A critique of mission education in South Africa according to Bosch's mission paradigm theory

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The aim in this article was to locate mission education in South Africa within the mission paradigm theory as propagated by the missiologist, David J. Bosch. This model, as proposed in the monograph *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, adopts a contextual stance in the examination of the mission process throughout history and is also considered appropriate for a critique of mission education in South Africa.

Introduction

Mission education in South Africa has frequently been diversely perceived by various critics (Lewis, 1999:6-7). MacKenzie (1993:45) identifies critiques made by politicians, journalists and educationists, who "provide simplified and aphoristic assessments of missionaries and their achievements or failings." Cross (1987:550-551) notes that two prominent theoretical models are used in the literature concerning mission education, namely, the reproduction model, predominantly propagated by Marxist writers and the balance-sheet model, which draws conclusions on the basis of a juxtaposition of missionaries' positive and negative contributions. However, analyses based on these models tend to overlook the context in which missionaries operated, failing to recognise that the work of missionaries and mission education were profoundly influenced by their historical backgrounds, culture, understanding of reality, personalities, social positions, ecclesiastical tradition, personal context, motivation and ideologies (*cf.* Bosch, 1991:182-183; Lewis, 1999:28-57). Several alternative interpretations of missionary endeavour have been made (Ashley, 1980; Ashley, 1982; Van der Walt, 1992). In this regard, a major contribution was made by the late missiologist, David J. Bosch, in his monograph: *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (1991). Bosch places the Christian mission endeavour within the realm of several paradigm shifts and examines its contextual nature (Bosch, 1991:xv). In this article we endeavour to further this discussion by placing mission education from the late eighteenth century until the mid-twentieth century in South Africa within the mission paradigm theory, as propagated by the missiologist, David J. Bosch.

Bosch's paradigm theory of mission

Bosch's paradigm theory of mission employs the historico-theological subdivisions of the history of Christianity used by the eminent theologian, Hans Küng (1987:157). These six major paradigms are:
• The Apocalyptic paradigm of early Christianity
• The Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic epoch
• The Roman Catholic paradigm of the Middle Ages
• The Protestant Reformation paradigm
• The Enlightenment (modern) paradigm
• The developing Ecumenical (postmodern) paradigm

Küng postulates an understanding of the Christian faith according to each of these six periods. Bosch (1991) develops this thesis by positing a distinctive interpretation of Christian mission according to the same periods. He (1991:183) acknowledges that Küng's subdivision is not original since it follows a format generally used in missiological literature (*cf.* Neill, 1964). What is innovative, however, is Küng's construction of these subdivisions according to the theory of paradigm shifts developed by the physicist and science historian, Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn, 1970). Although Kuhn's thesis had its genesis and application in the natural sciences, its significance has not been limited to the history of science and its relevance to the social sciences has been widely, albeit not uncritically, acknowledged (Barnes, 1982; Eggert,

1998:9). Therefore, it is necessary to refer very briefly to Kuhn's paradigm theory.

Kuhn's ideas were first published in his seminal work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). Kuhn defines a paradigm as "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community" (Kuhn, 1970:175). Using a historical approach Kuhn examines the process by which fundamental understandings or paradigms in the field of natural science are overturned and overtaken by rival understandings, thus producing a scientific revolution. The scholar is deeply involved in this shift from one framework to another. These changes are fundamental (Kuhn, 1970:84):

> The transition from a paradigm in crisis to a new one from which a new tradition of normal science can emerge is far from a cumulative process, one achieved by an articulation or extension of the old paradigm. Rather it is a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications.

