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**THE IMPACT OF PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM
TOWARDS THE POOR.
A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE.
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RURAL COMMUNITIES OF
BUSHBUCKRIDGE**

BY

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DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I Titus Risimati Mobie (Rev) hereby declare that the dissertation which I submit for the degree Ph.D (Practical Theology) at the University of Pretoria is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

T.R. MOBIE (Rev)



DEDICATION

“If I were to choose between studying for the sake of a degree, and studying for the sake of knowledge, I would choose studying for the sake of knowledge” (Rev NNJ Ngwenya).

*Ndzi nkhensa marito ya vutlhari yo fana ni lawa.
(Many thanks for these words of wisdom.)*

With Warm memories and thanks I dedicate this work to you my spiritual father and mentor the late Rev Ntlaweni Nchongi Joshua Ngwenya

1938-2006

Rest in Peace

TITUS RISIMATI MOBBIE (Rev)



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“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	=	All Africa Conference of Churches
ABC	=	Abstain, Be faithful, and Condomise
ADB	=	African Development Bank
AGAPE	=	Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth
AIDS	=	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	=	African National Congress
APF	=	Anti Privatization Forum
ARV	=	Antiretroviral
BWR	=	Basic Water Requirement
BEE	=	Black Economic Empowerment
CBOs	=	Community Based Organisations
CESCR	=	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CFA	=	Comprehensive Freshwater Assessment
CSD	=	Commission on Sustainable Development
CWSS	=	Community Water Supply and Sanitation Programme
DAWASA	=	Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority
DWAF	=	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
e.g.	=	For example
ESAP	=	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
Etc	=	et cetera
ESOP	=	Employee Stock Ownership Plan
FAO	=	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FBOs	=	Faith Based Organisations
FRELIMO	=	Mozambique Liberation Front
GATS	=	General Agreement on Trade in Services



GDP	=	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	=	Growth, Employment and Reconstruction
GST	=	General Sales Tax
HIPC	=	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	=	Human Immune Virus
HSRC	=	Human Science Research Council
ICPI	=	International Centre for Public Integrity
IFLs	=	International Financial Institutions
IUCN	=	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KNP	=	Kruger National Park
LCDs	=	Less Developed Countries
LPCD	=	Litres per capita per day
MDGs	=	Millennium Development Goals
MIIU	=	Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit
MNCs	=	Multinational Companies
MNR	=	Moçambique National Resistance
NGOs	=	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIEO	=	New International Economic Order
NRLF	=	National Religious Leaders Forum
NEPAD	=	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NP	=	National Party
NT	=	New Testament
OAU	=	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	=	Official Development Aid
OECD	=	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PLWA	=	People Living with HIV
PLWHA	=	People Living with HIV and AIDS



PRs	=	Poverty Reduction Strategies
RDP	=	Reconstruction and Development Programme
PTSD	=	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
SACC	=	South African Council of Churches
SADC	=	Southern Africa Development Community
SACMUP	=	Southern African Churches in Ministry with Uprooted
SAPs	=	Structural Adjustment Programmes
IMF	=	International Monetary Fund
UN	=	United Nations
UNAIDS	=	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV /AIDS
UNESCO	=	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	=	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	=	United Nations Children Fund
UNITA	=	United Total Independence for Angola
USSR	=	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
WARC	=	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
RENAMO	=	Mozambique Resistance Army
RSA	=	Republic of South Africa
WB	=	World Bank
WCC	=	World Council of Churches
WDM	=	Water Demand Management



ABSTRACT

THE IMPACTS OF PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM TOWARDS THE POOR A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE

The dissertation focuses on water, which has become the focal point of global debate today among nations. This is due to ever-increasing population and the insatiable consumer demands that the market makes on humanity, putting heavy stress on natural resources, especially water.

Since the 1980s, rich countries and the institutions they control, i.e. the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been forcing poor countries to implement policies and sign agreements that do them more harm than good (i.e. privatization of state assets such as water).

The debt crisis drove many poor countries into structural adjustment programs as a condition for receiving IMF and World Bank aid. These programs, under various names, contain policies that compel vulnerable countries to expose their social services to competition with big profit making corporations.

Through persuasion, threats, bullying and conditions attached to loans and aid, poor countries have been forced to:

- Open their markets in order to subsidize exports from rich countries.
- Stop prioritising domestic producers.



- Divert development efforts away from local food markets, and
- Privatize essential services such as water system, electricity etc.

These debt relief conditions and trade agreements are focused solely on making profit and not on improving the livelihood and welfare of the poor. The theory that the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO put forward is that increased trade will automatically be equal to improved welfare. This equality has not worked in practice as Raj Patel in a more or harsher description, that structural adjustment and other trade related policies could also be seen as a “weapon of mass destruction” (Znet, November 28, 2000).

The author concurs with Patel’s view, as according to UNICEF, over 500,000 children under the age of five died each year in Africa and Latin America in the late 1980s as a direct result of the debt crisis and its management under the International Monetary Fund’s structural adjustments programs. These programs required the abolition of price supports on essential food-stuffs, steep reductions in spending on health, education, and other social services, and increases in taxes. The debt crisis has never been resolved for much of Sub-Saharan Africa. Extrapolating from the UNICEF data, as many as 5,000,000 children and vulnerable adults may have lost their lives in this blighted continent as a result of the debt crunch (World Policy Journal, Volume XIX, No.4, Winter 2002/03).

Privatization and commodification of water system is the order of the day in many developing countries. It has raised survival issues



for the poor and the marginalized, causing problems such as scarcity of safe drinking water, pollution of water and soil, and destruction of agricultural sectors in other parts of developing countries.

This dissertation emphasizes that all people have internationally accepted rights to water *“all peoples, whatever their stage of development and their social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs” (United Nations 1977)*. This right is being violated for millions of people around the globe, particularly in developing countries such as Africa, Asia and Latin America.

This dissertation reminds the church leadership, members of faith communities and all relevant stakeholders of their responsibilities to God-given gift of water. Both the Old and New Testament understanding of justice as taking the side of the poor and oppressed, and also seeking to compel us to action, i.e. to address the exploitative and oppressive systems that seek to hold the poor and their oppressive structures. We are inspired to strive for justice, each in our own place and according to our separate gifts. We are called to the struggle to make trade a means of sharing the bounty of the earth and the fruits of human labor, and to ensure that people’s rights to water is fully respected.

The dissertation emphasizes that **“water”** is the source of life, a gift of nature and that it belongs to all living beings and the rest of creation. God who is the creator gives this right to everyone. It is



not a private property but a common resource for the sustenance of all members of plant and animal kingdoms.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER ONE

The first chapter of this dissertation comprises of the introduction that covers the mission statement, problem statement, aim of study and methodology. In this chapter the author is concerned about the unprecedented privatization of water system by the multilateral international bodies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) including other international financial institutions because of their Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) policies.

With these policies, developing countries are encouraged to privatize their services as conditions for compliance to be included among the list of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) in order to be eligible for debt relief. One of the services that these countries are forced to privatize is water supply, where profit is put ahead of social and environmental concerns, leading to greater indebtedness. The above process creates poverty among developing countries.

In this chapter, the author challenges these institutions that they are not there to help these countries, but to make profit in the name of helping them, where the poor who cannot pay are cut off and left without services at all, resulting in water related diseases and death (Agape 2005:42). Some foreign countries are also corrupting our African governments by giving money to the leaders while taking the lion's share of the wealth out of our countries. As a result good governance and respect to democracy is grossly violated.



In this chapter, the author introduces the aim of the study being that of raising awareness to the church, other faith based organization, government and other stakeholders of the negative impacts of privatization of water system particularly to the poorest of the poor. The research suggests that the church and the gospel should be seen as a solution to the human ills and national crisis otherwise it has no relevancy to the real world.

The review of literature on privatization of water reveals unpleasant side effects where safe drinking water is not affordable to the vulnerable, i.e. the poorest of the poor who are then left with no other option, but to use contaminated water for their needs from rivers, dams, wells etc, resulting in water-borne diseases and death. It is important for the reader to note that, neither human being nor plant can live without water.

In this research, the author who grew up as a shepherd of his father's flock, reminds the church of her shepherding role by taking Jesus Christ as a model where He is depicted as the great servant, or deacon (Mark 10:45 and John 13), and that his successors are called to carry on his service (diakonia) among the oppressed and the abused. The author uses Gerkin's shepherding model as the model par excellence (1997:28) in reminding the church of her responsibilities of shepherding. The researcher revolves around the Gerkin's pastoral and educative shepherding model in the attempt to challenge and inspire the churches, NGOs and the wider ecumenical movement to address current global problems regarding the privatization of water resources' issue. In this attempt, the analysis of the results of the chosen research



tools, the interviews and surveys among his subjects / respondents are supported by this model. The stories are in the context of the locality of study and are related with the aims of the study. These serve as eye-openers for readers to understand the pains and struggles of the people. The researcher's aim that this study will serve as "voice" of the voiceless people of their pains and struggles to the government, and to the world is well delivered in the selected stories. The gathered data has been summarized and concluded within the premises of the Gerkin's model.

Both the qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the data collection of this research. The researcher uses the descriptive-survey research design as his data collecting techniques, that is, employing the questionnaire and survey methods. The questionnaire is translated into Xitsonga, the local language, clearly stating survey questions. Both questionnaires are attached as appendices.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter discusses the whole question of water, that it is God's gift and a vital resource for life. The question of its scarcity is also discussed where the following factors are seen to be causes: population growth, increased demand on agricultural water, inappropriate water management, industrialization, urbanization and climate change due to global warming.

The chapter also discusses the critical characteristics of water that:

- It fulfils multiple functions.



- It is needed for regional, local and global water imbalances.
- The distinction between need and demand of water resource need to be identified.
- It should be taken as the first thing in developmental strategies.
- All stakeholders should be engaged in addressing the issue of water. The author does not, however, agree with the commodification of this resource as it is the poorest of the poor who suffer the consequence.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three discusses the whole question of privatization of essential services, what it is, its various methods, and how governments benefit from it. The chapter also raises some arguments pro and against privatization policies. All in all, the fact is that governments have a lot to benefit out of this policy because of its economic gains from developed countries. The question to ask is: Does governments care about the poor? The researcher leaves this area of concern for other researchers to pursue.

It is the researcher's view that while it may be necessary for governments to privatize social services; some essential services such as water supply should not be privatized or commodified for economic reasons, as it has to do with human life and the rest of creation.

It is the researcher's view that the church should be encouraged to promote a non-commodity exchange community, based on a



sharing and caring principle, reflecting the economy of God's grace. Water is the basic source of life, which cannot only be considered in terms of its economic capabilities and potential, but as a necessity for human sustenance, hence the importance of its distribution to all, irrespective of their ability to pay for it.

CHAPTER FOUR

The chapter discusses privatization of water in relation to poverty. Food production is the main economic activity of most women and men in rural Africa (A Connor 1991:76). On the other hand, food is also the important critical dimension of African poverty (1991:76). Food production however, is made possible if water is available.

In the situation where there is scarcity of rain or where water is privatized, hunger is the order of the day, and it is the poor who suffer most because of lack of finance and other resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter deals with food, which is the first remedy for AIDS. People living with HIV and AIDS live longer as a result of good nutrition. This chapter discusses the importance of good feeding where water is seen to be very critical for the production of food, diet that brings about the necessary energy and nutrients. With privatization of water, the poor will not afford to access water in order to grow food such as vegetables, fruits etc.

CHAPTER SIX

The Chapter discusses the fact that the church exists to be prophetic in its ministry, protecting and defending those whose



rights are violated by others. These are the poor and the marginalized, who also have the right to live and enjoy life to the fullest. The mission of the faith-community should therefore be expressed in its diverse practices of engaging in social justice, communicating the faith as well as the administering of the word and sacrament. It is in this context that the Church is called to respond and reinterpret its mandate and mission. God is on the side of the poor, weak, marginalized, voiceless, defenceless, and the oppressed, and this is what the church should emulate. The Church and the gospel should be seen as a solution to the crisis, otherwise it has no relevance to the real world. It has a mission to be compassionate, and be a righteous community working globally for justice and peace.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Chapter seven consists of the conclusion and recommendations that there is no life without water. The dissertation has attempted to emphasize that both the poor and the rich need good and safe water since almost all human activities revolve around water. It should be made accessible to all since this will even help women and children especially the girl – child from walking long distances with big and heavy containers to sources where they could get portable water. It recommends good care of water. Water-borne diseases could be eradicated if people take good care of the water around them. This way, all living creatures would enjoy the life-giving gift from God, which is water, and that no private individuals or companies should be allowed to commodify it for economic gains or profit.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
(a) Declaration	i
(b) Dedication	ii
(c) Acknowledgements	iii
(d) Acronyms	vi
(e) Abstract	ix
(f) Executive summary	xiii
(g) Table of contents	1

CHAPTER ONE

1.	Introduction	7
	1.1 Background to the study	7
	1.2 Mission statement	10
	1.3 Problem statement	22
	1.4 Scarcity of water resource in South Africa	30
	1.5 Aim of study	41
	1.6 Government and local authorities	43
	1.7 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	45
	1.8 Members of local communities	47
	1.9 Communities and individuals	48
	1.10 Research Gap	50
2.	Methodology	53
	2.1 Research methodology	53
	2.2 Development of research instrument	54
	2.3 Analysis to the survey on the impact of privatization of water system to the poor	63
	2.3.1 Civil society	63
	2.3.2 Local authority	63
	2.3.3 Local church leaders	63
	2.3.4 The emerging farmers	63
	2.4 Language used in the interviews	64
	2.5 Research model	64
	2.6 The church, a shepherd of the poor	68



2.7	Preliminary conclusion	76
-----	------------------------	----

CHAPTER TWO

2.	WATER AND ITS PRIVATIZATION	81
2.1	Introduction	81
2.2	Globalization of water resources	83
2.3	Key problems and aspects concerning water	85
2.4	No water no life	87
2.5	Water, God's gift and vital resource for life	92
2.5.1	Water resource fulfills multiple functions	92
2.5.1.1	Water and human health	93
2.5.1.2	Water and ecological / environmental health	97
2.5.1.3	Water and productive health	99
2.5.1.4	Water and carrier functions	101
2.5.1.5	Water and psychological Functions	101
2.5.1.6	Water – nature's thirst Quencher	102
2.5.1.7	Water needed for keeping ourselves clean	103
2.5.1.8	Water needed for keeping the surroundings clean	103
2.5.1.9	Water need for brain and mental functions	104
2.5.1.10	Water needed for digestive functions	104
2.5.1.11	Water needed for skeletal functions	105
2.5.1.12	Water needed for kidney functions	105
2.5.1.13	Water needed for medication purposes	106
2.6	The notion on the scarcity of water resource	109
2.6.1	Population growth	112
2.6.2	Increased demand on agricultural water	113
2.6.3	Inappropriate water management	113
2.6.3.1	Destruction of forests	114
2.6.3.2	Water pollution	114



2.6.4	Industrialization and urbanization	115
2.6.5	Climate changes due to global warming	116
2.7	People's perspectives on water	122
2.8	Theological and ethical foundations on water as gift and right	126
2.8.1	Water and God	128
2.8.2	Water and life	129
2.9	Conflict over fresh water	134
2.10	The African understanding of the importance of water	142
2.11	Water supply and sanitation	143
2.12	The White Paper on a national water policy For South Africa	148
2.13	Access to clean water a national Basic Human Right	148
2.13.1	Regional, local and global water Imbalances	150
2.13.2	The distinction between need and demand	151
2.13.3	Water a first thing in developmental strategy	152
2.14	Maximum participation in water management	152
2.15	Water management and community fora	154
2.16	Water management and Individual users	155
2.17	Water management and women	156
2.18	Water management and young people	159
2.19	Water management and people with disabilities	160
2.20	Preliminary conclusion	161

CHAPTER THREE

3.	PRIVATIZATION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES	166
3.1.	Introduction	166
3.2.	Defining privatization	167
3.3.	Different methods of privatization	170



3.4.	Arguments pro – privatization	173
3.5.	Arguments against privatization	178
3.6.	Privatization of state monopoly	183
3.7.	Water not an economic entity to be privatized, but to be treated as a common good	186
3.8.	Free water feasible for poor Communities in South Africa.	196
3.8.1.	Regulation of civil servants' salaries	197
3.8.2.	Reduction of provincial governments	197
3.8.3.	Regulation of giving child support grant	198
3.8.4.	RDP houses not needed at some areas	198
3.9.	Preliminary conclusion	200

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM AND POVERTY

		203
4.1.	Introduction	203
4.2.	Definitions and description of poverty	206
4.2.1.	Lack of food	212
4.2.2.	Lack of water	213
4.2.3.	Lack of fuel/energy supplies	217
4.3.	Different kinds of poverty	217
4.3.1.	Cyclical poverty	217
4.3.2.	Collective poverty	218
4.3.3.	Concentrated collective poverty	218
4.3.4.	Case poverty	219
4.4.	Understanding poverty in South Africa	219
4.5.	Unemployment and poverty	221
4.6.	Agriculture as an employment opportunity	222
4.7.	The biblical understanding of poverty	223



4.7.1.	The New Testament approach to poverty	223
4.7.2.	The Old Testament understanding of poverty	226
4.8.	Scarcity of water and its consequences	233
4.9.	Consequences of drought	234
4.10.	Rain making for agrarian purposes	240
4.11.	Preliminary conclusion	244

CHAPTER FIVE

5.	PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV AND AIDS	245
5.1.	INTRODUCTION	245
5.2.	Food and privatization of water system in the context of HIV and Aids	247
5.3.	Preliminary conclusion	251

CHAPTER SIX

6.	THE CHURCH'S PASTORAL RESPONSE TO POVERTY AND PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM	253
6.1.	Introduction	253
6.2.	Defining the church	255
6.3.	Diaconical work and mission of the church	258
	6.3.1. Diakonia as material help	258
	6.3.2. Diakonia as spiritual help	258
6.4.	Jesus Christ as model of diakonia servant	259
6.5	The church's response to privatization of water system	264
6.6	The church and the accessibility of water to all	272
6.7	Preliminary conclusion	278



CHAPTER SEVEN

7.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	280
7.1.	Appendices	285
7.2.	Bibliography	301



CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

“To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of life “(Rev 21:06)

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink, let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said; out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:37)

God demands the right use of his gifts so that his providential nature be glorified when all creation is cared for and looked after and receives in celebration a just and fair distribution proportionate to one’s needs without wasting, polluting, greed or selfish indulgence as recorded in both the books of Ezekiel and John’s gospel (Ezekiel 34; John 10:10).

The following background as experienced by the researcher introduces to the reader the reasons that necessitated me to engage in this study:

It was in the year 1985 that the researcher made a pastoral visit to one of the hospitals in Bushbuckridge, a rural village of the Mpumalanga Province of the Republic of South Africa, where one of my congregants had just been operated. In the same ward was one patient by the name of Tshikiwani (*not a real name*) who had been there for more than six (6) years. Tshikiwani and her husband had been involved in a car accident that left Tshikiwani paralyzed with her legs, arm and spinal cord broken. The husband was not seriously injured and decided to dump the wife at the hospital and the three children with his mother in law.



He felt so sad about Tshikiwani story and decided to visit the three children who were sixteen (16), eleven (11) and eight (8) years of age. As a member of the local council of churches i.e. Lowveld Council of churches, (the Provincial branch of the South African Council of Churches), I reported the Tshikiwani story to the Home and Family Life department who resolved to care for the children by paying their school fees, and providing financial assistance that included feeding and clothing.

In 1986, the Health Department decided to discharge Tshikiwani who was then taken to join her children. Here, Tshikiwani had no room of her own. She was housed in a small rondavel made of mud with no window. What a traumatic experience it was for her!

In 1988 another family that was leaving the area offered to sell me their five (5) roomed house which I struggled to buy for Tshikiwani and her children. Thanks God that I managed. While this poor family was staying in this new home, I always helped them as much as I could, e.g., buying them food, soap etc. In 1999 I decided to pastorally engage on a process that would enable them to help themselves, remembering the old saying of “teaching a person to catch fish rather than giving him/her a fish”. This is what Maluleke is saying: “Christian community development should help these people to stand on their own feet” (1999:22). In the yard, there was a tap of water while other taps in the area, very often did not have water. As the yard was big enough, I taught them to plant vegetables and fruits such as spinach, cabbage, tomatoes, beans, mangoes, avocados, etc.



Again the idea here was to teach the children how “to learn to catch fish for themselves.” This helped the family a great deal as expressed in the well-known statement “Give a person a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a person to fish and you feed him for a life time” (Maluleke 1999:13) People in the area also benefited from this project as they used to buy fresh vegetables from Tshikiwani’s home.

Three years later, the government came out with the cost recovery doctrine where water users were to pay for the water they used. This doctrine has a detrimental effect on the poor because they are not able to afford to pay for their water; as a result they are cut off from water supply. Consequently, this poor family could not afford and had their water cut off and the whole project collapsed. The source of life was then taken away from them, and as a result Tshikiwani and those who benefited from the project were impoverished again. It is against this background that I felt the need to research on the negative impact of privatization of water system, its commercialization and commodification so that awareness be raised to the church and its stakeholders.

The awareness that the dissertation aims to raise is the fact that water and land is God’s gift for life. If one has land and water, one is able to survive, and the absence thereof, means poverty that yields diseases and death. The study however, focuses on the inaccessibility of water due to its commercialization (privatization) leaving the topic of land to other researchers.



1.2 MISSION STATEMENT

Investing in water today is more profitable than investing in oil and pharmaceuticals. In fact, water promises to be the 21st century what oil was to the 20th century. Water is the petroleum of the 21st century. According to Fortune, the annual profits of the water industry now amount to about 40 percent of those of the oil sector and are already substantially higher than the pharmaceutical sector.

Charles Santiago also observes that water as a global common good has come under the control of market forces. This is because water promises to be the most precious commodity of the 21st century, profiting corporations. Past experiences of privatization and the control of water by large private monopolies show that almost invariably, lead to the exclusion of the poor from accessing clean water, mainly through tariff increases and disconnections.

The global trade in water is currently estimated to be US\$ 800 billion, involving about 6% of the world population receiving services from corporations. However, the global trade is expected to be a multitrillion-dollar industry in the near future. When privatized, water systems expand to serve about 17% of the world's population by 2015.

The Big Ten multinational corporations control the water market and related industries. Nine of the ten largest water corporations in the world are located in Europe (Europe water corporations and privatization of Asia Water Resources;

(http://www.boell.de/downloads/global/cancun_water.pdf. p9)



Water is now the most precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations. For example, in their book: Economics of Water Resources, Nicolas Spulber and Asghar Sabbaghi have this to say about water in the Middle East: “In the case of the Middle East, where oil has long played a major role in shaping the politics of the area, water is now recognized as the dominant resource issue as a number of countries face increasingly serious water shortages” (1998:189).

Today we are witnessing the unprecedented privatization of water system and other public goods by governments, particularly those of the developing countries. This is because of the insistence of the multilateral international bodies such as Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as associated agencies such as the Asian Development Bank or the Latin American Development Bank.

This insistence is done through their conditionalities of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (imposition of loan conditionalities). These financial institutions are pushing African governments to privatize public assets such as water (Petrella 2001:12-13), the free gift given to humanity by God. They are increasingly forcing Third World countries, particularly those who wish to be included in the list of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) to abandon their public water delivery systems and contract with the water giants in order to be eligible for debt relief. They



argue that water management by large corporations will be more efficient and save government's money.

The use of such conditionalities and emphasis on the needs of investors both serve to undermine the scope for a public sector reform option, masking the genuine realities of private and public alternatives. The researcher sees this behaviour as another dimension of tied aid and as being punitive to the poor. It is the researcher's view that water can never be regarded or treated as private property or become the means and end of individual interest. He underlines that indifference towards the vitality of water constitutes both a blasphemy to God the creator and a crime against humanity.

In at least eight African countries, opening the water sector to privatization was a condition for receiving an IMF loan. So many countries that are already heavily indebted and have cut spending on social services have been forced to privatize water systems in order to borrow money leading to greater indebtedness. The example of this is found in the *Alternative Globalization Addressing peoples and Earth (Agape)* where it is recorded that:

"In Africa, the IMF's star pupil was Zambia. In a region wracked by drought and ravaged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Zambia needs all its available financial resources to support its social and agricultural infrastructure. Instead, it is expected to pay an average of US\$221 million a year in debt service from 2003 to 2005, which is two-thirds more than it paid prior to receiving debt relief under the HIPC initiative.

The IMF alone is scheduled to extract \$293 million in debt servicing from 2003 to 2005, after providing debt relief through the HIPC initiative, while Zambians are still paying for misguided policies imposed by the WB and IMF throughout



the 1090s. Instead of admitting its responsibility and liability for Zambia's debt crisis, the IMF remains fixated on forcing the country to sell its remaining assets. When confronted with the failure of their approach in Zambia, international policy-makers hid behind allegations of local government corruption, rather than examine the true impact of their own policies.(Agape 2005:27)

Another example is in Tanzania where, Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA) was privatized as one of the conditions given for the country to receive the HIPC debt relief. On the other hand, the Tanzanian government raised a credit to fund the \$145 million upgrade of DAWASA, needed to sell off the company at a lower price, effectively increasing the national debt it seeks to reduce. Accordingly, this privatization will produce higher water bills or even become another corruption trap.

Another example is that of the African Development Bank (ADB) which sent out a release on the 31st of May 2002 saying it had signed an agreement with Tanzanian Deputy Minister of Finance Alhaji Adbisalaam Issa khatibu, for a loan of approximately \$47 million. According, to the ADB, the money would help in improving the accessibility, quality, reliability and affordability of services to the population.

It would contribute to poverty eradication and reduction as well as improving the economic and social well-being of the Tanzanian people. This would be done by providing a better access to clean water and reducing the incident of water borne diseases among the vulnerable people, the poor, while in fact it was meant to enrich



the Tanzanian president's family

(<http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/develop/africa/2002/06ofwater.htm>).

These Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed horrendous restrictions on ordinary citizens, especially the poor, and did nothing to wipe out corruption. Their emphasis on reducing essential state expenditure in health, education, social services and infrastructure led to high drop out rate from schools, drastically reduced access to medical care and reduction in productivity in the agricultural sector.

It has also reduced water to a mere commodity in the global market for the rich multinational companies (MNCs) like Vivendi, Suez, and Aquas de Barcelona to buy and exploit (Fischer 2006:47). Water business is actually dominated by the largest French multinationals, Suez and Vivendi, who hold about 70% of the international privatized water business particularly in Africa.

The untrammelled imposition of free market economy and American style democracy also helped to breed ethnic hatred, crime and violence. Following is a detailed identity of these multinational companies as recorded in the industry bible:

The industry bible record that 545 million people (9% of the world's population) are served by private providers. Of the three biggest multinationals active in the sector are:

- Suez which is French based serves 117.4 million people world wide
- Veolia Environment which is French based serves 108.2 million people and



- RWE, a German based serves 69.5 million, with its subsidiary Thames Water, which is based in UK.

The next biggest players are:

- Aquas de Barcelona which serves 35.2 million people
- SAUR which serves 33.5 million people
- SABESP which serves 25.1 million people
- United Utilities, which serves 22.1 million (Mason Water Yearbook 2004/5).

However, “Activists fear that this economic globalization, as envisaged by transnational corporations that are pressurizing national governments to privatize, deregulate and relinquish state controls is pushing us into a single economy (Figueres et al 2003:47).

Privatization and commodification of water resources have raised serious survival issues for the poor and the marginalized all over the world, especially in the South, causing problems such as scarcity of drinking water, pollution of water and soil, and destruction of agricultural sectors.

The poor and rural communities do not attract private investors. Any improvements that might come with private ownership are in areas that generate profit. Private water supply, telecommunications and electricity companies tend to focus on efficiency in collecting tariffs, but not on improving service. Cost usually leaps up quickly annoying the middle class and the wealthy customers, but leaving the poor without service at all (2003:48).



This in the author's view benefits these MNCs whose primary motives are defined purely by their shareholders interest, their return on capital and the risk involved and not the provision of public services. Figueres and his co-writers clearly put it when they record how activists perceive these private operators. Private operators are said to be there solely to grab cash "seeking to improve their profits margins" (2003:48). They reap sub-normal profits without necessarily delivering efficiency, promising more aid while real economic development suffers. The example can be seen where Senegal was encouraged to grow nuts for export and:

- As poor nation without resources, she took out loans to help develop the country.
- Other nations saw this to be going well, and followed suit.
- The price of nuts started to drop and Senegal faced debt repayment problems.
- Structural Adjustment Policies were put in place, cutting spending and reducing government involvement in the nut industry and elsewhere through privatization.
- However, things got worse, while rich countries such as US were subsidizing their own nut and other industries, allowing them to gain in market share around the world ([http://www.globalissues.org/Trade Related/SAP.asp](http://www.globalissues.org/Trade%20Related/SAP.asp)).

Concerning privatization of water resources, Figueres and co-writers put it succinctly that: "A common concern of those opposing a greater role of the market in water management is the risk of placing water, vital for public health, in the hands of private sector whose first concern is profit" (2003:49). These private water industries are there to boost their profits at the expense of the



taxpayers, while such takeover excludes the poor from an affordable clean water supply.

Corporations see investment in water as a growing business. It is estimated to be an annual billion-dollar industry. As already indicated, it is forty percent (40%) of the size of the oil sector, and one third larger than the pharmaceutical sector. Most of these companies are the beneficiary of the USD 20 billion lending of the World Bank to water-supply projects over the last twelve years. Here, the lives of the poor are sacrificed for the gains of the rich.

The study of the International Centre for Public Integrity (ICPI) reveals that, of the 276 World Bank water-supply loans from 1990 to 2002, 30 percent required privatization, the majority in the last five years. Some companies like Aquas Argentines, controlled by Suez and its shareholders, were making huge profits of as much as 25 percent.

The ICPI reported that an Argentine businessman earned a profit of USD 100 million through privatization. Bottled water is also a USD 33 billion annual business. This implies therefore, that in the world we have a scenario of those who push the attractive marketization of water (water marketers for profit) and others who are against it for moral and ethical reasons.

The performance of these companies in Europe and the developing world has been well documented. Customers who cannot pay know them for going for huge profits, higher prices for water, and cut-offs. There is no transparency in their dealings;



while at the same time there is reduction of quantity and quality water. Bribery and corruption is rife, whereas a financial inducement for an official / political or public authority is to act in the interest of the company rather than the public interest he or she is supposed to represent (2003:52). It is a fact that corruption is a dangerous phenomenon whereby consequences are particularly harmful to the economic, social and political life in every community.

It is the objective of this work to argue that the economy should serve the needs of the people. This is what God meant when He gave human beings stewardship over creation and all the resources therein (Gen 1:28; 2:15). The researcher believes that this is contradicted by the policies and practices in the process of economic globalization. For the author, the impact of economic globalization of the African people should be critically analysed and monitored, and that alternatives that benefit the people and secure their livelihood particularly the poorest of the poor be provided. Privatization of water services has a detrimental impact on the public health of the poor. The details of these impacts will be discussed in chapter two of this dissertation.

Water is God's gift for life (Rev. 22:1) and that every human being has the right to it. According to Bruns and Meinzen "a single user rarely has full ownership rights to control, use, and dispose of the resource purely as she or he sees fit. Rather, it is useful to think of a bundle of rights to use water, with different users and stakeholders having the right to use water for a certain purpose, or subject to various types of conditionalities" (2000:28).



The biblical book of Revelation shares an interesting thought worth to be quoting. “To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.” (21:6). Nicola King further emphasizes the fact that water is essential to the existence of human life, as well as to the functioning of ecosystems and the perpetuation of biodiversity (2002:2). To deny anybody of water therefore violates the dignity and image of God. As such it becomes a challenge to pastoral care.

In the Bible, water has been used metaphorically. An example is found in the book of Amos’ where he uses the rolling waters and streams to symbolize justice: “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). On the core of this metaphor we see the refreshing, beautifying, life giving quality of water. Water plays an important role in our religious, cultural practices and livelihoods.

A May 2001 report by Kate Bayliss, a researcher at the University of Greenwich, Britain, titled Water Privatization in Africa: Lesson from the Case Studies, concluded that high prices and disconnections means that the poorest segments of society are likely to be the main losers from the privatization process. It forces the use of unsafe water sources, the consequence of which is disastrous for public health.

This research study is therefore aimed at raising awareness to the church leadership and other stakeholders that privatization of water services has a terrible record whereby:



- Multinational corporations' interest in water and sanitation services is defined poorly by their shareholders' interest, their return on capital and risks involved.
- With less experience with privatization of water system in developing countries, the corporations sometimes experience financial problems leading them to question their financial interest in continuing.
- There remains a constant danger that extending privatization will extend the opportunities for corruption and bribery.
- Customer rates are doubled or tripled;
- Corporate profits are rising;
- Water quality standards dropping dramatically, causing water hazard and contamination, which is fatal to life.
- Overuse promoted to raise money;
- And customers who can't pay cut off from supply, leaving the poor without service at all (Agape 2005:42).

This research is a call to the church to seriously engage with the Accra confession of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, "covenanting for justice in the Economy and the Earth. The church is here expected to challenge governments, to pursue God's justice and to seek God's abundant life for all people. Governments should be made aware that water is the most important of all public services. It is a common property for all, rich and poor alike, but it should not be misused by any. It should be recognized as a common global heritage of humanity, a source of life and a fundamental resource for sustainable development of the ecosystem, earth (Petrella 2001:8).



In South Africa, the Bushbuckridge area in particular, the research is intended at raising awareness to the African National Congress (ANC) led Government that the true long-term cost of giving the corporations protection from currency risks, political risks and demand risks be examined. There is a need for a public process of comparing any private proposal with public alternatives, as part of an open public debate.

Water provision to all households in both rural and urban areas has been one of the main developmental strategies of this democratic government since 1994 as noted by Gleick: “The new government set as a top priority efforts to address unmet needs for water. This government soon realized that meeting those needs would require a fundamental reallocation of water rights and water access. This priority is reflected in the new South African Constitution and the preparation of a new National Water Policy.” (1998: 159). In this new Constitution, section 27 guarantees all South Africans “the right to have access to sufficient food and water (Constitution of South Africa, Bill of Rights, Section 27 (1) (b)).

To date, water provision continues to be a key item on this government’s agenda. Water is seen as both a basic human need as well as a way to root out extreme poverty. Increasing water provision often reduces the burden of diseases, increases community health, improves environmental conditions and creates opportunities for more effective local economic development. Together these factors contribute to a more dignified and



sustainable quality of life for all South Africans and the rest of the world.

Privatization of water system to these multinational companies however, goes against the government's policy and strategy of alleviation and eradication of extreme poverty and that of the improvement of the quality of life for all. The pastoral care giver must therefore hold these multinationals responsible. The details of this will be discussed in Chapter Two where the whole question of water privatization will be discussed at length.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In a world of plenty, where commitments to eradicate poverty by also ensuring access to safe drinking water have been made at the highest political echelons, negligible progress has been due to lack of political will. Water is essential and necessary for life but statistics indicate that many people do not have access to the water they need and require.

Water is therefore a development issue recognized by many development organisations, as well as the United Nations. It is also an issue of emergency in many contexts of war, for Internally Displaced Peoples, and for refugees. It is an issue to which governments have committed themselves to work with. In September 2000, leaders from 189 member states of the United Nations signed the Millennium Declaration, pledging to eradicate extreme poverty and to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. This declaration was signed at the UN Millennium General Assembly in New York.



These goals are about lives of women, men, and children in the community and all over the world. The eight goals identify issues that religious leaders and faith communities have been actively addressing for decades, issues which speak to the heart of all faith traditions: the value of each individual human life.

The eight (8) goals have been broken down into measurable targets:

No.	GOAL	TARGET
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.
2	Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
3	Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4	Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
5	Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7	Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. By 2020 achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
8	Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop open trading and financial systems that include a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction nationally and internationally. Address the least developed countries' special needs and the special of landlocked and small island developing states. Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems. Develop decent and



		<p>productive work for youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.▪ In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.
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Source: adapted from the campaign toolkit available at www.millenniumcampaign.org

These goals are intended to provide a focus for the efforts of financial institutions such as the World Bank, for governments, and for other partners in the development community. The intention is to meet all MDGs, i.e. to reduce poverty by 2015. Water is included in the MDGs, because lack of it is linked to poverty, and that clean water is critical in containing the spread of infectious and parasitic diseases. Target ten (10) of the MDGs is to halve, by 2010, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

It is the improvement of water and sanitation that can speed the achievement of all eight (8) MDGs, helping to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empowerment of women; reduce mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.

It is reported that each year more than three (3) million children die from preventable water related diseases (World Bank 2002b). A number of studies have found that access to safe water is associated with better child health (Merrick 1985:1-24). The poor



are therefore at a disadvantage as they are not in a position to access clean water.

This includes material health, and environmental sustainability. Government have pledged to reduce the number of children who die before their fifth birthday, as well as to halve the number of people who have no access to safe water (by two-thirds), the target year being 2015. But efforts towards reaching the MDGs on water have not been adequate.

Privatization of water system has a negative impact with regard to child mortality under the age of five (5). According to WHO and UNICEF, Infants and young children are the innocent victims of the worldwide failure to make safe drinking water and basic sanitation services available to impoverished people. Their families' poverty, lack of basic services and the result in filthy living environment means that children under 5 years of age in particular are exposed to a multitude of health threats, without the physical or economic means to combat them. Malnutrition – particularly protein-energy malnutrition – stunts growth, impairs cognitive development and, crucially, lowers the children's resistance to a wide range of infections, including water-related diarrhoeal diseases and malaria.

In developing countries, over 90% of all diarrhoeal deaths occur in children under 5 years of age. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, some 769 000 children under 5 years of age died from diarrhoeal diseases between 2000 and 2003. This is more than 2000 children's lives lost every day, in a region where just 36% of the population has access to hygienic means of sanitation. Similarly



South Asia has low sanitation coverage. Child mortality is very high in this country. Some 683 000 children under 5 years of age die each year from diarrhoeal diseases.

This can be compared to developed regions, where most mothers and babies benefit from safe drinking water in quantities that make hygiene behaviour easy, have access to safe, private sanitation, adequate nutrition, and many other prerequisites to health. Of the 57 million children under 5 years, about 700 succumbed annually to diarrhoeal disease (according to statistics for 2000-2003). This means that the sub-Saharan baby has almost 520 times the chance of dying from diarrhoea compared with a baby born in Europe or the United States of America. (2005:12).

Sufficient safe water for drinking and washing is a fundamental human right. Without water, it is obvious that no other human rights, such as the rights to life and to health could exist. Paradoxically, the right to water is so obvious that it was never made explicit in the human rights law. As a result governments have rarely been pressed to fulfill it. Presently, the situation is changing through the MDGs and also through a ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights. The right to water has now been incorporated into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Such ratification is no symbolic move, but could be a platform for advocacy and change.

By ratifying these treaties and instruments, states have voluntarily accepted the obligations to progressively realize their right to food, health, adequate housing and a range of other rights and services,



including water and sanitation, which are essential for the wellbeing of their citizens.

