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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEADERS AND FIELDWORK

#### **SECTION A. The Experience of Poverty [the big issue]**

Q 1. What percentage of your congregation's membership is affected by poverty?

Notes: To solicit information that will indicate if their church can relate to the poor to appeal to them to attend it.

Q 2. What is the profile of those who are poor in your context?

Q 3. How do you measure poverty amongst people?

Notes: Get an idea about the indicators they use to assess the level of poverty.

Q4. What are areas of known human need in your community?

#### **SECTION B. Theology/Teaching in Relation to Poverty**

Q 1: What is your [churches/denomination] opinion about poverty?

Q 2: What is the message that the church communicates in its vision in the context of poverty?

Q 3: What are the poverty issues that you address through teaching/preaching or liturgy?

Q 4: What are the lessons that you're learning in your Christian witness amongst the poor?

Note: To get the information about their theological view about poverty.

#### **SECTION C. Response to Poverty**

Notes: To determine if there is prior thought or planning about these projects.

Q 1: What programs do run to assist the poor?

Notes: To determine the type of projects there are having whether it is relief or developmental programs?

Q 2: What are the objectives of those programs?

Notes: To assess if they clearly spelled their goals for their programs and whether they have determined what they seek to achieve?

Q 3: Since when were these programs initiated?

Notes: To determine track record of involvement in poverty issues?

Q 4: Who is been targeted with these programs?

Notes: to check who are the actual beneficiaries to this program whether it is members of the community or the church members only?

What is the number of people benefiting from poverty alleviation programs?

Q 5: In your opinion, has your church adequately responded to poverty?

#### **SECTION D. The Relationship Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

Q 1: How significant are these programs to the mission of you church?

Q 2: How do link your development initiatives to your Christian witness?

Q 3: What is the involvement of your congregation in your poverty alleviation programs?

Notes: To determine the role of their congregants in these projects

Q 4: To what extent do your poverty alleviation projects involve the poor?

Notes: Determine the level of community participation.

Q 5: What do you think is the impact of these projects?

Notes: To check is there is a constant evaluation of these projects and the results.

Q 6: What are things that you wish you could improve in your initiatives to assist the poor?

Notes: Get an idea of a critical assessment of themselves about their ministry activities/

### **SECTION E. General**

Q 1: What is your annual budget for these poverty alleviation programs?

Notes: To get an idea about the size of their expenditure in terms of these projects.

Q 2: Where do you get your funding?

Q 3: In your opinion, does your community know about your poverty alleviation programs?

Notes: Get an idea about the visibility of this program in the community as a place where they could get assistance.

Q 4: What kind of infrastructure is there to deal with projects that minister to the poor?

Q 5: Where is the location of these facilities in relation to the people it is intended to serve?

Q 6: Who facilitated these programs?

Q7: What is the frequency of these programs?

Q 8: What is the personal story of those who are benefiting from this witness?

Q 9: What is the impact of this witness?

**ANNEXURE TO CHAPTER 6: CHARISMATIC EVANGELICAL RESPONSE  
TO POVERTY IN SA**

**Report On Interviews With Leading Figures In Regional/Local Churches  
In the Charismatic Pentecostal Evangelical Churches**

This is a report on interviews with key leaders of local churches within the Charismatic Pentecostal Evangelical Church, with a reflection on an interpretation of their experience of poverty, their theology or teachings in relation to their response to poverty and the relationship between the work of the church and poverty.

**4. Pastor Glen Schroedder – Christian Revival Centre**

This church is part of the IFCC and is situated in a Durban North suburb. It is a multiracial church with people from different backgrounds.

**The Experience of Poverty**

Pastor Schroeder estimates that 30 to 40 % of his congregation is affected by poverty. The rest of them are either middle class or relatively wealthy. Most of those who are poor have been assimilated into the church through outreach programmes that the church initiated in Kwa-Mashu Township, a previously disadvantaged area. They believe that the poor and the rich need each other as members of the church of Christ. The rich and the poor can assist each other in being empowered by using their respective gifts and resources. Therefore they should exist harmoniously in society.

Poverty in their context normally manifests through lack of finances, food and access to essential services like ablutions. Although money can help deal with other survival needs it cannot give people respect and help them find dignity. What accompanies this

deprivation is the people's need to have their rights and dignity as human beings respected. Other needs that are commonly faced by the underprivileged, include:

- Empowerment for work, so that people can access job opportunities that would give them a better future and greater hope than their current situation in abject poverty.
- Dealing with the repercussions of the Aids pandemic such as Aids orphans. Thus they want to build an orphanage.
- Restoration of people's dignity that culminates in a change of attitudes and mindset. They need to know how to catch a fish for themselves instead of just getting a fish always.

Poverty is part of their life as a church and they have to deal with it in their ministry.

### **Theology/Teachings of the Church in Relation to Poverty**

In their teachings they propagate the gospel, which, in Pastor Schroedder's view is relevant to people in their situation. Their teachings have a two-fold perspective or approach. Firstly, they believe that one earns the right to speak into people's lives. Secondly, their mission must inspire people. The hungry were Christ's biggest constituency. Therefore they seek to give hope and faith that is practical to the deprived. They look at practical means to respond to the needs of the poor in application of the various teachings of Jesus that were pro-poor.

They have been open to learn from the poor in a manner that has enriched their faith. One of the lessons they have learnt in ministry to the poor is:

- The extent of damage that poisonous cultures wreak on people. The apartheid regime affected both the poor and the rich negatively – spiritually, psychologically and socially.

### **Response to Poverty**

They have also adopted the concept of *Vukuzenzele* [meaning do it for yourself, in Zulu] in their approach to ministry in the situation of poverty. These are the things they do:

- They inspire people to grab their opportunity for development. This can only happen when they help them to see those opportunities for development that are available in society.
- They assist people in acquiring basic education, to be literate and to function in a modern society.
- They feed the desperate to give them strength so that they may continue to work on their dreams of self-reliance.

