The decolonisation of the mind
Black consciousness community projects by the Limpopo council of churches

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Abstract

This article is a narrative account of examples of community projects of the Black Consciousness Movement as part of an attempt to decolonise the black mind as undertaken by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in the former Northern Transvaal of South Africa (now the Limpopo province). During the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, this area was regarded as the most conservative Afrikaner settlement as reported in The New York Times of 25 April 1991. The article recounts the role played by the South African Council of Churches in solidarity with the victims of apartheid on route to the decolonisation of the black mind. It briefly starts by describing the concept of the colonisation of the mind and then locates the philosophy of Black Consciousness as an appropriate response to the process of decolonising the black mind and thus the mission of the church. The article relies on archival material from the Limpopo Council of Churches as its primary source.

Key words: Decolonisation, Mission, Colonisation, Seasoning, Consciousness, Mind, Deculturation, Programme, Project, Trajectory

1. Background

This article explores the mission work of the branch of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in the former Northern Transvaal province in South Africa (it is now called the Limpopo province) in search of its contribution to the decolonisation of the black mind through its community projects. The paper argues that the process of the decolonisation of the mind is an attempt to help black people reach self-empowerment and self-emancipation from external as well as from internal enslavement and the control of their colonisers. It is a missiological discourse which calls upon the church to get involved in human projects of liberation. The Black Consciousness Movement and its 'soulmates' (Dolamo 2016) – Black People Convention and Black Theology programmes – were examples of the agenda of the decolonisation of the black mind. The movement introduced community projects which were meant to concretise the process of liberating the colonised mind

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(D'Errico 2011) which is part of the mission of the church. Many black people saw education as a way of qualifying themselves for employment at white-owned industries. But the agenda of decolonising the mind as was driven by the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa envisaged a situation in which black people would start their own projects and stop relying on white industries. This was regarded as a way of self-development and in essence the mission of God to the poor.

During the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the area of the Limpopo province was widely regarded as one of the most conservative white Afrikaner strongholds in South Africa that strictly adhered to the principles of apartheid, according to Christopher Wren of *The New York Times* on 25 April 1991. The article examines the SACC's role in acting in solidarity with victims of apartheid in their search for emancipation from oppression in order to define themselves in the Limpopo province. As people fought for their dignity and true humanness (Illunga 1984:156), Steve Biko, the founder and leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, made the following statement: 'Black man, you are on your own' (2004:213). Biko's (2004:213) statement was aimed at making black people more independent of white people and dependent on themselves for their freedom which was in essence a call to mission.

The paper briefly discusses the concept of the 'decolonisation of the mind' as it came to be understood in South Africa and the pioneering role Steve Biko played in shaping its focus in the country. The sources used in this paper are archival materials from the then Northern Transvaal Council of Churches (NTCC), now the Limpopo Province Council of Churches (LPCC) sourced at the LPCC's offices and articles and books written on the concept of the decolonisation of the black mind. Archival materials from reports by fieldworkers, newsletters by organisations associated with the SACC, letters, minutes of NTCC meetings, interviews with people involved in the projects and speeches given at conferences form the primary sources for this article. Other sources include newsletters such as 'The Rural Action Project', 'Rural News', and 'Transvaal Rural Action Committee', in *Our View* and *Family Day* published by the SACC. Some key people were interviewed to verify the authenticity of the information. Care was taken to strive for objectivity while operating in a highly subjective environment.

2. Defining the colonisation of the black mind

Dascal (2007:1) defines the colonisation of the mind as subtle manifestations of political, economic, cultural and religious beliefs taking possession of and control of victims' minds by the colonisers. According to Dascal (2007:1), the purpose of colonisation was to introduce new forms of seeing reality and unconsciously or consciously relinquishing one's cultural norms and adopting new ones. Its primary

aim was to twist the logic and take over the thought and actions of its victims in a manner that was less violent as violence would only ensure that the victims were openly resistant to incorporate the new desired change (Dascal 2007:27-47; Biko 2004:81; Oelofsen 2015:130-146; D'Errico 2011).