Even though water is a human right issue, many governments so far have not fulfilled their obligations to provide it. No matter what development agencies do to meet the needs of water, the cooperation of governments is necessary. The obligation to respect these rights requires governments to avoid measures that prevent access to these basic essential services. It is the government's obligation to ensure free access to basic services such as food and water. States should therefore be encouraged to take active steps in strengthening people's access to, and use of, resources to ensure their livelihood.

It is increasingly being recognized that water and sanitation management requires effective government both at national and local levels. Issues of good and accountable governance in water are key for sustainable water services in economic, social and ecological dimensions. In her address at the Sixth Nelson Mandela Lecture in Kliptown, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia refers to lack of good governance that: "Some of our African countries are not poor but poorly managed" (2008-07-12). The above are traditionally perceived as part of the human rights agenda, and therefore are particularly pertinent to the water sector. These include the necessity for transparency, the elimination of corruption, and a strengthening of democratic participation at all levels of national and municipal governments.



Participation of women and children is very important in water management. In most societies, women have a primary responsibility for management of household water supply, sanitation and health. Water is necessary not only for drinking, but also for food production and preparation, care of domestic animals, personal hygiene, care of the sick, cleaning, washing and waste disposal.

Because of their dependence on water resources, women have accumulated considerable knowledge about this aspect, including location, quality and storage methods. Efforts geared towards, improving the management of the world's finite water resources, and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, however, often overlook the central role of women in water management. The importance of involving both women and men in the management of water and sanitation in many cases, showing that water projects work better when women are involved has a greater impact on mobilizing finance for gender-biased projects than showing that access to water has an impact on gender equality.

A study by the International Water and Sanitation Centre of community water and sanitation projects in 88 communities in 15 countries found that projects designed and run with the full participation of women are more sustainable and effective than those that do not (van Wijk-sijbesma, et al: 1998).

Water is therefore, both a development and a human rights issue. It is a global political issue requiring the commitment of



governments and international donors. A rights-based approach to development speaks to the realities concerning water. It is an approach already adopted by some agencies and donors in addressing poverty. It is an approach that links and bridges, the realities of overlaps (and gaps) between the development field and the human rights field. Some are hopeful about this approach, and are beginning to also implement it for water issues.

Others, already critical of development are suspicious at varying levels. They are worried whether a rights-based approach would become yet conditionality for aid, whether it is just something that looks good on paper, but of not much help in practice. These are valid critiques, but the researcher finds that the rights-based approach can, in fact, be used to answer the critiques of development, especially with regard to water.

As already indicated, it is over five years since 189 leaders agreed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These are a set of time-bound and achievable goals, aimed at halving the world's poverty and creating a better world for everyone. Efforts towards reaching these MDGs on water have not been adequate. Billions continue to wallow in extreme poverty, unable to meet their basic needs.

The church must play a strong role in reminding our leaders that promises and commitments made in New York in the year 2000, and that advocated by the United Nations (UN) Johannesburg summit 2002 together with the World Council of Churches (WCC) on fresh water that the following on water be made a priority:



- 1997 : access to clean water a human right
- 1998 : stop commercialization of fresh water, and
- 1999 : to create an International Treaty on fresh water.

This is what the African National Congress should mean or include when talking of creating conditions for a better life for all.

1.4 SCARCITY OF WATER RESOURCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

In per capita terms South Africa is an upper-middle-income country. Despite this relative wealth, most South African households experience the outright poverty. They continue to be vulnerable to extreme poverty everyday. The distribution of income and wealth is among the most unequal in the world. Many households have unsatisfactory access to education, healthcare, energy and clean water. The question to ask is why the lack of these basic necessities in a country with enough mineral resources including rivers, dams and reservoirs.

Poverty, which is understood as not having enough to satisfy a basic need, has many different facets described in the following way: lack of food, lack of energy supplies, distribution of land, lack of income, ill health, insecurity and uncertainty, inadequate housing, commuter transport and lack of water (Nash 1984:57-62). In this dissertation, the researcher is more concerned about the lack of water resource. The details of all the facets will be discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

Today billions of people around the globe lack access to the most fundamental foundation of a decent civilized world, namely basic



sanitation services and clean drinking water. According to United Nations (UN) officials, the shortage of water in many countries arises from poor management in the preservation of water, pollution, inefficient use of underground water and lack of awareness by their people.

According to the 1999 World Bank strategy report, the bank played an important role in charting South Africa's privatization strategy. It has provided technical assistance and policy advice in virtually all sectors of the economy and promoted the increased participation of the private sector in the development of infrastructure.

The World Bank was doing this in the name of helping reduce apartheid legacy of poverty and inequality. Unfortunately, this did not turn out that way. It ended up with the introduction of several policy changes such as the cost recovery strategy, which introduced credible threat of cutting service to non-paying consumers.

With regard to privatization of water resource, Figueres argues that: "Two common concerns that can be challenged are that the market approach will result in the poor being cut off from water supplies and that their health will suffer (2003:48). This is a fact that does not need challenging. What a serious disadvantage to the poor.

As a result of the above, water situation is now dangerously critical:



1. Every eight seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease.
2. Fifty percent of the people in developing countries suffer from one or more waterborne diseases. This is because the poor do not afford to pay for fresh water hence they resort to use even contaminated water from the streams.
3. Eighty per cent of diseases in the developing world are caused by contaminated water.
4. Fifty per cent of people on earth lack adequate sanitation.
5. Twenty per cent of freshwater fish species have been pushed to the edge of extinction by contaminated water as Figueres and his co-writers say: “With increasing pollution and large livestock operations coming closer to urban areas, outbreaks of contamination from bacteria, viruses or parasites, such as cryptosporidium in Milwaukee that resulted in the death of over 100 people and the sickness of over 400 000 are becoming increasingly common in public water supplies” (2003:49).
6. For the poor to have safe drinking water they are compelled to buy high-priced water, not only in bottles but also from the tap. The bottled water industry will continue its remarkable advance as diversification opens up huge new markets. This impoverishes the poor even more.

The researcher views this as a sin that deeply violates God’s goodwill, God’s steadfast love for life, for human beings, the whole of creation and ecosystem earth. Pieterse reminds his readers that when people are impoverished they usually resort to crime for



their livelihood (2001:39). Poverty is therefore, a contributory factor to escalating criminal activities in South Africa.

The author challenges the church that the integrity of her faith is at stake if she remains silent or refuses to act in the face of the current system of privatization of water and neoliberal economic globalization, which subordinates and reduces everything to economic profit.

In South Africa this kind of poverty i.e., lack of water affects people in different ways and to different degrees. In some informal settlement such as Crossroads in Cape Town, people walk 200 metres to fetch water from a communal tap. In rural areas people may walk for 5km to a borehole and still get no ground water since water table sometimes fall. This results in women and children queuing for long hours even at night in order to get water. Some end up drawing water from rivers where cattle, donkeys, goats and other animals drink, resulting in the outbreak of malaria and related waterborne diseases. (Nash 1984:58)

The vast majority of people in this area live in rural areas, and many poor people make their living in urban slums all across this region. Some predictions say that two out of three people in the world will face a water shortage by 2025. Yet the potential of water investments as a tool for reducing poverty and building sustainable livelihoods has not been fully realized.

A lot of water in the area of research, is left to flow freely from rivers to the sea. For example, Rivers such as Olifants and Klein



Letaba near Phalaborwa, Sabie and Sand Rivers in Hazyview, Crocodile and Komati Rivers in Nelspruit and Komatipoort respectively, Blyde River, Great Letaba and other tributaries flowing from the Drakensberg mountains to mention but a few. Water from these rivers should be harvested, harnessed and stored in dams for future use by people, animals and the environment.

The government however, is faced with the reality that sooner or later there will be no water for human consumption, industrial operations as well as agricultural usage. In order to better utilize the water resources, several calls have been made to take water control and regulation away from the government to private companies.

The Mpumalanga Province has been one of the first such areas where water was privatized in Nelspruit areas (about 300km east of Johannesburg, RSA) some few years back (www.psir.org).

In most of the rural areas, water has been freely available for local consumption as well as for irrigation in small farming sector. In fact people have been drawing water from the rivers without having to pay for it. Now, due to persistent drought, the government has been forced to build more water storages and to lay pipes to the local communities. In the process, water metres are being installed in the households to ensure that those who use water pay for it.



In rural areas malnutrition and death of children from starvation hunger, kwashiorkor, pellagra, gastroenteritis and measles is rife. This, as Maluleke explains can only be solved by encouraging people to establish vegetable gardens and produce crops such as spinach, beans and tomatoes (1993:28). Adequate water supplies is therefore a fundamental need to the people and to the poor in particular, but at places where water is paid for (privatized), starting such projects is rather impossible.

Currently there is a rush to privatize water around the world including South Africa. One of the underlying conditions for World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans is privatization of public services by countries taking the loan with the belief that it would stimulate sustained economic growth. For instance, the countries taking the loans must cut down on public spending on social services like health and education. They must also subcontract public functions such as transportation and sell public owned companies and natural resources such as water to private firms, replacing public monopolies with private monopolies.

The ones who suffer from the consequences of this injustice are the rural, urban poor and workers or ordinary civil servants who cannot make ends meet. The biblical tradition of the prophets and Sabbath / Jubilee however, puts the priority for the well-being of the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. Trade rules and the institutions responsible for their implementation are just if they serve, first of all, oppressed and marginalized people. This is the biblical call for justice (Amos 5:11-15).



The policy is upheld as the answer to sustained economic growth because it is believed to lead to efficiency, which in turn, facilitates greater investment and increased exports. However, rather than reducing poverty this dogmatic approach to privatization has further worsened the situation of low-income population particularly, in the case of Africa, which form the majority of the population. This is because private investors aim at maximizing profits. Hence they do not target poor and rural communities who cannot pay the cost of such services.

One can hereby conclude that privatization of water system is mainly the talk of the benefits to be gained in pretence of it being efficient, profitable, transparent, flexible, adaptable and innovative. Privatization of this resource therefore, “places water (the source of life), in danger of gradually becoming one of the principal sources of profit, one of the last areas to be conquered for the private accumulation of capital” (Petrella 2001: 13-14).

The result is the high rate of illiteracy, incidences of diseases, scarcity of essential goods like safe drinking water and abject poverty among these communities. For example, up to 300 million people in Africa do not have access to safe water and sanitation. As a result three to five million people mostly children die from water-related illnesses every year. This study is concerned with this big issue of privatization of water system particularly among the poor with special reference to the rural villages and refugee camps in the Bushbuckridge area.



Having worked in the rural areas of Bushbuckridge where more than 70% of the inhabitants are unemployed, one has experienced the traumatic experience of extreme poverty under which they live. These people usually land in what Pieterse calls “a poverty traps, i.e., lack of complementary assets and services given to them by God resulting in ‘poverty of opportunity’ whereby individuals are unable to take full advantage of the few assets to which they have access, from which it is all but impossible to escape (2001:44).

In the Bushbuckridge area, which is the area of this research, there are refugee communities from Mozambique. Those who fled for their lives seeking refuge in South Africa and other neighbouring countries during the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) and Mozambique Resistance Army (Renamo) civil war in the early 1980s.

In South Africa these refugees are settled in refugee camps adjacent to the local villages. Other than depending on handouts, refugees and most of the Bushbuckridge communities depend on agriculture as their source of survival. They grow maize, fruits, vegetables etc. In fact one would say agriculture is their main source of living.

Privatization of water system therefore is detrimental to their well being which solely depends on the availability of water. For example, to water their gardens as water has become so expensive and that without it, they become more impoverished and thus turn into criminals, even selling their bodies as prostitutes in order to survive.



As indicated before, most people in the Bushbuckridge area are not working. The rate of unemployment is very high. In most villages when one speaks of an employee, one is referring to a police officer, teacher or a nurse working in a police station, a school and clinic respectively. These are the common institutions available even in remote areas. There are no extra employment opportunities whatsoever.

People live on subsistence farming within a restricted area, which is their landing ground for poverty alleviation. Those who are lucky get employed at the local farms, wood plantations as well as banana farms in Kiepersol in the Hazyview area (Mobie 2005:85).

The reader can now understand that the absence of water makes these poor people vulnerable to poor health, hence the high prevalence of Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV & AIDS), a subject other researchers can pursue. Lack of water results in other opportunistic diseases that reduce the quality of life and productive capacity, and burdens health care and social welfare services.

When parents become sick or die, children are more likely to be malnourished, fall ill, withdraw from school or become abused and exploited. Worse still, they could lose their homes and inheritance; suffer from psycho-social distress, fear, isolation, and economic hardships as they assume responsibility for their younger siblings.

Maluleke succinctly explain this process by saying: “water is the source of life for all living creatures” (1993:55). Provision of



dependable water supplies has a strong positive effect on food security and income generation for rural people. Substantial livelihood gains are likely to be made by releasing labour time spent on obtaining water, and providing water for small farming and other enterprises.

The researcher does not advocate the non-payment of essential services by those who use it. For the researcher, governments should own water so as to ensure its accessibility, affordability and quality to all citizens. Throughout the world privatization of water system has a track record of skyrocketing prices, water quality problems, deteriorating services and a loss of local control.

It also has a record of vulnerability to corruption, operating according to a profit driven corporate agenda which is incompatible with essential service delivery, and fail to provide people with safe and affordable water as cited by Figueres and co-writers when they give an example of: "the tragic case of the small Ontario, Canada, town of Walkerton, where in 2000, after drinking municipal water contaminated with E-coli bacteria, seven people died, illustrates the danger of quickly linking public health concerns with privatization" (2003:49). In South Africa case study A in chapter two of this dissertation illustrates this point succinctly.

The researcher does not dispute the findings by Turton that "there is a high level of support for metered water connections, and that there is also a high rate of payment being shown by people who are billed" (2002:61). His conclusion is that this willingness suggests "that people want to be in control of their own lives and



consequently support policies that empower them with knowledge" (2002:61).

This is true depending on where the research was done. If the research was conducted among people living in places like Sandton, Houghton in Johannesburg this finding will be fitting for such communities. The opposite of this finding will be true for the rural communities of Tlhavekisa and Hluvukani in Bushbuckridge, given the high unemployment rate in such communities. Turton seems to ignore that South Africa has two economies, one for the rich and the other for the poor. He writes from one side of South Africa's reality.

It is correct as Turton says. People will always be willing to pay for water consumption, but they have limited ability to do so with little or no income to pay market rates for water. It is the researcher's view that willingness and ability to pay on the side of the poor are two different things. People will always express a willingness to pay for water consumption, but their ability might be extremely limited by their income streams.

The researcher is also concerned that the market rate at which tariffs are eventually set may prove beyond the means of many people, driving them back to other, more dangerous source of water, such as wells, dams, springs etc. where such water might be contaminated.

Today, there are water metres erected in some communities in rural areas such as Bushbuckridge. Households will now be



expected to pay for water, yet they are unemployed. Water is now being privatized and this will make the lives of these poor communities more difficult while basic necessities like water are supposed to be the right of every citizen and the responsibility of the government.

1.5 AIM OF STUDY

Water is a basic human need. The human right to water is recognized as a precondition for other human rights – such as the right to life, appropriate nutrition and sufficient medical care (UN Doc. E/C.12/2002/11).

Yet, when that which has traditionally been owned by communities is transferred to private ownership it makes impossible the protection of a ‘right’ as it makes water a ‘commodity’ that is ‘tradable’ for a price and at a profit. ‘Privatization’ in the context of ownership of water replaces community and people’s ownership of water sources with private ownership. Such an approach is a serious roadblock to achieving the Millennium Development Goal on water that seeks to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015.

There is little by way of clarity and coherence, regarding water sources, supply and service, and its use, in the current approaches to resolve the world water crisis. International financial institutions have aggressively promoted an approach that naturalizes the ‘provision of water services’ as a way of thinking of water use.



The objective of this research is to come up with a theological rationale that would justify the reversal of privatization of water system. The researcher aligns himself with Hassan who highlights that water is a public good which cannot be privately owned (1997: 407). It has been experienced as a wonderful gift of God to all His creation. This is clearly shown in the creation story in Chapter One of the book of Genesis. We therefore, need to create conditions for socio-political action in our societies in order to promote, consolidate and guarantee constant access to life for every human individual and community.

The problem of water privatization is multifaceted that no single field of inquiry can come up with the entire solution. Gleick puts it very well that “no single water publication can adequately address all of the issues of interest to water experts, students, and the general (1998:3).

The researcher therefore, intends to make one of the many contributions needed for the solution to the problem. It is the researcher’s view that the problem also has pastoral as well as theological dimensions hence this research. It is the researcher’s view that: The church cannot remain in comfortable silence mode when billions of God’s people are caught in the web of abject poverty and death as a result of the scarcity of safe drinking water because of its privatization. Churches need to reflect on how God acts in order to protect and promote justice in creation and in human society.



The Church, other bodies and other religious bodies, for example, are major centers of spiritual development for both individuals and communities. The ministry of comforting and speaking on behalf of the poor is an important part of its ministry. It should challenge actors that oppress the poor. Maluleke puts it well that “The Christian church would not be true to its mission if it neglected matters that affect the community (1999:3).

The Church and its leadership must be aware of the negative impact of privatization of water system so that appropriate action is taken as the church is called to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalized. Much attention of the details of the mission of the church in situations such as this will be developed in Chapter Four where the author intends discussing the whole question of the church’s pastoral response to the poor, the needy and the marginalized.

The Church is called to play an important role in creation by searching for life, for water for everybody including the poor, and for the life of all creation. The Church should take the issue of privatization of water system very seriously, and urgently. She needs to ask how the society views and values water especially when poor people are denied the right to water. In short, to charge as well as deny water to them is against the dignity and integrity of humans who are created in the image of God.

1.6 GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The welfare and prosperity of the citizens depend so much on the government and local authorities. While the importance of



privatization of water system may be of National or Provincial interest, the local leadership is part of the community and therefore is responsible for ensuring that their subjects are cared for, and that the interests of the consumer are protected.

It is the researcher's view that with regard to water resource, governments and their agents should know that water is a public commodity that it has to be managed for the benefit of the public, not only for the present generation, but also for the generations to come. According to Romans 13:6 authorities were put in place by God, and their duty is to serve the interest of their citizens. Now, shifting the issue of water distribution to privately owned companies is to run away from their divine calling and part of their responsibility.

Once a commodity such as water is privately owned it becomes personal and therefore, one is not bound to share it with others. But, if we understand it to be God's gift to the rest of humanity we will use it as a stewardship responsibility given to us by God the creator of all. As a result of the above, it becomes a duty to share it with all of creation.

The aim of this research therefore, is to critique the government so as to bring to the attention of the authorities that water is a basic human right and that it should be made accessible to those who are deprived of it. It is a basic commodity that cannot be privately owned by certain companies while denying majority of people to have access to this gift from God. It is therefore the responsibility of governments to take care of their own citizens as Gleick



correctly puts it: “When governments provide the water, costs are less” (1998:46).

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The researcher aims at bringing into light the negative consequences of privatization of water system so that people do not lose access to this commodity and that they be included in the decisions that shape their lives (Swanepoel 1989:9).

In recent development thinking community participation has become a very important factor in development. It is for this reason that community participation was adopted as one of the key strategies of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-90). The United Nations agencies concerned with the Decade jointly declared that: “Maximum participation by those who will benefit from the new systems is central to the approach. This issue not only affects the poor, but rich communities as well, in fact it affects all of creation.

Governments should be reminded of their responsibility (on their own citizens) to have the will and means to make it easy for people to have access to basic sanitation services and fresh clean drinking water, as this is the most fundamental basic right of every human being. This, then, involves a system of governance / regulation of the ownership, appropriation, distribution, management, protection, utilization and conservation of the principal source of life for every living form in the earth's ecosystem that is water (Petrella 2001:7).



The author accepts Watt's argument that "the market mechanism does not deliver public goods efficiently and equitably. Basic services that have high public-goods contents require public action to protect access for the poor. There is both a moral responsibility on the part of the state to protect the basic rights of its citizens and long-term economic interests in a healthy and educated population" (Watt 2001:8).

It is the author's view that the government should guarantee access to life for every human being and living organism. This should be done by establishing at local and global level, and on a basis of solidarity, sustainable system of ownership of water resource. This should include the distribution management use and conservation of this basic vital resource. In doing this, the government should:

- Enshrine the right to access to water in domestic legislation.
- Ensure that everyone has access to safe and secure drinking water and sanitation facilities equities and without discrimination. This requires that government take action to avoid inequitable price increases or the adoption of full cost recovery as a strategy within water investment.
- Consult with all stakeholders (including women, young people and people with disabilities) before considering placing water as part of their General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) commitments.
- Ensure independent monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards.



- Allow greater debate over the issue of water privatization. This involves greater transparency and wider representation in dealing with IFLs and water corporations.
- Urge high-income nations to ensure that more aid is directed towards increased development assistance for water not linked to privatization.

1.7 MEMBERS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Members of local communities are to be involved in all aspects of water / sanitation from planning, construction and financing, to training, operation and maintenance. Like Gleick, the author shares the same view that “water planning and decision making will be democratic, ensuring representation of all affected parties and fostering direct participation of affected interests” (1998:18).

This should be done through advocacy and lobbying. The aim is to raise awareness to Community Based Organizations, Non-Governmental Organisations and the civil society that they have enough information regarding privatization of water system and its impact to the poor and the marginalized.

These stakeholders need to be made aware that the shift from the nationally-owned water into the hands of a few companies have seen diminishing public accountability and has led to some disastrous health consequences and water sourcing options for the poor, indigenous people, farmers and families. These NGOs should therefore be lobbied to campaign for the right of water and against exploitation of this resource by the MNCs.



The research is aimed at raising awareness to these stakeholders. They need to be reminded that it is the role of citizens to take action by advocating against privatization of water system. It is the role of the citizens themselves, to put pressure on their leaders to fulfill their own obligations and responsibilities in order to end extreme poverty and its effects.

We have to find a way to protect water and to ensure that everybody can have access to it in an equitable way, not forgetting all the other creatures on earth. Using only the necessary amount of water at home and teaching our children is the first step towards being water wise and conscious. But we must go further than this. We have to protest against factories that pollute water and the wrong use of water and ask for protective legislation, which will help to keep this God's gift for life safe.

1.8 COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS

The author takes into cognisance however, that the people have a responsibility to ensure the correct management and use of this resource; for example, communities and individuals need to be taught about recycling water as a major of saving it. To be educated so as to recognize their responsibilities of environmental stewardship.

Communities and individuals are urged to:

- Be involved in the decision-making process surrounding the protection and regulation supply and management of water.
- Participate in easing the global water crisis by changing certain household practices. The author is here referring to



among other things, finding and stopping wasteful leaks, recycling wastewater and installing water efficient devices such as shower heads and dual flush toilets. The author is here reminded of a message that was always left on his hotel bed in California, USA that read “It is time for us to take part in helping the environment. In an effort to reduce waste water, electricity and the use of chemicals.”

- Lobby governments to take decisive action for rapid greenhouse gas emission reduction. This will avoid climate change that causes natural disasters that reflect the imbalance in the relationship between people and nature.

Following is a case study of the people of the village communities in Ave Prefecture in Togo, who know very well the usefulness and importance of environmental protection and mostly that of natural resources:

CASE STUDY 1

The two communities of Ando – kpomey and Nyamessiva have built a reel forest, which upkeep species threatened of disappearance. What is the most striking is that these communities have set up keeping rules, a supervising committee and exemplary self-discipline in observing these rules.

With regard to these rules, no one has the right to cut a tree at the green belt without any permission from the supervising committee. Even women are not allowed to collect fuel woods, except in the case of specific events such as funerals and traditional feasts. Men are also allowed to cut trees from



the green belt for specific purposes such as house building. The green belt also provides the population with medical plants (The train of URM no. 003-2004)

It is the church's responsibility to teach its members and the entire human race to protect the environment, economic justice, and educate them to reduce waste.

They need to be made aware of their responsibility to defend water i.e., by keeping it clean and away from markets which are thirsty for money, as expressed in the privatization of water system or free trade agreements.

1.9 RESEARCH GAP

Several researchers have written on the widespread and growing opinion that the world faces an imminent and evermore serious crisis on the scarcity of water supply (Figueres, et al 2003:1). Other researchers and institutions have done some work on Water Management where private participation on water management is introduced so as to regulate the use of this natural resource. The list of literature on water in the bibliography supports the availability of literature with regards to this natural resource.

The researcher is also aware of the scarcity of water and the need to regulate its use. Privatization of this resource as a way of regulating its use is however, what the researcher is mainly opposed to, because firstly, it violates human rights and God's gift to humanity. Secondly, it makes certain few rich people richer and the majority poorer and as a result conflict between nations/countries becomes part of the problem.



As indicated, various scholars have written on the scarcity of water and the need for the regulation of its use, e.g. Postel has this to say: “Appropriate pricing, the creation of markets for buying and selling water, and other economic inducements for wise water use hardly exist in most places. They have a central role to play in the transition to an era of scarcity” (1997:165). While the author does not dispute what Postel is saying regarding the pricing of water in the transition to an era of the scarcity of water supply, Postel however, does not suggest how the poor, those who have no means to pay for this resource will benefit.

Very little does Postel say, is said on the implication of the privatization of water system to the poorest of the poor as water is one of the most essentials of all natural resources which everybody should have access to, and without which there is no life.

The following case study from the researcher’s experience illustrates that where there is no water, life is destroyed.

CASE STUDY 2

“On Monday 05 March 2007, I together with my fellow colleague students whom I hosted as we attended the Research Methodology workshop, came home only to find that the municipality had just cut our electricity supply.

What a traumatic experience it was for me to come home with visitors only to find the house in darkness where it becomes difficult to prepare supper, tea even bath water.



In the midst of my disappointment as a host, one of my visiting colleagues reminded me that what I saw to be a disaster could be simply managed. He suggested that we buy candles for the lights and firewood that we make fire and cook our supper. This was done and we had lights and supper for the night.

In the following morning I remembered my frustration of the previous night, and I concluded that one can live without electricity. I then imagined what could have happened if we had come and found water cut. Surely we could not have sorted the food issue, tea, bath, toilet etc. This brings one to the conclusion that where there is no water there is no life.

One American proponent of water privatization in his article says: “Our government hires contractors to maintain the airplanes that transport the president, to run the space shuttle, to guard our nuclear power plants, and to build, maintain, and often operate submarines, fighter jets and other high tech weapons systems. Government remains responsible for establishing and enforcing quality and reliability standards, and with a good contract, contractors have every incentive to ensure the same” (<http://www.rppi.org/waterprivatization.shtml>).

For a person in the United States of America (USA) who has never experienced a situation of poverty where because of the World Bank’s total recovery doctrine, could not afford to pay for these services were cut off from water supply. This water cutoffs then forces thousands of people to go back to their original sources of water, polluted streams, dams, rivers and lakes resulting in the



worst outbreak of cholera and other water related diseases. This is what the author means when he says life is destroyed.

Petrella succinctly puts it in perspective that: "one can live without the internet, without oil, even without an investment fund or a bank account. But a banal point, though one regularly forgotten, it is not possible to live without water" (2001:7). It is therefore a fact that if you run short of electricity, there are other sources of energy that one can use, but if you run short of water, there is nothing that one can do.

Water is a source of life; a gift of nature and it belongs to all living beings including the ecosystem earth. It is not a private property, but a common resource for the sustenance of all. As things stand however, safe drinking water in particular is inaccessible to a large growing number of people particularly the poor. This is the gap the researcher identifies and hopes to make a contribution in working towards its closure. The poor must also have the right to life.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology is based on two epistemologically acceptable data collection techniques. These are:

- Personal interviews that was used where qualitative data was required. This is the method employed when interviewing key role-players such as community representatives. These interviews endeavoured to get as close as objectively human possible to the emotions and the



real stories of those affected, by privatization of water system particularly the poor.

- Surveys were used where a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data was needed. This is the primary method employed when determining trends in perspectives on water and Water Demand Management (WDM) strategies at the community level.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Central to this was the need to develop a research instrument that enabled comparable data to be captured from different research subjects. It was therefore necessary to develop a questionnaire that would guide and leave minimal gaps in the data collection process. Stakeholders such as emerging farmers, local authorities, farm workers as well as members of the civil society were interviewed using these structured questionnaires (see Appendices A1 to A4 of the interview questionnaires attached, i.e. pages 299-305). The surveys were conducted as follows:

- Surveys on emerging farmer and farm workers: Rural Areas of Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga, Rural Areas of Dennilton in Limpopo Province; Rural Areas of Malamulele in Limpopo Province.
- Surveys on local authorities: Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga
- Surveys on civil society: Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga
- In the urban area of Johannesburg including Soweto: Gauteng Province.



Here, the author wanted to compare how the urban areas suffer from the lack of water resource as compared to the poor in rural areas.

To adequately investigate facts on the impact of privatization of water system to the poor, various methods of data collection that relied on both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Primary sources of data collection included visits to banana plantations in Kiepersol in Hazyview and the ZZ2 Tomato farms in Mooketsi near Modjadjiskloof in the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

Interviews with thirty (30) specific target subjects were done where four separate types of questionnaires generated with reference to the specific target respondents were used. Within each of these separate questionnaire individual questions are listed with reference to specific issue - clusters such as:

1. key questions related to accessibility of water resource
2. key questions related to pricing and
3. key questions related to affordability of this resource.

Following are the questionnaires and responses mentioned above beginning with the introduction, giving a background to the survey:

SURVEY ON THE IMPACT OF PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM TO THE POOR

BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY:

According to surveys, it is expected that by 2025, the world will be running out of water. This is due to growing water pollution, population growth, urbanization and inappropriate management



practice (Figueres 2003:1). Global warming and erratic weather patterns have also created serious droughts in most of the areas of the world. Europe, which is known to have plenty of rain, has experienced serious drought.

Farmers in this continent have, for many years, ploughed their lands without having to rely on irrigation schemes, as the rainfall has been sufficient to see the harvest through. The third world is hard hit by the drought. South Africa has experienced acute water shortage over a long period. Water is now being imported from Lesotho, as river catchments in South Africa have not been able to fill the rivers and dams.

Effective water policies and reforms at international, national, and local levels are essential ingredients for meeting water sector challenges. Two thirds of the world's poor live in the Third World countries such as Africa, Asia, Latin America and others and most face acute water problems. One in three people in the third world does not have safe drinking water, and one in two lacks adequate sanitation. The vast majority of people in this area live in rural areas, and many poor people make their living in urban slums all across this region from agriculture. Some predictions say that two out of three people in the world will face a water shortage by 2025 (Postel 1997:xv). Yet the potential of water investments as a tool for reducing poverty and building sustainable livelihoods has not been fully realized.

Governments are faced with the reality that sooner or later there will be no water for human consumption, industrial operations as



well as agricultural usage. In order to better utilize the water resources, calls have been made to take water control and regulation away from the government to private companies. The Mpumalanga Province, for an example, has been one of the first such areas where water was privatized in Nelspruit areas some few years back.

In most of the rural areas, water has been freely available for local consumption as well as for irrigation in small farming sector. In fact people have been drawing water from the rivers without having to pay for it. Now, due to persistent drought, the government has been forced to build more water reservoirs and to lay pipes to the local communities. In the process, water metres are being installed in the households to ensure that those who use water pay for it. The government has, in the mean time come up with the strategy to ensure that poor families are helped by providing free water of 6000 kilolitres per month, showing their responsibility in caring for their own citizens.



QUESTIONNAIRE A1

Questions to civil society

1. *How much water per month does an average home use?*
25liters per person per day: that is 4500L per month per person.
This depends on the number of people in the family.
2. *Is the 6000 litres adequate for domestic consumption?*
600L is not adequate hence people have to resort to other means to get water.
3. *If metres are installed, is the average home going to be able to afford water?*
The average household will not be able to pay for water, as most people are unemployed.
4. *Many families make a living by growing vegetables in their gardens and keeping of livestock such as chicken, goats and cattle. What effect does the payment of water have on these?*
People will not afford water to maintain these projects, which help in the alleviation and reduction of poverty. This is what happened to Tshikiwani's garden project in chapter one of this dissertation.



QUESTIONNAIRE A2

Questions to the local authorities:

1. *The introduction of privatization of water system in rural areas affects all the families irrespective of their income level. Those who provide water need to make profit in order to ensure that water purification and maintenance of pipes and the whole system is kept running. What measures are being made to ensure that poor families are not denied the basic commodity?*

In future people living in rural areas particularly the un employed should be exempted from paying for water resource.

2. *How is the local authorities affected by the process of water privatization in terms of ensuring service deliveries to the communities?*

Water services Authority will buy bulk of purified water from the private company which will be expensive. Reticulations project to supply water to communities according to the required standards, i.e. yard connections and RDF standards. The tariffs will be high in order to can afford the bulk water payments. Without funds, local government is struggling to make ends meet. The provincial government has to give more to the local government.

3. *Local authorities have been the government organs on the ground of providing for such services, will they get any percentage of the revenue?*



Through cost recovery, certain percentage of revenue is collected by local government and a certain percentage of this revenue should be ploughed back to them.

4. *If such revenue is realized, how much of it will be ploughed back to the poor families?*

80% of this revenue should be ploughed back to enable local government to render a better delivery to the poor.

5. *HIV/AIDS problem is affecting family structures and in many cases, elderly people who depend on the government's monthly grant, is there anything that is being thought of by the local authorities in this regard?*

The affected people should be supplied with food parcels they should be registered as indigents to can be given free basic water services. HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns should be done to educate people and the pandemic, and orphans should be provided with social grants.



QUESTIONNAIRE A3

Questions to the local Church leaders:

1. *As leaders of the communities, Church leaders stand a good chance to speak on behalf of the poor without being influenced by any political gains. Are the churches in the rural areas aware of the effects of privatization of water system, particularly to the poor households?*

No, most of them are not aware as most of the church leaders do not participate in community issues where issues such as privatization of water system and its impact to the poor should be discussed.

2. *What interventions can the Church embark on to ensure that this process will not kill the rural family structures?*

Church leaders can best serve in committees monitoring water supply so as to advocate for the poor against water privatization. This will help the poor to have access to water.

3. *Are churches thinking of alternative means of providing water to those who cannot afford to pay for metres?*

Some churches have projects on water such as provision of boreholes, reservoir and water tanks to be placed in strategic points for the poor to can obtain water.



QUESTIONNAIRE A4

Questions to the emerging farmers:

1. *Water stands to be the pillar of farming, be it agricultural, stock farming, chicken farming, etc. Privatization of water system will mean that farmers will have to pay heavily for this commodity. How do you think privatization of water system affect farming sector?*

Farmers will be hard heat, unless heavy subsidization will be done, as farming takes a bulk of water.

2. *Is there a way poor farmers can be assisted to get access to water without having to connect to the privatized one?*

Dams can be erected, furrows can be made from rivers to the field. Windmills can be erected to pump ground water for stock farming etc.

3. *If rivers get dry, are there other means that farmers can device to access water?*

The erection of windmills and boreholes to access groundwater is the only way out.

4. *In developed farming sectors, there are Farmers Unions that speak on behalf of the farmers; can such structures be of any help to the emerging farmers?*

Yes, Farmers' Unions are structures that represents and advocate for farmers. The government will better listen to one voice than listening to individual farmers.

Once collected, the data was analyzed by the researcher to get the correct interpretation on the impact of privatization of water system to those who use it. According to the survey conducted, it is clear that water is a renewable but finite resource without which there is



no life. This is seen in the analysis of the results of interviews here below.

2.3 ANALYSIS TO THE SURVEY

2.3.1 CIVIL SOCIETY:

The Civil Society agrees that the average amount of water used by the family is far more than what the South African government's 6000 litres per month offers. The installation of water metres will worsen the situation of poor people in the rural areas.

2.3.2 LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

The local authorities strongly feel that the introduction of privatization in the rural areas will affect poor families. They agree that the process of selling water should ultimately benefit the poor communities. This can be done by ploughing back the profits of the sale of water back into the rural areas by the provision of services to the poor communities.

2.3.3 LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS:

It is generally agreed that many Church leaders are not aware of the problems of the communities, as many are not involved in the community structures. But, there is a general agreement that Church leaders stand a good chance to advocate on behalf of the communities.

2.3.4 THE EMERGING FARMERS:

Emerging farmers will be hard hit by the privatization of water, as they are generally not subsidized. Their activities



will be seriously affected as many cannot afford to buy water. However, Farmers' Union stand a good chance to advocate on behalf of the farmers. The erection of windmills, reservoirs and canals/furrows from the natural rivers can help to address the plight of the farmers.

2.4 LANGUAGE USED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Given the linguistic variation in South Africa, questionnaires were developed in both English and Tsonga (p 299-309). Tsonga is the official language predominantly used in the former homeland of Gazankulu where the rural area of Bushbuckridge is situated, and where most of the research was conducted. The purpose here was the gathering of information on the subject. Sharing these experiences with the people concerned helped in planning towards the solution of the problem.

2.5 RESEARCH MODEL

The researcher chooses to employ Gerkin's pastoral and educative shepherding model in attempting to inspire the churches, NGOs and the wider ecumenical movement to address current global problems by responding resolutely to the intolerable level of poverty as a result of privatization of water system particularly in developing countries. In his book: An Introduction to Pastoral Care, Gerkin sees the model of a caring leader as that of a shepherd. He goes on to depict Jesus "as a good shepherd who leads the people in paths of righteousness, restores the soul of the people, and walks with the people among their enemies, and even into the valley of the shadow of death" (1997:27).



Like Gerkin, Campbell suggests that pastoral care is about shepherding. For him, it mediates a sense of integrity, wholeness and steadfastness to those in need. The imagery of a shepherd according to Campbell embraces all that is involved in providing care as illustrated in the biblical usage of the term (1986:37).

Anton Boisen, out of the heated crucible of severe mental disorder is said to have discovered for himself and the succeeding generations of ministers that the real laboratory for discovering the clearest revelation of the meaning of God in Christ is among the sick, the outcast, the distressed failures of life. These are the 'least ones', the living human documents of flesh and blood where God is most certainly making himself known (Oates 1952:20). Like these writers, the researcher sees ministry to these people as that of shepherding to which every Christian is called. The ministry that vitalizes and purifies our knowledge of God. In John's Gospel, the shepherding image of Jesus takes its place as a primary grounding image for ministry taking into account a more holistic understanding of the ministry, i.e. "care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of justice and moral integrity in the life of the people (1997:25).

In his book: The Church of my dreams, John Beaumont reminds us that " The Bible shepherd walked ahead of the flock, leading the way to green pastures, and into new territory. He walked as they walked, experiencing with them the heat of the sun and the ruggedness of the way" (1988:125).



In the person of Jesus, God has chosen to live among the poor. He became hungry and thirsty, lived among the sick, blind, lame, and homeless vagrant. Jesus who seeks work but is made redundant and discarded by the principalities and powers of this world. This is the Jesus who became poor for our sake, so that through his poverty we all may enjoy the fullness of life (Nash 1985:5).

The good news of this shepherd is that he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Hence, his followers must serve the poor who are in need. This includes his powerful and provocative intervention in the here-and-now of human misery. He did not only live among the hungry, but fed them, gave sight to the blind, healed the lame, and warned the rich against exploitative ways and the false worship of material security (Luke 12:12-34).

