

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this introductory chapter is to present the research problem. This chapter also provides some background to the study, as well as its outline aims, objectives and its relevance. Furthermore it offers an overview of all the chapters of the thesis. Finally some key terms and concepts used in this research are explained.

This research focuses on pastoral care in the context of poverty, within a practical theological framework. In addition the research aims to be a search for a pastoral care model that is relevant and contextual, specifically in the context of poverty. The research methodology used is qualitative in orientation, with in-depth interviews with participants who live in poverty. Participants in this research are from members of the Lutheran church In Kagiso, Extension 12, which is an exclusively black residential area, which started as an informal settlement, but which is gradually in the process of being formalized and developed. This is done as liberation theologians say: “from the belly of the whale” (Herzog 1970: cf. Rieger 1999). This research makes efforts to study and understand poverty from both the perspective of literature, as well as from the experience of the poor themselves by

interviewing some of them. This is theology from the “underside of history” (Gibellini 1987:1; cf. Martey 1993:7, Herzog 1999:2). It will be a theology born out of the struggle, as Martey says:

For those coming from the underside of history, theology has always been a struggle against all enslaving and dehumanizing forces (Martey 1993:7).

As liberation theologians insist, this is a study of the reality from below, in addition to what the literature under review says. The literature that is critically reviewed includes pastoral care in particular, practical theology in general and liberation theology on the one hand and literature on poverty that deals with socio-economic and political realities of South Africa on the other hand.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

While I no longer regard myself as part of the poorest of the poor, I was born and grew up in poverty. In this section which is a description of part of my personal childhood journey through the wilderness of poverty I use the personal pronoun “I” instead of the normally academically acceptable and distant word, “the researcher” or “the author” which in this context will sound cumbersome. Only in subsequent sections will I use the normally accepted word “researcher”, instead of “I”. I was born in a single room mud-house in the oldest township of Bloemfontein, called Batho location, Bantu lokasie according to our then white masters. The single-room house, which was

divided by curtains, was occupied not only by my two parents, my two brothers and myself, but also by other members of the extended family, from both the maternal and paternal side of the extended family.

As a result of the large family and the slave wages earned by my father and mother, there was often little if not nothing to eat. When I hear phrases like the often quoted phrase in the circles of the poor: “the poor not knowing when or from whom they would have their next meal” to us this was not an academic notion but a constant reality that we experienced.

As we suffered the pangs of hunger and starvation with all associated evils of apartheid, we continued the journey with our mother to be religious, and we regularly went to church. This was not for any concrete relief, but only temporary escape to heaven as preachers continued to punch their bibles promising us a pie in the sky. Except for this temporary escape, the church or its representatives never bothered about our poverty. The best that the church did was to offer prayer and statements that never made any sense to us. It was not uncommon to hear pastors and preachers saying that our suffering was God's will. During that time the church was according to Mosala:

relatively silent on the question of oppression but the thoroughly western and white outlook of its theology helped to reproduce the basic inequalities of apartheid (Mosala 1989:1).

The church had become what Steve Biko calls: “very irrelevant and in fact an ivory tower” (Biko 1978:57). In another context Mosala and Tlhagale point out that there was the time when Christianity and the Christian church served as an ideological tool for softening up the black people (Mosala and Tlhagale 1986:vii). That was precisely the role that was played by the church during my childhood and later years as a young adult. In our context the church was not only silent but actively played a prominent and an active role in legitimising the oppression and poverty of black people. It seemed during that period of our hunger, poverty and the exploitation of my parents and many other black people, that the church was guilty of complicity with the existing powers in destroying the black community. This complicity raised questions such as the following:

-What kind of God is the one that we worship, who seems not to care when we suffer?

-What kind of God is this one who allows our suffering to persist unchallenged?

-Is it really God's will that our black community should suffer?

-Is it really true that one day when we are in heaven our suffering will only then come to an end? Is there a place somewhere across the bridge where there will be no suffering and no sorrow?

What is the relevance of the church and its ministry in our context of poverty?

There were times when I was very angry towards this unjust God whose will was the suffering of black people. This anger was shared with many other young people of my time. This anger was at one occasion publicly expressed in 1979 by me and other students at my alma mater Lereko High School as

we refused to accept the Bibles (New Testament) that were distributed by representatives of Gideons' International. We repeated the often-quoted statement in radical student circles that the distribution of Bibles was done:

“in the spirit of our colonial masters who together with their ministers instructed us to close our eyes and pray, and after the prayer we found ourselves having Bibles in our hands and our land stolen from us”

Those were the contradictions that I experienced until I became a young adult and even went to study theology. The contradictions relate mainly to the church appearing to be an uncaring institution and yet the same church being part of those who were suffering. These contradictions started changing when significant sections of the church and its leadership started to be caring and even started addressing the concerns of the poor and the suffering. While I have the blessings of being employed, in a poorly paying profession, I am now experiencing poverty at a different level, namely, that of my parishioners, members of my extended family and other members of the community whose poverty I can hardly address except from the pulpit and prayers. These were never sufficient for me. Why would prayers and sermons be sufficient for others? Certainly the church was irrelevant for our context of poverty and suffering.

Our preachers and theologians of the time never took the words of Cone

seriously that:

It is time for Christians to begin to relate Christianity to the pain of being black in a white racist society, or else Christianity will be discarded as irrelevant in its perverse whiteness. Christianity needs remaking in the light of black oppression (*black poverty*) (Cone 1989:117).

As we suffered the pangs of hunger and poverty, together with other poor members of our community, the church continued to render itself irrelevant and useless through either its disturbing silence or its direct complicity in our poverty and oppression. This was long before the late seventies and eighties when the church in South Africa was still sleeping through a revolution, little aware that it was discrediting Christianity through its disturbing silence and also through its complicity in the face of poverty, suffering and oppression. It was not until the mid-seventies that the church, or rather sections of the church, started waking up from its sleep. It had to take the insurrection of 16th June 1976 and further uprisings of the mid eighties for sections of the black church to be awakened, before the church made efforts to be relevant to the context and experience of black poverty, suffering and oppression. Once the church, especially the black church, woke from its sleep, it became what Mosala correctly calls:

that refuge to which black people escaped from the brutalities of

racism and capitalist exploitation, which also served as a resistance base . . . (Mosala 1989:XI).

Once some sections of the church awoke from their sleep, they became champions of the poor and the oppressed. However, after the political liberation that was ushered in by the democratic elections of 27th April 1994, the church seems to have gone back to sleep. It is as if the political kingdom has been sought and found and everything else has followed. It is now as if the church subscribes completely to the biblico-political dictum of Kwame Nkrumah that says: “*seek yee first the political kingdom*” (Martey 1993:51). Dismissing the myth of the primacy of the political kingdom, Martey says:

We have painfully come to realise that primacy in politics cannot solve Africa’s acute social and economic problems in a world ruled and controlled by white supremacy (Martey 1993:51).

Whereas Martey was writing in the context of the whole African continent, what he said is also true for South Africa. We know that despite wielding political power, economic liberation is still eluding the majority of the citizens of our country, as demonstrated by the widespread poverty that is still prevalent in mainly our black communities.

My interest in this is not only academic but arises out of my own context or experience. I continue to observe with deep concern the context of poverty as experienced by other black people in our villages, townships and informal

settlements. Though, the setting of the present research is in a newly established township.

1.3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research is interested in understanding poverty as a context in which pastoral care is developed and practiced. The interest is in poverty from the perspective of the poor themselves. The research is done from the “belly of the whale” as liberation theologians often say. In this research, efforts are made to study poverty from the painful reality as experienced by the poor themselves. It will be a theology from the “underside of history” (Gibellini 1987:1; cf. Martey 1993:7).

Prixley and Boff once wrote:

People are divided by the stand they take on poverty today (Prixley and Boff 1989:XI).

These words tempt one to apply this to all theological disciplines. Theological disciplines, like people, also need to be divided by the stand they take on poverty. This also applies to pastoral care. The researcher agrees with Pattison when he says in his critique of pastoral care:

pastoral care has a disregard of social and political dimensions (Pattison1988:83).

It is a fact that pastoral care in South Africa often proceeds as if social and political realities do not matter at all. This is a tendency that is shared with Western theology in general. This is the case in particular with regard to American and European writers. In America and Europe this disregard may not be a problem, as the societies there are marked by conditions of affluence instead of the widespread poverty that is found in the developing world. This tendency to stay aloof from socio-economic and political realities has permeated the theory and practice of pastoral care in the developing world. This is still the case in many institutions of higher learning that teach theology in Africa. Consequently pastoral theology (theory) and pastoral practice which developed in South Africa remains subject to the cultural tutelage of the first world (the developed world), where poverty is not as widespread as in the developing world. The apathy towards poverty and other social ills and problems is not only confined to theological disciplines, but even to the church as an institution. The church has not only been apathetic to the socio-economic and political ills, at other times, significant sections of the church actively supported systems responsible for those ills. For example, the Dutch Reformed church gave theological justification for the policy of apartheid. The Evangelical and Pentecostal churches ignored the socio-economic and political ills of society as if they were not the church's business.

The researcher is inclined to agree with Wright, who said that most pastoral theologians agree that pastoral care is focused on the ambulance ministry (band aid or corn-plaster approach) with people who are ill, or in trouble whilst

ignoring social, political and economic causes, which are responsible for those ills and troubles (Wright 1986:8; cf. Boff and Boff 1987:5). He also points out that it is possible to misuse pastoral care (and counseling) in order to avoid tackling fundamental political and social issues (Wright 1986:8). In the researcher's opinion any theology that ignores the problem of poverty is not helpful and in fact it is engaged in discrediting itself. Equally pastoral care would be discredited if it were to ignore the reality of poverty, as well as the socio-economic and political causes of poverty.

