

The development of the Church of the Nazarene ✓
in South Africa with particular reference
to the Indian community in Natal

by

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To Erlene, my wife and to
my two special daughters
Angelique Erlene and
Kaira Tibbs. Not forgetting
my mother Dhanam Naidoo for her
spiritual guidance.

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Introduction

The writer was a former member of the Church of the Nazarene, in Chatsworth. The Church had made a great impact in his life, leading him to the Christian faith and providing him with a sound theological and spiritual discipline. In responding, he had attempted to document a history of the Church's witness among the Indian community in Natal.

The research seeks to prove that the church of the Nazarene had succeeded in converting a section of the predominant Hindu communities in Natal, because of its strong evangelical witness, which it inherited from the Wesleyan Revival Movement and the Holiness Movement of North America.

The research also seeks to investigate the Church's decline in membership in its latter years of ministry. Hoping that the investigation would facilitate a process of careful enquiry and evaluation of the Church's structure and mission in the Indian community of Kwa Zulu Natal and to provide recommendation for future reflection and debates.

The need for this study

- a) There is no documented history of the Church of the Nazarenes' work among the Indians in Kwa Zulu Natal. Its Information is largely in oral tradition and in fragmented literatures such as: brochures, written

reports and minutes of meetings. There is a need for such information to be carefully researched and properly documented.

- b) It is also important that the Church of the Nazarenes' work among the Indians be remembered for its ministers had made enormous personal sacrifice to propagate the gospel. The Church was also a beacon of hope to the destitute and transformed a section of the youth into successful Christians.
- c) The Nazarene Indian work from the inception has stressed on faith ministry. It would be a worthwhile investigation to evaluate its contemporary response.
- d) The Church of the Nazarene has a worldwide membership of 1.3 million. In South Africa it has a membership of 35 000 of which 3000 are Indians. It is imperative to expose the ethos and doctrines to the wider Christian community and to South Africans who have viewed the Church of the Nazarene with suspicion.
- c) There is also a need to document some detailed information on pioneering ministries, particularly the life of the pioneers in the Indian work.

Methodology of study

Historical research methodologies would be the basis of the study. Gathering of the historical data will be researched and evaluated, and would be fitted together to form a meaningful matrix. The Indian mission will be the core of the investigation. The first six chapters will state the facts of the study, minimising personal interpretation at all cost, to allow for objectivity. The final chapter would be interpretative in character. Interviews and responses from missionaries and ministers who were primarily involved in the Indian work would be used in this study.

Summary

The first chapter traces the history of the revival movement, from the Great Awakening of America to Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century. A relatively detailed study on John Wesley's Revival Movement and the Methodist Church has also been traced. Their model of mission formed the very fabric of the Church of the Nazarenes' missionary ethos. The development of the Church of the Nazarene including its theology and structure has also been discussed. The final section of this chapter would deal with the global expansion of its missionary enterprise.

Chapter two deals with the development of the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa. It traces the ministry of

Schmelzenbach, the first African missionaries, and the establishment of first Nazarene hospital in Swaziland. It also traces the development of the Church of Nazarene in the Transvaal and its merger with the International Holiness Church. Followed by the development of the Church's work among Coloured and European communities in South Africa.

The third chapter traces the origin of Indian Mission in Natal. Father Sabon, a Catholic minister was the first to minister to Indians in Natal. Also mentioned is the first Nazarene convert, Samuel Moonsamy. The Penns and Moonsamy were the first to work among the Indians in Natal. The arrival of the Emslies had revitalized the Indian work in Natal. The chapter also traces the first Coloured and Zulu work in Natal and the financial problems affecting the mission.

Chapter four deals with the development of the Merebank and the Chatsworth Churches. The arrival of Porthen and Subjee developed the work into a major centre for mission work. The minister's financial problems and poor accommodations are also dealt with in this chapter. Also mentioned was the growth of the lay worker and the division of the Chatsworth church. It finally concludes with the retirement of the Emslies and Betty Emslie's assessment of the work in Indian work in Natal.

Chapter five deals with the expansion of the Indian work in the South Coast of Natal. It begins with development of

Austerville church under Roy Govender and the decline of it's work. Also mentioned is Rev Massey's work at Shallcross and Rev Thorpe replaces the Emslies and opens a work in Ispingo. The deaths of Rev Nana Naidoo and John Nulliah are also recorded. A large section deals with the expansion of the work in the rural areas of Port Shepstone and Umkomaas. The chapter concludes with the resignation of six ministers from the Church of the Nazarene.

The sixth chapter deals with the development of the Nazarene work among the Indian community in the North coast of Kwa Zulu Natal and Natal. It begins with the development of the Indian work in Phoenix and the ongoing financial problems faced by ministers. The district leadership assigned two more ministers to open new works in Phoenix, resulting in the development of Sunford and Philadelphia churches. Also mentioned was the amalgamation of the churches in Phoenix and Mount Edgecombe and its failure. This chapter also reflects on spiritual gifts of ministers and the effect it had on new converts. It traces the development of the Newland church and its involvement in "informal settlement ministries". The chapter ends with the development of the work in Richard's Bay, Pietermaritzburg and Ladysmith. The suffering and hardship of ministers and their families are also briefly mentioned.

The concluding chapter deals with the relevance of the Church of the Nazarene as a distinctive holiness church and tries to foster a debate on the need for a separate holiness church.

The second section engages the reader on the practical problems of the doctrine of entire sanctification and the need for a further development of its theology. The third section is an attempt to evaluate and redefine the Church's call to ordained ministry. The fourth section deals with the programme of restructure of the Churches financial institutions. The fifth section of the chapter traces the division of the Indian mission, which resulted in the decline of the work. The sixth section calls the Church to embrace a spirit of openness and tolerance. The final section acknowledges the Church's openness to dialogue with the wider Church and discusses the need for healing and reconciliation within its establishment.

Chapter One

1. The Origin of the church of the Nazarene in North America

1.1 Introduction:

The first section of this chapter details the life of John Wesley and the Revival Movement of the eighteenth century. The Church of the Nazarene believed that John Wesley was its founding theologian. It interprets God and the world through the doctrinal teaching of its founder. Three theological landmarks characterized the Wesleyan's preaching: regeneration by grace through faith, entire sanctification by the workings of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of grace. The Church of the Nazarene adopted these doctrines as its basic belief, and strongly advocated its teachings. On the other hand, the Wesleyan Revival Movement of John Wesley created a laity church with strong emphasis on lay preaching, testimonies, cottage meetings, classes and bands. These expressions formed the very fabric of the Church of the Nazarene's mission model.

The Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the Church of the Nazarene are carefully detailed in this chapter. The Holiness Movement tried to revive the revival of John Wesley, which had waned in the Methodist churches of North America. Out of this expression the Church of the Nazarene was born, as well as other

holiness denominations. Therefore this background study in this chapter is important to the development of the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa and its work among the Indians in Natal, for many of the Indian converts of the Church of the Nazarene in Natal testified their religious experience with much enthusiasm, typifying the Wesleyan and Holiness phases of a great revival.

1.2 The Wesleyan Revival Movement in the Eighteenth Century

1.2.1 The Great Awakening of America (1740-1743)

The Great Awakening of North America propagated individual conversion and personal religion. The proponents of the Great Awakening were the German Pietists, Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.¹ It started in the Dutch Reformed congregations, in New Jersey in 1740. The Dutch Reformed Church was influenced by Puritan theology and they strongly emphasized God's sovereignty. It was Jonathan Edwards who combined the predominant rationalism of John Locke with the personal spiritual experience of the German Pietists. The revival spread to other denominations, largely through the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.² They discouraged emotionalism although they called for visible signs of conversion experience. The Great Awakening was a new

¹ Braaten, C E, 1977. *The Flaming Center*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 112

² Johnston, Arthur, 1978. *The Battle for World Evangelism*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 302-3

beginning for the American people and an end to the Puritan era whose spirituality began to wane.³

The Great Awakening spread to England by the preaching of George Whitefield and the Moravians in 1749. Whitefield joined John and Charles Wesley, whose spiritual revival resulted from contact with Moravian Pietists. Together they extended the revival to Scotland and Wales. John Wesley and his associate of the Oxford Holy Club brought to the revival movement a form of structure and discipline. The revival movement under John Wesley developed into an organized denomination. It was the discipline and the organized method of piety that earned the Oxford Holy Club the name "Methodist". The name Methodist thereafter became associated with the Revival Movement. This will be discussed later in this chapter.⁴

1.2.2 The life of John Wesley

The Church of the Nazarene regards John Wesley as its founding theologian, and it is therefore imperative for this study to explore Wesley's life and theological thinking. John Wesley was born in Epworth, England in 1703. His father was a priest of the Church of England. John Wesley was a brilliant and a compulsive worker. He entered Oxford College after matriculating as a Charterhouse scholar, in June 1720. At

³ Ibid, 302-3

⁴ Johnson, Paul, 1976. *A History of Christianity*. England: Penguin Books, 368-369

Oxford College he obtained his master's degree, and in recognition of his scholarship ability, became a fellow of Lincoln College in 1726. He entered the priesthood on 22 September 1728.⁵ Wesley grew up, under the watchful eyes of his mother Susanna Wesley, a daughter of a prominent priest in London. She was a mother and saint, who presided with equal grace and firmness over the affairs of her large impoverished family.⁶ She was extremely skilful in rearing her children. The Wesley children had an outstanding discipline and a deep respect for religion. Her methodical precision and industrious nurture of her children helped to explain John Wesley quest for Christian perfection.⁷

⁵ Telford, John, 1908. *The Life of John Wesley*. England: Epworth, 33-36.

Wesley's weekly schedule at this time was: Monday and Tuesday-- Greek and Romans classics; Wednesday --logic and ethics (fasting); Thursday --Hebrew and Arabic; Friday --metaphysics and philosophy; Saturday--oratory and poetry, chiefly composing (Turner, George Allen, 1964. *The Vision which Transforms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 199)

⁶ Outler, Albert, 1964. *The Life of John Wesley*. New York: Oxford University Press, 8

Susanna Wesley was capable of defying her husband in ecclesiastical matters, and of debating with her sons on theological question. John Telford described Susanna as " a woman of rare judgment and sterling piety.... Mrs Wesley's prudent counsel was also of conspicuous service at several crisis of the Evangelical Revival". (Telford, 8)

⁷ Telford, 14-15. Refer also Turner, 192. Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection can be traced from his experience and from others. Wesley understood Christian perfection as the renewal to the lost image of God, meaning, "love to God and man". (Wesley, John, 1950. *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 400. Refer also to Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs, 1962. *A Theology of Love; The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 270-271

1.2.3 John Wesley and the Enlightenment

Two major factors contributed to Wesley's sudden shift to personal religion. Firstly, it was the negative influence of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century in England. It emphasized human reason and empirical science as measuring rods for all things. The influences of science disregarded Christianity as an objective reality and worthy of state religion. The church stood helplessly as it watched its traditional doctrine shaken to the core by the rationalist thinkers. They proposed a rationalist deism as an alternative to Christianity, determined by human reason alone, and not divine revelation.⁸ The ministers were blamed for synchronizing Christianity, by yielding to the attractive deism of the Rationalists.⁹ Consequently, the spiritual life of the Church of England degenerated. Preaching was intellectually presented to a confined audience who had the time for leisurely contemplation. The ministers were able thinkers but had little influence on its members. The prevailing mood was moderation on all things. Extreme intellectualism had led to spiritual decay.¹⁰ Rationalism was strengthened by fear of the policy and doctrines of the church. There was no room for spiritual expression of the Christian faith.¹¹

⁸ Welch, C, 1972. *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth-Century*. Vol.1. New Haven: Yale University, 42

⁹ Telford, John, 115-117

¹⁰ Turner, 193, and Telford, 115-117.

The second major factor that influenced John Wesley was the moral decay of England. Mark Paterson in his book, "The Religious Thought in England," characterized England from 1714 to 1744, "As a decay of religion, licentiousness of moral, public corruption and profanity of language. It was an age whose poetry was without romance, and whose public men were without character; an age of light without love, whose very merit were of the earth, earthly".¹² Even though the population in England doubled, there was no attempt from the churches to provide adequate increase of religious instruction. The church had grown corrupt. The clergies had lost their influence. Their preaching according to John Wesley "was to fit men for this world".¹³

1.2.4 John Wesley's Conversion

The negative influence of England's intellectualism and moral decay of England led John Wesley to seek for Christian perfection. He could not find true holiness in England, and sought for it among the Indians in North America. This motivated his missionary venture. His asceticism is evident as he solemnly sets out his motives to preach to the Indians in Georgia. He clearly defined his motives as follows:

My chief motive, to which all the rest are subordinate, is hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by

¹¹ Turner, 192

¹² Eayrs, George, (no date). *John Wesley: "Christian Philosopher and Church Founder"*. London: The Epworth Press. In 1741 Archbishop Secker of Oxford mourned against this unhappy age of irreligion and libertinism. See also Telford, 115.

¹³ Telford, 115

preaching to the heathens. They have no comments to contrive away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it ... By these therefore I hope to learn the purity of the faith, which was delivered to the saints... A right faith will I trust, open the way for a right practice...An Indian hut affords no food for curiosity, no gratification of the desire of new or pretty things.¹⁴

Wesley thought that Georgia would be an ideal place to gain true holiness. While on a ship bound for Savannah, Georgia, John Wesley became greatly impressed with the religious piety of the German passengers. It was among them that he found true holiness. He later confessed in his voyage diary:

"At seven I went to the Germans. I had long before observed the seriousness of their behaviour. Of their humility they had given continual proof.... There was now opportunity of testing, whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge".¹⁵

Upon his return to England, Wesley stressed on "inward holiness". From Peter Bohler and others he learned more about the natures of "saving faith"¹⁶ as defined by Martin Luther. This period of discovery became known as Wesley's intellectual awakening, which led to his spiritual awakening on 24 May 1738. Wesley described his newfound spiritual

¹⁴ Wesley, John, 1931. *The Letters of John Wesley*. Vol 1. Telford, John. (eds). London: The Epworth Press.

¹⁵ Wesley, John. *Journal*. Vol I. Curnock, Nehemiah 1909. (ed). London: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 142. The German passenger sang songs of praise to God against the raging storms, while John Wesley was scared to die. He discovered in them the evidence that perfect love "ease out all fear" and existed in plain people.

¹⁶ "Saving faith" according to John Wesley Christians can be from inward as well as outward sins. Sin does not remain in the recipient neither does it dominate the receptor who accept this grace by faith. See Turner, 207-209

awakening in Nettleton Court, Aldergate Street, after the reading of Luther's "Preface to the Epistle to the Roman." He described the change, which God works in the heart through faith in Christ,

I felt my heart was strangely warm. I felt I did trust in Jesus Christ alone for my salvation; an assurance was given to me that He has taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.¹⁷

This experience changed Wesley's outlook of the Christian life and theology. He stress that salvation was by faith alone. The receptor of this grace cannot earn it. It is by faith and gratitude. In contrast to the predestination of Calvinism, Wesley stressed that all people needed "to be saved, and that all can be saved, and all can know that they are saved." He also taught that God wants man to be perfect and to rid themselves of all sinfulness (Mt. 5:48) and that "all can be saved to the uttermost".¹⁸ The Church of the Nazarene accepted Wesley's doctrinal tenets as its fundamental belief.¹⁹

1.3 The Rise of Methodism

This section deals with the development of the Methodist Church in Britain and North America. The study is important to understand the scenario from which the Church of the Nazarene in North America developed. The Church of the

¹⁷ Outler, 66

¹⁸ New American Standard Bible, Rom 8:16, 2 Tim 1:12

¹⁹ *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 1989. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 24

Nazarene and the Methodist Church of John Wesley shared common experiences in their formative years. Both churches developed out of revival movements and derived their members from other denominations. They strongly advocated religious experience and were persecuted and frustrated. Also the founder of Church of the Nazarene, Rev F Bresee was a retired Methodist minister. He brought to the Church certain disciplines and structures which were common to Methodism.

1.3.1 Methodism in Britain

The disruption of agricultural life and the industrial revolution led to the growth of the Methodist Movement in Britain. It was these two concurrent phenomena, which produced the social conditions that provided Wesley with an army of potential converts. The bright side of the industrial revolution was the rapid expansion of British trade in the first half of the eighteenth century through the opening of the newer market at home and abroad. This laid the foundation for industrial progress and provided the incentive for invention and improvisation. The dark side of agricultural and industrial progress was the disruption of the traditional way of life. The landlords drove the peasants off their land. They then occupied the cities in search of employment. Thousands of dispossessed people huddled in the slums on the outskirts of the English cities. Disease, poverty, fear and

malnutrition were the consequence of the newly formed capital revolution.²⁰

There were scores of industrial villagers in need of a church. J H Plunt said that the Wesleyan Movement met the spiritual need of the villagers, "but salvation of a kind they found.. it was provided by religion, by John Wesley".²¹ Methodism owed its existence to the Oxford Holy Club, which followed the precedent established fifty years ago by religious societies of the Church of England. Dr Anthony Horneck, a Lutheran minister who had settled in England, originally organized the societies for his followers who were seeking to develop a more disciplined spiritual life. The practice of personal piety and the collection and the distribution of money to the poor were common in these societies. Two lay stewards dealt with these responsibilities. This marked the beginning of a strong lay leadership, which developed as the movement spread under the Wesleyan Revival. Josiah Woodward published the standard history of the societies in 1698.²² It was clear from his account that the movement became more strictly regulated as it developed.²³

²⁰ Plunt, J H. *England in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Pelican Books, 82

²¹ Ibid, 89-90

²² Simon, John S, 1921. *John Wesley and Religious Societies*. London: Epworth Press, 9-27

²³ Ibid, 27

Samuel Wesley formed his first religious society at Epworth in 7 February 1701, consisting of eight members. Meetings were held on Saturday evenings to prepare for the Lord's Day. These societies were not intended to form an alternative Church to the Church of England, but originally sought to improve the spiritual condition of its members. They maintained their membership with the Church of England. No doubt, the religious society at Oxford under John Wesley was founded for this purpose.²⁴ Wesley was indebted to these societies for the incipient structure of his organization, for they provided the first Methodist Society with an important nucleus of membership.²⁵

The Revival Movement under John Wesley permeated the religious societies with new life. The need for new societies was quickly created. This resulted in the Revival Movement assuming complete control of the old religious societies.²⁶ John Wesley did not set out to form a new church. He founded religious societies to serve a specialized purpose, which was the preservation and propagation of the Methodist ethos, by spreading the doctrine of scriptural holiness throughout the land. The movement spread to Scotland, Wales, Ireland and North America under the leadership of John Wesley. These societies became the units of the Methodist organization. Wesley divided the societies into classes and bands, in order

²⁴ Allen, W.O and Mc Clure, Edmund, 1989. *Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian knowledge*. London: SPCK, 89

²⁵ Watson, David Lowe, 1987. *The Methodist Class Meeting: It's Origin and Significance*. Nashville: Discipleship Resource, 73

to provide mutual encouragement and support, and to maintain a more vigorous discipline among its members.²⁷ One can reduce the distinct Methodist brand of Christianity to a dedicated, discipline and sustained attempt to take seriously the commands of Christ. Loving God is a personal commitment and piety, loving ones neighbour is expressing this love for God in social concern and action. It is this type of revolutionary material, beginning with the individual soul and leading to social changes through virtuous living and corporate effort, which probably saved Britain from a violent revolution.²⁸

1.3.2 Methodism in North America

The Methodist Movement had been under way in England for twenty-five years before it made its appearance in North America. Robert Strawbridge, an Irish local preacher, settled in Maryland in 1762, while Philip Embury settled in New York in 1760 with a number of Methodist relatives. Both formed Methodist societies. The movement was largely confined to Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, where Anglicanism was strongest²⁹. In 1771 Wesley appointed Francis Asbury and

²⁶ Allen, 127

²⁷ John Wesley thought of himself as an Anglican: "I live and die a member of the Church of England. None who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it". He believed that he had been appointed by God to assume the role of a modern day Paul to proclaim the gospel of salvation. This meant breaking the conventional Anglican parochial system and preaching whenever he could find an audience. Johnson. *History of Christianity*, 336

²⁸ Niebuhr, Richard H, 1959. *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*. North America: New American Library, 59.

²⁹ Ibid, 359

Thomas Rankin to help extend and build the societies. The societies grew rapidly as the revival spread across North America. In 1775, Thomas Rankin was appointed superintendent of the growing work. Rankin organized the first American Methodist Conference in Philadelphia in June 1775. The return of all the English preachers except Asbury to England, soon after, and the beginning of the Revolutionary War gave the opportunity for an able group of national preachers to assume leadership under Asbury's direction. In 1784, the membership grew to 14 988.³⁰

1.3.3 Formation of the Methodist Church and its breakaways

At the time of Wesley's death (1791) the Methodist societies were independent from the Church of England. Though the relationship was not unfriendly, it soon became obvious that a breakaway was inevitable. The main issue was the celebration of the sacraments and ordination of ministers. The Church of England refused to serve the societies and to ordain ministers of the Methodist movement. Firstly, for America and for certain places in Britain. It was not until 1836, that the Methodist Conference decided its preachers should receive regular ordination.³¹ Methodism accordingly identified itself as an established order of society. After

³⁰ Telford, 296-297

³¹ Wesley encouraged his members to support their parish churches. He took care to attend himself, and earnestly exhorted the societies to be regular in their attendance. Telford said 'these Methodists were repelled from the Lord's Table; not seldom they were compelled to receive the sacrament from ministers who either persecuted them or lived utterly unworthy of their profession'. See Telford, 309

its breakaway from the Church of England it underwent the subtle transformation from awakening and enthusing to teaching and ruling and building expensive churches. In 1807, the Methodist Conference voted against camp meeting, putting an end to a model of mission that brought many converts to the movement. This discouraged a section of its followers. The more militant sections broke away. They were formed into two distinctive groups, the Wesleyan Reformers and the Protestant Reformers. In 1857, they joined to form the United Methodist Free Church.³²

1.4 The Holiness Movement of the Ninetieth Century

The revivalists in the Methodist churches were frustrated by its ecclesiastical structure. The Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century placed a renewed emphasis on Christian holiness and called for personal religious experience. It began in the Eastern United States and spread throughout that nation. Timothy Merritt, a Methodist minister was the founding leader of the Holiness Movement. The Holiness Movement spilled outside the bounds of Methodism. Revivalists from Congregational, Presbyterian and Baptist also joined the Movement. Many of the revivalists within the established churches broke away to express their new form of worship. Some of these independent holiness entities yearned for union into a national holiness church. Out of this impulse the Church of the Nazarene was born.

³² Johnson, 368

1.4.1 The Beginning of Holiness Movement in North America

The Great American Civil War brought in its wake a moral and spiritual crisis, similar to the conditions experienced in Wesley's England. An urban and industrial society rapidly replaced the simple agricultural environment. The attractive factories lured thousands of people from the rural area into the cities. Floods of immigrants turned to North America to seek their fortune. In the cities and towns, these newcomers often lived in misery. Timothy Smith stated the conditions of the newcomers as follows, "They endured periodic unemployment and faced multiplied temptation to drunkenness and vice...." Language barriers and religious intolerance added to the bloody strife between wage earners and employers.³³ The Rationalist influence continued to dominate the American way of life. The churches fell under the spell of wealth and power and neglected spiritual matters. The new faith of modernism was dead against social evils, but it rejected the ancient doctrines and old-fashioned revivals. Prominent Methodist ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist and the Free Methodist churches believed that the needs could be met by reviving the doctrinal emphases of John Wesley.³⁴

The Methodist Movement up to 1858 had entrenched its influence in North America. As the years passed, the preaching of the Wesleyan message of scriptural holiness in

³³ Smith, Timothy L, 1962. *Called unto Holiness: The story of the Nazarene: The Formative Years*. Kansas City; Nazarene Publishing House. 13

³⁴ Ibid, 15 and Wellman, 8

Methodist circles began to wane. This resulted in a nationwide holiness revival, which sought to revive the doctrinal emphasis of John Wesley. In the last half of the nineteenth century there was a widespread holiness revival not only in the Methodist church, but also among most Protestant denominations.³⁵ The resurrection of camp meetings and holiness preaching brought many converts to the movement. A great revival swept the nation in 1858. Hundreds of spontaneous prayer meetings were held in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and nearly every city and town in the Northern states. Ministers and lay people of all denominations took part. The same year, five hundred thousand people converted to the Holiness Movement. The deepening of moral conviction strengthened resistance against human slavery, along with a strong crusade against intemperance, Sabbath desecration, and the neglect of the poor. Many Christians were inspired to seek holiness of heart and life.³⁶

1.4.2 The "Second Blessing"

The Methodists had a new sense of earnestness, to restore the Wesleyan experience to its central place in its denomination. Phoebe Palmer, wife of a New York physician, had for twenty years conducted in her home the "Tuesday Meeting for the promotion of Holiness". Hundreds of Methodist preachers,

³⁵ Wellman, W. Donald, 1977. *We'd like you to know about the Church of the Nazarene*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 8

³⁶ Smith, 11-26

including at least three bishops received the "second blessing" under Mrs Palmer's influence. Timothy Merritt, Methodist minister and founding editor of the "Guide to Christian Perfection" was among the leaders of the holiness revival³⁷

The Holiness Movement spilled outside the bounds of Methodism. Charles G. Finney experienced "second blessing" and began to spread his newfound experience to other denominations. Finney and Asa Mahan led the renewed emphasis on holiness in Presbyterian and Congregationalist circles. Baptist evangelist A B Earle was among the leaders of the Holiness Movement within his denomination. Pearsall Smith, a popular Quaker took the revival to Germany. Immense crowds attended Pearsall's services in Berlin, and other cities.³⁸ The American revival inevitably spilled over into England. The writings of Charles Finney, Phoebe Palmer, T C Upham, and William E Boardman had circulated widely in England before the American Civil War. Finney had made memorable visits. The Palmers preached for weeks to packed houses at Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester and Birmingham.³⁹ In July 1873, at the Cambridge University in England the "Oxford Union Meeting for the promotion of Scriptural Holiness" was formed.⁴⁰

³⁷ *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 16

³⁸ Pierson, Arthur T, 1903. *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*. New York: Abingdon, 18-38

³⁹ Warfield, B B, 1931. *Perfectionism*. Vol 2. New York: Oxford University Press, 458-459. In 1881 in Leeds, England prominent Wesleyan ministers profess the experience of Christian perfection. Thirteen thousand people were converted in one service. Refer to Smith, 23

⁴⁰ Smith, 24

1.4.3 The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army was another influential holiness group. William Booth, a former British Methodist preacher led the movement. He withdrew from the Methodist Conference to become an evangelist in 1861. Under his inspiration the Salvation Army wedded Christian holiness to social work. Their ministry in England and North America was mainly among the poor, promoting the gospel of "Soup, Soap and Salvation".⁴¹ Samuel Logan Brengle became the organization's principle leader. His campaigns in the United States and Canada as well as in Scandinavia and Australia inspired thousands of people.⁴² The witness of Christian holiness played a role of varying significance. In the 1880s new holiness churches sprang into existence, including the Church Of God. The Salvation Army also influenced the older religious movements including certain groups of the Mennonites, called Brethren and Friends.⁴³

1.4.4 The "Come Outers"

From 1885 to 1900 the Holiness Movement yearned for a union of its members. This led to the organization of independent churches, despite the frequent pledge of loyalty its leaders made to the Movement. By 1888 the sweep of the Awakening in America produced two distinct holiness groups. The largely

⁴¹ Turner, 313

⁴² Smith, 26

⁴³ *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 17

rural church was more emotionally demonstrative. It emphasized rigid standards of dress and behaviour. In contrast, the urban church was intellectual in nature, and less zealous about outward standards of holiness. Timothy Smith identified four contributing factors that led to independent churches:

1. The persistent opposition of ecclesiastical officials to independent holiness associations and publishing agencies.
2. The recurrent outbursts of fanaticism among persons who were members of the association but not of the churches.
3. The outbreak in the 1890s' of a strenuous attack upon the doctrine of sanctification itself.
4. The increasing activity of urban holiness preachers in city mission and social work.⁴⁴

The Methodist Connexional Bishops of the North and the South tried to prevent a division by keeping their denomination evangelical and united. They had to deal with two extreme groups of members. On one hand, it had wealthy congregations and their cultivated ministers, who rebelled against the traditional class meetings, revival meetings, and the fundamental teachings of its founder. On the other hand, the "second blessing" preachers had been generally critical of the bishops' autocratic authority. From 1895 to 1905 the bishops sponsored successful revival campaigns to prevent its great body of preachers from leaving the Methodist Church. This simply produced another distinct holiness church.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Smith, 27

⁴⁵ Ibid, 53. Mrs Warner, the wife of Revivalist D.S. Warner of the Church of God strongly opposed the formation of new churches. She announced in 1884 that she was "thoroughly convinced that this effort to unite God's people by calling them

In the 1890's a great exodus of independent holiness groups took place. Many left their churches to form new holiness groups. They were independent bands, urban missions, rescue homes, missionaries and evangelistic associations. They were known as the "come outers."⁴⁶ The seed of holiness sectarianism germinated everywhere. New outbursts of fanaticism sickened the average church members, and forced the holiness leaders towards stronger independent organizations.⁴⁷ They destroyed in the process much of the freedom in which they had come into existence. Some of the people involved in these organizations yearned for union into a national holiness church. Out of that impulse the church of the Nazarene was born.⁴⁸

1.5 The development of the Church of the Nazarene

1.5.1 Phineas F Bresee the founder

Phineas F Bresee was the founding father of the church of the Nazarene. He was born in Franklin, Delaware County, Western New York, on 31 December 1838. He was converted in a Methodist "revival meeting" in February 1856. Thereafter he served the church as an exhorter. In 1857 he entered the

out of the churches is not Gods' plan of unity...they are clearly sanctified unless they see as we do". D S Warner's church of God carried the non-sectarian tradition of holiness revival to such extreme that he rejected totally the idea of an organized religion. Smith, 28-29

⁴⁶ Smith, 27 and *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 17

⁴⁷ Smith, 32, 53

⁴⁸ *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 17

Methodist ministry. The Church appointed him as an associate minister to Rev A Barnhart in the Marengo Circuit. In 1858 Bresee returned to his home circuit in the Dutch settlement of Pella and was ordained in 1861. He married Maria Hibbard, daughter of a prominent Methodist family. Due to the rejection of his anti-slavery preaching he requested a transfer from Pella circuit where they found his preaching an offence to their "southern blood". He moved to the Gatesburg Circuit and there he fanned the flames of revival. In the first year of his ministry he received 140 converts into the membership of his church, and bought a comfortable manse for his society.

