

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The problem that calls for a research

In 1996 Gauteng had a population of 7,4 million people, 48,4% of households lived in houses on a separate stand and 51,6% in informal dwellings or shacks (Census 2001). The informal settlements constitute probably the fastest growing component of the population. Most of this settlement is occurring in the metropolitan areas, but there is also rapid growth of informal settlements in medium and smaller towns in the rural areas, where a process of densification appears to be taking place in areas, which are transforming from rural into urban.

In South Africa today there are millions of people who are now staying in the informal settlement communities. These areas are mushrooming daily. Rapid urbanization has resulted in millions of people living in shantytowns on the peripheries of the metropolitan areas.

In terms of statistics published by the Department of local Government and Provincial Affairs the number of squatters and backyard occupants were as follows: 1989-8: 962 611 squatters and 1 603 642 backyard occupants; 1990-1: 446 164 squatters and 1 936 717 backyard occupants; 1991-2: 891 520 squatters and 1 716 881 backyard occupants. The Urban Foundation on the other hand is of the opinion that

there are at least 7 million squatters in metropolitan areas and 1,5 to 2,4 million on the Reef (Olivier 1992: 3). Estimates of rates of growth of the squatter areas indicate that they are growing faster than the cities.

In view of the rapid growth of the population, nearly 50 percent of the South African population now lives in cities, and the majority of them is poor and is outside the Christian faith. The poorest are housed at the greatest distance from the city centers where most job opportunities and services are unavailable. They are the poorest of the poor, the destitute, and the unwanted. In many cases this distribution was achieved through the mechanism of forced removals in terms of the Group Areas Act and other legislation

Accordingly, population densities in urban areas tend to be highest on the periphery of the city. Many of the shack-dwellers live in townships established by the government for African people on the outskirts of the cities. There is, however, another side to the picture. Along with an increase in population, there has been an increase in crime, graft, violence, drug addiction, abuse of sex, pornography, divorce, abortion, and a host of other social evils in the informal settlements communities.

It is no exaggeration to call cities the new frontier of Christian mission.

The urban poor constitute the largest unclaimed frontier Christian

missions has ever encountered. The urban masses especially in the informal settlement communities have not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ nor seen it demonstrated in ways that affect their lives. They live outside the normal reach of established churches, and few attempts have been made to draw them into Christian congregations. Their living conditions are largely unseen except in printed statistics and photographs. The causes of their poverty are barely understood by the vast majority of mission-minded Christians (Greenway 1989:45)

There is a tragic coincide that most of the poor have not heard the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; or they could not receive it, because it was not recognized as Good News in the way in which it was brought. This is a double injustice: they are victims of the oppression of an unjust economic order or an unjust political distribution of power, and at the same time they are deprived of the knowledge of God's special care for them. To announce the good news to the poor is to begin to render the justice due to them. The church of Jesus Christ is called to preach the Good News to the poor following the example of its Lord who was incarnated as poor, who lived as one among them and gave to them the promise of the kingdom of God. Jesus looked at the multitude with compassion. He recognized the poor as those who were sinned against, victims of both personal and structural sin (Stromberg 1983:57)

Out of this deep awareness came both his solidarity and his calling (Mathew 11:28). His calling was a personalized one. He invited them to come to him, to receive forgiveness of sins and assume a task. He called them to follow Him, because His love incorporated His respect for them as people created by God with freedom to respond. He called them to exercise this responsibility towards God, neighbors and their own lives. The proclamation of the Gospel among the poor is a sign of the Messianic kingdom and a priority criterion by which to judge the validity of our missionary engagement today (Stromberg 1983:57).

Living with the poor and understanding the Bible from their perspective helps to discover the particular caring with which God both in the Old and in the New Testament thinks of the marginalized, the downtrodden and the deprived. We realize that the poor to whom Jesus promised the kingdom of God are blessed in their longing for justice and their hope for liberation. They are both subjects and bearers of the good news; they have the right and the duty to announce the Gospel not only among themselves, but also to all other sectors of the human family.

In South Africa today, the **informal settlement** communities and the **squatter settlements** are the homes to the urban poor. Informal housing has been condemned by some social commentators as a vehicle for the reproduction of urban and rural poverty, and it has been celebrated by

others as an expression of the creativity and determination of people who do not enjoy access to formal housing (Hart 1992:19).

