

THE MANIPULATION OF THE
POOR BY THE POWERFUL FOR
SELF-SERVING CAREERISM – A
PASTORAL CARE STUDY

BY

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FOR SELF-SERVING CAREERISM**

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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIALLY FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR**

**THE DEGREE OF MAGISTER ARTIUM IN THE FACULTY
OF THEOLOGY**

DEPARTMENT OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR M.J.S. MASANGO

DATE OF SUBMISSION:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to record my indebtedness and sincere gratitude to the following:

The Library staff of Pretoria University, especially those of the Faculty of Theology, who contributed to my success in various ways.

My colleagues who were also busy, or had just finished their Masters Degrees, for their encouragement to “go on to the end.”

My Secretary, Miss Annastacia Chuene, of Mogalakwena Circuit, where I laboured while studying, for meticulously typing the manuscript. Ke a leboga “TLOU” le ka moso.

The poor and suffering people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, who were unaware that I was interviewing them for this study.

My promoter, Professor M.J.S. Masango, for lending me his books, invaluable guidance, encouragement and emotional support that made it possible for me to complete this study.

My wife, MaNkomo, the “two girls and two boys,” for their support and prayers to “finish the study.” “Nkomo kaYengwayo;” “Madiba, Dlomo, Zondwa.”

My ancestors and the Lord Jesus Christ as their President. Without their protection and inspiration this study could not have been completed.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the content of this dissertation is my own work, both in conception and execution. According to my knowledge it has not been previously submitted to any other University for a degree either in part or in its entirety.

The sources quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....
T.N. KABANYANE

SUMMARY

*"We eat only once a day, a ball of millet with a few chillies ... Is there any hope for us?"
All their lives they toil, without hope. (Julio de Santa Ana, 1982:22).*

The basic premises of this study is that the poor people should not be manipulated by the rich and powerful for their selfish end. Though they are poor, they are God's people and God loves them as well. Growing up in the poor rural areas of Herschel, the researcher was the victim of apartheid laws at an early age. He experienced the pangs of hunger and on many occasions was tempted to steal. As a small boy he had many unanswered questions, when he saw white boys of his age being well fed, clad, and staying in beautiful homes.

Later as a minister, working with Rev. S.R. Kumalo, in Ivory Park informal settlement, the researcher was touched by the plight of the poor living in shacks. In 2001 he was stationed in the neighbouring Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. Here he was confronted with circumstances that perpetuated poverty among the poor, such as lack of job opportunities, no formal school buildings, sports facilities that keep the youth away from crime, no sites for churches, shops, clinics and police station. The people felt neglected and betrayed by the very government they voted for in 1994 and 1998. The government has failed to fulfill the promises made then.

The poor even question the existence of God, as poverty in this area is absolute. If God does exist, as far as they are concerned, he has either forgotten them, or turned his back on them. Caring for the poor was a major challenge to the researcher. He had to study and acquire skills of empowering and liberating the poor from their morass. The researcher used Gerkin's biblical traditional method of shepherding God's people, as used in Old Testament times. He also applied Masango's liberation theology as a way out to freedom from bondage of oppression.

The researcher also identified five forms of poverty that affects the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch, but emphasis is zeroed on economic poverty, as it affects all their spheres of life. The daily struggle of the poor here is how to keep the body and soul together.

The economic poverty has resulted in other evil repercussions, such as prostitution or sex work, which in turn leads to wide spread of pandemic HIV/AIDS, crime such as house breakings, car hijackings and general robbery, are on the increase.

The poor are neglected by the politicians and the rich. Every time during political campaigns the politicians remember that there are people to be addressed in Olievenhoutbosch, they visit them. After elections the politicians disappear to come back again when there is the next political campaign. The researcher views this as the manipulation of the poor by the powerful for their own selfish ends. The researcher has included the stories of the poor to back up their suffering after being used as pawns by the politicians.

As means of healing the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, the researcher has recommended some pastoral care guidelines. The poor must be encouraged to re-evaluate and come out of their state of inertia and start to live a new life. They must be empowered to use their voting power to change their circumstances and lives. They must end their exploitation through their sheer numbers. The lesson of liberation will also focus on the powerful as they are the victims of greed and power hungry. Nobody can really be happy and live comfortably when the neighbor is starving and unhappy. The boycotts and marches taking place recently in the townships are a sign that the masses can no longer tolerate their sufferings, and unfulfilled promises.

In concluding this study the researcher has suggested the way forward for pastoral care-givers. He has further suggested some researches that need to be done. At the end of this study the researcher also became aware of his own weaknesses, which are his personal ongoing struggles and challenges that must be subdued in the new democratic South Africa.

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THE MANIPULATION OF THE POOR BY THE POWERFUL FOR SELF - AGGRANDIZEMENT: A PASTORAL CARE STUDY.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Sharing the good news with the poor is not a freedom of choice for any Christian Church, it is a must. It is a calling and a must which help us to fulfil the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 28:19). Poverty does not only mean to be poor economically, but it is also a spiritual problem. We are reminded that we are dehumanized by poverty as men and women, yet we are created in the image of God. The rich and powerful, unlike the poor, they have control over their situations, for instance financially OK, security of health, and other physical needs, and yet some of them are bankrupt spiritually. Nicholls and Wood have an interesting analysis of the rich and poor, which will help us to understand the power dynamics between the rich and poor. They remark that:

“(the rich) are free to make choices. Not so with the poor. They (the poor) have little or no freedom over their bodies or lifestyle, and little hope for the future. The rich by definition have power, while the poor are powerless; they are mere pawns in the hands of others (who are powerful). They are subjects to institutionalised structures” (ed. 1996:1)

I regard this quotation from these two editors as an appropriate preliminary bird's-eye view of the situation in the informal settlement of Olievenhoutbosch, where I minister at the Methodist congregation of Southern Africa – amongst people who are surviving in the world of poverty.

a) Early struggles for survival.

I grew up the hard way as an orphan with my grandparents (partenal family). My mother tells me that my father was an “itshipha” (one who deserts his family, home, and lived away from us, and nothing was heard of him). The first time I saw a woman called my mother was when we, that is my elder brother, sister and myself, moved into an “ungquphantsi” (a hut whose walls are built of leafy branches covered with mud, with a thatched roof). Such a hut usually is built within one day. This hut, I am told by my mother that it was built by her two elder brothers, because she was ill treated, for various reasons, by her mother-in-law. The disadvantage of such a hut is that it is a comfortable home for mice, and they breed faster within the walls. At night they make such a lot of noise by squeaking and running through the walls. If the food was safely stored away, they became more of menace than nuisance in that they would gnaw the outer edges of our feet.

My uncle (my father’s younger brother) would wake us up roughly at 03h00 in the morning, winter or summer, to go and plough his fields. We were supposed to finish two acres before going to school. We were punished severely at school for coming late. Our meals, breakfast and supper, was composed of “umqa” (stiff porridge of maize meal) and “amarhewu” (non-intoxicating drink made from a thin porridge of maize meal). The available delicacies were preserved for adults and my aunt’s children. Living in that home I never realized then that we were poor. Poverty was prevalent and part of our daily life.

As I grew up, I also became the victim of racial prejudice in my small hometown, Sterkspruit, in the Eastern Cape. At an early age I became aware

that the white boys of my age enjoyed better facilities and privileges than me. I began struggling with the issue that black people were not allowed to be in town after six in the evening without the permission of the white magistrate. When I visited my aunt (my mother's elder sister) in Rosettenville, in Johannesburg, I had to remain unseen by her employers in her small room at the back of their big house. This type of life was really frustrating to me in which my freedom of movement was determined by other people. One day my aunt sent me to a café two blocks away, to buy milk and bread. As I was returning "home", a police van screeched to a halt next to me. Two white police officers quickly jumped out, grabbed me and demanded my "dompas" (an identity document). The white range damning effect and the violation of black people's rights, by "dompas" which curtailed one's free movement was experienced daily by South Africans Blacks. Tutu aptly captures this scenario thus,

"all black people aged 16 and above had to carry a pass. It was an offence not to have on the person when a police officer demanded to see it – it was no good saying you have left it in your office in your jacket pocket when went out to buy a packet of cigarette from a corner café... it is difficult to describe the daily public humiliation of having to produce your pass or maybe joined the crocodile pass of those who have fallen foul of the law and now where handcuffed together" (2000:13).

As a scholar I was carrying a documentary proof that I was a student at Bensonvale High School. They tore it into pieces and continued to demand that I should produce my "dompas". While in a state of confusion and shock, I was clapped, kicked and pushed into the police van. I do not remember what happened to the bread and milk. Inside, there were ten black boys. We were all dumped at Booyens Police station. By the way every African feared the white

police officers in particular, “whether they be traffic police, ordinary constable, or members of the dreaded Special Branch. Most policemen expected unquestioning deference from the ‘nie-blankes’ (non-Europeans or non-whites). If this was not forthcoming, they immediately interpreted it as “riot and rebellion” (Sowetan, March 24, 2004:28). One “displaying” such attitude was labelled ‘n kommunist’ (a communist), thus “qualifying” to be summarily incarcerated for months without appearing in court. The main problem was that, my aunt had to use money in order to release me from prison. This particular violation of human rights was something that nearly every black person in South Africa had experienced in one way or the other in his/her life.

For the first time I became aware of how helpless black people were in South Africa, especially in the presence of dominating and oppressive force of white people. What became more painful to me at that police station, was when the black police officers, especially in the presence of white police officers, physically, emotionally and verbally abused us. I learned later that, it was a way of convincing the senior white police officers that they deserved to be promoted. I was so hurt emotionally that I started to question the presence of God in such brutality. Who was God? Was it his purpose to create black people to be inferior and oppressed by a white race? Was there a God for white people, and a God for black people? Was God favouring white people more powerful than the one worshipped by the black people? Were the whites endowed with better skills of worship than the blacks? In order to survive, we imitated the black police officers and called the white police officers “baas” (master). I assumed then that it was a kind of respect and title reserved specifically for them. This incident was the first sickening contact with racism and oppression by the powerful that was to follow later. To the ordinary black person in the streets, racism and

oppression still prevails today overtly or covertly, though we are ten years into free democracy.

It is surprising that those white police officers, who belonged to the so called superior race, custodians of Christianity and "the best" Western civilisation, can be so callous and inhuman to fellow human beings, yet 1 John declares

"If anyone says, "I love God", yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen... Whoever loves God must love his brother as well" (4:20-21).

The above scripture passage challenges us to care for our brothers and sisters. On the other hand Gerkin appropriately pricks the conscience of all those who claim to be Christians by saying that

"Care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of justice and moral integrity in the life of the people" (Gerkin 1997:25).

As a result of the above experience and Gerkin's point of view, I now realized that God's love knows no apartheid. We cannot claim that we truly love God while neglecting to love those who are created in his "image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26). The only problem I was asking God was – why are the majority of blacks poor? Why are they the victims of oppression and marginalization? This kind of treatment demeaned our people and had a deeply corrosive on their dignity (cf. Tutu 2000:14).

b) Struggle on a wider field

For several months (January to December 2000), it was a pleasure for me to sit in the lecture room, as one of Rev. SR Kumalo's student at Jabavu Campus in Soweto (which is part of John Wesley College), responsible for training budding Methodist ministers. In 2001 I was lucky to be attached to serve with him in his Section, composed of six Methodist societies in Ivory Park, an informal settlement in Midrand. Here I was directly under his supervision as a Phase two Methodist Minister (Phase Two minister is the one who is on his/her second year of training for ministry at John Wesley College, as a fulltime student, but must be attached to a society (Laws & Disciple 2000:28). My interest to minister to the poor people in the informal settlements was kindled by him, and his style of preaching in a context of poverty during those two years.

While lecturing at John Wesley College (Jabavu Campus), Rev. Kumalo claims that this was an opportunity offered to him by the Methodist Church, and thus introduced him

“To students who sharpened my (his) thinking and raised even more interest in theological enquiry (in ministry in informal settlement)” (2001: v).

Under his guidance, both as a student and junior minister, I experienced the same feelings of enquiring more about ministering to the poor in the informal settlement, and how we can allow the Kingdom of God to guide us toward appropriate responses to the powerlessness of the poor. Further more, as Van Engen & Glasser appropriately echo my feelings as they remark in their foreword to Christian's book

“My life was enriched, my perspective enlarged and my heart challenged through the in-depth interaction of those months” (Christian 1999:x).

I align myself with Van Engen and Glassner’s view in that working daily amongst poor people subdues my pride, and always pricks my conscience to remember my own background. Each poor person that I met, in the church or streets, I began seeing the image of God, who is also my Lord. Reverend Kumalo helped me to re-assess my disposition and preference to ministering to the poor, and the way I understood mission among the poor. I further concur with Christian as he acknowledges that working among the poor

“broadened my horizons, challenged my perception, and touched my heart” (op. cit. 1999:xi).

The more I became involved in ministering to the poor in the informal settlement, the more I was touched in body, soul and mind by their predicaments, and as Van Deventer correctly articulates my emotions, he says,

“... of becoming part of them and of them becoming part of me (to whatever extent it is possible for people to really become part of each other)” (1989:1-2).

Further more I was challenged by Prof. Masango, while doing the honours degree in pastoral theology at University of Pretoria, to acquire more skills on pastoral care and counselling, so as to be better equipped in helping and serving the poor and oppressed people in this area.

In the year 2002, I was stationed as a minister in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. On arrival I found that

there was no structure that can be called a sanctuary, but the congregation was accommodated in a brown military canvas tent that was no longer valuable to the South African National Defence Force, measuring about 5x10 metres. Other denominations in this area worship in bigger and better tents with exception of Z.C.C. that worship in the open field. Is the Methodist Church so poor, I asked myself, to use a small, brown military tent? In summer it is too hot; in winter it is too cold; in spring it offers little resistance against dust and insufficient protection against rain on rainy days. Poverty in this area is absolute and confounds description; hence my whetted interest in wanting to analyse poverty and share a pastoral care theory of caring ministry that will alleviate the suffering of the poor.

1.2 STRUGGLE FOR LAND AND CHURCH SITE

I was informed by the oldest inhabitants of this area that the people have been squatting here since 1996. The land belongs to Mr Andries Choba, who claims that he bought it from a white farmer six years ago. He claims that he is "helping homeless people who have nowhere else to go", and candidly states that

"I am in business for money and these people must pay or I'll give them trek passes if they don't" (City Press, 30 March 2003)".

Now the struggle of oppression is being handled by black folks. Will they be like our whites in the days of 'apartheid'? The other section of the informal settlement referred to as Camp One and Camp Two, are under the control of Centurion Municipality. The land, where Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) houses have been erected, belongs to Nu-Way Developers. Since 1999, the Methodist Church had been trying to acquire land without any positive

results. On this juncture I recall Psalm of David, which shares an idea that is worth noting:

“The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord;
The earth and all who live on it are his,
He built it on the deep waters beneath the earth
And laid its foundations in the ocean depths” (24:1-2).

Proceeding from this biblical conviction, one embraces the idea that the land on which we live and depend for our sustenance in South Africa, does not ultimately belong to any single person, or any particular group of people, instead

“This land has been entrusted to our care as stewards for us in meeting the needs of all (South Africans). We are all responsible to God, for the way we use the fruits and resources of the earth, to provide for all his people” (Relocations 1984: 4).

On the other hand, even if the piece of land can be given to the Olievenhoutbosch Methodist Church, it would be difficult to erect a proper structure. The majority of people are poor and uneducated, consequently they are helpers/domestic workers or gardeners in the surrounding suburbs. Only one percent or less, are in any professional capacity.

“There is no question that for the church to have money, it needs its members to support it. If the members are poor, there is a problem - especially when they are faced with an unemployment rate of sixty-percent” (Kumalo 2001: 2).

However, this does not mean that the church should be a mere observer that does not help in their sufferings. Jesus’ ministry was focussed on the poor, hence

he open his ministry with the following words "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor" (Luke 4:18). The two white societies in the circuit heavily subsidise our church almost to a tune of hundred percent. This further proves that the Olievenhoutbosch Methodist church is incapable of supporting itself and its minister. On the surface this subsidization appears to be beneficial, to the people, but in reality it is disempowering the Olievenhoutbosch society psychologically and mentally. For example, they unwittingly display symptoms of dependency from white folks, and never take any responsibility of caring for their own minister and maintaining their sanctuary in acceptable condition.