According to Douglas (2007), the colonisation of the mind presupposes the intervention of external force on six levels: a) the coloniser's intervention in the psyche of the subjects – the colonised, b) the intervention affects the mental sphere of the subjects, c) the effects are long-lasting and hard to remove, d) the result is asymmetrical power relationships between the parties, e) parties can live aware or unaware of the new acquired relationships, and f) parties can participate in the relationships voluntarily or involuntarily. The process may take place through the transmission of mental habits and other social structures over a long period of time. Social acts such as education and religion can serve as a crucial means of depositing colonial traits into the minds of victims as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:384) has observed. Hotep (2008), writing from an African-American background, equates the process of the colonisation of the mind to deculturalisation, seasoning and mis-education. By deculturalisation, Hotep (2008) refers to a method of pacification and control while stripping the victims of their culture, history and their ancestral education and replacing them with external (Eurocentric) values. He calls this process a seasoning which is a form of brainwashing (Hotep 2008). Shongwe (2016:1) equates it to a system that takes away the identity of its victims to the extent that the victims become foreigners and strangers to their own culture. Ngugi wa Thiong'o describes it as a process that corrodes the human-centredness of its victims to lose qualities of courage, kindness, faith in themselves, mercy, hatred of evil, integrity and self-confidence.

In this process, Africans are taught to feel ashamed of their cultural heritage so that they may discard it from their lives and adopt foreign norms as authentic and universal (Hotep 2008). Furthermore, they are taught to admire the white culture and values with a view of embracing them as authentic and universal. In some cases, when the victims of colonisation accept the values imposed on them by their colonisers they are rewarded with gifts that make their counterparts who are still outside feel ashamed and inferior (Biko 2004:45). Douglas (2007) argues that the aim of colonisation is to change the African mind (by the coloniser) to adopt the forms of thinking and behaviour as determined by the coloniser for the purposes of subjugation. The ultimate results of the colonisation process is to internalise the beliefs that the colonised are inferior to the colonising race, diligently trying to 'mirror white as beautiful and black as backward and primitive' (Yerxa 2013). The colonisation of the mind robs the colonised of their dignity and identity and makes them 'rootless and nameless' with no right to self-determination (Mveng 1994:156).

Another level of the colonisation of the mind is what Mwata (1996) calls 'learned indifference' which manifests itself through self-destructiveness characterised by a psychological disorder of being disinterested in issues that promote the self-worth of oneself. At the centre of this indifference is self-hate, jealousy and pull-down syndrome. Nobody is allowed to develop further than the group. In this regard, Mwata (1996) argues that many colonised people are not even aware of the struggle being waged for their liberation and that they remain causalities. Instead of uniting and working for the common cause, which is achieving their liberation, they often fight among themselves. Often than not their life is characterised by factionalism and divisive strives. Hotep (2008) identifies another feature that characterises the colonised mind which is disunity and a lack of a common purpose. The worse scenario of this type of disunity is the colonised predisposition to accept dysfunctional practices in their community such as corruption, teenage pregnancy, anarchy, and the power struggle with all of its manifestations, such as accepting crime without reporting it to law-enforcement agents and living in squalor conditions while having the means of improving one's lot. A worse scenario is a resignation from the cause of justice by the poor. This form of defeatism and indifference to inhumane circumstances may be the goal that the colonisers wanted to achieve with the colonised as it becomes a type of self-fulfilling prophecy. Appalling and unhygienic conditions are often ascribed to the victims of the colonisation as signs of indolence, incompetence, unintelligence, backwardness and primitiveness, ignoring the fact that the conditions in which black people live were designed by colonial state control (in the case of apartheid in South Africa) and separate development (Worden 2012:74). The worse scenario of the colonised mind has the elements of superstition, fatalism, passivity and timidity (Magesa 1976:19). At the heart of the loss of rationality the subjects remain indifferent to critical issues that deeply and negatively determine their lives (Magesa 1976:20).