The South African Freedom Charter proclaims that all people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security and 'slums' shall be demolished and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, crèches and social centers, the crises of homelessness has grown rather than been solved.

There is a serious lack of clarity regarding definitions and terminology in the context of informal housing in South Africa. Informal housing is essentially housing which is established unconventionally. Two broad types of informal types of informal housing can be recognized within this broad definition. The first is spontaneous informal housing, and the second is site-and-service housing (Hart 1992:21).

We need to distinguish between the two terms. The **squatter settlement** is typically a 'shanty-town', that is, a collection of impermanent dwellings made of recuperated waste material. Shacks or shanties are built of wooden packing cases, flattened kerosene tins, plastic board, cardboard, and indeed any serviceable item of refuse (Shorter 1991:48). Whereas Hart (1992:22) best describes squatting as the people who are in illegal

occupation of land or dwellings; hence site-and-service schemes are not squatting. Also, squatters occupy not all spontaneous informal areas. Illegal squatting was never entirely eradicated under apartheid era, but after being reduced to small hidden pockets in the 1960's it began to grow again in the 1970's, mainly in the form of clandestine illegal settlement near townships.

Rev. Paul Ntshumayelo, a minister of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa in Orange Farm describes a squatter camp as a place where people live on a piece of land without prior permission given to them. South Africa has many squatters and they are especially found on the outskirts of 'white' cities. Some of them come from the farms where their owners stayed in big houses, mansions with electricity, water, flushing toilets and other facilities, but the poor black workers would stay in houses made of clay or corrugated iron (ISWEN Kommunikassie-kerk en Plakkers December 1994:15). Informal housing refers to unconventionally established housing whereas squatting refers to the unlawful occupation of property.

Wherever land can be found, huts and plywood shacks go up. Few governments have the capacity to prevent it or to provide services for the people arriving. The majority of new arrivals remain in squatter areas. The cities continue to grow exponentially as it exploits the resources of its

rural hinterland.

Whereas the term **informal settlements** can be defined as the occupation of land in the absence of

- a) Legal rights to land,
- b) Official approval of land use and development standards, and
- c) Provision of infrastructure.

Generally, these settlements are formed by some form of land invasion, the process that falls into one of two broad categories. The first is gradual invasion, through individual action, while the second is sudden, through organized collective action. Such organized action may be orchestrated by homeless communities, by political parties for political gain) or by government officials (Abbott 2001:v)

Dr. S.D Maluleke, the director of Church Aid in Need of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa describes the informal settlement as the place where many people with low income stay. The local authorities are authorizing these settlements. Some of these sites have been serviced, some not. Most of the sites have been planned and are numbered. Some of these sites have water taps while some are using one common water tap for up to twenty families (Maluleke 1997:22).

The shared characteristic of the settlement types is usually low incomes,

poverty and precarious infrastructure. People who are staying in the informal settlements are not squatters. You may find squatters who are squatting within the informal settlement dwellers, but they are not all called squatters. The term 'squatter' is not acceptable because it dehumanizes the people. When you are looking at these people from afar, their condition is the same. The cloud of poverty covers them all. The shelters of the people living in the informal settlement and those of the squatters are the same. Their life style is the same as that of the squatters (Maluleke 1997:22-23)

At the beginning of 1990, over seven million people lived in informal houses in South African Urban and metropolitan areas. The vast majority of these were black (African). Not only do squatters share a common economic history and system, they also share universal religious characteristics. Also, cultural characteristics in the informal settlements are as much universal, as they relate to the prevalent cultures in each city.

Socially each squatter community perceive itself as a distinct social entity, linked to the city, but with life, society and subculture of its own. In each city the squatters have coping strategies independent of middle-class life, including middle-class religious life, to which they have little or no relationship (Grigg 1992:26)

Language in the informal settlements communities tends to draw migrants together as all learn to speak the 'lingua franca' of the city. Yet almost all realize they cannot read and write properly and, unlike the middle class are uneducated. As a result, ethnic barriers are lower in the city, but a strong class barrier between the lower class and the middle class emerges (Grigg 1992:22).

