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COURSE: CHURCH HISTORY

TOPIC: THE MAKING OF  
INDEGTYNOUS CLERGY (HC302)

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW  
ON THE BAPTIST CHURCH WITH  
MR. JARDINE BRIAN.

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LECTURER: PHILLIPE DENIS OP

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## TRANSCRIPTION

Joseph: What was your desire to become a Minister ?

Brain: Now, well, Joseph, first of all, I made a commitment to Jesus Christ when I was still a young boy of about fifteen. When Jesus became very well to me, then God gave me a leadership opportunities at school in Christian associations at school I was a teacher at Sunday school and I was a youth Chairman of the young people at school. I increasingly felt the call of God in my life. I remember one day reading Psalm 37 which says " Delight yourself in God and he will give you the desires of your heart" I felt God calling me increasingly into ministry and I went to the Theological collage to study in Johnesburg. There was a very strong sense of call in my life that this is what God is calling me to do.

Joseph: During that time what were the current issues, in relation to whites and the black ?.

Brian: Well, In 1965, that was the heart of apartheid regime, you know; where Dr. Havot<sup>1</sup> was the prime minister and the architecture of apartheid; South Africa had just left the common wealth, apartheid was very strong, the economy was very strong, so whites never ever thought that there will be power sharing or that there will be ANC government, ANC you know Mr. Mandela was put in prison, the ANC was banned, you know and there was a lot of tension actually, white and blacks.

*Verwoerd*

Joseph: In your decision did you find any problem with your family about your desire to become a minister ?

Brian: I was not married ,I was single and my parents were very wonderful and encouraging, much happy with my desire . They were very glad, you know; that the son is going to be a minister , so I had no difficulty , and my parents were Presbyterians, but they were glad that I was going to be a Minister.

Joseph: Even the people in your community around ?

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<sup>1</sup> not sure of the spelling.

- Brian: I think there was a sense of state symbol and they were glad you know; that I had decided to become a minister.
- Joseph: **Where did you do your training ?**
- Brian: At the Baptist Theological collage in Johnesburg. I did a four year course, I studied there, by that time was UNISA, I did UNISA studies and I did a BTH.
- Joseph: **so you just studied theology ?**
- Brian : Oh.Yah, Theology.
- Joseph: **How many years did it take you.**
- Brian : Four years.
- Joseph: **What was the situation in training ?, Who was the principle?**
- Brian: Rev Sandigo Phillip, was the principal of the collage and trained in London Bible collage in London, very gifted exegete of word of God, great man of God, he latter became the head English radio, SABC religious broadcast and Dr.John Johnson who used to be a lecturer in Natal University, theological faculty was also a principle for 3 years, and I studied under Dr. Johnson he was a product of Natal University was a principal for three years. Dr. Brianica was also a product of Natal University.
- Joseph: **I understand that there was apartheid during that time, did you find it a problem to mix with the blacks in the collage?. how was your relation with the blacks in the collage.**
- Brian: I think we were more separate and the paternalism was very strong, I think, you know whites there were regarded (...<sup>2</sup>.) as Missionaries and the blacks, were regarded the missionary fields for whites. there was a very strong paternalism whites verses blacks. That was the heart of our apartheid in South Africa. I think things were not good.
- Joseph: **And the blacks never came to visit you ?**

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<sup>2</sup> not heard

**Brian:** They did, Yah ,,but I don't think there was a greater freedom there, you know,,for instance they did not stay in our homes or spend days and nights as they do now.I think there is a greater freedom at least, Separate apartheid was to keep us separate and we were separate. They were in black townships and we were in white areas and we were separate, they called it separate development, and it was that you know !!.

**Joseph:** In your training where you did your studies there were no blacks ?

**Brian:** No! there were no, and also in 1973, there was a turning point in my life. The congress of mission and evangelism in Durban by African enterprise, where the whole of South Africa came together, It was the first time I realised the deep division and the anger in black people and I really a turning point in my life.

**Joseph:** How was the living conditions in your collage; like water, electricity, transport, etc ?

**Brian:** In my University?, Fantastic; just like any University,great !

**Joseph:** Where are you now doing your ministry ?

**Brian:** I don't have a church Joseph, I don't have a church of my own of my own, I'm the area coordinator for the Baptist church in Natal; The Natal Baptist association, If I was an Angelical or a Catholic I would be a Bishop so I'm the Baptist Bishop so I am the area coordinator, I'm trying to minister to the blacks, Indians and coloured churches of the Baptist church in Natal.