3. Means of colonising the mind

Against the debilitating effects of the colonisation of the mind there is a Sotho axiom that says: *Botse re lella boswanyana, boswaanyana bo a lahla* (beauty we strive for is blackness for whiteness betrays). According to Northern Sotho proverb writer Rakoma (1975:122), whiteness represents fragility and unreliability. Blackness, in contrast, represents endurance, permanence, trustworthiness and indigenousness. There was no reason for black women to use Ambi cream to lighten their skins and wear wigs to look like white people. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, during the height of the Black Consciousness campaign, some black women wanted to be like white women with long hair and light skin (Douglas 2007). These women wore clothes that made them look like white women. As part of decolonising the mind,

the Black Consciousness leaders campaigned to infuse a sense of pride in their black skin so that the women would stop using Ambi creams that lightened their skins and throw away wigs and wear their natural African hair (Hadfield 2017:np). At the heart of the Black Consciousness Movement was the call for black people to stand up and discover their identity which they ought to tenaciously affirm and cherish.

The Black Consciousness philosophy was instrumental in the decolonisation of the mind in South Africa. Founded by Steve Biko in the early 1970s it championed the psychological liberation of black people in the country that brook no tolerance to dissenting black views to the policy of apartheid. Tiyani Lybon Mabasa wrote in the *Soweton* on 13 September 2007 that Steve Biko had a radical approach to the process of emancipating black people from the yoke of apartheid. He urged people to define and discover themselves, their history and their values (Biko 2004:80). He argued that 'the greatest weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the minds of those whom they oppress'. Nengwekhulu (2000) echoed the same sentiment and added that in South Africa the oppressor had attempted to twist and manipulate black minds in order to make them mentally and psychologically pliable to the oppressor's exploitation and manipulation. This statement was at the core of Biko's Black Consciousness campaign to stop black people from seeing themselves and their role in terms of white 'eyes' and values (Mabasa 2007). He saw the only vehicle for a change of racism in South Africa as lying in the regaining of self-consciousness of the people whose personalities had been lost (Biko 2004: 81) and the way of such discovery lay in the dispelling of fear for pain, arrest or death (Biko 2004:173). The first step in regaining the lost personality was through becoming who they really were (black and oppressed) by infusing dignity in them and reminding them about their complicity in the crime of allowing themselves to be caught in the process of racial supremacy (Biko 2004:164).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:384) sees language as the most potent instrument in the hands of the colonisers to capture the mind of the colonised. Dascal (2007:387) argues that the ability to speak and write the colonial language in his schooling career was highly prized and became a measure of intelligence. Language and literature were broadly employed in colonial education to the extent that they became a means of communication and the careers of new culture (Dascal 2007:388). According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), language as a culture is an image-forming agent in the mind of learners and in that way deposits new images in the minds of learners that gradually dislocate themselves from the environment of their birth. Hotep (2008) agrees with Ngungi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Mwata (1996) that colonial education, images and symbols were used to capture the minds of black people. The primary interest of the colonisers was economic in the form of land that

would bring them bread and a place of abode (D'Errico 2011; Thiong'o 1986:390; Yerxa 2013). In an environment where the interests of the colonisers were to capture the mind of the colonised for the purposes of domesticating them for social and economic interest, control and force had to be used. The point in case here is the forced removals of black people (Kgatla 2013:30). Dascal (2007) and Biko (2004:80) argue that family structures, traditions, education, religion, media, fashion and ideology are used to lure the colonised to unwittingly and unknowingly be trapped in the system. State controlled media had the power of distorting the world to appear more attractive while it had gruesome consequences. One of the informers of this study equated the Bantustan government to a piece of meat that was given to the victims with a sharp knife within it. Receiving black self-government would hurt those who had received it because of hidden cruelty embedded within it. Force was used to coerce the colonised to submit to a new ideology (Biko 2004:81) if they could not voluntarily do so.

4. Decolonisation of the mind as an authentic way out of colonial entrapment

Many of the commentators on the decolonisation of the mind are of the same accord that the only way out of the entrapment of colonisation is to inculcate change in the minds of the colonised belief systems in order to embrace self-definition, self-determination, self-affirmation, self-love, and self-defence (Hotep 2008; Biko 2004:164; Thiong'o 1986:39; Shongwe 2016; D'Errico 201; Oelofsen 2015:135; Kritzenger 1988:175; Dascal 2007). In any meaningful programme of emancipation from the slavery of colonisation, the colonised should re-discover their lost humanness (Hadfield 2017), pick themselves up and appreciate (as it were kiss) themselves. According to Hadfield (2017), the first step in re-discovery is for the oppressed to come to their sense, so to speak 'pump back life into their empty shell' and to infuse them with pride and dignity (Hadfield 2017:np), renouncing their complicity in their crime of entanglement in the colonial system.

