

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **NECESSITY OF A COMPREHENSIVE/ HOLISTIC APPROACH**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

More than half of the South African's population live in poor and deprived communities. They are often excluded from the normal things that make life valuable. They often live isolated lives, cut off from other people, or from involvement in common activities, which give meaning and richness to life, and which come from the mutuality and relatedness which social activity brings (Vincent 2000: 53).

The Bible teaches that the essential nature of human beings is the image of God in which they are made. All Christian concern for the poor and downtrodden springs from that premise. God so highly valued human beings that he sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem them from sin and eternal loss. This biblical assessment of the value of human beings gives the Christian all the motivation required for relief and development ministry.

The Bible teaches that that God is angered when people are oppressed, and in this life He will punish those who are oppressed. The apostasy of Israel is characterized in part in terms of her oppression of the poor (Amos 5:12). The promise of the year of jubilee and the age the Messiah is portrayed as

“good news to the poor” (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:17-21). According to the book of James, pure religion involves taking care of defenseless widows and orphans (James 1:27). This ministry of Jesus had special significance for the poor and oppressed of his day, for he defined his ministry as preaching the gospel to the poor and announcing the freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and release for the oppressed (Luke 4:17-21).

Greenway & Monsma (1990:50) says: “If we wipe out poverty but neglect to tell the poor the Good News about Jesus Christ, we will have failed in our mission. And if we preach the gospel but ignore the plight of the poor, we are false prophets”

Bringing a witness of Christ to the poor has become one of the heaviest burdens of Christians today. We have a large obligation to motivate ourselves for the task, to be equipped with effective strategies, and to go into action. Salvation is an issue that the church and Christians must always face. Probably all Christians acknowledge that the church has a mission to the informal settlement communities, and surely none would dare suggest that the church is accomplishing this mission. David Bosch (1980:20) puts it clearly when he says that 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.

## **4.2 A Comprehensive Ministry**

The ministry of the church therefore has a fourfold dimension:

- a) Kerygma: the gospel must be proclaimed
- b) Koinonia: the gospel must be lived and its power made visible in the actual life of the community, which embodies the new covenant relationship
- c) Diakonia: the Gospel must be demonstrated in humble service
- d) Leiturgia: Worship God through mission

### **4.2.1 The Ministry of Evangelism and Witness**

The etymology and semantic association of the word '**evangelism**' is derived from a Greek word: *euangelion*, meaning to proclaim the good news. The Greek verb from which evangelism is derived is *euangelizomai*, which means "to bring or announce good news," (Abraham 1989:41). The message of the good tidings from God is to be shared with all peoples. Jesus himself announced this gospel: *'The right time has come....and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!'* (Mark 1:15). *"Jesus went all over Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom..."* (Mathew

4:23). Jesus is the first evangelist of the New Testament, continuing and fulfilling the ministry of John the Baptist. Evangelism has its origin, pattern, and basis in the activity of the evangelist Jesus Christ. We proclaim the Kingdom of God, which he proclaimed and manifested (Dayton & Fraser 1989:70-71).

Evangelism is part of the mission of the Church. The church is in the world as the agent of the Kingdom of God. As such the church is sent into the world to serve all peoples of the earth, and to have the compassion of God for all human needs. Whenever the Church touches the world through caring service, sensitive evangelization, prophetic opposition to injustice, and identification with sufferings of others, it is engaged in mission. Mission as participation in the '*Missio Dei*' is a broader reality than evangelism. Evangelism is indeed an indispensable and central component of mission and the church. The Church ceases to participate in the mission of God when it no longer engages in evangelism. But evangelism does not exhaust the purpose for which God sends it into the world as He sent his Son (John 20:21) (Dayton & Fraser 1980:70)

According to Jesus, the Kingdom of God, which was promised in the Old Testament, is now dynamically present to overcome evil, to deliver humans from the power of sin and death, and to usher people into the blessings of the reign of God himself. Jesus commits the message of the Kingdom to

his apostles and tells them to carry it to all peoples: *“This good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all mankind; and then the end will come”* (Mathew 24:14). He also say *“Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all mankind. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:150). *“This is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witness of these things”* (Luke 24:46-48).

The New Testament declares an important message, which needs to be communicated. This message comes from God in the person of Jesus Christ. He is both the evangelist par excellence and the one who embodied the Good News in dynamic works of power, signs, and authoritative teachings, which He gave to his disciples. This message is of such importance that it has the power to convey the abundant life of the Kingdom of God to those who are willing to receive it (Dayton & Fraser 1980:27)

In the light of the brief New Testament description of evangelism, we want to define evangelism in a way that will be useful when planning strategies. Numerous definitions have been suggested. The Lausanne Congress on

World Evangelism (1974) gave a more detailed definition:

“To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord He now offers the forgiveness of sins, and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord with a view to persuading people to come to Him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the Gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of Discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow Him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with His new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, to incorporation into his church, and responsible service to the world” (Douglas 1975:4)

The Greek word for witness is **‘martures’** which means ‘to testify’ or to bear witness to a thing (Liddel & Scott 1984:426). Martyria means to witness by word and deed, even if it may bring suffering and opposition to the witness. Martyria includes Diakonia (service), Koinonia (fellowship) and Kerygma (proclamation). The witness of the church is broader than could be expressed by the three concepts: service, fellowship and proclamation. Witness includes the fourth dimension Leiturgia (worship). Marturia means to witness by word and deed, even if it may bring suffering and opposition to the witness. Witness is more than kerugma (proclamation)

Being a Christian means being a witness. Christians as people who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior means announcing the fact that in every facet of their lives and by every means available to them: by life, deed, word, and sign. For Christians, being a witness is integral to who we are and what we believe.