Arthur Adams dramatizes Jesus' experiential element to the needs of the people well when he says: "Watch Jesus at work. See how much he exposes himself to the experiences of others. This is in the very nature of incarnation. He goes where they are. He listens. He shares their joys and sorrows. He feels their pains and frustrations. He knows when they are hungry and tired. He senses their intentions. The disciples develop the habit of empathy from Him. Put them down anywhere and they soon know a lot about the men and women around them" (1978:17).

This is the model par excellence the researcher chooses as a grounding metaphor for the work of pastoral leaders (Gerkin



1997:28). The model where the good shepherd knows his sheep and is also known by it (John 10:14). This indicates that Jesus related to people at all levels giving us “the model sine qua non for pastoral relationship with those immediately within our care and those strangers we meet along the way” (1997:80). The good shepherd seeks “to understand the deepest longing, the secret sins and fears of the people so that the heading function of our understanding may communicate that we and the God we serve care deeply and intimately for them” (1997:82).

The shepherding model is the ministry to which the Church is called. Privatization of water system brings a challenge to the Church and those stakeholders responsible for the shepherding of God’s people. The Church is called to be involved in the day-to-day relationships with people especially the poor at all levels of social life. Poser sums it up by saying: “What our world badly and urgently need is a Church which dares to confront the powers of this world, be they political, economic or cultural, and in the name of the crucified, call for justice for the poor and oppressed (1987:44).

Like its Master the Church is called to show concern for both the individual and the community. It is the church’s Christian duty to respond in words and deeds to all situations of human suffering such as poverty, oppression, corruption, women, children abuses and water issues etc.

In other words, the Church should help the state assess itself and help respecting human rights of the poor. The assessment of this



must be contextual and measured on the actor's (state) effort to respect human rights. If the Church is involved in being a voice of the voiceless, the rights of the poor must be addressed, especially privatization of water system.

2.6 THE CHURCH, A SHEPHERD OF THE POOR

As a shepherd of the poor and the voiceless the church should participate in the public and international discussions on water. In this situation, the Church has to be prophetic and become an alternative community to the system. She is called to offer resistance and be prophetic in such as liquid modernity.

This is what Gerkin is referring to when he says: "Christians through their ministry to each other are to exemplify Jesus' ministry in his disciples" (Gerkin 1997:93). The author aligns himself with Wright in his definition of pastoral care when he says it is "a helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose trouble arise in the context of ultimate meaning and concern" (1982:23).

The role of the church as a shepherd of God's flock is best explained by Tokunboh Adegemo that: "Where people are bruised, the Church supplies the balm; Where people are battered, the Church restores with dignity; Where people are broken, the Church brings healing; Where people are buffeted by the scourge, the Church soothes; Where people are banned from society, the Church provides a home" (Dortzbach 1996:5).



In addressing the privatization of water system with authorities, and also empowering the poor the church should not be directed by multinational companies operations, who seek to furnish the image of God among the people. It must not be governed by fear, but by wisdom rooted in its own identity as it addresses the issue of privatization of water system.

As an African young man who experienced what Adegemo is referring to above, the researcher is reminded of his early days as a herd-boy looking after the flock. The onus was upon us as herdboys to see to the well-being of the flock. We were to see to it that the flock was led to good pastures, taken for a drink, protecting the flock from wild animals and ensuring that whichever beast was hurt got the necessary treatment and healing.

The shepherding model is therefore the approach needed to change the plight of the poor in developing countries and in South Africa in particular. Like Jesus the church needs to opt for the poor and show them preferential treatment by being champions of the cause of their poverty. Just as Jesus in his ministry was drawn especially to the marginalized, excluded and deprived members of the community, so the church is called to reflect God's biasness to the poor.

Like the Old Testament prophets, the church in its mission is called to expose injustice, to stand alongside those most afflicted by its effects, and to point in the direction coming reign of God. The church takes to heart the cries of the poor, which it hears through close partnership with partner churches in impoverished countries.



It seeks to express practical compassion and forthright advocacy in order to bring liberation and hope to those in the terrible bondage of poverty, with a special emphasis on women and children.

During his historic incarnation, Jesus pointed to his identity with human suffering as evidence that the Messiah had come. This was manifested in the seven characteristics of the Messianic age:

The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them (Luke 7:18-22).

This is the Jesus who reveals himself daily in the suffering of needy people; the hungry; the thirsty; the stranger; the naked; the sick; and the imprisoned. Amongst these was his meeting place with his followers. His followers and their awareness of the cries of 'his little ones' would be the basis of judgement and separation, acceptance and fellowship before God. In the suffering of needy persons Jesus comes upon us in fullest clarity. He thrust us into active involvement with the sick, the spirit-possessed, and the deprived ones.

The church's attitude towards the poor must therefore be a positive one that endeavours, in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to change poverty in whichever form it is found (Shorter 1986:60). This is the situation our Lord has shared and wants us to share. Maluleke describes the deaconate of the church as that of striving towards equality in sharing God's gifts to us all. Maluleke goes on



to remind the church that: “A church that does not take part in transformation of the rural settlements has lost its status as a church. The whole work of the church is to put plans into actions. It is to transform structures that perpetuate suffering by creating poverty. The church must concentrate on both material and spiritual things in rural settlements” (1993:58). It cannot afford to remain silent when the poor and the marginalized are being sacrificed to the benefit of the multinational companies who are there for profit and not for the poor.

The faith community therefore has a responsibility as a watchdog in society to speak for those whose tongues are silenced. The church should understand her calling to be prophetic in advocacy, challenging the forces of evil and death and speaking in places where the victims of oppression, injustice and suffering do not have a voice of presence. The church at its core means being critics of structures in church and society, which contradict the life-giving message of Jesus Christ. It is part of the church’s ethos to be agents of transformation in this way, i.e. transforming, criticising and changing whatever contradicts the fullness of life for which Jesus came.

This is better explained by Professor Maake Masango in his address at a United States Congressional Briefing on Africa when he said: “where there are people broken; where there are people who are oppressed; people who have no voices; the church ought to rise to the occasion and begin to be a voice to the voiceless” (AACC Newsletter, July 16-30, 2006:4).



The study is intended to pastorally come up with strategies where the leadership of the church are educated on what privatization of water system is all about, its impact on the poor and how this can be averted taking into account as already indicated that people need to be educated so as to take full responsibility with regard to the correct management and use of water resource.

To support this process, however, public awareness needs to be raised. Educational strategies, including non-formal education programmes on environmental and social issues, are needed. Educating the next generation to become responsible water users is an important task for the future. The study is therefore intended to lobby the churches in various countries and their specialized ministries to join together in the Ecumenical Water Network in working for the provision of fresh water and adequate sanitation and advocating for the right to water. Access to water is indeed a basic human right.

The United Nations has called for an International Decade for Action, Water for Life, 2005 to 2015. It is essential for churches and Christian agencies to work together and to seek cooperation with other partners, including other faith traditions and NGOs, and particularly those organisations that work with vulnerable and marginalized populations who hold similar ethical convictions. It is necessary to engage in debate and action on water policies, including dialogue with governments and multilateral or corporate institutions. This is essential to promote the significance of the right to water and to point to alternative ways of living, which are



more respectful of ecological processes and more sustainable in the longer term.

These organisations are lobbied to:

Call on the churches and ecumenical partners to work together with the aim to:

- *promote* awareness of and take all necessary measures for preservation and protection of water resources against over-consumption and pollution as an integral part of the right to life;
- *undertake* advocacy efforts for development of legal instruments and mechanisms that guarantee the implementation of the right to water as fundamental human right at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- *foster* cooperation of churches and ecumenical partners on water concerns through participation in the Ecumenical Water Network;
- *support* community-based initiatives whose objectives are to enable local people to exercise responsible control, manage and regulate water resources and prevent the exploitation for commercial purposes, i.e. to come up with practical theological care methodologies and interventions that can be used as tools by the relevant stakeholders including the church.
- *urge* governments and international aid agencies to give priority to and allocate adequate funds and other resources for programmes designed to provide access to and make water available to local communities and also promote development of proper sanitation systems and projects,



taking into account the needs of people with disabilities to have access to this clean water and sanitation service. The care of the poor and marginalized in our communities should be taken as a priority.

- *monitor* disputes and agreements related to water resources and river basins to ensure that such agreements contain detailed, concrete and unambiguous provisions for conflict resolution;
- *contribute* to the International Decade for Action, Water for Life, 2005-2015, by exploring and highlighting the ethical and spiritual dimension of the water crisis.

These organisations should focus on the correct treatment with regards to the environment, the planet earth, and the necessity to be vigilant in view of all attempts to privatize water resources. The church is therefore lobbied to commit herself to the struggle against economic and ecological destruction.

The church leadership, other Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), civil society, and the church are here encouraged to campaign for a clean environment. This will be to respond to the impacts of climate change which causes unpredictable rainfall, prolonged droughts, devastating floods, desertification and the drying up of water sources.

The environment that is polluted has adverse effect on global warming and climate change in Africa, resulting in posing serious challenges to the management of world's water resources. They also pose a problem in reaching the United Nations Millennium



Development Goals on water and food security, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. We therefore need to dedicate ourselves to taking care of God's creation so that we can participate in addressing the adverse effect of global warming.

These organisations should also be lobbied to put pressure on their governments to preserve water and stop its privatization. The church is therefore lobbied to resist the evil of an economic system that dehumanizes millions of people and plunder the planet. This should be done by taking the side of the poor, that of, the One who offer abundant life for all.

Again, this should be done by condemning the powerful profit-driven advocates of globalization who continuously try to manoeuvre the injustices so as to maximise profit which continue to impoverish the people of Asia-Africa and the two-third world countries.

The researcher aims at lobbying human rights activists, local government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other cadre of people to put a strong case for water not to be commercialized for profit, and to ensure that it is made available for all.

The church particularly in Africa where the majority of its inhabitants are living in abject poverty, should be encouraged to condemn the exploitative system and structure of international and national financial institutions and multinational corporations that continue to drive many people into abject poverty. It should



commit itself in the struggle of the poor and to ensure that all have access to safe drinking water.

The availability of water helps the poor in the fight for the alleviation and eradication of poverty by growing food, etc. People however, should be encouraged to be “water wise”. By this, meaning that people are encouraged to use water responsibly and not to waste it.

The researcher integrated and reflected on the interpretations and significance of the collected data by drawing a thematic analysis at the end of the research. The final dissertation is made available to the University of Pretoria and other institutions of higher learning, including those individuals and stakeholders who have interest in this subject. The evaluation was done as against the existing situation and circumstances so that other researchers can continue searching other gaps not covered by this research.

2.7 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The world is running out of fresh water. Per capita water consumption has gone up dramatically. This is mainly due to a number of factors such as population growth, increased demand for agricultural water, industrialization, urbanization and economic growth (Uitto and Biswas 2000:226). Humanity is polluting, appropriating or contaminating an increasingly large fraction of the earth’s fresh water supplies as well as diverting and depleting the wellspring of life at a startling rate. With every passing day, demand for fresh water outpaces its availability, and thousands



more people are put at risk due to carelessness of other people and privatization (Gleick 1998:1).

Gleick lists the following most disturbing characteristics of the current situations with regard to water resource:

- Per-capita water demands are increasing and per-capita water availability is declining due to population growth and trends in economic development.
- Half the world's people lack basic sanitation services. More than a billion lack potable drinking water. In much of the world these numbers are rising, not falling.
- Incidences of some water-related diseases are rising; resistance to drugs is increasing; and disease ranges are expanding.
- The amount of land irrigated per capita is falling, and competition for agricultural water from cities is growing.
- More than 700 species of fish are formally acknowledged to be threatened or endangered; the ecological disasters of the Aral Sea, Lake Victoria, and other bodies of water are now in our textbooks as examples of what we do either intentionally or unintentionally to our aquatic environment.
- Political and military conflicts over shared water resources are on the rise in some regions.
- Groundwater overdraft is accelerating. Unsustainable groundwater use occurs on every continent except Antarctica.
- The scientific community has acknowledge that human interference in global climate is now evident and that the



hydrologic cycle will be seriously affected in ways we are only now beginning to study (1998:1).

Already, global warming and climate change, the social, political and economic impacts of water scarcity are rapidly becoming a destabilizing force, with water-related conflicts springing up around the globe. Quite simply, unless we dramatically change our ways, between one-half and two-thirds of humanity will be living with severe freshwater shortages within the next quarter-century.

The researcher shares the same view with Postel that “we have so taken water for granted that our use and abuse of it now threaten to undermine the very life-support system we depend on” (Postel 1997: xxxvi). Awareness should be raised to make communities to be environmental friendly. This will make people to be good stewards of water resources.

One of the policy approaches and policy options that are seen by water planners to facilitate a long-term sustainable water use is its privatization. The World Bank and the IMF are pressurizing developing countries (particularly African countries) to privatize water including their doctrine of ‘full cost recovery’ where users are expected to pay for the full cost of their water consumption. This privatization often forms part of conditionality packages for donors whereby the release of aid funds is conditional on the implementation of privatization policies.

On the other hand, poverty in Africa has become a real stigma. It cruelly prevents access to the most basic of human needs such as



food, shelter, health care and water. It also denies the education so essential to break the cycle.

Lack of water is one facet of poverty that impoverishes the poor even more. In the rural areas such as the former homelands of South Africa, lack of this resource is a major problem as people live far below the poverty line. Pastoral care givers should hold the ANC led government accountable for their promises of fighting for a better life for all.

The unprecedented privatization of water system makes the situation even worse. People are not able to pay for this essential service as this has a track record of skyrocketing prices, water quality problems, deteriorating service etc. Poor people are unable to pay for this essential commodity, and without water there is no life. The absence of water makes people to be vulnerable to poor health and other negative effects.

The study aims at alerting church leadership, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders of the impact of privatization of water system to the poor. Gerkin's shepherding model is preferred by the researcher as the model to be used in reminding the church, government and other stakeholders of their pastoral responsibilities to the people under their care. It is the researcher's view that water remains the government's commodity to be made affordable even to the poorest of the poor.

In the next chapter, the researcher chooses to deal with the whole question of privatization of water system, as this irreplaceable



source of life is becoming a topic of conflict and concern in many places of the world. Animals and plants cannot live without water. The idea is to raise awareness to the readers, the church leadership, government, private sector and other stakeholders on how water is sourced, how it is managed and how its privatization negatively impact to humanity with special reference to the marginalized and the poor.



CHAPTER TWO

2. WATER AND ITS PRIVATIZATION

“Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes” (Ezekiel 47:9).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that water is vital or multiple and universally agreed-upon aspects of human well being, like health, economic security, and freedom from drudgery. More than a billion poor people are deprived of access to water of sufficient quantity and quality to meet even minimal levels of health, income, and freedom from drudgery.

Several people die annually from water-borne disease. Women and children especially do not have access to clean water and are as such exposed to infected water, which affect them adversely. Women and children again have to walk several kilometres to water sources to get clean water, and they do this daily carrying big and heavy water containers.

Globally, water is abundant but unevenly distributed in time and space. According to Dr Rogate R. Mshana, a Tanzanian scholar, inequality in water use is a major concern in water management. “There is also a global inequality in water use. The population of Nairobi, Kenya, pays five times more for water than a North American citizen does; for when a toilet in North America is



flushed, a person is using the same amount of water that one person in the developing world uses all day to wash, clean, cook and drink”(Stirring the waters 2006:17).

This is an indication that some people have more water as compared to others and this brings inequality as well as inaccessibility into the system. In some parts of the globe, water is wasted especially where people regard it as priceless or where it is under-priced. Value must be given to water in the sense of collecting, cleaning and its distribution. Another problem that the globe faces when it comes to water is its overuse for the wrong purpose.

The church cannot underestimate the fact in Genesis 2 that: “Water flows out of God’s Paradise over the world.” As paradise is a gift for all, water should be regarded also as a gift for all. If this is so then clean fresh water should be available to meet the basic needs of all, instead of being bought and sold.

Christians use water in different ways, like baptism; some sprinkle the water on the cleansing. A new life begins any time water is used for cleansing. Any time we get up in the morning, we wash our faces; take a shower all signs of beginning a new life. In the book of John, Jesus referred to himself as the stream of life-giving water.

Figuratively, water is used for salvation because water is life. Wells in the biblical times were a great treasure because it provides safe drinking water. Jesus asking the Samaritan woman



at the well for water to drink is an example (John 7:38-39). It is the duty of the church to make sure that water, which is a symbol of life, reaches all human beings whether rich or poor.

2.2 GLOBLIZATION OF WATER RESOURCES

In the book of Isaiah God assures the children of Israel that He never allows what the children of Israel have laboured for to be enjoyed by the foreigners. He promises them that they will now be able to enjoy the gifts given to them by the nature as well as the fruits of their labour (Isaiah 12:8-12). Psalm 24 begins with the words. “The earth is Yahweh’s, with its fullness; the world, and those who dwell therein.” Isaiah assures the children of Israel that the gifts of nature belong to God and he had created them to be enjoyed by all mankind. He is the only one who had power on them.

While Isaiah indicates that the world belongs to God, the current world is in the hands of Global Trade and multinational companies. Everything had been globalized and traded in the international markets, including basic commodities such as water. Global trade is important for all the citizens of the world, because it helps continents and countries to share.

The brighter side of global trade is that it helps the world to share resources, i.e. countries that do not produce certain commodities are able to share them from those that produce them. For an example, the European and North American climates cannot produce certain products such as coffee, bananas, cocoa, yet they need them for their survival. They have the skills of producing or



manufacturing beautiful and useful items, but for them to do so, they need to import them. The darker side of global trade is that often global trade is carried out at the expense or exploitation of the poorer nationals. The grain of the third world is and continues to be the food of the first world.

Africa is a rich continent. It is indeed a paradox that Africa has immense human and material resources, yet it is faced with utmost poverty. Africa is rich in natural resources such as gold, diamonds, oil, platinum, coal, water etc. If these resources were managed efficiently, and effectively, poverty, wars and civil conflicts would be part of folklores told to children. Because Africa is not equipped to process the raw materials it has, it relies heavily on developed countries and nations. These are taken away from the continent and processed elsewhere. The raw materials help to give employment to people in other countries while those who produce them earn nothing. To add salt to the wound is that when the finished products return from the first world factories, they are too expensive for the people who produced the original raw material.

Africa is rich in water resources yet the agricultural sector of the continent is doing badly. Rivers such as the Nile, the Congo, The Limpopo, the Zambezi, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Victoria, Lake Malawi, the Lesotho Highland water etc, all have water that can help the continent to produce enough food for its inhabitants. The first world has seen potential in these rivers and they have globalised their water. Waters from these natural resources were channelled by the African colonizers to feed their industries and



even went to an extent of restricting its use by the indigenous people.

Millions of litres of water is being exported from Africa in so-called “Mineral Water” content and sold bottled in the developed countries. People are discouraged from using natural water from the rivers and wells and are sold bottled water. Global companies have come into the continent to build huge water companies such as the Rand Water Board and everybody has to pay for the use of water.

Therefore Africans cannot enjoy the fruit of the gifts of nature given to them by God as Isaiah says: “water does no longer belong to nature, God but to companies. Anyone who want to use it, be it for domestic or commercial use, one has to pay.”

2.3 OTHER KEY PROBLEMS AND ASPECTS CONCERNING WATER

This research reflects on the critical nature of water-related issues caused by privatization of water system, global warming, climate change, pollution, encroaching aridity and salinity, diseases, water access and political conflict.

Following are some of the key problems and aspects concerning water which the researcher offers to the church leadership, other stakeholders and communities who want to engage their responsibilities for environmental stewardship and economic justice through study, reflection and action:



- Too many people around have little or no access to clean water.
- A key reform option, preferred by many donors and agencies, is the privatization of water system, making it a conditionality for aid, and taking responsibility for making water accessible to all out of governments' hands.
- The poor are the worst off because they cannot afford high prices. For example, in Nouakchott (Mauritania), low-income families now pay up to a fifth of their household budget on water alone, while in Cochabamba (Bolivia) water prices doubled overnight after privatization (Marcus et al 2002; Schultz 2002). In the poor township of Fort Beaufort (South Africa), water prices increased by 600 percent between 1994 and 1996 following privatization (Afrol News 2002).
- Women and children are especially affected: it is they who, in many contexts, have to fetch water for their household needs.
- There is no one to really be held accountable for the implications of privatization of water system.
- Every day, more than 25,000 die from waterborne diseases.
- Approximately 80 percent of diseases and over one-third of death are caused by contaminated water.
- 65 percent of infant deaths from diarrhoea and cholera could be prevented in developing countries by providing safe water and sanitation.
- A child dies every 15 seconds from bad water and sanitation.
- Billion people lack access to an adequate supply of water.
- 2.4 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation.



- Over 2 million people mostly children, die annually from water related diseases (www.wateraid.org).

In addition, poor women bear a disproportionate burden of the unpaid chore of fetching water for domestic use, while they are excluded from many opportunities to create wealth with water. Water has rarely been a “free good” for women in many parts of the world. If poverty is defined as living below generally accepted standards of well being, for multiple and interrelated dimensions of well being, water deprivation is typically one of its characteristics.

One facet of water deprivation that is widely recognized as a typical characteristic of poverty is sub minimal access to safe water and sanitation facilities, which results in severe waterborne diseases, and often in exorbitantly high costs in labor or cash. A comprehensive approach is necessary, one that recognizes that poor people’s water needs are multifaceted.

Water especially affects income generation, another major element of well being, of which poor people are typically deprived. Poor people’s self-employment and wage employment opportunities in urban and especially rural areas depend on water, as well as other factors.

2.4 NO WATER NO LIFE

Water is a symbol of life. In the book of Genesis, the Bible affirms water as the cradle of life, an expression of God’s grace in perpetuating for the whole of creation. Water was there even before life was. “In the beginning of creation, when God made



heaven and earth, the earth was without form and void, with darkness over the face of the abyss, and a mighty wind that swept over the surface of the water” (Genesis 1: 1-2).

It is a basic condition for all life on Earth (Gen. 1:2ff) and is to be preserved and shared for the benefit of all creatures and the wider creation. Water is the source of health and well-being and requires responsible action from us human beings, as partners and priests of Creation (Rev. 22:1ff). As churches, we are called to participate in the mission of God to bring about a new creation where life in abundance is assured to all (John 10:10; Amos 5:24). It is therefore right to speak out and act when the life-giving water is pervasively and systematically under threat.

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches describes water as “God’s Gift for life”. It is central to the conditions of life on earth and the survival of all creatures on our planet, from the moment of conception to the second of death. The critical nature of this resource has become clearer in discussion and research about global warming, climate change, endangered species, encroaching aridity and salinity, diseases and conflict (Fisher 2006:10).

The question to ask is: “Why should water be equated to life?” Water, to all living things is very vital for various reasons. Water relates to both spiritual and geopolitics. Faith symbols and sacraments nurture our souls while safe drinking water ensures our physical survival.



The life of nearly every creature on earth depends on water for survival. At sunset, a chirping bird, an opening rosebud, a friendly dog receiving us home, a hug from our friends and for those we love. All of these moments need water to occur. Sunsets are more beautiful with some light clouds and there are no clouds without water; as there are no birds, no flowers, no human kind without water. Life as we know it, is just not possible without water.

Out of water God created life. No person can live without water including all living things. “God provided water so as to sustain all life”. It is out of this that the slogan “water is God’s gift for life is derived.” This gift should be respected by creation in appreciation. It should not be wasted but preserved at all cost because it sustains all living creatures. It makes the world beautiful. Where there is no water there is no life. When one saves water, one is saving life. Everybody should have to learn to be water wise, meaning that people must use water sparingly and responsibly, i.e. not pollute it, waste it, etc.

In all ages, water has been precious and people have expressed appreciation to the almighty God for the provision of water, more especially in times of need such as drought etc. People as recorded in the book of Numbers here below, became excited over the wells because they knew that they were going to live again:

“Well up, spring water!

Greet it with song,

The spring unearthed by the princess,

Laid open by the leaders of the people



***With sceptre and with mace,
A gift from the wilderness” (Numbers 21:18).***

God’s greatest gift to creation is the gift of water. He initiated water as gift on the day of creation. This is demonstrated in the divine plan of the universe. It is for this same reason that water was given as a gift of life that human being should trust in Him the giver of life rather than trusting on human beings.

The statement: No water-No life is so significant in the life of all living things on our earth. Nothing will have life on this earth without water. The most serious thing that can happen to life on this earth is the absence of water. As such, many people equate the rainfall to ‘a sign of God’s favour and goodness’ (The new Bible Dictionary 1980:1317), and the absence of it is regarded as a curse on the people.

To symbolize this, water is used for several reasons. Christians see water as God’s blessing and of spiritual refreshment. The prophet Jeremiah describes God as the fountain of living waters. “Two sins have my people committed: they have forsaken me, a spring of living water” (Jer. 2: 13).

Water is therefore very significant in the entire Bible. It is sacred and central to many ceremonial rituals like feet washing and religious sacraments like baptism. Priests, for example, were washed during their consecration. The Levites as well as the chief priests went through the removal of ceremonial defilement by the use of water as recorded in the book of Ezekiel.



***“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you”
(Ez. 36:25-27).***

Water is good, it gives life but at times we all fear water that it brings disaster and catastrophe if not well managed

Taking into account, the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red sea, the 2004 Tsunami and 2005 Hurricane Katrina. We could also say that water could pose danger to human life and the environment. People are drowned when the rain falls beyond expectation. Lives, property and the environment are at times lost in very heavy down pour. Water is very important for both human and the environment, but if not properly managed it can cause great havoc.

Without water, there would be no life. Most advanced countries depend on the electrical energy derived from water. This is the energy used in the big industries. For this energy to be renewed, there is the water cycle, which helps to keep the water flowing.

Through this we have “the water from the oceans and other exposed bodies being evaporated by the sun, formed into clouds, returned to earth as precipitation, and then flows once again from the high ground into the ocean (Friedman 1982:343). This way, it can easily be said that water movement is very critical, and it enhances the importance of the life-giving element of water.



2.5 WATER, GOD'S GIFT AND VITAL RESOURCE FOR LIFE

2.5.1 WATER RESOURCE FULFILLS MULTIPLE

FUNCTIONS

Water resource is very vital for the fulfilment of so many functions. The researcher assumes that we all heard that the average adult body is 75% water and 25% solid matter. In fact, water is second only to oxygen as essential for life.

Aside from aiding in the digestion and absorption of food, water regulates body temperature, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, removes toxins and other wastes, cushions joints and protects tissues and organs including the spinal cord from shock and damage and contribute to elasticity in the skin (which can significantly slow the development of wrinkles).

To perform so much for so many organ systems, we need lots of fresh water on a daily basis to stay healthy and in peak condition.

Water, and conversely, the lack of water, plays a major role in the functioning (or malfunctioning) of every major body system. From brain functions to proper digestion and elimination, proper hydration can ensure efficient and regular body functions. At the same time, you would be surprised at the myriad of ailments and symptoms experienced every day that are simply your



body's way of telling you subtly and sometimes not so subtly, to drink more water.

The body has more than the one 'dry mouth' indicator of water shortage. Actually the human body possesses a variety of sophisticated indicators of dehydration and thirst. Unexplained backaches and headaches are often your body's way of asking for more water. Swollen limbs are also a sign of low water intake.

Water resource is therefore very vital for the fulfilment of so many functions. Following are other main functions for water's vital role for both the environment and human:

2.5.1.1 Water and human health

The absence of water has a critical health implication. Changes in rainfall affect the presence and absence of vector and water-borne pathogens. A change in temperature and precipitation boosts the population of disease – carrying mosquitoes resulting in the increase of malaria epidemics.

Today, it is seldom noted that billions of people around the globe lack access to the most fundamental foundations of a decent civilized world which is basic sanitation services and clean drinking water. (Gleick 1998: 39).



The author is of the same view with Akhtar Hameed Khan that “access to safe water and adequate sanitation is the foundation of development. For when you have a medieval level of sanitation, you have a medieval level of diseases, and no country can advance without a healthy population (Unicef 1997).

Gleick supports the same when he says: “failure to provide basic sanitation services and clean water to so many people takes a serious toll on human health.” He continues to say: “In many developing countries, cholera, dysentery, and other water-related diseases are on the upswing” (1998:39).

Nearly 250 million cases are reported every year, with between 5 and ten million deaths. Diarrhoea diseases leave millions of children underweight, mentally and physically handicapped, and vulnerable to other diseases. Yet we are falling further and further behind in our efforts to provide these basic services (1998:39).

Between 1990 and 1997, some 300 million more people were added to 2,600 million already without adequate sanitation services, a clear indication that the world community is failing to meet the most basic need (1998:39).

The following case study illustrates what Gleick is saying regarding the outbreak of waterborne diseases



as a result of the scarcity of safe drinking water and sanitation. It is reported that:

CASE STUDY 3

“In South Africa, the former homeland of Kwa-Zulu suffered a major outbreak of cholera where more than 12000 cases were reported and 24 people died. This was in the year 1982. As part of the relief program, the then apartheid government erected nine communal taps on the border of Ngwelezane. For the first time, residents of Ngwelezane were able to access purified water. Some people were even able to connect water into their houses. For seventeen (17) years people of this community had running water.

The local municipality covered all cost of water until when the town council introduced measures for more rigorous financial management. Here, residents were required to pay a flat monthly rate of \$4.50 for water and electricity. At the end of 1989, the nine communal taps were converted to prepaid metres. To access water, residents had to pay a connection fee of \$5. Only 700 households could afford the registration fee. The No money No water principle was applied. Two thousand families remained unconnected.

In August 2000, four of the prepaid taps stopped water. Even those households who had money did not have access to water until after three weeks when the meters were working again. All this time boreholes were dry and during this time 11 percent of Ngwelezane’s residents had no choice but to get



water from the rivers streams and dams as a result of this cut-off.

People started using ponds and streams contaminated with cholera bacteria, and the disease spread like wildfire. The first cholera outbreak in the area was reported in the year 2000. Within four months there were thousand of cases of the disease, which spread through food or water contaminated with cholera.

The disease ultimately spread to the Eastern Cape, and then to the capital, Johannesburg, becoming the largest cholera outbreak in the South African history before it ended in early 2002. About 120000 people were infected and 265 were killed.

The local council eventually reacted by removing the prepaid metres from communal taps and charging people a flat rate of \$2.50 per month for water. The South African government gave Kwa-Zulu – Natal \$ 2.5. million in emergency funds to fight cholera in the province. Water was also trucked into affected areas at a cost of \$45.000 per month. How hard it is to fathom how a democratic government, which prides itself with promoting progressive water legislation, could experience one of the biggest outbreaks of cholera. The government has no way, but to do away with its policy of “cost recovery”. The state is also paying tens if not hundreds of times more dealing with the health crisis as a result of trying to recoup its water costs” (waterprivatization/metr...2006\10\30).



It is therefore important to note that safe drinking water is prerequisite for the maintenance of human health (Lundqvist & Gleick 1997:3).

2.5.1.2 Water supply and ecological / environmental health

Water is central to the conditions of life on earth and the survival of all creatures on our planet, from the moment of conception to the second of death. The critical nature of this issue has become clearer in discussions and research about global warming, climate change, endangered species, encroaching aridity and salinity, diseases and conflicts.

It is very important that church communities recognize their responsibilities of environmental stewardship and economic justice through biblical studies and theology of water.

They should raise awareness and encourage action by the faith communities. This should be done by caring for the natural environment and promoting eco-justice, using the extensive network of the churches and religions in their countries, in order to conscientise their members and to encourage environmental action by:

- urging faith communities to act to raise awareness of the crisis;
- making personal commitments to a more sustainable lifestyle;



- lobbying the public and private sectors to make appropriate policy and technology choices, to support education initiatives, and to support those who will be most severely affected by climate change; and
- working with all concerned groups seeking solutions to the crisis.
- seeking to uphold principles and ethics for sustainable living
- establishing eco-justice – that is economic and environmental justice
- caring for the earth and water resources
- stemming the extinction of plants and animals
- finding ways of reducing fossil fuel consumption, eliminating waste, and using clean energy
- designing and constructing ‘green’ buildings
- promoting sustainable livelihoods and income generation options
- educating both children and adults to better understand the splendour of creation and the role they could play in ensuring that current and future generations can enjoy it as well.

People in their own localities should dedicate themselves and educate others in better water practice and reduce waste, fight pollution and privatization and rally for the survival of endangered species and rescue



of communities threatened by drought, floods and other forces of nature.

There would be no life on earth if there was no water. Water was and continues to be the home for the earliest and most simple forms of life on planet earth. From the smallest bacteria to the biggest mammal, plants and animals need water to grow and flourish.

Lack of water due to drought can be deadly for plants, animals and human communities. Water pollution can severely hamper not only the quality of life of the communities affected, but even their health and the very existence.

2.5.1.3 Water and productive health

Water is very crucial in the production of food to feed the Earth's growing populations. Gleick quotes the 1992 Dublin Conference that acknowledged the importance of food security concerns and suggested alternative approaches ensuring that future food goals are met. The conference acknowledged that: "Achieving food security is a high priority in many countries.

Water is therefore essential for food production. Irrigating crops results in a high loss of water through transpiration and mineralization. One of the biggest problems in agriculture today is to reduce the loss of



water by irrigation. It is estimated that irrigation results in the loss of over billion gallons of water per day.

Agriculture must not only provide food for rising populations, but also save water for other uses.

The challenge is to develop and apply water-saving technology and management methods, and, through capacity building, enable communities to introduce institutions and incentives for the rural populations to adopt new approaches, for both rain fed and irrigated agriculture (1997:22).

In South Africa, approximately 50% water use is devoted to the irrigation of 1.3 million ha of land, accounting for 25-30% of South Africans total agricultural output. Water rights are a complex issue, further complicated by the difficulty of granting water rights to individuals on land held in traditional communal tenure in the former homeland territories. The national Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) is responsible for the development of national water infrastructure, and for the allocation and control of scarce water resources.

The national Department of Agriculture (DoA) is responsible for marketing standards and norms, and the provincial Departments of Agriculture for supporting and developing irrigation farming.



The goal here is to grow enough food to meet the world's needs and to deliver it where it is needed. Water is therefore needed for the growing of food not only for international markets, but for countries and families as well.

Water-short regions cannot produce sufficient food to meet all their domestic needs. Water scarcity has a negative impact on food production at both the regional and national level. It is therefore necessary that countries formulate sound water policies that will ensure access to food security.

2.5.1.4 Water and carrier functions

Crops require water to transport the nutrients from the soil into the plants. Since there are few waste products discharged by plants, the water taken in by the plant is largely lost by transpiration. Thus it is that plants have a tremendous demand for water. In instances the agricultural activities result in interception of the water before it runs off in our streams or into the ground. Water plays an active role in diluting and transporting waste. It is also very important in the natural erosion and land processes of the global water cycle.

2.5.1.5 Water and psychological functions

Water is important in making water bodies, water views, fountains, etc. It plays a role in many religions and cultural activities, e.g. baptism.



2.5.2 Water-Nature's Thirst Quencher

The Bible from Genesis through out emphasizes the fact that water gives us life. In the book of Isaiah, it is said: “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the water” (Isaiah 55: 1). The liquid content of our physical bodies is very great, as more than 75 percent consist of water. All living things need water to survive as St. Francis of Assisi succinctly called water *la humilde hermana*, i.e. our humble sister restores, refreshes and purifies our lives at the end of a heavy labour.

Over half of your body is made up of water. It's in every cell and every tissue. Biological processes like circulation, digestion, absorption and excretion depend on water. It forms the foundation of blood and lymph, maintains hearty muscles and young looking skin, lubricates joints and organs and regulates body temperature. You can't function without it.

As you grow older, it becomes vital to pay attention to your water consumption. Mature persons hold less cellular water, with a loss of 10 to 15 percent of previous capacity by the age of 65. A contributing factor is the loss of thirst sensitivity. Because water is so important for digestion, a lack of fluid in your body might make it more difficult for you to digest food. You may suffer from cramps, bloating, gas, constipation, diverticulosis or even colon cancer. Drinking more water, combined with a high-fiber diet, can prevent these problems. To combat this loss of fluids, the answer is simple. Drink more water. Six to ten glasses of pure water each day are



necessary to enhance your body's functioning. Beyond helping your digestive system, getting enough fluids will give fresh skin, clear eyes and shining hair. Signs of hunger may be a warning flag that your body needs a good drink. Try consuming several glasses of water before diving into a snack to see if that takes care of your craving. Because fruits are largely made up of water, they are perfect choices for a mid-afternoon treat.

2.5.3 Water needed for keeping ourselves clean

Every human being needs to keep his / her body clean and can only be done with water apart from the spatial cleanliness. The Israelites, especially their women encountered a whole lot of problems in the wilderness especially when they got to places where there was no water.

2.5.4 Water needed for keeping the surroundings clean

We need water to clean our homes, to cook, to wash our clothes and many other things. The Bible tells us that 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness'. Therefore, water cleanses us and draws us nearer to God. In their words, water gives us life. Without water, there is no life. Plants, small and big need water to survive.

Water adds to the beauty of the earth. Whenever there is a long drought, we have dead plants around us and the blossoming of the beautiful flowers elude us. Everything around us looks dry and deadly.



2.5.5 Water needed for the brain and mental functions

Although the brain is 1/50* of the body's total weight, it uses 1720th of the blood supply. Brain cells are 85% water. The brain is one of the unique organs that is always active, even in deep sleep. The tremendous amounts of energy expended on a continuous basis require ample amounts of water to maintain proper hydration and functioning of mental processes.

Dehydration can lead to short-term memory loss, headaches including migraines, light-headedness are really an indication of severe dehydration of the brain and eyes. This explains why one of the key symptoms of the onslaught of a migraine is visual distortion and temporary blindness.

2.5.6 Water needed for digestive functions

The digestion of solid food depends on a sufficient supply of water in the body. Although it is imperative that one cannot eat and drink at the same time, (thus diluting digestive acids and enzymes and delaying the digestion of food); an amply hydrated system more efficiently eliminates waste and toxins from the body. Without proper amounts of water in the body, foods are not broken down completely enough to pass from the stomach into the intestines. This can lead to gastritis, duodenitis (inflammation of the small intestines), ulcers, heartburn and acid stomach. Constipation is also a frequent symptom of dehydration.



Chronic dehydration can lead to weight gain, poor muscles tone and water retention in the form of swelling of the limbs and bloating.

2.5.7 Water needed for skeletal functions

The cartilage tissue found at the ends of bones and between The vertebrae of the spine hold water that serves as a lubricant during the movement of the joint. When the system is well hydrated, the joints move smoothly and with ease.

When there is lack of water, the bones rub together, hindering movement and causing pain. If not corrected by sustained increased water consumption, severe pain, joint deterioration and inhibited movement of the affected joints can occur.

2.5.8 Water needed for kidney functions

The kidneys remove wastes such as uric acid, urea and lactic acid from the body. All of these substances must be dissolved in water to pass through the bladder and out of the body. When there isn't enough water, these wastes are not effectively removed. This can result in kidney and urinary infections, kidney failure and kidney stones.

A very simple way to determine whether you need to drink more water is to check the colour of your urine when relieving yourself. When the body is properly hydrated your urine will range from clear to pale yellow. If your urine is yellow or orange, drink more water immediately!