Bresee was a success at the age of twenty-three. He was an excellent church growth strategist and a disciplinarian. The Iowa Conference recognized him as one of their trusted leaders, actively involved in mission and temperance causes, particularly the use of alcohol and tobacco.⁴⁹ At Red Oak, Iowa, Phineas Bresee built one of the finest church buildings where he held his first "home camp meeting." A revival broke out which lasted all winter. Hundreds of people were converted in those meetings. During those services, Bresee used popular choruses, which the people enjoyed. There he trained his people in personal evangelism. The revival created a new group of evangelical Methodists who had an

⁴⁹ Girvin, E A, 1916. *P F Bresee: A Prince of Israel*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 23-37, 39-40

impact on the community. The editor of the local newspaper alleged that a new breed of Methodist had come into being.⁵⁰ In the winter of 1866 Bresee experienced for the first time the "second blessing," while he was stationed at Chariton. He fell across the altar of his church and prayed for the baptism of the Holy Spirit to meet his need. After his encounter, he testified that he no longer had tendencies of "worldliness, anger and pride". However he was not thoroughly convinced of his sanctification experience. His assurance of the second blessing was the prototype of the prophet Isaiah's vision in 6: 1-10. He described his experience as follows:

I sat alone in the parsonage...As I waited and waited, and continued to pray, I looked up, it seemed to me as if from the azure there came a meteor, an indescribable ball of condensed light, descending rapidly towards me. As I gazed upon it, it was soon within a few score feet, when I seem distinctly to hear a voice saying...
"Swallow it! Swallow it!" And in an instance it fell upon my lips and face...although it fell like fire on my lips, the burning sensation did not leave for several days...there came with it into my heart and being, a transformed condition of life and blessing and unction and glory, which I had never known before. I felt my need was supplied...I had never gotten over it, and there came...into my ministry a new element of spiritual life and power.⁵¹

After this experience Bresee became a strong proponent of the "second blessing." By the close of his pastorate in Los Angeles, his congregation numbered 650 members, four times more than any other society in the Conference.⁵² He made holiness of heart the supreme issue of his preaching. He regretted not receiving the "second blessing" early in his

⁵⁰ Ibid, 45-70

⁵¹ Smith, 97

ministry. He declared, " If I had known more when I came to this coast, and had experienced and sensed, I would have swept the whole of Methodism into holiness".⁵³

1.5.2 The Resistance to Holiness

The increasing activity of the independent holiness group throughout the state greatly annoyed Methodist officials who disagreed with the biblical exposition of the revivalists. Rev John H Vincent, who replaced Bishop Mallalieu, was a determined enemy of the Holiness Movement. He became the first major opponent of Bresee's revival. Bishop Vincent closed down the revival that Bresee started in his district. He removed Bresee from his office as a presiding elder, and appointed him to the Simpson Society, where the opposition to holiness was at its strongest.⁵⁴ His ministry at Simpson Society was almost impossible. The society was in serious debt. The membership had decreased steadily. Few accepted the gospel of the "second blessing". Bresee disliked his ministry at Simpson Society and requested a transfer. Subsequently he was appointed to a small congregation in Los Angeles. In Los Angeles, Bresee also joined a group of holiness advocates at Peniel Hall Mission. Though his demotion was apparent to all, Bresee remained faithful to the Methodist Church, and was a key leader of both the evangelistic and educational works. He was president of the

⁵² Ibid, 99-100

⁵³ Garvin, 81-85

⁵⁴ Smith, 103

Conference board of trustees and the board of church extension and chairperson of the board of education. His involvement in Peniel Hall Mission and his continuous advocacy of the "second blessing" caused his relationship with the Methodist authorities to deteriorate.⁵⁵ This motivated him to apply for an early retirement from the Methodist ministry. At Peniel Hall the Church of the Nazarene had its beginnings.

1.5.3 The Formation of the Church of the Nazarene

In December 1894, Bresee had published the "Declaration of Principles" for the Peniel Mission in Los Angeles. The declaration called for an organization of workers that would permit persons who were not members of any church to make the Mission their Christian home. He urged that the Mission should be "unsectarian" in nature. One year later the Church of Nazarene was formed with eighty-two members. Within a short time it grew to one hundred and thirty-five. Most of the members were made of recent converts from poorer sections of Los Angeles. Joseph Widney, one of the co-founders attempted to explain why a new denomination was required. He said that the traditional churches had proved a hindrance to the work of evangelising the poor.⁵⁶ The first piece of Nazarene literature ever printed was a letter published in the Church of the Nazarene Manual in 1898. Its mission statement is quoted as follows:

⁵⁵ Ibid, 104

⁵⁶ Smith, 108-111

The Church of the Nazarene is a simple, primitive church, a church of the people and for the people. It has no new doctrines, only the old, old bible truths. It seeks to discard all superfluous forms and ecclesiasticism and go back to the plain simple words of Christ. It is not a mission, but a church with a mission ... Its mission is to everyone upon whom the battle of life has been sore, and to every heart that hungers for cleansing from sin come.⁵⁷

The congregation at Los Angeles became the nucleus of a spreading movement destined to give spiritual shelter to holiness people and persisted to become a national church in North America. The union of the holiness Movement began in 1906 under the inspiration of C W Ruth. Three former Methodist preachers, J W Short, H N Brown and A B Riggs were appointed to merge the various Wesleyan holiness groups, on the grounds that such a union would materially help the missionary work. After considerable discussion on governing matters, Dr Bresee's First Church of the Nazarene and the Associations of Pentecostal Church of America formed an official union, under the name Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. They invited all holiness bodies interested to join the union. They also resolved that the First Church of the Nazarene constitution was the "working basis" of the merger.⁵⁸

On 14 October 1908 the holiness Church of Christ united with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. The motion to unite was adopted by a unanimous rising vote of the General

⁵⁷ One copy of the printed letter may be found inserted in the copy of the church of the Nazarene, *Manual 1898*, in the rare book collection of Pasadena College Library. (Smith, 111)

⁵⁸ *Manual*, 17-21, Wellman, 8-10 and Smith, 206-211

Assembly. In 1914, after the death of its leader, J O McClurkan the Pentecostal Mission united with the Pentecostal Church of Nazarene. It brought into the denomination new mission churches in Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico and India.⁵⁹ In November 1915 the Pentecostal Church of Scotland under the leadership of George Sharpe, a former Congregational minister united with the Pentecostal Church of Nazarene.⁶⁰ It was from this group Dr and Mrs. David Hynd were sent as medical missionaries to South Africa in 1925. The Church's General Assembly of 1919 changed the name of its denomination to the Church of the Nazarene because of the new meaning that had become associated with the term "Pentecostal". The church chose to emphasize purity of heart than rather spiritual gifts that was common among the Pentecostal movements of its time.⁶¹

On 29 October 1952, the International Holiness Mission, a London based organization united with the Church of the Nazarene with twenty-eight churches, more than one thousand members in England and thirty-six missionaries in Africa.⁶² It was this group of missionaries that pioneered the Indian Mission in Natal.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Manual*, 17-21

⁶⁰ Whitelaw, Peter David. *A History of the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa*. Transvaal: African Publication House, 16

⁶¹ *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 22

⁶² Whitelaw, 16 and *Manual*, 22

⁶³ Emslie, Betty L, 1966. *Continent in a Hurry: A study of Nazarene Mission in Southern Africa*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 112-113

1.5.4 Nazarene mission and theology

A discussion on the Church's mission and theology is fundamental in the attempt to understand the development of its mission among the Indian descent of Natal. The Church of the Nazarene's from its formative years emphasised on global ministry. Its ministry has centred on evangelism, compassionate ministries and education. The evangelistic impulse was exemplified in the lives of H F Schmelzenbach, L S Tracy, Ester Winens, Samuel Krikerian and others. Around the world, Nazarene churches and districts continue to reflect a revivalist and evangelical character.⁶⁴ Its missionary motto is to "Christianise the Christians" and to reach the "unchurched" of the world. Nazarene believed that God "raised them up" to spread scriptural holiness through the world, which was the emphasis of the Wesleyan Revival Movement. The church since September 1999 had an international membership of 1.3 million, distributed in over 8900 congregations and it remains missionary in character.⁶⁵

The Church of the Nazarene lays claim to having roots that go deep into the historical consciousness of the early church. While adhering to the call of the doctrine common to Protestantism, the distinguishing feature of the church is

⁶⁴ *Church of the Nazarene Joins the World Methodist Council.*
Internet site <http://www.nazarene.org/methodistcouncil1.html>

⁶⁵ The church of the Nazarene currently has fourteen regions throughout the world. These are: the Africa Region, the Asia-Pacific Region, the Canada Region, the Caribbean Region, the Eurasia Region, the Mexico-central America Region, the South American Region, and eight regions in the United States. *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 23-24

its emphasis on the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification or "second blessing." The relevant doctrinal statement quoted in full from the church constitution is as follows:

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.

Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection", "perfect love", "heart purity", "the baptism with the Holy Spirit", "the fullness of the blessing" and "Christian holiness".

We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace.

We believe that the grace of entire sanctification includes the impulse to grow in grace. However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christ likeness of character and personality. Without such purposeful endeavour one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.⁶⁶

According to Nazarene theology entire sanctification is a second crisis experience in the life of Christians. It's a gift of God grace given to the Christian who desires it most. Initial sanctification is a first crisis experience. It begins with the experience of the new birth. This is where

⁶⁶ *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 34

holiness has its beginning in the life of a person. Initial sanctification is also referred to as "initial salvation", "rebirth" and "justification".⁶⁷ The process leading to the entire sanctification is expressed in the words of John Wesley. He writes, "By justification we are saved from guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God".⁶⁸ This experience perfects the believer in love against sin. The power to sin is removed by the working of the Holy Spirit. After this the Christian is required to grow to the status of Christ. Nazarenes hold the view that entire sanctification does not free the receptor from error, weakness and infirmities. The receptors of this grace can lose their salvation, if they so desire. Wesley taught that those who are sanctified may "fall and perish".⁶⁹ Therefore it is imperative for Christians to continue to grow and to mature in holiness after the experience of entire sanctification. The crisis experience of sanctification is more a beginning of a journey than an end. An assessment of the Nazarene theology will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this study.

⁶⁷ Metz, Donald, 1971. *Studies in Biblical Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 112

⁶⁸ Wesley, John 1877. *Works of John Wesley*. England: Wesleyan Conference Office, Vol. 6, 509

⁶⁹ Wesley, John. *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 45

1.5.5 Nazarene structure

There are three levels on which the church of the Nazarene operates its ministries; the local level, district level and the general level. Each level of government is representative in nature. This form of government reflects the various backgrounds of church policy present in the formative stages of development. Majority of its early memberships were former Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. They managed to constitute a compromised governmental structure. It was a system developed by finely balancing the extremes of Episcopal authority with congregational independence. Norman Whitelaw said that the governmental system developed in the church was a pragmatic attempt to synthesize the better of the two extreme forms of government. The strong point of the episcopacy is its efficiency of operation. The dominant form of congregationalism fosters initiative and growth at the grassroots level.⁷⁰ The article of organization and Government clearly identifies the three levels of government:

Article I, Form of Government

The Church of the Nazarene has a representative form of government. We are agreed on the necessity of a superintendency, which shall complement and assist the local church in the fulfilling of its mission and objectives. The superintendency shall build morale, provide motivation, supply management and method assistance, and organize and encourage organization of new churches and missions everywhere.

⁷⁰ Whitelaw, 71-72, Wellmen, 14-15

We are agreed that authority given to superintendents shall not interfere with the independent action of a fully organized church. Each church shall enjoy the right to select its own pastors subject to such approval as the General Assembly shall find wise to institute. Each church shall also elect delegates to the various assemblies, manage its own finances, and having charge of all other matters pertaining to its local life and work.

Article II, Local Churches

The membership of a local church shall consist of all who have been organized as a church by those authorized so to do and who have been publicly received by those having proper authority, after having declared their experience of salvation, their belief in our doctrines, and their willingness to submit to our government.

Article III, District Assemblies

The General Assembly shall organize the membership of the church into district assemblies, giving such lay and ministerial representation therein as the General Assembly may deem fair and just, and shall determine qualifications of such representatives, provided, however, that all (elders in good standing) assigned ordained ministers shall be members thereof. The general Assembly shall also fix the boundaries of assembly districts, and define the powers and duties of district assemblies.

Article IV, The General Assembly

How Composed. The General Assembly shall be composed of ministerial and lay delegates in equal numbers, elected thereto by district assemblies of the Church of the Nazarene; such ex officio members as the General Assembly shall from time to time direct; and such delegates of districts under the administration of the World Mission and Church Growth departments of the Church of the Nazarene as may be provided for by the General Assembly.⁷¹

The constitution requires that each local congregation is responsible to elect its pastor, church board, and departmental leaders; to set its local budgets, raise its

⁷¹ *Manual*, 41-42

finances and buy property and build buildings. Each congregation, at the same time is under the administration of a district superintendent and the District Assembly who is in turn accountable to the Board of General Superintendents and the General Assembly.⁷²

1.6 The global expansion of the Church of Nazarene

The years between 1908 and 1933 witnessed the global expansion of the Church of the Nazarene. The holiness revival within the church produced faithful missionaries who were willing to spread its holiness message and plant churches around the world, at much personal sacrifice. These missionaries began careers as "faith" missionaries without income. It was Hermon Schmelzenbach and his team of missionaries that pioneered Nazarene work in Swaziland in 1908, and laid the foundation for the Church of the Nazarene mission in South Africa.⁷³ Their progress will be discussed in the following chapters.

In Guatemala, Central America, a determined group of missionaries started a work there. First in the field was Richard Anderson, a representative of McClucan's Pentecostal Mission, which later joined the Church of the Nazarene. Anderson spent the year 1907 in the district of Verapez. He began to study the art of printing and published that year

⁷² Wellman, 15

⁷³ Esselstyn, William C, 1952. *Nazarene Mission in South Africa*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 36-37. See also Smith, 342 -343.

the first issue of "EL Cristiano", a periodical, which was for nearly forty years the organ of Nazarene evangelism in Spanish speaking countries. He struggled almost until 1915 to develop the mission work, but was hampered by uncertainty about the future of Pentecostal Missions.⁷⁴ In 1921, Miss Eugenia Philip established the first Nazarene Bible Training School to educate the pastors of Guatemala.⁷⁵

In Mexico, after the revolution of 1912, the Nazarene missionaries who started the work were compelled to leave the mission. Mr V G Santin, a medical doctor and a citizen of Mexico continued the work. He built the first Nazarene Church in Mexico City. In 1919, General Superintendent J W Goodwin appointed Santin the first national superintendent of a Nazarene Mission field. He re-opened the mission in the Chiapas Province, which was closed by the revolution of 1912.⁷⁶ The Nazarene work continued to spread to Peru and then to Asuarures tribe of the Amazon under the guidance of "faith" missionaries Roger and Esther Winens. Esther was the first Christian missionary to publish Bible stories of St. Luke in the Aguarures language.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Smith, 343

⁷⁵ Birchard, Russell and et al, (no date). *Richard Simpson Anderson: Pioneer Missionary to Central America*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 10-19, 43-60.

⁷⁶ The term *national* is referred to natives of the mission countries. Sanner, A.E. and John W. Goodwin, 1945. *A Biography*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 140

⁷⁷ Smith, 344-345

The Nazarene mission on the Asian continent was established by three missionaries, W A Eckel in Japan, C J Kinne in China and L S Tracy in India. Eckel developed the Japanese mission on the strength of three Japanese local preachers who had been converted in North America and educated at a Nazarene Bible College in Pasadena. Mr J I Nagamatism and his spouse arrived in Fukuchiyana in 1913 and ministered to hundreds of Japanese children. By 1914, he started ten Sunday Schools and held a weekday pre school. Hiroshini Kitagawa went to Japan in 1914 with two missionaries. Under his guidance a bible school was built at Kamamoto from which several national pastors graduated. Kitagawa became the first national superintendent of the Japanese Church of the Nazarene. The third of the trio served as an interpreter for Eckel in 1915 and pioneered many mission stations in Kure, Kyoto and elsewhere. The mission grew under the guidance of the nationals. By 1932 General Superintendents William and Goodwin reported that twenty-five organized churches were growing under national leadership.⁷⁸

In China a large missionary team was sent to establish mission stations in Western Shantung to Vopei Province. The first Nazarene Hospital was completed in 1932 under the direction of C J Kinne, son-in-law of the church founder Phineas Bresee. The Japanese invasion in China frustrated the mission work, and the stability of the mission was in serious doubt.⁷⁹ Mission work in India began in 1904, in

⁷⁸ Smith, 345

⁷⁹ Smith, 346

Igatpuri by L S Tracy and four other missionaries. Igatpuri later became headquarters for Nazarene mission in the Asian subcontinent.⁸⁰

On most of the mission fields the Nazarenes, as the Methodist revivalists did, used "camp meetings" as a form of evangelism in agrarian societies, whether primitive or modernized. In Swaziland, Guatemala, China, Japan and in India the camp meeting in an open grove attracted large crowds of new Christians. Undoubtedly the informality of the atmosphere brought to the church many converts. Medical mission, by contrast, was a venture, prompted by the needs, which missionaries faced on the mission fields. In 1932 the church declared itself firmly in favour of medical missions, but at the same time looked for safeguards against displacing the gospel of salvation.⁸¹ To this day the Church of the Nazarene strongly advocates its local churches to raise funds for global mission work. It entrenched into its local churches a committee called the Nazarene World Mission Society (MWMS) to meet this need.

1.7 Conclusion

The beginnings of the Methodist movement in the eighteenth century has been outlined in some detail to provide an overview of evangelical spirituality and its impact in the

⁸⁰ Reford, Maury E, 1936. *History of the Church of the Nazarene in the South Africa*. M.A. Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 46-47

⁸¹ Smith, 347

Western World. Undoubtedly, the spirituality of John Wesley had influenced the Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century and the formation of the Church of the Nazarene. His doctrine of "Perfect Love" has been the distinctive feature of the Church's mission statement. Today the Church of the Nazarene is the largest holiness denomination in the World. The foundation of the Church of the Nazarene has also been briefly traced. Rev Bresee was instrumental in uniting independent holiness churches of North America into a common denomination.

The expansion of the Church of the Nazarene's mission work from 1900 to 1932 has been traced. Similar to the New Testament apostles, missionaries such as Hermon Schmelzenbach and others bravely embarked on a faith journey, living on a bare minimum to take the gospel to the continents of Africa, Asia and Central America. These missionaries laid the foundation for the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa.

Since the Church of the Nazarene does not feature as one of the more popular churches in South Africa, a brief summary of the church's policy and structure has been presented. This aspect of the study has a distinct bearing on the formation of Nazarene Indian Mission in Natal, which will be discussed in the following chapters. Many of the Indian members of the Church of the Nazarene in Natal shared a similar religious experience expressed by the Wesleyan and Holiness Movement.

Chapter Two

2. The Church of the Nazarene in South Africa 1907-1980

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to research the historical development of the Church of the Nazarene's mission in South Africa, from which the Indian Mission in Natal was launched. It had proven hard to separate Nazarene mission in South Africa from the rest of Africa. The Nazarene Missionary Society in North America did not isolate countries as missionary targets, but had seen Africa as a continent for mission. Missionaries would cross the countries of Africa, showing no preferences for a particular group of people. Countries neighbouring on South Africa will be mentioned as part of the missionary outreach, such as Mozambique and Swaziland. This chapter mainly describes the work of the early pioneers and their background, the erection of hospitals and educational institutions. Many of the early missionaries were members of the holiness movements of the nineteenth century who joined the Church of the Nazarene while working in South Africa. A large section of this chapter deals with the Church of the Nazarene's mission among the white and coloured descents of South Africa. It also shows how the problem of racism affected the Church's mission strategies among the various ethnic groups in South Africa.

2.2 Pioneering Days

2.2.1 Schmelzenbach Arrival

The first three missionaries from New York arrived in Algoa Bay, Port Elizabeth on 18 June 1907. These "faith missionaries" were Harmon Schmelzenbach, Lula Glatzel and Marietta Innis.¹ They were not affiliated to a church denomination and had no credentials to their names, but were led by an irresistible call to "save Africa". Schmelzenbach, who led the mission, felt called after reading the life of the African missionary, David Livingstone. Schmelzenbach responded "Lord here am I. Send me to tell them.... God almost killed me with the burden for dark Africa".² Schmelzenbach and Glatzel studied the Xhosa language and they accepted an invitation to assist the White Holiness Mission in Port Elizabeth. Innis spent her early months ministering to the white people, bravely preaching on street corners of Port Elizabeth.³

In 1908, Harmon Schmelzenbach married his companion Lula Glatzel, and they were assigned to work in Natal as representatives of the White Holiness Mission among the Zulu people. They were responsible for two mission stations, Bethany Compounds and Inland Mission near Escourt. There they learned to master the Zulu language. They faced their first obstacle

¹ Hynd, David, 1959. *Africa Emerging*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 115

² Whitelaw, 27-28

³ Esselstyn, William, 36, Whitelaw, 28

when the British authorities refused to give them working permits, as they were not registered with recognized churches.⁴

The Schmelzenbachs had very little success both in Port Elizabeth and Natal, due to the already established mission churches. In 1908 while in Escourt, he received news that his Peniel Church in North America joined the Church of the Nazarene. The Church of the Nazarene invited Schmelzenbach to be their missionary with no financial support. In 1910, he resigned from White Holiness Mission to join the Church of the Nazarene. He decided to start a Nazarene work in Swaziland.⁵

The Schmelzenbachs travelled for more than two months with their infant son, David and a Zulu servant Billy Phato. Phato helped them with their wagon drawn by donkeys. On 15 December 1910 they reached Edingeni in Swaziland, what was to become the first Nazarene station in Africa. He called it Peniel, named in honour of the Peniel Church in North America who initially supported his mission to South Africa. In June 1911 the queen of Swaziland awarded the Schmelzenbachs three acres of land, which belonged to a certain McCorkindale who was forced to vacate the land. In 1910 Miss Marietta Innis became a member of the Church of the Nazarene for the Holiness Christian Church in America, of which she was a member, had affiliated with the Church of the Nazarene. She joined the Schmelzenbachs on

⁴ Esselstyn, William, 34

⁵ Schmelzenbach, Lula, 1947. *The Missionary Prospector*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 24

1 January 1911, and for seven months the three of them lived in a wagon.⁶

2.2.2 The first Nazarene convert

In spite of Schmelzenbachs' tireless efforts to evangelise the Swazi people, the first two years came and went without a single convert to the Christian faith. They found the Swazi fearful and very antagonistic against white missionaries.⁷ The first convert was Mangwane Gama, the tenth wife of an old man. She was renamed Ruth after her conversion. Schmelzenbach used to visit her home regularly, but she was afraid of responding to the gospel because of resistance from her husband. One Sunday afternoon she boldly told the missionary in the presence of her husband that she wanted to become a Christian. Her husband refuted her behaviour and prevented her from praying in their home for he feared the backlash of Swazi custom.⁸

Ruth Gama explained her religious experience as follows: "My heart tells me Jesus has come in. I feel so light." After her conversion she broke away from some of her customs, which she had adhered to for many years. She bravely requested for soap to wash her hair that had not been washed since her marriage, fifteen years before. According to Swazi custom, for a married woman to wash her hair means to bring a curse of death upon

⁶ Esselstyn, William, 37

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Dayhoff, Paul S, 1995. *Living Stones in Africa: Pioneers of the Church of the Nazarene*. Iowa, USA: Dayhoff, 8

her. In her hostile environment she continued to learn and read, and remained a devoted Christian all her life. At her deathbed, her parting words were, "I must go home; my Father is calling me." She died at the age of seventy-five in 1960.⁹

2.2.3 The first African minister

Solomon Malangabi Ndzimande was born in Pigg's Peak, Swaziland in 1877. At the time of his birth his family home was burned and his parents called him Malangabi, which mean "flames". As a boy, he ran away from home and had no formal education. As a young adult he worked in the Mpumalanga region in South Africa. A friend invited him to a revival service and his experience there, never left him. He could not sleep that night as he was deeply convicted of his sinful ways. He attended the revival meeting the next night, and was converted. He testified at the service "from this day forward I choose the Lord". Thereafter he served as an interpreter for a Presbyterian minister for nine years.¹⁰

In April 1911 Ndzimande travelled from Pretoria to join the Nazarene Mission in Swaziland. He wanted to do mission work among his people. The Schmelzenbachs saw in him a tremendous zeal for the work of God and his willingness to receive the second blessing. They recommended that he prepare for the ordained ministry. He served as a probationer minister for a number of years, under the supervision of Schmelzenbach and

⁹ Ibid, 8

¹⁰ Ibid, 7

then became the first evangelist in Swaziland. The church which he established at Helehele outgrew its building at least three times, becoming the largest outstation of the Mission in the country.¹¹ This was the first significant growth the missionaries experienced in Swaziland. In 1939 after twenty-eight years as a field worker, Dr Morrison ordained Solomon at the first ordination of African elders. In 1942 he was appointed Superintendent of the Swaziland Mission.¹²

Ndzimande became blind in 1945 from diabetes. He never allowed it to hinder his work. As long as he could, he continued to visit his societies and preaching stations, having a boy to lead him through the mountain trails. In 1945 he retired, forced by ill health. William Esselstyn recorded, "I saw him a few months ago, as a frail old man of perhaps eighty, but still with a confident testimony for God upon his lips." He died on 18 May 1951 and was buried in Pigg's Peak, Swaziland.¹³

2.3 The expansion of the Mission

2.3.1 Growth of work

In 1915 the Nazarene Missionary Society in Kansas City appointed Rev and Mrs Shirley to assist the Schmelzenbachs. Mrs Shirley was seriously ill and hospitalised in Johannesburg where she died. She was the first Nazarene missionary to be

¹¹ Esselstyn, William, 39-41

¹² Dayhoff, 7

¹³ Dayhoff, 7, Esselstyn, William, 39-41

buried in African soil. Three years later in 1918, Marietta Innis and Rev Shirley married. They pioneered the work of publishing and printing in Southern Africa. After the First World War, more missionaries from North America were appointed to develop the work in Swaziland. In 1919 the following missionaries arrived: Rev and Mrs J F Penn, Miss Ora Lovelace, Miss Eva Rixse, Miss Minnie Martin, Rev and Mrs C S Jenkins, Miss Louise Robinson and Mrs Minerva B Marshall. Mrs Marshall came as a tutor for the children of the missionary schools and published the first Nazarene songbook in Zulu, "Izihlabelelo Ezokudumisa".¹⁴ The Nazarene missionary team in Swaziland began to spread its work across the Swazi border into South Africa and across Mozambique.¹⁵

William Esselstyn highlighted three major factors, which influenced the founding of the Nazarene Mission in Swaziland. They were hostility, poor living conditions and inadequate financial provision. He pictured the situation as follows:

The problems, which the missionaries faced, were those of a hostile heathen people. Hostile because their traditional customs of forced marriage, witchcraft, and worship of ancestral spirits were being interfered with. Normally the Swazi has a good and kindly disposition. Then there were the primitive living conditions of the frontier, isolation from friends and medical help, poor and dangerous roads, and lack of finance to supply many times even the bare necessities of life.¹⁶

In 1919 the first report of the quarterly meeting at Peniel recorded eighteen church members, thirty-one probationers,

¹⁴ Whitelaw, 31

¹⁵ Esselstyn, William, 44

three preachers stationed who held weekly services and daily prayer meetings. Regarding the social and educational aspects of the mission, it was reported that 1 565 patients had been treated; twenty-five people had enrolled in the elementary school with four mission workers enrolled for Bible training. The Mission also owed three acres of property valued R7 720,00, as well as one chapel and two parsonages.¹⁷

2.3.2 Raleigh Memorial Hospital

Harmon Schmelzenbach tried his best to develop a single medical treatment for most cases. He used to carry a small medical bag with simple remedies and a pair of tooth forceps. He administered medical treatment with the little knowledge he had. In 1917 Lillian Cole, a trained nurse joined him to assist in the medical work. Dr C E West arrived in 1922 to open a small hospital at Pigg's Peak.¹⁸ The British colonial government of Swaziland refused to acknowledge his medical degree, and he was finally transferred to China. A new property was acquired for another hospital, Dr David Hynd, a British citizen, was appointed by the Church to oversee the project. The hospital was named the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital. Dr Hynd was the sole architect and builder of the hospital. Under his leadership the hospital became one of the leading medical establishments in Swaziland.¹⁹

¹⁶ Hynd, David, 117

¹⁷ Jenkins, C S. *Personal files 1907-1919*, Manzini, Swaziland: Grante's Office, Nazarene Mission, (a publication).

¹⁸ Whitelaw, 34-35

¹⁹ Esselstyn, William, 82

In 1926 the annual report showed that a total of 1 500 outpatients were treated and that 184 were hospitalised.²⁰ By 1930 the hospital outgrew the capacity of one doctor and the Church appointed more doctors and nurses to meet the demand. In 1973 the hospital housed 322 beds, with five medical doctors. It had a nursing school with seventy-five African trainees and sixteen clinics. Some of these clinics treated as many as 22 000 patients annually. 176 988 patients were treated in 1972, which equals one third of the inhabitants of Swaziland.²¹ To date, the Church of the Nazarene continues to fund and support the medical work in the Swaziland district.

2.3.3 Schmelzenbach's vision and dedication

Schmelzenbach was greatly burdened for the Swazi people. He firmly believed that the "unsaved" would face eternal damnation and sought vigorously to lead many of them to Christ. His evangelical zeal was motivated by his visionary encounter with God. While in a vision he was sitting near the great white judgment throne of God, he saw many Swazi chiefs and their subjects going to the judgment without Christ. In his vision one Swazi chief called him by his native name, "Sibaha, I and my people are lost and going to the judgment without Christ, and you are to blame." After that encounter, Schmelzenbach fell on his knees and promised the Lord that he would carry the gospel to the bushveld of Swaziland. He was determined to

²⁰ Ibid, 82

²¹ Esselstyn, Theodore P, 1975. *Cut from the African Rock*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 115-116

expand the work into the remote parts of Swaziland, particularly the Swazi bushveld, which had an incidence of malarial fever. He knew that his life was at risk, but challenged by his call and his vision, he pursued his mission.²²

Schmelzenbach worked diligently to produce a strong indigenous church in Swaziland. He laid the groundwork by placing responsible indigenous pastors like Solomon Ndzimande, in charge. He set a precedent for missionaries by being guided and advised by the local people. Dr Reynolds, General Superintendent of the Africa region of the work praised Schmelzenbach for his dedication. He gave this testimony: "No missionary ever worked harder, prayed more fervently, nor had greater faith and vision than did Harmon Schmelzenbach."²³

2.3.4 Death of Harmon Schmelzenbach and growth of the work

In 1928, after twenty-one years of labour, the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene requested that the Schmelzenbachs retire to the United States. Afterwards, he was diagnosed with malaria and was nearing his death. Although weakened by the decease, he pleaded with the Church authorities in Kansas City to send him back to Swaziland. There he spent his last days visiting his outstations and preaching to his people to the end

²² Esselstyn, William, 46

²³ Jenkins

of his life. Upon his deathbed he secured the appointment of C Jenkins to care for the Swaziland mission.²⁴

Schmelzenbach died on the 22 May 1929. At the grave many of his converts sang his favourite hymns, "Wonderful Story of Love," and "The Eastern Gate". William Esselstyn describes his experience of Schmelzenbach funeral at the grave side: "We laid him to rest close to the graves of his children, under the tall eucalyptus trees at the side of the old mission house, and there I knelt down with the other missionaries and native workers and we rededicated our lives to the task of bringing the full salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the people for whom he laid down his life."²⁵ Schmelzenbach's grave at Endingini remains a monument remembering the first Nazarene missionary to Africa.