Christian witness is the beginning of transformation. The need to proclaim the good news of Christ is directly related to a Christian understanding of transformation. For Christians, believe is the beginning of knowing.

Athanasius said that the gospel provided a new *arche*, a new starting point for the way we understand and make sense of our world. Augustine of Hippo took the biblical story as the point of departure for his radical reconstruction of his former ways of thinking, following the dictum *Credo ut intelligam*- I believe in order to know. By sharing God's good news with the poor we offer the beginning of the process of recovering identity and vocation.

Jesus gave us two simple commandments. We are to love God with all we have and to love our neighbours as ourselves (Mathew 22:;34-40). This is the motivation, which takes us to the poor in the first place. We cannot say we love our neighbours if we limit our work to improving their material lives in the here and now and never share the news that holds the promise

of transforming their lives now and forever. Therefore we as Christians, our thinking and practice of transforming development must have an evangelistic intent. It is a call to be sure we do our development with an attitude that prays and yearns for people to know Jesus Christ (Myers 2001:205)

Only a church fully aware of how people in the world live and feel and think can adequately fulfill either aspect of this mediatory mission. It is at this point that the church recognizes the validity and significance of the ministry of others to the church, in order that the church may better understand and be in closer solidarity with the world, knowing and sharing its pains and yearnings. Only by responding to others can we remove our ignorance and misunderstanding of others, and be better able to minister to them (Stromberg 1985:11)

There is no stronger witness than the witness of changed lives and changed attitude towards the poor by loving them as we love ourselves. In a world of moral breakdown, it must be clear that a complete new order of things come about: *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* (II Corinthians 5:17)

The poor should see that we bear witness not only through our lips but also through our deeds. Many people have come to think of Christian



witness as standing up before a crowd of people and telling them one's own story of finding Christ. Witnessing is not a five minutes activity on a floodlit platform before some thousands of people; it is not the publicity excitement of a tremendous rally for Christ. Witnessing in its truest sense is when we are least aware of publicly demonstrating something, but is being simply caught up in the toils, heartaches, glories, depths and peaks and mundane chores of life (Douglas 1961:143)

Christians owe the message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to every person and to every people. Christians make their witness in the context of neighbours who live by other religious convictions and ideological persuasions. True witness follows Jesus Christ in respecting and affirming the uniqueness and freedom of others. The Word is at work in every human life. In Jesus of Nazareth the Word became a human being. The wonder of His ministry of love persuades Christians to testify to people of every religious and non- religious persuasion of this decisive presence of God in Christ (Stromberg 1985:72).

Christians should use every opportunity to join hands with their neighbours, to work together to become communities of freedom, peace and mutual respect. Life with people of other faith and ideologies is an encounter of commitments. Witness cannot be a one-way process, but of necessity two-way; in it Christians become aware of some of the deepest

convictions of their neighbors.

#### **4.2.2 The Ministry of Fellowship**

Evangelism is also what Jesus Christ does through the church's fellowship. The Greek term which best describes fellowship is '**koinonia**'. It has a wealth of meaning: association, partnership, community, communion, joint participation, a common share. Koinonia is the spirit of generous sharing as contrasted with the spirit of selfish getting. The Christian koinonia is that bond which binds Christians to each other to Christ and to God (Baclay 1973:173).

Christians of the early church shared their belongs for the poor:

*“Many miracles and wonders were being done through the apostles, and everyone was filled with awe. All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, praising God, and enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved” (Luke 2:43-47).*

Each community should covenant together to have no poor among them.

Each is responsible to care for the needs of its participants. Each

community should strive for the spirit and practice of equality, so that

class distinctions or discriminations based on wealth or social status are removed. The willingness to share all things in common can only lead to the lessening of the unjust inequality that all too often exists between members within the Christian community. Christian love extends beyond the bounds of Christian community to embrace all people and above all the poor and suffering. As Jesus' love went out to all their enemies, do good, lend expecting nothing in return, invite and uninvited. The poor are suffering and thus deserving of our help, for our help God is the God of the poor and defender of the lowly (Pilgrim 1981:171)

The goals of Christian witness are: changed people, and changed relationships. We desire that all people- the poor, the rich, and ourselves be able to experience the lifelong process of recovering our true identity as children of God and the restoration of our true vocation as productive stewards in God's creation.

