



CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

“To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of life “(Rev 21:06)

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink, let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said; out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:37)

God demands the right use of his gifts so that his providential nature be glorified when all creation is cared for and looked after and receives in celebration a just and fair distribution proportionate to one’s needs without wasting, polluting, greed or selfish indulgence as recorded in both the books of Ezekiel and John’s gospel (Ezekiel 34; John 10:10).

The following background as experienced by the researcher introduces to the reader the reasons that necessitated me to engage in this study:

It was in the year 1985 that the researcher made a pastoral visit to one of the hospitals in Bushbuckridge, a rural village of the Mpumalanga Province of the Republic of South Africa, where one of my congregants had just been operated. In the same ward was one patient by the name of Tshikiwani (*not a real name*) who had been there for more than six (6) years. Tshikiwani and her husband had been involved in a car accident that left Tshikiwani paralyzed with her legs, arm and spinal cord broken. The husband was not seriously injured and decided to dump the wife at the hospital and the three children with his mother in law.



He felt so sad about Tshikiwani story and decided to visit the three children who were sixteen (16), eleven (11) and eight (8) years of age. As a member of the local council of churches i.e. Lowveld Council of churches, (the Provincial branch of the South African Council of Churches), I reported the Tshikiwani story to the Home and Family Life department who resolved to care for the children by paying their school fees, and providing financial assistance that included feeding and clothing.

In 1986, the Health Department decided to discharge Tshikiwani who was then taken to join her children. Here, Tshikiwani had no room of her own. She was housed in a small rondavel made of mud with no window. What a traumatic experience it was for her!

In 1988 another family that was leaving the area offered to sell me their five (5) roomed house which I struggled to buy for Tshikiwani and her children. Thanks God that I managed. While this poor family was staying in this new home, I always helped them as much as I could, e.g., buying them food, soap etc. In 1999 I decided to pastorally engage on a process that would enable them to help themselves, remembering the old saying of “teaching a person to catch fish rather than giving him/her a fish”. This is what Maluleke is saying: “Christian community development should help these people to stand on their own feet” (1999:22). In the yard, there was a tap of water while other taps in the area, very often did not have water. As the yard was big enough, I taught them to plant vegetables and fruits such as spinach, cabbage, tomatoes, beans, mangoes, avocados, etc.



Again the idea here was to teach the children how “to learn to catch fish for themselves.” This helped the family a great deal as expressed in the well-known statement “Give a person a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a person to fish and you feed him for a life time” (Maluleke 1999:13) People in the area also benefited from this project as they used to buy fresh vegetables from Tshikiwani’s home.

Three years later, the government came out with the cost recovery doctrine where water users were to pay for the water they used. This doctrine has a detrimental effect on the poor because they are not able to afford to pay for their water; as a result they are cut off from water supply. Consequently, this poor family could not afford and had their water cut off and the whole project collapsed. The source of life was then taken away from them, and as a result Tshikiwani and those who benefited from the project were impoverished again. It is against this background that I felt the need to research on the negative impact of privatization of water system, its commercialization and commodification so that awareness be raised to the church and its stakeholders.

The awareness that the dissertation aims to raise is the fact that water and land is God’s gift for life. If one has land and water, one is able to survive, and the absence thereof, means poverty that yields diseases and death. The study however, focuses on the inaccessibility of water due to its commercialization (privatization) leaving the topic of land to other researchers.



1.2 MISSION STATEMENT

Investing in water today is more profitable than investing in oil and pharmaceuticals. In fact, water promises to be the 21st century what oil was to the 20th century. Water is the petroleum of the 21st century. According to Fortune, the annual profits of the water industry now amount to about 40 percent of those of the oil sector and are already substantially higher than the pharmaceutical sector.

Charles Santiago also observes that water as a global common good has come under the control of market forces. This is because water promises to be the most precious commodity of the 21st century, profiting corporations. Past experiences of privatization and the control of water by large private monopolies show that almost invariably, lead to the exclusion of the poor from accessing clean water, mainly through tariff increases and disconnections.

The global trade in water is currently estimated to be US\$ 800 billion, involving about 6% of the world population receiving services from corporations. However, the global trade is expected to be a multitrillion-dollar industry in the near future. When privatized, water systems expand to serve about 17% of the world's population by 2015.

The Big Ten multinational corporations control the water market and related industries. Nine of the ten largest water corporations in the world are located in Europe (Europe water corporations and privatization of Asia Water Resources;

(http://www.boell.de/downloads/global/cancun_water.pdf. p9)



Water is now the most precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations. For example, in their book: Economics of Water Resources, Nicolas Spulber and Asghar Sabbaghi have this to say about water in the Middle East: “In the case of the Middle East, where oil has long played a major role in shaping the politics of the area, water is now recognized as the dominant resource issue as a number of countries face increasingly serious water shortages” (1998:189).

Today we are witnessing the unprecedented privatization of water system and other public goods by governments, particularly those of the developing countries. This is because of the insistence of the multilateral international bodies such as Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as associated agencies such as the Asian Development Bank or the Latin American Development Bank.

This insistence is done through their conditionalities of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (imposition of loan conditionalities). These financial institutions are pushing African governments to privatize public assets such as water (Petrella 2001:12-13), the free gift given to humanity by God. They are increasingly forcing Third World countries, particularly those who wish to be included in the list of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) to abandon their public water delivery systems and contract with the water giants in order to be eligible for debt relief. They



argue that water management by large corporations will be more efficient and save government's money.

The use of such conditionalities and emphasis on the needs of investors both serve to undermine the scope for a public sector reform option, masking the genuine realities of private and public alternatives. The researcher sees this behaviour as another dimension of tied aid and as being punitive to the poor. It is the researcher's view that water can never be regarded or treated as private property or become the means and end of individual interest. He underlines that indifference towards the vitality of water constitutes both a blasphemy to God the creator and a crime against humanity.

In at least eight African countries, opening the water sector to privatization was a condition for receiving an IMF loan. So many countries that are already heavily indebted and have cut spending on social services have been forced to privatize water systems in order to borrow money leading to greater indebtedness. The example of this is found in the *Alternative Globalization Addressing peoples and Earth (Agape)* where it is recorded that:

"In Africa, the IMF's star pupil was Zambia. In a region wracked by drought and ravaged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Zambia needs all its available financial resources to support its social and agricultural infrastructure. Instead, it is expected to pay an average of US\$221 million a year in debt service from 2003 to 2005, which is two-thirds more than it paid prior to receiving debt relief under the HIPC initiative.

The IMF alone is scheduled to extract \$293 million in debt servicing from 2003 to 2005, after providing debt relief through the HIPC initiative, while Zambians are still paying for misguided policies imposed by the WB and IMF throughout



the 1090s. Instead of admitting its responsibility and liability for Zambia's debt crisis, the IMF remains fixated on forcing the country to sell its remaining assets. When confronted with the failure of their approach in Zambia, international policy-makers hid behind allegations of local government corruption, rather than examine the true impact of their own policies.(Agape 2005:27)

Another example is in Tanzania where, Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA) was privatized as one of the conditions given for the country to receive the HIPC debt relief. On the other hand, the Tanzanian government raised a credit to fund the \$145 million upgrade of DAWASA, needed to sell off the company at a lower price, effectively increasing the national debt it seeks to reduce. Accordingly, this privatization will produce higher water bills or even become another corruption trap.

Another example is that of the African Development Bank (ADB) which sent out a release on the 31st of May 2002 saying it had signed an agreement with Tanzanian Deputy Minister of Finance Alhaji Adbisalaam Issa khatibu, for a loan of approximately \$47 million. According, to the ADB, the money would help in improving the accessibility, quality, reliability and affordability of services to the population.

It would contribute to poverty eradication and reduction as well as improving the economic and social well-being of the Tanzanian people. This would be done by providing a better access to clean water and reducing the incident of water borne diseases among the vulnerable people, the poor, while in fact it was meant to enrich



the Tanzanian president's family

(<http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/develop/africa/2002/06ofwater.htm>).

These Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed horrendous restrictions on ordinary citizens, especially the poor, and did nothing to wipe out corruption. Their emphasis on reducing essential state expenditure in health, education, social services and infrastructure led to high drop out rate from schools, drastically reduced access to medical care and reduction in productivity in the agricultural sector.

It has also reduced water to a mere commodity in the global market for the rich multinational companies (MNCs) like Vivendi, Suez, and Aquas de Barcelona to buy and exploit (Fischer 2006:47). Water business is actually dominated by the largest French multinationals, Suez and Vivendi, who hold about 70% of the international privatized water business particularly in Africa.

The untrammelled imposition of free market economy and American style democracy also helped to breed ethnic hatred, crime and violence. Following is a detailed identity of these multinational companies as recorded in the industry bible:

The industry bible record that 545 million people (9% of the world's population) are served by private providers. Of the three biggest multinationals active in the sector are:

- Suez which is French based serves 117.4 million people world wide
- Veolia Environment which is French based serves 108.2 million people and



- RWE, a German based serves 69.5 million, with its subsidiary Thames Water, which is based in UK.

The next biggest players are:

- Aquas de Barcelona which serves 35.2 million people
- SAUR which serves 33.5 million people
- SABESP which serves 25.1 million people
- United Utilities, which serves 22.1 million (Mason Water Yearbook 2004/5).

However, “Activists fear that this economic globalization, as envisaged by transnational corporations that are pressurizing national governments to privatize, deregulate and relinquish state controls is pushing us into a single economy (Figueres et al 2003:47).

Privatization and commodification of water resources have raised serious survival issues for the poor and the marginalized all over the world, especially in the South, causing problems such as scarcity of drinking water, pollution of water and soil, and destruction of agricultural sectors.

The poor and rural communities do not attract private investors. Any improvements that might come with private ownership are in areas that generate profit. Private water supply, telecommunications and electricity companies tend to focus on efficiency in collecting tariffs, but not on improving service. Cost usually leaps up quickly annoying the middle class and the wealthy customers, but leaving the poor without service at all (2003:48).



This in the author's view benefits these MNCs whose primary motives are defined purely by their shareholders interest, their return on capital and the risk involved and not the provision of public services. Figueres and his co-writers clearly put it when they record how activists perceive these private operators. Private operators are said to be there solely to grab cash "seeking to improve their profits margins" (2003:48). They reap sub-normal profits without necessarily delivering efficiency, promising more aid while real economic development suffers. The example can be seen where Senegal was encouraged to grow nuts for export and:

- As poor nation without resources, she took out loans to help develop the country.
- Other nations saw this to be going well, and followed suit.
- The price of nuts started to drop and Senegal faced debt repayment problems.
- Structural Adjustment Policies were put in place, cutting spending and reducing government involvement in the nut industry and elsewhere through privatization.
- However, things got worse, while rich countries such as US were subsidizing their own nut and other industries, allowing them to gain in market share around the world ([http://www.globalissues.org/Trade Related/SAP.asp](http://www.globalissues.org/Trade%20Related/SAP.asp)).

Concerning privatization of water resources, Figueres and co-writers put it succinctly that: "A common concern of those opposing a greater role of the market in water management is the risk of placing water, vital for public health, in the hands of private sector whose first concern is profit" (2003:49). These private water industries are there to boost their profits at the expense of the



taxpayers, while such takeover excludes the poor from an affordable clean water supply.

Corporations see investment in water as a growing business. It is estimated to be an annual billion-dollar industry. As already indicated, it is forty percent (40%) of the size of the oil sector, and one third larger than the pharmaceutical sector. Most of these companies are the beneficiary of the USD 20 billion lending of the World Bank to water-supply projects over the last twelve years. Here, the lives of the poor are sacrificed for the gains of the rich.

The study of the International Centre for Public Integrity (ICPI) reveals that, of the 276 World Bank water-supply loans from 1990 to 2002, 30 percent required privatization, the majority in the last five years. Some companies like Aquas Argentines, controlled by Suez and its shareholders, were making huge profits of as much as 25 percent.

The ICPI reported that an Argentine businessman earned a profit of USD 100 million through privatization. Bottled water is also a USD 33 billion annual business. This implies therefore, that in the world we have a scenario of those who push the attractive marketization of water (water marketers for profit) and others who are against it for moral and ethical reasons.

The performance of these companies in Europe and the developing world has been well documented. Customers who cannot pay know them for going for huge profits, higher prices for water, and cut-offs. There is no transparency in their dealings;



while at the same time there is reduction of quantity and quality water. Bribery and corruption is rife, whereas a financial inducement for an official / political or public authority is to act in the interest of the company rather than the public interest he or she is supposed to represent (2003:52). It is a fact that corruption is a dangerous phenomenon whereby consequences are particularly harmful to the economic, social and political life in every community.

It is the objective of this work to argue that the economy should serve the needs of the people. This is what God meant when He gave human beings stewardship over creation and all the resources therein (Gen 1:28; 2:15). The researcher believes that this is contradicted by the policies and practices in the process of economic globalization. For the author, the impact of economic globalization of the African people should be critically analysed and monitored, and that alternatives that benefit the people and secure their livelihood particularly the poorest of the poor be provided. Privatization of water services has a detrimental impact on the public health of the poor. The details of these impacts will be discussed in chapter two of this dissertation.

Water is God's gift for life (Rev. 22:1) and that every human being has the right to it. According to Bruns and Meinzen "a single user rarely has full ownership rights to control, use, and dispose of the resource purely as she or he sees fit. Rather, it is useful to think of a bundle of rights to use water, with different users and stakeholders having the right to use water for a certain purpose, or subject to various types of conditionalities" (2000:28).



The biblical book of Revelation shares an interesting thought worth to be quoting. “To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.” (21:6). Nicola King further emphasizes the fact that water is essential to the existence of human life, as well as to the functioning of ecosystems and the perpetuation of biodiversity (2002:2). To deny anybody of water therefore violates the dignity and image of God. As such it becomes a challenge to pastoral care.

In the Bible, water has been used metaphorically. An example is found in the book of Amos’ where he uses the rolling waters and streams to symbolize justice: “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). On the core of this metaphor we see the refreshing, beautifying, life giving quality of water. Water plays an important role in our religious, cultural practices and livelihoods.

A May 2001 report by Kate Bayliss, a researcher at the University of Greenwich, Britain, titled Water Privatization in Africa: Lesson from the Case Studies, concluded that high prices and disconnections means that the poorest segments of society are likely to be the main losers from the privatization process. It forces the use of unsafe water sources, the consequence of which is disastrous for public health.

This research study is therefore aimed at raising awareness to the church leadership and other stakeholders that privatization of water services has a terrible record whereby:



- Multinational corporations' interest in water and sanitation services is defined poorly by their shareholders' interest, their return on capital and risks involved.
- With less experience with privatization of water system in developing countries, the corporations sometimes experience financial problems leading them to question their financial interest in continuing.
- There remains a constant danger that extending privatization will extend the opportunities for corruption and bribery.
- Customer rates are doubled or tripled;
- Corporate profits are rising;
- Water quality standards dropping dramatically, causing water hazard and contamination, which is fatal to life.
- Overuse promoted to raise money;
- And customers who can't pay cut off from supply, leaving the poor without service at all (Agape 2005:42).

This research is a call to the church to seriously engage with the Accra confession of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, "covenanting for justice in the Economy and the Earth. The church is here expected to challenge governments, to pursue God's justice and to seek God's abundant life for all people. Governments should be made aware that water is the most important of all public services. It is a common property for all, rich and poor alike, but it should not be misused by any. It should be recognized as a common global heritage of humanity, a source of life and a fundamental resource for sustainable development of the ecosystem, earth (Petrella 2001:8).



In South Africa, the Bushbuckridge area in particular, the research is intended at raising awareness to the African National Congress (ANC) led Government that the true long-term cost of giving the corporations protection from currency risks, political risks and demand risks be examined. There is a need for a public process of comparing any private proposal with public alternatives, as part of an open public debate.