**Joseph:** When did you start that kind of Service to the people?

**Brian:** In the present position ?

**Joseph:** Yes,

**Brian:** In 1990 I became the area coordinator. I have just been doing this for four years now .

- Joseph: As a leader, do you find problems in bringing these people together of different colours and cultures as Indians, blacks ?
- Brian: Yes! Joseph you know the burgage of apartheid in the past is still there up to now. You know, trust is something that takes time, but God is doing something wonderful, and we are working in a kind of relationship building relationship without relationship there is a lot of mistrust, but God is doing something wonderful among us, You know,, we are slowly coming up, We are learning to respect and understand each other and each one's cultures I think there is a greater cultural differences. I'm learning to eat "Curry" with the Indians and "Phuthu" when I go to black churches, but culturally we are different but we learning to respect and understand each other.
- Joseph: How do you find the economic status of some blacks ?
- Brian: Yah,,,,,the blacks are dependent, the blacks are very poor and they lack motivation to help themselves, Yah,, but they still want to come to God, the church is very poor and I think that God is the greatest helper but it is weak the church is weak.
- Joseph: Don't they have political attitudes when they come for church services ?
- Brian: Yes, Yes, they do .
- Joseph: Do they understand the differences between politics and religion because you find that there some people who come to church to express their political anger, How do you find this ?
- Brian: Yes, Let me say that the Baptist church is a church full of pietism, you are aware of this, our church is more paetistic, where the spiritual emphasis is greater than the political, so the more paetic attitude to christianity, the church has a more paetic attitude to christianity. We have more pietie

attitude to christianity. they certainly express their anger and problems to God politically there is no great danger and of course you are aware of the two major political parties in Natal IFP and ANC are predominant that brings greater tension.

Joseph: Do you try to reconcile them ?.

Brian: Yes, yes,.

Joseph: Which means do you help them to reconcile? do you go out with them, do you have gatherings, What?

Brian: Well; first of all, We do have ministers "fraternals" and we have conferences, we hold conferences, retreats and all of us come together. Once for four days we were together in one It is a multi racial all of us come together , we just had one, Indians,coloreds, blacks and whites we were together for four days and we experienced wonderful fraternal communion,we were together, Yah,,,,.

Joseph: How do you find the knowledge you acquired in the institute,is it helping you a lot in your ministry?.

Brian: Yes, I think the theological education is a dynamic one;you know since I graduated it is now 25 years, but I think the one thing about my theology training it gave me a love of teaching the world of God I have been trained in management skills,You know,, in dealing with people we did apologetic, hermeneutics,dogmatic,systematics and all the different sciences but for me preaching and the study of the word of God is the basic at the institute.

Joseph: Were you going out to preach during your training ?

Brian: Yes we did, We were encouraged to have a church of our own.

Joseph: How do you relate the decision which you had made with your experience now ?.

Brian: By the grace of God I think I'm strong enough in my call and I'm ready to be a pastor.I am a pastor Joseph; God is calling me to be a pastor I am very

glad to be a pastor there is growth in my life through difficulties. I have got a deep love for people and I'm committed and convinced of my calling, though there are a lot of mistakes

Joseph: Have you now recruited some blacks in your church to work as Ministers now ?

Brian: Yes, I have, though not so many but in my preaching in the black churches, I encourage them to consider the Ministry, and there is one man at the moment at the theological collage by name; Elijah Sibusiso Ndamba from Empangeni. now at Baptist collage to train to be a minister,

Joseph: About how many do you have in the training .

Brian: I think in the training we do have about seventeen student in all. 7

Joseph: Do you have any rumours about the black ministers who came before you ? Is there any problem they faces or experienced?

Brian: Yes, I think possibly the economic factors was a big problem. sometimes there have been difficulties in marriages, and also political problems, for instance there is one minister whose son went to train as a freedom fighter in Angola..<sup>3</sup>.

Joseph: Do you think the present conditions are better than they were before ?.

Brian: I think conditions are improving now and there is a greater consciousness about the need, We try to help with better homes, transport, building churches we also try to make the salaries realistic in the present economic situation, but we are failing a wrong way short but we try. Yah,,.

Joseph: How do you meet the salaries?

Brian: You see in the Baptist church each church is autonomous <sup>any</sup> so it depends on that local church to support their pastor and to see that he has got a

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<sup>3</sup> sorry I'm unable to hear those words.

good life. Every church has to take care but we can help and support where we can.

Joseph: Pastors don't do any other job apart from preaching.

Brian: No. they don't do any other job apart from preaching and they are very much committed to the church work, full time.

Joseph: Do you hear any other problems from other Ministers ?

Brian: I think most of the different denominations are the same, people are the same everywhere, church government are different, the way we run the church is different; but there are crises of authority, in case of crises, integrity, all those things you know, , , .

Joseph: Even those in rural areas don't have particular problems?

