

**The marginalized stories of people who live in  
poverty: a pastoral narrative approach to  
community transformational development.**

By

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## Dedication

I dedicate this PhD to my beautiful wife Catherine who was patient with me when I was spending sleepless nights during my study, also to my children, Tshegofatso. Tebogo, and Pheny who sometimes I did not spend enough quality time.

## Declaration

I Semape Jacob Manyaka, declare that **The marginalized stories of people who live in poverty: a pastoral narrative approach to community transformational development** is my work. Every reference used has been properly acknowledged accordingly. The work has never been submitted for attainment of a degree in any faculty of the university.

## Abstract

In this research process, my objectives were as follows; firstly, to explore the relationship between identity formation and poverty and secondly to explore the role of the church in combating the effects of poverty in the lives of those who live in poverty stricken communities. A Narrative approach was used to gather data from the community. I listened to the stories of those people who live in poverty. Seven movements were used as the methodology for this research (Muller 2005:81-86).

As a practical theologian, I positioned myself within postfoundationalist theology. In this position I avoided foundation epistemology which seeks the absolute truth as well as anti or nonfoundational epistemology which promotes relativism. As I mentioned earlier postfoundationalist practical theology is always thinking in a specific context and can also go beyond that specific context into interdisciplinary thinking.

Starting from a specific context into an interdisciplinary context, we found that the concept of poverty has been described as a discourse meaning that it went from poverty as a lack of resources into linguistic, poverty as lack of capabilities or poverty being political. By taking multidimension method to eradicate poverty one needs to apply a multidimensions approach. The stories from Nellmapius affirmed that poverty influences identity formation. The following effects were identified: low self-esteem, stress, depression, lack of self-acceptance and hopelessness.

The church has the capacity as the biggest membership and with the most awareness organization in most communities that has the attention of many people. The church is able to preach hope for people in what seems to be hopelessness and encourage the poor to rise out of their poverty. It can facilitate the poor and the government to work together to change their lives.



## **Key concepts**

Postmodernism

Social constructionism

Postfoundationalism

Narrative approach

Poverty

Identity formation

Development

Transformation

Church

Co-researchers

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## CHAPTER 1: POSITIONING

### 1.1. Introduction - Poverty is generational

*“Vusiwana byi na xilanda”*

*“mohlako ke leabela”*

(The first proverb is in Tsonga and the second one in northern Sotho. Both of them mean that if your family lives in poverty, you too, will be poor).

There are many African proverbs that promote this kind of thought on generational poverty. It is as if, these proverbs are promoting the acceptance of a poverty situation to be how things are. Also the danger of the above thought can prevent poor people from trying anything that would help them in changing their lives.

The followings are the stories that I would like to share in order to demonstrate how bad it is to live in poverty:

The first story is about a man who lives in Nellmapius. He came to me crying bitterly, the tears were rolling down his cheeks. He told me that there is no food in the house, he can't pay water and electricity and he cannot pay the school transport. It was the first time I had seen the man crying like this. In our African language, we say *“monna ke nku o lela pelong”* it means in English that man is a sheep does not cry. The showing of your emotions is considered a sign of weakness. I could sense how serious this problem was for the man.

The second story is from a single-parent family, headed by the mother of two girls. The mother said to me that she did not think that her situation of poverty would change. She lived in a one roomed house with her children. She said “Life was hard pastor” as they call me. “We struggle to satisfy our basic needs”. Both of these families felt that there was no hope of an improvement in their situation. They were giving up on life had had no plan for the future.

As I was listening to these stories, I have selected only two out of many similar stories from the community of Nellmapius. I was reminded of my own personal story of poverty. In my heart I felt what they were going through. I was born out of wedlock and did not have a stable family background. I was living in the house of my grandmother with other children of my mother’s sisters. I could not see any future because I saw other people as being better than me. Also, there was anger inside of me. I felt that I had been robbed of something which belonged to me.

Listening to these stories of people who live in poverty, I felt, that I did not have enough answers for them. The only thing I did was to encourage them to trust in God. I kept saying to them, that God is able to change their situation and I started sharing my own story in order to encourage them. These two stories are so similar to the many stories that I hear in the community of Nellmapius.

## **1.2. Motivation**

I am the pastor of Willow Manor Christian Center in Nellmapius community, situated in the North East of Pretoria,



this community is extremely poor. As a pastor in a poverty stricken community, I minister to these people on a daily basis. It broke my heart to listen to their stories and experiences because they mostly feel hopeless and defeated. As a pastor, I want to do something that could transform the community of Nellmapius. I feel that it is not enough to preach to them on Sundays.

### **1.3. Research gap**

There has been much research carried out in the area of poverty, which I appreciate so much. Authors such as, (Meadows 2003:19) speaks about the rich thinking about the world's poor. In his book he is sharing that we do not listen to what the poor think about themselves and because of this we could find the wrong answers to their situation. In chapter 12 of his book he is saying "listen to us-say the poor-please slow down" (Meadow 2003:49).

Williams 1998 speaks more about the existence of poverty, causes of poverty and what different ideologies say about poverty, such as capitalism, socialism, and Christianity and how these ideologies help the poor and how can these ideologies improve their help of the poor.

Disadvantaged people need someone who can come and help them to restore their human identity and self respect (Maluleke, 1999:2). Here he is emphasizing the ministry of the church towards deprived people. The question is how can these disadvantaged people own their future and fulfil what God has given them.

Kotze (1997:2) is dealing more with the concept of development administration in third world communities. He is trying to demonstrate to us how to bring about development to those communities who live in poverty.

Schofield (2001:9) focuses on the debts cancellation instigated by the church and different organizations. It is impossible to eradicate poverty if the poor countries still owe the International banks. The emphasis is on those that have been colonized by western countries, the so called third world countries to rebuild and assist in developing them to their true potential. I would like to recognize the value of the research carried out on poverty by the researchers mentioned above.

In order to add to the knowledge and wisdom revealed above, I would like to explore the relationship between poverty and identity. What does living in poverty do to human identity? And what could be the role of the church in the identity formation of the whole person.

From the stories that I have shared previously including my own experience I have learned that poverty affects identity formation. This is supported by the literature such as (Smith 2005:41; Rob 2002:26). Poverty causes the development of the following, low self-esteem, lack of acceptance, hopelessness, psychological problems, anxiety, depression and stress in the lives of those who live in poverty. According to (Smith 2005:41) all of these effects can be found in third world countries such as Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

I think the worst enemy of the poor according to the stories that have shared and my own experience and supported by literature is that the poor must take charge of their lives and find how to control their lives from within them. The question is how the poor can take control from within them if poverty has affected their life identity.

## **1.4 Research problem**

Due to the above discussion, the research problem would be; identity is a major problem to those who live within poverty stricken communities.

In the next section, since there is a connection between poverty and identity, I would like to look more closely at identity formation.

### **1.4.1 What is identity?**

Delpont & Olivier (2003:180; Pretorius 1989:12) describe personal identity as “person awareness of the self as a unique individual, and it centres on questions ‘Who am I?’, ‘Where am I going?’ and ‘What is the meaning of my life?’”. If a person is not sure about him/herself they cannot function properly.

Personal identity can be described as the commitment, and identification, which provides the frame within which one can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done (Taylor 1989:27).

Josselson (1987:10) describes identity like this “Identity is the stable, consistent, and reliable sense of who one is and what one stands for in the world”. According to the above definition, the reliable sense of who a person feels about himself/her and the reason why he/her lives for in the world.

Identity is how one sees himself/herself and is a sense of worthiness or acceptance? If one feels a sense of worthiness, that person will walk tall in life, but when one feels unworthy will walk short in life. It determines how a person will act in life, either positively or negatively. “Identity is how the person experiences him/herself” (Josselson 1987:13).

Modernists view identity in this way “In psychodynamic terms, identity is neither a structure nor a content but a property of the ego that organizes experience” (Josselson, 1987:12). It tells that identity is an essential or element of the personality. It is something someone has been born with (Samson, 1991:212).

Tatum (1997:18) describes the concept of identity as complex shaped by individual characteristics such as family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. So, to speak about identity is not just to single out an element but it should be a multidimensional approach.

In the following section, I would like to explore the formation of identity in the life of the person.

#### **1.4.2 Formation of identity**

In this section, I will explore the numerous ways that affect the formation of human identity. I will do this by looking through the lenses of the following authors: Erikson 1980, Marcia (1980:159), Grotevant, (1987:203), Berszonsky' (1989:268), and (Phillips & Pittman 2003:20-21). I think the model above can help us to understand this difficult concept of identity formation. After we have understood identity formation, we can see the impact of the environment or context, such as living in poverty or not living in poverty has on a person.

#### **1.4.2.1. Marcia's Identity status**

The four statuses as developed by Marcia are as follows; achievements status, foreclosure status, moratorium status, and diffusion status (Marcia 1980:159; Philips and Pitman, 2003:119). These four statuses determine whether a person will feel good or bad about him/herself. They help in the identity formation of the person.

- **Achievements status**

In this status the person will go through a period of exploration and an individual commitment to self-chosen goals. In this status the person receives a sense of who he/she is (That is identity)

- **Foreclosure**

In this status the person is not able to analyse or experience a period of crisis and they commit themselves. He/she is influenced by what other people are saying about

him/herself. He/she will follow a particular profession because it pleases their parents.

- **Identity diffusion**

These are people who present low levels of commitment as well as low levels of identity exploration. This is why some people experience a low self-esteem in their life.

- **Moratorium**

This status describes a person who is experiencing a crisis but has not yet made a commitment to what he/she wants to be.

#### **1.4.2.2. Grotevant's Process of Model of identity**

In this process of model of identity, Grotevant (1987:203) describes identity as developmental, contextual, and life span in scope. This model takes consideration of the following; Individual characteristics or affective and cognitive, and context where people live, the identity process and interdependencies. Identity formation is a life long process; one cannot say I have arrived at my own identity (Philips and Pitman 2003:120).

It can be seen here that the context or environment affects those people who live within a particular environment. For instance, if the environment is positive it will influence people positively and if it is negative, it will influence people negatively.

#### **1.4.2.3. Berzonsky's Identity styles.**

Berzonsky (1989:268) says that individuals differ in the manner in which they go about monitoring, utilizing, testing, and revising their identities. He is informing us that human beings respond differently to life. He uses three styles of self-theorizing:

- The informational style.  
Is associated with a stronger orientation to explore and involves actively seeking out, processing and evaluating self-relevant information.
- The normative style  
Is characterized by a concern with the standards and expectations of significant others (e.g. parent) and entails resisting change and resisting information that challenges currently held belief and values.

A child's identity is dependent on interaction with a trustworthy and meaningful hierarchy of roles by the generations living together in some form of family (Erikson, 1980:122; Phinney, 2000:28). This process starts as soon as the child tries to live out their lives according to the strong role model that they see and what they wish to be when they have grown up

Child and parent relationships will indeed affect the child's life. According to this identification process children will resemble their parents. Identification does not end when the person comes to the end of adolescent but will continue throughout the life time. In the community a person will be influenced by certain characteristic he/she sees from other people, such as a child relating with the elderly, husbands

with their wives, pastor and his congregation and the relationship with students at university.

Some research has shown that some ethnic minority children in USA have expressed a desire to be white (Phinney 2000:30). This suggests that these children are not happy with who they are and what they represent in life. Also, most of these minority children are growing up in poverty and they are black Americans. Whereas they see most of those people who are rich in the USA are white. This suggests that their desire to be white could be because they perceive that all good things are to be found in white communities.

- The diffuse-avoidance style  
Is characterized by procrastination and the avoidance of dealing with personally relevant issues in life.

#### **1.4.2.4. Identity formation as a social construction.**

I would like to continue with the area of identity formation. In this part, I will discuss identity formation from a social constructionist perspective. In this perspective narratives play an important role. People organize themselves according to the stories they have about themselves. The following quotation stresses that identity is a social construction “He argues that identities are construction and performed within the communication of stories” (Abel and Stokoe 2001:420).

Identity originates not from inside the person, but from social interactions between people, where people swim in a sea of language and other signs a sea that is invisible to us because it is as a very social being. “We can now say that our identity is constructed out of the discourses culturally



available to us, and which we draw upon in our communications with other people” (Burr 1995:51)

People see themselves according to the language they use. I know as a man, I have to behave in a particular way because of my language which describes how a man should behave. It is same with women, they cannot live differently or apart from what their particular society expects or that society has defined as being a woman. “Prevailing discourses of femininity speak of emotionality, illogically and intuitiveness-not the stuff of science” (Gergen 2001:418). Living out with this discourse, one can be treated as an outcast by the community, because you live out of the normal expectations of being a woman as described by the discourse.

Culture and history play an important role in shaping human identity (Gergen 2001:418). Two young people growing in two different cultures are not going to feel the same about themselves, because different discourses have been experienced and they are understood according to their respective cultures and context, “The self does not have existence apart from the society and history that construct and describe it” (Sampson 1991:210).

The identity of a person will be constructed through the stories about that person (Demasure & Muller 2006:412). Identity is not a God given characteristic, but it is something that would be constructed in a particular locality. Social constructionism will not follow the modernistic way of analysing a personality in order to understand the identity of a person. Social constructionism proposes ‘relational self’ (Demasure & Muller 2006:215). One will know his/her identity according how his/her culture describes him/her. “For each of

us, then, a multitude of discourses is constantly at work constructing and producing our identity” Burr (1995:51)

Personal identity can be described as relational and linguistic. It means that personal identity exists in a dialogical mode (Du Toit 1997:86, 87). Always we need others to complete our personal identity.

Turner (2007:17) explains the self as follows: “I am a self only inasmuch as I am part of a given relationship at a given time”. Context and relationship and locality play an important role in building the way I feel about myself. Again, the construction of self/identity is ongoing not static as the modernistic worldview has put it.

People give meaning to their life by telling the stories of their past experiences. Our identity comes from those narratives of our lives. According to social constructionism, identity is socially constructed. This means that identity is the product of social interaction (Gergen 1994:186).

Ricoeur (1984) in (Whitty 2000:212) argues that “there seems to be no other way of describing lived time except in the form of narrative”. To talk about who I am, I must share my story first. My narratives shape my identity and telling of my story will include sharing my identity.

Whitty (2002:212) states that “if we were to give a brief account of events that have happened to us, these events would be chosen according to how we now see ourselves to be and thus would take their place in the form of narratives”. It is true that we cannot speak of identity without speaking of stories that people have lived.

Phinney, (2000:28) argues that “a narrative approach is being recognized as a means of examining the ways in which individuals make sense of their lives within a changing socio-historical context”. People as they tell their stories come to terms with who they are.

Krog (1998: 99) states that what you believe to be true depends on who you believe yourself to be”. Also, it will depend on how I think people view me. My identity depend on relationship with others and context.

The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur’s advocacy is that identities be studied as identity narratives. Identity always includes the existence of others. (Martin 1999:188; Delport & Olivier 2003:180).

Identity can be stated as a social construction of meaning, meaning of actions and by social actors. Identity will be always rooted outside of experiences (Castell 2000:6, 7; Dawson 2007:460).

Identity can be understood not as an absolute or pre-given but as something constantly in process of change and formation (Walker 2005:133). In a narrative approach and in social constructionism the concept of identity shall always be in a process of change. Identity as a discourse shall receive different understandings and meanings in different contexts.

Discourse is understood here in the foucaultian sense as socially organizes frameworks of meaning, a way of thinking, speaking, and acting that presents particular relationships as self-evidently true, it allows for certain things, to be said or thought and not others. So identity viewed as a discourse will never be absolute (Walker 2005:134).

Looking into the different descriptions of identity, I have learned that there is no single way in which we can describe identity formation but I have understood from those who speak about identity ego and the role that has played by context and culture. Identity is socially constructed. Identity is constructed in endlessly different ways in spite of similar circumstances. And this supports my philosophical and theological positioning which I will state in the coming sections.

### **1.5. Biblical perspective on identity formation**

In this section, I would like to explore identity formation from a biblical understanding or point of view. The biblical perspective might differ from social construction by virtue of adding God in discussions or the bible in the discussion. Being a theologian, it is important to bring in theology because the research is taking place in the faculty of theology.

#### **1.5.1. God's image and likeness in man**

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness..." (Gen. 1:26). When He says let us, we do not know who us is. Most biblical commentators say it refers to heavenly or the trinity, in this research I will not go deeply into the meaning of it. The main thing that I would like to look at more critically is God's image and likeness in man. This could mean four things: A spiritual being capable of immortality, a moral being, bearing God's likeness and an

intellectual being with the capacity for reason and ruler ship (Livingstone G.H. 1969).

Van Huyssteen (2006:120), explains the image as *tselem* in Hebrew it refers to an image, a physical representation of a thing. *Demut*, translated “likeness” or form, and appearance, model, or pattern.

Van Huyssteen (2006:121) and (Towner 2001:26) have stated that humans are walking representations of God, and as such are of exquisite value and importance. Humans are taking care of what God has created and what He values so much.

As Genesis 1:26-28 puts it we were created in God’s image and likeness to have dominion over the earth, the animals, and the fishes of the sea. (Towner 2001: 28) explains dominion in this way that dominion is the stewardship, nurture, and responsibility towards the things God loves. Humans are occupying such an important position in the creation of God which was stated by the Psalmist in (Psalm 8:6 ) “You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands”.

According to my understanding man has been separated from animals because of this role that was given to man by God. He is responsible for the creations of God here on the earth.

Only humans alone of all the members, alone of all the plants are invited into a personal relationship with God the creator (Van Huyssteen 2006:121). Man receives his identity from God. Genesis 1:26-28 tells us that men are like God. Men

have the image of God in their lives. This means that mankind has a high value because of the image of God.

The image of God is what gives human beings their identity or self of man. (Grenz 1994:182) argues that humans are not arising from own, but from God. Our lives have derived from God. We owe our existence to God the creator. Paul said “For in Him we live, and move, and have our being, as some of your own poets have said, ‘for we are His offspring’” (Acts 17:28). It gives them a sense of worth or significance. Men will start to accept and be joyous about him/her because of knowing that they are created by God and humans bear the image of God.

The image of God has been squarely put into the reason of human beings. Its reason or rationality is what gives human beings their uniqueness (Herzefeld 2002:17). It separates human beings from other animals. Other theologians such as (Niebuhr 1942:161) speak of human beings being able to reach beyond themselves. They are more than rational beings. They are able to be self-transcendent because they are in the image of God.

Also, it is not only giving us our being, but it encompasses our individual purpose. This includes personal purpose, goal and destiny ( Grenz 1994:182). God is giving us who we are. Our self identity is derived from God not from self or a world that is theologically positioned.

Pannenberg (1975:47) argues freedom in this way “Christian theology from the beginning understood freedom in relation to its content, as participation in the truth and life of God, as likeness of God”. (Pannenberg 1975:49) continued saying

that the destiny of man is to be truly himself in openness to the divine mystery of his life by freely giving himself to the world and to his fellow man.

Man was created in the image of God that alone must give him inviolability (Pannenberg 1975:43). We must respect one another because of this God image in man. Prohibition of the shedding of human blood is coming from that concept of human as the representation of God, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man” (Gen. 9:6).

Pannenberg (1975:43) states that to attack the life of a human being is to commit an offence against God because man is the representation of God here on earth. He is the ruler of the earth on behalf of God.

Functional interpretation was followed up by other theologians. They said that the image of God is all about the function God has given to man. The function was about dominion over the creatures and the earth as it is stated in (Gen. 1:26-28) (Van Huyssteen 2006:134; Shults 2003:231; Herzfeld 2002:20), as if man is ruling the earth on behalf of God. Actually as a researcher I think that man is god on earth.

Psalms (139:14) stress as this by saying “I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are your works, and that my soul knows very well”. The psalmist is stressing that God made each one of us. He says, each one of us is fearfully and wonderfully made. Human identity comes from God. If human beings can have this understanding, it will bring a sense of worthiness and self

acceptance and self appreciation. Human beings will feel good about themselves.

### **1.5.2. The fall of man**

In Genesis (3:6-9), man disobeyed God by eating from the tree that was in the midst of the Garden of Eden. “By our own actions we have become flawed, so that we fail to live in accordance with the divine intent” (Grenz 1994:245). They saw their nakedness and ran away from God and hide themselves. Sin has entered the earth, brought separation between God and man. Man lost his right to stand with God.

### **1.5.3. The nature of sin**

Grenz (1994:237) stated the nature of sin following the Hebrew words as follows: *avah* (“bent” or “crooked”), *aval* which refers to the lack of integrity, *avar* (“to cross over” or “transgress”), *ra* (“the rule of evil”) and *ma al* (“breach of trust”). *Pasha* (“to revolt or refuse subjection to authority”) and *chatha* means “to miss the right point” or “to deviate from the norm”.

Also, Grenz 1994:137) continues giving the meaning of sin, using the Greek words: *parabasis* (“the transgression of a boundary”), *parkoe* (“disobedience to a voice”), *paraptoma* (“falling where one should have stood upright”), *agnoema* (“ignorance of what one ought to have known”), *hettama* (“the diminishing of what should have been fully rendered”), and *plemmeleia* (“a discord in harmonies of God’s universe”).



Following these meanings of the nature of sin from both the Hebrew and Greek languages, one can understand that man lost his rightful position with God and his responsibilities here on earth.

#### **1.5.4. The results of sin**

- Alienation as we have said in the previous section is that human beings have originated from God and their destiny is with God. Sin caused us to fail to live in that design from God (Grenz 1994:268). Because of sin, came the destruction of our relationship with God, our fellowmen and the environment.
- Condemnation refers to the sentence or judgement placed on us as we live in sin (Grenz 1994:170). Sin robs from us the sense of identity as the children of God. That originality as the children of God has been removed from humans.
- Enslavement refers to the loss of choice that God has given us. Our will in bondage, cannot choose the life that God desired us to live (Grenz 1994:273).
- Depravity as a result of sin makes us humans powerless to remedy our situation (Grenz 1994:274). The remedy must come from the Creator.

#### **1.5.5. Righteousness**

In this section I would like to explore the meaning of the word righteousness and its implication to the formation of human identity. First, we look at the Hebrew word; Sedeq: meaning righteousness, justice, rightness, acting according to a proper

(God's) standard, doing what is right, being in the right (The strongest NIV Exhaustive concordance 1999).

Then at the Greek word: dikaiosyne-righteousness, what is right, justice, the act of doing what is in agreement with God's standard, state of being in proper relationship with God (The strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance 1999).

According to the definition given above, I can see that the following words in English tries to give us the meaning of righteousness, here are those English words: proper relationship with God, and being justified meaning that man has been acquitted or freely pronounced righteous.

Paul is explaining the righteousness of God in the following scripture: (Romans 3:21-26);

“21. But, now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and prophets,

22, even the righteousness of God, through Faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no different;

23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24. Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God set forth as propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

26. to demonstrate at present time His righteousness, that He might be just and justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus”.

People have been justified by faith in Christ Jesus, who shared his blood on the cross of Calvary. I call righteousness a position in God and again a restoration of God's image in man.

People do not need to work for acceptance because they are already accepted in Christ. God bestowed his righteousness on the people. This act of God gives good sense to people about themselves, which is their identity. The results of the fall had been dealt with through the righteousness of God. "And I will put enmity between you and woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His head" (Gen.3:15).

This verse is telling us about continuing the struggle between the offspring of a woman and serpent, and offspring of the children of God and children of Satan. This prophesies were fulfilled at the cross where Jesus crushed the head of Satan. The blood of Jesus restores our identity. The battle is still continuing, but those who believe know that victory belongs to them (Wycliffe Bible Commentary 1962).

According to the righteousness of mankind he receives the sense of identity. We became right with God. "No more condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom.8:1). No more sense of guilty or sense of unworthiness. God justified us through Jesus Christ our Lord. People came into the right position with God.

## **1.6. Research objectives**

My first objective is to explore the relationship between identity formation and poverty. I would like to see if there is

Indeed any relationship between identity formation and poverty.

My second objective is to explore the role of the church in combating the effects of poverty on the lives of those people who are living in poverty stricken communities.

How can the church play a role in shaping a positive identity formation?

## **1.7. PARADIGMATIC APPROACH**

### **1.7.1. Introduction**

I position myself in a postmodernistic worldview, postfoundationalism and social constructionism. We are not striving to get an objective truth but we strive to be truthful in the way that we conduct the research process. Journey with me as I would like to explore my philosophical position.

### **1.7.2. Paradigms shifting: Moving between two worlds**

#### **1.7.2.1. Modernist epistemology**

Modernism as a way of thinking that has originated from the western intellectual and artistic era of life called enlightenment (Burr 1995:12). The enlightenment project was to search for truth, to understand the true nature of reality. It started about the mid-eighteenth century. “Fundamental to

modernism is the privilege of human rationality over other ways of knowing” (Hodge & Derogotes 2008: 105).

During the mediaeval period the church was the sole arbiter of truth (Burr 1995:12). This means that people were receiving their direction for life from the church. Metaphysical was the epistemology of the time. The church and scripture was the only way people received knowledge. Nobody could question that.

The epistemology was heaven to earth knowledge and it could it not be questioned by anybody. Thinkers who believed in modernism were trying to explain the world and knowledge in a rational, empirical and objective way. Modernism challenged the church as the only way people can find the truth.

Modernism is a worldview in which people believe that it is possible to find essential objective facts (Freedman & Comb 1996:20). Modernism is known by its positivistic search for truth, reality and knowledge which can be clearly discovered through scientific methods.

Followers of Modernism believe that truth can be found through scientific methods. After those methods have been put in place they start to generalize that scientific methods are the only means to obtain objective truth. “Objectivity of the modernist world view, with its on facts, replicable procedure and generally applicable rules, easily ignores the specific, localized meaning of individual people” (Freedom & Comb 1996:21).

### 1.7.2.2. Postmodernist epistemology

Postmodernism is a way of thinking that rejects the modernistic way of thinking. “It represents a questioning of and rejection of fundamental assumptions of modernism...” (Burr 1995:12). Especially the assumption of the possibility of finding an absolute truth as mentioned on previous section.

Kuhn writes about absolute truth, “There can be no brute facts and unitary truth because facts and truth depending on ‘ways of seeing the world’” (Durrheim 1996:177). (Freedman & Combo 1996:33) say “since we cannot objectively know reality, all we can do is to interpret experience.

Every truth or reality discovery will be localized in a particular context.( Chan 2007:307), put it this way, “all we have is truth that is essentially an social construct made up of raw materials supplied by historical and social conditions” The truth that people embrace today will be seen differently or interpreted differently by people living in another context, or it will be interpreted differently by the next generation.

Postmodernism acknowledges contextuality and the crucial interpretation of experiences. “Knowledge is local and contextual” (Hodge & Deregotes 2008:107

Postmodernism rejects the idea that the individual has access to the truth out there Chan (2007:307). Instead of objective truth, postmodernism prefers truths, depending on where one stands, culturally and historically, the truth will always be perspectival. “In literary, criticism, it also led us to the idea that there could be no ‘true’ reading of a poem or

novel, that each person's interpretation was necessarily as good as the next"(Burr, 1995:13).