2.5.9 Water needed for medication purposes

For medication purposes, water is needed for the following:

2.5.9.1 Sterility procedures – where it is needed for:

- Personal health before and between procedures, e.g., procedures for hands decontamination
- Cleaning of theatres, wards, floors and most importantly for hygiene purposes
- Sterilizing of equipments
- Washing of hospital linen (Vlok 1983: 304-320).

2.5.9.2 Administration of oral medication and dilution of injections

2.5.9.3 Hydration:

- Water is very important for resuscitation purposes
- It is needed for intravenous (drip) therapy and oral treatment (Vlok 1991: 763-775).

2.5.9.4 For humidifying of air, water is needed for:

- Pertinent on oxygen therapy
- Intubation in Intensive Care Unit
- Nebulizing patients with asthmatic conditions
- Suctioning of airway to assist vacuum
- Air conditions in theatres to maintain particular temperatures (1991: 675).
- Reducing pyrexia by drinking cold water and bathing with cold water
- People with burns can be given water via intravenous therapy to maintain fluid loss due to burns (Vlok 1983: 350-351).

Looking critically at the above reasons for having good water



around us, one can say that all living organisms need good and clean water for survival. The reader will understand that privatization of water system makes medication to be very expensive where the poor are the ones to suffer the most as they do not afford to pay for medical expenses.

Water does not only give life to living things. It is very sacred, a gift of the creator as well as the source of life” (Women’s Magazine 2006:17). Every living thing including the environment has a right to water, but greed and poverty has driven us into the commodification of this resource. The acquisition of water, the gift of the creator must be available to both the poor and the rich, because everybody needs water.

People who claim monopoly of this very important need are committing sin against God. Water, being a free gift of God should be a public responsibility and not the property of some individuals. It is in the book of Ezekiel that we find the most appropriate text for water as a sign and gift of life. The whole prophecy of Ezekiel is marked by visions and symbolic actions. It is evident that the book of Ezekiel perceives the conception of water as an origin of life.

In the Old Testament a fundamental distinction is made between stagnant water that dirties and is not drinkable and living water that is drinkable and flows freely. Sea water is also conceived sometimes and sprouts all forms. Not only the earth but also the sea symbolizes the material breast.



What a prophet Ezekiel was! Even though he came from the priestly line, he broke all the parameters and canons of priestly theology to enter with great enthusiasm into the theology of exile, with new categories of the glory and presence of God proclaiming *a viz voz* (“in a loud voice”) that God was present, not only in the temple and in Jerusalem but in the midst of suffering people in their land of exile.

The Old Testament never restricted the action of God, of Yahweh, to the confines of Israel. All lands and all people are inside the will of the Creator. But for people in the days of Ezekiel to be exiled was synonymous with being abandoned by their God. In foreign and impure lands, Yahweh was concealed and undetected because the glory of Yahweh always glowed in Jerusalem, in the temple. Isaiah saw it there. But Ezekiel was given in exile, next to the river Chebar (Ezekiel 1:3). Yes, he saw God’s glory in the Mesopotamian valleys and not in the mountains of Zion.

“So I rose up and went out into the valley; and the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory that I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face” (Ezekiel 3:23).

Ezekiel identified the presence of Yahweh in the difficult moments. Yahweh is there among the oppressed and enslaved people, in solidarity with the poor and next to the exiles. This provided comfort and spirit to those that looked toward the north with sadness and despair; from there, from that direction, the Babylonians had brought them to the river Chebar. What a relief! God had not forgotten their ways. How in solidarity was their God.



To provide comfort and to make the exiles reborn to a new life was the main reason for the vision of Ezekiel. The water would be spilled on them as a blessing. “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

2.6 THE NOTION ON THE SCARCITY OF WATER RESOURCE

Water has become scarce all over the world particularly in Africa and other developing countries.

There are mixed feelings about the notion of the scarcity of water resource. Terence Lee for an example argues against the scarcity of water resource saying: “in the absolute sense, however, even given climate change, water is not becoming scarcer. It is true that the amount of water is finite, but it is not only finite, it is inherently stable. We are not using up water resource, because we cannot use it up. Water is not exhaustible in the sense that coal, oil, any metal ore or other no-renewable natural resources are. The amount of water available on earth has not changed for a very long time. Why then is there this concern about water scarcity (1999:1-2).

In South Africa, however, like Lee, the author finds it difficult to accept the notion of the scarcity of water resource since a lot of water in the area of research and other areas in the country is left



to flow freely from rivers to the sea. In the area of research, rivers such as Olifants and Klein Letaba near Phalaborwa, Sabie and Sand Rivers in Hazyview, Crocodile and Komati Rivers in Nelspruit and Komatipoort respectively, Blyde River, Great Letaba and other tributaries flowing from the Drakensberg mountains to mention but a few, is left to flow to the sea.

Water from these rivers should be harvested, and stored in dams for future use by people, animals and environment. The newly constructed Inyaka Dam in Bushbuckridge is a practical example. Similarly, there are so many rivers flowing from the Republic of South Africa. This water can be harvested and stored for future use.

Many of the problems being faced in the water sector can be traced as Winpenny puts it: to the way in which both the supply and use of water are planned, regulated, managed and financed. The laws governing the use of water and the institutions that have arisen to manage it are frequently obstacles to making more rational use of the resource” (1994:32).

Many professionals, scholars in different parts of the world, share the notion on the scarcity of water resource. This expressed opinion is shared by many people involved in water management in both developed and developing countries (Uitto & Biswas 2000:226).

In the midst of such amazing water weather, it is difficult to believe the notion on the scarcity of water resource. Postel clearly point



out that “the total volume of water some 1,360,000,000 cubic kilometers, would cover the globe to a height of 2.7 kilometres is spread evenly over its surface. But more that 97% is locked in icecaps and glaciers, and a large proportion of the remaining 1% lies too far underground to exploit” (1997:27).

Postel goes on to say “Each year, evaporation fuelled by the sun’s energy lifts some 500,000 cubic kilometres of moisture into the atmosphere 86% from the oceans and 14% from the land. An equal amount falls back to earth as rain, sleet, or snow, but it is distributed in different proportions: where the continents lose about 70,000 cubic kilometres through evaporation, they gain 110,000 through precipitation.” (1997:27)

Each year therefore, about 40,000 cubic kilometres of renewable water are transferred from sea to the land. This is the water the society needs to support a moderate standard of living.

The scarcity of this resource is attributed to various factors such as:

The uneven distribution of water and the fact that two thirds of it is left to make its way back to the sea leaving about 14,000 cubic kilometres as a relatively stable resource of support. (1997:28)

It is argued that the scarcity of this resource is attributed to a number of factors such as population growth, increased demand on agricultural water, industrialization, urbanization and climatic change (Uitto&Biswas:226). Such a scarcity of this resource causes problems for both human and ecosystem health. The crisis of the scarcity of this resource is so marked as to cause serious



economic, political and social repercussions such as conflict over fresh water.

2.6.1 POPULATION GROWTH

The number of countries which population surpassed the level that can be sustained comfortably by the available water resource is increasing. Postel records that 26 countries, collectively home to 232 million people, fall into the water-scarce category. 11 of these water-scarce countries are in Africa. Many of them have high population growth rates, and so their water problem are growing fast (1997:29).

This rapid demographic change takes place as households unbundled, over crowded households split up and finds separate lodgings, posing difficult challenges to service delivery.

By 1997 the world's population was 5.8 billion where about a fifth of the population lack adequate water for their livelihood. (Postel 1997:x). Human numbers always outstrip the ability of local water supplies to sustain a moderate standard of living. (1997:18). It is estimated that by 2025 as many as 3.6 billion people could be living in countries where water supplies will be too limited for food self-sufficiency. Africa and the Middle East alone will have more than 1.3 billion people living in water stressed countries.



It is therefore evident that there will be insufficient food to feed the population, and that even in the case where food should be imported; the price will be too high.

2.6.2 INCREASED DEMAND ON AGRICULTURAL WATER

In order to feed the above-mentioned population including the ever-increasing figures, it is obvious that agriculture should claim the biggest share of water supplies as compared to other water users.

It is estimated that 65 percent of water taken from rivers, lakes and aquifers is used for food production. This percentage rises as the population grows (Postel 1997:20). Industries are the second largest claim of water after agriculture. A large amount of water for example is used to generate electricity, papermaking, street production, plastics manufacturing and other materials needed on the daily bases. All these takes copious amounts of water.

It is estimated that by the end of this decade, some 22 cities worldwide will have populations of 10 million or more of the 22 cities, it is estimated that 18 of them will be in the Third World. (1997:21) Surely, this will need more water.

2.6.3 INAPPROPRIATE WATER MANAGEMENT

In most cases, people have taken water for granted that its use and abuse threaten the very life-support systems we all depend



on (Postel: xxxiv). People abuse water and the environment in different way:

2.6.3.1 *Destruction of Forests*

In cutting down trees to sell wood or to clear the land for cultivation, the results are that many of the plants and animals that live in forests become extinct.

We also lose the firewood, medical plants and other products that come from the forests. With trees and other vegetation gone, rain runs off the land faster, leading to devastating floods.

2.6.3.2 *Water Pollution*

As already indicated, the growing human populations have reduced the amount of water available per person and increased pollution of drinking water by fertilizers and pesticides from farms carried by rain water. This ends up contaminating a lot of usable water and such water ends up not usable.

It is very important to protect rivers so that they remain healthy and well functioning. This is fundamental to the workings of the natural world as their decline represents a crippling of the planet's circulatory system and a crumbling of its ecological foundation. (Postel 1997:xvii) Rivers, flood-plains, lakes swamps, wetlands and deltas



are fresh water-ecosystems that performs a host of vital functions such as:

- (i) delivering of nutrients to the sea for the nourishment of marine food webs.
 - (ii) sustenance of fisheries.
 - (iii) dilution of our waste products.
 - (iv) Provision of convenient shipping channels.
 - (v) maintenance of soil fertility including offering some of the most inspirational natural beauty on the planet. (1997:xiii)
- Postel goes on to remind us that “these ecosystem services are now deteriorating rapidly.

Numerous human activities from the construction of dams, dikes and levees to uncontrolled pollution, excessive river diversions and the draining of wetlands are destroying ecological functions before they have been properly valued or sometimes even before they have been identified” (1997:xviii)

2.6.4 INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION

As already indicated, industries make the second largest claim on water. Generating of electricity, production of paper, steel, plastics and other materials used on daily bases takes copious amount of water. It is estimated that by the end of this decade, some 22 cities worldwide will have a populations of 10 million or more. Of the 22 cities 18 of them will be in the Third World.



(Postel 1997:20–21) Surely this will increase the consumption of water which is already scarce

The rapid urbanization in many towns and cities in South Africa exacerbate the problem of the scarcity of water as Buhlungu and his co-writers put it: “In the Western Cape, for example, it is estimated that the Cape Town area receives an additional 16000 households per annum, many from the Eastern Cape” (2007:72).

As people move in search of jobs, causing the level of migration to be very high, resulting in the housing and service backlogs to be almost impossible to reduce. HIV/AIDS on the other hand contributes to the household poverty, furthering demographic changes as households re-bundle in the wake of the death of wage earners (2007:73).

2.6.5 CLIMATE CHANGE DUE TO GLOBAL WARMING

Global warming is affecting Africa more than the industrialized world despite being the inhabited continent least to blame for the greenhouse effect.

Scientists believe that the world is now on the verge of changing our climate through human activities that produce gases, the burning of fossils fuel, the destruction of forests, and a wide range of industrial and agricultural activates. This greenhouse effect has widespread consequences for every aspect of life on earth. (Gleick 1998:137)



Climate determines where people live, how we live, the kind of crop we grow, their success and failure, the location, size, operation dams and reservoirs, the kinds of structures we build along our coastlines, and even the clothes we buy.

The greenhouse effect has a negative impact on water resources. Water managers and their stakeholders have to start thinking about long-term water planning and management. The change in climate impact in the rainfall and those depending on agriculture for their livelihood suffers greatly, particularly the poor.

African economies are overwhelmingly agriculture – based and highly susceptible even to minute variations in temperatures and rainfall. Farmers in the developed world can often make up for short rainy seasons by using man-made water sources. Africa’s farmers on the other hand often labor without the most basic irrigation systems.

Burdened by decades of underdevelopment and impoverishment, the agricultural industry so crucial to African economies is now increasingly crippled by periodic droughts. In addition to its environmental impact, climate change in Africa is made even drier by the continent’s limited resources.

The capacity of most African nations to respond to rapid environmental changes is diminished by infrastructures and budgets already strained by a multitude of competing challenges. In Africa, climate change does not act in isolation,



but instead it is just one additional problem as we already contend with a lot of problems such as poverty, food insecurity, civil wars and conflicts.

Sub – Saharan African countries are slowly being starved of their lifeblood – water. Rain, upon which we all rely, but upon which the reliance of farmers in non industrialized countries is more acute, are shorter, more unpredictable and often more intense. Three million people on the African continent alone survive by growing crops or rearing cattle.

Climate change due to global warming is the cause of this change resulting in the scarcity of rainwater and “changes in precipitation, evapotranspiration, runoff, and soil moisture: In short, from changes in the most important variables for water planning and management” (1998: 140) this has a negative impact to the African poor masses.

As water becomes more and more scarce and its quality continues to deteriorate. Policy makers have been compelled to explore new approaches to improve the management of water resource. Water pricing reforms are among various measures designed to encourage the efficient use of water resources.

Surveys demonstrate that many countries have been engaged in such pricing reforms lately. As already stated one key reform option, preferred by many donors and agencies, is the privatization of water system taking it all out of government’s



hands, making it a conditionality for aid, and taking responsibility for making water accessible.

Water has therefore, become the “oil-fights”, the commodity gold, of the future living people particularly the poor of the developing countries without potable clean water for drinking, cooking, washing and mostly that for agricultural purposes (farming), the purposes why it was freely given. Poor people depend on water for their alleviation and eradication of their abject poverty and sustenance.

The research is therefore aimed at defending the rights of the poor and the rest of creation and educating the rich. All human actors (rich and poor), therefore, must be accountable to standards and norms greater than themselves, which then acts as regulations measurers.

In spite of the reasons given, water should be kept away from markets, which are thirsty for money and big profits at the expense of the poor by making water to be unaffordable. In fact, the strongest and most emotional criticism of the activists against privatization of water system is that it has a devastating impact to the poor and the rest of creation.

Barlow puts it very well when he says: “When water is privatized, prices are set on the open market. As a result, millions of poor people have been cut off” (1999:16). This makes their lives more difficult. The following case study



illustrates the negative impact as a result of privatization of water system.

The author will share two case studies in order to show the devastating impact of privatization of water system resource.

CASE STUDY 4

“In the South African area of Nkobongo, where David Radebe lives, the French water company Saur won a 30-year concession in 1999 to provide water and purification services to the area’s diverse population of 40,000. Saur formed a local company in consortium with four South African companies, called Siza Water Company. Saur was the majority shareholder, while the majority black South African companies shared the rest.

Water that was once free for the poor suddenly carried a price tag. Initially, families such as Radebe’s could afford it. Pleased to have cool, fresh running water in his new home for the first time in his life, Radebe gladly paid the connection fee and his first water bill totalling 63.58 Rand (\$6.40) a copy of which he retains as a keepsake.

But in 2001, Radebe lost his job as a gardener at a construction company. School fees, food costs and rising water and power rates quickly drove the family into debt. The household’s electricity was cut off, and the water stopped flowing. Radebe tried to install a pipe to bypass his water meter but was arrested and released on a warning. He had to



beg the school headmaster to reschedule the kids' school fees. With no water, his vegetable patch dried out and the electric stove was of no use since the electricity had been cut off. Radebe did not have money to pay for the stove, and it ended up repossessed.

Radebe told city officials he would never be able to pay. So they removed his water meter altogether. Many of his neighbours and friends also experienced cut offs. Ninety percent of township residents now access water from sources other than the Siza Water Company” (waterprivatization\metr....2006\10\30).

The author argues that scarce as it is, the management of water resource should be left in the hands of sovereign states that have the responsibility to ensure that all people have access to it. These big companies like Vivendi, Suez and Aquas de Barcelona are there to make profit and not for service to the people. They are there to monopolize (“they have the ability to influence the market price of water services) (MIT 1986:286) the service delivery of this resource, as water supply will now be transferred from a state monopoly to a private sector monopoly.

People living in poorer areas, particularly those living in slums are left without access to safe drinking water. They cannot manage to dig wells to get underground water as digging a well is expensive and that underground water is often polluted.

The second story concerns an emerging farmer who also had a problem in obtaining water for his farm:



CASE STUDY 5

One emerging farmer at the Shikundu Village, in Limpopo Province, of the Republic of South Africa sharing his frustration with the researcher concerning accessing ground water says:

“In attempting to solve the problem of the scarcity of water for my small farm, I decided to spare some money for a borehole. It took me more than ten (10) years to raise the amount of R30 000 for this project.

I finally managed to have a borehole erected. I was now happy that the problem of water had come to an end, and that I will be able to recover the money I spent on the borehole, only to receive a statement from water affairs department charging me the water I pumped with my borehole. This has taken me back to my initial problem”.

This research is meant to mobilize and raise awareness to the church and its stakeholders that access to water is one of the basic-human rights for all living creatures and ecosystem, earth should have (Gen 9:8-17). The research is aimed at lobbying them to find ways to protect water and to ensure that everybody has access to it in an equitable way including all the other creatures on earth.

2.7 PEOPLE’S PERSPECTIVE ON WATER

Perspective on the value of water changes considerably from one society to the other, from culture to culture, and from one time period to the next. The author grew up in a very fertile area in the



Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa. Here people could grow anything without the use of fertilizers, if we had water.

Rain came only every three years so we had to get water from rivers and hand-dug wells. Wells would go dry if not carefully managed by the whole community, which depended on them for survival. So water was used only for what was really essential to the household, that is, cooking, drinking, washing, and weekly showers, so that we would have enough for livestock and gardens.

Water was so precious to us! Stewardship of water left a lasting impression on those of us who lived in the area. Wasting water, and misusing it, were two important taboos, which children were taught from an early age. The author grew up to learn that respect for water was one of the values that held our community together. It brought solidarity and cohesion so that, despite the scarcity of water, no one died of thirst.

The researcher has lived in modern societies for many years now. In these societies, one has seen that water has been “tamed” for the convenience, comfort and enjoyment of people. With the help of technology, water comes to some homes and other public places in abundance particularly in the white communities. Environmentalists have put much effort into conscientizing urbanites to use it with moderation, but how effective can such a campaign be, given the consumer mentality that measures quality of life by purchasing power? “If I can afford to pay for a bath twice a day, why should I settle for a shower once a day?”



In addition to domestic overuse of water, there is industrial exploitation of water, e.g. building dams and mills. One sees total disrespect and arrogance when water – river, sea or ocean, which is home to a myriad of living creatures is used as a dumping place for industrial and toxic waste. There is also increasing overuse of water for entertainment, e.g., swimming pools, fountains and golf courses.

As part of modern society and sharing in its responsibility, there is what one would call “domestication of water.” Water is tamed and exploited for its energy, and life-giving and sustaining quality. As in all forms of domestication – human, animal, natural element – domestication of water is exploitative, disrespectful and abusive. As in all forms of domestication, it creates ripples throughout the ecosystem. One of these is the exploitation of weaker communities through privatization of water system.

Looking at Africa in particular, one needs to be aware that many African countries have experienced the destructive effects of drought in the past few years. Such a situation could be blamed on climatic changes, but human responsibility towards care of the environment cannot be overlooked.

Deforestation in search of arable land, for instance, caused desertification in countries where demographic growth had increased exponentially. Where there is no forest, rain is also scarce. In some places, deforestation precipitated the clogging and eventual “death” of rivers due to slit formation from soil erosion. The use of hand-dug wells, if not effectively supervised,



may also cause desertification due to the depletion of underground water that irrigates soil from beneath.

On the other hand, there is another African reality that needs to be considered and discussed among us. In traditional Africa, water is given an important spiritual role. In many countries, traditional cultures see water as the medium through which life and healing flow to, and within, the community. Water is also the medium used for the giving of blessings. It is used in many religious rites, thereby symbolizing life in abundance.

However, it is also common for some communities to worship water springs, lakes and rivers. One might argue that people worship spirits dwelling in the water, and not the water itself. But in some communities, the distinction between spirits and water is unclear. In many cases, as a place or object of worship, water becomes inaccessible to the community. Because of religious taboos associated with the worship of water, community development work is often hampered: for example, water cannot be used for irrigation or even for consumption.

How do the church, address issues of water? Does the church have a simple answer to this complex problem? Will the church be able to come up with clear directions on how to address these issues within a limited time? The church needs to be realistic and see her task in perspective. Consultations at the sub-regional and national levels should be done.



From this perspective, the author sees a need to address faith-based organisations approach to the issues of water. This means inquiring as to how one's faith informs the way one addresses these issues. In our case, it is to inquire as to what value, if any, does the Christian faith assign to water, and what does Christian faith say about human responsibility in relation to water? What the author attempts doing is to draw a broad picture of the biblical perspective that forms the basis of Christian teaching on water.

2.8 THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATION FOR WATER AS GIFT AND RIGHT

The biblical creation story in Genesis lays down some of the fundamental understandings of water. In the beginning the spirit of God was hovering over the water (Gen 1.2) even before creation began, signifying the fact that water is pre-creation source and becomes the basis for the creation that followed. Heaven and earth were called out of the waters (Gen 1.6-10). The waters were blessed with abundant living creatures (Gen 1.20-21).

God uses water to nourish and sustain creation, and gives it as a blessing on the whole of creation (Gen 1.20-23, 2.6.). Water becomes a means of God's creation. In other words, it is the lifeline of God's creation. It is also important to note that water can become a tool of destruction in the face of human wickedness (Gen 7.1-24) and ecological destruction e.g. the 2004 tsunami and Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The New Testament carries on this symbolical importance of water. John's gospel abounds in references to it. (Koester



2003:175-2006) During Jesus' baptism, water becomes the context of divine revelation (John 1.31-33). It is also considered to be purifying in nature, as it is closely identified with the Spirit of God. "Living water" (John 4.10) is another expression that needs our attention, as it signifies the new life, which Jesus promises. The gospel of John also narrates two important healing stories by the pool side (John 5:1-9 & 9:1-14).

The purpose of this brief biblical overview is to highlight the creational thinking that underlines the significance of water in human communities as life-giver and sustainer of this complex ecosystem. It is important for us, as Christians, to recognize this aspect of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The presence of water ensures life and the absence of it spells death. In other words, water comes to represent the divine among creation.

In the Judeo-Christian faith, water plays a primordial and central role. Scripture, i.e. both the Old and the New Testaments, speak of water in a manner quite astonishing to us today. Water is more than one of the natural elements essential for our existence. It has a special meaning in Christian spirituality.



One could write the whole theology, and ethics, based on water, but the author chooses to write briefly about three biblical themes on water among many others. These three themes are selected to crystallize for us how scripture understands and speak on water, and to help us move into the ethical implications from faith perspective. The three themes are water and God, water and life and water, a gift of life. In

2.8.1 WATER AND GOD

In Christian theological reflection, creation begins with the spirit of God “brooding over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). Later, drought becomes a symbol and image of divine judgement (Isaiah 33:9), and the eschatological hope of the prophets comes to be expressed through the promise that rivers will spring up in the desert (Isaiah 43:19). Communities experience threat not only through the absence of water but when there is too much, as in sea level rise, and when it is impure as a result of inadequate sanitation. For the Christian community these images are further developed in baptism where water becomes the image of renewal, of promise, and of hope.

According to the creation story in Genesis, time began with the creation of light. Before there was light, water was already in the embrace of God’s spirit. Before everything else was created, water was already with God in the beginning, in other words, creation began with water.



2.8.2 WATER AND LIFE

According to biblical cosmogony, it was in the womb of water that time and space were formed to allow for life to unfold. There was water in the heavens above and water in the deep below (Gen 1:6-8, 8:2) being thus surrounded by water depicts a depth of great mystery, beauty (cosmos, and both security and precariousness).

Water is therefore the cradle and source of life, and one of the most potent bearers of cultural and religious meanings. Christian theological reflection has its roots in these two observations. Life in all its form is impossible without water. It was only the development of planetary conditions that allowed for the presence of large quantities of water in its liquid state that made possible the emergence of life on earth. Without water and its particular qualities, biological life as we know it would be impossible. Water is a precondition for life, a given and a gift from God.

Water is a symbol of life. The Bible affirms water as the cradle of life, an expression of God's grace in perpetuity for the whole of creation (Gen. 2:54ff.). It is a basic condition for all life on Earth (Gen. 1:2ff) and is to be preserved and shared for the benefit of all creatures and the wider creation. Water is the source of health and well-being and requires responsible action from us human beings, as partners and priests of Creation (Rom. 8:19ff., Rev. 22). As churches, we are called to participate in the mission of God to bring about a new creation where life in abundance is assured to all



(John 10:10; Amos 5:24). It is therefore right to speak out and to act when the life-giving water is pervasively and systematically under threat.

It is for this reason that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches describes water as “God’s Gift for life”. Water is central to the conditions of life on earth and the survival of all creatures on our planet, from the moment of conception to the second of death. The critical nature of this resource has become clearer in discussion and research about global warming, climate change, endangered species, encroaching aridity and salinity, diseases and conflict (Fisher 2006:10).

The question to ask is: “Why should water be equated to life?” Water, to all living things is very vital for various reasons. Water relates to both spirituality and geopolitics. Faith symbols and sacraments nurture our souls while safe drinking water ensures our physical survival.

The life of nearly every creature on earth depends on water for survival. Fisher puts it succinctly that: “At sunset, a chirping bird, an opening rosebud, a friendly dog receiving us home, a hug from our friends and for those we love. All of these moments need water to occur. Sunsets are more beautiful with some light clouds and there are no clouds without water; as there are no birds, no flowers, no human kind without water. Life as we know it, is just not possible without water” (2006:47).



Water was there even before life was. “In the beginning of creation, when God made heaven and earth, the earth was without form and void, with darkness over the face of the abyss, and a mighty wind that swept over the surface of the water” (Genesis 1: 1-2).

Out of water God created life. No person can live without water including all living things. “God provided water so as to sustain all life”. It is out of this that the slogan “water is God’s gift for life is derived.” This gift should be respected by creation in appreciation. It should not be wasted but preserved at all cost because it sustains all living creatures. It makes the world beautiful. Where there is no water there is no life. When one saves water, one is saving life. Everybody should have to learn to be water wise, meaning that people must use water sparingly and responsibly, i.e. not pollute it, waste it, etc.

In all ages, water has been precious and people have expressed appreciation to the almighty God for the provision of water, more especially in times of need such as drought etc. People as recorded in the book of Numbers here below, became excited over the wells because they knew that they were going to live again:

***“Well up, spring water!
Greet it with song,
The spring unearthed by the princess,
Laid open by the leaders of the people
With sceptre and with mace,***



A gift from the wilderness” (Numbers 21:18).

God’s greatest gift to creation is the gift of water. He initiated water as gift on the day of creation. This is demonstrated in the divine plan of the universe. It is for this same reason that water was given as a gift of life that human being should trust in Him the giver of life rather than trusting on human beings.

The statement: No water-No life is so significant in the life of all living things on our earth. Nothing will have life on this earth without water. The most serious thing that can happen to life on this earth is the absence of water. As such, many people equate the rainfall to ‘a sign of God’s favour and goodness’ (The new Bible Dictionary 1980:1317), and the absence of it is regarded as a curse on the people.

To symbolize this, water is used for several reasons. Christians see water as God’s blessing and of spiritual refreshment. The prophet Jeremiah describes God as “the fountain of living waters (Jer. 17: 13), water is very significantly in the entire Bible. Priests were washed during their consecration. The Levites as well as the chief priests went through the removal of ceremonial defilement by the use of water. Water is good, it gives life but at times we all fear water.

Taking into account, the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red sea, the 2004 Tsunami and 2005 Hurricane Katrina, we could also say that water could pose danger to the human



life. People are drowned when the rain falls beyond expectation. Lives and property are at times lost in very heavy down pour. Water is very important to the human life, but if not properly managed it can cause great havoc.

Without water, there would be no life. Most advanced countries depend on the electrical energy derived from water. This is the energy used in the big industries. For this energy to be renewed, there is the water cycle, which helps to keep the water flowing.

Through this we have “the water from the oceans and other exposed bodies being evaporated by the sun, formed into clouds, returned to earth as precipitation, and then flows once again from the high ground into the ocean (Friedman 1982:343). This way, it can easily be said that water movement is very cyclical, and it enhances the importance of the life-giving element of water.

Human community is therefore dependent on water, not just physically, but socially and culturally. In the scriptures we see the identification of particular cultures with the rivers from which their sustenance is drawn. When the people “refuse the gentle water of Shiloah” (Isaiah 8:6), we are being told that they have forgotten their divine vocation. The consequence of this is a judgement lived out in exile beside the wrong river (Ps. 137).



This correlation between culture and the water systems beside which people live, and in relationship to which they gain their livelihood, provides a basis for the church's solidarity with Indigenous People and, indeed, with all peoples who are displaced from their home and alienated from the waters that have traditionally given them life.

To show the fragility of the human habitat the Psalmist sings of God having "spread out the earth on the waters" and calls on the congregation to "give thanks to the Lord for God's steadfast love endures for ever" (Ps 136:6). Water is brought to the fore; and sustains life, as we know it.

2.9 CONFLICT OVER FRESH WATER

Access to fresh water supplies is becoming an urgent matter across the planet. The survival of 1.2 billion people is currently in jeopardy due to lack of adequate water and sanitation. Unequal access to water causes conflicts between and among people, communities, regions and nations. Biodiversity is also threatened by the depletion and pollution of fresh water resources or through impacts of large dams, large-scale mining and hot cultures (irrigation) whose construction often involves the forced displacement of people and disruption of the ecosystem. The integrity and balance of the ecosystem is crucial for the access to water. Forests are an indispensable part in the ecosystem of water and must be protected. The crisis is aggravated by climate change and further deepened by strong economic interests. Water is increasingly treated as a commercial good, subject to market conditions.



Scarcity of water is also a growing source of conflict. Agreements concerning international water courses and river basins need to be more concrete, setting out measures to enforce treaties made and incorporating detailed conflict resolution mechanisms in case disputes erupt.

Vandana Shiva, a well-known scientist and activist from India has published a book titled *Water Wars*. In this book, Vandana analyzes the erosion of communal water rights in different parts of the world, and points to the increasing number of conflicts concerning access to water, e.g. “the failure of the basin’s three countries of Iraq, Syria and Turkey to reach water-sharing agreements has created an atmosphere of competition and mistrust that could breed future conflict (Postel 1997:80).

We see many cases of post-modern society and governments maliciously beginning to fight for control over water resources and against the sell out of public water services to private companies. Postel makes the example of the Middle East who have heard more than one leader voice the possibility of going to war over the scarcity of water resources. “Talk of a water crisis in the Middle East has become almost legendary with some of the highest population growth rates in world and heavy reliance on irrigation for their agricultural productivity. Middle East countries have much at stake when, it comes to distributing the regions supplies of water. Enough leaders have spoken of the potential for wars over water that new warnings have begun to lack bite “(1997:74). Another example is that of the former USSR president Michael Gorbachev who told the Third world Water Forum in Kyoto that



failure to reverse the global water crisis could lead to “real conflict” in the future.

Mr Gorbacher warned that all countries in river basins would have to co-operate to prevent tensions and those legal powers must be made tougher to forestall any potential flash point.

(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2867583.stm>)

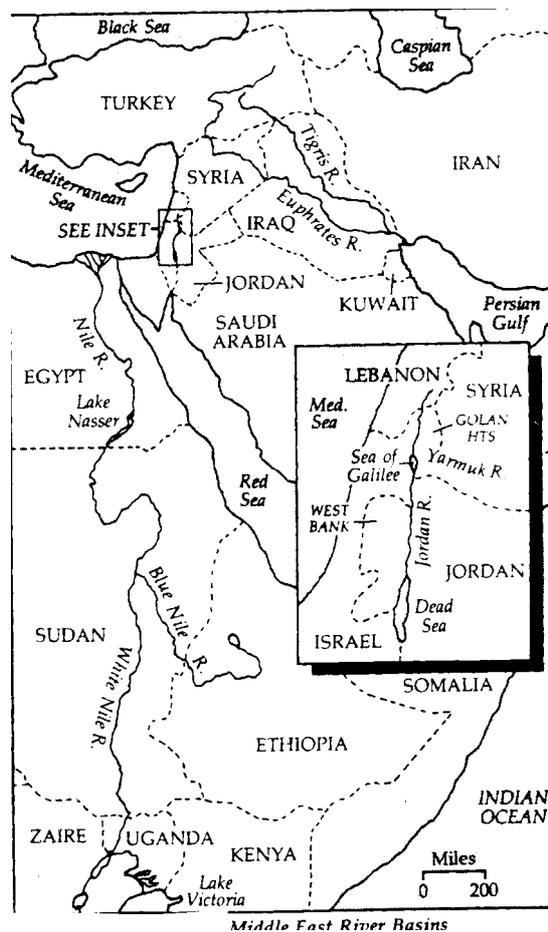
This is so because countries share waters of the rivers bordering them e.g. Israel, Jordan and the occupied West Bank who share waters of the Jordan River basin. If a country near a river’s source begins using more water, this lowers the amount that reaches countries further downstream.

In Southern Africa the following countries share the following rivers, which might “foster either an unprecedented degree of cooperation or a combustible level of conflict, “(Postel 1997:74). Following are River basin of SADC and the Middle East Regions:

RIVER BASIN	BASIN STATES	BASIN AREA (KM2)
Buzi	Mozambique, Zimbabwe	30,000
Cunene	Angola, Namibia	110,000
Cuvelai	Angola, Namibia	125,000
Incomati	Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe	54,000
Limpopo	Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe	385,000
Maputo	Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland	34,000
Nata	Botswana, Zimbabwe	n.d
Okavango	Angola, Botswana, Namibia	585,000
Orange	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa	950,000

Pungue	Mozambique, Zimbabwe	32,000
Rovuma	Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania	167,000
Save	Mozambique, Zimbabwe	100,000
Umbeluzi	Mozambique, Zimbabwe	5,500
Zambezi	Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	1,420,000
Congo (Zaire)	Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia	3,800,000

Source: UN 1978; Ohlsson 1995; Heyns 1995; Conley 1996.



Around the world, competition for water is increasing everyday particularly among irrigators and between agriculture, industry,



urban water supply and other needs. It is for this reason that people get killed fighting over water (Bruns and Meinzen – Dick).

The first and therefore often publicized case was the resistance of the people of Cochabamba in Bolivia to the contract between their local government and the US Bechtel Corporation. Despite all odds and with much international solidarity, the people of Cochabamba succeeded and pushed the corporation out of the contract. But after that they had to start the struggle to find a financially and politically viable basis for a communal water project.

The Southern African countries of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Moçambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe are largely dependent on rainfall and river runoff for water supply. In most cases, every major perennial river in these countries is shared by two countries or more, hence disputes are very often inevitable. Mozambique and South Africa for an example share rivers like Limpopo and Incomati:

“One unusual aspect of the dispute involves the connection between the dispute over the shared rivers between the two countries and those rivers that flow through the Kruger National Park in South Africa along the border with Mozambique of particular concern to the Mozambican government is the operation of a number of South African dams and increased agricultural withdrawals on tributaries of the Limpopo, Injaka, and Incomati rivers effectively cease flowing by the time they reach the border “(1998:120).



Following are tributaries to the Limpopo and Incomati Rivers shared by South Africa and Mocambique:

River basin	basin area (km²)	Natural flow (mcm/yr)
Levubu River	3,568	395
Letaba River	13,400	553
Shingwendzi River	5,400	78
Olifants River	54,575	1,950
Sabie River	7,096	1,950
Crocodile	10,526	1,238

Source : Breen et al. 1994

The three countries of Botswana, Namibia and Angola share the use of the Okavango River resulting in disputes over the use of its water for an example:

“Botswana proposed a major project called Southern Okavango integrated water Development water Development project. The project aimed at providing water for irrigators and urban users, livestock, and, in particular, a large mine. This was refused by the International Union for the conservation of Nature (IUCN) which was critical about its environmental implications” (1998:121)

Again, “more recently, the relationship between Namibia and Botswana has been strained by Namibian plans to construct a 250 kilometer pipeline to divert water from the Okavango River to eastern Namibia and its capital Windhoek. Namibia intends to build an emergency pipeline to connect their Eastern National Water Carrier with the Okavango to help deal with severe drought and anticipated water shortages. This development would extract about 20mcm of water from the Okavango for urban water needs, though some plans have called for as much as 100 mcm per year” (1998:122)



Another well-publicized conflict arose in South Africa when the water supplies and distribution were privatized. The bank wanted to recover the cost of the loans given to the apartheid government to finance the very expensive Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The French company Suez Lyonnais introduced water meters and new pricing schemes, people insisted on their guaranteed right to water.

The Johannesburg case played a prominent role in the encounters between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) Program, the World Bank and the IMF. In co-operation with scientist and activists from a local university and the townships, an alternative pricing scheme was presented that would allow the financing of free access to water for the poorest.

We could go around the globe and identify similar stories from Buenos Aires in Argentina, Manila in the Phillipines, Grenoble in France, and many other cities. The WCC delegation to the United Nations Twelfth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development shared the following examples.

- Local farmers and villagers in Kerala, India, were met with mass arrest in 2003 when they tried to protest the unsustainable withdrawal of up to a million gallons of water daily from sixty-five area bore holes by the Coca-Cola Company. Nevertheless, persistent community pressure, and a supportive local council, led to a ban on further withdrawal until the arrival of June 2004 monsoon season.



Coca-Cola is appealing the ruling (Rogate R Mshana Washington DC, WCC Publication 2004:46-61).

- In Brazil, civil society organizations are drawing on grants from local banks and the government to build rainwater cisterns with the objective of creating 1,000,000 low cost water facilities for poor communities (2004:73).
- Civil society groups are demonstrating that an eco-village model can transform waste into renewable energy and channel domestic water to restore the environment. Protecting the Nakivubo wetlands in Uganda in this way can, through natural processes, carry out a task that normally would cost USD 2 million annually in traditional sewage purification services (www.publicintegrity.org/water/report.aspx).
- An international network of social groups, environmental organizations, women's networks, trade unions and faith-based communities is mobilizing a campaign to prevent water from being included in world Trade Organisation negotiations as "goods and service" (The Economist 2004:19th-25 July).
- Michigan (USA) Citizens for Water Conservation and other plaintiffs were successful in convincing a judge in 2003 to force the Nestle Corporation to terminate withdrawals of spring water in Mecosta Country on the grounds that Nestlé's water operations unlawfully demised lakes, streams, and



wetlands (CBC News – in depth water: (March 20
www.cbc.ca/news/features/water).

2.10 THE AFRICAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER

The abundance of rain, according to the African culture is the sign of wealth and prosperity as well as a blessing from God. The African economy is based on agriculture and therefore the presence of adequate water supply is very important. Whereas the absence of water, drought, may be associated with poverty, famine and hunger and punishment from gods and God.

