to him the racial inequalities within the Methodist Church (Balía 1991:8). The programme of focusing on the MCSA was actually initiated by one of Dr Boraine's youth field workers, Rev Ernest Baartman, who ultimately succeeded him as General Secretary. Rev Baartman invited Black Methodist ministers to a consultation in May 1975 in Bloemfontein. This consultation was formally constituted as the Black Ministers' Consultation (BMC). Rev. Baartman was elected as chairman and Rev. Dr Mgojo as secretary. In 1978 it was renamed the Black *Methodist* Consultation in order to accommodate the laity. In 1980 membership was opened to Black women as well. The BMC conferences were at that time usually held in Bloemfontein, during May each year to review and reflect on the decisions of the previous Methodist Annual Conference. In September each year another conference was held to strategise for issues that would arise at the forthcoming MCSA Conference in October. The main programme of the BMC was to "conscientise" Black ministers on the leadership roles they should play in a non-racial church. Black Consciousness and Black Theology were the chief inspiration of the BMC. The BMC believed that political conscientisation was a legitimate church programme and therefore "Black sermons should germinate political consciousness so that our people are led to take relevant action in a local situation" (Balía 1991:89). On the practical level the BMC sought to identify the power bases of the MCSA and these were the Connexional Secretariat and the Chairmen of Districts. The BMC adopted a policy of canvassing for Black candidates as heads of Departments, e.g. Missionary, Youth, etc. whenever a vacancy occurred. It also noted that "the position of Chairman was vested with much power in the Methodist Church and the BMC was convinced that Black members were not being faithfully served by White Chairmen who have White interests at heart, and that the Methodist system was perceived as White, Western and Capitalist" (Balía 1991). There was also the observation that the Chairmen of Districts were always White and the deputy-chairmen always Black. The 1977 BMC Conference took a resolution that no Black ministers should accept nomination to these token positions. It also recommended that each District should form a District BMC. The Clarkebury District BMC was constituted on 24 September, 1977. The following committee was elected: Chairman: Rev. P.P. Mjali; Secretary: Rev. W.B.S. Gaba; Other members: Revs. M.T. Lungu, A. Fadane and H.M. Dandala (provisional, since he was on study leave at the time).

8. There were many people who attended the meeting who did not belong to any of the invited categories, i.e. either ministers, circuit stewards or "prominent Methodists." For example, there were some members of the Security Police and some young people working for the Black People's Programme based at the Ncambedlana Lay Training Centre where the meeting was being held.

9. The people who were delegated by the "top executive" to attend the meeting were Rev. Dr D.W. Bandey and Rev. Dr D.G.L. Cragg. They did not attend, however, because of the ban on foreigners (Cragg 1995).

10. Rev. Dr E.K. Mgojo (1995) states that he never supported the formation of the MCT. The perception existed among some Transkeian Methodists, however, that he had been positive about the idea at the meeting of 31 January, 1978. This perception was probably based on his words at the end of the meeting, when he was asked to thank the Prime Minister (see 2.3).

11. Rev. R.D. Ntatu (1991) states that there had been people going around in the Clarkebury District urging ministers to attend the Buntingville meeting and that failure to attend would be regarded as an indication that they were not "K.D.'s friends."

12. Reverend Dabula based his calculation on the fact that each circuit had two circuit stewards and added to that number the lay people who were members of various Synod committees. But he overlooked the fact that ministers appointed in the Republic of South Africa would not come with lay people, which would reduce the ratio.

13. Mr M.V.Lila was a government official and therefore had access to such information.

14. Rev. Mbabane wanted to find out how Rev. Gaba was going to influence the meeting, since he suspected that Rev. Gaba had already cast his lot with the MCT. He could have come to this conclusion on the basis of Rev. W.B.S. Gaba's motion in the meeting of 31 January, 1978 (that the Transkeian ministers should decide the issue), together with the fact that he walked out of a Transkei Council of Churches Executive meeting on 6 February, 1978 when ministers of other churches enquired from the Methodists on the Executive what the response of the MCSA was to the impending ban. The report of the *Daily Dispatch* (February 10, 1978) on Rev. Gaba's walkout read: "Some Methodist clergy said some of the Methodist ministers in Transkei were using every means to assure the success of the 'nationalisation' of the Methodist Church of South Africa." This could have referred to the view of Rev. Mbabane. He could therefore have sent Rev. Manitshana to be his "ear" in the Buntingville BMC meeting, and also given a twisted report to the *Daily Dispatch* in order to frustrate those who had met in Buntingville.

15. Methodist ministers could negotiate car loans with the MCO on terms which were more favourable than those offered by commercial/financial institutions

16. The Transkeian government was responsible for the maintenance of the six Methodist educational institutions, viz. Clarkebury, Bensonvale, Buntingville, Faku, Osborn and Shawbury. The wardens of these institutions submitted claims to the MCO for maintenance expenses, which in turn reclaimed it from the Transkeian government.

CHAPTER 3

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

From the narrative description of the process of the Methodist schism in chapter 2 the precipitating factors can be identified as a clash between the resolution of the 1977 Methodist Annual Conference to discontinue its practice of sending letters of greeting to the heads of the Southern African states and the Transkeian Government's need for the recognition of its political independence, which it had obtained from the Republic of South Africa in 1976 (see 2.2).

The Church resolution may look too innocuous (as, indeed, it did to some people) to have so offended the Transkei Government that it caused a schism in the Methodist Church of South Africa. The "independence" of a homeland would seem to be equally innocuous as a cause of church schism. This calls for a detailed analysis of the two issues involved. The problems did not arise with the Conference resolution but with its context; not with the Transkeian independence but with the international context of its rejection. Understanding what the Methodist resolution implied and what Chief Matanzima said would not provide insight into their respective contexts. That can only be achieved by analysing both issues in their respective ecclesial and political contexts, their meaning and significance, and the circumstances which led their respective communities to hold the positions they held. Accordingly, in this chapter the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei will be analysed contextually in order to

- (1) review the Methodist tradition of sending letters of greeting, the context in which the decision to discontinue the practice was taken, and also consider how that decision clashed with the Transkeian Government's own agenda
- (2) review the development of Transkei as a "State" up to the stage of attaining its "independence" and how the Methodist resolution was perceived in Transkei as sabotaging

the Transkeian campaign to secure international recognition of its independence

(3) consider the peculiarities of the Methodist tradition in Transkei with a view to determining why that tradition could not serve to resolve the dispute between the Transkeian Government and the Methodist Church of South Africa.

3.2 THE METHODIST TRADITION OF ADDRESSING THE HEAD OF STATE

Since this Methodist tradition precipitated the clash between the Transkei Government and the Methodist Church of South Africa, it will now be considered. This tradition dates back to eighteenth-century Methodism. At that time the Methodists, who had broken away from the established Church of England, were suspected of subversive tendencies and accused of sympathising with the French republican spirit. In 1800 the Bishop of Rochester accused their institutions of having sedition and atheism as their real objects. In the face of such accusations the Methodist Conference felt compelled to "publish annually a protestation of deep loyalty to the Crown and an instruction to the Methodist people to abstain from political activity" (Davies 1963:134-135).

The birth in 1811 of the Methodist tradition of pledging loyalty to the state was not only a response to the crisis of the French Revolution but also marked the formalisation of an attitude which had been encouraged twenty years earlier. In 1792 the Methodist Conference resolved: "None of us shall either in writing or in conversation speak lightly or irreverently of the Government" (Halevy 1924: 373). Later, Jabez Bunting, the most powerful Methodist after John Wesley, declared: "Methodism hates democracy as much as it hates sin" (Fromm 1960: 81-3).

This tradition was exported with Methodism to South Africa. Commenting on the work of the missionaries in South Africa, the Kilner Report makes the following observation:

This Meeting resolves to place on record its assurance that the Wesleyan Methodists in the South African Colonies will continue to maintain that loyalty to the British Crown which has always characterised the Wesleyan Methodist Church throughout the empire. And at the same time, this Meeting rejoices in being able again to declare that our people, both Colonial and Native, have on all occasions given abundant evidence of this loyalty (Kilner 1881: 55).

From this Kilner Report it is clear that the Wesleyan missionaries were expected to be loyal to the British Crown and to inculcate the same loyalty in their converts.

In the course of time the tradition underwent changes. First it was an address of loyalty to the British Crown while South Africa was still part of the British Empire. At that time another address of loyalty was sent to the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa. When South Africa became a republic and severed links with the Commonwealth, the address of loyalty to the President was written. In 1965 the address was modified to become a letter of greeting. From 1970 to 1976 letters of greeting were also sent to the King of Lesotho, the King of Swaziland and the President of Botswana. In 1972 the President of Mozambique was also included on the list. This development was in recognition of the fact that the Methodist Church of South Africa had members and churches/circuits in all these states of the Southern African region.

3.2.1 Format of the Address/Letter of Loyalty/Greeting

The format was quite simple:

- (1) It opened by introducing the sitting Methodist Conference to the recipient (the head of state) and then gave approximate membership of the Methodist Church of South Africa and the geographical area of its mission work.
- (2) Then followed some kind remarks on the recipient's personal life. In 1960, for example, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain was congratulated on the birth of her third son, Prince Edward. In 1961 Mr C.R. Swart was congratulated on his elevation to first State President of the new Republic of South Africa and Mrs Swart was wished a speedy recovery from her illness.
- (3) Reference would then be made to the responsibilities entrusted to the recipient, such as the demanding role of the Queen in the Commonwealth, and the task of smoothing race relations in South Africa expected of the Governor-General and later the State President. These remarks would be followed by an expression of moral support through prayer and a pledge of loyalty to the recipient.

The prevailing political mood would also determine the content and tone of these addresses/letters. As political repression of the Blacks in South Africa increased, the tone became more critical of Government policy. So, for instance, the 1976 letter of greeting to the State President challenged him as follows (*MCSA 1976:250*) to encourage and effect more meaningful changes in the political situation of the country:

... we cannot stress too strongly the necessity for your Ministers of State to act rigorously to effect changes in all those areas in which South Africans feel that they are being suppressed, discriminated against or in any way prevented from leading a free and full life... We believe that every man and woman in South Africa is entitled to personal, religious and political freedom and we pray that restraint upon these freedoms may soon be removed...

These letters to the head of state were generally written in mild and restrained language. In the 1961 letter to the State President, Mr C.R. Swart, for instance, the Conference offered its sincere congratulations on his assumption to the office as first Head of State under its republican constitution. The sentiments expressed in no way reflected the fact that not all the Whites had voted in favour of the Republic in the Referendum let alone that Blacks did not vote at all. Misgivings about the republican constitution were based only on the fact that, unlike other countries such as India, the Republic of South Africa had opted out of the Commonwealth. This was revealed in the address to the British Methodist Conference that same year where the Conference stated that "... it has been a matter of the deepest regret to us that the ties of Commonwealth association have been severed during the year" (*MCSA 1961:231*).

In addition to the address/letter to the head of state, it was also standard practice to write other letters. Thus the Conference wrote one to the British Methodist Conference cited above and another to all the members of the Methodist Church of South Africa. There were also the report and resolutions of the Christian Citizenship Department (CCD) of the Methodist Church of South Africa, which deal with moral, social and political issues. From the CCD reports and resolutions and the other addresses, a clear picture can be gained of the mind of the Conference on issues that were put mildly in the letter to the head of state.

An example of this is the question of the Soweto uprising. The Soweto uprising started on June 16, 1976 in response to the South African Government's decision to introduce

Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in some subjects in Black high schools. The imposition of Afrikaans was rejected by both students and parents. Students from various schools started marching through Soweto to Orlando Stadium, collecting other students as they went. They were confronted by the police, who fired shots at them and some students died. Violence and riots erupted throughout South African Black schools. The Soweto uprising changed the whole political situation in South Africa, especially in the field of education. Political repression and anti-government violence carried on well into 1977. Nowhere in the 1976 letter to the State President was it specifically stated that the tone and substance of the letter were motivated by the Soweto uprising. The letter merely appeals for change and mentions political repression, discrimination and the denial of personal freedoms. That the issue generating both the tone and substance of the letter is the Soweto uprising is made clear, however, in the address to the British Methodist Conference, which states directly that "events in Soweto have been greeted with shock and horror" (*MCSA 1976:272*). This information is complemented by the address to the members of the Methodist Church of South Africa, which mentions "widespread riots and strife" and further that the Conference is "deeply conscious that for most Black people this is a time of tremendous frustration and alienation and of struggle to find human dignity in a climate of discrimination and injustice ... our deep sympathy (is extended) to all who have seen children, parents, relatives or friends killed in the recent riots" (*MCSA 1976:275*).

The CCD report of 1976 (*MCSA 1976:182*) goes further to make a firm resolution which states:

In the light of the present Republic-wide unrest in our country the Methodist Conference calls for an immediate end to police harassment of school children and community leaders ... Conference declares its solidarity with the hopes and aspirations of the Black people and impresses upon the Government the urgency of bringing rapid and radical change in the living and educational conditions under which urban Black people are living. The Conference further resolves that the General Secretaries of the C.C.D. should initiate approaches to the S.A.C.C. member churches and the Afrikaans churches of the Reformed tradition with a view to discussing ways and means of bringing peaceful change in South Africa while there is still time.

It is clear therefore that the letter of greeting to the head of state was a traditional gesture of politeness which did not necessarily express the real feelings of the Conference.

3.2.2 The 1977 Methodist Annual Conference

The atmosphere prevailing at the 1977 Methodist Annual Conference which convened in Benoni on 20 October can be gleaned from its own address to the British Methodist Conference and to its own members as well as from the CCD reports and resolutions. The address to the British Conference speaks of the “security clampdown which banned eighteen organisations, closed down two papers, *The World* and *The Weekend World* and silenced *Pro Veritate* of the Christian Institute, itself among the banned organisations” (MCSA 1977:286). The mood of the Conference is further clarified by the address to the members of the Church which states that “... there is a growing resistance building up from inside and outside our borders against discrimination and racial injustices and severe government bannings of organisations and individuals in the Republic” (MCSA 1977:291). Among those banned were two Methodist ministers, Theo Kotze and Brian Brown, who had been associated with the Christian Institute.

The 1977 Conference was therefore held when political tension in the country was very high due to the death in detention of Steve Biko on 12 September 1977 and the banning of Black organisations on 19 October 1977. On the death of Steve Biko the Conference accepted the CCD resolution (MCSA 1977:193) that

The Conference deplores the death in detention of Mr Steve Biko and some 42 other detainees and the manner of handling of these matters by the Minister of Justice, police and prisons and his department. Conference therefore calls upon the Minister to resign his post.

The Minister of Justice at the time was Mr Jimmy Kruger of the infamous words, “Steve Biko’s death leaves me cold”.

The letters of greetings to other heads of state (Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique and Transkei) had already been written and approved when the letter to the State President of South Africa became an issue of dispute in the 1977 Conference. The committee appointed to draft the letter was sent back several times to redraft it. Some delegates felt that the traditional gesture of politeness should be dropped and an angry letter be written reflecting the feelings of the Conference. Dr H. Shaw, a layman from Pietermaritzburg who was also on the committee, eventually proposed that the letter not

be sent as it was a waste of time if it could not express the anger of the Conference. Reverend Dr L. Hulley, who was the convenor of the committee, seconded the proposal and it was adopted by the Conference (Hulley 1993).

In the light of this proposal Rev. Cyril Wilkins moved that the whole practice of sending letters of greeting to heads of state be discontinued. In support of this motion one of the Black delegates asked how many letters of greeting the Conference would have to write since more homelands were to become independent in accordance with the SA Government's homeland policy (Fikeni 1991). The homelands granted independence were Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977) with Ciskei and Venda pending in 1981 and 1982, respectively. They were called the TBVC states. The motion received overwhelming support and a previous resolution to send the already approved letters to the heads of the other Southern African states (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Transkei) was then rescinded.

Since the way in which this dispute was reported in *Dimension* (the official newspaper of the Methodist Church of South Africa) played a central role in the Transkeian schism, it should be discussed.

3.2.2.1 *The Dimension report*

The November 7, 1977 edition of *Dimension* covered the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa. In an article entitled "No more greetings" it was reported that there had been no agreement in the Conference as to how the letter of greeting to be sent to the State President of the Republic of South Africa should be worded. According to the report, this letter "went through no less than four drafts because of the questions raised by delegates as to some or other detail of the letter" and "... another issue which had been raised was that of the recognition of Transkei. Some Black delegates were unhappy that any letter (of greeting) might indicate recognition by the Methodist Church of the homeland state".

It would seem that the intention of the *Dimension* report was to explain that the reason for discontinuing the practice of sending letters of greeting to the heads of state was the

dispute over the letter to the State President of South Africa. Incidentally, in doing so, the report also reveals that, although the letter to Transkei had been written and approved, it had had no easy passage because some Black delegates had seen it as implying a tacit recognition of the independence of Transkei by the Methodist Church of South Africa. That this is probably the correct interpretation of the debate is confirmed by the fact that, in support of the motion of discontinuing the practice altogether, a Black delegate referred to the issue of homelands again by asking how many letters would need to be sent since more homelands were to become independent.

If the Black delegates had expressed reservations about or even objections to sending a letter to Transkei, they were, in fact, also raising a matter of principle because the same Conference had already reaffirmed its rejection of the Government's homelands policy. In this regard the resolution (*MCSA 1977:192-193*) stated:

The Conference is of the opinion that this policy is divisive and disrupting the mission and the unity of the church. The Conference calls upon the Prime Minister to reconsider the Homelands Policy before the consequences of this policy result in devastating effects on the nation as a whole.

In view of this clear policy position the question should be asked of why the MCSA did not condemn the independence of Transkei. Even in its response to Chief Matanzima's Press Statement of 12 January 1978 the MCSA was not trapped into declaring its position on the issue but insisted that "in the debate on this issue" (N.B. not on Transkei independence but on the letters of greetings) "some of those who spoke said that they themselves did not recognise Transkei. This, however, was not the issue before the Conference and the independence of Transkei was not debated (2.2)."

The reasons for this non-condemnatory position of the MCSA were probably that it did not want to offend and alienate its Transkeian section who, through the Clarkebury District Synod had even sent a resolution requesting the Conference to include the Transkei State President in its letters of greetings.

The second probable reason is that the MCSA did not want to compromise its "long and very honourable history of loyal service to Transkei". The Church wanted the Transkei independence to be recognised for what it was: a creation of the South African

Government for which Transkei could not be punished.

The fundamental question of whether it is theologically correct for the Church to align itself with the State by pleading its loyalty even if this had been modified to a form of greetings was not addressed. Even in the 1977 Conference the resolution to discontinue came as a result of pragmatic consideration as the Church Statement of 16 January 1978 suggests that

The growing complexity of the political situation in the nations served by this Church had made it more and more difficult for the Conference to send letters of greetings in their traditional form ... (2.2)

Chief Matanzima, in the political seat of Transkei as successor to the British, Colonial and Republican authorities, did not want to see the Methodist tradition of sending loyalty address/letters of greetings discontinued but to continue and applied to Transkei as well.

3.2.2.2 *Text and context*

The decision to discontinue the practice of sending letters of greeting was the result of considerations arising out of the problem of formulating an acceptable **text** for the letter to the State President of the Republic of South Africa. The background to this problem with the text was its context. The contextual problem of a repressive government was also challenging the Methodist Church of South Africa to free itself from bondage to a British tradition (which had arisen in a specific political context) so that it could be more prophetic in and to the South African context.

The resolution did not only signal a break with a tradition inherited from British Methodism but also signalled a relocation of the Methodist focus away from any pro-establishment bias to those who were oppressed. This has to be said because, as Villa-Vicencio had observed, the Methodist practice and teaching had always favoured the bourgeoisie, it encouraged conformity to the wishes of the upper middle classes and inhibited revolution (Villa-Vicencio 1989: 92-102).

This attitude had been challenged in 1976. In the BMC Conference in Bloemfontein, Rev

E.N. Baartman remarked about the strange silence of the MCSA on the crisis created by the political situation (Balía 1991: 89). Later in the year the BMC presented each delegate in the Pietermaritzburg Conference with an “untabled document calling on the Conference to ‘so adjust its agenda to accommodate discussion on the crisis situation in the country’” (Balía 1991: 93). The relocation of the Methodist focus to the oppressed in 1978 was therefore long overdue.

Had the resolution to discontinue the practice been born out of theological reflection rather than pragmatic considerations of the problem with the text, it would have been a good example of contextual missiology. Nevertheless, the resolution was still a strong declaration by the Methodist Church of South Africa that it could not be co-opted by the State nor be seen as its co-traveller, especially in the apartheid situation of South Africa. Hulley (1995), who was on the committee responsible for drafting the letter, claims to have raised the issue of the relevance of the whole tradition. The *Dimension* report refers only to the textual problem.

Having considered the ecclesial context of the dispute surrounding the letter of greeting, the next step will be to consider the political context by analysing the significance of political independence for Transkei.

3.3 TRANSKEI AS A “STATE”

The creation of Transkei as a separate geo-political entity was a political design by the Cape colonial government to promote ethnocultural loyalty by manipulating the cultural homogeneity of the Xhosa-speaking tribes who were settled between the Kei River in the west and the Natal border in the east.

This scheme was designed to discourage any political aspirations beyond the Transkei border (Hammond-Tooke 1968:455-459). The Nationalist Government of the Republic conferred a political status on this ethnocultural loyalty by granting political independence to Transkei in 1976 - an independence which was recognised only by its own mentor, the Republic of South Africa.

The 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei revolved around the issues of letters of greeting and Transkeian independence. To provide adequate background information on the issue of the recognition of Transkei independence and its clash with the Methodist Church of South Africa's tradition of loyal addresses, a brief look at the history of Transkei as a state is necessary.

3.3.1 The Bunga Council, 1895-1955

The Xhosa-speaking tribes of Transkei had settled in the area now known as Transkei (*trans* = across the Kei River) as independent chiefdoms until the period between 1872 and 1894 during which they were all incorporated into the British Cape Colony.

As subjects of the British Crown, people were entitled to vote if they had the necessary qualifications prescribed for the non-racial franchise. While this caused no problem initially, the future consequences of the non-racial franchise could be anticipated in view of the growing number of Africans who could qualify for the franchise.

To obviate this problem, the Cape colonial government devised a scheme to make Transkei a geo-political entity to be governed separately from the Cape Colony by the council system. To administer a chiefdom, the Cape colonial government first introduced a tribal council under a magistrate to conduct the affairs of each tribal territory. The tribal council was later replaced by the District Council. In 1903 these District Councils formed the Transkei District Council, which included the whole Transkei with the exclusion of Pondoland.

In 1911 this council system was introduced in Pondoland but a separate council was established and finalised in 1927 as the Pondoland General Council. On 1 January 1931 the two Councils - the Transkei District Council and the Pondoland General Council - were amalgamated to form the United Transkeian Territories General Council (UTTGC), which when in assembly was called the Bunga (the word means "council").

3.3.2 The administration of the Transkeian Territories

Proclamation 293 of 1896 placed the Transkei under the jurisdiction of a White magistrate

in Umtata. By 1931 the Bunga consisted of twenty-six White magistrates from the twenty-six magisterial districts of Transkei, three Paramount Chiefs from Thembuland and Eastern and Western Pondoland, and three representatives from each magisterial district; that is, a total of 108 members including the White Chief Magistrate.

The Bunga was meant to concern itself with practical issues affecting tribal life, like the dipping of cattle to combat disease and the building and maintenance of rural roads. Although the Bunga was restricted to local Transkeian matters, concern with provincial and national issues was very high in Transkei. But such enthusiasm was thwarted by the White control of the Bunga. Hammond-Tooke (1968) contends that this was a major weakness of the Bunga. It promised first to be an experiment in local government and training in governance but ultimately proved to have been designed to keep the Transkeians apolitical. This led to the apathy of the educated people towards the Bunga politics. Some found a more viable political platform in the African National Congress. Although the Bunga was initially meant to develop non-traditional (i.e. not chiefs) leadership, in the end chiefs and headmen formed the majority of the Bunga. When it met in a special session in November 1955 to consider the integration of the council system with the proposed Bantu Authorities system, the Bunga had 17 chiefs, 49 headmen, 6 peasant farmers, 4 teachers, 2 ex-clerks, 1 attorney, 1 farmer and 26 magistrates with the White Chief Magistrate (Hammond-Tooke 1968:467). It is not strange that they voted the Bunga out of existence in favour of the Bantu Authorities Act.

The Bunga had failed to solve the two crucial issues of the African franchise in South African politics and curbing the political role of the chiefs. The commoners, who had the right to be involved in politics, were screened and the chiefs, whose traditional role was apolitical, were turned into politicians.

3.3.3 The road to independence: 1955-1976

The issue of independence for Transkei was first mooted in 1920 as a reaction to Hertzog's deputation to the Versailles Peace Conference to ask for a South African republic. In Transkei it was feared that a South Africa separated from Great Britain would be worse in its race relations. The Bunga moved that in the event of "the Republic propaganda at

present being prosecuted by a certain section of the people of this country materializing, the Imperial Government will (or should) take over the Natives of this country under its protection as was done in the case of Basutoland" (*TTGC* 1920:92-93). This wish, as well as that of seeking provincial status during the 1940 conference, was never realised.

The attainment of a form of independence for Transkei came as a result of the implementation of the Bantu Authorities Act, 68 of 1951, but this independence was different from that sought in the 1920s, the status of a British Protectorate and the provincial status sought by the Transkei in the 1940s.