R.S Greenway (1999:68), in his book *Cities, Missions' New Frontier* mentions the nine causes of the urban poverty that are similar to the lives of the poor in the informal settlement community today, these causes are:

1. The lack of employment opportunities, particularly among new comers.
2. Scarcity of decent and affordable housing.
3. Abandoned children by millions who live in the streets, perpetuating the cycle of suffering, crime, and despair.
4. The gravitation of the elderly to the cities without adequate financial, social, emotional, and religious support systems.
5. The breakdowns of family structures, which traditionally have been society's bulwark against spiritual, moral, and material attack
6. Corruption at all levels of government and society, coupled with callous indifference to the needs of the poor and powerless.
7. Inadequate public services. This is due in part to the precarious

financial condition of Southern World countries, and the rapid pace of urbanization, which defies even the best efforts of public officials.

8. An abnegation of responsibility on the part of many urban churches, which either relocate at a distance from the poor or refuse to get up deeply involved in social ministry.
9. The secularization of many churches in Southern World, shown by their concern for self-aggrandizement instead of ministry to the poor, who seem to offer little in return (Greenway 1999:68)

In the informal settlements there is similarly a market for drugs. These are usually obtained fairly cheaply and drug taking includes the smoking of marijuana. Drug- taking and drug peddling are also related to crimes of violence. Hard drugs, like heroine, cocaine or opium, are rarely found in the informal settlement communities, since they are expensive imports, but professional criminals, who can afford them and who may be in contact with international drug-smugglers, can resort them to.

Prostitution of women and children is one of the commonest ways of making a living in the informal settlement community. The preponderance of male migrants, the need for female economic independence, the phenomenon of street children and the reality of crowded living conditions all favor it. The absence of normal family relationships and the morally disorienting experience of the shanty- towns favor sexual promiscuity. This

also means that the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases is high. These include HIV infections and the disease AIDS. Theoretically, prostitutes are both vulnerable to infection and instrumental in its bilateral transmission; however, it is notorious difficult to assess the extent of HIV infection and the prevalence of AIDS in the informal settlements (Shorter 1999: 50)

The difficulty in assessing the AIDS potential is the result of many factors: official sensitivity, incomplete case-detection, delays in case reporting, and imbalances in the distribution of cases. The picture is further complicated by the urban medical scene, in which the AIDS patients are treated in the clinics not in the hospitals.

1.1.1 Migration to the cities

We are living in the days of incredible global massive migration. The world-wide increase in population is an underlying cause of migration to the cities. The need for more jobs comes with the increase in population. This forces millions to leave their traditional rural homes and move to cities in search of employment. There are other factors. Cities offer educational opportunities that are not available in small towns and villages. Cities offer hospitals and health care centers for people with special medical needs. Young people, especially, are attracted to the cities for excitement, entertainment, and new opportunities. They often come to cities dreaming

of riches and a better life, only to have their dreams destroyed by the hard realities of urban life (Greenway 1999:116).

If we picture the image that comes from Psalm 107, we see people who are hungry, thirsty and crying out in the desert, in parched paths of life; they cry out to the Lord, and the Lord answers their prayer. He leads them from the north, the south, the east, and the west to a city in which to dwell.

Psalm 107 portrays what we see happening worldwide. We are also living in the midst of the greatest migration in history. The world is in motion: the Southern Hemisphere is coming north, the East is coming west, and on all six continents migrations are to the cities (Bakke 2002:29)

The informal settlement communities are like giant magnets attracting people. They present amazing challenges. We use two terms to explain migration. By *urbanization* we refer to the city as a magnet. Urbanization pulls people in from rural areas. By *urbanism* we refer to the city as a transformer, transmitter, and magnifier of culture (Bakke 2002:30). In most cases it appears that first-time migrants to the cities are men. Often, family members or circumstances force them to leave their villages or circumstances force them to leave their villages and make the move. For a time, they maintain their families in the villages and send money regularly. They keep close connections with their families and clans in the villages. After a time, these men either bring their wives, children and siblings to

the informal settlement communities, or eventually get married.

In the recent years, more rural people are migrating to the informal settlement communities with their families and households. This is particularly true when there is large -scale famine, flooding, or rioting in countryside. Those people who live in villages near major cities migrate to the cities with their entire families because the expansion of urbanization absorbs their land and livelihood. They are left with no possible means of support in their village, and having no other option, they take shelter in the informal settlement. Men, women, and even children begin a struggle for survival as they move into the informal settlement communities. Many women and children must seek work in the nearby cities.