Diakonia among the Churches is the koinonia of the Church realized by God. It is what the apostolic Church has received from the Lord what she re-presents in His Spirit. Through this service and help among the Churches we are not performing a good act of mercy and compassion, but we are rendering to the triune God what he has given to us (Nissiotis 1961:193).

The poor people must experience that Christians care for each other. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love another*” (John 13: 34-35). These words clearly mean that our love to one another must be free and ready, laborious and expensive, constant and persevering. We must also love one another from this motive and upon this consideration, because Christ has loved us (Hendrickson 1994:891).

As Christians we belong to a new family, the family of God “*consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone*” (Ephesians 2:19-20). Poor people should experience this in the way that Christians care and support each other in times of stress and distress. They must also experience this in the way we pray for each other in times of sickness, financial need and family strain. They must see how Christians value each other’s gifts and how we take responsibilities for one another to make sure that everyone’s gifts are developed and used to the full. They must even experience this in our discipline. Discipline is a part of our love for each other. One cannot allow one’s brother to fall back into sin or to neglect his person, his gifts or his family. We must hold each other to the highest standard. Our fellowship should be the one which

bridges all barriers of race, class and education, a fellowship which is only possible because we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ through the indwelling fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Greyling 1987:155)

We as Christians have a vital role to play for the poor if we are at all consistent with the faith we profess, Walter Pilgrim (1981:173-174) says we can adopt the following strategies the:

- a) Adopt the Zacchaeus principle for sharing wealth: Zacchaeus' sharing of one –half to the poor means that he gave as much to the poor as he kept for himself. The response to the gospel, however, requires that we keep this kind of costly paradigm of discipleship before our eyes. To continue to live like the rich fool, seeking to accumulate more than enough for our own security and pleasures or to live like the rich man in daily indifference to poor Lazarus cannot be reconciled with faithful Christian discipleship.
- b) Simply the way we live: If our present affluence cannot be justified because of the existence of the poor and needy at home and throughout the world, then it is time to begin new life-styles. We learned that the first communities of believers in Acts became models of caring for society around them.
- c) Become advocates of the poor: We called to stand on God's side, with Jesus as advocates of the poor and oppressed. To be such an

advocate is to be faithful to the Gospel that Luke has proclaimed.

d) Oppose systems that perpetuate social injustices and inequalities:

One of the most difficult and necessary task for the church today is to move from a private to a public ethic. Too much Christians preaching and teaching has centered on the private and personal relations between God and the individual and not on the social dimensions of the Gospel. The necessary part of Christian discipleship is to oppose the entrenched and exploitive powers that we have and to work towards more just and humane social systems.

#### **4.2.3 The Ministry of Service**

The Greek word **diakonia** can best be translated as service. The three words ‘diakonein, diakonia and diakonos’ come from the same classical Greek source, of which the verb form is ‘Diakonein’, Diakonein means, in a more narrow sense, “waiting table” or “to care for one’s physical needs”, and “serving food as a sacrifice to the gods”. From these meanings there develops a broader sense of ‘Diakonein’ as service in general. The substantive ‘Diakonia’ is the action of ‘Diakonein’ and ‘Diakonos’ is the person who performs ‘Diakonein’ (Van Klinken 1988:26). One can detect three different usages of these related words in the New Testament:

a) A general meaning of service to others, but with a profound significance.

- b) A specialized meaning: a function or office within the church.
- c) A further restricted meaning-specialized function or office within the church, especially related to the poor.

When we speak of diakonia we usually mean the action of the Churches in the service of the world as one of the most important factors in their missionary activities. The churches are sent to the world not only to preach and to save men but also to establish communities through which they serve the world in its material and spiritual needs. In this sense, the act of diakonia is equivalent to the fulfillment of the duty of the Churches to offer help to the suffering people outside their membership or to provide answers to the problems of man in economic, political, personal or family life. Through this kind of diakonia the churches enter into the world and render their witness to their Lord evident, vivid and realistically present in practice. Without this action a Church would seem to be deprived of the fundamental expression of her inner life (Nissiotis 1961:191)

The Mission must proclaim and live the Gospel as well as demonstrate its transcendent wonder in deed. Mission without diakonia is a contradiction in terms (Visser 't Hooft 1957:225). *“If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, he must be the slave of all”* (Mark 10:43). In the Gospel of John symbols that express the ministry and mission of Jesus include the towel and basin and

the cross:

*'During supper, Jesus, well aware that the Father had entrusted everything to him, and that he had come from God... rose from the table, laid aside his garments, and taking a towel, tied it round him. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel' (John 13:3-5)*

The cross remains the deepest symbol of the full extent of Jesus' love through His suffering and death. The towel and basin, however, also symbolize His love (John 13:1). They portray the foot washing of '*Christos Diakonos*' (Christ the servant), who assumed the form of a servant, kneeling down, as would a slave to wash the feet of His disciples.