Irrigation development offers a range of possibilities for poverty alleviation, and the budgetary implications of many of the options are modest. A new institutional framework for water management and allocation will facilitate irrigation development through creating spaces for the representation and self-development of small-scale irrigators.

What is required are clear policy principles and relevant information to guide provincial Departments of Agriculture and local authorities. The discussion documents produced so far represent only a preliminary move towards policy formulation.

It is interesting to note that in South Africa, even in Europe, almost all the villages, and towns, including big cities have been established along rivers. This was intended to be near water for domestic purpose, agricultural and for the domestic animals. This eliminated the need to draw water from distances. The other



contributory factor is that at that time land was not owned by anybody hence a decision to settle in a particular area did not cause problems. People could move at will to follow the water supply.

The concept of privatization of water system has not been thought of as water has always been regarded as a gift from God. For decades, water has been drawn from rivers and therefore there was no reason for it to be sold.

2.11 WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

In South Africa, infrastructure services such as communications, power, transportation, provision of water and sanitation are central to both the activities of households and a nation. It should be borne in mind that development in the old South Africa had ensured that rural areas were not provided with such facilities.

“In 1996, virtually all white and coloured households had running water and flush toilets on site, as well as electricity. In contrast, less than half of African households had these amenities. By 2004, half of African households had water on site and three-quarter use electricity for lighting. For most services, the share of African households in total recipients had risen to two-thirds, up from about half eight years earlier. Still, African communities continued to lag substantially behind” (2007:147).

In exceptional cases in which these were provided, these were prepared communally and the use there of was limited. In some



cases, these facilities such as water were even shared with domestic animals, and it was always contaminated with water-related diseases such as cholera etc.

In order to ensure that growth is consistent with poverty alleviation, infrastructural development needs to be extended to all sectors of the population; access to at least minimum infrastructure services is one of the essential criteria for defining welfare. Links between poverty and infrastructural services in rural South Africa are always easy to define because they are directly linked. Access to utilities in these parts of the country has always not been an issue with the government development strategies as the initial intention was to develop urban South Africa and leave the rural homelands to the tribal or ethnic leadership.

Basic infrastructure was developed as during that time the homeland system was intended for cheap labour for the industries in the urban areas. The dilemma, in which the new government finds itself in, is the enormous imbalance in the access to basic infrastructure such as water.

While the big cities, particularly former white suburbs and settlements had access to quality infrastructure, some rural areas, even up to this stage, still do not know what it means to have electricity and running water in the house. Those fortunate enough have access to water in the streets where the whole neighbourhood come to draw water and it can only be used for washing of clothes and cooking as it is not clean to be used for drinking.



Moreover, the different infrastructure sectors have different effects on improving quality of life and reducing poverty: access to reliable energy, clean water and sanitation helps reduce mortality and morbidity and saves time for productive tasks; transport enhances access to goods, services and employment; communications allows access to services, and information on economic activities.

Redress of current imbalances in infrastructural services requires considerable investment in the short- and medium-term, despite fiscal constraints. Resolving this fiscal dilemma - generating sufficient public and private investment without incurring excessive public debt is essential in order to secure the growth and poverty reduction linkages of infrastructure investments.

The absence of potable water and sanitation services affect the health and well-being of the population at large in innumerable ways. It makes people vulnerable to poor health, which reduces the quality of life and productive capacity of people, and burdens health care and social welfare services. Provision of dependable water supplies can have a strong positive effect on food security and income generation for rural women.

Substantial livelihood gains are likely to be made by releasing labour time spent on obtaining water, and providing water for small farming and other enterprises. In a report compiled for the office of the South African Executive Deputy President, and the inter-Ministerial committee for Poverty Inequality, the following facts are observed: only 21 % of households have piped water, and only 28% have sanitation facilities.



In rural areas, more than 80% of poor households have no access to piped water or sanitation, and 74% of rural African households need to fetch water on a daily basis. Most people without access to basic supply and sanitation services live in rural areas, which is why the Community Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (CWSS) of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF) focuses on these areas.

The DWAFF vision is to achieve a situation where there is equitable access to water on a permanent basis at a minimum level. The CWSS aimed to provide water supplies to 90% of the currently non-serviced population by 2004, and since its inception in 1994 has provided basic water supply only to 1.3 million people.

Many actors (government, parastatal, non-government and private) are involved in the delivery of water supply and sanitation services:

- (a) the DWAFF sets and supports the achievement of basic norms and standards for service provision;
- (b) the CWSS (initially funded from the RDP budget but now by the DWAFF) uses local governments (or if local government lacks capacity, community-based organisations (CBOs and NGOs) to implement water supply and sanitation projects in rural areas;
- (c) the Water Boards traditionally deliver bulk supplies of purified water for urban and industrial use, but are now being called upon to provide water directly to consumers and provide support services to local structures handling water supply;
- (d) local government carries primary responsibility for



provision of water supplies and sanitation, but in many cases local authorities do not have the capacity to effectively deliver and manage water services; and

- (e) the Mvula Trust is a non-profit organisation, funded largely by the DWAF, which finances and implements water supply and sanitation projects to rural communities.

Despite all this progress in water provision, however, the problem of non-payment for services is there as people particularly the poor are not able to pay. Many municipalities face severe financial problems, and improving income from service charges would help to stabilise the position of local government. Sanitation delivery at certain provinces like Mpumalanga has just taken off. There has been an important process of involving different government departments and setting of policies for the provision of sanitation services.

Although water is treated as a common good in South Africa, water services have been privatized. Vivendi, Biwater and Saux are already active. The use of pre-paid metres is a source of concern especially in the low-income, particularly in the rural areas of the former homelands. Trade unions, especially the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) have been very vocal against privatization of water.



2.12 THE WHITE PAPER ON A NATIONAL WATER POLICY FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The White Paper on a National Water Policy for South Africa (1997) has recently been adopted. A new National Water Bill has been drafted, and a separate Water Services Bill has been prepared covering provision of water by local authorities. As a consequence of apartheid policies, distribution of access to water is as skewed as access to land, and the new water policy provides a framework and principles to redress present inequities.

Agriculture, which, as mentioned above, accounts for half the nation's water use, will have to re-evaluate its usage, and will have to pay a price for water that reflects its real economic, social and environmental cost. Water will be allocated through a new licensing system founded on achieving beneficial use in the public interest. Proposed new irrigation policy would found irrigation development on farmer management and participative planning, which would open up access to previously disadvantaged users of water for productive purposes.

The separation of water rights from title deeds to land will open access to those without freehold tenure, and the establishment of Water User Associations at a local level will provide for the effective representation of small farmers and community gardeners on irrigation schemes.

2.13 ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Everyone has a right to access to water. Governments have through conventions committed themselves to provide clean water



and sanitation for its citizens. They have the primary responsibility, which cannot be delegated to private organisation.

Women have a right to participate actively, meaning that they can take part in making decisions concerning their water needs. Everyone has a right to water, to make use of their own potential to live in dignity. Women and children have a right to the assistance they need to live full and productive lives. Governments have responsibility under international law to provide clean water and sanitation for its citizens.

Most recently however, with the onslaught on neo-liberal economic globalization and the prevalent market mentality sweeping across modern societies around the globe, the term “white gold” has been coined to indicate the potent market value of water as an indispensable but costly commodity. The world is therefore faced with another dimension of the issue, i.e., that of commercialization of water for private gain.

When water is turned into a commodity by private enterprises, the question of human rights, the basic right to water need to be addressed. Looming in the background is the danger of regional and international wars to compete for control over water.

People are encouraged to stand up for and claim their rights to water and life. They are claim-holders and have a right to claim assistance that is relevant to their specific needs. Churches must engage with governments and get involved with politics in defending the rights of those who don't have access to water.



Through diakonia, the church should be concerned with assuring that people's rights are respected, including their right to water resource.

The statement by an ecumenical team to the United Nations' 12 Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), put it very clearly that "The centrality of water to life, and the experience of water as a gift are two sources of our affirmation of water as a basic human right. Just as the Biblical Jubilee declared that land belonged to God and not to any particular individual, so we could affirm that water should be part of global common goods.

To treat water as a gift from God and a human right implies that clean freshwater should be available to meet the basic needs of all, rather than be treated as a private commodity to be bought and sold" (19-30 April 2004). The issue on water as Human Right will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

2.13.1 REGIONAL, LOCAL AND GLOBAL WATER IMBALANCES

The question of the scarcity of water is not a global issue. Globally water is enough to meet the needs of every human being. This is also true at the continental level, except that per capital there exist large regional disparities.

Gleick gives an example that "in Europe, each million cubic meters of water available per year is shared by over 150 people, on average, while in South America only 25 people must share that much water.



Comparison with Asia shows even more extreme differences” (1997:4). This difference in the usage of water is even bigger in Africa as compared to Europe because of the difference in population.

This difference in the scarcity of water is more marked at the national level, even from one country to the next. This difference indicates imbalances between the overall availability and the growth in need and demand, causing implications such as countries not able to produce enough food they require.

2.13.2 THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NEED AND DEMAND

Basic need for water by ordinary citizens cannot be compared to the demand by big water consumption agencies such as the golf clubs, the water sport and other affluent users of water. The ‘need’ for water exists independently of economic or political status and cannot be manipulated. The difference between the two: need and demand, is that those in need have no power or choice whereas those who demand have power and choices.

The 1997 Mar del Plata Conference officially recognized the need for provision for the basic human needs. It defined the basic human need for domestic purposes and quantifies it as ‘a basic water requirement’.

Demand for water can be changed and even reduced without necessarily diminishing the overall utility for the individual user of water.



2.13.3 WATER A FIRST THING IN DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY

- Water resources must now be recognized as a major determining factor for socio-economic development.
- When human demands on water were low and when hydrological cycle behaviour and the climate were thought to be fairly predictable, water was the last thing to be considered in the developments decision-making.
- Today, because of demand and pressure on the use of water, decision-making on water has been changed. Water has become the first thing in decision-making in development.

It is now imperative that decision makers in all sectors, and particularly those responsible for socio-economic planning, financial analysis and security, make development decisions with explicit attention to water reservoirs. Management of water and environmental issues are now high on the diplomatic agenda.

The effects of these developments can be generally summarised in the following points:

2.14 MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

The motivation for consultation process is for the people to be integrally part of determining the development of their communities and their lives. It is an empowering and ongoing process where



people, most of whom have been politically, socially and economically marginalized in the past are given a voice. This opportunity to articulate their needs leads not only to a growing sense of their own role as agents of change in their village, but also makes planning more collaborative and increases chances of successful implementation and maintenance.

Good and accountable governance in water is key for sustainable water services in economic, social and ecological dimensions. This is only achievable with transparency and participation. If users can take an informed decision about the service level they want, they are more likely to be able to pay for it. If consumers are informed about the cost and can take influence on the design of tariff structures and subsidies they can better contribute to the costs.

Water planning and decision-making should therefore be democratic, ensuring representation of all affected parties and fostering participation of affected interests. Communities as the rightful custodian of water should not be left out in water management. People need to be taught that the management of water resource is not exclusively the responsibility of governments. It must involve full public consultation and decisions from the lowest levels of water users in planning and implementation.

The author shares the same view with Lundqvist and Gleick that: "Involvement of users and sharing of responsibilities and management tasks is a prerequisite for proper choice of technological and organisational approaches. Awareness should



be raised to communities that they are needed for augmentation, management, and equitable use of water resource.

Water bodies need to be handed over to appropriate groups within the communities, i.e. women's group, water-user associations and others instead of private companies. Participation in decision-making produces more efficient and more sustainable use of water. When communities influence or control the decisions that affect them, they will have greater stake in the outcome and are more committed to ensuring success.

2.15 WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY FORA

It is the task of the church leadership, municipalities and other stakeholders to initiate discussions with village residents. This will ensure that a wide range of community voices form part of the very first contact with the municipality. This effort will in turn offer a guarantee that the process is as inclusive as possible.

The ideas and desires of local leadership, established development forums and traditional leaders are important, as it is often these people that have a wholistic sense of developments within their community. It is also important to discover smaller groups' perceptions. The voices of women's groups, entrepreneurial groups, stokvels and growers' associations should shape an idea of the village commitment to water management.

This process, using participatory and inclusive methods, will enable the community to see their role as central to the success of the project. They will also realize that they have the ability to



manage their own scheme. This empowering idea will make people comfortable with solving their own problems. Experience has shown that when people go through a process of problems identification and when they discover for themselves linkages between problems, they start to feel ownership of the problems and responsibility for finding solutions.

2.16 WATER MANAGEMENT AND INDIVIDUAL USERS

It is also important to gather information and include people that are not organized and have generally remained marginalized or 'voiceless': women, people living with HIV and AIDS, the elderly, the very poor, and people with disabilities. These groups have a particular interest in a good water service and are likely to benefit significantly from an O&M system that function to serve the whole community. Thus all these people need to be actively involved as far as is reasonably possible.

It is the researcher's view that individuals should be involved in the decision-making processes surrounding the protection and regulation, supply and management of water.

Individuals should also participate in easing the global water crisis by changing certain household practices such as finding and stopping wasteful leaks, recycling waste water and installing water efficient devices such as shower heads and dual flush toilets.

The best way to ensure that people are eager to be involved in their community's development is by including them in decision-making processes, i.e. in identifying solutions and jointly planning actions. In this case, these actions may include:



- Opening and closing taps
- Keeping taps clean
- Reporting breakdowns to the leaders and authorities as well as
- Active monitoring role for the wider community after selection of a village water committee.

2.17 WATER MANAGEMENT AND WOMEN

The WHO estimates that 80 percent of all sickness in the world is attributable to unsafe water and sanitation. Waterborne diseases kill 3.4 million people, mostly children, annually. Millions more are sickened with diarrhoea, malaria, arsenic poisoning, trachoma, and hepatitis – diseases that are preventable by access to clean water and health-care information (Postel 1997:21). Women bear the main burden of caring for those who are ill. This does not only limits their income-generating activities and education, but medical costs associated with family illness, increase household debt and deepen poverty.

Poor women, as managers of household and community water and related responsibilities, have been first to signal problems with privatization of water system, including astronomical price hikes, in some cases, consuming a large portion of monthly income; water cut-offs due to unpaid bills; lack of accountability mechanisms for users; deterioration of water quality; and hygiene issues.

In some instances, poor and working women have been forced to decide between paying for water and feeding their children. Protests against the sale of public water services to multinational



corporations have been mounted across the globe, from Bolivia to Ukraine, and even in the USA.

The water crisis in Africa has led to shortage in food production. Household food security is undermined in many African countries today. Women and children continue to bear the burden of hunger and food insecurity. Many of the African communities depend on herbal medicine, especially women for minor illnesses. With the disappearing of forests due to deforestation, women and children are more vulnerable. This has been exacerbated by the water crisis.

Beyond the gender question of water is the foreseen issue of water-related conflicts, especially with the drying up of rivers due to deforestation and global warming. This is not only about water but also about pastures. This has already been seen where the pastoralist communities of the Karamoja in Uganda, the Turkana and the Pokots have crossed over borders in search of pastures.

There is also a need for gender-sensitive education on proper sanitation and hygiene practices and this must be made available to men as well as women. With limited investment, education could have a tremendous impact on common waterborne diseases, such as malaria and cholera. Currently, most health and hygiene education programs are aimed at women, as caregivers and managers of the household.

Women are very important in the management of water resource. Adrian van Dis puts it very well in saying: "If women are left



behind in the development of a nation, then it is as if you are trying to help a bird fly with only one wing”. “The best approach to protecting the world’s ecosystems is ensuring that women are involved in integrated land and water use planning” (The Ministered Declaration of the 2nd World Water Forum 2000).

“Water policies and water management systems should be gender-sensitive. They should reflect the division of labour – paid and unpaid – between men and women in all settings related to water” (The 2001 International Conference on Freshwater, Bonn, Germany).

In most cultures in Africa, women and men have different roles and responsibilities in the use and management of water. Women and girls are responsible for collecting water for cooking, cleaning, health and hygiene, and if they have access to land, they need water for growing food.

In rural areas, women walk long distances to fetch water, often spending four (4) to five (5) hours per day carrying heavy containers and suffering acute physical problems. In arid and drought-prone areas the challenge is compounded. In urban areas, women and girls can spend hours waiting in lines to collect intermittent water supplies at standpipes. The inordinate burden of fetching water inhibits women and girls’ involvement in other activities such as education, income generation, cultural and political involvement, and rest and recreation. (Postel 1997:21)

Conversely, men in rural areas almost never fetch water, and if they own or have access to land, their involvement with water is



related to agriculture or livestock. Furthermore, because men's work is considered as part of the productive economy of paid labor, it is generally seen more worthy of infrastructure investment. As a result, there may be infrastructure for irrigation, but not for safe drinking water within cartage distance or for other activities considered part of the care of the economy.

This limits women's engagement in a range of economic activities that depend on access to safe water, like the preparation of food and other products for local markets. The absence of women in decision-making positions results in the creation of policies that fail to address women's needs and concerns. Women's equal participation at all levels of decision-making is critical to achieving a more equitable provision of water and sanitation services.

2.18 WATER MANAGEMENT AND YOUNG PEOPLE

For the most part, young people have been left out of the decision-making process surrounding water accessibility. As young people will inherit the earth from the current decision-makers, it is of vital importance that their voice in management and distribution of water be heard.

Following are key players responsible for all decisions on water management while excluding young people:

- International Financial Institutions (IFIs),
- World Trade Organisation (WTO),
- Government of High-Income countries,
- Water Corporation, and
- Water Forums and Councils.



Young people's ability to exercise the right to water is therefore potentially threatened when water is treated as an economic good. Any payment for water services has to be based on the principle of equity, ensuring that these services, whether privately or publicly provided, are affordable for all, including the youth, and socially disadvantaged groups.

2.19 WATER MANAGEMENT AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The practice of excluding, marginalizing, overlooking or simply disrespecting persons with disabilities has been a feature of most societies and cultures. In many places persons with disabilities are the outcast of society and treated as such, stigmatised and isolated from decision-making even in issues that affect livelihood such as water management.

It is the author's view that persons with disabilities have the right to equality of opportunity and justice, and to full inclusion in all spheres of life. They therefore, have the potential to make a distinct contribution to local, national and regional development. It is the researcher's view that people with disabilities should not be left out in all decisions that affect their livelihood particularly in water management.



2.20 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Generally, water has become one of the points of global debate today. The ever increasing population and the insatiable consumer demands that the market makes on humanity, put heavy stress on natural resources, especially water, threatening global and regional food security and sufficiency. The researcher is of the same view with Gleick that: “The failure of the decade to completely satisfy basic human needs for water and water services was the result of rapid population growth, under investment, growing urbanization, and misdirected priorities.

Dependence on water is most direct and evident for a large, and in many countries the largest, group of poor people: the small holders. Because the land resources of poor farmers are typically very limited, a major income-generating strategy is to improve the agricultural output of their holdings through intensification.

Among the many factors that enable intensification, a crucial one is water in the form of year-round irrigation, supplementary irrigation, and water harvested and conserved with a range of water-management techniques. It improves yields, allows for better-yielding varieties, enables continuing production during the otherwise slack season, and, last but not least, reduces risks due to erratic rainfall.

Harvests used for household consumption and sale directly contribute to food security and fulfilment of monetary needs. More sustentative wealth creation, and even escaping income poverty through intensification, often depends on access to markets and rewarding prices. If market niches can be found, growing labor-



intensive, irrigated, high-value crops on small rural holdings, or homesteads, or peri-urban plots considerably improves incomes.

The extent of the problem means many governments; organisations and agencies must be involved in planning and implementing programs. Unfortunately, other social problems are often given higher priorities and rapid population growth makes it difficult to catch up with basic water needs” (1998:42).

One head of state’s words that if there were to be a third world war, it would be fought around the issue of Right to Water, assume that relevance in today’s global geo-political landscape. Water has been reduced to a mere commodity in the global market for the rich Multinational Companies (MNCs) to buy and exploit. This is because the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund made privatization of water system a condition for giving aid to developing countries resulting in the rising of water prices so as to attract investors.

Privatization of key public service sectors such as water resource are in many cases opposed by opposition political parties and civil society groups such as trade unions etc. As indicated, privatization of water resources has raised serious issues for the poor and the marginalized all over the world, especially in the South, causing problems such as scarcity of drinking water, pollution of water and soil, and destruction of agricultural sectors.

The researcher maintains that water is a gift of God and a fundamental human right. It should remain under public



responsibility and should not be traded. Governments must declare that water belongs to the earth and all species hence a fundamental human right. No one has the right to appropriate it for profit. It must be declared a public trust, and that all governments must enact legislation to protect the fresh water resources in their territories. An international legal framework on water is also needed. Ecumenical movements and other social movements share this view.

The World Bank, the IMF, and corporations along with some governments, favour the privatization process by trading water through three methods:

- (a) Complete sale of public water delivery and treatment systems to private corporations.
- (b) Long-term leases or concessions allowing corporations to take over the delivery of water services and collection of revenues.
- (c) Corporations contracted by government to manage water services for an administrative fee.

These institutions favour privatization of water services in the name of promoting efficiency in water delivery, forcing these three methods on the developing world. Uitto & Biswas attribute this policy shift to the fact that there is a generally disappointing performance on the side of the public sector and that there is mounting evidence that the private sector can indeed be instrumental in helping the sector develop more efficiently in the future.



In reality, privatization more often than not fulfils none of these promises, and instead creates a number of new problems. It is vulnerable to corruption and operates according to a profit-driven corporate agenda fundamentally incompatible with delivering of essential services. Private water companies are failing to provide citizens with safe and affordable water.

These companies seek to increase profit margins by cutting costs; hence privatization is always accompanied by lay-offs. Privatization therefore, does not allow the existence of the poor. As a result, the poor very often resort to getting water from shallow wells or stagnant pools that are easily contaminated with human and animal waste, resulting in waterborne diseases which account to an estimated 80 percent of all illness in developing countries (Postel 1997:21).

Water should remain a public trust, not a commodity. Governments and communities should manage its protection, consumption, and distribution. Precautions should be taken when governments make contracts with private companies. Through community involvement, increased transparency should solve issues of corruption. Structural Adjustment Programs and the current conditionalities in the Poverty Reduction Strategies PRSs) of the World Bank and the IMF, implicitly forcing poor countries to privatize water through blanket liberalization, should be resisted.

Where public-private partnership programs exist in water delivery, governments should ensure that people and the environment come before profit. People living in poverty, and the safeguard of



the environment, should be the main criteria in devising water management strategies, protection and consumption. In observing March 22 as World Water Day every year, water activists should continue to fight so that water remains in the public domain. Let criticisms levelled against public water delivery be corrected with specific proposals.

Churches and the ecumenical family should continue to demonstrate how public water management could be made efficient, leaving no space for criticism by water marketers. Struggles against privatization of water system are part of the struggle against neo-liberal globalization, which promotes private property and contracts.

The research puts it very clear on the fact that water is a free gift from God. It should neither be commercialized nor commodified, but should be distributed fairly to everyone.

Chapter three discusses the whole question of privatization strategies, its types including both arguments pro and against where it will be noticed that of all the social services, water is one service that cannot be commercialized nor commodified for profit.



CHAPTER THREE

3. PRIVATIZATION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Control over arable land, the seas and rivers, drinking water, oil gas and other natural resources is being gradually taken away from democratically elected powers, through economic liberalisation and privatization.

International agreements and WTO, IMF and World Bank contracts are determining how we deal with natural resources. Transnational corporations and the economic major powers, especially the United States of America (USA), are opposing international rules, which have been made to protect the environment. There is no court of appeal where we can take our complaints about the exploitation, deterioration and destruction of natural resources and genetic diversity.

This research is aimed at advocating that clear steps must be taken quickly in order to reduce commercializing natural resources for profit at the expense of the poorest of the poor who are left without basic social services necessary for their livelihood.

- Clear steps be taken that the industrialized nations reduce greenhouse gas emissions so as to alleviate the dangerous course of climate change. This rigorous and pro- active policy on climate change belongs in the political domain, and that it cannot be left to voluntary initiatives by economic players.



These industrialized nations are determined to stick to economic growth and exploitation, rather than conversion of their industries, energy conservation, or promotion of renewable energies, because setting limits on carbon Dioxide (co₂) emissions would curb economic development too much.

International agreements on reducing the ecological consequences of global economic activity are thus failing because of resistance by major industrial nations.

In this context, two facts are particularly disturbing:

- Ecological issues are playing only a secondary role in the current discussions criticizing globalization.
- The environment is becoming the object of negotiations, when it is supposed to be available at the lowest possible price, if not for free. The costs of measures to protect the environment are not entering into the calculations of corporations.

3.2 DEFINING PRIVATIZATION

The concept “privatization” is rather a broad term to define. Most simply, privatization is the transfer of assets or service delivery from the government to the private sector. Hanke simply defines privatization as “the transfer of assets and service functions from public to private hands” (1987:4).

From the British perspective, “privatization is generally used to mean the formation of a Companies Act and the subsequent sale



of at least 50 percent of the shares to private shareholders” (Beesley and Littlechild 1986:35).

The researcher understands privatization as a transfer of ownership and / or control of a company or an industry from the state sector to the market sector of the economy, often by selling government owned assets. Privatization therefore, runs a very broad range, sometimes leaving very little government involvement, or creating partnerships between government and private service providers where the government is still the dominant player.

Privatization is often assumed to entail commercialization and commodification, to the extent that the terms are, at times, used interchangeably. It requires change of ownership or handover of management, from the public to the private sector. Privatization is the accumulation of property and ownership of the right to exclude others from using it (Tanner 2005:34).

Furthermore, the term privatization could be interpreted as the process that involves the participation of private companies in the distribution and maintenance of public services, with the government infrastructure at various levels of agreement and not necessarily controlling the assets. There are ardent supporters and advocates of privatization as the norm and future of the world (Paul: December 1990).

This broader definition of privatization also includes a wide range of public-private partnerships, such as voucher systems. Creation



of federal corporations, quasi government organizations and government-sponsored enterprises is also filed under the category of privatization, though it is often difficult to tell where government begins or ends.

Privatization comes in many forms. The government withdrawal from the industry can either be partial or complete. In some instances, privatization covers any action that involves exposing the government to pressures of the commercial market place including privatization of water resource.

This idea of privatizing in order to prevent conflict and preserve “scarce resources” is a key to capitalism, since it also creates the scarce condition to make it competitive. Inequality is a by-product of this process. The market is for those who have purchasing power and not the impoverished.

In South Africa, privatization of state-owned industries is seen as a key plank of its Growth, Employment and Reconstruction Strategy (GEAR). Privatization policy is also seen by governments as one way to promote black economic empowerment (BEE) as Buhlungu and his co-writers put it: “and just as the National Party (NP) used them to promote the development of Afrikaner Capital, so the ANC today view them as key instruments for Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)” (2007:201).

Against this background, state-owned services such as essential services like electricity, water transport, etc, are put into the hands of private investors. The example of the South African’s Municipal



Infrastructure Investment Unit (MIIU) is given, where it is “revealed to have set up by Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) through a private consultancy PADCO. This MIIU has always been touted as a Section 21 by the South African government which aimed at helping municipalities find innovative solutions to critical problems regarding the financing and management of essential municipal services such as water supply, sanitation, waste, energy and transport” (Water privatization/water.... 2007/01/12).

Today, water privatization is a big issue in many African countries and other developing countries such as Asia, Latin America, etc. As already indicated in chapter two of this dissertation, investors say privatization brings efficiency, while opponents say it hurts the poor who are left with no say in the matter.

3.3 DIFFERENT METHODS OF PRIVATIZATION

Following are variety of alternative service delivery techniques that are employed to maximize efficiency and increase service quality. Some methods are more appropriate than others depending on the service.

- **Contracting out** (also called “outsourcing”). The government competitively contracts with a private organization, for-profit or non-profit, to provide a service or part of a service.
- **Management contracts.** The operation of a facility is contracted out to a private company. Facilities where the



management is frequently contracted out include airports, wastewater plants, arenas and convention centers.

Public-private competition (also called “managed competition”, or market testing). When public services are opened up to competition, in-house public organisations are allowed to participate in the bidding process.

- **Franchise.** A private firm is given the exclusive right to provide a service within a certain geographical area.
- **Internal markets.** Departments are allowed to purchase support services such as printing, maintenance, computer repair and training from in-house providers or outside suppliers. In-house providers of support services are required to operate as independent business units competing against outside contractors for departments’ business. Under such a system, market forces are brought to bear within an organisation. Internal customers can reject the offerings of internal service providers if they don’t like their quality or if they cost too much.
- **Vouchers.** Government pays for the service; however, individuals are given redeemable certificates to purchase the service on the open market. These subsidize the consumer of the service, but services are provided by the private sector. In addition to providing greater freedom of choice, vouchers bring consumer pressure to bear, creating



incentives for consumers to shop around for services and for service providers to supply high-quality, low-cost services.

- **Commercialisation** (also known as “service shedding”). Government stops providing a service and lets the private sector assume the function.
- **Self-help** (also referred to as “transfer to non-profit organisation). Community groups and neighborhood organisations take over a service or government asset such as a local park. The new providers of the service are also directly benefiting from the service. Governments are increasingly discovering that by turning some non-core services such as zoos, museums, fairs, remote parks and some recreational programs over to non-profit organisations, they are able to ensure that these institutions don’t drain the budget.
- **Volunteers.** Volunteers are used to provide all or part of a government service. Volunteer activities are conducted through a government volunteer program or through a non-profit organisation.
- **Corporatization.** Government organisations are reorganised along business lines. Typically, they are required to pay taxes, raise capital on the market (with no government backing – explicit or implicit), and operate according to commercial principles. Government corporations focus on maximizing profits and achieving a



favourable return on investment. They are freed from government procurement, personnel and budget systems.

- **Assets sale or long-term lease.** Government sells or enters into long-term leases for assets such as airports, gas utilities or real estate to private firms, thus turning physical capital into financial capital. In a sale-leaseback arrangement, government sells the asset to a private sector entity and then leases it back. Another asset sale technique is the employee buyout. Existing public managers and employees take the public unit private, typically purchasing the company through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP).
- **Private infrastructure development and operation.** The private sector builds, finances and operates public infrastructure such as roads and airports, recovering costs through user charges such as tollgates fees etc. Several techniques are commonly used for privately building and operating infrastructure.

3.4 ARGUMENTS PRO-PRIVATIZATION

Proponents of privatization believe that private market actors can more efficiently deliver any good or service than government can provide. The controlling ethical issue in the pro-privatization perspective is the need for responsible stewardship of tax money.

Privatization proponents' faith in the market is philosophically based in an economic principle of competition: that where there is



a profit to be made, competition will inevitably arise, and that competition will inevitably draw prices down while increasing efficiency and quality. By the same principle, privatization proponents feel that government lends itself to waste because it has no competition. A related argument for privatization says that it is preferable to maximize the number of social arenas open to entrepreneurship.

- **Performance.** State-run industries tend to be bureaucratic. A political government may only be motivated to improve a function when its poor performance becomes politically sensitive, and such an improvement is easily reversed by another regime.

Private utilities are likely to work under greater scrutiny than public systems because of the controversy surrounding privatization. The government is more likely to criticize and act against a private operator than a government corporation.

- **Improvements.** Conversely, the government may put off improvements due to political sensitivity and special interests – even in cases of companies that are run well and better serve their customers' needs.

A private utility has a greater incentive to reduce losses because lost water means lost profit.

- **Corruption.** A monopolized function is prone to corruption. Decisions are made primarily for political reasons, personal gain of the decision-maker, rather than economic ones.



- **Accountability.** Managers of privately owned companies are accountable to their owners / shareholders and to the consumer, and can only exist and thrive where needs are met.
- **Civil Liberty concerns.** A company controlled by the State may have access to information or assets which may be used against dissidents or any individuals who disagree with their policies.
- **Goals.** A political government tends to run an industry or company for political goals rather than economic ones.
- **Capital.** Privately held companies can more easily raise investment capital in the financial markets, investments decisions are governed by market interest rates. State-owned industries have to compete with demands from other government departments and special interests.
- **Security.** Governments have had the tendency to “bail out” poorly run businesses when, economically, it may be better to let the business fold, often due to the sensitivity of job losses.
- **Lack of market discipline.** Poorly managed state companies are insulated from the same discipline as private companies, which could go bankrupt, have their management removed, or be taken over by competitors.



- **Concentration of wealth.** Ownership of and profits from successful enterprises tend to be dispersed and diversified. The availability of more investment vehicles stimulates to capital markets and promotes job creation.
- **Political influence.** Nationalized industries are prone to interference from politicians for political or populist reasons. Examples include making an industry buy supplies from local producers (when that may be more expensive than buying from abroad), forcing an industry to freeze its prices / fares to satisfy the electorate or control inflation, increasing its staffing to reduce unemployment, or moving its operations to marginal constituencies.
- **Profits.** Private companies make a profit by enticing consumers to buy their products in preference to their competitors'. Private corporations exist to serve exactly the needs of their clients' propensity to pay, which is usually correlated, with how well they serve the needs. Corporations of different sizes may target different market niches in order to focus on marginal groups and satisfy their demand.

The basic economic argument given for privatization is that governments have few incentives to ensure that the enterprises they own are well run. Governments have *de facto* monopoly to raise money by taxation should revenues be insufficient. As governments may borrow money cheaply from the debt markets than private enterprises. They will squeeze out more efficient private companies through this



misallocation of resources. The high costs of tax subsidies are not readily seen.

Where governments lacks, it is said that private owners do have a profit motive. The theory holds that, not only will the enterprise's clients see benefits, but as the privatized enterprise becomes more efficient, the whole economy will benefit. Ideally, privatization propels the establishment of social, organisational and legal infrastructures and institutions that are essential for an effective market economy.

Privatising a non-profitable (or sever loss-making) company, which was state-owned, would shift the burden of financing off taxpayers, as well as freeing some national budget resources, which may be subsequently used for something else. Especially, proponents of the laissez-faire capitalism will argue, that it is both unethical and inefficient for the state to force taxpayers to fund the functions or industries that they oppose or do not require.

They also hold that the privatized entity would have to adapt to market forces or be penalised if it fails to adapt to the market reality by offering goods and / or services, which are preferred by the customers. They are therefore, likely to draw upon international experience and know-how than are government utilities.



The main political argument for privatization is that of civil liberties and privacy. A very substantial benefit to share or asset sale privatisations is that bidders compete to offer the state the highest price, creating revenues for the state to redistribute in addition to new tax revenue.

Voucher privatisations, on the other hand, would be a genuine return of the assets into the hands of the general population, and create a real sense of participation and inclusion. Vouchers, like all other private property, could then be sold on if preferred.

3.5 ARGUMENTS AGAINST PRIVATIZATION

In South Africa, privatization has encountered strong resistance from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and e.g., given the failure of GEAR to promote envisaged inflows of foreign capital, job creation and growth, the ANC has moved away from brazenly pro-market policies towards the pursuit of a developmental state (Buhlungu et al 2007:201).

Opponents of privatization believe that certain parts of the social terrain should remain closed to market exploitation in order to protect them from the unpredictability and ruthlessness of the market. These are essential social services such as private prisons, water supply, etc.

The controlling ethical issue in the anti-privatization perspective is the need for responsible stewardship of social support missions. Market interactions are all guided by self-interest, and successful



actors in a healthy market must be committed to charging the maximum price that the market will bear.

Privatization opponents believe that this model is not compatible with government missions for social support, whose primary aim is delivering affordability and quality of service to society. In privatization, profit is always put ahead of social and environmental concerns. Opponents would also claim that many of the utilities which government provides benefit society at large and are indirect and difficult to measure. As a result, many functions which government provides, such as defense, have been historically identified as being unproductive and unable to produce a profit. In such functions, the incentives of profits would be negated.

Many privatization opponents also warn against the practice's inherent tendency toward corruption. As many areas, which the government could provide, are essentially profitless, the only way private companies could, to any degree, operate them would be through contracts or block payments. In these cases, the private firm's performance in a particular project would be removed from their performance, and embezzlement and dangerous cost cutting measures might be taken to maximum profits.

Some would also point out that privatising certain functions of government might hamper coordination, and charge firms with specialized and limited capabilities to perform functions, which they are not suited for. In rebuilding a war torn nation's infrastructure, for example, a private firm would, in order to provide security, either have to hire security, which would be both



necessarily limited and complicate their functions, or coordinate with government, which, due to a lack of command structure shared between firm and government, might be difficult. A government agency, on the other hand, would have the entire military of a nation to draw upon for security, whose chain of command is clearly defined.

Opponents of privatization dispute the claims concerning the alleged lack of incentive for governments to ensure that the enterprises they own are well run, on the basis of the idea that governments are proxy owners answerable to the people. It is argued that a government which runs nationalized enterprises poorly will lose public support and votes, while government which runs those enterprises well will gain public support and votes. Thus, democratic governments do have an incentive to maximize efficiently in nationalized companies, due to the pressure of future elections.

Furthermore, opponents of privatization argue that it is undesirable to transfer state-owned assets into private hands for the following reasons:

- **Performance.** A democratically elected government is accountable to the people through parliament, and is motivated to safeguarding the assets of the nation. The profit motive may be subordinated to social objectives. It is the government's mandate to deliver social services such as water to the population.



- **Improvements.** The government is motivated to performance improvements as well run businesses that contribute to the state's revenues.
- **Corruption.** Government ministers and civil servants are bound to uphold the highest ethical standards. Standards of probity are guaranteed through codes of conduct and declarations of interest. However, the selling process could lack transparency, allowing the purchaser and civil servants controlling the sale to gain personally.
- **Accountability.** The public does not have any control or oversight of private companies.
- **Civil Liberty concerns.** A democratically elected government is accountable to the people through parliament, and can intervene when civil liberties are threatened.
- **Goals.** The government may seek to use state companies as instruments to further social goals for the benefit of the nation as a whole.
- **Capital.** Governments can raise money in the financial markets most cheaply to re-lend to state-owned enterprises.
- **Lack of market discipline.** Governments have chosen to keep certain companies / industries under public



ownership because of their strategic importance or sensitive nature.

- **Cuts in essential services.** If a government-owned company providing an essential service (such as water supply) to all citizens is privatized, its new owner(s) could lead to the abandoning of the social obligation to those who are less able to pay, or to regions where this service is unprofitable.
- **Lack of transparency.** Privatization policies are frequently introduced on the basis of consultant reports that were intended to remain secret. This practice hinders democratic debates, lead to bad quality reports and bad advice. Flawed assumptions remain unchallenged, inadequate evidence is critically evaluated, incompetent work is not exposed, and alternative policy options are submerged.
- **Natural monopolies.** Privatization will not result in true competition if a natural monopoly exists.
- **Concentration of wealth.** Profits from successful enterprises end up in private, often foreign, hands instead of being available for the common good.
- **Political influence.** Governments may more easily exert pressure on state-owned firms to help implementing government policy.



- **Downsizing.** Private companies often face a conflict between profitability and service levels, and could over-react to short-term events. A state-owned company would have a longer-term view, and be less likely to cut back on maintenance or staff costs, training etc, to stem short-term losses.
- **Profiteering.** Private companies do not have any goal other than to maximize profits. A private company will serve the needs of those who are most willing (and able) to pay, as opposed to the needs of the majority, and are thus anti-democratic.