Besides Nu-Way Developers, I was advised to approach a certain gentleman, who is supposed to be the mayor of the area, to negotiate for land issue. Initially it was difficult for me to meet him because he promised, through a messenger, that all denominations squatting in the area, would be allocated sites as soon as possible. That promised was made in March 2002. Hitherto that promise has not been fulfilled. Since then every time I make an appointment to see him, he is either very busy, unavailable or promises to grant me a date. It seems to me that the said gentleman is only interested in feathering his bureaucratic lifestyle efficiently. One realizes how powerful people continue to manipulate the poor for their self-serving careerism. I am aware that they are caught in circumstances of poverty due to social problems that are not their own making. It is a challenge to minister among them.

Mr Vuyo Mbuli, in SAFM morning live, "Vuyo Mbuli Show", made a remarkable comment which is worth quoting. He said that:

"career politicians care for themselves first, their friends (and relatives) second, and the masses last" (7 May 2003).

This statement reminds me that "charity begins at home". This is a glaring abuse of power to the detriment of poor people, yet the Bible asserts unequivocally that the poor should be given opportunities to better their situation thus,

"Do not deprive foreigners and orphans of their rights; and do not take a widow's garment as security for a loan" (Deut. 24:17).

As a last resort, I attempted to have an interview with the Mayor of Tshwane Municipality under which Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement falls. It is regrettable to declare that I was tossed from pillar to post until finally I was told to submit a memorandum as to why I wanted to see the Mayor (see attached memo Appendix A). In all this kind of playing games, it also became part of my life as I seek to speak on behalf of the poor,

"the people of the informal settlement communities are the ones most adversely affected by the problem of poverty" (Kumalo 2001: 5).

Hitherto I have been receiving empty promises through a third person - no written response sent directly to me. Adopting delaying tactics, is this perhaps another game of playing politics? Later, through the third person, I was ordered to submit a program plan (see Appendix B).

1.3. FREE BUT POOR (IN CHAINS OF POVERTY)

In 1994 South Africa became a truly liberated country, a free and democratic society where all citizens were guaranteed freedom and were supposed to be treated equally. In a democratic society, I presume, those

“holding political power or authority are responsible to the electorate... where the individual and the state aspire to social and economic justice” (Lossky et al 199:866).

Nine years have passed since that true independence was attained. In year 2004 there was another general election, yet the state of the nation is still in chaotic condition. The communities in the informal settlements are politically free, but stand again at another crossroad. They are not yet economically free.

“They are still characterised by poor living conditions and a lack of the essential resources that enable people to live decent lives” (vide Kumalo 2001:4).

The very poverty-stricken communities, who are hungry, sick, powerless, struggling to hold on their human dignity, are supposed to vote for the very people who have been ignoring them in the past years. Is this a game played by the powerful while manipulating the poor? The Sowetan newspaper carried a fascinating and thought-provoking article, written in bold letters: **‘Discovering squatters’ needs’**, wherein it says,

“The Gauteng Department of Development, Planning and Local Government this week kicks off a campaign to visit informal settlements in the Province in an effort to identify the services residents need most urgently. On Tuesday the officials visited Itsoseng informal settlement, in

North Riding, Randburg. They interviewed members of the community about their needs and the challenges they face" (24 July 2003).

I regard this "official visit" as nothing else but as "kicks off a campaign" for politicking and Machiavellian stance. The informal settlements have been mushrooming since the early nineties. Now that we are facing general election in 2004, they are on "fact-finding mission to ensure the department know what individual informal settlements needed". Once more they are on a campaign to manipulate and hoodwink the innocent and political dwarfs, for their votes, by dangling the carrot of improving and upgrading the informal settlements. When they need the votes of people in these areas, the officials visit them, but as soon as they are voted back in high, and powerful positions and warm offices, they either forget the needs of individual informal settlements, or push them down in their list of priorities and attend to "urgent issues", as if the sufferings of the poor people are not urgent issues; as if the poor can afford to survive without the basic life necessities: a roof above their heads, nutritious food, clean water supply, electricity and proper system of sanitation.

The church in this area is also the victim of poverty and suffering, because the community who formed the church is constantly confronted by the problem of poverty. There is no police station not even a satellite police station to curb crime, or at least where people can report crime committed by criminals. The equipment used by the congregants is stolen now and again. The nearest police station is in a white suburb about 18 kilometres away. It is a problem to hire a watchman because the Methodist society does not have sufficient funds to pay him.

There are no proper school buildings, clinics, and shops, consequently illegal "spaza" shops have mushroomed more or less in every street. The infrastructure is not provided, simply because the poor people have nothing to give to the powerful except their votes when required to do so. My role here is to help the poor discover their power in voting. This will give them a position of working from a strong position.

The government has attempted to address the problem of poverty by building the so-called RDP houses. These houses are so small that they dictate the type and size of furniture one must buy because the rooms are small. The site of each RDP house is so small that when one extends the house she/he is virtually left without space for vegetable garden, flowers or decorative shrubs. Despite all this, the majority of people are unemployed, yet they must pay rent for the removal of garbage, buy water and electricity from the local municipality offices. The priority of the hungry people of Olievenhoutbosch is food; paying rent to the municipality means little if they cannot earn money. Consequently the majority prefer to remain in their shacks as their homes. Cosser describes a shack as

"A structure, usually made of material that can be found cheaply, which gives shelter. Shacks are like shelters, but this word suggests more permanence and less of a makeshift structure. House which is actually quite strong, but made with iron and wood or plastic, and without the approval of an inspector or builders' code..."(ed. s.a.: 13-14).

In the informal settlement of Olievenhoutbosch roads for cars, are either too narrow, full of potholes or non-existent. The horrible smell of running water, especially in summer, is flowing freely in the "streets" if not forming small puddles. The families of about 150 people share common water tap and toilets,

which are blocked now and then - hence some people prefer relieving themselves in the open veld. The shacks catch fire easily and spreads fast to the next one, since they are crowded and made of cheap material. Dousing the fire is problematic due to few water taps. Due to lack of job opportunities, the majority of people live in outright poverty. It should be remembered, however, that the poor to whom Jesus and the church bring Good News are

“the naked, the hungry, the disabled, the oppressed, the imprisoned, the sick, the bereaved, widows and orphans” (Nicholl & Wood 1996:69).

The powerful seem to ignore the Good News of Jesus. The poor are trapped by lack of poor infrastructure and lack of education. Tshwane Municipality care less as long as these squatters do not bother it with constant complaints and "toy-totyping" to their offices. We are living on a time bomb that can explode any time unexpectedly. When people are hungry, they will do anything in order to get food and accommodation. (see appendix F).

Under such circumstances the question to ask is: How can one carry out proper ministry to the poor who are hungry, yet ignored, marginalized and neglected by society, without being angry and frustrated? The church cannot ignore cries for food and hope to successfully save people's souls. At Olievenhoutbosch Methodist Church we attempt to redress these problems by organising bread and soup from big stores, such as Shoprite, in town. Under such circumstances De Beer correctly perceives that the church now tends to function as a charitable organization, and is viewed as such by poverty stricken people of this area. He asserts that,

“Where the church responds to social problems in the community it is usually in the form of service ministries, not necessarily dealing with the

causes of poverty and marginalization. The church tries to provide relief on the surface while the community is slowly disintegrating underneath. The church is not involved, in other words, in the transformation of the inner city into a better environment and therefore it becomes part of downward spiral" (De Beer 1997:10).

1.4. FREEDOM OR ENSLAVEMENT?

Freedom is a popular word used especially by politicians these days. Many people interpret it as being free to do whatever appeals to them. All those who restrict them and try to challenge them from this illusion, are regarded as oppressors. True freedom comprises far more than political or social aspiration. It is a profound spiritual experience, which expresses itself in a moral obligation, which amounts to doing what you *must* do and not to do what you *want* to do. I am reminded of Myers' description of Exodus story that it is

"... the story of moving from slavery to freedom, from injustice toward a just society ... and from dependence to independence ... moving from oppression in someone else' land to freedom in their own land" (Myers 1999:31).

People are enslaved and disempowered when they cannot do things for themselves, the way they want and at the times they feel like. Enslavement means to be dependent on somebody to help you when she/he feels like in the manner she/he likes. Dependent personality disorders, according to Coleman are, in a sense, disorders of reputation – marked by the imprint the behaviour has on others rather than by the pain and feeling felt by the individual ... these disorders

have no apparent learning from previous troubles and are highly resistant to change (Coleman et al 1991:237).

The problem with charity is that it has never liberated anybody before. The same applies to the people of Olievenhoutbosch. Rather instead it “enslaves both the giver (who has to give all the time) and the recipient (who has to beg all the time). Therefore charity has to be discouraged, because it does not deal with the root cause of poverty by seeking strategies towards finding permanent solutions to the problem (of poverty) (Kumalo 2001:6).

I concur with the above viewpoint. Charity encourages people to be lazy to think and do things for themselves, and thus liberate themselves from any problematic situations. The true liberation, in this instance, is

“to empower the poor to improve their own situation and thus enjoy liberation from poverty” (Pieterse 2001: ix; cf. Kumalo 2001: 18).

The people suffer from mental slavery in that they always expect a white person to come and do things for them. My belief is that giving a fish to a person, you feed him/her for a day, but if you give him/her fishing equipment and teach him/her how to fish, you feed her/him for the rest of her/his life, even though some rich/powerful people may pollute the rivers to gain excess for their companies. People equipped with survival skills, will in turn create jobs for themselves, or will be employable and stop being perpetual beggars. (Refer also to Appendix A at the end of this chapter).

The role of the church is not only to feed people's belly, but also to equip them on how to feed themselves perpetually. Christians, however, accurately observes that

“No matter how much one wishes to avoid the rhetoric of the do-gooder fraternity, the reality is that the poor are victims of entrenched socio-economic systems that allow poverty to persist” (1999:123).

The "slow disintegrating underneath", which De Beers refers to above, becomes apparent when individuals become so demoralised that they are no longer able to successfully meet the demands that they and others expect them to meet. By demoralisation Burke refers to a

“Sense of a loss of power to affect ones environment - characterizes all problems ... power, real or perceived, is key to an individual's well-being” (1989:24).

If people, therefore, fail to live up to expectations, the resulting syndrome is characterised by depression, self-blame, guilt and shame - hence in most cases people in Olievenhoutbosch, according to Pieterse's phraseology

“They are convinced that God has forgotten them, left them alone and is with the better off and the rich” (2001:108).

Consequently they often feel resentment toward and alienation from those who are well off. Stealing things from the rich whites, in particular, is therefore regarded not as a crime of theft, but as repossession of things that were robbed from them by social structures created by the then apartheid government. In particular the Africans where victims of the then governments' policy that

removed the so-called “black spots,” and push them away to homelands, that were mainly infertile and rocky land.

1.5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion I concur then that the destructive social impact, and chain reaction of economic costs arising from this miserable situation are colossal. An understanding of how to devise means of putting it right, is urgently needed. The record shows how official policies, plannings and administration can ruin the lives of poor and disadvantaged masses, as they are overtaken by effects of changing local and world circumstances. Once it was a common belief that the earth was indestructible, we are, however, aware now that the earth is being destroyed. The level of food production has dropped, the poor are the victims of starvation.

Nissen observes correctly that poverty can be so devastating in the lives of the poor that

“... it denotes not only a physical condition but an attitude of life, an outlook ... (that) they finally accept the inhumanity and humiliation of their situation; they accept the status quo as the normal way of their life” (1984:132).

They are therefore easily manipulated as they are at the mercy of the powerful especially politicians, who only use them as pawns to remain in their comfortable positions. Politicians promise utopia, but in the end instead the poor and the voiceless, are reduced to the status of beggars, rummaging in refuse bins and dumping areas for stale food and rejected old material to keep them surviving. It is my fervent wish to work on a new mode of pastoral care, which will challenge

the conscience of the rich and powerful as they manipulate the poor and the disadvantaged. It is also my desire to sound a note of warning to the poor to wake up from their dependency syndrome. The church has a huge responsibility to stand by the poor, and be their voice in times of suffering and need, and call out attention to the scandal of poverty.

In the next chapter I will deal with the methodology that will transform and liberate the poor and the voiceless in order to receive attention and their dignity back. The liberation theology that empowers and offers awareness to the suffering poor masses, that they are also God's children created in his/her "image and likeness", will be explored to render some counselling and healing.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The marginalization of the poor, sick, aged and suffering is accurately mirrored in the eleven year old Nkosi Johnson's lament, reported in *The New Dimension* as follows:

"Care for us and accept us – we are human beings. We are normal. We have hands. We have feet. We can walk, we can talk, and we have needs just like everyone else. Don't be afraid of us. We are all the same" (May 2004:4).

As a young boy, ravaged by HIV/AIDS, Nkosi needed to make bold statement to the South African public, to ruffle its conscience, in order that they start providing for the poverty-stricken section of our society, and those living with the dreaded HIV/AIDS. It is an ignominy to the economically powerful, and the politicians in particular, that such a simple call should come from an eleven year old boy, who should be enjoying his youth days without worries of life.

My unwavering conviction is that when God created human beings in God's "own image, in the likeness of us" (Genesis 1:26), God never intended them to suffer indignity in the form of poverty and manipulation, but "that they may have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). It is this view that reminds me of Masango's phraseology "... that God's desire in every moment of pain, humiliation, and suffering, is to decrease its intensity. The aim of God's justice is to judge evil and oppression that surrounds the abused" (Masango 1993:70-71).

I concur with Masango's above thoughts, in that as a South African, he knows and grew up in poverty, and in the words of Barclay

“... an ordinary home ... where there were no luxuries, a home where the cost of everything had to be considered carefully, a home where the members of the family knew all about the difficulties of making a living and the haunting insecurity of life” (2001:30),

when suffering and oppression prevailed all around. He grew up during the vigorous era of an oppressive and tyrannical government of the time. As a Presbyterian priest he knows that God disapproves of any form of inhumanity of one race over another. As a theologian he is a champion of the poor people, who have the same needs and desires as those who have been voted into positions of power by the very marginalized people. What will it take to obtain justice, fair-mindedness and mercy for all, irrespective of social status, in South Africa? How many more Nkosi Johnsons have to suffer before their cries and sufferings are attended to by those in power and high positions? How long will take to normalize their circumstances for proper life that is free from dehumanisation?

Christian, quoting the famous liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff, claims that the kingdom of God is all embracing, proclaiming the deliverance of every human being and cosmic reality from all sins – from the sin of property, from the sin of starvation, from the sin of dehumanization, from the sin of the spirit of vengeance, and from the sin of the rejection of God (Christian 1999:167-168). I cannot avoid aligning myself with Christian’s quotation, that God in his/her creation, never destined one race, or class of people to dominate, sideline and manipulate the disadvantaged and less fortunate group, but be cared for and given opportunities to better their own situation (cf. also Exodus 22:22-27; Deuteronomy 24:10-22).

2.2. MODALITIES OF PASTORAL CARE

In the light of the above information, the question then is how to reverse such harmful repercussions? Which relevant methods to be selected and applied as “the way out of oppression, isolation and exclusion ... to rediscover ... (the) dignity and

bring back their worth, so that they may also be in the center of life like men” (Masango 1993:34).

The people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement are also the people of God. They are asking many questions about their predicament and suffering, vis-à-vis:

- Where is God in the midst of all this oppression and suffering?
- The God they hear about every Sunday, does he/she really exist?
- If God does, does God see their situation and suffering and hear their prayers?
- If God is powerful, as the Bible affirms, why does the iniquity befall the poor?
- Does God listen to the prayers of the powerful only?

These questions disclose how the poor feel, how they are humiliated, degraded and negated by those in powerful positions. The above questions cannot be brushed aside simply because they are asked by the marginalized poor and victims of abuse. Therefore I aligned myself with Masango’s view that they need to be supported in order “to rediscover their dignity and bring back their worth” as fully-fledged human beings, created in God’s image. Besides, these questions are challenges to the pastoral counsellor, to explore with the poor and sidelined people, relevant pastoral care and theological methods that will reverse, or alleviate their suffering and marginalization by the well off and powerful.

In order to reverse these preposterous and inappropriate circumstances, one needs relevant pastoral care skills and theology to tend the poor and sidelined people of God. Campbell’s pastoral care methodology will be used, and Masango’s liberation theology will also be utilized.

2.2.1.CAMPBELL’S BIBLICAL IMAGE OF SHEPHERDING

One of the tragedies of the poor people’s lives is the insensitiveness of the economically and politically powerful leaders that oppress them. By being in comfort zones, these leaders often utterly fail to realize what the unlucky ones are

going through in their lives. Having no experience of poverty, or their humanity blunted by upper class status, they are inconsiderate when referring to the poor living in the shacks. We have no alternative, therefore, but to denounce the powerful and exploiters as, according to Graybill,

“... corrupt men looking after their own interests, lining their pockets,
... and lacking integrity at the expense of the poor” (1995:109).