Brian: Problems are greater, financially those are very bad, there is a drought many men have left the rural areas to Urban areas and there are more women than men in churches; for instance, Umfolozi, Empangeni and other parts of Zululand there is a drought, In most rural areas salaries are little .

Joseph: Still people have not lost their faith because of lack of ministers or pastors?

Brian: No, No, Many pastors have left rural areas to urban areas where the salaries are greater.

Joseph: Do ministers in Urban areas go to preach in the rural areas ?.

Brian: Yes, but I think the attraction is more in Urban areas because there is far more money in urban than in rural, Urbanisation is one of the great phenomena in this generation.

Joseph: I'm asking to know how you encourage those ministers in the rural areas not to come to towns because even in rural areas there is a need for pastors and the people to hear the word of God ?



Brian: I think we try to help and support as much as we can, we now hold regional meetings so that they come and share with us their experiences, there are experts to help them in farming, irrigation etc.

Joseph: Do you transfer ministers from one place to another? Because for us Catholics we get transfers, one works here for a certain period and then he can be transferred to another area after some time.

Brian: Yes we do but not as great, I think at large they stay so long, Some are changed, for instance one of the main pastor Mr. Chikambo was in Newcastle, now working in Orlando <sup>4</sup>; but our church work by calling, the church must call him.

Joseph: Is it the Christians who invite a pastor?

Brian: Yes, they can and he can to go or not to go.

Joseph: You as a leader can you suggest or transfer a pastor

Brian: I cannot decide but I can only suggest if I want because it is not a hierarchical kind of system used in the Baptist church it is government for the people by the people. We do have a kind of democracy in the church. Yah I can make a suggestion.

Joseph: But do you find a problem to transfer one pastor who has been working here to go and work in rural areas I don't know whether you have ever tried. how do they feel about it?

Brian: They have to consider where they can afford to go, for instance, if there is one who is retired and need a replacement another pastor can replace him. Some of the white churches support the black churches.

Joseph: When you talk of the white and black churches for me I understand that you do still have these difference between whites and blacks, do you still have it?

Brian: I think because of our South African situation we

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<sup>4</sup> I'm not quite sure whether it is the right name of the place

don't have many multi-racial churches,<sup>5</sup> and because for the past 45 years whites have been in white areas and blacks in black areas, so whites have the churches where they stay and blacks in their black townships and Indians in their communities so Indian churches and the same with the coloureds.

Joseph: Can a black minister go and preach in the white church

Brian: Yes he can; but it has not happened yet, we have in our church a black Minister who is very gifted and he is the general secretary of our denomination. I hope it will happen but not yet.

Joseph: Do blacks like to come and work among the whites?

Brian: Yes, but Language is also a problem some black ministers are not strong enough in their English. but really there is a good relationship.

Joseph: What about the white ministers do they go to preach to blacks ?. Do they understand their culture ?.

Brian: Yes, there is a growing understanding but we always preach with an interpreter because we cannot speak Zulu <sup>6</sup>.

Joseph: Is a culture not a problem for you when you go to them?

Brian: Because of my calling<sup>7</sup>, I love black people, they do receive me well and I am learning, I do mistakes culturally but I am learning it is a wonderful thing I think, it's a richness of different cultures of coming together.

Joseph: Do you feel happy that you respect their cultures?

Brian: No, no we have to respect them

Joseph: You have talked to the problem of housing and salaries, how is it a problem in rural areas compared to urban areas ?

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<sup>5</sup> a long pause

<sup>6</sup> pause

<sup>7</sup> I unable to hear what he said there,

- Brian: The salaries are very poor in rural areas, very very poor.
- Joseph: But can't salaries come from urban to rural?.
- Brian: Because of the nature of our church government each church is autonomy, in black church we support and because of the rural areas economically deprived and unemployed then they don't give ministers much.<sup>9</sup>
- Joseph: Even in terms of other requirements like buying a car to a minister or providing transport services ?
- Brian: Yes ,yes but we haven't done that yet, I think sometime we have given a car or a motor bike,,<sup>9</sup>.
- Joseph: What about helping building a house?
- Brian: Yes we have built houses ,building churches.
- Joseph: supporting children in schools?
- Brian: Yes, yes we have also tried that not as much as we should but we try
- Joseph: Is it not a problem for you as a leader to settle all these problems in rural areas?.
- Brian: Yes, yes very problematic ....<sup>10</sup> and the distance too  
too far in many centres, Intozoweni<sup>11</sup> is far, Durban, Kabalake<sup>12</sup> and other many places in the rural areas, some of them you know, the white church, Brian: do you understand when I speak of the white church Joseph: yes , Brian : they do support very much to build church the whites works towards the pension <sup>13</sup>, because the whites are far

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<sup>9</sup> repetition

<sup>9</sup> words not clear from the tape.