Postmodernism believes in pluralism, they say that scientific methods cannot be the only way knowledge is shaped. As Gergen, (1994:3) put it, "what is needed is an alternative conception of knowledge". What we see here is that knowledge cannot be produced by scientific means and it is not something that is in the individuals mind. "Knowledge is not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather, something people do together. Language is essentially shared activities" Gergen (1985:270).

Language plays an important role in the social construction of knowledge; the post modern discourse looks carefully into this process. "It (postmodernism) focuses instead on the contextuality of human knowledge and probes epistemological claims in the light of human limits" Chan (2007:306-319).

Postmodernists believe that there are limits to the ability of human beings to measure and describe the universe in any precise, absolute, and universally applicable way (Freedman & Comb 1996:21). Postmodernists strive for specific, localized meanings of individual people. They are not interested in universal ways of defining things but the meaning that is found within a context.

Postmodernism also rejects the idea that there can be an ultimate truth and reality. "Since we cannot objectively know reality, what we can do is interpret experience" (Freedman and Comb 1996:33).

Burr (1995:13) says that “postmodernism is a rejection of both the idea that there can be an ultimate truth and of structuralism, the idea that the world as we see it is the result of hidden structure”. People must be allowed to interpreting life as they live it. Every interpretation will depend on the context one lives in.

So, postmodernism is not striving for a single method of getting objective truths but likes to celebrate diversity. Art and literature for instance, for most of the time cannot be interpreted the same way. Every person will look at it from a different perspective and discover something that nobody else has been able to locate in a piece of art or literature. All of these different interpretations could not be considered to be neither right nor wrong; they all depend on the perspective of the interpreter. “One of the central tenets of postmodernism is the decentering of human rationality in favour of the plurality of ways of knowing” (Hodge & Deregotos 2008:106)

Modernism believes that “it is the individual who acquires knowledge, and thus we invest in educational institutions to train and expand the individual mind” (Gergen, 1994:4). The impact of culture on the individual must be considered. Who a person is today could be because of the impact from his/her socialization process.

Modernism believes in individual mind power. In rejection of the issue of individual mind power, the postmodern temper promotes a holistic understanding of the human person that takes into account the physical, affective aesthetic, social-interactive, and spiritual dimensions Chan (2007:306-319).



The section will be looking into the importance of the language in postmodernism, social construction, and narrative research. Language has the power to create.

### **1.7.3. Language**

Postmodernism believes that knowledge is socially constructed. It happens through the interaction of individuals. This interaction becomes possible through language (Anderson and Goolishian 1988:378) says: “Language does not mirror nature; language creates the nature we know”. Through language, we create our reality and that reality will guide us how to think or act or how to interpret the world around us. “This movement accepts the fact that language has a constructive power, but considers this power to be dependent on, or the result of social and material constructions, social relations and institutionalized practices”( Demasure, & Muller, 2006:413).

Gergen (1999:33) explains language in this way, “the alternative is the language itself provides us with a way of structuring our experience of ourselves and the world, and that the concepts we use do not pre-date language but are made possible by it”. It is true that human relations cannot be possible outside the use of language.

Erickson in Freedman and combs, (1996:12) is aware of the constitutive power of language. Language has the power to create human beings and concepts such as poverty and identity. This creative power shall be impossible without language.

Berger & Luckmann, (1966:37-39) have the following to say concerning language:

Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with [other people]. An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life....Language is capable of becoming an objective repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which it can then preserve in time and transcends and transmit to following generations... Because of its capacity to transcend the “here and now,” language bridges different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful whole... Language is capable of “making present” a variety of objects that are spatially, temporally, and socially absent from the “here and now”....Through language an entire world can be actualized at any moment.

Language has such a power to share with other people and enables us to understand each other. It connects the past and the present.

Freedman and Combs (1996:28) say it in this way, “To postmodernists, the only worlds that people can know are the worlds we share in language, and language is an interactive process, not a passive receiving of preexisting truths”

In social constructionism, language plays an important role. We listen to the meaning that comes through the language.

The next section is to look into the word deconstruction; the meaning, usage and how can it be used in postmodernist epistemology.

#### **1.7.4. Discourse definition**

Gergen (1999:48) describes a discourse as follows: “A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce particular version events. Social constructionism focuses more on discourses in research. How people give meanings to the events will depend on the understanding of the discourse that is dominating in a particular locality.

According to Foucault’s analysis: “discourses may be defined as sets of statements that construct objects and array of subject position” (Willig 2001:107).

Burr 1995:51 puts it this way about a discourse

These constructions, in turn, make available certain ways- of-seeing the world and certain ways-of-being in the world. Here, we see the power of discourses, they are like lenses depending which colour I have put on, if it is green, and then I will see greenish objects. Again, they position the individual. I become to see the world through these discourses and also I become what they emphasize or say who I am. ...our identity arises out of interactions with other people and is based on language.

#### **1.7.5. Deconstruction**

Post-modern is deconstructing patriarchal, gender, and cultural discourses that oppresses other voices. (Sampson, 1989:7) describes deconstruction as to undo, not to destroy. In deconstruction, we look at words and the meanings that had never been said or the hidden meanings of these words (Anderson & Goolishian (1988:380).

This new interpretation of words is welcomed. It likes to question and looks for an ultimate outcome that might bring another understanding and meaning into the context (Sampson 1989:8)

Chang and Phillips (1993:100) quotes Anderson and Goolishian's definition:

Deconstruction...is to... 'take apart the interpretive assumptions of system of meaning that you are examining...that reveals the assumption on which the model is based.' As these are revealed, you open space for an alternative understanding.

Caputo (1997:31) defined deconstruction in this way;

The meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things, texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices of whatever size and variety you require and does not have definable meanings and determinable mission that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy.

Any text has a hidden meaning that has not yet been revealed. To deconstruct a text is to find that hidden meaning. So, I can say that text does not say the same thing throughout generations.

What makes me feel encouraged about Derrida when he speaks about “the experience of the impossible” (Caputo 1997:32). We must never be trapped when we experience the impossible, but we should look, and there will be a way out. In the bible we read the following words, “...and nothing will be impossible for you” (Mt. 17:20).

Since deconstruction means unpacking, in this research we want to unpack through discourses relating to poverty, identity and cultural discourses poor people lived or live under.

#### **1.7.6. Transversal rationality**

In postmodern epistemology, our strength knowing that plurality is the way to go, not like modern epistemology that stresses singularity in knowledge. In transversal rationality, different disciplines can manage to have conversations in order to share their understanding. As Donald Capps put it in (Van Huyssteen, 2000:429), “transversality identifies different but equally legitimate ways of looking at issues or disciplines”. Here our different voices and strategies cannot stop us in working together for common good. Transversality looks for commonalities.

Shrag (1992:148) describes transversality in this way about transversal; “transversality has appeared on the scene as a recurring figuration of thought across the disciplines for some time”

Shrag (1992:148) is using different metaphors to explain the transversal rationality. These are the metaphors, he uses:

Mathematicians define transversality as a generalization of orthogonality, enabling a line to intersect two or more lines or surfaces without achieving coincidence.

Physiology employs the grammar of transversality in describing the networking of bands of fibres.

In anatomy the term is used to define the lateral movements of vertebra.

Physicists make use of the concept of transvers mass in working out the ratio of accelerating forces.

In philosophy the concept of transversality has been used to describe the dynamics of consciousness and the interplay of social practices.

In all the metaphors above, we see the following: interrelated senses of lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting and converging without achieving coincidence (Shrag 1992:149).

Felix Guattari (in Shrag 1992:152) uses psychiatric practice where different people join forces in helping in healing the patient. There are doctors, assistant doctors, Nurses, administration, patients, parents, pharmacies. All of these people represent different disciplines but they manage to network together.

Van Huyssteen (2007:23), has stated that “a postfoundationalist notion of rationality thus creates a safe space where our different discourses and actions are seen at times to link up with one another...”. The postfoundationalist notion of rationality is to allow communication amongst different rationalities. It can be seen as an interdisciplinary

reflection thus claims to be a viable third epistemological option beyond the extremes of absolutism and the relativism of extreme forms of pluralism (Van Huyssteen 2007:24).

I think, what make this possible is the value that different disciplines give to each other. There is a realization that the solution depends on interrelations with one another. No discipline can claim to be the only rationality that brings answers.

### **1.8. Social constructionism**

It is very hard, to describe the concept of social constructionism because it can mean different things to different people, even for those who work within the paradigm.

My understanding of social constructionism is that, it deals with how a perceived reality is developed in a particular context. The reality is form when there is interaction of people within society. This suggests that reality will differ from one society to another, because reality is formed within the context. “Social constructionist view of reality as subjective (i.e., created and understood within the context of individuals’ personal experiences with their world)” O’Connor, Thomas St. James, et. Al (2004:17, 23). The universal truth has not been promoted in social constructionism.

A major focus of social constructionism is to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived social reality. (Demasure & Muller 2006:413) they stress the power of interaction.

Berger and Luckmann (1966:3) argues that all knowledge, including the most basic taken-for-granted common sense knowledge of everyday, is derived from and maintained by social interactions. Reality is not divinely given, but has been created as people talk. Reality is socially constructed by people living together in particular cultural context.

Freedman and Combs speaks about the “community of knowers” (Freedman & Combs 1996:20). The realities that we perceive as objective reality is being created in the community, therefore there is no objective reality because every community will see and understand the dynamics of another community differently from the understanding shared by that other community of itself. As the knowers come together, they create a perceived reality and truth. “In other words, people, together, construct their realities as they live them” (Freedman & Combs, 1996:23)

Kuhn says, in Durrhein (1996:177) “there can be no brute facts and no unitary truth because facts and truth depend on ‘ways of seeing the world’”. According Kuhn, there are many truths, depending where you are standing or where you are looking from. One’s worldview will tell you what the truth is. Modernists strive for objective reality and truth but postmodernists celebrate diversity, which are many truths according to our cultural contexts.

Language plays an important role in the social constructionism process. The perceived reality in order to be formed needs more than one person to interact. The interaction without language would be impossible. “Micro social constructionism focuses on the role of microstructures and the use of language in interaction” (Demasure & Muller,



2006:413). Language has a constructive and transformative power.

Social constructionists have a deconstruction agenda. They like to unpack things both negative and positive. They like to see the possible alternative story (Muller 2001:79). In the coming section I would like to show the difference between social constructionism and cognitive constructivism.

## **1. 9. Theological positioning**

My theological positioning is within postfoundationalist theology. This is in the same line of thought with a social constructionist worldview. It is saying that knowledge is socially constructed.

The reason for my theological positioning is that it is not based on foundationalist epistemology or on a non-foundationalist approach to ministry. It will be a theology that develops in practice. Come with me as I explore my theological positioning

### **1.9.1. Theology**

What is the meaning of theology? It means a scientific study of people's faith in and religious statement about God. "Teaching concerning God or the study concerning God" (Grenz 1994:3) Human beings cannot study God, but they can study the language people use to describe God. As, we study people's knowledge about God, we come to the point

where we will ask ourselves the question how do human beings know?

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:3) stated that “theology is combination of two Greek words-theo, meaning God and logos, meaning word”. The question is can man study God and understand God? (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:3) continued to say, since it is impossible to study God, so theology must be “defined as a scientific study of people’s faith in and their religious statements about God”. This argument made it possible to study theology scientifically.

Theology is about God as the God of human beings, and as a God who cares about all living people (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:4). Therefore, theology deals with all human relationships with one another and with God, the creator of the universe.

According to Barth’s model of theology is God’s disclosure to men in order to apply revelation of God completely and directly to their concrete situations of life (Browning, 199:5; Barth 1936:47-70). In this model theologians move from the revelation to humanity being theory to become practice. This is a modernistic way of doing theology. The focus is not on the context but on the bible, which is the foundation for universal discourse.

According to the post-modernist epistemology, knowledge can be described into two ways, constructivism regards knowledge as a human construct; social construction discourse describe knowledge as social construct. It means that the way people claim to know God, it would depend on the kind of knowledge, where is the epistemology that they

follow. In this research, I will follow the social constructionism discourse.

### **1.9.2. Post-modern theology**

Since I work within a post-modern epistemology, even my theology will be post-modern in nature. This kind of theology will be more interested in the lived experiences that are taking place in society rather than abstract definitions. This style of theology will enable theologians to achieve their goals by following qualitative methods and narrative research.

Postmodern theology is to a greater extent into deconstruction. It likes to search for the hidden meanings in language. The text cannot give one fixed meaning. The reader can interpret a different meaning from the sense the writer has aimed at. The interpretation always will depend on the context. “According to Kant, space and time are two basic conditions for human experience, the environment for thinking, feeling and doing” (Van hoozer 2003:14).

Postmodernism theologians, have a role in deconstructing the modernistic discourses such as culture, patriarchy, and religion.

Postmodern theology rejects the notion of objective truth; it rather believes that there are many perceptions to a particular issue. Doing this research, it was essential that we listened to the people with whom we worked in our research project. Postmodern theology has the ability to help marginalized voices to be heard.

As a gospel minister, it sets me free to do ministry in a powerful way and assist in the transformation of the community. I approached these people whom I have been called to serve with an open mind, knowing that those people have the answers for their lives. I am in the situation to listen to the language and can discern the meaning that has been given through meaning that has been given through these interacting within the context.

I will also bring in the story of God into the community, and the story of God must never impose on the people we are researching with. The story of God is always an open-ended story. The story of the community that I serve as a minister combined with the story of God can convey a new story that could be transformational and be the story of hope.

The bible has been advanced as the only truth which cannot be opposed or interpreted differently. This kind of theology causes people to be intolerant towards those who understand and interpret theology differently.

In this research I and my co-researchers will take a closer look at a theology that will be able to take the context into consideration. How other people interpret their society and where does God come into being in their context.

### **1.9.3. Postfoundationalism: Beyond conflict and consonance**

I have chosen to work from a postfoundationalist epistemology because of the following reasons that have been stated.

Van Huyssteen 2000:430 has stated that foundationalist epistemology follows the transversality which justifies and urges an acknowledgement of multiple patterns of interpretation as one moves across the borders and boundaries of different disciplines. He continues saying the postfoundationalist epistemology claims to point beyond those boundaries of the local community, group, tradition, or culture toward a plausible form of interdisciplinary conversation.

In addition, a postfoundationalist model of rationality thus enables us to communicate across boundaries, from context to context, from one form of life to another, from one discipline to another (Van Huyssteen 2000:436).

According to my understanding, a postfoundationalist epistemology removes conflict amongst different disciplines and empowers the different rationalities of community to network for the common good of the humanity. Also, it sets people free from having to give a universal truth.

It is necessary for me to give a definition for foundation before I describe postfoundationalism. According to the description given by (Grenz and Franke, 2001:30), they are using the metaphor of a building. To build a house one needs a foundation that can carry the whole building.

Using the same pattern of thought, it is said knowledge needs a foundation that can be built on. The epistemological foundation must be based on basic beliefs or principles which cannot be questioned. The foundations of our faith are based on the universal truth. So, these principles will be followed in

the pursued of knowledge. This is the way knowledge can be acquired.

Some thinkers discarded foundational epistemology and in its place offered a nonfoundational approach claiming that, there cannot be a foundational approach because they say truth is relative (Grenz and Franke 2001:30). They mean that there are many truths out there.

Van Huyssteen (2000:430) describes postfoundationalism in the following manner: “Postfoundationalism in theological reflection thus claims to be a viable third epistemological option beyond the extremes of absolutism and the relativism of extremes forms of pluralism”.

Postfoundationalism avoids extremes in theological reflection. It gives a third epistemological approach to theology. It believes in an interdisciplinary approach for theological reflection. It cannot be defined by metaphors of foundationalism or nonfoundationalism (Van Huyssteen 1999:128).

What I like about postfoundationalism is that it allows us to come to our cross-disciplinary conversations with our strong beliefs, commitments, and even prejudices (Van Huyssteen, 2000:430). Postfoundationalist theology encourages multi-voices. Theology cannot be allowed to be isolated from a pluralist world. Modes of knowing cannot be found in one way.

Postfoundationalism is striving for different rationalities to dialoguing without competing with one another. Foundational epistemology made it so impossible for science and theology to have a dialogue because theology considered itself to be

holding onto the absolute truth and science is holding the same view. In this view, (Van Huyssteen 1998:34) put it in this way “postfoundationalist model rationality thus preserves the idea of progress and the idea that rational beliefs are based on good evidence, although there are now different sources of evidence for different claims”.

These sources of evidence must be in a healthy dialogue in order to find a common good in each source of evidence. There will be some differences but here for the most part it is better to concentrate in commonalities, which are the things that joined us together rather than the things that separate us.

In order to move beyond the epistemologies of foundationalism and nonfoundationalism, I will list the three dimensions of rationality that are crucially relevant for modes of knowledge: the cognitive, the evaluative, and the pragmatic (Van Huyssteen 1999:128). Theologians must give good reasons for their beliefs, good reason for their theoretical and moral choices, and good reasons for acting in a particular way.

Postfoundationalist theology believes in on interdisciplinary approach in our theological reflection.

Van Huyssteen, 2000:428-429 continues explaining about postfoundationalism:

First, it acknowledges contextuality and embeddedness of all our reflection in human culture and, therefore, in specific or confessional traditions.

Second, it takes seriously the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience or experiential understanding and the way that tradition shapes the epistemic as well as nonepistemic values that inform our reflection, our thoughts about God, and what some of us believe to be God's presence in the world.

Third, it allows us to explore freely and critically the experiential and interpretative roots of our beliefs from our deep commitments and to discover patterns in our lives and thought that might be consonant with the biblical paradigm. The persuasiveness of these patterns will be taken up in critical theological reflection, where their problem-solving ability will be evaluated and judged in an interpersonal and cross-contextual conversation.

Fourth, rationality itself can now be seen as a skill that enables us to gather and bind together the patterns of our interpreted experience through rhetoric, articulation, and discernment. Also, Van Huyssteen (1998: 24) stated that "finding a good reasons for hanging on to certain beliefs, good reasons for making certain moral choices, and good reasons for acting in certain ways"

#### **1.9.4. Practical theology**



Browning (1996:8) says that human nature is practical in thinking. Human beings never start their thinking from abstract and technical thinking but from a practical position.

Theory is an abstraction from practice. Practical theology must start with practice, it means that we begin with reflecting on concrete situation and we move to God's story. In doing practical theology, we move from practice to theory and back to practice. "Practice-theory-practice" (Browning 1996:9).

Practical theology is more than applying word over context and is more on reflecting on a concrete situation and how the context thinks about God and His presence. I believe that God has been working in the context before I came. There will be more meaning created as I work with people.

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:7) practical theology as follows, "practical theology interprets the interaction between gospel and people". (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:7) continued saying the "practical theologian wants to know whether the preacher understands the audience and its context properly"

Ballard, (1992:29) described the work of practical theology this way, "The special task of practical theology is to start with the concrete, historical, immediate reality critically evaluating and enabling the practical life of the church in all its forms, drawing on the findings of fundamental, historical, and systematic theology".

Practical theology should start with real life experiences. (Ballard 1992:31) continues saying that practical theology goes beyond theory and practice, but it concerns itself with constant dialogue between conceptual frameworks that interpret experience and the evidence that has to be

accounted for. Also, it is about interpreting those experiences to find meaning.

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:9) argues that practical theology is a science just like other fields, they say, “practical theology is a science because it has its own field of study, develops its own practical theological theories and applies its own of scientific methods”. The practical theologian will identify the problem in a specific context (in praxis). And will go and search the theory (theorise) about the problem and to come up with applicable methods to find the solution of the concern.

Heyns and Pieterse 1990:11 have summarised theology as follows:

- Scientific work is a human business. It is performed by human beings and consists of human reflection on subjects accessible to the human mind.
- The theology is a science in the ordinary human sense. To describe it as the queen of the sciences is arrogant.
- Theology is a scientific study of people’s faith in God and human statements about God.
- Practical theology is a variegated spectrum. Each colour and shade represents a field of study.
- Practical theology is a field of theological study which investigates theology from a specific point of view.
- Practical theology studies people’s religious actions. More particularly, it is concerned with communicative actions in the service of the gospel.
- Practical theology focuses on the religious praxis of church and society.

- Practical theology is critical theory of praxis.
- Practical theology is a science

Van der Ven (1993:34) quoted Luther saying “real theology was practical”. Theology must start in a concrete situation, meaning that theology that is only theoretical is not enough or cannot bring transformation into the lives of people

### **1.9.5. Exploring Practical wisdom and understanding**

Browning (1996:39) is using Gadamer’s hermeneutical theory which breaks the theory-practical model of humanistic learning. The understanding start within our current situation, such as facing a crisis in life and to be able to understand that crises we should reflect about the past and present in order to understand what is happening.

To understand we must follow the hermeneutic theory of Gadamer of moving from practice-to theory and back to practical. It means that theory must start from practice. The specific context must guide us in how to find the right theory and the methods to be used in that specific locality

### **1.9.6. Postfoundationalist Practical theology**

In the previous section, I have looked into theology, post-modern theology and postfoundationalism. In this section I would like to look into postfoundationalist practical theology. It is a practical theology developed by Prof. Muller using the postfoundational theology taken from Van Huyssteen. Muller

(2005:73) argues that this kind of practical theology happens whenever and wherever there is a reflection on practice, from the perspective of God's presence".

Muller (2005:3) continues by saying "it can be very spontaneous, informal, and local". Postfoundationalist practical theology is always happening in that moment of practice. It is not imposed on the context but is born in the context. It is always local and situated. The reason that I have chosen postfoundationalist practical theology is that it is taking place in a specific location and context and not imposed.

Muller (2005:77) put it this way, "this way of thinking is always concrete, local, and contextual, but at the same time reaches beyond local contexts to transdisciplinary concerns".

Muller (2005:78) formulated the minimum requirements for postfoundationalist practical theology as follows:

Locally contextual

Socially constructed

Directed by tradition

Pointing beyond the local

Muller (2005:81) gives us example of practical theology research processes by creating seven movements. My research will follow this process.

### **1.10. Narrative theory, Ricoeur, and hermeneutics**

In this section, I would like to look into narrative theory which has been constructed by Ricoeur and as a way of interpreting life (hermeneutics)

Ricoeur (1991:20) says that he is starting by saying “stories are recounted and lived; life is lived not recounted”. As he continues, he will clarify the relation between living and narrating.

Ricoeur uses a concept called *emplotment*, this concept has been taken from Aristotle. In Greek it is *muthos* which signifies both fable (in the sense of an imaginary story) and plot (in the sense of a well constructed story) (Ricoeur 1991:21). He mentions that plot is not a static structure but an operation, an integrating process, which shall be completed only by the reader, that is to say, in the living receiver of the narrated story.

Ricoeur (1991:21) continues to explain the operation of *emplotment* as a “synthesis of heterogeneous elements”. Ricoeur speaks of a synthesis between the events or incidents which are multiple and the story which is unified and complete. All of the different events become one story, this means to understand the story we must understand all of the events and contexts of the narrator and the reader.

Also, Ricoeur (1991:21) brings in the issue of time. He says there are two sorts of time; on one hand, a discrete succession that is open and theoretically indefinite, a series of incidents; on the other hand, the story told presents another temporal aspect characterized by the integration, culmination and closure owing when there is a new interpretation, he calls that a configuration.

Ricoeur (1991:26) stresses the world of the reader and the world of the text. He is stating that the significance of a narrative stems from the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader. He is saying also that in this intersection is where the narrative's capacity to transfigure the experience of the reader rests. The intersection will usher us into the new world of experience.

Ricoeur (1991:27) explains his hermeneutics as a process that happens in three stages. The first is called prefiguration or pre-narrative. Prefiguration is the world of the reader before she/he reads the story. The intersection bring forth the configuration, this is place of the construction of a different story. The configuration will birth a new story that is refiguration.

Gadamer put it this way in (Ricoeur 1991:27) "the horizon of expectation and the horizon of experience continually confront one another and fuse together". In understanding the text Gadamer speaks about 'fusion of horizons'.

#### **1.10.1. Narrative research**

The narrative research mode has been informed by postmodernism and rejects modernist conceptions of truth, certainty, and objectivity ( da Costa, Nelson, Rudes, & Guterman 2007:70; Müller et al 2001:67 ).

The narrative approach has been influenced by social constructionism, which maintains that knowledge is constitutive, intersubjective, and language-based (da Costa, Nelson, & Guterman 2007:70).

Also, narrative research is situated within the qualitative or interpretive research method (Moen 2006:5). A qualitative approach means that researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Leedy and Ormrod, 2004:147). The goal of qualitative approach is to 'describe and understand' (Müller, & Schoeman 2004:8).

In the narrative research process, one of the main characteristic is collaboration (participation) between the researcher and his/her research subjects (Moen 2006:6). It does not consider research subjects as informant. Research subjects are important participants.

Babbie (2007:301) states that participation between the researcher and the people being researched is participatory action research, he defines it as "an approach to social research in which the people being studied are given control over the purpose and procedures of the research: intended as counter to the implicit view that researchers are superior to those they study". This kind of research approach, gives equal power to researcher and those who are been researched, they are not just the object of the research but they must own the process of the research.

Actually, the people who are been researched must define the problem, methods of dealing with the problem and to come up with the solutions to their problem (Babbie 2007:301). In this regard the outcome of the research is not only beneficial to the researcher but is beneficial to the people who are been researched. In this way, the people become co-researchers

In narrative research both the stories of the researcher and co-researchers or participants are important. They should be well considered when it comes to interpretation. (Moen 2006:6) put it this way, “multivoiced of narrative would appear clearer than it would if the researcher and the research subject have joint understanding of the narratives that occur during the inquiry process”. Müller put in this way “...the narrative researcher has subjective integrity in mind and strives for participatory interaction” (Müller et. al 2001:78).

Ricoeur (1981) has provided a useful theory that helps us to understand this process, as has been quoted by (Moen 2006:6), here is the collaboration process between the researcher and collaborator.

First, in the dialogic collaboration process between the researcher and the research subject, one or more stories are written down and become fixed in the text. This means that the narrative in question is no longer tied to the moment in which it occurs.

Second, by fixing the narrative into a text it becomes “autonomized”: It has been detached from the moment it occurred and has assumed consequences of its own.

Third, the narrative can, in this way, assume an importance that goes beyond the initial situation and becomes relevant in other contexts.

Fourth, the narrative that is fixed in a text is thus considered an “open work” where the meaning is addressed to those who read and hear about it.



Narrative means telling a story of a sequence of events that is significant for the narrator or his/her audience (Moen 2006:4). According to sociocultural theory, there is an interlink between the individual and his/her context.

According to Moen 2006:4, 5, three basic claims about narrative research

First claim is that human beings organize their experiences of the world into narratives.

Second claim, narrative researchers maintain that the stories that are told depend on the individual's past and present experiences, her/his values, the people stories are being told to, the addressees, when and where they are being told

Third claim, closely connected to the second, concerns the multivoicedness that occurs in the narratives.