Indeed very few authors, such as Pattison (1988) and Wright (1986) in the field of pastoral care appreciate the fact that pastoral care has social and political implications and consequences.

According to Pattison:

Pastoral care which takes the social and political dimensions of human existence seriously should probably adopt a bias for the poor (Pattison 1988:103).

The researcher agrees with the statement of Pattison, in that pastoral care has no option but to side with the poor of the world. It is generally believed that God is on the side of the poor. The researcher subscribes to that conviction. Pastoral care must also adopt the preferential option of the poor, which is in fact biblical. A pastoral care that adopts this preferential option of the poor would be sensitive to the concerns and pains of the poor. Pastoral

care has to look beyond individual and personal problems and pay special attention to the root causes of such problems. Referring to this preferential option of the poor Gutierrez says:

the poor and the dispossessed are the privileged ones in God's Kingdom (Gutierrez 1984:9).

Equally the poor and the dispossessed should be the privileged ones in the church today, and in any theological discourse. The researcher goes as far as saying that the poor and the dispossessed are the privileged ones in our discipline of pastoral care. According to Bosch there can be no doubt that in the Bible there is a significant focus on the poor and their plight (Bosch 1991:436). Thus the poor are entitled to what liberation theologians call "an epistemological privilege" (Bosch 1991:436). With this preferential option for the poor, the church is expected to be "the church of the poor" and to demonstrate solidarity with the poor (Boff 1988:24; cf. Bosch 1991:436). Segundo emphasises this preferential option of the poor by saying:

I do not believe that there is any other way of expressing the option of the poor concretely than to say it is God's compassion for the most afflicted (Segundo 1993:125).

Therefore the church and its theology must also concretely express and demonstrate this option for the poor. If God is unequivocally on the side of the poor, can the church afford to be on a different side? Can pastoral care also

afford to be on a different side? The answer is an unequivocal, No! Therefore this research focuses on poverty as a context in which pastoral care is developed and practiced.

The research:

- Studies poverty from the perspective of the poor themselves, with specific reference to the pastoral care needs of the poor.
- 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 research that is conducted amongst the poor. This is in view of developing a pastoral care model that is contextual, relevant and liberating.

1.4. THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

1.4.1. LIBERATION THEOLOGY METHODOLOGY

As may already be obvious from previous paragraphs the study relies heavily on the methodology used in liberation theology. Liberation theology has according to Gibellini:

opened a new context and methodology of Christian reflection on faith as praxis with a precise situation in history (Gibellini 1987:7).

The author agrees with Gibellini that all theology and liberation theology in particular must seriously take cognizance of “Christian reflection as praxis” i.e. it must take the historical situation or experience of the poor very seriously. One prominent South African theologian, Bongajalo Goba also echoes the same sentiment with regard to the significance of context and reality. Writing in the context of black theology he says that:

Theology must be born within the context of the black Christian community as it participates in the struggle (Goba 1988)

The same point is also emphasized by Cone when he says that:

Black theology must take seriously the reality of black people, their life of suffering and humiliation (Cone 1969:117).

The author agrees with both Goba and Cones that all of black theology, and in fact all of theology including pastoral care, must take black reality seriously (Goba 1988; Cone 1969). This black reality is marked by poverty, suffering and oppression. This research therefore takes the reality of poverty seriously, as experienced by the poor themselves.

In the methodology of liberation theology, according to exponents of liberation theology, theology is understood to be the second act, which presupposes the first act, on which it reflects (Gibellini 1987:5; cf. Cone 1985:147). In this new method Cone says that orthopraxis comes before orthodoxy. He also says:

Theology in this methodology is a critical reflection upon prior religio-cultural affirmation and political commitment to be in solidarity with victims of our continents (Cone 1985:148).

The researcher agrees with Cone and other liberation theologians such as Gibellini that theological reflection (or experience of faith) on praxis is as critical as the first act, which comes before orthodoxy. It is in that context that this study intends to benefit from the methodology that is used widely in liberation theology.

1.4.2. PASTORAL CARE METHODOLOGY- GERKIN'S NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL MODEL

Apart from heavily relying on the methodology from liberation theology, this study will find guidance from the narrative hermeneutical model developed by Gerkin (1997:15). This narrative hermeneutical model was developed in contrast to the psychotherapeutic pastoral care model that used to be dominant and common in the U.S.A and went on to infiltrate all Western pastoral care. Gerkin concedes that the development of his narrative hermeneutical model was influenced by Anton Boisen, who was the first person to coin the phrase the "living human documents" (Boisen 1952: cf. Gerkin 1997:15). To Anton Boisen the reading of the "living human documents" was as important as the reading of biblical and historical texts. In this model there is due recognition and appreciation of the importance of

human needs in pastoral care (Gerkin 1997:97). The phrase, “the living human document” is Boisen’s way of reminding us that any human being is a unique text that must be read and interpreted, as we carry out our hermeneutical task (Lester 1995:4). The researcher agrees with Gerkin and Lester that in pastoral care “the living human documents” are as important as the biblical and historical texts. The other important feature of Gerkin’s model is the recognition of the care of the whole family in addition to care of individuals (Gerkin 1997:118). One could even add the care of the whole community in which pastoral care is developed and practiced. In this respect the hermeneutical narrative model has a lot in common with the African worldview which values communal life. This is in line with what African theologians such as Goba (1988) call communal praxis. In the researcher’s opinion this model may be closer to the African worldview than most models developed in pastoral care.

1.5. AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND THE RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

There is extensive amount of literature on pastoral care, which is written from the European and American perspectives by authors of those developed countries. While their theories and paradigms may have been relevant and contextual for their various contexts marked by affluence and other material conditions associated with affluence, such theories and paradigms can no longer be uncritically read and applied to the situation of the developing countries. There is unfortunately far less work (literature) written by pastoral care practitioners from the perspectives of the developing world, except for a

few articles by only a few African authors such as Msomi, Njumbuxa and a few others, The few and limited journal articles just mention the realities of the developing world in passing. Therefore this research is a contribution to the body of literature that approaches pastoral care from the perspectives of the poor. This research is done in view of contributing towards making pastoral care contextual and liberating.

The three-fold aim of this research is as follows:

1. To study poverty and understand it from the perspectives of the poor themselves.
2. To study and understand the pastoral care needs of the poor from their own perspectives.
3. To find ways of making pastoral care useful, contextual and liberating

Thus this study hopes to be a contribution to the much necessary challenge to theology in general, and to pastoral care in particular. This challenge relates to making pastoral care relevant, contextual and liberating. To appropriate the words of one leading feminist pastoral theologian, Stevenson-Moessner, pastoral care has to be “optimally effective“(Capps 2003:9; cf. Stevenson-Moessner 2005:23).

Pastoral care can be optimally effective in the South African context of

poverty provided:

(a). Pastoral care in Africa ceases to be a carbon copy of European and American pastoral care (cf. Msomi 1993; De Jong Van Arkel 1995).

(b). Pastoral care takes the African realities (realities of poverty in the developing world) seriously. One of the most important realities of Africa is the context of poverty, which is compounded by other associated realities such as HIV and AIDS, illiteracy, crime, economics and power.

(c). Pastoral care must cease to only concentrate on “the ambulance ministry” with the sick and the troubled, while ignoring the social, economic and political causes of poverty and all that make them sick and troubled. Pattison correctly points out that relating pastoral to the social and political dimensions of life has to be a major concern in pastoral care (Pattison 1988:83).

This research is therefore a contribution to existing body of knowledge that makes pastoral care relevant, contextual and liberating.

1.6. RESEARCH METHOD

The proposed research will consist of two major parts, namely:

1. Reviewing of literature. This is chiefly literature on the following: poverty, pastoral care and practical theology. This research also looks

at the literature on liberation theology, from which the researcher believes pastoral care can be enriched.

2. Empirical research in poor communities. This research uses In-depth interviews in order to benefit from the perspective of the poor themselves. The empirical part uses grounded theory in data collection and analysis (cf. Glazer and Strauss 1999:1).

The research relies heavily on methods and insights from other disciplines especially the social sciences. This is carried out in the spirit of multi-disciplinary approach as Brekke explains it:

With care and attention that is demanded by all disciplines in the social sciences (Brekke 1979:4).

This study is done in that spirit of multi-disciplinary cooperation with methods from other social sciences. Thus this research will appreciate the value of social sciences methods which according to Babbie:

offer a way of addressing issues with logical and observational rigour (Babbie 1989:3).

According to Babbie such methods let us pierce through our personal viewpoints and allow us to get a look at the world that lies beyond our normal

vision (Babbie 1989: 4). This research uses scientific methodology of investigating praxis in the context of poverty.

Of the methods of research, namely qualitative and quantitative methods this research is mainly qualitative in orientation. To be precise the method used is grounded theory, which Neuman describes as:

a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon (Neuman 2000:146; cf. Strauss and Corbin 1990:24).

In the same spirit this research tries to grapple with and understand the phenomenon of poverty in a systematic way.

Marshall and Rossman say that qualitative research methods have become increasingly important modes of inquiry in the social sciences (Marshall and Rossman 1989:9). This is a fact that is also appreciated by Dreyer who recognises that there is a growing interest in the use of qualitative research (Dreyer 1993:219). This research also uses the same methods in data collection. As a data collection technique, In-depth Interviews are conducted with a sample representing the poor themselves. This is in view of understanding their perspective on poverty, as well as their own understanding of their pastoral care needs.

1.7. Definition of key terms and concepts

In this section only a few key terms and concepts are explained. The following concepts are not in order of importance but rather listed alphabetically.