3.6 PRIVATIZATION OF STATE MONOPOLY

In recent years, many governments, particularly those of developing countries, are privatizing many of the state monopoly. These include transportation, steel, post and telecommunications, electricity and water and sanitation etc. (Vorclies & Grand 1990:145).

The following reasons are cited to be the benefits for government and consumers respectively:

- Increased government revenue and lower taxes.
- Increased economic efficiency
- Widespread share ownership and economic stability.
- Depoliticized managerial decision-making
- Better catering for consumer needs.



The major reasons for the government, both liberal and socialist, that are privatizing services is to raise revenue for the state so that it is able to service debt. It is for this reason that commodities such as electricity, education, Health care, transport, water, etc, which are essential for life are privatized, and becoming subjects to this liberalized economy. Following are four (4) ways the state makes money from privatization:

- **One-off sale**

Here the state sells the service and collect a one time proceeds which she can use to pay off debt. The stake can alternatively use the proceeds to spend on developmental projects or the proceeds can be used to lower taxes.

- **Reduction of subsidies**

In some of its service deliveries, the state provides subsidies to its citizens. When the service is privatized and be controlled by private sector, the government does not subsidize a private sector, but collect revenue. In South Africa this certainly occur as a result of privatizing services such as transportation and post and telecommunication.

- **Tax on future profits**

Supporters of privatization argue that privatization brings about more efficient use of resources and thus promotes economic growth and development.

This is clearly put by McPherson in one of his articles when he summarizes the development benefit of privatization:



“Many countries have found that state-owned enterprises have failed to generate high rates of growth that are critical to development. Privatization increases the quality of goods and services available in the market while keeping it responsive to consumer needs and demand. Through the free market’s allocation of resources, privatization over the long term creates jobs and opportunities for all. Privatization leads to open, competitive economies that produce higher incomes and more permanent jobs. In short, privatization can be the right step at the right time to liberate the economies of developing countries from the slow growth and stagnation that has plagued so many of them for so long” (McPherson 1987:18).

To a certain extent, the researcher agrees with McPherson, but only if such a privatization excludes essential services such as water which should be left affordable to everybody particularly the poor.

Another reason given for water to be treated as an economic good is due to the increase of the ratio of the overall use of the availability of water that increases the effort in terms of human ingenuity and financial outlays. This increase needs the construction of new water infrastructure that requires greater investment for every additional unit of water supply (**reference**).

The author takes the above reasons into cognisance but still believe that government should come out with strategies to



recover the cost from those big companies and the rich who earn huge sums of money, but to exclude the poor who cannot afford.

3.7 WATER NOT AN ECONOMIC ENTITY TO BE PRIVATIZED, BUT TO BE TREATED AS A COMMON GOOD

The world is waking up to the reality of the precious nature of water. Some of the facts about water are startling. In this context the attitude to water has changed. The increase of the ratio of the overall use of the availability of water increases the efforts in terms of human ingenuity and financial outlays. This increase requires the construction of new water infrastructure that requires greater investment for every additional unit of water supply. (Lundqvist et al 1997: 25)

Today, water is seen as an economic entity. This important step in recognizing the economic value was taken in Berlin, Germany. As the statement says:

“Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good. Within this principle, it is vital to recognize first the basic right of all human beings to have access to clean water and sanitation at an affordable price. Past failure to recognize the economic value of water has led to wasteful and environmentally damaging use of the resource. Managing water as an economic good is an important way of achieving efficient and equitable use and of encouraging conservation and protection of water resources”. (Budds et al 1992:9)



This attitude towards water as an economic entity has led the private sector to cash in on the need for safe drinking water. The community that has the economic potential makes use of this privilege and the low-income category is left to the mercy of governments.

The recent trend of governments to entrust to private companies the responsibility for securing water resources and for distributing water is an issue of great concern. Apart from paying a fee to the government, private companies would earn a huge profit by selling water to the public. There were efforts to enhance the government policy to accommodate this process.

Considering the fact that governments lacked funds and expertise, private companies, which were on the high following the neoliberal market economic boom, jumped in to provide the service, exploiting the “inability” of the public sector infrastructure. This is true of many developing countries. Within a neoliberal setting it is believed that governments should play the role of a facilitator by allowing the market to carry out the social functions. It is too attractive a proposal for governments to refuse.

When it comes to water, the issue becomes rather complicated due to the very attitude of people towards water. It is an essential part of human life. In the words of the World Council of Churches, which probably summarizes the people’s view, “Water is a symbol of life. It is a basic condition for all life on Earth and is to be preserved and shared for the benefit of all creatures and the wider creation”. (<http://www.oikoumene.org/>)



Water has a special place in the spiritual life of many world religions. It is an accepted notion that all human beings, irrespective of their economic background, have a right to use water. The UN states that, “The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, affordable, physically accessible, safe and acceptable water for personal and domestic uses.” (2002:89)

But with the definition of water as an economic entity, water has shifted from a “human right” to a “commodity” that needs to be bought. It is very obvious that the poor become the victims of this effort to privatize water distribution by the private sector as they cannot afford to pay for and buy it. Although this privatization argument is furthered from the stance that it would enable better efficiency in the preservation and distribution of water, and would serve the poor better, very little evidence comes in support of this. An Indian journalist once described this situation as follows:

“Developing country governments that are under the charmed spell of the pro –privatization World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other multilateral organizations have come around to a consensus that water is a commodity. On the other hand, civil society groups firmly believe that water is a natural resource that belongs equally to all people and should stay a public utility. World Bank sponsored studies indicate that the urban poor already pay five times the municipal rate for water in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, 25 times more in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and 40 times more in Cairo, Egypt” (Ninan 2003, 16 April).

Although the organized private sector does not yet have a monopoly on water, the distribution and sale of “bottled/packaged



mineral water” within the context of the lack of a proper drinkable water supply by the municipal system assumes an importance that cannot be ignored. Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, severely critiquing this process, comment:

“The commodification of water is ethically, environmentally and socially wrong. It insures that decisions regarding the allocation of water would centre on commercial, not environmental or social justice considerations. Privatization means that the management of water resources is based on principles of scarcity and profit maximization rather than long-term sustainability. Corporations are dependent on increased consumption to generate profits in the use of chemical technology, desalination, marketing and water trading than conservation.” (<http://www.thenation.com/docPrint.mhtml?i=20020902&s=Barlow> p.5)

This destructive developmental process has to be countered in order to save the earth and the human community, which demands strict measures and policies protecting the natural resources and upholding human rights. It can be achieved only when governments take the responsibility and provide legal frameworks for safeguarding the interests of the whole of creation and not just private individuals and corporations.

The poor are the hardest hit by this process. International experience tells us that they pay more than anyone, since water has become a commodity controlled by multinational companies and soon will no longer be a “natural free source” (http://www.boell.de/downloads/global/cancun_water.pdf.p.9.)



The Bible and many other cultural and religious traditions remind us that water is sacred, a gift of the Creator and the source of life, and not just a resource for human consumption. Justice in relation to water from this perspective requires recognition of its value for all life and not just for us (justice-not just us). Water is a common good, not a commodity.

According to these traditions, water should not be traded or sold because it is essential to life. Everybody, including the poor and the marginalized without money, must have access to a certain amount of water. This is a principle, which is expressed in our call for the right to water as human right. Opponents of privatization feel that because of its vitality, “governments should give water free, or greatly discounted for the poor. Furthermore, they see an inherent contradiction between the idea that water is a fundamental human right and social good and that it could potentially be allocated like any other commodity. Only to those who can afford it (Figueres et al 2003:47).

If water is the common heritage to many religions and cultures, why then do we arrive at a situation where powers, such as a International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and a number of transnational corporations want to convince us that water is better treated as a commodity up for sale? Do we treat water as a sacred gift of life and public good, or as a resource and commodity?

These preceding points on the significance of water demand an answer in the light of water being privatized. Can there be a



theological justification or explanation of this development? What is the rationale behind privatizing the basis and source of life, which sustains and nurtures life, and moreover comes to present God's presence in creation? Ultimately, how do we treat God's gift to humanity? What are the experiences of the early Christians on the issue of private possession? Does privatizing water amount to privatizing God?

Acts 4.32-35 holds the key to the early Christians' understanding of this issue. In very clear terms it is mentioned that they shared everything and had everything in common. Importantly, there was not a needy person in their midst. Ulrich Duchrow interprets that it was not an accident that the early Christians had this practice; it is an outcome of their experience with their master Jesus Christ, who prophetically condemned the attitude of accumulation and insisted on sharing and gaining "abundant life".

They continued it because, through this fellowship of a sharing and caring community, Jesus Christ became alive in their midst. The early Christians represented a community without need, a counter community of sharing. (The Ecumenical Review: October 2002).

Throughout the centuries this idea of a shared common life occupied the heart of the Christian message. In the understanding of the early church fathers, private ownership is rather sinful and the common use of goods manifested the fellowship in Christ, which is God's will for humanity. Joan L. O'Donovan substantiates this: "Within the practice of the church, the original use was more closely approximated. By the communal ownership and distribution



of goods throughout the clerical and monastic estates, but was also reflected in the giving away of superfluous property to the poor by all estates of the church. As much as the fathers, the medieval viewed the private amassing of wealth, retained and preserved by property right for exclusive use, as a violation of the divine owner's intention that the earth's abundance be shared in charity and distributed justly for the sustenance of all, love and justice being bound together. They concurred in their predecessors' indictment of avaricious accumulation as "robbery" of the needy, taking from the poor what belongs to them by divine and natural right. (2004:104 -105)

Property and economic exchange, human industry and market trade have to be fairly and righteously dealt with, Luther claimed. It is important to pick up these threads from Christian theological history i.e. that there is no Christian justification for privatization or claim for exclusive use of resources; rather we are expected to share and live in a community. Exclusive ownership and accumulation are even considered to be against God's will. (2004:117)

Common good is the norm, since Christian theology makes it very clear that we do not own anything but God, and all the earth's resources need to be justly shared among all in other words; this is the Christian ethical basis. Furthering Calvin's idea of our resources as God's gift and we as stewards, Kathryn Tanner says that there should be a non-commodity exchange, putting the emphasis on giving rather than accumulating. One partakes in the community not for personal reasons but to be part of a self-



sustaining society, which stands in opposition to the commodity contract of capitalist transaction.

This ushers in the idea of common sharing and possession as against private accumulation. It is not the individual but the community that is at the heart of God's gift. The necessity of non-competitive relations is crucial in sustaining this community, self-sharing for the good of others (2005:48 -85). In other words, the significance of the ethic of common good and stewardship, since ownership is defined in the light of love for the neighbour, an essential "mandate for Christian" because it is the necessity of all of us to promote justice and protect the common good by working together with neighbourly love. (Martin – Schramm et al 2003:178).

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the WCC statement makes a clear point on the issue of privatization of water system that:

"The centrality of water to life, and the experience of water as a gift are two sources of the affirmation of water as a basic human right. Just as the biblical jubilee declared that land belonged, in the final analysis, to God and not to any particular individual, so water should be part of the global commons and a social good. To treat water as a gift of God and human right implies that clean fresh water should be available to meet the basic needs of all living beings, rather than be treated as a private commodity to be bought and sold" (WCC. Consultation at mission 21, Basle 9 – 13 May 2005).

We can conclude that any privatization that excludes and denies the rightful use of resources is against God's will and more so with



the water which God uses to create, nurture, sustain and heal the whole of creation. The multinational companies that are trying to privatize life itself, thereby excluding and denying to a large section of humanity their right to livelihood through the unjust structures of society. This process requires serious consideration within the ecclesial community.

Our position in the present debates depends on our response to this question, but one thing certain is that “considering water as an economic good leads to the commodification of the world’s water supply. Driven by economic globalization, that will lead us to greater inequities and to water that flows only to the highest bidder (2003:47).

Lake Geneva in Switzerland is home to two leading companies in the marketing of bottled water: Nestle in Vevey on one side of the lake, and Evian on the opposite side in France. One would not be surprised to find either Nestle or Evian water on the table when dining in Switzerland. There might be other alternatives – probably not same quality water in big jugs, although it is of the same quality or even better than bottled water, since tap water comes from wells which bottled water might have been stored for many weeks. We may also use other bottled water sold by local outlets.

Water, which used to be a common good, has become a commodity – not only bottled table water, but also tap water, consumed daily by families and factories. The water market is worth billions and billions of dollars worldwide, and continues to grow. While several companies compete for market shares in bottled water, companies from the United States of America and



Europe fight for control over supplies and distribution in other countries of the world. One would be surprised to see, for example, the activities of the German (RWE), which bought the British Thames Water Utilities, a number of US waterworks, and also tried to monopolize water sources in India.

These companies seek help from the IMF and the World Bank, which suggest privatization of water system supplies and distribution as a condition for availing their loans. A review of IMF policies in forty countries found that during 2000, IMF loan agreements in twelve countries included conditions imposing water privatization or full-cost recovery. When the IMF presses for privatization of water system it is difficult for countries from the global south to withstand the pressure.

In addition, compliance with IMF conditions is frequently a prerequisite for access to other international creditors and investors, including the World Bank. Powerful countries are pushing for liberalization, deregulation, and privatization of public services, such as education, health, and water. All these efforts are meant to create a very profitable new world market for water.

It is the author's view that commodification of water is ethically, environmentally and socially wrong, as it ensures that decisions regarding the allocation of water could centre on the commercial, not social or environmental justice consideration.

Privatization of water system means that the management of water resources is based on principles of scarcity and profit maximization



rather than long-term sustainability. Corporations are dependent on increased consumption to generate profit and are much more likely to invest in the use of chemical technology, desalination, marketing and water trading than in conservation.

The author believes that for all time water must be understood to be a common property for all. In a world where everything is being privatized, citizens must establish clear perimeters around those areas that are sacred to life and necessary for the survival of the planet.

3.8 FREE WATER FEASIBLE FOR POOR COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is the author's view as Ronnie Kasrils, the then South Africa's Water and Forestry Minister once said that in South Africa, it is feasible to give free water to poor communities:

According to a report by the South African Press Association:

"A government committee has found that it would be feasible to provide water free of charge to poor communities, Water and Forestry Minister Ronnie Kasrils said on Friday (*October 2000*). Kasrils said in a statement that the inter-ministerial group, comprising himself and the ministers of finance and provincial and local government was formed to investigate the provision of free basic water to the poor. A study by the committee found it would be "feasible and viable" to provide free water once schemes were established. Funding for free water would come from local government and by recovering costs from those who could pay. In many areas, particularly rural districts, the poor do not pay at present for water. "The problem is that when we try to implement cost recovery, many of the poor cannot pay." Kasrils said health problems, such as the current cholera outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal, arose when the poor excluded from water supplies. He said his visits to rural areas had highlighted the fact that many people were so desperately poor that they could not afford what might seem to ordinary people a very small price for water. He said rural women complained that should they have to pay a R10 per month for water, their



families would have less to eat. They therefore chose to buy food instead and took their chances in searching for river or ground water, he said. “It is our moral duty to make a basic amount of safe water available to all South Africans, or at least to those who cannot afford to pay for it.” Kasrils said the cholera outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal would not have happened if all South Africans had access to safe drinking water.” (South African Press Association: 13th October 2000).

As the minister cited above, it is the researcher’s view that in South Africa, with the right allocation of the country’s resources, water can be supplied without the poor having to struggle to pay. The researcher will here give examples of how this can be done:

3.8.1 REGULATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS’ SALARIES

Salaries of some of our civil servants including those of politicians, judiciary and the presidency are rather too high (Sunday Times: 17 June 2007). Given a fair distribution of this resource, part of this money can be used to subsidize the poor to get water free of charge. This can also reduce income inequality whereby the gap between the rich and the poor, which seem to be growing by the day can be reduced.

3.8.2 REDUCTION OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

South Africa has nine provinces which administration is very costly to maintain. It is the researcher’s view that these provinces be reduced by three (3), a lot of resources can be used to service essential services like water, and that way those who cannot afford (the poor) be subsidized.



3.8.3 REGULATION OF THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT

The idea behind this grant is very good if granted to responsible citizens. This grant is however, abused to the extent that by this grant, the government ends up using a lot of resources where the young girls compete on how much grant they get per month, depending on the number of children. It is the researcher's view that if not properly managed, this grant encourages our young girls to give birth to children whom they will not afford to look after, adding to the number of those living in abject poverty in the country.

The researcher would suggest that the granting of this grant be regulated which will bring the expenditure down so that the rest of the money be used to provide essential services where the poor will be subsidized. Given free water people are able to start agricultural projects and grow food for themselves.

3.8.4 RDP HOUSES NOT NEEDED AT SOME AREAS

The idea of RDP houses is a good one at some other areas such as urban areas where housing is a problem, e.g. Gauteng, Cape Town, Durban and those areas where people live in shacks at the informal settlements. Housing is however not a problem in some rural areas, where people live in their traditional houses.

The author has experienced a situation where RDP houses are built as a village about six (6) kilometres away from the local village. Young unemployed boys and girls apply to stay



in these houses. In order to survive, they turn into prostitution and criminals in order to get money for their survival. This, of course, results in the spread of HIV infection and death, leaving a lot of orphans who need care, food, clothing, health care and education.

It is the author's view that before these houses are built, a study be conducted so as to establish such a need. If not, the resource can be used to supply free essential services such as water to the poor.



3.9 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The strongest theological critique of privatization particularly that of water is that it undermines the very nature of community and the place of God in it. As observed in this dissertation, privatization of water system breaks the bond of community and creates inequality through accumulation and exclusion, with the result that some have access to good drinking water and some have not.

In a Christian sense, “Community” is essentially sharing the resources and caring for one another. The church as a community of **faithful** should practice reciprocal commitment by ensuring the wellbeing of all the members.

Church members should not be committed to the church as an institution or organization, but that the church should also show its commitment for the betterment and wellbeing of its members, the community among whom it lives including caring of the environment.

This is the fundamental difference between privatization and the communitarian aspect. The church should promote a non-commodity exchange community, based on a sharing and caring principle, reflecting the economy of God’s grace.

Water is the basic source of life. It needs to be considered not in terms of its economic capabilities and potential, but as a necessity for human sustenance, hence the importance to its distribution to all, irrespective of their ability to pay for it.



Generally, privatization of water system can be summarized as having the following effects:

1. The price of privatized water involves the cost of purification, up gradation and distribution, which is unaffordable by the poor.
2. Unsustainable and uncontrolled water mining, with profit as the only motive, leads to an alarming fall in the ground water level, which is the primary source of fresh water.
3. Privatization of water system leads to the formation of water monopolies thereby eliminating public control over this resource.
4. In the absence of the legal implementation of quality control, individuals and companies driven by profit compromise on water quality, thereby causing a serious threat to public health.
5. In order to feed the growing urban need for water, villagers are robbed of their remaining water resources, driving them to abandon their villages and move to urban centers.
6. It is true that government agencies fail miserably due to deep-seated corruption and lack of transparency in their transactions, thus causing private companies to flourish. It is the poor who become the victims and are therefore excluded and driven to the edge of despair and death,



which is a gross violation of human rights. (http://www.cceia.org/view_media.php/prm_templateID/5/prmid/850).

Maude Barlow summarizes this by saying: “Leaving water in the hands of private companies which are driven by commercial concerns and are not accountable to anyone is socially and environmentally immoral.” (<http://www.cceia.org/viewMedia.php/prmTemplateID/5/prm/ID/830>)

In conclusion, private sector participation in the provision of water services is an issue that has and is still creating controversy. It is seen to be having negative consequences in terms of water distribution for the poor, who are unable to pay for adequate supply, as a result it yields poverty that impoverish the poor even more.

The next chapter will therefore, focus on the issue of privatization of water system in relation to poverty.



CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM AND POVERTY:

“I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me”
(Matthew 25:35-36).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Africa has become the poorest continent in the last four decades. One in four people in this region cannot afford basic shelters or the minimum food requirements for an active and productive life. Most families in Africa live on less than US \$1 a day. Our governments spend millions of dollars actually to service debts, which have not benefited us. The argument is therefore that trade can help reduce poverty levels in developing countries, with the implementation of national and international policies that are development driven.

Corporate globalization is enabling corporations to steal from the poor their last resources, their seeds and biodiversity, their food and water, their land and forests. As predatory and non-sustainable models of economic development spread worldwide, species are pushed to extinction, rivers and glaciers are disappearing, and millions are uprooted from their homes, displaced and left impoverished.

Public goods such as water, health care and transportation are privatized, which makes them even less affordable. Peace and



security are in decline, while preventable diseases like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are spreading out of control. Meanwhile, African countries are threatened by problems from the inside, such as corruption, mismanagement, violence conflict, and spread of deadly yet preventable diseases, exacerbating the issue of poverty. These enemies, which are predominant in Africa, have been created by unjust political and economic systems that operate in our continent.

Privatization of water system, biodiversity and genetic resources are patented and land is taken over by force for industry, mines highways and ports (Asling 2004:66) leaving people to abject poverty. Up to three million people in Africa do not have access to safe drinking water or sanitation. In many nations, homelessness is a severe problem, affecting even children. For example, even though the bill of rights of South Africa guarantees access to adequate housing as a basic right, the unfair distribution of resources often leaves many people without the shelter, water and other basic services they need. Throughout the continent, many others face the same hardships as recorded by Anna, Elena Obando in her November 2003 paper entitled, Women and Water Privatization that:

- 2.5 billion people do not have access to improve sanitation, i.e. two fifth of the world's population, do not have access to adequate health.
- 1.2 billion people in the world's population do not have access to an improved source of portable drinking water, i.e. the sixth of the world's population.



- 2.2. million people in developing countries are dying every year, most of them children from diseases linked to the lack of access to clean drinking water, inadequate health and poor hygiene.
- 6000 boys and girls die everyday from diseases linked to the lack of access to clean drinking water, inadequate health and poor hygiene.
- The average distance a woman in Africa, Asia and Latin America walks to collect water is 6 km.
- The weight of water that women in Africa, Asia and Latin America carry on their heads is equivalent to the baggage weight allowed by airlines (20kg)
- In developing countries one person uses an average of 10 liters of water per day, while in the United Kingdom, one person uses an average of 135 liters of water everyday.
- When you flush the toilet, you are using the same water amount that one person in the Third World uses all day to wash, clean cook and drink.
- In the last ten years, diarrhoea has killed more girls and boys than all people who have died since the World War II.



- The population of Nairobi, Kenya, pays five times more for one liter of water than does North American citizen.
- Billion people in the world are suffering from parasite infections due to solid waste in the environment, which could be controlled with hygiene, water and sanitation. The infections can cause malnutrition, anaemia and delayed growth. ([http: www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-water.html](http://www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-water.html))

This chapter will focus on the issue of privatization of water system in the context of poverty.

4.2. DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTION OF POVERTY

Poverty is a difficult concept to define. It is relative, though many international organisations including the World Bank attach to it a clear and concise definition. For the World Bank, poverty is a yardstick for her to determine countries that require aid.

To say someone is poor, “we normally refer to economic poverty, meaning that the one person has very little or no money with which to buy some basic needs” (Mobbie 2005:62). In the light of this, this author quotes the Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defining poverty as “the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possession” (2202:62). He also quotes the Concise Oxford Dictionary that simply defines poverty as “being insufficient in amount” (2005:62).

Citing May and Govender, Pieterse defines poverty as “the inability of the individual households, or entire communities, to command



sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable standard of living” (2001:30). This definition by Pieterse underscores the World Bank’s idea that poverty is the inability to attain a minimal standard of living.

This understanding of poverty however, does not state who determines the living standard for the people. Could a person from United States of America or from Europe say that people in Bushbuckridge are poor because they cannot afford a Mercedes Benz? These definitions of poverty are not informative enough, as they restrict poverty to lack of money, at the exclusion of other needs such as material assets, safe drinking water, etc.

The term “poor” therefore covers, besides economic poverty, the unjustly deprived, the impoverished, the oppressed, the unfortunate, the afflicted, the needy, the destitute, the widow, the orphan, and even the stranger, all of whom are objects of God’s special protection. Poverty may also involve social exclusion from decision-making, social services such as water, electricity, etc.

In attempting to clearly underpin the definition of poverty, the World Bank outlined some descriptive aspects that embrace the various facets of poverty. For the World Bank therefore, poverty is hunger, a lack of shelter, being sick and unable to see a doctor and lack of water because of its privatization and that one cannot afford to pay. Poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read and write. Poverty is not having a job. It is the fear of the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child due to ill health brought about by unclean water and one



cannot afford medical fees. Poverty is powerlessness, a lack of representation and freedom.

These descriptions of the various aspect of poverty clarify it. It captures the person's context and experience. Poverty is therefore, contextual and experiential, consistent with its relative nature. In agreement with the World Bank's description of poverty, Pieterse wisely states that "What poverty means is the poor's own experience". He goes on to apply the experiential dimension where he applies it to the South African context where he quotes Wilson & Ramphela defining poverty as "a state of not knowing where the next meal is coming from or fearing eviction from their meagre dwelling because they cannot pay the basic rental. There is also a fear that the breadwinner will lose his job" (Pieterse 2001:30).

As seen above, there are many ways people understand or define poverty. Poverty depends much on the defined-standard of living in a particular society. For instance, what is defined as poverty in the first world may turn out to be wealth in the third world. Generally, poverty refers to the economic condition in which people lack sufficient income to obtain certain minimal levels of life such as health services, food, housing, clothing, education and water resources. These are generally recognized as the necessary requirements to ensure an adequate standard of living. What is considered adequate, however, as mentioned above, may depend on where an individual lives.



In South Africa for example poverty means:

- Pregnant women so weakened by malnutrition that their babies are stillborn or die very soon after birth.
- Small children with swollen bellies, sores oozing pus, faces wizened and drawn like those of old people.
- The gnawing ravenous hunger of the semi-starved
- The aching anxiety of wondering where the next meal will come from
- The pain of watching a granny waste away on a diet of weak tea because what little food there is must go to the children
- The fear of being asked to share food with kinsfolk or neighbour

And in time of drought and when water is privatized, poverty means:

- thirst and the daily desperate search for water
 - trekking from 3.00am to 6.00am to a distant borehole
 - queuing and waiting for many wearisome hours
 - sometimes having literally to fight for a share of the meager trickle
 - trudging back in the heat with the precious but burdensome load
 - And repeating the process next day and the day after, for weeks and months with no end in sight. (Nash 1984:9)
- One can therefore see that there is a strong link between poverty and lack of water.



In his doctoral dissertation, Buffel's co-researchers define their understanding of their reality of poverty, what it is and how it negatively impacts the poor and the marginalized.

In the following table, Buffel records the verbatim definition of each participant's understanding of the reality of poverty that:

P	Definition or understanding in each participant's words
A	Poverty is a condition in which you find yourself and in which you cannot afford basic things that you need and you cannot live without those basic things. Poverty deprives one of normal life that other people around you are leading.
B	Poverty is a situation in which you have no food for clothes and other basic things afford basic things that you need and you cannot live without those basic things. Poverty deprives one of normal life that other people around you are leading
C	Poverty is a condition of life in which there is suffering as a result of failure to have certain basic requirements such as food and clothes, school fees, school uniforms and money for transport to and from school.
D	Poverty is the environment in which one is unable to afford things such as food, clothes, water and electricity. Sometimes one does not even have money for transport for children to go to school. One is also unable to provide for one's own house.
E	Poverty is when you have nothing, when you cannot properly provide for the needs of your family. You struggle to give them decent meals and decent clothes. You struggle when you have to send your children to school.
F	Poverty is condition of life in which you lack basic necessities of life such as food, clothes and decent housing. Poverty closes doors for opportunities. It is like a trap in which a person is trapped, in which you



	are helpless and hopeless.
G	I understand poverty to be circumstances in which you are and you cannot provide for the basic needs of your family such as food, clothes, transport to and from school. Sometimes you do not even have a house of your own.
H	Poverty is an inability to afford the basic necessities of the family such as food, clothes and sometimes water and electricity. There are times when we cannot afford prepaid water and electricity.
I	Poverty is a situation in which one struggles to provide for the basic things that are required for the survival of the individual and family. It could also affect the whole community and country.

P stands for participants and each of the alphabet A to I stands for each participant instead of using a name: Source: Buffel 2007: 106-107

It therefore becomes clear to the reader that from the definition and the description of poverty by Buffel's co-researchers here above, in South Africa and other developing countries poverty can be defined as: "not having enough to satisfy a basic need" (Nash 1984:57).

Poverty, as described here above has many different facets namely: lack of food, lack of energy supplies, distribution of land, lack of income, ill health, insecurity and uncertainty, inadequate housing, commuter transport and lack of water (Nash 1984:57-62). In this dissertation, the researcher will briefly discuss the three facets, i.e. lack of food, lack of water and lack of energy leaving the other facets of poverty for other researchers to pursue.



4.2.1 LACK OF FOOD

The right to food as recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that is sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable. This access to food right is not necessarily to be understood as merely being given food through aid, but it means access to an income base either through disposing of productive resources such as land, water, seeds, livestock reed, fish stocks, and work. If neither of these is possible, then the person, household or the community is regarded as living in poverty.

People living under these conditions are vulnerable to all kind of diseases as Nash succinctly puts it “Since 1966 malnutrition diseases like Kwashiorkor have not been fortifiable, therefore no one has exact statistics. But there is general agreement that malnutrition is a very serious problem in South Africa” (1984:124) for years there has been serious development of malnutrition in developing countries of third world and South Africa in particular. As a result, too many children died of starvation or of hunger- related diseases like kwashiorkor, pellagra, gastroenteritis and measles. This also added to the poverty experienced by the poor in developing countries. This is one facet of poverty that affects the continent besides brain draining (nurses, doctors, engineers, etc) and unemployment, etc.

This poverty is exacerbated by the existing inequality and the consequent violation, of almost all human rights the World Bank and the International Monetary fund have imposed. i.e.



the privatization of water services on several countries as a condition to grant them loans.

In per capita terms South Africa is an upper-middle-income country. Despite this relative wealth, most South African households experience the outright poverty. They continue to be vulnerable to extreme poverty everyday. The distribution of income and wealth is among the most unequal in the world. Many households have unsatisfactory access to education, healthcare, energy and clean water. The question to ask is why the lack of these basic necessities in a country with enough mineral resources including rivers, dams and reservoirs.

4.2.2 LACK OF WATER:

Today, billions of people around the globe lack access to the most fundamental foundation of a decent civilized world, namely basic sanitation services and clean drinking water. According to United Nations (UN) officials, the shortage of water in many countries arises from poor management in the preservation of water, pollution, inefficient use of underground water and lack of awareness by their people.

According to the 1999 World Bank strategy report, the bank played an important role in charting South Africa's privatization strategy. It has provided technical assistance and policy advice in virtually all sectors of the economy and promoted the increased participation of the private sector in the development of infrastructure.



The World Bank was doing this in the name of helping reduce apartheid legacy of poverty and inequality. Unfortunately, this did not turn out that way. It ended up with the introduction of several policy changes such as the cost recovery strategy, which introduced credible threat of cutting service to non-paying consumers.

With regard to privatization of water resource, Figueres has this to say: “Two common concerns that can be challenged are that the market approach which will result in the poor being cut off from water supplies and that their health will suffer (2003:48). This is a fact that does not need challenging. What a serious disadvantage to the poor.

The researcher views this as a sin that deeply violates God's goodwill, God's steadfast love for life, for human beings, the whole of creation and ecosystem earth. Pieterse reminds his readers that when people are impoverished they usually resort to crime for their livelihood (2001:39). Poverty is therefore, a contributory factor to escalating criminal activities in South Africa.

The author challenges the church that the integrity of her faith is at stake if she remains silent or refuses to act in the face of the current system of water privatization and neoliberal economic globalization, which subordinates and reduces everything to economic profit.



In South Africa this kind of poverty i.e., lack of water affects people in different ways and to different degrees. In some informal settlement such as Crossroads in Cape Town, people walk 200 metres to fetch water from a communal tap. In rural areas people may walk for 5km to a borehole and still get no ground water since water table sometimes fall. This results in women and children queuing for long hours even at night in order to get water. Some end up drawing water from rivers where cattle, donkeys, goats and other animals also drink resulting in the outbreak of malaria and related waterborne diseases. (Nash 1984:58)

The vast majority of people in this area live in rural areas, and many poor people make their living in urban slums all across this region. Some predictions say that two out of three people in the world will face a water shortage by 2025. Yet the potential of water investments as a tool for reducing poverty and building sustainable livelihoods has not been fully realized.

A lot of water in the area of research however, is left to flow freely from rivers to the sea. For example, Rivers such as Olifants and Klein Letaba near Phalaborwa, Sabie and Sand Rivers in Hazyview, Crocodile and Komati Rivers in Nelspruit and Komatipoort respectively, Blyde River, Great Letaba and other tributaries flowing from the Drakensberg mountains to mention but a few. Water from these rivers should be harvested, harnessed and stored in dams for future use by people, animals and environment.



The government however, is faced with the reality that sooner or later there will be no water for human consumption, industrial operations as well as agricultural usage. In order to better utilize the water resources, call have been made to take water control and regulation away from the government to private companies.

The Mpumalanga Province has been one of the first such areas where water was privatized in Nelspruit areas (about 300km east of Johannesburg, RSA) some few years back (www.psimu.org).

In most of the rural areas, water has been freely available for local consumption as well as for irrigation in small farming sector. In fact people have been drawing water from the rivers without having to pay for it. Now, due to persistent drought, the government has been forced to build more water storages and to lay pipes to the local communities. In the process, water metres are being installed in the households to ensure that those who use water pay for it.

In rural areas malnutrition and death of children from starvation from hunger, kwashiorkor, pellagra, gastroenteritis and measles is rife. This, as Maluleke explain can only be solved by encouraging people to establish vegetable gardens and produce crops such as spinach, beans and tomatoes (Maluleke 1993:28). Adequate water supplies is therefore a fundamental need to the people and to the poor



in particular, but at places where water is paid for (privatized), starting such projects is rather impossible.

4.2.3 LACK OF FUEL / ENERGY SUPPLIES

It is very important for the reader to understand that when sharing about fuel or energy supplies, the author is not referring to fuel to fly fighter jets, move trains or motorists, but the fuel /energy needed by countries poor people for cooking and keeping themselves warm (1984:59). These are some of the things that impoverish the African continent.

4.3 DIFFERENT KINDS OF POVERTY:

The Encarta Encyclopaedia identifies the following two types of poverty, relative and absolute. Relative poverty is that experienced by those whose income falls considerably below the average for their particular society. Absolute poverty is that experienced by those who do not have enough food to remain healthy. However, estimating poverty on an income basis may not measure essential elements that also contribute to a healthy life. People without access to safe drinking water, education and health services should be considered poor even if they have adequate food.

4.3.1 Cyclical Poverty:

This is the type of poverty that is widespread throughout the population but its occurrence is of limited duration. This type of poverty may be influenced by business cycle, depression or recession. Once the situation has normalised, poverty is ended.



4.3.2 Collective Poverty:

This refers to the long term or permanent insufficiency of means to secure basic needs, such as water, food, education, health facilities due to lack of income. This is related to economic underdevelopment. It is mostly found in the third world countries where communities struggle to get the basic means of survival.

In South Africa for example, the following data as quoted by Pieterse from a study of the literature on Poverty by Theron (1992:186) is an example of **collective poverty** where by 2001:

- A total of 500 million people were starving.
- Two billion did not have clean or adequate water.
- One billion were living in dire poverty.
- Five hundred million were unemployed or earned less than R300 per annum.
- As many as 814 million were illiterate.
- For 1,7 billion life expectancy was less than 60 years. Most of whom die around the age of 45, if they do not incur a fatal disease before that (2001:32)

4.3.3 Concentrated collective poverty:

This is the type of poverty that can be found in highly industrialised areas with informal settlements or ghettos where people are attached to the cities but do not belong to its economy. They live in these situations because they feel if they are closer to the industrial or agricultural areas would



benefit. They are normally people with low education and skills, which cannot be used by the industries in their neighbourhood. They cannot afford to pay for water bills, electricity, rental, education for their children, and even to be sure of their next meal, etc.

4.3.4 Case Poverty:

Case poverty refers to the inability of an individual or family to secure basic needs even in social surroundings of general prosperity. This inability is generally related to the lack of some basic attribute that would permit the individual to maintain himself. Such categories of persons include the helpless aged, the blind, the physically handicapped, the chronically ill, and the chronic mentally ill. Physical and mental handicaps are usually regarded sympathetically, as being beyond the control of the people who suffer from them. Again, in developing countries, these people do not afford to pay for their water bills, electricity, adequate food, rental, etc.

4.4 UNDERSTANDING POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In order to understand the current situation of poverty in South Africa, we need to go back beyond the 1994 dispensation. Since the dawn of new democracy, and when the homelands system collapsed, a number of developments followed. Rapid urbanization took place faster than the government could think. The reasons for this are that when the homeland system collapsed, the so-called border industries, which were established within the borders of the homelands or in the boundaries along these establishments, also collapsed.



As these were intended to keep the dream of homelands alive, they were heavily subsidised and paid very low salaries. When subsidies ended and protection against labour movements disappeared, the owners left. It is ironical that the majority of such industries were of the Oriental origin. These left the rural areas, which have now been incorporated into the new South Africa, dry and poorer.

The other fact was that, once all the restrictive laws were abolished, people from the rural areas were tempted to move to big cities where it is generally believed that chances of job opportunities are more promising.

The prospect of owning a house in the cities also improved. One had to first build and live in a shack for a while so that when the Provincial Government comes to do counting of those who should qualify for the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses; they should find them already resident in the area. In many cases, a lot of people have to pay exorbitant amounts of money to get access to the informal settlement so that they can also be counted as part of the community. This act makes the poor even poorer.

The mushrooming of informal settlements in and around the major cities has not brought about any improvement but has worsened the situation of millions of poor people. The cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town are all surrounded by hundreds of thousands of shacks with squalid conditions. Here there is no service delivery such as water and



sanitation, electricity and collection of rubbish bins etc. Most people living here are unemployed and always engage in unbecoming activities such as stealing, prostitution etc.

4.5 UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

It is not easy to separate unemployment from poverty as the two are interlinked. The legacy of apartheid in the South African context produced employment dependent society, particularly among the black people. The type of education system for the black people was that which produced good employees and not people who would make their own businesses or create employment for themselves and others. Those who were unemployed remained poor and without the basic necessities of life.

The other issue is that the former government had excluded over 80% of the population from the economic plans of the country as they had planned to dump them into what was called homelands and make them independent, so they sad, while in fact the idea was to divide and rule. The new government therefore has an enormous task of incorporating them into the economy in order to alleviate poverty.

Robin Gurney, in his book, The Face of Pain and Hope, in the chapter dealing with Germany post the cold war, depicts the state of the unified Germany. The country did not expect to deal with the massive unemployment crisis. The West Germany economy had to accommodate people from the East who had never experienced unemployment in their history because of the Communist history



(1995: 54 – 58).

This is the situation South Africa finds herself in. The influx of illegal immigrants and refugees from the neighbouring states because of the deteriorating economies and conflicts is not making the situation easier for the government. The already impoverished millions of South Africans have to compete with foreigners for employment who are prepared to accept any form of remuneration. Many profit-driven employers would rather prefer to employ foreigners so as to ensure that, at the end, they (employers) get more profit from their businesses.