A narrative researcher wants to listen to the story of culture, context, and individual story. In this sense, the researcher will be able to understand stories of those we are researching well because; the stories will come from the culture and the context which we lived in. In this research project, I will listen to the stories of people living in the poverty stricken community of Nellmapius.

Narrative researchers believe that human beings are interpretive in nature. They are able to interpret their experiences, when the researcher works with participants; they listen to their narratives very well. "Narrative research is, consequently, focused on individuals' assigned meaning to their experiences through story telling" (Moen 2006:5).

Narrative research is an ongoing hermeneutic or interpretive process.

The story telling cannot be possible without the use of language. The narrative research process places a high value on language, which without it, participation between the researcher and the participant will be totally impossible.

Narrative research rejects the notion that there is a single, dominant, or static reality but rather, a number of realities that are constructed in the process of interactions and dialogue (Moen 2006:5).

Narrative research affirms that knowledge is social construction, it takes place during the interaction which is language based.

### **1.11. Social constructionism and postfoundationalism**

Both of these two concepts share the same thoughts, even though they are from a different a context. This is three of socially constructed interpretations and meaning. They listen to the stories of people who live in a specific locality and context (Demasure and Muller 2006:417).

### **1.12. Ethical positioning**

In this research process, I and my co-researchers will work together as partners with an equal position. “We want to be researchers who do not “pathologize” or “victimize” their narrators” (Muller Van Deventer and Human 2001:77). We do not call those who do research with a “research

population” but we call them co-researchers. I will value them and respect them.

The research outcome must serve those whom we work with. Even though I will receive my degree, these people will also be helped from their participation. The narrator outlook must prevail. “Researcher lose nothing in sharing the process reaffirming the narrator’s authority of self which naturally is interactive and collaboration rather than autocratic” ( Smythe & Murray 2005:5).

I must explain the process to my co-researchers because without understanding the process it will be hard for them to take ownership of the process. I want also to hear from them what they feel about the process, they will have the freedom to stop being my co-researchers at any time.

The consent form will be explained to them before they can be my co-researchers. I will strive for honesty and transparency. My thesis will also be available to them at any time, they wish to read it and comment on it.

### **1.13. Research design**

My practical theology research process will follow the seven movements developed by Julian Muller; they were developed out of postfoundationalist practical theology (Muller 2005:83). The seven movements fit well with my epistemology and my theological positioning.

#### **1.13.1. Specific context is defined**

The research process starts with a specific context. My context in this research will be co-researchers drawn from the Nellmapius community. These are the people who live in this community. I will listen to the co-researchers about living in a poverty stricken community and the discourses that are found in this context.

### **1.13.2. In-context experiences are listened to and described**

I will listen to the stories of my co-researchers. My main aim here is to hear the experiences of those who dwell in this context. I would love to know what they think about poverty and how poverty affects their identity formation. A narrative research process will be followed.

### **1.13.3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with “co-researchers”.**

In this research process, my aim is not only to listen to the description of the experiences, but it is more on interpretation/meaning realized by my co-researchers. My co-researchers must give meaning to their own situation of poverty and how that shaped the lives of those who have grown in the context saturated with poverty. I will read literature, culture of the context and art. Discourses must be looked into.

**1.13.4. A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation.**

We strive to know the discourses that are in Nellmapius the informed perceptions and behaviour. It will make us understand why people act the way they have been acting. Interpretation of the discourses will be essential, and also theological discourses will be listened too.

**1.13.5. A reflection on religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experiences in a specific situation.**

The aim is to listen to the co-researchers understanding of God's presence. It should never be the researchers forced effort on co-researchers. I will listen to any mention of God and follow it up in order to understand. I must hear what they think about God in their situation of poverty.

**1.13.6. A description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation.**

Postfoundationalist practical theology strives to have a conversation with other theological disciplines and other disciplines. It listens to other stories from these disciplines and thickens our ministry in the community. Interdisciplinary research will achieve the following: literature study, conversation with colleagues from different disciplines.

### **1.13.7. The development of alternative interpretations, that point beyond the local community**

This method of doing theology is not only describing and interpreting experiences, but is also about alternative interpretation. It means that even though working in a specific context, our alternative story can be used beyond that particular context. The usage should follow a narrative approach and social constructionist way of doing things. It will not be about imposing our findings on other communities.

### **1.14. Profiles of my co-researchers**

I have chosen nine people to be my co-researchers. I have 3 youths and 3 couples and one disabled person in my co-researchers group. All of them live in Nellmapius. They all have the same experiences. I believe that we will understand a lot about Nellmapius and also how we can discover the preferred story for our community.

#### *1.14.1. Miss J*

Miss JM is young lady in her early twenties, raised by her mum who works in the Indian supermarket. Parents separated while she was very young. Miss JM completed her diploma in production management and she got a job with ABSA bank and also she is one of my competent leaders in the church.

#### *1.14.2. Mr. S and Mrs Z*

Are a young couple in their twenties. Mr. S found a job as a financial analyst with one of successful company and Mrs. Z

remains at home, bringing up their baby boy. They are the youth leaders in the church.

*1.14.3. T's family*

Mrs T. works in old age home and Mr. T after long a time being unemployed, is now employed with SAPS as a clerk. He has one hand; he got injured while he was a small boy.

*1.14.4. Mr. P*

Mr P is young man in his twenties. He has done engineering and is working with one of the successful companies in South Africa as one of their directors. He is also helpful in church.

*1.14.5. Mr. TN*

He is in his twenties, and brother to Miss JM. He is working for a pharmaceutical company. He is also studying computer science with UNISA.

*1.14.6. MR.JR*

He is in his forties married with three children, and one of his children is disabled. He is a deputy principal in a school. He is one of the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church.

*1.14.7. Mrs J*

Mrs J is the wife of Mr JR. She is at 40yrs. She works as a teacher in one of the Primary Schools in Nellmapius. I have known her for a long time

### **1.15. Journey of my life-story**

As a narrative researcher, it is important to share my own personal story so that my co-researchers will be able to share their stories with me. Prof. Muller says he cannot be truthful to the narrative approach, if he is not willing to share his story (Muller, 2001:1). Therefore, as I share my story of the past, it will also help with the creation of a new story which it might become a better story of hope or with a better outcome.

The question of bias in the sharing of a story is very serious. Some researchers, avoid this by what is called “self-extricate” and some researchers especially those who work in a narrative research approach speak about “self-insertion” or projection in a good sense (Josselson, Lieblich, and McAdams 2003: 29). Good projection will assist me in not being biased regarding my own story. I will treat all stories equally. I was born in the poorest of the poor family. I felt bad about being for been born in my family. We slept without good food and we did not have proper housing or property because of the apartheid rule of the day.

My parents sent me to school up to standard 4. My life seemed hopeless as regards the future. I did not think I was an important person. In January 1979 I accepted the Lord as my personal saviour. He changed my perception about who am I. I started to read the bible. I have learned that God made me in His image and likeness. I regained my importance and began to see the good that was in me. The new identity of my life was reconstructed through allowing God’s story to come into my life.



There was a family in our congregation who was without children, they adopted me and they sent me back to school. They helped me for two years. I remember that after those two years, I was supposed to go to standard 6. I had no uniform and books. God touched other people in the congregation and they helped me with all of that.

Even though I lived in that hopeless story, today I am telling a new story of success and victory. I am completing my PhD in practical theology. The new preferred story gives me the power to face every challenge and to make more free choices that come in to my life. The preferred identity makes me feel happy with my life.

Now, I feel freedom, self-worth and self-acceptance. I now sense that nothing is impossible for all the people who believe (Mark 9:23). Today, I am glad that I'm able to face every mountain.

#### **1.15.1. Why share the journey of my life story?**

As I have already mentioned it is important for me to share my story because, it gives me the courage to go on in life. According to Muller, story telling shapes our identity (Muller 1999). The sharing of my story builds me a narrative research identity. It will empower my co-researchers to share their own stories without any fear. It will help me not to be biased towards my own story.

The story telling has the following; a past, a present and the future. Development of the story is very important. As I share my story, I believe that my story will develop. In my research,

since I use the narrative approach, I will ask my co-researchers to tell their story I must first tell my story, and I believe that this will help them (co-researchers) to feel free to share their stories.

## **1.16. The context of Nellmapius**

### **1.16.1. Population**

This is a township that is situated on the east side of Pretoria. It started around 1994; originally it was for coloured people. Nellmapius is dominantly African with a few coloureds and whites.

The population of Nellmapius is about 37 000 and there are about 10 000 houses and many houses still coming (Statistic SA). There are about 1735 bond houses in Nellmapius and there is still a need for more. Reconstruction and Development project (RDP) houses are in the majority and there will be more of them being built. People who live in RDP houses are busy developing their RDP houses, some of them are bigger than others and those are in the bond houses section (Nellmapius proper).

Development is very slow in this community. There are three primary schools in Nellmapius and a high school still under construction. The community has only one clinic which is too small.

Nellmapius consists of mainly RDP houses these are the houses that the government has rented to poor people and the loan houses for those who qualify to get a loan of money

from the banks. There are many people living in the backyards around the RDP houses, especially foreigners.

Unemployment is a reality in the community of Nellmapius. I have observed that many people have different skills yet unemployed. In this research we aim to understand why some people are still living in poverty even though they have skill e.g. sewing.

#### **1.16.2. Economic aspects**

In Nellmapius economic development is very slow. So far, we do not have any big businesses in the area. The only business that can be seen is informal business, operating in an area that has not been zoned for business.

#### **1.16.3. Educational aspect**

Nellmapius has three high primary schools only and a high school still under construction. All early learning centres are being run from homes which do not fit the criteria set out by the city council of Tshwane.

#### **1.16.4. Health aspect**

Nellmapius being the fastest growing township has only one clinic servicing the whole area. The clinic work is only available during office hours and is not equipped to serve adults. The clinic is too small.

### **1.16.5. Early Childhood Development centres**

Most of the preschools are been run from private houses. Some of them came out of poverty alleviation and was not intended to provide proper child education. They cannot be registered with the city council. In my church, we are busy trying to build a world- class development centre.

### **1.16.6. Taverns**

They are many taverns in Nellmapius. Drunkenness is one of the problems that is destroying our community. Young and old suffer from alcohol abuse.

### **1.17. Outlines of chapters**

Chapter 1: Positioning

In this chapter I spoke about the reason why I am writing this research process. It came out of great concern for the people to whom I am ministering who are facing the issue of poverty daily. It appeared that poverty formed their identity. How can the chain of poverty be broken in their lives.

Also, the chapter speaks more about my theological and philosophical position which will be on postmodern, postfoundationalism, social constructionism, narrative approach, and postfoundationalist practical theology.

Chapter 2: Describing the problem

In chapter 2 I have written more on poverty, the effects of poverty, identity formation, and how poverty affects identity formation.

### Chapter 3: Community transformation

This chapter, is about how we can eradicate poverty? Looking more at development, transformation, participation, empowerment and how can we feel good about ourselves

### Chapter 4: Experiences are listened to and described

In this chapter, I concentrate on the narratives of my co-researchers. How they tell them and give meaning to their experiences.

### Chapter 5: Interdisciplinary conversation

In this chapter I had conversation with people from other disciplines especially those who are involved in Nellmapius. Also, I go beyond the context.

### Chapter 6: Pointing beyond the context and preferred stories

In postfoundationalist practical theology, what matters most is the narratives from a specific context, but we have discovered they can be used in other contexts

### Chapter 7: My reflection on my research

In this chapter I reflect on my work and self.

## CHAPTER 2:

### DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM - POVERTY

#### 2.1. Introduction

Poverty is a crime against humanity. (Smith 2005:3) says it is “the systematic exploitation, theft, and abuse not only by the rich but by the government officials ostensibly there to help: the poor must pay larger bribes, as a share of their income, than the rich just to survive”. Because of poverty people have to live a life that they do not want. It puts them at the mercy of abuse, violence and oppression. It leads to a life of fear and anxiety (Pieterse 2001:45). Every nation of the world should fight against poverty and its causes.

Erasmus (2005:143) stated that “in pre -democratic South Africa the ideology of apartheid protected the interests of the minority white Afrikaner people of the national party”. The majority of the people of South Africa were forced to live in poverty.

After the first democratic election people were politically free but economically still living in slavery (Nieman 2006:597) stated that “Martin Luther King promoted the concept that freedom without economic empowerment and access to socio-economic opportunity and a resource was not freedom”.

Pick et al. (2008:165), “The millennium Declaration pledges to free men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty”. This is one of the goals set by the United Nations to be fulfilled in 2015. Poverty is a crime because it causes so many social ills in

the world. “Poverty is still the gravest insult to human dignity” (Kane & Kirby 2003:42).

In Luke 4: 18, it is written “the spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor...” Jesus declared that His ministry was to focus on poor people. He came to set them free from the shackles of poverty. Jesus valued those people who were not valued by the systems of the time.

Furthermore, it can be put it this way, “Poverty was seen as denying people adequate food, housing, education, and health care, and being responsible for forcing people to lead an undesirable lifestyle, such as child prostitute”( Delton et al. 2008:498). Poverty removes dignity from the human being created in the image of God. There should be a multi approach in the fight against poverty. I do not think it could a uni-approach in a battle against poverty and its causes.

The ANC-led government inherited poverty and inequality in 1994. (Nieman 2006:597) says almost half (48%) of South Africans live in conditions of extreme poverty. The chances and opportunities do not exist to lead a long and healthy life with the freedom to enjoy a decent standard of living with dignity, self-respect and respect for others.

A major concern for the African National Congress led government was how to deal with the main issues though there have been many interventions through creating policies and programs of action not enough has been done.

How can a church community get involved in helping the poor people and assist in working for equality for all people.

## 2.2. Definition of poverty

The question is what do we mean when we speak about poverty? Poverty remains a difficult phenomenon to be defined because it could be defined in many ways depending on the context people live in. “However, poverty with its complexities has remained a major challenge both to the church and the governments of the world” (Christian 1999:1). Poverty is a complex phenomenon and it is not easy to define but I will look into different meanings from literature and from my co-researchers. Understanding the meaning of poverty can help us to declare a war against poverty.

Poverty could mean the following: “the inability of individuals, households, or entire communities, to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living” (Pieterse 2001:30; cf. May 2000:5). Here the poverty has been defined as an economical challenge. People cannot eat, dress, have a house, and go on holiday, as they wish.

People who live in poverty lack sufficient resources to satisfy the minimum standard of living. The World Bank describes poverty “in terms of income and consumption levels”(Mubangizi 2008:175; Alcock 2006:64). One cannot afford to buy food and clothing. Children go to school without proper breakfast, which will make it difficult for a child to concentrate in class. I remember, going to school without breakfast and during the break I used to drink only water. “A logical starting point for any analysis of poverty is that essentially it is a lack of resources” (Christian 1999:19).



Poverty can also be divided into two categories: extreme poverty this is where the income falls below the threshold and less extreme or moderate is where the income falls between the extreme or moderate poverty and the upper poverty threshold. People in extreme poverty are always hungry and the people in less extreme poverty can only afford an unbalanced diet (Saha 200:268).

From my own experience, I have learned that there is nothing more stressful than as a father you more than fail to provide for your own children. Every time they needed something, as a father to have to say I do not have the money. On their birthdays, you cannot buy them a present or to take them out to lunch or dinner. You feel like crying, it is so stressing.

One of my co-researchers put it this way:

*“Failing to provide for my family as a parent causes stress and sometimes you feel pains on your body” (Mr. T.)*

According to the Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary seventh edition poor means “having a small amount of something”. Poverty means a “state of being poor”. Poverty is a condition in which people find themselves. Most of the time poverty is beyond your own choice.

Kane & Kirby 2003:44 put it this way about poverty, absolute poverty is a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. The poorest people have been deprived of their life necessities.

Again, poverty is a complex amalgam of physical and spiritual pain, which robs the person and the community of dignity and meaning as much as the body of nourishment, shelter and beauty” (William, 1998:3; Hall 1982:92).

Also, poverty causes a spiritual pain. One does not accept himself/her. Poverty crushes who we are in our inner being. That is why we want to explore the relationship between identity formation and poverty.

The description of poverty goes beyond the income and consumption level that is being described in the following quote, “Poverty is about exclusion and power, about relationships and loss of self-respect, it is about lack of choice and limitation of freedom” (Forrester & Skene 1988: ix). Poor people are marginalized; it means that they cannot live in dominion life. By dominion life, I mean a fulfilled life and where one has the power of choice.

They have been excluded by those who have power. They are not able to make the choices that they have been given the power to choose by God. “Poverty as a lack of freedom to grow” (Jayakaran 1996:14). People who live in a poverty stricken community have no freedom to choose the life they wish to live, instead the rich make all the choices for the poor.

People who live in poverty have no power to choose the life they wish to live. So, poverty is about power relation, Paulo Freire (in Burkey 1993:30) said:

One must go beyond criteria based on indices of per capita income as well as those which concentrate on the study of gross income. The

basic elementary criterion is whether or not the society is 'being for itself', that is, 'its political, economic and cultural decision-making power is located within'

Because of the more recent description of poverty the World Bank has expanded its definition of poverty to include the language of voiceless, powerlessness, risks and vulnerability (Mubangisi 2008:175).

Also, human poverty can be described as a lack of opportunities and capabilities ( Saha 2008:269). The doors of changing their lives are closed. Even though, they wish to do something about their lives, they found themselves chained.

### **2.2.1. Poor people's definitions of poverty**

People who are living in poverty feel that they are not consulted when major decisions are made about them. (Christian 1999:3).

The authorities have sold the land; they have lived and farmed on all their lives. There was no consultation with them before the land was sold they were never considered. "the landless do not have a say in the sale of their land, even though it is their work at stake" (Christian 1999:3). This agricultural land belonged to the government. The poor people were using the land for farming on it. It was like owning the land. Every decision that would have been made, they should have been consulted, But the land was sold without them been consulted.

Being poor means that one has no power because we can see the land been taken by those who are in power without talking to the poor. “They are gradually being alienated from the land they belonged to. Today, their agricultural tools lies silent in the dark corners of their houses, reminding them that they have become tools in the hands of the urban elite” (Christian 1999:3).

Poor people have a perception that those who come to assist them, treat them as people who are lazy people and ultimately choose to leave things as they are ( Meadows 2003:50). Again deprived people accuse those who say that they are there to help them, that they say that come with a attitude that poor people are not capable off bringing about change themselves (Meadows 2003:50).

Impoverished people feel that their voice must be heard by the governments and development agencies. Governments sometime only do things to get votes and agencies only do things to please donors (Meadows 2003:51).

The poor say ‘listen to us’-say the poor. ‘Please slow down’ (Meadows 1999:49).

My co-researchers says:

*“Poverty is a choice”* (Mr.TN).

Meaning that the power to change is inside you. Let us stop blame-shifting. Let us stop blaming apartheid. He continues by saying, there are doctors, lawyers, and politicians who have lived during the apartheid era, and they managed to receive education.

### **2.2.2. Definition of poverty by non poor**

Non poor people called the poor by many names which labels or marginalize people in different ways. Non poor people name the poor as follows; uneducated, dirty, superstitious, homeless, destitute, indigenous, working poor, and so on (Myers 1999:58).

These labels encourage those who have money to decide what poor people need. I remember, in South Africa before the transition to a democracy Blacks in the country had no names. They were given the names that were suitable for their bosses. Literatures continue describing Blacks as follows:

As indigenous people, Blacks are behind in their thinking and they cannot plan properly.

As uneducated people, means that Blacks cannot work with metatheories because the undeveloped mind cannot think properly.

Most of the time, when poverty is under discussion, it is discussed as a phenomenon and no real attention is given to those who live in poverty (Muller 2009:20). There is no value given to those people who are poor.

The narrative approach is very much important in this regard because it chooses to listen to the stories of the same people who live in poverty. The narrative approach does not only listen to stories but it pays attention to the development of these stories. The development of the story can possibly bring alternative narratives (Muller 2009:20).

The narrative approach, if followed by the policymakers, would mean that they would include the poor in their decision making on how poverty can be eradicated. The narrative approach respects those people who are affected in the process of the research (Muller 2009:21).

Poverty has a dehumanising effect on people. As I listened to the narratives of poor people, one can hear that poverty removes the sense of being important. Also, poverty has no power to dehumanise if we move from phenomenon to the narratives of the poor (Muller 2009:22)

Whatever the negative effect poverty has on people, it can not take away the dignity of the poor person. The poor person is still a human being capable of reciprocating in relationships (Muller 2009:22). In this regard I would like to share my story, as a researcher because I grew up in poverty. The people who have been helping me are the poor themselves. I think the saying that says “*Motho ke motho ka batho*” meaning that a person is a person because of other people. I have seen that in my life.

The poor people not the rich bought me shoes, trousers, etc. I have learned that the poor people have the ability to assist, e.g. when my car stuck on the road the people who assisted me were the poor. According to my understanding poverty gives someone a sense of being a person.

The voices of the of the poor people have been silenced in Sub-Saharan African countries where poverty is analysed from beginning to end by civil servants whom are not affected by poverty, so the poor people fail to contribute to the debate on poverty(Saha 2008:269). Governments in Sub-Saharan

African countries are excluding or marginalizing the voices of the people who have been affected by poverty when making policies.

Understanding poverty will help the faith based organizations to respond positively when helping people to fight poverty. I believe co-operation between the church and the community will improve the standard of living of poor people.

The narrative approach in this regard can possibly make the voices of the poor heard. Poverty as a discourse is more than just the of lack money. In this research process the voices of poor people are very important.

### **2.2.3. Poverty as a discourse**

There are some poverty discourses that were drawn from the definition of poverty. They are as follows:

- Poverty as exclusion. People who are poor have been excluded from the decision-making processes, excluded from political involvement, and excluded from economical participation.
- Poverty as voicelessness. People who live in poverty they do not have a say in policy-making.
- Lack of opportunities and capabilities. They do not have opportunities to use their capabilities as human beings.
- Limitation of freedom. They cannot exercise their freedom to improve themselves.

- Poverty as an unhealthy relationship. Poor people have a bad relationship with one another, with those who are in power, and with God.

My co-researcher said:

*“I did not have a proper relationship with my father. There was a time when I had no one to listen to”* (Mr. TN).

### **2.3. Global poverty**

Alcock (2006:48) describes poverty as a global issue. Most of the time poverty has been discussed at national level, while poverty in itself is an international issue. There are a lot of inequalities in the world at large. In order to win the battle against poverty, the battle must be also global.

Smith (2005:1) has stated that “global poverty is immense”. He continues saying that about 2.25 billion people subsist on less than a dollar per day, and 2.8 billion-nearly half the population of the world live on less than two dollar per day. Half of the population of the world lives in poverty.

This is amazing statistics in a world where technology reigns. It is possible to move your money from one stock exchange to another in a second. We see other parts of the world where children are dying because of the lack of food. Some of them die because of preventable diseases (Simmons 1995:14). What an unfair world we are living in.

Simmons 1995:14 continued by saying in reality, the rich are becoming richer, while huge numbers of the poor become



poorer. One –fifth of the world’s population are living in the poorest fifty countries and now receive between them less than 2 per cent of the total global income.

#### **2.4. Poverty trap or structural poverty**

Structural poverty emphasises the social circumstances and social forces. Forces such as economic growth, labour market opportunities, educational provision, social security systems and political force (Alcock 2006:35). Most of the time, it is hard for an individual to fight these forces. They need policy action. It means the government must come up with systems that could facilitate the eradication of poverty.

Smith (2005:12-17) is outlining the 16 poverty traps or structural poverty as follows:

- Family child labour trap. If parents cannot be productive due to unhealthy and being unskilled, they will send their children to work so that they can provide for the family.
- Illiteracy trap. Here parents fail to send their children to school because of lack of money for the transport.
- Working capital traps. Lack of credit also plays a role in other poverty traps.
- Uninsurable-risk traps. Most of the poor farmers cannot afford the weather insurance. If you live in poverty, future preparation is not very important but I would like to see a solution now. The issue of having insurance for the future is not important now.

- Debt bondage traps. While credit is needed, the wrong kind of debt from scrupulous money-lenders can also be a trap. I am seeing it now, most of our professional people are in poverty because of uncontrollable debts.
- Information traps. Lack of access to information keeps the poor in poverty, and conditions of poverty prevent the poor from getting information needed to escape from poverty.
- Under nutrition and illness traps. If an under nourished person is too weak to work productively, her resulting wage is too small to pay for sufficient food, so they continue to work at a low productivity rate for low wages.
- Law-skill traps. Take for instance that there is no employer in the region who is seeking skilled workers for, as an example, basic manufacturing jobs, then there is no visible incentive for individuals to invest in attaining these skills.
- High fertility traps. If everyone around you is having many children, and there are few decent jobs to go around, then you must have many children to work for you.
- Subsistence traps. The alternative is to produce for distance markets.
- Farm erosion traps. The poor are so desperate for food that they have to overuse their land even though they know the results will reduce soil fertility and productivity the next year.

- Common property mismanagement traps. Lakes are overfished, forests are not managed sustainably, and land is overgrazed. Part of the problem is that the community management system has broken down.
- Collective action traps. Most of the time the community of the poor could improve their circumstances by working together on a project, This needs a leader who will organize, most of the time this is not possible because that require time and resources. Also, because the payoff for collective action goes to the group not to the individual leader, so that makes it very difficult for the individual to take the initial steps.
- Criminality traps. Youths without access to useful education and who see little future in legitimate work are drawn to gang membership and other cultures of criminality.
- Mental health traps. Depression and anxiety are pervasive amongst the poor in developing countries.
- Powerlessness traps. The poor will remain in poverty, not because on their own wish, but due to the wish of those who benefit from their poverty.

Structural poverty removes the cause of poverty from the poor people to the structures created by the government and institutions that make it impossible for the poor to change their poverty situation. There are no opportunities created for the poor people (Kane & Kirby 2003:110).

In the coming section, I would love to speak about Africa as this is the continent where I live and how poverty affects the people of this continent.

## **2.5. Africa**

Africa though very rich in natural resources, but is the poorest continent in the world. The conditions of poverty are desperate in Africa. Most of the regions are living in extreme poverty and it has been estimated by the World Bank to have increased from 217 million in 1987 to 291 million in 1998. The World Bank is continuing by saying that in 2001, some 48 percent of the population was so absolutely poor, they were living on less than 1 dollar per day (Smith 2005:1).

The major cause of poverty in Africa was colonization by the rich nations of the world. Africa has been robbed by the process of colonization. “Colonialism was totalitarian since it controlled both the private and public spheres” (Wa Muiiu, Mueni 2008:86). Africans lost their freedom as human beings. Their dignity was taken from them by Europe.

Europe had less interest in the people of Africa; they wanted to use Africa to enrich Europe. They had never industrialized Africa, except for South Africa where a minority of whites were still in charge (Wa Muiiu Mueni 2008:86). This meant that all the raw materials were exported to Europe to be refined. And that process denied Africa the opportunity to be developed and made Africa unable to use its resources to empower Africans so that Africans can have the power to determine their future.

Because of the lack of industrialisation Africa has been unable to use its raw materials to provide for the people of this continent. If Africa had the skills to process its own resources, African power would enable her to influence other nations of the world.