It is the task of the Christian churches to learn to understand the language of the symbol of towel and basin and interpret it in their cities, and communities. Churches must learn that diakonia is a key to understanding the person of Jesus Christ and His gospel, and therefore also a key to understanding the missionary task that the Christian church is called to fulfill because the church that is not a diaconal is no church (Verkuyl 1979:209)

The washing of the feet of the apostles by Christ before His sacrifice on the Cross for the whole world is a vivid and eloquent expression of the internal



ecclesiological motive, or better, “moment” of diakonia. It is a pre-figuration of his sacrifice, an act of binding Him down before He is delivered up to the world (Nissiotis 1961:192).

The church is aware of the profound needs and problems of the informal settlement communities and squatter camps, and that they confront the deaconate with immense and multifarious challenges. In modern cities, many departments of social work and public agencies have been developed to meet human needs of the poor. In such a situation, the churches must neither attempt to take over the existing social services nor ignore their availability. In the “welfare states” the churches should attempt to fill the gaps that exist in the social service systems, whereas in those communities where few social services are available the churches should supply these services, at least temporarily, until such time as public agencies are in a position to take over.

Today many churches have offered to collectively work together with the social welfare department, and also to temporarily assume certain tasks, which they are not yet able to assume. Even in those communities where the public welfare and social agencies function professionally and effectively, there remain endless gaps where either concealed or open wounds exist that need to be discovered and treated. The consequence of this approach will be a deepening and broadening of the churches’

deaconate outreach.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the outreach of the churches' deaconate was limited to care for the poor, but today the outreach of the deaconate has broadened considerably and that the methods employed have undergone significant change. The deaconate has learned to see the inadequacy of marginal charity and has come to be actively engaged in the attempt to change unjust situations. We have come to realize that the deaconate must not only be an instrument of compassion, important as this, but also an agent of justice.

It is the task of diaconate in urban mission to bridge gap, which is wide open that exist between theory and practice, and there are few urban deaconate that accomplish this. The task of the deaconate in the informal settlements is to reveal something of the greater love (1Corinthians 13), the abundant justice (Mathew 5:20), and the 'shalom' that is beyond our understanding (Philippians 4:7). Nonetheless the important question remains on how the urban deaconate can be renewed and made into a responsible instrument.

1. Respect end express the unity of word and deed: Evangelism is incomplete until people have come into contact with 'Christos Diakonos', Christ the true deacon, who is seen in our word and deeds. Committees for evangelization and deaconate must not be

separated they must work together.

2. In choosing deacons and organizing diaconate, keep in mind the entire community to be served: The deacons must coordinate the diaconal task of the congregation, present proposals and suggestions. They must take the needs of the community into consideration.
3. Acquire insight into the total situation of the informal settlement community which the local congregation work by making contacts between Christian Pastors: To avoid this there must be an overview of the entire situation and a careful evaluation of the existing challenges. Such study can be of great help in enabling the diaconate to assume a more responsible role in urban mission
4. On the basis of such shared reflection and insight, each local diaconate, should draw up a work plan that will define its task within the large field of urban mission. This will involve the selection of several projects and programs within the capacities of the local congregation which take into consideration the charismata present among her members, and which will fit into a situation of meaningful Christian teamwork

5. Frequently evaluate the activities chosen in this manner and consult professional advisers. The concern must be to remain flexible and alert, to play a responsible role in the whole of urban mission. In this way the example of 'Christos Diakonos' can be followed in the large cities of the world.

#### **4.2.3.1 Projects and Programs**

In alleviating the problem of poverty in the informal settlement community, the diaconate commission can introduce the following projects and programs to assist the poor:

- a) Freeing people from addictions: One question to the churches in the informal settlement communities: Is Do you come into contact with people in those places where they are enslaved to their sins and where their exodus from slavery must be brought about. For example the work of the drug addicts and assistance offered to alcoholics. The projects belong to the diaconate and they must not be permitted to fall into neglect.
- b) Advancing a sense of community: Loneliness is one of the biggest problems in the informal settlement community. Loneliness and community poverty presents a challenge to the diaconate in all communities.

- c) Bridging the gaps between the conflicting groups: We should think of programs that can heal the unhealthy relations between the various groups in the informal settlement communities, for example, various political parties, taxi violence etc. There are various ethnic and interest groups that live next to and in antagonism towards one another. The diaconate has been working with the individuals and has seldom recognized the healing of relations between groups as a part of its task. If our congregations want to be diaconal congregations they will have to lend a hand to the task of healing these broken relations wherever they are found.
- d) Struggling against unemployment: Unemployment is in the first place the task of the government. Nonetheless unemployment is also the task of the church's diaconate. Help in educating young people to enable them to find work is the task, which the church is called for. The stimulation of projects to put people to work can also be undertaken. Unemployment is demoralizing and in the struggle against it churches are called to be inventive. This too belongs to the outreach of the diaconate.
- e) Serving justice: The diaconate chose the example of the Good Samaritan as its example, but it is time also to see that Exodus 3:7-8 is also the example of the diaconate: Then the Lord said,

*“I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard them cry out to be rescued from their slave-drivers. I know all about their sufferings, and so I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land, one which is rich and fertile and in which...”*

The God of mercy and charity is also the God of justice, who defends the rights of the poor and powerless. We should not forget this when we serve the people of the informal settlement communities. These people are frustrated for they have been profoundly disappointed by the various unjust situations. They come from all over the places. They came to the informal settlement with hope, looking for something better, but instead they lost their identity and their sense of personal worth even more (Verkuyl 1979:216)

- f) Establishing projects: The self supporting associations offer a wide variety of services to establish projects e.g Gardening projects, Sewing and knitting, Candle making, Literacy classes etc.

