

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DEVELOPING A MISSION STRATEGY**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter we have identified, studied and described the undetached poor in the informal settlement communities, in this chapter we will now develop effective mission strategies to minister to them. The church needs to develop an authentic urban mission strategy for ministering in the informal settlement communities. These are strategies to which the church needs to pay particular attention as we seek to do truly authentic urban ministry.

We must develop strategies to reach specific ethnic communities and multiply churches among them. We need to remember that informal settlement communities are not single homogeneous units but conglomerates of different groups and subgroups, many of which require a specially designed missionary strategy. Many poor people have remained untouched by Christians for years simply because they were insulated by language and cultural barriers, and nobody took notice of them. The first step in reaching a hitherto undetached ethnic group is to find out what is already being done by churches in these areas and then develop mission strategies.

## **6.2 DEVELOPING MISSION STRATEGIES**

### **6.2.1 Networking**

Networking provides one of the major forms of social organization on the middle level of the city. People link up with other people through word of mouth, references, meetings, phones, faxes, and computers. Ray Bakke (1984:86) points to three kinds of networks: those based on kinship, on geography and on vocation. We must encourage the poor to form networks with other structures in their communities.

Networking has become a popular term lately. The term comes from the world of business, and it simply means the creation or maintenance of a "net" of contacts through which one effectively carries out an enterprise. That net can be a human net or a corporate net or even an electronic net." *Networking, in the Christian context, is the intentional and systematic visiting of people in an urban community by the Pastor and church worker in order to enable that community or church to address more effectively that neighborhood's most the community, bridges which the gospel and its implications for all of life can be carried to corners that otherwise would be inaccessible.*

Linthicum (2000:113) mentions the three primary reasons for networking in a community. These reasons can be relevant to the community of the poor and they are interrelated and strategic to each other.

- Networkers seek first to learn what the people's *substantive problems are*. If a church is to reach out to its community, it is irrelevant what the church perceives as the issues. One must begin where people are, with their issues, and the only sure way to uncover those issues is to ask the people.
- The second thing networkers seek to learn is *who are the real leaders of the community*. Very rarely are the elected or business leaders of a community the real leaders; and that is particularly true of an informal settlement community.
- The third thing networkers want to know is, *who in the community cares so much about an issue that he'll get involved in dealing with it*. No community issue can be addressed successfully unless the people address it.

The most important function of networking in the informal settlement community is to enable the pastor and his church to move into the most effective aspect of urban ministry-community organization. Another avenue for net workers is to find out what other churches in other informal settlement communities are doing and try to network with them. They might have a worker to spare who knows the language and culture. Contacts should also be made with former missionaries and foreign-mission agencies that have had experience working with the particular ethnic group overseas (Greenway 2000:103).

### **6.2.2 Community organization strategy**

Linthicum (2000:116) best describes community organization as " *the process by which the people of an urban community organize themselves to deal with the primary forces that are exploiting their community and making them powerless victims.*"

In discussing how the church may respond to the community we assume two things:

- The first assumption is that people who are best able to deal with a problem are those most affected by it. The people involved must own any activity and its implementation. They must feel it is theirs.
- The second assumption is that people who are excluded from full participation in the social, economic, and political life of their city or neighborhood can be empowered to participate when they act collectively (Grigg 1992: 268)

If people can be empowered to work corporately, as a single unit, they will be able to take responsibility for the life of their community and, consequently, to participate fully in their community.

In the light of these two assumptions, a church can respond to its community in one of three different ways:

- First, it may see itself as the church *in* the community. It will not

feel any particular commitment to its neighborhood. It will not particularly identify with the community. It will simply be physically present in it. It will be the church in the community only because its brick and mortar happen to meet the ground there.