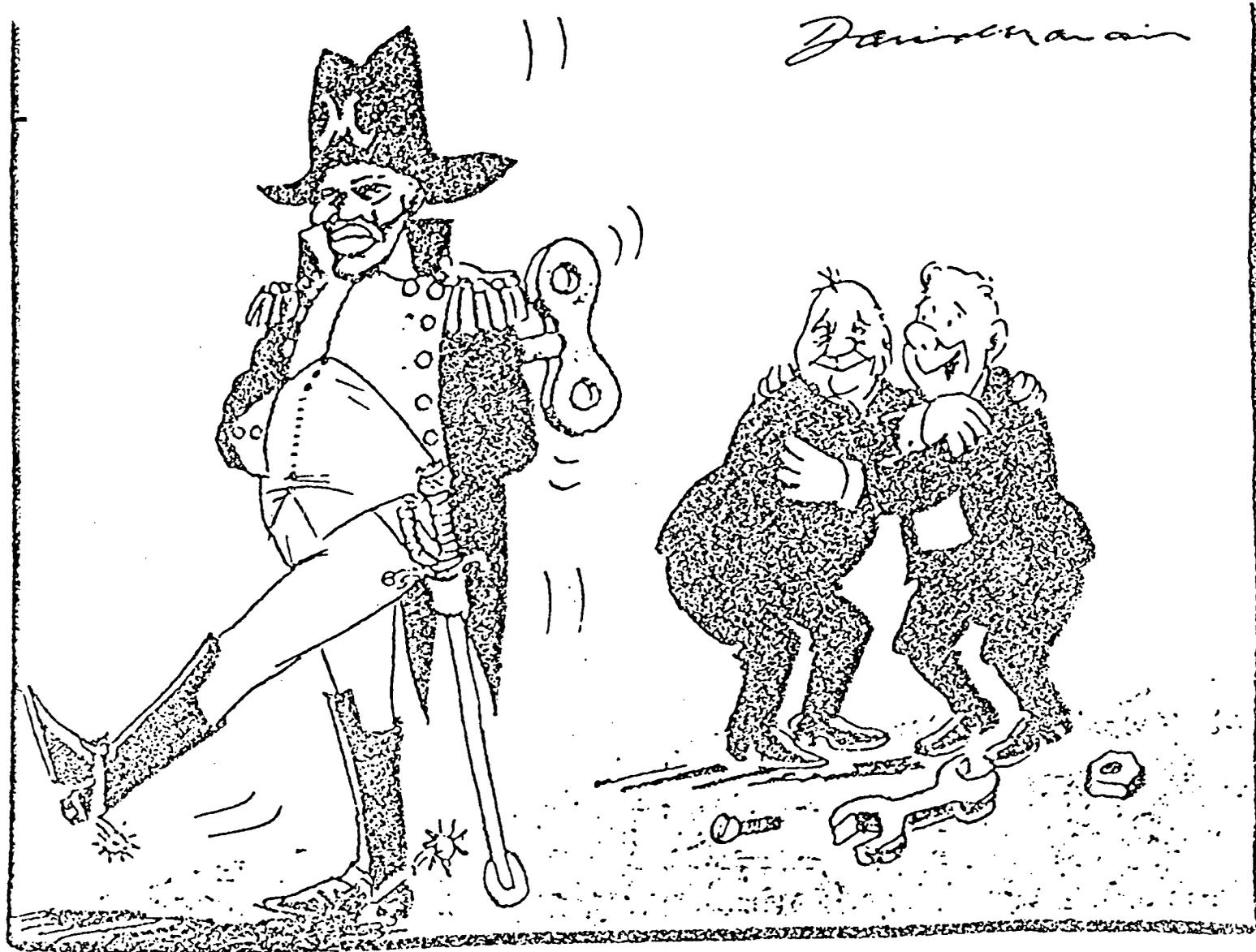
3.3.3.1 *The Bantu Authorities Act, 68 of 1951*

The Bantu Authorities Act was passed in order to "provide for the establishment of certain Bantu Authorities and to define their functions" and "to abolish the Native Representative Council". Paragraph 2 of the Act provides for the establishment of tribal, regional and territorial authorities (*Union Statutes* 1951: 1152-1180). This Act ushered in the era of centralised Bantu administration in South African politics and the de facto creation of the Bantustans. It was rigorously opposed by the Blacks all over South Africa. They saw it as an attempt by the Nationalist Government to co-opt the traditional leaders like the chiefs on to its administration.

When the Bantu Authorities Act was introduced in Transkei, it resulted in the Pondo revolt of 1960. On June 6, 1960 the police clashed with the Pondo tribesmen at Ngquza Hill, between Bizana and Lusikisiki. Between 11 and 30 Pondo tribesmen were killed by the police as well as some Pondo chiefs by the Pondo tribesmen. Later 30 Pondos were sentenced to death for their complicity in the Pondoland revolt (Mbeki 1984:116-134).

3.3.3.2 *Chief K.D. Matanzima and Transkei politics*

During these turbulent years Chief Matanzima emerged as a loyal supporter of the South African government policy of the Bantustans. Davenport (1988:415) suggests that Matanzima had two main motives for this. First, he wanted to secure his personal promotion. In 1963 he became Chief Minister of Transkei and in 1966 was elevated to the rank of Paramount Chief.



'It works!'

(David Marais, Cape Times, 13 March 1963)

Secondly, he wanted to accomplish his vision of an independent Transkei, which was why he called his political party the Transkei National Independence Party (TNIP).

Matanzima's strongest opponent was Paramount Chief Victor Poto of Western Pondoland (of the Democratic Party). Chief Poto viewed Transkei as an integral part of a unitary South Africa and wanted to see it remain in that position. He strongly rejected the Bantustan policy, which sought to Balkanise South Africa into various independent Bantustans.

Chief Matanzima, on the other hand, did not mince his words in endorsing in toto the Government policy of separate development. In explaining his position vis-à-vis that of Chief Poto, Matanzima (1976:51-52) wrote "I accepted separate development and Mr Poto rejected it. I accepted the future Transkei as an independent state; he rejected it."

The clash between Matanzima's separatist and Poto's unitarist views became very clear during Transkei's general elections in 1963. The election results showed that the electorate preferred the unitary view of South Africa which Poto held. The tribal chiefs, however, elected to prove their loyalty to their employer, the South African Government, and thus voted for Chief Matanzima's TNIP. Evidence of this loyalty was the fact that even in Eastern Pondoland (where the Bantustan policy was rejected by the people [see 3.3.3.1]) the chiefs, who were Chief Poto's kin, voted for the TNIP.

After the 1963 general elections ideologically defined political parties emerged. Chief Matanzima's separatist ideal gained momentum principally because the chiefs supported it. By 1968, after the general elections of that year, Chief Matanzima was so confident of achieving his goal of an independent Transkei that he declared the following years would be a period of "sweat and toil in the implementation to its full of the policy of separate development" (*Daily Dispatch*, October 23, 1968). The first indication of this commitment was a motion (*Hansard TLA 1968:6*) during the 1968 Parliamentary Session by Mr H.M. Canca, which read:

That as in terms of the Proclamation of Bantu Self Government Act of 1959 and the Transkei Constitution Act, it is envisaged that the Bantu areas should be developed into full independence, in the opinion of this Assembly the Government should consider the advisability of approaching the Republican Government to do everything in its power to prepare the Transkei for full independence within the shortest possible time.

This motion was finally adopted by 52 votes to 22 (*Hansard* TLA 1968:251). In the same year (1968) the then Prime Minister, Mr B.J. Vorster, was quoted as saying that any Black people were free to discuss possible independence with him.

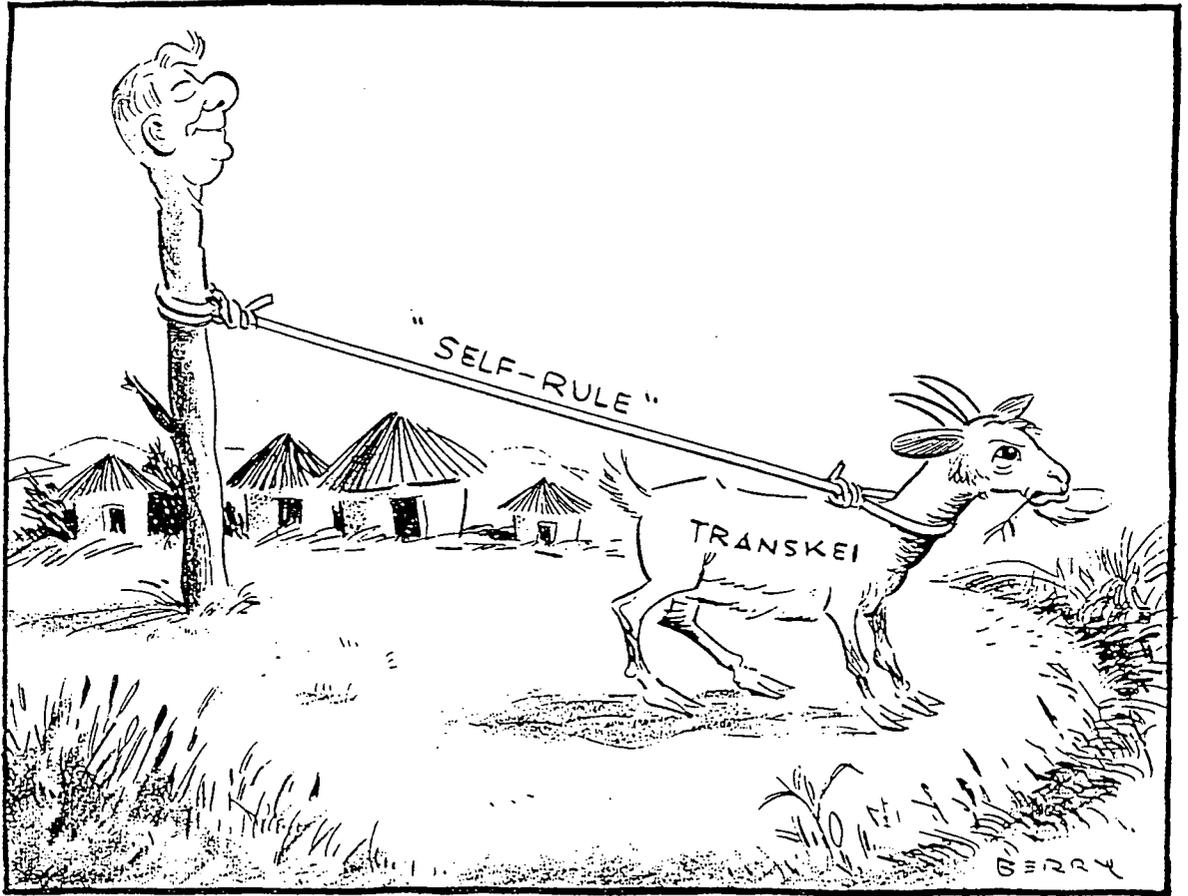
A Recess Committee to consider the implications of independence for Transkei and to draft a Constitution was appointed by the Transkei Legislative Assembly after the general elections of 1973. It finalised its report at the end of 1974. Negotiations with the South African Government then began. In the interim the South African Government adopted the Status of the Transkei Act 100 of 1976, which provided inter alia for the transfer of sovereignty over Transkei from the Republic of South Africa to the Government of Transkei as a fully sovereign and independent state. Transkei finally became independent on 26 October 1976.

3.3.4 Independence of Transkei

The South African Bantustan policy was partly realised when Transkei was granted its political "independence" on 26 October 1976. About 1.7 million people living in Transkei lost their right to South African citizenship. This number would swell to about 3 million since, in theory, all Xhosa-speaking Blacks were Transkeian except those deemed to belong to the Ciskei Bantustan (van der Bent 1986: 58). The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches took a resolution by which it

condemns the deceptive manoeuvre of the South African government to perpetuate and consolidate apartheid by the creation of the so-called "independent" Transkei, by which these three million South Africans will be made foreigners in their own country ... and expresses its solidarity with and compassion for the Xhosa-speaking people as they struggle for the legitimate rights of all Africans in South Africa (van der Bent 1986: 59-60)

In economic terms Transkei was dependent on South Africa for its budgetary needs. That Transkei would collapse without such financial assistance was proved during the break in diplomatic relationship between Transkei and the Republic of South Africa. Financial assistance to the Transkei was not withheld by the RSA (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 137). That also proved the extent to which the RSA would go to prop up the "independence" of Transkei. The RSA was prepared to carry on this financial burden in exchange for the elimination of Transkei from the political stakes in South Africa (see cartoon). Transkei remained, by design



and expedience, a perpetual reservoir of cheap labour for South Africa (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 148-169). The Transkeians were deemed to have voluntarily opted for this position through their vote in the 1976 general elections. This is the subject of the following section.

3.3.4.1 *Transkei 1976: elections or referendum?*

Within Transkei the political "independence" of Transkei was achieved by a political trick of interpreting the victory of the TNIP in the 1976 general elections as a "referendum" for independence. People were not asked to vote either for Transkei independence or to remain in the RSA (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 32). Since the TNIP had campaigned on the ticket of Transkeian independence, its victory was interpreted as a vote for independence.

The voting in 1976 had questionable legitimacy. Only 43.4 percent of the voters went to the polls. Even this figure was inflated by the electoral office to 65.95 percent by adding 100 percent voter turnout in the sixteen unopposed seats (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 31).

Streek and Wicksteed also point out that there were 1 083 175 registered voters in 1976, of whom only 354 489 went to the polls in the elections. (This actually gives a percentage of 32.7 rather than 43.4.) A total of 164 279 voted, which is 15.17 percent. This means that only 12.67 percent (the TNIP support) actually supported the idea of independence.

Chief Matanzima still interpreted the 1976 election as an overwhelming support for independence. This claim motivated Professor Lawrence Schlemmer to investigate this apparent support for Transkei independence in the face of widespread rejection of separate homelands by the South African Blacks as part of the Quail Commission. He confined his investigation to urban Blacks, however, including those who had associations with the homelands and those for whom such association no longer existed (*Quail Report*, 1980: 177-300).

Schlemmer found that those who approved of the homelands policy did so for socio-economic rather than political reasons, such as the right to land and stock or the lesser economic demands of rural life compared to urban economic demands. When asked to express their

political views, they still preferred a unified South Africa with universal franchise. These findings confirmed those of the Arnold Bergstrasse Institute, who found that the attitude of urban Africans towards the homelands policy was generally one of rejection (*Quail Report*, 1980: 5).

In their different studies on the Soweto uprising, Schlemmer, Kane-Berman (1978: 98-101) and the Cillié Commission (1977: 586-588) found that the granting of independence to Transkei by the South African Government was partly responsible. They identified the Transkeian dimension in the riots by the fact that in some areas the Xhosa-speaking youth took the lead and also by the slogans on placards (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 8-9).

Although Schlemmer's research was conducted outside Transkei, he holds the view that if conditions in Transkei were amenable to research, similar findings would confirm this general rejection of the homelands policy. The broad political range of Black attitudes towards the homelands policy would support this view.

3.3.4.2 *Black politics and the Bantustan policy*

The international community rejected Matanzima's (Transkei's) independence. The Western world awaited a signal of the approval of this independence from the African states, which was not forthcoming. Internal rejection within South Africa was uncompromising. The Bantu Authorities Act, which was the cornerstone of the Bantustans, had been rejected by the Pedi (1957), the Pondo (1960) and the Thembu (1962-1963) (Mbeki 1964). The traditional African political parties rejected it on the grounds that it was part of the grand apartheid programme of the South African Government. The position of the African National Congress was spelled out by two of its prominent leaders, Professor Z.K. Matthews and Chief Albert Luthuli. They reaffirmed the ANC's stand of a unitary non-racial and democratic South Africa. Professor Matthews pointed out that the homelands policy was an attempt by White South Africa to convince the international community by a system of co-opting Black leaders, namely the chiefs, that all was well in South Africa (Motlhabi 1985: 49-50). Chief Luthuli, speaking from his position as both politician and chief, was far more articulate. According to him, Bantustans were neither democratic nor African and when the Bantustan policy was rejected by the bona fide politicians, the Government approached chiefs individually rather than hold a public

meeting. Those chiefs who agreed with the policy did so against the wishes of their people. The most tragic aim of the Bantustan Act was that it sought to “wipe Africans off the South African political map” and a hierarchy of the governmental pawns would appear to rule while the world would be told that this was the traditional African way (Luthuli 1962: 200-201).

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was even more critical of the homelands policy than the ANC. It declared the homelands leaders the enemies of the people. Chief Matanzima and Chief B.M. Buthelezi of KwaZulu were singled out as the main traitors in the people's struggle against the White oppressors. Chief Matanzima was criticised for pursuing the policy of ‘geographical tribalism’ after he agreed to the regional separation of Transkei from South Africa. They treated Chief Buthelezi even more harshly for pursuing the policy of ‘political tribalism’. In their view, Buthelezi was doing more harm to the cause of Black liberation by canvassing support even in urban areas of South Africa and thus was deceiving people into believing that he was fighting the system while, in fact, what he was doing was drawing people into it (Motlhabi 1985: 83).

The acceptance of the Bantustan policy by some homelands leaders has always been qualified. The majority of them regarded it as a fourth option to the traditional forms of Black resistance, which Motlhabi (1985: 1) identifies as political opposition, armed struggle and political journalism. Some traditional chiefs wanted to use the Bantustan structure as a form of leverage against Pretoria, to challenge the apartheid system from within and thus “fight for the liberation of the Black man from a position of power” (*Republic of Transkei*, 1976: 9). Others recognised the contradictions inherent in the homelands policy. Chief Matanzima's statement in 1973 showed the ambivalence of the policy when he claimed that the homelands could become independent but at the same time persisted in staking claims on the South African economy and citizenship. According to Motlhabi (1985: 217), in his 1973 election manifesto, Matanzima said that:

1: South Africa belongs to Black and White equally and all its wealth should be shared by all inhabitants without discrimination.

2: The Homelands should be developed to full independence and the division of land in terms of population numbers would be basic for the fulfilment of such independence.

3: There should be freedom to seek work anywhere in the RSA and freedom from pass laws.

One could ask in what way, if these requirements were met, Transkei would still be independent and whether it would have ceased to be part of the RSA.

Matanzima proceeded to opt for independence before any of his preconditions had been settled satisfactorily. For instance, the parts of South Africa he had claimed for Transkei (Griqualand East, Maclear, Ugie and Indwe) had not been consolidated nor were Transkeians granted dual citizenship (of Transkei and of the RSA) as he had intended.

In Ciskei the findings of the Quail Commission suggested that the people were not enthusiastic about opting for independence yet a court application against Ciskei opting for independence was rejected on the grounds that "in strict law the conferring of independence was a unilateral action by the South African Parliament whether the Ciskeians wished to accept it or not" (Davenport 1988: 456). This court ruling suggested that the Government could confer independence on any homeland, if it so wished.

The homeland leaders came to realise the reality of the homelands and that, although they could not be wished away, they were not the final solution to the South African race problem. Professor Ntsanwisi, Chief Minister of Gazankulu, suggested that the homelands should be regarded as an "interim measure". Chief Lucas Mangope, Chief Minister of Bophuthatswana, argued that the "reality" of the Bantustans should not necessarily lead to the abandonment of the "permanent ideal" of "one man one vote" in a united South Africa (Mangope 1978: 65). Chief Buthelezi suggested that the interests of the majority group should be regarded as paramount in a region (Buthelezi 1974: 11-13).

3.3.4.3 *Transkeian independence and the international community*

The Bantustan policy was designed to reach its logical conclusion when each homeland attained its full independence. Transkei was an ideal homeland to test and experiment with

this policy. The problem of obtaining international recognition, which would legitimise the homelands policy, sabotaged the whole scheme. No nation was prepared to recognise Transkei.

On 25 October 1976 the United Nations Organisation (UNO) proposed a resolution which called for the nations of the world not to recognise Transkei, a resolution that was passed unanimously with only the United States of America abstaining (*Transkei Anniversary 1986:10*).

On 26 October 1976 Nigeria introduced a resolution on "The so-called Independent Transkei and other Bantustans" in the UNO. This resolution was adopted as Resolution 31/6A by the General Assembly by 134 to 0 votes, with only one abstention. The resolution stated that the Assembly:

- (1) strongly condemned the establishment of bantustans as designed to consolidate the inhuman policies of *apartheid*, to destroy the territorial integrity of the country, to perpetuate white minority domination and to dispossess the African people of South Africa of their inalienable rights;
- (2) rejected the declaration of "independence" of Transkei and declared it invalid;
- (3) called upon all governments to deny any form of recognition to Transkei and to refrain from having any dealings with it or with other bantustans; and
- (4) requested all States to take effective measures to prohibit all individuals, corporations and other institutions under their jurisdiction from having any dealings with it or with other bantustans (*UNO Year Book 1976: 125*).

Similarly, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) called "on member Churches to urge their governments to oppose the Bantustan policy, to withhold recognition of the Transkei as an independent state and to have no direct or indirect diplomatic, commercial or other relations with the Transkei, or any other activity which would imply recognition" (van der Bent 1986:59-60).

This was a blow to both Transkei and the RSA. For Transkei, its international recognition

would have legitimised the course it had followed in the face of the widespread rejection of the homelands policy by SA Blacks. For the RSA, international recognition of Transkei independence would have proved to the SA Black community that its policy of separate and independent national states could work. Having failed to secure international recognition of its political independence, the Transkeian Government embarked on international lobbying for support. This is discussed in the next section.

3.3.4.4 *Transkei independence and international lobbying*

Transkei's desperate need for the recognition of its political independence ushered in a period of expensive campaigning. Initially, the campaign was a public relations exercise carried out from Pretoria by Dr Eschel Rhoodie's Department of Information. This Department produced expensive publications, such as *Republic of Transkei* (1976), *Independence my way* by Matanzima (1976) and others, to promote the acceptance and recognition of Transkei. It was estimated that the undertaking cost about R1 million (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 200). The desired results were not achieved.

The Transkeian Government then employed lobbyists to promote Transkei, especially in America. Mr Jay Parker, a Black American, who was paid R900 a month plus R60 000 a year, was employed to promote Transkei (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 201). Later, a former PAC exile, Mr Ngqondi Masimini was employed as Transkei's "ambassador" to North America.

The lobbyists apparently worked harder in convincing the Transkei political government that they were about to make significant 'breakthroughs' than in convincing the international community of the Transkei case. They failed to deliver the goods, a failure which cost the Transkei a lot of money.

3.3.4.5 *Transkeian independence and political repression*

Within Transkei the need for the recognition of its independence was pursued through political repression of dissidents. Draconian laws of state security, some of which were inherited from the RSA, were used to persecute those who opposed the independence of Transkei. The

notorious South African Proclamation R400, which applied to Transkei as well since 1963, was not repealed by the independent Transkei. Instead, it was retained. The people who were worst hit by Proclamation R400 were the members of the Democratic Party, who held the unitarist view of South Africa. At one stage the Party's entire executive was detained (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 12). The number of people detained in Transkei during the period from 1963 to 1966 was much higher than for the period 1967 to 1975. Streek and Wicksteed (1980) interpret this as reflecting not so much the growing acceptance of the homelands policy as rather the growing realisation of the high risk of opposing Chief Matanzima.

This political repression created a culture of fear and insecurity to a degree not experienced when Transkei was still part of the RSA. General Martin Ngceba, the head of the Transkei Police, was the most feared man in Transkei (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 303 Brigadier Ngceba says ...). The Transkei Intelligence Service, under Mr Fuzile Ngcai, was capable of infiltrating any organisation, including the Church. The awareness of its network was intimidating in any meeting (see 2.7.3). According to Rev. Mbabane, the presence of members of the Transkei Security Police at the meeting on 21 February 1978 was intimidating to some participants and prevented them from speaking (*Dimension*, May 7, 1978).

The Methodist Church in Transkei could not escape being under constant police surveillance because some of the top officials in the Police Service, like General Martin Ngceba, Captain Damoyi, Lt Z. Lavisa and others, were Methodists and could attend some of the church meetings. Although they attended the meetings as good Methodists, they were nonetheless police officials in what had become a police state (Fadane 1992) and therefore their presence was intimidating. It is also significant that after the formation of the MCT some of them became members of some District Synods and also of the Conference (*UMCSA* 1988: 2).

It was during this period of political repression and when the international campaign for the recognition of its independence was at its height that the Methodist Annual Conference in October 1977 passed a resolution on letters of greetings (see 3.6) that was to have fateful consequences for the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei.

But, after a casual look at the issues involved, it would seem that there should have been no problem for the Methodist Church of South Africa to convince the Transkeian Government

that no insult to the government was ever intended by the decision to discontinue the practice of sending letters of greeting. The Transkeian Government itself, however, seems to have elected not to rid itself of the idea of having been insulted.

The contextual analyses of the Conference resolution and the issue of the recognition of Transkeian independence do not give sufficient information about the prior relationship between the Methodist Church of South Africa and Transkei. Since that relationship could have had a bearing on the issue in dispute, I shall now analyse it.

3.4 METHODISM IN TRANSKEI

In its statement of 16 January 1978, the Methodist Church of South Africa top executive claimed "a long and very honourable history of loyal service in Transkei ..." (see Appendix II). This long relationship between the Methodist Church of South Africa and Transkei should be analysed to see why it could not be used to save the situation and to establish whether the greeting issue did not, in fact, provide Chief Matanzima with an opportunity to manipulate the "misunderstanding" to pursue his own agenda for the Methodist tradition in Transkei. Analysing the problem from these perspectives is based on the premise that there were sufficient grounds for resolving the dispute.

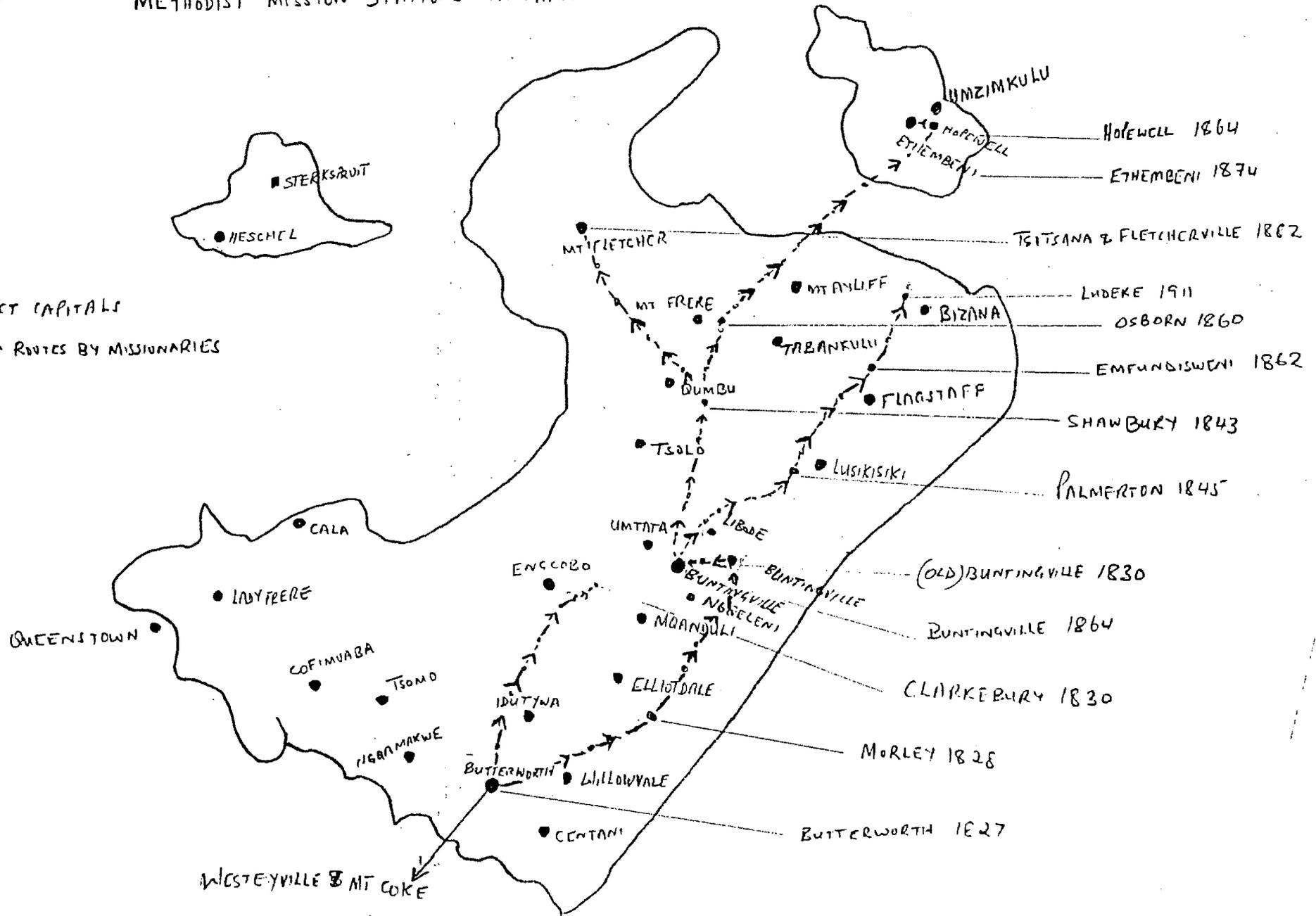
The first Wesleyan mission station in Transkei was established in Butterworth in 1828. The Methodist schism in Transkei occurred on the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Methodism in Transkei. During this long association a peculiar Transkeian Methodist tradition developed, consisting mainly in close co-operation between the Methodist (Wesleyan) missionaries and the tribal chiefs. Two factors facilitated and laid the foundations for this co-operation:

(1) William Shaw's determination to realise his dream of a chain of mission stations beyond the Colonial boundaries from Grahamstown through "Kaffraria" to Natal and Delagoa Bay (Shaw 1872:60).

