PASTORAL CARE IN A CONTEXT OF POVERTY: A SEARCH FOR A PASTORAL CARE MODEL THAT IS CONTEXTUAL AND LIBERATING

By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

In the faculty of Theology

At the University of Pretoria

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JUNE 2007
Acknowledgements

I wish to express my deep gratitude to the following persons and institutions for the support and encouragement that inspired, enabled and sustained me in the process of undertaking and completing this research:

My supervisor, Prof M.J.M. Masango for his constructive criticism, encouragement, guidance and support from the beginning to the end of this research.

Special thanks to the library staff at the University of Pretoria for their assistance in acquiring books and journals for me. Towards the last few months of this research additional support came from the staff of the library of University of Kwazulu – Natal and in a very intimate way from home, the staff of the library of Lutheran Theological Institute. Their support is much appreciated.

The members of the School of Religion and Theology who are too numerous to mention under the leadership of Prof I. Phiri who gave me support, encouragement and comments in addition to the academic space and time without which I would not have completed this research. I am also indebted to members of staff at the Lutheran Theological Institute, some of whom at critical times took some of my pastoral and teaching responsibilities.

I also thank all post-graduate students in Practical theology, Masters and Doctoral students who attended Post Graduate seminars organised by Prof Masango. From them I learned invaluable lessons and also received support, constructive critical comments and encouragement.

I am also indebted to colleagues in the ministry and academia who are too numerous to mention. I offer my sincere thanks to them for their pastoral care. Thanks also to my friends and family, many of whom understood when I was not available to maintain and strengthen the family bonds and bonds of friendship. The same indebtedness is owed to my parishioners at Immanuel Parish, Kagiso, who in many ways supported and encouraged me in my academic activities. From their struggles with daily problems and troubles I became sensitised to the plight and suffering of the poor and the marginalised. Special thanks to those who agreed to participate in this research and in that way opened the sanctity of the privacy of their lives and reflections, to teach me so much about the harsh realities of the socio-economic and political conditions under which they live.

Many thanks also to my wife Nelly and my son, Olebogeng who graciously supported and sustained me throughout my academic journey and my ministry.

To all of the above I say: Le ka moso Ma-Afrika a mantle (even tomorrow, beautiful Africans).

Above all I thank God for enabling me to complete this project and for enabling me to grow academically and professionally.

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Pietermaritzburg
02 May 2007
DECLARATION

I Olehile Andries Buffel hereby declare that this thesis is a product of my own original work, unless otherwise stated. Conclusions reached are my own and may not be attributed to any other individual or association. Furthermore declare that this research has not been submitted to any other University.

_______________________       Date__________________
Signature
SUMMARY

This research deals with poverty as a context in which pastoral care is developed and practiced. The research is done from the “belly of the whale” as liberation theologians usually say. Efforts are made to study poverty from the painful reality as experienced by the poor. It is theology (pastoral care) from the “underside of history.”

The research:

- Studies poverty from the perspective of the poor, with specific reference to their pastoral care needs.
- Critically reviews pastoral care literature, with specific focus on the stand taken on poverty in the past and present.
- Consolidates what emerged from literature with the empirical, qualitative research that is conducted amongst the poor. This is in view of developing a pastoral care model that is contextual, relevant and liberating.

Having listened to the poor as the “living human documents” and having compared that with literature this research proposes a model of pastoral care that is contextual and liberating. The proposed model takes the following seriously:
- African worldview, which is communal and systemic in contrast to the Western worldview, which is individualistic.

- Socio-economic and political conditions and context of the poor. This model takes seriously the socio-economic and political dimensions of life as experienced by the poor. These conditions are to be addressed pastorally by a holistic and multi-dimensional model that is proposed in this research.

- The poor as “living human documents” are not only read and understood, as if they merely passive participants but are taken seriously and regarded as central to the both the pastoral action and the liberation process. Pastoral care has to help establish an environment of empowerment in which the poor play a central role in uprooting socio-economic and political roots of their problems and troubles.

- Liberation theology and its methodology.

- The preferential option of God, which should be adopted by the church and by pastoral care. Both the church and pastoral care should also be politically committed to the poor and be in solidarity with the poor.

The proposed model is referred to as holistic-multi-dimensional pastoral care.
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