- Second, a church may perceive itself as a church *to* the community. Some urban churches realize that if they do not interact with their neighborhood they will die. So they began to become concerned about the neighborhood and its problems. This is a holistic approach because it recognizes that the church must be present to the people around it and concerned with both evangelism and social action. "It is inadequate to be concerned with people's soul, particularly of the poor, unless the church is also going to be concerned about their social and economic needs" (Linthicum 2000:117).
- Thirdly, a church may be the church *with* the community. This means that the church incarnates itself in that community. It becomes flesh of that people's flesh, bone of that people's bone. It enters into the life of the community and becomes a partner in addressing its need. This means that the church allows the people of the community to instruct it as it identifies with the people. It respects them and joins them in dealing with the issues they have identified as their own. The church joins with the people in addressing the issues of that community, not from advantage point

of privilege, but from the recognition that the people of the community with the problem must assume final responsibility for coping with the problem. The church must come alongside them, support and work with them in the endeavor, and share with them the particular gifts and strengths it has to contribute. Community organization is a process of mobilizing the people in a troubled neighborhood to take action together to identify and defeat the social and spiritual forces destroying that neighborhood (Linthicum 200:118).

### **6.2.3 Mission strategy**

Evangelism refers to the number of people within a population who have heard the good news of Jesus Christ and the degree to which they have received the message.

Yamamori et al (1996:7) say that there are billions of people on this planet whose faith is not in the one Savior, Jesus Christ and who worship something other than the one true God. Most of these people live in the informal settlement communities. The Christian response to these poor people should be evangelism. What an informal settlement community needs most are the Disciples of Christ, not just “converts”.

Deeds of kindness done to the poor are never sufficient in and of themselves. The greatest kindness that the church can show to a poor person is to point that person to Jesus. Only the shed blood of Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross can do that. Jesus underlined the spiritual needs of those with physical needs when He said to the paralytic, “*Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven*” (Mathew 9:2).

The church's participation in the community's organization creates a unique opportunity to share the Christian faith with the community's emerging leaders. Community organization builds relationships of depth

and trust between the people of the church and the people of the community. In such relationships, sharing about Jesus is natural. People who would normally be unreceptive to the gospel willingly hear it from their community partners because they trust them. The comprehensiveness of the mission task in the informal settlement community requires the proclamation of the gospel, the planting and nature of churches, and application of the principles of Christ's lordship to all areas of community life. It means concern for all in the city, even for the cosmos above and beneath the city, from the quality of the air people breathe to the purity of the water in the rivers and canals (Greenway 2000:45).

Jesus key strategy for the salvation of the world was disciple making. He made disciples so that they might become apostles. Jesus educated and disciplined them, that through them the movement of God's kingdom might pass on to the world with growing power and scope. Their discipleship was unto apostleship. Discipleship in the informal settlement community means getting serious about issues like good schools, responsible governments, sanitation, and clean streets, fairness in the marketplaces and justice in the courts. It means to eliminate squalor, slums, and every depressing condition that dishonors God by degrading human life.

All those who are disciples are expected to be witnesses to their faith



before an unbelieving world. This is the key to what the church needs today in terms of discipleship and renewal for mission. When we call people to Christ in faith and repentance, we are inviting them to turn their backs on the old gods and join the New Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and offer their lives, talents, and energy in serving to him. This is what discipleship is about (Greenway 2000:45)

The gospel message is an inseparable mix of life, deed, word, and sign. We are to be with Jesus (life) so that we can preach the good news (word), heal the sick (deed), and cast out the demons (sign). While we should reveal the gospel message in whatever way best speaks to the immediate needs of our audience, over time all the dimensions of the gospel must be revealed for the good news of Jesus Christ to be understood in its fullness. Often the transformational development process begins with witness through good deeds (Myers 1999:134)

#### **6.2.4 The need for incarnational ministry strategy**

The third area that often troubles urban leaders is incarnational living. This is especially necessary if we are ministering in communities where people do not resemble us, or if we are in a transitioning community that seems foreign to us. Paul Hiebert (1999:373) best describes incarnational ministry as “mission is first and foremost the work of God. The incarnation of the missionary, the message, and the church are meaningless if God is

not present in the missionary endeavor. We must become incarnate because God himself is already incarnate among people before we arrive, preparing their hearts to hear God's Word, revealing that Word to them by the work of the Holy Spirit, and transforming them through the power of the cross". The primary reason for incarnational living is to better understand the community in which we minister. Bruwer (1994:84) says we can best understand the poor if we:

- a. Go to the poor
- b. Live among the poor
- c. Learn from the poor
- d. Work with the poor
- e. Start with what the poor have

And build upon what the poor have

- f. Teach by showing
- g. Learn by doing

We need to live among the people at their level-not independent of them-despite our resources (Grigg 1992:136). Incarnational living allows for bonding with neighbors. People are more open when they realize that their community is your community too, that you are dealing with the same issues they are, not from the outside to "help them, but from the inside because they affect you too" (Baker 2002:70).