In retrospect, they are not satisfied that they have done enough in their witness to the disadvantaged. They feel they can still do more themselves, and also draw more people from across the spectrum of their multiracial church to participate in the ministry to the poor.

### **The Relationship Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

As a young church they feel they still have to develop their strategies and programmes and increase their resources. They realized that poverty is an inescapable reality in their community. It is increasingly becoming a focal point in their ministry. This ministry cannot be separated from the mission of the church, since the church is sent into a society that is grappling with issues of destitution.

#### **5. Pastor Johannes Monosi – Healing Mission Centre**

This is a congregation in Turflaagte in Mangaung – Bloemfontein, in the Free State Province. This congregation is in an area where there are informal settlements and low cost [RDP] housing. The actual church building is a shack made out of corrugated iron sheeting. The Pastor is Johannes Monosi. This is an independent Charismatic Church.

### **The Experience of Poverty**

He estimates that 70% of his congregation is affected by poverty. The majority live in squatter camps and their church is in an area of government-provided RDP houses. Poverty in this area hits families hard. All the members of the family are affected adversely by deprivation. It becomes obvious amongst children and youth when one notices their appearance. They are mostly emaciated for lack of good nutrition and have no decent clothing appropriate to the weather, particularly in wintertime. The church has been measuring the levels of poverty by looking at the following indicators:

- The types of clothing people wear. The clothes that I observed were very old and worn out.
- The conditions of the areas of residence. The majority of their members live in informal settlements and low cost housing.
- The contributions / offerings people bring to the church. These have been minimal, reflecting their abject poverty.

His community is really struggling to live a decent life due to impoverishment. These are the current problems that they have identified in their community:

- Lack of employment, there is large-scale unemployment in the area.
- Lack of interest in education, especially after the youths have been to an initiation school for rites of passage into adulthood [lebollo].
- Poor road infrastructure.
- Limited access to and unaffordability of electricity.
- Lack of proper housing, many people are shanty dwellers.

### **Theology/Teachings in Relation to Poverty**

For Pastor Monosi poverty is very bad condition for any human being to cope with. It sometimes affects people's ability and motivation to take responsibility for their lives. It damages people in the following areas:

- Their minds

- It creates low or lack of self-esteem.
- It affects concentration and motivation to be engaged in meaningful learning.

Therefore they believe that the church should be involved in ministry that assists the poor in their desperation. As a church they have a vision to run the following:

- Job creation initiatives, which has stalled due to lack of capacity and resources.
- Education – thus they are at the moment running a crèche.

As a church they prefer a practical message. They proclaim the gospel to equip their members to deal with the challenges of impoverishment that they are facing daily. Their teachings encapsulate the following aspects:

- Teaching people to have hope. They encourage people to trust in God in appalling conditions of poverty.
- Giving and sharing. They encourage a spirit in which people will continue to share the resources they have when they have been fortunate to receive something.
- They encourage the poor to use the available legitimate opportunities that they have to empower themselves.

Ministering to the poor has been both a painful and a value-adding experience. It has been disturbing to interact with people who are just desperately battling to survive due to poverty. But, it has also been enlightening to learn from them in their journey of faith despite their numerous trials and tribulations. These are the lessons that Pastor Monosi has learnt from the poor:

- a. Humbleness, the genuineness of faith and the simplicity of ordinary people as they go about their lives.
- b. Dedication, hard work and gratitude of the poor. When given an opportunity to work, they show wholehearted commitment.

As a church they are inspired by those lessons; therefore they try to make a difference and, within their available means, to serve the needy. They realize that they can still do more.

## **Response to Poverty**

In this situation affected by poverty, this is how the Healing Mission Centre responded:

1. They have put their trust in the Lord to see them through their struggles against poverty. For them it is a matter of exercising their faith in God to help them get out of this desperate situation.
2. They are running a crèche to assist parents by providing child-minding services as the parents seek to make a living in their odd jobs. This project, however, is challenged in terms of funding since they depend on irregular and meagre contributions from disadvantaged parents.
3. They are running a small-scale programme of home-based care for frail people. Due to lack of funding this scheme could not be expanded.
4. Distribution of food parcels to a few families that are the most desperate.

The objectives of the abovementioned ministry initiatives are:

- To provide relief to families in distress by assisting them with their immediate needs.
- Job creation to enable people to be self-employed in order for them to be able to be self-supporting.

In their self-examination of their witness amongst the disadvantaged, they feel they have not done enough due to their limited resources. The prevalent needs of the community are too complex for them to handle alone. They do not think they have made great inroads in dealing with these enormous social problems haunting their community.

## **The Relationship Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

Ministering to the poor is part of the broad commission given by God to the church, to go into the world. Therefore they cannot exclude it from their mission as a local congregation. They draw their inspiration from Jesus. He preached to everyone, but also fed those who were poor. You can never preach effectively to someone who is hungry.

Before you can proclaim the gospel to the famished you need to deal adequately with their need. Jesus did the same. He never neglected the needs of the poor in his ministry. In ministering to the poor, they seek to involve the members of the congregation and the community. They have found this to be beneficial due to the fact that they have found people in the community who have skills that church members do not possess. They find it necessary to train the people who get involved, to ensure the sustainability of the projects. In the crèche project, for instance, they had to expose personnel to appropriate training so that they can add value to the undertaking.

They report that their witness has had some modest impact on their community. The notable difference is in training. Although a person probably receives just a stipend for the kind of services that he provides, the skills and experience acquired through participation in projects are proving to be valuable. They open doors to better opportunities of employment in private sector or self-employment. Their community development initiatives have been limited in the following areas that should be improved significantly:

- Efficient management of current and future ministry projects.
- Increasing resources. This could be done, by networking with strategic organizations or structures.