1.7.1. Gerkin's narrative hermeneutical model: This refers to the model that was developed in contrast to the psychotherapeutic pastoral care that used to be popular in the U.S.A and went on to infiltrate all western pastoral care. It has also inevitably infiltrated pastoral care theory and practice in Africa. This model gives due recognition and appreciation to the importance of human needs in pastoral care. To Gerkin the "living human documents" are as important as the biblical and historical texts, and they must also be read and interpreted (Gerkin 1997:97).

1.7.2. Grounded theory: This refers to a qualitative research method that was initially discovered during the sixties by the two leading sociologists of the time, Glazer and Strauss. According to this method theory is discovered from the data collected. Furthermore the data from which theory emerges is obtained not in a haphazard way, rather in a systematic way from social research (Glazer and Strauss 2001:1;2; cf. Neuman 2000:146).

1.7.3. Pastoral care: One of the sub-disciplines of practical theology, which in the past was referred to as shepherding, poimenics and soul care (seelsorge) (Van der Ven 1993:37). It deals with the care of Christians for one another. In the past it was confined only to pastors or priests as if they are the

only ones to take care of others. The discipline has developed to the extent that it is liberated from individualism and clericalism and it refers to the caring ministry of all the people of God (cf. Buffel 2004:41). The broadest understanding is provided by Hulme who sees pastoral care as being “synonymous with the entire ministry of the church” (Hulme 1970:10).

1.7.4. Poverty: Poverty is a state of want or deprivation in which those who suffer from it have no basic, minimum requirements for survival. According Boff and Pixley the poor suffer from basic economic needs and they are deprived of material goods necessary to live with dignity. The poor are oppressed in all manner of ways and they seek their liberation (Boff and Pixley 1989:3,4). Pieterse uses a definition that is commonly accepted by researchers that poverty is:

The inability of individuals; households or entire communities to command resources to satisfy a socially acceptable standard of living (Pieterse 2001:30; cf. May 2000:5).

The researcher subscribes to the above-mentioned definition which though it may not cover all aspects of poverty, it captures the essence of what poverty is all about.

1.3.5. Theoretical sampling: A method of sampling used in qualitative research, that is in contrast to the rigorous statistical sampling methods used in quantitative research. In terms of this theoretical sampling the process of

data collection and the associated volume of participants are controlled and determined by emerging theory as one proceeds with data collection. Participants are theoretically chosen as theory emerges from collected data. The selection is not based on a preconceived theoretical framework, nor is the selection drawn in advance as it is the case with qualitative research (cf. Glazer and Stead 2001; Struwig and Stead 2001).

1.8. Conclusion

Having clarified the research problem, aims, the relevance of the study, as well as the background to this study in the first chapter, chapter two deals with critical review of literature, as well as location of pastoral care within a practical theological framework. Furthermore the next chapter attempts to define pastoral care. It also looks at liberation theology and its methodology from which pastoral care can be enriched. It also outlines the context of this research, which is also the context in which pastoral care is developed and practiced.

1.9. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS OF THIS DISSERTATION

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter reviews literature on pastoral, practical theology and poverty as the context of this research. It also looks at literature from development

studies and other sources that provide information on socio-economic and political realities of South Africa.

Chapter 3: Research Method and Design

This chapter outlines the Research method chosen. It also deals with grounded theory, the research design, data collection, the population, theoretical sampling, data analysis and some ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Results concurrently with preliminary analysis of data

In this chapter there is presentation of the results from interviews undertaken

Chapter 5: Final Data Analysis

This chapter deals with analysis of consistencies and contrasts with literature, as well as interpretation of results

Chapter 6: Contextual and liberating Pastoral care

This chapter deals with the emerging model of pastoral care. This is examined against dominant theories and models of pastoral care, with Gerkin's hermeneutical model being of critical importance in guiding the author. The research also benefits from the work of Pattison, one of the few

Western pastoral theologians who appreciate the role played by socio-economic realities in personal and individual problems that pastoral care deal with. Furthermore this chapter also relies heavily on the methodological approaches proposed in Liberation theology.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and Conclusions

The final chapter provides a summary of the conclusions drawn. It also provides some recommendations for future studies in the field of pastoral care.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This second chapter critically reviews literature on pastoral care, practical theology and liberation theology. It also looks critically into the literature on poverty and associated ills such as inequality; illiteracy and others. In addition it locates pastoral care within a practical theological framework. Furthermore it outlines the context of the present study, marked by poverty, which is also the context in which pastoral care is developed and practiced.

2.2. PASTORAL CARE WITHIN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY FRAMEWORK

2.2.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCATING PASTORAL CARE WITHIN A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This study recognises the need to locate pastoral care within a practical theological framework. This is done by briefly tracing the history of practical theology as a theological discipline and its various sub-disciplines, of which pastoral care is one (Heyns and Pieterse 1990; cf. Van der Ven 1995; Heyns 1995). The history of the discipline is traced right from the time it was established as an academic discipline in 1774 in Austria to the present day.

While this process does not help with poverty per se, it makes sense in the opinion of the researcher to locate the study within the broader practical theological framework. In addition it also helps to know where a discipline comes from, if we are to understand its present and its future, as well as its challenges. Furthermore a full understanding of a discipline and where it comes from is a foundation upon which an understanding of the discipline is based.

2.2.2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Practical theology was first established as a theological, academic discipline in 1774 in Austria, Vienna (Heyns 1995:56; cf. Van der Ven 1994:30). In that year, Stephen Rautenstrauch, proposed to the Empress Maria Theresia of Austria, that a fifth year be added to the four years, which was supposed to be practical (Van der Ven 1994:30). Rautenstrauch's ideas of pastoral theology as a science, was that practical theology comprised two sections namely:

Firstly, a theologically orientated section to be taught at university and,

Secondly, a practically oriented section to be taught at seminaries

Heyns and Pieterse say that the distinction is artificial as it was found that practical theology as taught at university was no different from that taught at seminaries. During that early stage of the development of the discipline,

practical theology was called pastoral theology (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:87). The first theologian to call Pastoral theology by the name Practical theology was Friedrich Schleiermacher (Heyns and Pieterse 1990). He also gave practical theology its own clearly defined status as a theological science. He directed the subject to ecclesiastical activities as a whole and not just to the pastor or special ministries. For his unique contribution, Schleiermacher is regarded as the father of practical theology, which he called the crown of all theological study. According to him, in practical theology all theology becomes practical. It arrives in the world. He stated that practical theology is not praxis, but theory of praxis (Heyns and Pieterse 1990 cf. Van der Ven 1998).

2.2.3. DEFINITION OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

There is need to understand what practical theology is. A number of definitions are attempted by some theologians, not necessarily contradicting each other nor mutually exclusive of each other. Hawkes defines practical theology as a critical study of contemporary activities and experience of Christians and of the church in relation to God's will and purpose for them (Hawkes 1989:29).

Heyns and Pieterse define practical theology as that branch of theological science that analyses praxis scientifically (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:10). They maintain that practical theology is a science because it has its own field of study, develops its own practical theological theories and applies its own scientific methods. Heyns and Pieterse describe practical theology as a

critical theory of religious actions in society. They further say practical theology is that part of theology that concerns itself with encounters between God and humanity (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:6). According to Van der Ven practical theology can be interpreted as a critical theory of religious praxis (Van der Ven 1988:9).

2.2.4.METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

According to Van der Ven the question of methodology in practical theology is at stake most of the times. He says there are others who argue that practical theology has no methodology and should not even have one (Van der Ven 1994:29). Methodology is of critical importance in practical theology. According to Van der Ven, methodology is a necessary condition for practical theology (Van der Ven 1994:24). He says without clear methodology, practical theology cannot fulfil its task; namely reflecting on the people's praxis from the viewpoint of God's revelatory praxis in a way that is as scientific as possible. This especially refers to developing practical theology within the context of a modern secular university (Van der Ven 1994:29). Van der Ven identifies two conceptions. The first one refers to practical theology from the tradition-based perspective of theology as "sapientia." The second relates to practical theology from the tradition-oriented viewpoint of theology as "scientia." His own point of departure is that of the "scientia" perspective. In that context, he says a question has to be posed, that is, "which methodology is relevant for practical theology?" Van der Ven goes on to identify a number of methodologies that are used in practical theological studies:

Historical methodology, ... hermeneutical methodology and ideology-critical methodology, all of which are very enriching (Van der Ven 1994:30).

Next to these methods is the empirical approach, which is relevant for practical theology. According to Pieterse it borrows from empirical methods of the social sciences, in an interdisciplinary approach (Pieterse 2001:12). This is typical of the sciences as they continually borrow one another's methods.

2.2.5 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AS EMPIRICAL THEOLOGY

As van der Ven points out, the empirical approach is the most relevant method for practical theology (Van der Ven 1994:30). This is also supported by Pieterse and Dreyer, when they say that the methods of empirical research are taken over and are being used by practical theologians. The adoption of empirical methods in practical theology signified an important methodological development (Pieterse and Dreyer 1995:34). Pieterse says that the correct place of empirical research in practical theology is an important question (Pieterse 1994:82).

Van der Ven refers to practical theology as empirical theology. He says that practical theology, in the sense of empirical theology, uses empirical methodology for its theological aims (Van der Ven 1988:1). He says that the object of practical theology is to relate theological insights to empirical facts in

a methodologically grounded and systematically structured manner (Van der Ven 1994:32). According to Van der Ven, what is needed in practical theology is empirical-theological research. It is the kind of research in which the procedures of conceptualisation and operationalisation and data collection determine the praxis under investigation (Van der Ven 1988:13). Van der Ven does not talk about empirical method, rather he calls practical theology, empirical theology. It was perhaps this approach that led to the change in the name of the Department of Pastoral theology, which he is heading. It is now renamed the Department of Empirical theology. Pieterse says that Van der Ven's work is the most comprehensive and best-developed argumentation for an empirical approach in theology, and especially practical theology (Pieterse 1994:81). His work has made a fundamental contribution to theology as a whole. In his assessment of Van der Ven's work, Pieterse says that Van der Ven's approach does not come out of the blue. It has strong roots in the empirical theology of the early Chicago school at the beginning of the century. It furthermore finds roots in the arguments for empirical theology by German practical theologians like Baston, Spiegel, Baumler etc, who also argued for empirical theology during the seventies (Pieterse 1996:80-81).