Besides helping to build relationships, there are two other benefits that come from understanding your community.

- First, we know that to develop a holistic ministry in a community, to minister in word and deed, one must know the needs of the community. This is what we call needs assessment. It cannot be done accurately if we do not understand the community.
- Second, in order to be relevant in our presentation of the gospel, again in both word and deed, we must contextualize all aspects of our presentation, and this requires an intimate knowledge of the community and its people. Although we are advocating incarnational living, we must remember that being incarnational in itself is not enough; our goal goes far beyond that.

Hiebert and Meneses (1999:373) best explain that: *“The goal of incarnational ministry is not that people understand the gospel. It is that they respond to God’s invitation and are transformed by his power. They become new creatures through Christ and members of a new community, the church”*.

In ministering to the informal settlement community, we need to remember that Jesus is our role model for mission, His impact lies in the fact that *“the Word became flesh and made his dwellings among us”* (John 1:4). For our ministry to be relevant we must minister to the poor closely

and not from the distance. Jesus interacted with those to whom He ministered including the poor.

Incarnation was a profound historic symbol for Jesus. It is from such symbols of humility, sacrifice, and love that men and women are emboldened to transform them. Incarnation was a profound economic act of Jesus. It reversed values, defined jubilee principles, and demonstrated the active intervention of heavenly Father in providing for needs.

Incarnational ministry among the poor, is the primary step to transforming the economics of an emerging Christian community earth (Greenway 2000:161).

Incarnational for the poor means getting close, sharing pain, working over the long term, making local commitments and loving poor people, all these will contribute significantly to the effectiveness of our ministries. Because the church is Incarnational, it also knows that it will always be called to express the gospel within the terms, styles, and perspectives of its social context (Guder 1998:14).

### **6.2.5 Understanding the community strategy**

The main purpose of incarnational ministry is to assist us in understanding the community and its needs from the inside. If we do not know the people of the community or what the community is all about, we

cannot make intelligent decisions regarding their ministry strategy. We need to know the tools that are helpful in bringing about this understanding of the community.

Hiebert and Meneses (1999:261) remind us that “ we need to use both micro and macro approaches... to help us understand this great, complex, and confusing thing we call a city”. These two approaches roughly correspond to anthropology and sociology. Sociology looks at the systems of a city and how they interact, while anthropology examines the city more from the street where you meet people and learn who they are.

The first step in understanding your community is to know your own self. The second step is to do a walk-through. This is an exercise that should be done in pairs. It entails a purposeful walk through a portion of your community, during which you make detailed observations. Having a partner helps in identifying questions and interacting on what is seen. More than one walk should be planned, and they should be on different days of the week and at different times of the day, so patterns can be observed. A walk- through is a beneficial mostly because of the questions that are raised. Often the questions that come up are based on preconceptions.

The next step is to begin to know the individuals who live there. This is

where Incarnational living is such help. Shop in the community stores, and chat informally with the storeowners. Greet people on the street and ask them how they enjoy their community- what they like about it, what they would like to see changed. If there is a park, sit in it for a while and talk with people there. Find out what kind of activities may be planned for that community and participate in them. This is where you are becoming part of the community and why Incarnational living is so important. Try to talk to a variety of people- men and women, young and old- because they will look at the community in different ways.