Water provision to all households in both rural and urban areas has been one of the main developmental strategies of this democratic government since 1994 as noted by Gleick: “The new government set as a top priority efforts to address unmet needs for water. This government soon realized that meeting those needs would require a fundamental reallocation of water rights and water access. This priority is reflected in the new South African Constitution and the preparation of a new National Water Policy.” (1998: 159). In this new Constitution, section 27 guarantees all South Africans “the right to have access to sufficient food and water (Constitution of South Africa, Bill of Rights, Section 27 (1) (b)).

To date, water provision continues to be a key item on this government’s agenda. Water is seen as both a basic human need as well as a way to root out extreme poverty. Increasing water provision often reduces the burden of diseases, increases community health, improves environmental conditions and creates opportunities for more effective local economic development. Together these factors contribute to a more dignified and



sustainable quality of life for all South Africans and the rest of the world.

Privatization of water system to these multinational companies however, goes against the government's policy and strategy of alleviation and eradication of extreme poverty and that of the improvement of the quality of life for all. The pastoral care giver must therefore hold these multinationals responsible. The details of this will be discussed in Chapter Two where the whole question of water privatization will be discussed at length.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In a world of plenty, where commitments to eradicate poverty by also ensuring access to safe drinking water have been made at the highest political echelons, negligible progress has been due to lack of political will. Water is essential and necessary for life but statistics indicate that many people do not have access to the water they need and require.

Water is therefore a development issue recognized by many development organisations, as well as the United Nations. It is also an issue of emergency in many contexts of war, for Internally Displaced Peoples, and for refugees. It is an issue to which governments have committed themselves to work with. In September 2000, leaders from 189 member states of the United Nations signed the Millennium Declaration, pledging to eradicate extreme poverty and to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. This declaration was signed at the UN Millennium General Assembly in New York.



These goals are about lives of women, men, and children in the community and all over the world. The eight goals identify issues that religious leaders and faith communities have been actively addressing for decades, issues which speak to the heart of all faith traditions: the value of each individual human life.

The eight (8) goals have been broken down into measurable targets:

No.	GOAL	TARGET
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.
2	Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
3	Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4	Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
5	Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7	Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. By 2020 achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
8	Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop open trading and financial systems that include a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction nationally and internationally. Address the least developed countries' special needs and the special of landlocked and small island developing states. Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems. Develop decent and



		<p>productive work for youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries. ▪ In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.
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Source: adapted from the campaign toolkit available at www.millenniumcampaign.org

These goals are intended to provide a focus for the efforts of financial institutions such as the World Bank, for governments, and for other partners in the development community. The intention is to meet all MDGs, i.e. to reduce poverty by 2015. Water is included in the MDGs, because lack of it is linked to poverty, and that clean water is critical in containing the spread of infectious and parasitic diseases. Target ten (10) of the MDGs is to halve, by 2010, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

It is the improvement of water and sanitation that can speed the achievement of all eight (8) MDGs, helping to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empowerment of women; reduce mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.

It is reported that each year more than three (3) million children die from preventable water related diseases (World Bank 2002b). A number of studies have found that access to safe water is associated with better child health (Merrick 1985:1-24). The poor



are therefore at a disadvantage as they are not in a position to access clean water.

This includes material health, and environmental sustainability. Government have pledged to reduce the number of children who die before their fifth birthday, as well as to halve the number of people who have no access to safe water (by two-thirds), the target year being 2015. But efforts towards reaching the MDGs on water have not been adequate.

Privatization of water system has a negative impact with regard to child mortality under the age of five (5). According to WHO and UNICEF, Infants and young children are the innocent victims of the worldwide failure to make safe drinking water and basic sanitation services available to impoverished people. Their families' poverty, lack of basic services and the result in filthy living environment means that children under 5 years of age in particular are exposed to a multitude of health threats, without the physical or economic means to combat them. Malnutrition – particularly protein-energy malnutrition – stunts growth, impairs cognitive development and, crucially, lowers the children's resistance to a wide range of infections, including water-related diarrhoeal diseases and malaria.

In developing countries, over 90% of all diarrhoeal deaths occur in children under 5 years of age. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, some 769 000 children under 5 years of age died from diarrhoeal diseases between 2000 and 2003. This is more than 2000 children's lives lost every day, in a region where just 36% of the population has access to hygienic means of sanitation. Similarly



South Asia has low sanitation coverage. Child mortality is very high in this country. Some 683 000 children under 5 years of age die each year from diarrhoeal diseases.

This can be compared to developed regions, where most mothers and babies benefit from safe drinking water in quantities that make hygiene behaviour easy, have access to safe, private sanitation, adequate nutrition, and many other prerequisites to health. Of the 57 million children under 5 years, about 700 succumbed annually to diarrhoeal disease (according to statistics for 2000-2003). This means that the sub-Saharan baby has almost 520 times the chance of dying from diarrhoea compared with a baby born in Europe or the United States of America. (2005:12).

Sufficient safe water for drinking and washing is a fundamental human right. Without water, it is obvious that no other human rights, such as the rights to life and to health could exist. Paradoxically, the right to water is so obvious that it was never made explicit in the human rights law. As a result governments have rarely been pressed to fulfill it. Presently, the situation is changing through the MDGs and also through a ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights. The right to water has now been incorporated into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Such ratification is no symbolic move, but could be a platform for advocacy and change.

By ratifying these treaties and instruments, states have voluntarily accepted the obligations to progressively realize their right to food, health, adequate housing and a range of other rights and services,



including water and sanitation, which are essential for the wellbeing of their citizens.

Even though water is a human right issue, many governments so far have not fulfilled their obligations to provide it. No matter what development agencies do to meet the needs of water, the cooperation of governments is necessary. The obligation to respect these rights requires governments to avoid measures that prevent access to these basic essential services. It is the government's obligation to ensure free access to basic services such as food and water. States should therefore be encouraged to take active steps in strengthening people's access to, and use of, resources to ensure their livelihood.

It is increasingly being recognized that water and sanitation management requires effective government both at national and local levels. Issues of good and accountable governance in water are key for sustainable water services in economic, social and ecological dimensions. In her address at the Sixth Nelson Mandela Lecture in Kliptown, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia refers to lack of good governance that: "Some of our African countries are not poor but poorly managed" (2008-07-12). The above are traditionally perceived as part of the human rights agenda, and therefore are particularly pertinent to the water sector. These include the necessity for transparency, the elimination of corruption, and a strengthening of democratic participation at all levels of national and municipal governments.



Participation of women and children is very important in water management. In most societies, women have a primary responsibility for management of household water supply, sanitation and health. Water is necessary not only for drinking, but also for food production and preparation, care of domestic animals, personal hygiene, care of the sick, cleaning, washing and waste disposal.

Because of their dependence on water resources, women have accumulated considerable knowledge about this aspect, including location, quality and storage methods. Efforts geared towards, improving the management of the world's finite water resources, and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, however, often overlook the central role of women in water management. The importance of involving both women and men in the management of water and sanitation in many cases, showing that water projects work better when women are involved has a greater impact on mobilizing finance for gender-biased projects than showing that access to water has an impact on gender equality.

A study by the International Water and Sanitation Centre of community water and sanitation projects in 88 communities in 15 countries found that projects designed and run with the full participation of women are more sustainable and effective than those that do not (van Wijk-sijbesma, et al: 1998).

Water is therefore, both a development and a human rights issue. It is a global political issue requiring the commitment of



governments and international donors. A rights-based approach to development speaks to the realities concerning water. It is an approach already adopted by some agencies and donors in addressing poverty. It is an approach that links and bridges, the realities of overlaps (and gaps) between the development field and the human rights field. Some are hopeful about this approach, and are beginning to also implement it for water issues.