## **General**

Their funding is not very consistent since it comes from the same impoverished community they serve. At the moment they spend 30 to 40 % of their income on relief programmes for families and orphans. They support three families. The rest they have assisted to obtain social grants through government foster care programmes. Some of their donors are other NGO's, which in turn depend on other donors. When contributions dry up, there is little they can do. Yet, despite these stumbling blocks they still seek to care for the poor. Therefore, there is a high level of awareness in the community that they are a caring church. The community is developing trust for them as a ministry.

## **6. Bishop Zondo – Rivers of Living Waters Ministries**

Rivers of living Water Ministries is situated in the township of Evaton, in the Vaal Triangle, Gauteng.

### **The Experience of Poverty**

According to Bishop Zondo, almost 60 % of his congregation and community are affected by poverty. Poverty is real challenge facing his people. These are the needs that they have identified amongst the poor:

- Education
- Skills development – for people to be self-employed.
- Combating child abuse

In profiling the poor they have discovered that poverty affects children the most.

They use a system of ‘cell groups’ to identify the needs of the poor. People fellowship through the cell groups. Through the cells system people are known by name, also where they live and the quality of their lives.

### **Theology/Teachings in Relation to Poverty**

For him poverty is a state of mind. If people can change their thinking they can change their environment. People’s mentality becomes affected negatively in a self-limiting way by the conditions of impoverishment. Thus in their message they seek to change people’s mindset if it has been impaired by poverty. Therefore they use the gospel to change people’s behaviour, lifestyle and relationship with Christ. The good news to the poor is that the gospel has come to transform their lives. They also use success stories as testimonies to inspire people in their struggle to defeat their impoverishment. The Bishop also tells his own story to his constituency for that purpose. As a street kid, he could not tolerate the conditions of poverty. But transformation in his life only began with the transformation of his mindset after being motivated by successful people who had

previously been poor. He came to believe that if others could extricate themselves from poverty with the help of God and friends – so could he.

Their Christian witness in the context of poverty has contributed towards their overall growth as a church. These are some of the lessons that they have learnt in their ministry amongst the poor:

1. Poor people have something to offer. If they could be trained and given the opportunity they would probably be able to help themselves. Some are just lazy, but there are those who just need training and an opportunity to implement their ideas towards self-sufficiency.
2. Ministering in the situation of poverty has helped Bishop Zondo to realize that he can be a beacon of hope to his people. This has enriched his life.

### **Response to Poverty**

The Rivers of Living Waters Ministries have embarked on various programmes to assist the poor. Below are some of their initiatives:

- Tutoring of school-going learners to help them master certain subjects that are problematic to them.
- Coaching people in business skills to enable them to become entrepreneurs.
- *Stokvel* type, saving initiatives, with people pooling their resources to enable contributing members to start their own business ventures. They have their own business forum which was started early in 2004 to help people to network and support one another in their business endeavours.
- Developing personal financial skills – budgeting etc. This is to boost people's financial literacy, which is essential for their survival. They also aspire to produce millionaires from the grassroots.
- Running a feeding scheme. Since 1996 they have provided Sunday meals for disadvantaged people. The church has made a commitment to feed the hungry within their community in the Vaal Triangle and around SA. Apart from donating to community development organizations, they make sure that every Sunday after

- the church service, they give food to those who don't have any. People who have been on the feeding scheme have been absorbed into their business forum so that they may be empowered to fend for themselves.
- Distribution of clothing. They have made an undertaking to clothe those without clothes.

### **The Relationship Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

Ministering to the poor is so important to the Rivers of Living Waters Ministries, that they have included it in their mission statement, which defines their objectives as follows:

- To preach God's Word to all people at all costs
- To preach good news to the poor
- To clothe the naked
- To give hope to the hopeless
- To give love to the unloved
- To give a warm welcome to those who visit.

Therefore programmes to minister to the poor are not just incidental, but part of their mission of their vision as a church. They embark on these projects to realize their ministry vision. A passage from Scripture, 3 John 2, is their inspiration in their response to poverty. Their dream is to assist people to live life to the fullest, to be healthy, and prosperous in all areas of their lives. These initiatives to reach out to the poor are not just side activities they add to their ministry, but part of their total ministry as a church that is indivisible. They have one ministry as a church that has different projects and activities that are linked to each other. When they feed a person who is hungry, it is part of their witness. Between their Sunday services they feed 300 people. This is in addition to the families that are on their monthly nutritional programme and who are supplied with groceries. Their modus operandi is to put poor families into a nutritional programme for two years. In the course of the two years, these people are taught to use faith and are provided with the skills they require to become employed. Their target is that in two

years or less those who have been supported should be self-sufficient. Their view is that they help the poor to stand up, but subsequently they should be able to walk on their own.

They insist on involving the poor in their own empowerment. Their approach is not to do things for the poor but to do things with them. They propagate partnership with them, doing things together. This approach has enabled them to see progress in their initiatives. They selected two people and trained them in agriculture. These people have progressed to being trainers of others to pass on the skills that they have acquired. When people use those agricultural skills successfully they are helping themselves.

Despite these achievements, Bishop Zondo's church still wishes to improve. Increasing their resources is a priority. This is achieved in part by helping their own people to become givers, so that they in turn can help others who are distressed. They insist on involving their church members in their ministry activities. It is their usual practice to have meetings with people to discuss ministry issues, and give feedback, so that supporters may buy into the vision of the church. The surrounding community has a high level of awareness of their community programmes and are encouraged by the church's deeds of compassion among the poor and victims of crime. Dealing with issues of crime and poverty ultimately benefits everybody.

## **General**

Rivers of Living Waters Ministry use 5% of their total income to minister to the poor. They are a self-funding church.

### **7. Pastor Buti David Molutsi – God's Tabernacle Christian Family Church**

This is an independent Charismatic Church, which was started in 1994. It is situated in the township of Seshego, in Polokwane, Limpopo.