Even the process of independence for the majority of the countries in Africa was controlled by Europeans, to the point of drafting constitutions that were in favour of the colonial power of that nation. The leaders were chosen by Europe in order that they could continue to control Africa. “These leaders totally ignored indigenous institutions(e.g mode of economy, family, leadership) which could have been modified, to suite present conditions and incorporated into modern state institutions”(Wa Muiu Mueni 2008:89). Most of the leaders who were chosen were not capable of leading, but because they were given this power by the European power. I think colonialism has left a leadership vacuum within Africa.

Even the South African ruling elite which took over government in 1994 has failed to transform these institutions.

Other factors to be considered are that it might be a lack of leadership skills, corruptions and lack of real democracy. All of these factors are leading back to the colonization of Africa.

## **2.6. South Africa**

South Arica as part of Africa is also affected by colonization. I would like to look more into South Africa because my research is based in Nellmapius, South Africa

### **2.6.1. Apartheid**

The apartheid policies which were developed and implemented by the national party who came to power in 1948, caused deprivation and poverty for all black people in South Africa. The Group Areas act which was passed in 1950 by the parliament meant that black people were only allowed to live in deprived areas of the country. This was modified and strengthened by group areas act (77 of 1957), the Group Areas Amendment act (1957), and the Group Areas Amendment Act (1961). These act caused poverty in the lives of black people because they were forced to live where there was no industry or jobs and these areas were far from the cities where most industries and available jobs were (Pieterse, 2001:46-48).

The Population Registration Act (30 of 1950) compelled everyone in South Africa to be classified according to their race or colour. All black people were discriminated against.

In 1953 the Bantu Education Act was passed. Before the Act, churches were offering the best education for all races and population of the country. Because of this Act churches were no longer able to maintain their schools financially and so the government took over these schools from the churches. Black people were offered inferior education if they were able to pay for it. The churches objected to this act which provided an education so inferior that it served merely to train a black working class (Lombard 1981:129; Seekings & Natrass 2005:133).

Presently in South Africa black people are still lacking behind in education and vocational training because of this

act. There are still poor facilities, inadequate schools and poorly trained teachers in previously Black only schools and this is a result of that act.

The Mines and industries Act was passed by parliament in 1911. This Act empowered the governor general to proclaim regulations on issues, withdrawal and suspension of certificates of competence for certain kinds of work on mines (Pieterse 2001:47). In 1926 the 1911 act was amended, giving powers to the governor general to reserve certain jobs for a particular racial group. All skilled and managerial positions were reserved for whites only.

The native Construction Workers Act (27 of 1951) and was amended by Act 38 of 1953 and Act 60 of 1955, stopped the employment of blacks in skilled jobs in the building industry in areas outside of a Bantu area.

The Black Labour Regulation Act (48 of 1953) was passed (Seekings and Nattrass 2005:138), to prohibit black people from establishing a trade union. Black people could not organize any protest against unfair labour practices. Whites' employers were able to oppress the workers as they wished.

South Africa has been rated as an upper middle class country in the world, but the wealth is unequally distributed (May 1998:1). In South Africa the wealth is enjoyed by a few people while the majority of the population still lives in poverty. The country of South Africa is known as the country of two worlds. There is the world of the rich and the world of the poor. "We are living in the midst of paradoxes" (Dickson 1983:3).

South Africa has the largest economy in Africa with 28% of Gross National Product (Roux 1999:146). This means that the economy of South Africa is leading Africa. One of South African musical group by the name of ‘*Sitimela*’ said in one of their songs “why suffering in the land of plenty?”

### **2.6.2. Legacy of apartheid**

There are many things that we can point out which are as a result of apartheid policies, such as the inequalities in residential places, education and poverty in South Africa.

South Africa is now 15yrs into its new democracy, but still people are suffering from inequalities. “Despite the transition from apartheid to democracy, South Africa continues to be a relentlessly unequal society” (Wale and Foster 2007:45). Black and white are not equal in life. Whites are still favoured by the past, and blacks need to work hard to close that gap.

Since 1994 when the first democratic elections took place politically Africans are in power, but the economy is still in the hands of whites.

Even though the group areas act has been abolished still the majority of black people live in shacks. They cannot build the houses they need. People are living in conditions that are not conducive.

Many black people live in squatter camps around the big cities. And there are no facilities such as running water, sanitation and electricity in most of those places. Housing is inadequate and there is overcrowding. Health is very poor if



not zero. Children have no developed parks where they can safely play with their friends.

Families in black communities are disintegrating and we see a rise in the growth of single-parent families. Many of the children grow without knowledge of their fathers, which often causes psychological problems in the life of the individual.

Most of the historical black schools are not producing good results because of their poor facilities and overcrowding and the teachers are not well skilled. All this has been the legacy from the apartheid era. It can be put this way, “social engineering of apartheid which has left a legacy of poverty and lack of education” (Mamphela 2008:158)

It was the aim of the apartheid regime to advance white people in the country at the expense of their black people. As a result white people were more privileged than their black counterparts.

#### **1.6.2.1. Exclusion of the poor from the riches of the land**

The majority of the population of South Africa was excluded from the main stream of the economy. Most of the acts that were passed by the national party were to oppress the majority South Africans.

In this section, I would like to look into the history of inequality among black and white in South Africa. In this research I am focusing on the poor as black. I am aware that there might be some poor whites. Since inequality is a legacy of apartheid, it is a very important subject to look into it

### 2.6.3. The history of inequality in South Africa

During the periods of colonialism and apartheid, dominant white people continued mobilizing their political, economic, military and ideological hegemony to systematically advantage white South Africans, while at the same time creating a highly exploitable black workforce (Wale & Foster 2007:46). This discourse was created to keep white above and Black down in this country and the continent. We can see today Black that the majority of Black people are still unskilled workers.

Inequality in South Africa started on 1652 when Europeans arrived in the Cape. They came and took over the land through agriculture, and property rights, which became at odds with the existing customs of the indigenous people, were imposed on the indigenous people (Kirsten et al 2006:46). South Africans were turned into cheap labour while the white people were becoming owners of all the resources.

There is an African proverb that says in Pedi, “*Sehlare sa Mosotho ke lekgowa*”. This meaning that a black man is incapable of doing anything good without a white person. When you go into government offices, if, one does not see a white person, then people thought that they cannot receive a good service delivery.

In South Africa, race will determine your future, for instance, if you are a white person, there were lots of opportunities for you. You are a privileged person because of the colour of your skin in this country. Job opportunities were reserved for only white people. Doors of better education were opened for the privileged white of this country.

To keep white as the strong and better race, the government developed a strategy of helping poor whites. “To solve the poor white problem, the South African government established a project of discriminatory job protection, welfare, and public education to re-habilitate poor whites” (Kim and Foster 2007:47). Inequality, developed by the white minority of this country is still continuing today.

The creation of white people as superior is continuing; throughout South Africa’s history, an ideology of white superiority has reigned. Within this ideology, everything European is considered as good and valued, while at the same time de-valuing everything African( Kim and Foster 2007:48). Black South Africans have been conditioned to believe as people they must depend on their white counterparts. To be successful, blacks must live to adhere to system that has been placed by a white minority.

Research on this area says, “Black university students report that it is often easier to get things done when you comply with the dominant norms and language of white culture” (Walker 2005). In the same thought, this is the reason African languages are treated as inferior by blacks themselves. To be educated is to speak the European language

#### **2.6.4. Meta-theoretical perspective**

My research is based in the paradigm of post-modernism, postfoundationalism, social constructionism, and a narrative approach. In this paradigm language plays an important role. We need to give meaning through the use of language. White wealthy South Africans need to give meaning to poverty and

development. In this research, I and my co-researchers want to look at ideological discourses, defined as systems of meaning that dominant groups attempt to fix as 'truth' that function to constitute and maintain their dominance (Kim and Foster 2007:49).

According to Kim and Foster 2007:49, there are three ideological strategies that were made in order to continue white dominance in South Africa:

**Legitimizing** is a strategy of presenting relations of dominance as legitimate. This strategy can be understood as a form of justification for unequal power distribution. By appealing to traditionally established, rational or charismatic grounds, dominant groups use this strategy to argue that their dominance is justified. For example, the unequal relations of colonialism were justified by appealing on the grounds that it was in the native's interests to be dominated and civilized by a superior nation. Legitimizing functions to justify relations of domination by presenting them as the way things ought to be.

**Dissimulation** is a strategy of concealing or denying relations of domination and presenting them as something other than they are. If relations of domination are hidden, they cannot be challenged. Therefore, by rendering unequal power relations invisible, this strategy functions to exclude the possibility that relations may be challenged.

**Reification** is a strategy of denying history and presenting the state of affairs as if it was permanent,

natural and existed outside of time. This strategy functions to ideologically separate the current state of affairs from the history that informs them. By removing situations from its historical context, this strategy often works hand in hand with dissimulation to gloss over the historical power dynamics that led to a current situation of inequality. In the case of South Africa, this strategy functions to remove post-apartheid South Africa from the legacy of apartheid, and enable white South Africans to argue against structural transformation.

In the following section, I would like to discuss colour in relation to poverty and how this makes people think about themselves. Whiteness how now it is perceived in South Africa.

#### **2.6.5. Whiteness**

In South Africa as in the rest of the world color speaks. “I know what it signifies when race and color are used to determine who is human and who is sub-human” (Mbeki 1998:6). Being black or white gives a certain identity in South Africa and even in the rest of the world.

To be a black someone is inferior, uneducated, uncivilized and unthinking, someone who needs to be empowered by a white counterpart; “Europe was able to construct the rest (everyone who was not European) as an inferior ‘other’ in relation to the West” (Kim and Foster 2007:50) Whiteness consists of a particular cultural content, and a particular way of viewing the world, understanding history and thinking about self (Kim and Foster 2007:50).

Kim and Foster 2007:50 put it this way

**The essentialist discourse** stems back to the colonial period where races were constructed as essential, biological categories. During this period of colonial expansion, various forms of traveller' tales, racial taxonomies and 'race science' functioned to constitute the racist discourse of the legitimized many institutional forms of racist domination including slavery, colonialism, segregation and apartheid.

**Colour/power** evasive discourse is more common than the overtly racist essentialist discourse. This discourse draws on liberal individualist discourse to argue that we should not see colour, and instead treat everyone as colour-less individuals. Within this discourse, differences that are implicated in power are evaded with euphemism in order to de-emphasize relations of domination. Through this discourse the unequal power structures are played down and denied, in order for the same treatment regardless of race.

Whites are mobilizing colour-blind individualism and non-racial to argue that affirmative action was unfair to whites (Kim and Foster 2007:51). They want to legitimize their privileges. Whites are aware that the economy is still in the hands of whites people.

In South Africa, (Mbeki 1996:7) Stated that the doors must be opened for those who were disadvantaged to assume their place in society as equals with their fellow human beings without regard to colour, race, and gender, age or geographical dispersal.

In the following section, I focus on the African mind and how it has been perceived by Africans themselves and the world.

## **2.7. African mind**

African people (black) were known as people who do not possess systems of thought; it means they could not think like human beings. They were excluded from the category of men (Cloete 2007:393).

The idea of reason that Hegel emphasizes was something that governs the world. The world history is a rational process. In the western world they based more on mental reason this is viewed as a distinctively human characteristic, and it separates human beings from other forms of life (Cloete 2007:393).

African people were defined as mystic, meaning they were devoid of rational thinking, and without reasoning. The mind of an African was intellectually backward and inferior to the mind of a white man or European man (Cloete 2007:395)

On prelogicality and mysticality, Kebede (2004:2-4), put it this way:

The first aspect refers to the thought, that is, to the permeation of physical with mystic powers incarnating the fear, hope, and religious awe of the primitive. Second aspect concerns connection between ideas, which because they implicate occult forces, operate independently of logical laws. The social and technological retardation of native peoples is wholly due to this inability to

think physically and logically. Some such turn of mind is abundantly opposed to scientific thinking and technological orientation; it is only fit to wallow in magic, thereby perpetuating the subordination of natives to mysterious forces.

In these thoughts Africans were described as otherness from European. They were created to perpetuate a philosophical racism. Whites had created themselves as the Messiahs of African people.

### **2.7.1. Reflection on prelogicality and mysticity**

These kinds of thoughts would mean that the African is in poverty because their minds are not developed and are more mystic. Africans (blacks) cannot reason or they cannot use their minds.

They cannot work with metatheory and they are unable to work physically and logically.

They are saying that all of these reasons cause Africa to be backward or to be in poverty. Personally, I think, it was the intention of Europeans or white people to control Africans. The systems that were put in place caused Africans to be acting and living the way they were. Europeans were thinking for Africans, they thought that they had all the answers for Africans.

On philosophical racism (Levy-Bruhl, 1995:46), puts it this way:



Primitive perception is fundamentally mystic on account of the mystic nature of the collective representations which form an integral part of every perception. Ours has ceased to be so, at any rate with regard to most of the objects which surround us. Nothing appears alike to them and to us. For people like ourselves, speaking the language familiar to us, there is insurmountable difficulty in entering into their way of thinking. The longer we live among them, the more we approximate to their mental attitude, the more do we realize how impossible it is to yield to it entirely.

South Africa as a part of Africa is also affected by colonization. I would like to look more closely at South Africa because my research is based on Nellmapius, South Africa.

## **2.8. Measurement of poverty**

In this section, I would like to look into poverty measurement, in order to understand it and to know how to defeat poverty.

Poverty cannot be measured in one way, but it can be measured in many ways. It is not so straight forward to understand poverty. In this research, I would like to follow four approaches to poverty measurement by Ruggier-laderchi et al. 2003:28

The four approaches are the following:

- The monetary approach,

- The capacity approach
- The social exclusion, and
- The participatory approach

The monetary approach is what is used to determine whether people are poor or not. Even the poverty line or standard has been set on monetary income of a person. In South Africa Most people live at or below poverty line because they receive less money.

The capability approach stresses that people must be capacitated in order to function in their societies. If, people have been capacitated they are able to make the right choices and have the freedom to choose the life they would like to live.

The social exclusion approach deals with groups, not the individual. People who live in rural areas they might be excluded from many from some of resources that are only found in towns or urban areas. Other groups in communities such as women, disabled people, and the minority group of the world long as one lives in one of this group you could be excluded from many opportunities.

The participatory approach includes the people who live within poverty in definition of what is poverty. I believe, this is good if people can define poverty for themselves for then they can take the necessary steps to fight against their poverty.

## **2.9. Describing poverty from a biblical perspective**

Hebrew has many words that describe poverty. The Hebrew word *haser* means the following in English; to lack, to have nothing, to go down, recede, run dry, in want, to have too little and depriving ( The strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance 1999). All of these words are mostly referring to material needs.

Coming to Greek the word *ptochos* in English, it means the lack of resources, someone who has been oppressed, despised, miserable people who do not have basic needs and do not have a voice in the government of the day (The strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance 1999).

### **2.9.1. God cares for the poor**

In Deut. 24:19, Moses says, “when you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it, it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands”. God was commanding his people to help the poor which I believe is also encouraging us to take care of the less fortunate in our society.

Psalms 40:17, says “But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me, you are my helper and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God”. The psalmist was aware of his poverty and that nobody will be taking care of him. He was aware that God thinks about him.

In Psalm 72:12, the psalmist says “For he will deliver the needy, when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper”. The poor always have God who is ready for them

### **2.9.2 Early church**

Acts 2:44, 45 Luke says “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them all, as everyone had need”. They had shared amongst themselves.

In Romans 15:26 Paul put it this way,” For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem”. The church in Jerusalem became so poor. Other churches were making a contribution to assist their fellow brothers in Jerusalem.

In Gal. 2:10, Paul continues standing for the saints, “They desired only that we should remember the poor, the thing which I also was eager to do”.

### **2.9.3. Causes of poverty-biblical perspective**

Reading all the scriptures quoted above, one can try to trace the causes of poverty in the bible: they as follows;

- Oppression
  - Poverty is lack of power; it could be political, cultural and economic. Like the strangers, widows, and fatherless, these people are without power.

- Disobeying the Word of God.
  - When Adam chose to disobey God, there was a separation between God and man. To be blessed people need to obey God (Deut. 28:1).
  
- Laziness
  - Prov. 19:24, says “a lazy man buries his hand in the bowl, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth”
  - Ecc. 10:2, the preacher says “because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks”.
  
- **Natural disasters**
  - Joel 1:4, “What the chewing locusts left, the swarming locust has eaten; what swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten”. Natural disasters cause people to experience poverty, sometimes in the short term or long term. It is something that happen beyond human control.

#### **2.9.4. Spiritual poverty**

Mtt. 5:3 says “blessed are the poor in spirit...”.The Wycliffe Bible commentary put in this way “Those who have recognized their poverty in spiritual things and have allowed Christ to meet their needs”.

I think this verse means those who feel dissatisfaction about their spiritual condition and see that they cannot make it by themselves. He/she put themselves in God's power to provide for his/her spiritual poverty. I believe that this kind of poverty is essential because it makes us to depend on God who made us. We are drawn near to God daily.

### **2.9.5. Psychological perspective**

Poverty affects the whole being, most of the time we concentrate on our economical burden, but it is also affecting human beings psychologically. I think it is more serious in our psychology than with our economic situation. It is put this way "Poverty carries with it not only economic burdens but also psychological difficulties" (Mickelson & Williams 2008: 94).

Often society stigmatizes those people who live in poverty. The poor people would feel marginalized and useless human beings. Perceived stigma causes people to have a low self-esteem. Perceived stigma is combination of internalized and experienced stigma (Mickelson and Williams 2008:908). All of these increase the level of depression.

Living in poverty entails multiple stresses that have adverse effects on development from infancy through to adolescence (Phillips and Pitman 2003:117). This suggests that people who have grown up in poverty may have psychological problems. Poverty could have affected them greatly in one way or another.

## 2.10. Globalisation

Globalization means when cultures, businesses and people are connected to each other. It has been made easy by technology, i.e. internet, television, and etc.

People are moving from one continent to another and from one country to another. A problem in one country could affect the whole world for instance at the time of writing this research we are experiencing swine flu. This flu is spreading throughout the world because people are travelling a lot.

Developing countries are losing the skills and expertise that is needed to build the economy of their countries, because people with the skills and expertise go to the developed world to find jobs that are well paid ( Akoojee, & McGrath, 2004:39). This process has been known as the brain drain.

The brain drain has disturbed the process of economical development in developing countries. The skills and the knowledge that should be helping economical development are been recruited out of Africa. People do not worry anymore about their countries they are concerned about their family survival.

Even, South Africa's economical development has depended to a significant degree on the importation of skilled white labour ( Akoojee & McGrath 2004: 41). Apartheid made sure that people with marketable skills are white people.

## 2.1. Impact of poverty

Poverty is impacting people in many ways; here are some of the things that has impacted according (Pieterse 2001:30, 31):

- Alienation from the community. The poor become alienated from the rest of the community. The aged live in tiny rooms, often with no contact with their children and relatives. Elderly people who are not cared for by younger relatives are considered 'poor'. Not, only elderly people, but all who live in poverty experience alienation from the community. People without money nobody listens to them.
- Lack of food. When people have little food to feed their families or themselves they live in poverty. In my family, we used to eat pap alone, in the morning, noon and evening. We ate pap before going to school and we would eat pap again after school. Meat was a luxury, it would only be eaten at Christmas time and when someone who works in one of the big towns has come home to visit. Actually all foods; bread, cheese, butter peanut butter, etc. were luxuries.
- Lack of clean water basic forms of energy. We used to fetch water from faraway. We made a wood fire; even now my extended family is still living like that.
- Lack of job opportunities. Due to job reservation in South Africa many Africans are out of jobs today. Even though apartheid has gone away structural poverty continues.
- Breakup of families. In the apartheid era, men left women and children at home to go and work in the city. Children grow without seeing their father. Men would take other women in the city and stop supporting their family at home.



- Diseases caused by bad circumstances. Because a poor person cannot afford to eat properly and has no money to go and see the doctor then one can die of an illness that could have been prevented.
- Lack of proper housing has led to the emergence of huge squatter camps around cities and towns.
- Literacy and education. Parents fail to send their children to school because of poverty. Here we see the transmission of poverty to the next generation.
- Helplessness and vulnerability. Hopelessness is one of the sign of being poor. You do not know where next meal will be coming from

Poverty can be named as the major problem in our community; it has given giving birth to all that has been mentioned above. Crime, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, and etc. they are also linked to poverty. It lowers a person's esteem or lack of self-worth. The next section is to focus on poverty and identity, and how poverty affects the human process of growing as people

### **2.11.1. Poverty and identity formation process**

Phillips and Pittman (2003:115) have done intensive research in the relationship between socioeconomic and identity formation. According to them, they have looked into the processes of identity formation. In this project I would like to explore what they have written. These are the issues that they are following:

- Poverty and limitation to opportunity structures.
- Poverty and stress
- Stigma of Poverty

### **2.11.2. Poverty and limitation to opportunity structure**

Other findings on poverty say, “Research shows that poverty is associated with limitations in opportunity structures and life chances” Phillips and Pittman (2003:117). People from poverty stricken communities and people from well off communities will have a different response to life.

Those who have grown up in poverty have fewer opportunities in life which will hinder them in making a long life plan. It will also hinder them in their life exploration. “Therefore, not only do poor adolescents hope for less, they also expect less out of life Phillips and Pittman” (2003:117). They would fail in long term planning because they focus only on their daily needs.

Poverty could affect exploration and commitment. One cannot engage in exploration if one is lacking the opportunity structure. He/she does not see the future being bright or seeing hope in the end of the tunnel. One limitation on opportunity structure makes one not to commit to a long life plan or he/she can commit to a goal that is not of his/her choice.

African American boys showed different patterns compared with their white counterparts in their identity formation. An African American’s view remained largely unchanged

overtime and it remained at foreclosure as Marcia has put it (Thom & Coetzee 2004:185). White counterparts have shown the identity formation characterized by a changing view of the self that became increasingly integrated and stabilised.

Young African Black Americans have shown premature identity formation because they were faced with limited and unattractive jobs opportunities in life (Thom & Coetzee 2004:185). African American grew up in a community where recreational facilities were non existent.

Black South African youth have shown similar results because of discrimination and opportunities due to apartheid policies that were placed on African people. Good jobs were reserved for white people only. Also, there was a lack of role models because of family disintegration caused by apartheid. The fathers were living far from their family (Thom & Coetzee 2004:185). Apartheid laws of forced removals, relocations and migrant labour system were imposed on African families.

Diffusion or foreclosure will be more common among poor people, whereas achievement and moratorium should be less common status among poor adolescence relative to their non poor age mates.

### **2.11.3. Poverty and Stress**

According to the Oxford Advance learner's Dictionary, stress means "pressure or worry caused by a problem on somebody's life". Lack of food, lack of clothing, lack of money to take children to school can cause pressure in a person's

life. , I am writing from experience and how painful it is. “Poor youth experiences more undesirable life events and adverse conditions, and this excessive stress can place demands on them that exceed their coping resources” Phillips and Pittman (2003:127).

Poor people do not only feel helpless, desperate and hungry but also they feel ashamed of themselves (Bruce et al. 1996:70). Poverty is a shame. People who live in poverty will suffer from a lack of self-acceptance. Poverty is a shame because “poor man is hated even by his own neighbour” (Prov. 14:20).

Watkins (2000:13) has stated that the poorest families lack the capacity to cope with stress, and suffer acute difficulties, such as sickness, physical weakness and economic impoverishment. It is true that the poor due to living with so much stress will live a short life.

Children who live in poverty look at other children who are from wealthier families and they wish to be those children. One child had been asked what you would wish to be when you grow up, the child said I wish to be a white person. So, poverty affects the identity of people, by feeling and thinking less about themselves.

Poverty for most people is associated with inferiority, lack of self-worth, depression and frustration. Poverty crushes our humanness, and we remain with a sense of uselessness.

#### **2.11.4. Stigma and Poverty**

Being poor entails marginalization and to be treated as useless or an outcast in the community of the wealthy. No one wishes to associate with those who are less fortunate in life. I have experienced people wishing to become your friend in order to get something from you. If you have nothing to give then you may well find yourself to be marginalized.

Poor people feel humiliated when they are dependant on other people for life necessities. The issue of an inferiority complex grows (Bruce et al. 1996:71). Depending on others for a living diminishes our human freedom. Every human being must have the power of choice and freedom to do what one likes.

Most people in research view the poor as morally deficient and personally responsible for their plight. This kind of thinking, promotes image that people are poor because they are lazy and not considering poverty as a social problem which is the responsibility of the whole of society. ( Alcock, 2006:32)

Most of our teachers are coming from the middle-class as; their view of children from a poverty stricken background would be biased. These teachers perceive low-income pupils less positively and have lower achievement expectations from them than they would have for children from a high-income family.

Alcock 2006:38 speaks about the “cycle of deprivation” most children who are born and have grown up in poverty stricken communities are affected by their situation of poverty. These children when they grow up to adulthood their level of

expectation and their abilities are lowered. They accept the poverty of their parents as their own; as a result many poor people would do nothing to change their situation.

Alcock 2006:29 also stated that people who are poor have been named as a threat to social stability by undermining the work ethic and threatening social order. These poor people have been named as criminals and lazy people. In America poverty has been racialized as something belonging to black people because most poor people are black.

Poverty gives people a lower expectation in life. What they do is to focus on their daily needs. They do not expect to have wealth but to live only for today.

Brantlinger 1991 in (Phillips & Pittman 2003:118) investigated social class distinctions in adolescents' reports of problems and punishment. Low-income youth reported a higher frequency of problems with teachers and peers than their high-income counter-parts, and youth from low-income families reported more penalties than their high-income counterparts. The punishment reported by low-income adolescents at school tended to be more severe, disproportionate to the offenses, and humiliating in nature than the punishment received by high-income adolescents.

#### **2.11.5. How poverty affects identity processes**

In this section, I will look at how the theories of Marcia 1980 Grotevant 1987 and Berszonsky 1987, and (Phillips and Pittman 2003:122) affect identity processes. With regard to Marcia status paradigm, stress, social stigma, and limitations

in opportunity associated with chronic poverty will affect both exploration and commitment.

Therefore, diffusion and foreclosure should be more common among poor adolescents, whereas achievement and moratorium should be a less common status among poor adolescents relative to their non poor peer group.

The stress, stigma, and limitation in opportunities create a context that is not conducive to exploring identity issues. This context can produce a negative identity, where one starts to live badly or live with drugs and crimes.

Phillips and Pittman (2003:120) using the Grotevant 1987 model, it should be expected that for many poor adolescents the orientation to engage in exploration will be suppressed. According to this model, many poor adolescents are expected to settle quickly and prematurely into roles that fail to take advantage of the entire adolescent' potential, roles, perhaps based on realistic appraisals from society.