In the empirical approach, practical theology finds methods and tools to describe and explain what goes on in the lives of people (Pieterse 1994:79). According to Pieterse the empirical methodology makes it possible for practical theology to analyse and evaluate the texts which people use as guides in their religious experience, to explore and validate the interpretations of these experiences, and finally, to investigate hypotheses that are

formulated with regard to these experiences and texts and contexts with which they are connected (Pieterse 1994:79).

2.2.6. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AS THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

Practical theologians are agreed that their discipline is an action science that studies actions performed by Christian believers (Pieterse 2001:9). The pastors, preachers and Christians perform these Christian actions both inside and outside the church. These actions are communicated not just in language and creeds but also in deeds. The acts are intentional acts aimed at intervening in a situation in view of transforming the church and society.

Practical theology is a field of study that has to do with comprehending and getting to know God, appropriating the Biblical message and concomitant religious action (Pieterse 2001:8). Comprehending is essentially a communicative process. Hence the field of practical theology is to convey the faith, the action that mediates it or, to put it differently, to communicate through mediatory actions. Practical theologians study this field within the overall field of theology. Therefore it can be defined as a study of communicative acts in the service of the gospel in the context of modern society. Pieterse correctly adds that communicative actions should be in the service of the gospel, towards the realisation of the kingdom of God (Pieterse 2001:8).

2.2.7. THEORY-PRAXIS RELATION

A critical question in practical theology is that of the relationship between theory and praxis. Van der Ven, states that the relationship between theory and praxis has to be interpreted as the core question of practical theology (Van der Ven 1988:7). It is the crux of *theologica practica*. According to Hawkes, in practical theology, theory and praxis are intimately and inextricably connected (Hawkes 1989:29). Stone also emphasises the issue of the relation between theory and praxis. He says that praxis is most effective when it is in concert with theory. Ideally, practice and theory inform and support each other (Stone 2001:182). Thus the relation is that of mutual benefit to each other. To be more precise, there is a relationship of mutual information and support between the two.

According to Heyns and Pieterse practical theology is a science concerned with praxis. It is not an armchair enterprise. Practical theology is indissolubly linked with praxis in the sense that it critically monitors the relationship and interaction (interplay) between praxis and theory (cf. Pieterse 1990:12,13). Pieterse says that there is a bipolar relation between theory and praxis. This relation is also dialectical, indicating that we should approach it hermeneutically (Pieterse 2001:9). It means that the theoretical theories that we deal with are in the various traditions and praxis of active believers and they are also in the broad sense described above, in tension on an equal footing.

Practical theology applies critical theory to praxis and vice versa. This critical theory is meant to be communicative acts in the service of the gospel, in order to direct such acts towards the gospel of justice, righteousness, human dignity and freedom. This is in order to promote the coming of the kingdom of God (Pieterse 2001:10).

2.2.8. THE TASK OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Practical theology studies religious praxis, as it relates to the encounter between God and human beings. According to Van der Ven the task that has to be fulfilled by practical theology is: 'to reflect on the people's praxis from the viewpoint of God's revelatory praxis in a way that is as scientific as possible' (Van der Ven 1994:29). Putting it in context, Pieterse says practical theology has the task of theorising on communication of the Christian faith in contemporary context (Pieterse 1994:78). Practical theology, with its empirical approach describes and explains what goes on concretely in the lives of people. It analyses and evaluates the texts, which these people use as guides in their religious experience. According to theologians, empirical theology reads the signs of the times, from the perspective of a faith that seeks to be engaged in reality and the transformation of reality, so that faith and experience, dogma and pastorate, church and society enter into a relationship that generates mutual power of revelation. Thus, practical theology concerns itself with theories of ecclesiastical and religious praxis (cf. Heyns and Pieterse 1990:19). Putting the task of practical theology in a South African context, Louw says the basic task of practical theology is to create a healing

community, where painful stories of the past can be told and heard (Louw 1997:27). This is what Louw calls a pastoral task. Practical theology reflects on what happens in the congregation and on the religious actions of the people, both within the church and in society at large (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:12). Furthermore, they say that the task of practical theology is to think about the things that happen in the congregation (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:13).

2.2.9. SUB-DISCIPLINES OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Though practical theology is an academic, scientific discipline, it has a number of sub-disciplines. These sub-disciplines were previously defined in terms of the work of the clergy, however, they have since been defined in terms of the church (Van der Ven 1993:36). Van der Ven identifies with what he calls the clear-cut traditional divisions of practical theology from an ecclesiastical perspective and mentions the following divisions: pastoral guidance, catechesis, liturgy, diaconal service and parish development (Van der Ven 1993:37).

Hiltner divided the disciplines into these major divisions, namely: organising, communicating and shepherding (Hiltner 1958). Hiltner refers to these as perspectives (1958:55). Clearly there is no consensus on the precise divisions of the sub-disciplines of practical theology. Van der Ven also points out to the fact that there is no agreement on the most satisfactory division of practical theology from an ecclesiastical perspective (Van der Ven 1993:37). However

the present study aligns itself with the division proposed by Heyns and Pieterse namely: preaching, instruction, celebration, service and care (Pieterse 1990:12). Van der Ven also concurs that these are the main fields of study (Van der Ven 1993:37). Heyns and Pieterse point out that practical theology is not responsible for the accomplishment of the five religious actions mentioned above. Rather the task of practical theology is to think about the things that happen in the congregation (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:12, 13). Practical theology engages in analysis of what happens in both the church and the world. While the researcher agrees that it is not the task of practical theology to accomplish the above-mentioned actions or services, reflecting on what happens in the congregation is not an end in itself. We do not just think about what happens for the sake of it. Critical theological reflection in practical theology is done so that praxis and theory can be critiqued in view of review, improvement, or affirmation of religious praxis. When practical theology reflects on what is happening in the congregation or the community it is in view of improving or bringing about transformation. As Hawkes points out, the purpose is understanding, prediction and revision of practice with a view to enhancing Christian ministry to and by Christians and the church (Hawkes 1989:29). Furthermore, Hawkes says:

I believe practical theology to be vital to the well-being, well-doing of the church, including the church in South Africa (Hawkes 1989:29).

In the opinion of the researcher this needs to be extended to the wellbeing and well doing of the broader community, and not just that of the church.

Practical theology does not merely reflect on what happens in the church. According to Heyns and Pieterse, it reflects critically on what happens in the congregation and on the religious actions of the people both within the church and society at large (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:12).

2.2.10. PASTORAL CARE AS ONE OF THE FIVE SUB-DISCIPLINES

Pastoral care is one of the five main sub-disciplines of practical theology, together with the following: preaching, instruction, celebration and service (cf. Heyns and Pieterse 1990:12). The present study falls under pastoral care.

The experience and welfare of the poor cannot be excluded from religious actions just because some of the poor may not be Christians. In South Africa, the majority of citizens are Christians and more than half of the South African population live in poverty (cf. May and Govender 1998:45; Pieterse 2001:32). Their religious actions can also be assessed by practical theology relying on empirical methodology.

2.2.10.1. PASTORAL CARE AND OTHER PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

Pastoral care and counselling are two of the main pastoral activities of the church. The other one is pastoral psychotherapy. There are times when pastoral care and counselling are used synonymously, and wrongly so. According to Hulme pastoral care is a larger discipline, under which the other two falls (Hulme 1970:10). He says that pastoral counselling is a specific

discipline within the larger discipline of pastoral care. Furthermore, he says that broadly speaking, pastoral care is synonymous with the entire ministry. According to Hulme, everything that a minister does as a minister is pastoral care. This is helpful in understanding the relationship between the three, namely pastoral care, pastoral counselling and pastoral psychotherapy. It needs to be pointed out, however, that they are all part of a larger discipline, practical theology. Where Hulme mentions discipline, one could replace that with sub-discipline, as that is what pastoral care is, that is, one of the sub-disciplines of practical theology.

Whereas pastoral care is a broad sub discipline, pastoral counselling is one of its dimensions, which is the utilisation of a variety of healing (therapeutic) methods to help people handle their problems and crises more growth fully and thus experience healing in their broken lives. People need counselling at times of severe crisis, usually short term (Clinebell 1984:26). Pastoral psychotherapy is the utilisation of long term, reconstructive therapeutic methods when growth is chronically diminished by need-depriving early life experiences or by multiple crises in adult life (Clinebell 1984:26). Furthermore, according to Clinebell, the primary focus of pastoral care and counselling in general ministry is on helping people handle their problems and crisis meaningfully (Clinebell 1984:35). Thus whereas pastoral counselling and pastoral psychotherapy are specific, pastoral care is the broad, inclusive ministry of mutual healing and growth within a congregation and its community (Clinebell 1984:26). According to Clinebell people need pastoral care throughout their lives (Clinebell 1984:26). This is in the context of

Clinebell's growth centred approach. This is regarded as a given regarding all other Christians. The other two pastoral activities (or rather needs) namely, pastoral counselling and pastoral psychotherapy, mostly accessible to the rich, are also desperately needed by the poor. The focus of this study is on the poor and their pastoral care needs.