### **The Experience of Poverty**

Pastor Molutsi estimates that about 60 % of their church membership is affected by poverty. Many of them come from the Township of Seshego and the surrounding villages in the greater Polokwane area. Women are the ones who feel the heat of poverty the most since their husbands are migrant workers in Gauteng and other areas in South Africa. These women depend on their husbands who to send them money to support them and their children. School-going kids are also severely affected by poverty, followed by young pregnant girls. It seems that some fall pregnant just to access the social grant that young mothers get from government. Below is the criterion they apply to measure poverty in their situation:

- Assess people's ability to acquire means to live. When they do not have the means to buy enough food and clothing and cannot afford to buy or build a proper shelter, they would be regarded as poor.

### **Theology/Teachings in Relation to Poverty**

From the Bible they deduce that Jesus' mission was to relieve the poor from their poverty. They believe that it is God's will to deliver people from impoverishment. This is why Jesus addressed the needs of the disadvantaged when they came to Him. They read from the Scriptures, 3 John 2 that says, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." According to Pastor Molutsi, the text addresses three issues: the physical aspect and the issue of health, the spiritual aspect with reference to the soul and the material aspect with reference to prospering in all things. It is his conviction that God wants people's essential needs to be satisfied. Therefore in their church they preach that God desires to meet all the fundamental needs of people. If they apply certain biblical principles they should expect God to do a miracle in their lives. They should not lose hope and think that their lives will never change for the better. The church gives the poor hope in their despair and urges them to look up to God who wants to meet their needs and deliver them from poverty. They do not only

focus on their immediate needs, they believe that God can also break the shackles of dependency so that they may live better lives. They should not remain victims of destitution who have to believe for their daily miracle in order to survive, but should rather be self-reliant and confident of meeting their basic needs themselves.

This is how they have conceptualised their position on their witness in the situation of poverty in their mission statements. They describe their vision as follows:

1. To touch the deprived by giving them hope.
2. To look at the status of their immediate needs whether they have shelter, food and clothing, and then to address those immediate needs.
3. To assess the people's talents so that they may use what they have to improve their situation. They would run programmes aimed at job creation or youth empowerment to help young people to start businesses. These programmes would teach among other things, how to draw up a business, sales and marketing plan. They would conduct workshops with the support of experts in various fields. These projects would be geared for the youth but would be open to adults who are keen to participate. In helping people to start their own business, the objective is to assist them to be self-reliant.

The poor are not the only ones who have benefited from their witness. The church leaders themselves learned important lessons from their interaction with the poor. These are some of the lessons learnt in ministry amongst the poor, namely:

- They had become aware of the vulnerability of the poor. They will accept anything, just because they are starving. The task of the Christian is to help the poor not to be abused in their defencelessness, and to reach out to them lovingly without exploiting their susceptibility as an opportunity to convert them into Christianity. They should reflect Jesus' kindness, and his desire that they should be freed from poverty.
- They have experienced a unique fulfilment in their efforts to help the disadvantaged. Service to the poor gives church leaders an opportunity to share

with them what God has provided. Taking part in this kind of ministry is what brings contentment.

### **Response to Poverty**

These are the projects they have initiated in ministry amongst the poor:

1. They seek to address people's needs through the small groups that people are allocated to in the church. Those who have jobs or are self-employed are encouraged to be on the look out for employment opportunities for group members who are unemployed. This kind of networking works very well. It opens opportunities for employment and empowering business deals.
2. They run workshops for aspirant business people who are disadvantaged. The intention is to build their capacity and to provide the relevant business skills they need to start and run their own viable businesses.
3. They encourage people to make contributions to stock up their church food and clothes bank with non-perishable food, and clothes that are still in a good condition. These are collected and distributed to the disadvantaged.

The Christian Centre has been running poverty alleviation programmes as their witness to the gospel of Christ since 1998.

Their church has been constantly evaluating its ministry initiatives. According to their own assessment of their ministry to the poor they have not implemented all their programmes as they had envisaged. They still want to do more. Thus they have future programmes that they would seek to pursue, such as:

- Relaunching their vegetable garden project with the intention of making it sustainable.
- Starting an orphanage for children whose parents died due to HIV/Aids infection.

The final goal of these projects is to empower persons or groups to achieve success and then to continue to multiply their initiatives to touch other members of the community.

## **The Relationship Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

Their understanding of the mission of their church is summarized as follows:

1. To lead people to experience God
2. To remove obstacles that are in the way of people trying to reach God. One of these hindrances is poverty. This is their reason for being involved in poverty alleviation initiatives.

Their church approaches ministry as a common witness in which the entire congregation participates. People are involved as volunteers in programmes where they can use their expertise. They are involved at various stages and levels of the ministry to the poor according to their knowledge, skill and experience. Their youth development programme is solely run by the youth, for instance. They are responsible for its leadership, programming and research to acquire essential data that is critical for their programmes. They take care of everything, even to the extent of liaising with external organizations and government structures like the National Youth Commission. In terms of their programmes the youth leadership would invite relevant facilitators to run their workshops, and obtain pertinent information about career development from tertiary institutions like UNISA. This information is distributed amongst the youth.

In their witness to the deprived they have seen some noticeable encouraging results. They have noticed tremendous improvements in the life of the people they have assisted. In many cases the poor now have food, shelter and clothing that have made a difference to the quality of their lives. There are those who have made better decisions concerning their career options, and are now enrolled in various tertiary institutions, acquiring professional qualifications. Some enterprises have been started by entrepreneurs who were once unemployed, while some of their peers through the church's grape vine have been assisted to find employment. Their testimony is that, because of the great improvement in their own circumstances, they have managed to assist others who are still struggling.