It is for this reason that Campbell remarks that

“ The first step in the rediscovery of pastoral care must consist in
revitalizing the language used” (when referring to the poor) (2000:16).

The terminology of counselling should be appropriate in conveying a unique character of such care. A corrective language should be used when referring to the poor, a language that always empowers and restores the dignity and heals the pride of the poor as people loved by their Creator, who does not discriminate.

From the outset Campbell warns us that the pastoral care giver should be a brave and courageous person, in order to confront the pain, loss and the bafflement of the victim. Caring is costly and intimidating to the caregiver, to an extent of risking one’s own life on the behalf of the sufferer. Campbell illustrates this by quoting the biblical image of the young, but brave David, who risked his life to save his father’s flock from the bears and lions, and the Jewish army from the fearsome and intimidating Goliath (Campbell 2000:26).

The researcher concurs with Campbell in that only the brave leaders, who risk their lives for the people, who become successful nation builders. South African history is flooded with such leaders who made a lasting contribution: king Shaka of the Zulus; Moshoeshoe of the Sothos; Hintsa of the Xhosas, to mention a few. Recently it has been Chief A. Luthuli, who joined the ranks of his people in the “new spirit that revolts openly and boldly against injustice and expresses itself in a determined and non-violent manner” (Graybill 1995:32). Dr. NR Mandela, who has never been an ivory-tower politician divorced from the realities of life in the real world, but

became a symbol of resistance against oppression, and struggle for human rights. By so doing he risked life sentence behind bars for the freedom of all South Africans.

The personality of a shepherd/pastoral counsellor should be a mixture of toughness and tenderness, skilled in leadership and concerned for the whole flock. He/she must be able to lead, guide, nurture, heal the sick, seek out the lost, bring the scattered flock back together and protects it from harm (Campbell 2000:280).

It is evident from Campbell's views above that, pastoral care needs one who is tough, brave and yet has tender care for the poor and marginalized masses. Toughness should not be a physical issue only, but mentally and ethically. Decisions taken by the leader should not favour the rich and powerful, but be inclusive of the poor as well.

There are many fearsome and intimidating Goliaths, that one at times has to tread a lonely and less travelled route, as Jesus did. On several occasions, Jesus, the Great Shepherd, had to confront and risked being attacked by the majority and powerful Jewish rulers and Pharisees, since he constantly sided with the poor and the marginalized masses. When the turbulent seas of adversity are threatening, however, one needs to remember the awesome power of God, as Christ did always on the side of the weak.

The good shepherd image displayed by Jesus, is carried over and provided by the human leaders of the community, the priests in particular (cf. Gerkin 1997:27). Segwape holds a similar opinion with Gerkin, that the shepherds of God's flock are the ones who can recognise those families who are stricken by poverty. Therefore, the shepherding image takes its place as a primary grounding image for ministry today (2004:41). A good shepherd cares for his/her flock, provides provision, guidance and protection – hence the flock follow him/her trustingly without hesitation (cf. also John 10:3-5). Collins positively asserts that priest have the responsibility

“To provide encouragement and guidance for those who are facing losses, decisions, or disappointments ... to help people cope more effectively with

the problems of living, with inner feelings, and with crippling emotions” (1988:16).

The shepherding image is reminiscent of the fellowship of the believers depicted in Acts 2:42-47. The Apostles united the first believers into a fellowship of Christians, recognizing one another as sisters and brothers in the family of God. In order to care for one another, Christians shared all that they had so that all could benefit from God’s gift. Pastoral care means being responsible to help one another in every way possible. God’s family works best when its members work, share and journey together, as they are gently guided by pastoral care leaders.

At this juncture the researcher recalls a comment made by Chidwick, who shares an insight about the word ‘pastoral’:

“... (it) has strong association with the concept of shepherding. And it is the work of a shepherd to gently guide people in their spiritual journey, not to drag them roughly through a prescribed route. Since everyone is engaged in some kind of journey, the compassionate presence of a pastoral caregiver will always be appreciated” (1988:58).

Quoting Gerkin, Basson says pastoral counselling has become increasingly specialised. Under the influence of psychotherapy, pastoral counselling has become more available to the affluent middle and upper class – to those who can afford it. Pastoral counsellors are, however, commissioned to care for the neglected or overlooked persons (2001:18).

The researcher agrees with Gerkin’s view quoted by Basson. Pastoral counsellors are urged to give care to those whose needs are great, the poor in the informal settlements are a good example. Giving care and counselling the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch are important aspects of my ministry, and it should be so to those who are in positions of power politically and economically. An article from Sowetan accurately noted that we sometimes waste a lot of precious time “by silly acts of unnecessary bickering among the politicians and economists, poor service from civil servants, and bad treatment of the small (sic) and poor by the wealthy and privileged (December 6 2004).

2.2.2. MASANGO'S LIBERATION THEOLOGY.

The ultimate shame, and one from which it is almost impossible to recover, is the feeling that one is unloved by God. The root of shame, according to Wimberly, is believing that one is unloved and will never be loved (1999:51). If such a humiliating conclusion is true from God's perspective, then there is no ground for hope at all in this life.

What Wimberly says above, is precisely the realization by some of the poor that their confidence in God is misplaced. Since the poor in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement feel neglected, they also feel unloved by God. Consequently they are ashamed of themselves – hence they ask so many questions about their very existence and that of God. They doubt whether they have a role to play in God's future programs. I hold the same opinion with Wimberly that, people who are severely humiliated have no hope for the future. Life to them has become a monotonous routine for survival. They live only for the day, for them the future is gloomy. They cannot handle the "rejection" by God. Masango on the other hand remarks that

"This is a cry for a theology that is relevant and that is able to bring liberation from humiliating situations. It is also a cry to understand who God is in the midst of oppression (and poverty). These questions also point the oppressed (and poor) people toward the road of liberation, which is a way of changing their oppressive situation" (1993:72).

The South African poverty-stricken people are brainwashed into an acquiescence of oppression and exploitation. They come to believe what others have determined about them, filling them with self-disgust, self-contempt and self-hatred. They allow those in power to set the standards for them, and provide the role models (cf. Graybill 1995:104). This sense of inferiority complex, manifesting among the poor, lead them to vent their anger wrongly against one another, and treat each other as scum. It is due to this weakness that Cone insists that

"Theology has to arise out of the oppressed community as they seek to understand their place in the history of salvation" (1975:7).

Masango also acknowledges that some of the victims of abuse have internalised the values of their victimizers, thereby closing their consciousness to the possibility of freedom in their lives. He maintains that liberation theology is the key to their bondage of oppression and a way out to freedom (1993:72). The researcher concurs with Masango's view that the "abused have internalized the values of their victimisers." The researcher observed that to the majority of the poor in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, what is said by politicians and the rich, is believed without questions. The old people always remark: "Umlungu mdala, ufaka intlanzi etotini ingaboli." (The white person is well experienced he / she tins fish and is not spoilt). It is difficult to change such mentality of people who are so brainwashed within the short space of time.

Liberation theology, in a sense, can be seen as a specific approach to poverty, as its very existence is due to the social conditions in its areas. If poverty had not been such a serious problem, liberation theology would not have existed at all (Williams 1998:198). Theology should address issues that emerge out of people's lives as they seek to make a difference in their dehumanising situation who they are, what is their role in God's universe, and his/her purpose about them in it. I agree with Masango that liberation theology is the key to the suffering and poverty of the neglected. It is also a way of freedom to break the chains of self-hate and self-abasement. Cone is also of the same opinion that

"The function of theology is that of analysing the meaning of that liberation for the oppressed community so that they can know their struggle for political, social and economic justice is consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Therefore) any message that is not related to the liberation of the poor in the society is not Christ's message. Any theology that is indifferent to the theme of liberation is not Christian theology" (1970:11).

The theology for the oppressed, according to Masango, aims to put into ordered speech the meaning of God's activity in the world so that the community of the oppressed, and poor will come to realize that its inner thrust for liberation is not only consistent with the gospel, but is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the liberator of

the poor and oppressed. It identifies with those who are humiliated, neglected and abused. In fact, theology stops being a theology of the gospel when it fails to identify with those who are poor and oppressed (1993:73). Masango substantiates the idea that God through Christ identifies with the poor by taking their condition of humiliation and abuse. Christ left the splendours of heaven to come to our sinful-drenched earth, and took upon himself the weakness of humanity as his own.

Though Masango addresses himself to the politically and socially oppressed people, his liberation theology is also applicable to the poverty-stricken and exploited people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. The fact that they are marginalized and poor, they experience oppression. They cannot do what they like any time they want to. They are hamstrung by poverty and neglected by the powerful. The poverty-stricken, however, can now identify with Christ, and accept him as their true liberator. In other words, through Christ, God accepts them entirely without preconditions.

The exploitation of the poor is an urgent problem that cannot be deferred any longer because, as Masango avers,

“the task of God’s presence in human life is clearly identified by God who has revealed God’s self as the God of the oppressed” (1993:74).

The researcher agrees with Masango in that Christ came as the liberator of the poor, and exploited and was in solidarity with the sidelined. By so doing he created an awareness of their value, worth and dignity, and thus liberated them from oppression and marginalization. Therefore if the manipulation of the poor is ignored, we are sitting on a live time bomb, ready to explode at any time unexpectedly. Besides, since God identifies with the poor, for the rich to neglect the poor economically and politically, the powerful are being indifferent to God as well, and stand condemned for their irresponsible behaviour. God comes to those who are oppressed and abused and declares his complete identification with their situation, disclosing to them the rightness of their emancipation on their own terms (Cone 1970:91). In other words, Cone maintains that God approves the breaking

of the chains of poverty and abused by the poor and assures them their liberation is his (God's) work.

Liberation theology is an attempt to enliven the liberating presence of Christ in the process of healing, enabling individuals and communities to experience concretely the presence of the Kingdom of God. Whenever there is suffering, pain, and oppression, God is fully involved, confronting evil and leading the oppressed, the abused, and the poor to freedom, as well as suffering with them. God became human in Christ in order to confront the evil, and suffering which seeks to destroy others (Masango 1993:78). People's feelings about themselves are based on the internalisation of their relationships with others. The poor in this instance, can only experience renewal of their humanity by identifying and internalising biblical scenes involving Christ's suffering, and thus accepting him as part of them. In the words of Wimberly,

“If these internalisations are positive and accepting, then we have internalised an enduring source of self-identity that can nourish and sustain us throughout our lives” (1999:61).

Wimberly affirms that Christ is constantly transforming the shame and inferiority complex of the people he encounters into positive self-affirmation. God's grace and healing is extended through Jesus to all irrespective of social status, sex, creed or certain behaviours they exhibited. What matters most to liberation theology is the correct action – redeeming humankind from sin and thereby ensures spiritual happiness for all. In other words, liberation theology does not aim at freeing the poor only, even the rich are freed from their burden of oppressing others. No person is free until all people are free. Liberation theology empowers both the poor and the rich to break off their chains of differences, and journey together, hand in hand, as fellow human beings created in the image of God. This means that both are God-carriers, God's viceroys.

2.3. FINDING DIGNITY FOR ALL

The world operates on dualism, in short, it loves dividing people mainly into two camps: rich against poor; smart against dumb; attractive against ugly; strong against weak. Usually, only one of these categories is considered desirable. For example, the strong rules the weak. The modern society treats the poor people as untrustworthy, expendable and inferior in status to the powerful. Thus they are deprived of their rights as human beings, exploited for the benefit of the powerful, pushed to the periphery of social activities – hence most townships are named “Vergenoeg” (Far-away-enough). Liberation of the poor cannot be compartmentalized into pigeonholes, hence Masango maintains that

“To be fully human is to be involved and participate in societal structures for liberation. Christ acted in such a way that liberated people as he identified with those who suffered and were oppressed, healing them and bringing them to the center of life” (1993:88).

As it often does, the Bible, which is “the most subversive book imaginable in a situation of injustice and oppression” however, turns the worldly values and thinking completely around. According to the Bible the strong are not to dominate the weak, but to serve them appropriately. They must not be frustrated and grow impatient and be inclined to leave them behind as they move forward in Christian life (cf. Blackaby & Blackaby 2001:98).

Paul also reminds us that

“There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ” (Galatians 3:28).

Masango, quoting Cone, brings into prominence an important aspect of God who equates God’s self with those who are poor, sidelined and are suffering. He writes,

“God in Christ really enters into the world where the poor, the despised, and the blacks are, disclosing that he is with them always, enduring the humiliation and pain, and transforming oppressed slaves into liberated slaves” (1993:98).

Jesus as the Son of God is sent to announce that God is a God of the outcast, the poor and those who are afflicted by physical pains. God through Christ opens the doors of future life to all, and offers his Father's gracious and goodness with no exception. The Christians, therefore, often feel that equality is a Christian virtue. They see it as the will of God who blesses all in providence. According to this view, it is the human action that causes poverty, for

“God's raineth on the just and also on the unjust fellow, but chiefly on the just because the unjust stole the just's umbrella” (Williams, 1998:83).

2.4. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Bishop Gavin Taylor, of the Limpopo District, addressing the Synod, at Lord Milner School in Settlers, remarked about the role of the church, especially in South Africa at this point in time:

“if we are to become a church in mission, then we need to be concerned about integration, about healing the brokenness of our disintegration at every level of our society. We need to become a church that comes out of our isolated suspicious corners, and boldly say in the name of Jesus, ‘Let's talk, let's explore, let us find each other, let us build a bridge here, heal a wound there, repair the damage over here, find a way forward there.’” (May 20, 2004 Settlers Methodist School)

Apparently Bishop Taylor is aware that, despite ten years of freedom “down freedom lane”, the well-off are reluctant to come out of their comfort zones. Politicians are still enjoy the fruits of freedom instead of ‘healing the wounds’ of ‘apartheid’ (separateness) and ‘repairing the damages’ thereof afflicting the poor. For most of us freedom is a journey we cannot hope to undertake and a dream that will never come true. Our democracy is not absolute, but exists only in the mind for the poor. It is a baby that is still crawling, though it is ten years old. The mission statement of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa declares:

“God calls all the Methodist people to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation” (2004:2).

If all people can commit themselves truly and faithfully to this mandate, it would be easy to heal and transform the bruised and the broken world to the one wanted by our Creator.

We cannot survive unless we are committed to strong partnership between the powerful (politically and economically) and the poor people in South Africa, especially Christians who feel and believe that equality is a Christian virtue. Besides they believe that it is the will of God who blesses all in providence. It is a challenge to deepen our spirituality, strengthen our moral fibre, develop our sensitivity to those who are less fortunate, mobilise ourselves to respond to their needs as Christ did.

2.5. CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter highlights the problems and struggles confronting the poor of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement as they are neglected by the powerful. It suggests the relevant methodologies that can be applied in counselling them. Furthermore, suggestions are made on how the church can effectively respond to the concerns of the poor, in their struggles for survival.

The church in Africa should contextualize evangelism to benefit African people in their struggles. The time has come for sincere efforts to be made towards achievement of mutual understanding between the poor and the powerful, for the benefit of all irrespective of social status. If we fail, thuggery and poverty will prevail until the powerful ‘hate their wealth, status and comfort zones’. Now we will discuss the types of poverty that affects the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement most.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POOR AND POVERTY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore what is meant by poor people and poverty. Various forms and effects of poverty will be briefly discussed, but emphasis will be zeroed on economic poverty since it is the one most felt by the poor and sidelined people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. About the prevalence of the poor and needy. Guthrie reminds us that

“There have been few societies in which there have been no under-privileged people and, therefore, the problem of the attitude of society towards its less fortunate members is always pressing” (1981:943).

The authenticity of Guthrie’s comments in South Africa is reflected by many poor people who are a common sight in towns and cities. In most cases they hold up overused cardboards with written messages, sometimes in wrong language and spelling thus:

“Pleez help unemployed with waif and tree childs God bles”.

The spelling, tense and language may be wrong but the message is carried across to the readers. Most of the beggars either come from the former homelands, or from the informal settlements found in every township. People living in these areas have two alternatives in order to survive: steal or beg. Poverty in informal settlements is absolute. Quoting from the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s on Urban Priority Areas, Scott declares:

“... a growing number of people are excluded by poverty or powerlessness from sharing in the common life of our nation” (1999:260).

He continues on to say:

“A substantial minority – perhaps as many as one person in every four or five across the nation... are forced to live on the margins of poverty or below the threshold of any acceptable standard of living” (op.cit.260).