The Church of the Nazarene Mission proved to be a major success in Swaziland. In 1973 a report to the District Assembly indicated that there were 3 738 members and sixty-three churches with sixty-nine missionaries.²⁶ The work continues to grow today with a strong and capable administration consisting of Swazi people.

²⁴ Williamson, G B, 1962. *Missionary Safari*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 20-21

²⁵ Esselstyn, William, 50-51

²⁶ Esselstyn, Theodore, 39-40

2.4 Beginning of the Church of the Nazarene in Transvaal

It was in Transvaal that the Church of the Nazarene experienced a spirit of optimism for mission after it merged with the International Holiness Mission. Resulting in the expansion of mission work throughout the country, particularly among the white, Coloured and Indian descents of South Africa. Therefore the Church's development in the Transvaal is important to this study.

2.4.1 David Jones of the Independent Holiness Mission

David Jones was born in London in 1885. He experienced the saving grace of Jesus in a nearby Mission Hall in Clapham Junction. He also experienced the "infilling" of the Holy Spirit" in the Wesleyan style. Thereafter he received a call to be a full-time missionary. Turning down an offer to serve under the Oriental Missionary Society in China, he opted to go to Africa at the age of twenty-three.²⁷ He and W Clement, another missionary, left for South Africa. They arrived in Port Elizabeth in 1908, and used this place as a springboard into the inland of South Africa.²⁸

David Jones was gripped by a call to the inland mission, particularly to the Witwatersrand gold mines in the Transvaal. He was attracted by the news that thousands of Africans from

²⁷ Jones, Mrs D B, et al, 1955. *David Jones: Ambassadors to Africa*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 15-24

²⁸ Whitelaw, David, 32-33

the sub-continent were working in the gold fields of Johannesburg. Together with his friend Clement and Emily Maud, his newly wedded wife, they took a train to Johannesburg in 1911. Immediately he obtained a small home and a mission hall and funded this project out of his salary. They joined the White Holiness Mission. Clement worked in the print shop of the Holiness Mission in Johannesburg. Jones continued to serve under the Holiness Mission, with very little financial support. In 1914, the Battersea Church in London of which Jones was a member gave him some financial support. This enabled Jones to engage in full-time missionary work in the gold mine compounds of Johannesburg.²⁹ In 1952 the Holiness Mission of which Jones belonged merged with the Church of the Nazarene, which would be discussed later in this chapter.

2.4.2 The Mission at Sabie

Meanwhile the Nazarene missionaries in Swaziland heard about the opportunity for mission among the Africans in the gold mining town of Sabie, Eastern Transvaal, about one hundred kilometres from the Peniel Station. While Schmelzenbach's mission had always been restricted to villages and rural settings, the church was now faced with the challenge to present the gospel to the cities with a high concentration of people. In 1920 Rev and Mrs Shirley moved from Swaziland to establish a mission station in Sabie. Within a year Rev J F Penn and Miss Louise Robinson joined them. Nurse Lillian Cole

²⁹ Hynd, 116, and Whitelaw, 33

and Miss Maude Greators moved from Swaziland to assist the Shirleys in establishing a clinic in the gold mining town of Sabie.³⁰ The Eastern Transvaal attracted a mixture of tribes: Swazi, Hlangana, Shangaan, Mambayr, Bapedi and others. The missionaries had to study and master a variety of languages in order to propagate the gospel effectively. The Shirleys started a day and a night school at the mission and in the compounds. The fact that many of the African miners were able to read, motivated Rev Shirley to develop literature for them. The first Nazarene printing press was established, printing Zulu gospel tracts and preacher's magazines.³¹

The mission at Sabie was profoundly affected by circumstances beyond the control of the missionaries. Two factors forced the mine to close. One was that the gold deposits at Sabie were nearing exhaustion. The second factor was that an extensive demand arose for timbers for the expansion of deep mines along the Reef. Since there were no indigenous forests, a plantation was necessary. The Sabie area was found suitable for growing of eucalyptus and pine trees. The compounds were then relocated and large numbers of people moved away to make way for new plantation. These factors produced a rapid decline of the population as early as the 1920s, and adversely affected the missionary work. One by one missionaries were assigned elsewhere until finally the station was closed.³²

³⁰ Parker, J Fred, 1988. *Mission to the World: A History of Mission in the Church of the Nazarene through 1985*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 144-145

³¹ Whitelaw, 39-40

³² Parker, 145-146

2.4.3 Bethal

After considering the dwindling possibilities at Sabie, Rev J F Penn a missionary, opened a mission station about twenty-six kilometres from Sabie. It was appropriately named Bethal, for the Penns won the hearts of people and carried on highly effective mission work.³³ Bethal became the nucleus that set a precedence of growth throughout the region of Transvaal. The mission tried to explore every possibility of evangelising the compounds and mining fields and took every given opportunity to convert the mineworkers. The strategy of open-air camp styles preaching was commonly used. Hundreds of mineworkers would gather to hear the missionaries. They sang old hymns and were taught a few choruses. Rev L R Chapman who witnessed the occasion was greatly impressed by the singing of the mineworkers. He gave his impressions as follows:

"Here are masses of men, none of them ever having had what we could call even average advantages; They carry both the melody and the harmony right on through the refrains as though they had been trained for a special exhibition, not once nor twice, but always, and many times right in one service. After the singing, the Nazarene believers stepped forward, one after the other, to testify. They tell how they once lived in sin and in fear, but how they have been changed by the power of Christ. They urged their fellow associates to repent, using language that is graphic and picturesque. Rev Esselstyn gives a short message, invites the men to pray, and several come forward to confess their sins."³⁴

After J F Penn established Bethal, other outstations began to flourish. Arthurseat and Acornhoek in the Eastern Transvaal

³³ Ibid, 146

³⁴ Chapman, Louis R, 1952. *The Problem of the Bantu in the City: The Problem of Africa*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 34

became the main mission stations. In 1935 Rev Shirley moved his printing press to Arthurseat. The proceeds from the sale of the Sabie property in 1947 were used to purchase a large 600-acre farm. Arthurseat soon became a flourishing mission centre of the Nazarene work. There the first Nazarene college was built to train African pastors and other workers. The college was named after the wife of the first African pioneer, known as the Lula Schmelzenbach Memorial Bible School.³⁵

2.4.4 The effects of the Second World War

By 1944 the Second World War was placing the mission in a state of unrest. Due to financial hardship caused by the war, it poised many difficulties, particularly a shortage of missionary personnel. The hardships experienced by the missionaries forced them to focus their mission beyond the border of the mines. A committee appointed by the Missionary Council envisaged the opening of work among the white and Coloured people of South Africa. This would require more missionaries and more money. A request was placed before the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene for thirty new missionaries to be sent to South Africa and for additional finances. From 1944 to 1946 more than thirty missionaries were appointed to South Africa. The new reinforcement began to spearhead the work in Transvaal and the dreams of building churches across the race groupings became a reality.³⁶

³⁵ Emslie, Betty, 1966. *Continent in a Hurry*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 123

³⁶ Esselstyn, William, 54-55

In October 1947 General Superintendent Dr Hardy Power visited South Africa. During his visit he conducted Annual Council Meetings, visited all the main stations, inspected some of the proposed areas for new stations and ordained a number of black South Africans to the eldership order of the Church. At an ordination service at Arthurseat, Enos Mgwenya was ordained and became the first elder in the Eastern Transvaal mission field. Seven pastors were also received into the ordained ministry at Bremersdorp.³⁷

By 1950 the Eastern Transvaal mission fields had grown to such an extent that it was able to challenge all of Swaziland. The camp meeting was the largest in Africa, with more than fifty outstations and preaching points. Local leader of the Eastern Transvaal expanded the mission in Witwatersrand, Northern Transvaal and Blouberg. In addition Arthurseat replaced Bethal as the headquarters for all mission activities. The churches ran schools with an enrolment of over ten thousand students. The tireless work at Arthurseat brought two honourable attractions to its mission centre.³⁸ In 1950 it hosted the All-African Missionary Council and in 1952 it saw a historic merger.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid, 55-56

³⁸ Parker, 146

³⁹ Hynd, 116-117, and Parker, 158

2.4.5 A Church Merger

The International Holiness Mission, formerly known as the White Holiness Church had its headquarters in London. The Mission was a result of the holiness revival in England. Its founder was Rev David Thomas who establish the Mission in 1907." It grew particularly in Mozambique and the Eastern Transvaal. Rev D B Jones, mentioned earlier in this chapter, spearheaded the work in the gold mines of Johannesburg. In 1937 it built one of its major hospitals in Acornhoek, nine kilometres from the Nazarene mission stations in Arthurseat. At the end of the Second World War the IHM went into a period of expansion. Other independent missionaries who were working among the Pedi people in the Tzaneen area of the Transvaal joined them.⁴⁰ They had an extensive mission work in Southern Africa and shared the same doctrine and ethos of the Church of the Nazarene.⁴¹ While in Southern Africa, they experienced financial difficulty, and could not sustain its work.⁴² This resulted in a merger with the Church of the Nazarene on 29 November 1952 at Arthurseat in the Eastern Transvaal.

The merger of the Church of the Nazarene with the International Holiness Mission went smoothly.⁴³ Rev Theodore Esselstyn showed what the merger meant in membership:

⁴⁰ Esselstyn, Theodore, 27-28, Hynd, 116

⁴¹ *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 22

⁴² Emslie, Betty. Personal Interview. Westville, 17 July 1996.

⁴³ Hynd, 117

The statistical records showed that the number of African preachers increased by almost 100, and the church membership rose from 6 493 to 7 459 the year following the union. This was the largest jump in any one year up to that date. However with the increased staff and the concerted effort now possible, remarkably increased steadily, and then in 1956 it rose by 1 599 better than a 15 percent increase.⁴⁴

The Independent Holiness Mission also brought into the merger seventy-two church buildings and mission stations, eight hundred acres of land, and thirty-one missionaries.⁴⁵ It was this group that spearheaded the mission among the Indians in Natal. The merger gave the Church of the Nazarene a new spirit of optimism, the incredible wealth of missionaries appreciating African culture, and new mission centres to work from. Thus the centripetal nature of the churches in Transvaal transformed itself to a centrifugal force of mission, resulting in the expansion of mission work, throughout the countries.

2.4.6 Death of Rev David Jones

Rev David Jones remained a dedicated member of the Independent Holiness Mission. He died on 14 January 1950, two years before his parent-body church merged with the Church of the Nazarene. His colleagues knew him as a humble and godly leader who dedicated his life to the people of South African. He laid a strong foundation for the mission in Transvaal. He served the Mission for forty-one years, during which time mission centres

⁴⁴ Esselstyn, Theodore, 27-28

⁴⁵ Hynd, 116-117 and Parker, 158

and churches multiplied. Even though he was not a Nazarene, he was strongly regarded as one of the early pioneers.⁴⁶

2.5 The Development of the Church of the Nazarene among the European community in South Africa

2.5.1 The Arrival of the Europeans

European association with South Africa began with the Portuguese circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope at the end of the fifteenth century. The Dutch were the first to settle in South Africa as early as 1652. Followed by the French Huguenots in 1688, who fled from the religious persecution in France. They settled in the Stellenbosch region of the Cape.⁴⁷ By the early years of the eighteenth century, the white settlers in the Cape found it very difficult to survive, and moved inland. They were known as the "Trekboers".⁴⁸ T Davenport a prominent South African historian described that by 1776 the Cape was already a plural stratified, slave-owning society.⁴⁹ In 1820, 4000 British citizens settled in the Cape. These were mainly poor people who never owned land in their former country. Davenport concluded that, "The British settlers developed a physical and moral toughness and a harder race attitude which was common to the Dutch settlers."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Esselstyn, Theodore, 27-28

⁴⁷ Davenport, T R H, 1978. *South Africa a Modern History*. Third Edition. South Africa: Macmillan Publishers, 22-23.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 30

⁴⁹ Ibid, 36-37

⁵⁰ Davenport, 44

Throughout the nineteenth century, British administrative influence at the Cape was strengthened by the increase of white immigrants.⁵¹ Many of these immigrants were victims of the Napoleonic war, who were escaping from the hardship and were hoping to start a new life in South Africa. The discovery of gold in the minefields of Johannesburg attracted a number of whites from the Cape and overseas.⁵²

2.5.2 European religion

The white settlers brought with them their religions and succeeded to convert the indigenous South Africans. When the British gained control of the Cape, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church were not the only churches in the colony. Protestant churches from Europe and North America arrived in they numbers to convert the indigenous people. According to John De Gruchy, by the turn of the nineteenth century the Methodist Church had most of the Black membership of any mainline denomination in South Africa. By 1950 the white churches developed into well-established denominations and had enjoyed the benefits of resources and personal. De Gruchy believed that the Council did very little to address the polarization of its members.⁵³

⁵¹ Malan, S F, E J Carruther and B M Theron, 1996. *History of South Africa: 1806-1902*. Pretoria: University of SA, 39-40

⁵² De Gruchy, John, 1979. *The church struggle in South Africa*. Grand Rapid: W M B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1

⁵³ Ibid, 10-14

2.5.3 Nazarene stance on Apartheid

The arrival of Apartheid in 1948 legislated the "apartness of race groupings" entrenched the existing cultural schism between the races. De Gruchy believed that even though the Christian Council of Churches initially opposed it, it did very little to address the polarization of its members. Therefore the Church of the Nazarene had no difficulty calling for a mission among the European people of South Africa. They saw the mission "only for blacks" as racist and needed to work in all societies of South Africa.⁵⁴ In conforming with the Government apartheid policy, the Nazarene church found itself adopting a separate "white" church. According to David Hynd only the Roman Catholic Church carried out its universal policy of opening its door to all races. They ignored the racial policy advocated by the South African government of 1948.⁵⁵

The Church of the Nazarene from the outset of its mission in South Africa believed its mission was of a spiritual nature. It was convinced of its historical position that social reformation must follow spiritual awakening, and by redeeming individuals through the Gospel, they believed that society would be morally transformed.⁵⁶ Therefore the church maintained its uncritical stance to the unjust political and social structures of that time. Rev Strickland, the founding father of Nazarene mission among European descent believed that, "The

⁵⁴ Williamson, 66. Also refer to William Esselstyn, 129

⁵⁵ Hynd, 99

Church of the Nazarene has not attempted to enter the racial issues within the country."⁵⁷

2.5.4 The motivation for a "White Mission"

Two factors led to the development of the Church of Nazarene among the European descent. The first factor was the racial confinement of Nazarene mission to black people.⁵⁸ The black members of the Church of the Nazarene requested the missionaries to spread the holiness message among White South Africans. The persistent question that was asked by the black members: "Does not this gospel work as well for the white man as for the black man?"⁵⁹

The second factor according to Strickland was the assumption that there were no clearly defined holiness churches, which advocated the "second blessing" among the European descent in South Africa. Strickland believed that most of the holiness advocates were from holiness movements, and not organized churches, such as the holiness ministry of Andrew Murray, the African Evangelistic band, and the Holiness Association of Southern Africa.⁶⁰ Mrs. Laura Ferree, who entered the country in 1925, was the first of the Nazarene missionaries to work among the white people of South Africa. She promoted the

⁵⁶ Strickland, Charles H, 1959. *Africa Adventure*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing Houses, 25

⁵⁷ Ibid, 25

⁵⁸ Esselstyn, William, 129

⁵⁹ Strickland, 21

⁶⁰ Ibid, 23

doctrine of holiness by distributing the periodical *Herald of Holiness* and took every opportunity to win the whites, visited the sick and learned the Afrikaans language. After her death, the missionaries in South Africa tried to influence the Head Office in Kansas City to initiate a mission among the white South Africans.⁶¹ In 1947 General Superintendent Powers formed the Portuguese Nazarene Church in Lorenzo Marques. A Roman Catholic priest, Acacia Pereira, converted to a Nazarene, was the first pastor of the newly formed church. This motivated Powers to request the Missionary Board to appoint missionaries to the Europeans in South Africa.⁶²

2.5.5 DR Charles H. Strickland

The Missionary Board agreed to the proposal of Powers. Rev Strickland, pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene in Dallas, Texas, was appointed to officially establish the mission to whites in South Africa.⁶³ Rev Strickland described his appointment as follows:

"Suddenly in my prayer I was confronted with the memory of my conversion as a lad of ten and the experience of sanctification which I received at that time. My minister asked me that night, to place "the unknown bundle" my future upon the altar. He explained that this act of consecration must remain a permanent attitude throughout my life, placing me in such a position that God's will, would always be the supreme desire of my life, and that it would always be first in my consideration. Thus twenty-two years later at the altar of the First Church in Dallas, Texas; it suddenly became

⁶¹ Esselstyn, William, 129-131

⁶² Esselstyn, Theodore, 59 and Esselstyn, William. 131

⁶³ Whitelaw, 36-37

clear that the "unknown bundle" of my youthful consecration was Africa.⁶⁴

Strickland with his wife and two children arrived in Johannesburg, on the 28 August 1948. His new home at 83 Honeyball Avenue, Discovery, was the beginning of the new headquarters for his mission in South Africa. This put the missionaries within a three-hour trip of more than 50% of the white population.⁶⁵ Upon his arrival, 2 372 000 Europeans were residents in South Africa in 1948. According to Theodore Esselstyn the Dutch Reformed Church claimed 54% of the white South Africans, 16% belong to the Anglican, 5% the Roman Catholic and 16% belonged to other Protestant churches including the Methodists. Less than 1% claimed no attachment to any church.⁶⁶

2.5.6 The First European "come outers"

The foundation for establishing a Nazarene church among whites was already laid in 1947, influenced by Nazarene Radio League who aired "Showers of Blessing" over the short-wave radio station at Mozambique. The station reached nearly two-thirds of the white population in South Africa. Through its enthusiastic preaching and singing, which typified the Nazarene evangelical spirit, the church reached out to the English-speaking people of South Africa.⁶⁷ Hundreds of letters were received of people

⁶⁴ Strickland, 15-16

⁶⁵ Whitelaw, 37 and Esselstyn, William, 134

⁶⁶ Esselstyn, William, 133-134

⁶⁷ Ibid, 134 and Strickland, 24

testifying of "second blessing" experiences. The great majority of those contacted were regular listeners to "Showers of blessing."⁶⁸

In 1949 Rev Hendrik Senekal a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, met with Strickland. Senekal shared his experience of the second blessing advocated by the radio program and felt that his church was opposing his newfound teaching. He joined the Church of the Nazarene and became the first licensed minister in the new European District, as it was called.⁶⁹ In the same year Rev J J Scheepers, a South African minister of the African Evangelistic Band, joined the Church of the Nazarene. Having received the "second blessing" he heard that the Nazarenes had started a work among the whites and applied to join the Church. His eyes were filled with tears when he said to Strickland, "I have come to tell you that God has called me into the Church of the Nazarene and I offer you my services."⁷⁰

2.5.7 The First congregations in Pretoria and Parys

Strickland, Scheepers and Senekal were strong advocates of Church's holiness teachings. They preached the doctrine of "second blessing" in tents and town halls. Strickland, writing on 1 June 1950, stated that he had concluded three months of continuous preaching in revival campaigns and brought to the

⁶⁸ Strickland, 24

⁶⁹ Dayhoff, 94

⁷⁰ Esselstyn, William, 135-136

Church one hundred and seventy people.⁷¹ The first church group was formed in Pretoria under the care of Rev Senekal. A church building, bought from another denomination, was dedicated on 31 December 1949. Senekal faithfully served the congregation for many years and was forced to retire from active ministry due to poor health.⁷²

Scheepers and his wife moved to Parys in the Orange Free State where they started services in the town hall. On 4 November 1949, Strickland officially organized a local church with eight members. Scheepers was given the task of an ordained elder and pastor of the church in Parys. A certain Mrs Oates, testified of experiencing the second blessing, felt that God spoke to her to donate half of her land to the Parys church. A new church building and a parsonage were erected on that property. On 20 October 1950 General Superintendent Powers dedicated the building.⁷³

2.5.8 Further growth

Josiash MacLachlan while doing independent mission work at Beaconsfield, Kimberley, met a Nazarene missionary who gave him a copy of the *Herald of Holiness* and the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*. He wrote to Powers inviting the Church to start a work among the whites in South Africa.⁷⁴ He felt that

⁷¹ Ibid, 137

⁷² Strickland, 44, Dayhoff, 94 and Esselstyn, William, 137

⁷³ Strickland, 43 and William Esselstyn, 137-138

⁷⁴ Dayhoff, 94

his Church was not true to the message of the second blessing. MacLachlan joined the Church of the Nazarene and was appointed on 18 May 1950 to the newly established congregation in Vereeniging with fourteen members. Vereeniging was the first white congregation to become self-supporting. Under the leadership of MacLachlan, the congregation financed a chapel for a rural community and supported a black Nazarene church in Vereeniging. Strickland praised MacLachlan for the wealth of experience and rich ministry, which he had brought into the Church of the Nazarene.⁷⁵ By July 1950 five white congregations of the Church of the Nazarene was in operation. These were Parys, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Vanderbijl Park and Vereeniging. All of them had full-time pastors, with a total Sunday school attendance of three hundred.⁷⁶

In 1950 Powers organized the newly established congregation into a district, followed by a District Assembly, an Advisory Board, Church School and a Court of Appeals. Strickland was appointed superintendent of the new district. In this way, white congregations could enjoy the privileges offered in the constitution of the Church.⁷⁷

2.5.9 The Church among people of European descent in Natal

In 1952 Rev Strickland appointed Rev Stafford Finnemore to labour among the whites in Natal. Finnemore had served in the

⁷⁵ Strickland, 46

⁷⁶ Esselstyn, William, 138

⁷⁷ Ibid, 139-140

Baptist Church for a number of years. After reading the *Herald of Holiness*, he joined the Church of the Nazarene at a camp meeting 18 May 1950. He succeeded Rev MacLachlan as pastor of the Church of the Nazarene at Vereeniging. Finnemore and his father helped to finance the building of the church.⁷⁸

Finnemore was instrumental in propagating the Church in Natal. He brought to fruition four congregations within the ten years of his ministry in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. He spent most of his early year in the Durban zone. Initially two part-time missionaries, Irma Koffel and Dela Boggs, assisted him. On 1 January 1953 Finnemore began a three months term as acting pastor. By the end of February Rev Strickland decided that sufficient progress had been made for Rev Finnemore to be appointed a full-time minister of the Durban circuit. Mr Brian Wilson was the first convert of the mission. By the close of 1953 six members were added to the mission. Regular services were held at Greyville, Durban North, Pinetown, Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith, New Hanover and Newcastle. By 1954 the Durban circuit had a Sunday school enrolment of 108. The new converts largely assisted the mission, availing their homes for services and Sunday school.⁷⁹

In March 1955 a service was held in a borer-infected house for which the demolishing permit was awaited. Finnemore testified of wonderful blessings of the Holy Spirit. In September 1955

⁷⁸ Strickland, 46-47

⁷⁹ Information supplied by Rev Finnemore Stafford, Durban, 5 June 1997.

the service was moved to the locality of a former radio transmitting station. Within a few months the Church bought a large property at 18 Rosebank Avenue, Morningside, for R3200. In October 1957 a parsonage and basement hall were erected, and the church was organized with eleven members.⁸⁰

2.5.10 Further development

The Pietermaritzburg Church of the Nazarene was fully organized by March 1957. Rev R Smith, was one of the first graduates of the Nazarene Bible College in the Transvaal, was appointed minister of the congregation in Pietermaritzburg.⁸¹ This appointment greatly relieved the pressure on Rev Finnemore in the Durban circuit so that the mission in Durban was given more attention. A year later another property was purchased at Lothian Road, Durban for the congregation at Greyville with twenty-one members. In 1960 another property was purchased in Virginia, for the congregations in Durban North area, where there were eleven members.⁸²

2.5.11 Ministers joining the Church of the Nazarene

During the early years of the white mission in South Africa, a number of ministers and lay preachers from other churches joined the Church of the Nazarene. Much of the growth and expansion of the church was the result of the labours of people

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Strickland, 62

⁸² Finnemore

who previously belonged to other denominations. Apart from Senekal, Scheepers, MacLachlan and Finnemore already mentioned, there were others who joined the Church. Rev Christoffel Botha, who first studied medicine graduated from the Andrew Murray Bible Institution and joined the church of the Nazarene in 1949. He was ordained in 1952.⁸³ Rev Johannes Steyn, a minister of the African Evangelistic Band joined the Church of the Nazarene at the first District Assembly on October 1950. In the same year Rev Cyril Pass, a minister of the Pilgrim Holiness Church also joined the Church of the Nazarene. Later he served as principal of the Nazarene Bible College in Johannesburg.⁸⁴ In 1951 another two ministers joined the Church, Rev J Coetzee an evangelist in the African Evangelistic Band and Rev J F Cronje, an interdenominational preacher, who started a Nazarene congregation in Welverdiend in Johannesburg. Also Rev George Alexander, a Methodist minister, who was a strong advocate of the doctrine of the "second blessing" broke away from his Methodist Society and joined the Church of the Nazarene in 1953.⁸⁵

2.5.12 The Nazarene Bible College for European descents

In 1950 the first District Assembly discussed the need for a Bible college for its white members in South Africa. It was considered important that ministers be trained in the doctrine, vision and methods of the Church. A commission was set up to

⁸³ Dayhoff, 99

⁸⁴ Strickland, 56-58

⁸⁵ Ibid, 58, Dayhoff, 96

investigate the possibility of establishing such a college. The Nazarene Youth Council in North America who decided to finance the building of the operation boosted the project. A property was purchased in Potchefstroom, which was formerly used as an orphanage. On 9 January 1954 the Nazarene Bible College of South Africa was officially opened with Rev CJ Pass as its principal. Six students enrolled for the course.⁸⁶

2.5.13 Ministers resigning

In 1968 Strickland retired from the European field leaving behind twenty-three churches with 935 members. In 1971 Rev B T Taylor, a Canadian, replaced Dr Strickland. Some white pastors and members were unhappy that a missionary from overseas was appointed in place of capable personnel resources within the district. As a result of that conflict ten ministers resigned, two joined the Baptist Church, six joined the Dutch Reformed Church and two became independent ministers.⁸⁷

2.6 The Development of the Church of the Nazarene among the Coloured community in South Africa

2.6.1 The formation of the people called "Coloured"

The Coloured people originated with the coming of white settlers in the Cape in the seventeenth century. Through

⁸⁶ Strickland, 70-71, Whitelaw, 64

⁸⁷ Whitelaw, 73

biological contact and intermingling of various ethnic groups, a new nation emerged, known as the Coloureds. They speak English or Afrikaans, but Afrikaans is predominantly their home language. In spite of their heterogeneous origin, they have adopted the Western way of life. They often share with the whites the same culture, tradition and religion. Their history is closely interwoven with the history of the Christian church and missionary activities in South Africa. Majority of them are Christians, although a certain section, Cape Malays, adhere to the Islamic faith.⁸⁸

2.6.2 The first Coloured congregation

The first interest of the Church of the Nazarene in Coloured people became visible in 1946 when a number of Coloured people gathered near Manzini, Swaziland. The missionaries in Swaziland discussed with Power the possibility of evangelising the Coloureds. With the influx of Nazarene missionaries in 1948 a mission among the Coloureds in Johannesburg was established. Rev Paul Hetrick held an open-air gospel meeting at Newclare where a certain Mr Richard Timms was one of the first converts. He was drunk with alcohol and wanted prayer. After his conversion he never drank alcohol again. He invited the missionary to his home in Coronationville where the first Nazarene meeting among the Coloureds was held.⁸⁹ A congregation was established in Newclare in 1948. The daughter of Richard

⁸⁸ Emslie, 102-105. See also Chapman, 39-41

⁸⁹ Whitelaw, 52

Timms became the first Nazarene missionary from among the Coloured people.⁹⁰

2.6.3 The early Coloured converts and growth

Open-air meetings and tent gatherings were common methods of evangelisation among the Coloureds. At a meeting held in Kliptown Irene Pop, a schoolteacher, who was converted in the Free Baptist Church, became the first member of the Kliptown Church of the Nazarene. She remained the rest of her life an active Christian in the Kliptown church. Her son, Carver Pop, later became a Nazarene pastor.⁹¹ William Douman was converted in a tent meeting in Newclare. In 1948 he felt a call to the ministry. He was one of the first students enrolled in the newly established Nazarene Bible College for Coloureds and Indians in Cape Town. Along with other students, such as George Meyers and Sydney Holmes, he held cottage meetings and started congregations in Johannesburg.⁹² Under the able leadership of missionary Morris Chalfant, the work grew rapidly. Services were held in rented cinemas, empty shops and school halls. Church properties were secured in Kliptown, Newclare and Protea. On 23 July 1950 the Kliptown church building was the first building of the Church of the Nazarene among the Coloureds.⁹³

⁹⁰ Dayhoff, 105

⁹¹ Ibid, 105

⁹² Ibid, 102 and 109

⁹³ Whitelaw, 52-53

In 1953 the mission was extended to Kimberley. A truck with Nazarene converts went to Kimberley for a weekend of open-air evangelical meetings. The successful work led to the birth of the Kimberley congregation. In 1954 five Coloured students enrolled for the ministry.⁹⁴ Missionaries were expected to study Afrikaans; the language of most of the Coloured people, so as to make leadership and communication more effective. Most of the missionaries did quite well in their Afrikaans examinations. On language studies the following was reported in the first Coloured regional council meeting:

Rev and Mrs N D Zurcher have both passed the technical college Std 6b Afrikaans examinations. Mrs P R Steigleder has passed the final oral examinations in Afrikaans. Mrs Zurcher has passed the required ten-minutes talk in Afrikaans.