Another step is to identify the community institutions and interview representatives of them. What schools service the community, and far away? Are there social service agencies or medical facilities nearby? Are there community development corporations, and what is their focus? Ask these professionals what they perceive as the needs in the community and how they are addressing them. Identify other churches in the area, and determine what types of programs they have. Networking is very important. The informal settlement community is not the place to be denominationally protective- we need all of God's people in the informal settlement communities, and there are not enough resources available for us to reproduce programs that are already in place.

The next step is to stand back and take a look at the community as it fits

into larger systems- the entire city, the state, the country, and even the world. One will realize that there might be similarities between the informal settlement communities and there are also major differences- in language, political activism, leadership, religious influence, and even the existence of gangs. These differences are directly attributable to the systemic structures influencing these communities. An overview of the culture can be obtained through reading materials on that culture. It is also important to know the history of the people's homeland

Next we need to review demographic data available for the community. Census is the best places where we can get information it only comes after four years. A good use of the census is to gather data for the last three census periods, compare them, and determine compare them how the community has changed over time.

#### **6.2.6 The Need for Evaluation**

When we are involved in ministry, we ought to be concerned whether we are really doing what we planned to do, or whether what we are doing is an effective use of ministry resources. Efficiency is not always the best criterion when talking about ministry. Effectiveness implies determining whether what we are doing is significant in building and enhancing God's kingdom.

Evaluation takes place before the ministry gets started, while it is still in the planning stage. Before any ministry program begins we should write out a mission statement and set measurable goals stating exactly what we want to accomplish at the end of the program. The plan should include a time- line that indicates when the first evaluation will be made and when will it end.

Evaluation should both be qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative should never be emphasized so much that it controls the outcomes of the evaluation. Evaluation takes time, and churches often bypassed it often. This can result in a tremendous waste of resources. Another aspect of evaluation is that no program should be evaluated in isolation from the rest of the church's programs (Baker 2002:80-81)

#### **6.2.7 Developing a Holistic Ministry**

Holistic approach means designing a development program so that it deals with the whole community. It is an integrated approach looking at various economic and social aspects of the community's development. Holistic ministry can refer to program where "relief and development efforts have led to the creation of new churches or the expansion of existing churches" (Yamamori et 1996: 124)

The idea of holistic ministry has deep biblical roots. Throughout the Old



and New Testaments, the Bible mandates that the church minister to the whole person. The need for this way of thinking about and viewing the world should now be clear. As we take on the challenge of working for human transformation, we will have to learn to think and act holistically in a variety of ways.

#### **6.2.7.1 Ministering to the community of the poor**

People staying in these communities are the poorest of the poor

The main special groups are the street children, unemployed, HIV-AIDS sufferers, prostitutes and homeless. Their community's needs are immense, for example, running water, sewerage, houses, schools, health services, electricity, street lights, ownership of the land, church buildings etc. Social services are not easily accessible to them

Unemployment has become a widespread and growing problem in the informal settlement communities. The church should begin to address the problem of unemployment in their Sunday services. The pastors must preach sermons on the responsibility of Christians to provide for themselves, and others. The church can raise a small fund to help church members acquire the tools they will need to start a business. And they should work closely with the Diaconal service that provides the skills for the unemployed

The large number of unemployed people in the informal settlement communities is having very distressing consequences. Robbery, violent crime, drug addicts, street children are increasing dramatically on daily basis. Because most people are poor they support each other in these communities, e.g during bereavement- the culture of 'Ubuntu' people will give an offering to help bury the dead.

#### **6.2.7.2 Ministering to the HIV-AIDS sufferers**

AIDS is more than a challenge to the church. It sets before the church an opportunity to reflect on its identity and its mission. If the church fails to act compassionately, neglects the needs that cluster around people with AIDS, fails to express itself redemptively, and abandons people who have almost no one to cry out on their behalf for mercy and justice, then the church will abdicate its responsibility and fail in its witness (Shelp & Sunderland 1987:90).

Moreover, the privilege of ministering to person with AIDS and to their family awakens one to life. Serious and terminal illness has a way of catalyzing the kinds of experiences that Paul describes. It has that effect on the dying person. It has the same potential power for awakening those who assist in the care of someone who is facing death. We are reminded of St Paul in his Letter to the Romans: "*Now we know that for those who love God all things work together unto God*" (Romans 8:28). God's healing

touches the healer as well as the afflicted. One is ministered to by the very persons to whom one extends a helping hand (Smith 1988:158).