Others, already critical of development are suspicious at varying levels. They are worried whether a rights-based approach would become yet conditionality for aid, whether it is just something that looks good on paper, but of not much help in practice. These are valid critiques, but the researcher finds that the rights-based approach can, in fact, be used to answer the critiques of development, especially with regard to water.

As already indicated, it is over five years since 189 leaders agreed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These are a set of time-bound and achievable goals, aimed at halving the world's poverty and creating a better world for everyone. Efforts towards reaching these MDGs on water have not been adequate. Billions continue to wallow in extreme poverty, unable to meet their basic needs.

The church must play a strong role in reminding our leaders that promises and commitments made in New York in the year 2000, and that advocated by the United Nations (UN) Johannesburg summit 2002 together with the World Council of Churches (WCC) on fresh water that the following on water be made a priority:



- 1997 : access to clean water a human right
- 1998 : stop commercialization of fresh water, and
- 1999 : to create an International Treaty on fresh water.

This is what the African National Congress should mean or include when talking of creating conditions for a better life for all.

1.4 SCARCITY OF WATER RESOURCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

In per capita terms South Africa is an upper-middle-income country. Despite this relative wealth, most South African households experience the outright poverty. They continue to be vulnerable to extreme poverty everyday. The distribution of income and wealth is among the most unequal in the world. Many households have unsatisfactory access to education, healthcare, energy and clean water. The question to ask is why the lack of these basic necessities in a country with enough mineral resources including rivers, dams and reservoirs.

Poverty, which is understood as not having enough to satisfy a basic need, has many different facets described in the following way: lack of food, lack of energy supplies, distribution of land, lack of income, ill health, insecurity and uncertainty, inadequate housing, commuter transport and lack of water (Nash 1984:57-62). In this dissertation, the researcher is more concerned about the lack of water resource. The details of all the facets will be discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

Today billions of people around the globe lack access to the most fundamental foundation of a decent civilized world, namely basic



sanitation services and clean drinking water. According to United Nations (UN) officials, the shortage of water in many countries arises from poor management in the preservation of water, pollution, inefficient use of underground water and lack of awareness by their people.

According to the 1999 World Bank strategy report, the bank played an important role in charting South Africa's privatization strategy. It has provided technical assistance and policy advice in virtually all sectors of the economy and promoted the increased participation of the private sector in the development of infrastructure.

The World Bank was doing this in the name of helping reduce apartheid legacy of poverty and inequality. Unfortunately, this did not turn out that way. It ended up with the introduction of several policy changes such as the cost recovery strategy, which introduced credible threat of cutting service to non-paying consumers.

With regard to privatization of water resource, Figueres argues that: "Two common concerns that can be challenged are that the market approach will result in the poor being cut off from water supplies and that their health will suffer (2003:48). This is a fact that does not need challenging. What a serious disadvantage to the poor.

As a result of the above, water situation is now dangerously critical:



1. Every eight seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease.
2. Fifty percent of the people in developing countries suffer from one or more waterborne diseases. This is because the poor do not afford to pay for fresh water hence they resort to use even contaminated water from the streams.
3. Eighty per cent of diseases in the developing world are caused by contaminated water.
4. Fifty per cent of people on earth lack adequate sanitation.
5. Twenty per cent of freshwater fish species have been pushed to the edge of extinction by contaminated water as Figueres and his co-writers say: “With increasing pollution and large livestock operations coming closer to urban areas, outbreaks of contamination from bacteria, viruses or parasites, such as cryptosporidium in Milwaukee that resulted in the death of over 100 people and the sickness of over 400 000 are becoming increasingly common in public water supplies” (2003:49).
6. For the poor to have safe drinking water they are compelled to buy high-priced water, not only in bottles but also from the tap. The bottled water industry will continue its remarkable advance as diversification opens up huge new markets. This impoverishes the poor even more.

The researcher views this as a sin that deeply violates God’s goodwill, God’s steadfast love for life, for human beings, the whole of creation and ecosystem earth. Pieterse reminds his readers that when people are impoverished they usually resort to crime for



their livelihood (2001:39). Poverty is therefore, a contributory factor to escalating criminal activities in South Africa.

The author challenges the church that the integrity of her faith is at stake if she remains silent or refuses to act in the face of the current system of privatization of water and neoliberal economic globalization, which subordinates and reduces everything to economic profit.

In South Africa this kind of poverty i.e., lack of water affects people in different ways and to different degrees. In some informal settlement such as Crossroads in Cape Town, people walk 200 metres to fetch water from a communal tap. In rural areas people may walk for 5km to a borehole and still get no ground water since water table sometimes fall. This results in women and children queuing for long hours even at night in order to get water. Some end up drawing water from rivers where cattle, donkeys, goats and other animals drink, resulting in the outbreak of malaria and related waterborne diseases. (Nash 1984:58)

The vast majority of people in this area live in rural areas, and many poor people make their living in urban slums all across this region. Some predictions say that two out of three people in the world will face a water shortage by 2025. Yet the potential of water investments as a tool for reducing poverty and building sustainable livelihoods has not been fully realized.

A lot of water in the area of research, is left to flow freely from rivers to the sea. For example, Rivers such as Olifants and Klein



Letaba near Phalaborwa, Sabie and Sand Rivers in Hazyview, Crocodile and Komati Rivers in Nelspruit and Komatipoort respectively, Blyde River, Great Letaba and other tributaries flowing from the Drakensberg mountains to mention but a few. Water from these rivers should be harvested, harnessed and stored in dams for future use by people, animals and the environment.

The government however, is faced with the reality that sooner or later there will be no water for human consumption, industrial operations as well as agricultural usage. In order to better utilize the water resources, several calls have been made to take water control and regulation away from the government to private companies.

The Mpumalanga Province has been one of the first such areas where water was privatized in Nelspruit areas (about 300km east of Johannesburg, RSA) some few years back (www.psir.org).

In most of the rural areas, water has been freely available for local consumption as well as for irrigation in small farming sector. In fact people have been drawing water from the rivers without having to pay for it. Now, due to persistent drought, the government has been forced to build more water storages and to lay pipes to the local communities. In the process, water metres are being installed in the households to ensure that those who use water pay for it.



In rural areas malnutrition and death of children from starvation hunger, kwashiorkor, pellagra, gastroenteritis and measles is rife. This, as Maluleke explains can only be solved by encouraging people to establish vegetable gardens and produce crops such as spinach, beans and tomatoes (1993:28). Adequate water supplies is therefore a fundamental need to the people and to the poor in particular, but at places where water is paid for (privatized), starting such projects is rather impossible.

Currently there is a rush to privatize water around the world including South Africa. One of the underlying conditions for World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans is privatization of public services by countries taking the loan with the belief that it would stimulate sustained economic growth. For instance, the countries taking the loans must cut down on public spending on social services like health and education. They must also subcontract public functions such as transportation and sell public owned companies and natural resources such as water to private firms, replacing public monopolies with private monopolies.

The ones who suffer from the consequences of this injustice are the rural, urban poor and workers or ordinary civil servants who cannot make ends meet. The biblical tradition of the prophets and Sabbath / Jubilee however, puts the priority for the well-being of the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. Trade rules and the institutions responsible for their implementation are just if they serve, first of all, oppressed and marginalized people. This is the biblical call for justice (Amos 5:11-15).



The policy is upheld as the answer to sustained economic growth because it is believed to lead to efficiency, which in turn, facilitates greater investment and increased exports. However, rather than reducing poverty this dogmatic approach to privatization has further worsened the situation of low-income population particularly, in the case of Africa, which form the majority of the population. This is because private investors aim at maximizing profits. Hence they do not target poor and rural communities who cannot pay the cost of such services.

One can hereby conclude that privatization of water system is mainly the talk of the benefits to be gained in pretence of it being efficient, profitable, transparent, flexible, adaptable and innovative. Privatization of this resource therefore, “places water (the source of life), in danger of gradually becoming one of the principal sources of profit, one of the last areas to be conquered for the private accumulation of capital” (Petrella 2001: 13-14).