We recommend:

Rev Steigleder continues his study of Afrikaans. Rev Zurcher continues his study of Afrikaans preparation for his final oral examinations. Mrs Steigleder is graduated from this course. Mrs Zurcher continue the practice the use of the language in preparation for the final oral examinations excluding the ten-minutes talk.⁹⁵

2.6.4 The Church of the Nazarene in the Cape Province

A commission visited Cape Town in May 1956 and recommended that a mission be started there. Following the merger of the International Holiness Mission and the Church of the Nazarene, it made available a vacant Rehoboth mission station in Ottery

⁹⁴ Ibid, 53

⁹⁵ *The first meeting Coloured and Indian Regional Council Journal*. Church of the Nazarene, Pretoria, 1962.

to launch the work. Rev Joseph Penn was appointed to lead the mission.⁹⁶ Pastors from the Coloured Districts in Transvaal were the first to work in Cape Town. The state and the local authorities launched major housing projects for the Coloureds who flooded the city for employment. It was in these townships such as Factreton, Matroosfontein, Steenberg, Sunnyside and Bontehewel that the Church of the Nazarene were able to begin their new work.⁹⁷

Many years of hard work were put into these areas; Chapman summarized the impact of the mission among the Coloureds as follows:

God has performed wonders among the Eurafrican group. Hundreds attended the services under the tents or in the regular church houses. Numbers have found the Saviour in a saving and sanctifying way ... These new Christians are rejoicing in their salvation and bringing many friends to Jesus. Some have already answered the call to preach. They are tithing and giving to support the workers and help build their churches. Truly God has been with us whenever we have walked in this new location.⁹⁸

The Steenberg congregation of the Church of the Nazarene in Cape Town was established with twenty-one members on 10 June 1961. Also in the Matroosfontien and Steenberg the Church of the Nazarene were having missionary outreaches. Rev Emslie, the missionary in charge, described the mission situation in 1961:

Tent campaigns have been held at Matroosfontein, Bontehewel and Steenberg townships. The tent was often packed out with standing room only and there were many seekers. Several Zone Rallies have been held and a

⁹⁶ Whitelaw, 83

⁹⁷ Emslie, 107

⁹⁸ Chapman, 40

wonderful spirit of unity prevailed with the awareness of the Lords' presence. Monthly preachers meetings, with discussion on the various phases of the work, such as administration and policy and our local problems, have proven helpful. The preachers appeared to have valued these meetings. Two of our churches are taking complete care of all their finances and it is hoped that within three months the others will have their own treasurers.⁹⁹

Mrs Betty Emslie and Mrs Steigleder championed the mission among the Coloured women. Many of the women experienced the "Second blessing". In 1961 Mrs Steigleder reported of an open-air meeting where "many women have knelt in the sand at the meeting and sought God, and put their lives right."¹⁰⁰ Within ten years of Nazarene mission in Cape Town, it boasted seven organized churches and a membership of six hundred and seven, with eleven pastors. The Sunday school accounted an attendance of 4303 with a teenage membership of 413.¹⁰¹ By 1973 the Coloured mission in the Cape District had the largest membership among the Coloureds in South Africa. Rev Smith, a South African was elected the first District Superintendent of the mission.¹⁰²

2.7 Conclusion

The beginning of the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa was briefly outlined. Credit is given to the tireless missionaries, such as Hermon Schmelzenbach and Rev David Jones who brought

⁹⁹ *Journal*, 1962

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 28-29

¹⁰¹ *Coloured and Indian Regional Statistic Report*. Church of the Nazarene, 1966-1968.

¹⁰² Whitelaw, 83-84

the message of holiness to South Africa and Swaziland with little financial support. The development of the Church's mission among the blacks, whites and coloured people of South Africa has been traced according to racial division. The strong financial support and dedicated missionary personnel from the Church of the Nazarene in North America helped to sustain and expand the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa. Credit was also given to local pastors and lay people who gave their sacrificial service to the Church. Much of the growth and expansion of the Church of the Nazarene among the white South Africans was the labour of people who belonged to other denominations. The Church's mission among the Coloured people has been discussed in some detail. For it was the Coloured mission that laid the foundation for the Church's mission among the Indians in Natal.

Chapter Three

3. The development of the Church of the Nazarene among the Indian community in KwaZulu Natal 1960-1967

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the development of the Church of the Nazarene among the Indian community in KwaZulu Natal. It gives a detailed account of the pioneered work, its struggles and growth. Credit is given to missionaries such as Rex and Betty Emslie who worked tirelessly among the Indians in Durban. It was Rev Samuel Moonsamy who was largely responsible for initiating and developing the first Indian churches in Johannesburg and Natal with much personal sacrifice. For this purpose a detailed account of their lives and ministry is given. A brief history of the arrival of the Indian immigrant in Natal is carefully related, particularly its economical and social struggles and insecurity due to the pressure of Apartheid and forced removals. It was their social insecurities that had created an opportunity for the Church of the Nazarene to provide the gospel.

3.2. The Arrival of the Indians in Natal

The Indians arrived in Natal in 1860. The majority of Indians who came to South Africa were agricultural workers who lived in sprawling poverty. They worked in the coffee plantations of

South and central India. Plant diseases and borer beetle infestation brought the collapse of the coffee industry by 1885. It caused the worst famine in years. Coupled with that they faced an economic depression that largely affected industry and agricultural life. Anstey gave some added reasons for the emigration of Indians to Natal:

They faced huge amount of debt, mortgage and particularly loss of land, which made the acres that remained inadequate to provide a livelihood. Those who lost all the land were also unable to obtain employment and had to migrate or starve.¹

The first group of Indian immigrants arrived on a ship called the *Truro* in November 1860. The occasion for the arrival of the Indians was provided by the development of the sugar industry in Natal, which was needing resuscitation after the economic depression. Followed by a number of Dutch white settlers leaving Natal after it was annexed as a British colony in 1843. This reduced the number of white people in the colony. A number of schemes were introduced to attract whites to the colony. By 1858, about 2500 British immigrants came to Natal and took to farming and the cultivation of sugar cane. This created a serious need for manual labour.²

The Indian agricultural workers who were skilled in the field of farming suited the needs of the farmers. Since India and Natal were under British control, the immigration continued smoothly. A total of 152,184 indentured Indian immigrants

¹ Brain, J B, 1983. *Christian Indians in Natal 1860-1911*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, xvi

² Seethal, VB, 1993. *The Development of Methodism in Natal with particular reference to the "Indian Mission."* Durban: University-Durban Westville, 1.

arrived in South Africa from 1860 to 1911. The British authorities promised them after five years of service if they choose to remain in the colony, they would be regarded as free citizens and would be given a piece of land equal to the cost of a free passage back to India.³

The employers and the British authorities often violated the terms of the contract that the Indian labourers accepted. From those who applied for a piece of land instead of their passage back to India, only 53 out of 13,000 received this promised grant.⁴ Often their wages were withheld, and their living conditions were poor and lacked basic facilities. In many estates, barracks-type homes with insufficient number of rooms accommodated large families. Privacy for married couples was not provided. Water and ablution facilities were communal. Poor Sanitation often resulted in serious health problems. The superior industry of the Indians, the economic condition of the Indian traders and the emergence of the "free" Indians created resistance among the whites in the country. Various efforts were made to repatriate Indians after the indentureship contract had expired. This created a deep sense of insecurity within the Indian community, against the threat of repatriation. It was in 1961, one hundred years after their arrival, that Indians were declared citizens of South Africa.⁵

³ Reddy, DC, 1992. *The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa with special reference to its rise and development in the Indian community*. Durban: University of Durban-Westville, 39-41.

⁴ Pachai, Brijlal, 1979. *South Africa's Indians. The Evolution Of a Minority*, North America: University Press of America Inc., 3-4.

⁵ Reddy, 45

3. 3. The first Christian mission among the Indian descent

3.3.1. The Roman Catholic Mission

The Roman Catholic Church was the first Christian denomination to start work among the Indian immigrants. The French-speaking father Jean-Baptiste Sabon arrived in Natal with Bishop Allard in 1852. He was sent to Durban to care for the French speaking Mauritian immigrants. After the return of the Mauritians to their native country, Father Sabon spent much of his time visiting the Indian immigrants that arrived in Natal. He met the first immigrants in Durban in 1860 and gave his opinion of his meeting:

Among the Indians who arrived from the Indies to be workers in Natal, there was about 50 Catholic...I had a long conversation with them; they appear very intelligent, and they are much respectful towards a priest. Before leaving the place, they knelt before me, asked for my blessing and in the streets; they greeted me, stopping for this purpose. They are desirous of obtaining medals and crosses; some had these objects of piety already, hung around their necks. Before they leave Durban I will try to get their names of all the Catholics and the name of their masters.⁶

In 1861, Father Sabon already visited all the sugar estates with Indian employees as far as Umzinto in the South to Verulam in the North Coast. The Catholic Indians in Umzinto deeply appreciated the ministry of Father Sabon. Sabon also persevered with learning the Indian language. Within a few months he could read and write in Tamil. He was also concerned about the education of Indian children, for which no provision

⁶ Brian, 194-195

had been made either by the government or by the estate owners. On 2 November 1863 Sabon petitioned the governing authorities for financial assistance to erect a school in the Durban area. The government refused to fund the project. In 1867 through the tireless efforts of Father Sabon the first Indian school was established with 30 children.⁷

During Sabon's lifetime he had a flourishing Indian Mission. The membership did not increase rapidly since many of the parishioners returned to India. In 1892 the Indian Catholics in Durban had a membership of three hundred. J B Brain said that it was never the intention of the Catholic Church to evangelise the whites and the Indian communities, but to care of its members.⁸ This may suggest that Sabon had a deep respect for people of other religious persuasions. Credit should also be given to Father Sabon for caring for the Indian Catholics in spite of their short-term stay in the country. Not only did he care for their spiritual well being but also for the education of their children.

3.3.2. Indian Methodist Mission

The Methodist Church was the first to convert the Indians in Natal. It was Rev Joseph Jackson a Methodist missionary who made contact with Indians in the sugar estates of Northern Natal. In 1861 he distributed Christian literature in the form

⁷ Ibid, 199

⁸ Ibid, 199

of tracts⁹ to the Indians in the Verulam area and through an interpreter communicated with them. Rev Jackson ministering to a large black circuit in Pietermaritzburg was not able to engage in effective pioneering work among the Indian immigrants. Rev Ralph Stott a missionary to Sri Lanka was appointed to work amongst the Indians in the sugar estates of Natal.¹⁰

Rev Ralph Stott was an ideal choice for ministering to the Indians in Natal. While in Sri Lanka he learned numerous Indian languages and this enabled him to communicate the gospel effectively to the Indians. In 1861 he was in charge of the Methodist Indian Mission in Natal and visited all the sugar estates in the Natal coast. He preferred to concentrate his efforts in Durban because of the large number of Indian arrivals. Ralph Stott's approach was different from that of Father Sabon who had a sizable Catholic membership to work with. Stott had six Protestants, and was compelled to serve as an itinerant evangelist to gain converts. The success of his visitation programme was reported in 1864. Two thousand Indians were attending public worship in the Durban area and along the North and South Coast. There were thirty-five preaching places, and it was reported that there were no children attending the Sunday school. He visited thirty-nine sugar estates and in 1876 it increased to eighty. His area of outreach extended from Umzinto to as far as Kearsney on the North Coast. Like Father

⁹ *Tracts* were small handbill, which were easily distributed to pass Byers. This printed material often recorded simple statements leading readers to the Christian faith.

¹⁰ Seethal, 29

Sabon he was also instrumental in securing education for the children of the immigrants. In 1876 he secured a piece of land in Queen Street, Durban. On that property the first Indian Methodist church was built.¹¹

3.4. The Nazarene Mission among the Blacks in Natal

The Church of the Nazarene first came to Natal in 1952. Rev Strickland appointed Rev Finnemore to labour among the whites in Natal. He brought to fruition four congregations within ten years of his ministry in Durban and Pietermaritzburg.¹² A decade later the Church of the Nazarene started its work among the Zulu people of Natal. In January 1962 Rev and Mrs. Reginald Jones were appointed missionaries to work among the Zulus in the Durban area. They found a number of displaced Nazarene members from Swaziland who were employed in Durban. Rev Gininda from Swaziland district assisted Rev Jones to preach to the Zulus.¹³

In 1963 Rev Samuel Ndhlovu and his Baptist congregation disagreed with certain policies of his denomination. He joined the Church of the Nazarene after being impressed with its holiness doctrine. When the KwaZulu Northern District of the Church in Natal was formed, Ndhlovu was appointed the first District Superintendent. In 1985 there were 23 Zulu churches

¹¹ Ibid, 33-41

¹² Strickland, 46-47

¹³ Parker, 172-173

with a membership of 813.¹⁴ Even though the Church was active in Natal they did not make any contact with the Indian community until July 1962.¹⁵

3.5 The beginning of the work among Indian community in Johannesburg

3.5.1. The first Indian convert

In 1950 Rev George Taylor, a Coloured minister of the Church of the Nazarene, made contact with Samuel Moonsamy, an Indian of the Hindu religion. The meeting was an unusual occurrence; young Samuel was with a group of boys throwing stones on the roof of the church of which Taylor was a lay pastor. Instead of reprimanding them he chose to teach them about the Christian faith. After which he got them involved in the Sunday school. In 1955 through the guidance of Taylor, Moonsamy was converted to the Christian faith in a camp meeting in Kliptown.¹⁶ Taylor was also instrumental in leading young people to the ordained ministry notably Van Zeeburg, Caver Pop and Rashadien Benjamin.¹⁷

¹⁴ Dayhoff, 118

¹⁵ Finnemore

¹⁶ Porthen, Michael. *Personal Interview*. Merebank, Durban, 16 September 1996.

¹⁷ Dayhoff, 99

3.5.2. Lenasia "First Indian Church"

After his conversion Samuel Moonsamy enrolled at the Rehoboth Nazarene Bible College in Johannesburg. While in training, Moonsamy together with two Coloured ministers Jankies and Holmes started a work among the Indians in Lenasia, south of Johannesburg. Lenasia was a military camp and after the passing of the group area act of 1951 the Indians in the cities and outskirts of Johannesburg where relocated there. Rev Moonsamy held a camp meeting in Lenasia in 1957. Together with his colleagues they invited people in the area. Rev Moonsamy without a vehicle visited the Indians at their homes and invited them to the camp meeting. He also faced strong opposition from the Hindus and Muslims for propagating the Christian faith. The first to join his church were his close family members.¹⁸ Rev Moonsamy was passionate about his call to "save souls that he never rested until the person is saved."¹⁹ Rev Michael Porthen described how Moonsamy led him to the Christian faith and also described his commitment to the ministry:

Rev Moonsamy would come daily to my house in Lenasia to pick me up to the camp meeting. He persevered with me until I was converted to the Christian faith. He laboured among the Indians without any stipend or allowance. He loved the Lord's work and would make any sacrifice. He was a committed and a dedicated man of God.²⁰

¹⁸ Porthen, *Interview*.

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ *Ibid*

The church in Lenasia grew rapidly in the first two years of Rev Moonsamy's ministry. In 1961 after numerous difficulties, a piece of land was purchased and the first Nazarene church among Indian descent was built. On 24 September 1961 general superintendent J B Williamson dedicated the building. William Esselstyn the missionary in charge organized the church with fourteen members on 26 November 1961.²¹ The establishment of the Lenasia church gave the church leaders new hope of reaching its goal to evangelise the Indians of KwaZulu Natal. The same year J B Williamson met with the Coloured and Indian District Council comprising mainly of missionaries and encouraged them to start a work among the Indian in Durban. They appointed Rev Moonsamy and two missionaries, Rex and Betty Emslie for this purpose. A house was purchased for the Emslies at 18 Bowan Road, Glenmore, in Durban. Joseph and Helen Penn were given the responsibility of the work while the Emslies were on a six-month holiday.²²

3.6 The Indian Mission in Durban

3.6.1 The social conditions

By 1960 the original Indian dwellings were unsettled by the Group Area Act of 1948. The Indians who occupied the fertile valleys of the sugar estates and city centres were relocated in the townships of Chatsworth, Merebank and Ispingo, which were built by the Durban City Council. Their movement to the newly

²¹ Whitelaw, 54

established housing scheme, which was densely populated, disrupted their social and economic lives. This new pattern of lifestyle gave the Church of the Nazarene a unique opportunity to bring the gospel to the Indians.²³

3.6.2 The arrival of missionaries and Rev Moonsamy

In July 1961 Rev Moonsamy and the Penns arrived in Durban. They started evangelising the areas of Chatsworth and Merebank, which had the highest concentration of Indians.²⁴ Rev Moonsamy worked in Merebank, while the Penns laboured in Chatsworth. The Emslies replaced the Penns on 1 February 1963. The Emslies with the help of Rev Moonsamy developed the two works, which were to become major centres for growth in the area.²⁵ The Emslie spent twelve years of their lives building the Church among the Indians in Natal. They initially worked with children and developed many wayside Sunday schools. They took time to teach them the Christian religion. These children grew up to be strong lay workers and ministers that launched churches in other areas of Natal. Peter Ganesh, one of the early converts described the Emslies influence over the children. He said that the "Emslies taught us to fear God, not the punishment of God, but the love of God, it was so great that we fell in love with

²² *Journal*, 1962

²³ *Journal*, 1963

²⁴ Emslie, Betty. *Personal Interview*. Joseph Penn was the son of a Nazarene missionary who pioneered the church in Transvaal. He spoke Zulu fluently and was a graduate of the Pasadena Nazarene College in North America. While in training he met his wife Helen. After spending six months in Natal Penn was appointed Regional Supervisor of the Coloured and Indian work in South Africa (*Journal*, 1962, 12)

²⁵ Govender, Kristopher. *Personal Interview*. Phoenix, 8 August 1996

Christ and his work."²⁶ The Indian Nazarenes in Natal had declared the Emslies as the founding parents of the Indian Mission.²⁷ It is therefore imperative for this research to relate their life and personal history.

3.6.3 The life of Rex and Betty Emslie

Rex Emslie was born in Grahamstown, South Africa on 12 October 1913. He was the direct descendant of 1820 settlers. He grew up in the Baptist Church in Durban. At the age of 12 he testified publicly of his conversion experience in the Baptist Church. At eighteen he felt the call to preach the gospel to the "unsaved." He felt that he could no longer sit in church while people outside were in need of the gospel. In 1931 he joined a Baptist missionary Mrs. Burns and ministered to Indians in the Sea Cow Lake area of Durban. He handed out Christian literature and visited most of the homes in the area.²⁸ He also served in the South African Air force during the Second World War. While in Egypt, he received his second blessing experience, after reading Oswald Chamber's book "So send I you." He was overwhelmed by this experience, which led him to hold regular prayer meetings with his fellow soldiers, and led some to the Christian faith.²⁹

²⁶ Ganesh, Peter. 1996. *Interview*. Hillary, Durban, 14 August 1996

²⁷ Soobramoney, Lazarus. *Interview*. Shallcross, Durban, 7 August 1996.

²⁸ Emslie, *Interview*.

²⁹ Dayhoff, 117, and Emslie. *Interview*.

In 1945 he was appointed by the Natal Baptist Association to pastor the Tamil Baptist Church situated in the Magazine Barracks in Durban. While pastoring the Indian work he married Betty Emslie in 1946, who was a direct descendant of a Russian Jew. Together they served the Baptist Church. Betty enjoyed ministering to the children and would hold regular Sunday schools. She described her initial encounter with the children, "I used to take a bell to the Barracks where some of the Indians stayed and I would ring it. The children in their numbers would follow me. I felt like the Pied Piper of Hamlet".³⁰

While working in the Baptist Church the Emslies felt the call to be missionaries. They applied to the Baptist Association and were rejected for the Church was no longer employing Whites to work in Black communities. In 1948 they applied to the International Holiness Mission who needed a pastor with skills in the construction of buildings. Rex Emslie felt that he suited the job description and accepted it as God's appointment for his life. They were stationed in Acornhoek and worked among the Bapedi people. They laboured for four years without a fixed income and often relied on the goodwill of families and friends of the Baptist Church. Betty described her financial embarrassment when she learned that the missionaries in the International Holiness Mission pooled their *tithes*³¹ to provide them an income. She said, "We sold our home and gave our

³⁰ Emslie, *Interview*

³¹ A tithe was a tenth of ones earning which members contribute to their churches.

investment to the Mission and we trusted God to meet our needs and we never regretted that hardship."³² Their financial difficulties were resolved when the International Holiness Mission amalgamated with the Church of the Nazarene in 1952.

They spent ten years in rural Transvaal and built a hospital, mission homes and opened a number of outstations. In 1958 Rex Emslie was elected Regional Supervisor of the Coloured and Indian Regional Council of the Church of the Nazarene. It was this body of the Church that was responsible for caring and developing the Coloured and Indian work in South Africa. In 1961 the Council appointed the Emslies to open the work among the Indians in Durban. The Council felt that the Emslies had worked with Indians in the past and they had a good knowledge of their culture. In 1963 the Emslies joined Rev Moonsamy in opening the work in Natal.³³

3.7 The establishment of the Merebank church

Rev Samuel Moonsamy started the church in Merebank in July 1962. He lived in a rented municipal house in 98 Nizam Road, Merebank. He arrived with his newly wedded wife Susan who greatly assisted him in starting the work.³⁴ Moonsamy and his wife spent the first few months visiting their Hindu neighbours and invited them to a weekly service held at their home. They found working with children a great success. They held two

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Porthen, *Interview*

Sunday schools and many of these children were brought into the mission. A report from Rev Emslie in 1962 stated that Rev Moonsamy was experiencing a revival and that he was "seeing souls at the altar and wayside Sunday schools have been started".³⁵ In March 1963 Siva Naidoo, a staunch Hindu became the first Nazarene convert in the mission. Soon after his conversion he made his home available for the church to hold services. With the coming of Emslies the work at Merebank was greatly boosted. Rev Emslie being a skilled carpenter and a builder assisted Rev Moonsamy in erecting a car garage at the Naidoo's home for church services.³⁶

In May 1963 Moonsamy and Rex Emslie held the first baptism service at the beach of Salisbury Island, Merebank. On 16 February 1964 the Church of the Nazarene in Merebank was fully constituted with eleven members. The same year the Church attendance was boosted by the arrival of general superintendent J B Williamson who shared in a revival service. The members were honoured by his presence and graced him with a beautiful garland typifying the Indian culture towards a honoured guest.³⁷ In 1965 the work grew rapidly. The Sunday school attendance averaged 308, with an active youth work. The young people who were new converts were producing their own programmes and Bible studies. In July 1965 Rev Emslie praised the intellectual response of the youth group of Merebank Church in the Regional Council Meeting:

³⁵ *Journal*, 1963

³⁶ *Ibid*, and Emslie, *Interview*

³⁷ *Ibid*

The Indian people love reading and that they have given themselves enthusiastically to the reading programs. Their innate interest in current events makes them appreciate the fact that the church is involved in an international program and they respond to the challenge.³⁸

Susan Moonsamy was also active in the Merebank church. She was instrumental in starting the Nazarene World Mission Society (NWMS) with the Indian ladies of the church. Together with Mrs. Emslie they provided literary education for Hindu women. They found many of the women oppressed by their husbands and educated them on women's rights.³⁹

3.8 The establishment of the Chatsworth Church

3.8.1 The Penns

Joseph and Helen Penn started the work in Chatsworth in July 1962.⁴⁰ Joseph Penn was the son of a Nazarene missionary who pioneered the Nazarene work in Sabie, Transvaal in 1920.⁴¹ Joseph spent most of his life in South Africa and developed a good knowledge of the African languages. After receiving a call to the ministry, he went to the Nazarene Pasadena Bible College in North America where he received his training. There he met his wife Helen. After their training they accepted an invitation to pastor the Nazarene Church in Bresee Avenue in Los Angeles. Feeling compelled by his call to Africa he

³⁸ *Journal*, 1965

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ *Journal*, 1962

⁴¹ Parker, 144-145

accepted a request by the Missionary Society to assist the work in the Swaziland District and in the mining compounds of Transvaal because of his fluency in some of the African languages.⁴²

In 1961 the Penns were appointed by the Coloured and Indian Regional Council in Cape Town to supervise the work in Natal for a period of eight months while the Emslies were on holiday. In July 1962 the Penns started a work in Chatsworth. There they made contact with a Hindu family in Bayview. The family allowed the Penns to use their little home for church meetings. By October 1962 the Penns had weekly prayer meeting at their home.⁴³ When the Emslies arrived in February 1963, they continued the work at Bayview, while Joseph Penn supervised the Coloured and Indian Regional work from Cape Town.⁴⁴

3.8.2 Emslies faced difficulties

After four months of hard work among the Indians in Chatsworth, the Emslies were faced with huge setbacks. The original contacts made by the Penns where nowhere to be found. The home, which was available to them to have their weekly services, was closed due to the pressure of the Hindu neighbours who ostracized the family. The Emslies were forced to work in the streets of Chatsworth. Betty Emslie stated:

⁴² Emslie, *Interview*.

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ *Journal*, 1963

The family who allowed us to have weekly services in their home were practicing Hindus. They were warm, loving and welcoming people. We felt that it would be wise to move out of the house, and work outside among the people, because the neighbours were antagonistic to the family that allowed the church to use their home.⁴⁵

Rex Emslie reported to the Annual District meeting of July 1963, that they felt it was difficult to work among the adults, for most were not responding to the gospel " though religious by nature they were bound by tradition and the darkness of Hinduism". Compounded to this was their displacement caused by forced removals under the government's Group Area Act.⁴⁶ This coercion disrupted their old way of life, and unfamiliar neighbourhoods and new social life confronted many, which was uncommon to their previous inhabitant, resulting in new insecurities. Most people had fond memories of families and friends, which were disrupted by their movement, and yearned for their old way of life.⁴⁷

On the positive side the Emslies found the young people and the children were more receptive to the gospel. This was the result of the English speaking schools, which influenced a western way of life and thinking. Their new paradigm shift challenged the traditional and religious mindset of their parents.⁴⁸ Westernisation, entrenched with the stigma of apartheid had communicated an ethnocentrism that relegated Indian culture to be inferior. Most of the young people were reluctant to

⁴⁵ Emslie, *Interview*.

⁴⁶ Journal, 1963

⁴⁷ Naidoo, Moonsamy. *Interview*. Chatsworth. 20 October 1999.

⁴⁸ Emslie, *Interview*

participate in Hindu religious activities, and were eager to study English and Afrikaans than their traditional languages. Many were also embarrassed by their "first names" and preferred English names.

The Emslies spent the first year working with children. After their disappointing start at Bayview, they concentrated their efforts in Westcliff, Chatsworth. They emulated the spirit of John Wesley who said, "The world is my parish," and worked on the street corners of Westcliff and Bayview. Rex Emslie had "open air" meetings. He took the opportunity to preach the gospel of salvation, whenever he saw an audience. While, Betty Emslie spent more of her time working with children. Rex Emslie also assisted her by making wooden benches for the children to sit. They had to endure enormous hardship to sustain their fragile work. Betty Emslie described that on several occasions, the bad weather had often destroyed her hard work on the streets, "and I remembered holding my first *Vacation Bible School*⁴⁹ on a street in Bayview. It was a cul-de-sac. The children came in great numbers, but the wind blew our materials away"⁵⁰

The Emslies dedication and commitment to the children won the respect among Hindus. Many would send their children to the Emslies Sunday schools, for they had witnessed the moral

⁴⁹ A weekly educational bible study for children held during school vacation.

⁵⁰ Ibid

progress in the lives of their children.⁵¹ Their experiences on the streets humbled the Emslies, as they struggled to adjust to a church without a building. Betty Emslie described their adjustment:

I remember purchasing a big bell, and we stood on the street corner and rang the bell. A big crowd of children surrounded us, and we started a Sunday school. I also remembered my husband saying that he was a missionary for sixteen years and at a retiring age finds himself preaching on street corners. We had to start somewhere, since there was no public building around at that time.⁵²

Betty Emslie's first convert was a little boy Ronnie Naidoo, who was miraculously healed at a Sunday school meeting in Bayview. It was Ronnie Naidoo, Mr Francis and Miss Massey from the Merebank church who assisted the Emslies in expanding the Sunday school. Mr Francis and Ronnie Naidoo attended the first Sunday school convention in Zululand.⁵³

By the end of 1963, the Emslies began to expand the work in the areas of Chatsworth. They started a Sunday school on a street in Westcliff. Soon after they made contact with a certain Mr. Luke Kuppen, who lived in the area. He was a member of the Tamil Baptist Church, where the Emslies held their previous pastorate. The Kuppen family allowed the Emslies to use the home in Road 333, Westcliff for Sunday school meetings. This served the Emslies well; the Sunday school in the area began to

T010044

⁵¹ Soobramoney

⁵² Emslie, Interview

⁵³ Ibid



grow rapidly. Five children of the Kuppen family also joined, and later became members of the church in Chatsworth.⁵⁴

3.8.3 The Church Site

The Emslies believed that the work in Chatsworth had God's blessing on it, and prayed for a church site in the vicinity of Westcliff. In spite of no adult converts they made an application for a church site to the Durban City Council in December 1963. The application was unsuccessful. The Council resolved that the Church of the Nazarene was not a registered body in South Africa, and could not own a property in Indian areas. Mrs Emslie remembered how she called the children to pray for the City Council to release the property to them.⁵⁵ In July 1964, after much persuasion, the Council granted the Emslies a piece of land situated in Westcliff. This greatly boosted the work. The Emslies immediately placed a signboard on the property, which stated, "The Future Church of the Nazarene".⁵⁶ By December 1964, the property was fully paid for and the building plan drawn by Rex Emslies was approved.⁵⁷

Peter Ganesh was one of the children who were converted by the Emslies. He described his first encounter with the new Sunday school, held at the church site, when he was eleven years old:

It was in January 1965. The Emslies had a Sunday school at the church site. I went out of curiosity. Bushes

⁵⁴ Kuppen, Timmy. *Interview*. Chatsworth. 15 July 1998.

⁵⁵ Emslie, *Interview*

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ *Journal*, 1964

surrounded the site. Part of it was neatly shaven, and there I found a group of children eagerly listening to the teachings of Jesus. There was no building, only a set of benches for the children to sit on. Their teaching had profound effect on my life. It was that Sunday school that brought me to the Christian faith.⁵⁸

The building of the church began in 1965. Even though there were no adult converts, Rex Emslie built a five hundred-sitter church. He was assisted by a certain Mr. Soobramoney and Mr. Sibiya. Also, the men folk in the community contributed their labour and the ladies provided the meals. The brothers of certain Miss Faith who later became a member of the church did the plastering of the inner wall. The total cost of the building on record was R1500. The South Africa Railways sponsored a large quantity of bricks, which was used to build a hall for the sole purpose of serving the need of the youth.⁵⁹

3.8.4 Emslies future church realized

The Emslies dream of "the future Church of the Nazarene" was realized in the life of the children they converted through the Sunday school. Many of them become responsible leaders and workers that enhanced the rapid growth of the church in the 1970's. The Church that the Emslies built was a lighthouse that attracted disillusioned young people. They made the church their social life, and it was for them a haven from abuse of drugs and alcohol, which was destroying the lives of the people in the community.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ganesh, Peter

⁵⁹ Soobramoney, Lazarus.

⁶⁰ Ronnie Naidoo. *Interview*. Chatsworth. 15 January 1998.