The researcher concurs with Scott’s view. This is proved in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement by the rapidly increasing number of shacks more or less on daily basis. There is no way that the government will be able to build enough houses for all the shack dwellers.

Like the other informal settlements in South Africa, the one in Olievenhoutbosch is not different from the others. People here are bereft of every iota of human dignity, yet Bruwer, quoted by Kumalo, asserts that:

“The basic cry of the poor is for human dignity” (1996:14).

Bruwer’s viewpoint is re-enforced by Pieterse who avers about the society’s responsibility to the poor:

“We must realise fully that the human dignity of the poor should top our list of priorities” (2001:114).

Unfortunately this is not the case with Tshwane Municipality in Olievenhoutbosch. Very soon shack dwellers might resort to illegal means to alleviate their sufferings. (see Appendix F).

Seeing the poorly clad people begging in the street corners, in summer or winter, one wonders what is the opinion and feeling of the town councillors and parliamentarians as they pass by, in chauffeur driven BMW and Mercedes Benz cars. The human righteousness required by God and established in obedience is for all the people of God. This righteousness should pour down as a mighty stream to all, not for the chosen few, irrespective of status, sex or race (cf. also Amos 5:24).

The poor are the people who have not basic means of survival, those who suffer from poverty and lack the necessities of life, many of them do not have food or

enough food to eat, decent clothes to wear, or a suitable place to live – hence they are regarded as being homeless. Such conditions are the results of underemployment, unemployment, illness, age, or just misfortunes (Heitzenrater ed. 2002: 27). Pieterse, quoting Wilson and Ramphele, concurs with the above view:

“Poverty means not knowing where their next meal is coming from, or fearing eviction from their meagre dwellings because they cannot pay the basic rental ... also the fear that the breadwinner will lose his or her job” [2001:30].

Kumalo, in attempting to define the poor, quotes Schenk 1996:16, and says:

“(they are) powerless and alienated people from the key institutions of society that makes it possible for them to access resources they need (most) for their lives to be whole, thus being in a state of deficiency materially, spiritually, and culturally” (2001:11).

Kumalo’s definition above brings into prominence significant issues about poor people. They are subtly pushed to the periphery of social power. They have no power to participate in key institutions of society, where their voices can be heard, and decisions taken in their favour. In most cases they are never consulted by those in power, hence Scott complains that a growing number of our people are excluded by poverty or powerlessness from sharing in the common life of our society (Scott 1999:260). Projects are designed and agreements arrived at without the voice of the poor being heard. As a result issues decided by the powerful are supposed to be right and fitting for the poor. Neglecting and sidelining the needy is nothing else but disempowering them, yet Myers remarks that:

“Empowerment includes an emphasis on local decision-making, local self-reliance, participatory democracy, and social learning” (1999:99).

Harvey, quoting David Donnison, concurs with Kumalo in describing poverty and its repercussions as:

“... a standard of living so low that it excludes (poor) people from the community in which they live. To keep out of poverty people must have an income, which enables them to participate in the life of the community” (Harvey 1989:43).

The only time the poor are considered in Olievenhoutbosch is during election campaigns. Thereafter they are simply ignored or excluded in decision-making on matters that affects their lives, because the so-called councillors are not elected by them but by the Party. Therefore, the counsellors are accountable to the Party only and not to the people who elected them. The amaXhosa have also developed phrases depicting those who cannot keep themselves reasonably fed, well-clothed to maintain some respectability, and to attend public gatherings with confidence, for instance,

- Indod’ engenantlanti ayimanyelw’ enkundleni (a man that does not have a cattle kraal, is not respected in traditional meetings).
- Ixhwitha – ntamo (A destitute man is often given the slaughtered ox’s neck as his share in traditional feasts).
- Umasila ngeentungo (One who never has beer feasting in his house due to poverty, but is always visiting houses that have African beer).

The researcher mentions this not because of a tendency to digress, but to expose the shoddy treatment often meted out to the poor and lowly people by those who have means. They are not treated as equals, but are made to feel that they are nonentities, the scum of the society.

3.2 THE KINDS OF POVERTY

Since poverty is a complex reality, it is viewed in different ways, by various theological scholars, in particular. There are scholars who believe that poverty is the result of sin. Christian stirring the same chord, declares that:

“People and self-centred and seek to monopolize God’s earth and its resources to become rich. Hunger is a result of this self-centredness...

Therefore poverty is rooted in the fallenness of humankind with ramifications in their character and structure, so people need to be redeemed from sin" (1999: 106).

Christian is of the opinion that inadequate social structures are the results of human's sinful actions. Apparently he believes that people need to be redeemed from this detrimental sin of unwilling to share "God's earth and its resources". In contrast the researcher remembers how the early Church was able to share possessions and property, thereby eliminating poverty and suffering among its people. As a result of unity brought by the Holy Spirit, sharing was about a voluntary deed (cf Acts 4: 32-35). The researcher recalls Exodus where God instruct Moses that

"Now I am going to make food rain down from the sky for all of you. The people must go out everyday and gather enough for that day" (Exodus 16:4).

Some people were greedy that they gathered more than enough and saved part of it for tomorrow. The food that was saved for the next day, however the next morning was full of worms and rotten. It is true that some people selfishly monopolizes God's resources in order to become rich and refuse to share their riches with the poor. Selfishness about God's resources is a sin in the eyes of God.

On the other hand Lossky (et al) regard poverty as being an historical issue in social, economic and political realm. They concur indirectly with Christian that:

"Poverty is usually perceived as a result of the failure, intentional or otherwise, of political and economic organization to satisfy the legitimate rights of all people for a dignified and equitable life" (1991:807).

The researcher is aware that there are many factors that cause poverty as there are many kinds of poverty. Globalizations and rich countries accumulate wealth at the expense of undeveloped or underdeveloped countries. In this study of limited range, the researcher has, however distinguished five dimensions of poverty that will be examined on a limited scale. These basic five dimensions have been

specifically selected because they play havoc with the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement.

These are:

- 3.2.1 Educational poverty;
- 3.2.2 Spiritual poverty;
- 3.2.3 Physical poverty;
- 3.2.4 Political poverty and
- 3.2.5 Economic poverty.

3.2.1 EDUCATIONAL POVERTY

About lack of education or no education Maluleke comments:

“Most people in rural settlements cannot read and write. They are having an inferiority complex. They are even afraid to take part in the matters that concern their lives, thinking that they cannot make any worthwhile contribution. It is true that illiteracy hampers organizational aspects such as keeping minutes of meeting etc.” (1993:8).

As an African who grew among poor African people, knows how they struggle to get education, especially in the rural areas. Schools are few and far apart as a result few children get educated due to lack of funds.

It is shocking and preposterous in this twenty first century, to find that educational poverty still features prominently in the people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, yet it is surrounded by wealthy white people. By educational poverty, here the researcher means inability to, or poor ability to read, write and count beyond ten. English and Afrikaans are dominating languages used in the Midrand area, where most people from Olievenhoutbosch seek employment in the suburbs, big retailers and firms. Uneducated people cannot express themselves indubitably about their deep desires in the working environment. They will either be misunderstood or expelled from their work places.

Due to lack of education, the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement cannot read newspapers and apply for advertised vacancies. They are disadvantaged by illiteracy, thus remain in a state of poverty. Apparently the majority of the people here never had access to education since they were farm workers or were from destitute homes. Some left schooling in their lower classes due to lack of funds, or the schools were far away from their homes. Others were not allowed to attend school because they had to till the land of white farmers and look after their livestock yet today they are victims of poverty.

Recognizing the significant ways of education to overcome poverty, and thus improve the standard of living, Taylor remarks:

“In order to adapt to a changing world - to make possible innovation and local creativity, to respond to the challenges of an increasingly interactive and globalised world - education and training of people becomes fundamental” (2003:38).

Speaking from Western point of view, Taylor’s advices are not easy to apply to an African context, where electricity is luxury and schools are poorly equipped with educational facilities.

In order to combat illiteracy, Maluleke advises that we need to start adult education immediately. The poor in the informal settlement should be taught how to read, write and arithmetic. This enterprise should go jointly with handwork (Maluleke 1995:8). This type of education needs a lot of time because it is a slow process, and requires patience on the educator.

Education should be used as a leverage to lure children away from meanly paid jobs, which have no fringe benefits, but instead infringe on the children's rights. Education is, however important in all levels - from pre-school to tertiary. The curriculum should be designed with strong vocational bias, preparing people for employment, or re-employment when new skills are required (Taylor 2003:39). Society should call upon the government of the country, to show support for

parents who invest their money in the education of their children; by making such expenses tax deductible (MCSA Yearbook 2003:118).

By educating their children, the parents are contributing positively to the state's benefit, by "bringing into being" reliable and productive citizens of tomorrow - thus contributing to the nation building. Illiterate citizens are a burden and liability instead of being an asset to the state.

3.2.2 SPIRITUAL POVERTY

It is sometimes incomprehensible when people are labelled as being poor spiritually in this modern and enlightened age. By spiritually poverty the researcher here means when the wealthy are seen as being greedy, selfish, hard-hearted and lacking in human values - thus completely detached from godliness. Their confidence comes from "their abilities to handle whatever comes along". They don't rely on God for their strength. By spiritually poverty, Myers believes, is when

"The household suffers from broken and dysfunctional relationships with God, each other, the community and creation" (1999: 67).

The majority of rich people have no time for church services. Sunday to them is the day to enjoy their wealth or acquire more money.

The poor are, however, excluded from spiritual poverty because, as Stott asserts:

"... are spiritually meek and depend on God ... They look to her/him for mercy. Oppressed by human beings, and helpless to liberate themselves, they put their trust in God" (1999:286 & cf. Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12).

The poor are blessed by their worldly poverty because it keeps them humble before God. It provides them with opportunities to depend on God's mercies for their spiritual achievement, any luck to survive each day, and look forward to the heavenly rewards in the Kingdom of God hereafter. Scripture says: "Blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 5:3). Such statement is comforting and encourages them to hope for a happy life in the next world.

There is nothing wrong with wealth per se. Riches become evil when they are worshipped by people instead of God; when people forget that they are mere custodians of God's property on earth. Jesus once warned his followers that:

“Do not store up yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up ... in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

Christ continued warning them by saying that, it is impossible to give one's first allegiance to both God and money.

“No one can serve two masters. Either he (she) will hate one and love the other, or he (she) be devoted to one and despised the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (ibid. 6:24).

Money should not entice and blind us that our lives solely depend on it.

De Santa Ana, quotes Mother Teresa, who was addressing a group of people in England, a country advanced in Western civilisation and supposed to be custodian of Christianity and berth of best civilisation, remarked about their spiritual poverty:

“There is poverty here greater than material poverty. This poverty of the spirit is more killing than the poverty of material things” (1982: 27-28).

Storey, addressing the Americans, harp on the same chord as Mother Teresa as follows:

“And here? Is it possible that in this most prosperous and powerful nation on earth, prosperity and power have blinded people to the supremacy of the living God?” (2002:156).

Though the English people are developed and belong to the first world country, material advancement has overtaken their "ubuntu" (human values), resulting in a systematic impoverishment of the spirit, which is deadly, since it is theologically the core of immortal godliness in human beings. This idea is reminiscent of the Christians' attitude in Laodicea, warned by Christ that they were in great spiritual

peril, because they could not see themselves as they really were. Societies in such countries, function on values which support selfish individualism, social exclusivity, where personhood is measured in terms of one's wealth.

Excessive wealth renders mostly rich people to be haughty, inconsiderate and self-centred. They become greedy for more wealth and care less about other people, except if they are means to bring more riches. Worldly-mindedness is highly objectionable. Concentration on prosperity in this world, to the detriment of all else, is a temptation to which the rich are especially vulnerable. Avarice is the vice of respectability whilst widows, orphans, aliens and the poor are not cared for in the world. Their cries are not attended to by the powerful; hence they accept their suffering and misery as part of normal living (see appendix E). The poor and marginalized people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement console themselves by aligning with the various denominations found in the area, and thus commit their ways to the Lord, who promises never to forsake them.

3.2.3 PHYSICAL POVERTY

By physical poverty Myers argues that

“The household members are weak. They lack strength because of poor health, and inadequate nutrition. Many in the household are women, the very young, and very old” (1999:67).

In Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, " the young and the very old" are the ones who are victims of physical poverty. The able-bodied leave them in the shacks as they leave early for work (those who are working), or go about in their daily tedious and tiring job-hunting routine. The poor people in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement urgently require the attention of the municipality and government. The physical poverty and suffering according to Maluleke, who quotes Nash (1984:59), renders a

"...loss of human dignity because they accommodate their poverty ... They have no real wish to do anything but only to survive. They are fearful of trying any innovations because it carries more risks" (1993:9).

Suffering physical pain is the criterion of all that is negative. All people, rich or poor, dislike and try to avoid pain, especially when brought about by physical poverty, if possible. All forms of suffering call for genuine compassion and immediate attention of the rich and political leaders. When seeing poor people still scrounging for their sustenance, rummaging dustbins for food, ten years down the line, in a democratic South Africa, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela bemoans that:

"That is not what we had in mind (when we fought for liberation). We thought ten years down the line the levelling of the playing fields, politically would be a little normal" (Sowetan 07.07. 2004:8).

Madikizela-Mandela's view is strongly echoed by Stott, who bitterly complains that:

"My most poignant experience was to see men, women and children Scavenging in the city garbage dumps, like dogs, looking for food. For extreme poverty is demeaning; it reduces a human being to the level of animals" (1999:123).

The author concurs with the two critics above in that hunger is the most primitive form of pain. It is incurable except to fill the stomach with food. It mostly affects the poor and marginalized people. Its effects cause young girls, as fifteen years old, to resort to prostitution, which also leads to the spread of the dreaded and incurable HIV/AIDS. Young men are becoming more desperate and bolder to commit, sometimes the most heinous crimes, in order to get something to alleviate physical pain of hunger and cold. Considering the negative effects of the physical causes intensifying poverty, Myers once more remarks:

"People need food, shelter, water and clean air. They need an environment that supports life. Money, land and livestock are helpful assets to have. If these things are wholly, or largely absent, poverty is the result" (1998:83).

All the good things mentioned by Myers, which sustain life, " are wholly absent" in

the informal settlement of Olievenhoutbosch. As Myers has correctly stated that "poverty is the result", people here are deprived of human dignity, self-respect and self-realization. What is wrong with South Africa that such suffering can exist as if it is a country representative of South African society with regard to race, social status or political affiliation?

3.2.4 POLITICAL POVERTY

An article appearing on City Press newspaper commented about the poor and their political power:

"... the poor should not rely on the goodwill of politicians but must use the power they wield to force politicians to act in their own interest" (that is of the poor). (City press July 11 2004 page 08)

The researcher concurs absolutely with Mr Khathu Mamaila, the author of the article. If the poor, however, are not aware of their rights, are gullible enough to believe every word and impossible promises made by politicians, how can they ever use their power? No politician who needs the poor people's votes, will ever admit his/her weakness and machinations to them. Christian notes therefore that

"Exclusion of the poor is part of a systematic process of disempowering them from the economic, political, social, bureaucratic and religious life of the community"(1999:126).

At this juncture the researcher recalls Forester's remark about politician's attempts to improve the human lot, he avers:

"No political project is capable of inaugurating a just society, for human nature is corrupt and we live in a fallen world, where the only politics that is worth taking seriously is politics of imperfection (1988:45)".

The researcher assumes that political poverty is the flawed ideas and concepts the poor and lowly cherished, concerning how they are being ruled by the politicians, and failure to demand their rightful rights, as citizens who voted for the politicians

into powerful positions. For prosperity to prevail fairly to all, Ford maintains that it is only when

“...the gift of peace come from those who are marginalized and crushed by society, from the powerless and vulnerable, (that) all work for peace and justice be grounded not in fear or anger, but in love -- especially love for the enemy” (2000: 65).

Until such time that the poor and powerless stop depending on self-serving politicians for acceptable survival, start organizing themselves, they will be used again and again by aspirant politicians to raise their profiles. Politicians seldom act in the interest of the poor. “Free electricity for the poor, which was a popular slogan during elections, remains a mirage, a flickering illusion on the horizon (of hope) for many poor people. They are often useful tools during elections and, once they have served their purpose, they are forgotten” (City Press 11 July 2004).