The colonised should start defining themselves in new positive terms in the face of their adversaries. In the same vein, Biko (2004:164) attests that the starting point of the process of decolonisation has to do with diminishing fear in their minds. Fear of pain, even death, is an impediment to real liberation. The oppressed should never be afraid of involving themselves in politics in favour of their bright careers against the system (Biko 2004:164). On a psychological level, the colonised should throw away the shackles of the images deposited on their brains by the coloniser by consciously becoming what they really are. With clenched fists raised in the air, the black people affirm themselves as people of their own terms and are no longer defined in terms of white values and standards (Kritzinger 1988:44). Black Con-

sciousness was a way of life and a cry for authentic humanity in the midst of dark evil powers that negated it (Kritzinger 1988:46).

5. Building community projects as a call to mission

As a church witnessing and serving in the midst of oppression and denial of the basic human needs by the powerful, self-help projects became an essential part of its response to holistic mission. Bosch sees holistic (integral) mission as a form of ministry by the people of God (1991:467), as liberation (Bosch 1991:432), and as missio Dei where God the Father is sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son are sending the Spirit. It includes a movement towards the world (Bosch 1991:390). In response to its calling, the church should bring people closer to God by sharing the Gospel through service, praise and worship and witnessing to his love by providing for their felt needs (Graham 1996:202-204) by providing for their needs. In support of the same missiogical concept De Gruchy (2004:145) maintains that the black South Africans did not have to be told by outsiders what mission of the church was..

The church should seek to spread the love of Jesus Christ to the poor and marginalised of the society regardless of its environment. God uses anybody He chooses to use in His unsearchable mystical love. As Christensen (2000:172-178) observes, the 'one vision' of God for the church is achieved through practice and reflection through community formation, involvement in mission and true stewardship guided by His Spirit. Christensen (2000:174) continues to expound his thesis that the strength to live a quality Christian life comes through the structures of the community, solidarity, mutuality, authenticity and commitment in a therapeutic quality in worship, as well as an outward movement to serve and care with compassion for the poor and the marginalised as dictated by Christ in Matthew 25 (Christensen 2000:180). There is always a developmental dimension to mission and this should be appreciated without linking it to the historical and colonial understanding of the term. Mission is not the prerogative of Western Christianity but of God. African Christians also responded to the mission of God even in their search for liberation.

6. Calling for the struggle: NTCC programmes as part of decolonising the mind as mission agenda.

One of the tangible means of decolonising the black mind in the campaign of Black Consciousness was the introduction of community projects that were called Black Community Programmes (BCP) in 1972 (South African History Online nd). The rationale for starting self-help programmes was that, according to Biko (Bizos 1998:43), black people were defeated and they had to uplift themselves by their own 'boot strings'. In order to realise this ideal they had to design various

programmes in their black communities for the purpose of uplifting them (Bizos 1998:43). BCPs were started in the Eastern Cape and later spread to the whole of the country. Mamphela Ramphele led the campaign in the Eastern Cape including Zanempilo Community Health Centre and later she was moved to the Northern Transvaal in terms of her banishment order (South African History Online nd). Even there she continued with the self-help programmes of BCPs such as the Isutheng Community Health Programme. There were also vegetable plantings, bricklaying, home-based industries producing leather products, church programmes and many others (BCP nd).

The BCP projects were established essentially to answer the problem that the black person was a defeated being who had to find him/herself to lift him/herself up (BCP nd). They were introduced to defeat the attitude and instil a sense of human worth in them. Small as they were, the BCPs went a long way in conscientising black people to affirm themselves and discover who they were. What they saw in their new identity of blackness was that their identity lead directly to their destiny of self-affirmation and self-help and that led to starting new community projects.