But this church is striving to become even more effective in their witness amongst the impoverished. These are proposed areas of improvement in their ministry to the poor:

- They seek to move away from concentrating only on members of their church to attending also to the poor outside their local church. They hope to extend these services to benefit the broader community beyond the walls of the church. They want to reach out to the community with no strings attached to their witness. They would not require people to join the church in order to have access to any assistance or programmes of development.
- They would like to consistently make donations to NGO's whose cause is the poor, like those assisting victims in times of floods. They have previously been giving donations of cash, and clothing to a government fund that assists people during disasters, and would now liked to resume their support. They intend to be more involved as a church in situations like these to bring relief to the traumatized victims of disasters.

## **General**

They allocate 10 % of their annual income to assisting the disadvantaged. This funding comes from the members of their local congregation. Their members believe in the vision of the church and in its quest to help the poor; therefore they give generously towards that cause. The church has a challenge to open its doors to more needy people from the community. Members of the broader community are not fully aware of the fact that they could turn to the church for assistance in times of dire need. Church leaders certainly would like to improve this situation so that more people could be brought into the relief net of the congregation. They are planning to use their under-utilised infrastructure more effectively to expand their ministry into the community. The following projects have been proposed:

- Use of land. A plot has been donated to the church where they hope to build an orphanage. They also plan to utilize the open space on the premises of the church for a vegetable garden project.

- They are in the process of buying a house to provide temporary shelter for orphans.

The Christian Centre has vowed to continue to be a church that is sensitive to the needs of the poor.

## **8. Pastor Blessing Selepe – Family Support Ministries**

The Family Support Ministries is an independent Charismatic Church that was started by Pastor Selepe, in Polokwane, Limpopo.

### **The Experience of Poverty**

In their setting in Polokwane they are experiencing extreme levels of poverty, which they estimate to be 80 % of their church membership. This is followed by a high incidence of HIV/Aids infection within their constituency. The profile of those who are poor is as follows:

- Women – many have a rural background with little or no education.
- Single parents [divorcees, widows and those who never married]
- The unemployed, especially women.
- Pastors and their families. When a pastor dies his children and wife are normally evicted from the mission house to make way for the newly appointed pastor. The pastors are so poor that they leave no inheritance to secure the future of their family – who are left destitute, like the widow in Elijah's story.

They use common indicators that put a spotlight on basic needs to assess the levels of impoverishment in their community. In their interaction with people, they take notice of the:

- Type of clothing
- Quality of food
- Kind of shelter.

Many of the poor wear substandard clothing, and make do with food and shelter, which are not suitable for any human being. Below is a list of the common problems that they have positioned themselves as a congregation to deal with in their community:

- Family instability and disintegration. Help to stabilize the family and manage relationships that might have been destabilized by divorce.
- Support families to eradicate domestic violence [Abuse of wives and children occurs regularly, with a small incidence of husband abuse – which is all the more devastating for its secrecy and silence].
- Unemployment.
- Reach out to children, who have left school without skills to participate actively as productive citizens.
- Address the issues of suicides. It seems there is progressive increase in suicide attempts amongst some of the poor.

### **Theology/Teachings Relation to Poverty**

The Scriptures influence the church's view of poverty. In reading the Scriptures they are inspired by Luke 4:18, which portrays the centrality of the poor in the mission of Christ, orchestrated by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God introduced a new order in which the liberation of the poor was promulgated as part of the new covenant that Christ had inaugurated through his life and ministry on earth. This new order heralded a dispensation in which God himself through Christ declared the freedom of the disadvantaged from any form of bondage, oppression and marginalization. Therefore, the poor have a right to be free from any form of deprivation and live in dignity, being well supplied as children of God, with them being properly integrated as productive members of the community, making a meaningful contribution to their society with their God-given talents.

In their view poverty ruins the dreams of the poor. It is not good news to be poor, it is a nightmare. Many of the poor are borrowers who are trapped in debts. They are victims of loan sharks who are plundering their livelihood and property by charging exorbitant

interest rates. They are like the widow in Elijah's times, who was pauperised by moneylenders who demanded settlement of their debts at the death of her husband (c.f. 2Kin 4). Many of the poor, including the pastors' wives and families are as vulnerable, having no secure source of revenue. They also realize that poverty results in the exclusion of the poor from significant sectors of the community. The poor are usually undesirable guests in some places of worship, educational institutions, and socio-economic institutions. Poverty disadvantages the poor because it disrupts meaningful relationships and isolates them to powerlessness in obscurity. They are people who are just seen, but ignored and never taken seriously because they do not have wealth. Even the Scriptures say in Proverbs. 19:4, "Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friends." The pain of deprivation is not only to lack basics but also to be cut off from humanity because you are devalued as a result of your poverty. Your material status makes others to be ashamed to associate with you.

They are teaching and working with the poor to reveal their potential. They teach them to accept the fact that they cannot change their sad past, since it is gone. Yet, they must not allow their dreams to die with their gloomy past. Rather, they should realize they were born with a purpose. The evidence of their purpose is in the abilities they possess. It is the church's role to motivate them to explore their potential, to provide them with knowledge and skills and to guide them in the direction of opportunities for empowerment. It should try to open doors for them, through using their gifts, so that they may be employed in some productive activity that would become their source of income. The poor should not be left to waste away in negativity and lack and thus neglect their abilities, whereas they can be employed, rise from poverty and use these assets.

With hindsight they think that ministering to the poor has brought life-changing experiences. They have learned important lessons, including the following:

1. To correct their own stereotypical reactions to the poor. Ministering to the poor has uncovered the wrong perceptions that they had of them.
2. The poor have a rich culture and tradition that need to be considered when we do ministry amongst them. This is critical in their empowerment because

- development must take cognisance of their culture and traditions, which are part of their setting.
3. Treat them with respect and encourage them to speak and participate in their own development.

### **Response to Poverty**

From 1998 to 2003 the Family Support Ministries have experimented with various poverty alleviation projects, which are described below.