Phillips & Pittman (2003:120) using Berzonsky 1989 identity styles, it can be hypothesized that stress, derogatory self-relevant information, and limitations in opportunity associated with poverty will result in many poor adolescents adopting either a normative style ( as a result of internalizing negative messages about self and the opportunities available) or a diffuse-avoidant style (as a form of capitulation in response to stress, negative messages about the self, and perceptions that opportunities are indeed limited). Poor adolescents will have had less opportunity to develop an informational style of self-theorizing.

## 2.12. Conclusion

In this chapter I have seen that poverty affects identity formation. People who live in poverty face so many challenges that put pressure on them. As one of my co-researchers put it “*Failing to provide for my family as a parent causes stress and sometimes you feel pains on your body*” (Mr. T)



## CHAPTER 3:

### COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

In order to better ones self and your surrounding community, you need to constantly develop your skills and your talents in order to be a productive member of society. As an African proverb states: “*kodumela moepa thutse, gago lehumo letswago kgaiswi*” – work hard, wealth does not come easy, one needs to be motivated and a hard worker to make a real difference.

It is telling us to take responsibility for our own lives which is in your own two hands. Individual success is dependant on each individual, even though most of the time; people need collective actions to achieve the success they want.

In the bible we read in 2 Thess. 3:10, “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”. A work ethic has been encouraged in the bible. People must be hard workers in order to eat or to live. I have often heard Christians saying work is a curse.

Gen. 2:3, “...He rested from all his work which God Had created and made”. God Himself is a worker. He rested from His work, it means He worked, it means working is not a curse and neither slavery.

Gen. 2:15, “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it”. God commanded man to tend the garden before the fall of man into sin. This shows us work is not a curse neither or slavery.

The community must take a full participation in its own transformation process. If this participation is not taken fully the community will become stagnant as the African proverb says “*Tau dia hloka seboka, di shitwa ke nare e hlotsha*” It means that if people do not work together, they will fail even to achieve minor things. In order for the community to be transformed it needs everyone to take ownership of the process of transformation.

African people have always believed in communal life. They do things together. This can be seen in their proverbs. Here is another proverb “*sedikwa ga se pale*” meaning if people work together they will be successful in their work.

Therefore this chapter will focus on transformation, development and the empowerment of people and their communities enabling them to take responsibility for their own lives and actions.

## **3.2. TRANSFORMATION AS AN ACTION**

### **3.2.1. Defining the concept of transformation**

Transformation, according to the (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2005*) means a complete change, from something into something different. It is a change of a form or structure for instance a country’s transformation from a dictatorship to a democracy.

(The Chambers Dictionary tenth edition 2006) put it this way transformation (n) means to change the shape of, to change especially radically or thoroughly to another form.

Transformation according to the (Reader's Digest Oxford Word finder 1993) is the act or an instance of transforming. Transform as a verb means to make a thorough or dramatic change in the form, outward appearance, character.

Transformation (noun) according to the (Webster Comprehensive Dictionary international Edition 1998) is the act of transforming or the state of being transformed. The verb from transformation is transformed which means to give a different form to, change the character, to alter the nature of.

(The *Strong NIV Exhaustive Concordance* 1998) Greek word: metamorphoo it means changed in form, transfigured, and transformed into another form. The word repent (Greek:metanoeo) comes from the same root meaning change any or all the elements composing one's life: attitude, thoughts, and behaviour concerning the demands of God for living.

In Hebrew the word is *hapak* meaning to be transformed, changed, be turned into. It is in the same line of thought with the Greek meaning. It is all about taking a new form or structure.

I have read all the definitions above, and they all come to one conclusion that transformation is a radical or thorough change of something. This means that we need to breakup the first form and bring about a new form different that completely different from the first form. A community that was

poverty stricken must be transformed into a wealthy and successful community in all aspects i.e. spiritual, physical, emotional and social.

### **3.2.2. Transformation on an individual level**

According to the definitions of transformation, radical, thorough and dramatic change of a form is important. In transforming individuals who have lived in poverty for a long time account must be taken of the fact that their minds have been affected by living in poverty. Therefore a radical change of the form of their minds is critical. According to (Edwards & Sen, 2000:610) processes of change cannot be effective without a deep-rooted personal transformation which could be the catalyst which will start the search for new ways of doing things. Inner changes are very important before the outer change can be realized.

Romans 12:2, says “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”. Changing of the way we think is crucial or important in our lives. When we think right we will act right.

Proverbs 23:7, “For as the man thinks in his heart, so is he”. It is important to allow transformation to take place in our minds. The old way of thinking (poverty mentality) must be transformed so that we begin to think that we were created in God’s image and likeness, that we are important.

Essama-Nssah (2004:513) as I have quoted him in the section where I speak about empowerment, he speaks of

freedom of choice. When the individual has been living in poverty and where they have been robbed of their personal freedom of choices in life, the transformation of their mind will give them the freedom to choose the kind of life they wish to live.

According to (Von Kotze 2007:233) I have mentioned him in the section below, he speaks about “dignified decent life” the transformed mind helps the poor to be able to live a dignified decent life. The power belongs to people whose minds have been transformed.

The transformed mind will begin to make correct choices in regard to healthy living. It may start with proper eating programs leading to healthy eating. The importance of following a balanced diet daily will be realised.

Transformed minds will start physical exercising daily, those who have improved their finances can join places like Active Virgin to keep their bodies in a healthy shape and that will protect them from sicknesses. Such people will start to realize that smoking, drug abuse and irresponsible sexual behaviour are not needed.

Transformed minds will start to live a productive life. They are people who add family to the community at large. They are no longer only consumers, but they are producers. They will get involved in community projects to change their own and the lives of others. These kinds of people, wish the community to be in good shape and to be in place where everyone wishes to live.

### 3.2.3 Social transformation

Continuing with the concept of community transformation, I would like to look into the concept of social transformation. According to the definitions given above, the transformation is a complete change of something, on structure and character. What is social transformation all about?

Groenewald, (2000) (in Erasmus 2005:140) defines social transformation as "...to transform is to change in form or appearance; in condition, nature or character. The social is concerned with human beings in their relations to each other, their living conditions, and living together in organized communities". It simply means a complete change of how people live as human beings in relation to their neighbours and conditions in life.

In my research, this is a core matter. I would like to see how people who live in poverty stricken communities can be transformed into a new structure and their living conditions to be renewed.

Wint and Ngcobo (2000:93) state that transformation in South Africa is all about moving from exclusion into inclusion in the sphere of life, such as economic, political and social and that all people are able to share in all of the opportunities that are in the country. We are all aware that South African people were treated according to their race and that certain races were excluded; now, through transformation those races must be part of South Africa.

The democratic governments proposed a Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP) which was developed to facilitate social transformation. There were three

objectives of the RDP as (Midgley 2001:269) stated in her article. Here are the three focuses of RDP:

- Meeting the basic needs of people.
  - Housing
  - Food
- Human resource development
  - Given high priority to education and skills development.
  - Implementation of affirmative action.
  - Improvement of culture, arts, and youth services, and enhanced sports and recreational activities particularly in poor communities.
- Economy
  - The RDP promised to support industrial development, trade, small business and resource-based such as mining and agriculture.
- Democratisation
  - RDP calls for the creation of an equitable, people-centred, democratic and appropriate welfare system that will create a humane and peaceful society.

Edwards & Sen (2000:606-607) shares their perspective on change that all social systems depended on three bases: set of principles, ethics and values; a set of processes; the subjective states that constitute our inner being, personal

feelings and institution. Effective change depends on integration and working together of the three bases.

### **3.2.4. Transformation as a story of action in the Bible**

Conversion of Paul

Acts 26:1-22

In this narrative, we read about Paul speaking before King Agrippa, after he has been accused of causing the trouble from the Jews. He claimed that he did everything that was right according to the Law of Moses. He stood against those who had believed in Christ Jesus. Many Christians were put in prison and some were put to death and Paul was also casting his vote against them.

12 While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commissioned from the chief priests,

13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.

14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads'.

15 So I said, who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness



both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will reveal to you.

17 I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as from the Gentile, to whom I now send you,

18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

In order to transform the community, we need first to develop the community. Now I will look into the meaning of development and how communities can develop their own context.

### **3.3. DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.3.1 Defining the concept of development**

Development means the gradual growth of something that becomes more advanced. I will look more into these words and to see how we can apply them in our community to bring a new story of hope and progress

Development explained in this way, is “about empowering people to take charge of their destinies” (Essama-Nssah 2004:510). Community development if it can be said to be successful is when people or the community controls their destinies.

It can be put in this way “development is about fighting and overcoming poverty and inequalities especially in the developing countries or third world” (Kotze 1997:1).

Development agencies should not be concerned about themselves, but about the eradication of poverty and inequalities in the communities of the world. Again development can be defined as positive social, economic, and political change (Kotze 1997:1). We do not know what positive change is or when do we say a change is positive or negative? I would say the change is positive if the poor people are in charge of the development process. The poor people or grassroots or marginalized must be part of the social change, economical change and get politicians to account.

Community development is processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those who are in authority such as government to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of the communities (Masumba 2006:89).

The local people must play an important role in this process. Indigenous knowledge is absolutely essential. The development process should be built on what people know already and how they have been doing things in their community. This could be pertaining to their local strategies about living and overcoming the obstacles of life. The social developmental theory was meant to broaden opportunities for people to participate in the economy rather than in making them dependent on state hand outs (Gray 2006:61).

Again, development should not only be in the economic sphere but also should be at institutional, social, cultural, political, and psychological areas of life (Kotze 1996:9). Changing the economy alone without paying attention to the context of the community cannot be successful. Relevant

departments of government must work together with the local people to change the poverty they are living in. Development is “a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations” (Myers 1999:96; Korten 1990:67).

The key words of these authors are capacities of both personal and institutional which must be improved to change the lives of the poor. Poor people must play a key role in the process of liberating their own lives. Institutions must be poor people- centred rather than focusing on the donors

Any community project must be sustainable beyond the presence of the development agencies. It means that the poor people must run this process without outsiders.

Government should act justly towards the poor. Most of the time government institutions act in favour of the rich or the powerful. The poor must be at the focus of any development.

The aspirations of the poor must be taken into consideration. Any improvement should be in tune with their aspirations. They should be the one who decide what improvements should be made.

Friedman (1992:33) speaks about alternative development as a process that seeks the empowerment of households and their individual members through their involvement socially, and politically. Empowerment here must be in the form of helping the locals to devise their own decision-making process and locals to self-reliance, participation. This would mean that empowering is to enable to win their lives

back. Poor people must be able to hold politicians accountable in fulfilling every promise they have made.

Friedman (1992:13) says again on alternative development:

The objective of an alternative development programme is to humanize the system that has shut them [the poor] out, and to accomplish this through forms of everyday resistance and political struggle that insist on the rights of the excluded population as human beings as citizens, and as people intent on releasing their loving and creative powers from within. Its central objective is their inclusion in a restructured system that does not make them redundant

Development should empower the excluded population, so that they can begin to release the love and creative powers within them. This community of the excluded must start to walk in their identity and to be productive as human beings created by God in His image and likeness.

According to Chambers (1997:9) there is a significant shifting that is occurring in development processes; shifting is from “the things and infrastructure to people and capacities”. Empowerment of people is the cornerstone of development. The technical aspect must follow people who are capacitated. If, we transfer things such as money and technology without empowering the people themselves it would be a waste of money and resources.

The spiritual dimension has been prominent in development as an important element; “questions relating to the uses of power, values, love, brotherhood, peace and the ability of people to live in harmony with one another are fundamental

to religion and to the role of the church in society” (Korten 1990:168).

### **3.3.2. Economic development**

The economy of the community is amongst other developments that are so crucial for us to concentrate on in order to transform our communities.

Economic development must start with focusing on building people capacities as Chambers put it in section 3.3.1 above. The need for economic development must be researched by the community itself not by development agencies who are coming into the community. Development agencies must work in partnership with the community.

Deepa Narayan (2002:212) put it this way, “when the community controlled the type of projects they have chosen and implemented, they tended to select projects that better match community needs and interests”.

The poor people should identify what kind of economic project they can engage in to bring improvement to the economy of their lives. After the project has been identified they should do the planning for the project. Also, the poor people must be able to implement the project that they have been planning. They should not only, implement the program, but also should evaluate the project, to see if the project is doing well. It means the power is in the hands of the people.

The poor community must survey and identify the projects that would be viable in their communities. Receiving money

without building human capacity it would be a waste of resources because it could not be used properly

The government must encourage the poor people as they change their economic situation. It must help people by building structures for business. They should help with financial assistance where necessary.

### **3.3.3. Post-development theory**

The development discourse functions to construct the third world in which legitimizes development intervention (Kim and Foster 2007:52). This discourse functions as a tool for creating and managing the third world. The same people who want to bring development are the people who have colonized the third world. It is promoting or legitimizing relations of domination. People on the ground will feel that they cannot do it without their former bosses. “Various post-development theorists argue that development intervention functions as a continuation of Western Colonial imperialism” (Kim and Foster 2007:52).

### **3.3.4. What is post-development?**

Escobar (1995:215) lists the hallmarks of post-development as follows:

- An interest not in development alternatives but in alternatives to development does rejection of the entire paradigm.
- An interested in local culture and knowledge.

- A critical stance towards established scientific discourses.
- The defense and promotion of localized, pluralistic and grassroots movements.

This school of thought bluntly rejects development as a Eurocentric discourse, imperialist project and meaningless concept (Ziai 2004:1045).

Also, post-development claim that the knowledge deployed in development is a product of the epistemic perspectives of the West (Jakimor 2008:315).

Post-development promotes that knowledge should be localized and contextualized. The knowledge should not just be applied to the community but it should be generated in the community (Jakimor 2008:316). As I work from postfoundationalist epistemology, that would sound good. But will not pursue an in-depth of post-development may be later one can pursue research on it

### **3.4. DEVELOPING AND EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY**

I think the point that has been mentioned in the above 3.3 by Pieterse that it is important and powerful for empowering the community. As, we have seen above, the government has a lot of work to complete in this area and is still doing so today.

Pieterse, (2001:67) parliament passed the National Empowerment Fund Act, its aim was to restructure various state assets so that disadvantaged communities can benefit

by investing in the shares. The money would help poverty stricken communities to start small businesses.

### **3.4.1. Defining the concept of empowerment**

I think it is appropriate to start with a definition of the word empowerment. The (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2005) put it this way, empower means to “give someone authority to do something”, to give someone more control over their own life or the situation they are in. Someone could be a group or the whole community. E.g. the movement actively empowered women and helped them to feel confidence in themselves.

Von Kotze (2007:235). Argues that empowerment is the “Capacity refer to the ability to perform the actions necessary to create and sustain life, including being able to identify and make use of livelihood opportunities and cope with stress and shocks” I understand the author's stress on the issue of livelihood. The empowerment process should assist poor people to live a fulfilled life.

Von Kotze (2007:233), speaks about a “dignified decent life” , that is livelihood, meaning that a person is not just working for a salary but making a productive living which God has created for us to live here on earth and beyond the present life.

Empowerment is more than just transferring technical solutions to the community, it must be more in capacity building and raising standards for the poor people (Essama-Nssah 2004:510).



Every community empowerment must be in relation to living well. The people must have a choice to make the life they wish to live. People should take charge of their lives towards their destinies.

Empowerment can be defined in this way “implies freedom of choice and action in the pursuit of one’s life plans” (Essama-Nssah 2004:513). This would be a fulfilled life which helps one to achieve their full potential.

Kim et al (2007:39) has defined empowerment as the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

The aim of an empowerment process includes “power within”(internal qualities, such as self-confidence or critical thinking, skills that contribute to individual agency), “power to”(creation of new opportunities without domination: factors such as the ability to make independent decisions that determine and demonstrate such agency) and “power with”(communal dimensions, such as group solidarity or collective actions which acknowledges that positive change may often be affected through acting together, rather than alone (Kim et al 2007:28)

Nussbaun (2000:72): has put it this way

The core idea that the human being as a dignified free being who shapes his/her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with other, rather than been being passively shaped or pushed around by the world in the manner of a flock or ‘herd’ animal. A life that is really human is one that is shaped

throughout by these human powers of practical reason and sociability.

We could also define empowerment as the expansion of the assets and capacities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives (Essama-Nssah 2004:504). The poor people must take back the control of their lives. No transformation can take place effectively without the poor being in charge of their destinies.

When people or a community has been capacitated they can own the process of economic empowerment in their hands and create work for themselves and their children.

### **3.4.2. Four elements of empowerment**

Deepa (2002:18), mentions four elements of empowerment, that has been seen across most of the empowerment processes that have been completed by poor people, government, and civil society in different contexts. They are as follows:

- Access to information
- Inclusion and participation
- Accountability
- Local organizational capacity

Access to information should be a two-way street. The information should move from the government to the poor communities and at the same time government must get

information about the poor in order to serve them better. Information such as what do the poor think about their condition? What can they do to change their condition? What ability do they have to change the condition?

Citizens that are well informed make better choices and can also take advantages of opportunities, access services exercise their rights, negotiate effectively, and hold state and nonstate accountable( Deepa 2002:19). The poor people must receive relevant and timely, information so that they can take effective action to change their condition.

Inclusion and participation is important in the process of empowerment. An empowering process should take poor people as co-producers with authority and control over decision-making and resources. Participatory process is more on helping the poor to achieve “independence from the external agents in formulating the agenda and managing the affairs” ( Kweku 2001:9).

Accountability refers to the ability to call public officials, private employers, or service providers to account (Deepa 2002:20). Officials and private employers must be aware that they serve the poor people and they must be aware that poor people are co-producers and they are in partnership with them.

Local organization capacity, is a process that enables people to work together, organize themselves and mobilize resources to solve their problems of common interest (Deepa 2002:21)

### 3.4.3. Empowerment through education

Education is an important empowerment tool; there is a need to involve knowledge, skills transfer, critical thinking, and values (Essama-Nssah 2004:518). The individual or group must be equipped with the necessary education.

Knowledge will equip poor people and give them the power to make informed decisions about their lives. Knowledge is power. One cannot shape his/her life without arming himself/herself with knowledge. And this knowledge becomes power for individuals or group of people who operate in the business of shaping their lives.

Capacity building cannot happen without education. In order for people to become capable, they need the kind of education that will help them to be critical thinkers, to make choices for the life they want to live (Essama Nssa 2004:510).

Education must help people to achieve their full potential. They become productive in life as individual and as groups of people living together. And by using their full potential, they must participate in shaping their future.

When people have learned the skills to do something, such as a project that can bring economical change in their lives then they are empowered. Skill is about practical reason, or ability to do something such as a decision-making skill, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and “note that skill may be attributed to the purposeful use of self” (Lee 2001:58). Skills can be defined as what people do rather than what people are.

Human values must be at the centre of community empowerment. *“Motho ke motho ka batho”*( a person is a person because of others). If this value is in place people will manage to live with other people. Other values are as follows: respect, responsibility, honesty, accountability, and reliability. Our values are more about who we are rather than what we can do.

#### **3.4.4. Researcher’s reflection on empowerment**

I have chosen the following themes to reflect upon. My co-researchers have been involved in this process and they are happy with them.

##### **3.4.4.1. Increasing the capacity**

Increased capacity was shown as an important key to empowering the community or individuals. As we have seen in chapter 2, poverty excludes poor people from many things which disempowered them. Poor people feel that they do not know that they have the capacity to change things.

Poor people must be aware that they have the ability to make things happen. When there is a need in the community the government and private sector must work with community or the individuals from the community so that they can build their capacities. If, these qualities have been strengthened poor people can stand for themselves.

#### **3.4.4.2. Dignified decent life**

The poor people deserve to live a dignified decent life. By living in poverty this element of life has been forgotten or is not known. Poor people have a desire to own things that will make them feel good. I have known some people who have taken their retirement fund to build big houses which they will not stay in for a long time. From this I have observed that these people wished to live decently but poverty denied them.

#### **3.4.4.3. Freedom of choice**

In life poor people have been denied the freedom of choice. The people with control of the resources such as government officials, and donors would make choices for the poor. Poor people have not been given a chance to be free to make their own choices to change their lives.

Empowerment sets the poor free so that they can have freedom of choice in their lives. We all need to have freedom of choice in our lives.

#### **3.4.4.4. Participation in the process of the empowerment**

Sustainability is an important element in community empowerment. In order to reach this goal the community or the individuals who need to be empowered must be included and take a full participation in the process. They must own the process of empowerment. They must be part of the decision-making, implementation, and evaluation

### 3.3.4.5. Expansion of assets

When the poor have taken their position as human being and have been capacitated in every way then assets or money can be pumped into the community. These are assets that would assist in the process of empowerment. They will be able to use the assets correctly

### 3.4. Entrepreneurship spirit: “*Mpofutsho wa phatla*”

According to (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2005 7<sup>th</sup> Edition) entrepreneur means a “person who makes money by starting or running the business”, especially when this involve financial risks. So, entrepreneurship would mean the process of starting or running a business. This is a skill that education must bring to empower poor people to take charge of their lives.

In Pedi, we say “*motho o tla ja mpofutsho wa phatla ya gagwe*”. Meaning everyone will eat his/her sweets or meaning that we must work before we get food or money to buy whatever we like or desire. The entrepreneurship spirit encourages us to take ownership of our life or to be our own boss. Proverbs 6:6 says “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise”. The bible is challenging us to look at the life of an ant. The ant gathers food during summer times and keeps it safe for winter times. Winter time is a period where there is no food.

*One of my researchers (Mr. TN) said that “most black people lack initiatives”.*

Proverbs 6: 7 will say “which, having no captain, overseer or ruler”. The ants have this ability because ants plan ahead and save food for the future and can organize where to save food. The ant is showing us a characteristic of entrepreneurship. Poor people must develop the potential that God has given them. Initiative is one of the characteristics an entrepreneurship spirit. The African proverb that I have quoted above emphasizes an entrepreneurship spirit.

### **3.5.1. Empowerment – the power of participation**

The development agencies, government, and the community must work together towards community empowerment. All these people must be in partnership.

Nieman (2006:597) is stating that “the South African government has shown political will by accepting social development as policy”. The Government came up with a white paper on social development stipulating, among other things, participation, empowerment, equity, accountability, accessibility, and partnership as elements, considered to be the key principles for a South African developmental approach. The church is one of the main stakeholders in this partnership and she has the ability to do a lot. The government wants to help people to help themselves.

Effective participation can include the following honesty, respect, and caring (White 1999:128). Honesty is about being truthful toward self and other participants in the process. Respect is about respecting your self and respecting others. People who are in a participation process must feel a caring



spirit. Participants must feel that they add value to the process that they are a part of it.

When the atmosphere is good, people who are in this process will feel the compulsion to open up their lives to the group. They will feel safe and protected and feel cared for by the group. This care must be according to the definition of the local people. Development agencies might define it according to their own understanding. Here, participants are more important than anyone else.

The local people or grassroots must be listened to, to be allowed to contribute to their own decision-making process and their policies (White 1999:155). Actually the participation empowers the local people to take ownership of the community project.

Participation means that the training creates an atmosphere in which the trainee, trainer, and their materials engage in a dialogue to find suitable answers (De Beer and Swanepool 1996:4). The equality of the participants is vital for the community project to succeed.

The Comprehensive Development Framework, wants to see the following, a local ownership, a long-term holistic approach, focus on result and partnership (Essama- Nssah 2004:510). The World Bank wants to see local people taking ownership of the empowerment process in their community. They must be in partnership with those who are helping in the process such as governments, institutions and development agencies. Local people should be able to do strategic planning to get results.

### **3.6. TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Transformational development means more than development which is concerned only about social change in the material world, but transformational refers to a positive change in the whole of life materially, socially, and spiritually (Myers 1999:3). Transformational development is a life journey and is endless. Above all it stresses really change from within the person.

In this section I would like to look into different stories that are involve in transformational development. As a narrative researcher, the narratives play an important role in my research, so I pay serious attention towards narratives involved in transformational development. They are three voices that I want to look like this:

#### **3.6.1. Convergent stories**

The most important thing in transformational development is the stories that are involved in this process.

##### **3.6.1.1. Biblical story**

Theology is a necessary element in the process of transformational development. We cannot be successful in our process without listening to the story of God. He was part and working in the community before anyone was there (Myers 1999:20).

### 3.6.1.2. Creation

God is the one who created the whole of creation that we see today. The bible says, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth” (Genesis 1:1). Everything in creation that we see today has been created by God. We see the stars, the moon and the sun. All these things come from God.

He also, created man in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). He is a moral being whose intelligence, perception, and self-determination has far exceeds that of any other earthly being. Man has been created in God’s image, this gives man his identity. The question that says who am I has been answered.

Man has been given a responsibility by God. He was created to be like God (he receive his being ‘identity’) and his duty (Gen.2:15), “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it”. Man has received his being and his responsibilities from God. The poor bear the image of God and they must live productive lives. In our community transformation, this story must be shared so that the poor could realize it and associate with the story.

God did not only create man, but also the nations of the earth (Gen. 10:32). The nations and kingdoms of the earth come from God. Even, other institutions come from God.

Triune God (trinity) is a story of God being one but in three form, God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We see the unity of God and it must give us hope today. Again, we see harmony during and after the creation period, between God, and man, between man and man, man and

the environment. The Intent of God was that there must be a harmony amongst the people and the environment.

### **3.6.1.3. The story of the fall**

In this story, we hear about the fall of man from the place God has put man. The harmony that existed was broken down because of the disobedience of man. This is what the bible has to say about this story, “And they heard the sound Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, where are you”? (Gen. 3:8, 9). Man has left the place of harmony with God and with himself/herself.

Again, it could be put this way, “the effect of this disobedience ensured that human identity and all dimensions of human relationships would be marred” (Myers 1999:27). The story of the fall affected everything that God has intended to achieve for human beings. I can say poverty came to earth because of the fall of man. Man became selfish, corrupted, and no longer thought about God’s purposes and his fellowman.

Myers 1999:29 put it this way about the effect of the fall of the institutions:

The economic system was created by God to steward responsibly and justly share the natural and human resources of the nation and to encourage men and women to be productive, and using the gifts God has

given to create wealth. Distorted by the fall, people occupying positions of influence within the economic system now act more often as owners and less as stewards. They skew the system to enhance and protect their own self-interest and insulate themselves from the impact of these distortions on the less fortunate.

The political system was created by God to encourage kingdom ethics and to bring a creation order into the management of human affairs, an order based on justice and peace. Yet, as a result of the fall, the political system becomes a captive of the economic order and begins to serve the powerful; its ministries of justice cease being either ministries or just.

Finally, the religious system, which was created by God to bring the nations and their institutions into relationship with God, too often colludes with fallen political and economic systems. The prophets of accountability are gradually seduced by money, power, and prestige, gradually becoming silent (Eze. 22:28)

In our work for community transformation, we must look carefully into the spiritual causes of poverty.

#### **3.6.1.4. Exodus- liberation story**

In the story of liberation, we see the holistic and relational nature of God's redemptive work.

We see God revealing himself and demonstrating his power so that Israel would believe and be faithful.

Socio-politically, exodus is the story of moving from slavery to freedom, from injustice toward a just society, from dependence to independence.

Economically, the exodus story is about moving from oppression in someone else's land to freedom in their own land, a land fairly distributed to all so that everyone could enjoy the fruit of his or her own labour.