(2) The unstable political situation in the tribal kingdoms of Transkei caused by the Mfecane Wars (Edmunds 1936:111).

METHODIST MISSION STATIONS IN TRANSKEI

• DISTRICT CAPITALS
 - - - - -> ROUTES BY MISSIONARIES



Both the missionary activity and the political situation necessitated a close co-operation between the missionaries and the tribal chiefs. These two factors will now be considered.

3.4.1 The missionaries and tribal politics

The Mfecane Wars which ravaged Natal and the Eastern Cape were caused by Shaka the Zulu imperialist between 1818 and the time of the Great Trek, but continued even after his death in 1828 to the 1850s. The Mfecane Wars did not only cause physical displacement of the tribes in the Transkei but also shattered the foundations of their social world - religion. The missionaries came at the most opportune moment as Peires (1981:75) suggests that "a new religion could appeal only to those whose old world was irrevocably shattered and who wanted to build on a new one".

The tribal leaders could no longer afford the luxury of quibbling with the missionaries on "Why does God not first convert the devil?" (Shaw 1872:75).

According to Hammond-Tooke (1972:172), the urgency of embracing the Gospel was spelt out by one of Chief Faku's counsellors, who responded to Shaw's address in 1829, by saying:

The news you have told us today is good. It is sweet. It is like sweet cane. Make haste and let a missionary come. You talk about peace. It is good. We are tired of war, tired of brawling like wild beasts, or being hunted like game.

Because of the unstable tribal politics, the missionaries were welcome to establish the mission stations and to live among the tribal kingdoms. As the missionaries became part of the tribal communities they served, they also shared the fate of the tribe. Some mission stations, for instance, were burned down during the tribal wars (e.g. Morley Mission Station; Clarkebury was threatened [Mears 1973:18; 24]). The tribal chiefs took responsibility for the safety of the missionaries and the missionaries in return contributed by their diplomacy and clearer perception of intergroup relations. So, for example, Rev. Peter Hargreaves intervened in the disputes between Chiefs Ngangelizwe and Sarhili and between Chiefs Mqikela and Jojo (Mears 1973:22; 59).

So the tribal politics, then, created a culture of a working relationship between the tribal chiefs and the Wesleyan missionaries in the Transkei.

3.4.2 The missionaries and colonial politics

In their relationship with the Colonial Government the tribal chiefs adopted the missionaries as “our mouth to [the] white chiefs” (Shaw 1872:110). In the colonial programme of annexing the tribal territories into the Cape Colony the tribal chiefs used the missionary as “an agent through whom he could negotiate with the Colonial Government” (Conradie 1967:49). Peter Hargreaves advised AbaThembu to accept incorporation into the Cape Colony in 1875 (Conradie 1967:49). He also prevailed over Chief Mqikela of AmaMpondo to approve the annexation of Pondoland into the Cape Colony in 1894 (Mears 1973:61).

Although the missionary policy specifically prohibited the missionaries from being involved in the Colonial-tribal politics, they felt it was within their missionary operations to be involved on behalf of the tribal chiefs as their spokespersons and advisers. This, again, helped to create a culture of a working relationship between the tribal chiefs and the Wesleyan missionaries in the Transkei.

3.4.3 The missionaries and education

When the Transkeian Government on 26 May 1978 declared the Methodist Church of South Africa an undesirable organisation in Transkei, Rev. Abel Hendricks, then President of the Methodist Conference, responded: “The banning of a church which had openly proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ for over a century in the Transkei, and which had provided the backbone of education, is one which must be rejected in the strongest terms” (*Daily Dispatch*, May 27, 1978).

This statement would suggest that education was one of the main features of the total missionary package delivered by the missionaries in Transkei. A comprehensive account of the establishment of Methodism in the Transkei is provided in Mears (1973) *Mission to Clarkebury*, in which he tells the story of establishing the major Methodist mission stations like Clarkebury, Buntingville and Palmerton. It is therefore appropriate to consider education as part of the Methodist claim of “loyal service”.

3.4.3.1 *Formal education*

The missionaries, the tribal chiefs and the Colonial Government did not only interact in the field of politics but also in the field of education.

The missionaries initiated the programme of building schools, the tribal chiefs co-operated by donating land and provided pupils and money in the form of cattle, and the Colonial Government provided teachers and subsidised the mission schools from 1856 (Saayman 1991:29).

That the tribal chiefs were interested in education as distinct from the Gospel is borne out by the fact that none of the chiefs who had invited the missionaries to establish mission stations in their respective areas (Chiefs Ngubengcuka [Thembu], Faku [Pondo], Ncapai [Bhaca] and Mhlontlo [Pondomise]) ever embraced the Christian faith. In their invitations they usually stated that they wanted their people to be “educated”. The very Xhosa understanding and designation of the missionary/minister as *umfundisi* has an education connotation.

The missionaries themselves put a high premium on education. So it is that people who are not Christians often say, “I did not go to school”. According to D.D.T. Jabavu (Eveleigh 1923:27),

[The] earliest missionaries realised that in order to keep aflame the light thus kindled, it was necessary for the converts ... to have literature which they could read for their own spiritual solace and for the purposes of propagating the Word among others. The school was the natural corollary or appendage of any Gospel Centre.

This truth is confirmed by the fact that the school in Wesleyville was established only fourteen months after the commencement of the mission work (Shaw 1872:122). Each Methodist church site was also a potential Sunday school and ultimately a day school. The church and the school became almost synonymous as Jabavu (Eveleigh 1923:27) observed that the “school combines in its significance both the Day School and the whole Mission Station where the school and the mission are located”.

Because of the large number of Methodist schools in Transkei, many educated people must have been exposed to the Methodist influence at some stage in their lives. The missionary policy was that those who wanted to train as teachers in Methodist schools had to become Methodists. Eveleigh (1923:34) explains this policy by saying the Methodist Church was “convinced that only Christian teachers could give the education our schools were intended to impart ... at first only such as were members or on trial for membership in the church, were admitted to the training institutions ... few pass through our institutions without spiritual blessing ...”.

This policy was extended to the Church employment practice. Those who wanted to teach in the Methodist schools had to become Methodists. The church building, which was used as a Sunday School on Sundays, became a Day School on weekdays. The Day School in the mission station developed into a Secondary School and ultimately into a High School or a Teacher Training and/or Industrial School. The large educational institutions of Clarkebury (1875), Buntingville (1881), Emfundisweni (1887) and Shawbury (1893), which became the pride of Methodism in Transkei, grew up during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953 transferred the control of the schools from the churches to the state. This Act was passed to “provide for the transfer of the administration and control of native education from the several provincial administrations to the Government of the Union, and for matters incidental thereto”. Paragraph 9.1 of the Act states that “... no person shall establish, conduct or maintain any Bantu or native school ...” (*Union Statutes* 1953: 264). The Act robbed the churches of a major area of influence, the one through which the missionaries had endeavoured to create a Christian culture in Transkei.

The 1960 Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa passed a resolution that “the Church would continue to control its own Hostels” (*MCSA* 1960:126). Indeed, it continued to run eighteen hostels in Transkei. By 1991 this number had shrunk to nine (*MCSA* 1991:225).

The Methodist Church of South Africa still exercises some influence in its hostels since the Transkei Government still gives first preference to the Methodist Church of South Africa in the appointment of chaplains to the high schools and colleges which formerly belonged to the

Methodist Church.

3.4.3.2 *Informal education*

As early as 1824 William Shaw realised that informal education had a major role to play in the transformation of the Xhosa society. He believed that this could be achieved (1) by encouraging the missionaries to actually live among the Xhosa and visit their homes so that their personal influence could be felt and also (2) through the Xhosas' exposure to the Western way of life. This he did by taking young Chief Kama of the AmaGqunukhwebe and others to Grahamstown (Shaw 1872:129-130).

This idea was crystallized in the upbringing of the sons of the chiefs by the missionaries. From the missionary point of view, the son of a chief who was brought up in the manse would be sufficiently exposed to the Gospel and "civilisation".

The missionaries shared this philosophy of Christian socialisation with the state. Hodgson (1982) uses the establishment of the "Kafir College" as a case study which highlights the cooperation between the church and the state as epitomising the identification of the missionary outreach and the secular motives of imperialism during the Victorian era.

It was generally believed by the Government and the missionaries that bringing up the sons of chiefs in a "European" family was a good and wise investment for both the church and the state. Sir George Grey tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Paramount Chief of the AmaXhosa, Sarhili, to allow his son to come and live with him.

So far I have merely described the missionary activity in the Eastern Cape and Transkei without a conceptual theory for interpreting that activity. An interpretation of that activity would help in defining the ultimate objective of the missionary activity.

Peires (1989) interprets the missionary activity as a process of transferring the Xhosa society to a new world-view. In the process their own world-view was undermined and delegitimated. This sociological interpretation is certainly correct since it is based on a general phenomenon which occurs when different cultural groups come into contact. Schreier (1993) has given us the useful concept of "group boundaries" for understanding the process of cultural interaction

of different groups. According to him, each group has its own "boundaries" and world-view, which define its identity. These group boundaries are transgressed when members from one group cross the boundaries of another group. In most cases, it is the powerful group which invades the weaker group's boundaries.

In the Eastern Cape this invasion of the Xhosa group boundaries by the missionaries was very thorough, starting from conferring the status of "first" names to the English personal names given to the Xhosa at school and in the church right through to dress code. In this process the Methodist missionaries waged a campaign of "cultural conversion", which affected not only the members of the Church but an even wider community.

Moreover, the nature of missionary activity in the colonial situation had far-reaching significance in terms of the attitudes they created. To be more precise in this regard, one could ask what type of Xhosa attitudes towards the colonial situation the Methodist missionaries created. The answer to this question lies in the attitude of British Methodism towards the socio-political issues. The attitudes of British Methodism are linked to those of John Wesley. Most scholars agree that, although John Wesley was concerned about the upliftment of the "wretched of the earth", he was essentially a conservative churchman who believed in the preservation of the status quo. E.P. Thompson (1963: 398) writes that Methodist theology "by virtue of its promiscuous opportunism, was better suited than any other to serve as the religion of a proletariat whose members had not the least reason, in social experience, to feel themselves to be 'elected'. In his theology, Wesley appears to have dispensed with the best and selected unhesitatingly the worst elements of Puritanism: if in class terms Methodism was hermaphroditic, in doctrinal terms it was a mule." Thompson characterised the Methodist teaching as "hermaphroditic"; that is, showing interest in both the oppressor and the oppressed, the upper and the lower classes. The Gospel was preached in such a way that each class was made to be happy in its status. The emphasis on the egalitarianism (equality of men as sinners) concealed the fact of accountability of the upper class for the plight of the lower classes and concretised egalitarianism "by drafting the poor and the oppressed in the ideological structures of the oppressors" (Mosala 1989: 89). Villa-Vicencio (1989: 95) endorses this view by saying that Methodism's social influence was essentially one that "favoured the bourgeoisie, inhibiting the revolution which radical workers sought".

Although Methodism was conservative in design and teaching, it was still capable of revolutionising its followers. On this Hulley (1987: 27) says that Wesley “had created a structure in which ordinary people could hold office as leaders, stewards and local preachers, thus providing training in running a complex organisation and in leadership as well as public speaking, *but he was afraid of democracy*. In the end, however, the democratic potential which he helped to bring about triumphed.”

The Methodist tradition, then, as exhibited in both the Eastern Cape and the broader South African Methodism is essentially of a conservative mould. Methodists are influenced to conform to the social order prescribed by the ruling classes. But, as Hulley (1987) points out, Methodist teaching has the potential to break out of that conservative mould. The 1977 Annual Conference demonstrates this quite clearly. The time had arrived to “reject the narrow Wesleyan perspective, replacing it with a broad theological horizon which is latently and powerfully present in our heritage” (Villa-Vicencio 1989: 102). In 3.4.5 I shall consider the peculiarities of Transkeian Methodism.

3.4.4 Transkei Government and the racial practices of the MCSA

At the meeting on 31 January 1978 some Transkeian Cabinet Ministers strongly condemned the racial practices within the Methodist Church of South Africa. The issues that were highlighted at that meeting were the racially segregated circuits and congregations, church property ownership and the racially determined stipend scales of the ministers. These three issues should be considered separately.

3.4.4.1 Racial Circuits and congregations

One of the issues which was brought into the spotlight at the meeting of 31 January 1978 was that of the racially segregated circuits and congregations in Transkei. All White congregations in Transkeian towns fell under White circuits, irrespective of the distance. Thus a “Coloured” Methodist congregation near Port St. John's was administered by Kokstad Circuit, a White congregation in Idutywa was administered by East London Circuit.

In the 1977 *Minutes of Conference* (MCSA 1977:233) the names of Revs P.C. Shone and

O.B. Ngcatshe appear both in the Umtata (European) Circuit (then called the Mid-Transkei Circuit) and the Umtata African Circuit. The congregations, however, were racially divided. The congregation at Frere Road was becoming mixed but it was still one of the very few of such congregations in the whole of the MCSA to do so. Generally, circuits and congregations were divided along racial grouping (as is the practice in some circuits even today – 1995) and ministers were appointed mainly to their racial groups, to circuits which were racially defined as “European” or “African” and so on.

While the independent Transkei had removed all the vestiges of an apartheid society from Transkei, these were still existing in the RSA and the MCSA. The two Methodist Churches very close to each other in Umtata, namely the Frere Road Methodist Church for the White congregation and the Leeds Road Methodist Church for the Black congregation, were seen as evidence. This was the anomaly which Mr Pamla suggested should be speedily addressed (2.3).

3.4.4.2 *Church property ownership*

Land and property ownership have been contentious political issues since they were regulated by the Land Act of 1913 and 1936 and more recently by the Group Areas Act of 1972.

Mr Pamla raised this issue at the meeting of 31 January 1978 when he said, “We know that the Methodist Church of South Africa is legally White in South Africa, although the majority of its members are Africans” (see 2.3). All church properties in Transkei were, by law, owned by a controlling body outside the “sovereign state of Transkei”.

This problem arose from the apartheid system of South Africa. In spite of protests by the Church, it had to be classified white or lose all titles to its properties. In Black areas, where the properties were occupied by a permit system, the Church could not own any land.

Conference after Conference rejected the laws through which the apartheid system was socially institutionalised: Population Registration Act (MCSA 1970:160); Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (MCSA 1977:183); Bantu Education Act (MCSA 1960:126) and Group Areas Act (MCSA 1970:165), and yet in so many ways the MCSA was itself “trapped in apartheid”

(Villa-Vicencio 1988).

3.4.4.3 *Discrimination in stipend allowances*

Discrimination in salaries, stipends and wages on the basis of race has been the premium indicator of the economic stratification of the South African society for a very long time. In the MCSA this difference in stipend allowances had been a contentious issue at synod after synod and conference after conference.

That the racist stipend scales was the practice not only of the MCSA but also of other churches as well was revealed in a study by Rev T.S.N. Gqubule. His article, "Ministers' stipends in multiracial churches" (Gqubule 1968) tabled the racially differentiated stipend scales of the Church of the Province (Anglican), the MCSA, the Presbyterian Church of South Africa and the United Congregational Church. The study revealed the following situation:

A. **The Church of the Province of South Africa (Diocese of Grahamstown)**

	European* and Coloured	African
Incumbent	R1260 p.a.	R850 p.a.
Assistant Curate	R1000 p.a.	R760 p.a.
Deacon	R 800 p.a.	R660 p.a.

B. **The Methodist Church of South Africa**

Probationer	European	Coloured and	African
Minister		Indian	
1-3 years	R1040 p.a.	R 800 p.a.	R568 p.a.
Remaining years	R1200 p.a.	R1000 p.a.	R568 p.a.

The CPSA, MCSA and PCSA referred to their White ministers as "European."

Ord. Minister

1-5 years	R1700 p.a.	R1050 p.a.	R750 p.a.
6-10 years	R1750 p.a.	R1100 p.a.	R750 p.a.
11-15 years	R1800 p.a.	R1150 p.a.	R750 p.a.
16-20 years	R1850 p.a.	R1200 p.a.	R750 p.a.
21-25 years	R1900 p.a.	R1250 p.a.	R750 p.a.
26-30 years	R1950 p.a.	R1300 p.a.	R750 p.a.
31-35 years	R2000 p.a.	R1350 p.a.	R750 p.a.

C. The Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa

Years of service	0-3	3-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	over 24
European Ministers	1608	1680	1800	1896	1968	2040
Eur. ord Evangelists	1440	1512	1608	1728	1728	1728
African Ministers	792	840	888	984	984	1008
Afr. ord Evangelists	568	696	744	792	792	792

D. United Congregational Church: minimum scales

African: R672; Coloured: R960; White: R1,440 (Gqubule 1968:58)

These racist stipend scales were widely criticised but the MCSA continued the practice of racist stipend scales until 1976. In defence of these racist stipend scales the White ministers and lay people always argued that a minister's stipend allowance was paid by his own circuit. Secondly, to raise the African minister's stipend allowance would be tantamount to elevating him far above his own community. Many platitudes were used to remind the African ministers of the meaning of the Christian vocation, sacrifice and communal identification.

Against such platitudes the African argument was that it was unChristian to base stipend

differentiation on the economic stratification obtaining in the broad South African way of life as if that were itself normal and Christian, and that the Church should take the lead to abolish the racist differentiation of stipend allowances.

The MCSA finally abolished racist disparity in ministers' stipend allowances in 1976. This was regarded as a great breakthrough, which even merited reporting to the British Conference:

During the Conference, we have made good progress towards the elimination from our structures of vestiges of discrimination. The adoption of a common minimum scale of stipends has been a step forward in our aim of achieving common stipends and common standards for a common ministry (*MCSA 1976:271*).

The non-racist stipend policy became effective in 1977 as the 1976 Conference had voted for the following minimum stipend scales for all the racial groups:

Probationer Ministers

1-3 years R1152

Remaining years R1308

Ordained Ministers

1-5 years R1536

6-10 years R1590

11-15 years R1644

16-20 years R1698

21-25 years R1752

26-30 years R1806

31- years R1860

(*MCSA 1976:108*)

The adoption of the policy of non-racist stipend scales would not have been known by some people in 1978. Mr Cromwell Diko, the leader of the Opposition Party in the Transkeian Parliament and also a minister of the Methodist Independent Church, still charged that Black ministers were given "meagre handouts while the White ministers were getting fat cheques ..." (*Daily Dispatch*, February 1, 1978).

This view would persist for some time even amongst those who should have known and appreciated the improvement. This was partly due to the fact that the 1976 Conference had prescribed only a minimum stipend scale and those circuits, presumably the White circuits, who were able to pay more were free to do so. The minimum stipend scale for an ordained White minister with 30 years' service was R1 950 p.a. in 1968 but for 1977 the Conference recommended R1 806! This made the policy look more like window-dressing.

The racist discrimination in ministers' stipend scales was still an issue of contention and it did have a bearing on the Methodist schism of 1978 in spite of the 1976 Conference resolution to discontinue the practice.

The Transkeian Government raised the three issues of racial circuits and congregations, church property ownership and racist stipends in order to argue for the formation of a Methodist Church of Transkei, which would be structurally more "loyal" to the Transkeian state. The greetings issue had provided an opportune occasion to pursue the goal of having its "own Church".

Although the Cabinet Ministers raised these issues, what is more significant is that they did not so much argue the case for banning the Methodist Church of South Africa as present the case for supporting the idea of forming the Methodist Church of Transkei. Their aim, it would seem, was to point out to the Methodist ministers the folly of being loyal to a church which practised racism while they were citizens of a Transkeian state which was free from racism.

Similarly, Chief Matanzima did not argue only the case for banning the Methodist Church of South Africa but also the case for forming the Methodist Church of Transkei (see 2.3). His argument was based on the desirability of forming a church which would be co-ordinated with the state of Transkei. Such a church would have its headquarters in Umtata, as was the case with Transkei state and government, and could have its ministers deployed in the Republic of South Africa to serve its Transkeian members.

3.4.5 The identity of Transkeian Methodism

Although we should include both the Queenstown and the Clarkebury Districts when

considering the peculiarities of Transkeian Methodism, we should focus especially on Clarkebury District because it is exclusively Transkeian (see Appendix III).

Within the broad South African Methodist tradition the Clarkebury District has for a long time been regarded as a "missionary District" and for this reason has received much attention and financial assistance from the MCO. Among its main features as a District was an extensive involvement in the field of education that was not equalled by any other District in the MCSA. This programme seems to have been the main reason for retaining the White missionaries serving Christian communities which were exclusively Black. This involvement in the field of education has contributed significantly in creating an essentially Methodist Christian oral tradition in Transkei - Christians of other churches will use the terminology, ethos and idiom of the Methodists: *Mongameli*, *Mfundisi wam*, *dade*, *bazahvana*, *ramente* and so on. Then, too, the Methodist tradition has spearheaded the development of indigenous Church leadership.

Even within the MCSA, the Clarkebury District always had more Black superintendents than other Districts. The transition of the Clarkebury District from a missionary to an African/Black District took about twenty years: from 1950 to 1972. This period is dated from the appointment of Rev. E.J. Ndzamela to Palmerton in 1945. Previously very few, if any, Black Superintendents and ministers were ever appointed to mission stations that had been established by the missionaries. Most of these mission stations had educational institutions, for example Clarkebury, Buntingville, Shawbury, Osborn and Mfundisweni. The first Black Warden was Rev. Seth M. Mokitimi, who was appointed Warden of Osborn Institution (MCSA 1972: 10).

In 1971 Rev. R.I. Thompson, the last White missionary, retired. The 1968 Conference appointed Rev. Jotham C. Mvusi as the first Black Chairman of the Clarkebury District (MCSA 1991: 82). At the end of 1975 he retired and was succeeded by Rev. F.H.T. Fikeni. In the following year (1976) Transkei gained its independence.

During this period of church transformation to a Black-led District, there was also a parallel political transformation to a Black civilian state: the White magistrates and other high officials in the public service were replaced by Black officials. This was also the period of the

emergence of Transkei local government.

When Chief Matanzima was preparing for Transkeian independence, some Methodist ministers, Revs A.L. Socikwa, M.V.D. Lila and M.M.V. Njongwe, were appointed to serve in the Department of Foreign Affairs. By giving such posts to Methodist ministers, Chief Matanzima was probably carrying on the Eastern Cape/Transkei tradition of a close relationship between the missionaries and tribal chiefs. Chief Matanzima and other Transkeian politicians were proud of being Methodist lay people and also of long association with most senior Methodist ministers, whom they called the "Faculties". They had been students together at Healdtown Institution or Lovedale Institution and mainly at Fort Hare University College.

Although Chief Matanzima involved some Methodist ministers in his preparation for an independent Transkei, the sojourn of the Federal Theological Seminary Southern Africa in Umtata must have rudely awakened him to the realisation that he was then not dealing with the generation of the "Faculties" but highly politicised theological students. This experience created a sceptical attitude towards the younger MCSA ministers. There was a growing perception in political circles that they were being trained to be sympathetic to communism and to be political activists, a perception that was long held by some politicians in South Africa.

The different attitudes of some politicians towards the Methodist ministers must have put Matanzima in a dilemma. He and other politicians were largely comfortable with the White missionaries and the inherently conservative old-style Black ministers, but had a problem in handling the "angry young men of Black Consciousness".

In spite of his own anger at the younger ministers, Matanzima was still soft on the Methodist ministers. This probably explains some events in Transkei following the death in detention of Steve Biko on 12 September 1977. While ministers of other churches, Revs Prince Ntintili and Mcebisi Xundu, were detained for organising transport for people to attend the funeral in King William's Town (*Daily Dispatch*, 27 January 1978), the Methodists, Revs Tom Mbabane and Max Lungu, who were also involved in the arrangements, were never detained.

In the light of the above consideration of a peculiar Methodist tradition in Transkei, while the Methodist Church in South Africa's top executive claimed the credit for the MCSA, the Transkei Government would hold a different view. It could claim that that tradition was possible only through the co-operation of the tribal chiefs.

In the post-missionary period that tradition was no longer very visible. The missionaries had left Transkei and education - an important sphere of partnership between the missionaries and the tribal chiefs - had been taken over by central government. In fact, centralisation in administration, both in the political and the ecclesial sphere, had the effect of undermining local co-operation between the "state" and the church.

After reclaiming authority for local administration through the homelands policy, Chief Matanzima would have the same vision for the Methodist Church in Transkei. Through the domestication of both politics and the church, the tradition of co-operation between the missionaries and the tribal chiefs could be revived. This should explain why he preferred to keep the "misunderstanding" alive and also why he was interested not only in banning the Methodist Church of South Africa but also in the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei.

As it was appropriate to give an account of the political situation in Transkei at the time of passing the 1977 Conference resolution (3.3.4.3-3.3.4.5) it is also appropriate to do the same for the Clarkebury District.

When Rev Mvusi was retiring as Chairman of the District in 1975 two groups emerged in the District, each with its own candidate for the Chairmanship of the District. Rev. Fikeni won the contest. The tension between the two groups had not finally melted away when the 1977 Methodist Annual Conference suspended three ministers from Clarkebury District. This led to unhappiness and the signing of a petition.

In the District Special Synod Rev. Gaba, who had been a District delegate to the 1977 Conference, and yet had signed the petition (see 2.6) had no option but to stand together with Rev Fikeni when giving an explanation to the District. But Rev. Gaba went further than that. He proposed that the District should pass a vote of confidence on the Chairmanship of Rev.

Fikeni, and even argued that it was urgent since the District was under threat from both the MCSA (as it had already suspended three of its ministers) and the Transkeian government (as it had threatened to ban the MCSA). The vote of confidence was passed unanimously. The issue for which the Special Synod had been convened was thus, to the dismay of the suspended ministers, relegated to the background.

From then on the District groups changed alliances; the pro-Masela group of 1975 split, with Rev. Gaba then emerging as a leader of the pro-Fikeni group and Rev. Mbabane as the leader of a group who were no longer pro-Fikeni. The climax of this feud was reached when he accused Rev. Fikeni of "telling lies" in the Chairmen's Meeting (Makalima 1989:12). Of course by then the issues which had caused tension in the Clarkebury District, namely, the successor to Rev. Mvusi and the suspension of the three ministers were displaced by the question of responding to the ban. The suspension of the three ministers had a bearing on the re-alignment of power blocs within Clarkebury District and in creating a culture of fear and intimidation in the church; these in turn had a bearing on the way some people responded on the impending ban (Oral sources).

3.5 CONCLUSION

This contextual analysis of the three issues of the church resolution, the independence of Transkei, and the Methodist tradition in the Transkei was a serious attempt to understand issues in their respective contexts which define their meaning and significance in their own communities.