The Emslies success stemmed from their simplicity of character and their personal relationship with the poor. They identified with the culture of the people. Mrs. Emslie often dressed in Indian traditional style to church. Gesture such as these won the heart of the Indian community in Chatsworth.⁶¹ They also provided literacy education by empowering the Indian women to read and write.⁶² In spite of no adult conversion the Emslies saw the future Church of the Nazarene in the lives of their young converts and built a large church that would accommodate five hundred people.⁶³

3.9. Austerville church

In 1964 while working in Chatsworth the Emslies opened a new work in Austerville, Durban. Austerville is a Coloured community bordering on Merebank with a population of 11 000. The Emslies made contact with a certain Mr. Sasser whose relatives belonged to a Church of the Nazarene in Johannesburg. The Sasser family were keen to be Nazarenes, and requested the Emslies to use their home for church services.⁶⁴ Using the Sassers home as base for outreach, the Emslies found little success in converting the Coloured people. They found that most of the people were members of their traditional churches. The people were suspicious about the Church of the Nazarene,

⁶¹ Doorsamy. *Interview*. Chatsworth. 10 August 1996.

⁶² Betty Emslie contacted the World Literacy Movement for materials. The motto of the literacy campaign was "Each One Teach One". *Journal*, 1965

⁶³ Soobramoney

⁶⁴ Govender, Roy. *Interview*. Blackburn, Durban North, 16 August 1996. Also see *Journal*, 1964

because it was a new movement and were unaware of its teachings.⁶⁵ Further development of the work in Austerville will be discussed in chapter five.

3.10 Resignation of Rev Moonsamy

In 1966 Rev Moonsamy resigned from the Merebank Church. There were three factors that led to his resignation from his promising work. Firstly, he faced huge financial setbacks. He could not afford to care for his family with the low income he received from the church. At times his family had no food and he depended on friends and relatives to meet his needs. Secondly, his wife was ill and needed serious medical care, having no medical benefits it made it difficult for her to receive proper treatment. This created a scenario where the family needed the assistance and care of their extended family in Lenasia. Thirdly, he was disillusioned with the Church of the Nazarene's silence against the Apartheid Government.⁶⁶ He detested the policy taken by the Church that their missionaries should not engage in the politics of any government. Rev Moonsamy moved to Lenasia and was invited to pastor his former church, of which he accepted. In 1970 he resigned as a member of the Church of the Nazarene and joined Campus Crusade and ministered to students in the University of Durban-Westville. Mrs. Emslie stated that he strongly opposed the racial oppression and found no future for his children in South Africa.

⁶⁵ Emslie, *Interview*

In 1974 the Moonsamys left to the United State of America with his family and became a citizen of that country.⁶⁷ Not much is known about Rev Moonsamy's stay in the North America, it has been suggested by Rev Michael Porthen that the Indian Mission in Natal suffered after the resignation of Rev Moonsamy. Rev Porthen who was the second pastor of the Merebank Church stated that Rev Moonsamy was a hard worker and loved the ministry and worked tirelessly for a meagre income. He described him as a soft-spoken person whose preaching brought "immediate conviction of one's sinfulness".⁶⁸ Mrs. Emslies asserted that the Moonsamys were "cooperative and a joy to work with and they have been of great help to us and are indispensable to the work".⁶⁹

3.11 The struggle of the Emslies

3.11.1 Lack of personnel resource

Rev Moonsamy's resignation from the Indian Mission placed an added burden on the Emslies. They were shouldered with a huge workload of caring for the work in Chatsworth and Merebank. In 1966 Rev Rex Emslie asked the Regional Council to appoint an Indian minister in Merebank. He believed that Indian personnel would best understand the complex cultural dynamics of Indian

⁶⁶ Emslie, *Interview*

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Porthen, *Interview*

⁶⁹ Emslie, *Interview*.

people. He made it known to the Regional Council that missionaries should not replace national pastors as this will stifle growth and the development of national leadership.⁷⁰

3.11.2 Betty Emslie's new awakening

The Emslies carried the mission for three year from 1966 to 1968 without an additional staff. Betty Emslie was greatly stressed by the ministerial demand that was placed on her. Above the responsibility of a housewife and caring for her three children she described her hectic Sunday schedule:

We were responsible for three churches in Durban. On Sunday morning I would hold Sunday school classes in Chatsworth. After which I would rush to Merebank and preach in the morning service. In the afternoon I held Sunday school at Austerville. I was tired of all the different programs, if I was to get an additional workload from the Regional Council I was going to scream. I must admit that I was so busy with church work that I lost my first love for God and my joy in serving Him.⁷¹

Betty Emslie was overwhelmed and frustrated by the workload she had to endure. She admitted that she had no more strength to continue. One evening, in June 1966 while she was preparing a sermon on Pentecost, she read a book by Samuel Chadwick, "The way to Pentecost." She was overwhelmed by a strong presence of God. She believed that God spoke to her in the second person and wanted her to have the power of the Holy Sprit. After the experienced she stated:

⁷⁰ *Journal, 1966*

⁷¹ *Emslie, Interview*

I fell on my knees at the base of my bedside and I sensed the same kind of sense that Elijah felt at the cave of Horeb. When I heard the voice of God I remembered covering my head the way Elijah covered his face. I was very aware that God was present and the joy of heaven passed through my heart. That experience was greater than my conversion and it changed my whole life. Instead of carrying the work, the work carried me.⁷²

Betty Emslie felt that God was dealing with the missionaries and the Indian Mission. She wrote to Rev William Esselstyn who was in charge of the work in Africa and described her newfound experience and her renewed enthusiasm for the work in Natal. She began to preach and testify with great joy and some people were converted.⁷³

3.12 The first candidate for ministry

In July 1966 Betty Emslie preached a sermon on "Christian Mission" at a home prayer meeting in Merebank and Mr. Sonny Massey was converted and he felt called into the full-time ministry. Rev Emslie was delighted that God called a young man to serve in the Mission. He organized employment for Massey to work at Hooch Engineering Company so as to enable him to pay his way through Bible College. Massey worked for a year and left with his family for Rehoboth Nazarene College, which was relocated to Cape Town.⁷⁴ Rev Emslie recommended Massey as a probationer and stated his frustration of finding candidates for the ministry in the Regional Council Meeting:

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Massey, Lazarus. *Interview*. Richards Bay, Natal. 3 July 2000.

⁷⁴ Ibid

It has been a sore test to wait so long for students but in speaking to people about the Lord's service we have tried to avoid putting pressure, which should only come from Divine hands. We sense a real call in Sonny Massey and know that the Lord is going to add to his number.⁷⁵

3.13 The financial problem affecting the Indian Mission

The early years of the Indian work was largely affected by financial resources. From the outset of its mission trust, the Church of the Nazarene supported a vigorous policy of establishing viable self-supporting churches at the expense of the welfare of its "national" pastors.⁷⁶ In the case of Rev Moonsamy he was dependent on the income that was generated by his local church in Merebank. Most of his members came from the lower income group. The income that he received from the Coloured and Indian Regional Council did not meet his basic needs.⁷⁷

The financial hardship Moonsamy endured created enormous strain in his personal life and ministry. This discouraged a lot of young people entering the ministry of the Church of the Nazarene.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the missionary employees were given better care by the Church. In the case of the Penns and the Emslies a decent house was purchased in the white suburb of Glenmore in Durban and their salaries were not disclosed to their colleagues in the ministry. While Rev Moonsamy lived in

⁷⁵ *Journal*, 1968

⁷⁶ Perumal, Jason. *Interview*. Chatsworth. 12 August 1996

⁷⁷ Emslie, *Interview*.

⁷⁸ Ganesh

a rented garage on his arrival, and a year later was moved to a council house for lower income groups. In spite of this huge setback Rev Moonsamy contributed largely in building the Merebank Church of the Nazarene. One wonders whether the disparity in stipend had played a large part in Rev Moonsamy leaving the Church of the Nazarene. Did the context of Apartheid or the scenario of developing countries affect the mind set of the Church when distributing stipend and housing to its personnel? These questions would be adequately dealt with in the final chapter of this research.

3.14 Conclusion

The "Indian Mission" was born in the Kliptown Church of the Nazarene when Rev Taylor led Samuel Moonsamy to the Christian faith. It was Moonsamy who reached out to the Indians in Lenasia and Natal. Despite the financial hardship he built a church in Merebank. The work also grew under the leadership of Rex and Betty Emslies. Their dedication to the Indian work enabled them to establish works in Chatsworth and Austerville. They worked largely with children and developed Sunday Schools. Most of these children became active lay workers who largely contributed to the rapid growth of the Church in the seventies.

It is without a doubt that the tireless effort of Samuel Moonsamy and the Emslies has made the church in Chatsworth and Merebank centrifugal force of mission centres in the Indian community. The next chapter will deal with the expansion of the

Indian Mission in Natal. Both Chatsworth and Merebank aggressively launched the work in other areas of Natal.

Chapter Four

4. Further development in Merebank and Chatsworth

4.1 Introduction

The leadership of Michael Porthen and Ahmed Subjee greatly added the growth of the work among the Indians in Natal.¹ In the previous chapter, it was explained that Rev Moonsamy and Emslies laid the foundation for growth by developing strong laypeople. The minister's financial problems and poor accommodations are also dealt with in this chapter. Also mentioned were the growth of the lay worker and the division of the Chatsworth church. It finally concludes with the retirement of the Emslies and Betty Emslie's assessment of the work in Natal. It would be fitting to conclude that under the directive of Porthen and Subjee the Indian Mission experienced phenomenal growth in the seventies. While Porthen and Subjee confined their work in Merebank and Chatsworth, the Emslies concentrated their efforts in other areas of Durban, which will be discussed in the foregoing chapters.

4.2 The arrival of two indigenous ministers

In 1968 two ministers from Lenasia, Johannesburg, arrived in Durban. They were Rev Michael Sivalingum Porthen and Rev Ahmed Subjee, who were the early converts of the Lenasia Nazarene

¹ *Journal*, 1968

Church. It was Rev Samuel Moonsamy who led them to the Christian faith. They had developed their churches into major mission centres and trained personnel to establish churches in other areas of Natal. It would be important for this study to relate the lives of Rev Porthen and Rev Subjee who had developed the Indian work after the Emslies.²

4 2.1 The life of Rev Michael Porthen

Michael Porthen was born in Bertrams, Johannesburg in 1935. His father Charlie Porthen was a devoted Hindu priest. Charlie Porthen was famous for transcendental rituals, notably "fire walking."³ His wife Angelina did not understand Hinduism and rejected it. At the age of fourteen, Michael Porthen first heard the gospel at a Salvation Army meeting, and did not respond to it. His teenage life was a troubled one and was disillusioned with religion. He became an atheist. He wanted to be a medical doctor but dropped out of school.⁴ As a young man he worked as a supervisor at General Electronic. He later married Mary Davids and lived in Lenasia. In 1961 Rev Samuel Moonsamy visited the Porthens. He found Michael Porthen with a knife in his hand in a violent rage with his uncle, who forced him to perform the customary Hindu rituals for his newborn child. Rev Moonsamy invited Porthen to his church and promised that God would heal his uncontrollable anger.⁵ One Sunday in a

² Porthen, Ganesh, K Govender, and Soobramoney.

³ *Fire walking* was a common Hindu practice, where people in a transcendental state walk barefoot over hot coals of fire. —

⁴ Dayhoff

⁵ Porthen, *Interview*

camp meeting at the Church of the Nazarene, Porthen was convicted by the preaching of Rev William Esselstyn. He testified of a religious experience that changed his life:

I was eighteen at the time. I felt a load of burden being lifted from me. The stars were shining again and life was beautiful. I had a new peace within me and I felt my sin forgiven. I was free and I remembered singing all night. I was overflowing with joy and God was real to me. From that day, I never looked back and enjoyed going to church and serving the Lord.⁶

Michael Porthen continued to pray for the conversion of his father. In 1971 his father had a vision of Christ and subsequently converted to the Christian faith and said publicly "From today I am going to serve Jesus Christ". The same day, he broke his Hindu idols and burned his shrine. After which, he requested for a Tamil Bible to study the life of Jesus. Shortly thereafter, the entire Porthen family was converted to the Christian faith.⁷ Michael Porthen became an active lay worker in the Lenasia church, and in 1963 he was called into full-time ministry. He enrolled at the Nazarene Bible College in 1965.⁸ In 1968 Rev Rex Emslie invited him to Merebank.

4.2.2 The life of Rev Ahmed Subjee

Ahmed Subjee was born in Sophiatown, Johannesburg in 1942. He was a troubled Muslim teenager attracted to the criminal element of his neighbourhood. He joined a group of gangsters who committed violent crimes in Sophiatown. In 1955 he

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Dayhoff, 120

described an event in which he stabbed a young man and almost killed him. Subjee was afraid of going to jail and sought for help. Added to his demise, he lost five close friends, two were stabbed to death and the others were drowned while he was swimming with them. This was the beginning of his journey that led him to the Christian faith.⁹

Subjee realized his utter hopelessness, and prayed for help, and felt that God touched his life. He wanted to know which God had responded to him. After inquiring, his mother gave him the Quran to study and promised that he would find peace in his heart. He studied and recited the Quran to win the approval of God, and felt the discipline did not help him. On 31 December 1960 Rev Samuel Moonsamy visited his home and invited him to watch a film on the crucifixion of Jesus. There, Subjee was converted to the Christian faith. He cried while watching the film and testified of his conversion:

Something strange and glorious happened to me that evening. I knelt and confessed my sins to Jesus Christ. My sinful chains seemed to have snapped. I felt like a new person. I walked outside and saw a different world the flowers were beautiful, the trees swayed so majestically, the stars were brilliant and for the first time I felt God's forgiveness.¹⁰

After his conversion in 1962, he attended a youth camp meeting in Johannesburg. There, Mrs Emslie the speaker led Ahmed Subjee to the experience of entire sanctification.¹¹ He said at that

⁸ Emslie, *Interview*

⁹ Subjee, Ahmed. *Interview*. Cape Town, 6 July 2000. Also see Dayhoff, 121

¹⁰ Subjee

¹¹ Emslie, *Interview*

time he did not know anything much about the Christian faith, but at that camp meeting he felt free from the chains of sin. "I felt myself had died, and a new self emerged in me, and there after I wanted nothing but God."¹²

Subjee's family was ashamed of his conversion and tried to persuade him to change his mind. He kept his newfound faith after reading the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:37,38 "if anyone loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me". When Subjee was baptized his family ostracized him. His mother cursed him and preferred him dead. Against all odds, Subjee was prepared to forfeit his own life for his newfound faith.¹³

Subjee and Porthen were active lay workers at the Lenasia church. It was the enthusiasm and commitment of these young men that carried the work in Lenasia after Rev Moonsamy was called to Durban. In 1965 Ahmed Subjee offered for the ordained ministry and attended the Rehoboth Nazarene Bible College in Cape Town. At first, he was reluctant to go to Bible College. He felt that the three year study was a waste of valuable time, "when there are people in need of the gospel".¹⁴ In 1968 he was invited by Rev Emslie to pastor the church in Chatsworth.¹⁵

¹² Subjee

¹³ Ibid and Dayhoff, 122

¹⁴ Dayhoff, 121, and Subjee

¹⁵ *Journal*, 2 July 1968

4.3 Further development of the Merebank Church

4.3.1 Rev Porthen in Merebank

The arrival of Rev Porthen in March 1968 brought a renewed sense of mission to the congregation in Merebank. The Emslies were greatly relieved that a national minister assumed the pastorate of the promising work. They found it difficult to keep up with the pastoral visitation, and acknowledged that many potential converts were unreachable because of the lack of trained personnel.¹⁶ Three months into his ministry, Rev Porthen showed large gain in membership. Rev Emslie reported to the Regional Council in July 1968, that he was happy, in the way, God was blessing the ministry of Rev Porthen, and that his biblical preaching had "borne fruit in the salvation of souls." It was also reported that the arrival of Mary Porthen had considerably improved the women's work.¹⁷

4.3.2 The poor accommodation

When Rev Porthen arrived with his family, he was without accommodation. The house, which accommodated the Moonsamys were not available for rental. The Porthens with their five children lived in a servant quarter, and shared the same bathroom facilities with their landlord. The Emslies were ashamed that they could not provide Porthens with a decent house and applied to Nazarenes in North America for funding. The Porthens endured

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

hardships and appreciated the little that God had given them. In spite of the situation Rev Porthen never regretted his call and love for God. In his report to the Natal District Assembly of 1995, he stated:

When I look back at the full ministry that God has given me, I cannot thank Him enough. Sometimes I feel that He has given me so much of Himself that I am spoilt and want more and more and more.¹⁸

The Porthens continued to live without a parsonage for five years. In December 1973 they rented a council house that was far more comfortable than their previous dwelling. Rev R E Thorpe the new superintendent of the Natal District was elated in his report to the District meeting, and said "God wondrously gave us a home for our pastor and his wife and the blessing of the Lord has been upon his labour."¹⁹

4.3.3 The church building

In 1964 Rev Emslie had applied to the Durban City Council for a church site in Merebank. It was reported that most of the prescribed land was already allocated to other religious organizations.²⁰ The Merebank congregation was forced to relocate five times within ten year of its existence. Firstly, in 1962 the church operated in the home of Rev Moonsamy. A year later services were held in 98 Nizam Road, Merebank. The

¹⁸ Porthen, Michael. *District Superintendent's Report for 1994/95*. 14 Oct. 1995

¹⁹ *Natal Pioneer District Assembly; Coloured and Indian Field; Church of the Nazarene*. The first District Assembly Minutes, Chatsworth, Durban, 7 Dec. 1974.

²⁰ Emslie, *Interview*

same it moved to the home of Mr Siva Naidoo. After which the congregation out grew the garage and move to Nizam Primary School. Two classrooms were used for this purpose. In spite of the huge setback the congregation grew rapidly. ²¹

After ten years of anticipation for a church site, which was not forth coming, the Barberton First Church of the Nazarene and the Warren First Church of the Nazarene in North America purchased a building for the Merebank congregation. A Council house in Padbani Road was purchased, and converted to a church building that was able to accommodate three hundred people. In 1975 the house that the Porthens rented was also purchased for R12 000.²² On 25 December 1976 Rev. Philip Bedwell, the rector of the Nazarene Bible College, dedicated the church and the parsonage.²³

4.3.4 The ministry of Rev Porthen

In 1974 the Merebank church recorded a membership of 112 with 35 junior members and a wayside Sunday school of 1530 children. The statistics in the Minutes of 1988 recorded 495 members and a Sunday school membership of 570 with an annual income of R39213. The rapid growth was the result of Rev Porthen's charismatic ministry. He was a revivalist and his evangelical preaching brought many people to the Christian faith. The missionaries, in pioneering new churches, often used him as a

²¹ Porthen, Michael. *Brochure: Church of the Nazarene Dedication Service of the Merebank Building*, 25 Dec. 1976.

²² *First District Assembly Minutes, 1974*

camp speaker.²⁴ Porthen was also endowed with spiritual gifts, which had contributed in building his Church. Rev Porthen was also known for his gift of exercising demons. A section of his converts who came to his church had been delivered from demon possession.

The success of Rev Porthen's ministry was his availability to assist people in need. He would go to extremes. At one time, he travelled to Port Elizabeth to help a family oppressed by demons. Also in 1982 he was awakened at three in the morning to pray for a fifteen years old Hindu girl who revealed a psychotic condition. She was delivered from demonic oppression. After which, she became a faithful member of the Merebank church.²⁵ Porthen also had a deep spiritual life, ever since his conversion. He prayed at five o'clock every morning. He believed that his prayer life greatly assisted him in the shaping of his ministry.²⁶ He was also instrumental in pioneering several churches in Natal. He opened churches in Ispingo, Umkomaas, Port Shepstone, Mt. Edgecombe, Verulam, Tongaat and Clare Estate.²⁷

4.3.5 Development of lay leadership

The success of the growth of the Merebank church was also the development of lay people who were instrumental in leading

²³ Porthen, *Brochure*

²⁴ Govender, Kristopher

²⁵ Dayhoff, 121

²⁶ Porthen, *Interview*

²⁷ Porthen, *District Superintendent report 1994/95*

people to the Christian faith. Porthen trained and involved his leaders in home visitation. Particularly visiting non-Christians. Camp meetings was a common source of evangelism which was used to reach the "unsaved". The members of Merebank strongly supported these events.²⁸ Kristopher Govender, one of the early converts of Rev Porthen described the involvement of the lay people in Merebank:

It was a common practice after Sunday services to go on tract drive and pray for the sick. The camp meetings were held twice a year and the entire church would pray and fast for people to be saved and they were vitally involved in inviting people to these meetings. Many people found the Lord.²⁹

The highlight of the Merebank church was the camp meeting of 1973. Many people were saved and some became active lay witnesses. Lay leaders such as Mr Joseph Perumal, Mr Kishore Bhadar Dutt, Mr Eddie Simoen, Mr Dan Govender, Mr Charles Moonsamy and Mr Kristopher Govender and a certain Mr Bandy and Mr Cecil were converted that year. The camp meetings were largely responsible for the growth and development of church.³⁰

Porthen also produced several ministers for the ministry. They were Kristopher Govender (1975), Charles Munsamy (1975), Nana Naidoo (1976), Reggie Naidoo (1976), Frank Pillay (1978), Charles Simeon (1978), Nathan Porthen (1981), John Nulliah (1983), David Williams (1983), Titus Joseph (1985), and Martha Porthen (1991).³¹ Many of them opened new churches in other

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Govender, Kristopher

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Porthen, *District Superintendent's Report 1994/95*.

areas of Natal. Their contributions to the Indian work will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.5 Further development of the Chatsworth Church

4.5.1 Rev Subjee in Chatsworth

In 1966 Rev Subjee was invited as a speaker at a camp meeting in Chatsworth. The Emslies were impressed with his enthusiasm and commitment to the work, and invited him to pastor the church after his theological training. The Emslies were due to go on furlough and needed the dependable character of Subjee to carry the work.³² On 14 April 1968 the Chatsworth church was constituted with ten full members.³³ The first board meeting was held on 12 May 1968 with Rev Subjee as the resident minister. The members of the board were Mrs Ganesh, Mr Chris Moonsamy, Mr Samuel Govender and Mr Les Percy Govender.³⁴

4.5 2 Living by faith

When Rev Subjee arrived in Chatsworth he was without accommodation. The Emslies did not have the financial resources to meet his basic needs.³⁵ He lived in the church vestry for two years and relied on the goodwill of his members.³⁶ A

³² Emslie, *Interview*

³³ *Journal*, 1968

³⁴ *First Minutes of the Board Meeting from May 1968 to August 1973.* Church of the Nazarene. Chatsworth

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ Ganesh

certain Mrs Ganesh regularly provided him with meals. He regarded material security meaningless in comparison to souls being converted to Christian faith.³⁷ On 25 June 1969 he married Brenda Phiffer and live in vestry, until July 1970, after Rex Emslie built a parsonage on the church property.³⁸

4.5.3 Growth of lay workers

When Rev Subjee arrived in January 1968 he found six members and a vibrant Sunday school. The church members needed a full time leader to guide and nurture their newfound faith. Rev Subjee had the character and vision that the church needed. From the outset of his ministry, the church began to grow in numbers. In the first five years of his ministry he worked with the Sunday school. Their average ages were twelve and thirteen. He developed them into an active youth.³⁹

By 1972 half of the church board consisted of young adults. They were the original nucleus group that developed the church in the seventies. Some of the young people were Chris and Vincent Moonsamy, Graham Ganesh, Peter Ganesh, Bernard Thomas, Lazarus Soobramoney, Benjamin Soobramoney, Vicki Perumal, Emmanuel Doorsamy, Kamala Pillay, David Luke, Sonna Pillay, Dicky Govender and Sidam Moodley.⁴⁰ In 1973 the youth group of the Chatsworth Church formed a gospel musical band called the

³⁷ Subjee

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Soobramoney

⁴⁰ *First Minutes of the Board Meeting*. Chatsworth Church of the Nazarene

"Scoffers Creed". Their music was instrumental in attracting other youths who were largely influenced by the American "Woodstock generation"⁴¹ of the seventies. Most were delivered from alcohol and drug addiction, which was prevalent at the time.⁴²

4.5.4. Revival in Chatsworth Church

In 1976 the church experienced a phenomenal growth. Every part of Chatsworth was touched by the presence of the Church of the Nazarene. Sunday schools were started in a number of districts in Chatsworth. The church was flooded with new converts. Pews and benches were purchased to accommodate the influx of people. The Sunday service was televised live and screened in the youth hall to cater for the over crowding attendees.⁴³ The church also attracted many people who were disenchanted with life. A certain Mr Nad Chetty and his brother gave their lives to God. They were known for their notorious behaviour. At the time of their conversion they were contemplating to avenge the death of their brother. It was Rev Subjee who intervened and led them to the Christian faith. There after, they became active members of the church and was instrumental in leading a number of alcoholic and drug addicts to Christ. Mr Nad Chetty was also the leader of the evangelism team of the church faithfully

⁴¹ Woodstock: It was a North American musical festival held in 1969, which contributed to the abuse of drug and alcohol.

⁴² Soobramoney

⁴³ Ibid, Ganesh, and Subjee.

visited and cared for the members. In 1985 his brother Morgan Chetty also joined the church and became a minister.⁴⁴

4.5.5 The rise of ministers

Rev Subjee was instrumental in developing the talents of young people. He created in them a passion for mission. He would often use the pulpit to preach the "call of God" to full-time ministry, and over the years, young people responded to God's call in their lives. Many had made great personal sacrifice to enter the ministry. Rev Dan Kisten who was a candidate from Chatsworth, recalled his journey to the ordained ministry:

I was young man, passionate to win souls for Jesus. My desire was to do the will of God in my life.... He called me to the full-time ministry, and I immediately went to Bible College with my family. I only had money to pay my first years fees. It was an enormous challenge; finance was hard to come by. I had very little support from my church. I was on my own.... It was tough.⁴⁵

The following ministers were candidates from the Church of the Nazarene in Chatsworth: Kitty Govender (1974), Roy Govender (1976), Emmanuel Doorsamy (1978), Abel Pillay (1978), Morgan Chetty (1982), Dan Kisten (1983), Manivasagren Pillay (1984), Colin Elliott (1980), Matthew Simeon (1981), and Jason Perumal (1985). Three candidates from Chatsworth did not complete their training: Vicki Perumal, Badon Govender and Kenneth Benjamin.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Subjee

⁴⁵ Kisten, Dan. *Interview*. Phoenix. 20 September 1996.

4.5.6 Dissatisfied members

Ninety active members of the Chatsworth church resigned in June 1984. They were dissatisfied with the management style of Rev Subjee. A letter was sent to Rev Jenkins, the general superintendent of the Africa Region in Kansas City, to assist the church in resolving its problems.⁴⁷ Rev Steigleder presiding superintendent of the District tried to resolve the division in the Annual General Meeting of 1983. This culminated into a violent outburst where some of the dissatisfied members were assaulted. The invitation of Rev Subjee was brought to a congregational vote. Ninety members voted against his reinstatement. The division adversely affected the spiritual growth of the church, culminating in huge loss in finance and membership.⁴⁸

There were four factors that led to the division of the Chatsworth church. The dissatisfied members felt that Rev Subjee was autocratic and manoeuvred the decisions of the church's board meetings. Secondly they felt that he favoured certain members and give them prominence.⁴⁹ Thirdly they were against the increase in his stipend and allowances.⁵⁰ Fourthly, they felt that he was not open to criticism and used the pulpit to rebuke his critics.⁵¹ Peter Ganesh stated that the District

⁴⁶ *District Assembly Minutes, 1974-1991*

⁴⁷ Ganesh

⁴⁸ Soobramoney, and Ganesh.

⁴⁹ Naidoo, Ronnie

⁵⁰ Ganesh

⁵¹ Naidoo, Ronnie

leadership of the church did not have the trained personnel to deal effectively with conflict situations. This had largely effected the development of the Indian work in Natal, which will be dealt with in the concluding chapter.⁵²

4.5.7 Subjee moves to Cape Town

Those who left the Chatsworth church were active financial contributors and lay workers. The loss of membership had affected the stability and development of the Chatsworth church. This had greatly affected Rev Subjee ministry. He was also dissatisfied with the district management in resolving the problem. In 1987 he accepted an invitation to pastor the Church of the Nazarene in Mitchell Plain, Cape Town. Rev Massey was invited to pastor the church in 1988. He served the church for two years. Rev Matthew Simeon who assisted Rev Massey became the minister of the church.⁵³

4.6 The Natal Pioneer District

The Indian work in Natal, which was controlled by the Coloured and Indian Regional Council from Cape Town, felt that Indian work in Natal had grown and it had the personnel to co-ordinate its own affairs and consolidate its work independently. In 1974 the Indian work in Natal became the Natal Pioneer District of the Coloured and Indian Field. On 7 December 1974 the Natal district had it's first District Assembly in the Church of the Nazarene in Chatsworth. Rev R E Thorpe, a missionary was

⁵² Ganesh

⁵³ Ibid

appointed the first superintendent of the newly constituted district. The first Advisory Board members were elected with two ministers and two laypersons; Rev Porthen, Rev Subjee, Mr Les Percy Govender and Mr S Moodley. Rev Thorpe and Rev P Steigleder (chairperson) were not elected officers but were appointed to the Advisory Board because of their missionary status.⁵⁴ In 1979 Rev Ahmed Subjee became the first district superintendent of the Coloured and Indian work in Natal.⁵⁵

4.7 The Emslies assessment of the Indian work

The Emslies felt the Indian work was far more exciting and challenging when compared to rural African work. They found the Indians "intelligent and eager to learn".⁵⁶ Betty Emslie said that the Indians were very poor and she remembered providing young mothers with milk to feed their babies, hoping it would attract other women to the church. She also maintained that the Indian women had a poor self esteem and felt inferior to their husbands.⁵⁷

When confronting the Hindus with the gospel, Rev Emslie approached them as people who are "lost in the darkness of Hinduism" and they needed to be saved from this condemned way of life. In spite of his fundamental idealism of Hindus, he was tactful and sensitive in approaching the Indians with the

⁵⁴ *First District Assembly Minutes, 1974*

⁵⁵ Subjee

⁵⁶ Emslie, *Interview*

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

gospel. Betty Emslie on the other hand was far more open-minded. The Emslie also found the Indians friendly and benevolent, which made it easy for them to communicate the gospel. Betty Emslie believed that the breakdown in Hinduism led to the young people being opened to Christianity:

We found that the Indians were very receptive to the gospel; the young people flooded the church. I think that the decline in Hinduism started among the women. It was the women folk who were responsible to teach religion in their homes, and they failed to do so, because the women became working mothers and often came home late in the evening and had no time to teach religion to their children. Another factor that led to the decline of Hinduism was the young people were unfamiliarity with their own languages. Most were attending English schools and preferred to speak English. Thus Hinduism lost its impetus, because the Indian languages were no more functional, as it languages were embroiled in Hindu philosophy.⁵⁸

On the political aspect of the Indian life, the Emslies failed to address this issue. Their motto was to "win soul" and not to engage the church members in addressing the political problem of the country believing that it would deter them from its fundamental objective, which is to convert people to Christ. Betty Emslie regretted for not engaging in a balance ministry. She also felt that the Church of the Nazarene was silence against the evil of Apartheid and wilfully avoided the issue. She was sad that nobody in the Church of the Nazarene could help Rev Samuel Moonsamy to deal with his anger against the system of Apartheid.