Neither Küng nor Bosch is impervious to the fact that Kuhn's theory was intended for the natural sciences and both explicitly mention its extensive critique by both natural and social scientists (Fuller, 2000). Yet they maintain that Kuhn's work still has a certain usefulness in its application to theology (Küng, 1987:162; Bosch, 1991:185). Whilst identifying similarities as well as important differences between the natural sciences and theology (Küng, 1989:11-29; Bosch, 1991:186), it is argued that in the area of theology, "new hypotheses and theories emerge as a result of a highly complex and generally protracted *replacement of a hitherto accepted model of interpretation or 'paradigm' by a new one.* They arise from a *'paradigm change'* (not a sudden 'paradigm switch'!) in a longer process that is neither completely rational nor completely irrational, and is often more revolutionary than evolutionary" (Küng, 1989:7). Bosch (1991:186) points out that where in the natural sciences the new paradigm usually replaces the old paradigm definitely and irreversibly, in theology old paradigms may continue or even be revived. People may even remain committed to more than one paradigm concurrently. Furthermore, in theology a paradigm shift can only be carried out on the basis of the gospel. Contrary to the natural sciences, theology relates not only to the present and future, but also to the past, to tradition and to divine revelation. Theology must be contextual and relevant, yet should be pursued in the light of the epistemological priority of the Scriptures (Bosch, 1991:187). Thus, Bosch (1991:184-185) treats Kuhn's work with reservation and uses his views "only as a kind of working hypothesis" in order to understand differences in widespread perception that existed from one era to another. The relevance of Kuhn's paradigm theory to Bosch (1991:185) and his understanding of the development of the Christian mission is that "there is a growing awareness that we live in an era of change from one way of understanding reality to another (read "perceptions" — the authors)."

Küng's six subdivisions, based on Kuhn's theory provides a framework from which Bosch (1991:183) conceptualises the broader mission process as fundamentally changing from one era to the next and having an "effect on our understanding of how Christians perceived the church's mission in the various epochs of the history of Christianity." With specific reference to South Africa, Bosch's conceptualisation provides a relevant model in this article for the contextual understanding of mission education in the light of its changing nature over more than two centuries, covering two paradigms identified by Küng, namely the modern paradigm and the postmodern paradigm. Therefore, a cursory exposition of these two paradigms will follow.

The Enlightenment or modern era

This era began more or less during the seventeenth century and was the result of several events, which took place in reaction to the Church's authoritative stranglehold over society, especially evident during medieval times. Events during the Renaissance, Reformation and certain revolutions prompted people, predominantly in Europe, to question the church's dominant position (Venter, 1992:40). According to Bosch (1991:264-267), several main tenets of this period had an impact on thinking in Europe at the time:

- The Enlightenment was the age of reason (*cf*. Usher & Edwards, 1994:9; Lemmer, 1998:19) during which the human mind was perceived as the only independent authority in all areas of life. Phenomena needed to be explained in rational terms, one such example was an explanation for racial differences. In this regard, Dubow (1995:25) states: "Rationalism demanded new universal definitions of man's [sic] place in nature as well as his position in God's universe." Naturalists, such as the Swedish classifier, Carolus Linné (better known as Linnaeus [1707-1778]) (Huxley & Haddon, 1935:41) who was primarily concerned with the classification of plants, believed that these principles could be applied to living things, including humans. This gave racism a scientific justification. Racism, both in theory and in practice, was to see an upsurge during the nineteenth century, especially from the third decade onwards (Lewis, 1999:119).
- The Enlightenment was marked by a profound belief in progress (*cf*. Usher & Edwards, 1994:9) which resulted in the discovery and development of new countries and territories, subsequently introducing the system of colonies to so-called backward civilisations (Lewis, 1999:73; 209-218). Missionaries followed in the wake of colonisation in an attempt to bring the Christian gospel to non-Christian nations (Neill, 1964:140).
- Whereas in the past humans were considered one with their environment, they were now considered separate. This provided the opportunity to study the animal and mineral worlds from the realms of scientific objectivity. Bosch (1991:264) refers to this phenomenon as the "subject–object scheme". Watson (in De Kock, 1996:9-10) notes that the westerner "embarked upon his [sic] Cartesian project of separating subject from object, self from the world in a dualism, which privileged the first of the two terms and thereby assured his [sic] domination of nature and any other obstacles he might confront." These 'obstacles' were rationalised in various ways and included the indigenous populations of potentially conquerable and conquered territories.
- All problems could be solved by science and reason.
- The belief in the teleological was substituted by a cause-and-effect understanding of reality (*cf*. Matzken, 2000:1).
- Enlightenment thinking regarded humans as autonomous, free individuals.
- Scientific knowledge was viewed as factual, neutral and value-free. Religion did not therefore fall within the realm as it was perceived as a subjective experience.