The result is the high rate of illiteracy, incidences of diseases, scarcity of essential goods like safe drinking water and abject poverty among these communities. For example, up to 300 million people in Africa do not have access to safe water and sanitation. As a result three to five million people mostly children die from water-related illnesses every year. This study is concerned with this big issue of privatization of water system particularly among the poor with special reference to the rural villages and refugee camps in the Bushbuckridge area.



Having worked in the rural areas of Bushbuckridge where more than 70% of the inhabitants are unemployed, one has experienced the traumatic experience of extreme poverty under which they live. These people usually land in what Pieterse calls “a poverty traps, i.e., lack of complementary assets and services given to them by God resulting in ‘poverty of opportunity’ whereby individuals are unable to take full advantage of the few assets to which they have access, from which it is all but impossible to escape (2001:44).

In the Bushbuckridge area, which is the area of this research, there are refugee communities from Mozambique. Those who fled for their lives seeking refuge in South Africa and other neighbouring countries during the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) and Mozambique Resistance Army (Renamo) civil war in the early 1980s.

In South Africa these refugees are settled in refugee camps adjacent to the local villages. Other than depending on handouts, refugees and most of the Bushbuckridge communities depend on agriculture as their source of survival. They grow maize, fruits, vegetables etc. In fact one would say agriculture is their main source of living.

Privatization of water system therefore is detrimental to their well being which solely depends on the availability of water. For example, to water their gardens as water has become so expensive and that without it, they become more impoverished and thus turn into criminals, even selling their bodies as prostitutes in order to survive.



As indicated before, most people in the Bushbuckridge area are not working. The rate of unemployment is very high. In most villages when one speaks of an employee, one is referring to a police officer, teacher or a nurse working in a police station, a school and clinic respectively. These are the common institutions available even in remote areas. There are no extra employment opportunities whatsoever.

People live on subsistence farming within a restricted area, which is their landing ground for poverty alleviation. Those who are lucky get employed at the local farms, wood plantations as well as banana farms in Kiepersol in the Hazyview area (Mobie 2005:85).

The reader can now understand that the absence of water makes these poor people vulnerable to poor health, hence the high prevalence of Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV & AIDS), a subject other researchers can pursue. Lack of water results in other opportunistic diseases that reduce the quality of life and productive capacity, and burdens health care and social welfare services.

When parents become sick or die, children are more likely to be malnourished, fall ill, withdraw from school or become abused and exploited. Worse still, they could lose their homes and inheritance; suffer from psycho-social distress, fear, isolation, and economic hardships as they assume responsibility for their younger siblings.

Maluleke succinctly explain this process by saying: “water is the source of life for all living creatures” (1993:55). Provision of



dependable water supplies has a strong positive effect on food security and income generation for rural people. Substantial livelihood gains are likely to be made by releasing labour time spent on obtaining water, and providing water for small farming and other enterprises.

The researcher does not advocate the non-payment of essential services by those who use it. For the researcher, governments should own water so as to ensure its accessibility, affordability and quality to all citizens. Throughout the world privatization of water system has a track record of skyrocketing prices, water quality problems, deteriorating services and a loss of local control.

It also has a record of vulnerability to corruption, operating according to a profit driven corporate agenda which is incompatible with essential service delivery, and fail to provide people with safe and affordable water as cited by Figueres and co-writers when they give an example of: "the tragic case of the small Ontario, Canada, town of Walkerton, where in 2000, after drinking municipal water contaminated with E-coli bacteria, seven people died, illustrates the danger of quickly linking public health concerns with privatization" (2003:49). In South Africa case study A in chapter two of this dissertation illustrates this point succinctly.

The researcher does not dispute the findings by Turton that "there is a high level of support for metered water connections, and that there is also a high rate of payment being shown by people who are billed" (2002:61). His conclusion is that this willingness suggests "that people want to be in control of their own lives and



consequently support policies that empower them with knowledge" (2002:61).

This is true depending on where the research was done. If the research was conducted among people living in places like Sandton, Houghton in Johannesburg this finding will be fitting for such communities. The opposite of this finding will be true for the rural communities of Tlhavekisa and Hluvukani in Bushbuckridge, given the high unemployment rate in such communities. Turton seems to ignore that South Africa has two economies, one for the rich and the other for the poor. He writes from one side of South Africa's reality.

It is correct as Turton says. People will always be willing to pay for water consumption, but they have limited ability to do so with little or no income to pay market rates for water. It is the researcher's view that willingness and ability to pay on the side of the poor are two different things. People will always express a willingness to pay for water consumption, but their ability might be extremely limited by their income streams.

The researcher is also concerned that the market rate at which tariffs are eventually set may prove beyond the means of many people, driving them back to other, more dangerous source of water, such as wells, dams, springs etc. where such water might be contaminated.

Today, there are water metres erected in some communities in rural areas such as Bushbuckridge. Households will now be



expected to pay for water, yet they are unemployed. Water is now being privatized and this will make the lives of these poor communities more difficult while basic necessities like water are supposed to be the right of every citizen and the responsibility of the government.

1.5 AIM OF STUDY

Water is a basic human need. The human right to water is recognized as a precondition for other human rights – such as the right to life, appropriate nutrition and sufficient medical care (UN Doc. E/C.12/2002/11).

Yet, when that which has traditionally been owned by communities is transferred to private ownership it makes impossible the protection of a ‘right’ as it makes water a ‘commodity’ that is ‘tradable’ for a price and at a profit. ‘Privatization’ in the context of ownership of water replaces community and people’s ownership of water sources with private ownership. Such an approach is a serious roadblock to achieving the Millennium Development Goal on water that seeks to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015.

There is little by way of clarity and coherence, regarding water sources, supply and service, and its use, in the current approaches to resolve the world water crisis. International financial institutions have aggressively promoted an approach that naturalizes the ‘provision of water services’ as a way of thinking of water use.



The objective of this research is to come up with a theological rationale that would justify the reversal of privatization of water system. The researcher aligns himself with Hassan who highlights that water is a public good which cannot be privately owned (1997: 407). It has been experienced as a wonderful gift of God to all His creation. This is clearly shown in the creation story in Chapter One of the book of Genesis. We therefore, need to create conditions for socio-political action in our societies in order to promote, consolidate and guarantee constant access to life for every human individual and community.

The problem of water privatization is multifaceted that no single field of inquiry can come up with the entire solution. Gleick puts it very well that “no single water publication can adequately address all of the issues of interest to water experts, students, and the general (1998:3).

The researcher therefore, intends to make one of the many contributions needed for the solution to the problem. It is the researcher’s view that the problem also has pastoral as well as theological dimensions hence this research. It is the researcher’s view that: The church cannot remain in comfortable silence mode when billions of God’s people are caught in the web of abject poverty and death as a result of the scarcity of safe drinking water because of its privatization. Churches need to reflect on how God acts in order to protect and promote justice in creation and in human society.



The Church, other bodies and other religious bodies, for example, are major centers of spiritual development for both individuals and communities. The ministry of comforting and speaking on behalf of the poor is an important part of its ministry. It should challenge actors that oppress the poor. Maluleke puts it well that “The Christian church would not be true to its mission if it neglected matters that affect the community (1999:3).

The Church and its leadership must be aware of the negative impact of privatization of water system so that appropriate action is taken as the church is called to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalized. Much attention of the details of the mission of the church in situations such as this will be developed in Chapter Four where the author intends discussing the whole question of the church’s pastoral response to the poor, the needy and the marginalized.

The Church is called to play an important role in creation by searching for life, for water for everybody including the poor, and for the life of all creation. The Church should take the issue of privatization of water system very seriously, and urgently. She needs to ask how the society views and values water especially when poor people are denied the right to water. In short, to charge as well as deny water to them is against the dignity and integrity of humans who are created in the image of God.

1.6 GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The welfare and prosperity of the citizens depend so much on the government and local authorities. While the importance of



privatization of water system may be of National or Provincial interest, the local leadership is part of the community and therefore is responsible for ensuring that their subjects are cared for, and that the interests of the consumer are protected.