To emphasise the question of needs, Clinebell (1984:46) says that pastoral care is a response to the need that everyone has for warmth, nurture, support and caring (Clinebell 1984:46). Hulme (1981:9) is in support of this when he writes:

Pastoral care is a supportive ministry to people and those close to them who are experiencing the familiar trials that characterise life in this world such as illness, surgery, incapacitation, death and bereavement (Hulme 1981:9).

This is heightened during the times of personal stress and social chaos, and in the researcher's opinion, the poor are no exceptions to the needs described above.

2.2.10.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING PASTORAL CARE

It is essential to have a clear understanding of what pastoral care is before one engages in any discourse on it. There is, therefore, the need to review a number of definitions as offered by several authors in the field. The

researcher agrees with Pattison who notes the significance of defining pastoral care (Pattison 1988:1). In the researcher's opinion the complexity of the task of defining any discipline should never deter one from articulating a clear definition, hence the effort to grapple with matters of definition in this research. The importance of definition is also recognised by Campbell (1987). According to Pattison many authors ignore the importance of defining pastoral care (Pattison 1988:1). They take it for granted that they do not need to define pastoral care. It is assumed that people already know what pastoral care is. Such an assumption is inappropriate, if not out of place. At a Leadership workshop of lay leaders, one very educated member of the Parish Council asked the question: "What is pastoral care? Of what use is it to the parishioners?" Other participants in the workshop also expressed the need to clarify what pastoral care is and what its usefulness is.

Emmanuel Lartey also posed more or less similar questions, as he tried to explore and give clarity to the nature of pastoral theology:

What do we mean by pastoral theology? What does it entail? Of what use is it and to whom? How do we understand it and how do we engage in it? (Lartey 2006:4)

While the members referred to above had a fair understanding of all other theological disciplines and their usefulness, they had no clue as to what pastoral care is or its usefulness. Though anecdotal, this illustrates that pastoral care is an unknown theological discipline among many lay leaders, in

comparison with other classical disciplines such as Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic theology, Theological ethics and others.

One cannot overemphasize the importance of defining pastoral care, as well as ensuring that it is defined as broadly and inclusively as possible. This research critically reviews a number of definitions and ultimately adopts a working definition of pastoral care.

2.2.10.3. DEFINITION OF PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care is defined as that aspect of ministry, which is concerned with the wellbeing of individuals and communities (Campbell 1987:188). The definition offered by Clebsch and Jaeckle emphasises notable insights with regard to context. They define pastoral care as:

The ministry of the cure of souls consist of helping acts done by representatives of Christian persons, directed towards the healing' sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns (Clebsch and Jaeckle 1964:4; Wright 1982:23)

It is important to note that the classical definition provided by Clebsch and Jaeckle as far back as 1964 takes context seriously. How does modern day pastoral care (or any theology for that matter) manage not to be contextual, when pastoral care theorists of the past, such as Clebsch and Jaeckle took

due cognisance of the context?

Clebsch and Jaeckle, when identifying the four distinct functions of pastoral care, do not claim any originality regarding the four functions of pastoral care (Clebsch and Jaeckle 1964:4). They concede that these were delineated earlier by Seward Hiltner in his Preface to Pastoral Theology, which was published in 1958.

The same four main distinct functions are also identified by Campbell, namely: healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling (Campbell 1987:188). The four functions are also cited by Pattison, Hunter and Lester (Pattison 1988:12; Hunter 1990:836; Lester 1995:1). Clebsch and Jaeckle suggest that the content of care includes the pastoral functions of healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling (Clebsch and Jaeckle 1964:4). Reiterating the same point and tracing its historical development Lester says:

Pastoral care and counseling are historically concerned with healing, guiding, sustaining, (*reconciling*) and liberating (Lester 1995:1).

Most literature on pastoral care that makes efforts to define and trace the history of pastoral care reiterates the four functions mentioned above.

Without pretending to be original, but rather drawing from aspects emphasised by other authors, in this research, pastoral care is defined as:

That multidimensional ministry of all believers in the church, which is concerned with the wellbeing of all of God's people, be it as individuals or as groups or communities. In this ministry, which occurs in socio-economic and political contexts, each one is a brother or sister to another. This all-inclusive ministry of keeping each other or mutually caring for each other takes the context of brother or sister into cognisance (Buffel 2004:40).

In the context of the present study, the context that is taken seriously is that of poverty. This is further compounded by problems associated with poverty such as inequality, HIV and Aids pandemic, illiteracy and crime.

2.2.10. 4. A CRITIQUE OF PASTORAL CARE

This research argues that modern pastoral care is largely and primarily a Western dominated enterprise. This argument pursued by one of the leading South African authors in the field, De Jong Van Arkel, who writes:

Theories generated for this field are influenced by individualistic and affluent lifestyles of Western Europe and North America (De Jong Van Arkel 1995:190).

The same fact is further echoed by another leading South African theologian, who says:

Pastoral care is mostly oriented to the European and North American model (Louw 1995:29)

The two white theologians cited above concede that pastoral care theories used at our universities and theological seminaries are imported into Africa, often without adaptation for the African context and culture (Louw 1995; De Jong Van Arkel 1995). This fact is also raised and supported by Njumbuxa who says that Western oriented pastoral work as we have it appeals best among Western oriented people (Njumbuxa 1995:47).

Njumbuxa together with Louw warn that pastoral work should not be viewed as a carbon copy of the white pastorate (Njumbuxa 1995:48; Louw 1995:29). The researcher agrees with Njumbuxa and Louw that whereas pastoral care in Africa cannot completely sever ties with its heritage, it needs to be critical and to take cognisance of the context in which it is developed and practiced.

De Jong Van Arkel rightly points out that

as a result of this uncritical importation, pastoral theology and practice which is developed in South Africa remains subject to the tutelage and captivity of the first world (De Jong Van Arkel 1995:190).

Thus Africa continues to be in some form of North Atlantic captivity in terms of pastoral care, which is one consequence of the colonial history of most African people. The same critique is also captured by other African writers such as Msomi (1993:75) and Njumbuxa (1995:48).

In his critique of the influence of Western based pastoral care Msomi argues that:

the weakness in the Southern African context has persisted far too long as if the African pastorate were a carbon copy of the European, British or North American one (Msomi 1993:75).

It is a known fact that the material conditions of the so-called First world or developed world are shaped by affluence, which is in contrast with the material conditions of the developing world, which are marked by poverty. It is equally a known fact that pastoral care theories that are taught and applied in the developing world were developed in the developed world (First world). This is an anomaly that, must be corrected if pastoral care has to be contextual and liberating. This research is a small contribution in this endeavour.

2.3. LIBERATION THEOLOGY

2.3.1. WHAT IS LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Liberation theology is that brand of theology that has its origin in the Third world, which in the evangelical world and development sector is referred to as “the two-thirds of the world”. Whereas liberation theology has its origin in Latin America, it later became what Ellis and Maduro refer to as a global phenomenon. According to Bosch ‘the theology of liberation’ is a multifaceted phenomenon, manifesting itself in various theologies from the Third world (Bosch 1991:432). It is probably for that reason that others refrain from referring to liberation theology in the singular, but rather in the plural form. The reference in the plural form seems to be favoured by Motlhabi, who asserts that to speak of “liberation theology” is perhaps misleading (Motlhabi 1987:1). Motlhabi argues that:

A more appropriate appellation would be the plural form: ‘liberation theologies’ (Motlhabi 1987:1).

The researcher prefers the singular “liberation theology” to “theologies” in that it could just be one theology that has different emphasis or perspectives depending on those who articulate it and also depending on the harsh realities and context within which “theology is done” in contrast to “theology which is thought of.” Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it suffices to refer to a singular “liberation theology” and not “theologies,” with due

recognition that there are a variety of emphases or perspectives depending on various contexts.

It is accepted historically that liberation theology started in Latin America during the mid sixties. It came about not as a result of the intellectual efforts of theologians but the efforts of the Christian base communities as they grappled with the realities of oppression, dehumanization and poverty. However the Latin Americans were not the first to grapple with such issues. They may have given it the name and intensified the momentum; however the realities they grappled with have long been in existence. Rieger discourages the tendency to discuss who was “really first” in talking about a theology of liberation, since liberation theology and its various brands were not the brainchild of intellectual heroes but in recognition of severe suffering and pressure in many shapes and forms (Rieger 1999:3). These realities of suffering and oppression were there long before the term “liberation theology” was coined. When God called and inspired Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt that was liberation theology even though it may not have been called that. When the Israelites protested in exile and sang protest songs such as Psalm 137: “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” That was equally liberation theology. When South Africans protested in South African streets at the risk of being tear-gassed, arrested and shot and killed that was their brand of liberation theology. What professional theologians did was chiefly to articulate in theological language the concerns, pains and struggles of the poor and the oppressed. Rieger correctly points out that it is often overlooked that liberation theology did not develop out of one centre, as a

great idea that made its way from top down, but from bottom up (Rieger 1999:3). It emerged out of situation in which people were grappling with harsh realities of life.

Segundo says that from its inception liberation theology was a theology which arose out of the urgent problems of real life (Segundo 1985:4). According to Segundo:

Liberation theology deals not so much deal with content as with the method used to theologise in the face of real life situation (Segundo 1985:9).

Thus liberation theology does not emanate from the “ivory tower” but from real life, that is, the *Sitz im leben*. Haight points out that, historically, liberation theology arose in Latin America as a human response to the large-scale suffering that is manifested there (Haight 1985:27). The development of liberation theology was not the monopoly of Latin America but rather other parts of the developing world, including South Africa. Even in the developed world such as the U.S.A. there was a particular brand referred to as Black theology. It arose out of the suffering inflicted on the poor and the oppressed in not only Latin America but in all the Third world, with different emphases and perspectives depending on the specific context of each brand of liberation theology.