The tenets of the modern era were reflected in the thinking and behaviour of people and in several philosophical schools of thought (e.g. Naturalism, Rationalism and Philanthropism). However, these ideas were not universally accepted, resulting in a reaction in the form of Romanticism (Venter, 1992:47).

Enlightenment ideas invariably influenced missionary thinking and practice (Ashley, 1980:28-29; Ashley,1982:49-58) to such an extent that Bosch (1991:274) refers to the entire modern missionary enterprise as "a child of the Enlightenment". However, several Enlightenment ideas (e.g. its radical anthropocentrism) generally ran counter to Christianity. The latter responded to the former's challenge in the form of, among others, Pietism and several evangelical awakenings (Booth, 1968:v-vii; Neill, Anderson & Goodwin, 1971:485; Warneck, 1979:76-78).

The Enlightenment was also characterised by certain events (Lewis, 1999:82-83) emanating from the mentioned tenets:
- Colonialist and scientific expeditions were spurred on by expansionistic and progressive reasoning.
- The French and American Revolutions took place as a result of prevalent thinking of liberation and anthropocentrism.
- By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution was under way in Great Britain and the rest of Europe. This led to an expansionistic mentality, due to the need to find markets for manufactured products as well as change among social classes (*cf*. Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991:55-56).

However, over time, modernism has displayed a less inviting face; its spectacular successes marred by totalitarianism, uncontrollable technology and the instrumental rationality which has in turn created a consumer society (Lyotard, 1993:29). Thus, the twentieth century saw the emergence of a critique of the modern era (Usher & Edwards, 1994:2; 8) which has resulted in the emergence of a postmodern discourse.

The postmodern era

A definition of the postmodernism is neither possible nor entirely desirable since definitions vary with every citation. Moreover, a definitive perspective is inconsistent with the postmodern stance — knowledge cannot be systematised into a singular, all-encompassing framework. However, Edwards and Usher (1994:7) suggested that postmodernism is "... an umbrella term for a historical period, a condition, a set of practices, a cultural discourse, an attitude and a model of analysis." Underlying these dimensions is an incredulity toward the modernist project — a scepticism, a doubt, even unbelief expressed towards modernist ideals in the light of a rapidly post-industrialising society. While the modern and postmodern are clearly distinguishable, both as historical periods and as cultural movements (Lyotard, 1984), they can, and indeed do, exist recursively in any period, in an oppositional tension, "*de generaties struikelen over elkaar*" (Lyotard, 1987:15). In this regard Bosch (1991:349) notes:

> New paradigms do not establish themselves overnight. They take decades, sometimes even centuries, to develop distinctive contours. The new paradigm is therefore still emerging and it is, as yet, not clear which shape it will eventually adopt. For the most part we are, at the moment, thinking and working in terms of *two* paradigms [modern and postmodern — authors].

Certain strands characterise the shift to the postmodern era:
- Postmodernism spurns the idea that a single, objective and rational account of the world can be reached. Rationalism was thus found to be too narrow and needed to be expanded (Steyn, 1997:154), thus necessitating the realisation that scientific principles and theological facts cannot be defined absolutely.
- The Enlightenment emphasised the dominance of the human mind over the environment with frequently catastrophic results. Postmodernism advocates a symbiotic relationship between humans, as well as between humans and nature therefore opposing exploitation (Bosch, 1991:355).
- Enlightenment ideas of reasoning along linear, causal lines as well as notions of universality, validity and certainty (*cf*. Usher & Edwards, 1994:10) were replaced with the recognition that knowledge is partial, local and specific (De Kock, 1996:10).