The MCSA's resolution on discontinuing letters of greetings to heads of state was therefore taken in a complex political context by a church who wanted to be prophetic. In the process that led to a clash with a political vision of a homeland.

While the Transkei Government may seem to have overreacted, it had nothing to gain by "punishing" the Methodist Church of South Africa. Instead, it would lose more from the international community from which it sought to secure political recognition. And yet, in spite of this, it did not back down: its eyes were already set on gain in another respect.

As a product of the South African political ideology, Chief Matanzima could probably not visualise his new Transkei state without religious support and therefore needed a Transkeian Church that would be the Transkeian "Government at prayer". His dispute with the Methodist Church of South Africa therefore did not arise out of an anti-church attitude at all, but rather from a conviction, supported perhaps by his observation of the relationship between the South African Government and the Dutch Reformed Church, that a state needs religious support. He therefore needed an ecclesial alliance which would complement his political programme of creating a Transkeian political identity by injecting a religious spirit into that movement.

In the end the Transkeian schism occurred not only because the Transkei Government and the Methodist Church of South Africa failed to resolve the dispute but also because the issue had shifted to the Transkeian Methodists. They themselves were divided by a conflict of different loyalties. This will be dealt with in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

A CONFLICTUAL ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2 a narrative method was used to tell a story of the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei. Chapter 3 contextually analysed the issues of the recognition of Transkeian independence and Methodist tradition of church greeting. These issues were identified as providing the political and ecclesial contexts of the crisis which developed for the Methodist Church of South Africa.

In 1.5.3 it was pointed out that conflict is an inherent component of a story. As anyone who reads the story of the MCT will see, the element of conflict runs right through it. Although three stages of the conflict in the MCT have been identified, namely between the Transkeian Government and the international community, the Transkeian Government and the MCSA, and the conflict amongst the Transkeian Methodists, this chapter will focus only on the latter. It is a conflictual analysis of the reaction of the Transkeian Methodists to the pending banning of the MCSA in Transkei.

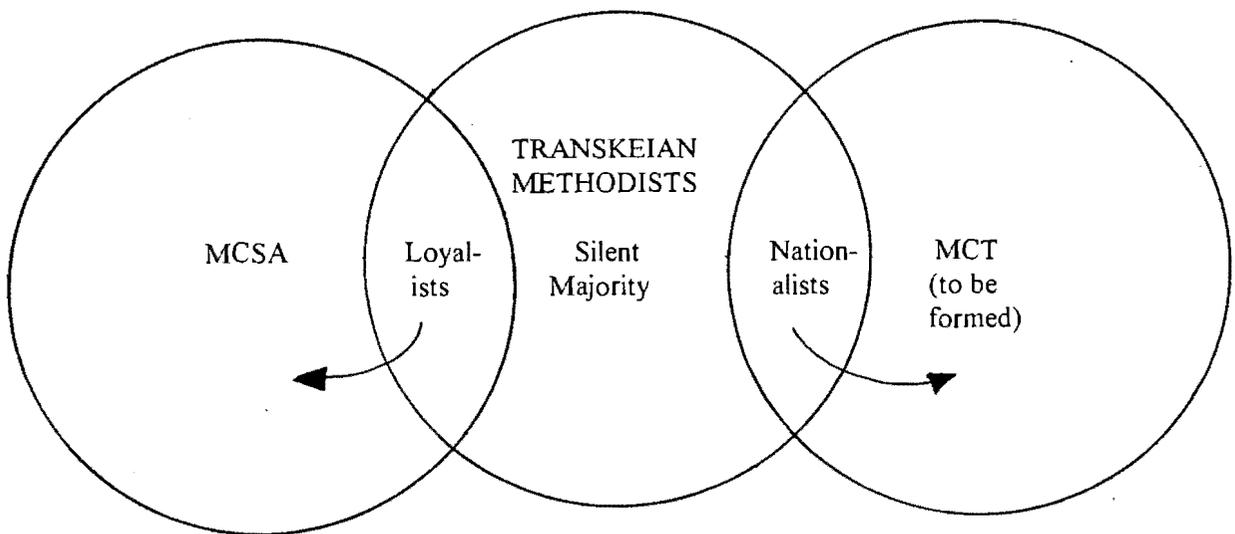
Although chapter 3 may be seen as a study of conflict, it is more an analysis of a clash of political and ecclesial agendas. That clash generated a deeper conflict and major players, determined by different loyalties, began to emerge. This chapter is about that dimension of the process of the schism. In analysing a situation like that of the MCT, it is important to take into account the grassroots reaction to a crisis. The common approach is to focus only on the main actors, in our case the Transkeian Government and the MCSA, thus ignoring the people who are most affected. In this chapter the MCT schism will be analysed from the perspective not of the main actors but of the majority of the affected people.

In the face of the unresolved dispute between the Transkeian Government and the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Transkeian Methodists had to take a position. This was inevitable because they were the group who would be affected most if the Methodist

Church of South Africa were to be banned in Transkei and the Methodist Church of Transkei formed.

The main issue dividing the Transkeian Methodists was that of participation or non-participation in the debate on the banning of the Methodist Church of South Africa in Transkei and the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei. One group, the "loyalists", seemed content to leave the matter in the hands of the top executive of the Methodist Church of South Africa while the other group, the "nationalists", were determined, as stakeholders, to make their own input on the matter.

The question of participation or non-participation plunged the Methodists in Transkei into a deeper crisis and their different positions assumed another dimension, namely that of loyalty to the Methodist Church of South Africa (the loyalists) and loyalty to the Methodist Church of Transkei (the nationalists). This can be represented as follows:



Between the two extreme positions of loyalty either to the Methodist Church of South Africa or to (the idea of) the Methodist Church of Transkei, there were various other forms of loyalty.

The different groups and loyalties began to surface at the meeting on 31 January 1978. An analysis of the conflict will identify the group loyalties into which the Transkeian Methodists were divided. This conflictual analysis will help to explain why the initiative shifted from the Transkeian Government and the Methodist Church of South Africa to the Transkeian Methodists and also how the interaction of the different groups led to the schism instead of procuring a negotiated autonomy from the Methodist Church of South Africa for the Methodists in Transkei.

4.2 GROUP LOYALTIES

The six loyalties which can be regarded as crucial to the process of the schism will be described.

4.2.1 Loyalty to the Methodist Church of South Africa

It can reasonably be assumed that all the Transkeian Methodist ministers, whether appointed to circuits in the Transkei or the Republic of South Africa, in good ministerial standing, retired or suspended, were loyal to the Methodist Church of South Africa. Such loyalty entailed observing and carrying out the directions and policy of the Methodist Church of South Africa. The Transkeian Government challenged this monolithic loyalty by stating that the intention of forming the Methodist Church of Transkei was to "obviate the conflict of loyalties" (see 2.3), that is between their loyalty to the Methodist Church in South Africa in the Republic of South Africa as Methodists and their loyalty to Transkei state as Transkeian citizens.

This challenge divided Transkeian Methodists. Reverend Tom Mbabane represented the group, designated the loyalists in this study, who felt that the top executive of the Methodist Church of South Africa had the sole right to handle the matter. At the meeting on 31 January 1978 he asked the Prime Minister to allow the Methodist ministers to pursue the matter of forming the Methodist Church of Transkei through the ecclesiastical channels. Rev. W.B.S. Gaba on the other hand represented the group, designated the nationalists in this study. He felt the Transkeian Methodist ministers were competent to handle the matter.

4.2.2 Loyalty to the tribal structure

Loyalty to the century-old Methodist tradition of the alliance between the missionaries and the tribal chiefs was also evident in that meeting. That tradition encouraged close cooperation between the missionaries and the tribal chiefs (see 3.4.1). This tradition could see no contradiction between endorsing Chief Matanzima's vision of a Transkeian Church and loyalty to the Methodist Church of South Africa.

Some supernumerary ministers, who themselves had been brought up during the days of the missionary-chief cooperation, were deeply influenced by this loyalty. Reverend N. Jafta (his praise name: Nyikiny'ubhoxo) represented this group at the meeting on 31 January 1978. He made the traditional praise chant (*ukubonga*) as the Prime Minister entered the hall:

*Ah! Daliwonga
Lwangen'ufaf ohude
Unyana kaMhlobō
umazondwa ziintshaba
Zingaz'umenza nto
Daliwonga ...!!!*

(Hail, Daliwonga!
There enters the tall one
The son of Chief Mhlobo
He who is hated by his enemies
And yet they cannot hurt him
Daliwonga ...!!!)

This was a dramatic Xhosa way of telling the assembly of ministers that it was not just a politician they were going to deal with but also a tribal chief. At the BMC meeting in Buntingville a similar view of negotiations and tribal protocol was expressed (see 2.7.3).

4.2.3 Loyalty to Black Solidarity/Consciousness

In the context of the Black struggle of the time, the Clarkebury District could be regarded as a "liberated zone" as it was the only Methodist District with a Black Chairman.

Although Chief Matanzima did not approve of Black Consciousness (see 3.4.5), there were Black Consciousness (BC) supporters who were in favour of the formation of the MCT (see the BMC debate in 2.7.3 & 2.7.7) since they saw it as an opportunity to foster Black leadership and autonomy. However, most BC supporters were strongly opposed to the homelands policy and any form of tribalism. In the name of an all-embracing Black solidarity, some BC supporters opposed the formation of the MCT. This view was expressed by the Rev. Mvume Dandala when he pointed out that the envisaged MCT would essentially be a Black Church and therefore a breakaway by only the Transkeian section of the MCSA would not only harm the MCSA but would also prove very damaging to Black solidarity. He suggested that the matter of forming the MCT should therefore be referred to the BMC (see 2.4).

4.2.4 Loyalty to the local congregation

This loyalty was expressed by those ministers seeking the assurance that the formation of the MCT would not interfere with normal Methodist church life (the Methodists would continue with the same Methodist hymns they knew, the same church organisations like the Manyanos, church uniforms, and so on). They settled for the MCT in order to continue with day-to-day ministry despite unhappiness with the schism and its consequences.

This loyalty did not emerge clearly at the meeting on 31 January 1978 but at the later stages of the schism. It is expressed by the action of Rev. A.M. Sincadu. He was persuaded by his circuit, in the interests of his congregation, to change his decision of leaving Transkei after the formation of the MCT and to join the MCT (see Appendix V). (Sincadu 1992).

4.2.5 Loyalty to Methodism

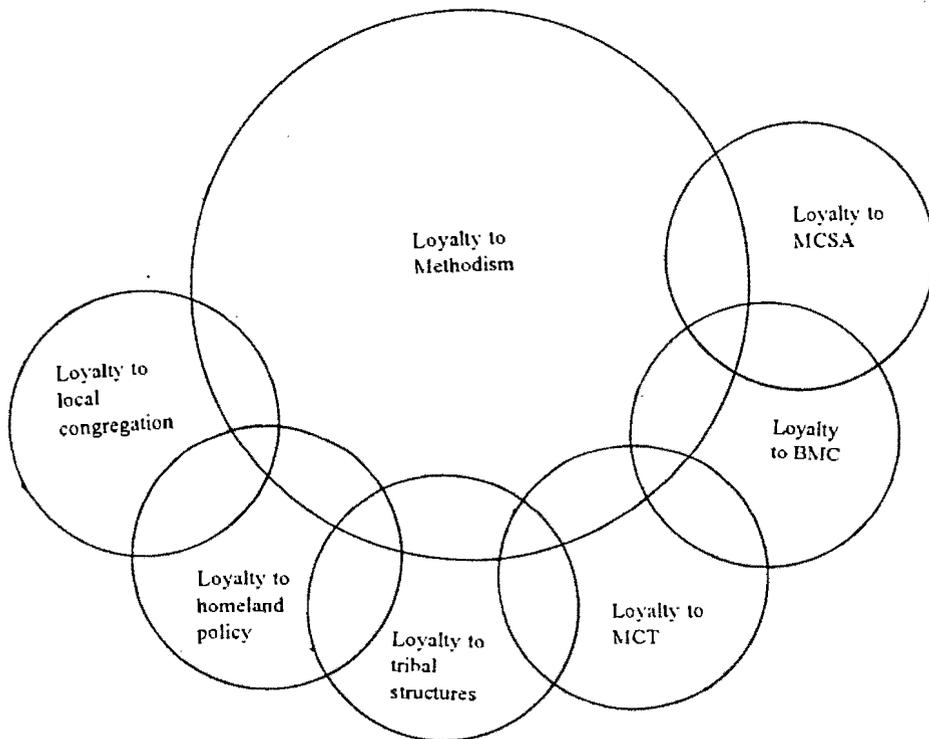
The idea that there could be a Methodist Church in Transkei disaffiliated from the MCSA, with its own Methodist Connexional Office in Umtata, suggested a distinction between loyalty to the MCSA and loyalty to Methodism. Loyalty to Methodism implied loyalty to Methodist doctrines, practices and usages but not to the top executive or the organisational

structure of the MCSA. Reverend W.B.S. Gaba pursued this line of thinking throughout the process of schism.

4.2.6 Loyalty to the MCT

As the MCT did not exist at the time, any support for the formation of a Transkeian Church can be regarded as an expression of potential loyalty to the MCT. Reverend Qambela (see 2.3) represented this loyalty.

The following diagram illustrates the loyalties which were pulling Transkeian Methodists in different directions:



An explanation of the diagram:

- (1) Methodism is central because all the Transkeian Methodists claimed loyalty to it.
- (2) The BMC circle overlaps with both the MCSA and the MCT because in it there were both those who were loyal to the MCSA and those loyal to the (still to be formed) MCT. Both groups shared a common loyalty to Methodism hence their circles overlap with Methodism but not with each other.
- (3) Loyalty to the local congregation was one way of being loyal to Methodism, but not necessarily to either the MCSA or the MCT (hence the circle does not overlap with either of them).
- (4) The local congregation was based in Transkei so interacting with the homeland politics was unavoidable hence the circles of the local congregation and the homelands policy overlap.
- (5) The policy of the MCSA was opposed to the Homelands Policy (see 3.2.2.1) hence the circles of the MCSA and the Homelands Policy do not overlap and are at opposite poles in the diagram.
- (6) The history of Methodism, especially in Transkei shows a close cooperation between the Methodist missionaries and the tribal chiefs (see 3.4.1) (a practice continued by Black ministers) hence the circles of Methodism and the tribal structure overlap.
- (7) The circles of the tribal structure and the Homelands Policy overlap because the former was an essential element of the latter (see 3.3.3.1).
- (8) The tribal structure circle overlaps with that of the MCT because that would be unavoidable for a church operating primarily in a homeland context.

Many of these loyalties were present (to some extent) in all the participants but their relative importance differed. This led to the formation of some distinct “constellations” of loyalties among Transkeian Methodists. The different constellations will now be analysed.

4.3 INTERPLAY OF LOYALTIES IN THE VARIOUS GROUPS

Although a number of groups surfaced at the meeting on 31 January 1978, in the process of the schism some of them converged to form two main combinations:

- (a) Those who felt that the issue of the formation of the MCT should be addressed by the national bodies of the Church, namely the MCSA Conference (Rev. Tom Mbabane) and the BMC (Rev. Mvume Dandala)
- (b) Those who felt that the issue should be addressed by the local bodies of the Church, namely Transkeian Methodist ministers (Rev. W.B.S. Gaba), and Transkeian circuit stewards (Rev. A.G. Mposelwa)

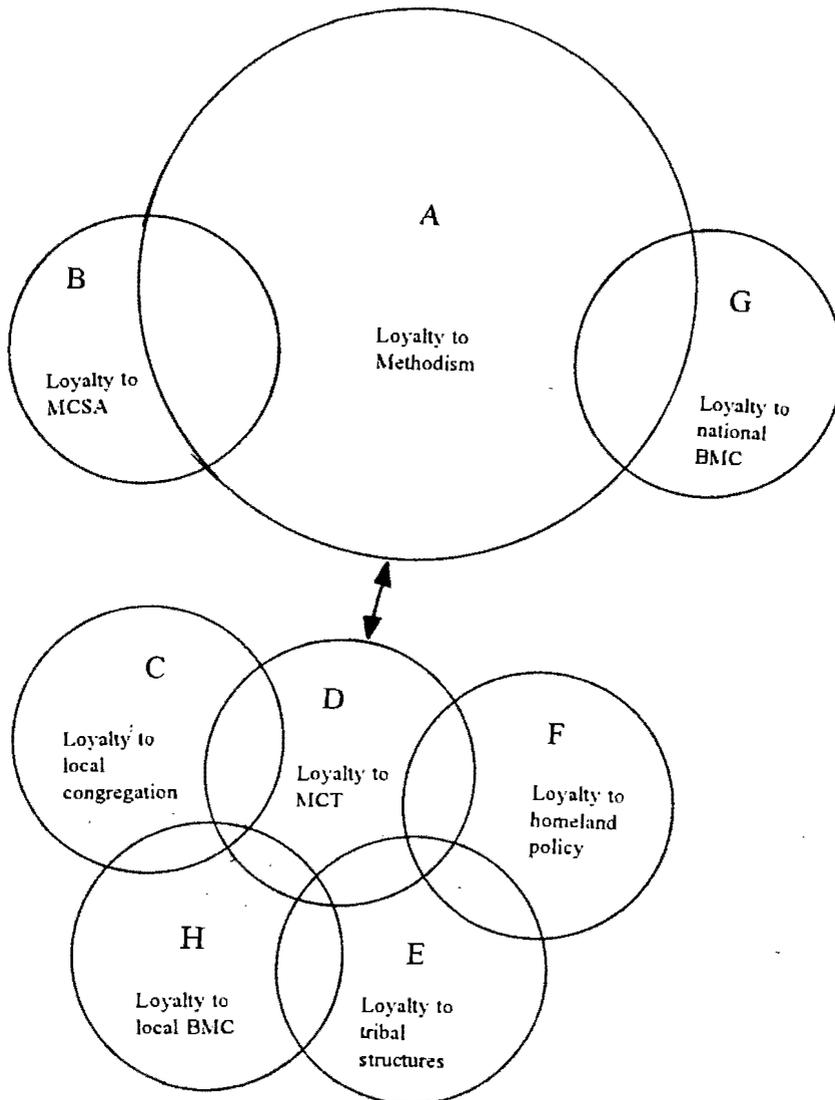
Similarly, the different loyalties can be reduced to the two main ones of loyalty to the MCSA and loyalty to the MCT.

- (1) **Loyalty to the MCSA.** The following statements and positions expressed loyalty to the MCSA:
 - _ The matter should be referred to the MCSA Conference (Mbabane).
 - _ The BMC is irrelevant because it has no *locus standi* (official standing) in the Church (Mgojo).¹
 - _ The breakaway will also hurt the MCSA (Dandala).
- (2) **Loyalty to the MCT.** The following statements and positions express (incipient) loyalty to the MCT:
 - _ Praising the Prime Minister as a tribal chief (some supernumeraries).
 - _ The Transkeian Methodist ministers should decide the issue (Gaba).
 - _ The Transkeian circuit stewards should decide the issue (Mposelwa).
 - _ Some suspended ministers. They pinned their hopes of reinstatement to ministry on the formation of the MCT (Zweni 1992).

In order to contrast these opposing positions they will be analysed in greater detail.

4.3.1 The constellation of loyalties making up the loyalist position

The constellation of loyalties making up the *loyalist* position may be represented as follows:



The loyalists regarded their loyalty to the MCSA (B) as more important than loyalty to the local congregation (C). They regarded loyalty to the MCSA (B) as equivalent to loyalty to Methodism (A). They regarded the MCT (D) and the Clarkebury-Queenstown BMC (H) as fatally compromised to tribalism (E) and to the homeland system (F) and therefore rejected it. Those among the loyalists who were BMC members, identified with the view of the national BMC (G) rather than the local BMC (H).

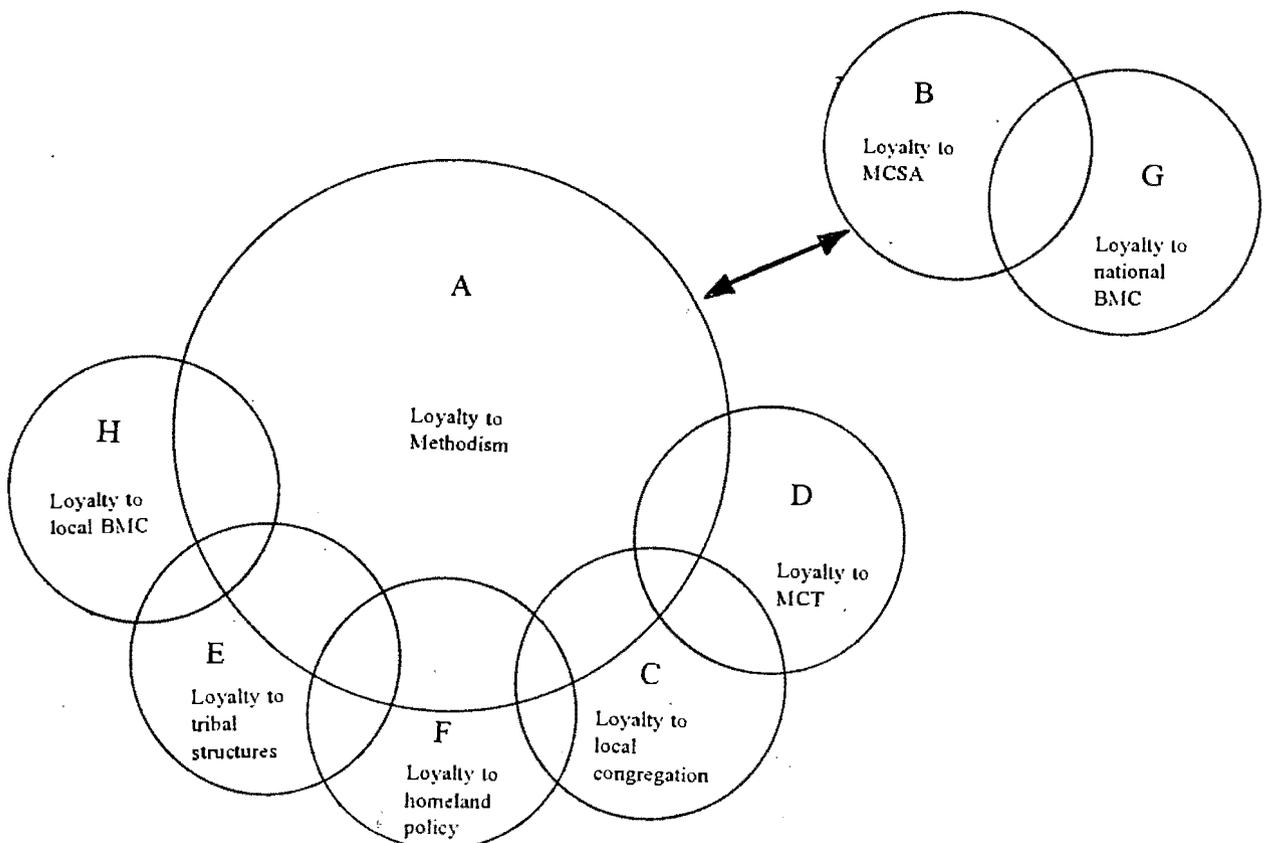
(1) The loyalists regarded loyalty to Methodism as implying loyalty to the MCSA hence Rev. Tom Mbabane regarded severing that link as "blasphemous" (*Dimension*, 7 May 1978: 10).

(2) In the diagram loyalty to the local congregation does not overlap with either the MCSA or the MCT but with loyalty to Methodism. The loyalists would expect the circle of the local congregation to overlap with that of the MCSA as well because, since they were "still part of the Methodist Church of South Africa" (see 2.5.8), they would also have been expected to show loyalty to the MCSA.

(3) The BMC (national, Mgojo, Dandala, Mbabane) circle overlaps with the circles of both loyalty to Methodism and the MCSA. The loyalists expected the issue of the formation of the MCT to be discussed only by the national bodies of the Church (see 4.3(a)).

(4) The loyalists regarded the BMC of the Transkei Districts (Clarkebury and Queenstown) as fatally compromised to loyalty to the chief and tribal structure and, ultimately, to the homelands policy and its homeland Church (MCT) and therefore rejected their line of action.

4.3.2 The constellation of loyalties making up the *nationalist* position



(1) The nationalists, led by the Clarkebury-Queenstown BMC (H), regarded loyalty to Methodism (A) as more important than loyalty to the MCSA (B) and were prepared to sacrifice the latter. The local BMC members felt abandoned by the national BMC (G).

(2) The nationalists regarded it as inevitable that loyalty to the local congregation (C) would overlap with that to the MCT (D), still to be formed, since they could not all be uprooted from Transkei. For them “a Methodist Church of Transkei” would be better than no Methodist Church in Transkei” (see 2.12).

(3) The nationalists accepted the MCT (D) because they did not regard Transkei as a political homeland created by the apartheid system (F) but rather as their natural home with all the cultural sentiments including loyalty to tribal chiefs/structure (E) and therefore many of them could not see any political equation in their choice to join or establish the MCT.

The clash between the two loyalty blocs over the formation of the MCT must be analysed below. To do so, the events leading to and the thinking behind the **resolutions** on the formation of the MCT will be discussed.

4.4 THE RESOLUTIONS ON THE FORMATION OF THE MCT

At the meeting on 21 February 1978 (see 2.3) two motions spelling out the positions of the loyalists and the nationalists were tabled, debated and voted on. Since these two motions capture the essence of the two approaches, they afford an excellent opportunity to analyse the interplay of the conflict of loyalties.

4.4.1 The first motion

The loyalists consistently denied Transkeian Methodists the right to act on the issue of the ban and the formation of the MCT. They took the view that only the Conference of the MCSA or its top executive had the right to decide on the issue. Initially their position was to totally reject the idea of a Methodist Church of Transkei. Reverend Dr Mgojo said the idea of a Church formed by the State was theologically unheard of,

wrong and a sin. The idea of forming the MCT should therefore be rejected (see 2.5.8).

Mr Guzana's original resolution expressed the same uncompromising rejection of the MCT: "We reject the idea of a church formed by a state" (2.5.8). Reverend Mbabane's amendment, which was finally adopted, changed the resolution to read:

In the light of the request from the Prime Minister of the Transkei for a reaction to his decision to ban the Methodist Church of South Africa and establish the Methodist Church of Transkei, this body sitting today (21/02/1978) decides that, as it is still part of the Methodist Church of South Africa, it cannot make a final decision and therefore refers this matter to the Conference through Synod (see 2.5.8).

This resolution did not reflect the thinking of the loyalists or the theological arguments they had advanced against the idea of forming the MCT. According to the *Fikeni Papers*, they had rejected the MCT because

- (1) That would be tantamount to endorsing the homelands policy and, ultimately, tribalism. Mr Guzana had argued that once the Church of Transkei was formed, presumably on the basis of the homelands policy, "... nothing would stop Methodists in the Transkei continuing their divisions along tribal lines ... what would stop a formation of a Pondo Church?" (see 2.5.8)
- (2) The initiative to form the MCT had been taken by the Transkeian Government. They had argued that no one would be against church autonomy provided that the Transkeian Methodists had worked for it rather than had it imposed by the Government (see 2.5.8).
- (3) The prophetic mission of the MCT would be compromised if it were formed by the state. It would never be able to say, "Thus says the Lord ..." (see 2.5.8).