According to one of its chief proponents, commonly regarded as the father of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez, liberation theology is:

. . . a theoretical reflection born of the experience of shared efforts to abolish the current unjust situation and to build a different society, freer and more human (Gutierrez 1988:XIII; cf. Frei 1989:32; West 1999:14).

Gutierrez defines liberation theology as:

critical reflection both from within, and upon historical praxis, in confronting the world with the word of God as lived out and experienced in faith (Gutierrez 1988)

Boff's definition raises more or less the same issues as that of Gutierrez:

a critical reflection on human praxis in the light of the practice of Jesus and the exigencies of faith (Boff 1988:14).

Nolan and Broderick describe liberation theology as an attempt by theologians to answer the faith questions of the oppressed (*and the poor*) people (Nolan and Broderick 1987:6).

These definitions share two important points in common, firstly human praxis (or experience or existential questions) as the starting point, of course in the light of the word of God. Secondly, they both refer to shared efforts to build a

different society or to transform society. Thus critical reflection is not an end in itself, but it is done in view of transforming society.

Gibellini says that liberation theology arose out of an ethical indignation at the poverty and the marginalisation of the great masses of our continent (*referring to Latin America*) (Gibellini 1987:4).

A very close to comprehensive definition of liberation theology is offered by Berryman who says that liberation theology is a theology that is a systematic, disciplined reflection on Christian faith and its implications (Berryman 1987:4).

Berryman provides the following three-fold description of liberation theology, calling it an initial description:

- An interpretation of Christian faith out of suffering, struggle and hope of the poor
- A critique of society and the ideologies sustaining it
- A critique of the activity of the church and of Christians from the angle of the poor (Berryman 1987:5,6).

The researcher identifies with this definition, which is all encompassing in comparison with other definitions offered in the literature dealing with liberation theology, except that it could create the impression that all that liberation theology is concerned with is interpretation and critique just for the sake of it. The element of transformation, which is an imperative, is

unfortunately left out in Berryman's definition. Perhaps Berryman's definition could have been fourfold instead of three-fold, in order to include the transformation part. This is that element which Cone calls a political commitment to the liberation of the poor and the oppressed (Cone 1985:147). Critique and interpretation alone can never bring about change and only a genuine (political or otherwise) commitment to the liberation of the poor will lead to transformation.

2.3.2. LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND POVERTY

Liberation theology arises as a response of the poor to their conditions. According to Berryman the fact and reality of widespread poverty is the starting point of liberation theology (Berryman 1989:29). According to West, the poor are the primary interlocutors in liberation theology (West 1999:14). West goes on to say that in contrast to Western theologies, liberation theologies always ask the question: "Who are the primary interlocutors of theology?" and "Who are we talking about and collaborating with when we read the Bible and do theology?" The answer to these questions is: the poor, that is, the marginalised (West 1999:14). While West is correct in identifying the poor as the primary interlocutors, we need to note that the poor are not just passive recipients of the charity of the rich. They are centrally involved in the articulation of their theology of liberation. They have ownership of liberation theology. According to Boff and Pixley the poor are rising up and organizing themselves for their collective liberation (Boff and Pixley 1989:5). Thus liberation theologians do not pretend to be the "voice of the voiceless,"

but rather the poor themselves are making their own voices heard. Berryman correctly points out that the poor themselves are interpreting their own faith in a new way. He says:

In liberation theology the poor learn to read the scriptures in a way that affirms their dignity and self worth and their right to struggle together for a more decent life (Berryman 1987:5; cf. Bosch 1991:432).

According to Frei:

The initiators of that reflection are the poor themselves they are the agents of transformation (Frei 1981:34).

Thus the poor themselves express themselves theologically. All that professional theologians have to do is to listen to the poor, and accompany the poor as they articulate their theology of liberation, as Boff does in his book with the same title (cf. Boff 1988).

The poor and their experience of poverty are of critical importance in liberation theology. According to Boff the theology of liberation begins with the actual liberating praxis (Boff 1987:14). The poor and their reality (experience) equally continue to be the primary interlocutors in this search of a relevant, contextual and liberating pastoral care. Writing in the context of El Salvador, Archbishop Oscar Romero said that the majority of the poor are oppressed and repressed daily by economic and political structures (Romero 1988:181).

This is true for all the poor and the oppressed of the developing world. These oppressed and repressed poor people are the interlocutors of our theology in general and in particular this research. They are our “living human documents”, to use Anton Boisen’s phrase (Boisen 1952; cf. Gerkin 1997; Gerkin 1984; Lester 1995). They are the “living human documents” that must be read, studied, interpreted, listened to and ultimately liberated in a transformation process in which the poor play a central role.

2.3.3. PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

Liberation theology argues that God is on the side of the poor. If God is on the side of the poor, how can the church be on a different side? According to Gutierrez: “an option for the poor is an option for the Kingdom of God” (Gutierrez 1990). The entire Bible beginning with Cain and Abel, through the oppression of the Hebrews in Egypt, the times of the prophets and exilic periods all mirror God’s predilection for the weak and the abused of human history. Furthermore the Bible informs us that God is on the side of the poor, the hungry and the suffering. Just before the beginning of Vatican II Pope John XXIII said:

... the church is called upon to be the church of the poor (Gutierrez 1990:13).

Just as God favours the poor, the church also must do the same. Jesus Christ furthered this preferential option for the poor, the oppressed and the

marginalized in his statements and his ministry. Equally the church favours the poor and the oppressed that are called, “the crucified people in history” in the liberation cycles (Stalsett 2003:12,15).

2.3.4. METHODOLOGY OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Liberation theology has a fundamentally different methodology from traditional, western theology. Writing in the context of the wider field of biblical studies, West says that the methodology of the First World, which is regarded as a universally valid norm has recently been fundamentally challenged (West 1995:16; cf. West 1999:12). In the researcher’s opinion this challenge is not only applicable in the wider field of biblical studies, but also in all theology, including practical theology, and pastoral care in particular. According to Segundo, liberation theology deals not so much with the content as with the method used to theologise in the face of our real life situation (Segundo 1985:9). This was an earlier point driven home by Gutierrez who said:

Theology of liberation offers not so much a new theme for reflection as a new way to do theology (Gutierrez 1974:15).

Agreeing with Gutierrez and Segundo, West also notes that liberation theology has a different content and is profoundly different from First World theology in that it has a different methodology (West 1999:12). McGovern, one of the most prolific critics of liberation theology says that liberation theologians see themselves in the words of Gutierrez as proposing “a new

way of doing theology.” The author agrees with Segundo and West that the real life situation, the *Sitz im Leben*, is of critical importance in the development of liberation theology. West correctly points out that there is a radical break in epistemology (West 1999:13). In this epistemological break with the past, theology is no longer the first act, but rather the second, with praxis being the first act. Gibellini, says that experience of faith (*praxis*) is the first act and theology the second act (Gibellini 1987:5). Cone also advocates for a new method of doing theology, in which there is consensus among black and third world theologians that theology is not the first act but rather the second (Cone 1985:147). According to Cone, the first act is both a religious-cultural affirmation of and a political commitment towards the liberation of the poor and the voiceless of Third World continents (Cone 1985:147). In enriching the methodological debate Segundo call this methodology a hermeneutic cycle, which he calls a special methodology that is necessitated by the approach that relates the past and the present challenge with the word of God (Segundo 1985:8). According to Segundo in this methodology there is a continuing change that is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal (Segundo 1985:8). This hermeneutical cycle confirms that theology is alive and it is connected up with the fountainhead of historical reality (Segundo 1985:25). The researcher agrees with Segundo that theology need not only be alive, but also dynamic especially in the context of realities experienced by especially the poor and marginalised.

According to Nolan and Broderick this method of doing theology is clearly circular and ongoing. Like Segundo, they also call this methodology a hermeneutical cycle (Nolan and Broderick 1987:27). Nolan and Broderick describe this hermeneutical cycle as:

the liberation theologian's theory, based upon practical experience of how the Bible and the teachings of the church should be interpreted (Nolan and Broderick 1987:27).

In terms of this theory, present day experience of faith (praxis) throws light upon the meaning of the Bible and, equally, the Bible throws light upon the experience of faith (Nolan and Broderick 1987:28). In the context of this research it means that experience of the poor throw light on the model of pastoral care needed and vice versa. This hermeneutical cycle is possible only if theologians are prepared to work not only from the comfort of their offices and personal computers, but from experience of the poor and marginalised. Professional theologians must be prepared to listen to the poor and accompany them as they journey in the struggle for liberation. This is done in line with what Frei says:

The liberation theologian is not an armchair intellectual confined to libraries and lecture rooms, dedicated to an academic rigour antiseptically protected from current conflicts (Frei 1989:32).

Liberation theology methodology is therefore not only applicable to liberation theology, but all theology. This is equally applicable to pastoral care. This research benefits greatly from the methodology that is used in liberation theology in the context of the poor and marginalised in South African context. It is therefore important to argue for the importance of context before outlining the main features of the South African context.

2.4. CONTEXT

2.4.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

Having located the present research within a practical theological framework, it is equally important to briefly outline the context within which this research is located. This is the same context in which the poor survive and the church exercises its ministry and pastoral care. This section outlines the context, by identifying briefly some of the main features that characterise the black South African context. Poverty so profoundly marks the context that one could say that the South African churches and caregivers carry out their pastoral work in a context of poverty. The features highlighted below all rotate around the problems of poverty.

Pastoral care providers must assess the context of their work. In a foreword

to De Gruchy's book: *Theology in Context and Crisis*, Marty says:

All ministry is contextual and is set in a particular context (De Gruchy 1986:8).