Since the launching of the concept of the community programmes, the regional and local churches which were affiliates of the World Council of Churches (WCC) joined. They based their programmes on the motto of the World Council of Churches: '…it is a Fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scripture and thus seek to fulfil together their common calling to the Glory of the one God, Father Son and the Holy Spirit.'[2] The SACC and its member churches in various regions were also guided by the same principles when establishing their programmes. Initially, the NTCC, now called the LPCC, overarching framework for its programmes included the Dependants' Conference, Inter-church Aid, the African Bursary Fund, and Home and Family Life[3]. These focus areas had to be broadened, reshaped and deepened as the struggle against the colonial system intensified.

The NTCC, like its mother body the SACC, was drawn into an intensive struggle in order to serve the oppressed black people of the country and their emancipation. 'The harvest was great, but the workers were few and resources were limited'; despite these limitations, the NTCC tirelessly engaged with the system that was destroying black people's lives. In order to illustrate the difficult path undertaken by the NTCC in response to the call of Black Consciousness for the decolonisation of the black mind, it had to follow and because of the limited scope of this study, the discussion is limited to the following community programmes: the Dependants'

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[2]   Consejo Mundial de Iglesias, op. cit.

[3]   File G. Polokwane NTCC Archive

Conference, Inter-Church Aid, Winter Schools, Home and Family Life, Refugees Ministries, the Exiles and Returnees Project, and Inter-Church Youth.[4]

7. Dependants' Conference[5]

The Dependants' Conference was a programme that provided assistance (grants, clothes, meals, legal fees and many other essential amenities) to the families of political detainees, exiles, returnees and the detainees themselves. The NTCC embarked on these services because there was no other way to be a church with integrity in South Africa without serving the cause of the poor and the afflicted. The apartheid system was to be defeated even in the thinking of black people. Lamenting on the vastness of the system and its evil would not defeat it, but taking positive steps, even though they may be small and risky in the sight of the system, would take them somewhere in their self-awareness.

The political detainees were not only assaulted, tortured, and kept *incommunicado*, but their families and close relatives were subjected to severe psychological pressure. It was clear that the regime resorted to these tactics in order to persuade their detainees' kin to exert pressure on the detainees to recant and to desist from their activities. Torture was one of the means at the disposal of the colonisers of making black people surrender to apartheid. The system's trail of terror exerted on its victims was unlimited. A woman wrote in *Our View* (a paper of the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee*)* of 21 August 1986:[6]

> For many families, detention can mean the loss of a breadwinner. There is the rent to be paid and food to be bought. There is the fear that the detainee will lose his/her job, or parents worry whether their child will be able to continue with school. Often, the family is so stressed that its members cannot give one another support. Young children may become clingy, demanding or aggressive. I often became angry and resentful at being so powerless….

The plight of the political detainees and their families became the concern of the NTCC. Political resistance without assistance to the victims of the system would not be credible enough and something additional had to be done. The NTCC visited the families of political prisoners, detainees, political 'trialists' and those on death row to assess the needs of their dependants. Particulars of the detainees were gathered, such as the nature of the offence, the prison or police station where he or she was held, family background, the detainee's financial position and the pastoral care

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[4]   Files File G, Polokwane, NTCC Archives.

[5]   File B of A-ZZ

[6]   Our View, A paper of the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee, 21 August 1986.

needed. This information helped the NTCC in its assessment as to what kind of help it could offer.

The assistance included food parcels, school funds for needy children, legal assistance if the detainee had to appear in court, and a means of dealing with unforeseen circumstances. Attorneys hired by the NTCC acted on behalf of 'emergency detainees' who needed amenities such as clothing, spectacles, money for hospital fees, money for burial arrangements of politically sanctioned deaths, money for relatives to visit their kin at Robben Island (where high-level political prisoners such as Nelson Mandela were held), and school or college fees. The NTCC assisted where it could. The NTCC also made money available for workshops to assist with the training of its member churches in survival techniques.

One of the NTCC fieldworkers, Mr. A.P. Mphaphili[7], who later worked as the Chief Executive of the Tshilidzili Hospital in Venda, wrote in a report about the fear that gripped the families of political detainees in Venda. He requested permission from the families to report their situation in the newspapers, but they refused. An old woman whose son was in detention refused the visit of the NTCC fieldworker because she feared harassment by the security police. Some people whose relatives were in detention would only allow night visits.