Come next general election, like spare wheels in times of emergency, the politicians will come and “use the poor people” once more, as vehicles to transport them back to their warm and well-equipped offices. Christian aptly observes that:

“When it is time for elections and for organizing political rallies, the poor are the most important targeted participants. But when the dust settles after these elections and rallies, passion for the poor also settles down” (1999:127).

The politicians abuse the confidence of the poor and powerless for their own benefit. Myers, being aware of the political game played by the politicians, strongly cautions against the abuse of the poor and needy, he avers:

“... the poor are made in the image of God and thus have (rights) gifts, skills and the potential to become kingdom-like, just as we do” (1999:62).

Jesus also warns against looking down on others (cf Matthew 19:21; Luke 14:13). Our concern for the destitute and poverty-stricken, therefore, should match God's treatment of them. This is especially true where the needy and powerless are taken lightly, ignored or marginalized by the powerful. Unless Christians dominate the

political field, there will be no salvation for the poor people, since the latter do not participate in social and political processes that advance their cause.

The powers that be should create an ideal situation with opportunities for the poor to advance their cause and improve their situation, especially in socio-economic and political arena. The researcher believes it is unbecoming that only the rich and powerful should decide about the fate of the poverty stricken without consulting them. Perhaps the powerful fail to recognise how wounded and traumatized were the poor by the vicious apartheid system of the past regime before 1994. We are human beings because we belong to one another and we are bound to live together.

3.2.5 ECONOMIC POVERTY

Nowadays the researcher is aware of the negative impact of globalisation on developing economy such as that of South Africa. This has, however, not been dealt with since this study is of limited scale. In order to address the global issues of economic poverty, it is important to understand what is meant by the term "economy". The term "economy" is commonly used to denote the function of money, industry and employment. Sometimes it also refers to resources that help people meet their basic needs (Kumalo 2003: 10). It deals with the detrimental arrays in which humans organise their life in the world and should thus be taken seriously (Villa-Vicencio & Gruchy, eds. 1994: 198).

Kumalo's description of economy indicates that it has to do with the control of wealth, the resources and its production. It also has to do with the distribution of wealth between the people and how the production is controlled. Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy (editors) concur with Kumalo when they say:

“... economic deals with three processes, which affect every human being in every age: production, distribution and consumption. What is produced ... in its simplest form is material goods” (1994: 199).

In both definitions it is obvious that economy has to do with the human beings,

sometimes machines are used to convert raw material into usable products. In describing economic poverty De Santa Ana comments:

“The present situation of the poor in the world is related to the process of the modern... socio-economic structure ... aimed at appropriation of economic surplus and accumulation of wealth for those who handle and control the mechanism of power to detriment of the powerless” (1982:35).

According to De Santa Ana's comment about economic poverty, it is evident that there is no equitable distribution of wealth that can "help people meet their basic needs". Only the powerful and wealthy have the access and control over the "economic surplus and accumulation of the wealth". Unequal distribution of wealth deeply affects the lives of the unemployment. The church cannot afford to be a mere observer where unfair practice is the order of the day. "The Church is not simply another institution in society, nor is it an extension of the traditions of any nation. The Church must be the Church" (Storey 2002:151). It is for this reason that "the theology bothers itself so much with economics" (ibid. 1994: 198). Pieterse also claims that South Africa is among the top countries that score badly in unequal distribution of wealth. "The biggest inequalities are those between racial groups ..." (Pieterse 200:32). It is self-explanatory, therefore, that economic poverty is when the majority poverty-stricken have no control over the wealth of their country, which mostly remains in the hands of the few powerful rich. Our economic system should correspond with God's economy and God's law of the household (cf. Meek 1989:3).

Here the researcher recalls the comment made by the Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, to the fact that the whole world had identified poverty as a priority that had to be dealt with in order to meet universal development goals. He avers,

“Unless barriers in the policies are addressed to ensure equal participation by all in developmental initiatives, employment levels increased, opportunities for betterment created, resources and service provided and skill levels

improved, the poor would remain in the poverty trap” (Sowetan 2004 June. 21:4).

The researcher aligns himself with Ndungane’s view that justice is so important to the God of the Bible that it cannot be imagined that theology should leave economies to the scientific experts and the politicians. If Christians do not involve themselves in the economic matters, it amounts to a dereliction of duty (ibid 1994:200). The Christians should remember that Jesus comes to the church in people who are hungry, thirsty, homeless, sick and imprisoned (cf Matthew 25:31-40). These are basically the human needs - food, clothes, house, health care facilities, and security that should be provided by politicians. It is disheartening to declare that such facilities are insufficient, of poor quality or non-existent in some areas of the informal settlement of Olievenhoutbosch.

Due to constant inflow of poor homeless people into Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, there is no possibility, in the near future, that the government will reverse this trend. The shacks are increasing in numbers at a faster rate than the erection of RDP (Redistribution and Development Program) houses. Very soon people will fight over houses because of corrupt officials (see appendix F). Unemployment is gradually becoming a threatening problem. Pieterse notes that:

“...unemployment, poverty and crime are interrelated. Unemployed become impoverished, and when people don’t have food they may resort to crime in order to find money” (2001:39).

Poverty and the gap between the rich and poor provoke conflict. A hungry person is unreliable and unpredictable. The poor have nothing to lose when arrested, except their poverty. It is therefore propitious to them to commit crime. They know that in prison the government will look after them. Able-bodied young men are easily persuaded by drug syndicates to become drug peddlers to earn a living. Very soon they will become hardened criminals. The effect of large numbers of unemployed people on society is negative, for an example, in a rapid rise in crime. In essence unemployed people are deprived of everything that God’s economy

demands (Villa-Vicencio & De Gruchy, editors. 1994: 201).

Another negative outcome of economic poverty in Olievenhoutbosch squatter camp is that girls as young as fifteen years old already indulge in prostitution. They are unemployed; some are unemployable due to lack of education and skills of survival. Prostitution has given rise to HIV/AIDS spiralling out of control and thus overloading the occupational health measures. In a country where incurable diseases have spiralled out of control, communities are suffering awfully; occupational health measures are a sham. Christian notes that:

“...the poor become compelled to depend on outsiders in times of family crisis. Sickness and accidents remind them that they have no traditional networks to fall back on” (1993:131).

This reality is a tremendous obstacle to the dream of creating a just and peaceful world order where sanity prevails. People calling themselves Christians cannot be comfortable with their riches in a sea of poverty.

3.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the terms “poor and poverty” are thoroughly discussed. Various forms and effects of poverty are also examined, but more emphasis is zeroed on economic poverty. This type of poverty is experienced mostly by poor and sidelined people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. Their daily struggle is how to keep the body and soul together.

The economic poverty has further resulted in other horrendous repercussions such as prostitution or sex work, as it is conciliatory referred to now. In turn sex work leads to the widespread of the pandemic HIV/AIDS. Crime such as housebreaking, car hijackings, robbery, and thuggery in general are escalating at an alarming rate. Thompson therefore, accurately remarks that:

“Until the misery and degradation of billions of our brothers and sisters is alleviated, there will be no justice and there will be no peace” (2000:29).

This chapter also demonstrates that the poverty-stricken people in this informal settlement are forced by economic poverty to live in high-risk shacks that affect their health. They bare the brunt of suffering through rising unemployment, retrenchment and the escalating petrol price, as they militate against economic development and progress (cf. Namwera; et al. 1990:182).

As long as the government and the business do not meet the deeper needs of the poor, that is to develop them, the gap between the rich and the poor will continue to widen and worsen. Human development has three core values that can change the whole social system of poor people for the better; they are sustenance, self-esteem and freedom. The economically and politically powerful middle class, however, it would seem they prefer to entrench their positions by manipulating the poor. Let us therefore discuss some of the manipulative techniques used by the powerful elite.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. MANIPULATION OF THE POOR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In safeguarding the interests of the poor and powerless, two firm beliefs become more apparent. The first one is that the Almighty is calling upon those who profess to be Christians, to take up the cudgels for ministry among the marginalized people, to pastor, defend and guide them in the ways of their Creator. The second is that no ministry, in South Africa, would ever have any integrity if it does not confront head-on hunger and poverty in the name of Our Saviour. This is our calling, our care for ministry for the least of these my brethren. If these two convictions are constantly kept in focus, they will shape the actions of the Christians in good stead for the poor.

The Church understands itself as an organization faithful to the Word of God. Therefore it can have a little impact if it does not involve the big businesses, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and the government, in uplifting the living standard of the poverty stricken masses. The church should be the conscience of the government. If needs be, as Storey remarks,

"The Church must be different from, and often over against and in contradiction to, the ways of all nations (world) ... The richest gift the Church can give the world is to be different from it. It must be a constant irritant that the world doesn't want, but cannot do without" (2002:151).

Kgobane Wilfred Rakgata, in his book "Elke loontjie kry sy loontjie," quoted in Thisday newspaper, concurs in a subtle manner by warning people who hold senior positions in the government, in non-governmental organizations, and in the community, not to look down on the poor people. He avers,

“I want to teach them that being a leader (and a powerful person) does not mean you abuse (and neglect) other people, the poor and needy in particular. A good leader respects every person, irrespective of the colour of the skin, status, or the fragile financial background of that person” (2003:19).

The researcher concurs with the above authors. The poor masses are not pawns to play politics with or pursue personal fame and pleasure. If the government is not careful, the time will come when the poor will take the law into their own hands and redress the poor service delivery, invariably will be led by the “concerned groups,” on behalf of the residents of the suffering areas. (See appendix F). There is, however, no guarantee that such leadership will not have its own ulterior motives or secret agenda, under the pretext of representing the interests of the poor masses. In seeking personal profit and wealth, those in powerful positions have let go their contact with the Creator of the poor, and his true source of life’s meaning and lasting happiness.

Parliamentarians traditionally see themselves as the custodians and embodiments of the interests of the people (cf. City Press, 20 February 2005:19). If there is, however, indifference and laxity on their part, there will be no peace and harmony. Quoting Martin Luther King (Junior), City Press claims that history has taught that

“... it is not just enough for the people to be angry. The supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force” (2005:20).

The American theologian, Martin Luther King (Junior’s) warning should be taken seriously by those in positions of power(s) and the rich. In South Africa apparently our parliamentarians have learnt nothing from past historical events. They will therefore reap the whirlwind for their callousness towards the poor and hungry people. God needs leaders who lead according to his/her will, direction

and love, rather than for their selfish ends and manipulating the poor thereof. At this juncture let us unpack what is meant by the term manipulation.

4.2 WHAT IS MANIPULATION?

Manipulation is the ability to handle, manage and control mostly characterized by unscrupulous exploitation of circumstances or people, bordering on self-centredness and vicious self-aggrandizement, for one's own ends. In most cases manipulation is a shameful misuse of power by individuals – dictators, politicians etc., who are always bent on shunning the truth and participate in clanderstine and warped activities for self-serving purposes (cf. Methodist Year book 2004:18).

In the above explanation of manipulation, certain words pregnant with depreciatory and negative meanings are noticeable, they are: unscrupulous, exploitation, self-centredness, self-aggrandizement, misuse, dictator, shunning, clanderstine, warped. According to Reader's Digest Dictionary,

- ~ Unscrupulous means having no scruples, unprincipled, immoral, corrupt, deceitful, etc. (1995:1723);
- ~ Exploitation is to derive benefit, or take advantage of (especially a person) for one's own ends (1995:520);
- ~ Self-centredness means to be pre-occupied with one's own personality or affairs (1995:1398);
- ~ Self-aggrandizement is the act or process of enriching oneself, or making oneself powerful (1995:1398);
- ~ Misuse means to use wrongly, abuse or apply to the wrong purpose (1995:976);
- ~ Dictator is a person with (often usurped) unrestricted authority in any sphere of power (1995:402);
- ~ Shunning is to disdain, spurn, rebuff, reject, give a cold shoulder to (1995:1435);

- ~ Clanderstine means surreptitious, secret (1995:259);
- ~ Warped means to make or become perverted, bitter or strange in mind or character (1995:1772)

The above explanation really gets at the root of the problem experienced by the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement.

Now the individuals who perpetrate the above negative behaviors implement them at the expense of mostly the illiterate, gullible innocent people, hence they succeed in their machinations. Explaining the word 'manipulation,' Storkey comments, that,

"it is a covert method of gaining advantage. One form is the manipulation of people's feelings to achieve one's own ends" (1979:155).

The phrase 'covert method' explicitly suggests a disguised form of executing certain tasks, an underhand operation. Storkey explains clearly that manipulation exploits "people's feelings" to the benefit of the exploiter and to the detriment of the exploited. I agree with Storkey's view in that Judasses of this world, who are greedy for more money and power, would not bat an eyelid to betray and exploit the poor, who are closer to Christ, in exchange for self-aggrandizement. The researcher is reminded of a chapter in Amos, which says,

"They sell the righteous for silver,
And the needy for a pair of sandals,
They trample on heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground,
And deny justice to the oppressed." (cf. Amos 2:6-7a)

By exploiting the poor, the manipulators seem to forget, ignore or deliberately cold-shoulder the idea that God is on the side of the poor, oppressed and sidelined in their state of wretchedness. Every human being reflects the image and glory of God (cf. Genesis 1:26). Knowing that people are made in God's image and thus share in many of God's characteristics, provides a solid foundation for human worth – not based on possessions, achievements, public

fame or status. Exploiting and oppressing the poor, the manipulators are exploiting God's creation, his/her own image, the spirit of God found in every poor and suffering person. Masango aptly reminds us how God is involved in the welfare of all human beings and his/her creation,

“God is the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of all creation – the high and holy one who is in control; who is to be worshipped and glorified as the sole power of creation” (1993:94).

What Masango says here is that the poor and oppressed are also equal with the rich, powerful and exploiters in Jesus Christ, who came to save them all. The researcher concurs with Masango in that God never recommended that one group of people should be dominated by another, but that all human beings should relate to him/her as equals in executing his/her work in all creation. All of us are part of a network of obedience to the Word of God, to push us closer to those who are suffering due to poverty and neglect, and to assure them of Christ's constant love for them. In the absence of humane treatment of the poor by the rich and powerful, what do the poor think and feel?

4.3 STORIES TOLD BY THE MANIPULATED

Before discussing the exploitive techniques utilized by the manipulators to exercise power over the poor, it would be advantageous and prudent first in Masango's phraseology to “hear the cries, stories and voices of the poor and oppressed people. As we listen, we also need to hear how they have been treated, about their humiliation, degradation and about the abuse that has violated and negated their human dignity” (1993:70). Pseudonyms will be used in order to protect their identity and reputation in the society. The following is just a sample of the feelings of the people living in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement area and in RDP houses. My research lead me to search stories of woman and men who are poor. Their stories challenge the pastoral care givers and the church.

4.3.1 Miss Tusso narrates

Originally she comes from Mpumalanga, a mother of three daughters, the eldest has her own child who is two years old.

“I came to Sandton with my employer in 1995, whom I have been working for seven years. I had a room in my employer’s backyard, staying with my second daughter, who was attending school in Alexandra Township. Conditions were at least not so bad, because I had a roof above my head, three meals a day which I did not buy, warm water and electricity which I did not pay for and did not pay rent. Since I was working, I was able to send money to my mother in Mpumalanga in order to pay my daughter’s school fees and transport to and from the township. My employer did not mind to see my daughter staying with me in the backyard room.

At the end of 1998 my employer emigrated to Canada. He left me with one year’s wages to survive while I was looking for another employment. For the sake of my daughter who was still schooling at Alexandra Township, I rented a backyard room in the township. Meanwhile I was looking for work in Sandton. I could only get temporary “piece jobs” (or piece works – a work paid for the amount produced on the day and time), meanwhile my money was getting finished in the bank. A friend of mine advised me to come to Olievenhoutbosch and erect my own shack in the informal settlement. I was told that the government houses will be build for all the poor people in the area. First preference would be given to those who pay rent for their shacks. Since I wanted my own house I paid rent monthly.

Unfortunately up to today I do not have a decent permanent job. I stopped paying rent. I cannot afford to buy an RDP house, not to mention buying water and electricity monthly. I am stuck in my shack.

Since I am no longer working and sending money to my mother in Mpumalanga, my mother had sent my two daughters to me here at Olievenhoutbosch. Now I am sharing my small two-room shack with my three daughters and a grandchild.”

4.3.2 Mr Monama's story

His original home is in Polokwane. He is a father of two boys and one daughter who has her own child. He is employed as a truck driver for a poultry farmer in Midrand.

“I started working for this farmer since 1989, feeding chickens in the morning and evening, collecting eggs from the fowl-run and slaughtering some for big shops such as Shoprite and Pick 'n Pay. In 1998 I was promoted to be a truck driver, delivering meat and eggs to the above mentioned shops. During this time I was staying in the single quarters with other men. Every month end we were allowed, in shifts, to visit our families at our homes in the rural areas.