Psychologically, the exodus story is about losing self-understanding as a slave people, and discovering the inner understanding that with God's help, they could be a people and become a nation.

#### **3.6.1.5. The story of Jesus**

The story of Jesus started outside where the power lies. He started his ministry where no one had expected it to take place. People were saying, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"(John 1:47). There was nothing of significance that could be expected from Nazareth. Power, prestige, salaried, professional or people of authority could not be expected to come from the periphery.

Jesus performed his ministry out there, where the poor or the labelled (Marginalized) people were living. The people from the centre of power were attracted to the periphery where Jesus was ministering. Jesus was associated with the poor and the outcasts. Today, this is a good lesson for those who are working in transformational development to stand with those who are living in poverty and are been marginalized by the powerful.

### **3.6.1.6. The mission of Jesus**

The mission of Jesus is clearly stated in the bible, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18).

Jesus was sent by His father to preach the kingdom of God unto the whole world (Luke 4:43). The kingdom of God is about restoration of human identity and human productivity which says God made man in His image and likeness and to tend the garden to produce food. Human beings might succeed if they start to operate from this notion.

### **3.6.1.7. Death of Jesus on the cross**

Jesus died out of the city. He went through a traumatic experience. Jesus was a good person who died for bad people. On the cross, he cried my God, my God why have you forsaken me (Mk. 15:33). If we were to analyse these two types of pain which are physical pain and broken relationship pain one would find that a broken relationship is what Christ was concerned about.

Furthermore, the bible asserts that in Christ all things hold together through the work of the Holy Spirit (Myers 1999:20). God is still busy today working in the world. As I am writing this research project God is with me, even the poor where they feel that sense of hopelessness God is with them and He works with them for the betterment of their lives.

### **3.6.1.8. The Faith-based organization and social transformation.**

As I stated in my objectives the research process looks into the impact of poverty on identity formation and how faith-based communities play an important role in influencing that identity formation in a positive way. We have many different faith-based people who belong to different religions. In this research I chose to work from a Christian religion and also interdisciplinary approach.

South Africa is considered to be a religious country, (Eramus 2005:139). He continues saying that the church is the strongest faith-based community and the most influential non-governmental organization (NGO) reaching, on average, 63% of the Christian population weekly (Eramus 2005:139).

According to the census of 2001 -79.8% of the population have indicated that they are affiliated with the Christian religion. Froise (1999:37),(quoted in Erasmus 2005) stated that “there are approximately 43,000 Christian faith communities in South Africa and the infrastructure of these churches reaches every corner of our country”.

Eramus (2005:139) is stating that “in rating South African social institutions, the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) 2000 found that the public’s view of the church received the highest percentage of trust (74% in 2000)”. So, Christian communities can play a major role in social transformation.

There are other arguments such as that religion often inhibits change (Erasmus 2005:139).



There is a notion or a school of thought that says the church has no value in connection with transformational development. Myers put it this way, “too often Christian development professionals see the church as a distraction, or worse, an impediment to transformation” (Myers 1999:126). This kind of thinking separates people from the community of believers where they must grow in fellowship with one another. Their argument is that the church is not professional enough to do transformational development.

Again, they view the church as part of the problem, so the church is unable to bring the solution into the communities of the world.

Despite all these thoughts, the church is a plan of God to expand the kingdom of God into the world, and she (Church) is not perfect, so she too need transformation (Myers 1999:126).

Myers 1999:127 puts the work of the church as follows:

First, the role of the church in transformational development is the same as ours: to be a servant and a source of encouragement, not a commander or a judge.

Second, the church can and must be a source of value formation within the community.

Finally, the church is the hermeneutical community that reads the biblical story as its story and applies this story to the concrete circumstances of its time, place, and culture.

### 3.6.1.9. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is part of the triune God. He came to give us the power to do his ministry, especially in transformation development using the church and all of those who are busy in serving poor communities. Jesus said to his disciples, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Jesus was aware that His disciples will fail by themselves, so they needed the Holy Spirit.

Also, in Acts 1:8; “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”. The Triune (God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) God chose to work with us in touching the lives of those who are suffering.

The Holy Spirit teaches us all things and reminds us about everything that Jesus taught us (John 14:16, 26).

The Holy Spirit initiates mission (Acts 13:2). The Holy Spirit leads and guides missions (Acts 8:28; 16:9). The Holy Spirit makes people response to the preaching of the Word (Acts 16:14).

Bearing in mind what the bible says, about the Holy Spirit, those who work in transformation development need the Holy Spirit, without Him, there would be no sustainability in the things that we do

### 3.6.1.10. Three important theological ideas

These three theological concepts could give us some guidance for doing transformational development.

#### ➤ **Incarnation**

In defining incarnation, John says, “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father, Full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The Word in this passage is Jesus, one of the trinity or triune God. It means Jesus or God left His glory to come to be with sinners that He might save them.

Without going into deep theology on incarnation, what we could learn as people who want to work in community transformation is that Jesus emptied himself, He became nothing, and He left His glory to become a sinner. So for most of us working in transformational development, we must empty ourselves, it is no longer about us, but is about those communities that live in poverty, we must listen to their story and work with them without looking at them as if they are nothing.

#### ➤ **Redemption**

According to the New Bible Dictionary, redemption means deliverance from some evil by payment of a price. This payment is called ransom. In this circle of ideas Christ’s death may be regarded as a ransom for many.

Myers 1999:47 put it in this fashion, “God is working to redeem and restore the whole of creation, human beings, all living things and creation itself” God is busy now, working for His creation to become better.

So, the work of transformation development falls under the redemptive plan, when we work for transformational development, we are working as God’s hands and feet (Myers 1999:47).

### ➤ **The Kingdom of God**

The main focus of Jesus was to preach the kingdom of God. In His first sermon He spoke about the kingdom of God (Mark. 1:14. In Matt. 6:33, He says seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. This means that the kingdom of God is what we must seek and everything else will follow us.

Matt, 6:10, Jesus, says that we must pray for the kingdom of God to come on earth. The kingdom of God is unshakeable (Heb. 12:28). What a blessing, to be in a kingdom that is unshakeable in the world where everything is shakeable. And to have a fixed person is something that can give strength to those who live in poverty that their situation will change by arrival of the kingdom of God which is through the Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:8).

The gospel of the kingdom must not be for personal salvation only but it should be for the whole system. (Wink, 1992:83) put it this way, “The gospel is not a message of personal salvation from the world, but a message of a world transfigured, right down to its basic structures”. The whole community needs the Kingdom of God to be transformed completely. Living in the Kingdom of God must be the one that brings hope. The bible

says, it is an “unshakeable kingdom” (Heb 12:28). Transformational development must establish this kingdom.

### **3.6. Community story**

In order for transformational development to take place, all stories must be listened to, even the story of the community. Most of the time, this is the story that community developers do not listen to.

It is important that the story of the community is listened to because “the community comes from a past, and its memory of that past is the beginning of any new story” (Myers 1999:138). Narratives speak about the story of the past and the future being in the present. To know where someone is going we must know where someone is coming from.

Again, when the development agent is listening to the community story, which alone will tell the community that their story is important (Myers 1999:139). By listening to someone telling his/her story, demonstrates that one values the story teller that alone can create a strong partnership. By listening to the story of the community one would be able to understand the belief system of the community that is spirituality of the community. By understanding their spirituality one will be aware of where the power lies (Myers 1999:140).

The survival strategy must be listened to. If people know about how one has survived, the same strategy can be used to plan for the future. Also, the indigenous knowledge must

be listened to often these are the elements that people ignore.

### **3.8. Story of the development agent**

It is very important, that the development agents do not come there as people who have all the answers to offer to the poor community. (Myers 1999:51, 52) speaking about very important attitudes that can help the community practitioners:

- Be a good neighbour: A good neighbour will give his/her life for others. To be good neighbours must change who we are.
- Be patient: development does not work on a timetable. The donors might be happy if the project is finished within a given time, but sometimes it is not good for transformation and sustainability.
- Be humble before the facts: development agents must know that they do not know everything. So, must be willing to learn from the people of the community.
- Everyone is learning: The poor and nonpoor must be aware that they need to learn. Without learning transformation cannot take place.
- Everywhere is holy: development workers must respect the poor people. They must be aware that they have been created in God's image like nonpoor people.
- Every moment and every action is potentially transforming: Community transformation workers must

be very careful of the way they do things at all times.  
Do or live as the community.

- Love the people, not the program: Development workers are in the community not for programs, but for people. Programs are just a means to assist the people. The business must be people.
- Love the churches too: development workers must love and be prepared to work with local churches without looking down at them. God has put gifts inside these churches.
- Cultivate a repentant spirit: No one is perfect. So, the development workers must be willing to repent if they have done something wrong, especially if it is related to the poor people.
- Act like dependent people: Working with the poor, we must appear depending on God not on our skills, development technology, or our financial resources. By so doing, we teach the poor to trust in God.
- Whose reality counts? It is not about the way development agents see things, but the reality of the poor or the community must be taken into account.

### **3.9. The role of spirituality in social transformation in South Africa**

The South African government in dealing with the Moral Renewal of the nation is aware that it needs spiritual transformation. In pursuing political and economical

development, spiritual transformation is a necessity (Erasmus 2005:142). So, the church must get into a partnership with the government to transform the communities of South Africa.

McGuire (1997:240-248) stresses that religion can bring social change in three ways which are religious ideas, religious leadership, and religious group:

McGuire (1997:140) states it in this way that ideas themselves do not directly effect change. “Ideas indirectly influence society through people whose interests lie in pursuing those ideas and applying them on social action in two ways: They may form the content of what a group of people try to do; and they may shape people’s perception of what their interests are”.

Secondly, social change needs a leader who will express the desired change, motivates followers to actions, and direct their actions into some larger movement of change. Religion has historically been a major source of such leaders largely because religious claims form a potent basis of authority. The prototype of the change-oriented religious leader is the prophet, whose social role is especially significant (McGuire 1997:244).

In South Africa, we see the Dutch Reformed Church as the main church in the Afrikaner community. She (Dutch Reformed Church) establishes the commissions of poverty relief programs such as old-age homes, orphanages, schools for the blinds and death. Also, we saw that the African Indigenous Church putting more stress on development of self-sufficiency for its members (Kinghorn, 1998:85). The



church is in the community to give hope and encouragement for those who live in poverty stricken communities.

### **3.9.1. Spirituality-The spirit's way in social transformation**

Bruce et al. 1996:154 stated three aspects of the spirit's way in social transformation:

- First, taking Christian spirituality seriously would mean our analysis of the world-its happenings, its structures and its people. The structures such as the World Bank etc.
- Second, taking Christian spirituality seriously would mean our perspective in involvement becomes participatory with the spirit in redemptive events.
- Thirdly, taking the biblical understanding of spirituality seriously would require accepting the context of suffering as essential for developing spirituality. It would mean learning to see participation with those who suffer and their suffering as a fundamental context for spirituality.

### **3.9. My own reflections**

While writing this chapter I felt sad and a failure. Because as I was writing I became aware that my house is too small, I do not have a private place where I could study without disturbing my family. My computer is right where the family watches the television. Also, I do not have the money to

please my family. The question for me was how can this research project bring transformation to my life, so that I will be able to take my family on holiday and to live a decent life? To see every limitation of poverty that has been placed on me by all injustices of the past being destroyed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EXPERIENCES ARE LISTENED TO AND DESCRIBED**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I chose 9 people who have agreed for me to listen to their stories. They are 4 ladies and 5 males. 6 of these co-researchers are married and 3 are young adults. One of the males is a person living with a disability.

#### **4.2. HOW DID I CHOOSE THEM?**

When I invited these people to be my co-researchers the process was fully explained to them. No money was promised to each one of them. They fully accepted my invitation. I have not used their real names because they have requested not to be addressed by their real names. I have used their initials only.

#### **4.3. HOW DID I COLLECT THE DATA?**

My co-researchers and I have had semi-structured and unstructured conversations. We have our conversation following seven questions that have guided us.

Due to the time factor we only managed to have two interviews with each co-researcher and three group meetings that were held at the church. Some of the Interviews I conducted in the homes of my co-researchers and some took

place in my own home. Time was quite a serious problem for meeting with my co-researchers.

We recorded the interviews and I also took some notes. One of my co-researchers was and still is working out of town and spent most of his time away from home but we managed to communicate telephonically. The following are the narratives of my co-researchers as they were shared with me. The chapters of their narratives were given to the co-researchers for feedback. All of the above was carried out continuously during the research process.

**4.3.1. The questions I asked the co-researchers are as follows:**

- How would you describe poverty?
- How poverty does affects the way you feel about yourself?
- What do you think can be the causes of poverty?
- What is the role of the church towards those who have been affected by poverty?
- What do you think can be done to eradicate poverty?
- What is the role of the government and private companies to wards those who have been affected by poverty?
- What is your role as a person who lives in poverty to eradicate it?

#### **4.4. LANGUAGE USAGE**

I am writing my thesis in English as a requirement of the university's medium of instruction. In my conversations with my co-researchers we used English, Northern-Sotho and Swati to enable all concerned to feel free to express themselves in their mother tongue. I then translated what they said into English in order to fulfil the requirement for writing this thesis

##### **4.1.1. Mr. P's story**

This is a young man, who grew up in Nellmapius. He completed his high school in Mamelodi and he went to Technical School to study civil engineering. He is presently working with a big company where he holds a managerial position. He is very positive in his outlook and determined to make a difference in the community of Nellmapius. He is also a promising leader who can play an important role in his community.

##### **4.1.2. How Mr. P understands poverty**

Poverty *ke motlako* meaning that poverty is suffering. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary suffering means physical or mental pain. Poverty affects people physically and mentally, caused by people lacking food,

clothing, and all the other things that would be described as basic needs.

### **4.1.3. Mr. P's identified causes of poverty in an African context**

#### *4.1.3.1 Bantu education as a cause of poverty*

Bantu education was a structure of education that was imposed by the apartheid regime for Africans referring to the indigenous black people. It was a style of education that would encourage a servant or slave mentality. Africans were only allowed to receive education in order to be better servants or slaves to serve a white minority. It was not an empowering education that would train people to be critical thinkers, to receive proper knowledge and human value system.

It could not develop entrepreneurs who would create jobs for other people, but would encourage people to be consumers rather than to be producers. The majority of elderly people were restricted by Bantu education to follow certain professions, such as police, teaching, nursing, that were inferior. This kind of education does not lead to the freedom that we all need to be the kind of people who can walk strong with confidence.

In, 1994 the education system started to change. Young people today, have more opportunities than previous generations of people. They can follow the profession of their choice or according to their abilities. Education should be a tool to eradicate poverty and in order to do this it must encourage an entrepreneur spirit. Young people need to be critical thinkers and able to identify the problems that caused

poverty and come up with solutions. They must be able to create jobs in their local communities.

#### *4.1.3.2 Mindset has impact on our lives*

The way we think, will affect the way we act. People must think positive, meaning that they think that they are convinced that they have the ability to improve their lives. With this attitude nothing will be too difficult for them when they put their minds into a positive mode. He was trying to show that everything depends on the way people think about themselves. Whatever people think they will ultimately act according to their thoughts.

#### *4.1.3.3 Laziness as a cause of poverty*

Laziness could also be considered as a cause of poverty. People who are lazy are not prepared to do anything to help them but would wait for someone else to do it for them. They expect things to come to them without them taking any action. At the present time those who are running businesses in our communities, mostly foreigners certainly much more than the local people. To eradicate poverty is the individual's responsibility to rise and do something about.

#### *4.1.3.4 The environment has an impact on the lives of people*

Some people are saying that they are poor because they come from a poor environment. Therefore it is surprising to find that there are people who are successful and come from the same environment that has been defined as a poor community. This demonstrates that it is more to do with the way we think than on our surroundings. Environment cannot

prevent a person from uplifting yourself and cause you to stay poor.

#### *4.1.3.5 Researcher's thoughts on Mr. P. narrative*

I agree with Mr P. about what he thinks are causes of poverty such as the quality of so-called 'Bantu' education from the apartheid era as well as a particular mindset, and even laziness.

'Bantu' education was introduced by the apartheid government to make African (in this thesis black people) to feel inferior (Pieterse 2001:47). This act had disadvantaged Africans with regard to knowledge and vocational training.

Education on the whole should be more liberating than anything else. It needs to open our minds to ourselves and to the world. It teaches us how to think and act appropriately at all times. Education has been identified as of the key that can be used in the eradication of poverty (Smith 2005:61).

A negative attitude and mindset is the biggest problem to be overcome if the lives of poor people are to be improved. Also, I think Bantu education was introduced in order that we think of ourselves as insignificant. The way in which a person thinks influences how that person will act. Most Africans live in squatter camps because the doors of education were closed to them which in return closed the doors of their minds. There is nothing more debilitating if one only has a negative outlook of life.

I believe that for people to be successful they must think positively. If, people are lazy they will remain in poverty forever. At the same time most Africans (blacks) are poor



and yet most of them are not lazy. They are hard working people. They are those people who dig for gold for low wages and they have built our cities, our roads and our houses.

## **4.2. Mrs. J's story**

I have known her for about 10 years. She is a qualified teacher but for a long time unemployed. She lived by piece jobs and her husband is a deputy principal. She had faith that one day things will be right. Now, she has full-time employment in one of the Nellmapius Schools. She is completing her honour's degree in Education with the University of Pretoria.

### **4.2.1. Mrs J's view on causes of poverty**

#### *4.2.1.1 Environment as a cause of poverty*

People who grow up in an area where there are no resources and no successful people around will continue to live in poverty. When children are born and grow in such an environment can be affected by that environment. If, young people see that only girls have children they will think this is the way to do things. Also, if they are continually exposed to drunken people around them, they will also get drunk.

It is important for those people, who were born in that environment and are successful, should stay or keep coming to visit that community so that people can be influenced by them in a positive way

#### *4.2.1.2 Poverty is a chain*

Poverty can be seen from generation to generation or a chain. It is something that is moving from the elderly to the children. If only one person from the family can make a stand against poverty then that chain can be broken. It is the responsibility of the individual to say enough is enough.

#### *4.2.1.3 Grants*

Grants for those girls who have children can be one cause of poverty, because girls will keep having more children so that they can receive more money from the government. At the same time one cannot support these children with what the government is giving.

These children are born into an already very poor family; it means poverty for that family will only increase and there is no way that they can get out this poverty trap. Those girls are not learning to be responsible people but they want the government to be responsible for them. In this way the chain of poverty will continue to be strong.

#### *4.2.1.4 HIV and Aids*

Girls will sleep with more than one partner in order to get money to buy whatever they need. Because most of these girls are having sex with more than one partner HIV/AIDS will spread rapidly and poverty will escalate because many people will be unable to work because of ill health. It is possible to find a girl with five children and each has a different father. It means that all of these fathers would possibly be HIV positive as well as those children and their

mother. This will also enable them to get grants from the government.

#### *4.2.1.5 Education and the mother tongue*

To eradicate poverty, children must receive proper education. This education must be given in their mother tongue. Those nations of the world, who are shaping the economy of the world, do things in their own language. We cannot master subjects if we are not using our mother language.

The apartheid system was promoting Afrikaans and a little bit of English in South Africa. African languages were treated as less important compared to these two languages. This can cause people to undermine their own language and treat it as inferior compared with other languages of the world. Every child must start mastering his/her language from an early life.

#### *4.2.1.6 Impact of poverty*

The poorest of the poor do not have the resources to open a bank account. This means that they cannot save for the future, when they get old they cannot take care of themselves.

Also, some who are professionals continue living in poverty because of a lack of financial literacy. She means that people live in debt they cannot enjoy their money.

Poverty causes stress in the lives of people. They can not afford basic medical care, clothing, shelter, and food.

#### *4.2.1.7 Church and community transformation*

It is impossible for the churches to work together because the church is a business. Pastors are making money out of it.

The rate of unemployment has encouraged many people to say “I am called”. Even although they have not called they still offer for the ministry because they see being a pastor as an easy way of making money.

#### *4.2.1.8 God*

Poor people do not realize that God exists. If, the church wants to talk about God to the poor, the church first should provide the basic needs of the poor, such as giving them food parcels and clothing. Then the church can begin to disciple them.

It may that it is the will of God that some people will remain poor while others become wealthy. As the Pedi proverbs says “*Ga re lekane re se meno*” meaning that people are not equal like the teeth. It suggests that it was the will of God not to be equal so that we can help one another.

#### *4.2.1.9 Researcher’s thoughts on Mrs J’s narrative*

I agree with Mrs. J the environment can be a cause of poverty. If to be poor is the norm of a community it will affect the mindset. The children who have been born within the poor environment will continue to live there without seeing anything wrong with the situation. Because they do not see anything wrong, they will continue to live that kind of life. Poverty will be a chain that will be more generational. HIV will spread across the community because people are not experiencing good role models around them.

On the 01/01/2010, we were sitting down with my brother talking about the way we grew up. He said to me that people ill treated us because our family was the poorest in the

community. Life became too hard for him. This environment changed him; he had to look for way in which he would be able to live in that hostile environment. He became the very harsh person as he is now.

Sometimes he would challenge those men who treated him badly in order to avenge himself. Some of those people are now fathers and have their own families, but he still feels that he should challenge them. That is when I realized just how much that environment shaped us.

People act violently, not because they were born that way but environment has a way of creating them. So, in order to change the people we must first change the environment. The hidden stories of success must be discovered in order to influence that negative description of the environment.

#### *4.2.1.10 Church as a business*

This attitude of people offering for the ministry without being called by God is very disappointing because people see the church as way of making money. Many people have lost hope in the church. Because I am a pastor this is my concern.

It is important for me as a pastor to correct this wrong attitude about the church. The community must realize that the church is a place to connect with God and their fellow brothers and sisters. When people come to church, they feel that is a time to rest from the toils of the world.

#### *4.2.1.11 Grants*

People must be taught about responsible behaviour. I think it is the right thing for the government to assist the community.

According to the government it is not its aim to create a dependent manner of living. The government must inform communities about their real aim of giving people grants which is to assist them not to support them.

The other thing that is required is for the governments to monitoring these grants, to establish if the correct people receive them and that they are being used for the right purposes. It is possible that some people receive the grants but their children are not benefiting from those grants which are aimed at helping the poor

### **4.3. Miss JM's story**

Miss JM is a 27year old lady. I have known her since she was at high school, as a young girl. She has now completed her grade 12 gained a diploma in production management from Tshwane University of Science. She was brought up by her mum after the divorce of her parents. Since her mother passed away, she now lives in what was her mother's house with her brother. She works with ABSA bank. She and her brother have turned their RDP house into a mansion. She is one of the leaders in the church.

#### **4.3.1. Miss JM's view on the causes of poverty**

##### *4.3.1.1 Unemployment grant will kill economy*

If people who are not employed can be given a grant, it might kill the economy because people will tend to depend on the government rather than being responsible people. There

would be no need to look for a job or to start a business which will provide an income and create jobs for others so that we can eradicate poverty. Even those who are working will end up leaving their jobs to live off the government.

#### *4.3.1.2 Parent's role*

Parents must play a role in shaping the future of their children. They should teach them to be responsible people and to have a positive outlook for life and the future. Parents when they play their role will create a healthy community.

#### *4.3.1.3 Taking own responsibility*

Poor people must stop blaming apartheid and other people, for their situation they should rise and take the responsibility to change their situation. The more people spend their time in blaming others; they will fail to take the necessary steps to solve the issues that are facing them.

#### *4.3.1.4 Positive thinking*

Poor people must learn to confess positively. By confess positively she meant to speak positive words to yourself. The more we speak the more poverty cracks. There is power in our confession.

#### *4.3.1.5 Environment*

To be successful, we need a healthy environment that is motivating and inspiring so that we can grow in what God has given us. It is better spend time with people who are positive rather than people who are negative. This means that one should choose friends who are able to help you to grow

holistically. Every individual person must strive to be a role model

#### *4.3.1.6 Researcher's reflection on Miss JM's narrative*

Miss JM seems to be putting her focus on personal responsibility. She is also looking at other reasons out of the self that make people poor. I believe that many poor people are responsible but their historical background, corruption of officials, politics, and the economic systems that have been put in place make the poor more deprived.

If poverty is to be eradicated then all the aspects that I have mentioned above must be transformed.

#### **4.4. Mrs T's story as 'co-researcher'**

She is about 37years of age and working as an assistant nurse in old age home. She has three children, two boys and one girl. She has completed studies to become qualified assistant nurse. She worked and studied at the same time. It was hard for her but she continued until she completed her studies. She is still prepared to continue improving her nursing qualifications.

#### **4.4.1 Mrs. T's view on causes of poverty**

##### *4.4.1.1 Reasons why people live in poverty*

No one likes to be poor. Some live in poverty against their own will; they try to change their situation but fail.



Some are living in poverty because of their own making, e.g. if you are working and you steal from your boss, when you get caught they will dismiss you.

#### *4.4.1.2 Poverty is not only material*

They are people who have material wealth but they are poor in other areas of their lives such as having a failed relationship. Some people feel driven to commit suicide and even wealthy people have committed suicide. This teaches us that poverty need not only be material but spiritual as well

#### *4.4.1.3 Over populated*

There is poverty in the world because we are too many people on the planet. There are not enough resources and what is available cannot reach every one of us. This suggests that this is an issue that needs looking into.

#### *4.4.1.4 Poor family*

If your family is poor then obviously children born into your family would be poor as well. This would suggest that poverty is a generational issue, until eventually some member of the family decides to take a positive step towards changing the poverty that has been controlling the whole family.

Many people were born in poverty stricken families. They stood up and changed the direction of their family. All the other members of the family began to see light at the end of the tunnel. She said when you think about most of those who are in government and in the business world they come from places that were stricken by poverty.

#### *4.4.1.5 Education*

Education is a tool that could be used to eradicate poverty on the earth. Holistic education that is building the mind, spirit, physical body, and develops social awareness. Our minds must be trained in critical thinking, our spirit must connect with God, and we must feed our bodies with healthy food and exercise, and learn to live in brotherly love with other people.

Children must be encouraged to go to school. Adults who cannot go school, should be encouraged to go to abet (adult education), where they can learn more about how to start and run their own businesses. There are many adults who are not educated (classroom) but they are very wealthy.

#### *4.4.1.6 Grants to 14yrs girls cause poverty*

Government causes poverty by giving children who have babies' grants. These girls keep becoming pregnant because they know that the Government will support them and they no longer need to go to school. She is saying that grants cause poverty because those girls will stop going to school to take care of their families and by not going to school they have no hope of ever improving their situation. Since the government grants are not enough for people to live a decent life, these children are still going to lack most of life's essentials.

#### *4.4.1.7 Drugs are results of being hopelessness*

Many children because of poverty end up living on drugs. Their poverty gives them a feeling of hopelessness and they have a sense of being useless because they do not have the

basic requirements for life. That is why drug addiction is so high in poor communities.

#### *4.4.1.8 Crime is caused by being in poverty*

Poverty increases the rate of crime. People, who do not have basic requirements for life provided, end up committing crimes. Poverty has forced hungry people to satisfy their own needs in a different way which is stealing which may lead to killing.