The NTCC had to contend with the situation of political detainees who fell ill while in detention. Some notable cases were those of Joyce Mashamba, the former Member of Executive (MEC) for Sports and Culture; Joyce Mabudafhasi, the former Deputy Minister of the Department of the Public Service Commission; and Mariestella Mabitje. All three of them fell ill and suffered severe depression when they were held in prison at Nylstroom (now Modimolle). Mashamba[8] had just served a long prison term at Kroonstad in the Free State. The doctor (a white man) who came once a week to see the political prisoners would go back without treating any one of them when he realised that there were many people who wanted consultations. Many political prisoners lost their lives under similar conditions. Alfred Makaleng was one of them – he died on 26 August 1988 from a brain hemorrhage after he had been assaulted by the security police. He had been kept in the same Nylstroom (Modimolle) prison for 14 days before his death. Before his death, he complained of a headache, but he was not attended to. African life was very cheap in the hands of the security police, especially because of the political climate[9].

The NTCC responded to these anomalies without hesitation and helped where it could, as already indicated. The cases deserving mention here are those of G. Mashamba, T. Makunyane, P. Mudzielwane, and J. Mukgesi. The four cases

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[7]   File D Dependants' Conference

[8]   File F of A_ZZ

[9]   File I of A_ZZ

represent the categories of the people the NTCC were helping. Mashamba was a university lecturer who was serving a ten-year sentence at Robben Island and whose wife had been given a five-year sentence in the Kroonstad Women's Prison. The couple had three children who were living with their grandmother and were attending school at Mankweng. They had no source of income and Mashamba had just been dismissed by the university. Makunyane was a university student who struggled to continue his studies because he was being harassed by the security police. Both of his parents were working: his father as a medical doctor and his mother as a nursing sister. In his application to the NTCC, he did not hide the fact that his family was well-off, but that his political views plunged him into problems. Mudzielwane was a gardener who was imprisoned in Venda because of his activism. His wife, Selinah, applied for a grant to support four children. Mukgesi was a housewife, and her husband, Livingstone, had been detained in Venda. She applied for a grant to buy a brick machine to make bricks for herself and her two children. All applications were favourably considered by the NTCC and the applicants were helped.

8. Inter-Church Aid[10]

The NTCC ministered to human needs. In its response to the Gospel, it started projects that were aimed at community development and income generation. It took its cue from the perceived needs of communities without being prescriptive. Community projects ranged a broad spectrum of activities such as crèches (preschools), farming projects, water projects, gardening projects, literacy projects and financial management projects.

One such example of a community project can be found in the 1970s and 1980s. The Limpopo province is a semi-desert area, with summer rainfall ranging between 300 mm and 500 mm per year. During a prolonged drought in the 1970s and 1980s, many rivers dried up and the only source of water for the people was underground water. The NTCC joined communities in the area to organise the drilling of boreholes and to confront the homeland governments to force them to do the same. Dry farming and gardening projects benefited from such boreholes. The NTCC would support the communities to acquire arable land from local chiefs and get donations to purchase seed and fertilisers for these small farming communities. According to the archival source[11], successful water projects were launched in the villages of Mamone, Schoonoord, and Alberton in Sekhukhuneneland, Ramogwerane and Tafelkop in Nebo, Mamotiantane next to

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[10] Files M & N of A_ZZ

[11] Files H of A-ZZ

the University of the North (now the University of Limpopo), Botlokwa north of Pietersburg (Polokwane) and in the western regions. In addition to water supply projects, crèches were established in villages such as Tafelkop, Lorraine, Ga-Phiri, Botlokwa, Tshamawela, Mamone and many others. The communities benefited from these projects initiated by the NTCC.

9. Winter School Project[12]

As the South African government became more and more repressive and militarised to enforce the Bantustan policies of independence and inequality with all their ramifications, school children and their teachers became intensely involved in the struggle. As a result, the security police stepped up its presence in centres of higher learning. Their presence and actions disrupted proper learning in those centres. Matriculation results became poorer, year after year. In rural areas, the term 'dropouts' became so prevalent that the then Secretary of the Lebowa Education Department did his master's degree on the concept with the then University of the Orange Free State (now the University of the Free State), but he did not blame the causes of the dropouts on the apartheid system, but on the victims. Many prominent black people who were working for the Bantustan governments were so blinded by the system that they could not see the plight of their own people.