Many people assume that migration from the rural areas is the primary cause. But migration has always occurred. It is not the only cause of growth. The growth of cities is made up of both migration (called explosion growth) and natural increase within the cities (sometimes called implosion growth). Causes of migration are described as push and pull factors (Grigg 1992:29). Migrants come from diverse religious background into a melting pot of religions.

The processes of urbanization are not new phenomena. Urbanization have been occurring since Nimrod and Babel. But there are historical

differences occurring today that have resulted in the world rapidly becoming urban and more of the world's people becoming urban poor.

As migrants arrive in the cities, they find no place and they end up squatting in the unused land or looking for residents in the informal settlements. As they arrive in the informal settlement they initially appear to be uprooted and dislocated. A closer look reveals a different picture. When the rural people migrate to the cities they do not come arbitrarily. In most cases, they come to the city with some kind of initial contact (Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:149)

Normally, the contact is either a close relative, someone from the same clan, or a friend. This explains why one can find groups of people from the same caste, language, and village background in specific areas of the city. Monsma (1980:14) is right when he says, “ Networking relationship help people to find work, provide clothing, shelter, and food when needed protect from destructive acts, provide help when sickness or death strikes and fulfill mankind's desire for social contacts”

Some of the worst suffering is found among people that have recently arrived in the informal settlement communities. Peasants are seldom prepared for the difficulties they find in the informal settlement communities. They do not have the skills or training required for the jobs

that are available. They do not have money to buy property or pay high rent. They are forced to stay in squatter camps, which are shack built of pieces of wood, tin, and tarpaper, usually located on the city borders. These squatter communities lack water, sewage, electricity and regular streets. The residents are open to eviction and sudden loss of their homes because the land does not belong to them. Life for the poor is hard in cities. They are often victims of crime and injustice. Nevertheless large number of people continues to arrive in large numbers to the informal settlement communities. They are drawn to these informal settlement communities as though by invisible magnets. They have great hopes and dreams for the future despite the poverty and suffering they experience now. They firmly believe that if not the parents; certainly the children will enjoy better lives in the informal settlement communities.

1.1.2 Push factors behind migration

1.1.2.1 Rural poverty

The primary driving force behind migration is the rural economy. In an increasingly cash economy, the same levels of agriculture provide declining level of effective cash. It becomes increasingly rational to migrate to the town, even if there is only a one in three or a one in two chance of getting a job. People primary migrate to the cities for economic reasons- to earn a living. When there is little rainfall, drought displaces thousands of people, forcing them to leave their villages to find work in the cities. A substantial

body of research on rural-urban migration in various world regions shows that most people move to the cities for economic reasons (Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:170).

Members of the lower castes and landless laborers compose sizable segments of those who migrate to the informal settlements. In addition, partly because of changes in the traditional caste system, many landless laborers lose their traditional occupation and must seek employment outside the village. Thus most of the people who migrate to the informal settlements do so primarily for economic reasons.

1.1.2.2 Weather factors

Weather also affects migration. People came to the cities because of river erosion and flooding. Disasters such as famine, flooding, and community unrest force people to migrate to the informal settlement communities.

1.1.2.3 Unemployment

Most of the people came to the cities seeking for employment. Data concerning unemployment in South Africa especially in the informal settlements is really unsatisfactory. Unemployment is probably the most severe problem South African society is experiencing and is conceivably the root cause of many other problems such as high crime rate, violence, and object poverty. A person is said to be unemployed if he/she is without

work, is currently available for work and is seeking work or wanting to work (Barker 1998:113)

1.1.2.4 Money

Money has increasingly become an important commodity, because it is acceptable in all social and economic transactions, including “bride price” and other traditional compensations. Today social prestige dictates the use of money to finalize the transactions (Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:171).

1.1.3 Pull factors behind migration

Throughout the centuries men and women have needed permanence, security, community and achievement. The city, good in its reflections of the godhead, in its communality, opportunity for creativity, and creation of order; and evil in its infiltration with the demonic components of abusive power, exploitation, and arrogant rejection of God, has always been the Mecca for such aspirations.

When the impact of radios, television, films, magazines and newspapers resulted in rising expectations among the rural population. This plus the new highways into the rural towns, open up a bewildering array of alternatives for people who for centuries have lived at subsistence levels. This is a prime reason why those who live in rural areas that are closer to centers of politics or economics migrate at a greater rate.