Why those formulating the resolution put aside these theological arguments will be discussed after considering the second motion (4.4.2).

4.4.2 The second motion

The second motion, tabled by Mr Canca and reflecting the thinking of the nationalists, read that "this meeting should accept the Methodist Church of Transkei" (see 2.5.8).

In support of this motion Mr Canca maintained that "it would be useless to oppose the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei as that would not change the decision of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to ban the Methodist Church of South Africa" (see 2.5.8).

In the context of this pragmatic approach Rev. Gaba argued that engaging in theological arguments was futile as "faith, the Kingdom of God, Scripture, theology and church history are irrelevant to the issue and therefore should be put aside" (*Fikeni Papers*). This argument apparently intended to say that there would be no change in the understanding of these doctrinal issues even in the MCT or that political realities were more powerful and needed to be faced pragmatically.

For adopting this pragmatic approach, which avoided or even dismissed a theological analysis of the issue by simply reminding others "... who does not know KD?" (i.e. Chief Matanzima), Rev. Mbabane accused the nationalists of treating the ban as if it were a *fait accompli* and concluded that "it is no longer the Prime Minister who wants the ban to be implemented" (*Dimension*, 7 May 1978: 10).

Mr Canca did not stop at precluding theological arguments by his pragmatic approach but went on to say that as "an independent state, Transkei needs its own church" (*Fikeni Papers*). This statement made the pragmatic and the ideological considerations converge in favour of forming the MCT and thus made loyalty to the MCT and loyalty to the homelands policy overlap.

It could be argued that the majority of the nationalists did not support Mr Canca's views as they did not regard Transkei as a homeland in the first place but rather as their natural cultural home base. Mr Canca, who was a member of Chief Matanzima's ruling TNIP (*Dimension* 7 May 1978:10) and had tabled the motion in the Transkeian Parliament requesting the Republican Government to grant Transkei its political independence (see 3.3.3.2), could not entertain such a distinction. Those who evaded this equation of Transkei and a homeland state argued in favour of a distinction between loyalty to Methodism and loyalty to the MCSA. For them, loyalty to Methodism meant a truly Methodist Church but without any administration and financial links with the MCSA. Reverend Tom Mbabane dubbed this distinction "blasphemous" (*Dimension*, 7 May 1978:10).

Why the loyalists ignored the theological arguments against the formation of the MCT will be considered next.

4.4.3 A comment on the motions

To start with, the two motions are not really contradictory or mutually exclusive, although the majority decision at the meeting ruled against this view. The two motions served two different purposes: the second motion served to define how many were for and how many were against the formation of the MCT. On the strength of the 70-40 vote against the idea, the debate on the issue should have been closed and the Prime Minister informed accordingly. The first motion probably served two purposes, the first being to reject the very idea of voting on the issue because "we are still part of the MCSA" and the second to reject the idea itself. Many people would accept the latter as the main intention but Rev. Mbabane's report suggests that this was a surprising and "unexpected victory" (*Dimension*, 7 May 1978:10).

The first motion, which did not define how many were for and how many against, was a strategic device on the part of the loyalists. It was used to conceal the fact from the Prime Minister that the idea of forming the MCT had been rejected by 70 to 40 votes. This is why the Prime Minister was satisfied when he noted that the first motion

expressed what he had said at the meeting on 31 January 1978 (viz. that the matter should be taken from Synod to the Conference).

The loyalists' fears of Chief Matanzima's reaction were he to be told that the idea of forming the MCT had been rejected by 70 to 40 were as realistic as those of the nationalists ("who does not know KD?"). This view was confirmed by Rev. Fikeni (1994).

Secondly, the first motion was used to pass the buck to the MCSA: let the MCSA decide 'because we are still part of it'. At the same time, however, the theological arguments and 70-40 vote on the second motion were taken to express their own opinion - even if the MCSA should decide otherwise.

Thirdly, the effect of the first motion was to keep the issue alive within Methodist circles. By withholding information on the second motion, the Prime Minister was spared having to think about how to handle the issue. For the process of the schism, what he was **not** told rather than what he was told (i.e. who is for and who is against) became more significant.

Developments resulting from the vote of 21 February 1978 will be analysed next to show their impact.

4.5 CONSOLIDATION OF GROUP LOYALTIES

4.5.1 The nationalist bloc

The nationalists' energies were not dissipated by their defeat and humiliation in the meeting of 21 February 1978. Instead, they expanded their constituency by attracting various groups with different interests and agendas to join them under cover of pragmatism. There were three components in the nationalist bloc.

4.5.1.1 The BMC, Clarkebury-Queenstown Branch

This group formed the core of the nationalists. They were severely censured in the meeting on 21 February 1978. Their rallying points were their common lack of confidence in the MCSA top executive's ability to negotiate effectively with the Transkeian Government and their suspicion of the loyalists' motives for wanting to leave the issue entirely in the hands of the MCSA's top executive. These two rallying points were used to drum up support for the Clarkebury-Queenstown branch of the BMC against the loyalists and Transkeian Methodist ministers appointed to circuits in the Republic of South Africa. At their meeting on 21 March 1978 they committed themselves to working for the formation of the MCT and to imposing their own agenda on the Lindikhaya Steering Committee (see 2.11). Once this was achieved, the Clarkebury-Queenstown BMC branch ceased to exist and function as a distinct group (see Appendix I).

4.5.1.2 The supernumerary ministers

From the start of the process of the schism some supernumerary ministers played a role far out of proportion to their status as retired ministers. The most prominent of these were the Revs. F. de Waal Mahlsela, E.D. Gwiliza and N. Jafta. This was probably a reflection of the influence of African culture on Black Christianity. In African culture respect for age is rated much higher than respect for expertise, knowledge and professional rank.

These supernumeraries probably viewed the whole crisis of the banning of the MCSA and the formation of the MCT from a totally different perspective. Having themselves been nurtured in a church dominated by a culture of close cooperation between the missionaries and the tribal chiefs, they could see nothing exceptionally wrong in Chief Matanzima's vision of a Transkeian Church. In their view, this would be a revival and perpetuation of the Eastern Cape/Transkei Methodist tradition.

The younger generation of ministers, who had been exposed to (and probably

participated in some way in) the then prevailing Black struggle like the Black Consciousness Movement, South African Student's Organisation (SASO) (cf BMC), could have approached the issue from perspectives that could have conflicted with the missionary-tribal chief mould of the senior men. Such was not the case, however.

Two factors may have reduced the potential conflict. The first may still have been respect for age. Even in the "multiracial" churches like the MCSA, the White Chairmen of Districts usually display amazing accommodation of this African culture of respecting age. The second may have been fear on the part of the younger generation - fear of Chief Matanzima and of the reaction of the MCSA to the whole issue. This would explain why the younger ministers pushed the supernumerary ministers to the frontline in the process of the schism. The supernumeraries had nothing to fear from the MCSA because they were already retired. They had no problem relating to the Prime Minister, whom they approached more as a tribal chief than a politician. This fear would also explain why the the younger ministers supported the name of Rev. F. de Waal Mahlasela² as the first President of the MCT. They wanted to manipulate his personal friendship with Chief Matanzima.

4.5.1.3 The disgruntled ministers

In a speech in the Transkeian Parliament in June 1978 Mr Caledon Mda charged that the MCSA had been banned in Transkei because "certain ministers who could not bow down to the regulations of their church and keep their vows (had) influenced the Prime Minister to ban the Methodist Church of Southern Africa" (*Daily Dispatch*, June 16, 1978:1). The original statement, which Mr Mda was ordered to withdraw, read: "Certain Methodist ministers, who had failed to abide by the regulations of their church, had refused to be disciplined, had dragged the Transkei Prime Minister by the ear and persuaded him to ban the Methodist Church of Southern Africa."

This allegation could be referring to three categories of disgruntled ministers: (1) those who had resigned, (2) those who had been given early retirement (prematurely retired) and (3) those who had been suspended.

(1) Ministers, like Mike Lila,³ who had resigned. Mr Lila's presence at two meetings has already been mentioned (see 2.5.2 and 2.8). As a Government official, Mr Lila supported the formation of the MCT.

(2) Supernumerary ministers, like F.de W. Mahlasela and E.D. Gwiliza, who had been prematurely retired. According to Rev. Mahlasela (1994), the Port Elizabeth church riots between 1974 and 1976 were sparked off by the reaction of the youth to a Quarterly Meeting decision to divide them into the normal classes of 12 members.⁴ Instead of supporting his efforts to implement the Q.M. decision, the MCSA top executive let him down by removing him from the Port Elizabeth circuit. In spite of this initial betrayal, he had initially wanted to help the Church in negotiating with Chief Matanzima to drop the idea of banning the church. Later he changed his mind and supported the formation of the MCT.

Reverend Gwiliza was stationed at Faku Institution. When the students burned the hostel, he was removed by the MCSA without any inquiry.

(3) Ministers who had been suspended. The concern for the ministers in the Clarkebury District who had been suspended was such a live issue that it led to a petition and the convening of a District Special Synod (see 2.6). Even though the suspended ministers themselves did not participate in the meetings, it should be noted that in the Black community one does not need a formal status to influence people.

The influence of these disgruntled ministers should therefore not be underestimated. They had a vested interest in the formation of the MCT, which, some of them might have hoped, would be kinder to them than the MCSA.

In the end many groups and a large section of the silent majority were attracted by the pragmatism of the nationalists and the promise of a truly Methodist Church in Transkei with the same liturgy, doctrines, church organisations and church uniforms because, as Rev. Fikeni, Chairman of the Clarkebury District, said, "A Methodist Church of Transkei is better than no Methodist Church in Transkei" (*Daily Dispatch*, June 3,

1978:1).

4.5.2 The loyalist bloc

The development of the loyalist bloc after the meeting on 21 February 1978 also needs to be considered.

The loyalists continued to hold their view that only the Conference of the MCSA or its top executive had the right to decide on the issue. It was probably through their influence that the Interim Committee⁵ attended and reported on developments in Transkei to the Chairmen's Meeting on 7 April 1978, for which they were severely censured (see 2.8).

To the loyalists, loyalty to the MCSA and loyalty to Methodism were inseparable hence they could not approve a Draft Constitution of the MCT, not because of any flaws but because its drafting had not been mandated by the MCSA top executive (see 2.10.5). Consequently they rejected any initiatives taken by Transkeian Methodists since that would endorse the fragmentation of the church.

In the early stages of the schism the loyalists controlled centre stage. The turning point came on 12 April 1978, when the Interim Committee was dissolved and replaced by the Lindikhaya Steering Committee. Although some of their members were re-elected to the Steering Committee, they soon resigned when they realised that the nationalists had outmanoeuvred them by imposing their own agenda on the Lindikhaya Steering Committee. All those who were appointed to circuits in the Republic of South Africa stopped attending, thereby leaving a few loyalists in Transkei to fight alone against the majority of nationalists. In the end seventeen ministers refused to join the MCT when it was finally formed (see Appendix VII).

4.6 CONCLUSION

In 1.5.3 it was stated that conflict is an important and even essential component of a

story (since a story has a rational structure of plot, conflict and resolution [Williams 1986: 24]). This chapter is designed specifically to show the role of that component in the story of the Methodist Church of Transkei. The conflictual analysis provided in this chapter should make sense out of a story that is otherwise baffling and confusing, by explaining the motivations and the mood of the participants (see 1.5.1).

From the conflictual analysis given so far one can discern a movement in the story: in the early stages of the schism the loyalists controlled centre stage and at a later stage (especially after 12 April 1978) the nationalists displaced them. This reflects the normal movement in a conflict situation where power and influence shift from group to group.

For a better understanding of the conflict, the nationalist and the loyalist blocs as protagonists and antagonists respectively have been used in the process of the schism. The nationalists have been associated with the interests of the local bodies of the church and the loyalists with those of the national bodies of the church.

Beneath these structural designations are the political, ethnic and cultural issues which are pertinent to dividing society. It should be clear from the foregoing conflictual analysis that, as the history of Christendom testifies, very little can be attributed solely to theological differences when it comes to church division. Non-theological issues like political, ethnic and cultural considerations are very often decisive. They themselves may not be the cause of the schism but strong determinants of the direction of events. This applies to the story of the Methodist Church of Transkei as well. Although the loyalties that divided the Transkeian Methodists were not the *cause* of the schism, they were very much a part of the process of the schism.

The question for both the loyalists and the nationalists was what loyalty to Christ meant in terms of loyalty to the Church (either the MCSA or the MCT) and loyalty to the state (either the undivided but racist South Africa or the "independent" Transkei). Some ministers (the loyalists) regarded loyalty to Christ to mean loyalty to the MCSA against the MCT and the Transkeian state. Others (the nationalists) regarded it as

meaning loyalty to the MCT and the Transkeian state against the MCSA and South Africa. Still others (the silent majority) regarded it as meaning loyalty to their local congregations and - since the MCSA was going to be banned anyway, - settled for the MCT as the only way to remain loyal to their flock.

The issue of loyalty seems to be basic as a way of looking at the world for any society or community. Since there is no given standard or recipe for Christian loyalty that can be applied to all situations, people will go on making choices that they believe best embody Christian loyalty.

The aim of the study, amongst other objectives, was not only to identify and analyse the role played by different loyalties in the MCT but also, through this chapter, to raise awareness of their role in any schism or conflict situation. In this study we cannot therefore identify a particular loyalty as being solely responsible for the schism. All of them contributed in varying degrees. This consideration of the conflict of different loyalties helps in understanding more clearly the interests which influenced different groups.

This conflictual analysis also shows that research on the AICs (see chapter 5) should not be confined only to theological/ecclesial/religious theoretical frameworks of interpretation but should also take into account socio-cultural issues which make up the "world of meaning" for the people affected. Some of the loyalties which have been analysed are peculiar only to the Transkeian "world-view". In other similar studies different loyalties will play a central role. The point to make here is that the ecclesial, theological and even political issues may provide the wider context, but the decisive determinants for the participants may be their socio-cultural loyalties.

Having considered the role played by the conflict of different loyalties in the process of the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei, an analysis of the nature of the schism leading to the formation of the Methodist Church of Transkei needs to be done.

ENDNOTES

1. Mgojo's position was ambiguous. Does the irrelevance of the BMC suggest that the matter should be settled by the MCSA or the Transkeian Methodists? In his later statements it was clear that he wanted the matter to be addressed by the MCSA.
2. Reverend Mahlasela was a very prominent Methodist minister. He was the first Black Secretary of a District Synod (Clarkebury District) and the first Black Warden of Clarkebury Institution. He was transferred to Grahamstown District when he contested the chairmanship of Clarkebury District. In Port Elizabeth Circuit he came into conflict with the Class 8 youth and subsequently took early retirement.
3. Mr Lila resigned from the ministry of the MCSA for personal (family) reasons. He was reinstated to the ministry of the MCSA in 1993 (MCSA 1993: 44).
4. Church members are divided into classes of 12 members including a class leader for the purposes of spiritual nurture and administration. In the African Circuits this practice is still followed. The class leader is a member of the Society Leaders' Meeting and also of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.
5. The Interim Committee was so elected that both groups were represented as follows: Loyalists: Rev. Tom Mbabane and Mr Guzana. Nationalists: Rev. Gaba and Mr Canca. These can be regarded as the most outstanding representatives of the groups at that stage (see 2.5.9)

CHAPTER 5

A TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 gave a contextual analysis of the factors that precipitated the schism and chapter 4 a conflictual analysis of the different loyalties that interacted in the process.

In this chapter I shall situate the MCT in the context of the African Independent Church (AIC) movement. To facilitate achieving that goal, the nature of the MCT will be categorised, using insights gained from the typology drawn up for the AIC movement as analysed in 1.4.4. Applying that typology, which causative factors and typological classification most appropriate for the MCT, must be considered.

5.2 CAUSATIVE FACTORS

Causal theories to explain the AIC movement abound. Some missiologists explain the rise of the AICs in purely religious terms while others do so in socio-political terms.

5.2.1 The religious explanation

Over the past forty years the approach to and judgement of the AIC movement has undergone some conversion from an attitude of outright condemnation to a more positive evaluation. This was due to approaching the issue from two different angles. Some were concerned over what the AIC movement was doing to the Gospel and judged it to be a syncretist distortion. Missiologists who did so approached the AIC movement fully armed with the "correct" theological presuppositions and Western assumptions about what the "true Gospel" is. They were alarmed at the rate of "perversion" going on in the AIC movement.

Sundkler (1961: 297), the founder of the studies on the AIC movement, initially saw the

motivating factor for this movement as "a nativistic-syncretistic interpretation of the Christian religion" which created "the bridge over which Africans are brought back to heathenism - and ultimately to 'the African animism' from which they started".

Oosthuizen, who, in particular, underwent a conversion of attitude, started by denying them any right to call themselves Christian. He regarded them as "post-Christian" movements because they maintained traditional religion instead of regarding the Word of God as normative (Oosthuizen 1968: 73-75). He later modified his views by recognising the Christian orientation of some of these churches (Oosthuizen 1979: 3). The severest judgement, however, was passed by Beyerhaus (1969: 79), who saw them as being under the control of demonic powers.

Other missiologists approached the issue with a view to determining how the AIC movement was impacting on the African culture and traditional religions. They returned a verdict of contextualization.

Daneel, the champion of this more tolerant spirit, initiated the positive attitude as early as 1971 when he challenged the missiologists who overemphasised the syncretist motif in the rise of the AIC movement. Daneel (1971: 455) pointed out that the "older generation of mission Church officials - European and African - tend to view the Separatists as their opponents, 'sheep-stealers' who rob members of their flock, and as 'twisters of the truth'.... They regard them 'as an inferior expression of Christianity' or as decidedly non-Christian."

Daneel regards the phenomenon of the AICs as primarily concerned with the need to adapt Christianity to African traditional rituals and symbols. According to him, they are therefore exhibiting a genuine "process of contextualization" and "create the kind of context in which dialogue and confrontation between the Christian message and traditional religion takes place consistently" (Daneel 1984: 67).

Daneel (1984: 68) points out that the AICs "are realistic and ever engaged in presenting the Christian message at the deeper levels of traditionalist thought and experience" and goes on to describe what actually takes place in the process of contextualizing the Gospel:

This process of contextualization is not just a simplistic adaptation to traditional ritual and thought: neither is it a kind of accommodation which merely selects, inserts or absorbs the so-called "good" elements from traditional culture or religion. On the contrary, it is an adaptation that displays parallels with traditional religion but in its essence implies a continuing confrontation with an original, creative transformation of traditional religious values.

Far from distorting the Gospel, Daneel sees the AICs as grappling with the fundamental problem of relating the Gospel to a specific situation of African culture.

Another missiologist who advocates evaluating the AICs in their own right is Turner (1967: 32), who suggests that the development of the AICs expresses a need to reconstruct a sacred world to provide security, fellowship and spiritual guidance in the face of a disintegrating order. Turner (1984: 112) furthermore rejects the approach that seeks to evaluate the AIC movement only in relation to the "historical" or "mainline" churches because of its tendency to elevate negative factors like "protest" at the expense of the more positive factors of "spiritual search, religious insight and experience, and encounter with revelation".

For this reason he feels that the traditional/mainline churches always subject themselves to unnecessary guilt feelings which is probably fostered by Barrett's thesis of "a failure in love" (Barrett 1968: 156). This approach has also created a stereotype culture amongst the Blacks of blaming the missionaries for everything wrong. To illustrate this stereotype mentality, Turner cites the "white trick" thesis of Majeke¹ (1953: 73-74) when dealing with the Xhosa Cattle Killing of 1857. Nongqause, a medicine woman, had a vision in 1856 that the Xhosa ancestors would come from the sea and drive the White colonists into the sea. For this to happen, the Xhosa were required to kill all their cattle and destroy all their grain.[2] Many people perished in the famine which followed (Wilson & Thompson 1971: 258). Turner (1984: 111) points out that Majeke's "trick" thesis reduces the Xhosa to the level of simple-minded dupes being manipulated into a stupid and crazy act instead of treating them as a people making a profoundly religious response.

In 5.5.1 the contextualization of the Gospel model proposed by Daneel and Turner as a dominant motif in the AIC movement will be considered again.

5.2.2 The socio-political explanations

The ethnic and cultural factors are also included in this category of explanation.

5.2.2.1 The ethnic factor

In a study on the development of the AICs in Swaziland the ethnic factor was found to offer some explanation for the secession syndrome in the African Churches. It was attributed to the tribal tradition of a kin group breaking away and attaining independence after the death of a family patriarch (Kuper 1946). It was also observed that for African societies the small kinship group was regarded as the ideal social model (Knoob 1961).

In 5.5.3 an attempt will be made to see whether this “tribal *zeistgeist*” played any significant role in the MCT.

5.2.2.2 The socio-political situation

Sundkler (1961), Balandier (1970), Anderson (1958), Oosthuizen (1968a, 1968b, 1979, 1982) and other missiologists stress that the socio-political conditions are central causes of the AIC movement. They cite the dehumanising experiences of social injustice, racial tension and racial segregation as giving rise to an urge to opt out of a multiracial church and create an ethnic or racial church where personal dignity could be regained.

Oosthuizen (1968a: 7) suggests that, although there are religious motives, the movements are an expression of a reaction against the inbred Western assumption of superiority. This rejection is then transferred to and projected on to the spiritual and ecclesiastical plane.

This concern with political accommodation made Oosthuizen (1968b:209-221) put the “political causes on top of the twelve groups of causes for independence”, a view which

he did not modify even in 1982 as he went further to insist that the struggle for political independence helped to create the atmosphere for religious independence (Oosthuizen 1982: 29).

In 5.6 an attempt will be made to determine whether there was a rise in political consciousness in Transkei as well as to what extent such political consciousness gave rise to a need for its own Church.

5.3 TYPOLOGIES OF THE AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

A consideration of the type or nature of the Church to emerge after the schism has led to the typological classification of the AICs. In his study of the AICs, Sundkler (1961: 53-59) also classified them into different types: the Ethiopian, those who had seceded from White mission churches or their offshoots, and the Zionist Churches, who included other designations, such as "Zion", "Apostolic", "Pentecostal" and "Faith".

Turner and Daneel later improved on Sundkler's typology. Turner classified the AICs into two groups: non-Christian and Christian. The Christian group is again divided into two groups: Ethiopian and Zionist. Daneel (1971: 258-349) prefers to designate the Zionist group as "spirit-type" churches while Turner (1979: 95) designates them as "prophet-healing" churches.

The Zionist Churches are characterised by a more serious attempt to adapt some Christian teachings to the African world-view. The Ethiopian type emerged between 1890 and 1920 and are characterised by their reaction against the Whites and the missionaries. The Methodist schisms considered below (5.4) were largely influenced by this Ethiopian motif.

5.4 SCHISMS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN METHODIST TRADITION

In his list of African Independent Churches in South Africa Sundkler (1961: 354-374) has more than twenty of them bearing the name "Methodist". An investigation into why the Methodist tradition is vulnerable to schisms is outside the scope of this study.[3] Only a

few Methodist schisms will be considered here, their selection being based on the similarity between them and the MCT. The comparison should help in defining the nature or type of the MCT.

5.4.1 The Nehemiah Tile schism, 1884

Nehemiah Tile's schism of 1884 is generally regarded as the first lasting church schism initiated by a Black Christian in South Africa. No study on the AICs can avoid his name because he can be regarded as the father of the African Independent Church movement in Southern Africa (Oosthuizen 1973: 233). The recent interest in Nehemiah Tile and other 19th-century Black Christians stems from a concern to formulate more satisfactory explanatory theories on the phenomenon of the African Independent Church movement. Current ideas on present African Christianity in its various shapes and designations, such as African Christian theology, Black theology, African Independent Church movement, and new religious movements, are attributed to the seminal influence of some writers. For instance, Pretorius (1990) regards Nehemiah Tile as the pioneer of African Christian theology and Oosthuizen (1973: 233) regards him as the father of the AIC movement. Hodgson (1984: 20) regards Ntsikana as the precursor of the movement who only failed to effect a formal secession.

If Nehemiah Tile's name occupies a special status in the AIC movement in general, a consideration of him as a Methodist in the study of the MCT should have a far deeper significance. Tile was a Methodist evangelist stationed at Mqekezweni substation of the Clarkebury Circuit. Mqekezweni was also the Great Place of the Thembu kings. Reverend Peter Hargreaves, who was stationed at Clarkebury, the third link in Rev. William Shaw's "chain of mission stations" and established in 1830, was also the Superintendent minister over Nehemiah Tile. He was so impressed by Nehemiah Tile's gifts that he sent him to Healdtown Methodist Theological College for training as a Probationer minister.

The turning point in Nehemiah Tile's life came in 1883 when the very first Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa, which had been granted autonomy by the British Methodist Conference in 1882, refused to ordain him "despite", according to

Saunders (1970: 555), "the relatively lengthy period he had served on trial". Nehemiah Tile then left the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa and later founded the Thembu National Church. The only interpretations of the schism to be considered here will be those of C.C. Saunders (1970) and Hennie Pretorius (1990).

5.4.1.1 Saunders' interpretation of the Tile schism

Saunders approaches the Tile schism from a political perspective and argues that it was part of a larger movement of political protest against the loss of tribal independence in the Eastern Cape. The schism was therefore a political protest expressed in religious terms.

He suggests that it was Tile's involvement in Thembu politics that was unacceptable to the Wesleyan Church. That is what probably cost Tile his ordination. Tile had his own dissatisfaction with church administration, which centred on (1) the exclusive control of church funds by the "English" ministers alone - this was in conflict with the principle laid down by the missionary committee in England. The principle stated "that all contributions from the Native Churches shall, in the first place, be applied to the maintenance of a Native Ministry, needful schools, and a training Institution for Native agents of both sexes" (Kilner 1881:7); and (2) the granting of autonomy by the British Methodist Conference to the SA Methodist Conference, which had been negotiated by the White missionaries since the early 1860s (Hewson 1950: 81-85). Tile might have felt that the granting of autonomy to the SA Methodist Conference would eliminate the influence of the British Methodist Conference on the SA Methodist Church, a move which would entrench exclusive White control. This move was bad news for the African Methodists hence Tile's dissatisfaction.

Nehemiah Tile then exploited the tribal discontent against the moves by the Cape Colonial Government to incorporate Thembuland into Transkei, which would effectively terminate the independence of the Thembu chiefdom. Thembuland was indeed incorporated into Transkei in 1884.

Then Tile urged Chief Ngangelizwe to reject the division of Thembuland into four magisterial districts because that would reduce the Chief's control of his subjects since

some issues could be settled in the magistrate's courts without recourse to him. He also stirred up the AbaThembu to boycott the hut taxes, which, in his view, had been levied to support the proposed four magistracies (Saunders 1970: 558). These activities brought Tile into conflict with the Cape Colonial Government, who subsequently arrested him.

It is probable that the Cape Department of Native Affairs might have challenged the Church to review Tile's political activities (Saunders 1970: 555-556). When the Church confronted Tile with allegations of political activities, he did not refute them but decided to leave the Church during the second half of 1883. Two reasons may have led to this decision: the Church's refusal to ordain him for political reasons and the Church's collusion with the Colonial Government to curtail his freedom of political activity.