The debate around the percentage of unemployment in the country indicates the grave situation the country finds itself and to get the figure, will depend on who is telling or sharing about the above information. For those who want to highlight the seriousness of the issue place it at more than 46% and those who try to paint a better and optimistic picture they share that it is at 26 - 30%.

4.6 AGRICULTURE AS AN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Where people are unemployed and impoverished as discussed in this chapter, they need a way to sustain themselves and a way to come out of the poverty trap.

Two – thirds of humanity depends on natural resources for their livelihood and meeting basic needs. They live in an economy connected to the land, water, and biodiversity as their primary capital, and their means of production and their economic security.



Ecological destruction, erosion, pollution, or privatization of these vital resources translates into poverty and underdevelopment by robbing the poor of their sources of livelihood in land, water and living resources. It also squeezes them out of their own land.

In many Africa countries, agriculture is an important source of livelihood for those who are unemployed. It is an important source of livelihood for the poorest of the poor who have no source of cash income, and those for whom self-employment is an important income source and who are the most well-off in terms of income and assets. Many of these cultivators are women, for whom agriculture is one of the several livelihoods being undertaken. Water supply makes a massive difference to the lives of the unemployed. More aspects of poverty are addressed when there is water available. In this regard, water should be provided for productive as well as consumptive use.

Today, 70 percent of the world's water is used for crop irrigation. As the population grows, irrigation land is expected to become increasing significantly in feeding people. The impeding water crisis due to its lack of privatization will push many croplands to the brink of disaster, as there will be insufficient water to irrigate our food crop. This will also increase the level of poverty among people.

4.7 THE BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY

4.7.1 The New Testament approach to poverty

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus made it very clear that his ministry was that which identified with the marginalized.



By quoting from the Old Testament reading, Isaiah 61:1 – 3, Jesus clearly identified two issues regarding his ministry, i.e. a) The preaching of the Word (The Good New, Gospel) and b) The caring to the marginalized. This approach to ministry is in line with the summary of the Ten Commandments (Matthew 22:34-37) and can also be found in Luke.

***“The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight of the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”
(Luke 4:17-18).***

Jesus points out one very important aspect of his ministry, that he is inspired by the “Spirit of the Lord.” This implies that his ministry was inspired from above. At the beginning of the Christian Church, the apostles found it very difficult to separate the two issues. Their priority at the beginning of their ministry was to spread the gospel, but very soon they learned that the widows needed attention as well. They had to appoint a special team to address this aspect (Acts 6:1 – 7) The Church of Antioch, was also touched by the famine in Judea.

They then collected relief aid and sent it to the brothers and sisters in Judea. This inspired Paul to the extent that when famine was reported in Jerusalem, he had to go all out to encourage the brothers. Perhaps, more than any other



church in the New Testament record, the church in Antioch provides a good model of holistic ministry. It was a compassionate church. When famine in Judea took place, every believer in Antioch “The disciples, each according to his/her ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea” (Acts 11:29).

The history of the Christian Church, as early as the apostolic times has always incorporated service to the poor in its structures. Churches such as the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches have taken the Diaconate ministry as part of their mission. The ministry of the Church should be twofold: The church should look upon to God, vertical relationship, and to our neighbours, horizontal relationship. The Word and Service; in the New Testament the poor are referred to as the needy, indigent, the poor who are meek and calm.

James says Faith and Deeds go together. He puts it very interestingly that: “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If anyone says to him/her: Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:26).

Indeed these passages of scripture quoted above, challenge the Church of God to work for elimination of poverty. The



Church is challenged to advocate on behalf of poor people for access of basic water resources.

4.7.2. The Old Testament understanding of poverty:

From the Holy Scriptures, it is very clear that poverty is as old as humankind. Already, early in the Old Testament time, we are told that laws were made to protect the poor. The Old Testament teaches us that God had always been on the side of the poor, and showed particular biasness towards them. James Cone is correct in his contention that “God has not ever, not ever, left the oppressed alone in struggle. He was with them in Pharaoh’s Egypt, is with them in America, Africa and Latin America, and will come in the end of time to consummate fully the human freedom” (1975:137).

There is abundant evidence that the poor existed among the Hebrews. “But the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the animal of the field shall eat. In like manner you shall deal with your vineyard and with olive grove” (Exodus 23:11).

“For the poor will never cease out of land: therefore I command you, saying, You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor, in your land” (Deut. 15:11).

In the book of Exodus, God was touched by the cries of the oppressed Israelites in Egypt and remembered the covenant He had made with Jacob (Ex. 2:23-25). It is very important



to note that poverty at that time was not associated with begging. The laws were made to provide for the poor; therefore Children of Israel were advised not to reap everything from their land during harvest but that they should leave some parts of the land so that the poor could come and reap for themselves. As there was food available from these lands, there was no need for anybody to go out and beg (Lev. 19:9-10). The reader should note that greed was not part of Israel's life. Today we face people who do not care about other people.

This concept of looking after the poor as recorded in the Old Testament can be found in most of the African communities. Poverty has been an issue that the African communities had always taken very seriously. No family was allowed to die of poverty when there were neighbours who could rescue them. In the rural villages, rich families would lend their cattle to poor families. They would provide a small team of oxen to plough the land and also lent milk cows to provide milk for the family. This process paid itself back by the poor families helping to look after the cattle and making sure that they multiply for the owner. In return the owner would pay them with one cow for every year they had the animals. At the end, the poor person is helped to transform from poverty. This is where the concept of "**Ubuntu**" (i.e. I am because you are) worked.

The following issues can be observed with regard to the Mosaic legislation regarding the poor:



- They had the right to gleaning the fields (Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-21)
- In the sabbatical year they were to have their share of the produce of the fields and the vineyards Exodus 23:11 and Leviticus 25:6)
- In the year of jubilee they recovered their property (Leviticus 25:25-30)
- In the year of jubilee they recovered their property (Leviticus 25:25-30)
- Usury was forbidden, and if it happened that a garment was taken as collateral, it should be returned as soon as possible before the sun went down. It was not even allowed for the borrower to enter the house to demand for collateral;

“If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not regard him as a creditor; neither shall you charge him interest, If you take your neighbour’s garment as collateral, you shall restore it to him / her before the sun goes down, for that is his / her only covering, it his / her garment for his / her skin. What would be sleep in? It will happen, when he / she cries to me, that I will hear, that will hear, for I am gracious” (Exodus 22:25-27, Deuteronomy 24:10-13)

- The rich were to be generous to the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7-11)
- In the sabbatical and jubilee years the bond-servants were to be freed (Deuteronomy 15:12, Leviticus 25:39-42, 47-54)



- Certain portions from the tithes were assigned to the poor, (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29; 26:12-13)
- The poor were allowed to share in the feasts (Deuteronomy 16:11,13; Nehemiah 8:10)
- Wages were to be paid at the close of each day (Leviticus 19:13)

The story of Naomi also gives us some ideas about poverty. After the death of their husbands, Naomi and Ruth are obliged to return to Bethlehem (Ruth 1:19) and, as two widows without family take them in, they are vulnerable and poor. Ruth resorts to the exercise of her right to glean in order to get food to eat (Ruth 2:2-3).

Ruth gleaned unintentionally into the field of Boaz, a relation of Naomi's husband (Ruth 2:1, 20). He is generous to her in allowing her to glean in the main part of the field instead of only the edges as the law provided (Ruth 2:7,9). He also provided her with food (Ruth 2:14) and drink (Ruth 2:9b). Also he acted as her protector from being molested by men (Ruth 2:9b). Boaz goes on to buy Naomi's husband's land for her and take Ruth as his wife, thus providing security for the two widows and rescuing them from their poverty. Life in those days was not driven by economic prosperity which has people to isolate others.

In his presentation in the book entitled Towards African Christian Maturity, Wynnand Amewowo takes us through the Old Testament understanding of Poverty. He points us to



the Wisdom literature; Psalms, Proverbs, Sirach Ecclesiastes, that clearly indicates that God is on the side of the poor. The enemies of the poor are the enemy of Yahweh (Ps. 18:28), and the poor person is the friend and servant of God (Ps 86). This is clearly demonstrated by Cone when he says “The cross of Jesus reveals the extent of God’s involvement in the suffering of the weak. He is not merely sympathetic with the social plan of the poor, but becomes totally identified with them in their agony and pain. The pain of the oppressed is God’s pain, for he takes away their sufferings as their own, thereby freeing them from its ultimate control of their lives (1975:175).

Again, Cone puts it into perspective that: “The poor are Yahweh’s own, his special possession. These are the people the divine has called into being for freedom. Therefore as the sovereign King of Israel whose saving power, Yahweh judges Israel in the light of their treatment of the poor” (1975:69).

The poor person is the friend and servant of God. Like Cone, Wynnand continues to define the term “poor” as something that covers, besides the economic poverty, the unjustly deprived, the impoverished, the oppressed, the unfortunate, the afflicted, the needy, the destitute, the widow, the orphan, and even the stranger, all of whom are objects of God’s special protection. He further says, “Not every poor person merits the title of the poor of Yahweh, the poor with



disposition of humility, fear of God, with faith and fidelity merit the name of the poor of Yahweh (1987:59).

Bishop Desmond Tutu is very vocal about the fact that God is on the side of the poor and oppressed. In the book of Job, the same sentiment is echoed about God's favour towards the poor (Job 34:28). Again, in the book of Zephaniah, the poor are described as the meek and the humble or lowly people. The Prophets are God's messengers who defend the poor and denounce exploitation (Zeph. 3:12ff). In all the examples given, water played a crucial role in the alleviation of poverty through irrigation.

The Bible is rich with examples of how God's people have responded in times of crisis or difficult times. Devastations and death due to poverty, typhoons, floods, fires, revolutions, and droughts are phenomenal that occur now and again all over the World. They are experienced in rural areas, urban areas as well as the slum areas of the cities. How is the Church responding to this?

According to the scriptures, the suggested answer to this question is that every local church/congregation, at the very least, should be involved in the fight for the poor; the Church has the Biblical mandate to respond to human needs in all manifestations. To ignore this responsibility is to deny the Lordship of Christ over the Church that is the incarnation of Christ. The failing of world economies, globalization, mismanagement of natural resources, such as water, global



warming creates massive calamities to millions of people especially the poor.

The Church has to be moved with compassion at the sight of human misery because of privatisation of water and leaving millions of poor families without the basic commodity. The church has a responsibility to advocate on behalf of people like it was the case in the Old and the New Testament.

The Church, as part of the people, is uniquely placed to be part of the suffering of the communities:

- It is already on the ground among the poor and therefore is able to see the poor even before the governments and other powers start understanding the suffering of the people. The Church is not the buildings but the people and therefore when people get poor it is the Church that is hurting.
- The Church, despite its parochial tendencies at times, is still a reliable screening body to identify needy peoples in the community in collaboration with the local authorities.
- On a long-term basis, the local Church serves as a natural infrastructure for follow-up. Development agencies and government departments can come and go but the local Church remains with the community and has the potential to monitor the process.



The churches' involvement in the day-to-day lives of the community, the relief of those who suffer the injustices created by the wrong policies of government and local authorities, can be powerful witness to Christ, the head of the Church.

4.8 SCARCITY OF WATER AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In the bible, human beings have been experiencing droughts since the very earliest times. The bible refers to poverty when there was drought and famine as a result of the scarcity of rains. Drought (which the author prefers to use exchangeable with famine though the two are not exactly one thing) was sometimes caused by natural disasters, but very often it was caused by God who used it to get the people's attention, as a reminder of just who has the power to turn it on for those who obey Him, or off, for those who have gone their own way. Following are two examples:

“The Lord will open to you His good treasury the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and bless all the work of your hands” These are the blessings of obedience (Deut.28:12)

“And the anger of The Lord be kindled against you, and He shut up the heavens, so that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which The Lord gives you.” (Deut. 11:17) These are the curses of

disobedience.

Drought as experienced in the biblical stories, and that we experience in modern time particularly in Africa can be explained as an extended period of months or years when a region notes a



deficiency in its water supply. Generally, this occurs when a region receives consistently below average precipitation. However, man can also worsen the effects. It can have a substantial impact on the ecosystem and agriculture of the affected region. Although droughts can persist for several years, even a short, intense drought can cause significant damage and harm the local economy.

For most regions, drought is a normal, recurrent feature of the climate, and having adequate drought mitigation strategies in place can greatly reduce the impact. Recurring or long-term drought can bring about desertification; for example, the recurring droughts in the Horn of Africa have created grave ecological catastrophes, prompting massive food shortages, still recurring. This kind of change in climate has added in increasing poverty, because people are no longer able to plough their land.

To the north-west of the Horn, the Darfur conflict in neighbouring Sudan, also affecting Chad, was fuelled by decades of drought, desertification and overpopulation are among the leading causes of the Darfur conflict, because the Arab Baggara nomads searching for water have to take their livestock further south, to land mainly occupied by farming peoples.

4.9 CONSEQUENCES OF DROUGHT

Period of drought that can have significant environmental, economic and social consequences include:

- Death of livestock
- Reduced crop yields.



- Wildfires, such as the once experienced in Mpumalanga, Kwa-Zulu in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) in 2007 are more common during times of drought.
- Desertification
- Dust storms, when drought hits an area suffering from desertification and erosion
- Malnutrition, dehydration and related diseases.
- Famine due to lack of water for irrigation.
- Social unrest.
- Mass migration, resulting in internal displacement and international refugees.
- War over natural resources, including water and food.
- Reduced electricity production due to insufficient available coolant.

The effect varies according to vulnerability. For example, subsistence farmers are more likely to migrate during drought because they do not have alternative food sources. Areas with populations that depend on subsistence farming as a major food source are more vulnerable to drought-triggered famine.

Drought is rarely if ever the sole cause of famine; socio-political factors such as extreme widespread poverty play a major role. Drought can also reduce water quality, because lower water flows reduce dilution of pollutants and increases contamination of remaining water sources.

Moby Thesaurus define drought to mean: “absence, appetite
define drought to mean: “absence, appetite, aridity, aridness,
beggary, canine appetite, corkiness, defectiveness, deficiency,



deficit, deprivation, destitution, dryness, emptiness, empty stomach, famine, hollow hunger, hunger, hungriness, imperfection, impoverishment, incompleteness, juicelessness, lack, need omission, polydipsia, relish, saplessness, shortage, shortcoming, shortfall, starvation, stomach, sweet tooth, taste, thirstiness, torment of tantalus, want, wantage, waterlessness, watertight integrity, and watertightness. (<http://onlinedictionary.com/word/drought>)

These words, therefore, describe what it means not to have water. During this time there is no food for people, no grass for animals as there is no water for human and environmental needs (Gen 41:29-30, Ruth 1:1, 11 Sam 21: 1, 1Ki: 8:2; 11Ki: 6:25; 11Ki: 25:3 and Act 11: 28). The effects are devastating and lead to poverty. In all these references, people had to relocate to other places to start new life where there was rain (water). It is here where they can grow maize, wheat etc, and where they will be enough feed for their flock (Ruth 1:1) The absence of water is tantamount to the absence of life and poverty prevails.

An example can be cited as reported by Nash when giving the background on rural poverty to the August 1983 Northern Transvaal churches workshop.

We are reminded that throughout 1983 and early 1984 most of the country (particularly the six (6) homelands of the Republic of South Africa) had been in the grip of drought, the worst in 200 years. The summer rains had failed in most areas.



Many parts of the country had been without rain four three (3) or four (4) seasons, where in semi-desert Namaqualand there were children of six (6) and seven (7) years old who had never seen rain. The land was scorched and denuded of vegetation. Rivers and boreholes yielded meagre trickles or failed completely, cattle died or sent to abattoirs, donkeys destroyed to conserve what little grazing and fodder remained. Countless thousands of people lacked the barest essentials of life, namely water and food. Poverty became the order of the day. In other words, where there is lack of water, poverty becomes part of life.

For city people, the drought exposed pathetic conditions of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, illness and disease afflicting the black population in rural areas. For shareholders in business who depended on black rural customers, especially food and furniture (often on hire purchase) it brought reduced profit and a policy of diversifying into high technology enterprises which so far have been noticeably more “drought resistant”.

For customers it had brought increased General Sales Tax (GST) and for taxpayers a heavier burden in order to meet massive state deficits and foreign loan debts. In its ravages in Maputo, the drought contributed to that country’s willingness to sign the March 1984 Nkomati Accord, but there was little doubt that the drought had also exacerbated and made more visible the internal contradictions of the defence – burdened South African economy.



In rural areas short term relief measures in the form of new or deeper boreholes, feeding schemes and relief works for payment were instituted and doubtless saved many lives.

The need of such schemes, however, disappeared, yet very often the need is as great as ever. For in reality the drought did not create a temporary problem of rural hunger and poverty.

Rather, it intensified and exposed the deepening but often hidden crisis of survival being suffered by millions of black South African, particularly those in rural areas.

The RSA Department of Health and Welfare estimated that two (2) million children in South Africa excluding the homelands suffered from malnutrition and nearly 400 died of it each year. (Nash 1984:13–14). How sad and pathetic it is to note that to date in some villages of the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa, women and girl-children still queue for long hours in private household with boreholes where they pay R25-00 for a drum of water (SABC: Morning Live news: 2007-08-08).

How many poor people can afford the R25-00 to buy water? The news continue to picture women and children resorting to getting water from wells, springs, dams sharing it with donkeys, cattle, and other wild animals resulting in deaths from water-borne diseases.

Unfortunately, in 2007 the above story coincided with the celebration of the Women's Day month when the South African women celebrated their freedom after their walk in protest against



the pass laws in 1956. Women in Limpopo can ask genuine questions as to whether they should participate in the celebration or not, given the above circumstances where even the little water available at some areas is privatized, impoverishing the poor even more.

As experienced in the South African story above, the shortage of water yields poverty and has a negative impact and effect to our social life. Today, the impacts of climate change e.g. The Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina of 2004 and 2005 respectively also exacerbated poverty.

The table below summarizes the social, environmental and economic impact and effects of the shortage/scarcity of water resource.

IMPACT	RIPPLE EFFECTS
SOCIAL	IMPACTS
Lack or poor distribution of resources (food and water)	Migration, resettlement, conflicts between water
Increased quest for water	Increased conflicts between water users
Marginal lands become unsustainable	Poverty, unemployment
Reduced grazing quality and crop yields	Overstocking; Reduced quality of living
Employment layoffs	Reduced or no income
Food insecurity	Malnutrition and famine; Civil strife and Conflict
Increased pollutant concentrations	Public health risks
Inequitable drought relief	Social unrest, distrust
Increased forest and range fires	Increased threat to human and animal life
Urbanization	Social pressure, reduced safety
ENVIRONMENTAL	
Damage to natural habitats	Loss of biodiversity
Reduced forest, crop, and range land productivity	Reduced income and food shortages



Reduced water levels	Lower accessibility to water
Increased daytime temperature	Increased fire hazard
Increased evapotranspiration	Crop withering and dying
More dust and sandstorms	Increased soil erosion; Increased air pollution
Decreased soil productivity	Desertification and soil degradation (topsoil
Decreased water resources	Lack of feeding and drinking water
Reduced water quality	More waterborne diseases; Increased salt con
Increased incidence of animal diseases and mortality	Loss of income and food; Reduced breeding
Soil desiccation	Increased soil "blow ability"
Degradation of landscape quality	Permanent loss of biological productivity of the soil
Species concentration near water	Increased vulnerability to predation
ECONOMIC IMPACTS	
Reduced business with retailers	Increased prices for farming commodities
Food and energy shortages	Drastic price increased; Expensive/
Loss of crops for food and income	Increased expense of buying food from shops
Reduction of livestock quality	Sale of livestock at reduced market price
Water scarcity	Increased transport costs
Loss of jobs, income, and property	Deepening poverty; increased unemployment
Less income from tourism and recreation	Increased capital shortfall
Forced financial loans	Increased debt' Increased credit risk for finance institutions

[http://drought.unl.edu/risk/world/impacts SA.htm](http://drought.unl.edu/risk/world/impacts_SA.htm)

4.10 RAIN MAKING FOR AGRARIAN PURPOSES:

In some other cultures, the concept of rainmaking or rain dancing has been associated with the agrarian rural communities for decades.

Ceremonial dances were performed in many cultures, from the ancient Egyptian to 20th-century Balkan, to invoke rain, ensuring an abundant harvest. Because most primitive dances have the same goals—life, health, abundance, power—it is not unusual for phallic and other fertility dances to be performed as rain dances.



Thus, the Hopi Indian rain dance includes holding live venomous snakes in the mouth, an apparent phallic gesture.

Agrarian cultures, including the Mayan civilization and that of ancient Egypt have most commonly employed rain dances; Egyptian tomb scenes depicted rain dancers as early as 2700 BC. Rain dances often feature dancing in a circle, the participation of young girls, decoration with green vegetation, nudity, the pouring of water, phallic rites, and whirling, meant to act as a wind charm. Thus, the South African Angoni carry tree branches, and Papuan mythology teaches that grass carried in such dances pierces the eye of the sun, causing it to weep and be covered with clouds.

The Sioux Indians dance four times around a jug of water, through themselves to the ground, and then drink from the jug. The Hopi snake dance, based on the belief that the snakes carry prayers to the rainmakers beneath the earth, doubtless traces back to earlier snake cults in Mexico and Central America. In south eastern European ceremonies, a group of girls proceed from house to house, their leader clothed only in leaves and grass and whirling in their midst while housewives poured water on her.

The community, in which this research is being carried out, depends on agriculture for their survival and water has always played the most important role in their lives. The area is within the catchment area of the Lowveld in the Mpumalanga province and availability of water has not been so much a problem.

The periodic droughts that sweep across the area, particularly below the Bushbuckridge Mountains, sometimes affect the normal



agricultural activities of the communities in those areas. In the early 1980's a severe drought swept across the area and it was so bad that almost all the crops failed including the fruits, which are the main production of the area.

In desperation, the former Lebowa Homeland Head, Dr Phatudi looked all over to try to find water solution in this area. Dr Phatudi, under desperation, consulted the Japanese company, which was in the process of advertising a new machine for making rain through vapour. This old man happened to have visited Japan and was shown this new innovation. The machine was brought in to the Bushbuckridge area and when it failed to produce the expected water people became very angry. In that situation, the African people look to the ancestors for help.

In the mountainous area of the Northern Province, now called Limpopo along the Drakensberg Mountains, lies a village of the Balovedu tribe, led by the dynasty of the Modjadji's. The chieftainship of this dynasty is led by women and can be traced from the revered Rain Queen. The latest representative of a 400-year-old matriarchal dynasty believed to have magical rainmaking powers, and South Africa's only reigning queen.

Rain Queen, Modjadji V serves as the secular and religious leader of her people, although her brother handles most administrative details because of the seclusion her position traditionally requires. Modjadji V was initiated into the dynasty's rainmaking secrets after her mother, Queen Modjadji IV, succeeded to the crown on the

22nd October 1959, and she gained the throne upon the latter's death in 1982 (Schlosser 2002:9).

In recent years she was seldom called on to make rain. Modjadji V, like her predecessors, was respected and consulted by tribes throughout the region as well as by national leaders, including former president Nelson Mandela. Her great-grandmother, Queen Modjadji II, was the inspiration for H. Rider Haggard's 1887 novel.



4.11 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION:

The African continent is without doubt the continent most affected by poverty and underdevelopment. Despite churches efforts at eradicating poverty, Stiglitz notes that the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty increased from 41.6 percent in 1981 to 46.9 percent in 2001 (2006: 11). Given Africa's increasing population, this means that the number of people living in extreme poverty has almost doubled from 164 million to 316 million. He attributes this to the fact that Africa is the region most exploited by globalization, which keeps it to be poor.

Extreme poverty means that households cannot meet basic needs for survival. They are chronically hungry, unable to access healthcare, lack the amenities of safe drinking water and sanitation, cannot afford education for some or all of the children and perhaps lack rudimentary shelter, a roof to keep the rain out of the hut, a chimney to remove the smoke from the cook stove, and basic articles of clothing such as shoes. Unlike moderate and relative poverty, extreme poverty only occurs in developing countries.



CHAPTER FIVE

5. PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV AND AIDS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

HIV /AIDS and water appear to be very little related to each other. However, a closer inspection of the features that characterize its spread and its implications for individuals, communities, and societies reveals several significant linkages with water, as well as important consequences for water resource management.

The links between HIV / AIDS and water reflect some of the often unanticipated effects of the pandemic on society, with long-term implications for effective water resource management and the provision of wholesome water supplies to communities. This chapter focuses on the impact of the non-accessibility of water due to its privatization.

Africa especially in the Sub-Saharan region, has become a fertile ground for the fast spread of and fast death from HIV and AIDS. AIDS grips our communities and robs us of our parents, teachers and other professionals, our eager youth and infant children, our church members and leaders. The epidemic spreads silently and often without people knowing of it. It spreads through a tiny virus known as HIV (human immuno-deficiency virus).

The most common way of its spread is through sexual contact among youth and adults. Infants may also get the disease during birth from their mothers who have HIV. The only other way to pass



the virus is when fresh infected blood is mixed with the fresh blood of another person such as through transfusions, or during a surgical intervention, e.g. in circumcision at initiation schools if sterility or aseptic technique is not followed.

This Pandemic (HIV and AIDS) has become the most devastating disease humankind has ever faced. Since the epidemic begun, millions of people have been infected and affected with the virus, and it is now the leading cause of death in some countries, particularly the developing ones. Worldwide, HIV and AIDS is the fourth killer disease.

HIV and AIDS have been correctly described as the greatest threat to human well-being and public health in modern times. According to UNAIDS, the spread is currently twice what it was five years ago. Presently, 42 million are living with the disease and 22 million have already died of it while 3 million children are living with HIV and AIDS. 14 million children are orphaned.

The church is so far chanting simplistically the “abstinence, be faithful and condomise (ABC) messages, while ignoring the structures of oppression and inequalities that provide a fertile ground for vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, especially women and children, particularly the girl child. HIV and AIDS is a global challenge but at the moment it is heavily an African problem calling for Prevention, Treatment and Care.

Though the anti-retrovirals (ARVs) medication is available, the poverty pandemic, which impact on the infected people’s



malnutrition, undermines the effectiveness of these drugs. It is important that further steps be taken to improve the general living conditions of the poor particularly people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA).

5.2 FOOD AND PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV AND AIDS

Research has shown that more than 800 million people go to bed hungry on a daily basis. 300 million of those people are children. It is extremely important that all people have access to basic nutrition and have enough food to keep them healthy. A balanced diet is not only a key part to helping people thrive as individuals, but to help them develop their countries especially poor people. Hunger makes people vulnerable to diseases, causes conflict over scarce resources, and prevents citizens from living up to their full potential. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 33% of the population is under nourished compared to 17% in developing countries.

People are entitled to adequate food that is sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable. It is essential for every one of us and we do eat for various reasons. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Food is the first remedy to AIDS, and with a good feeding, people affected by AIDS disease will live longer. Food is always seen to be the only remedy to AIDS pandemic.

Foods remind us of our childhood, our country and our culture. Most of the time, we commemorate events around a good meal, together with our dearly beloved. A good meal brings about a



feeling of welfare. Food brings the necessary energy and nutrients our body needs to be well kept, move, build up and renew the cells, necessary for growth, upkeep and mending of our tissues. It also enables us to resist and fight against infections. A sound and balanced nutrition implies a good type of food in an appropriate quantity so as to stay in good health and feel well.

Thus, HIV and AIDS patients must make sure they have a good, healthy and sufficient feeding in order to keep themselves away from infections and stop the diseases from getting worse. Patients should therefore, prioritise food that their body can easily bear, and which are nourishing such as soups, stocks, rice, and pieces of pasta, wheat, cream, potatoes, cottages, cheese, toast, chickens or turkey, yoghurt, hard-boiled eggs, bananas, soya biscuits, corn, fruits etc.

In contrast, malnutrition is a serious threat for HIV and AIDS patients. During the first stage of the disease, i.e. where there is not yet any visible sign, HIV changes the nutritional state of the body. The risks of malnutrition considerably increase as the infection gains grounds. It is therefore necessary to meet the feeding and nutritional needs of the families affected by HIV and AIDS in order to keep them in dignity and Security.

Although a corrective feeding cannot heal AIDS disease or prevent HIV infection, it can enhance the health state of the patients and delay the progress of opportunistic diseases linked to HIV and AIDS. It can therefore improve the quality of life of those who are affected by the disease. It is therefore, important to understand



that there is a linkage between water, sanitation, hygiene and HIV and AIDS.

A sound and balanced feeding will help the body to be well kept and prevent it from losing weight. It is necessary for making up the lost in energy and nutrients, generated by the infection. A good feeding supports the effects of medicines and helps to create an atmosphere of welfare and determination in healing the sick. HIV and AIDS patients are therefore encouraged to live and eat healthily.

Eventually, a good feeding helps to protect and strengthen the immunitary system (protection of the body against diseases) and to be kept in good health. It is important to bring a support to AIDS patients and nutritional care as just at the first stages of the infection in order to prevent the development of the disease or nutritional deficiencies of the prospective patients.

The question is: where do these people get nutritious food in the midst of this abject poverty and unemployment conditions under which they live? Maluleke come out with a strategy when he suggests that: "The church should encourage members of the community who are unemployed to start self-help projects. By so doing they will create employment for themselves as well as for others" (1999:9).

Following are self-help projects that Maluleke suggests:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Brick making | 12. Cooking |
| 2. Building | 13. Baking |
| 3. Carpentry | 14. Car repair |



4. Radio repairs
5. TV repairs
6. Dress making
7. Candle making
8. Plumbing
9. Painting and spraying
10. Welding
11. Juice making
15. Making gas grill
16. Selling vegetables & fruit
17. Electrician
18. Refrigerator repair
19. Garden making
20. Selling hand craft articles
21. Tuck shops (1999:23)

Most of the above-proposed projects can only exist if people have access to water. Governments should therefore be reminded of their obligation to respect, protect and fulfill people's needs for appropriate access to sufficient water of an acceptable quality.



5.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

As a continent, Africa has the highest rate of diseases among its people. Africa also has the highest rate of infant mortality in the world. Every minute, a woman somewhere dies because of complications in pregnancy or childbirth. Most rural communities have no access to health care, making preventable diseases deadly.

According to UNAIDS an estimated 40.3 million people are living with HIV of whom 25.8 million are from Sub-Saharan Africa. In the most affected regions, hard-earned improvements in health over the last 50 years have been overwhelmed by death and disability from AIDS. In addition to the AIDS pandemic, diseases once common but now almost unknown in most of the industrialized world, like malaria, tuberculosis, tapeworm and dysentery often claim far more victims, particularly among the young. These can mainly be attributed to a large section of the population to access medical centers.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), UNAIDS and UNICEF an estimated 8 Million Africans are dying annually from preventable, treatable and manageable diseases and health conditions. 586 911 Africans are dying from Tuberculosis annually (this is 35% of the world total). In 2006, annual AIDS death figures for Africa were 2.1 million; and estimated 24.7 million Africans were living with HIV; and an estimated 2.8 Million adults and children became infected with HIV while AIDS orphans were estimated at over 12 million.



Annual African deaths from Malaria are estimated at 1,136,000 (89,3% of the world total); maternal mortality claims the lives of an estimated 300,000 African women annually (over half of the global total); and child mortality is high with an estimated 4.8. Million children under the age of 5 years dying annually. The Human Development Report 2006 also argues that poverty; power and inequality are the heart of the global water crisis.

Water is life. Without water, we cannot prevent diseases or grow the food we need for sustenance. It is the backbone of all anti-poverty strategies. The church can therefore, not remain silent when the majority of people, particularly the poor, are denied of this basic resource.

Chapter six will therefore focus on the church's response in situations such as these.



CHAPTER SIX

6. THE CHURCH'S PASTORAL RESPONSE TO POVERTY AND PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM

6.1 INTRODUCTION

“The church exists in modern society as the work and instrument of God’s justice.” (Moltmann 1989:6). These defining words of Jurgen Moltmann summarize the purpose, mission and the ministerial role of the church in our times. The church, which stands in the historical tradition of being a counter community, promoting the values of justice and love, the importance of sharing has to reinvent itself in order to confront contemporary challenges experienced by those who are caught by social structures that eliminates them from society.

Talking about the responsibility of the churches, Ulrich Dutchrow says: “Prophetic critique, resistance, living alternatives and intervention towards legal reforms, these were the biblical forms of practicing faith in Yahweh, the compassionate God”. ([http:11findarticles.com/p/articles/mcm2065/154/ai97118068](http://11findarticles.com/p/articles/mcm2065/154/ai97118068))

Regarding privatization of water system, the researcher shares the same view which is also supported by other scholars such as Tanner, that the church is under obligation to promote a non-market framework and practice, unconditional giving in the face of competitive terms of relationship. (2005:129).



The theological roots of economy have to rework the truncated hopes, uncertified losses. Callous exclusions and challenge the “winner takes all” competitive market attitude. (2005:129). This statement shares precisely what developing countries are experiencing on a daily basis.

How is this possible? Enrique Dussel advocates that it is possible only through covenantal relationship, which is a pact for the good of the community. Not through moral order (morality of domination or privatization) but by ethical praxis, not through accumulation, but through freely giving by making ourselves responsible for the “other”, we may be able to establish a covenantal community. (1988:40-46).

This community relationship should have characteristics of sharing and stewardship, not economically commodified transaction. Salvation is not just an issue concerning an individual’s soul but also involves transforming the socio-political and economic structure of which the individual is part. How therefore, can we privatize water and not care for the poor? In this way privatization of water system becomes a mini god followed by those who do not care for human beings.

Privatization that replaces God with self should be critiqued. In the context of the dehumanizing forces of privatization and globalization we need to address this evil, for example, Hans Küng stresses the necessity of a global ethic that has binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes. (1998:4). The author



agrees with Küng hence this research which seek to suggest a way but, by presenting a caring method to poor people.

6.2 DEFINING THE CHURCH

Before engaging in the whole question of the church's pastoral response to the poor, it is very important for the reader to be introduced to what the church is, its purpose and what its role in society should be.

The Christian concept of the word "church" is derived from the Greek word "*ekklesia*" found in the New Testament. The term refers to "a company of people called out." These are called out for a new relationship with God and with one another. They are called out to perform a mission of God by caring for others. It refers to a group or body of persons who share their faith based in Christianity. This group is described in the book of Jeremiah as the people of the new covenant because they carry forward the relationship and responsibilities of Israel under new conditions revealed and offered in Christ" (Jer. 3:31; Matt. 26:26-28).

This united people is again referred to in the first letter to the Corinthians as "the fellowship" because of their unique communion with God and with one another on the basis of Christ's life, death and resurrection, through the work of the Holy Spirit in their individual and personal lives (1 Cor. 1:9; John 1:3-7). This fellowship is called the body of Christ as each of the persons in it is related to the others as the members of the body are related, and the whole system of persons is controlled by one head, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the body must always care for other parts of the



body; by addressing injustices experienced by those who are oppressed.

The church is an instrument of God's justice. Hence it is incompatible with the unjust structures of the world and stands under the obligation to strive and struggle for the restoration of the fallen creation. It should have in its heart the role of combating for justice and promoting right relationships, relationships of equality, mutual sharing and caring with "love for the neighbour" as the driving force, embodying the image of God. (Watson 2002:116-120). The church is there for the pursuit of God's justice as a response to the gospel that embraces the whole world and that God's abundant life for people.

It is against this background that the author seeks to address problems of injustice. In the light of the growing privatization of water system the church is called upon to be prophetic, critiquing the kind of dehumanizing privatization that is being pushed by the national water policy under the influence of international funding agencies (World Bank, Asian Development Bank and International Monetary fund) and to challenge governments to develop policies that protect water resources; especially for poor people who are the majority in the world.

Being a model, the church should practice the ecologically sustainable use of water resources and promote community-based initiatives with equal and just sharing. It should encourage communities as well as governments to take up sustainable



watershed management and invest in eco-friendly technologies.

(<http://studentorgs.Utexas.edupidaustin/water privatization.pdf>. p14)

The Church should for example highlight to its members the benefits of rainwater harvesting. As an instrument of God's justice, it should urge governments to take legal framework seriously to protect the poor against this onslaught, by regulating various water bodies and monitoring the price, quality and distribution of water resource.

The church being the epitome of a just sharing community, without romanticizing "community", should live it out in all possible ways. It requires a firm belief in a "God" who has gifted us with all these resources and given us a vocation as stewards to preserve, nurture and share in a community. There is no provision for claiming an exclusive right to God's gift to humanity, and the church has the mandate to resist such a development. It is the duty of the church in the light of Luke (Jesus' Nazareth Manifesto) to ensure that justice is done to the poor, marginalized, the victimized and the excluded, especially in the context of privatization of water system (Luke 4:14–21).

The church therefore, owes its life to an act of God. A call, an offer, a redemption. Adam puts it very well when he says: "The 'church' can therefore be summarized as a community of persons engaged in mission and functioning through a social structure" (1978:64).

Thus, the church is the creature of God's Word (*Creatura Verbi*), and of the Holy Spirit (*Creatura Spiritus*). The church is missionary



by its nature and cannot exist by and for itself. It is called and sent to serve, as an instrument of the word and the spirit, as a witness to the Kingdom of God.

6.3. DIACONICAL WORK AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Diaconical work is often defined as the care of the church or Christians for people in need. This definition may sound to be too narrow, but in the New Testament, the word diakonia is used in a broader sense, i.e. diakonia as material help, diakonia as spiritual help and other services.

6.3.1 DIAKONIA AS MATERIAL HELP

Diakonia can be arranged as material assistance to those in need. The gift of money that the apostle Paul collected for the congregation in Jerusalem on his third missionary journey is the nearest example of diakonia as a material help (2 Cor 9:12-13; Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 8:4 and 2 Cor 9:1). As already indicated in earlier chapters of this dissertation, the assistance from the congregation of Antioch to the congregation in Jerusalem is referred to as diakonia or service (Acts 11:9 and Acts 12:25). Therefore the church in developing countries must always be cautious of its servanthood.

6.3.2 DIAKONIA AS SPIRITUAL HELP

Diakonia is also seen as a spiritual help. In Acts 6:4, diakonia is referred to as a ministry of the Word. In 2 Cor 5:17, Paul refers to diakonia or service as ministry of reconciliation.

There are other services of the apostles and various other services in the congregations that are referred to as diakonia, e.g. we also



meet deacons undertaking various of both the apostle Paul and the first Christian communities who regarded their job and their mission as one big diakonia arising from the new life in Christ.

6.4 JESUS CHRIST AS MODEL OF DIAKONIA SERVANT

The church is an instrument of God in carrying out God's mission. It was Jesus' mission to bring wholeness in people. In Mark 10:45 and John 13 Jesus is the great servant and his successors are called to carry on his service or diakonia.

Opocensky puts it well that: "The Son of Man has come to serve us, and in his footsteps we are sent out to serve. Jesus of Nazareth is an example and a paradigm of what true service means" (2000:223). This is what Mugambe is saying that: "The church and each one of us is challenged to become agents of social transformation, proclaiming hope where there is war, joy where there is conflict, harmony where there is discord, clarity where there is confusion, light where there is darkness" (Temple et al 2007: 35). The church should therefore ensure that in the context of privatization of water system, the poor get the essential service due to them, i.e. water supply, etc.