The desire for education and health are also pulling factors. Rural schools often prepare people not for rural lives for the modernizing influence of the city. In the rural areas there are no hospitals, no doctors and in despair people moved to the cities where life is infinitely better. They have a roof over their head and the possibility of a permanent piece of land.

Industrialization is considered a “pull” factor that attracts thousands of people to the city. Cities offer numerous options for employment, primarily in industry. Many educated and skilled people tend to move to the city. In recent decades, the significant growth of industrial centers in major cities has attracted millions from all over the country. This is a major reason why people move to the informal settlement communities, where some kind of employment is normally available.

There are other reasons why people migrate to the informal settlement communities. The availability of educational facilities in the nearby cities, the allure of the mass media, and increasing freedom attract thousands to the informal settlements.

The physical manifestation of urban poverty are evident in all cities in the developing informal settlement communities: majority lack water, sanitation, urban transport, adequate shelter, and unnerved by social

services such as health and education. Poor quality of life is worsened further amidst a deteriorating local environment. It is evident that there is a strong relationship between poverty and informal settlements.

At the same time there is also a strong link between perceptions of urban poverty and intervention in informal settlements. Perception of poverty inform the way in which poverty is measured, which in turn informs alleviation and the design of intervention strategies

The churches in South Africa are engaged in compassionate outreach to help the people in need and to change conditions that need changing. These churches organize and support similar programs, but the ways they explain their ministries are different, unique to their churches own character and compelling to many of its members. This research is a calling for a comprehensive method, which churches can use in helping the poor by developing social ministries in the informal settlement communities

Most churches become involved in social ministries for many reasons. Some ministries respond to the needs of families and individuals in their community, some reflect the fear of changes in the church neighborhood, some result from the efforts of a few committed members, and others seek to recruit new members. Most congregations act from a mixture of

motives, but their ministries of concern are virtually always a natural expression of their Christian faith (Dudley xi)

Mission is a comprehensive concept, 'embracing everything which God sends his people into the world to do' (Bosch 1985: 16). Mission has to do with the crossing of frontiers towards the world. These frontiers may be ethnic, cultural, geographical, religious, ideological or social. Mission takes place where the Church, in her total involvement with the world and the comprehensiveness of her message, bears her testimony in word and deed in the form of a servant with reference to unbelief, exploitation, discrimination and violence, but also with reference to salvation, healing, liberation, reconciliation and righteousness (Bosch 1986: 18). It describes the total task, which God has set the Church for the salvation of the world. It is the task of the Church in movement, the Church that lives for others, the Church that is not only concerned with herself, that turns herself 'inside out' towards the world (Bosch 1986: 17).

Mission is thus comprehensive (but not all-inclusive) and comprises more than Jesus public ministry in Nazareth, he outlines it in terms of mission: 'He said *'As the Father has sent me even so I send you'* (John 20:21). He began his ministry with these compassion words from prophet Isaiah:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
And to recovery of sight for the blind,
To release the oppressed,
And to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”* (Luke 4:18-19).

Surely with these words Jesus modeled the gospel as primarily good news for the poor. And he defined ministry to the poor declaring that the ministry to the poor is holistic, involving preaching, healing, deliverance, justice and doing good deeds. Jesus had a particular interest in the poor and other marginalized groups. The first words Jesus spoke in public according to Luke 4:18-19 contains a pragmatic statement concerning his mission to reverse the destiny of the poor. The prisoners, the blind and the oppressed are all subsumed under the poor, they are all manifestation of poverty, and are all in need of the good news (Bosch: 1996:100).

Jesus’ ministry is a model of the way the Christian’s twin responsibilities of evangelism and social involvement is to be integrated. Jesus preached, taught, and healed. His concern for the physical needs of people flowed from his love and compassion for them as people, image-bearers of God, who are burdened down by sin and its consequences, hurting, hoping, seeking, and dying. His healing ministry served as a bridge to his

preaching ministry, as he blended concern for the temporal and eternal dimensions of human existence (Greenway 1989:175).