The death of Paramount Chief Ngangelizwe adversely affected Tile's standing in the Thembu chiefdom. The new Paramount Chief, Dalindyebo, who had been brought up under missionary tutelage (Pretorius 1990:10), did not endorse all Tile's political activities. There was also pressure on him from both the Wesleyan missionaries and the Colonial Government to dissociate himself from Tile (Saunders 1970: 555-570). However, Tile was able to secure the recognition of the Thembu National Church as the Church of the Chiefdom, with Paramount Chief Dalindyebo as its head, presumably following the example of the Church of England (Sundkler 1961: 38).

5.4.1.2 Pretorius's interpretation of the Tile schism

Pretorius, on the other hand, approaches the Tile schism from an ecclesiastical perspective and argues that it was an ecclesiastical protest against the White control and orientation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa. When this protest could not be effective in the African ecclesiastical context, the volatile political mood of the time was then manipulated. The ecclesiastical protest was therefore expressed in political terms.

That Tile's secession was motivated by religious considerations and the desire to adapt the message of the church to the needs of his own Thembu was shown by the changes he made in the liturgy. The prayer for the British royal family was applied to the Thembu

royal family:

Sindisa Tixo uNgangelizwe(God save Ngangelizwe)

Sindisa Tixo nomntwana wakhe (God save his son too)

Sindisa Tixo isizwe sabaThembu (God save the Thembu nation)

(Pretorius 1990: 13)

To exert more pressure on Chief Dalindyebo to dissociate himself from Tile, the Wesleyan missionaries and the Colonial Government enlisted the help of prominent members of the Wesleyan Church like Chief Matanzima, Chief Dalindyebo's uncle and brother of the late Chief Ngangelizwe, the father of Chief Dalindyebo, and from a broader African community like J. T. Jabavu (Pretorius 1990: 10).

The Tile schism shows, amongst other things, the close co-operation between the Wesleyan missionaries and the Colonial authorities when dealing with the tribal chiefs. It is clear that Tile regarded his involvement in Thembu politics as a legitimate part of his ministry. Since he was above the average Thembu in education, intelligence and exposure to Western civilisation, who could have been a better adviser to the Thembu chiefs during that crucial period in the life of the tribe?

While the missionaries were in constant consultation with the Colonial authorities they denied the African ministers the right to advise their tribal chiefs.

Reverend T. Chubb, the first Chairman of the Clarkebury District from 1882 to 1885 (Mears 1973: 73) summoned Tile to appear before a disciplinary committee. Amongst the allegations against him were the following:

(1) He was responsible for agitating against the magistrates in Thembuland. This allegation may have been motivated by the Cape Native Affairs Department, who wanted to divide Thembuland into four magisterial districts. Tile supported or even urged (incited) Thembu acceptance of only one magistrate (Saunders 1970: 556-557).

(2) He had not kept Chubb (who was also his superintendent) informed of his political activities. This allegation confirms Saunders' suspicion that the first allegation may have been motivated by the Cape Native Affairs Department. It also suggests that Chubb was embarrassed by Tile's political activities.

(3) He had donated an ox for the circumcision ceremony of Dalindyebo, the great son of Paramount Chief Ngangelizwe (Saunders 1970: 556). This was the only allegation which involved church discipline. The Methodist policy discouraged the observance of African customs and rituals.

Tile did not contest these allegations but instead left the Church (Saunders 1970: 556).

Having considered the two interpretations of the Tile schism, then, it may be asked whether it was really a political protest expressed in religious terms (Saunders 1970) or an ecclesiastical protest expressed in political terms (Pretorius 1990).

It seems as if both interpretations are valid and complement each other, especially if my proposal of a third option is acceptable. It seems the Tile schism was a cultural protest. This, of course, includes both the political and religious dimensions. When considering the political situation of Thembuland at the time of the Tile schism, it is clear that there was no outright rejection of the new political dispensation nor did they have the capacity to do so. The least the Thembus could negotiate was a political and religious transformation which did not undermine loyalty to the Thembu national or tribal identity. In the area of political transformation, the creation of four magisterial districts was seen as undermining loyalty to the Thembu Paramount Chief because a sub-chief would have to deal with the magistrate of his territory. To the Thembu this arrangement was more than a political or administrative matter but undermined an important cultural symbol, that of tribal hierarchy (cf Saunders 1970: 557).

On the religious front Tile rejected the dominance of the white missionaries and the white-oriented liturgy. His substituting references to the Thembu royal family for the references to the British royal family (Pretorius 1990) expressed not only a quest for African Theology and/or contextualization of the Gospel (Daneel) but more than that a

determination to have loyalty to African culture entrenched by religious legitimation. Tile's concern therefore was to preserve and protect the Thembu (African) cultural symbols. This was expressed in both religious and political terms.

The Tile schism will be mentioned in 5.5.3 again because of similarities between it and that of the MCT.

5.4.2 Mangena Maake Mokone

Mokone is generally regarded as the founder of Ethiopianism. However, Sundkler (1961: 38), Balia (1991: 75) and other scholars consider Nehemiah Tile as the founder and Mokone only as its organiser. Mokone was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1880. He was concerned about the education of the African people and through his influence a school was established at Kilnerton (so called in honour of Rev. John Kilner). He became its first principal in 1891 (Balia 1991: 69).

Although Ethiopianism itself may be linked to the African rejection of European imperialism in Africa, which reached its peak in the late nineteenth century, it was expressed in a religious context of challenging and rejecting racial practices within the Church. Mokone, a typical example of this reaction in the 1890s, attacked racial separation at the Synod and Conference sessions in the Methodist Church.

On 24 October 1892 Mokone resigned from the Methodist Church. In the *Founders' Declaration of Independence* sent to Rev. George Weavind, his superintendent (Balia 1991: 69), he cited some African grievances centred on the racial segregation of the District Synod while at the same time the White ministers were permitted to hold leadership positions in the African circuits and the African Synod (Balia 1991: 72). On 20 November 1892 Mokone and about fifty other ministers formed the Ethiopian Church (Balia 1991: 73).

Unlike Nehemiah Tile, who used his Thembu tribal base to launch his church, Mokone appealed to all the African tribes to join his church. He interpreted Psalm 68:31 and Acts

8 as a clarion call to broad Africanism in the face of the imperialistic Western nations and churches. Mokone understood these biblical texts as legitimising "the self-government of the African Church under African leaders" (Sundkler 1961: 39). He regarded the Ethiopian Church as no different from the mission churches apart from being led by Africans and believed that it was firmly grounded in the tradition of Wesleyan Methodism, even regarding it as "John Wesley's legitimate child" (Balía 1991: 74).

The relevance of Mokone's Ethiopianism for the MCT will be reviewed again in 5.5.2 - 5.5.4.

5.4.3 James Mata Dwane

Dwane was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1881 (Balía 1991: 75). In 1887 and 1892 he went to England to raise funds to build a college or university for Blacks in South Africa. When Dwane returned with sufficient funds, his supervisor, Rev. Lamplough insisted that the money be put into the general funds of the Church. Dwane was annoyed, especially by the innuendos casting some doubt on his trustworthiness. He finally obliged, handed over the money and then resigned from the Methodist Church.

In 1896 he joined the Ethiopian movement initiated by Mokone. Mokone had already initiated moves to affiliate the Ethiopian Church to the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), which had been founded by Rev. Richard Allen in Philadelphia, USA in 1816 in protest against racism in the Methodist Church (Niebuhr 1972: 260). Dwane was the only delegate who attended the affiliation service in the USA. This secured his appointment to the office of Vicar-Bishop of the new fourteenth district of the AME Church in South Africa.

Having ousted Mokone as the leader in South Africa, Dwane was still not satisfied as he felt that he was still inferior to his American counterparts. Another source of dissatisfaction for him was that the AME Church would not entrust large sums of money to him. He began to question the authority of the AME Church to hand out episcopal orders (Balía 1991: 77). Dwane then formed the Order of Ethiopia, which, for episcopal reasons, was

affiliated to the Anglican Church (called Church of the Province of South Africa since 1900).

The Dwane case illustrates the problem of Black leadership and stewardship in the multi-racial or non-racial churches. Since it has some relevance for the MCT, it will be reviewed again in 5.5.2 and 5.5.4.

5.4.4 The Bantu Methodist Churches of 1932 and 1933

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa as presently constituted was formed in 1932 by the amalgamation of three South African Methodist Churches, namely the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa, the Transvaal and Swaziland District of Wesleyan Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Primitive Methodist Mission Church.

During the same period a section of the Black Methodists in Transvaal broke away to form the Bantu Methodist Church. Sundkler (1961: 341) suggests that that schism was linked to the formation of a united Methodist Church of South Africa, while Hewson (1950: 94) ascribes it to "revolt from discipline rather than from White Methodist domination". The protest against the raising of the Church fee (the reason given for the schism by its leaders) might have been an occasion to express African protest against the transfer of the mission work from England to the Methodist Church of South Africa.

This discontent started simmering early in 1932. Those who were in favour of the formation of an independent Methodist Church first approached Rev. R- (whose name is not disclosed by Sundkler [1961: 172]), who delayed casting his lot with the new Church. Then they approached Rev. J.H. Hlongwane, who was willing to lead the new Church.

A protest procession against the raising of Church members' quarterly fee from two shillings to two shillings and sixpence was then organised. Leading the procession was a donkey bearing placards reading "Jesus Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver. We are sold for thirty pence"[4] (Sundkler 1961: 341). The nickname "Donkey Church" for the Bantu Methodist Church which was formed in the process has stuck ever since.

The indecisive Rev. R- finally agreed to lead the Bantu Methodist Church but Rev. Hlongwane refused to relinquish his position as the president. Reverend R- and a section of the Bantu Methodist Church then formed the Bantu Methodist Church of South Africa in October 1933 (Sundkler 1961: 172-173).

The four Methodist schisms briefly considered here throw some light on the nature of Methodist practice and African reactions to it. Some of these issues are already evident in the previous chapters in various forms and to different degrees. The causes underlying these schisms will be reviewed again in 5.5.4 to see the extent to which the MCT resembled or differed from the earlier Methodist schisms.

5.5 AN ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

In the light of all the foregoing descriptions and analyses, an analysis of the factors contributing to the MCT schism will now be considered.

By now it should be clear that a church schism is a complex issue, involving many parties with different interests. To attempt to attribute the whole process of the schism to one particular causative factor would not do justice to it. Insights gained from the consideration of theoretical frameworks for interpreting church schisms in 5.4 will now be used to determine the extent to which the MCT was an expression of religious, ethnic, Ethiopian, political or personal interests. These possible interpretations will be considered individually.

5.5.1 The MCT: an expression of theological interests?

The views of Turner and Daneel (see 5.2.1 above) show that there are differences between religious and theological explanations for the development of the AICs. Turner sees their development as expressing a human attempt to impute meaning to a marginal or anomic situation. This need arises when their world of meaning has been threatened or even shattered. From the same perspectives Berger (1973: 34) defines the role of religion as "the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established" and goes on to say "...

religion is cosmization in a sacred mode".

In spite of the "disintegration of the old order" (Turner 1967: 32), if the alienation of Transkei from the RSA can be regarded as such, the MCT does not belong to the category of the new religious movements which are characterised by a strong tribal background. It did not arise as an attempt to respond to an anomic or marginalised experience. The MCT therefore does not fit into Turner's model of religious fulfilment where there is an attempt to relate the nomos to the cosmos.

Daneel, on the other hand, sees the development of the AICs as expressing the desire to relate the Christian Gospel to the African world-view. This is a theological concern of contextualization. During the process of the MCT schism theological arguments were advanced **against** the formation of the MCT (see 2.5.8). A strong position was taken against introducing any theological innovations. The intention of forming the MCT was not, it was stated, to "reform" the Methodist Church. That position shows clearly that Daneel's contextualization motif did not apply to the MCT. This is because the MCT was not an attempt to address problems arising from the traditional African world-view. The MCT therefore was not an expression of religious/theological interests.

5.5.2 The MCT: an expression of Ethiopian interests?

At the meeting on 31 January 1978 some members of the Transkeian Cabinet expressed their strong rejection of the White control of the MCSA (see 2.3). Their remarks were reminiscent of what Mokone had said about the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the 1890s (see 5.4.2). This White control of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was also one of the reasons behind the Tile schism (see 5.4.1).

Chief Matanzima wanted an MCT that was identical to the MCSA in all respects except control. This was endorsed by the Transkeian Methodists who rejected "reforming" it. This position was intended to ground the MCT firmly in the traditions of Methodism so that, like Mokone's Ethiopian Church, it too could be regarded as "John Wesley's legitimate child" (Balila 1991: 74). In this regard the MCT fits the classic definition of an Ethiopian-

type "independent" church; that is, one whose primary reason for existence is freedom from White control. But whereas Mokone appealed to all the African Christians to join the Ethiopian movement, Chief Matanzima deliberately played down an appeal to all the Black people. This reflected his political attitude.

Although Chief Matanzima was a contemporary of Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo at the University of Fort Hare, he never embraced African nationalism (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 113-114). As a student his aim was to pass his degree and return home to fulfil his role as a tribal chief. Streek and Wicksteed even advise caution in accepting Lawrence's assessment of Chief Matanzima as a Xhosa nationalist. Lawrence (1976: 8) concludes his assessment of Chief Matanzima by saying, "Stripping away the politicking, the man that emerges is a Xhosa nationalist dedicated to restoring Xhosa hegemony in the lands historically occupied by the Xhosa-speaking people... African unity ... was of marginal importance compared to Xhosa nationalism. Where it served the Xhosa cause it was propagated, but where it became an obstacle it was discarded." Streek and Wicksteed (1980: 125) point out that "if it was ever suggested that a greater Xhosaland be created with Ciskei's Chief Minister, Chief Lennox Sebe, at the head, the Matanzimas would kill the notion. The anchor of their interest in greater Xhosa unity is their personal ambition." It can therefore be said that Chief Matanzima was actually "politicking" when he spoke as an African nationalist or a dreamer of a Greater Xhosaland which could include Ciskei, the "White" corridor between Ciskei and Transkei, and also East Griqualand (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 172). His ideological and political framework was that of a tribal mould.

Despite some similarities, therefore, the MCT envisaged by Chief Matanzima was not of the Ethiopian type. Besides, whereas a Pan-Africanism or Black Consciousness is the philosophical base for Ethiopianism, ethnic consciousness is the cornerstone of the Bantustan policy. Ethiopianism and the Bantustan policy are therefore incompatible. The only Ethiopian element in Chief Matanzima's MCT was the removal of White control.

In conclusion it should be noted that Ethiopianism, which characterised the earlier Methodist schisms, was displaced in the case of the MCT by ethnic considerations, which had become an important element in the South African political ideology by the 1970s.

Whereas Tile was chastised by both the Church and the State for playing the ethnic card in the 1880s, Chief Matanzima was behaving "correctly" by doing the same in the 1970s.

5.5.3 The MCT: an expression of ethnic interests?

From the foregoing consideration of the Ethiopian model it is clear that the origin of the MCT was deeply influenced by the ethnic factor. A classic example of a schism in which ethnic interest played a role is that of Tile. Not only was the ethnic factor the motivation, it was also the framework for the schism. The suggestion that in Tile's vision ethnic considerations took second place to a conception of common Blackness (Saunders 1970: 567) has to be taken with caution. This assessment was made by some Africans in 1902 at the peak of the Ethiopian movement. They wanted to raise Tile's status from that of a tribal leader to one of a national hero.

It was precisely the narrow tribal base of Tile's Thembu National Church that led to its disintegration. One of his able successors, Rev. Jonas Goduka was not acceptable to Tile's followers because he was not a Thembu and as a result some of Tile's followers joined the Ethiopian Church of Mokone and Dwane (Sundkler 1948: 46).

Chief Matanzima, another Thembu, wanted to form another tribal church but his tribal base had been ideologically broadened by redefining all the tribes in Transkei as **Transkeians**. The similarities between the Thembu National Church and the MCT are striking because of some ethnic elements in both, including (1) the exclusion of White control, the only element they share with Ethiopianism; (2) the insistence that only bona fide members of the Thembu tribe could succeed Tile; in the MCT Chief Matanzima insisted that only the Transkeians would run the MCT although the "Whites would be welcome in our Church" (*Imvo Zaba Ntsundu* February 11, 1978: 4); and (3) the refusal to broaden the tribal base: Tile's successors shunned a close link with Mokone's Ethiopian Church (Saunders 1970: 566). In the 1970s Chief Matanzima did not entertain Rev. Ernest Baartman's suggestion of expanding the MCT to a Black Methodist Church of South Africa (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 281).

These considerations lead one to the conclusion that since the MCT as conceived by Chief Matanzima was a homeland church, ethnic interests played a role because a homeland is little more than a tribal kingdom.

In the face of rising broad African nationalism both Tile's Thembu National Church and the MCT could not survive for very long because of their narrow ethnic base. Jonas Goduka reconstituted the Thembu National Church as the African Native Church (Sundkler 1948: 46) and the MCT changed its name to the United Methodist Church of Southern Africa in 1979 (Streek & Wicksteed 1980: 281).

5.5.4 The MCT: an expression of socio-political interests?

Mahlasela (1986) identifies the racial practices of the MCSA as a crucial factor in the schism yet at no stage did Transkeian Methodists cite racial practices within the MCSA as a reason for wanting to break away from the MCSA. Nor did they endorse Transkeian Cabinet Ministers' accusations that the MCSA was a racist Church (see 2.3). Transkeian Methodists were certainly aware of and opposed to the racial practices of the MCSA and they did not need the politicians to remind them of such practices. The questions then arise of why Transkeians did not use racial practices as a reason for the schism and why they did not capitalise on that when it was suggested by the politicians and some of the Transkeian Methodists? Besides, all the previous schisms in SA Methodism had been precipitated by racialism; for example, Tile (see 5.4.1), Mokone (see 5.4.2), Dwane (see 5.4.2) and the Bantu Methodist Churches (see 5.4.4).

It would seem that Transkeian Methodists were interested not in winning support or even a sympathetic understanding from the world by undergirding their position with respectable reasons, like rejecting racism in the Methodist Church, but in winning the support of the Methodist masses within Transkei.

Avoiding mention of racial practices as a justification for the schism was a tactical move by the BMC/nationalist bloc, who wanted to win the support of the "silent majority" in Transkei, who were known to be politically conservative.⁵ The majority of the Transkeian

Methodists were rural people who had less exposure to the dehumanising personal experience of the apartheid system and to the politicising influence of Black political movements which were primarily urban phenomena. They were people who had accepted the supremacy and competency of the White missionaries. Even amongst the ministers there was a big gap of perception of the racial issue between the younger generation of ministers, who were members of the BMC, and the older generation who either did not understand what the BMC was all about or else were not even aware of its existence (see 2.6).

To have suggested any changes to Methodism as the majority of Methodist understood it would simply have reduced potential support for the drive to form the MCT. To maintain and win broad grassroots support, it was tactical to assure them of the continued use of the Laws and Discipline (except for replacing references to South Africa by Transkei), the Xhosa Methodist Hymn Book, the Methodist liturgy, the church organisations they knew with their uniforms and so on. It was wise to convince them that the new Church was going to be formed because their Prime Minister wanted it and that those in the forefront of the schism were going to do everything possible to perpetuate the traditions of Methodism as they had been received from the missionaries. This is the reason behind the strange silence on the racial practices of the MCSA in the debate preceding the schism.

This strange silence on the racial practices did not make the MCSA comfortable. Hewson (1978: 102-103), like Mahlasela, still felt that the racial practices of the MCSA were the main reason behind the schism and blamed the Methodist system of church administration for not granting "a greater measure of autonomy to each Methodist district". The implication of this statement is that, since Clarkebury District had a Black Chairman, it should have been possible to settle the dispute locally with the Prime Minister. Instead, the top executive of the MCSA got involved and as a result the negotiating team became less representative; that is, fewer Blacks were involved.

Although socio-political arguments in the interest of forming the MCT were therefore suppressed, one can read it as a latent protest. The deliberate attempt to eliminate theology from the debate in the process building up to the schism was aimed at rallying grassroots

support for the perpetuation of loyalty to Methodist doctrine and practice even if that meant sacrificing the organic unity of South African Methodism.

5.5.5 The MCT: an expression of personal interests?

In considering theoretical frameworks of interpreting church schisms no reference was made to personal interests as a distinct cause in the theories or typological models. Here, however, they will be treated as a framework of interpreting the schism because the press persistently referred to the Transkei schism as exhibiting no more than personal interests.

Commenting on the MCT, Rev. D.W. Bandey said "What we saw looked more like the action of a few resentful and perhaps power-hungry politicians than like the action of a responsible body of Methodist ministers" (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978: 10). In almost the same vein Hewson (1978: 102) commented: "This strong feeling (of the Transkeian Methodist identity) has been harnessed by opportunists to further their own ambitions." This was not the first time that Hewson reduced a national concern to a personal interest. He attributed the 1932-33 schisms, which led to the formation of the Bantu Methodist Churches (see 5.4.4), to a rejection of church discipline and accordingly interpreted the African protest against the sixpence rise in church fees as a mere pretext. Yet that was during the years of economic depression! It seems that, when it comes to an analysis of the Methodist schisms, personal interests should indeed be considered as playing a role and therefore serve as a framework for interpretation.

Makalima also used personal interests as an interpretive scheme in castigating some Transkeian Methodist ministers and by comparing Chief Matanzima to King Henry VIII of England. With regard to the latter, Makalima's views are similar to those in an article in the *Sunday Times* of June 4, 1978, which declared that the secret of Kaiser's banned church was a bid "to force Methodist ministers remaining in Transkei to accept polygamy".⁶ The article went on to argue that legalising polygamy would "rationalise Chief Matanzima's own (personal) position. He has three wives and is a Methodist preacher."

Chief Matanzima and King Henry VIII can be compared on two levels. First, on the personal level, as Makalima and the *Sunday Times* article do, and secondly, on the political level, as an article in *The Argus* of 4 February 1978 and Letlaka (see 2.3) do. On the political level, *The Argus* article merely saw a parallel between Chief Matanzima's intention to nationalise the Methodist Church in Transkei and Henry VIII of England. The heading of the article was "Matanzima: a new Henry VIII". Letlaka used the reference to King Henry VIII of England to argue that Transkei was a sovereign state with powers to legislate even on church matters. According to his argument, if legislating on church matters had, in fact, been done in England, what was to prevent Transkei, as a sovereign state, from doing the same? Letlaka's argument was a response to Rev. Thompson, who had expressed reservations that a state should legislate on the establishment of a church (see 2.3). He did not consider the precipitating factors in the formation of the Church of England, such as the matrimonial problem of King Henry VIII (on the personal level) and the question of dual loyalty of English citizens, who were loyal to the King and the Pope as members of the Roman Catholic Church (on the political level).

Personal interests did play a role in the schism though not beyond sustaining its momentum. The decisive factors in the schism were not personal. On the formation of the Church of England, Elton (1965: 229) says that without the divorce "there would therefore have been no Reformation, which is not at all the same as to say that there was nothing to the Reformation but the divorce". King Henry VIII got away with this interference with church matters simply because of the groundswell of unhappiness with the Pope in England (a similar situation regarding the MCSA was obtaining in Transkei). In the case of the MCT, the personal interests could be detected in Chief Matanzima's wish to "repossess" his estranged wife⁷ and in some disgruntled ministers (see 4.5.1.3). But these do not elevate personal interests to the dominant perspective for the interpretation of the MCT schism. It is clear that more than mere personal interests were involved in this schism.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The material collected thus far and insights gained from consideration of various

explanatory models of the origin of the AICs should make it possible to make a judgement on what it was that was happening in the formation of the MCT. By now it is clear that a variety of factors have played a role in the MCT schism and that they differed from each other in the matter of degree. The MCT did not fit exactly into any model. The determining factor for the differences between the models considered and the MCT was, to a great extent, its political and ecclesial contexts.

In searching for the underlying causes of the schism, the Methodist Conference resolution to discontinue the practice of sending church greetings to governments and the Transkeian Government's desire for international recognition of its political independence underline the importance of understanding the background of any schism or development of an AIC.

A consideration of the political and ecclesial contexts of the schism puts the socio-political factors at the top of the scale; that is, the issues considered so far eliminate any religious or theological factors as a primary cause of the schism. Accordingly, Turner's model of religious fulfilment and Daneel's model of contextualization of the Gospel do not fit the MCT. Daneel's model can, however, be accommodated by arguing that the MCT was an attempt to form a Methodist Church which would be more relevant to the unique Transkeian situation, that is, if one extends Daneel's framework of an African cultural world-view to apply to an African political world-view as well. But I think that would be stretching the model beyond recognition. I will therefore consider the political factors which caused the schism first as they provide the background to the schism.

Even granted that Chief Matanzima was genuinely offended by the 1977 Conference resolution to discontinue sending letters of greetings, the question to ask is why he did not stop at punishing the MCSA by banning it in the Transkei but, instead, went further to suggest the formation of the MCT.

When one considers Chief Matanzima's need for a Transkei Church, the greetings issue merely serves as an occasion or "a pretext for action it was ready to take on other grounds" (Hewson 1978: 102) for expressing the need for an "own Church". This is probably why on 31 January 1978 Chief Matanzima said that what Transkeians wanted was "an

independent Transkei Methodist Church to be run by Black Transkeians and free from the foreign white domination of the Methodist Church of South Africa" (*Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, February 11, 1978: 4).

However, Chief Matanzima did not want a state church as in the case of the Church of England, because "this Methodist Church would be allowed to operate as an autonomous body in Transkei and its constitution would not be interfered with" (*Daily Dispatch*, January 13, 1978: 1).

Chief Matanzima's reason for entering into the "greetings issue" was the recognition of Transkei independence. It is inconceivable that he would have pursued the matter by banning the MCSA in Transkei in the face of an outcry from the very international community from whom he sought recognition of Transkei's independence. His use of the greetings issue was therefore not targeted at either the international community or the MCSA. His target was within Transkei.

Chief Matanzima, himself a Methodist,⁸ would have wanted to create a loyal church constituency within Transkei and, since the Methodist Church was the largest in Transkei, it would be more effective to manipulate it. It was therefore imperative for any leader to win the Methodists support for the legitimacy of the new independent state. For the local purpose and for stability, this constituency had either to be checked or manipulated. To do this, the most logical step was to create a new ecclesial identity (similar to the political identity he had created) which would not transcend the political boundaries of Transkei because any section of Transkei that was attached to a group outside Transkei, like the MCSA, would have to take positions which at times would conflict with those of the Transkeian Government. The way to overcome that problem was to contain a section of Methodism and reorientate its loyalty to this new national identity. Matanzima's political interests therefore played a major role in precipitating the 1978 Methodist schism in Transkei. The schism was a political tactic to secure religious legitimation of his homeland system.

However, the categorisation of the MCT cannot be defined solely on the basis of Chief Matanzima's political objectives. The role played by the Transkeian Methodists and the total ecclesial context of the schism should also be taken seriously.

In the ecclesial context the racial practices of the MCSA had heightened the dissatisfaction of the Black Methodists and therefore created the possibility of a schism. Within the MCSA the organisation which could have spearheaded the schism was the BMC. The BMC, however, was not a Black Methodist Church in waiting. Instead, its policy was to work for the transformation of the MCSA till its policy of "one and undivided Church" could be realised practically. As part of the BC movement, it was fiercely opposed to the homelands system (see 6.5).