As churches and individual Christians we should consider how to respond to the opportunities for ministry presented by AIDS, care should be taken not to underestimate the complexity of the challenge, the difficulty of the task, and the level of commitment necessary to initiate an adequate response. In developing ministries, flexibility and responsiveness to individual differences are important. AIDS ministries may be more difficult to design and implement because the variations between situations require personalized attention.

Finally high level of commitment is required to begin and sustain AIDS ministries. AIDS ministries should be undertaken by congregations and individuals who have their eyes open to the probable burdens and blessings associated with these activities. Ministering to people touched by AIDS differs in several ways from ministering to people with other illnesses. The final decision to embark upon an AIDS ministry should be guided by the imperatives of Christian discipleship. Clearly the perspectives offered here is that the Christian mission authorizes and embraces ministry to people with AIDS (Shelp & Sunderland1987:93).

People who participate in AIDS ministry should be learning as much as

possible about the disease. Learning about AIDS requires more than learning about the medical and physical facts. It means learning about the psycho-social aspects of the disease itself and the epidemic. Learning about the physical and psycho-social manifestations of AIDS involves learning about people who are at high risk for contracting the disease

#### **6.2.7.2.1 HIV-AIDS Ministries**

AIDS ministries are termed sustainable ministries because they inform, affirm, and support persons. They promote certain goods and values in the midst of a situation of significant loss. These ministries are multidirectional and serve a variety of ends. They are realistic, responsive to the needs arising from the crisis of AIDS, appropriate to the mission of God's people, and representative of a contemporary interpretation of the command to love one's neighbor

#### **6.2.7.2.2 Church-Based Care**

The care of the sick and suffering people is a duty of God's people. Although the institution may sponsor or operate facilities and conduct programs through which care is provided, the actual ministry, in whatever form takes, is performed by individuals. Church-related hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, and residences are laudable activities. Ministering in a comprehensive manner to people with AIDS may require a large investment of time and energy. In addition, the needs of affected

individuals can be so numerous and demanding, ministry teams can best address the problem of HIV AIDS by drawing expertise within a congregation (Shelp & Sunderland 1987:106-107)

#### **6.2.7.2.3 Inter-faith ministries**

AIDS affect people in all religious traditions, and therefore all religions traditions have a responsibility to conduct AIDS ministries. People touched by AIDS are found nearly everywhere. People who need AIDS related ministries are dispersed throughout the city limits and across the countryside. An interfaith AIDS ministry can provide a coordinated program through which faith groups support and complement each other. Such a structure also enables a coordinator staff to match patients and families with a congregation team of their own faith (Shelp & Sunderland 1987: 108-109)

#### **6.2.7.3 Ministering to the Homeless**

To ensure that shelter residents are aware of and referred to appropriate agencies, churches must have a workable brokering and referral system that operates well within the confines of its limited funding sources.

Public social services available to serve the complex needs of the homelessness include: medical care, some public housing, mental health services, therapeutic adult care, and screening for the developmentally

delayed. Emergency housing should be provided for hundreds of people without shelter. Churches should provide clothing, furniture and referrals. Day care for the younger homeless children should be provided at one of the homeless shelters. Roger Greenway (2000:185-186) suggests that the church should:

- Firstly, seek an understanding of the problems related to the poor and the homeless and sponsor direct services to the homeless on the streets.
- Secondly, churches must be prepared to respond to the needs of homeless people who may show up at their door at any time.
- Thirdly, Christians should commit themselves to mission careers among the homeless. Rescue missions and rehabilitation centers should be developed.
- Fourthly, start soup kitchen, near the cheap hotels, and the alleys where the homeless can sleep.

#### **6.2.7.4 Ministering to the Victims of Abuse**

Many people in the informal settlements are physically, psychologically, sexually, and verbally abused. Help is being offered for them in the churches by praying and give counseling. It is the task of the police service to detain and put to jail those who abuse others. Churches should network and work with the social service departments to offer counseling to the affected.