⁵⁸ Ibid

4.8 The Emslies retire

After working for twelve years in Natal, the Emslies were called to work in Cape Town. They lectured in the Nazarene Bible College and were involved in opening the Church of the Nazarene in Mannenburg. After three year in Cape Town the Emslies retired from active mission work. In 1985 Rev Rex Emslie died and his funeral was held at the Church of the Nazarene in Chatsworth. Rev Samuel Moonsamy, who appreciated the dedication of the Emslies to the Indian work, attended the funeral.⁵⁹ After retiring as a missionary Betty Emslie became a political activist and joined the Black Sash movement. Her daughter Jenny, an activist of the African National Congress, largely influenced her. Mrs Emslie was dissatisfied with the Church of the Nazarene's commitment to social changes and after her retirement she attended the Anglican Church, whom she believed was committed to social changes in the country.⁶⁰

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the growth of the Merebank and Chatsworth Church. Rev Porthen and Rev Subjee had been credited for their personal sacrifice and dedication in growing the work in Natal. It was their conversion experience that made them passionate in converting the Indians to the Christian faith. The growth of work was also largely due to the commitment of the lay workers. It was Porthen and Subjee that groomed their

⁵⁹ Emslie, *Interview*

members into active workers. The division in Chatsworth had greatly affected the Church and eventuated Rev Subjee's departure to Cape Town. The ministry of Porthen and Subjee had produce twenty-one minister who extended the work in Natal. The last section of this chapter had dealt with Emslies assessment of their ministry in Natal and their retirement. The next chapter will deal with the growth and development of new churches in Natal.

⁶⁰ Ibid

Chapter Five

5. The development of Church of the Nazarene in the South Coast of Natal.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the expansion of the Indian church in the South Coast of Natal. The ministry of Rev Porthen and Subjee had produced twenty-one ministers. Ten of them were responsible for pioneering new Indian churches in South Coast Natal. It was a common practice for superintendents to provide incoming ministers from Bible College with a new work. Very little attention was given to the financial welfare of ministers and their families. Ministers had to generate income by increasing the membership of their churches and were also forced also by circumstances to stress on biblical tithing. Also discussed is the economic hardship experienced by the ministers, which led to the decline of the work in most areas. The lack of effective leadership and improper care for ministers led to them resigning from the church.

5.2 Further development of Austerville

The work in Austerville was started by the Emslies in 1964, which was also mentioned in chapter three of this study. Regular services were held in the home of a certain Mr Sasser.¹

¹ Emslie, *Interview*

The work in Austerville had mainly developed along the line of Sunday schools. Up until 1973 it had an average attendance of 250 children. The Merebank Sunday school teachers also assisted the work. In November 1974 regular Sunday service were held at the Durban East School in Austerville. District superintendent Rev R.E Thorpe was in charge of the work. He reported to the District Assembly in 1974 of the slow development of the work. He said, "The attendance, so far, has not been too encouraging. However we believe that with time and patience it will grow".² In 1975 Rev R E Thorpe appointed Mr Nanakishore Bhadar Dutt of the Merebank church, to serve as a lay pastor in Austerville.³ After which Rev Roy Govender was appointed as a pastor of the church. He served as a minister until 1985. The church grew under his leadership.⁴ Rev Govender was instrumental in developing the Austerville into an organized church. It would be important for this study to document his journey to the ordained ministry.

5.2.1 Rev Roy Govender in Austerville

Roy Govender was a Hindu. He believed his conversion was a journey and not a crisis experienced which was common to many Nazarenes. The process of his conversion started after inner awareness of his spiritual condition. He felt tired of living a meaningless life and wanted a change. During his contemplation he was invited to a youth meeting at the Church of the Nazarene

² *First District Assembly Minutes, 1974*

³ Govender, Roy. *Interview*. Blackburn, Durban. 16 August 1996.

⁴ Porthen, *Interview*

in Chatsworth. The Nazarenes befriended him and made him the coach of their soccer team. Govender enjoyed their companionship and wanted to emulate their Christian character. Subsequently, he began attending the Sunday services. There, he was converted after hearing a sermon by Rev Subjee. He felt that the sermon was relating the story of his notorious life. Immediately after his conversion he got involved in the programmes of the church, and also became a Sunday school teacher.⁵

In October 1974 Roy Govender was called to the ordained ministry, after being challenged by his minister. In 1976 he attended the Nazarene Bible College in Cape Town. It was a certain Mrs Elna Peterson from the United States of America, who financially assisted him in his theological training. After graduating in October 1978, Roy Govender was appointed by the then district missionary superintendent N D Zurcher to pastor Austerville church. When he arrived in January 1979, he and his wife Joyce was housed in a servant quarters at 19 Junnagarth Road, Merebank. He received a stipend of one hundred rands. He started the work with two adults and seven children. Most of members who were associated with the Austerville work joined other churches, including the Sasser family. In spite of financial difficulties and lack of transportation, Roy Govender recorded eight members in the first year of his ministry and a Sunday school attendance of twenty-three.⁶

⁵ Govender, Roy

⁶ Ibid

5.2.2 The Church grows

In 1981 Michael and Julia Davidson donated a vehicle to Roy Govender and also paid for its maintenance. Their contact was made possible through their children, who attended the Sunday school. The vehicle had elevated Govender's burden of travelling by public transport to the church. Roy Govender found it difficult to convert the adults, as most were members of other churches in the area. He concentrated his energy on children and young adult. He used his experience and knowledge of football to teach the youth. By 1983 he attracted forty young people to the church. Many were escaping the abuse of drugs, alcohol and "gangsterism", which was common in Austerville at that time. In 1984 the crime rate in Austerville was the one of the highest in the world. Rev Govender said that murders were happening every day, which led the government to declare a "state of emergency" in 1984. The South African Defence Force was deployed to quell the violence. This gave Rev Govender a tremendous opportunity to use the church as a haven for youth of Austerville.⁷

In 1982 Rev N D Zurcher made R48000 available to build the Austerville church. The minister together with the youth assisted in the building of the church, and Elma Peterson carpeted the floor. In October 1983 Rev Zurcher dedicated the church building.⁸ The highlight of church of the Nazarene was in 1984, when three gangsters came to rob the church of it's

⁷ Ibid

⁸ *Minutes of the General Assembly, Chatsworth, November 1984*

offering and found themselves repenting at the altar. Roy Govender described that event:

It was during a Sunday service, when three young men attended the service. They were Roderick, Anthony and Booiman. According to their plan, two would respond to the invitation for prayer, and third would steal the offering. Their plan was foiled when the two who responded for prayer gave their lives to God. Roderick and Anthony became active lay workers in the church.⁹

In 1990 Roderick Mottie was the first person from the Austerville church to offer for the ordained ministry. Due to his financial constrains he withdrew his candidature after his first year of studies.¹⁰

5.2.3 Rev Roy Govender struggles

Rev Roy Govender struggled financially. He felt uncomfortable with taking money from the church offering to meet travelling cost. He used his own resources to meet the needs of his family and ministry. He stated in his interview:

In terms of the financial situation I earned peanuts. Austerville was for me an opportunity to serve God. In 1979 I was paid R100 as salary, and R75 for housing allowance. These amounts never increased during my years of service. This had adversely affected the security and health of family.¹¹

In 1985 Rev Roy Govender resigned as an elder of the Church of the Nazarene, due to marital problems. The same year, the

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Mottie, Roderick. Interview. Austerville. 19 July 2000

¹¹ Govender, Roy

church had 32 full members, 12 probation members and 130 juniors with an annual income of R2011.¹² No attempt was made by the District leadership to counsel Rev Govender. He felt that the Church have not made provision to assist him with his spiritual problem, and because of his failed marriage the leadership were not willing to restore him. He worked as a boilermaker for six years. While living in Ispingo he became associated with Ispingo Methodist Society. There after in 1991 he was appointed as a lay pastor of the Phoenix Methodist Society. The same year Rev Roy Govender applied for the ordained ministry. The Methodist Conference appointed him to Umgeni Circuit in Durban. In 1998 Govender became the superintendent minister of the Umgeni Circuit.¹³

5.2.4 Austerville struggles

In 1986 Rev David Ruiters and his wife Jeraldine was invited from George to pastor the church in Austerville. The District could not afford to accommodate the family. He lived with his family in the church vestry, hoping that the Austerville church would grow and became financially viable, but nothing was forthcoming. In spite of the able assistants of Mr John Claasen, Mrs Harkam Hartley and Mr Roderick and Bernice Mottie the work remained stagnant. Ruiters tried to revive the work by hosting several camp meetings in 1986 and 1987.¹⁴

¹² *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1985*

¹³ Govender, Roy

¹⁴ Mottie

In 1988 the Austerville church received a donation of R20 000 from Alabaster Funds, for building a parsonage. The monies were used for district administration, and were not made available to the Austerville work. In 1990 Rev Ruiters accepted an invitation to his home church in George.¹⁵ In 1991 the membership dropped to twenty-one with an annual income of R2449. Eighteen of them were regarded as inactive members. The same year Mr Roderick Mottie was appointed as a lay pastor of the Austerville Church. He continues to serve the church in this capacity.¹⁶

5.3 Development of Shallcross church

5.3 1 The beginning of the work

The arrival of Subjee and Porthen in Durban enabled the Emslies to concentrate their efforts in opening new works in other Indian areas. The Emslies were also pressured to provide a new work for the incoming pastor, Lazarus Massey. In 1969 the Emslie held a camp meeting in Shallcross. The congregations of Chatsworth and Merebank were invited to attend. Some of the lay people assisted the Emslies in distributing Christian literature in Shallcross. The Emslies first converts were the Pandaram family. Regular services were held in their home in Zoutpanburg Lane.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ *17th Annual Assembly Journal*. Natal Regular District. Church of the Nazarene. Durban Central, 30 November 1990

In 1970 Rev Massey was appointed to develop the existing work in Shallcross. Massey and his wife Linda were housed in a council flat in Zoutpanburg Lane.¹⁸ The initial years of Rev Massey's ministry was a struggle. Firstly, he had no transport and finances were hard to come by. The work struggled to grow, as most Indians were attracted to the charismatic churches that offered dramatic and emotional religion at that time. Secondly, a break away group from a charismatic church joined his church. They assumed immediate control of the leadership and undermined his authority.¹⁹ The problem persisted for four year and adversely affected the growth of the church. In 1974 the membership was nine, with two on probation. The same year missionary R E Thorpe constituted the Shallcross church.²⁰

In 1976 the new superintendent Rev N D Zurcher received a mission grant of R60 000 and a church in Shallcross. In 1982 Rev Massey accepted an invitation to Lenasia church. Rev Reggie Naidoo was offered the Shallcross church, but declined. Rev Abel Pillay was appointed to the Shallcross church, after spending two years developing a new church in Verulam. When he arrived in Shallcross at the end of 1982 the membership was forty with twenty children. Pillay was a gifted counsellor and was strong in the area of pastoral visitation, which was greatly needed for the work to survive.²¹ His aggressive visitation attracted new converts, and the church began to grow

¹⁷ Sewcharan, Michael. Interview. 15 September 1999.

¹⁸ *First District Assembly Minutes.*

¹⁹ Massey

²⁰ *Journal*, 1974

²¹ Soobramoney

rapidly. In two years of Pillay's ministry the membership increased to 196. Sam Pillay and Reeves Moodley assisted him in pastoral visitation. The church became one of the fastest growing churches in the Natal district.²²

In 1984 forty members of Chatsworth church joined the Shallcross church, after a disagreement with their minister. Most of them were experienced and active lay workers, which provided Pillay with ample personnel resource. Some of the lay workers were Lazarus Soobramoney and his brothers, Nad Chetty, Ronnie Naidoo, Lucky Govender, Ravi Munien, Aroo Pillay, Danny Pillay and Priscilla and Daniel Gounden. Sunday schools were established in most areas of Shallcross. There were numerous lay visitation teams. Subsequently, the church doubled its membership, and outgrew its building. In 1985 funds were raised to extent its buildings. Within three years, the members raised R50 000 and extended the church building and built a parsonage. It was Lazarus Soobramoney and Ronnie Naidoo who raised the needed funds for the building. The lay people did most of the labour. A certain Mr Roy Chetty, a new convert did most of the construction on the building.²³ In 1988 the Shallcross church recorded a full membership of 367 and 30 probationers.²⁴

²² Soobramoney

²³ Naidoo, Ronnie

²⁴ *Journal, 1990-1991*. Natal District, Merebank, 17 Nov.1990.

5.3.2 Shallcross struggles

In 1990 the Shallcross congregation began to decline. Rev Pillay's financial administration and his family were brought into question. A section of the members requested Rev Pillay to resign. Superintendent Michael Porthen set up a commission to investigate the accusation against the Pillays. The situation in Shallcross worsened after the findings by the investigation committee. The congregation were divided over Pillay's appointment in Shallcross. In 1991 most of the member who came from Chatsworth rejoined their former church. It resulted in a huge loss of it's lay workers and subsequently the membership began to decline rapidly.²⁵ In 1992 Rev Abel Pillay resigned from the Shallcross church.²⁶

The huge loss of membership brought the church into a financial crisis. Consequently, the congregation could not afford to invite a minister. For a period of two years, the church had no pastor. This resulted in more members leaving the church. In 1994 Rev Reggie Naidoo was invited to pastor the church. He was without transport and travelled from his home in Merebank. The congregation was not happy with this arrangement and wanted Naidoo to live in the church parsonage. The leadership was divided over the issue. This led to retirement of Rev Naidoo from active ministry in March 1996.²⁷ Naidoo's life and ministry will be discussed in the foregoing chapter.

²⁵ Munien, Ravi. *Interview*. Interview. Chatsworth. 5 January 1997

²⁶ Pillay, Abel. *Interview*. Shallcross. 19 Sept 2000

²⁷ Naidoo, Reggie. *Interview*. Merebank. 6 August 1996

In 1996 Rev Porthen met with the leadership of Shallcross church and resolved to appoint a part-time minister. Rev Roy Oosthuizen was invited for this purpose. He became the first White national to pastor a Nazarene Church among the Indian community in Natal.²⁸ Rev Oosthuizen felt a call to be an itinerant evangelist. Subsequently, he resigned after two years at Shallcross. In 1998 Revs Gavin and Martha Hendricks were in charge of the work. The church had grown under their leadership.²⁹

5.4 Ispingo church

In 1975 Rev Thorpe, the missionary in charge of the Natal district worked among the Indians in Ispingo. They worked with the poor, who lived in "squatter" type homes and he found them receptive to the gospel. Rev Porthen and members of the Merebank and Chatsworth churches assisted Thorpe.³⁰ Many of the old people at Ispingo spoke their home languages and Rev Porthen often served as an interpreter to Rev Thorpe. They visited the area and prayed for the sick and exercised demons. The first church meeting was held at a certain Mr Ramadan's home. The Ramadans were staunch Hindus whose daughter Shelly Naidoo was possessed by a demon. Rev Porthen prayed for her and she was healed. Shelly Naidoo and her husband Steven accepted the Christian faith and were the first members of the Ispingo church. The Ramadans who witnessed the healing also accepted

²⁸ Naidoo, Amudha. *Interview*. Shallcross. 8 Dec. 1999

²⁹ Hendricks, Gavin

³⁰ Soobramoney, and Porthen

the Christian faith. A certain Mr Moonie offered Rev Thorpe to use his home for church services, after he was delivered from drug addiction. Regular services were held at Moonie's home, there the services attracted many new converts. Notably Mr Narian and Mrs Ruby Mariappen, who went on to be active lay workers.³¹

5.4.1 Rev Nana Naidoo

Rev Nana Naidoo was the first full-time pastor of the Ispingo Church. He was converted at a camp meeting in Merebank. It was Rev Michael Porthen who led him to the Christian faith. His conversion was a dramatic one. Rev Porthen described that event:

I saw a young man, with his shirt hanging out and was high on drugs. He came to the altar. He told me that he was a sinner and a drug addict and asked me to prayer for him. I spent about fifteen minutes praying for him. After which he was in tears. He told me that the Lord had touched his life. The next night of the camp meeting he came neatly dressed and testified in the service how the Lord changed his life for the better.³²

Nana Naidoo was free from drugs and alcohol. His Hindu family, who were frustrated in trying to rehabilitate him, welcomed his conversion. After which Nana Naidoo joined the Merebank Church of the Nazarene. He was instrumental in opening new Sunday schools in the area of Merebank. A year after his conversion he was called to the ordained ministry. In January 1976 Nana

³¹ Porthen, Interview.

³² Ibid

Naidoo went the Nazarene Bible College in Cape Town.³³ Lazarus Soobramoney said that, "for Nana Naidoo to be call to the ordained ministry was a miracle."³⁴

In Dec 1978 Nana Naidoo became the first pastor of the Ispingo church. The same year the church was fully established. In 1979 it had forty full members and eleven on probation.³⁵ The work under Nana Naidoo continued to grow. The church service was moved to a classroom at Ispingo Primary School in Suligeni Road. After six month in Ispingo, Nana Naidoo suffered from tuberculoses.³⁶ He was poor and could not afford to receive medical treatment. Rev Porthen took him to a medical doctor and he was then hospitalised.³⁷ In June 1979 Nana Naidoo died, leaving behind his wife Maliga and newborn son, Joshua.³⁸

5.4.2 Ispingo struggles

In July 1979 Reggie Naidoo was invited by superintendent Zurcher to pastor the Church at Ispingo. Reggie Naidoo spent much of his ministry training lay people in personal evangelism and lay preaching. He was greatly assisted by Mr Narian Mariappen, Mr Gabriel and Mrs Jaya Chetty, Mr Moonie and Mrs Mack Janikee. Even though the work suffered financially, Rev Reggie Naidoo purchased a vehicle to transport his members.

³³ Porthen, Interview. See also Soobramoney.

³⁴ Soobramoney

³⁵ *Journal*, 1979. Natal Mission District.

³⁶ Naidoo, Reggie. See also Porthen, *Interview*

³⁷ Porthen, *Interview*

³⁸ *Journal*, 1979.

In spite of strong laity the church struggled to grow in the 1990s. There are four factors that contributed to decline of membership. Firstly, Reggie Naidoo had transportation problem that hampered his movement within the community. This restricted him to depend on public transport. Secondly, it was accommodation. His family preferred to live in the Merebank. Most of the twelve years of his ministry in Ispingo he lived away from his family. Reggie Naidoo felt that the family separation often caused him heartaches. Coupled with that he lost his son in a car accident and felt guilty of not spending quality time with him. Thirdly, it was the competitive Pentecostal churches that attracted the Indians from other churches. Some Nazarene members joined the movement. Lastly, the janitor who was in charge of the school in which the Nazarenes held their service was antagonist against Christian. He deliberately did not pitch up to open the classroom. Some members were frustrated and left the church.³⁹

Reggie Naidoo felt that he was faced with financial hardship and could not cope with a monthly income of R350. In 1985 he took a secular employment to compensate his income. In 1989 he resigned from the Ispingo church. After his resignation a number of people left the church. Mr Narian Mariappen was left in charge of the work. The work remained stagnant, because most of the Indians were staunch in their religion and were antagonistic to the Christian religion.⁴⁰

³⁹ Naidoo, Reggie

⁴⁰ Ibid

5.5 Clare Estate church

Mr Nandkishore Bhadar Dutt was a member of the Merebank church and moved to Clare Estate. This gave the church an opportunity to start a work in the area. The work started in Clare Estate in 1978. It was Rev Porthen and Kishore Dutt who started evangelising in the area. Regular services were held in home of Nandkishore Dutt for a number of years.⁴¹ In 1979 Rev Charles Moonsamy was in charge of the work. The same year the church was established with twelve full members and five probationers.⁴²

In 1980 the work began to grow under the direction of Rev Moonsamy. He was assisted by strong lay workers: Mr Kishore Dutt, Mrs Roy, Mr D Chetty, Mrs Angie Pillay, Mrs Premila Ramadu and Mrs Selvie Pillay. The same year the Nazarenes held their services in the Anglican Church in Clare Road. In Feb 1981 Rev Moonsamy accepted an invitation to pastor a Nazarene church in Phoenix. Followed by Mr Kishore Dutt who was appointed as lay pastor of the church. Soon after the membership began to decline, for most of the members were tenants in the area, and resettled in Phoenix. The work continued to suffer and progressively declined in its membership.⁴³ The Natal Assembly in 1987 vote unanimously to disorganize the Clare Estate Church of the Nazarene.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Moonsamy, Charles. Interview. Phoenix. 2 August 1996

⁴² *Journal*, 1979

⁴³ *Ibid.* And also see Porthen, Michael. *Interview.*

⁴⁴ *Journal*, 1987. Natal District.

5.6 Port Shepstone Church

The Port Shepstone Church of the Nazarene started in 12 January 1987. It was Rev Manivasagren Pillay and his wife Mary who pioneered the work in the area. After they graduated from the Nazarene Bible College in Port Elizabeth in December 1986 they had no church available to them. It was the district superintendent, Rev Michael Porthen who encouraged the Pillays to start a church in the Indian community of Margate, in Port Shepstone. The Pillays immediately rented a home in Margate and began to evangelise the area.⁴⁵

The Pillays visited most of the Hindu homes in the area, and distributed Christian literature. The first day the Pillays visited twenty homes and prayed for those who needed prayer. They found little success in the urban community. Rev Pillay then visited the people in the rural area and found that they were in great need for spirituality. Their first converts were from the Lion Grove Farm. A certain Mrs Sonlall who was grieving the death of her husband and was convicted by reading the literature, which was given to her by the Pillays. She called Rev Pillay and requested prayer. She and her daughter, Rasmin and Asmin were converted to the Christian faith. In 1988 the Pillays had over fifty people attending his church with a full membership of twenty-six.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Pillay, Manivasagren. *Interview*. King Williams Town. 10 December 1996

The Pillays held their first service in the Lion Grove Primary School. In 1989 the work began to grow, over eighty people crowded the classroom. A temporary structure was erected on a vacant land to accommodate the people. Most of them were converts from Hinduism. Rev Pillay recalled how a number of his converts disposed off their Hindu idols, and stated that some who joined the church were delivered from demonic oppression.⁴⁷ The lay people who assisted the Pillays were Miss Shirley Moses, Mrs Iris Sonlall, Mr Colin Pillay and Mr Matthew.

5.6.1 Church dissolved

After working four years in the Port Shepstone area, the Pillays were faced with huge financial setbacks. They earned less than R500 and lived in poverty. Pillay had to find a secular employment in Durban in order to meet his basic needs. In 1990 he worked as an insurance advisor in Durban. This precipitated him residing in Durban. Up until October 1991 he commuted to Port Shepstone on Sundays. Consequently the work at Port Shepstone began to suffer. Pillay regretted having two jobs, but felt compelled to do so. He felt that he received no encouragement and support from the Natal District Advisory Board.⁴⁸

In the 1991 District Assembly he appealed to delegates to assist him in securing a church property in Port Shepstone, but

⁴⁶ Pillay, Mary. *Interview*. 2 September 2000

⁴⁷ Pillay, Manivasagren

⁴⁸ Ibid

nothing was forth coming. In the same year he asked superintendent Michael Porthen to reassign him to a vacancy in the Verulam Church. His application was rejected. In 1992 he resigned from the Church of the Nazarene and started his independent church in Phoenix. Being a strong supporter of the "Nazarenes" he called his church the New Hope Nazarene Church. In the 1998 it was renamed New Hope Holiness Church, after many failed attempts to affiliate his church with the Church of the Nazarene.⁴⁹ The Port Shepstone work was in abeyance. The existing members joined others churches in the area. In the 1994 District Assembly, the church was officially dissolved.⁵⁰

5.7 Umkomaas church

The work in Umkomaas was started by then district Superintendent, Rev Michael Porthen in 1980. A certain Mr Dees Pillay who wanted to join the Church of the Nazarene contacted him. Rev Michael Porthen visited the family's home in Umkomaas and confirmed their conversion to Christianity. There after he held a weekly service at their home and trained Mr Dees Pillay to hold the weekly prayer meetings. Some lay members of Merebank church assisted in the services on Sundays. The work initially started with seven members of the Pillay family. In 1981 the worked was strengthen by the appointment of Rev Nathan Porthen, the son of Rev Michael Porthen. The Pillay were excited to have a minister and supported him. Under Nathan Porthen's ministry a few more members were added to the church.

⁴⁹ Pillay, Mary

⁵⁰ Journal, 1994-95

This precipitated the church to move to a schoolroom. Nathan Porthen was stationed in Umkomaas for two years. He found the living conditions appalling and the work struggled to grow. In 1982 he resigned from Umkomaas and open a work in the Phoenix area of Durban.⁵¹

In 1983 Rev John Nulliah, who completed his theological training was appointed to the Umkomaas church. His wife Nalini, who lead the women's meeting, assisted him. Ms Daphne Naidoo cared for the youth group and Mr Siva Chetty presided over the Sunday school. In 1985 the membership grew to thirty. The church was again affected by the death of Rev John Nulliah, who died in an automobile accident in 1986.⁵² The same year Rev Dan Kisten was given pastoral responsibility of the work.⁵³

When Rev Kisten arrived he found that Nazarene members attending other churches in the area. He only had six members to work with. Dan Kisten and his wife Ragini found their ministry in a depressed state. Together with the huge loss of membership, two of his children were hospitalised with pneumonia, because of poor living conditions. He also found it difficult to support his family with a stipend of R452 a month. The Kistens believed that the call to Umkomaas was a challenge from God. They were willing to make any sacrifice to save the "lost souls". The Kistens served the Umkomaas church for ten

⁵¹ Porthen, Michael. *Interview*

⁵² *Ibid*

⁵³ Kisten, Dan. *Interview*. Phoenix. 20 September 1996.

years.⁵⁴ In 1991 through the sterling work of Kisten the membership increased to forty-eight.⁵⁵

5.7.1 The work struggles

In 1996 Rev Kisten resigned from the Umkomaas church. There after the work was in abeyance. There were five factors that lead to the Kistens resignation. Firstly the poor housing condition led to the Kistens living in Durban. This forced the Kistens to commute to Umkomaas by public transport. Secondly the membership of Umkomaas was low-income earners and could not supplement the Kistens income. This also forced Rev Kisten to do secular work to compensate his income. The third factor was the lack of support from the Natal district leadership. Rev Kisten felt that no attempt was made to address his accommodation and financial difficulties. Fourthly, Rev Kisten found that Hinduism dominated Umkomaas and people resisted the Christian faith. Fifthly, he found that Christians were attracted to a dominant charismatic church in the area. Kisten lost a many of his converts to the church. In 1997 Rev Kisten started an independent church in Phoenix, and continues to supplement his income by working as a salesperson. The church in Umkomaas was dissolved in 1998.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Journal, 1991

⁵⁶ Kisten, Dan

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter had dealt with the development of Indian and a Coloured churches in the Natal South Coast. Many of the churches were affected by the recurring financial difficulties. Precipitating most ministers to work by-vocationally in order to supplement their income. This had greatly affected the stability of and the growth of the work. Consequently, three churches were dissolved Clare Estate, Port Shepstone and Umkomaas, with Ispingo and Austerville struggling to survive. Most ministers had blamed the Natal district leadership for their lack of support and care. In the wake of this, six ministers resigned from South Coast section of Natal and two was transferred to the Western Cape district. Chapter six will deal with the development of the churches in the Natal North Coast and the Natal Inlands.

Chapter Six

6. The development of the Church of the Nazarene in the North Coast and Natal Inland.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the development of the Church of the Nazarene among the Indian communities in the Natal North Coast, Pietermaritzburg and Ladysmith. The pioneered works were done by Indian pastors who in so doing made great personal sacrifices that affected the stability of their ministries. The continuous financial burden and the lack of basic care contributed to the decline and closure of some promising work.

6.2 Pioneering Days

When Rev Subjee and Rev Porthen took charge in Chatsworth and Merebank, Rex and Betty Emslie continued their mission work by establishing a church in an Indian community in Pietermaritzburg. Lay people from the Chatsworth church assisted the Emslies by visiting and distributing Christian tracts in Northdale in Pietermaritzburg.¹ In 1969, their work came to an abrupt end, when they had to go on a furlough. The work at Northdale was in abeyance for six years. Then in 1975 the District superintendent, Rev R E Thorpe resuscitated the

¹ Emslie, *Interview*

work at Northdale.² He was aggressive in pastoral work and was also the first to start a Nazarene Church in the North Coast of Natal.³ The vision of these dedicated missionaries had enabled the Church of Nazarene to grow beyond the boundary of Durban. Their vision captured the minds of the local ministers who were willing to sacrifice all, to start new churches in Natal.⁴

6.3 Mount Edgecombe

The church at Mount Edgecombe started in 1974.⁵ The motivation for starting the work was to provide a platform for probationary ministers graduating from Bible College. It was missionary Rev R E Thorpe and who started a work in the area. He was assisted by Rev Michael Porthen. Both visited and held prayer meetings at the homes of Indians, who were employees of Hulleys Sugar Mills. Most of them were Hindus. The Pillay and the Muthan families were first to be converted.⁶

In November 1974 Rev Thorpe secured a small building at the entrance of Campbell's Town for church services. It was provided by the Hulleys Sugar Mill.⁷ The same year Porthen and Thorpe held a revival camp meeting in Campbell's Town. In April 1976 Rev Kitty Govender who candidated from the Chatsworth church was appointed to Mount Edgecombe. Rev Govender was

² Soobramoney

³ *Journal*, 1974

⁴ Soobramoney

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ Bhadar Dutt, Nandkishore. *Interview*. Phoenix. 18 Sept. 2000.