Reality is therefore constructed by communities' perceptual frameworks and language.

- Progress thinking was replaced by notions of upliftment and development, especially concerning previously colonised populations.
- Whereas modernism propagated a distinction between facts and values, postmodernism posits that facts cannot be considered objectively. They are influenced by social and cultural factors, thus emphasising their contextuality.
- Postmodernism recognised that not all problems are solvable.
- Whereas the Enlightenment propagated the notion of individual freedom, the consequences were often catastrophic and led to the embracing of nihilism. The postmodern discourse advocates a need for conviction and commitment as well as interdependence and togetherness (Bosch, 1991:356-362). This should not deny any meaning in life and historical purpose (Matzken, 2000:3).

Many philosophical schools of thought, theological trends and events reflected postmodern thinking and behaviour. Regarding the missionary endeavour, a more liberal approach toward mission was considered during the early twentieth century (Neill, 1964:450-454) as evidenced at the second World Missionary Conference in Jerusalem in 1928. It was propounded at this conference and in subsequent mission reports that conversion should be replaced by co-operation and tolerance and attempts should be made to enculturate and contextualise mission thinking and practice. The twentieth century also witnessed a stronger move towards an organised ecumenical movement. Previously inter-denominational rivalry was ameliorated by co-operation and development. The final aim of this liberal view was "the emergence of the various religions out of their isolation into a world fellowship in which each will find its appropriate place" (Neill, 1964:456). This stance embodied a direct challenge to the Enlightenment idea of progress thinking and proposed notions of social justice, the recognition of others' practice of Christianity and reconstruction and development.

Several other developments during the twentieth century reflected postmodern thinking, such as interdependence, the recognition of others and symbiosis. The liberation of Europe from Nazism and Fascism, for example, intensified feelings of liberation within the Allies. In Africa, growing nationalism led to independence movements and eventual self-government (Van Aswegen, 1980:406-410; Mandela, 1994:114), thereby challenging the european notion of progress thinking which had given rise to colonial expansion. Yet, in spite of worldwide trends towards self-determination, the apartheid regime in South Africa held onto modernist thinking by developing institutionalised racism in the policy of apartheid, thereby adhering to the Enlightenment belief of rationalising european supremacy of black people.

Mission education in South Africa

Mission education was to reflect both modern and postmodern elements in the course of its history in South Africa.

Mission education during the modern era

This mission endeavour was no accidental occurrence, but the culmination of several aspects of the modern era. The most prominent was the Enlightenment's expansionist world-view, which culminated in colonial expansion by several European countries. Reasons for this expansion include political, economic and ideological factors as well as personal tendencies (Jenks, 1963). Together with colonial expansion went Christian evangelisation carried out largely by missionaries (Neill, 1966:35-39). Christianisation went hand in hand with educational provision as the latter led to a better understanding of the former (Venter, 1992:5).

The establishment of a refreshment station by the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 not only constituted a foothold for Europeans in southern Africa, but also signalled the beginning of the Christianisation process of the indigenous people. Initial undertakings to evangelise and educate were infrequent. How-ever, after the occupation of the Cape in 1795 by the British, unparalleled missionary activity commenced (Lewis, 1999:82). According to Keto (1976:602), "the missionary ... viewed the African as a malleable spirit ripe for the noble onslaught of civilizing and Christianizing endeavours." The first Protestant mission society to evangelise and educate at the Cape was the Moravian Church in 1737 under Georg Schmidt. After 1799 concerted efforts were made by several missionary societies (Du Plessis, 1911:99-102).