#### *4.4.1.9 Teenage pregnancy caused by poverty*

Because of their poverty, many girls start providing sex in exchange for money. Also, if there is no love at home, girls may attach to an older man who offers affection to the point of giving sex to that man.

#### *4.4.1.10 Things are very expensive*

Poor people cannot afford the basic needs because things are very expensive. If, one has an income R1 000.00, will not sustain a family because it will only buy a few items

#### *4.4.1.11 Poverty has levels*

There are in different levels of poverty for instance there are people who lack the basic needs of life, whereas others can afford the basic needs but they cannot afford a reasonable lifestyle. This would indicate that poverty is relative.

#### *4.4.1.12 Poverty kills the feelings of the person*

Poverty causes stress in the life of people. It becomes stressful because a person cannot afford to fulfil their needs, and it puts pressure on the mind, which will end up

affecting feelings, for example disrupt the sexual life of a couple or cause the lack of good relationships within a family. This can result in sicknesses that cannot be cured.

#### *4.4.1.13 Poverty makes people to feel hopeless*

If poor people cannot pay their rent or provide basic needs, such as pay school fees for their children, take their children to a decent health care centre where they do not spend the whole day and give presents to their children on birth days these are the things that will cause people to feel hopelessness. They cannot see tomorrow.

#### *4.4.1.14 Change is always possible*

Poor people must not accept the situation as it is, but have hope that the situation will change. Nothing will stay the same forever. An African proverb says “*Bophelo ke semphekgo*” meaning life changes. The life that one is living today might change in the future. Take for instance that, many years ago, white people were ruling South Africa, but now change has taken place and Africans control the politics of South Africa.

#### *4.4.1.15 Spirituality and God’ presence experience*

It is hard to believe in God when one does not have the basic needs of life. The concern of poor people is to satisfy their basic human needs. The issue of whether God is present in their lives or not is of little relevance to them.

For those people who believe in God, they can persist on waiting for God to bring them answers. They are aware that God takes time to answer the prayers of His children.

#### *4.4.1.16 Researcher's reflection on Mrs. T's narratives*

Teenage pregnancy is a problem that I have also observed in poverty stricken communities. Mrs T put it this way that many girls sell their bodies for sexual intercourse to earn some money. Here, we can see the impact of poverty. Most of these teenagers can not see any other way of earning money apart from prostituting themselves.

In communities where there is a lack of places of entertainment forces young people to engage in unprotected sexual activities. Many young people because they feel bored engage in sexual activities. For them this is an activity which removes some boredom in their lives

### **4.5. Mr. JR's view on poverty**

#### **4.5.1 Describing poverty**

A person who lives in poverty is a person who has nothing at all. No food, clothing, decent shelter, cannot afford basic needs such as medical care, shelter, and education. They are those people who live without hope. They do not know where their next meal will be coming from.

#### **4.5.2. Mr JR's view on causes of poverty**

Historical

- Job reservation
  - Good jobs were only being provided for the white community and excluding black people.

Today the abject poverty that we see is because of that historical background of South Africa. Today, the squatter camps that we see everywhere is because of that past

- Bantu education
  - Better education that would be the key in the eradication of poverty, this was denied to millions of the people in the country. The Bantu education act was introduced to keep blacks as third class citizens of the country. Other people, especially older people cannot go back to receive education.
  - Education must be compulsory for all people before poverty can be eradicated.
- Environment
  - He says that the environment where people live can be a cause of poverty for people. If someone grows up in a deprived environment then it is likely that the majority of those people living in that community would be poor
  - There are some people who would be successful despite growing in a disadvantaged environment but it would be a very small percentage.
- Role of the Government
  - Government must promote technical skills because it gives people the opportunity to earn

money otherwise people will be become lazy and start to depend on the Government for everything. They would stop preparing for their future.

- Government must help the community to establish projects such as bakery, sewing and gardening within the community.

#### **4.5.3. Some of the impacts of poverty are:**

- People will lose confidence in themselves.
- Crime
- Stress- Sometimes leading to suicide
- Makes people feel hopeless about life.

#### **4.5.4. How to eradicate poverty?**

- Individual level
  - People must take personal responsibility to get themselves out of poverty.
  - People need to be motivated to climb out of the poverty trap.
- Government
  - Government must promote technical skills, so that poor people can be equipped.

- Government must not give people money for instance government must buy all the things that will be needed for people to start the business because if people receive cash they might use it for their person needs not on something that can generate money.
- Government must assist people to start projects that would encourage self help
- Community
  - The community helps those who are poor by giving them food or supplying their basic needs while the poor are busy establishing their projects.

#### **4.5.5. Mr. JR's Experience of God**

Some people ask themselves where God is. Why does God not remove them from their poverty. Why it seems that He does not hear them when they pray.

Some people stop praying to God because it seems as though He is not listening to their prayers. Sometimes God takes time to answer their prayers.

Some poverty motivates them to pray and to put their trust in God. Most of the time, they would ask God to make a way where there was no way.

God wants us even though we pray to Him, to do something, we must participate with God.



Meeting with fellow believers helps the poor to carry the yoke of poverty.

#### **4.5.6. Researcher's thought on Mr. JR's narrative**

He mentioned that poverty is historical in South Africa. The apartheid government legislated laws that excluded the majority of people from proper education which I think is what has caused backwardness in the lives of many.

In addition the job reservation acts that were introduced had excluded the black people from contributing towards the economy of the country. Many of the people today are unemployed because of these acts from the previous government.

In eradication of poverty, the individual, government, and private sector must all play a part. People must take responsibility for their own future. The government must make it possible for people to receive relevant information that can assist them to make informed decisions about their lives. The private sector must partner with poor people to provide money that can assist the poor to win the battle against poverty.

The church is a part of the community. The church must preach hope to poor people. It must teach the poor that they were made in God's image so they are important. The church must not just concentrate on the spiritual aspect of life but must involve itself in community development by helping the poor to start projects that will empower them

#### **4.6. Mr. T's story**

Mr. T is a man of about 42 years of age. He lost his arm when he was a little boy. He was retrenched from Vista University some years back. When I met him he was unemployed and life was not easy for this man to provide for his family. His wife was working in an old age home, where they were paid little money. He is now employed in the police department as an administrative clerk. This improved life in his home. Mr. T is living with a disability. He got injured while he was still a boy.

##### *4.6.1 Unemployment causes poverty*

If there are no more jobs in the country then it means that people cannot work and poverty will grow from generation to generation. It will be impossible to satisfy your needs.

##### *4.6.2 Poverty causes stress and depression for the parents*

If parents cannot afford to provide for their family, it puts pressure on the parents, and they end up being stressed which will cause other bodily sicknesses. Poverty affects marital relationships because stress can affect our sexual life so that the marriage may become an unstable relationship. Women become harsh towards their husbands because they cannot provide for them.

##### *4.6.3 Budgeting system*

Sometimes, people are suffering poverty because they cannot manage their money well. They do not know how to do basic personal budgeting and that can cause them to find themselves with many debts.

#### *4.6.4 Peer group pressure.*

If parents cannot afford to provide for their children, the children might end up following their friends in doing illegal things to satisfy their lives, such as committing crimes, doing drugs and prostitution.

#### *4.6.5 People who live in poverty need a lot of motivation*

Parents must keep motivating their children, reassuring them that the situation that we find ourselves in one day will change. Parents need to give their children hope and let them see that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

#### *4.6.6 Effective education must be given in own language*

Children must use their mother tongue in school. They must do mathematics and science in their mother tongue so that they can excel and have pride in their own languages.

#### *4.6.7 Poor people feel that prayer is useless*

Many people have given up with prayer, if they pray, and it seems prayer does not work for them then they think it is pointless. They need to pray and see the result of those prayers now.

#### *4.6.8 Poverty comes from God*

Poverty comes from God so that people must follow Him.

### **4.7. Mr. TN's story**

I have known Mr. TN for about ten years we met while he was still a student attending the high school. His parents

divorced in the early years of their marriage. He stayed with his mother and his sister. Presently, at the time this research is being written Mr. TN is completing his degree in Computer studies.

Mr. TN said that although he had never gone to bed without food, he has still experienced poverty because his mother could not provide all of the necessities of life. For instance she could not buy him certain items that were required for school.

He also defined poverty as a lack of a proper relationship within the family. As a boy growing up you need your father to be around you or to speak to you. If one has challenges to face in life then he can go to his father and share his heart with him.

#### **4.7.1. Mr. TN's view on poverty**

##### *4.7.1.1 Parents divorce affects children negatively*

Divorce would cause poverty in the family. Children need to live a decent life. They will suffer at school and in life in general. The children of divorced parents sometimes experience difficulties integrating with other children at school

Divorce causes an emotional poverty in the lives of the children and their parents.

Lack of parental involvement frustrates children and can inhibit healthy and strong growth.

People might be impoverished because of unemployment.

#### *4.7.1.2 Lack of willingness*

Black people do not have a willing heart to plan for the future. It is as if they like to live for today only, they do not think about tomorrow.

They cannot prioritize, unable to set goals to implement any goals that have been set and carry out an evaluation of them. He said one of his co-workers was commenting about the company they work for saying that it was well managed because the management is white. They thought that if it was managed by someone black it would not be as well managed as it is being managed now.

#### *4.7.1.3 Curse upon black African*

It seems as if blacks are being cursed by God, not to succeed in life.

It is possible to break the generational curses upon our lives. One has to tell himself that I will be successful and start to plan around what you are saying. Identify your problems and get solutions.

#### *4.7.1.4 To continue within poverty is a choice*

People who live in poverty made a choice to continue living in poverty. Meaning that poor people are the ones to be blamed for the mess they find themselves in. They must not blame the government or the apartheid regime all the time.

#### *4.7.1.5 Willingness to go to school*

In order to overcome poverty, poor people must go to school to learn. Education is a weapon that could help to destroy the power of poverty.

#### *4.7.1.6 Making the right decisions.*

By becoming educated, people would be able to make the right choices in life. And those choices will change their lives.

#### *4.7.1.7 Most African (Blacks) lack initiative*

Many black Africans seem to want the government to give them everything they need. They just want to wake up and stand in street corners expecting miracles to come to them. They would like to receive free houses from the government.

#### *4.7.1.8 Stop blaming apartheid*

It is time for us to stand up and take charge of our lives and be responsible for our future. It cannot help us to keep looking backwards and blaming apartheid. Poor people must learn to be in charge of their lives

#### *4.7.1.9 Researcher's thoughts on Mr. TN's narrative*

I felt rather disappointed as I was listening to my co-researchers because I started this research project with some anger against the previous white government for being the cause of black people having to live in poverty. Mr. TN has looked into the causes of poverty but he spent more thought and discussion saying that it is time to move on, meaning that we have to stop focusing on the pasts, but have to start focusing on the future. And he has spent more time talking about poor people is their own responsibilities in life. It has challenged me to rethink my whole attitude on the poverty issue. As much as people need to learn from their past, they should never stay in the past. It is time to move on.

#### 4.8. Mr. S's story

Mr. S is about 30 years of age and married to Mrs Z and they have two boys. He works for the National Empowerment Fund. This fund helps new companies by lending them finances. This is what he has been sharing about poverty in our conversation:

##### **4.8.1. Describing poverty as**

He described poverty as the inability to satisfy human basic needs. He put the needs as follows;

###### 4.8.1.1 Spiritual needs

He describes spiritual as living according to the Word of God; following God's principles for life.

###### 4.8.1.2 Physical needs

This is having enough food, shelter, money and clothing.

###### 4.8.1.3 Emotional needs

Lack of love caused by poor relationships in families and community

###### 4.8.1.4 Social needs

A feeling of acceptance by others from the community knowing that they are able to accept us despite being different from each other

#### 4.8.2. Causes of poverty

- Lack of information
  - If people are living in a poverty stricken community it is because they often lack information about what is available that can help them to fight poverty; things such as the programs of the government about poverty alleviation, bursaries, and other opportunities that are available.
  
- Education
  - People cannot always access the opportunities in education that can change their conditions. Education is a powerful tool that can remove people from poverty.
  
- Political system
  - Politics can cause poverty for a particular group of people. Like in South Africa the previous government introduced apartheid where the system was favouring whites and excluding blacks.
  
  - Also, the previous government introduced the Bantu Education Act which was aimed at making Blacks third class citizens and introducing a job reservation act that was privileging white people by giving them all skilled and semi-skilled jobs.



- Economical system
  - Economical system to favour those people who are connected to a ruling political party.
- Corruption and nepotism
  - Corrupt officials will cause poverty by stealing the money that was given to assist in alleviating poverty to create jobs and to build houses for the poor. And they will give jobs to their relatives. When they offer tenders they will sell the tender. If you are not known by the officials or do not believe in corruption you cannot win a tender.
- Unequal distribution of wealth to the different provinces.
  - He says most of the time government has been focusing in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Provinces such as the Eastern Cape have been neglected. The people who live in poor provinces cannot enjoy the fruits of the New South Africa.

#### **4.8.3. Impact of poverty**

- Stress on the life of those who live in poverty.
  - It manifest in family violence because there is not enough money in the house.

- Poor people may commit suicide because they are hopeless.
- Crime
  - Most of the poverty stricken communities are identified with crime. People fight against poverty in a negative way.
- Drug addiction
  - Poor people would live on drugs to forget about their situation. If they are drunk their wives cannot talk to them about the problems of the family.
- Teenage pregnancies
  - Poverty stricken communities do not have any facility for the youth to entertain themselves. Young people are bored and they end up using sex as a means of entertainment. They end up with children before marriage.

#### **4.8.4. Spiritual**

He sees teaching about God as a way of promoting morality. It concentrates on the heart of people. God in His Word teaches us to share what we have with those who have less. When people follow the teachings of God it means that we will take care of the poor.

The bible teaches us how to prosper, following the bible people will prosper. The teachings of God must shape the way we think, the way we think it will influence the way we live and do.

If government officials were follow the spiritual teachings of God they would never steal the money that was made available to assist the alleviation of poverty. They will have a good heart of God.

#### **4.8.5. Eradication of poverty**

- Morality
  - People must be empowered in spiritual things so that they can take care of themselves how to use resources and not to be greedy. Here morality is connected with God.
- Up skilling
  - People must be empowered by teaching them technical skills, so that people can be employed or can create their own jobs.
  - Providing information that teaches people that they need to rise up from poverty
  - The church must come up with projects that would change the community. The church as a centre of morality must encourage all professionals who are members of the church

not to be selfish but to share what they have with those who do not have.

- Youth programs
  - Good programs must be introduced to young people so that it will encourage them not commit crimes, prevent teenage pregnancies and to train them for life.

#### **4.8.6. Researcher's thoughts on Mr. S's narrative**

On eradication of poverty, he suggested the following: the first is to teach people about the Word of God. He called it morality. It's when people live right, respect other people hate corruption, and are willing to serve the poor. I agree that people must change especially when dealing with the poor.

Also, the poor people must be helped to help themselves about helping themselves. Projects that will empower the community must be promoted.

#### **4.9. Mrs Z's story**

She described poverty as a lack of money, because if one has no money that person cannot buy what she/he needs.

#### **4.9.1. Mrs Z's view on causes of poverty**

*4.9.1.1 Mindset can cause poverty and also can make us succeed*

She says when people think small about themselves then they will act according to the way they think.

*4.9.1.2 Laziness as a cause of poverty*

Even though people may have opportunities, they can still fail to use those opportunities because they are lazy.

*4.9.1.3 The root of poverty is spiritual*

Poverty is seen materially but it is also spiritual. All kinds of poverty starts from spiritual poverty where people live out of God's will or are living in sin.

#### **4.10. Researcher's view on poverty**

*4.10.1 As a Child*

I grew up as a child who did not see any problems with the issue of poverty. It was normal for me to go to school without food, clothes and other human needs. I started seeing the differences as I was growing up especially when I saw how white people live.

I was beginning to understand the issue of the difference between white and black this was when anger started to grow in my life. I made a decision that I would not work for a white man when I grew up but that I would steal from them as a way of repossessing what was stolen from African people.

#### *4.10.2 As a man, husband, and father*

It is really frustrating as a man, if you cannot provide for your needs and the needs of your family. I felt and still am feeling less of a man compared to men white because of poverty. I know that I am important, but poverty makes you feel that you are not important. It is more stressing, if your own wife and children need something, but you fail to provide for them. I wished to take them on holiday but I cannot go because I do not have enough money.

#### *4.10.3 As a Christian and the pastor*

As a Christian, I felt and still feel the pain of poverty the same way as I felt when a child and as a father and husband. I have found myself frustrated that I cannot provide for my family. It is worse if I see white Christians with an attitude towards Black people that is showing signs of apartheid or acting towards blacks as if they are inferior.

As a Christian, I have a sense of hope that things will one day change. I should focus more on the positive than on the negative of the past. I must forgive those who brought apartheid to South Africa especially upon Africans. I must start to work towards the betterment of the future rather than to dwell on the wrongs of the past.

As a pastor, leading and working amongst the poor, I sometimes feel helpless in my ministry. But because of the hope that I have received from God, it gives me strength to minister to the poor. I pray for them and give them hope to face tomorrow.

In South Africa, we must all move forward in life to build a better country where black and white can live together in harmony. Let the white be aware that the time of having a sense of superiority is over and blacks must let the anger and bitterness caused by apartheid be a thing of the past and move on.

#### **4.11. Themes identified in this context and conversing with literature and other disciplines**

I have selected themes from the discussions with my co-researchers. There were many themes that came through but we have chosen the most common ones which we came upon frequently in our group discussions

##### *4.11.1 Bantu Education as a cause of poverty*

Bantu education was education that was created for black people. I have dealt more with this in chapter 2. It was a form of education that was inferior compared to their white counterparts. Mr. S. mentioned that poor education was a reason why black people were better slaves than entrepreneurs because to be entrepreneur a person would need to be able to read and to write. It did not give black people the opportunity to choose the jobs they would like (Pieterse 2001:47).

After 1994 things started changing in the schools. Opportunities have started to become available. Even although the majority of Black people still cannot afford university education, the government is doing much to support black people to getting a proper education. Mr. S

mentioned that the new generation, is thinking to own their businesses (Smith 2005:61).

Quality education is a major key for destroying poverty in South Africa especially Nellmapius.

Mrs T and Mr. T. said that those poor people, especially young people must go to school because education can change the situation of these people. Children must be encouraged to learn so that their future would be great.

Mrs J. spoke about quality education that must be offered in the mother tongue. Children would go far if they can receive education in their mother tongue. Education that will provide them with skills, knowledge and human values.

#### *4.11.1.1 Personal responsibility*

Personal responsibility was identified so strongly in the conversations with my co-researchers. Statements like the following were identified:

*“It is time to be responsible for our own lives”*

*“Stop blaming apartheid”*

*“Africans lack initiative”*

*“To continue in poverty is a choice”*

As a researcher, I have learned from my own experience that I had to take personal responsibility in order to achieve the educational standards that I have to mention only one example amongst many other examples. As I have already mentioned in my personal story I was born out of wedlock, I have not known my father only his grave which I found in



2007, which was a painful experience. My grandmother and my mother were the poorest of the poor. They managed to educate me up to standard 5 which now known as grade 7.

In 1979 I was out of school, and that was when I received Christ in my life I have read in the bible,(Gen.1:26) says that God made man in his image and likeness. This made me realize that I am important and able to make things happen. I made a personal decision to go back to school. To cut a long story short today I am completing my PhD. There was a lot of challenges on the journey of my life because of the personal decision that I made and despite those challenges I stood firm in order to make those decisions happen.

The education system must help people to take personal responsibility to change their lives and their situations.

#### *4.11.2 Poverty is not only material*

From the voices of Nellmapius, it is said that poverty cannot be defined as a lack of resources; it also means that sometimes one can have material resources but still lack in happiness or peace in their life. From literature poverty is identified as more than a lack of resources, (Jayakaran 1996:14) says “poverty as a lack of freedom”. According to (Munroe 1998:74) freedom is a “liberty to dominate”. Every human being has been given a space to be in charge of their environment. If people do not have this freedom they are poor.

Mubangisi (2008:175) says the description of poverty includes the language of voiceless, powerless, risks, and vulnerability. According to the statement above if people do not have a say they are poor or they shall remain in poverty.

Poverty is about lack of opportunities and capabilities (Saha 2008:269).

#### *4.11.3 New perspective on social grants for the needy*

According to my co-researchers perspectives they opposed to grants being given to 14 year old girls who have illegitimate babies and also to grant given to anyone else. They feel that people will depend on government rather than take personal responsibility for their lives. Personally I feel that when people have been a long time receiving grants of any kind, those people will be irresponsible in life.

The government is sharing the same feelings about grants. That is why; they have changed social welfare to social development. It follows the developmental theory of help the people to help themselves. It joins social welfare with economy (Gray 2006:S53). According to the government people must be helped temporally with the grants while at the same empowering them to be responsible citizens of South Africa. In chapter 3 I spoke about empowerment, where I have confirmed from literature that people must be empowered to take charge of their lives.

Nieman (2006:599) stated that in receiving handouts, the individuality of people was suppressed and their inherent skills and strengths are not acknowledged. This can lead to apathy, self-blame, low self-esteem, frustration and anger. I believe that God made us to be free to live according to the choices we have made.

#### *4.11.4 Environment as a cause of poverty*

It has been argued by my co-researchers that the environment where we have been born and grew will have impacted on us in a positive or negative way. Mr. P said that environment cannot influence you but you can influence your environment using the example of those who are in the government and in business who are successful today. Mr. JR said we should also check how many are successful from deprived communities, most of the time people who are successful would be less in percentage and some of those successful people would be politically connected. The rest of the people from deprived communities would stay in poverty.

Alcock (2006:35) argues that “social circumstances and social forces” will have an impact on the lives of people. It means that people living in a particular environment would act according to its effects.

The communities of the poor were excluded from the wealth of the country and that had a disempowering and marginalizing effect on people (Mubangisi 2006:175). My own experience from school was that our libraries and laboratories were totally empty, and so for most of the time we were taught science in theory only.

African communities do not have proper infrastructures such as community libraries, parks and entertainment places. And that has caused a lot of social ills such as teenage pregnancy, crime, drug addiction and hopelessness amongst the people living in these communities.

#### 4.11.5 *Church a vehicle for community transformation*

It would be better, if the churches in Nellmapius would work together to eradicate poverty, by researching for different skills and abilities that they have amongst the members of their churches in Nellmapius because if one church is doing community projects and is successful, other pastors might stop their members from being a part of those projects (Mr P).

(Mr P and Mr S) feel that the churches must work together in solving the community's problem especially poverty, because poverty is the root cause of all social ills. And the church is the main organization that is so active and has the attention of many more people than all the other organizations. In chapter 3, the role of church in community transformation has been clearly explained.

Nieman (2006:595) argues that the church is compelled to take a wider view of its role in the communities it serves, communities that in many instances are in poverty, underdeveloped and lacking resources. As a researcher, I feel that the church must play an active role in the social transformation process.

#### **4.12. CONCLUSION**

Rainbow nation is a phrase used by Bishop Tutu meaning that South Africa has different people, colours, cultures and tribes. Listening to all the narratives, they stress the importance of striving forward to build a better future for all the people who live in South Africa. We must press on keep

pressing on to build the rainbow nation. As the Freedom Charter of the ANC, stated South Africa belongs to all who live in it, despite colour, religion, tribe, rich, poor and level of education. The church must promote this kind of thought that all of us, we have been created by God as equal and we are of the same blood. The issue of blood is so amazing; if we can take the blood of a white man and the blood of a black man it is the same.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

In my introduction to chapter 5, I would like to refresh ourselves with the previous chapters.

Chapter 1 is about my philosophical, theological positioning and with an emphasis on identity formation.

Chapter 2 has concentrated on describing the problem which is poverty and its effects. My co-researchers and I have explored this concept thoroughly and we have realized that there is a connection between identity formation and poverty.

Chapter 3 has concentrated on community transformation. We researched and discussed all the processes relating to community transformation.

Chapter 4 related and discussed the in-context stories that were shared with me by my co-researchers and dealt with the development of those stories to until the new story has been discovered.

In this chapter 5 I would like to concentrate on an interdisciplinary position in order to thicken the new story.

## 5.2. Postfoundationalist or Transversal rationality

Muller (2009:204) states that “postfoundationalist approach forces us to firstly listen to the stories of people in a real-life situation. It hasn’t got the aim of merely describing a general context, but confronting us with a specific and concrete situation”. This approach avoids abstracts and universal truth.

Just as we discussed in chapter 1 it is stated that postfoundationalist epistemology claims to point beyond the boundaries of the local community, group, tradition or culture towards a plausible form of interdisciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen 1998:22). Postfoundationalism is opposed to objectivism of foundationalist epistemology and the extreme of relativism of nonfoundationalist epistemology

Van Huyssteen (2006:25) says that we are not the “intellectual prisoners of our contexts”. Human beings are able to move beyond their own disciplines or cultures. Christian theology cannot have only truth, but it can add value to the system of knowledge (Muller 2009:206).

Felix Guattari (in Shrag 1992:152) uses it in his psychiatric practice where different people join forces in helping with healing the patient. There are doctors, assistant doctors, nurses, administrators, patients, parents and pharmacists. All of these people represent different disciplines but they manage to network together.

In the following section, I will discuss the interdisciplinary conversation with my colleagues from other stakeholders in the community. Our discussion will be guided by three questions developed by (Muller 2009:203). In this

interdisciplinary conversation, we are not trying to reach the absolute truth, but we are trying to see if different disciplines or traditions can contribute positively in answering the questions facing human beings

### **5.3. Interdisciplinary conversation**

And by listening to other disciplines especially those who operate in my context; I will ask the three questions developed by (Muller 2009:227). The questions are as follows:

- When reading the story of (Nellmapius), what do you think would the co-researchers concerns be?
- How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why it is important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?
- Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?

These three questions will help the research to get other perspectives on the narratives of Nellmapius as they have spoken by my co-researchers

1. Mr Lekola: Professional educator: He has been in teaching for 15yrs. He had recently received promotion, to work in the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education. His position now involves him working with different schools to ensure that teaching is being carried out satisfactorily.
2. Pastor A. Spaumer: He is a Leader of the church in Nellmapius; He is also studying social work at the University



of Pretoria. I have chosen him in order that he might give his thoughts on my research as a pastor who works in Nellmapius which is the community of this research.

3. Miss Freedman: An auxiliary social worker, she is working at the grassroots of this community. She experiences poverty just as it is been experienced by the local people.
4. Miss Magakwe: Professional Nurse (manager of clinic) in our local clinic. Nursing is a multi skilled discipline because most of the time you are working as a doctor, social worker and, psychologist. I have chosen her because she woks at the grassroots of the community and she sees what poverty can do in the lives of people.