The local (Queenstown and Clarkebury Districts) BMC would not have liked to be seen as pursuing a goal which was contrary to the policy of the National BMC. This explains their unwillingness to endorse racial practices within the MCSA as a reason for forming the MCT. Instead they played the pragmatic card of saying the MCT would be formed because the Prime Minister was going to ban the MCSA in Transkei. Why they did support the formation of the MCT was because they saw in it an opportunity to advance Black leadership and empowerment which they were denied in the South African Methodist context.

The open involvement of a political party (Chief Matanzima) is the key to the differences between the MCT and other Methodist schisms. Although the Ethiopian model is most helpful to explain the formation of the MCT its political patronage made the difference between it and the classic Ethiopianism of Mokone and Dwane.

The MCT is thus unique in that it shows a convergence of both the political and ecclesial wishes of the Black people in the homelands during the apartheid era. The homelands policy should not be understood only from the perspectives of the SA Government, who sought to accommodate the political aspirations of the Black people in a separate political structure, but also from the perspective of Black people who wanted a space to express their political wishes free from any White political patronage. The same wish was also

obtaining in the ecclesial context. In the SA apartheid situation in which sharing anything on an equal footing between Black and White had become almost impossible, the bottom line in both the political and the ecclesial context was a wish for a space in which Blacks could regain their human dignity. Sharing in terms dictated only by the Whites was perceived as condemning the Blacks to a position of perpetual juniority and this was rejected by the Blacks since the advent of Black Consciousness in South Africa. The emergence of both Transkei as a state and the MCT was seen as an opportunity by some Blacks to claim such a space, even if it was a seriously limited and circumscribed space within what was possible in the repressive apartheid context of post-Soweto South African politics.

The MCT should not, therefore, be assessed narrowly of whether Transkeian Methodists were supporting the formation of the MCT but in terms of whether they supported or rejected White patronage. The overriding concern in the debate on the formation of the MCT as detailed in chapter 2 was whether the issue should be decided by the (White-dominated) top executive of the MCSA or by the Transkeian Methodists themselves. The process having been set in motion by the intended ban, the underlying cause of the schism that resulted was neither the Methodist Conference resolution nor the Transkeian Government's wish for a Transkeian Church but the people's wish to decide their own fate. Here the term "self-determination",⁹ which has a notorious South African political connotation, is appropriate.

The fact that this underlying desire for self-determination was not realised along the path of a negotiated "independence" for Transkeian Methodists but through a one-sided rupturing of the relationship from the Transkeian side was largely due to the political agenda of chief Matanzima and the open interference of his government and security police.

ENDNOTES

1. Nosipho Majeke was the pen-name of a White author, Dora Taylor, who was one of the founders of the Unity Movement in Cape Town (see Majeke 1986 [1952]).

2. In Nongqause's vision, the strangers said to her: "Tell that the whole community will rise from the dead; and that all cattle now living must be slaughtered, for they have been reared by contaminated hands because there are people about who deal in witchcraft. There should be no cultivation, but great new grain pits must be dug, new houses must be built, and great strong cattle enclaves must be erected. Cut out new milksacks and weave many doors from buka roots. So says the chief Napakade, the descendant of Sifuba-sibanzi. The people must leave their witchcraft, for soon they will be examined by diviners" (Peires 1989: 79).

3. Although Barrett (1961) saw the "scale of religious tension" as a main cause for the development of the African independent church movement from the Protestant Churches in general, I think it is in the Methodist tradition where this tension is most heightened. This can be attributed to a variety of factors such as the high degree of lay involvement in the leadership structures of the church and also their training as lay preachers; the egalitarian (equality of the ministerial status) ministry: till quite recently the circuit superintendent had more meaningful powers than the Chairman (now Bishop) of a District. Prof Hulley (1994) described this arrangement as reducing him (the Chairman of a District) and his District Synod to a "post boy" between the circuit and the Conference.

4. A shilling was made up of 12 pennies, so two shillings and sixpence equalled thirty pennies/pence.

5. Cases to support this observation abound but I shall consider only three:

(1) The Palmerton Dispute of 1882-1896. Rev. Lwana was the first African minister appointed to Palmerton to replace Rev. Douglas in 1882. In 1884 Rev. Lwana was transferred and replaced by a White missionary, Rev. R. Lewis. Chief Mqikela rejected this appointment. The church then sent Rev. John Nomvete to Palmerton.

When Rev. Nomvete arrived in Palmerton the congregation was already divided into two camps. One camp welcomed Rev. Nomvete and the other camp clung to Rev. Nikani who had been sent to hold the fort in Palmerton while the Church was still sorting out the problem of the Palmerton appointment since the rejection of Rev. Lewis. This dispute lingered on for 11 years.

The Church then re-appointed white missionaries from 1896-to 1944. The local Palmerton community was *excited* (my italics) at receiving an English minister, Rev. W.S. Davis (Conradie 1967:110).

(2) Rev. Charles Pamla was at Etembeni Circuit, Umzimkulu for 19 years, but was never accepted by the community. He himself referred to that period as the most difficult in his ministry. There was peace and stability in that circuit only after

the appointment of a White missionary who remained at Etembeni till 1951 (Mears 1973: 29-30).

(3) The Clarkebury District started campaigning for a Black Chairman of the District in the early 1960s. In spite of its very large Black majority (there were never more than 10 White members of the District Synod during that period) failed to nominate its Black candidate. The Annual Conference of 1968 appointed Rev. J.C. Mvusi as the first Black chairman of the Clarkebury District (MCSA 1968: 242).

(6) The earlier Church discipline directives were that a polygamous man had to put away all his other wives except the first in order to be admitted to full membership of the Church. In the early 1960s this stringent discipline was modified. The 1962 Annual Conference resolved to amend Laws and Discipline to read:

"Africans who are legally married by Native Custom and who became Christians shall be enrolled as members on trial for a period of not less than two years" (MCSA 1962: 61).

(7) This may have been a reference to the earlier Methodist discipline on polygamous marriages (see 6 above).

(8) The name of Chief Kaiser Dr. Matanzima appears in the list of lay members of Committees appointed by the 1977 Annual Conference (MCSA 1977: 420).

(9) This is a term with positive connotation in international politics enshrined by various UNO documents. The "right to self-determination" is therefore a recognised post-colonial term. But the way in which S.A. used it in the homelands system was a betrayal of the real intentions of the concept.

CHAPTER 6

MISSIOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

In concluding this study five areas of missiological importance highlighted by the 1978 Methodist schism will be considered. This is to give a pertinent missiological focus to the study by “teasing out” the most important implications of the foregoing chapters for both the mission of the church and the discipline of missiology. The five areas are: 1) The research questions; 2) Mission and unity; 3) Mission and ethnic issues; 4) Prophetic mission; and 5) Prophetic ambivalence.

6.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

At the beginning of this study (1.4), four research questions were posed. The aim of these questions was to delineate the different perspectives from which the schism was approached.

6.1.1 Narrative

The first research question (“How did the 1978 Methodism schism in Transkei unfold?”) was answered by means of a historical narrative in chapter 2, which told a story of the unfolding process of the schism. This is not “pure” narrative (as in a novel or short story), since frequent reference is made to sources, thus making it a kind of historical report. And yet the narrative element is predominant, for at least two reasons.

The first reason has to do with the nature of the *sources*. Due to a variety of reasons, very little information on the Methodist schism is available in church or university archives. Most of the written information (like minutes of meetings) are in the personal archives of people who were the scribes of the relevant committees at the time. And yet, these documents give only a small part of the picture, since minutes contain only the resolutions passed, very seldom referring to discussions in a meeting that preceded a decision. The minutes of the meeting of 21 February 1978 (Fikeni Papers), for instance,

while providing useful information on the debate regarding the formation of the MCT, does not even hint at the objection of Mr K.M.N. Guzana against the presence of Mr M.V. Lila or the clash between Rev. W.B.S. Gaba and Dr K.E. Mgojo. And yet these tensions throw very important light on the motivations behind people's actions and the reasoning going on in their minds. Information on such issues had to be obtained from the living oral tradition through interviews. These written documents were therefore no more than a skeletal point of reference. In addition to consulting such documents, extensive conversations were therefore held with a variety of people involved in the schism in order to fill in the details. The problem was, however, that some participants could no longer remember clearly what had actually happened in 1978. Much care was taken to eliminate serious distortions – due to my own bias and that of the people interviewed – in the telling of the story, even though personal bias can never be eliminated from scholarly study. The best one can hope for is to attain “objectivity in the heart of subjectivity” (Krüger 1982:36), which is what I attempted to achieve throughout this study.

The second reason for the prominence of narrative relates to the *purpose* of telling the story. Perhaps the 1978 schism is still too recent for a thoroughly critical and analytical study to be made of it. One often needs the benefit of historical “distance” to grasp the complex interaction between various factors causing a church schism such as this. But with historical distance comes the disadvantage of not having sufficient first-hand sources. In the case of the 1978 Methodist schism, a thorough analytical study done ten years from now would suffer from the serious handicap of not having enough insider's accounts available to it, unless the actors involved in the schism started writing down their perceptions and experiences of the schism, as I am doing here. In fact, some people who played a very significant role in the process of the schism have already died, while this research project was still in progress. People like the late Revs Mbabane, Mbele and Gwiliza, as well as Messrs K.M.N. Guzana and C.S. Mda would have been able to provide valuable information and insights. One of the central purposes of the present study, as embodied in chapter 2, was therefore to “tell a story” of the schism as I experienced it myself and interpreted it on the basis of the available documents and the stories told by other actors that were involved.

It is my view, however, that the use of this “unscholarly” method of writing history – in narrative fashion – should not only be followed in situations where archival material is unavailable. It should become an established alternative approach in African theology in order to draw the Christian oral tradition into the doing of theology. This is not intended as an excuse for producing “sloppy” history but to acknowledge the situation that the sources for writing African church history are predominantly oral (and therefore narrative) in character. To my mind it is a weakness of missiology as an academic discipline in South Africa that it has not yet reflected systematically on the oral and narrative character of so much of its sources in researching the mission of the church. One priority for further missiological research that has arisen out of this study is precisely this need to “take on board” the narrative dimension of theology with which other branches of theology have been grappling for quite some time (see e.g. Smit 1990).

6.1.2 Contextual analysis

The second research question dealt with the factors that played a role in the schism. It therefore led to an investigation into the background of the Methodist tradition of sending letters of greeting to heads of state, the history of Transkei as a state, and the peculiar characteristics of Transkeian Methodism.

When analysing the “letters of greeting” issue, which precipitated the schism, it became clear that the church needs a constant renewal and revisiting of its agenda. A church tradition develops in a certain period of history to meet a specific need and then gets passed on to subsequent generations. This becomes a problem when the church hands over (in the classic meaning of *traditio*) customs to following generations who then accept and perpetuate them uncritically. This is a betrayal of the reformational adage *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* (a reformed church must always be reforming). It also causes the Christian tradition to be seen as an orthodoxy claiming universal validity, rather than as a “series of local theologies” (Schreier 1985) developed by churches in widely differing contexts (Kritzinger 1995:8).

The theological issue raised by the Methodist “letters of greeting” to heads of state is the

freedom of the church. In early 19th century England, it was important for John Wesley and his fellow-Methodists to distance themselves from the “republican” spirit of the French Revolution, and to be seen as good law-abiding citizens. This centuries-old collusion between the Methodist Church and the British government, dutifully transplanted by British missionaries to the “mission fields” of Southern Africa, seriously curtailed the freedom of the MCSA in its dealings with the South African state. As a result, it was “trapped in apartheid” (Villa-Vicencio 1988). Especially since the 1948 election victory of the National Party, it became more and more difficult for the MCSA – which has had a majority of Black members since the 19th century – to continue sending letters of greeting to the South African head of state. Eventually it became little more than a formality, which undermined the credibility of the church’s public witness. This is not to say that the church should be an enemy of the state, but it should be sufficiently free to address the state prophetically when the need arises. I return to this issue of prophetic witness in 6.4.

6.1.3 Conflict of loyalties

The process leading up to the schism, as told in chapter 2, made it abundantly clear that serious internal conflict erupted among Transkeian Methodists as a result of the intended ban on the MCSA. In chapter 4 the conflict of loyalties between the “loyalists” and “nationalists” was analysed. This approach is not based on any recognised social science approach to the analysis of conflict. It arose out of the narrative method employed in chapter 2 and was therefore part of the “grounded theory” approach of this study. It became clear during the narrative description of the schism that the two constellations of loyalties evidenced by the two “blocs” of “loyalists” and “nationalists” presented a helpful way of describing the way in which the issues appeared to them at the time. Such an approach needs to be tested and investigated more fully, and related to social scientific methods of analysis in order to determine its usefulness in other contexts.

The initial reaction of the Transkeian Methodists to give a theological response to the crisis presented by the impending ban (see 2.5.8) was soon superseded by pragmatic considerations. In this regard the MCT schism illustrates quite clearly the problems inherent in the development of a local theology. Schreier (1985:14) sees the main

weakness of the development of a contextual theology in its inability to sustain a theological dialogue with the context it is addressing:

The development of a contextual theology is often set on as a project, but even more often not carried beyond the first couple of steps. Thus problems may be identified, questions may be addressed to the Christian faith as found in other cultural traditions, but there has not been time to continue the dialogue.

Indeed, in most cases "there has not been time" to formulate a *conscious* and *well considered* theological response to urgent issues in the life of a church. Insisting on such a cognitive or intellectualist perspective reflects a reductionist approach to theology, which is very common in Western theology. In a more holistic view of theology, the actions taken by Christians in a situation of crisis already express and embody their theology, even though it is not (fully) articulated. This is especially true in the African context where oral tradition is so powerful in the life of the church. In other words, the two constellations of loyalties identified in chapter 4 represent two contextual theologies at work among Transkeian Methodists during the process of the schism. This action-related view of theology is in line with that expressed at the founding conference of EATWOT in Dar-es-Salaam:

We reject as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action. We are prepared for a radical break in epistemology which makes commitment the first act of theology and engages in critical reflection on praxis of the reality of the Third World (Torres & Fabella 1978:269).

While no illuminating theological formulations or declarations were produced during the process of the MCT schism the pragmatic concerns expressed were deeply theological in nature. In chapter 4 the conflict between two opposing contextual theologies was analysed, thus developing a way of doing a missiological analysis of theological conflicts in the church's struggle to be relevant and authentic in its public ministry.

6.1.4 Typological analysis

Although the MCT and the earlier Methodist schisms are similar in some respects there are also significant differences between them. The differences are determined by differing attitudes towards the state and towards the established church (in all cases the Methodist

Church) from which they broke away. These differences become more striking when the MCT is compared with the Ethiopian church movement.

Although Mokone claimed that the Ethiopian Church was firmly grounded in the tradition of Wesleyan Methodism (Balija 1991:74), this should only be understood to refer to doctrinal issues. Mokone moved away from the British tradition of Methodist polity and adopted the polity of the American Methodist Episcopal Church (still doctrinally within Wesleyan Methodism but differing from it in church polity in various ways, e.g. the appointment of bishops) and later a section of the Ethiopian movement (under Dwane) went all the way into episcopal polity by establishing the Ethiopian Order within the Anglican Church. The MCT, on the other hand, distinguished itself by a wholesale adoption of the polity and institutional character of the “mother” church. It adopted the *Laws and Discipline* of the MCSA with only minor editorial alterations.

Another significant difference is in the relationship with the “mother” church. In spite of acrimonious relations between the MCT and the MCSA the Transkeian Methodists avoided interpreting the schism in religious, theological or racist terms, so that they could claim credal unity with the MCSA and trivialise their ecclesiastical (organisational) separation. The Ethiopian Churches, on the other hand, did not mince their words and stated quite categorically that they rejected the racist practices of the Wesleyan Methodist Church which were evident in its financial and administrative arrangements.

In the political context the MCT was an attempt to form a national church in the political sense, while the Ethiopian Churches were an attempt to form a national church in the cultural sense. Niebuhr (1972:25) characterises a national church in the political sense as displaying (among others) the features of the church as “a part of the state, or as a co-ordinate with the state” – characteristics which were quite prominent in the objectives of the formation of the MCT. That is why it was so careful to minimise any possible conflict with the political and economic interests of the Transkeian government. The typological analysis in chapter 5 led to the conclusion that the Transkeian Methodists wanted to create a Transkeian Church which was not only Transkeian but also Methodist, in the same sense that “the German church is not only German but also Lutheran...” (Niebuhr 1972:132f).

The peculiar nature of the MCT schism also raises the question whether typological classification is an adequate framework of interpretation when there are no dispute in matters of doctrine or practice. The MCSA refused to recognise the MCT, not because of differences in matters of doctrine and practice, but because the MCSA had not conferred autonomy on the MCT in a constitutional way: “[It] has been formed in defiance of the constitutional procedures of our church and to the detriment of unity in the body of Christ” (*Dimension*, Nov 12, 1978). This raises questions concerning the ecclesiology operative in the MCSA at the time. Does this not represent a bureaucratisation of the church, making it into a legal rather than theological institution? It also raises the theological question of the nature of “church law” or, put differently, the role of legal church structures, especially in the African context.

On the other hand, the question may be asked whether a faithful and sensitive application of Methodist constitutional procedures could not have guarded the MCT more effectively against intimidation by the Transkei state during the process leading up to the schism. Perhaps all of this proves that church rules and procedures in themselves cannot ensure that the church will act as a genuine Christian community. Without the living reality of mutual trust to sustain the constitutional process within the church, it can easily degenerate into mere formalism or (worse) into a mechanism of exclusion and manipulation.

6.2 MISSION AND ETHNIC ISSUES

The review of typological analyses in 6.1.4 shows that political, cultural and ethnic issues have not only invaded the church but have become part of its self-understanding. When dealing with this issue one should first recognise the complicity of the church in this regard. Niebuhr (1972:111) points out that the supra-national ideals of Jesus and Paul were surrendered during the first three centuries of Christianity, when it entered into an alliance with the Roman Empire, because it was a “denationalised and universal empire with which they associated the ecumenical ambitions of their faith, and it was a relatively catholic culture which they were called upon to infiltrate with their pan-human ethics.”

By the time Christianity was established in Europe, however, that monolithic political and

cultural ideal had been melted away and replaced by various nationalisms, each with its own cultural ethos. In this regard the relatively successful inculturation of the church into the life worlds of various people was partly responsible for its supra-national and ecumenical ideals being overshadowed and pushed into the background. The role of Martin Luther in the emergence of German national consciousness is a case in point.

The conception of people as a nation or ethnic group was part of the whole Western "package" conveyed by Christian missionaries and colonial administrators to countries outside Europe. When such a national principle did not exist, missionaries in some cases even regarded it as their task to create it (Maluleke 1993:236ff). Berger et al (1973: 149) points out the irony of nationalism in Third World countries: its objective was to throw out the influences of the Western world and yet nationalism is itself a product of modernisation, brought about by the Western world.

Were it not for the apartheid system, the evolution of Transkei to an independent state would have been regarded as a successful fulfilment of British colonial policy. This is equally true of the MCT: were it not for the schism of 1978, the evolution of the MCT would have been regarded as the fulfilment of the Venn-Anderson ideal of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating Christian community. The contextual analysis of chapter 3 revealed a parallel development of these political and ecclesial ideals in Transkei. In some cases there was a close cooperation between the colonial and church establishments, and such cooperation helped to create a climate which favoured an alliance between the Transkeian state and the MCSA's Clarkebury District, which was the only Black-led Methodist District and eventually became a homeland church.

The existence (or creation) of homogeneous ethnic communities was as essential to the ideological experimentation of the South African government as it was to the missionary propagation of the gospel. The missionary tradition in the Eastern Cape and Transkei in particular helped to foster ethnic consciousness by reducing the Xhosa language to writing, translating the Bible into Xhosa, thus creating a Xhosa Christian tradition. There was nothing wrong with that until the apartheid government started manipulating it (cf. Blaser et al. 1994:193ff).

A comparison between the MCT and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA – formerly Tsonga Presbyterian Church) provides a very interesting study of the ethnic factor in missiology. The development of an exclusive ethnic identity in the EPCSA preceded the development of the Bantustan policy, whereas in the MCT an exclusive ethnic identity came later, along with the Bantustan policy. Maluleke (1993) shows how the missionaries developed and created the Tsonga ethnic identity along with their missionary work. The homeland policy only conferred political legitimacy on an ethnic group which was already conscious of its own identity. In Transkei the ethnic consciousness was forged by the politics of the homeland policy and the MCT was an attempt to forge a religious legitimation for that ethnic identity.

Although the Methodist schism in Transkei is viewed and discussed in the categories of politics and ideology, the underlying issue is an ethnic one. The Xhosa were the first South African tribe to experience Western encroachment on its worldview. Their determination to resist is expressed in both political and religious terms. To achieve this they needed to control the institutions which determined their lives. The contextual analysis given in chapter 3 helps to explain why the (often romanticised) “struggle against apartheid” was lacking in large sections of the Transkeian Methodist Church. The joint legacy of the British colonial policy to create national states and the Methodist missionary tradition of cooperating with political authorities created a positive attitude towards the development of a Transkeian ethnic identity with its own political and ecclesial institutions. It was this climate which produced the MCT schism.

6.3 Mission and unity

As I have indicated before, the 1978 Annual Conference of the MCSA refused to recognise the “breakaway Transkei Methodist Church” as it “has been formed in defiance of the constitutional procedures of our church and to the detriment of the unity of the body of Christ” (*Dimension*, Nov. 12, 1978). In similar vein, the 1978 BMC National Conference declared:

.. the banning of the Methodist Church of South Africa and the forming of the Methodist Church of Transkei failed to find sympathy and acceptance from Black brethren. For (among other reasons mentioned) it was felt that the move would lead

to a severance of the solidarity and fellowship of Black people in their struggle for a meaningful place in the church (1978 BMC Minutes, in Mahlasela 1986:28).

Both statements tell us more about the concerns of the commentators than about church unity. The MCSA Conference is concerned about its constitution which has been defied and the BMC with its Black struggle which has been betrayed or undermined. These statements are symptomatic of the general lack of precision when unity in ecclesial circles is talked about.

Various conferences of the International Missionary Council have given different definitions of unity, to the extent that its importance has been relativised. Saayman (1984:19) gives the different meanings of unity which have emerged from ecumenical discussions and from the different Christian traditions. All these understandings of unity are related to the understanding of apostolicity. The latter is understood in terms of: a) apostolic succession, as in episcopal churches; b) remaining faithful to the apostles' doctrine, as in Reformed churches; c) fulfilling the apostolic mission of the church in the world, as in the theology of the apostolate. The MCT, as a church influenced by the Reformation, did not accept the apostolic succession, but could hardly be accused of having violated any of the other two dimensions of apostolicity as they seceded from the MCSA. They remained true to apostolic doctrine and apostolic mission.

Saayman (1984:123) points out that in the South African context there is a tendency to be satisfied as long as the church unity is not undermined in the terms listed above. Lack of unity within the same church is sometimes described as lack of uniformity so that it can be rationalised and justified on cultural grounds. The only unity which is sacrosanct and therefore should never be compromised is that of the controlling authority.

The 1978 MCSA Annual Conference was bombarded with statements like "they [the Transkeian Methodists] could not wait for Conference to debate and grant them their autonomy" and "they should have attended Conference to apply for their autonomy" (*Dimension*, Nov. 12, 1978). That would not have been enough. The question is whether the MCSA church could have legislated and set in motion its constitutional procedures for establishing a church which conformed to apartheid boundaries. What the Conference

should have promised, and would have been worth waiting for in Transkei and elsewhere, was a commitment by the MCSA to become a catholic supra-national and supra-cultural church. The change of name of the MCSA from Methodist Church of *South Africa* to Methodist Church of *Southern Africa* at the end of 1978 shows that the MCSA became aware at that time of the need to express such a supra-national identity. If the MCSA had conferred autonomy on the MCT by legislation in the context of the ideological exigencies of post-Soweto-1976 South African politics, that would not have conferred legitimacy on the MCT any more than the schism. As a matter of fact, it would have cast even more doubts on the church's integrity. Having changed the MCSA's name by legislation, what was needed was a change in practice.

The real theological issue underlying the MCT schism was therefore not the defiance of the constitutional procedures of the church. There was never any constitutional procedure for establishing an apartheid [a homeland] church, as Gaba argued in the LSC meeting (see 2.10.5) and there could never be one, because no [English-speaking?] church could ever make constitutional provisions for endorsing apartheid [the DRC did this openly, though, by establishing racially defined churches! Was this a case that the English did not want to look as "backward" as the Afrikaners? And yet they were as trapped in apartheid as most Afrikaners were].

Unity conceived of in terms of Black struggle as promoted by the BMC, on the other hand, also falls far short of the supra-national and supra-cultural ideal inherent in the nature of the church. A church which is above the political and cultural stratifications would have less oppressive structures and practices, thus escaping ideological manipulation. The existence of the BMC was, by the very nature of its objectives, provisional. Once its objectives of the transformation of the MCSA to a truly "one and undivided church" in practice was achieved, there would be no reason for its continued existence. The approaches of the national BMC and the BMC of the Transkei Districts reflected two approaches to national politics in South Africa. The national BMC was waging a struggle for a united democratic South Africa, while the BMC of the Transkei Districts had opted out of that struggle by taking the "homeland" line of trying to use the system against itself.

The Methodist schism in Transkei suggests that the church in Southern Africa needs to go further than boasting of shared theological traditions or unity in apostolicity, so that it may express its catholic nature in actual practice.

6.4 Prophetic mission

An important missiological dimension of this study is its emphasis on the prophetic mission of the church in terms of church-state relations (see 1.3). In 3.4.3.2 the point was made that the Methodist tradition has an inclination to influence its followers to conform to the wishes of the political establishment. To a large extent this compromises the Methodist Church's prophetic mission. Prophetic mission demands that the church should not "fear the fury of the Führer" but be bold enough to say "Thus says the Lord..."

In this section I shall argue that the success or failure of the MCSA in the Transkei crisis was decided by its response to the telegram of 10 February 1978 in which the Transkeian Minister of Justice banned "foreigners" from attending the meeting of 21 February 1978 in Umtata (see 2.4). The MCSA top leadership abided by the ruling and stayed away from the meeting. What would have been a prophetic stand in that situation from the side of the MCSA would have been for the President of Conference and his delegation to attend the meeting in defiance of the ban (or get arrested for trying to do so). The MCSA would have won more support from the international community and (more importantly) from Transkeian Methodists, who needed a signal from the MCSA in that situation that it was not going to abandon them. As pointed out in 2.7.3, the sentiment was expressed at the Buntingville BMC meeting on 14 February 1978 that the MCSA were "abandoning" the Methodists in Transkei by not sending a delegation to the forthcoming meeting.

When Rev. Hendricks and his delegation decided not to enter the lion's den they played into the hand of the Transkeian government and thus encouraged the process leading to the formation of the MCT. Their decision not to attend also sent a signal to the Transkeian Methodists that the MCSA could abandon them, in fact, that they were as powerless against the Transkeian government's security establishment as Transkeians themselves. As

a result, the ban on “foreigners” was not even discussed or challenged on 21 February 1978 since nobody in that category attended (or even tried to attend) the meeting. Even in March some Transkeian ministers were still lamenting the fact that the MCSA leadership had not even considered changing the venue of the meeting to Kokstad (see 2.7.7) to enable a meeting between all the interested parties.