The congregational diaconate is called to be attentive to these situations and to actively serve the cause of justice. Verkuyl (1979:216) suggest the following examples that can shed light:

1. Inexpensive or free legal aid
2. Helping people find housing and assisting them in rent problems.

3. Aiding people who have been imprisoned to adjust to normal social life
4. Encouraging the development of self-reliance and group power for the powerless.

In considering various diaconal projects and programs, something essential must not be forgotten. Diaconate is only possible when it is motivated by agape, and agape finds its source in the love of the true deacon, Jesus Christ. Agape derived from Him is inventive, just as the service He rendered when He went about Palestine was flexible and inventive. The urban diaconate must apply the ingenuity of love in the discovery of fields, of meaningful service and in the initiation of experiments (Verkuyl 1979:218)

#### **4.2.4 The Ministry of Worship**

The Greek word '**leitourgia**' can be translated as worship. In the early days of Hellenistic Greek the word 'leitourgein', the verb, meant to undertake some service of the state voluntarily and one's own free will. Later the word meant to perform the services, which the State laid upon citizen specially, those who qualified to perform them. The services were the same, but now instead of being voluntary, they became compulsory (Baclay 1973:177).

In the New Testament the word have been used on three occasions for the following purposes:

- a) It is used for the service rendered by man to man. So Paul when he is set on taking the collection for the poor saints of Jerusalem, uses 'leitourgein' This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God (11 Corinthians 9:12)
- b) 'Leitourgein' is used specifically for religious service (Luke 1:23; Acts 13:2)
- c) In the letters of Paul, the word 'Leitourgos' in the later Greek simply meant 'a workman' (Baclay 1973:17)

Worship (prayer, song, sermon, celebration of sacraments) emphasizes the uniqueness of the church as the people of God. Liturgy is fellowship with God. Liturgy is the name given ever since the days of the apostles to the act of taking part in the solemn corporate worship of God by the priestly society of Christians, who are the body of Christ. In worship it is God who always takes the initiative: Christians worship is the response to the word of God (Loving 1989:2). The hymns of prayer and praise speak the language of love. Prophetic preaching calls people to repentance, to the experience of conversion and the renewal of life. In worshipping church the presence of the risen Christ can be experienced, calling his people to a total dedication of their lives and demanding the renewal of their societies



so that God may rule completely over all (1Corinthians 15:28). Worship is the fountain from which all mission flows. Worship must also be interpreted outwardly in relation to mission. In worship the church celebrates the reality of Christ Lordship. He is the Lord of the church and Lord of the world. The church's struggle with social evils like poverty, oppression, injustice, violence and suffering will also compel it to take a firm stand against social, political and economic wrongs (Pretorius et al 1987:98-99).

The community, the church, is called to have a different political identity from the people around it. The symbol of the church's alternative political identity is worship. In its most concrete origins, the Hebrew word for worship denotes the physical act of falling on one's face on the ground in homage before one's ruler. Thus God the Ruler is at the centre of church's worship. The praise and prayer of worship, the reading and preaching of Scripture, the fellowship around the table, and the washing of baptism that initiates new citizens of heaven (Guder 1998:119)

The first and most basic principle is that evangelism should begin from a deep sense of the reality of the reign of God within the Christian community. The primary agent in all evangelism is God, and the ultimate objective of evangelism is to see people introduced to and grounded in the kingdom of God as it is manifested in history. Worship releases the church

to relax; it makes her aware that God is the primary agent in evangelism; it breaks the temptation to manipulate for worthy end; and it sets her free to mediate the presence of God and his rule (Abraham 1989: 167-168).

Within the world the church is the fellowship of those who have submitted to this Lord, who worship Him as Lord, and proclaim Him to the world as the sole means of salvation. In this world the Church plays two roles: it is the people of God whom He has called out of the world, who have been born again through baptism in Jesus Christ, and released from God's condemnation of the world. At the same time they are the people of prophets, priests and kings who have been sent into the world in order to preach salvation to it, and to intercede for it in prayer. The church is therefore the proclamation and the expression of the Lordship of God breaking into the world (Schlink 1961:142)

God commissions a church to be salt and light to its population. It must demonstrate sanctification but also reach out into community, to call people to the worship of the true God in Jesus Christ and serve with justice and compassion (Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:138).