This expansionist world view was accompanied by perceptions of cultural superiority on the part of western cultures. A 'west-was-best' attitude generally prevailed and the conquered people were viewed as separate from their culture, thereby placing them into the subject–object scheme identified by Bosch (1991:294). Invariably indigenous people's cultural identities were negated. As children of their time, several missionaries adhered to such beliefs, which were axiomatically reflected in their religion and mission education. In their view, Christianity reigned supreme over heathen religions, which were perceived as evil (Du Plessis, 1911; Behr, 1963). This attitude also extended to the education provided by missionaries. Prior to the introduction of Western education, indigenous tribes practised an informal type of education (Luthuli, 1981:54-55; Nkuna, 1986:93), which was generally not recognised by western missionaries as relevant. They subsequently replaced it with western educational practices (Gray, 1990:59). However, before judging missionaries from a state of distance, it should be noted that missionaries were educated in Western pedagogies and they sought to convey the same educational philosophy to their charges, thereby negating the educational needs of those they wished to convert. A further example of this expansionist view was the British government's stance of benevolent colonialism— the conscious responsibility taken by a colonial power for the welfare of her colonial inhabitants. This mindset of the colonial powers reflected the modern belief of Western superiority over the inhabitants of non-Western countries (Bosch, 1991:298-307).

Together with the assumption of western superiority went the conviction that God had chosen missionaries to "bring the Christian light to heathen countries", known as manifest destiny (De Kock, 1996:39). These pronouncements were made at various times by several missionaries, including Dr John Philip of the London Missionary Society (Philip, 1828:ix-x) and the Wesleyan missionary, William Binnington Boyce (Boyce, 1838:165-195) and were congruent with prevalent thinking during the modern era. However, these pronouncements should not be confused with the perception of continual collusion between missionaries and the colonial government of the time, an argument readily used by revisionist (*cf.* Marks & Atmore, 1980) and radical writers (Majeke, 1952; Rodney, 1972) in order to endorse the theory of labour reproduction. Ross (1986:11; 27; 36) and Van der Walt (1992:76) disagree with the latter views, accusing these writers of arguing without due consideration of context. According to Ross, Tory governors in the Cape prior to 1850 had far too little in common with the liberal humanitarians with regard to ideology and class to even suggest a conspiracy between the two. In support of Ross and Van der Walt, it should be noted that the Colonial government only started partially financing mission education from 1841 onwards (Cook, 1949:350; Behr & MacMillan, 1971:378), thereby annulling any real argument of economic collaboration between missionaries and the colonial authorities prior to 1841. Several reasons contributed to the granting of financial aid in 1841 to mission education:

- The prevalent colonial policy of equality among the inhabitants of colonies, due to philanthropic influences.
- The necessity of the government to have some form of control of the education provided to indigenous people.

One may also judge this measure as beneficial to missionaries and mission education since many cash-strapped mission societies welcomed monetary aid to alleviate the financial burdens of educational provision (MacKenzie, 1993:52).

After the mid-nineteenth century the situation changed and there could be no doubt as to missionary and government collaboration

(Bosch, 1991:307; Etherington, 1982:193-194). Knowingly and unknowingly, missionaries and mission education became part of the whole colonial and later imperialistic scheme of things and in many instances reflected the thinking and practices of benevolent mission and manifest destiny. Mission education also reflected the colonial government's policies of expansion. Whereas previously mission education had reflected a classical curriculum, during the mid-nineteenth century it began to emphasise industrial education and training (De Kock, 1996:70). A case in point was the Cape governor, Sir George Grey's use of mission education as part of his border pacification policy aimed at "detribalizing, educating and befriending the native" (Scholtz, 1975:196). Grey persuaded the British government to subsidise mission institutions so that black people could be trained as interpreters, evangelists and schoolmasters amongst their own people. Industrial education in mission schools formed part of his border pacification scheme to ensure political security and social progress in the Cape Colony (South Africa, 1936:10-12). To Grey, the influence of this colonial policy was that:

> ... we should try and make them a part of ourselves, with a common faith and common interests, useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue; in short, a source of strength and wealth for this colony, such as Providence designed them to be. What, therefore I propose is, that we should fill it up with a considerable number of Europeans, of a class fitted to increase our strength in that country, and that, at the same time, unremitting efforts should be made to raise the Kaffirs in Christianity and civilization, by the establishment among them, and beyond our boundary, of missions connected with industrial schools, by employing them on public works, and by other similar means (Rose & Tunmer, 1975:205).