Bimonthly visits to my family were exhausting my funds, but unfortunately we were not allowed to stay with our families in this farm, especially that majority of men were bachelors. In 1999 I heard that houses were built for the poor people in Olievenhoutbosch Township. I asked my employer to assist me in buying a house where I could stay with my family. Mr Fourie, the farm owner, was kind enough to help me get my own house in July 2002.

Since I have a big family I soon discovered that my house is too small – only two bedrooms, a sitting-room/ dinning-room, a kitchen and a toilet. At the moment I cannot afford to extend it because a certain amount of money is being deducted by Mr Fourie from my salary monthly, for the money he used to buy me this house.

Besides, I must pay for the education of my three children, one at tertiary school. I must buy food, electricity and pay rent for garbage removal. Besides the school uniform, my children are growing up, they need new clothes now and again. My wife is working for white couple on Mondays and Fridays. The money she is getting is insufficient for a decent living. At the moment it is a case of living "from hand to mouth". Another challenging story of poverty among people trapped in this situation.

4.3.3 Mr Tali tells his story

He is a young man in his late twenties, originally from De Aar. After passing the then Standard 10 he came to Johannesburg to seek for employment.

"I arrived in Johannesburg early in March, 1997 and stayed at my Aunt's place in Alexandra Township. Having passed standard 10 certificate, I thought I would easily get a job. My hopes were, however, dashed in that, the months passed by without any chance of getting a job. Desperation compelled me to accelerate the search for a job, and to forget being choosy but to accept any job offered to me.

The jobs available then were specifically for computer literate people. Instead of a job, I once more found myself behind a desk studying computer. In 1999 I ultimately got a decent job in Centurion Municipality. Alexandra was too far from my place of employment. The only place where I could buy a house was at Olievenhoutbosch Township. I could not get a house for various reasons such as being a bachelor, houses were available for married couples. I had to buy a house from somebody who was selling his.

The rooms of the RDP houses are so small that whatever furniture one wants to buy, is determined by the size of the room. At least I can afford to extend the rooms, but the site is too small for a decent three bed-rooms, dining-room, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, toilet and garage house, not to mention space for

vegetable garden, flowers or trees. The only alternative for me is to leave Olievehoutbosch Township for a suburb, but I did not have enough money for such a venture. For the moment I am stuck here in the mist of poverty.”

4.3.4 Mr Thwahla's Manhood is deflated

He comes from bundus (the undeveloped places in the rural areas) of former Transkei, because of crop failure due to drought, he came to Gauteng hoping to get a job to support his family. On arriving in Johannesburg, he found that accommodation and employment were scarce. Without job and without money to return home, he ended up in the informal settlement of Olievenhoutbosch, owning a shack. He says the ANC government promised them wonderful things in 1994; jobs, houses, free education for their children, health care, free electricity and fresh water supply. He easily joined the party when recruited and voted for it, hoping for better life later. Up to today the promises have not been fulfilled.

He says he is ashamed to bring his wife and kids from Transkei. He lost contact with them. When it rains, because of leakages the shack gets wet inside, and it is very cold in winter. They share a common toilet with small boys, and it is embarrassing when one has diarrhea and especially at night. For survival he depends on odd jobs (a casual isolated piece of work done for the day only) of being a gardener in the surrounding suburbs of Heuweloord, Countryview and Wierda Park. He has lost his pride, dignity and self-esteem as a respected family man he once was in Transkei because of poverty. He has succumbed to misery and suffering as part of a normal way in the informal settlement of Olievenhoutbosch. These stories show how poor people's dreams were dashed by political leaders of the country with empty promises. They were easily manipulated because of illiteracy and poverty.

4.4 MANIPULATIVE TACTICS

The poor masses were promised the seventh heaven during the years of fighting for liberation, as well as during the time of canvassing for their votes. It is now surprising that the very leaders have either sidelined, or forgotten about the poor people who suffered most during the apartheid era. Ten years have passed since liberation was achieved, yet the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement have not tasted the "sweet fruits" of democracy. For them there is no running water, no electricity or sewerage system. The researcher recalls the statement made by George Orwell as far back as in 1945 that

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others"
(1978:63).

Orwell's statement is a true reflection of "sweet fruits" enjoyed by a selected group and the neglect of the masses.

To Christ when it is said 'all people are equal' it means exactly just that, hence Paul, the Apostle, reminds all the believers of the Church at Colosse that in Christ,

"... there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarians or Scythians, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Colossians 3:11, cf. also Galatians 3:28).

Since Christ broke down all social and racial barriers and accepted all people who came to him as they were, it is the duty of the Church as well to have no barriers of race, gender, social status, wealth, religion or power. Paul also advises the Christians that

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you are called to peace" (Colossians 3:15).

Those in power, if they claim to be Christians, have no right to discriminate, exploit or marginalize the poor, yet this is what is happening to the poverty stricken masses of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. It is needless to

reiterate and comment on the cries and the silent complaints of the few individuals quoted above (cf. 4.3) they are self-explanatory.

Those in power use certain techniques to cheat the poor to submission and silent complaining. Few of these techniques will be mentioned and discussed.

4.4.1 Making empty promises

Promise brings forth great expectation on whom promised has been made. If the promise is unfulfilled, the one promised feels cheated, duped and his/her intelligence and reputation undermined. Her/his integrity is left in tatters.

Making a promise is to pledge oneself, or give an assurance that one will, or will not undertake a certain task or action. In most cases a promise is struck or reached between two people or parties. God who created a man and a woman bound himself forever to them as his creation. This relationship was damaged now and again by human beings, yet God kept re-instating it from his side (cf. Nel 2000:13). By damaging this relationship to their God, human beings prove that they have an inert predisposition for evil-mindedness. If God initiated and kept the covenant he made with Abraham and his descendants, where do the politicians get the audacity to make unfulfilled promises to the poor people of God, or is it because the majority of people in Olievenhoutbosch cannot read and write? Hence they are easily manipulated by others.

Every time during election campaign the politicians visit and organize mass meeting in Olievenhoutbosch, to persuade the gullible crowd to vote for them. In return they promised them pie in the sky: free education for their children, feeding scheme for school children, free electricity, free fresh water supply, free health care, new houses, adequate pension for the sickly and aged, creation of employment for the matriculated youth. They have the audacity of making such

wonderful promise because they know that the unsophisticated poor people rarely ask critical leading questions.

After being voted into important government offices, they disappear and never come back to present a progress report. The exploited and uneducated masses do not reason out whether such promises will be fulfilled or not. On the other hand, after delivering their speeches, the politicians are “in a hurry for another appointment” somewhere. Consequently the naïve are left without asking questions, if there are any questions. The people of God, who are closer to God, are treated with indignity and contempt, hence Cone reminds us that

“It takes a special kind of reasoning to conclude that God’s love means that he is no respecter of persons in a society filled with hate and oppression, where some men think they have the sole right to define the course of human” (1970:135).

In the first place why do they come and address the people, yet they know they “have another urgent appointment” somewhere? People should be given opportunity to ask questions. Different people need different things in different places according to different circumstances (cf. Alcock 1997:70). The people of God are treated with indignity because after voting they are expendable as far as the politicians are concerned. Like spare wheels, they will only be remembered during the next election campaign. The manner in which the gullible, poor people are used by the politicians is reminiscent of Shakespeare’s remark that

“To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,
He shall but bare them as the ass bears gold,
To groan and sweat under the business,
Either led or driven as we point the way:
And having brought our treasurer where we will,
Then take we down his load, and turn him off,
Like to the empty ass, to shake his ears
And graze in commons” (Julius Caesar, Act IV Scene I).

The powerful have no conscious in using the poor for their own benefit, and thereafter discard them to fend for themselves.

4.4.2 Favouritism

Mr Vuyo Mbuli, in SAFM morning live, once made a remarkable comment (see p. 10 above), about favouritism practiced by those in positions of power. It is utterly sickening to find that well qualified people, with vast experience, cannot be employed, but one with least experience and qualification is hired. Such excuses as “you are over qualified for the post,” or “we regret to inform you that your application was not successful,” or “your qualification do not suit the job” without giving tangible reasons, are lame and unfounded reasons given to the poor.

One wonders then why should people get better qualifications only to be told that they “are too qualified for the post.” Consequently it has now become a common trend that job seekers must not rely on their qualifications, skills and experiences, but on “networking” and “aligning oneself properly” with those in positions of power. People of Olievehoutbosch informal settlement are mere commoners, with no connections with the aristocracy. When poor people are ignored and sidelined for better paying jobs, this is downright corruption. Even if they are employed, Isaak further explores the above point by saying that,

“The upward social mobility for the poor has been fragmented with the speed-up of globalization that benefits the elite, and the abuse of power at the top of the corporate hierarchy” (2005:71).

Corporate corruption is easy to maintain because such bodies have financial power to manipulate circumstances to keep the poor from becoming wealthier, as well as to “stimulate the widening of the gap” between them and the poor. The rich pay more attention in amassing more wealth at the expense of the poor, promoting and protecting their prosperity. As a result the investment and

resources are pulled away from poor areas (cf. Isaak 2005:43). This is how the powerful treat the poor within social systems that are full of injustice – using their power in order to manipulate the poor people.

4.4.3 PRETENDED IGNORANCE

When some of the powerful are confronted by the idea that the majority of people are poor, they claim that actually they “don’t know any poor.” This is a problem as to how they look around, or where they choose to look or what they prefer to see. They even blame apartheid at this juncture of history while doing nothing to uplift the poor from suffering. How long will they keep on “hiding” behind apartheid injustices?

Granted, it is difficult to understand what we have not experienced. It is not easy to grasp the picture of poverty and suffering, if one has never been there; to be out of work and yet manage to survive more or else on putrefying crumbs or nothing, as the poor dwellers of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement in wealthy Midrand is a far fetched and incredible.

Any concern the rich might have for the poor and marginalized people, tends to be squeezed out by “other concerns and urgent issues” in this area surrounded by rich farmers and firms of the aristocracy, who drive around in latest car models. Left alone the status quo keep the existing poor in their state of poverty, and proliferate more poor people. By ignoring the poor, the wealthy help to create and perpetuate poverty and are thus guilty of the “sin of omission.” They do not give the disadvantaged the opportunities for education and equip them for self-supporting (Isaak 2005:44). By attempting to ignore the poor, the powerful cannot, however, free themselves from the guilt that harness and bind their conscience, unless their conscience is dead.

The marginalization of the poor and suffering masses of Olievenhoutbosch, is a problem that cannot be easily wished away, but has to be solved. Now and again the powerful attempt to forget about the problem of the poor, or take their eyes off the eyesore. On the other hand the poor are experiencing a situation from which they are unable to escape at any given moment. Theirs is a daily struggle to get out of an unpleasant situation, and not merely to solve a peripheral problem, as is the case with the aristocracy (Biko 2005:24).

South Africa is now a democratic state. Democracy should be seen thereof to benefit all, and especially those who are on the lowest rung of the social ladder. It should not only benefit the few with all the right connections, "the poor also need their pie here and now, and not in some future tomorrow" (Graybill 1995:107). It should be remembered that the Gospel of Jesus assures us that, God is always on the side of the oppressed, of the poor, suffering and of the despised ones.

4.4.4 Manipulation of Religion

Some scholars of philosophy believe that religion may be necessary as a social or psychological crutch for the poor, or the weak in their distress, but it is based on illusion (Boesak & Villa-Vicencio 1996:97).

Religion moreover is used by the rich and the powerful to subdue and keep the poor and weak in their place – a state of submission and capitulation to the dictation of the powerful. They encourage the poor and the sickly to be humble and exemplary like Christ. Whenever the poor start grumbling about being marginalized, suffering from poverty and unfulfilled promises, they are accused of being rebellious and bent on destabilizing democracy and anti-Christian. This unacceptable rationalization and wrong ideology need to be cracked and get rid off. It makes the poor people in Olievenhoutbosch believe that those in power

are genuine in their prescription, and something constructive is being done for them, whereas in actual fact it is mere papering over the cracks.

A manipulated religion means we reduce God to *deus ex machina*, a God who can be used for one's own end, and what is best self-interest to one. The poor are encouraged to fear God, who does not tolerate disloyalty and rebelliousness. They must remain loyal and exemplary good citizens. Apparently that they are starving and suffering is of minor importance. They must be patient as good comrades. The government will improve their lot by and by somewhere.

This view contradicts the God of the Bible, who cannot be reduced to a domestic duty at one's wish or making. It is, however, unbecoming to believe that some people are morally and intellectually superior to others. The researcher concurs with Tutu, who quickly denounced the notion. He wrote,

"God is on the side of the oppressed not because they are better or more deserving than the oppressors, but simply because they were oppressed ... God is not a nationalist deity who say 'my people right or wrong' but as one who saves and yet ultimately judges those whom he saves" (Graybill 1995:109).

Tutu goes on to warn us that too much evidence in history has taught us that,

"... the removal of one oppressor means the replacement by another; yesterdays victims quite rapidly becomes today's dictator" (1995:109).

How true and exact is Tutu's remark today, the only difference being that the black people who are in power are exploiting and subtly oppressing other black people. God, however, refuses to be manipulated and reduced to be a private, or tribal or class deity. God reveals his real self as the God who is beyond human control, who nevertheless identifies totally with humankind in Jesus Christ. From oppression or notion of poverty let us analyse the concept of elitism.

4.4.5 Elitism

Elitism has not been a notion used by South African blacks. It is a new concept which has become part of our history since acquiring a true democracy in 1994. Like racism, during apartheid times, it has taken roots and became part of cultural, economic, political and psychological domination. It is recognizable throughout the above facets.

Like racism, elitism is sinful in that it integrates beliefs of social class, that justifies and prescribes unequal treatment of people. It is a discrimination by a group against another for the purpose of maintaining subjugation (Biko 2005:27). It has inbuilt structures of domination – socially, politically and economically. As a result it excludes other groups or class of people on the basis of social status and education. The intellectual arrogance of the elite makes the elite to believe that their leadership is *sine qua non* in South Africa, and that they are divinely appointed protectors of the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch – hence they always decide for them without their inputs.

Elitism subtly denies the rights and equality with the poor. It indirectly denies the truth that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God, though the constitution of this country emphasizes the equality of all South African, irrespective of colour, race or sex, (cf. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Bill of Rights pp.6-7) consequently thereof, by implication it denies the unity of all human kind, but that “some are more important and more equal than others.”

The poor people of Olievenhoutbosch are treated with such impunity that they are beginning to accept their status, or to express it in Masango’s phraseology, “the victims of abuse have internalized the values of their victimizers, thereby closing their consciousness to the possibility of freedom in their lives” (1993:72). They presume that God has destined them to be poor from the cradle to the

grave. They are accepting the fact that people living in the surrounding suburbs are more intelligent and therefore superior to them. Consequently they cannot question, confront or undermine the decision of “their superior powerful leaders.” This is nothing else but mental slavery, which is demanding and time-consuming to eradicate.

It is interesting to know that the powerful, instead of bringing about meaningful changes that will benefit and secure meaningful participation and well-being for all, are subtly indoctrinating the poor to always hope for a bright future, and stop complaining about the present circumstances. They have learnt to be proficient in saying aloud the hackneyed clichè, “The people must learn that these things take time. They cannot be solved overnight.” Yes it is true, but during electioneering the impression was fashioned in poor people’s mind that this government is capable of solving all their problems. No time limit was ever prescribed. The same words which were used by the past regime, are now used by the blacks, who are aspiring to be rich as well. Tutu’s words are true when he says we are replacing one oppressor with another.

To secure comfortable positions the elite always present themselves as the guardians of the poor. Constantly bombarding the gullible with the fear that if the powerful can be forcibly remove from their comfort zones, apartheid will return and the poor will suffer as before, or they will become worse. This is a struggle challenging pastoral care givers as well as the church. The two are challenged to empower the poor while the latter is to become a voice of the voiceless.

4.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher examined the definition of manipulation, and how it is defined by other writers. It is noticed by the researcher that certain words in the definition of the term “manipulation”, are pregnant with depreciatory and

negative meanings. It is not surprising then that the manipulator is viewed as one who lacks human morals and principles.

“The cries, stories and voices of the poor” people of Olievenhoutbosch are included here, in order to understand “their humiliation, degradation and abuse that has violated and negated their human dignity” (Masango 1993:70), that has left them almost like zombies, who struggle daily to keep body and soul together.