Christians have regular weekly worship services, regular prayer meetings, home services, Sunday schools as well as women's and youth services which we can use to attract the poor to our services. We must invite the

poor to join us in those services. Worship or liturgy is fellowship with God. The hymns of prayer and praise must speak the message of love. Our prophetic preaching must call people to repentance, to the experience of conversion and the renewal of life. In the worshipping church the presence of the risen Christ can be experienced, calling his people to a total dedication of their lives and demanding the renewal of their societies so that God may rule completely over all (1Corinthians 15:20) (Greyling 1987:154)

#### **4.3 Relief**

Relief is a very evocative term. It suggests images of suffering on a large scale, and heightens global awareness to the point where emotion spills over into active responses of many types. One definition used by World Vision is that relief is the urgent provision of resources to reduce suffering resulting from a natural or man-made disaster. In short, this will usually require the provision of emergency aid. It is, by its very nature, immediate, temporary, and prolonged only when self-reliance is impossible (Millham 1989:256)

Today in South Africa there are many Christian agencies and organizations specializing in relief and development. The types of programs and their effects are as diverse as the organizations themselves. Churches, liberals and conservative, evangelistic in focus or socially concerned,

government subsidized and privately endowed- these are amazing diverse organizations and so are the experience and skill levels of their leadership in the area of relief. Their definition of the term, 'relief' also varies widely. The lack of coordination among the agencies, create a very unfortunate situation.

It is universally recognized that the phenomenon growth of poverty in the informal settlement communities is a major problem and that unemployment lies as the root of the problem. Yet without skills, and in most cases some capital, the poor find it difficult to find solutions to their problems. To meet unexpected crises, for example, short- term relief ministries are what is needed. We need to take immediate and appropriate action in order to meet the need. By so doing the Christian bear witness to God's love and mercy (Greenway & Monsma 1990: 51)

A Christian response to acute human suffering is not optional. Jesus came with great compassion and brought a message of "relief" for the poor and the needy. The topic of emergency relief is not a debate between "evangelism" and "social action". It is a matter at the heart of the kingdom of God striking at the core of who we are as Christians in one church of Jesus Christ responding to situations of human need. The Gospel of Luke records a vivid illustration of this truth:

*"The scroll of Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place*

*where it is written:*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and to recover of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”. Then He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:17)*

#### **4.4 Development**

We live in times when development has become common property.

Government organizations, the non-government organizations (NGO’s), the private sector, and many thousand-community organizations see it as their task to be involved in development.

Most Christian missions and Christian development agencies have struggled with defining the relationship between development and evangelism. They see development and evangelism as separate enterprises. The thinking is that evangelism addresses spiritual needs while development addresses physical needs. Evangelism clearly states the Good News of Jesus Christ is salvation to all who believe. Development, on the other hand, attempts to relieve the vulnerability to pain and suffering that people experience when they live in deteriorating conditions. The concept of ‘Shalom’ translated as peace bridges the gap between development and evangelism by its concern for truth, power and control. Shalom describes

the condition of well-being resulting from the sound relationships among people and between people and God. It includes social justice: the protection of widows, orphans, and society's dependents; the struggle against exploitation and oppression; the protection of life and protection of life and property (Bradshaw 1993:18).

A philosophy of development that merits the name Christian begins with the acknowledgement that the Bible is the source of authority for all thought and action. The Bible teaches a great number of things regarding the poor, whatever strategy we adopt for ministry to the poor in the informal settlement communities, it must spring from our understanding of God's attitude towards poor people and what the church must offer them in Christ's name.

There is a sense in which God stands on the side of the poor. The Bible teaches that God is angered when people are oppressed, and in this life or the next he will punish those who are oppressors. The apostasy of Israel is characterized in part in terms of her oppression of the poor (Amos 5:12). The promise of the year of jubilee and the age of the Messiah is portrayed as "good news to the poor" (Isaiah 61:1-3); Luke 4:17-21). According to the book of James, pure religion involves taking care of defenseless widows and orphans (James 1:27). The ministry of Jesus had special significance for the poor and oppressed of his day, for he defined his ministry as

preaching the gospel to the poor and announcing freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and release for the oppressed (Luke 4:17-21)

Development is defined, as a process enabling a community to provide for its own needs, beyond former levels, with dignity and justice. In short it is the improved capacity of a community to meet its needs. Development must be indigenous, comprehensive, long-term, and aimed for improved self-reliance. (Millham 1989:258).

The term development is used to describe relief activity that is intended to avoid creating dependency and instead gives the poor the opportunity to earn a respectable living on their own. An old Chinese proverb illustrates the difference between relief and development. “If you give a hungry man a fish, you relieve his hunger for a day. But if you teach him how to catch fish, you relieve his need for many days to come.” Applied to an urban strategy on behalf of the poor, this proverb suggests that development rather than benevolence is the route to take. Development protects the dignity of the poor and offers them the chance to rise above poverty and meet their needs on a permanent basis (Greenway & Monsma 1990:52).

We live in times when development has become common property.