Christ's compassion was holistic, concerned for sick bodies, empty stomachs, and perishing souls. Out of compassion for a leprous man he reached out and healed (Mark 1:41). Moved with compassion for people without spiritual direction, He set aside plans for a restful retreat and taught a multitude (Mark 6:34). When people were hungry and had no food left, Jesus used his power to feed them (Mark 8:1-10). Both his words and his works were expressions of his compassion for people. In the prayer Jesus taught us, he kept humankind's two essential needs together-daily bread and the forgiveness of sins (Greenway 1989:175)

Churches create community ministries in response to the great commandments: "You shall love God your with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Mathew 22:37-40). The church is trying to live out the expectations of our Lord that we will feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome strangers, and minister to the infirm and imprisoned-remember that just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me (Mathew 25:40)

Churches have generated a wide variety of social ministries, from soup kitchens and food pantries to shelters for the elderly and educational enrichment for children and youth. Other churches have launched justice ministries that advocate for minority rights and social responsibility. This thesis is an attempt to advice churches to put their faith into action

The church of Jesus Christ is called to bear its witness in the present context of social change, political uncertainty, religious quest and cultural dialogue. Many voices desire to be heard. In this context of political, social and religious ferment, the church is called to carry out its mission. In a land of extreme diversities and innumerable divisions the church is called to be an agent of reconciliation and peace by fighting on the side of the oppressed backward classes (Hedlund 1991:13).

1.2 The Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to reflect on what is happening in the lives of the poor in the informal settlement communities and collect information by means of a research and then develop a comprehensive strategy, which will help the churches serving in the informal settlement communities to evangelize the poor effectively. A proposal regarding a method for the comprehensive mission strategy for the churches in the informal settlement communities will therefore also be made.

The second purpose of this study will also be to make a contribution towards the churches interpretation of the Great Commission for a new generation struggling with issues of poverty within the context of the informal settlement communities

This study can therefore help the church's ministries towards those in informal settlements and similar circumstances. It is part of the Christian community's ongoing endeavor to care for the poor and to be relevant to their needs in ministering to them, because part of the unique situation of the informal settlement communities include poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and crime. Jesus came as the supreme expression of God's love for a fallen world. He taught us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves (Mathew 22:39). He had passion for the poor, the blind, the cripple, the leprous, the hungry and those who weep. It is the example and commission of Jesus that inspired his church to continue seeking to be present and visible even among the poor

1.3 Research Question:

In this research we will be trying to answer these two questions:

- Will the church be able to develop a comprehensive mission strategy for the poor in the informal settlement?
- Is it possible to develop comprehensive method, which the church can use in assisting the poor in the informal settlement community

both in word and deed?

The people of Orange Farm informal settlement function as a special reference. Emphasis will be given to the following aspects:

- a) The biblical understanding of mission for the poor
- b) The socio-cultural situation of the poor in the informal settlement communities
- c) The comprehensive strategy, which the church can use in assisting the poor.

1.4 Methodology and some basic presupposition

The methodology employed in the development of this topic will include the following steps. The foundation of this study rests upon a careful examination of the biblical and theological literature that helps us understand the mission strategy, which the church can use in evangelizing the informal settlement communities.

This study will also involve the collection and examination of contemporary missiological literature describing the real meaning of mission research.

The examination of this literature will be accompanied by correspondence and interviews with individuals possessing wide experience and

professional skills in the work of the church. Books and journals written by theologians, researchers and activists are a very good source of information on the experience of people, but these are no substitute for the contribution, which comes from those who go through experience.

Empirical research will be done through a survey of questionnaires that will be developed in collaboration with a team of church leaders in the community to ensure that it is as representative as possible. We will seek to determine the range of topics and issues to be covered, to remove ambiguities at the investigative phase and to ensure validity and reliability at the analysis phase. The office of the Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research (IMER) will be contacted for assistance in formulating these questions.

Lastly, this study will be approached subjectively through my personal experience in the community. For the past thirteen years the researcher has had the privilege of serving the Uniting Reformed Church In Southern Africa in Orange Farm. This in fact is an advantage because it forced me to approach the study with an open mind prepared to read the material on informal settlement communities, ask questions and listen before drawing conclusions and making recommendations. The fact that the researcher lives and works within the Orange Farm informal settlement is not considered to be a handicap for this investigation. This is viewed as an

advantage as the researcher has already established networks within the community and is likely not to be suspected when seeking further information about aspects associated with the community.

It is assumed throughout the work that although the Orange Farm informal settlement community is unique in certain aspects, it does have much in common with other informal settlement communities in South Africa. This assumption makes it possible for other studies of informal settlements in South Africa to be helpful in understanding Orange Farm. The present study's results may also be useful when other informal settlements are researched.