According to De Kock (1996:71), this type of education was to acquire "a docile and efficient labour force which would accept both European religions and political authority, as well as European social superiority", thereby emphasising economic and political motives for expansion. Although the perceived co-operation between missionaries and the government can be interpreted in the light of this example, MacKenzie (1993:49) cautions that co-operation with the government was frequently done for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons: "acquiescent neutrality may have been the price to be paid for the opportunity to proselytise." Missionaries operated from a situation of limited material resources and were often necessitated to use financial benefits offered by government to educate their charges.

Together with European colonial expansion went thinking and practice of racial superiority, which were reflected in mission education specifically during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In this period the perceptions of white people of black people invariably affected government policies towards mission education. Prevalent notions, such as the black person as a 'noble savage', whose mind would be corrupted by western education and the notion of the spoilt native (advocating that education would promote idleness) contributed to a justification for a separate type of education for Black people (Hartshorne, 1992:24). Advocates of segregation made use of Social Darwinist rhetoric, as well as environmental and genetic theories in an attempt to underpin their claim to segregation (Dubow, 1989:25).

Although initially mission schools were not segregated, they succumbed to prevalent racial thoughts and practices, especially during the late nineteenth century, starting in Natal and thereafter the Cape Colony. Missionaries and mission education were constantly directed in a discriminatory direction by government policies and prevalent thinking. Whereas several missionaries endorsed this viewpoint (Theal, 1910:268-269; Dubow, 1995:130; White, 1993:13), it was not accepted by all. In the latter instance, referrals to the perceived intellectual inferiority of black people were refuted by two principals of Lovedale Missionary Institution, Drs James Stewart and Robert HW Shepherd, who noted not only the excellent achievement of both black and white students in examinations, but also the former's academic superiority in cases (Horrel, 1963:13). Nevertheless, this instance

wherein Enlightenment ideas of advocating European racial supremacy were challenged, was uncommon and exceptional during the pre-twentieth century era. Strains of a postmodern thinking were however reflected. In the following section we discuss how mission education developed during the following postmodern era.

Mission education during the postmodern era

During the twentieth century, mission education began to reflect several postmodern characteristics identified by Bosch. The most prominent was its opposition to the prevalent racial thinking and practice in South Africa during this period which reflected Enlightenment reasoning along linear-causal lines. Black education in South Africa during the early twentieth century was still largely a mission endeavour, which functioned within a highly racist society which adhered to ideas of European racial supremacy. Government policies of segregation, as well as prevalent theories and practices on race, provide but a few examples which formed the backdrop for mission education. That these styles of thinking and policies and their subsequent actions would influence the education that missionaries provided for Black people in both the nineteenth and twentieth century, is given, due to the fact that education does not function within a vacuum, and would obviously affect the way that missionaries imparted their knowledge, either bolstering or defying prevalent forms of knowledge and cognitive styles (Lewis, 1999:152-200). For example, a post-World War One movement evident in South Africa which articulated the tenets of scientific racism was the eugenics movement. In essence, eugenic ideas supported pragmatic pronouncements of white racial superiority and the segregation of people along racial lines (Dubow, 1995:128-166). These ideas were reflected in the writings of the educationist, Charles T Loram, in his monograph: *The education of the South African native* and invariably influenced education (Loram, 1917:162-193). Although several missionaries dabbled in these theories, many opposed them, for example, Dr Neil Macvicar, a doctor at Lovedale Missionary Institution's Victoria Hospital. Opponents of eugenic theories included a host of groupings, such as the Roman Catholic Church (Dubow, 1995:124;143), whose educational policy called for non-discrimination between people on the grounds of colour (Walsh, 1966:33). However, to say that this non-discriminatory stance applied to all its members must be viewed cautiously and was not the norm (*cf.* Cochrane, 1990:85-93). Counter-eugenic stances did, however, reflect a challenge to prevalent Enlightenment ideas of scientific rationalisation of European racial superiority. This opposition could be considered as a postmodern tendency of recognising that scientific laws cannot be seen as absolute.