- They supplied between 150 and 200 families with mealie meal. They had an agreement with a milling company to supply mealie meal at a discounted price. The beneficiaries of this feeding scheme were people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, desperate or needy families. But they discovered that in the long-term giving food to people was not sustainable. Now they have changed their strategy. They are buying mealie meal to sell it to the community. The poor are enlisted to sell the mealie meal, earning their own supply by working for it.
- They train people to provide home-based care for the frail in the community.
- They assist people who were victims of sexual molestation – often perpetrated by false prophets masquerading as ‘preachers.’
- They are running a resource centre to disseminate important information to unemployed youth and the poor about where they could find help to start a business - since they noticed low levels of awareness about available opportunities for empowerment. Some help is available through government-created enterprise development agencies like Khula Trust, Umsombovu Fund and Seta learnerships for sector-based skills development.

From February 2004 they have initiated the following programmes in ministry to the poor:

- Partnerships NICRO AND SAPS – CPF initiatives dealing with issues of development and health as a way of preventing crime.

- Empowerment of church leaders who are struggling to maintain themselves and their families. They conduct weekly workshops with the help of established local entrepreneurs to help these leaders to start businesses or provide a service that can be used for income generation. This project was launched with five pastors. The model of the Apostle Paul who used his tent-making trade to support himself inspires it. Initially it was a struggle for ministers to embrace this concept since they never thought about earning their livelihood in this manner. But their attitudes about making money are changing whilst they continue to do ministry. Leaders should be helped, since they are tempted to keep the goods that are supposed to be disbursed to the poor for themselves.

Through the years of their ministry they have been seeking to achieve two objectives, namely:

- To contribute to the establishment of healthy, godly and nurturing families in the community.
- To inform and educate the poor about various available options for self-improvement and empowerment

They have been focusing on achieving these aims whilst making continuous adjustments to their ministry strategies in their witness to the poor. These are some of the areas that they seek to improve:

- They need to assist more families of church leaders to improve the quality of their lives by supporting the prophets of God to acquire skills through which they could be making a living whilst they continue to serve the poor.
- They should double their efforts and pace in assisting people in job creation.

### **General**

They work with a very limited budget. Their funding is mainly derived from their own congregation, friends, government and families impacted by their ministry.

## **9. Pastor Dublin Poswa – Full Gospel Church**

Pastor Poswa is the pastor of the local Full Gospel Church (Pentecostal) that is located in Southern Umtata, in the Eastern Cape.

### **The Experience of Poverty**

About 20 % of Pastor Dublin Poswa's present congregation is employed the rest is unemployed. This means about 80 % of the church membership is not engaged in any serious productive activity and income generation endeavour. It is this great number of people that are affected by poverty. Yet being employed per se does not necessarily mean they all work under desirable employment conditions. Even those who are employed may earn low wages. Poverty is a social problem in this church and the community. They use these indicators to detect poverty:

- Observing people's appearance in terms of clothing and wellness of their bodies.
- Assessing the kind of shelter they live in with their families.
- Whether they have the ability to fulfil their obligations to the ministry as church members, in making contributions.

In most cases those who are impoverished wear shabby clothes, and have emaciated bodies due to lack of proper nutrition. They live in substandard shelters and are unable to make contributions to the church coffers. Church leaders have identified the following common problems in this community:

- Lack of good nutrition
- Joblessness
- Poor clothing.

Poverty is widespread in their community and it devastates families.

### **Theology/Teachings in Relation to Poverty**

Poverty is a scourge that must be fought; therefore they must create resources for people to continue to live a respectable life. Their message is that the poor should not resign themselves to the conditions of poverty and passively succumb to misery. God never

created poverty; therefore nobody must ever be content within deprivation that is the legacy of injustice. The authentic good news should address their needs and never preach contentment with the situation of marginalisation. The church should seek all possible means to encourage self-employment in order for the poor to be self-sufficient. With formal employment being scarce, the unemployed should be supported to run their own enterprises.

Their teachings as a church have been tested in living their Christian life within the communities of the poor. This is the lesson that has been derived from life in that context:

- The poor have a very deep dedication to God. They give themselves unreservedly to the Lord; therefore they are closer to God, despite their sufferings. It seems they have this profound belief that God would provide for them. Thus poverty has made them strong in their faith. They have the advantage of being nearer to God.

### **Response to Poverty**

These are some of the programmes the Full Gospel Church has launched as part of their witness to the poor:

- Distribution of clothing
- Giving of foodstuffs.

The church welfare committee facilitates these initiatives as part of their service to the community. They are the ones who look into the needs of the people in the church and respond to any situation that has been identified. In cases of children who have needs in areas of education, members of the congregation are enlisted to support those children. Their programmes have been running for the past three years. But with the enormity of the community needs exceeding their capacity, they have not coped in their witness to address all of them. In their opinion they have not responded adequately to the challenges of poverty. The major stumbling block in certain instances was the selfishness of those who were hesitant to help those who were disadvantaged.

### **The Relationship Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

They have found it necessary to network with organizations that help the poor. Just because they have limited resources, it does not mean that they neglect their ministry to the destitute. This ministry is an integral part of their mission as church in this world. But they prefer to assign church members who have passion for this ministry to the poor to lead this process. Meanwhile they also involve church members broadly in various activities of this ministry. But the latter do not have a sense of ownership like those who are in the forefront. There is no direct involvement of poor community members as stakeholders in these ministry initiatives that assist them. The church's community development ministry has had limited scope. The impact of poverty alleviation initiatives has been assessed, by looking at how it has changed the lives of a few people. This is not measured in whether they ultimately join the church or not. The church has continued to channel part of its resources to the poor. Their poverty alleviation projects are funded through gifts from church members and donations from other NGO's that are involved in development. From their own church coffers they have dedicated just below 10 % of their annual income in their budget to issues of poverty.

#### **10. Pastor Thembinkosi Ntongana – Africa Evangelical Church**

Pastor Ntongana is the pastor of the Africa Evangelical Church, in Umtata, in the Eastern Cape. This is a local church that is part of the Africa Evangelical Church denomination.