#### **6.2.7.5 Ministering to the Street Children**

The informal settlement communities house a growing number of street children. These children, some as young as 6 years of age, spend their days in the shacks hustling for money. They mind cars, beg for food and sometimes engage in petty thievery to get enough money for meal. Many have become addicted to glue sniffing, seeking relief from their hunger pains with a temporary high. These children are important to us because they are the future of the community. Childhood is where strength, stamina, health, and brain power are developed and when values are formed. In any sense, a better future begins with better children. Malnourished and poorly educated children are hardly a good harbinger of a better future (Edwards 1996:820).

Secondly, children and youth are important since they make up 40% of the population in our communities. Thirdly, most life-shaping decisions, including faith decisions, are made before the age eighteen (Myers 1994). Greenway (2000:200) gives the methods which the church can use in helping the street children.

- Firstly, in order to help a child one must first know him or her. Most children are hungry, so providing food for them is not only a way to attract their attention; it is also a way to fill a genuine need in their lives. Usually the giving of food is accompanied by a brief Bible

lessons or a brief Bible story and some singing.

- Secondly, another way to get the attention of children on the street is to offer to take them to a camp. Different programs will be arranged such as mix of Bible lessons, Scripture memorization, games, and swimming. The children stay at the camp for four days and are immersed in camp activities twenty four hours a day. The showers, the food, the beds, and the activities form a strong contrast to the life of privation and hustling for whatever they need. As their heads clear, they begin responding to the gospel message, and so many have their lives turned around for good.

#### **6.2.7.6 Ministering to the Drug Addicts**

People are taking a number of drugs like cocaine, dagga, glue and spirits. The market in the informal settlement is the schools and free markets. Substance abuse is a major cause of homelessness in the informal settlement. It is estimated that alcoholics and drug abusers represent a greater percentage of the homeless population. Because of their addiction, these people cannot get or hold a job, they cannot pay for decent housing, and they are not mentally alert enough to make adequate use of available community services.

The challenge of curbing drugs and reshaping the criminal justice system is not just a matter of public policy, but is also a test of the church's



commitment. In the face of so much young people taking drugs, our faith calls the Church to responsibility and action. Of all urban ministries, a ministry to drug addicts requires the tightest authority structure and discipline. The one-to-one discipling process involved will result in a network of disciples (Grigg 1992:48). A variety of church communities have responded with impressive programs of service and advocacy. In churches today, diaconal services is reaching out to drug victims and their families. Through counseling and treatment programs, as well as early intervention efforts directed towards families and individuals at risk. Our community of faith is called to:

**6.2.7.6.1 Teach right from wrong, respect for life and law, forgiveness and mercy**

Our beliefs about the sanctity of human life and dignity must be at the centre of our approach to the issue of drugs. We must respect the humanity of both victims and offenders. We believe the society must protect its citizens from addiction and is held accountable to those who break the laws. These same principles lead us to advocate for rehabilitation and treatment for offenders,

God's wisdom, love and commandments can show us the way to live together, respect others and ourselves, heal victims and offenders and renew communities. Our churches should teach good values everyday

from the pulpit and congregations, in schools and adult education programs and through advocacy and witness in the public square.

#### **6.2.7.6.2 Stand with victims and their families**

Victims of drugs and their families often turn to their local churches for compassion and support. Pastors must be prepared to respond quickly and effectively. Failure to do so will result in alienation from the church by drug victims and their families.

Our pastoral presence to victims must be compassionate and constant, which includes developing victim ministry programs.

#### **6.2.7.6.3 Reach out to offenders and their families, advocate for more treatment, and provide for the pastoral needs of all involved**

The families of offenders are also in need of our pastoral presence.

Seeing a loved one fail to live up to family ideals, community values, and the requirements of the law causes intense pain and loss. The Gospel calls us as people of faith to minister to the families of those who are addicted.