A general theory of race which prevailed during this era was arrested development as proposed by the ethnologist, Dudley Kidd (1904). In essence, this theory stated that black children's ability to absorb knowledge far outstripped their European counterparts, but with the onset of puberty, this capacity declined and was surpassed by that of white adolescents due to black adolescents' absorption with "nutritive and sensual needs" (Kidd, 1904:277-278,280-282). Several missionaries upheld this type of thinking, such as the Trappist missionary and sometime Africanist scholar, the Rev AT Bryant (1917: 42-49) who based these kind of views on 33 years "intimate intercourse" with Zulus at the mission stations. Yet, these views were not entertained by all missionaries; counter observations were reflected in the *Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission 1903-1905* (Theal, 1910:265-273) and the 1908 *Report of the Select Committee on Native Education* (Cape of Good Hope, 1908, Appendix [O]:xxxiii-xxxvi). On inquiring of several missionaries during these investigations, if they subscribed to the theory of arrested development, based on their experiences when educating black people at mission stations, several missionaries rejected the theory, although, in some instances, notions of racial superiority did filter through. For example, although finding an equal capacity among black learners in arithmetic, reading and writing, the Rev WA Goodwin, former principal of a training college in Umtata, observed the inability of blacks towards

abstract thinking (Theal, 1910:273). Ironically, arithmetic involves abstract thought, thereby nullifying this kind of reasoning. In summary, responses of missionaries questioned by the Commission varied from total rejection to the acceptance thereof, reflecting the modernist characteristics of acceptance of theories of European racial superiority and the postmodern disputing thereof.

Mental testing, which was strongly suspected of being aimed at quantifying white superiority, made its appearance after 1910 and inadvertently led to prejudicial attitudes and behaviour being filtered through to the education system. Several 'authoritative sources' at the time, such as the educationist, Charles T Loram (1917) and the nationalist academics, ML Fick (1939) and JA Jansen van Rensburg (1938) argued that black people were not as intelligent as whites, a condition which necessitated a different kind of education. These sources confirmed the 'scientifically proven' fact that black people were only suitable for manual, repetitive jobs (Louw-Potgieter & Foster, 1991: 63), thus necessitating an education which would suit such an intellect. Although Loram was cautious in attributing the cause of black children's perceived inferior intelligence to genetics, Fick's conclusion was that black people had an inherent inferior intelligence compared with that of white people (Lewis, 1999:166). Werner Eiselen, the then Chief Inspector of Native Education and future chairman of the National Party's investigation into Bantu Education (the Eiselen Report of 1951) endorsed this perceived inferiority and called for a different type of education system to that of white people since "we may be leading them in a *cul-de-sac* and thus retard their development" (Eiselen, 1939:iii-iv). These racial perceptions were later reflected in the report of 1951, as well as the 1953 Bantu Education Act which incorporated the Eiselen Report's main recommendations. These and other racial theories were heavily contested and questioned by several sources, including missionaries who published articles in the Lovedale missionary journal, *South African Outlook*. A critique of mental testing by the editorial of the journal pointed out that the investigators who made these 'objective, scientific observations' were white people who embraced prevalent european racial superiority theories. More specific criticisms by missionaries questioned the validity and nature of the tests, which were more suitable for white testees. Moreover, the lingual and psychological competences of the testers were questionably lacking (*South African Outlook*, 1 May, 1939:100-105). These criticisms by missionaries, indicative of prevalent critical thinking against racial superiority, reflected postmodern characteristics (i.e. a challenge to modern sciences' rationalisation of European supremacy over colonised peoples).