The manipulative techniques used by the powerful are given, and how they are utilized by the manipulators to exercise power and control over the naïve and gullible poor people. At this juncture the researcher recalls the criticism of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who condemned the black economic empowerment as only benefiting the elite. They become instant millionaires and forget about the poor, who are supposed to benefit from these economic reforms. The poor are being cheated by these politically connected individuals (Sowetan, 1st December 2004). These challenges are to be addressed by care givers as well as the church. A new model of pastoral care need to be developed in order to address the issue of poverty in South Africa, or else face the wrath of the poor.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. PROTESTS REFLECT A CRISIS OF DIGNITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The development of protest among the poor people is escalating swiftly in the township, as a result of unfulfilled promises, corruption, and lack of service delivery. For the last ten years the poor have been patiently expecting their dreams being fulfilled.

Patience has turned into protest across South African townships, as thousands of poor and suffering people have taken to the streets to vent their anger at the government of the day. From Gauteng to the Eastern Cape, Western Cape to Northern Cape, Mpumalanga to Free State and North West, there is general despondence, dissatisfaction and outraged that is building up. The storm has been snowballing for a year now.

An article on protest was captured by Sunday Times Newspaper, revealing that seven out of nine Provinces (Districts ruled by a Premier and elected local ministers), are affected (29.05.2005:5). The hot spot areas are shared in alphabetical order of Provinces and dates where possible, to indicate that the dissatisfaction of poor people is rapidly spreading across the nation. People of the nation of poor is tired of been made pawns of politicians.

Eastern Cape: Thursday 19 May 2005: Kwazakhele, Motherwell, and
Friday 31 May 2005: in Walmer Township in Port Elizabeth.

Free State: 30 August 2004 just outside Harrismith;
15 September to October 2004 in towns of Warden, Memel
and Vrede;
20 October 2004 the chaotic Motheo, Moqhaka and Phumelela
municipalities were placed under Province's administration;

- November 2004 Kestell was rocked by protests;
23 November 2004 in Paul Roux two councilors were taken hostage;
February 2005 in Phomolong near Hennenman;
9 February 2005 senior Free State officials were escorted to safety from stone-throwing crowd, few days later protests spilled over to Ventersburg;
16 February 2005 there were riots in Clocolan.
- Gauteng: 5 July 2004 protests against councilors in Diepsloot;
March 2005 demonstrations in Lotus Gardens, Mamelodi and Tswane.
- Mpumalanga: 25 January 2005 Thaba Chweu municipality placed under provincial government administration;
15 March 2005 Secunda municipality offices were attacked by angry demonstrators;
Few days later 5,000 people marched in Secunda.
- Northern Cape: 16 March 2005 protesters blocked N12 highway near Hopetown.
- North West: 27 October 2004 in Itsoseng a mob goes on rampage.
- Western Cape: May 2005 demonstrations in Blackhealth, Happy Valley, Khayelitsha and Gugulethu;
20 May 2005 residents of Crossroads barricade neighbourhood.

The frustrated and angry residents of informal settlements, in particular, thronged the streets to vent their protest against Provinces' poor services delivery, lack of pure water, no sanitation, the housing crises and prevalent corruption in local municipalities and unemployment. Most municipalities are simply not functioning. They are infested with corruption, cronyism and incompetence. Many of those in powerful positions do not deserve to be holding these positions.

Most poor people are the Africans who formally lived in rural areas, where there were and still there are no basic services. These rural areas were former homelands that were neglected by the then apartheid government. They were the dumping areas for all the unwanted “Bantoes” (Africans) from the farms and urban areas. Since the new democratic government took over in 1994, people started flocking freely into urban areas hoping to be employed. But according to Pieterse,

“... unemployment and the resultant poverty are steadily increasing in this country. At the moment it does not appear possible to reverse the trend (of poverty)” (2001:38-39).

Unemployment in South Africa is becoming the country’s problem, especially that presently people from other countries as well come to South Africa as refugees, but some to seek employment. Without employment yet poor and starving, they resort to crime in order to survive.

There is a strong possibility that the protests will continue for some time as anger of poor and suffering people spreads like wild fire on dry grass. It seems as if they have reached a point where they say “thus far and no further” to the government and to corrupt leaders. Only two Provinces which are so far not affected by open protests and demonstrations, they are Kwazulu Natal and Limpopo Province. In the latter province there are some rumbles of complaints, only a tinder-box is required and this province will be on fire as well. Corruption especially amongst the elite cannot be condoned. Corruption is the moral deterioration where an individual in position of power uses it for dishonest purposes, especially in bribery and fraud, for self-aggrandizement. They cannot go about unmoved about it as though this is their fringed benefit. The government must close up all the loopholes whereby the government’s public servants found themselves in positions of power, abuse their power to benefit themselves materially. There is a saying which says

“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Power is the ability to control and influence people. Sometimes force may be used to achieve the desired end by whoever is in power. An uncontrolled power may send out wrong message, that is “as long as you have power and status, the long arm of the law can easily be evaded,” and only the poorest of the poor will feel the wrath of the law. This demeanour will further promote corruption amongst the elite.

The researcher gives the above long information in this chapter, not because of a tendency to digress. This information neatly dovetails with that of Chapter One, where the picture of poor, suffering and neglected people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement is vividly portrayed. In that chapter the reader will remember how the poor Africans were oppressed by white police officers. Further more the researcher earlier noted that we are sitting on a ticking time bomb that will explode unexpectedly at any time (vide chapter One). The researcher recalls that Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu who once issued a stern warning to the effect that

“Black economic empowerment is benefiting only a small elite while South Africa is ‘sitting on a power keg’ of poverty” (Pretoria News, 24 November 2004:5).

The author concurs with Tutu. Ten years of democracy have passed yet the majority of people are still living in shacks and are unemployed; few middle class people are really enjoying the fruits of democracy. This will not go on indefinitely. Surely the devil will find something to do for the idle minds and hands. The poor will revolt one day.

It is however shocking and intimidating when poor people, in informal settlements voice their anger over empty promises, poor service delivery and lack of communication, are being threatened with public violence and sedition charges by those in positions of power. It has been reported in the press that the government has asked

“The National Intelligence Agency... to investigate whether a secret force is behind the wave of riots that exploded around the country this week... the agents were questioning councilors and the public “with a view to understand the root cause of these actions” (Sunday Times 29 May 2005:21).

It does not need the National Intelligence Agency to know a “secret force behind the wave of riots that exploded around the country”. Poor people do not need somebody to come and tell them that they are now hungry and are suffering. Hunger and suffering are “secret forces of riots.” Asking the National Intelligence Agency, who are like the former government’s BOSS (Bureau of State Security), who was brutal in their techniques of investigation and drawing out information from the victims of torture, are nothing less than an intimidating technique by the government. Some of the poor people have been so brutalized by the former government that they are no longer intimidated.

Poor people have nothing to lose except their poverty. Poor and hungry people are desperate people; desperate people are unpredictable like mad people. In support of the above view, Pieterse comments that,

“... unemployment, poverty and crime are interrelated. Unemployed people become impoverished, and when people don’t have food they may resort to crime in order to find money.” (2000:39)

The government’s “conspiracy theories on the riots” is ridiculous, baseless and void of truth, except that it is another political stance to lay their corruption and poor service deliverance on somebody else – the so-called “third force”. The poor are acting on their own behalf - these protests are organic and home-grown. To suggest that they are being manipulated (by somebody, somewhere else) is a further insult to the dignity and intelligence of the poorest and neglected people (op. cit. 29 May 2005:21). In other words it means even if they are starving and suffering, even if they see that the elite is enriching itself to their

detriment, they must fold their arms and shut up. Complaining and attempting to stop their suffering and starvation is viewed as sedition and an unlawful action.

The author wholeheartedly concurs with the immediate above viewpoint as it rightly points out the disrespect piled up on poor people. The suffering, poor people in the informal settlements, Olievenhoutbosch included, may lack property and material of the high caliber, may go hungry most of the time, but at least they can still see and have intellectual faculty to query certain actions of the powerful. Hence the care of the church for such people is more important than that of the world. Caring for the poor means “the application of Christian social principles.” The government cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the countrywide unrest, or react tardily over service delivery. It must address the concerns of the poor immediately, by deploying capable multi-skilled and development orientated officials to deal with corrupt municipality civil servants.

5.2. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH.

In the past various churches in South Africa had different views about their social roles. To some it was to preach the gospel and nothing more and by and by the poor will be liberated if they have enough faith in God. Some saw their duty was to feed hungry and poor people. Others saw that the proclamation of the Good News could not be done in isolation, but that they should be engaged in improving the spiritual, social, physical, political and economic aspects of people. Evangelization cannot be effective to hungry and oppressed people (vide Segwape 2004:72; Taylor 2003:5; Waruta & Kinoti (editors) 2005:75).

The church as the body of Christ cannot stand by the touchline thereof and be a spectator whilst the poor people of God are suffering. The church has been called to serve poor in the world. The poor people in informal settlement are not to be seen as mere objects of mercy, or pawns in a game of chess, but as

people who are, in one way or another, gifted by God to represent justice to the rest of the world. Moreau (editor) therefore reminds us as he asserts that,

“Jesus came to preach liberty to the poor, they have, therefore, an advantage in reading the Scriptures. They aren’t weighted down with the presuppositions and agendas of the rich and are freer to read and interpret the text as its primary audience” (2000:117).

The author affirms Moreau’s viewpoint. The poor and neglected people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement are part of God’s creation. God, through Jesus, identifies and takes side of the poor, the abused, the marginalized and the aged in their conditions of humiliation and suffering. The poor are solely depended on God as their Creator, Protector and Provider. Unlike the poor, the rich depend on their wealth. They believe it is through their intelligence and capabilities that they are rich. This self-sufficiency attitude is an enemy when it causes people to believe that they can always control circumstances, and do what needs to be done in their own strength for their own benefit. God is moved away to the periphery of their social life, that is they no longer have confidence in God but in themselves (cf Judges 7:26). Bruwer express this by saying:

“The church must always put the role of the poor first within the church, the poor should be part of the decision making in the congregation. In doing so, the church can only gain in simplicity and service and come closer to the image of a community gathering around the cross” (1996:62).

The researcher concurs with Bruwer’s view because it focuses on the involvement of the poor in the “decision making.” Any undertaking done for the benefit of the poor in the community, from its inception, should involve the underprivileged. They should become participants that lead to solving the problems with the leaders. They know better how it feels to be poor and starving. Bruwer continues to remark that,

“The foundation of a strong and secure community is, at least according to Christian understanding, to be found among the poor. If there is security for the poor, then there is hope for the community at large. The aim of the church should be to share the burden of risk and to provide support to the community of the poor” (1996:63).

What Bruwer shares is true and appropriate to our present situation in South Africa, where the patience of the poor has reached the end of the tether – hence the general protests and demonstrations across South African townships, some becoming violent (cf 5.1 above). This concept will address the issue of why people resort to crime, in order to remedy the problem of crime and malfunction of society in our country (Segwape 2004:74). The author supports the idea that the rate of crime will increase as long as there are unemployed poor people. Imprisonment is a lesser evil than hunger to the poor. In prison at least they are assured of three meals a day, and well-cared for by the government.

According to Pieterse, we need to look at church action that will materially change the situation. If we want to communicate God’s love, grace and liberation to the poor in our country, we will have to do so by way of physical acts of upliftment. That is working with them and not for them. The church has to minister to the poor in word and deed – and in that order – impelled by Christian love (2001:111).

In other words, the church, on the other hand, must be prepared to listen from the poverty-stricken communities, because God’s mission to the world is his unfathomable love for the marginalized people in distress. The church and its leadership need to be transformed and its mindset changed, the needy people will have to be loved and accepted as they are. If they are accepted and valued as human beings, the poor gain self esteem and their self image is restored (Maluleke 2000:6-7).

Pieterse concurs with Maluleke as he remarks,

“... the role of the church specifically ... is to give the poor inspiration and vision so as to empower them to ameliorate their circumstances and thus bring about liberation from their situation of poverty” (2001:115).

Once more I align myself with Pieterse that the poor should be inspired to better their situation of poverty. Church's role is to train and empower them in specific skills of survival (see appendix B), and to assist those who are unfortunate, the physically disabled, the sick and the aged with medical care and food parcels. By so doing we are accepting Jesus' challenge to bring about a radical change to the world.

The church can never hope to remain abstract and removed from the people's environmental problems. In order to be applicable to the people, it must have meaning for them in their given situation. If they are poor, sidelined and oppressed people, the church must have something positive to say about their situation and give them faith and hope to confront poverty and suffering (vide Biko 2005:64). This kind of caring enables the poor to be empowered so as to be responsible in caring for themselves. In order to be a voice of the voiceless, the church need to embark on programs of social upliftment and empowerment. (see appendix B again).

5.3. EMPOWERMENT

The researcher embraces the belief that empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people, in this instance, to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives daily.

The term empowerment, according to Cronje, is defined as

“The process whereby individuals and groups attain personal or collective power, which enables them to actively improve their living conditions” (1996:37).

Cronje's definition accentuates that empowerment involves the development of knowledge and learning skills in order to acquire the necessary power for self-realization. The term empowerment here will be limited to the abilities, knowledge, and skills of individuals and communities acquired in order to mobilize and use power at their disposal for their own benefit in their environment (vide Kumalo 2003:11).

The reason for empowerment here must clearly move towards bringing about the economic, social and political transformation of their conditions. For quite a long time the poor and suffering people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement vote for politicians who forget about them when they are in their neat and warm offices. Instead of "voting them into positions of power," the poor masses must use their voting power to abstain from voting, or vote the useless politicians "out of power." This is possible if they organize themselves as they are the majority in the country. The church can play important role in empowering them. Their vote is an unused powerful weapon in their hands. Properly used, it can sway the scales in their favour and improve their lives in every aspect. Kumalo accurately remarks that empowerment

"is about people, not projects and programmes; it is about improving the quality of life of ordinary people in their local communities" (2003:12).

The poor people can be empowered with some skills that will render them employable. They can also be empowered with skills that make them self-supporting. Instead of begging or going about begging for jobs, they should be creators of jobs, producers of new products and sell them to the public (see Appendix B).

The communities, therefore, must become aware of the deepest need in people and in their immediate environment. This discernment will lead to peace and security in the country. If the powerful needs peace and prosperity, and to avoid a class struggle, there should be a change of heart on their part.

Reconciliation is only possible between equals, therefore that class struggle raises the question of ministry of reconciliation.

5.4. MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

The question we are addressing here has to do with the contribution of the reconciliation ministry, the reconstruction and rebuilding of our communities. Rebuilding our communities must cater for physical and spiritual needs, since people encounter and are affected by social concepts in their environments. Armstrong strongly warns us that:

“To be involved in their lives is therefore to be concerned about social, political and economic problems that affect their lives... an approach that is truly concerned with reaching the whole person...” (1979:58)

The quotation from Armstrong is relevant to the poor and marginalized people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. As a result of oppression they harbour deep seated mistrust, anger, disappointment and strong desire for revenge against their former exploiters. When they voted the present government into power, to some of them it was a form of revenge against their former oppressors. Yet to others they “had hoped” that it will “level the playing fields” and immediately redress the former imbalances. To their disappointment it was not done – hence the mistrust and anger now is re-directed to the present government and its corrupt officials (vide Chapter four). Armstrong has however, not mentioned the religious aspects. The poor people of Olievenhoutbosch, for instance, still harbour a grudge and revenge against all the white people as their former oppressors. Stealing their property is not viewed as theft but as re-possessing of ancestors property, yet not all the white’s were their oppressors. Some were labeled “kaffer boeties” (African supporters), for being objective in their relationship with Africans. Jesus speaking in a social climax where hatred of the enemy (Rome) was aligned with

righteousness and zeal for Israel's God, makes a hallmark of his teaching – love of the enemy – all the more striking:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy’ but I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” (Mathew 5:43-44).

Nowhere is more brilliantly enacted than in the scene of Jesus' crucifixion, when he prays,

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34).

The ministry of reconciliation is an important aspect to any church in South Africa and has to be taken seriously. Kumalo reminds us that

“Our country has a bad history of racial division, fear and mistrust between blacks and whites. There is a need to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation as part of the mission of the church. This is not an easy task... It takes a lot of sacrifice and determination. The problem is that the playing field is not level: we come from different backgrounds” (2003:99).