Government departments, non-governmental organizations, the private

sector, pressure groups and thousands of community-based organizations see it as their task to be involved in development. Christian Community Development is a holistic ministry to the poor and needy. It needs to be understood within the context in which it is carried out. Christian Community Development should lead to redemption, significance of Christian Movement and witness. The poor and the needy people want somebody who can help them to restore their human dignity and self-respect. They are asked to be touched and to be embraced with the Love and Compassion by the Christian Community. These people need to be motivated so that they can gain their self-esteem. (Maluleke 1999:2)

Development is the process of forging new values and enabling a community to have a part in determining its own destiny. Christian development makes a statement about what those values should be. It sees value in two dimensions: people interacting with people, and people finding ultimate meaning and value in the person of Jesus Christ. Christian development believes that men and women can be free only when they find freedom in Christ. Christian development always has the intention of evangelization, because it offers the only true basis of effective human relationships without which development cannot be fully achieved (Dayton & Fraser 1980 66-67).

Development enhances the happiness of the human being, bring greater



human dignity, and infuse the human being with knowledge, skills and insights to enable every person to maintain a dignified life. Of course a development project's objective will be better houses, schools, clinics, and roads but through their participation in development efforts the so-called population must gain in abstract things such as happiness, dignity and knowledge (Swanepoel 1996:95). This process of enabling the community to provide for its own needs virtually requires a relief contingency plan. Since it is the poor who suffer most, relief leaders must address the question of how to reduce poverty, and thus reduce vulnerability to disaster, while placing disaster response within the context of development. In the life of the early church, we note that the church was always involved in works of charity and caring for the needy people. There is no doubt that the introduction of Christianity in any place has been accompanied by social transformation of the community in that area. Missionary activities has always included many aspects of social services like schooling, Medical Care, vocational training, agricultural improvement, relief work and counseling (Maluleke 1999:3).

Projects of social service ought to be promoted. Without social service, Christianity will seem irrelevant to needy individuals and needy communities. The Christian church would not be true to its mission if it neglected matters that affected the Community (Maluleke 1999:3)

When we enter a situation, our intention may be simply to proclaim the Good News. We may go to an unreached people as evangelists with the intention of being related announcing God's word of reconciliation. But once we find ourselves in the community, the demands of the very gospel we proclaim may force us to take other action. When we have to cater for the hungry amongst us, we must not only be content with giving food, but we must also address the root causes. The real challenge for the church is to listen to the poor and understand their real problem. Helping the poor has encompassed several actions which are driven by compassion and taken according to the needs of the poor (Maluleke 1999:4).

The poor in the informal settlements communities certainly need food and clothing, but much more important for the people there, is a long-term commitment to community development. Many times we give because we do not know what else to do. We see the suffering and we have to do something, but we should always be sure to keep the focus of our giving on the ones who need the help. Sometimes our giving is motivated by guilt. This can be very dangerous for the poor (Perkins 1993:23).

Today there are unacceptable misunderstandings and misinterpretations regarding the involvement of Christians in development and that is why most Christians have been so thunderously silent on the rapaciousness of the "development" model.

- Firstly, their silence can be attributed to bad exegesis of scripture, apathy born of theological ignorance an ethnocentric model; of development and simple greed. James Watt was an advocate who justified on the basis of biblical grounds the opening of national forests to leases, and expediting surface mining of coal” My responsibility is to follow the Scriptures which call upon us to occupy the land until Jesus returns” Ironically this is a misquote of Scripture “Occupy the land until Jesus returns” is a misapplication of Luke’s parable of the talents, where Christ is really teaching the opposite of exploitation: good stewardship. In the parable, the wise steward multiplied rather than diminished resources.
- Secondly, other Christians have also asserted that the Scriptures teach exploitation rather than care-taking, based on Genesis 1:28-31 passage where the Hebrew *Kabash*, “subdue,” may also mean: to tread down or bring into bondage”, and the word for “rule,” *redah*,” can mean “to trample” or to prevail against. ”We are to subdue the creation and rule it as good stewards. We are called to be shepherd of God’s creation”
- Thirdly, apathy and theological ignorance is another reason for silence. Most Christians attend religious services but they know less

about wildlife and more utilitarian and dominionistic their attitudes are toward nature. The lack of theological teaching in the church on the imago Dei as caretaking is really a lack of teaching about God's vision for his people and the world. Our awareness of God himself is limited by this dangerous anthropocentrism.

- Fourthly, another reason that there is not an outcry by evangelicals against the exploitation system is that we are part of it as members of western society and as participants in the institutions that represent the modern, developmentalistic perspective. We are blinded by our ethnocentrism. The structures of our society are fallen and need reform and that the modernization approach to resolving human problems is bankrupt. The modern technological solution to human need is seriously flawed.
- Still another reason, perhaps unconscious, for our silence is greed. Christians in rich nations benefit immensely from the current arrangement. Christians from the rich society benefit own two thirds of the earth's entire resources. However only 13 percent of them live in absolute poverty. This disparity represented in the above figures needs addressing if there is to be any equity and justice within the Christian community worldwide. It is not a new problem. The early church also had to face disparities. The apostle Paul instructed the

Corinthian church on a solution to the drought-induced poverty of the church in Jerusalem. There is no question of relieving others at the cost of hardship to you; it is a question of equality. At the moment your surplus meets their need, but one day your need may be met from their surplus. The aim is equality; as scripture has it, *“The man who got much had no more than enough, and the man who got little did not go short”* (2Corinthians 8:13-15). This sharing ethic of the early church was seen also in the Jerusalem Christian community, where economic was vitally linked to their communion in common life, and to their witness and growth.