##### **The Experience of Poverty**

In Pastor Ntongana's view about 80 % of the congregation is affected by poverty. This poverty is having an impact largely on families. These are families of former migrant workers who have lost jobs through retrenchments. Many mines and companies that were downsizing had to lay off many workers. Some of those workers came from his area; and their families have lost their stable disposable income. These breadwinners are currently at home, jobless. The retrenchment packages paid to these workers have been depleted since they were used for survival rather than for income generation initiatives. Women

suffer the most because many of them were not employed before their spouses were retrenched.

They measure the prevalence of poverty, by looking at the following indicators:

- The general progress of the church in its ministry. In their case they have experienced slow progress in the growth of their overall ministry due to prevalent poverty. They lack the means to implement their ecclesiastical programmes; therefore they are struggling to meet their own needs as a church. Their members are unable to make contributions to the church.
- People's ability to afford to pay for their living expenses. Some cannot pay their landlords for their rented accommodation.
- People's employability. A number of matriculants have completed their high school but for several years they have been at home, unemployed and unable to access opportunities for further education. Such people turn to the church to assist them in surviving.

The common needs in their community are as follows:

- Education; especially the need for further education of the matriculating youth and development of other members of the population to be skilled and re-skilled for employability and entrepreneurship. There is a need for self-employment training that would foster sustainability, such as in catering services.
- Encouragement. People need to be stimulated to use their talents in areas such as music, for development purposes. It is important that our people be motivated to use their different talents to earn their livelihood, and to use the same zeal for church activities in the community.

### **Theology/Teachings in Relation to Poverty**

Jesus challenged us to be the salt and the light in our community. The Christian's task therefore is to take responsibility for bringing a positive influence into a situation of poverty. Pastor Ntongana's church feels challenged to take concrete action to deal with

issues of poverty in their community. They have already started a project to work with taxi operators in their community, helping them to run a viable business. These taxi operations, are evolving from just being a survival enterprise to being more profitable.

In trying times their message is that:

- People should learn to trust in God, depend on God as their source. People should be socialized to know that they couldn't live a fulfilling life outside the Lord.
- Trusting God should enable them to find their purpose and generate ideas that can transform their lives productively. Each person needs to discover his or her calling, which will orchestrate a process of development and prosperity in that person's life.

In their witness to the poor, church leaders have also been influenced by those disadvantaged members of the community. These are the lessons that they have picked up in ministering amongst the poor:

- They need to take responsibility and fulfil their role as Christians in a community that is disadvantaged. They cannot opt to be bystanders when there is a call for community transformation that they should support. They have learned that they should harness their strength in searching for novel solutions to tackle the giant of poverty and other related issues in the community.
- It is important to train people to have the life skills and other vital skills they need to be self-sufficient. They cannot just teach the gospel of God's kingdom without addressing the mundane needs of the poor.

### **Response to Poverty**

In responding to the challenges of poverty these are some of the initiatives they took:

- Vegetable gardens
- Helping people start their own businesses so that they should not have to depend on formal employment provided by organizations and business.

At the moment they have just implemented about 2 % of their intended poverty alleviation programmes. The majority of their programmes have not run effectively because of lack of funds.

### **The Relation Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

Ministering to the poor is high on the agenda of the African Evangelical Church. It cannot be separated from the mission of the church, since the church itself is overwhelmed by deprivation. As a leader, Pastor Ntongana could not be insensitive to the prevalence of poverty in society, because it is a reality he sees in his own church. He realizes that before they could even reach out to the poor outside the church, they will have to attend to the very poor in their church. For this reason they have launched few initiatives to assist the broader community. Therefore, in ministering to the impoverished, they have not broadly involved members of their church in any community projects. They have, however, networked with established NGO's hoping to acquire skills to strengthen their witness in the community that is beleaguered by poverty. They have identified the following areas in which they want to improve their witness:

- Ministering to people with needs created by HIV-AIDS.
- Providing the poor with basic necessities.

The African Evangelical Church has come to realize that they still need to grow in their capacity and involvement in poverty alleviation activities.

### **General**

The church is struggling to maintain a steady and positive cash flow. They have an impoverished support base that is their only source of income as a congregation. Thus the pastor has to work part-time or become involved in secular enterprises to support his livelihood.

## **11. Pastor Thomas Makhubu, Arise Bible Church.**

Pastor Makhubu is the pastor Arise Bible Church, which is an independent Charismatic local Church located in Taung, in the North West.

### **The Experience of Poverty**

Pastor Makhubu estimates that over 80 % of his congregation is affected by poverty. Many members of his church, like others in the community are unemployed. Those who are fortunate to be employed earn low wages. In their area it is common for a breadwinner who is employed to earn around R500 a month. This is not enough to support a family of up to eight members. Therefore the standard of living of the poor is very low. Men are affected by poverty, but women and children are affected even more. In some families women are the breadwinners. Church officials monitor people's standard of living to assess their level of poverty. These are the indicators that they use:

- Type of housing – their church is situated in an area where the majority of dwellings are low cost houses [government-provided RDP houses] or shacks. Even the quality of furniture inside their houses is poor.
- The clothes that people wear, especially children.
- The quality of the food they eat.

One of the greatest needs they identified is:

- Education and training in the skills required for relevant employment/self-employment. The education policies of the previous dispensation have created a generation of job seekers who have suppressed their creativity to do something different for a livelihood. The career options of graduating matriculants are limited. Job opportunities even in the police force and teaching professions are oversubscribed. Young people fail to look beyond such obstacles, even when they have potential. Unemployment consequently remains a major problem in the community.