It is the researcher's view that with regard to water resource, governments and their agents should know that water is a public commodity that it has to be managed for the benefit of the public, not only for the present generation, but also for the generations to come. According to Romans 13:6 authorities were put in place by God, and their duty is to serve the interest of their citizens. Now, shifting the issue of water distribution to privately owned companies is to run away from their divine calling and part of their responsibility.

Once a commodity such as water is privately owned it becomes personal and therefore, one is not bound to share it with others. But, if we understand it to be God's gift to the rest of humanity we will use it as a stewardship responsibility given to us by God the creator of all. As a result of the above, it becomes a duty to share it with all of creation.

The aim of this research therefore, is to critique the government so as to bring to the attention of the authorities that water is a basic human right and that it should be made accessible to those who are deprived of it. It is a basic commodity that cannot be privately owned by certain companies while denying majority of people to have access to this gift from God. It is therefore the responsibility of governments to take care of their own citizens as Gleick



correctly puts it: “When governments provide the water, costs are less” (1998:46).

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The researcher aims at bringing into light the negative consequences of privatization of water system so that people do not lose access to this commodity and that they be included in the decisions that shape their lives (Swanepoel 1989:9).

In recent development thinking community participation has become a very important factor in development. It is for this reason that community participation was adopted as one of the key strategies of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-90). The United Nations agencies concerned with the Decade jointly declared that: “Maximum participation by those who will benefit from the new systems is central to the approach. This issue not only affects the poor, but rich communities as well, in fact it affects all of creation.

Governments should be reminded of their responsibility (on their own citizens) to have the will and means to make it easy for people to have access to basic sanitation services and fresh clean drinking water, as this is the most fundamental basic right of every human being. This, then, involves a system of governance / regulation of the ownership, appropriation, distribution, management, protection, utilization and conservation of the principal source of life for every living form in the earth's ecosystem that is water (Petrella 2001:7).



The author accepts Watt's argument that "the market mechanism does not deliver public goods efficiently and equitably. Basic services that have high public-goods contents require public action to protect access for the poor. There is both a moral responsibility on the part of the state to protect the basic rights of its citizens and long-term economic interests in a healthy and educated population" (Watt 2001:8).

It is the author's view that the government should guarantee access to life for every human being and living organism. This should be done by establishing at local and global level, and on a basis of solidarity, sustainable system of ownership of water resource. This should include the distribution management use and conservation of this basic vital resource. In doing this, the government should:

- Enshrine the right to access to water in domestic legislation.
- Ensure that everyone has access to safe and secure drinking water and sanitation facilities equities and without discrimination. This requires that government take action to avoid inequitable price increases or the adoption of full cost recovery as a strategy within water investment.
- Consult with all stakeholders (including women, young people and people with disabilities) before considering placing water as part of their General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) commitments.
- Ensure independent monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards.



- Allow greater debate over the issue of water privatization. This involves greater transparency and wider representation in dealing with IFLs and water corporations.
- Urge high-income nations to ensure that more aid is directed towards increased development assistance for water not linked to privatization.

1.7 MEMBERS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Members of local communities are to be involved in all aspects of water / sanitation from planning, construction and financing, to training, operation and maintenance. Like Gleick, the author shares the same view that “water planning and decision making will be democratic, ensuring representation of all affected parties and fostering direct participation of affected interests” (1998:18).

This should be done through advocacy and lobbying. The aim is to raise awareness to Community Based Organizations, Non-Governmental Organisations and the civil society that they have enough information regarding privatization of water system and its impact to the poor and the marginalized.

These stakeholders need to be made aware that the shift from the nationally-owned water into the hands of a few companies have seen diminishing public accountability and has led to some disastrous health consequences and water sourcing options for the poor, indigenous people, farmers and families. These NGOs should therefore be lobbied to campaign for the right of water and against exploitation of this resource by the MNCs.



The research is aimed at raising awareness to these stakeholders. They need to be reminded that it is the role of citizens to take action by advocating against privatization of water system. It is the role of the citizens themselves, to put pressure on their leaders to fulfill their own obligations and responsibilities in order to end extreme poverty and its effects.

We have to find a way to protect water and to ensure that everybody can have access to it in an equitable way, not forgetting all the other creatures on earth. Using only the necessary amount of water at home and teaching our children is the first step towards being water wise and conscious. But we must go further than this. We have to protest against factories that pollute water and the wrong use of water and ask for protective legislation, which will help to keep this God's gift for life safe.

1.8 COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS

The author takes into cognisance however, that the people have a responsibility to ensure the correct management and use of this resource; for example, communities and individuals need to be taught about recycling water as a major of saving it. To be educated so as to recognize their responsibilities of environmental stewardship.

Communities and individuals are urged to:

- Be involved in the decision-making process surrounding the protection and regulation supply and management of water.
- Participate in easing the global water crisis by changing certain household practices. The author is here referring to



among other things, finding and stopping wasteful leaks, recycling wastewater and installing water efficient devices such as shower heads and dual flush toilets. The author is here reminded of a message that was always left on his hotel bed in California, USA that read “It is time for us to take part in helping the environment. In an effort to reduce waste water, electricity and the use of chemicals.”

- Lobby governments to take decisive action for rapid greenhouse gas emission reduction. This will avoid climate change that causes natural disasters that reflect the imbalance in the relationship between people and nature.

Following is a case study of the people of the village communities in Ave Prefecture in Togo, who know very well the usefulness and importance of environmental protection and mostly that of natural resources:

CASE STUDY 1

The two communities of Ando – kpomey and Nyamessiva have built a reel forest, which upkeep species threatened of disappearance. What is the most striking is that these communities have set up keeping rules, a supervising committee and exemplary self-discipline in observing these rules.

With regard to these rules, no one has the right to cut a tree at the green belt without any permission from the supervising committee. Even women are not allowed to collect fuel woods, except in the case of specific events such as funerals and traditional feasts. Men are also allowed to cut trees from



the green belt for specific purposes such as house building. The green belt also provides the population with medical plants (The train of URM no. 003-2004)

It is the church's responsibility to teach its members and the entire human race to protect the environment, economic justice, and educate them to reduce waste.

They need to be made aware of their responsibility to defend water i.e., by keeping it clean and away from markets which are thirsty for money, as expressed in the privatization of water system or free trade agreements.

1.9 RESEARCH GAP

Several researchers have written on the widespread and growing opinion that the world faces an imminent and evermore serious crisis on the scarcity of water supply (Figueres, et al 2003:1). Other researchers and institutions have done some work on Water Management where private participation on water management is introduced so as to regulate the use of this natural resource. The list of literature on water in the bibliography supports the availability of literature with regards to this natural resource.

The researcher is also aware of the scarcity of water and the need to regulate its use. Privatization of this resource as a way of regulating its use is however, what the researcher is mainly opposed to, because firstly, it violates human rights and God's gift to humanity. Secondly, it makes certain few rich people richer and the majority poorer and as a result conflict between nations/countries becomes part of the problem.



As indicated, various scholars have written on the scarcity of water and the need for the regulation of its use, e.g. Postel has this to say: “Appropriate pricing, the creation of markets for buying and selling water, and other economic inducements for wise water use hardly exist in most places. They have a central role to play in the transition to an era of scarcity” (1997:165). While the author does not dispute what Postel is saying regarding the pricing of water in the transition to an era of the scarcity of water supply, Postel however, does not suggest how the poor, those who have no means to pay for this resource will benefit.

Very little does Postel say, is said on the implication of the privatization of water system to the poorest of the poor as water is one of the most essentials of all natural resources which everybody should have access to, and without which there is no life.

The following case study from the researcher’s experience illustrates that where there is no water, life is destroyed.

CASE STUDY 2

“On Monday 05 March 2007, I together with my fellow colleague students whom I hosted as we attended the Research Methodology workshop, came home only to find that the municipality had just cut our electricity supply.