Out of its concern and the nature of its call, the NTCC initiated the Winter School programme, where matriculation students would receive additional tuition during the winter school vacation (in June and July) to augment what they were receiving from their conventional schools. The programme started in the early 1980s and continued until 1989. Large numbers of students attended the lessons and at the end of a set of lessons the students were requested to evaluate the programme. Positive and appreciative sentiments were often expressed. Some students indicated that what they received from the Winter School was better than what they had received from their normal schools.

Teachers who gave lessons at the Winter School were recruited from local schools on the basis of their expertise. The NTCC could not pay them or even subsidise their travelling costs, except where a donation could be solicited. They were requested to consider the work their Christian calling when they enrolled to assist at the Winter School. All teachers who assisted at the Winter School accepted the NTCC policy of non-payment and of out-of-pocket travelling expenses. But the teachers were provided with a dinner on the first day as a token of welcome and appreciation at the expense of the NTCC. By 1985, the number of volunteer teachers stood at 40. The numbers of learning materials ordered for learners in 1985 were

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12   Files N of A_ZZ

as follows: English, Afrikaans and biology – 650, mathematics and physical science
– 250, and geography and history – 450[13].

The principals of the schools from which students were drawn to the Winter
School had to sign a form confirming that the students were indeed in Standard Ten
(matriculants) and indicating the subject streams the students were in. A committee
constituted by the NTCC for the work of the Winter School would meet prior to the
commencement of the programme (for planning) and after the programme (for
evaluation). University lecturers who were experts in particular fields were often
invited to give advice or input.

The Winter School programme was not implemented without problems. In one
particular case, a circuit inspector threatened to charge one of the principals with
misconduct when he arranged for children from other schools to enrol for the
programme. Some teachers did not favour the programme and complained at the
circuit office about the initiative. The complaints were based on jealousy because
teachers at the Winter Schools were better qualified and more dedicated to their
work than those who were not involved in the Winter Schools. Despite all of these
hurdles, the NTCC continued with the programme for the benefit of learners.

10. Ministerial accompaniment

In 1970, the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act became law. The law declared that
all black people in South Africa were citizens of the homelands. Even if a person
was not living in or had not been to any homeland, he or she was declared a citizen
of the homeland where his or her language was spoken. These people would be
forced to apply through the homeland where they were relocated to when they
wanted to apply for a passport to go abroad, for example.

The NTCC would intervene for the victims through ministerial accompaniment,
providing accommodation for meetings and legal opinions, and covering any costs.
Where houses and properties of the people subjected to forced removals were de-
stroyed, the NTCC mobilised local churches to provide their churches as shelters
to the victims of the system. They arranged for people's basic needs, such as food,
water and clothes, to be met. The NTCC also functioned as the people's voice and
advocate.

Through these concerted efforts, the SACC, on behalf of the NTCC, could enlist
support from churches overseas. For example, on 31 July 1984, the Ecumenical
Secretary, Rev. Maja, called on all NTCC member churches to observe Friday 24
August 1984 as a day of fasting and prayer for all people affected by resettlement
and forced removals. The same call was made by the then Secretary General of

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[13] Files File A of A-ZZ, Polokwane, NTCC Archives.

the SACC, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, to member churches. The response from churches overseas was overwhelming. In Germany alone, the following churches or church organisations responded to the call: the Protestant Women Auxiliary in Bremen, the St. Nikola Evangelical Lutheran Church, the French Protestant Federation and Marc Brunschweiler, the Evangelical Lutheran Church Plotzensee, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, the Solidarian Church in the Rhineland, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lippe[14].

The NTCC also became a listening partner on the part of the victims at the meetings between government officials and community leaders with the view of helping the victims. A well-documented encounter between government officials and victims of forced removals with the NTCC took place at Driefontein and Daggakraal. The WCC Relocation Action Officer, Ishmael Mkhabela, called the two communities of Driefontein and Daggakraal 'communities under siege'. Although the government reassured the communities that they would not be forcefully removed, it was nevertheless determined to remove them. It sowed a seed of mistrust among the victims and a limited consultation process between them on the basis of divide-and-rule. In all the meetings, the government officials were accompanied by members of the security police who were there with the sole purpose of identifying 'troublemakers' and intimidating the critical debate by their presence.