In the following section, I will be listening to what other disciplines have to say about my co-researchers shared narratives from Nellmapius. The three questions will be required to be answered on the story of Nellmapius (Muller 2009:227)

#### **5.4. Mr. Lekola: Education**

##### **5.4.1. When reading the stories of co-researchers, what do you think would their concerns be?**

- Narratives place the blame on poor people for their poverty.
- It generates guilty amongst the poor for living in poverty.
- Poverty as a historical phenomenon has not been mentioned.
- Poor people should be included in order for empowerment to be successful.

- Poor people must take the responsibility for their own lives.

**5.4.2. Mr. Lekola: How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the of interdisciplinary table?**

- Holistic (Spiritual, Psychological, Social and Physical) approach to education is very important in eradicating poverty in the community.
- Education will make poor people to have confidence to change their lives.
- Education will change the way poor people think about themselves.

**5.4.3. Mr. Lekola: Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?**

- Education is a key to social transformation
- There cannot be a change without education
- Other disciplines are based on education.

## **5.5. Pastor A. Spaumer(Church):**

### **5.5.1. When reading the story of co-researchers what do you think would their concerns be?**

The narratives seem to focus more on people being the cause of their poverty and it being the sole responsibility of those people in poverty. The co-researchers have not considered the impact of the systems that are used in the world for managing economies as contributing to the status quo of some people who are living in poverty.

The narratives seem to generalize on some of the views they believe and are not considering that a situation for one or two people might not be the same for all people. It seems that to some of the researchers the problem of poverty is the responsibility of the person who is being affected by poverty. This view runs short because some people don't have access to information and resources that could help to improve their livelihood. This can include things like basic education, access to media (internet, newspaper, television and radio) which can be important in fighting ignorance.

This is in line with what the narratives have indicated regarding the environment and how it impacts on the position of a person in poverty. Change of environment and association can have a great impact on how a person can start to see life differently from the way he have grown-up. The impact of HIV-AIDS on our community was not emphasized by the researchers, as it has left many orphaned children and child-headed families with some children having to take care of their sickly parents and some of the responsibilities been transferred to their grandparents. Further the co-researchers don't consider the impact of

unemployment which is increasing the number of people in poverty; from those who started from a disadvantaged background.

**5.5.2. Pastor A Spaumer: How would you formulate your unique discipline's perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?**

*Luke 9: 10-15 (NIV)*

The above mentioned scripture teaches a lesson about helping people in need (poverty). Jesus uses a developmental approach (empowering people to help themselves and those around them) when he instructs the disciples to feed the crowds. He first instructed the disciples to do what they did although they did not have enough resources to do it and not to chase people away. It is from this lesson that the Theological perspective developed on poverty which we encourage churches to learn in order to look after the needy and empower people to look after themselves and those around them.

The ability of the churches to develop programs to alleviate poverty and address unemployment will go a long way towards ministering to the people both spiritually and physically. It is clear that Jesus was not just interested in meeting the spiritual needs of the people but also their physical needs. People will not be impressed how much one knows the bible but love expressed in kindness will always speak beyond words expressed from the pulpit.

Churches should encourage members to adopt orphans and needy children because this will go a long way towards alleviating poverty and give an opportunity for those in needs to find love and support. Above all this gives the church opportunity to minister spiritually and to grow as it meet the needs of people in the community.

Lastly it is important that church buildings should not only be used on Sundays but also during the week to address the community's needs which will help to fight poverty. The church should have programs like Adult Basic Education Training, Day Care Facilities for Old Age and Children, Skills Training Programs, Vegetable Gardens and many more such projects to fight poverty. Churches should also provide programs where members are taught life skills, career guidance for young people, interview skills and resume writing. An Information Desk could be introduced to provide information for people in the community about opportunities that are available in the market.

**5.5.3. Pastor A Spaumer: Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?**

The church needs to be understood and appreciated by other researchers from other disciplines as a place to connect with God and fellow men. Primarily it should be understood and appreciated as spiritual.

**5.6. Mrs Freeman (Social worker auxiliary working for Sanca).**

**5.6.1. Mrs Freeman: When reading the story of co-researchers, what do you think would their concerns be?**

- Unemployment
- Disability
- Single parenting
- Laziness
- People are refusing the help of the government, such as when the government funds NGO's to teach skills development e.g. where one needs to pay R50.00 the rest will be paid by the government.
- Crime
- Drug abuse
- Lack of quality of life
- Stress
  - Family break-up or family violence.
  - Stress on children
- Stigma
- Forcing people to go and look for HIV/AIDS in order to get attention and HIV/AIDS grants.

**5.6.3. Mrs. Freeman: How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?**

- Empowering the community

- Networking of the stakeholders working in Nellmapius because no one has all answers.
- Pastors must pray for people living in poverty.

**5.6.3. Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?**

- The social work deals with social problems.
- It is more on connecting the community with the government.
- It is helping people

**5.7. Ms Magakwe (Local Clinic manager)**

**5.7.1. Ms Magakwe: When reading the story of co-researchers, what do you think would their concerns be?**

- Diseases associated with lack of proper food nutrients e.g. kwashiorkor i.e. protein-energy malnutrition-masmus, pellagra to name a few.
- The growth of brain cells retarded and milestones
- Poor sanitation causes other illnesses.
- Substance abuse i.e. when people are unemployed they resort to alcoholism and drug abuse.
- Family violence

- Prostitution- where girls or women like to support themselves.
- Teenage pregnancies in order to get government grants.
- Overcrowding- Lots of tenants in one room and also many tenants in one yard encourage the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis and other contagious skin conditions.
- Family disorganisation due to lack of basic needs
- Ignorance- lack of vision in life.
- Relying on government to create jobs.
- Cross boarder challenges-unimmunized children from other countries/refugees-put other children at risk in day cares and schools.
- Political unrest-cause of job losses.
- Lack of proper retirement plan, dependence on state.
- HIV/AIDS loss of jobs due to illness.
- Extended families are not there anymore to reinforce support and morals.
- Corruption of government officials asking kick backs.

#### **5.7.2. Ms Magakwe's unique perspective**

- Community involvement/ participation
  - Outreach programmes/health talks.
  - Promotion of vegetables gardens



- Support groups
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Youth
  - Elderly
  - People with disability
- Open day-Marketing of available services in the clinic.
- Intersectoral collaboration with other stakeholders:
  - Schools
  - Agriculture
  - Security
  - Social workers, etc.

**5.7.3. Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researcher from other disciplines?**

It should appreciate in helping the community to live a healthy life.

**5.8. Researcher's reflection on interdisciplinary**

It is amazing how these three questions have been answered by these four disciplines. There was no conflict, only healthy conversation that was not focusing on seeking the only truth but seeking a mutual understanding from each discipline. The community transformation will be only possible if we can work together through seeking common understanding.

### **5.9. Reflection on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation.**

Poverty has been explained differently from the situation of my research process. Presence of God has been experienced as follows:

- The poor must pray to God. Prayer has been seen as a connection with God. He is the one who answers prayer. The church must assist people to pray.
- Some felt that prayer does not work. Co-researchers have been praying and there was no change in their situation.
- Poverty is spiritual. Some of my co-researchers feel that the poor must be the doers of the Word (Bible). If, we are not connected to the source (God) poverty and its effects will continue.
- Poverty caused by God. He does not want us to be equal. Some must be poor and some must be rich so that people will need each other. Life cannot be good if all of us are rich or poor.
- The church must give hope to the poor. The church has the responsibility to encourage poor people
- The church must help the poor to start projects to eradicate poverty. They must not only focus on spiritual matters but should be empowering poor people holistically.
- The church must empower the youths of Nellmapius with programs that would focus on shaping young

people with human values and help them to be aware that God made them with a purpose.

- Maybe blacks were cursed by God? One of my co-researchers felt that Blacks were cursed by God because most of poor people are black.

## Chapter 6

### **Alternative interpretation pointing beyond the local context**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

First I would like to state the main points of the previous chapters of my researchers.

In chapter 1 is about my philosophical, theological positioning and with an emphasis on identity formation.

Chapter 2 has concentrated on describing the problem which is poverty and its effects. My co-researchers and I have explored this concept thoroughly and we have realized that there is a connection between identity formation and poverty.

Chapter 3 has concentrated on community transformation. We researched and discussed all the processes relating to community transformation.

Chapter 4 related and discussed the in-context stories that were shared with me by my co-researchers and dealt with the development of those stories to until the new story has been discovered.

Chapter 5 has concentrated on an interdisciplinary position in order to thicken the new story. I had a discussion with other disciplines.

In chapter 6 I will state a possible alternative story which could point beyond the local context. There could be many alternative stories in my community. So my findings are not

absolute or universal answers to the world or to every poor community.

In this section I would like to state my positioning which helped in discovering an alternative story or my conclusions and recommendations.

## **6.2. Postfoundationalism or interdisciplinary approach**

Muller (2009:204) states that a “postfoundationalist approach forces us to firstly listen to the stories of people in real-life situation It hasn’t got the aim of merely describing a general context, but confronting us with a specific and concrete situation”. This approach avoids abstracts and universal truth.

As has been discussed in chapter 1 it is stated that postfoundationalist epistemology claims to point beyond the boundaries of the local community, group, tradition or culture toward a plausible form of interdisciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen 1998:22). Postfoundationalism is against the objectivism of foundationalist epistemology and the extreme of relativism of nonfoundationalist epistemology.

Van Huyssteen (2006:25) says that we are not the “intellectual prisoners of our contexts”. Human beings are able to move beyond their own disciplines or cultures. Christian theology cannot have only truth, but it can add value to the system of knowledge (Muller 2009:206).

Felix Guattari (in Shrag 1992:152) uses this in his psychiatric practice where different people join forces in helping in healing the patient. There are doctors, assistant doctors,

Nurses, administration, patients, parents, pharmacies. All of these people represent different disciplines but they manage to network together.

In this research process, Christian theology must play an important role of facilitating community transformation as equal partners with other disciplines or stakeholders.

### **6.3. Voices involve in creating the new interpretation.**

An alternative story needs the following voices to be listened to:

- Co-researchers
- Literature
- Scholars listened to in the interdisciplinary process

### **6.4. An alternative story**

In this section, I will give an alternative story that could bring liberation to the poverty stricken community we are dealing with in this research. I am not trying to state a universal solution but an alternative or a developed story in Nellmapius that would point beyond the local. The alternate story will be one amongst other stories that can develop from Nellmapius that would point beyond the local context

It is hard to say what must go beyond. So, in this research I suggest that what has mostly been discussed on poverty and community transformation by co-researchers, literature and the researcher can be taken beyond the local context. This

would not be treated as the only truth by as a way that other contexts can learn from.

#### **6.4.1. Poverty**

It was not easy to describe poverty. People give different descriptions which makes it difficult to find the alternative story. To eradicate poverty, it is impossible to look at one description, but we should look into a specific context. These are the different discourses of poverty:

- Lack of resources
- Exclusion from power and decision-making.
- Limitation of freedom and choices
- Damaged relationships amongst the community, and officials and community.
- Lack of information
- Voicelessness
- Lack of education
- Broken relationship with God
- Lack of opportunities and capabilities.

All of the above discourses make it difficult for the governments, church, and business community to come up with a universal solutions to eradicate poverty. The solutions would be to focus on a specific locality and not a universal solution. And, also the solutions to poverty, is to listen to the poor themselves. Listening to the voices of the poor can bring a quick solution to the problem of poverty.

## **6.5. Suggested recommendations for community transformation.**

### **6.5.1. Development**

The following are very important in bringing development to the community where people are poor. Co-researchers, voices from different disciplines and literature have common views on community development. Here are the views:

- Allowing poor people to participate in all spheres of life.
- Give ears to the voices of the poor.
- The poor people must own the development projects that affect their lives.
- Post-development theory need to look into development as people-centred.
- Government should play an important role in removing structural poverty and making it easy for the poor to access the information and resources needed for their community development.
- People must take ownership of the development project.

Gray ( 2006:S56) stated that development through participation and partnership rather than social service provision was regarded as the main means of alleviating poverty. The poor people should see it as their responsibility to come out of poverty. In social service provision, the government was intervening into the lives of the poor without



their fully participating but social development says let us work together to identify the problems and answers to those questions.

### **6.5.2. Empowerment**

Empowerment has different descriptions from the many theories that have been promoted. In this research what can be taken beyond our context is that people who live in poverty must be the ones who drive the process of eradicating their poverty. They should take ownership of their freedom from poverty. In order to do this those people must be empowered.

Adams (2003:3) stated it this way, “the concept of empowerment should be constantly redefined and reconstructed not just by so-called professionals but also through the actions and words of people wanting greater control over the services they receive”.

Poor people must define the word empowerment in a way that will make sense to them and also to suite the situation they find themselves in.

Empowerment is all about giving authority to those people who did not have any. As we have indicated in this research people who live in poverty should be the one who fight to redefine and reconstruct the word empowerment, which will be the means that will bring an alternative outcome for them.

### 6.5.2.1. Empowering individuals

Adams (2003: 66) speaks of “consciousness-raising” to empower the individual. This is a psychological approach, first of all people especially those who live in poverty must feel that they are in charge of their lives. Also, (Adams 2003: 67) continues stating that “the learned helplessness is a state of mind which leaves people unable to see the point of engaging with a new task in view of a previous experience failure, not necessarily in an identical situation, but sometimes in one with only some similarities”. My research carried out in a deprived area has shown me that poverty will leave people helpless and fearful which will render them powerless from engaging against their poverty. Helplessness is psychological.

The psychological strategies that are pursued by a cognitive-behavioural theory is to empower by enabling them (the poor) to feel in control (Adam 2003:67). Poor people must be helped to think that they are important and that they have the ability to make things happen. In addition poor people must be made aware of their rights and how to access those rights. Let them be aware that they are not doing anyone a favour and they do not cause the problem, but they just need their rights.

Munroe 2001: 43 stated the importance of purpose in our lives. He mentioned seven purposes that human beings must operate in order to live a fulfilled life. The seven purposes were mentioned as follows:

- God is a God of purpose
- God created everything with a purpose

- Not every purpose is known to us because we have lost our understanding of God’s original intent for us.
- Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable.
- To discover the purpose of something, never ask the creation; ask the creator.
- We find our purpose only in the mind of our Maker.
- God’s purpose is the key to our fulfilment.

According to my understanding of the purpose that Munroe has described in the above paragraph is that purpose gives us the reason for life. Empowerment is to show that to the individual.

Munroe (1998: 84) continues saying the following “third world people must look for the inner strength and potential lying deep within them. With a renewed commitment to the Creator, Jesus Christ, they must prepare themselves to refine their skills”.

### **6.5.3. Transformation**

If all the voices are given the opportunity to be heard that could bring a total transformation in the lives of people as individual and as a society. Empowering individuals and a community would then enable them to transform their community. Outsiders such as community development agents cannot transform the community, because they are just facilitators.

#### **6.5.4. Poverty and stress**

In chapter 2 it has been found that poverty causes stress in the lives of people. Because poor people do not have life necessities this cause stress in their lives. Parents, who feel unable to give their children what is necessary for living, would be feeling badly and that causes pressure in their lives. So it would be wise if the issue of poverty can be taken seriously by the church, government, private sector and poor people.

#### **6.5.5. Stigma and poverty**

As I have stated in chapter 2 of this research, people who live in poverty stricken communities very often feel that they are not worthy or are not like those children who come from wealthy families. In addition those people from the wealthy families may label them as if they are unworthy. I believe that poor people should be aware that it is not what they have or what others think about them that is the main issue it is that we have all been created in God's image. I have also written more about God's image in chapter 1

#### **6.5.6. Sustainable community transformation**

As a person, I value starting a project and finishing it well. In this research, I have learned from co-researchers and from the literature I have read on the area of emphasizing

sustainable transformational development that poor people must be involved from community analysis right up to the implementation of the poverty alleviation project and they should be part of the evaluation team.

Community ownership of development projects is so essential and this could make the project sustainable and bear good results. Equal partnership between the government, private sector and poor people is important in community transformation and that would sustain community transformation. The solution cannot come from one section or discipline, it needs a postfoundational approach. The poor of Nellmapius must take ownership of their community development projects.

(Pieterse 2001:115) speaks about prophetic preaching in the church in order to assure the poor that God is on their side. He is always ready to help them through the causes and from the situation of poverty. The issue of hope must be high on the agenda of the church.

As a researcher, it feels that this kind of prophetic preaching is more than giving money. Prophetic preaching will assist them to see the value and the potential that is in their lives. Hope will assist them to rise and face the tomorrow. The poor will be energised to keep on trying to fight their poverty and its influence on their lives.

#### **6.5.6.1. Ownership of the poverty alleviation project.**

The project must be owned by the government, poor people, businesses, and the bank. All of these stakeholders must

participate fully in the project from the start to the finish of the project (Rob 2002:62)

#### **6.5.7. Self help**

*Kgomo go tshoshwa e etshoshago (the meaning of this saying is that only people who try to help themselves will receive help from others)*

Therefore it is saying that God helps people who help themselves. Let us pray, but at the same time let us look around and see what we can do to eradicate poverty. It is not enough to pray and sleep only. Poor people must learn how to start small businesses, after that they must ask God to help them to implement the knowledge.

The previous section, speaks more about prophetic preaching. It should make people aware that they must rise and do something for their lives. My co-researcher put it this way;

*“Poor people lack initiatives”*(Mr.TN)

#### **6.5.8. The church and economical transformation**

The church is one of many role players in the community. Walking down the streets of Nellmapius one can see tents (people of Nellmapius hold their church services in tents since there are no church buildings) all over Nellmapius. The church has the capacity to transform the community.

On Sundays, we see many people wearing different uniforms and suits going to their place of worship. Is the church playing a role in influencing the community in the positive way? (Pieterse 2001:111) put it in this way “the church has to minister in deed- and word- and in that order-impelled by Christian love”. The church as the embodiment of the love of God should be the light in the community. The church should change from a Sunday only ministry and it should be an everyday ministry in order to change the lives of people and their conditions.

According to the following authors Wink (1999: 83; Erasmus 2005:142; Olupona 1999: X), my co-researchers and my own personal experiences in poverty, the God story can bring a total social transformation and as well as personal transformation. The moral renewal without the God’s story will be ineffective. The church must begin to play her positive part in social transformation.

Pieterse (2001:113) says it in a clear way that to help a poverty stricken community is the mission of God. He has shown His love to the world, He is involved with the world, and God likes to participate with people in their context. God’s will and plan is to help poor communities is God’s initiatives, the church joins to be co-partner with God also partner with the community of poor people.

Bruce J. et al 1996: 95 mentioned that “to help people help themselves”. The church should not be there to do things for people but to facilitate a process that can help people to take charge of their situation. The role of the church is not only for

encouragement but also to empower people to claim back their freedom.

Handouts such as food parcels and clothing and grants have negative effects when people depend on them for long periods of time. (Nieman 2006:599) says in “receiving handouts, the individuality of people is suppressed and their inherent skills and strengths are not acknowledged. This can lead to apathy, self-blame, low self-esteem, frustration and anger”. One of The functions of the church is to help in identity formation.

#### **6.6. Community transformation strategy**

The church should have a concrete strategy of implementing God’s plan for a poverty stricken community. I would like to do the following, follow the way the different voices have highlighted. I also, think that people starting with any research should know that prayer is very important especially for Christians and the church. By prayer we seek the guidance of the Lord and we seek His will for the community.

- **Research.** The community should be helped by being taught the tools in order to do research about their community. This is the stage where the community would gather the information, because one of the things that keep people in poverty; which was mentioned previously is a lack of information. So, the church must partner with the community to search for information. The community should be aware of the plans of government and businesses to eradicate poverty.



- **Planning.** The next step is to plan around the findings of the research. The poor people must be included in this plan. Actually, it is their plan. They must learn by being hands on rather than by theory. Most of the time, development agencies will come in and tell the community what to do. By collaborating with the community, this will give them a sense of dignity.
- **Organizing.** In this stage, people are been filled in the role to play in the project. Getting the right people with right the abilities to do what needs to be done. In all of these processes the poor should own the process. Training should be offered to those who have been identified on how to carry out the community project.
- **Implementation.** The poor people themselves have to making sure that everything that is been planned and organized has been implemented.
- **Managing.** The implementation should not be the end of the story. The project must be managed in order to be sustainable and be fruitful. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the project is very important. The power should be with those who are equipped with the skills of managing the project.

Pieterse (2001:117) argues that community development is a process whereby a group of people come together to exchange ideas. There are four questions that the poor must ask themselves:

- What are the problems?
- What is the order of priority of these problems?
- What are the causes of these problems?
- What will be our programme of action?

The community transformation process needs the involvement of people. If, people are not involved in the process, it can not bear good fruits or it will be a useless process that will never transform the community. These four questions stated above are part of the research process.

Bruwer 1996:66-74 states the following as the procedure followed by the apostles in acts 6:1-7. The Greek-speaking people raised their concerns about their widows. The Apostles had listened and acted on their concern by asking the congregation to select those people who could help in solving the crises. The problem became the congregation problem and no longer the leadership problem.

Today in our churches we must follow that system in our community transformation process. If, people are not included in the decision making, from the start, there would be no development Maluleke (19990:39). Very often decisions would be made away from the poor and only the implementation of these decisions would be expected from the poor. It is hard to correctly implement something when you were not part of the decision-making of it.

#### **6.7. Equipping poor people with skills for community transformation**

The church should facilitate the process of running the skills development programmed. The workshops should be concentrating more on building the capacity of poor people.

Mind you, these people should be capable of heading up the transformation. The following will be done and I mention them in bulleted way.

- Management system.
- Financial management
- Bookkeeping
- Cash flow management
- Budgeting system.
- Human relationships
- Strategic planning
- Project management
- Conflict resolution

Poor people will transform their community, if they have been empowered with the necessary skills. In our church, we are focusing on these processes.

### **6.8. Poverty has a negative impact on Identity formation**

It is true that because of the process of exclusion of the poor in decision-making, it brings a sense of low self-esteem and lack of confidence. Identity is how I feel about myself and also, the perception that I receive from other people about myself. In narrative research, we listen to the narratives of those who are poor. The narrative approach will fight to identify preferred stories and begin to develop those stories until they are thickened and become the dominant story. In this way, poor people will gain strength and have a sense of being significant.

Demasure and Muller 2006:415 put it this way, “identity is co-constructed out of the discourses available in a certain culture, such as a gender, discourse, education, age, sexuality”. The discourses on poverty will shape poor people in a very negative sense as we have seen in chapter 2, chapter 3, and chapter 4. Community transformation should be more about re-authoring of the stories of the poor people.

### **6.9. Future research focus**

- Why the people who were born in a poverty stricken community continue living in poverty despite the money allocated by government to improve their lives.
- Understanding of the interdisciplinary contributions.
- Impact of poverty on the identity formation
- How to transform the poverty stricken community.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Reflection**

#### **7.1. Introduction**

In this short chapter, I would like to reflect on the research process itself how do I feel about the research.

#### **7.2. How I felt before the research process?**

As a narrative researcher, I think that it would be appropriate if I reflect on my own and to try to be honest with it. I started the research process very angry inside. Being born and grown up in a poverty stricken community and still living in such a community. I felt that the white man has robbed me of what belongs to me. Through this research process, I wanted to tell how the white man has taken our land and resources and left us with nothing. Also, I wanted to find a way of how can African take back what was stolen from them.

#### **7.3. How did I feel during the research process?**

During my research process, I had mixed feelings, especially when I was having conversations with my co-researchers. The cause of my mixed feelings was that my co-researcher responded differently from me on the issue of poverty. Most of them, they sounded like they had forgotten about the past and were focusing on the future. They emphasized that it is time to stop blaming apartheid for every one of our own failures. I felt frustrated because had thought my own answers to the poverty issue, also, maybe what I needed is for them to support my preconceived answers through this research. I felt very lonely because I was still blaming Apartheid.

I felt the impact of poverty during the research process. I did not have money to make more copies to assist me in my research process, lack of enough space to study without disturbing my family while they enjoyed TV, and lack of the computer skills that would make my work more professional without paying more money outside.

#### **7.4. How did I feel after the research process?**

I felt that I should repent. As a Christian and a pastor I also had to encourage all people to do the same. Poverty is a global issue as I have indicated in chapter 2 of this research process. The whole world must stand together to defeat the common enemy which is poverty. Yes, the systems such as politics, economic and societies can cause poverty but it is us human beings who should hold hands to work together to put the proper systems in place.

## 7.5. Positioning

The positioning in the philosophical frame has been a challenging one, during and at end of my research I felt encouraged and felt empowered. I can work with different people from different disciplines. (Van Huyssteen 200:430) argues that in this sense it is vibrant and a constructive postmodernist move to integrate all ways of knowing without totalizing them in any modernist sense.

I have realized that the solution in life will come from different disciplines. The science and theology can have conversation and find a common understanding but still working from different disciplines.

## 7.6. The narrative approach

In narrative approach forces us to listen to the stories of people living in a specific context. We deal with a now action as we have described it in chapter 1. The co-researchers speak as they know without any thread. In a narrative approach the researcher must be positioning in the not-knowing position. The researcher is not demanding scientific answers (Muller 2003:81). As, a researcher, I would like my co-researchers to feel that they are part of the process.

Also, what I like with the narrative approach, we are not only listening to stories but there is a developmental part, which means that if the story is dominated with a problem, when development takes place we can hear new story, and my job as a researcher is not to force the outcome but my job is to wait and see developmental process develops.

This approach has taught me to listen without trying to push solutions into the research process also during my pastoral ministry I'm able to listen to those who need my help. Most of the time I tell them that I do not have any answer but together would discover the answer we need.

### **7.7. Excitement of the emergent of the new story**

After the discouragement of positioning and then experiencing the practical phase of the research I felt good and great to see that there is a hope at the end of the tunnel, to see that poor people indeed have a future. And this hope has not been brought by me or any expert but by listening the voices of those who live in poverty. Listening empowers the poor to take their role in their empowerment. The government, church, community, and business community must converse with each other and together they will find a way of eradicating poverty.

I have learned that most of the time that certain problem especially the problem of poverty cannot be solved because of a single solution from an individual stakeholder without including other stakeholders has been followed. This is where transversal rationality comes into being. All rationalities must come into being. The strategies of all rationalities must be listened too. Yes, the new story would emerge only when all strategies can converse and be shared.

### **7.8. Identity formation and poverty**



How do I feel about myself, will this enable me to be happy or sad in life? There are many factors that contribute to the way that I feel about my life. (Tatum 1997:2) put it this way the concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political context. The context of poverty in many times will affect human identity formation in a negative way.

The focus should be to change the context or environment before the individual can try to change and then try to change other people. The church, government and poor communities must join hands. To promote healthy behaviour and partnership is important. Crime, drug addiction, and sometimes laziness are because of a negative identity formation.

### **7.9. Empowerment**

The term empowerment is a process that helps those who are needy to take charge of their lives and move towards their God given destiny. A Northern Sotho proverb says “*tau diahloka seboka di shitwa ke nare e hlotsa*” it means in English without unity or collaboration we will fail to achieve even small things.

### **7.10. Conclusion**

In this chapter I focused on how I felt before the starting the research, and how I felt during and after the research. There was a life transformation taking place inside of me. The

challenges of the research were worth it. I am happy I have finally reached my goal. Blessed be the name of God.

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