The researcher agrees with Kumalo's viewpoint of former unequal treatment of blacks and whites. The whites were once a privileged and protected race – an envy of the black South Africans. The scale has now tipped in favour of the government's elite that wears the shoes of the former oppressors. It is no longer an issue of “racial division” now but of class - the upper class and the lower class. The upper class (elite) is enjoying the benefits of their former oppressor – hence the mistrust and anger is now “re-directed to them as well.” They have inherited not only hatred of the poor, but the corrupt misdemeanours of the apartheid regime.

If South African is to be brought to a road of peace and security, there is a great need that both sides be patient and open up to one another in dialogue and

action (cf p.74). The elite must come down from their ivory towers of egotism and self-sufficiency to the level of the ordinary people, be sincere in their negotiations, rather than telling them what is good for them – and what they (poor) must do. As Kumalo correctly points out, that:

“There is a need for both parties to understand that both are victims of the legacy of apartheid. They must help one another to deal with their prejudices, they have to understand that they should respect and learn from each other” (2003:99).

The elite should understand, like the poor that they are created in God’s image and it is by God’s grace that they are alive. They are therefore redeemable. It must understand that the poor in the eyes of God are not mere hewers of water and bearers of wood. God did not create the poor people for the comfort of the rich, but created all human beings equal in his “own image and likeness.” In another level Cone reminds us that:

“Being man is the same as being against evil by joining sides with those who are the victims of evil ... it means becoming oppressed with the oppressed, making their cause our cause ...” (1970:160)

What Cone says here is true. No one can really be free and happy until all people are free and happy as equals. The elite must take side of the poor as Christ, the Saviour of all did, and journey with the poor out of the stranglehold of poverty to the ‘horizon of peace and security.’

The reconciliation ministry encourages all human beings to accept the fact that they are all created in the image of God. Both groups in the process of reconciliation must be prepared to surrender some of their “old hold on” traditions for the sake of peace and progress. The researcher concurs with Wimberly when he says that,

“class evaluations and devaluations determines worth, respectability and honour of individuals” (1999:24), otherwise elitism and marginalization will be perpetuated *ad infinitum*.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The researcher has highlighted issues that touch on apartheid system that was legalized under National Government. It is however disheartening that in a post apartheid South African society the reality of brokenness amongst our poor and sidelined people still exists. Despite ten years of democracy the informal settlement people in Olievenhoutbosch, have not “tasted the sweet fruits”. Bate points out that “we are daily experiencing pain, and suffering through physical and drug abuse, criminal violence, illness, poverty etc” (1996:246). People are daily crying out for healing and compassion, and this is sought mostly within the existing Church.

We must not give in, in building a community that addresses injustices wherever they are found, and works towards the accountability by all stake holders, when power is abused, and towards the protection of the poor suffering such abuses. The church should have a prophetic voice in order to address issues of injustice in the community in a way that will benefit those who are marginalized and abused by the powerful. The church is also challenged to avoid “putting its head in the sand”, remembering that it cannot preach the Word to people with empty stomachs. Jesus healed and fed the hungry. The church is called as well as to be preaching, healing and feeding the community. In other words, the church has to be involved through action among the poor.

The research has taught me that in a caring community “botho/ubuntu” (humanity) always prevails. No one becomes marginalized due to painful experiences of not knowing where and when will the next meal come. Inclusive love challenges those in positions of power, to move out of their comfort zones, and share the resource of this country with the poor people, and leaders to serve the true interests of people (vide Matthew 23:12, Luke 22:25-27).

We must create a world in which people love and valued each other as brothers and sisters, not because they share a common nationality, race or culture, but because all are children of the same Father, loved by the same brother, Jesus Christ, in the power of the same Spirit (Bate 1996:247). The people's voice is apposite to the liberation of the poor people like those in Olivenhoutbosch informal settlement. "Together we ended apartheid; together we can end poverty" (Pieterse 2001:115).

This problem is challenging pastoral care givers as well as the church in a big way. As a result God, without exception, is calling all people to life, liberating them in such a way that they are free to relate to God as a parent who cares for all of them. Masango quoting Fiorenza, asserts,

"This God is a God of graciousness and goodness, who accepts everyone and brings justice and well being for everyone without exception....God who accepts all members...and especially the impoverished, the crippled, the outcasts, the sinners, and prostitutes" (1993:99).

This is a challenge to all human beings to receive one another as fellow beings on equal basis, as Christ set an exemplary. We are all invited, through Christ, to a new community of faith, under the same banner of God's discipleship of equals.

In this chapter I have tried to show how unfulfilled promises by the government can easily lead to chaos. Though the churches are side-lined by the ruling party, when "things are running smoothly," they should be actively involved in social regeneration. My concluding belief is that developmental problems can be changed by pastoral care theology.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter brings to an end the pastoral care study on the manipulation of the poor by the powerful, for purpose of self-aggrandizement. It is composed of two parts. The first part summarizes the arguments of this research, and identifies issues that maintain the status quo of poverty. The second one makes recommendations on issues raised and discussed on the research, and suggests some further researches that need to be done.

6.2 SUMMARY AND ISSUES PRESERVING POVERTY

Though the focus of this study is limited to the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, the researcher had, however, a wider picture of other informal settlements throughout South Africa in mind. The point here is to prove that the problem of informal settlement is prevalent in all towns, and it needs to be attended to urgently by the government.

It emerged in the study that poverty in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement will remain a problem as long as the poor are sidelined in decision making concerning them, used only as pawns during election campaigns, and as cheap labour to enrich and keep the elite in comfortable positions. It is an unpleasant situation that the former oppressed elite has copied their oppressors' habits when in positions of power.

The banal way of regarding the poor as inferior and means to an end, is objectionable especially in the eyes of God. The researcher is reminded of a passage in Deutoronomy where Moses rebukes the Israelites that,

“Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien in one of your towns. Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and counting on it.

Otherwise he may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin" (Deutoronomy 24:14-15)

The powerless and poverty-stricken are often victims of abuse and injustice, and often being branded as lazy. God does not permit profits on the less fortunate, who are, in most cases, victims of oppression and circumstances. God's justice means fairness to all, and to provide opportunities for the poor to better their unsavoury circumstances. God wants those with means to share with the poor, and see that their needs are duly met.

When the researcher attempted to empower and improve the lot of the poor in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement, he came up against the bureaucracy of the Church (Hennops River Circuit and the Office of the Limpopo District Bishop), Nu-Ways Developers and Tshwane Municipality (see attached Appendix A, D and E at the end of this disservation). The pretended co-operation of the above bureaucratic powerful officials was the most frustrating, destabilizing and disempowering factor ever experienced by the researcher. They were busy dawdling while the poor were suffering. With the above data in mind, let us analyze implication for caring for the poor pastorally.

6.3 SOME ADVICES FOR PASTORAL CARE-GIVERS

The sidelined poor people cannot be watched suffering from physical abuse, mental torment and spiritual despair, caused by the powerful for their selfish ends. When God created human beings, he never intended them to suffer indignity in the form of poverty and manipulation, but "that they may have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). God's Kingdom is all embracing, proclaiming the deliverance of every human being, irrespective of sex or social status.

The pastoral care givers should, therefore, use relevant methods to reverse the suffering of the poor, who are "frequently uneducated and unsophisticated, bewildered and even more traumatized". They must capacitate them to re-

discover their self-worth and dignity as human beings. The researcher has chosen the methods of two authorities, Campbell's pastoral care and Masango's liberation theology, as means to empower the poor people. The pastoral care givers should, however, be aware that there are many more methods they can choose. Campbell emphasizes the biblical image of shepherding as displayed by Jesus, that is of healing the sick, feeding the hungry and constantly siding with the poor and weak, risking being attacked by the powerful Jewish rulers and Pharisees.

Masango's liberation theology is chosen because first and foremost he is a South African who has first-hand experience of how African suffered under apartheid regime. Apartheid then was a doctrine whose ultimate goal was to create slaves out of the South African Africans, and limit their thinking capability. Secondly Masango is a priest and a servant of God. He knows how to forgive and counsel his former oppressors, and thus become a potent agent for change and reconciliation. As a professor of pastoral theology, he understands them to be also the victims of their own created monster – the apartheid system. In his liberation theology, he enlivens the liberating presence of Christ in the process of healing, enabling also the poor to experience concretely the presence of God's Kingdom here on earth. He says "The whites will never be free until the black man is free" Therefore the two must learn to live with each other, according to moral laws of this universe, or else pay the price. Tutu accurately reminds us that,

"We are human because we belong. We are made for community... to exist in a delicate network of interdependence" (2000:154)

Tutu's view of a "community of interdependence" excludes discrimination of any form. Treating anyone as a less human being is not only evil but is contrary to God's laws and justice.

The address of Bishop Gavin Taylor of Limpopo District, in 2004 Synod of the Methodists, dovetails with Masango's liberation theology, when he says,

“... we need to be concerned about integration, about healing the brokenness of our disintegration at every level of our society” (May 20,2004, Settlers Methodist School).

The aim of the pastoral care giving is to liberate and empower the poor, by making them realize that they are equal to all people irrespective of economic status. Gerkin thus declares that caring pastorally for people overlooked and neglected by society means,

“... to consistently inquire about and help the people to consider the morality of their action ... (and) set the moral boundaries within which the life of the people of God must be lived. (1997:84)

The “moral boundaries” prescribed by Gerkin are meant to be observed by both the poor and the powerful. The researcher is aware that this goal will not be achieved overnight, but will take years to be realized. Having said that, let us now examine how the poor cope up with poverty.

6.4 THE EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY BY THE POOR

Chapter three examines what is meant by poverty through the eyes of the poor, especially the dwellers of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. Due to their poverty, the poor do not participate in decision – making processes that directly affect them. They are either deliberately sidelined, or made to feel ill-equipped and embarrassed to participate on matters related to them.

There are many kinds of poverty. The researcher had selected five kinds that are specifically wreaking havoc with poor people of Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement. They are educational, spiritual, physical, political and economic poverty. The researcher is aware that eradication of these kinds of poverty will take time. That should, however, be no impediment that leads to apathy and no planning to fight poverty, but to embrace a Laodicean stance, that is a lukewarm attitude and indifference that leads to idleness.

The researcher has noted that poverty in Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement has resulted in other detestable repercussions such as prostitution or sex work by young girls, in particular. Sex work, in turn, has led to the widespread of the pandemic HIV/AIDS. Crime rate has also escalated alarmingly. Peace and justice are ignored by the community of this area, since the law enforcement officers are either regarded as being inefficient, or colluding with criminals. The government and business people must neutralize this ugly scenario in the bud, or else the neglected people will take the law into their hands (cf Appendix F). Let us now analyse the unequal treatment of people and the repercussions thereof.

6.5 UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF PEOPLE

In defining the term “manipulation,” in chapter four the researcher has noted that it is pregnant with words that have depreciatory and negative meanings. The stories told by the victims of abuse and poverty are in line with these negative meanings. The researcher has chosen these stories to recapture a clear picture of their suffering, and inability to extricate themselves from the uncomfortable social setting of informal settlement.

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the people, and their real addresses have also been deliberately ignored. The idea behind this is to get the true stories as told by the victims of poverty themselves. The researcher also attempts to empower the poor since he also experienced poverty in the past, as Masango reminds us that,

“... only men or woman who have experienced oppression or abuse are able to work with victims of abuse” (1993:167).

This quotation from Masango is also applicable to those who suffered from poverty. The pastoral care givers should, however, guard against over-protecting the poverty – stricken community, lest on the other hand they become victims of dependency syndrome, and cause a blockage of growth. One should avoid overshadowing them because they are capable of acting. All they need is empowerment in various skills.

The researcher also noted that the powerful succeed in manipulating the poor, because the latter is not sophisticated enough to see through the former's machinations. They are like soft clay in the potter's hands. Few of the techniques utilized by the powerful to exploit the poor, are mentioned and discussed, and how control is perpetuated over the gullible poor people.

The pastoral care givers are therefore challenged to address the vices of the powerful by developing new and effective pastoral care models, that will make the people feel they belong. Let us now review the results of people without hope.

6.6 THE PEOPLE'S TOLERANCE HAS REACHED NADIR

The culture of respect for humanity and acknowledgement of responsibility and accountability should be nurtured in the new democratic South Africa. The prevalent problem is that the poor people are sidelined to the fringes of democracy, where they are consigned to oblivion. In chapter five the researcher has shown that the patience of the poor and suffering people has reached its lowest level. They are, consequently, venting their anger against the government of the day, in the various provinces of South Africa (cf Appendix F).

There is a possibility that these protests will gather momentum, unless the national government urgently steps in to redress the imbalances, restore and heal broken relationships. It is, however, shocking and disheartening that when poor people, who experience suffering daily, start complaining vigorously, they are being threatened with public violence and sedition charges by those in powerful positions. Their response of violence is called maintaining law and order. This is how structural violence is defined.

Poor people can no longer spectate corrupt officials driving around pompously in latest flashy model cars, while they are experiencing pangs of hunger daily. From the above discussion, obviously the government will not succeed without

the churches' support. The church as a body of Christ, has been called to serve the poor in the world. This is God's demand of it. It is its calling and ministry. As the result of above, it needs to take a prophetic stance and speak on behalf of the poor.

In order to enable the poor to survive, they should be empowered in various forms, such as education in skills of survivals. The poor must be capacitated in order to break away from dependency syndrome, and learn to do things for themselves. In other words, the church should believe in the poor, especially that they are capable of doing things for themselves.

The majority of poor people of Olievedhoutbosch informal settlement have been hurt in various forms. One of the problems is that they are marginalized out of the main stream of South African democracy except when their votes are required. There can be no peace in future, unless they are roped in as co-builders of reconciliation and peace. The elite must be prepared to come down from their ivory towers and work with poor in every enterprise. The elite, as God's children, should be forgiven by the manipulated masses, taught what it means to be God's children and treated as equals.

6.7 EVALUATION

In this study the researcher has learnt that the poor people of Olievenhoutbosch, and other informal settlements, have power within themselves that has never been fully utilized because oppressive and enervating structures hindered them (cf Masango 1993:231). The few that I have shared views with, are beginning to exercise their rights as citizens of South Africa. The researcher has noted, however, that some adults have been so indoctrinated by oppressive structures, that they feel intimidated to get out of "well trodden ways of doing things." They still believe that whatsoever is said by the government "it must be right." It is difficult to convert overnight people who believe in the superiority and the power of Whites, as they remark that,

“Umlungu ufaka intlanzi etotini, ihlale iminyaka ingaboli”
(The white person seals fish in a tin and it remains unspoiled for years).

6.8 FURTHER RESEARCH ON OTHER PROBLEMS

Further research needs to be done on how to liberate the elite and the politicians from the greed for power and acquiring more wealth. The strong desire for these two leads to corruption. Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely and the powerless and poor suffer most. The society and religious institutions need to address this cancer which destroys the morals of society.

In this study the researcher has learnt that there are many people walking around who appear normal, but are in fact carrying heavy burdens of anguish and pains inflicted by the past apartheid government. The people were hurt psychologically and mentally and those wounds were never healed. The research could explore how to heal the festering wounds, especially of the poor and neglected people in South Africa.

Apartheid system inflicted a great damage on South African society. We are a nation divided even at this juncture. It seems as if we will take another decade before we are a united nation. A research needs to be done on how to accelerate forgiveness and reconciliation between blacks and whites, and the poor and rich. We need to rehabilitate the human and civil dignity of the victimized and victimizer.

Another field of research that needs to be explored thoroughly is the African concept of humanity: “Botho/ubuntu” (Sotho and Nguni languages respectively). Botho/ubuntu speaks of the very essences of being human. It means generosity, hospitality, friendliness, caring and compassionate (cf Tutu 2000:34). It means sharing whatever one has because one is a human being because of other people, hence the phrase “I am human because I belong” (cf also Mbiti 1990:106).

A person with “botho/ubuntu,” according to Tutu

“is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self–assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole ...” (2000:35).

As a victim of apartheid vicious system, I struggle to implement “botho/ubuntu” concept to the race that once had power to perpetrate the apartheid system. This is the author’s personal ongoing struggle and challenge I have to overcome in the new democratic South Africa.

6.9 CONCLUSION

The newspapers are now exposing corruption of officials in higher positions. Corruption can no longer be hidden or ignored. The society must be united in uprooting it and redress issues that affect the poor negatively. The pastoral care givers need to be more active in addressing the needs of the poor and the perverted behaviour of the powerful. Empowering the poor only will not bring about a long lasting peace and democracy without corrective measures against the elite. The powerful might mobilize themselves, and lash back at the “rebellious” masses, since they still have power. In order to have permanent peace in South Africa, both the poor and powerful must work together on equal terms, to forge a new way forward.

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