One big characteristic in Jesus' service is that he never placed himself above men, but was always in solidarity with men. This is what diakonia is all about. Any one carrying out diakonia never places himself / herself above the person he / she reaches out in diakonia; hence the church should serve people in situations such as that of privatization of water system and the poor cannot afford to pay for it.



As member of the body of Christ, the church and the congregation have the call to continue the service of Christ. Diakonia is not therefore a task of service of the individual, but the call or service and task of the congregation. It is for this reason that the author supports the saying that the church without diakonia is an amputated church. She needs to take her prophetic nature of the gospel to heart, and perform the serving function by protecting people against unjust acts such as privatization of water system.

It is God's design to gather all creation under the Lordship of Christ (cf. Eph 1:10), to bring humanity and all creation into communion, and to a reflection of the communion in the Triune God. The Church is God's instrument in fulfilling this goal. It is called to manifest God's mercy to humanity, and to bring humanity to its purpose, to praise and glorify God together with all the heavenly hosts. The mission of the Church is to serve the purpose of God as a gift given to the world in order that all may believe (Jn 17:21). The above thoughts challenge the way globalization is acting by excluding the poor.

As persons who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, Christians are called to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. They are to address those who have not heard, as well as those who are no longer living according to the Gospel, the Good News of the reign of God. They are called to live its values and to be a foretaste of that reign in the world.

Mission thus belongs to the very being of the Church. This is a central implication of affirming the apostolicity of the Church, which is inseparable from the other three attributes of the Church, viz:



unity, holiness and catholicity. All attributes relate both to the nature of God's own being and to the practical demands of authentic mission. If in the life of the Church, any of them is impaired, the Church's mission is compromised.

The Church, embodying in its own life the mystery of salvation and the transfiguration of humanity, participates in the mission of Christ to reconcile all things to God and to one another through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom 8:18-25). Through its worship (leitourgia); service, which includes the stewards of creation (diakonia); and proclamation (kerygma) the Church participates in and points to the reality of the Kingdom of God. In the power of the Holy Spirit the Church testifies to the divine mission in which the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

In exercising its mission, the Church cannot be true to itself without giving witness (martyria) to God's will for the salvation and transformation of the world. That is why it started at once preaching the Word, bearing witness to the great deeds of God and inviting everyone to repentance (metanoia), baptism (Acts 2:37-38) and the fuller life that is enjoyed by the followers of Jesus (Jn 10:10).

It is the church's responsibility to be God's instrument for peace as St. Francis of Assisi prayed:

***“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;***



***where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.***

***O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal
life.
Amen.”***

As Christ's mission encompassed the preaching of the Word of God and the commitment to care for those suffering and in need, so the apostolic Church in its mission from the beginning combined preaching of the Word, the call to repentance, faith, baptism and diakonia. This the Church understands as an essential dimension of its identity. The Church in this way signifies, participates in, and anticipates the new humanity God wants, and also serves to proclaim God's grace in human situations and needs until Christ comes in glory (Mt 25:31).

Because the servanthood of Christ entails suffering it is evident (as expressed in the New Testament writings) that the witness (martyria) of the Church will entail – for both individuals and for the community - the way of the cross, even to the point of martyrdom (Mt 10:16-33; 16:24-28).



The Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalized. This entails critically analyzing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation. The reader will understand the reason why the church should address the issue of privatization of water system. This is what president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, first President of Tanzania meant when he said: “Unless it participates actively in the rebellion against those structures and organisations which condemn people to poverty and degradation, the church will become irrelevant” (Nyerere: 1968). The Church is called to proclaim the words of hope and comfort of the Gospel, by its works of compassion and mercy (Lk. 4:18-19).

It is against this background that Maluleke make mention of the fact that: “The question of the poor affects all people but more so the Christian Church. There would be something central missing from Christianity if it were to lose sight of the plight of the poor and the justice due to them” (1997:7).

This faithful witness may involve Christians themselves in suffering for the sake of the Gospel. The Church is called to heal and reconcile broken human relationships and to be God’s instrument in the reconciliation of human division and hatred (2 Cor. 5:18-21). It is also called, together with all people of goodwill, to care for the integrity of creation in addressing the abuse and destruction of God’s creation, and to participate in God’s healing of broken relationships between creation and humanity. It is sent into the



world to be stewards of creation, to do justice and to work for reconciliation in a divided world.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church is called to proclaim faithfully the whole teaching of Christ and to share the Good News of the Kingdom – that is, the totality of apostolic faith, life and witness – with everyone throughout the entire world. Thus the Church seeks faithfully to proclaim and live the love of God for all, and to fulfill Christ's mission for the salvation and transformation of the world, to the glory of God.

God restores and enriches communion with humanity, granting eternal life in God's Triune Being. Through redeemed humanity the whole world is meant to be drawn to the goal of restoration and salvation. This divine plan reaches its fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth (cf. Rev 21:1) in God's holy Kingdom.

6.5 THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM

The biblical insights regarding the centrality of water to life, and water as a sacred gift, motivate advocacy for water as a basic human right. Just as the Biblical Jubilee tradition declared that land belonged to God and was only entrusted to individual families. Similarly, water should also be a common good for global use. To treat it as a gift of God and a human right implies that clean, fresh water should be available to meet the basic needs of all, rather than as a private commodity.



This goal requires the support and expansion of community-based initiatives such as those mentioned at the end of the previous section. There are many more encouraging examples of the effectiveness of community-based organisation in meeting people's water needs. A refocusing of Official Development Aid (ODA) is also required. Only 12 percent of total aid to the water sector in 2000-2001 went to countries where less than 60 percent of the population had access to safe water.

Like its master, the church is uniquely placed to provide effective relief in times of distress. Right from the beginning of his ministry, Jesus identified himself with the marginalized. The Gospel of Luke comes out very clear in identifying Jesus' diaconal ministry. In chapter 4 of this Gospel, Jesus puts his mission very clearly when He says:

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me; He has sent me to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour”. (Luke 4: 17-18)

It is very clear that Jesus identifies two roles of his ministry at this point. The preaching of the Word (The Good New, Gospel) and caring to the marginalized.

It is the church's responsibility to care based on the needs of people. To look at the world's reality from the perspective of people, especially the oppressed and the excluded. Through his church Jesus continues to extend his ministry and care for people (Haugk 1984:35). In the New Testament the poor are referred to



as the needy, indigent, the poor who are meek and calm. James says Faith and Deeds go together. He puts it very interestingly that “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 3:26).

In the midst of injustice, cultural dislocation and other ills plaguing the world, the church is the light and the leaven in human society. Her mission is one of being witness and serving the entire human community. She does not only save souls for heaven, but also humanize the social life of human kind and arouse in them a sense of personal responsibility in promoting a social, political, economic and spiritual order that is in line with the divine will for the world. Khoza Mgojo better explains this that: “The church should be prophetic and pastoral simultaneously” (Pityana et al). This implies therefore, that the church must continue to play its prophetic role of exposing the ills of society and also going a step further to rehabilitate the survivors of human selfishness and greed.

This is better explained by Nyomi the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in his address to the Christian Lifestyle Conference of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, when he urged participants to resist consumerism through ethical investing, the use of fairly traded products and by advocating for economy and ecological justice.

In his address Nyomi discusses the role of the church in society saying: we cannot yield to the rather mediocre view in which the powers that manage God's household today convince us that



individual needs and greed are more important than the needs of the community and that privatization and the motif of unbridled profit are paramount even if they oppress large numbers of people.

Without a critical analysis, we could be engaged in idolatry in which particular economic systems become gods – the only solution. This is one reason WARC is engaged with some of its sister organizations in the building of a covenanting for justice movement (March 2007.)

If God is sovereign over all of life, Nyomi asked, how can Reformed Christians today stand by as millions of people around the globe are suffering and dying because of the way the world's economic systems operates?

Many people do not have enough money to buy food, privatized drinking water, decent health care or education while Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank further exacerbate their plight” (March 2007).

Reformed faith has taught us that we cannot stay silent in the face of these realities. The church is called to follow Jesus and to serve in this world where he is present before we enter it and where he suffers with the least of our brothers and sisters.

The Bible tells us that God cares for those who suffer and calls on believers to challenge systems that fail to exhibit concern for those



on the margins of society through no fault of their own. Reformed theology refuses to blame the poor for their poverty.

How can we remain silent when the way the household is managed leads to death for some people in the household? Today we can see it in all those suffering around the world, particularly in Africa. The mission of the church is to care for them, to speak on behalf of the voiceless and, walking in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth, to serve without being subservient. From time immemorial until today the Son of Man suffers with all those who are discriminated against, oppressed and exploited. The church is called upon to be the messenger, ambassador and co-worker of Jesus Christ in the continuing process of transformation and humanisation.

When church members are experiencing troubles in their lives, it is the responsibility of the church community to respond. We are called upon to be actively engaged in resisting anything that denies fullness of life. As a church we are called to serve each other and to be faithful stewards of the entire creation.

The Accra Confession, a statement on neoliberal economic globalization by WARC's 24th General Council states that it is contrary to Christian faith to remain silent in the face of the current economic system that kills millions. It is therefore, contrary to Christian faith if the church remains silent while millions are denied access to safe drinking water.



As already indicated and inescapably, the Church has the Biblical mandate to respond to human needs in all manifestations. To ignore this responsibility is to deny the Lordship of Christ over the Church. Robert Wuthnow is vocal that: “The fellowship of believers is expected to be service, not only to one another within its own group, but to the needs of others, whether this be the immediate neighbourhood or the wider community of human kind. This is vital to any discussion of the church’s role now and in the future” (1993:33).

It is therefore, the researcher’s view that the church cannot sit back and watch when the government is privatising natural resources such as water, making it unaffordable to the poor. Barlow puts it clearly that: “When water is privatized prices are set on the open market. As a result, millions of poor people have been cut off” (1999:16). The research is intended at mobilizing the church leadership and other stakeholders to be the voice of the poor so that commodification of the world’s water supply is stopped since without this resource there is no life.

The share of Africa, where the need is extremely high, even decreased slightly during recent years. Many water and sanitation projects are financed through loans rather than grants. For example, in 2000-2001, about 57 percent of the total ODA in the water sector took the form of loans, thus increasing foreign debts. Developed countries should urgently fulfil their obligation to help poor countries to be able to guarantee and protect the human right to water, and adjust their ODA politics accordingly.



The human right to water is recognized as a precondition for other human rights – such as the right to life, appropriate nutrition and sufficient medical care (UN Doc. E/C.12/2002/11). This principle is at odds with the drive toward privatization and distribution of water supplies. The WCC delegation to the UN Twelfth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development underlined that:

... private ownership... makes impossible the protection of a ‘right’ as it makes a ‘commodity’ that is ‘tradable’ for a price and at a profit ‘Privatization’ in the context of ownership of water replaces community and people’s ownership. Such an approach is a serious roadblock to achieving the Millennium Development Goal on water that seeks to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015.

The urgent challenge, both in the South and the North, is to develop a positive vision of the public sector models that are responsive and effective in meeting water needs. The purpose should be clearly not to promote blueprints, but rather to create space for local communities to develop their own solutions and maintain their traditional rights and approaches to water use.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) encourages the call for the right to water as a basic human right. In its General Comment #15 on the implementation of Articles 11 and 12 of the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the committee noted that “the human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights”.



This human right has received global recognition and is firmly established in a number of international human rights instruments. By ratifying these treaties and instruments, the states have voluntarily accepted the obligations to progressively realize the right to water and sanitation.

Again, the WCC delegation stated that: “Water needs the protection of international law that incorporates a right-based approach. A water convenient binding under international law would champion a forward-looking water policy that is based on the human right to water, recognize water as a common good of humanity, safeguard the basis of life for future generations and create equitable distribution. Behind the call for binding law are questions of principle such as: Is access to water a human right or just a need? Is water a common good or a tradable commodity? Who has authority over access to water?”

It is the researcher’s view that an international water convention is needed for the following reasons:

- (i) To establish the right to water for all people in a binding manner.
- (ii) To guarantee the right to water for the coming generations.
- (iii) To protect water as a public good belonging to humanity and the rest of creation.
- (iv) To declare as a core task of governments to guarantee the right to water, and making national-states and their authorities responsible for the respect, protection and fulfilment of the right to water.



- (v) To prevent water from being privatized and degraded to a tradable good.
- (vi) To ensure that the human right to water takes precedence over international trade agreements (e.g. WTO).
- (vii) To place springs, groundwater, rivers and lakes under the comprehensive protection of international law.
- (viii) To guarantee women's water-related rights as human rights.
- (ix) To protect the local and national water rights of Indigenous Peoples under international law.
- (x) To enshrine traditional water culture and local water rights (e.g. of nomads) in national law.
- (xi) To ensure that people have a democratic right in determining and deciding national and local water strategies.
- (xii) To provide all people both internationally and domestically with effective judicial remedies for demanding fulfilment of the right to water.

The above will help churches to address this great monster that is making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

6.6 THE CHURCH AND THE ACCESSIBILITY OF WATER TO ALL

It is God's intention that every living creature should have access to water, the precious free gift of life he provided to his creation. As God's steward, the church should partake in the public and international discussion on water management. The church needs to discuss issues such as:



- **Precautionary principle with regard to water**

Here, the church need to check that whatever measurement regarding the handling of water is considered and discussed so that it does not lead to pollution, reduction in water supply, loss and damage to the water ecosystem.

The churches should be appalled by the economic destruction and environmental impact of most economic activities. In Southern Africa for example, forests are destroyed, natural habitats ruined all in the name of economic development. Deforestation and environmental degradation increase global warming which leads to increases in natural disasters such as cyclones, flooding and droughts.

It is the researcher's view that humanity should protect the environment and preserve the earth, which belongs to the Lord. The researcher's view is that economic progress and development should benefit all creation and not destroy what we have. He also believes in preserving natural filter like the wetlands and climate regulators than trusting it to commercial alternatives.

- **Protection from pollution**

Growing human populations have reduced the amount of water available per person and increased pollution of drinking water. More than 5 million people die each year from diseases caused by unsafe drinking water and a lack of water for sanitation and washing. When rainwater carries



fertilizers and pesticides from farms into lakes and rivers, fish and other creatures die. Pollution by chemicals' use in pesticides (such as DDT and dieldrin) and industrial process has long-term harmful effects, and cause cancers, birth defects and infertility (Adeyemo 2000:616).

- **Principle of transparency**

The church needs to monitor that all decisions with regard to the handling of water is transparent and to empower consumers to fight hidden profit mechanism such as profit and corruption.

- **Public participation**

There is a need for public participation with regard to the handling of water resource. This will ensure that the interests of all stakeholders, including animals and plants, are reasonably upheld. In chapter two of this dissertation, the author discusses the whole question of the need for public participation in the handling of water resource.

- **Principle of public control**

In the case where water is left in the hands of private sectors, the church need to ensure that independent control systems are in place so as to safeguard reasonable prices for water services. This will ensure that the poor are not cut off and left without water supply,



- **Taking sides with the voiceless**

As indicated in chapter four of this dissertation, the church should ensure that the voices of the voiceless are voiced. This will ensure that the interest of the poor and the marginalized are taken care of.

- **The principle of subsidiary**

The church must also ensure that decisions on the handling of water resource must take place at the lowest possible level so as to serve basic interests of all water users.

Keeping these benchmarks in mind, and at the same time reflecting on the spiritual dimension of questions related to water. Churches can become main contributors to a future world that reflects other values than just those of a trade-and-profit mentality.

Churches could become places of inspiration and change wherever and whenever they provide a model and example to community in general, by the way they handle water in their own life, using water-saving technology and encouraging their members to make personal life-style adjustments to their consumption of water.

Perhaps, more than any other, the church in the New Testament record, the church in Antioch providing a good model of holistic ministry. **It was a compassionate church.** When famine in Judea took place, every believer in Antioch



“The disciples, each according to his/her ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea” (Acts 11:29).

Clearly, the Church that is the incarnate body of Christ on earth has to “be moved with compassion” at the sight of human misery around us like the Church of Antioch. It has a relief responsibility to the hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, sick and other forms of human needs today, such as that of water.

The failing of world economies, globalization, mismanagement of natural resources, global warming creates massive calamities to millions of people.

The church in her shepherding role should have a part to play in globalization and work to make it just. This can happen if the church:

- Strengthens the sense of community in society.
- Promotes cooperation and participation at all levels, particularly that of the poor, women and children.
- Helps to promote social welfare and human security.
- Calls for equality and justice, and practicing them itself.
- Demand transparent democratic procedures in important economic decision – making processes such as the management of water resources.
- Appeal for everyone to participate in protecting the environment and lastly.
- Help people to experience that life is meaningful.



While realizing that there are limits to the understanding of the church's power to take action, the church is encouraged to seek cooperation with as many different partners as possible. The church should cooperate in ongoing dialogue with politicians, business representatives and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the region on the one hand, and with the groups critical of globalization today on the other.



6.7 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The church witnesses the massive violation of human dignity and the integrity of creation. She witnesses how the poor are impoverished by water privatization, the suffering, enormous economic and social disparity, abject poverty and the destruction of life resulting from the after effects of the above.

The church and all believers are called upon to be non-conformist and transformative communities. We are called to let ourselves be transformed by the freeing our minds from imperial mindset, thus doing the will of God. We are called to create spaces for, and become agents of transformation even as we are entangled in and complicit with the very system we are called to change.

Churches need to accept and assume the vocation to challenge all the evil forces that are taking away that human dignity from God's people. She is called to be with the suffering people and groaning creation in solidarity with those who are building alternative communities of life. She is called to make an explicit and public commitment of faith in word and deed by caring for life and resisting destructive principalities and powers. Following are ways in which the churches can express their faithfulness to God:

1. By opting for costly discipleship, preparing to become martyrs by following Jesus.
2. By taking a faith stance when the powers of injustice and destruction question the very integrity of the gospel; confessing their faith by saying "No!" to powers and principalities.



3. By participating in the communion (koinonia) of the Triune God for fullness of life.
4. By sharing the suffering and pain of the people and the earth in company with the spirit, who is groaning with the whole creation (Rom 8: 22-23).
5. By covenanting for justice in life together with people particularly the poor and the rest of creation.
6. By being in solidarity with the suffering people such as the poor, the marginalized, the ecosystem earth, and in resistance to powers of injustice and destruction.

The churches are challenged to join in the struggle for justice by resisting unjust and destructive powers and by working to build a healthy society be it local, regional, continental and global.



CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Democratic and societal control of many areas of life and the economy is being sidelined by policies, which reduce the role of government to a minimum and turn over as much control as possible to the “free market”. An economy globalized to this extent, which has been increasingly establishing itself since the changes in Europe in 1989, is oriented neither to social nor to ecological values.

Common sense gives way to efficiency, progress is defined as economic growth, and the freedom of citizens is reduced to the freedom of the market. Democratic participation in decisions, which have consequences for the lives of many people, becomes secondary to the free flow of goods and capital, of jobs and raw materials. Commodities such as education, medical care and even food and water, which are essential for life, becomes subjects to the dictates of this liberalized economy. It also influences the debates on the patenting of life forms and genetic engineering.

The research focus on the principle of global deregulation, how it works and impact to the scarcity of water resource. In this study, the researcher focuses on the notion of the scarcity of water resource due to several factors such as population growth, the growing water pollution, urbanization, industrialization and the inappropriate management practices. (Figures 2003:1) This scarcity of water resource results in the insufficiency of water to meet all industrial, domestic and agricultural need which



necessitates water professionals, policy-makers and governments to come up with different management policies in order to regulate the use of this resource, privatization is one method seen to be the best.

In his findings, the researcher notes that scientists, economists and politicians believe that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. It is said to be human-induced and not a cyclical phenomenon. It is realized that failure to take action against it could have serious financial, scientific and political consequences. It is also realized that climate change is not just an environmental threat, but one that is already touching human lives in the world. It is seen as an economic and livelihoods issue, a health issue, a conflict and refugee issue, a human rights issue as well as an environmental issue.

It is therefore, recognized that climate change would have disproportionate effect on the lives of the poor, as it leads to more weather extremes; more floods, heat-waves, droughts, intense hurricanes, monsoons and typhoons. These disasters affect the most vulnerable people, the elderly and the sick, the poorest of the poor in the poorest countries.

Developing countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change, as they often don't have the means to fend off floods and other natural disasters. To make matters worse, their economies are often based on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and fishing industries. Furthermore, the poor in these countries often



live in the most disaster-prone areas, along low-lying coastlines, on flood plains or on deforested slopes.

Slowly changing climatic conditions and more frequent extreme events are likely to threaten their food security, reduce their access to fresh water and increase their vulnerability to water borne diseases.

In recent studies, the World Health Organization indicates that climate change results in an extra 150,000 deaths and 5 million sicknesses each year by increasing the spreading of Malaria, diarrhoea, malnutrition and other ailments.

In February 2007, the United Nations intergovernmental Panel on climate reported that temperature would probably increase by 1.8 to 4 degrees Celsius by 2099, with sea levels rising by 28 to 43 centimetres (www.ipcc.ch).

Global warming is likely to result in the following catastrophes:

- **Thirst:** Fresh water availability in Southern Africa and the Mediterranean reduced by one-half, leaving millions thirsty.
- **Hunger:** African agricultural yields drop by 15 to 35 per cent. Marine and other ecosystems are disrupted. Up to 50 per cent of species face extinction.
- **Disease:** Up to 80 million more people in Africa are exposed to malaria. Millions more are exposed to dengue fever.
- **Coastal Flooding:** 7 to 300 million people are affected by coastal flooding. Hardest hit are Small Island, Bangladesh



and Viet Nam, and coastal cities such as Calcutta, Hong Kong, Karachi, London, New York and Tokyo.

- **Population Movement:** Hundreds of millions of people are forced from their homes by rising sea levels, storms, floods and drought.
- **Disasters:** Rising intensity of storms, droughts, floods, forests fires and heat waves.

The research then focuses on the privatization of water resources, which is the main concern of the researcher. Here, the World Bank, the IMF and multinational companies argue that proper use of water is to be obtained by its distribution strictly according to criteria of profit. It is worrying that neither the sustainable use of water, nor access to water for everyone, is a primary goal, but rather profitability of the corporations concerned. For business purposes, a high rate of water consumption is preferable to the sustainable and conservation-oriented use of this scarce resource.

The above may be good for economic growth, but it takes no account of long-term social and ecological consequences and costs particularly the poor of our societies. More than a billion people have no access to clean drinking water. If the current trend continues, in 2025 this will be true for one person in three on the planet. The promoters of globalization are determined to pursue the privatization of water services. Thus the IMF and the World Bank, as part of their structural adjustment programmes, call on poor countries to sell their water utilities.



The case of Cochabamba is always cited as an example; the water service was privatized because of pressure from the World Bank, as a condition for making loans available. When the water utility was taken over by private companies the price rose by 35%. Tens of thousands of the city's inhabitants protested in the street, because they could not afford this higher price. In the end, the water service had to be deprivatised because privatization does not take the lives of ordinary people into account.



7.2 APPENDICES

A. INFORMED CONCERNED LETTER

- Purpose of the study

The aim of this study was to set in motion a comprehensive, inclusive and holistic approach project by evoking in the minds of political, traditional and religious leaders as well as civil society the necessity to face the staring challenge of water privatization in poor rural communities.

Currently there is a rush to privatize water services around the world. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are pushing for this.

This is a big issue in many African countries. Investors argue that privatization of water brings efficiency. Opponents say it hurts the poor. Whatever one believes, the fact of the matter is that the poor have no say in the matter. Decisions are made on their behalf without their participation.

It is the researcher's view that water is life and that it must be free for sustenance needs. Nature gives it free of cost, buying and selling it for profit violates our rights. The poor are hurt most.

The study is therefore aimed at alerting the church leadership, government and other stakeholders that water is a free gift from God and that it cannot be



owned as private property and sold as a commodity. The aim is to protect the poor from being impoverished.

- **Procedures followed**

For the researcher to be able to do this research information from those affected by privatization of water was needed. Farmers, farm workers, people trading from farm produce and members of the workers, and members of the civil society were interviewed using the structured questionnaire form attached. The interviews were scheduled to be conducted within the second half of 2007, as the project should have been completed by the end of 2008.

- **Risk and discomforts**

All information obtained were treated as confidential. Pseudo names will be used so as not to put subjects at risk. This information will only be made available to the University, and only if there is need. In the light of this, the researcher is convinced that there will be no risk involved.

- This is a voluntary project where there was no gain either monetarily or in kind.



- **Participant's Rights**

Participation of the subject was voluntary. Subjects could withdraw their participation at any given time and without negative consequences.

- **Confidentiality**

Subject and the University of Pretoria were assured that all information obtained was treated as confidential. Anonymity was assured and that the data would be destroyed should the subject decided to withdraw. Only the researcher, subjects and the University of Pretoria will have access to the research data.

- **Declaration of the subjects**

I, the consent subject, have read and understood the content of the purpose of this research, and I am willing to be interviewed under the conditions tabulated in this document:



ITEM	NAME	DATE	SIGNATURE
01	HD Masangu (Rev)	2006/08/24	
02	W Rakuba (Rev)	2007/12/23	
03	BE Maringa (Rev)	29/08/2006	
04	RN Khoza (Rev)	25/08/2006	
05	AM Mabunda (Rev)	26/08/2006	
06	SPH Khosa (Rev)	02/09/2006	
07	JS Ndabane (Mr)	24-08-2006	
08	S.T Mkhabele (Mr)	27-08-2006	
09	P Mathebula (Mr)		
10	R Mkansi (Mr)	26-08-06	
11	NM Mbowana (Mr)	26-08-2006	
12	E Makabye (Mr)		
13	D Shirinda (Mr)	25-08-2006	
14	PK Maringa (Ms)	08-09-2006	
15	ST Dubazana (Ms)	28-08-2006	
16	S Maubane (Ms)	24-08-2006	
17	FBO Ramushu (Ms)	28-08-2006	
18	SJ Vilakazi (Ms)	28-08-2006	
19	W Nthane (Ms)	2006/08/26	



ITEM	NAME	DATE	SIGNATURE
20	BC Mbhokota (Ms)	25/08/2006	<i>[Signature]</i>
21	BF Kubayi (Ms)	08/09/2006	B.F. Kubayi

22. M.W. Khosa
 23. Tsakani Mathebula
 24. Rev. T.A.J. Sombhane
 f. mobie

 (

25/08/2006
 25/08/2006
 25/08/2006
 26/08/2006
[Signatures]

T.R. MOBIE (Rev)

STUDENT NUMBER

RESEARCHER

244635883



B. SURVEY ON THE IMPACT OF PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM TO THE POOR

BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY:

According to surveys, it is expected that by 2025, the world will be running out of water. This is due to growing water pollution, population growth, urbanization and inappropriate management practice (Figueres 2003:1). Global warming and erratic weather patterns have also created serious droughts in most of the areas of the world. Europe, which is known to have plenty of rain, has received experienced serious drought. Farmers in this continent have, for many years, ploughed their lands without having to rely on irrigation schemes, as the rainfall has been sufficient to see the harvest through. The third world is hard hit by the drought. South Africa has experienced acute water shortage over a long period. Water is now being imported from Lesotho as river catchments in South Africa have not been able to fill the rivers and dams.

Effective water policies and reforms at international, national, and local levels are essential ingredients for meeting water sector challenges. Two thirds of the world's poor live in the Third World countries such as Asia, Africa, Latin America and others and most face acute water problems. One in three people in the third world does not have safe drinking water, and one in two lacks adequate sanitation. The vast majority of people in this area live in rural areas, and many poor people make their living in urban slums all across this region from agriculture. Some predictions say that two out of three people in the world will face a water shortage by 2025 (Postel 1997:xv). Yet the potential of water investments as a tool



for reducing poverty and building sustainable livelihoods has not been fully realized.

Governments are faced with the reality that sooner or later there will be no water for human consumption, industrial operations as well as agricultural usage. In order to better utilize the water resources, calls have been made to take water control and regulation away from the government to private companies. The Mpumalanga Province, for an example, has been one of the first such areas where water was privatized in Nelspruit areas some few years back. In most of the rural areas, water has been freely available for local consumption as well as for irrigation in small farming sector. In fact people have been drawing water from the rivers without having to pay for it. Now, due to persistent drought, the government has been forced to build more water storages and to lay pipes to the local communities. In the process, water metres are being installed in the households to ensure that those who use water pay for it. The government has, in the mean time come up with the strategy to ensure that poor families are helped by providing free water of 6000 kilolitres per month, showing their responsibility in carrying for their own citizens.



QUESTIONNAIRE A1

Questions to civil society

1. *How much water per month does an average home use?*

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. *Is the 6000 litres adequate for domestic consumption?*

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. *If metres are installed, is the average home going to be able to afford water?*

.....

4. *Many families make a living by growing vegetables in their gardens and keeping of livestock such as chicken, goats and cattle. What effect does the payment of water have on these?*

.....



QUESTIONNAIRE A2

Questions to the local authorities:

1. *The introduction of privatization of water system in rural areas affects all the families irrespective of their income level. Those who provide water need to make profit in order to ensure that water purification and maintenance of pipes and the whole system is kept running. What measures are being made to ensure that poor families are not denied the basic commodity?*

.....

2. *How is the local authorities affected by the process of water privatization in terms of ensuring service deliveries to the communities?*

.....

3. *Local authorities have been the government organs on the ground of providing for such services, will they get any percentage of the revenue?*

.....

4. *If such revenue is realized, how much of it will be ploughed back to the poor families?*

.....



5. *The HIV/AIDS problem is affecting families' structures and in many cases, elderly people who depend on the government's monthly grant, is there anything that is being thought of by the local authorities in this regard?*

.....



QUESTINNAIRE A3

Questions to the local Church leaders:

1. *As leaders of the communities, Church leaders stand a good chance to speak on behalf of the poor without being influenced by any political gains. Are the churches in the rural areas aware of the effects of privatization of water system, particularly to the poor households?*

.....

2. *What interventions can the Church embark on to ensure that this process will not kill the rural family structures?*

.....

3. *Are churches thinking of alternative means of providing water to those who cannot afford to pay for metres?*

.....



QUESTIONNAIRE A4

Questions to the emerging farmers:

1. *Water stands to be the pillar of farming, be it agricultural, stock farming, chicken farming, etc. Privatization of water system will mean that farmers will have to pay heavily for this commodity. How do you think privatization of water system affects farming sector?*

.....

2. *Is there a way poor farmers can be assisted to get access to water without having to connect to the privatized one?*

.....

3. *If rivers get dry, are there other means that farmers can device to access water?*

.....

4. *In developed farming sectors, there are Farmers Unions that speak on behalf of the farmers; can such structures be of any help to the emerging farmers?*

.....



MBALANGO WA NTLHONTLHO LOWU VANGIWAKA HI KU HUNDLAHATA MATI ETINDHAWINI TA LE MAKAYA

1. MANGHENELO

Ku ya hi mbalango, swi languteriwa leswaku hi malembe ya va-2025, misava yi ta va evuswetini bya mati. Ku hisa ka la misaveni ni njhilo (ku jila) wa mashele minkarhi leyi, swi vanga madyandza etindhawini to tala emisaveni. Tiko ra Yuropa, leri tiviwaka hi ku va ni mpfula yo tala, ri kuma madyandza yo tala yo chavisa manguva lawa. Malembe layo tala lama hundzeke, varimi va le Yuropa va rimile masimu ya vona ni ku byala swibyala-byalani va nga tshembelanga eka ncheleto wa migero, hikuva mpfula a yi na hi mfanelo ku kurisa swibyala-byalana swa vona. Matiko ya nhluvuko wa le ndzhaku, (ku fana na Africa), na wona ya xanisiwa hi dyandza. Tiko ra Africa – Dzonga ri karhatiwe ngopfu nkarhi wo leha hi ku pfumaleka ka mati. Sweswi, ri xava mati eLesotho, hikuva tindhawu ta rona to kangatela mati, a ta ha ri na mati yo ringana ku khulukisa milambu ni ku tata madamu.

Swa laveka ku va ni ku lawula kokarhi ni ku cinca ko karhi hi mimfumo ku lwa ni tlhontlho wa vusweti bya mati. Mbirhi – xa nharhu wa swisiwana swa misava hinkwayo swi le matikweni ya nhluvuko wa le ndzhaku, ku fana ni matiko ya Axjiya, Africa na Latin America, ya langutane ni swiphiko swo chavisa swa vusweti bya mpfumaleko wa mati. Munhu un'we exikarhi ka vanhu vanharhu ematikweni ya nhluvuko wa le ndzhaku, u pfumala mati yo tihanyisa ni ku tihlambisa.

Vanhu vo tala etikweni leri, va hanya etindhawini ta le makaya, naswona, swisiwana swo tala swi tihanyisa hi ku endla mikhukhu etlhelo ka madoroba. Vakumbeteri va vula leswaku munhu wun'we eka vanharhu u tava a pfumala mati hi tlhelo ra ku va ya ri nchumu wo hunguta vusiwana ni ku vanga swo tihanyisa, ntikelo lowu, a wu si lemukisiwa hi ku hetiseka.

Mfumo wu kongomanile ni ntiyiso wa leswaku ku nga ri khale, ku ta va ku ri hava mati ya ku nwa, yo ma tirhisa eka vumaki ni yo cheleta swibyariwa eka ntirho wa vurimi. Leswaku mati ya ta kota ku tirhisiwa hi tindlela to antswa, ku huweleriwa hala ni hala leswaku vulawuri bya mati byi



susiwa emavokweni ya Mfumo byi vekiwa emavokweni ya tikhampani ta xihundla. Provinsi ya Mpumalanga i yin'wana ya tindhawu to tano laha mati ya nga hundlahatiwa eNasipoti eka malembenyana lama hundzeke.

Eka tindhawu to tala ta le Makaya, mati ya ku nwa ni ya ku cheleta swibyariwa emasin'wini , ya kumekile mahala ni hi ku olova. Hi ntiyiso, vanhu va kile mati emilambyeni va nga hakeli nchumu. Kambe sweswi, hikokwalaho ka madyandza yo sindzisa, mfumo wu bohekile ku aka madamu yo hlayisa mati ni ku andlalela tiphayiphi ku yisela vaakatiko emati, lomu va nga kona. Loko ku ri karhi ku endliwa leswi, ku hoxiwa ni swipima – mati emindyanwini ku endlela leswaku lava tirhisaka mati va hakela.

Hi tlhelo, Mfumo wu tile ni rhengu rinwana ro pfuna swisiwana hi ku swi nyika 6 000 wa tikilolitara ta mati hi n'hweti, mahala.

2. **SWIVUTISO EKA VAAKA-TIKO VA LE MAKAYA**

2.1. Ndyangu wu ngava wu tirhisa tikilolitara tingani ta mati hi nhweti?

2.2. Xana 6000 wa tikilolitara ta mati ti ringanerile ndyangu ku ti tirhisa xana?

2.3. Loko ko nghenisiwa xipima-mati, xana mindyangu – ndyangu –njhe, yi ta swi kota ku hakelela mati ke?

2.4. Mindyangu yo tala yi hanya hi ku byala miroho eswirhapeni swa yona ni ku fuya swifuwo swo fana ni tihuku ni timbuti. Loko mindyangu yo tano yi fanele ku hakela mati, swi ta va ni nkucetelo muni eka migingiriko ya vona ya ku byala swibyalabyalani ni ku fuya swifuwo ke?

3. **SWIVUTISO EKA MFUMO WA XIKAYA**

3.1. Ku hundlahata mati etindhawini ta le makaya swi ni nkucetelo wo karhi eka mindyangu hinkwayo ehandle



ka xiyimo xa muholo wa mindyangu leyi. Swi fanela leswaku lava va tisaka mati va bindzula leswaku va ta kota ku kuma mali yo tengisa mati lawa, ni ku vona leswaku tiphayiphi na sisiteme hinkwayo swi tshama swi ri ekutirheni nkarhi hinkwawo. Ku tekiwa magoza wahi ku vona leswaku mindyangu leyi pfumalaka swa le mandleni yi nga tsoniwi nchumu lowu wa nkoka lowu, ku nga mati?

3.2. *Xana ku hundlahata mati swi ni nkucetelo muni eka Mfumo wa xikaya hi tlhelo ro vona leswaku vaaka-tiko hinkwavo va korhokeriwa ke?*

3.3. *Mfumo wa xikaya i xandla xa mfumo wa le xikarhi, xandla xo nyika vukorhokelo byebyo. Xana Mfumo wa xikaya wu ta vuyeriwa hi ku kuma ti phesentenyana tingani ta mali leyi kumiwaka hi ku hakerisa mati ke?*

3.4. *Loko Mfumo wa xikaya wu kumanyana mali yo karhi, xana eka mali yoleyo, ku ta tirhisiwa xiphemu muni xa yona ku pfuna mindyangu leyi nga swela?*

3.5. *Xiphiso xa HIV/AIDS xi khumba xiyimo xa mindyangu yo tala hi tindlela to tala, kufana ni vadyuhati lava va tshembelaka eka mudende. Xana Mfumo – xikaya wu ehleketa xanchumu hi mhaka leyi ni hi vanhu lava khumbekaka xana?*

4. SWIVUTISO EKA VARHANGERI VA VUKHONGERI (VAFUNDHISI) ETINDHAWINI TA LE MAKAYA

4.1. *Tani hi leswi va nga varhangeri va vaaka-tiko, varhangeri va swa vukhongereri va le ka xiyimo xa nkoka xo vulavulela swisiwana va nga languteli mbuyelo hi swa tipolitiki. Xana tikereke emakaya ti le ku lemukeni ka nkucetelo lowu nga vangiwaka hi ku hundlahata mati, ngopfu nkucetelo eka mindyangu leyi nga swela ke?*



4.2. *Xana kereke yi nga ngenisa xandla hi mukhuva wihi ku vona leswaku ku hundlahata mati a swi onhi xiyimo xa mindyangu ya le makaya xana?*

4.3. *Xana tikereke ti karhi ku ehleketa tindlela tin'wana to nyika mati eka lava va nga ta tsandzeka ku hakelela swipima – mati xana?*

5. SWIVUTISO EKA VARIMI LAVA THUKUNUKAKA

5.1. *U vona leswaku ku hundlahata mati swi ta va na nkucetelo muni eka varimi lava va ha thukunukaka ke?*

5.2. *Xana tikona tindlela tin'wana leti nga kumiwaka to pfuna varimi lava pfumalaka swa le mandleni, ku kuma mati va nga lumeketiwangi ni mati yo hundlahatiwa ke?*

5.3. *Loko milambu yo phya, xana varimi va nga kuma rhengu muni rin'wana ro kuma mati ke?*

5.4. *Exikarhi ka varimi lava hluvukeke, ku ni tihuvo to karhi ta varimi leti vulavulelaka varimi volavo. Xana varimi lava va ha thukunukaka?va nga kuma ku pfuneka eka hikuvo leti ke?*

VITO RA NHLOKO-MHAKA YA NDZHAVISISO:

SIKU-----

NSAYINO -----



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