### **Theology/Teachings in Relation to Poverty**

Pastor Makhubu's teachings are meant to encourage people to have faith in God. He highlights the message of Christ who was partial to the poor. When Jesus came to them He sought to address both their physical and spiritual needs. Therefore the church needs to first understand the poor and assist them in their struggles. Furthermore, their message seeks to address the ignorance of people in the community about various opportunities available to them for empowerment. The church tries to provide the matriculating youth with proper career guidance so that they may be productive. They seek to broaden people's horizons and increase their awareness of other streams of professional development. They hope to enhance their exposure to other available avenues of growth, in order to increase their options for self-actualisation. Pastor Makhubu cited the example of a job opportunity for a manager for technical services in their municipality, which remained vacant for some time since there was no suitable candidate in their precinct. Someone had to be brought in from a different region and province to fill that post. Vacancies in their region in the health sector are advertised but remain vacant. Thus there is a drive to encourage people, especially the youth, to take their education seriously and to pursue careers that may lead to employment in the community. They recommend fields such as the natural sciences and engineering, since bursaries are available in these disciplines for people who were previously disadvantaged. Such qualifications would render them employable since there is a high demand for such skills.

Serving the poor has taught the church some valuable lessons, such as the ones below:

- It has increased their understanding of poverty in terms of Luke 4:18f. It has also challenged them to broaden their know-how in ministering to the poor.
- They have learned to give and help others who are desperate.

## **Response to Poverty**

The infrastructure and capacity of Pastor Makhubu's church are inadequate to respond to the material needs of people who are poor in their community. Many of their elaborate programmes to minister to the poor are still in their conceptual stage. They are conducting their ministry activities under a roof that is just a canopy to provide shelter from the sun but not from rain, winds and cold. They lack resources to respond to the poor. At the moment they are striving to network with well-resourced churches, non-profit organizations and corporate partners to get support for their ministry to the poor. Whenever they do get donations of food and clothing they distribute them to the community to give relief to those who are desperate. The projects they run are seasonal since they are viable only when they receive external support. They have had the most success with their supportive services offering career advice to school-going children. They have testimonies of individuals who are on the right career path in the legal and engineering fields as a result of timely counselling by the church. Thus the simple counselling and advice offered by the church is making some difference in the lives of young people.

Also, through their sermons they seek to provide spiritual and psychological support to the poor who have to cope with adverse conditions of poverty. The appalling conditions of deprivation in the community plant hopelessness, low morale and a negative outlook on life. This leads to problems of alcohol abuse in the general population and high rates of teen pregnancies amongst the youth. The church uses its teachings to enable people to see their potential despite being surrounded by a depressing environment.

## **The Relationship Between Poverty and the Work of the Church**

Caring for the poor is part of their mandate, included in the great commission. It is this ministry that gives Christians an opportunity to give, not only materially, but also their knowledge, skill, time and other essential resources. Part of the Christian's responsibility is not only to preach to the poor but also to share his resources with them in order to

address their needs. But Pastor Makhubu's church also has to tap into other community resources in order to bolster their response to poverty. Therefore, in ministering to the poor, they strive to involve their community, especially when they work on projects that are done in partnership with government. This is possible because government-sponsored projects are huge and they have structures that promote maximum community participation. Meanwhile the church cannot as yet involve the poor community in their programmes since their meagre budget has prevented them from embarking on any ambitious initiatives.

Pastor Makhubu thinks that their programmes had some impact, but on a small scale, since they are disadvantaged too as ministries. Progress can be tracked in their initiatives but it is happening at a slow pace. They are facing an uphill battle having to work with people who are inclined to depend on others rather than making personal effort. The pastor's aim is to influence their psyche, with a view to turning them into job creators, not job seekers. They do, however, have some success stories of people who are on a promising career path on professions through their support. While some of their peers three years after completing high school, have still not made any progress into starting a career or run their own enterprise. Their ministry has been encouraging those who are poor to live righteously. Just because they are poor and unemployed is not an excuse for them to resort to crime, substance abuse or any hedonistic other behaviour. Rather they should continue to be optimistic that their prospects would change for the better with time. They should not give up on their dreams and succumb to self-destructive behaviour that would ultimately disrupt their lives and those of the community.

Furthermore, they wish to spend more time in their interaction with young people since they have noted that the morale is very low and there is little commitment to sound moral values. The youth are surrounded by and accustomed to seeing and hearing negativity. Consequently, they are perceived to have no interest in education, to lack ethical behaviour and to like loitering. The pastor thinks that the youth are misunderstood in their community and that very few people seek to understand their life world, needs and challenges. Therefore, there is an opportunity to influence young people positively,

despite their background of poverty. Even in their present unfavourable circumstances there is still potential for things to change for the better. The area is rich in mineral resources like diamonds, spring and mineral water, marble and other stones that are used to produce floor tiles. Also there are potential opportunities for tourism. But people in their area are not aware of these opportunities because they are listening to the many negative reports about their area. The church wishes to accelerate its efforts in raising people's awareness about the potential in their area for empowerment so that they could be self-supporting.

Their ministry is open to the community and the community knows that they could turn to them in times of need. This applies especially to those who are in the immediate vicinity of their church. Also, those who have been helped continue to spread the news about the help they have received in times of distress. The community has even invited them to assist in the administration of sports clubs. The church has volunteered its services as part of the leadership team that runs one of their soccer clubs. It is their dream to make a contribution towards the social development of society.

## **Conclusion**

I have reported and interpreted the stories of a few local church leaders within the Charismatic Pentecostal Evangelical movement. They have enabled me to gather valuable data about their Christian witness in a situation of poverty. They have revealed to their different views and points of convergence in ministering to poor. Some of the responses to poverty are sophisticated and well structured, whilst others are just in their rudimentary stage. But the bottom line is that the leaders and their churches are involved in ministries that seek to address the needs of the marginalized. They have chosen not to be passive, but to use the resources at their disposal to fight poverty as part of their mission and work as Christians. They speak with appreciation about the valuable lessons they have derived from their experience ministering to the poor.