Another assumption, which guides this investigation, is the authority and inspiration of the Bible. It is for this reason that an effort will be made to submit whatever observation and evaluation of the research to validate an interpretation informed by acceptance of the Bible's authority.

1.5 Definition of terms

1.5.1 Strategy

Strategy is one of the most important themes discussed in mission today. The term strategy is derived from the Greek word 'strategos', which means a plan or policy to achieve something or the planning of a war or campaign. Strategy focuses on how mission has been carried out and the

numerous attempts to form plans for world evangelization.

The overwhelming panoramic view of the poor in the informal settlements communities shows that the church needs to develop authentic urban mission strategies for ministering in the informal settlement communities. The church is compelled to develop strategies to reach these communities and multiply churches among the poor.

1.5.2 Mission

The term mission is derived from the Latin word “mitto” which means to send. In more general terms the word mission describes a person’s vocation as his mission in life. This means that every person has a task and this task is called mission. In Christian terms the word mission means to be sent into the world with a specific task.

The church has a mission to the informal settlement communities. Bringing the witness of Christ to the poor is one of our heaviest burdens as Christians today. The church cannot, however relinquish its evangelistic mission in the areas of the poor but it is obliged to minister to them. David Bosch (1980: 20) puts it clearly when he says mission takes place where the church, in her total involvement with the world and the comprehensiveness of its message, bears its testimony, in word and deed in the form of servant, with reference to unbelief, exploitation,

discrimination and violence, but also with reference to salvation, healing, liberation, reconciliation and righteousness.

1.5.3 Informal Settlement Communities

It can be defined as the authorized settlement for the poor. It is the home for the poor. Some of their sites have been serviced, some not. Most of the sites have been planned and numbered. Some of these sites have water taps while some are using one common tap for up to twenty families. Their houses are made of plywood, shacks, plastics, bricks etc.

The shared characteristic of the settlement types is usually low incomes and poverty. The cloud of poverty covers them. Their lifestyle is the same as that of squatters. There many people who are staying in these areas and these people are in need, their needs are deepening, and they are a diverse group, for example, the homeless, the HIV-AIDS affected and infected, the prostitutes, the drug addicts, the widows and orphans. It is no exaggeration to call informal settlement communities the new frontier of Christian mission. Our encounter with these people should result in an inclusive and loving response. We are commanded to love these people as we love ourselves (Mathew 22:38-40).

1.6 Key words

Church History, Comprehensive approach (in missions), Development, Evangelism, HIV/AIDS, Informal Settlements, Local Church, Marginalized

Communities, Mission, Poverty, Relief, South Africa, Urbanisation.

1.7 Overview

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the thesis. It clarifies the scope of the study by providing the problem statement, the purpose and background of the study, motivation, relevance, and the planned methodology behind this study.

Chapter 2 gives a detailed biblical and theological perspective of mission for the poor by looking at various concepts derived from certain Old and New Testament passages. From these passages the scripture clearly demonstrates that God has a great concern for the poor and that God has an equal concern for the well being of every single person. The Bible teaches that God is angered when people are oppressed and that He always stands on the side of the poor.

Chapter 3 is a presentation of the historical overview of the church being involved with the mission and Christian social concern for the poor. Throughout history, concern for the poor has been constant in the church. The history of the church manifests a continuing care for the poor, sick and the homeless.

Chapter 4 describes the need for a comprehensive/holistic approach to the

problems of the poor. This is done by exploring the four crucial aspects of mission: *marturia*, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leitourgia*. This chapter further challenges us to set up relief and development ministries and convey the gospel to the poor in word and deed.

In *Chapter 5* an empirical research was done within the context of Orange Farm through a survey of questionnaires. The study focuses on the community's circumstances, traditions, worldview, behavior and beliefs. The data given in this chapter shows that there are many poor people who are staying in the informal settlement communities, and that their needs are deepening. The research demonstrated the value of and need for developing a comprehensive mission strategy.

It is in the light of *Chapter 6* that a comprehensive mission strategy was developed. The models for ministering in the informal settlement communities are explored by looking at the different effective strategies

Chapter 7 is the closing chapter of the entire research. I am offering a number of challenges to the churches in South Africa. I also indicate areas of further research