⁷ *Journal*, 1974

converted from Hinduism. His spouse Jean was instrumental in leading him to the Christian faith. It was during a New Years Eve service in 1969 that Govender committed his life to God. In 1971 he was called to the ordained ministry, and in 1974 he enrolled at the Rehoboth Nazarene Bible College in Cape Town.⁸

When Rev Kitty and Jean Govender arrived at Mount Edgecombe, they found ten members who were of Pentecostal leanings. They became active lay workers in the church. In spite of financial hardships the Govender's made Mount Edgecombe the third largest church in the Natal Mission District.⁹ From 1976 to 1979 they recorded a membership of 64, with a Sunday school attendance of 370.¹⁰ Most of the converts were parents of the Sunday school children whom the Govender's visited. Open-air services, tract drives and "door to door" visitations were used propagate the gospel. Jean Govender led the youth meetings and was instrumental in converting the teenagers whom she trained to be lay workers in the church. They were Savy and Manny Doorsamy, Suresh Gainy and Douglas Munthan.¹¹ In 1989 the Mount Edgecombe recorded a membership of two hundred and four. The same year the church was extended to accommodate the attendees. In 1992 the Mount Edgecombe church came into a crisis when the district leadership charged Rev Kitty Govender for his

⁸ Jean Govender, *Interview*. Durban North, 3 Dec. 2000

⁹ Rev Kitty Govender earned a stipend of R70 per month for the first five years in Mount Edgecombe. (Jean, Govender)

¹⁰ *Journal*, 3 November 1979

¹¹ Govender, Jean

misappropriation of church funds.¹² A District Disciplinary Commission suspended Rev Govender after their findings. Some Ministers felt that the commission were not trained to resolve problems and that their judgement had divided the Natal District. Subsequently, a member of the Mount Edgecombe church, Mr Dave Morris disclosed the findings to a local newspaper, "The Natal Post".¹³

In 1993 Rev Govender resigned from the church, believing that he was innocent and that the district leaders conspired against him. In 1997 he started an independent work in Mount Edgecombe called the Rehoboth Fellowship Centre. In 1994 the Church of the Nazarene, in Mount Edgecombe amalgamated with the Philadelphia Church under the leadership of Rev Nathan Porthen.¹⁴ Seventy members were dissatisfied with Rev Nathan leadership and joined the independent church of Rev Kristopher Govender, which will be discussed in the section that follows.¹⁵

6.4 Phoenix-one

6.4.1 Rev Kristopher Govender

Rev Kristopher Govender started the church in Phoenix in 1982. He was a staunch Hindu, converted in 1973. It was Rev Michael

¹² Doorsamy, Manny. *Interview*. Phoenix. 7 September 2000

¹³ Kristopher, Govender

¹⁴ Jean, Govender, and Porthen, *Interview*

¹⁵ *Ibid*

Porthen who led him to the Christian faith. Govender described his miraculous healing that led him to conversion:

Rev Michael Porthen came to my home in Merebank and prayed for me. I was stricken with a deadly virus. The extent of the sickness made me deaf but after he prayed for me. I was completely healed and I felt the presences of God. It was a strange feeling, but a joyous one. I believe at that moment, Jesus came into my life. I remembered after that experience, I dedicated my life to God and repented from my sinfulness.¹⁶

It was a common practice in the Church of the Nazarene to get the new converts immediately involve in the life of the church. The leaders believed that the religious experience of the converts provided them with enormous passion and energy for personal evangelism.¹⁷ Kristopher Govender was brought into the active life of the Merebank church, immediately after his conversion. He was called into the ordained ministry one year after his conversion. He believed that two major factors motivated his call to the ordained ministry. Firstly he believed that Rev Porthen motivated him to be a pastor. Rev Porthen often encouraged talented young people to enter the ministry. Secondly, it was Rev Porthen's sermon in an Alabaster Mission service, which called for self sacrifice and giving of ones self to the service of God. At that service, Rev Govender felt he was called to give his life to the ministry. Even though the call to ministry was diverse, the only option available was the ordained ministry. In 1975 at the age of

¹⁶ Govender, Kristopher

¹⁷ Porthen, *Interview*

twenty, Kristopher Govender married Neru. The same year they enrolled at the Nazarene Bible College in Cape Town.¹⁸

6.4.2 Development of the Phoenix-one church

In 1976 most of the Indians who lived in the outskirts of Durban were relocated to Phoenix. Their homes were built by the Natal Durban Corporation.¹⁹ Rev Kristopher was appointed to pioneer a work in the area. He was given the impression by the District Superintendent that there was an established work in Phoenix with a small group of Nazarenes. When he arrived in January 1977, he was disappointed to find a non-existent work. He felt de-motivated and expressed his disappointment to his Superintendent for making false promises. However he was motivated by his missionary zeal and stated in his interview:

Even though I was disappointed that there was no work done in Phoenix, my enthusiasm was great; my commitment to Christ and his church was my life. Therefore I did not allow the disappointment to dampen me. During my term as a bible student, the missionaries reminded us that we were called to save souls, and to pioneer new churches, and were not called to build on another "minister's foundation". This encouraged me to stay in Phoenix and start a new work.²⁰

In January 1977 Kristopher made contact with a certain Mr George Govender who moved into the area after his home was flooded in Minitown, Merebank. Mr Govender and family were members of the Church of the Nazarene in Merebank. According to

¹⁸ Govender, Kristopher

¹⁹ *Journal*, 1976

Rev Govender, George Govender and his family greatly assisted him in starting the work in Phoenix. Later during the same year the Naidoo family joined the church. Together with Rev Kristopher they worked tirelessly to build the church in Phoenix. They had open-air service on street corners, distributed Christian tracts and "door to door" visitation. At one open-air service Mr Ronnie Maharaj was delivered from drug addiction and was converted. According to Rev Govender, Maharaj became a dedicated lay worker of the church, and through his conversion led many Hindus to the Christian faith.²¹

In the first two years of his ministry Rev Govender concentrated on personal visit home visitation. He could not afford a vehicle and often walked, hoping that God will lead him to homes that are receptive to the gospel. Since Phoenix was a newly established settlement, he found many Christians who did not attend church. Some of them were delighted to have a pastor visiting and caring for them. This created an influx of Christians to Govender's church. Some of the families who joined the church were the Pathers, Davids, Pakiurs, and Chettys.²²

In November 1977, the first church service was held in the home of Rev Govender at Road 206, Unit 2, Phoenix, which was attended by George Govender and his family. Many of the families with whom Rev Govender worked with, did not attend the

²⁰ Govender, Kristopher

²¹ Ibid

services. This continued for a whole month. He fasted for days and prayed for God to revive the church. In December 1977 about thirty people attended the service in his home. Govender was ecstatic and described his experience as follows: "I cried with joy in my heart and I broke down emotionally in front of the congregation and I told them that God is faithful to his promise." His church outgrew his home, and in February 1978 Rev Govender had his service in the Greenbury Community Hall with sixty people. The church was faced with an accommodation problem after they were prohibited from using the community hall. In June 1978 a temporary structure was erected at the home of Rev Govender to house the newly formed church. The same month the church was officially established with 32 full members and 26 probationers with a Sunday school enrolment of 188. The same year the local health department requested Rev Govender to dismantle the temporary structure, for it was considered unsafe and dangerous. In August 1978 they moved to a classroom in Greenbury Primary School. They held services at the school until 1991.²³

6.4.3 Financial difficulties

Rev Govender received a subsidy of R40 per month from the Natal district, and the local church was to contribute the balance of his income. This was not possible, because most members were of the lower income group. Rev Govender described an occasion how God provided for his family:

²³ Ibid

Despite the poor financial situation I was placed in, I promised the Lord that I would not allow my ministry to suffer by accepting another job to meet my needs. I remember one evening, after my pastoral visitation, my family had no food to eat. When I returned home I found a basket of groceries on my doorstep, and our needs were met that night. I always believed that the Lord will take care of his called ones, and he has never failed me yet.²⁴

Rev Govender believed that because he was called to the ministry he was willing to suffer. At times the church was not able to pay him, but he gratefully accepted what was given to him. He loved God and was prepared to make any sacrifice to help the church. During that time he lost his newborn child. This did not deter him, but strengthen his resolve for the ministry. He also produced two candidates for the ordained ministry, Titus Joseph and David Daniels.²⁵

6.4.4 Rev Kristopher Govender resigns

Rev Kristopher Govender served the Phoenix church until 1981. After which he accepted an appointment to lecture at the Nazarene Bible College in Port Elizabeth. He served the college for ten years and felt called to resume his pastorate. He returned to Natal in 1991 and there was no suitable appointment available for him. The same year the Natal district was embroiled in problems. Rev Kristopher Govender and majority of the ministers in the Natal district were dissatisfied with the leadership of Rev Michael Porthen. Some of the ministers resigned from the Church of the Nazarene. This will be

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

discussed in the foregoing chapter. Rev Kristopher also resigned and joined the Methodist Church. He served the Methodist Church in Johannesburg for two years. He then resigned from the Methodist church and opened the Christian Tabernacle Church in Phoenix, with a growing membership of 300.²⁶

Rev Charles Munsamy was invited to pastor the Phoenix Church of the Nazarene in March 1981. He continued to hold services in the classroom in Greenbury. In 1984 the church was given a large property (3000m²) by the Durban Corporation.²⁷ In 1996 the Phoenix church amalgamated with three other Nazarene churches in the area. This would be discussed later in the chapter.

6.4.5 The demarcated boundaries

In 1984 there were three factors that prompt the district Advisory board to appoint ministers in Phoenix, when there was already an existing work.²⁸ Firstly, some of the ministers who completed their theological training were not willing to work outside the Durban area. Secondly, it was the travel expense incurred, where ministers stationed in rural areas had to regularly visited their families in Durban. This had also affected the stability of the work in the rural areas. Thirdly, the district leadership felt that it was a waste of personnel

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Munsamy, Charles

²⁸ Journal, 1985

resource to station ministers from Durban to rural areas, which were sparsely populated. The leadership resolved to concentrate the work in Durban, which housed the majority of the Indian population.²⁹ In order to accommodate the arrival of new ministers, the area of Phoenix were divided into three sections. Charles Moonsamy, Morgan Chetty and Nathan Porthen were assigned to work within the demarcated areas.³⁰

6.5 Development of the Sunford church

6.5.1. Rev Morgan Chetty

Rev Morgan Chetty started the Sunford Church of the Nazarene in Phoenix. His conversion experience was an unusual one. In March 1977 Morgan Chetty and his brother Nad were avenging the death of their brother. During that period, Rev Subjee converted a certain Mr John Iruson to the Christian faith. He was a drug dealer and a gangster. The Chettys were convicted by Iruson moral transformation, and wanted a similar encounter. On 8 March 1977 Rev Subjee led the Chettys to the Christian faith.³¹

The Chettys became active lay workers in the Chatsworth church under the leadership of Rev Subjee. They were well known for their "gangsterism" and were feared for their violent outburst. Their conversion made them humble in nature, and the Hindus praised the Church of the Nazarene for the positive affect it

²⁹ Soobramoney and Porthen, *Interview*.

³⁰ Chetty, Morgan. *Interview*. Phoenix, 14 August 1996

³¹ Ibid

had in transforming the gangsters, alcoholics and drug addicts of the community. Morgan Chetty publicly testified of his newfound faith, and said, "Jesus has saved me, and set me free from revenging my brothers death." In 1981 Morgan Chetty felt called into the ordained ministry. The same year he married Dershnie. In 1982 they enrolled at the Nazarene Bible College in Port Elizabeth.

6.5.2 The Development of the work

In January 1985 Rev Morgan Chetty was appointed by Superintendent Michael Porthen to open a work in Sunford, Phoenix. The Chettys were informed by the Superintendent that the District fund had been adversely affected and that there would be no financial assistance for them. Rev Chetty was eager to start a church and chose to work without compensation. In his response, he stated, "I told the District Superintendent that money or no money, house or no house I will do what God has called me to do".³²

Mr Dave Morris former member of the Chatsworth Church provided the Chettys with accommodation. There after Rev Chetty secured a classroom at Brailford Primary School and started to hold weekly services.³³ Two former Nazarene members from Chatsworth, John and Margaret Govender joined the church. The Chettys found it difficulty to survive on donations and appealed to district for compensation. The district gave them a monthly stipend of

³²Chetty, Morgan

³³ Morris, Dave. *Interview*. Phoenix. 15 July 1996

R250. In September the Chettys moved to a council house, which was provided by Rev Charles Moonsamy. The same month the membership began to grow after a week of camp meetings. Rev Subjee and Emmanuel Doorsamy were the camp speakers. Rev Chetty borrowed amount of R4500 from a certain member of his church, and purchased a vehicle.³⁴ The vehicle was used to transport new converts to church. In 1988 Rev Michael Porthen organized the Sunford church with fifty-two members and twenty-seven probationers.³⁵

In 1989 Rev Morgan Chetty resigned from the Church of the Nazarene, after experiencing marital difficulties.³⁶ In 1990 Rev Lazarus Massey became the minister of the Sunford church. Also in 1996 the Sunford church amalgamated to with other sister churches: Phoenix-one, Mount Edgecombe and Philadelphia. Rev Nathan Porthen was the pastor of the amalgamated church.³⁷

In 1993 Rev Chetty applied to the Natal District for reinstatement of his ministers license to preach. He was placed on probation for two-years under the supervision of the superintendent. He disagreed with the length of discipline and opened his independent church in Phoenix, called the Supreme Holiness Church.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Journal, 1988

³⁶ Chetty, Morgan

³⁷ Porthen, *Interview*.

³⁸ In June 1996 Rev Morgan Chetty started his independent work in a classroom at Brailford Primary School. It was in that classroom he

6.6 Phoenix-Philadelphia church

Mr Nandkishore Bhadar Dutt started the Philadelphia Church of the Nazarene in Phoenix in 1983. It was started with members of the Merebank Church who resettled in Phoenix. They met in the home of a certain Mr Ganie Peters home for service at 34 Camphaven Rd. Rev Nathan Porthen became their pastor in 1984. He lived in his father house in 5 Chadbury Close, Phoenix.³⁹ Under his leadership the church grew, and in two years his church was organized with twenty-two members and seventeen probationers. A schoolroom in Unit 10 was used for services.⁴⁰

In 1990 the Philadelphia church recorded a membership of one hundred. Most of them were Hindu converts. The growth was a result of committed lay members who assisted Rev Nathan Porthen in home visitations and cottage meetings. In 1994 Philadelphia merged with its sister churches in Phoenix.⁴¹ In 1998 Rev Nathan Porthen accepted an invitation to a Nazarene church in the United States of America. The same year Rev Titus Joseph became the pastor of the church.⁴²

started the Nazarene work. (Chetty, Morgan, and Pillay, Danny. *Interview*. King William's Town. 7 July 1996

³⁹ Bhadar Dutt

⁴⁰ Journal, 1986

⁴¹ Bhadar Dutt

⁴² Ibid

6.7 The amalgamation of the Phoenix and Mount Edgecombe churches

The amalgamation of the Phoenix church came about after the Church of the Nazarene was given a large property in Phoenix. Mount Edgecombe church joined the amalgamation after the resignation of Rev Kitty Govender and also because of its close approximate to Phoenix. It was Dr Zanner the Mission Director of Church of the Nazarene in Africa, who recommended that the churches in the Phoenix to form a single church.⁴³ There were four factors that affected the success of an amalgamated church. Firstly, Rev Charles Moonsamy felt that that the church property rightfully belonged to his Phoenix-one church who applied for it, and was not willing to amalgamate. Secondly, if the amalgamation was successful: who was to assume the senior pastor of the church? Thirdly, some of the affected ministers and members felt that the superintendent was securing Rev Nathan Porthen to be the senior pastor of the church.⁴⁴ Fourthly, the problem was compounded when members who were casting their votes were divided in their loyalty in choosing a senior minister.⁴⁵

The merger became possible after three ministers involved in the merger resigned from their churches. Rev Kitty Govender resigned as pastor of the church in Mount Edgecombe. In 1994 Rev Charles Munsamy resigned after being frustrated with the

⁴³ Porthen, *Interview*

⁴⁴ Munsamy, Charles, *Interview*

⁴⁵ Soobramoney

process and opened his own work in Phoenix. The same year Massey of the Sunford church accepted an invitation to Richard's Bay. Rev Nathan Porthen became the obvious choice to serve as pastor of the amalgamated churches.⁴⁶ The amalgamated church became the biggest church in the Natal district and recorded a membership of 600. The amalgamation was short lived after it was embroiled in division and strife. Mr Lazarus Soobramoney a member of the District Advisory Board gave his assessment:

The members were not ready to merge into a single church. There were two distinctive groups that were not addressed, the loyalist to Rev Subjee ministers and that of Rev Michael Porthen camp. The amalgamation also did not satisfy all effected parties. The Advisory Board was not invited to be part of the process and matters were led solely by the district superintendent. Mandates for the amalgamation was granted by lay people, and affected ministers were left out of the process.⁴⁷

In the first year of it amalgamation, over hundred people left the church. Seventy members joined the independent work of Rev Kristopher Govender.⁴⁸ Many were dissatisfied with the leadership of Rev Nathan Porthen. In 1998 Rev Nathan Porthen resigned and immigrated to the United States. The same year Rev Titus Joseph became the pastor of the Phoenix church in 1998 he found twelve members. He believed that most of the members left to other churches. However the work continues to grow under

⁴⁶ Porthen, *Interview*

⁴⁷ Soobramoney

⁴⁸ Govender, Kristopher

Joseph leadership. He also had in his team Mr Bhadar Dutt who had rejoined the Church of the Nazarene.⁴⁹

6.8 Phoenix Community Fellowship

In 1983 a number of families from the Chatsworth Church of the Nazarene who had resettled in Phoenix, commuted regularly to the Sunday services in Chatsworth. Superintendent Porthen requested them to join a Nazarene church in Phoenix, but they preferred to maintain their membership at Chatsworth.⁵⁰ Mr Graham Ganesh, Mr Chris Moonsamy and Sidam Moodley held the membership together. A Wednesday prayer meeting was held in the home of Mr Ganesh in Unit 17, Phoenix. Under their leadership the membership began to increase, and they found it difficult to continue attending the church in Chatsworth.⁵¹ They made numerous appeals to the Natal district for independent status but was denied on the ground that there were already existing Nazarene churches in the Phoenix.⁵² In 1996 Rev Gabriel Benjamin became the pastor of the work. The following year Rev David Holmes, the superintendent of the newly merged district recognized the work and organized church, which was called the Phoenix Community Fellowship.⁵³

⁴⁹ Joseph, Titus. *Interview*. Phoenix. 3 October 2000

⁵⁰ Porthen, *Interview*

⁵¹ Moonsamy, Chris. *Interview*. Phoenix. December 1997

⁵² Porthen, *Interview*

⁵³ *First Annual District Assembly of the Kwa Zulu Natal District Minutes*. Chatsworth, 17-18 January 1997

6.9 Newlands

6.9.1 Rev David Daniels

Rev David Daniels started a Nazarene work among the Indian community of Newlands West. In July 1979 Daniels was converted in a camp meeting held by Rev Michael Henry, a Pentecostal revivalist. Daniels found his conversion was similar to that of John Wesley's Aldergate experience. He described his experience as follow:

I had no peace in my heart. I sought for peace in music, drugs and alcohol. That night at the camp meeting I was drunk. Together with eleven of my friends, we attended the meeting. The minister made an appeal for people to give their lives to God. At that point in time I felt the overwhelming presence of God and my heart was strangely warmed. I was sobered by the presence of God and felt so light. It was like an electric current running through my body. Immediately after that experience I prayed the sinner's prayer and felt completely free from sin.⁵⁴

After his conversion he was longing to join a church. He joined the Phoenix Church of the Nazarene, after Rev Kristopher Govender visited him at his home.⁵⁵ At the Phoenix Church he studied the doctrine of holiness, and he yearned to receive the "second blessing." It was only after reading a gospel tract by Rev Billy Graham on entire sanctification in 1982 that God touched his life again. His experience lasted for four days as Daniel expressed that, "It was so beautiful, I just wanted to die in that Glory". After that experience he offered for the

⁵⁴ Daniel, David. *Interview*. Newlands West, 21 August 1996.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, and Govender, Kristopher

ordained ministry. In 1984 he enrolled at the Nazarene Bible College in Port Elizabeth.⁵⁶

6.9.2 Establishment of the work

In August 1986 superintendent Michael Porthen introduced David Daniel to his area of ministry. The work started with a simple prayer with Rev Porthen on the top of a hill over looking Newlands West.⁵⁷ Daniels active ministry started on 1 January 1987. He was given an allowance of R380 with no accommodation. Relatives in Phoenix accommodated him and his wife Selvie. The beginning of Daniels ministry was a tough one, he had no Christian contacts. This did not deter him, before he embarked on the ministry he fasted and prayed. He relied on God to lead him in converting people. After which, the first eight homes he visited, four of them joined the church. One of them, Mr Lionel Moodley offered Daniel his home to hold services. The first service was held with eight members at 63 Nordale Rd, Newlands West.⁵⁸

Daniel spent much of his time training lay people in evangelism. Mr Neville Pillay was in charge of the youth work and Reggie Pillay and Louie Govender help him with visitation. The church began to grow rapidly in 1990. There were two active wayside Sunday schools and all the parents of the children were visited and many of them joined the church. Daniel also

⁵⁶ Daniel

⁵⁷ Ibid and Porthen, *Interview*

⁵⁸ Ibid

believed that he had a gift of exercising demon and those who were delivered joined the church.⁵⁹ In 1990 the church had a membership of 104 and a Sunday school enrolment of 105.⁶⁰

In 1991 the church at Newlands began a ministry among Clare Estate Informal Settlement. The community was inhabited by Zulus, who lived in temporary structures. Most of the people they worked with found their livelihood by scavenging the dumpsite. Rev Daniel started a Sunday school and provided regular meals and clothing for the children. In 1996 they had sixty children in attendance. They were also held with suspicion by certain section of the community. The Zionist Movement tried to remove them from the area. Daniel believed that the work flourish after the death of the Zionist leader.⁶¹

In 1993 Rev Daniel raised funds to provide a building for his church. He sold clothing as far as Empangeni, and raised fund for the building project. In 1996 he raised one hundred and thirty thousand rands and built the Alpha and Omega Church of the Nazarene at Lawdale Place, Newlands West.⁶² Rev Daniels was disappointed with the District superintendent decision to withhold mission funds to assist the building of his church.⁶³ Subsequently, in June 1998 Rev Daniel and his congregation broke away from the Church of the Nazarene.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ *Journal*, 17 November 1990

⁶¹ Daniel

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Simeon, Matthew. *Interview*. Pinetown, 22 November 2000

⁶⁴ Daniel

6.10 Verulam church

Rev Abel Pillay pioneered the work in Verulam in January 1982. He was indebted to his wife Vernie, who greatly supported him in the ministry. They started the work in Verulam with an allowance of R130. Even though they felt it difficult to cope financially, they believed that God has called them and trusted Him for their needs. Initially, Rev Abel Pillay started working with children and established a wayside Sunday school.⁶⁵ While visiting the area, Pillay met the Vijan family who allowed him to start a church in their home, at 8 Mountain View Drive. Pillay's first convert was a certain Mr Mac Moonsamy, who invited Rev Pillay to pray for his brother Aubrey, an alcoholic. During that prayer meeting it was Mac Moonsamy who felt convicted and accepted the Christian faith. Subsequently, his four sisters and their spouses followed. Moonsamy became an active worker who assisted the Pillays in building the Verulam work, and also lead the youth work for number of years.⁶⁶

In first year of Rev Abel Pillay's ministry he had sixty converts attending his church. Most of the converts were Hindus. Pillay believed that three factors added to the rapid growth of the work. Firstly, it the new converts sharing their faith to their families and neighbours. Secondly, it was the active lay workers that assisted him in visitation and caring for the converts. They were Mac Moonsamy, Timothy Pillay, Dan Govinden, Mercy Poonsamy and Grace Govindsamy. Thirdly, it was

⁶⁵ Pillay, Vernie. *Interview*. Shallcross. 6 July 1997

⁶⁶ Pillay, Able. *Interview*. Shallcross. 13 August 2000.

his spiritual gifts in exercising demons and counselling.⁶⁷ He brought nine families to his church, through his gift in exercising demons. Pillay's ministry converted nine Hindu families. He described the conversion of certain Mr Kay Naidoo:

I went to the home of Mr Kay Naidoo, who was a Hindu. He was seriously afflicted by demons and showed psychotic symptoms that are associated with demonic manifestation. I anointed him with oil and prayed with him. While praying I removed the "moddopu" (a Hindu relic for protection) behind the door. Mr Naidoo was delivered and accepted Jesus Christ. After which I gathered all the idols and Hindu symbols and burned them.⁶⁸

On 6 March 1983 the church was relocated to a classroom in Everest Heights Primary School. The following Sunday service at the school, it recorded an attendance of sixty people. The work continued to grow under Pillay ministry with four wayside Sunday schools in operation.⁶⁹

In June 1983 Rev Pillay accepted an invitation to pastor the Shallcross church.⁷⁰ After which the church attendance declined rapidly. In 1984 it had eleven full members and thirteen on trial. The same year Rev Emmanuel Doorsamy was appointed the pastor of the Verulam Church.⁷¹ Doorsamy struggled to develop the church because of financial constrains. He was forced to take a second job to care for his family. This had greatly affected his availability for meeting the pastoral needs of the Verulam church. In 1988 he resigned and became a non-

⁶⁷ Soobramoney

⁶⁸ Pillay, Able

⁶⁹ Pillay, Vernie

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Natal District Journal, 1984

stipendiary assistant minister of the Shallcross church. On 23 April 1989 Rev Jason Perumal was appointed as pastor of the Verulam church. He had a membership of nineteen on record and only eleven people attended the church. Perumal also found it extremely difficult to maintain the work. Compounded to the problem was a lack of financial resources. This frustration led to the resignation of Rev Perumal in 1990.⁷² In 1991 Verulam had a membership of fourteen and was under the care of the superintendent Rev Michael Porthen. Mr Timothy Pillay was appointed lay pastor of the work.⁷³

6.11 Tongaat

The work in Tongaat started in 1979. It was Rev Michael Porthen, Rev Reggie Naidoo and Mr Bhadar Dutt who visited the Indian community of Buffelsdale in Tongaat.⁷⁴ Rev Reggie Naidoo started the church with fifteen children and two wayside Sunday schools. In the first few months, he visited the parents of the children. His first converts were Charles Naidoo and family.⁷⁵ Ronnie Naidoo, Segie Moodley, and Dan Govender were also converted and were instrumental in building the work in Tongaat.⁷⁶

The first service was held in the home of Mr Charles Naidoo in Buffelsdale. During the first three-month the church had eleven

⁷² Perumal, Jason. Interview. Chatsworth,

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid. See also Porthen, Interview.

⁷⁵ Naidoo, Reggie

⁷⁶ Bhardar Dutt

probationary members. Rev Reggie Naidoo trained his young converts to preach and to visit the predominant Hindu community. In July 1979, after spending six months in Tongaat he was appointed to the Ispingo church. Mr Bhadar Dutt was appointed as lay pastor of the work. He held the budding work together for three years.⁷⁷

In 1983 Rev Charles Simeon, a graduate from Nazarene Bible college, was stationed at Tongaat. Simeon was responsible for revitalizing the work in the first year of his ministry, recording a membership of twenty. Rev Simeon struggled to find a building to hold his services. During the first six years of his ministry, church services were held in the homes of his members. The services were held periodically at the homes of Charles Naidoo, Dan Govender, Segie Pillay and a certain Miss Logie.⁷⁸ The movement had greatly affected the growth of the work. Consequently, many of Simeon's converts were frustrated and left to other churches. In 1988 he was given permission to use a classroom in Bufferdales.⁷⁹

The slow growth of the Tongaat church was attributed to two major factors. Firstly, it was the financial difficulties. Rev Simeon was forced to take a secular employment to supplement his income. The church also had low-income earners that could not meet the needs of its minister. Consequently, the demand of Rev Simeon secular employment left him with little time for

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Bhadar Dutt

⁷⁹ Journal, 1985

church work. Secondly, it was the lack of a proper church building and the constant movement of church services. It is assumed within the Nazarene circles, that most Indians prefer to worship in a church building. The Emslies were also of the opinion that a visible church building attracts people, and they constructed the Chatsworth church without any converts.⁸⁰ In 1998 it recorded a membership 616.⁸¹ Much of Simeon's frustration was the loss of his converts to other churches.⁸² In 1990 he resigned from the Tongaat church, which had a membership of thirty members. In 1991 Rev Charles Simeon resigned from the Church of the Nazarene.⁸³

In August 1992 Rev Titus Joseph was appointed by the District superintendent Michael Porthen to revive the church in Tongaat. When Joseph arrived he found the work closed and the existing members were attending other churches. He served the church on a part-time basis, because of full-time secular employment. He started reviving the Tongaat work by visiting the old Nazarene members who were attending other churches. He succeeded in bring into the church former active Nazarene members. Notably Mr Dan Nariansamy who helped him in reviving the work. Within three years of his ministry, he brought to the church sixty Hindu converts and had a membership of seventy. The members

⁸⁰ Emslie, Betty. *Interview*. See also Soobramoney. *Interview*.

⁸¹ *Second Annual General Meeting: KwaZulu Natal*. 17 January 1998.

⁸² Naidoo, Reggie

⁸³ Porthen, *Interview*

increased their giving and the finances grew. In 1995 it raised an annual income of R17 823.⁸⁴

The growth of the Tongaat church can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, it was the financial security of Rev Joseph. He was compensated well by his secular employer. This provided an opportunity to care for his family. Secondly, he acquired a disciplined prayer life. He believed that through this means of grace he received the gift of healing. This had open up a new dimension of ministry. Many of his converts were the result of his healing ministry. He stated that some of his members were healed from incurable diseases. A certain Mrs Dolly Narian was suffering from cancer and a certain boy Shaun Pillay who was cripple from birth were healed.⁸⁵

In January 1999 Titus Joseph left the Tongaat church to pastor the Phoenix Church of the Nazarene. The church in Tongaat was left in the care of lay pastor, Mr Dan Nariansamy.⁸⁶ The life and ministry of Rev Titus will be dealt with, in the section that follows.

6.12 Richard's Bay

Rev Titus Joseph started the church in Richard's Bay in December 1987. Joseph was converted at the age of thirteen. Even though his parents were Christians he never desired the

⁸⁴ *Minutes of the second Annual District Assembly of Kwa Zulu Natal District. Chatsworth, 17 January 1998.*

⁸⁵ Joseph

Christian faith. As a young boy he indulged in alcohol and loose living. It was Rev Kristopher Govender who befriended Joseph and invited him to a soccer match held by the Church of the Nazarene in Phoenix. Joseph being a keen soccer player accepted the invitation and eventually found him-self attending Govender's church. In one of the services he witnessed Rev Govender exercising a demon. This encounter led him to Christ. He stated his experience as follow:

It was an evening service. I saw Rev Kristopher Govender exercising a demon. The woman was completely healed. It was the first time I witness such an event. The same night, I went to the altar, and gave my heart to the Lord. When Rev Govender prayed for me. I remembered saying, "Jesus forgive me for my sin." Immediately my heart was filled with peace and I knew that Jesus had saved me.⁸⁷

There after Joseph was fully involved in the life of the Phoenix church. In 1984 he attended a revival service at the Merebank Church of the Nazarene. There he believed that Rev Michael Porthen led him to the experience of entire sanctification. He felt that his experience had healed his uncontrollable temper. In 1985 he candidate for the ordained ministry and completed his training at the Nazarene Bible College in Port Elizabeth. In 1986 he married Jackie Govender.⁸⁸

In December 1987 superintendent Rev Michael Porthen and Rev Charles Moonsamy accompanied the Josephs and surveyed the

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Joseph, Titus. Interview. Pheonix, 19 September 2000. And also see Kristopher Govender.