We know that faith has a transforming effect on all our lives. Therefore, rehabilitation and restoration must include the spiritual dimension of healing and hope. The church must stand ready to help offenders discover the good news of the Gospel and how it can transform their

lives. One way to help reintegrate offenders into the community is developing church mentoring programs that will help offenders and assist them in the difficult transition back to the community. These programs can reduce recidivism and challenge faith communities to live out the Gospel values of forgiveness, reconciliation, and responsibility for all members of the Body of Christ. Mentoring programs provide an environment of support, love, and concrete assistance for ex-offenders.

Family group counseling programs are effective in redirecting youth who find themselves alienated from their families. Skilled counsellors can help families identify their negative pattern in relating to one another and can offer alternate ways of communicating and building stronger families.

#### **6.2.7.6.4 Build community**

Every congregation exists within a community. Congregations are called to help rebuild their communities. Partnership among churches, business, law enforcement, social services, etc can help address the problem of drug addicts.

**6.2.7.6.5 Advocate policies that help reduce violence, protect the innocent, involve the victims and offer real alternatives to addiction**

As people of faith, and as citizens we are called to become involved in civil society and to advocate for policies that reflect our values. We should promote policies that put more resources into restoration, education, and substance –abuse treatment programs. We should also encourage programs of restorative justice that focus on community healing and personal accountability.

**6.2.7.7 Ministering to the illiterates**

Illiteracy is a recognized problem in the informal settlement communities. Although it cannot be easily solved, but something can be done to alleviate it. The church need to start with formal schooling, many people, both young and old, need training to become skilled laborers, or training in operating small business. The majority of the poor in the informal settlement desire such training and they will eagerly participate in such training if it is offered to them. If people have a skill that can be marketed or an education that allows them to obtain respectable work, they will then be able to give to their churches as God has prospered them (Greenway 2000:225-226).

In addressing the problem of illiteracy, the church should take the

following into cognisance:

- Firstly, the spoken language of the people must be respected.
- Secondly, the church should address the spiritual, social, and educational needs in an integrated fashion; the church will change the lives of its youth, and impact the community at large.
- Thirdly, the church must train the educational leaders for ethnic diversity in their communities.

#### **6.2.7.8 Ministering to the Prostitutes:**

There are many young ladies who are practicing prostitution in the informal settlement. Their main reason is that it's because of unemployment. The money they raise helps to raise their children and look after their families.

Greenway (2000:210) says God's righteous indignation against adultery is clear throughout Scripture, but so is his power to forgive and restore public sinners. There were plenty of prostitutes in Palestine in Jesus day, and their unrighteous activity placed them far outside the kingdom of God. But the Gospel tells us that prostitutes and sinners went out to hear the preaching of John the Baptist, and many responded (Mathew 21:32).

There were fallen women among the converts of Jesus, and to one of them, a Samaritan, Jesus taught deeper truths about God than are found almost anywhere else in the New Testament (John 4:7-29). On one occasion Jesus

said that through repentance and faith more prostitutes enter the kingdom than do religious leaders whom everyone considers respectable (Mathew 21:3).

In the light of what we know about prostitution and its bondage, we can better understand Jesus' compassion for the woman caught in adultery. After dispersing the Pharisees who had accused her, Jesus said to the woman, "*Neither do I condemn you, go now and leave your life of sin*" (John 8:11) Prostitution girls can come out of this sin after hearing the story of Jesus and this woman who practiced prostitution. Prostitutes need to hear that caring people are willing to help them get out of prostitution and begin a new life.

The church ministers in many ways, especially through the teaching and proclamation of the Word of God, through worship, through prayers, through holy sacraments, and through pastoral visits. The church ministers in these ways to all its members. It proclaims the gospel, making known that we are all saved by grace through Jesus Christ. It calls us to faith and commitment. It calls us to an obedient life and gratitude to God. The church instructs, guides, comforts, and sometimes admonishes even rebukes, when we are not obedient to the command of our Lord (Engelhard 2002:6).