What a traumatic experience it was for me to come home with visitors only to find the house in darkness where it becomes difficult to prepare supper, tea even bath water.



In the midst of my disappointment as a host, one of my visiting colleagues reminded me that what I saw to be a disaster could be simply managed. He suggested that we buy candles for the lights and firewood that we make fire and cook our supper. This was done and we had lights and supper for the night.

In the following morning I remembered my frustration of the previous night, and I concluded that one can live without electricity. I then imagined what could have happened if we had come and found water cut. Surely we could not have sorted the food issue, tea, bath, toilet etc. This brings one to the conclusion that where there is no water there is no life.

One American proponent of water privatization in his article says: “Our government hires contractors to maintain the airplanes that transport the president, to run the space shuttle, to guard our nuclear power plants, and to build, maintain, and often operate submarines, fighter jets and other high tech weapons systems. Government remains responsible for establishing and enforcing quality and reliability standards, and with a good contract, contractors have every incentive to ensure the same” (<http://www.rppi.org/waterprivatization.shtml>).

For a person in the United States of America (USA) who has never experienced a situation of poverty where because of the World Bank’s total recovery doctrine, could not afford to pay for these services were cut off from water supply. This water cutoffs then forces thousands of people to go back to their original sources of water, polluted streams, dams, rivers and lakes resulting in the



worst outbreak of cholera and other water related diseases. This is what the author means when he says life is destroyed.

Petrella succinctly puts it in perspective that: "one can live without the internet, without oil, even without an investment fund or a bank account. But a banal point, though one regularly forgotten, it is not possible to live without water" (2001:7). It is therefore a fact that if you run short of electricity, there are other sources of energy that one can use, but if you run short of water, there is nothing that one can do.

Water is a source of life; a gift of nature and it belongs to all living beings including the ecosystem earth. It is not a private property, but a common resource for the sustenance of all. As things stand however, safe drinking water in particular is inaccessible to a large growing number of people particularly the poor. This is the gap the researcher identifies and hopes to make a contribution in working towards its closure. The poor must also have the right to life.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology is based on two epistemologically acceptable data collection techniques. These are:

- Personal interviews that was used where qualitative data was required. This is the method employed when interviewing key role-players such as community representatives. These interviews endeavoured to get as close as objectively human possible to the emotions and the



real stories of those affected, by privatization of water system particularly the poor.

- Surveys were used where a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data was needed. This is the primary method employed when determining trends in perspectives on water and Water Demand Management (WDM) strategies at the community level.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Central to this was the need to develop a research instrument that enabled comparable data to be captured from different research subjects. It was therefore necessary to develop a questionnaire that would guide and leave minimal gaps in the data collection process. Stakeholders such as emerging farmers, local authorities, farm workers as well as members of the civil society were interviewed using these structured questionnaires (see Appendices A1 to A4 of the interview questionnaires attached, i.e. pages 299-305). The surveys were conducted as follows:

- Surveys on emerging farmer and farm workers: Rural Areas of Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga, Rural Areas of Dennilton in Limpopo Province; Rural Areas of Malamulele in Limpopo Province.
- Surveys on local authorities: Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga
- Surveys on civil society: Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga
- In the urban area of Johannesburg including Soweto: Gauteng Province.



Here, the author wanted to compare how the urban areas suffer from the lack of water resource as compared to the poor in rural areas.

To adequately investigate facts on the impact of privatization of water system to the poor, various methods of data collection that relied on both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Primary sources of data collection included visits to banana plantations in Kiepersol in Hazyview and the ZZ2 Tomato farms in Mooketsi near Modjadjiskloof in the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

Interviews with thirty (30) specific target subjects were done where four separate types of questionnaires generated with reference to the specific target respondents were used. Within each of these separate questionnaire individual questions are listed with reference to specific issue - clusters such as:

1. key questions related to accessibility of water resource
2. key questions related to pricing and
3. key questions related to affordability of this resource.

Following are the questionnaires and responses mentioned above beginning with the introduction, giving a background to the survey:

SURVEY ON THE IMPACT OF PRIVATIZATION OF WATER SYSTEM TO THE POOR

BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY:

According to surveys, it is expected that by 2025, the world will be running out of water. This is due to growing water pollution, population growth, urbanization and inappropriate management



practice (Figueres 2003:1). Global warming and erratic weather patterns have also created serious droughts in most of the areas of the world. Europe, which is known to have plenty of rain, has experienced serious drought.

Farmers in this continent have, for many years, ploughed their lands without having to rely on irrigation schemes, as the rainfall has been sufficient to see the harvest through. The third world is hard hit by the drought. South Africa has experienced acute water shortage over a long period. Water is now being imported from Lesotho, as river catchments in South Africa have not been able to fill the rivers and dams.

Effective water policies and reforms at international, national, and local levels are essential ingredients for meeting water sector challenges. Two thirds of the world's poor live in the Third World countries such as Africa, Asia, Latin America and others and most face acute water problems. One in three people in the third world does not have safe drinking water, and one in two lacks adequate sanitation. The vast majority of people in this area live in rural areas, and many poor people make their living in urban slums all across this region from agriculture. Some predictions say that two out of three people in the world will face a water shortage by 2025 (Postel 1997:xv). Yet the potential of water investments as a tool for reducing poverty and building sustainable livelihoods has not been fully realized.

Governments are faced with the reality that sooner or later there will be no water for human consumption, industrial operations as



well as agricultural usage. In order to better utilize the water resources, calls have been made to take water control and regulation away from the government to private companies. The Mpumalanga Province, for an example, has been one of the first such areas where water was privatized in Nelspruit areas some few years back.

In most of the rural areas, water has been freely available for local consumption as well as for irrigation in small farming sector. In fact people have been drawing water from the rivers without having to pay for it. Now, due to persistent drought, the government has been forced to build more water reservoirs and to lay pipes to the local communities. In the process, water metres are being installed in the households to ensure that those who use water pay for it. The government has, in the mean time come up with the strategy to ensure that poor families are helped by providing free water of 6000 kilolitres per month, showing their responsibility in caring for their own citizens.



QUESTIONNAIRE A1

Questions to civil society

1. *How much water per month does an average home use?*
25liters per person per day: that is 4500L per month per person.
This depends on the number of people in the family.
2. *Is the 6000 litres adequate for domestic consumption?*
600L is not adequate hence people have to resort to other means to get water.
3. *If metres are installed, is the average home going to be able to afford water?*
The average household will not be able to pay for water, as most people are unemployed.
4. *Many families make a living by growing vegetables in their gardens and keeping of livestock such as chicken, goats and cattle. What effect does the payment of water have on these?*
People will not afford water to maintain these projects, which help in the alleviation and reduction of poverty. This is what happened to Tshikiwani's garden project in chapter one of this dissertation.



QUESTIONNAIRE A2

Questions to the local authorities:

1. *The introduction of privatization of water system in rural areas affects all the families irrespective of their income level. Those who provide water need to make profit in order to ensure that water purification and maintenance of pipes and the whole system is kept running. What measures are being made to ensure that poor families are not denied the basic commodity?*

In future people living in rural areas particularly the un employed should be exempted from paying for water resource.

2. *How is the local authorities affected by the process of water privatization in terms of ensuring service deliveries to the communities?*

Water services Authority will buy bulk of purified water from the private company which will be expensive. Reticulations project to supply water to communities according to the required standards, i.e. yard connections and RDF standards. The tariffs will be high in order to can afford the bulk water payments. Without funds, local government is struggling to make ends meet. The provincial government has to give more to the local government.

3. *Local authorities have been the government organs on the ground of providing for such services, will they get any percentage of the revenue?*



Through cost recovery, certain percentage of revenue is collected by local government and a certain percentage of this revenue should be ploughed back to them.

4. *If such revenue is realized, how much of it will be ploughed back to the poor families?*

80% of this revenue should be ploughed back to enable local government to render a better delivery to the poor.