Racist attitudes and approaches permeated the education system in South Africa at this time, notwithstanding the education provided by missionaries. Although after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 black pupils in primary schools were mainly taught by missionaries, these schools were largely aided by provincial subsidies (Hartshorne, 1992:25). In this way the government had direct influence over educational policies and practices. Educational policy documents, such as *The native primary school: Suggestions for the consideration of teachers* reflected a type of education which highlighted the black learner's perceived inferior intellectual capabilities typical of this period (Cape of Good Hope, 1929: foreword). According to Dube (1985:93), the aim of education was:

> To handicap African children with the introduction of an inferior syllabus, coupled with inadequate learning conditions and poorly educated teachers. These combined factors were intended to reinforce the existing belief of white superiority while simultaneously making African children believe that they, by nature, have different destinies. Whereas segregated education was intended to impose mutual ignorance of each others' customs, values and lifestyles upon white and African children, the curriculum for native education was designed to retard the intellectual development of Africans.

Several missionaries, including the Dutch Reformed missionary, H du Plessis (1935:32-41), adopted a similar discriminatory approach towards the education of black people. Yet this was not accepted by all missionaries in mission education. The viewpoint continued to be contested rigorously in liberal missionary circles (*South African Outlook*, 1 May 1939:100-105; *South African Outlook*, 1 July 1939:167-168). This interrogation of the theory of racial superiority reflected postmodern tenets which challenged a rationalisation of European racial superiority. Notwithstanding, these ecclesiastical challenges of unjust societal structures were not normative at this stage of South African history and fell outside the church's purview of harmony between church and state (*cf*. Bosch, 1991:402).

With the coming to power of the National Party in 1948, racial discrimination in black education was accelerated and culminated in the passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953. This Act, based largely on the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission (Behr, 1988:35-36) was to become the National Party's blueprint for black education. The education provided by missionaries, it was felt, could not be relied upon to root black people within their own 'tribal community' and had to be state-controlled in order to do so. In essence, this meant aligning black education with the apartheid ideology through government control (Lewis, 1992:37). Missionary response varied from acceptance of government policies to that of denouncement. Generally members of the English-speaking mission societies criticised the government; the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) largely endorsed prevalent developments. However, this perception cannot be generalised as there were instances of English-speaking missionaries taking a racist stance towards black people, as well as DRC missionaries opposing government policies (Lewis, 1999:281). English-speaking missionaries' criticism also varied in degree. Archbishop DE Hurley (1997) noted that although English-speaking churches disagreed with government policy of segregation, little was done to oppose it. According to Hurley, these churches' internal affairs concerning racial issues were not in order and reflected segregationist practices, which were again realised in the education provided.

Conclusion

The aim in this article was to place the development of mission education in South Africa within Bosch's mission paradigm theory. Since mission education in South Africa only really developed from the end of the eighteenth century, its development falls within the modern and postmodern paradigms and thus reflects several characteristics thereof as proposed by Bosch's paradigm theory. Whereas the modern paradigm reflected a rational interpretation of the world, largely benefitting Europeans and neglecting black people, the later postmodern paradigm challenged this and advocated the full recognition of black people. Missionaries, as children of their time reflected prevailing thinking and behaviour. However, this distinction was not clearcut, as in several instances, missionaries upheld modern thinking and behaviour in the emerging postmodern era, and vice versa.

Furthermore, an understanding of mission education within the paradigm theory provides a contextual view of the spirit of the times in which this type of education functioned. It offers a more holistic evaluation of mission education as it takes into consideration prevalent thinking and practice, political standpoints and economic developments in historical perspective. The authors thus argue that Bosch's paradigm theory can serve as a useful model which prospective researchers may use to analyse mission education in South Africa more rigorously. Moreover, this model is not only restricted to a discussion of mission education, but could also be employed in assessing other historical phenomena in the field of education.

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