⁸⁸ Ibid

Indian community of Richard's Bay, about 200 km from Durban.⁸⁹ Joseph was keen to start a Nazarene work in the area, but could not find a home to rent. Joseph contacted Rev Ron Gilbert, the missionary Superintendent of the Kwa Zulu Northern District, and asked him for assistance. He offered the Josephs a caravan, and they lived there for two years with their newborn son, Timothy. The Josephs lived by faith and was without an income. After which the Josephs joined the Kwa Zulu Northern District and received an income of R142, 00. They became the first integrate with a Black Nazarene district in South Africa. The Josephs found it hard to survive financially, but believed that God always provided for them. The call by God for the Josephs was far more important than his personal welfare.⁹⁰

In the first month at Richard's Bay, Rev Joseph visited over forty families. He felt the work was though as the Indian community was small, which had eight churches working in the area. In the first six month of his ministry, his church had fifty members and twenty-five probationers. Most of the converts were Hindus. Mr Nandha Harilall, Mr Harriparsad, Mr Sewpersad and John Pillay largely assisted him in personal evangelism. Rev Joseph was also not mobile and often walked for five kilometres a day to reach the "unchurched". At one occasion he visited a group of men who were smoking drugs and he took the opportunity to lead them to the Christian faith. Rev Joseph was a charismatic preacher and often preached in "open-air" meetings, but found personal evangelism more

⁸⁹ Porthen, *Interview*

⁹⁰ Joseph

rewarding. In August 1989 the Josephs had over 150 people attending the church services.⁹¹

In October 1989 Rev Titus Jacob resigned from the Richard's Bay for personal reasons. The same year Rev Vincent Argumuthu, who candidated for the ministry from the Shallcross church, was appointed to pastor the church. When Argumuthu arrived, he found that most of the members were attending other churches. Consequently, it affected the income of the church. Compounded was the recurring problem of accommodation. This frustrated Argumuthu and he resigned after three months at Richard's Bay.⁹²

In 1991 Rev Reggie Naidoo took over the work at Richard's Bay. He found the church with ten members in a classroom at Brackenham High School. It was Mr Nundalall Harripersad who held the work together. Reggie Naidoo served the church at Richard's Bay for two years. Under his leadership the church joined the its former district after finding it difficult to adjust to the cultural differences in the Black district. He resigned after his accommodation problem was not resolved. In 1994 Rev Lazarus Massey assume pastorate of the work. The work continues to grow under his leadership.⁹³

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid, Reggie Naidoo and Soobramoney

⁹³ Massey

6.13 Pietermaritzburg

Rex and Betty Emslie started the Church of the Nazarene in Pietermaritzburg in 1968. They worked among the Indian community in Northdale. Rex Emslie started the work with a week of revival meetings. The young people of the Chatsworth church provided the music and assisted him in distributing Christian literature to the people of Northdale. In the first few months of his ministry the work began to grow: to the extent that Rev Emslie had to have two services on a Sunday.⁹⁴ Betty Emslie strengthened the work by working with the youth and Sunday school. Through her effort a group of young Hindu men were converted.⁹⁵

After spending seven months at Northdale the Emslies left on a year furlough to the United States on the 7 July 1968.⁹⁶ In 1970 the work at Northdale continued to suffer after the Emslies were re-assigned to work in Cape Town. The lack of manpower left the church in Northdale without a minister. The work was forced to close after its members left to other churches. The incoming superintendent, Rev Thorpe re-opened the work in 1972. In 1973 the work was boosted after the Pietermaritzburg municipality provided the church with a small council home.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Soobramoney

⁹⁵ Emslie

⁹⁶ Minutes of the first Board Meetings of the Church of the Nazarene in Chatsworth May 1969- July 1970

⁹⁷ *First District Assembly Minutes*, 7 December 1974.

In 1973 the Northdale church had its first minister in the person of Rev Dixon Chetty. Chetty was a former minister of the Evangelical Bible Church. He joined the Church of the Nazarene in 1972 after being attracted by its holiness teachings. In January 1973 he completed his theological training at the Nazarene Bible College in Cape Town. The Northdale church grew under his leadership. In nine years of Chetty's ministry in Northdale, the church had a membership of 87 with a Sunday school enrolment of 360.⁹⁸ In 1976 Northdale church was given a church site. In 1979 the superintendent Rev Steigleder secured the necessary funds from Kansas City and built the Northdale Church.⁹⁹ The building was completed in 1982. The same year Rev Chetty resigned from the Church of the Nazarene and joined his former church in Ladysmith.¹⁰⁰

Rev Frank Pillay was appointed by Rev Steigleder in April 1983 to pastor the Northdale church. Pillay came from the Malabar church of Nazarene in Port Elizabeth. Rev Roy Govender and Rev Reggie Naidoo assisted Pillay in starting a work among the Indians in Malabar.¹⁰¹ He was a full-time minister for two years in Malabar when Northdale was offered to him. When Pillay arrived at Northdale he found eleven members. He worked and trained them to evangelise the area of Northdale. They visited the homes of the Hindus. Many families were converted and some of them became active lay workers of the church. They were

⁹⁸ *Journal*, 1970

⁹⁹ *Journal*, 1979

¹⁰⁰ Danny Pillay

¹⁰¹ Pillay, Frank. *Interview*. Phoenix. 19 August 1996, and Govender, Roy

Ronnie Naicker, Wilson Raja, Suren and Nela Naidoo. They were also five families that joined the church after being delivered from demonic oppression.¹⁰²

In 1984 Frank Pillay recorded a membership of 157 in Northdale.¹⁰³ He believed that the rapid growth of the work was the result of active lay involvement in personal evangelism. In December 1988 the promising Northdale church was faced with another blow when Rev Frank Pillay resigned as a pastor. The church, for a number of years was under the care of a lay pastor, Mr Ishwarlal Hariparsad. He was a practicing Hindu and a compulsive gambler. It was Rev Frank Pillay who led him to the Christian faith. In 1985 Rev Martha Hendricks became the minister of the Church. The same year her husband Rev Gavin Hendricks started a Nazarene work among the Zulu community in Howick and recorded a membership of forty-three.¹⁰⁴ The Hendricks ministry in Northdale was short lived after accepting an invitation to the Shallcross church in 1998. Mr Harriparsad continues to serve the Northdale church as a lay pastor. The work at Howick was left in abeyance and was closed in 1999 by the Superintendent Matthew Simeon.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Pillay, Frank

¹⁰³ *Journal, Shallcross*, 26 October 1985

¹⁰⁴ *First Annual District Assembly of the Kwa Zulu Natal District Minutes*. Chatsworth, 17-18 January 1997

¹⁰⁵ Hendricks, Gavin. *Interview*. Shallcross. 5 September 2000.

6.14 Ladysmith

6.14.1 Rev Jason Perumal

The Church of the Nazarene launched its work among the Indian community in Ladysmith in February 1987. Rev Jason Perumal, a college graduate pioneered the work. He was converted from Hinduism under the ministry of Rev Subjee. In 1984 he was called into the ordained ministry. The following year he entered the Nazarene Bible College in Port Elizabeth. While in training he was inspired by the lives of the Nazarene missionaries notably Schmelzenbach and Jones. He believed that the missionaries taught them to pioneer new works and stressed on a faith ministry. Perumal believed that students in training were purposely developed to start their own churches. He stated in his interview:

In Bible College we were taught to exercise a "faith ministry" regardless of welfare of our families. Our calling meant that we would have to sacrifice all, including a living wage in order to "save souls". It was also a taboo to accept a call to an established church. Starting your own work was regarded as a hallmark of a true servant of God. With that in mind I started my own work in Ladysmith.

6.14.2 The development of church

The vision of District superintendent Michael Porthen was to establish the Church of the Nazarene in all of the Indian communities in Kwa Zulu Natal. In his report to the Natal District Assembly in May 1987, he presented a three years plan

to establish churches in Ladysmith, Standerton, Harrismith, Dundee, Newcastle, and Glenco. Rev Jason Perumal was appointed to Ladysmith for this reason.¹⁰⁶ He was offered a salary of R320 in 1987. Out of his salary he rented a cheap accommodation in Ladysmith, which he shared with his spouse Devi.¹⁰⁷

Jason Perumal started his work with Mr Peter Ganesh, a former member of the Church of the Nazarene in Chatsworth. Perumal was frustrated in the first month of his assignment and did not know how to engage the people to a Nazarene ministry. There were three factors that contributed to this. Firstly, the Indian community was numerically small, and there were numerous churches in the area. Secondly, he found the Hindus were antagonistic against Christianity. Thirdly, he was without a vehicle and this impaired his mobility in evangelising the area.¹⁰⁸ Fourthly, he was financially embarrassed and he could not meet his basic needs.¹⁰⁹

Perumal was desperate to start a work and believed that if God had called him to Ladysmith, it was God that would help him. After which he prayed and fasted for a month living on water. He described his experienced:

In July 1987 my pregnant wife was in Durban who was in her last trimester. I could not afford to care for her, and my families assisted her. During that time I decided to fast for 31 days. It was easy, because nobody was there to cook for me and out of my salary I

¹⁰⁶ Journal, 23 May 1987

¹⁰⁷ Perumal

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, and Soobramoney

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

only had R18 to care for my needs. I fasted to put God to the test. I could not carry the work and I needed His guidance. My spiritual exercise had taught me to depend on Him. During that time the Lord gave me a vision and told me that the devil had a strong foothold in the area. After which I was renewed and determined to build His church. Soon after three families were added to my church. I believe that God broke through.¹¹⁰

Perumal started his work among the children. His first convert was a little Hindu girl who through prayer was healed from an incurable infection. He also presented the gospel by regularly distributing tracts and visiting the homes of the Hindus. In spite of his tireless effort he had very little success in converting the people. However in July 1987 he started a Sunday school at his home with fifteen children. In August 1987 he held his first service at his home with seven members.¹¹¹

The children who attended the Sunday school came from poor families. Devi Perumal provided them with meals. The Sunday school was later held in a "run down" bus, which was parked along the road. A certain Mr Freddie who was converted through the ministry of Rev Perumal lead the youth meetings. In September 1987 the work began to grow and Rev Perumal was suppose to have his service in a classroom. This did not materialize, because of the heavy floods.¹¹² The same night the home of Rev Perumal was flooded, the water soiled his clothing and furniture. He described the event as follows:

The water rose 30 cm in my house. My wife and I crabbed whatever we could carry. In that rush, I almost drop my baby in the water. I had no place to stay and no

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Ganesh

resources. At that point, I questioned my call to Ladysmith, was God appointment or my zealous passion?¹¹³

After that encounter the Perumals were homeless and returned to their parents home in Durban. Although Rev Perumal resided in Durban he continued to hold weekly services in Ladysmith. This became extremely costly and he felt that he would be more effective in pastoring a church in the Durban area. In March 1989 he was appointed to the Verulam Church of the Nazarene. The work at Ladysmith was further affected with the relocation of Mr Freddie and the Ganesh family to Durban. Rev Michael Porthen tried to revive the work by stationing a probationer minister, but nothing was forthcoming. The work at Ladysmith was left in abeyance. Rev Perumal also resigned from the Church of the Nazarene and started an independent work in Croftdene, Chatsworth.¹¹⁴

6.15 The new Kwa Zulu Natal District

After the 1994 democratic election in South Africa, the ethnic districts of Natal merged to form a single unified district in October 1995. The respective districts were the Kwa Zulu South, the Kwa Zulu North and Natal (Indian Mission). Rev David Holmes was elected as first superintendent of the newly form Kwa Zulu Natal District. The district comprised of forty-nine church, twenty-four ordained elders, two probationary ministers, four license ministers and fifteen lay pastors. Twelve churches were self-supporting, while most of the non-supporting churches

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Ibid

exercised a bi-vocational ministry. In 1998 Rev Matthew Simeon, from the Chatsworth Church became the superintendent of District. ¹¹⁵

6.16 Conclusion

The development of the Church of the Nazarene among the Indian communities of Natal North Coast and Natal Inland had been traced. Economic hardship faced by ministers and their families were not addressed by the district leadership. This had affected the performance of ministers, resulting in closure of some promising works. Ministers who were brought into discipline in most cases were treated punitively and no attempt was made to reinstate them. The district leadership were also not trained and equipped to handle situation of conflicts. This led to ministers resigning and abandoning their stations in the Natal North Coast and Natal Inland. They were Rev Kristopher, Rev Charles Simeon, Rev Morgan Chetty, Rev Kitty Govender, Rev Charles Moonsamy, Rev Emmanuel Doorsamy, Rev David Daniels, Rev Dixon Chetty, Rev Frank Pillay, Rev Jason Perumal and Rev Vincent Argumuthu. The steady decline in membership continues to date and is adversely affecting the future of the Church of the Nazarene in Natal.

¹¹⁵ *Minutes of Merger Committee, 1995.*

Chapter Seven

7. Assessment

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to assess and to facilitate a debate on the variety of issues that has arisen during the course of this study. The first section of this chapter seeks to understand the role of the Church of the Nazarene and its distinctive holiness message. The second section engages the reader on the practical problems of entire sanctification and the need for further development of its theology. The third section is an attempt to evaluate and redefine the Church's call to ordained ministry. The fourth section deals with the programme of restructuring of the Churches financial institutions. The fifth section of the chapter traces the division of the Indian mission, which resulted in the decline of the work. The sixth section calls the Church to embrace a spirit transparency and tolerance. The final section acknowledges the Church's openness to dialogue with the wider Church and discusses the need for healing and reconciliation.

7.2 The need for a distinctive holiness church

An investigation into the development of the Church of the Nazarene brings to debate the need and relevance of a

distinctive holiness church. Is the Church of the Nazarene called of God to preach a distinctive message of holiness? If so, is God fostering division?

It must be resolved that it is a generally accepted view, in the light of the New testament that the Church established by Jesus Christ is one and undivided.¹ Even the apostle Paul warned against division and promoted the unity of the Church.² In spite of this view the Church of the Nazarene believed it is called of God to proclaim the doctrine of entire sanctification to the world.³ In order to attempt to find an answer, a brief summary of church schism needed to be given some attention.

The first historical schism of the Church was the separation of the Western Roman Church and Orthodox East in 1054. According to Paul Johnson political, cultural, religious and theological factors were the major contributors. Followed by the Reformation of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century, which was far more radical in its origin and consequences than the former. The Reformation constituted a new form of Christianity in Europe.⁴

In the English world the revival movement of the eighteenth century ushered a moral and spiritual awakening that

¹ John 17

² 1 Corinthians 1:10-30

³ Manual, 15

⁴ Johnson, 360

challenged the Church of England, which was untouched by the reformation of Martin Luther. This brought about a distinctive Methodist Church.⁵ Timothy Merritt and Pheobe Palmer led the Holiness Revival of the nineteenth century in North America. They revived the teachings of John Wesley after they found the Methodist church becoming secular and lacking the enthusiasm, which characterized the Wesleyan Revival Movement. The holiness revival also spilled outside the bounds of Methodism incorporating in its fold Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Quakers. After a dispute in their respective denomination, they broke away to form the Church of the Nazarene.⁶ Conclusively the lack of tolerance and openness had led to the division. The major schism was the Orthodox East from the West and the Reformation.

This summary will assist the reader in some way in opening the discussion on the issue; Is the Church of the Nazarene called to be a separate church? Does it seek to be exclude the 'sinful' members of the Church? In primitive times Gnostics, Novatianists, Donatists and Montanists, in Medieval times the Chatters and in modern times various holiness enthusiasts and sectarian have attempted to exclude the "sinful members" from the Church, so that only the pure and holy would remain.⁷ This was evident in the Wesleyan and the Holiness revivals, where exclusive

⁵ Plunt, 81-82

⁶ Smith, 11-26

⁷ Kung, Hans.1968. *The Church*. London: Search Press, 322.

societies and movements accepted members who experienced their theological expression of faith. This was one the major contributor that led to the break away. There were also evidences of intolerance among Church authorities and worship structures that prevailed at that time. The established churches were antagonistic against the awakened, and were unprepared to embrace the expression of the revivalists. As much as some Methodist Bishop tried to embrace the holiness revivalist by supporting revival meetings in their districts, not much had been done to open the church to spiritual reform.

The break away groups are as guilty of division as their former churches. The former must take the blame for not using the revivals in transforming its churches, and they neglected to persevere with love and patience. The established churches neglected to learn from the Reformation and to open its door to changes, rather choosing to be hostile and critical against the awakeners.

This field of study needs to be exhausted before any conclusion can to be drawn on the issue of the distinctive call of God for the church of the Nazarene to be a separate church. Most would support the premises that God's Church is undivided and one, which closes the door to separate churches. Therefore one can conclude that the Church of the Nazarene has come about for the good of its own people, in order to express its identity, rather than to recognize a divine call to separateness. This does not make the Church

inferior but opens the debate for church unity. The Methodist Church as well as other denominations would have to consider the assumption that it has come about as separate churches for the good of his members rather than expressing divine intervention for its separateness. Neither of them should find sacredness or authenticity in length of their historical existence.

7.3 Problem of the doctrine of entire sanctification

The Church of the Nazarene's definition of the doctrine of entire sanctification is not widely accepted in theological circles. This section is an attempt to briefly survey the development of the doctrine and to point the readers to some problem areas. Hopefully this will open the door for further investigation among South Africans. An extensive study on this subject can be found in Margaret Winkoop: *Theology of Love*, George Turner: *Christian Perfection*, Donald Metz: *Biblical Holiness*, Charles Dunning: *Grace, Faith, Holiness* and Paul Dayhoff: *Holiness among the Northern Sotho*.

Nazarene's hold the view that John Wesley supported a distinct second crisis after conversion, which completely removes the original sin in a person.⁸ This is supported by an extract from Wesley's journal. He wrote, "By justification we are saved from guilt of sin, and restored

⁸ Metz, 112

to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God."⁹ This concept was not accepted by traditional Catholic and Protestant theology, because of the fundamental differences in doctrine of sin. John Calvin and Martin Luther accepted St. Augustine's definition of sin, is concupiscence yoked with the body of the person. Therefore human beings are exempted from the possibility of freedom of sin in this life. Luther and Calvin believed that God imputes holiness and the receptor of this grace continues to live with his sinful self.¹⁰

Nazarenes held the view that Wesley accepted the Pelagius teaching of sin that sin was atomistic and is identified with the voluntary transgressions of the known Law of God. The possibility of choosing not to sin is in the power of the human will, making it possible for sanctification to free mankind from sin. Entire sanctification can also be understood as removing the sinful state in humans, which is naturally bent towards evil, and the imparting of the power of righteousness to live pure lives.¹¹ Nazarenes also held the view that the Pentecost experience as related in Act 2, is a sanctifying act of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on lives of believers. This is refuted in Pentecostal circles as an error in judgment by over zealous holiness churches. Nazarenes may have tended to interpret scripture from a holiness perspective, and tried to support its

⁹ Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 6, 509

¹⁰ Dunning, H Ray. 1988. *Grace, Faith and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 459-451.

doctrine by overstating scriptural references, such as the Pentecostal experience. However, scriptural support is a necessity for any religious experience.

It must be stated that Wesley's attempt of developing the doctrine of sanctification was after his religious experience at Aldergate. Ray Dunning, a Nazarene theologian, believed that Wesley's definition of sanctification embraced a synthesis of the Catholic ethic of holiness, and the Protestant ethic of grace, and "upon further observation Wesley's synthesis incorporates the Eastern thoughts, which incline to postulate a transformation of the being".¹² Further to this debate Wesley believed that both the crisis of salvation and entire sanctification could be lost.

If sin is a subjective experience and is entirely based on human being voluntary action against that which is known (Law of God), then this conclusion leaves the door open for abuse. If an individual believed that the colour of his skin makes him superior to others and was reinforced by his historical cultural context and in so doing exercised his privileges, Nazarenes would conclude that that person had not sinned, because it is not known to him. If it is known to him and he does not rectify his error then he stands to be condemned. This theory may justify the some Christians

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid.

in South Africa who supported Apartheid, holding the subjective experience of truth, understood in their milieu.

The Church of the Nazarene has brought to theology the realization of new self in Christ; human being can be essentially good by the grace of God. The "utopian self" is a gift from God. The self is cleansed by the Holy Spirit, and in that crisis the root of sin is destroyed and a new self emerges in Jesus Christ. A comparative study of the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification and liberation theology would be a worthwhile exercise for future debate. Leonardo Boff, a Latin American theologian, discusses the aspect of the divinity of a human being through the concept of "new birth." He believes that the reincarnated God in Christ made it inherently possible for humans to become like God. Therefore through the crisis of new birth, humans inherit the divine character of God.¹³ It is also sad that many of the 19th and 20th century theologians have not seriously studied Wesley's theology but often made reference to his evangelical spirit.

The Church of the Nazarene's theologians and missionaries had also not taken seriously the socio-political and psychological implications of the gospel. It overemphasised self-renewal, and tended to build dykes against social and political transformation. As John Wesley said, "There is no

¹³ Boff, Leonardo. 1984. *Liberating Grace*. New York: Orbis Books, 141

holiness without social holiness".¹⁴ It is the task of the Church to develop the doctrine of sanctification to embrace people and their contexts. The social dimension of the human being is ontologically rooted in the very core of the human being as a person.¹⁵ What does entire sanctification mean to pastors and members in the Indian work, who cannot feed their children? Who are deprived of a living wage? To the countless of Indian women who have no formal education? Therefore it is imperative for Nazarenes to develop their theology (which is 150 years old) in a world that demands justice and economic freedom. However, the weight of economic justice in South Africa does not rest on Nazarenes alone, but their contributions can bring freedom closer to the poor. In all fairness Nazarenes have contributed to education and medical care of the poor in places such as Swaziland and Transvaal. But they failed to address the political and economic structures in South Africa.¹⁶

7.4 Ordained Ministry

The failed ministries in churches in the North Coast, South Coast and Natal Inland, is the result of poor planning. Ministers were stationed in churches that were not financially viable. Subsequently, they suffered and damaged

¹⁴ Dunning, 500-507

¹⁵ Boff, 141-142

¹⁶ Emslie, *Interview*

their ministries. Some of them blamed the Church leadership for their woes.¹⁷

The problem with Indian mission regarding the stationing of ministers is complex. The first factor may be attributed to the economic phase of "supply and demand". In the 1970's there were ten ministers and two self-supporting churches. The leadership had to designate areas for mission to place its ministers, with little or no financial resources.

The first factor regarding the stationing of ministers is ascribed to the superintendent missionaries who were in charge of the work and were relatively well paid. They encouraged their ministers to embark on a faith ministry with little or no allowances. They saw the abundance of ministers as God's gift to the Indian mission and utilized the available personnel resources without taking serious cognisance of the ethical problems and its implications. As much as the Emslies had sacrificed twelve years in building the Indian work, they have set a precedent by sending their first candidate without preparing for his financial welfare. Improper housing and "embarrassing" allowances had placed ministers who started the ministry in adverse poverty.¹⁸

¹⁷ Perumal, and Kisten, and K Govender, and Jean Govender, and M Pillay, and Able Pillay

¹⁸ Ibid, Porthen, *Interview*, and Subjee, and Roy Govender, and Massey

The second factor is ascribed to the two major Indian works: Chatsworth and Merebank churches. The ministers in charge of the works in the persons of Rev Subjee and Rev Porthen have "competitively" sent ministers for training. Most of the ministers were recent converts and also passionate about their newfound faith. They responded to the call to the ordained ministry with no evidence of pastoral counselling in their decisions. Some of them were called after listening to a sermon. Others were told that they would "make a good minister".¹⁹ The only avenue for serious ministry advocated in the Church of the Nazarene was the ordained ministry.²⁰ It seemed that the ministers who went into full-time ministry were vulnerable and their mentors exploited their youthful passion for the Christian faith. Out of twenty-three pastors who completed their theological training in 1970's and 1980's, sixteen left the Nazarene ministry. Some of the ministers had not recovered from their woes.

The structure and the call to the ordained ministry have to be seriously questioned; when compared to the period from 1990 to year 2000, only two candidates in the Indian work offered for the ordained ministry. They are in the persons of Martha Porthen and Gabriel Benjamin. One cannot conclude that the superintendent missionaries and the senior minister deliberately exploited its candidates for the ministry. Their zeal to win the "poor lost soul" was the

¹⁹ Govender, Kristopher

²⁰ Perumal, and Kristopher Govender

utmost priority for missions, and they failed in their innocent endeavours to see a sustainable future church. Some factors needed to be considered regarding the nurturing of candidates for ministry: prudent counselling; financial viability of the ministry; church community involvement in the call of the candidates; ascertaining a maturity level and fundamentally testing the divineness of the call to the ministry.

7.5 Structural problems

The problem that affected the Indian work in Natal is an imposed structure of administration that had not taken its context into consideration. The financial structure has to be redefined to meet local needs. The division of wealth is evident in whereby Nazarene Missionaries were paid by North American "coffers", and local ministers were cared for by a depleted "Third World" budgets. In the case of Rev Samuel Moonsamy who equally shared the work with the Emslies was economically disadvantaged, which eventuated his resignation from the Nazarene ministry. The Nazarene leadership would have maintained a healthy Indian work, if it had financially cared for its local ministers. The Church ploughed forty years of hard work in the Natal District and had produced only three self-supporting Indian churches. In its vigorous attempt to create self-supporting churches, it caused the closure of seven viable churches. The Church needs to rethink of its overseas mission budget,

and the undignified way it conducted its finances that had adversely affected the Indian work in Natal.

If the Church's mission fund cannot care for local ministers, the Church may have to consider a circuit ministry, where poor churches in geographical boundaries may attach it selves to a viable church or pool its financial resources, and in so doing maybe viable to share a minister. The Church of the Nazarene should also consider specifying a minimum salary for its ministers. Ministers have tended to be vulnerable and have accepted undignified stipends, for an opportunity to exercise their ministry. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa revises their ministers stipend on a yearly basis, advise from this institution might be a worthy exercise.²¹

7.6 The divided Indian work

The Merebank and Chatsworth church were mission centres that launched the Indian work in other area in KwaZulu Natal. In its awake, it also destroyed the revival and unity that existed from the inception. While the Emslies was in charge of the work, the unity prevailed. The arrival of Porthen and Subjee brought added momentum to the unity. The division began in the early eighties, when the district superintendent office was made available for local

²¹ *Methodist Church of Southern Africa: Year Book 1998*. Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 90-94

Cape Town: Methodist Publication House. 225

ministers. Delegates in District Assembly voted for their ministers and representatives as District officers.²²

Ministers who offered for the ministry and members from their respective churches were loyal to their ministers in the way they cast their votes. The failed amalgamation of Phoenix and Mount Edgecombe was ontologically rooted in this problem. The division was also largely contributed to the decline of the Indian work.²³ The Church as a district lost its passion for mission and subsequently immersed itself in ecclesiastical politics.²⁴

Nazarenes need to take cognisance of its historical roots. The Methodist Revival Movement had great success in renewing the Church's call to "save soul" and to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land. When it became an organised church it lost its enthusiasm for rule and governance.²⁵ It is imperative for Nazarenes to critically analyse the "blessing and banes" that is associated with experiential religion.

A factor, which had caused internal divisions in the churches such as Chatsworth, Shallcross, and Phoenix, is the insecurities faced by ministers. They share a common problem whereby members who were unhappy with their

²² Soobramoney, and Roy Govender, and Kristopher Govender, and Ganesh

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Joseph

²⁵ Johnson, 368

leadership joined other churches. In all three churches the ministers were forced to work in their respective appointments, because they had no alternative. If they were voted out of office, they most likely would be unemployed. This has create a scenario were ministers would cling onto their churches and at times attempt to ostracize their critics. Ministers may become more entrenched in their "power base" if they had made personal and economic sacrifices, which was common to Indian mission. The psychological and economical risk for a Nazarene minister and their families to engage in is exploitive and dehumanising. If this scenario continues the Church of the Nazarene may open itself to be sued for unfair labour practise. Nazarenes need to seriously engage in a structure that would create some kind of security for its ministers and their families who might be affected by a "pastoral recall".

7.7 The need for tolerance and transparency

In 1990 the Indian work in Natal was immersed in problems. Subsequently, in April 1991 disenchanted ministers formed a body within the Natal district to address the spiralling problems in the district. The organisation was called the "Council of Concerned Ministers". The following were members of the Council: E Doorsamy, M Simoen, A Pillay, D Daniels, J Perumal, D Kisten, T Naidoo, Kristopher Govender and M Pillay. A letter of grievance was sent to the Advisory Board and copied to all the relevant authorities

including the General Superintendent, Dr R Hurn. They had identified four objectives in to addressing the problems of the Indian work. It would be important for this study to state three objectives which is relevant to development of the Indian work:

Objective One

The state of the Natal District

- a) *There are unassigned ministers on our district who are willing to minister but are not given the opportunity: Jason Perumal and Tibbs Naidoo.*
- b) *There are churches without full-time ministers yet there are men available: Northdale, Tongaat, Ispingo, Verulam.*
- c) *We recommend that the superintendent do not entertain local church matters, but refer them to the pastor in charge.*
- d) *It seems that district-wise there is no evangelistic trust.*
- e) *There has been no feedback as far as ministerial pension are concern.*
- f) *There is a lack of ministerial fellowship on the district. The superintendent must create this as pastor of the pastors.*
- g) *There has been no feedback regarding auditing of district books professionally by a C.A.*

Objective Two

- a) *We need to know the reasons why ministers are resigning from their churches and the denomination.*
- b) *We suspect favouritism in district matters with letters of complaint treated differently.*
- c) *There is a basic exploitation of ministers with many having to live well below the bread line.*
- d) *Ministers feel very vulnerable because of the way letters to the Advisory Board are handled.*

Objective three

- a) *There are laymen appointed as pastors over and above qualified ministers.*
- b) *Bi-vocational ministers are approved by region but seem to be frowned upon on the Natal district.²⁶*

²⁶ Council of Concerned Ministers. "Letter to the Natal District Advisory Board". 12 April 1991.

The leadership did not address the issues that the ministers raised. The Church lacked the honest conviction to address the pressing issue that arose in the operation of its' ministry. It silenced its critics, by avoiding the issue. Subsequently, seven of the ministers resigned from the Church of the Nazarene. Hans Kung stated categorically, "A division in the Church is a scandal and a disgrace. Anyone who did not actively try to prevent it, anyone who furthers it in any way, at all bears part of the blame".²⁷ In order for the Church of the Nazarene to survive the twenty first century it need to foster a spirit of tolerance and transparency.

7.8 The way forward

The Church of the Nazarene had joined the World Methodist Council on 30 December 1999. The delegates of the Council received the Nazarenes with a standing ovation. It brought to the Council a passion for world evangelism and was anxious to experience and share the evangelism ethos of the World Methodist Council.²⁸ This move is a positive step for the Church; whereby it has the opportunity to dialogue with contemporary models of mission. Hopefully, this would infiltrate the Kwa Natal District and its leadership. The Church of the Nazarene had contributed immensely in transforming the lives of the young people in the Indian

²⁷ Kung, Hans, 1981. *The Church*. London: Search Press, 284

²⁸ *Church of the Nazarene Joins the World Methodist Council*.

community. It was a beacon of hope and a haven to those who wanted "full-salvation". Credit must be given to the early pioneers notably: Penn, Emslies, Samuel Moonsamy, Porthen and Subjee for their faithfulness and dedication to the Indian work. There is a dire need for the leadership to engage in personal resource training. Much of the hurts were cause by poor decision- making and communication. Healing and reconciliation between the various factions need to be a priority. The Church may consider a professional arbitrator from outside Nazarene circles to mediate.

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