<sup>10</sup> long pause

<sup>11</sup> I'm not sure whether it is the right spelling of that name of place.

<sup>12</sup> I'm not sure of the correct spelling of the name of place

<sup>13</sup> pause

much richer they have got greater the resources than the blacks.

Joseph: In terms of development apart from preaching the world of God do you have any other projects helping the people in rural areas.

Brian: Yes we do have creches, helping with building of what we call <sup>a manse</sup> amansy<sup>14</sup> for the minister, bore-holes for water, training of black workers in the huge urban areas for instance in Inanda <sup>15</sup> there are two black ladies Justine and Joice who have done a basic health care course for six weeks so that they can help in places like clinics for babies, creches for little children when the parents go for work, we can use the church for creche we can also use a church like a clinic, literacy classes, sewing classes, things like that, Yah..

Joseph: Then how...

Brian: How many more questions ? are we gonna be here for hours?

Joseph: No we are going to finish now.

Joseph: What are the hopes? how do you see the future of the Baptist church?

Brian: Well, there is a great hope of getting united and coming together and represent the true church we will culturally understand one another strengthening of black churches that they would not be dependent upon whites and that whites would not be a paternalistic in their giving that there would be a greater sense of equality, the strengthening of each other and learn to respect one another cultures.

Joseph: Do blacks want to respect the white culture or white way of doing things?.

Brian: I don't think there is a problem with that, No, but

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<sup>14</sup> I'm not familiar with this word.

<sup>15</sup> I'm not sure whether it is the correct spelling.

I think that the longing is to see the church growing, people coming to see Jesus christ as their lord saviour, people who are growing in the things of God through caring for families, try to help and be the salt of the world to stop violence and bring justice and peace and reconciliation, I think we are really looking forward for that.

Joseph: Are you encouraging more blacks to come for Biblical studies to become ministers ?

Brian: Yes, and to upgrade their theological studies, Yes,

Joseph: So in future the black ministers will be many?

Brian: Very much so, but that will be very slow you know, I think you know in the church the salaries are not so much as compared to secular, but we try our best and planting new churches, Yah

Joseph: So do you have and expect a big number of faithful in future?

Brian: Yes, the church will grow a lot.

Joseph: Now it is a new South Africa. when you preach, do the blacks still have negative attitudes as they were? do they accept you more now?

Brian: Very much so, for instance I'm not scared of going to townships as much as I was before. prior to the elections I was scared of <sup>murdering</sup> me, <sup>parting</sup> ~~perching~~ <sup>punching</sup> my car, attacking me, and (...<sup>16</sup>.) but now it is far better and more wonderful attitude.

Joseph: Do they welcome you?

Brian: Yah but that will come slowly it is not gonna cover over night, but God has done a wonderful thing in our country.

Joseph: Those are the some of the things I would like to know. do you have something to tell me about the Baptist church?

Brian: I think that the Baptist church has been slow to

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<sup>16</sup> long pause

change and very slow in the case of political issues, possibly not as great as Catholic or Anglican church but God is showing us many wonderful things, we all stood against apartheid but not as strong as other churches, but I simply look forward for greater multiracial relationship and greater respect for cultural differences and greater representation of the body of Christ, you know our churches are of different but of one body of Christ.

Joseph: **How is ecumenism in the Baptist church?**

Brian: Baptists, we have been slow in the ecumenism mainly on theological issues and we have not joined the SACC The South African council of Churches for theological reasons for liberation theology we resisted that, our position would be a conservative evangelical; a strong understanding of the word of God, so we have not supported ecumenism much inter denomination, we work with other groups that are keen to us like scripture union, (...<sup>17</sup>.) crusades, evangelical groups, but we have not shown much ecumenism.

Joseph: **Would you like to encourage this? How do you feel about it?**

Brian: Yes, I think the SACC for instance in itself is in state of (...<sup>18</sup>.) I does not know where it is going, but I think there will be a great movement and greater happiness towards each other.

Joseph: **Presently, when you go to preach, do you see some Catholics coming to your church or Anglicans?**

Brian: Not really, the catholics go to catholics and Anglicans to Anglicans, in fraternal we come together like passion week we come together, the catholics, the Anglicans, the Methodists, the congregation, we come together for passion week or

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<sup>17</sup> pause

<sup>18</sup> long pause

compassion week and things like that, like matches in the city we do them together, but by large every body goes to his church, you know,.,.

Joseph: **Thank you very much**

Brian: Thank you Joseph, I think, I have answered all your questions? Are they helpful?

Joseph: **Yes, they are encouraging.**

**END.**