Ishmael Mkhabela of the SACC who was in the meeting for the victims made the following insightful observations (File G)[15]:

- Government officials capitalised on black people's modesty and courtesy when dealing with white officials.
- Government officials managed to isolate Mr Mkhize as the instigator of those who resisted forced removals. Mkhize had earlier made contact with Dr Piet Koornhof, the then Minister of Co-operation and Development, under whom all black people's affairs were dealt with. He could contradict the official statements with what Dr Koornhof had written to him.
- Meetings between the government and the leaders of those who resisted forced removals were held during the day in order to minimise attendance, because large numbers of opponents to the forced removals would be at work.
- Government officials would also engage land owners (victims) in a verbal mud-slinging contest as a way of discrediting them and weakening their position.
- False promises were made, in accordance with Verwoerdian policy that black people had been entrusted by God into the care of the white Afrikaner. Black people were urged to believe that their removal and relocation were in their

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14 Files File G of A-ZZ, Polokwane, NTCC Archives.

15 Files File S ofA-ZZ, Polokwane, NTCC Archives, File G

best interests as their standard of life would be improved and they would find
peace and prosperity. They had to see their removal from their land as or-
dained by God.

- When the government officials could not convince the leaders to relocate to
  another area, the officials nevertheless stated that they were moving ahead with
  the removals and requested those who wanted to see the new area to register
  their intention to do so with the local magistrate.
- If all 'peaceful' attempts from government failed, military style forced removals
  ensued.

An example of the above occurred in the community of Driefontein in the Eastern
Transvaal (now Mpumalanga) in the 1980s. On 2 April 1983, Mkhize was shot dead
by the security police in order to eliminate resistance to the government policy of
forced removals (File H)[16]. On 18 December 1981, the Deputy Minister of Devel-
opment and Land Affairs received a letter from the chairperson of the Driefontein
Community Board on which Mkhize was serving which stated the following: 'Al-
though the government therefore appreciates and respects your feelings, the relo-
cation and resettlement of your people will have to be carried out in the interest of
all concerned.' The interest of all meant that Mkhize (who was a central figure in
the resistance to the forced removals) had to be eliminated in order for 'peaceful
and voluntary' relocation to take place. Often what was called 'government consul-
tation' for the relocation of people ended in violence if people did not co-operate.
Some would lose their lives, property and, finally, their land by force.

The NTCC could only fulfil its role as a watchdog, agent of the decolonisation
of the mind and community adviser by attending the relevant meetings. However,
attending these meetings held some risk for the members of the NTCC who did
so. Some leaders were arrested and charged with subversion and contravention of
apartheid laws. In some cases, the NTCC brought in trucks of maize meal to feed
the displaced people as the government would not do so. It also began community
projects like gardening to help the community. The NTCC came in to support the
people through pastoral counselling, paying their legal costs and raising funds with
overseas churches for the displaced communities.

11. Conclusion

The colonisation and decolonisation of the mind are complex discourses in South
Africa that need careful analysis and articulation. The discourse is as urgent and
important as the development of it is in South Africa. The former colonisers may
defend themselves using the self-fulfilling prophesy discourse of blaming the vic-

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[16] Files File T of A-ZZ, Polokwane, NTCC Archives, File H

tims for what they are. Moreover, the victims may suffer from paralysis that does not cure but lead to self-hate and toxic anger. Instead of concentrating on the process of healing from injuries inflicted by the system, the victims may turn on themselves and be embroiled in crab-mentality syndrome. The mission of the church means moving from the centre to the periphery, from self-destruction to self-development.

The article tried to articulate what the concepts of the colonised and decolonised mind mean and trace their trajectory in South African society. The input of the Black Consciousness Movement was highlighted. The initial attempts by Black Community Projects as a means of self-discovery and liberating mission by black people were discussed. The conclusion of the study is that the decolonisation of the black mind is a process that needs to be embraced unequivocally by black church and be taken up to its logical consequences of mission of that church. There is no one else who will decolonise the black mind except the victims themselves. The life of the Christian Church is to be characterized as missionary existence no matter how small its efforts are (Bosch 1991:9).

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