In the opinion of the author any theology or ministry that ignores the particularity of each context is worthless. According to Parrat, context is both the framework and part of the source material for doing theology (Parrat 2004:9). He also correctly points out that all theology is contextual, that is, it arises from a specific historical context and addresses that context (Parrat 2004:2). All that theology needs to do is to be honest about its "contextuality". Some of those trained in Western theology have not readily accepted the fact that their theology and training is contextual. Rather they often pretend that their theology is universal, eternally valid and aloof from context. Examples of this are provided by many of the missionaries and Seminary professors who are sent to the Third world. This problem does not only end with missionaries but this happens with indigenous pastoral givers most of whom are trained in the West. Many are trained in the developing world in a Seminary or University context not different from that of the West. At least Third World theologians have made an honest concession that all theology, including liberation theology is contextual. Miguez Bonino also says that theology has always been contextual implicitly or explicitly, consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or against the will of theologians (Bonino 2004:131). Equally our discipline of pastoral care, as developed and practiced in the context of poverty, must be contextual.

Writing in the context of Third World theologies in Southern Africa Phiri says that context and theology are never static (Phiri 2004:137). In raising the significance of context De Gruchy says that:

When people forget context and crisis they turn abstract, detached, ideological, remote and unhelpful. However when they remember context and crisis they show their identification with the people who are subjects and objects of Christian ministry (De Gruchy 1986:36).

De Gruchy goes on to say that the character which ministry takes within South Africa greatly depends upon the immediate context within which one has to minister. This is yet another appropriate emphasis on the importance of context in ministry. Ministry (theology) and context cannot be separated. Separation of ministry (or pastoral care) from the context can only serve to impoverish pastoral care and make it irrelevant, if not useless. Thus the need to always remember cognisance of context cannot be overemphasized.

According to Clinebell, if context is not duly noted there is a danger that the church will be confronted by irrelevance (Clinebell 1984:14). That applies to pastoral care. If pastoral care does not take context seriously it will be confronted by irrelevance. Therefore the context that is outlined in this study should be kept in mind as this research proceeds. This is the context of poverty, in which the participants in this research live and survive. Having emphasised the importance of context it is important to identify some of the

main features of the South African context.

2.4.2. THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.4.2.1. A DIVIDED SOUTH AFRICA

It is not uncommon nowadays to refer to South Africa as the new South Africa, the introduction of which is believed to have been ushered in on 2 February 1990, at the time of the watershed speech by the then President of South Africa, Mr F. W. De Klerk. At that time South Africa entered a period of transition. Huber recognises that event as having a symbolic significance. He cites Mr F. W. De Klerk, who said:

The dynamics of developments in international affairs have created new opportunities for South Africa as well. Southern Africa now has a new opportunity to set aside its conflicts and ideological differences and draw upon joint programmes and reconstruction (Huber 1991:14)

That speech was followed by a succession of events such as the following:

Unbanning of political organisations and their leadership.

Release of political prisoners

Return of those who were in exile

Repeal of some of the repressive laws that enforced apartheid

A series of rounds of negotiations that culminated at the agreements and

compromises at Kempton Park, with all the associated hiccups.

The most momentous and dramatic of those events was the Election Day on the 27th April 1994, on which all South Africans went to the polls for the first time as a nation to elect the first democratically and representative government. This election punctuated the final and official dismantling of apartheid and the construction of a new and free South Africa. This led to the nation being popularly referred to as “the rainbow nation.” Despite this, poverty remained a great challenge.

More than twelve years after liberation and despite the creation of a new South Africa, in some significant respects South Africa is still a divided country, that is, the white and black parts of the country still exists. Writing after the dawn of the new South Africa, Njumbuxa says:

In South Africa we have two worlds, the Western world and the African world (Njumbuxa 1995:47).

Obviously the Western world remains rich whereas and the African world remains poor. The former is white and the latter is black. Lest it be concluded that Njumbuxa, the researcher and the rest of the blacks like playing the race card, the fact of a divided South Africa is also noted and highlighted by white theologians such as West, De Gruchy, Stone and Pieterse (West 1995:16; De Gruchy 1996; Stone 1996; Pieterse 2000; West 1999). Apart from

theologians, even a leading Afrikaner, academic and economist, the distinguished Prof. S. Terreblanche notes this reality of South Africa being a country of two worlds when he writes:

South Africa is indeed a country of two nations, one rich and the other poor (Terreblanche 2002:39).

Like the rest, Terreblanche accepts that the two nations are separated by a racial divide, with the rich being white and the poor being black (Terreblanche 2002:25-35). Terreblanche points out that the political and legal empowerment of blacks since 1994 has not automatically translated into socio-economic empowerment, hence the existence of the two nations (Terreblanche 2002:35). It is a fact that the majority of those who are poor are black South Africans. The truth of a still racially divided country is also acknowledged by President Thabo Mbeki who said at the occasion of his election as President of the Republic of South Africa on the 14th June 1999:

And yet all of us are aware that our country continues to be divided along racial lines and it is therefore much more difficult to unite around common objectives (Mbeki 2002:25).

Emphasising the effects of apartheid, Stone writes as follows:

Black South Africans may be freed from the rule of the white minority, though not yet from poverty and inequality . . . It will probably take

generations for the wounds of apartheid to heal and for blacks South Africans to accept more fully their own worth and their own gifts of ministry to others (Stone 1996:209).

Concurring with Stone, West correctly captures the reality as follows:

In South Africa the struggle for liberation is largely the struggle of the black community (West 1995:16).

That rich South Africa is white and poor South Africa is black is not an exaggeration of blacks. There are whites, however few, who concede that there are two sections of the South African population, one white and the other black, one rich and the other poor. The issue is not a matter of what is in the minds of blacks and some whites, but the harsh reality of poverty and inequality as they experience these daily, which was created by apartheid. For a significant section of the black population, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

One South African theologian who specialises in the area of pastoral care, Prof D. Louw said:

Although South Africa is moving rapidly away from racism, pastoral care would be unrealistic if it assumed that ethnic considerations, which are usually related to race, social class, religion and gender could be ignored (Louw 1995:41).

Thus despite progress made in building a new South Africa, the so-called “rainbow nation”, poverty continues to be a predominantly black problem.

The Reconstruction and Development Policy Framework (1994), which outlines the policy of the African National Congress recognises that:

. . . apartheid and the economic exploitation have created gross and unnecessary inequalities (Reconstruction and Development Policy Framework 1994:5).

These inequalities continue to this day (2006), thirteen years after Uhuru (freedom). One could sing along with popular artist and singer, Letta Mbulu: “Not Yet Uhuru” She sings this song in the context of the whole African Continent, which though politically liberated from colonial masters, the realities still point to the contrary in terms of economic liberation, which is manifested by inequality in economic empowerment and skewed ownership of resources and particularly the land.

Pieterse says that apartheid policy has created the context of discrimination, dehumanisation and oppression to which theology and the church are compelled to respond (Pieterse 2001:1). One dares to say that there is still need to respond to these harsh realities. These harsh realities are the context in which the church carries out its pastoral work amongst the poorest of the poor. The present study is therefore carried out in the context of the Lutheran

church, of which the author is a member. South Africa continues to be racially divided country. For evidence we go further than our churches. There may well be few incidents of truly racially mixed churches, but a great part of our religious life as South Africans continues to be segregated. This also happens in the private lives and cultural lives of South Africans. In the segregated religious life of different racial churches, the divisions are still punctuated by wealth in white churches and poverty in black churches. The segregated socio-economic and cultural life even permeates churches that share the same ecclesiastical doctrines, that is, the same denominations. In the cases where our churches are integrated on Sundays after the “Amen,” concluding our services, blacks go back to their poverty and whites back to their wealth.

Thus while there have been significant changes, poverty continues to be a reality that wreaks havoc in especially in black people’s lives despite the political power that is now in the hands of blacks. Having the majority of members of Parliament from the ranks of blacks has not yet eradicated poverty. Having a few black millionaires as a result of the narrowly designed Black Economic Empowerment (B.E.E.) has not yet transformed the economic realities of the majority of the citizens of South Africa.

2.4. 2.2. POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Whereas poverty is a worldwide phenomenon, it is mainly concentrated in the countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. According to Mayfield the vast majority of the citizens of the less developed countries go to bed each night

with less calories than are required for a healthy productive life (Mayfielsd 1997:11). In fact, to have even these few calories is a luxury, as there are others who go to bed with no calories at all. Poverty and inequality are the most important of all features of the black context. Poverty is always an important feature of the developing world. This led Ravnborg and Sano to conclude that:

Roughly one third of the developing world's population lives in poverty (Ravonburg and Sano 1994:5).

According to Haight poverty is a worldwide reality, of destitution. It constitutes the lack of basic human necessities, food and drink, clothing, shelter, home, and medical care. Lack of these basic necessities can cause death (Haight 1985:16). According to Gutierrez poverty means death, premature and unjust death due to hunger and sickness (Gutierrez 1984:9-10). It is a known fact that the quality of life in poor communities is very low. In addition the life expectancy among the poor is very low. Boff says that poverty is a product of economic and socio-political mechanisms (Boff 1988:19). Thus poverty is entrenched within the economic and socio-political systems designed by the powerful. According to Boff and Pixley:

. . . the poor are poor because they are exploited or rejected by a perverse economic system. This is an exploitative and excluding system which means that the system keeps them under it or outside it (Boff and Pixley 1989:3).

Berryman also has the same view as Boff and Pixley regarding the systemic nature of poverty and he insists that people do not simply happen to be poor. Neither can people be blamed for being poor as it is often the case. Their poverty is largely a by-product of the way society is organized or structured (Berryman 1987:5; cf. Boff and Pixley 1989:3; Boff 1988:19).