Had the President of Conference and his delegation attended (or tried to attend) the meeting, it would have pushed the Transkeian government into a “no win” situation. If it arrested the delegation (the worst option they could take), it would permanently lose any hope of international recognition. If it did not “deal with them,” as threatened in the telegram, it would portray the image of a “toy government” – which need not be taken seriously because it issued empty threats – thus losing political support within Transkei. The telegram was part of a systematic display of power and intimidation tactics from the side of the Transkeian government. In January 1978 it threatened to ban the MCSA in Transkei; in February 1978 it banned the MCSA top executive (as “foreigners”) from attending a meeting in Transkei; in May 1978 it declared the MCSA an “undesirable organisation;” and in June it finally banned the MCSA.

When Rev. Hendricks, President of Conference, said in June 1978, in response to the eventual banning of the MCSA, “I do not accept the banning of our church,” that was a prophetic statement. It was four months too late, however, to make a difference to history. Its prophetic words would have carried much more weight if they were an expression of concrete prophetic action taken on 21 February 1978, and at other significant points between January and June 1978. Through the telegram of 10 February 1978 and the non-response to it by the MCSA, the state succeeded in increasing its power over Transkeians and the church in increasing its powerlessness. If it were a chess game, that was the point at which the MCSA lost its queen.

The fact that there was not a single Transkeian in the MCSA top leadership who could attend the meeting as a bona fide representative of the church, highlighted the structural problem of the MCSA at the time. Dr Mgojo attended the meeting of 21 February 1978 in his personal capacity, as a Transkeian. Had there not been such a credibility gap

between Transkeian Methodists and the MCSA top leadership, the developments may have taken a very different turn.

As it turned out, the telegram swung the pendulum in favour of the formation of the MCT. The MCSA's failure to take a strong prophetic stand weakened those in Transkei who were prepared to resist state interference in church affairs. The traditionally compromised position of the Methodist church vis-à-vis the state led it to respond lamely and ambiguously to the Transkeian government's blatant interference in the life of the church.

Furthermore, the MCSA statement of 21 February 1978 on the question of autonomy (see 2.5.7) said, "there is nothing wrong with the autonomy of the Transkeian Methodists *if they wanted it*" (my italics). On 21 March 1978 a majority of Transkeian Methodist leaders said they *wanted it*. The MCSA was therefore morally bound to grant it. The question is: why should the wishes of the Transkeians be sufficient reason for the granting of autonomy? And what were the implications of such a position for the unity of the church? It seems as if the concern for church unity was overshadowed by a concern for legitimacy, a legitimacy conferred to one church by another ("mother") church.

Villa-Vicencio has argued that Chief Matanzima's wish that the matter be referred to Synod and from Synod to Conference (see 2.5.7), was probably meant to guarantee this legitimacy. Had that line of action been followed, he would have successfully forced the MCSA

"to recognise the MCT and by implication the bantustan policy and therefore the apartheid policy of the South African government" (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978).

The collapse of the ecclesiastical channels of granting autonomy to the MCT saved the MCSA from that embarrassment.

For the Transkeian Methodists, on the other hand, it would have been a prophetic stand to have discussed and challenged the ban on "foreigners" at the meeting of 21 February 1978. By doing that they would have challenged not only their own alienation from the top leadership of their church, but also the introduction of the term "foreigner" in church

matters. By not challenging the concept "foreigner" at that crucial moment, they were allowing the Transkeian political establishment to redefine their (Transkeian Methodists) own membership in the MCSA as "foreigners," in the same sense in which (through political independence) they had been re-defined as foreigners in the RSA.

The unrecognised devastating effect of the telegram lay in its symbolism: it brought the concept "foreigner" more vividly into the awareness of the people of Transkei. At that stage (1976-78), the average Transkeians had not yet assimilated the political fact that they had become "foreigners" in South Africa. The Transkeian government decided to drive this point home in a dramatic way by showing that South Africans (even top church leaders) were "foreigners" in Transkei. The irony of this was the fact that the state was using the church, with its powerful capability of transmitting symbols, to drum into the minds of Transkeians the hard reality of this "foreigner" concept by splashing the message across the headlines that Rev. Hendricks, the President of the MCSA Conference, was a "foreigner" in Transkei. The telegram forced the Transkeian Methodists to become the first religious group to grant the Transkeian state the religious legitimation it so desperately needed. It allowed the state to get away with this blatant interference in church procedures, without even the faintest of challenges.

There are two possible reasons why the Transkeian Methodists did not challenge the telegram. The first is that they were probably intimidated by this threat from the side of the state and therefore afraid of opposing it. From experience they had learnt how the Transkeian leaders used power to get their own way. It is therefore understandable that someone remarked during the schism: "Who does not know KD?" (See 4.4.2). If Rev. Hendricks himself and the MCSA top leadership did not challenge or defy the ban, how could they even think of doing so?

A second reason is that they may have lacked the theological commitment to do so. They could not defend the policies of their own church (the MCSA) against the accusations levelled at it by the Transkeian politicians (see 2.3). If the link with the MCSA structure had been stronger and had been a treasured part of their identity as Methodists they may have resisted this imposition of a totally unacceptable term ("foreigner") onto their church

practices.

The telegram caught both the MCSA top executive and the Transkeian Methodists off guard. Afterwards each group accused the other of failing to exercise alternative options within their power that could have prevented the worsening of the situation. In the MCSA the charge was that the Transkeian Methodists could have offered some resistance to the Transkeian government. The Transkeian Methodists, for their part, blamed the MCSA top executive for refusing to break out of stereotyped ecclesiastical procedures to address the urgency of the situation.

The fact of the matter is that the telegram placed the church before a *kairos* moment in which prophetic deeds were required. Both groups allowed the *kairos* to slip through their fingers. Everything that followed was decisively determined by the responses to that infamous telegram.

6.5 Prophetic ambivalence

There were a number of prophetic Methodist responses to the crisis, but in this final section I want to point out how each of those prophetic responses contained an element of ambivalence. Missiologically speaking, this underlines the uncomfortable fact that the witness of the church is never totally "pure" or uncompromised.

One example is the view of Villa-Vicencio (*Dimension*, August 6, 1978) on the question whether the MCSA should recognise the MCSA:

Any form of recognition of the Methodist Church of Transkei at this time could have the gravest consequences. To recognise this church is to recognise Transkei and by implication the bantustan policy and therefore the apartheid policy of the South African government.

This statement is clear and prophetic, but it was made to a church which had already formulated and approved a letter of greeting to the Transkeian head of state at the 1977 MCSA Conference when the debate erupted over the wording of the letter of greeting to the South African government, which led to the decision to discontinue letters of greeting

altogether. That letter of greeting to the Transkei State President (Paramount Chief B.M. Sigcau) was in itself a clear indication of the recognition of Transkei and "by implication the bantustan policy and therefore the apartheid policy of the South African government," since the objections that were raised in the 1977 Conference to the sending of such a letter were not accepted by conference. As a result, the prophetic voice of the MCSA was severely compromised. But even more fundamentally, a possible prophetic stance by the MCSA against the homeland/apartheid system was weakened by the fact that there were separate Black and White Methodist congregations in Transkei and all over South Africa, as Mr Pamla pointed out in the meeting between Transkeian political leaders and MCSA representatives in January 1978. The courageous prophetic voices of individual Methodists were constantly blunted and contradicted by the daily practice of a church which was itself "trapped in apartheid" (Villa-Vicencio 1988).

Another example of prophetic ambivalence was the stance of the Clarkebury District BMC branch. As pointed out in 4.5.1.1 this BMC branch was the core of the nationalist group in the process leading to the MCT schism. The motivations for their support of the formation of the MCT were that it presented an opportunity to develop Black leadership. However, this is an ambivalent stance, since the majority position in the Black Consciousness movement, with which the BMC identified itself, was very strongly opposed to the homeland policy. This was clearly formulated by Biko (1978:86):

These tribal cocoons called "homelands" are nothing else but sophisticated concentration camps where black people are allowed to "suffer peacefully." Black people must constantly pressurise the bantustan leaders to pull out of the political cul-de-sac that has been created for them by the system.

This total rejection of the homeland system was also dramatised by the expulsion of Temba Sono from a SASO conference in 1972 for supporting the "realist" approach to the homelands (Gerhart 1978:289f), which proposed that "dummy institutions" should be used to undermine the system itself. When the Clarkebury BMC supported the formation of the MCT, they were taking the "realist" option, which explains why the National BMC did not support them. The "realist" Black Consciousness approach in Transkei was also followed by Rev. Qambela, former SASO President at Fedsem, who openly supported Chief Matanzima and urged him to ban all the White churches in Transkei (see 2.3). This shows, once again, that no prophetic stance is totally "pure" and uncompromised.

One of the functions of missiology is to reflect critically on the witness of the church. This study has provided ample material and insights to stimulate ongoing reflection on the ambiguities of the church's prophetic witness and the challenges facing it in its relationship with ethnic and political realities in Africa.

6.6 Conclusion

This study of the dynamics of the MCT schism has probably raised as many questions as it has proposed answers. I sincerely hope that other scholars will research it and enter into debate with the interpretations I have suggested. Further research is necessary to trace the subsequent developments of the MCT during the ten years of its separation from the MCSA, to see what light it throws (in retrospect) on the motivations for the formation of the MCT. It will also be necessary to interview lay members of the MCT to ascertain what their interpretations were to the schism, and how that differed from the views of the ministers and politicians.

After the lifting of the ban on the MCSA in 1988, not all Transkeian Methodists rejoined their "mother" church of 1978. A number of further schisms had taken place during the ten years "in exile."¹ These developments indicate that the 1978 schism should not be reduced simply to a "Matanzima affair." The "ecclesiastical disaster" pronounced by Rev. Hendricks in June 1978 was latently present before the MCT schism, waiting to be born, and the Matanzima government proved to be the midwife of that process. All of this demands further intensive study.

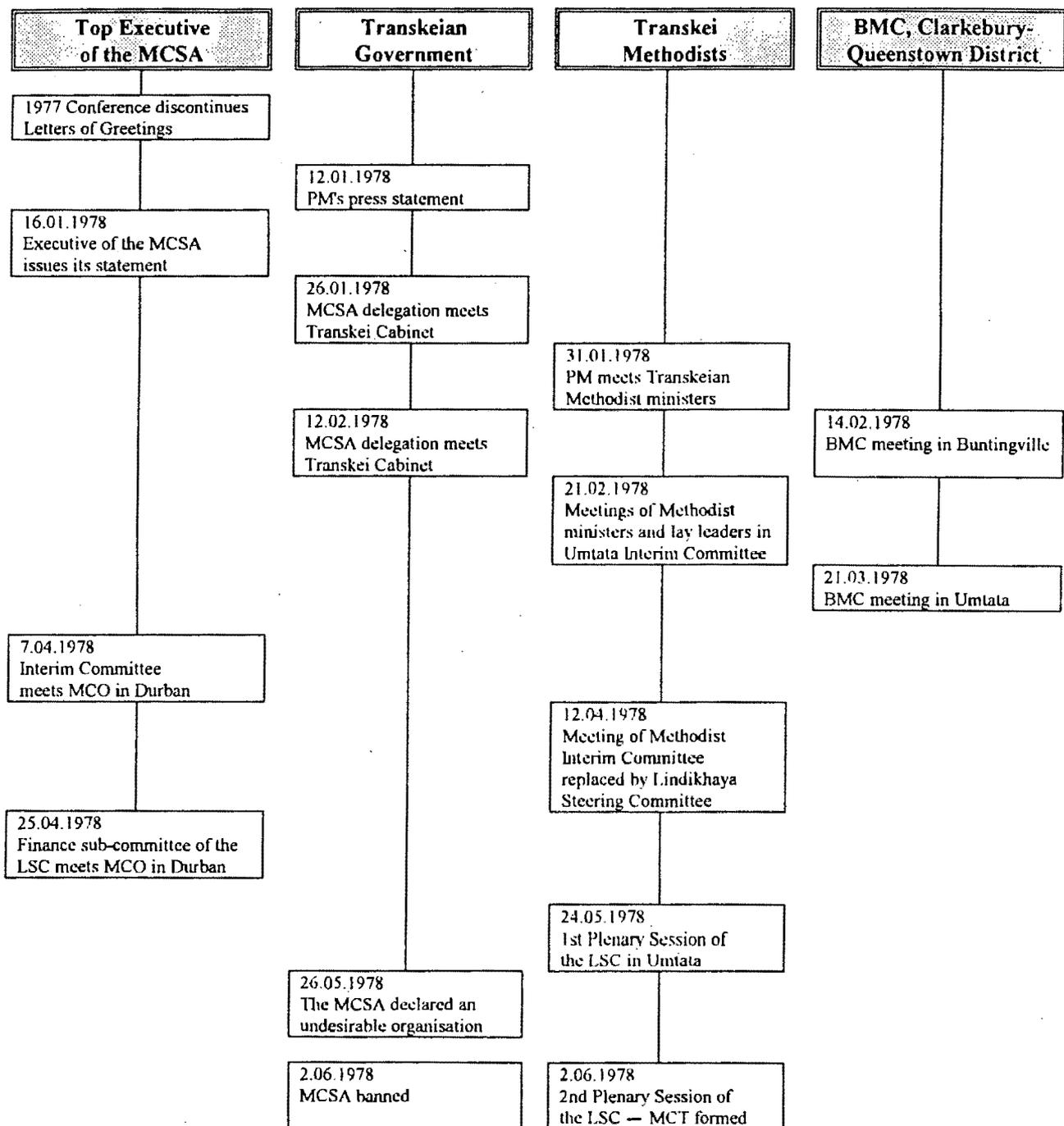
In conclusion, we can now thank God for the transformation we see in our church.
Viva, Methodist Church of Southern Africa!

ENDNOTES

1. A section of the silent majority of 1978 opted to remain the UMCSA (United Methodist Church of South Africa), which was the name adopted by the MCT in 1979. Another group decided to remain the "Methodist Church of Transkei." This was a group under Rev. W.B.S. Gaba who separated from the UMCSA in 1986 to adopt once more the original name of the church. To distinguish this group from the initial MCT, it is wise to call it "MCT II."

APPENDIX 1

Diagram of the interaction of the parties: October 1977 to June 1978



APPENDIX II**STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CHAIRMEN OF DISTRICTS ON 16 JANUARY 1978 IN RESPONSE TO CHIEF MATANZIMA'S PRESS STATEMENT OF 12 JANUARY 1978**

The Prime Minister of Transkei has declared that his cabinet intends to pass a law through the Transkei Parliament banning in Transkei the Methodist Church of South Africa. An Act is also envisaged which will establish a Methodist Church of Transkei with Circuits in Transkei and South Africa.

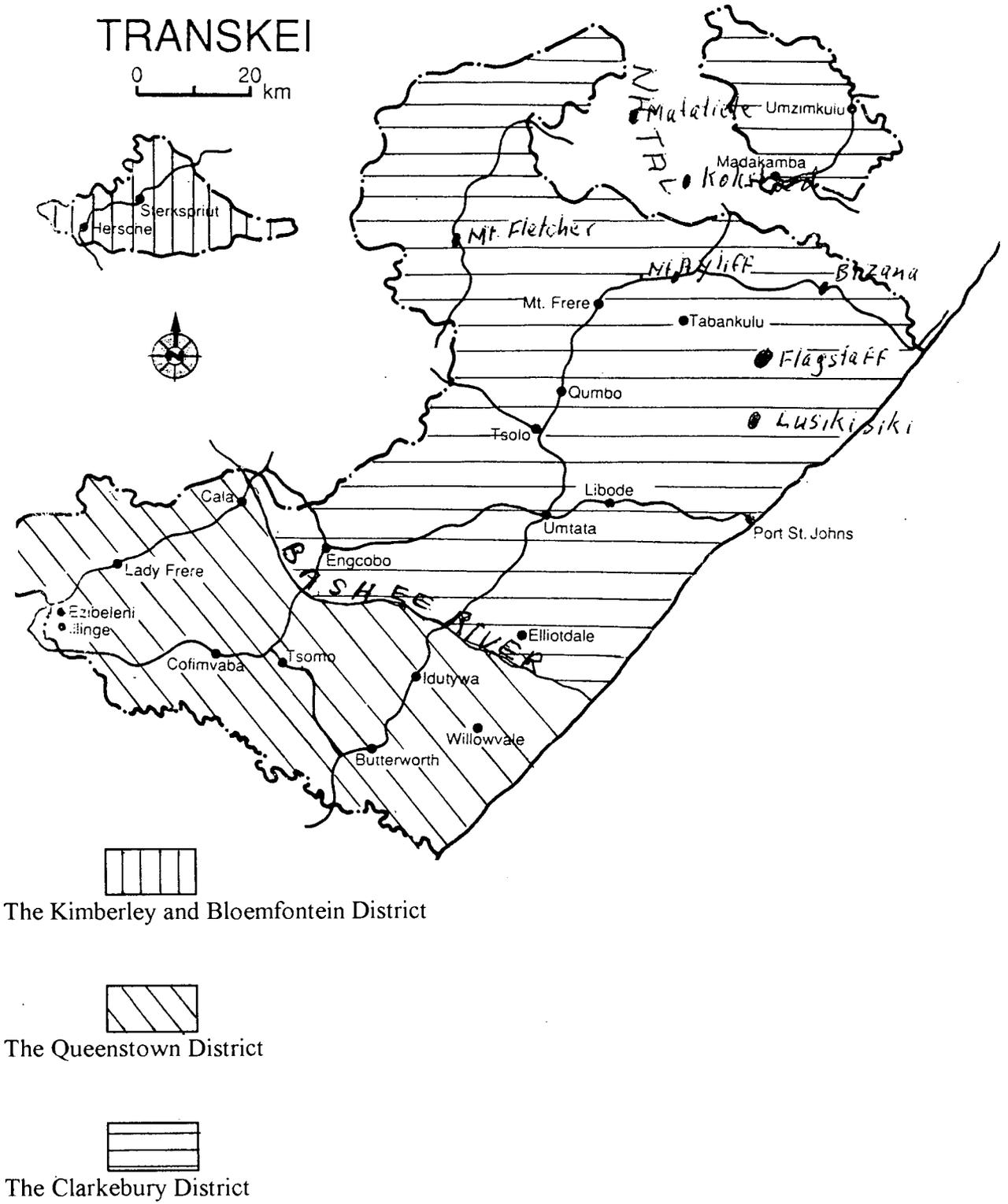
The reason given is that the Conference of 1977 did not send a message of greetings to the Transkei President. This has unfortunately been regarded as an affront to the integrity and dignity of the Head of State, Government and the people of Transkei.

The growing complexity of the political situation in the nations served by this church has made it more and more difficult for the Conference to send letters of greetings in their traditional form. The Conference, therefore, decided to discontinue the practice of sending these letters. In the debate on this issue, some of those who spoke said that they themselves did not recognise Transkei. This, however, was not the issue before the Conference and the independence of Transkei was not debated.

We strongly reject suggestions that the Methodist Church of South Africa takes instructions from the World Council of Churches or any other body. The Methodist Church of South Africa is completely autonomous, making its own decisions in the light of its understanding of the will of God as revealed through Holy Scripture.

The Methodist Church of South Africa has a long and very honourable history of loyal service in Transkei and other parts of Southern Africa. We believe that we can serve the people of Southern Africa best in the name of God by remaining undivided (*Fikeni Papers*).

APPENDIX III TRANSKEI METHODIST DISTRICT



APPENDIX IV

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF TRANSKEI
LAWS AND DISCIPLINE**Preamble**

This Assembly of the Transkeian Methodist Ministers and Lay Representatives meeting in Umtata on the 24th May, 1978 wishes to place on record its opinion on the intention of the Republic of Transkei to ban the Methodist Church of South Africa in the Transkei and its avowed intention to pass a Bill by an Act of Parliament enabling the Methodists in the Transkei to form and constitute the Methodist Church of Transkei. We have dealt with the fundamental question of whether a Church can be created by a State. We feel that as far as the envisaged Methodist Church of Transkei is concerned, the Republic of Transkei will not have and can never create a Church. The Church can be created only by Christ who is both the Foundation and the Head of the Church.

We have been made to realise that to decide otherwise in this matter is beyond our power. We are, however, content to learn that only what has always been regarded as of the *bene esse* of the Church will be changed.

Even in this regard we humbly admit that we know of no one method by which Christ creates a structure of his Church in all situations. In as much as we were called by him through various ways to his Church and his Ministry which itself is diversified (cf. Eph. 4.11 ff), we hope that he may in his wisdom have ordained that this is the way in which his mission can best be achieved in the Transkei. We pray that it be so because we are committed by our vocation to reveal him in whichever situation we find ourselves.

Since the internal organisation of the envisaged Methodist Church of Transkei may differ in certain respects from the Methodist Church of South Africa, we have adopted *mutatis mutandis* the *Laws and Discipline* of the Methodist Church of South Africa.

The religious doctrines and usages of the envisaged Methodist Church of Transkei will in all substantial respects be identical with those of the Methodist Church of South Africa. We claim to adhere to the same Methodist doctrines, traditions and practices (*Fikeni Papers*).

APPENDIX V

Republic of Transkei
26 May 1978

No. 28

Proclamation
by the President of the Republic of Transkei
No. 9

Declaration of the Methodist Church of South Africa as an Undesirable Organisation

Whereas I am satisfied that the existence within Transkei of the Methodist Church of South Africa is prejudicial to the interests of the State;
Now, therefore, under the powers vested in me by Section 2 of the Undesirable Organisation Act, 1978 (Act 9 of 1978), I hereby declare the Methodist Church of South Africa to be an undesirable organisation.

Given under my Hand the Seal of the Republic of Transkei at Umtata this 24th day of May, One thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight.

Botha M. Sigcau
State President

G.M.M. Matanzima
By Order of the President-in-Council

APPENDIX VI

Department of Justice
General Notice No. 29
Undesirable Organizations Act, 1978

Order

To the Methodist Church of South Africa

Whereas the President of the Republic of Transkei has by Proclamation 9 of 1978 declared the Methodist Church of South Africa to be an undesirable organization;

Now, therefore, under the powers vested in me by Section 2 of the Undesirable Organizations Act, 1978 (Act 9 of 1978), I hereby order the Methodist Church of South Africa -

- (a) to cease, with effect from the date of this order, all the activities of the said Methodist Church within Transkei;
- (b) to dispose of -
 - (i) all land and other immovable property situated in Transkei of which the Methodist Church of South Africa is the owner, irrespective of whether such property is registered in the name of the Methodist Church of South Africa or its governing body or any body or person on its behalf, and
 - (ii) all movable property owned by the Methodist Church of South Africa which is situated on any land referred to in paragraph (b) or which is used in connection with the activities of the Church within Transkei,

and to transfer, cede or deliver, within a period of six months, all such property to the Methodist Church of Transkei, subject to such conditions as the Methodist Church of South Africa and the Methodist Church of Transkei may agree upon.

Signed at Umtata on this 2nd day of June 1978.

G.M.M. Matanzima, Minister of Justice

APPENDIX VII

Not all the ministers in the Transkei Circuits were present at the meeting on 2 June 1978 to indicate whether they were for or against the MCT. The following list of the ministers who joined the MCT has been compiled by comparing the names which appear in the *Minutes* of the 1977 MCSA Conference with the names which appear in the 1978 MCT *Minutes*. Their names in the 1978 MCT *Minutes* are indicated as having been in their respective circuits for two years because the period from 2 June 1978 to October 1978 is regarded as a year (their last year in the MCSA records). This helps to eliminate the names of those who joined the MCT later either from the MCSA or from other churches and who joined the ministry for the first time.

The following fifty-one ministers decided to remain in the Methodist Church of Transkei:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Bam Tranquil Z.A. | 27. Mgcwaba Jonathan |
| 2. Bubesi Coulbert A.N. | 28. Mjali Phinias P. |
| 3. Conjwa Tholakele O. | 29. Msezeli Ezra N. |
| 4. Dabula Doran D. | 30. Mtshiza Greenwood M. |
| 5. Dladlama Robert | 31. Ngomana Joel G.M. |
| 6. Dzingwe Harris M. | 32. Njeke Joseph |
| 7. Fikeni Ferrier H.T. | 33. Ntatu Rufus |
| 8. Flatela Gladstone T. | 34. Njongwe Marshall M.V. |
| 9. Gaba Wellington B.S. | 35. Ntloko Stanley S. |
| 10. Jijana Mzimkulu M. | 36. Ntshinga Douglas M. |
| 11. Lungu Maxwell T. | 37. Pepeta Archibald M. |
| 12. Mabija Livingstone O.K. | 38. Poyo Albert Z. |
| 13. Madikiza Gilliard G.K. | 39. Pupuma William |
| 14. Maham E. de Gama | 40. Qambela Hamilton L. |
| 15. Makaula Edgar D. | 41. Qongqo Ezra |
| 16. Manitshana Abner V. | 42. Sanqela Gideon |
| 17. Manona Captain T. | 43. Samka Marques S. |
| 18. Masebeni Humphrey M.S. | 44. Sihawu Thornton |
| 19. Mavuma Humphrey O. | 45. Sincadu Abraham M. |
| 20. Mazwane Bollen B. | 46. Siswana Synod P.S. |
| 21. Mbele Owen K. | 47. Sobuwa Sydney S. |
| 22. Mdlozini Douglas | 48. Vava Witness L. |
| 23. Mbiko Lameck M. | 49. Waqu Pascot M. |
| 24. Mdolo Morgenthal D. | 50. Yako A.C. |
| 25. Mdolo Osman S.A. | 51. Zihlangu Elgie S. |
| 26. Methusi Emmanuel M. | |

The following supernumeraries joined the MCT:

1. Jafta Norris M.*
2. Gwiliza Edmund D.*
3. Mafusini Albert A.
4. Mahlasela F. de Waal*
5. Mayosi Bassie M.
6. Mandela Douglas
7. Mvusi Jotham C.*
8. Ncume Petrus

(* denotes the supernumeraries who were involved in the formation of the MCT and were later appointed to MCT Circuits after its formation.)

The following seventeen ministers decided to leave Transkei and remain with MCSA:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Fadane Amos S. | 10. Mposelwa Allwell G. |
| 2. Hina Timothy T. | 11. Mzi Christopher D. |
| 3. Jojozi Pinkerton K. | 12. Ngcatshe Osborn M. |
| 4. Languza Shaw N. | 13. Qobo Jeffrey |
| 5. Matebesi Samuel M. | 14. Shone Paul C. |
| 6. Matshiki Tom T. | 15. Silwanyana Jeremiah N. |
| 7. Matyolo Gladstone K. | 16. Sincadu Abraham M.* |
| 8. Mbuli Maxwell Z. | 17. Zim Allie |
| 9. Mbabane Thomas B. | |

(*Dimension*, 2 July 1978: 2)

The following supernumeraries did not join the MCT:

1. Fikeni Abednego J.
2. Matebese Shadrack J.
3. Mqomo Stephen O.W.

* Although Abraham M. Sincadu's name appears in the *Dimension* list of 2 July 1978, he never left Transkei. In an interview at Mnceba Mission he stated that he had indicated to the MCO that he would not join the MCT but the pressure from his Circuit (Etyeni) made him change his mind and cast in his lot with the MCT (Sincadu 1992).

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