*“All whose faith had drawn them together held everything in common they would sell their property and possessions and make a general distribution as the need of each required. With one mind they kept up distribution as the need of each required. With one mind they kept up their daily attendance at then temple, and, breaking bread in private houses, shared their meals with unaffected joy, as they praised God and enjoyed the favor of the whole people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those whom he was saving”* (Acts 2:44-47)

The early church had its disparities as well. The apostle James had to admonish the brothers who claimed faith yet were unwilling to show it through sharing:

*“Suppose a brother or a sister is in rags with not enough food for the day, and one of you says, ‘Good luck to you, keep yourselves warm, and have plenty to eat’ but does*

*nothing to supply their bodily needs, what good of that*” (James 2:15-16).

He warned them against piling up wealth at the expense of exploited laborers and against living wantonly in luxury, “fattening yourselves like cattle” (James 5:1-5). If James were alive today, his message would be appropriately applicable to the wealthy church that benefits from an exploitative system and then gives back a misery charity to the poor.

Until there is a fundamental, structural rearrangement of the way Christians respond to the poverty gap among themselves and in the world, all the relief and development efforts of the church and para-church organizations are only band -aids.

The church ideally, has the tools to overcome all social barriers, and this, surely, is the church’s call and ministry. Therefore, Christians who rightly understand the possibilities inherent in church unity as a social force are way ahead of the game in working for social transformation. Planting and edifying a church relates to the whole spectrum of social transforming.

#### **4.5 A need for developing a comprehensive and holistic approach**

The churches and mission agencies can extend help to the poor in the informal settlement communities. This kind of help should fulfill the biblical mandate to evangelize the poor as well as relieve their physical needs.

In fulfilling the Cultural mandate, especially in ministries involving social service, churches need to see clearly what should be done and why. Today most Christians agree that their churches should help the poor, and respond to the biblical question: “*But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?*” (1John 3:17-18).

The fulfillment of the missionary mandate requires the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the planting and growth of the church, the extension of Christ’s lordship over all areas of community life, and the reclaiming of the whole cosmos from the control of Satan and his servants. In pursuit of this goal, Christ’s servants proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God and bear witness in word and deed to his saving love and compassion. By all that they do, they seek to call forth a saved people, the church, and service Greenway & Monsma 1990:52)

By discovering the felt needs of un-churched people and designing church programs of service that will meet those needs, the church uses social service as an evangelistic means. In the early church we can draw a number of examples where the church established schools, hospitals, or orphanages in order to help open people’s hearts to the gospel message. In the New Testament accounts of the spread of the faith, as we see with the

lame man at the temple in Acts 3, social service in the form of miracles and wonders seems to have functioned as a means of preparing people for the message of salvation.

Clearly not every one agrees that Evangelism and Social service should be separated as two distinct parts of mission. Many Evangelicals believe that Social action is not Evangelism. It has been too commonly assumed that evangelism is mainly confined to preaching or some other kind of speaking. This is not true. Peter Wagner (1989:123) argues that "I do not believe it necessary to justify all Christian social ministry on the basis of its help in saving souls".

The Good Samaritan bound up the wounds of the person who was robbed and beaten with no conditions attached. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, his healing was 100 percent successful, though only ten percent came to faith through it. Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda despite the fact that he did not even know who Jesus was, and he did not even thank Jesus for his healing. Carl F.H Henry (1971:112) argues: "that the primary reason for social involvement ought not be an indirect evangelistic ploy, but rather a straight forward demonstration of God's Justice in the world". There is biblical justification for doing good whether or not men and women are brought to faith in Christ as a result of it.



Greenway and Monsma (1990:54) clearly spells out the basic values which undergird the kingdom vision of Christian urban community development to be as follows:

- From start to finish the ministry must be identifiably Christian.
- Christ's example of blending the spoken word with deeds of compassion towards the suffering must give continual direction to Christian urban development ministry.
- Christian ministry to the urban poor must follow the principle of indigenization.
- Material resources must be used as efficiently as possible
- The planting and development of compassionate churches in every part of the city must be long-term goal.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have explored four crucial aspects of mission. We must set up relief and development ministries that are clearly Christian, convey the gospel in word and deed, and are appropriate to needs and cultures of ethnic people. The kingdom of Jesus Christ is to be advanced in the informal settlement communities through actions that are identifiably Christian in content and style and that bring overall health and healing to people in need.

The Gospel has to be seen in action as well as heard in words. This was

certainly recognized in the New Testament. The life and fellowship was itself a visual aid to the Gospel. The life and witness of the individual Christian was a demonstration of what Christ can do in a human life.

Obviously besides the church, government agencies are also involved in assisting the poor in the informal settlement communities, so it will be poor stewardship for the Christian community to duplicate services that are already rendered in a satisfactory way. Rather than assuming the roles of government and community organizations, Christians should do all they can to promote the effective operation of these organizations and confront them when they fail.