Poverty is a problem of the system and cannot be done away by mere tempering with the periphery of the system, but rather by a complete transformation of the whole system.

Archbishop Oscar Romero says that the poor are:

. . . human beings who are at the mercy of cold economic calculations
(Romero 1988:180).

Poverty refers to a state of want or disadvantage. In that state victims of poverty are incapable of attaining minimal standards of living (Ravernburg and Sano 1994). May and Pieterse concur that researchers are almost agreed on the following definition of poverty:

The inability of individuals, households or entire communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living (May 2000:5; cf. May 1998:1; Pieterse 2001:30))

This definition does not cover all aspects of poverty, however it captures the essence of what poverty is. Whiteford correctly notes that poverty is a multidimensional condition and a comprehensive description of poverty should include as many aspects as possible (Whiteford 1995:1).

In a foreword to a book edited by May, Pillay says:

In South Africa indications were that 50% of the population could be considered poor and that the gap between the rich and the poor was among the largest in the world. These high levels of poverty and inequality affected the living standards, economic growth and levels of crime and social stability (May 2000:2)

Thus there is no doubt in the researcher's mind that the majority of those who are poor are black. May goes on to elaborate that the living standards in South Africa are closely correlated with race in South Africa. According to May:

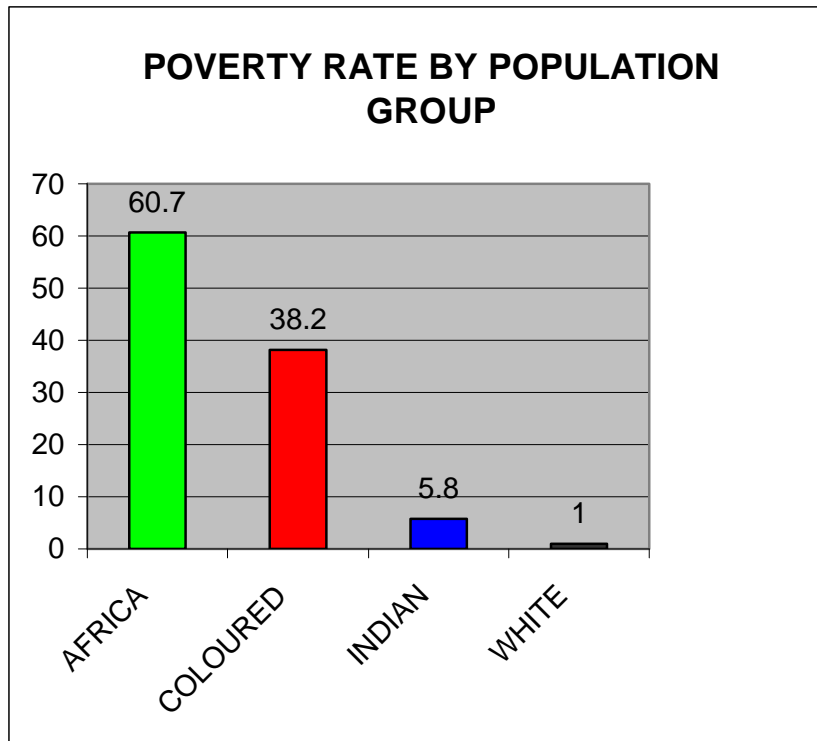
The distribution of income and wealth in South Africa may be the most unequal in the world (May 2000:2).

There is, therefore, a very close link between poverty, inequality, social and political stability. It is therefore not surprising that socio-economic conditions, in which blacks live and survive, are so depressing and devastating. In support of the same fact, Stone says:

Black South Africans may be freed from the rule of white minority, though not yet from poverty and inequality that the old system fostered (Stone 1996:209).

Thus the black majority rule still has a long way to go before we can argue that economic transformation has taken place. According to the Reconstruction and Development Programme, a policy document of the African National Congress (A.N.C), poverty is the single greatest burden of South Africa's people, and it is the direct result of apartheid system and the grossly skewed nature of business and industrial development, which accompanied it (A.N.C. 1994). While poverty knows no colour or race, it is concentrated among blacks. This fact is appreciated by the May and Pieterse (May 2000 2; cf. Pieterse 2000:33). May provides the following table as a depiction of the inequality and poverty that wreaks havoc in black communities.

Figure 1. Poverty rate by Population group



Source: *May 2000:32*

May goes on to say:

Although South Africa has undergone a dramatic economic, social and political transition in the last decade, many of the distortions and dynamics continue to produce poverty and inequality (May 2002:2).

Poverty and inequality are directly linked to the racial composition of the South African population. The black church serves the majority of the people who are victims of poverty. The majority of those who minister on behalf of the black church are part of vicious cycle of poverty in which the majority of

blacks are trapped. What Msomi said in 1993 is still valid today:

Many of our black parishioners are victims of crippled families and live in unimaginable poverty (Msomi 1993:80).

Msomi is correct in pointing out to that the majority of those who are adversely affected by poverty and inequality are black. This context of poverty necessitates a new way of doing theology, namely taking the context seriously. It is the main argument of this study that pastoral care in the South African context has not been sensitive to the context of poverty both in the present or past.

2.4.2.3. ILLITERACY

The high rate of illiteracy is yet another of the challenges facing South Africa. Once more this is mainly a black problem, as the majority of those who are illiterate are black. This is also a legacy of the previous regime, which neglected black progress regarding development in the area of education. To say they neglected the progress is to put it mildly. In reality, they deliberately planned and implemented policies and programmes that were designed to ensure that blacks were denied the same educational opportunities that were

provided for whites. In emphasising this deliberately designed inequality in education, one of the architects of apartheid Dr H. F. Verwoerd, is quoted as having said in 1955:

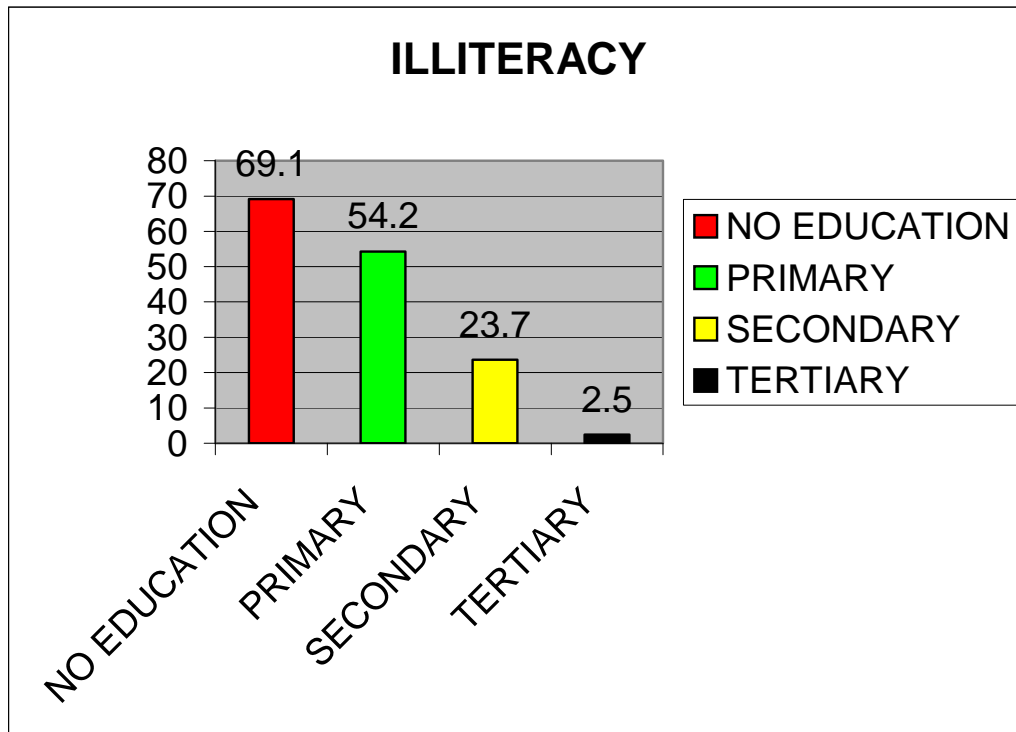
There is no place for the Bantu in the European community above the levels of certain forms of labour (Christie:1985:12).

In her Ph. D thesis, Moodly says:

Past South African governments put in place policies designed to limit black people's access to education and hardly paid any attention to literacy. Past policies also facilitated unequal allocation of resources. This resulted in poor quality education in black schools and illiteracy in millions of adults, effectively limiting intellectual and cultural development of South Africa as a whole (Moodley 2000:130).

As a result of the rate of illiteracy the poor continue to be trapped in poverty as only education and literacy can give people opportunities to escape from poverty. The standard of living continues to be very low for those with little or no education. May correctly points out that there is a very strong correlation between educational attainment and standard of living (May 2000:35).

Fig 1. Poverty rate by educational attainment of household head



Source: May 2000:36

The majority of those who are illiterate are blacks, who live in townships, squatter camps, informal settlements, rural villages and farms. Mainly black pastoral caregivers minister to these people in South Africa. Illiteracy has its associated evils such as poverty, overpopulation, spouse abuse and alcoholism, crime and others. While these may be found here and there among the educated and the rich, this is an exception than a rule (Stone

1996:209). Louw also identifies these when he says:

The South African situation is marked by overpopulation, poverty, illiteracy and disintegration of family life. These hamper process of growth and development (Louw 1997:16).

2.5. CONCLUSION

After outlining the place of pastoral care within a practical theological framework, and arguing the value and usefulness of liberation theology and its methodology for pastoral care and defining pastoral care and outlining the context and its importance in this second chapter, the third chapter will deal with the Research method and design that is used in the empirical component of this research.