All this is ministry, essential ministry for all persons, including those who are prostitutes. When the church reminds us of our brokenness and tells us the Scriptures, it is ministering to us about prostitution. And when the church invites us to come to the table of the Lord as repentant sinners, we are once again one in the Lord in spite of all our differences and in spite of our sins. This is ministry, essential ministry- also to persons who are prostitutes- ministry that helps find their place within the body of Christ.

Referrals are no substitutes for the ministry of the local congregation, and referrals are rarely successful unless they are made in the context of a compassionate church. Each congregation must do its own ministry: First, the church must remember that gospel, not law, has the power to redeem our lives and makes us whole. Saying no its not enough. The church must reach out with love and compassion, creating a fellowship of mutual honesty, caring, and support.

Christian ministry begins with compassion. Just as Jesus was moved by the cry of the blind man on the way to Jericho, by the widow following the body of her son, by the lepers who cried out from the crowd, and by the tears of the woman who washed his feet, so too we must first be moved in our deepest feeling by those who struggle with the same issues of prostitution.

Compassion is what we feel when we are in touched with the pain of others even though their situation may be very different from anything we have experienced. Compassion is born of imagination, the ability to put ourselves into their situation and know what it is really like. Only when we know our own brokenness, our own temptations can we begin to identify with others and feel compassion. That compassion is the motivational power for ministry. It moves us to reach out and do what we can. It also helps overcome their shame, the shame they do not deserve.

Compassionate ministry seeks to incorporate those with the same prostitution problem fully into the body and life of the church, satisfying their need for community, for intimacy, for oneness with others, and their need to serve others, and their need to serve the Lord.

Compassion ministry begins with lifting the taboo. Love and compassion will help. We need not stop our ears or avert our eyes. We must break down the conspiracy of silence and the walls of separation, which convey judgment, alienation, exclusion, and loss of hope to our brothers and sisters in Christ and to those outside of Christ who have been shut out of the church.

#### **6.2.7.8.1 Ministry of the local church to the prostitutes:**

Every church can minister to prostitutes; some congregations will develop



full-orbed ministries specifically designed for those who are seeking healing in the area of their sexual practice and desires. Every congregation can create a hospitable climate and an inclusive environment for those who experience same prostitution

#### **6.2.7.8.2 Creating a hospitable climate:**

Use language that assumes and describes the church community as the family of God. The church is a new community of Jesus Christ's followers, who are single, married, and from all varieties of backgrounds. In other words, teach that the church is not simply a collection of biological families or parts of families. Because the church is a new community, it needs to provide a home, a haven, for its members

Provide an environment for confession of sins and accountability to other Christians. In small-group settings as well as in public worship, provide a safe place to share struggles, confess sins.

#### **6.2.7.8.3 Some practical ways to develop a comprehensive ministry**

a) In congregational prayers include those who practice prostitution that they should come to repentance.

b) During liturgical confession refer by name to specific sins, including the practice of prostitution. Use scripture and prayers that refer to the fact

that Christians are tempted by, struggling with, and trapped in a variety of sins. Train worship leaders to use language that demonstrates that every kind of sin displeases God and that no sin is beyond God's forgiveness, that God's power can break the power and cycles of sin.

Mention sinful practice of attitude and thought as well as behavior and speech, including such things as gossip, slander, theft, murder, and violence. Among sins confessed should be those often perceived as ordinary and mundane as well as those that may be seen as dramatic.

c) In preaching talk about a variety of sins, including prostitution, and sexual practice outside marriage, (premarital/ extramarital affairs). Give examples of God's grace and comfort to those who struggle with brokenness and also examples of people who have been freed from the power of prostitution sin.

d) Encourage small groups to discuss some of the issues concerning sexual behavior in their bible groups.

#### **6.2.7.8.4 Ministry that local churches can offer**

The following are examples that ministries can offer to their members who are struggling with issues of prostitution:

a) Prayer partnership with others within the congregation

b) Congregation members who tell those who are practicing prostitution that they are really prepared to help and pray for them

c) Biblical teaching on the sinful nature of prostitution practice, sinful nature of the practice, on God's forgiveness, and on God's power for the believers to resist sin.

d) Practice of and training in classic disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, corporate worship, and service.