5. *HIV/AIDS problem is affecting family structures and in many cases, elderly people who depend on the government's monthly grant, is there anything that is being thought of by the local authorities in this regard?*

The affected people should be supplied with food parcels they should be registered as indigents to can be given free basic water services. HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns should be done to educate people and the pandemic, and orphans should be provided with social grants.



QUESTIONNAIRE A3

Questions to the local Church leaders:

1. *As leaders of the communities, Church leaders stand a good chance to speak on behalf of the poor without being influenced by any political gains. Are the churches in the rural areas aware of the effects of privatization of water system, particularly to the poor households?*

No, most of them are not aware as most of the church leaders do not participate in community issues where issues such as privatization of water system and its impact to the poor should be discussed.

2. *What interventions can the Church embark on to ensure that this process will not kill the rural family structures?*

Church leaders can best serve in committees monitoring water supply so as to advocate for the poor against water privatization. This will help the poor to have access to water.

3. *Are churches thinking of alternative means of providing water to those who cannot afford to pay for metres?*

Some churches have projects on water such as provision of boreholes, reservoir and water tanks to be placed in strategic points for the poor to can obtain water.



QUESTIONNAIRE A4

Questions to the emerging farmers:

1. *Water stands to be the pillar of farming, be it agricultural, stock farming, chicken farming, etc. Privatization of water system will mean that farmers will have to pay heavily for this commodity. How do you think privatization of water system affect farming sector?*

Farmers will be hard heat, unless heavy subsidization will be done, as farming takes a bulk of water.

2. *Is there a way poor farmers can be assisted to get access to water without having to connect to the privatized one?*

Dams can be erected, furrows can be made from rivers to the field. Windmills can be erected to pump ground water for stock farming etc.

3. *If rivers get dry, are there other means that farmers can device to access water?*

The erection of windmills and boreholes to access groundwater is the only way out.

4. *In developed farming sectors, there are Farmers Unions that speak on behalf of the farmers; can such structures be of any help to the emerging farmers?*

Yes, Farmers' Unions are structures that represents and advocate for farmers. The government will better listen to one voice than listening to individual farmers.

Once collected, the data was analyzed by the researcher to get the correct interpretation on the impact of privatization of water system to those who use it. According to the survey conducted, it is clear that water is a renewable but finite resource without which there is



no life. This is seen in the analysis of the results of interviews here below.

2.3 ANALYSIS TO THE SURVEY

2.3.1 CIVIL SOCIETY:

The Civil Society agrees that the average amount of water used by the family is far more than what the South African government's 6000 litres per month offers. The installation of water metres will worsen the situation of poor people in the rural areas.

2.3.2 LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

The local authorities strongly feel that the introduction of privatization in the rural areas will affect poor families. They agree that the process of selling water should ultimately benefit the poor communities. This can be done by ploughing back the profits of the sale of water back into the rural areas by the provision of services to the poor communities.

2.3.3 LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS:

It is generally agreed that many Church leaders are not aware of the problems of the communities, as many are not involved in the community structures. But, there is a general agreement that Church leaders stand a good chance to advocate on behalf of the communities.

2.3.4 THE EMERGING FARMERS:

Emerging farmers will be hard hit by the privatization of water, as they are generally not subsidized. Their activities



will be seriously affected as many cannot afford to buy water. However, Farmers' Union stand a good chance to advocate on behalf of the farmers. The erection of windmills, reservoirs and canals/furrows from the natural rivers can help to address the plight of the farmers.

2.4 LANGUAGE USED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Given the linguistic variation in South Africa, questionnaires were developed in both English and Tsonga (p 299-309). Tsonga is the official language predominantly used in the former homeland of Gazankulu where the rural area of Bushbuckridge is situated, and where most of the research was conducted. The purpose here was the gathering of information on the subject. Sharing these experiences with the people concerned helped in planning towards the solution of the problem.

2.5 RESEARCH MODEL

The researcher chooses to employ Gerkin's pastoral and educative shepherding model in attempting to inspire the churches, NGOs and the wider ecumenical movement to address current global problems by responding resolutely to the intolerable level of poverty as a result of privatization of water system particularly in developing countries. In his book: An Introduction to Pastoral Care, Gerkin sees the model of a caring leader as that of a shepherd. He goes on to depict Jesus "as a good shepherd who leads the people in paths of righteousness, restores the soul of the people, and walks with the people among their enemies, and even into the valley of the shadow of death" (1997:27).



Like Gerkin, Campbell suggests that pastoral care is about shepherding. For him, it mediates a sense of integrity, wholeness and steadfastness to those in need. The imagery of a shepherd according to Campbell embraces all that is involved in providing care as illustrated in the biblical usage of the term (1986:37).

Anton Boisen, out of the heated crucible of severe mental disorder is said to have discovered for himself and the succeeding generations of ministers that the real laboratory for discovering the clearest revelation of the meaning of God in Christ is among the sick, the outcast, the distressed failures of life. These are the 'least ones', the living human documents of flesh and blood where God is most certainly making himself known (Oates 1952:20). Like these writers, the researcher sees ministry to these people as that of shepherding to which every Christian is called. The ministry that vitalizes and purifies our knowledge of God. In John's Gospel, the shepherding image of Jesus takes its place as a primary grounding image for ministry taking into account a more holistic understanding of the ministry, i.e. "care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of justice and moral integrity in the life of the people (1997:25).

In his book: The Church of my dreams, John Beaumont reminds us that "The Bible shepherd walked ahead of the flock, leading the way to green pastures, and into new territory. He walked as they walked, experiencing with them the heat of the sun and the ruggedness of the way" (1988:125).



In the person of Jesus, God has chosen to live among the poor. He became hungry and thirsty, lived among the sick, blind, lame, and homeless vagrant. Jesus who seeks work but is made redundant and discarded by the principalities and powers of this world. This is the Jesus who became poor for our sake, so that through his poverty we all may enjoy the fullness of life (Nash 1985:5).

The good news of this shepherd is that he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Hence, his followers must serve the poor who are in need. This includes his powerful and provocative intervention in the here-and-now of human misery. He did not only live among the hungry, but fed them, gave sight to the blind, healed the lame, and warned the rich against exploitative ways and the false worship of material security (Luke 12:12-34).

Arthur Adams dramatizes Jesus' experiential element to the needs of the people well when he says: "Watch Jesus at work. See how much he exposes himself to the experiences of others. This is in the very nature of incarnation. He goes where they are. He listens. He shares their joys and sorrows. He feels their pains and frustrations. He knows when they are hungry and tired. He senses their intentions. The disciples develop the habit of empathy from Him. Put them down anywhere and they soon know a lot about the men and women around them" (1978:17).

This is the model par excellence the researcher chooses as a grounding metaphor for the work of pastoral leaders (Gerkin



1997:28). The model where the good shepherd knows his sheep and is also known by it (John 10:14). This indicates that Jesus related to people at all levels giving us “the model sine qua non for pastoral relationship with those immediately within our care and those strangers we meet along the way” (1997:80). The good shepherd seeks “to understand the deepest longing, the secret sins and fears of the people so that the heading function of our understanding may communicate that we and the God we serve care deeply and intimately for them” (1997:82).

The shepherding model is the ministry to which the Church is called. Privatization of water system brings a challenge to the Church and those stakeholders responsible for the shepherding of God’s people. The Church is called to be involved in the day-to-day relationships with people especially the poor at all levels of social life. Poser sums it up by saying: “What our world badly and urgently need is a Church which dares to confront the powers of this world, be they political, economic or cultural, and in the name of the crucified, call for justice for the poor and oppressed (1987:44).

Like its Master the Church is called to show concern for both the individual and the community. It is the church’s Christian duty to respond in words and deeds to all situations of human suffering such as poverty, oppression, corruption, women, children abuses and water issues etc.

In other words, the Church should help the state assess itself and help respecting human rights of the poor. The assessment of this



must be contextual and measured on the actor's (state) effort to respect human rights. If the Church is involved in being a voice of the voiceless, the rights of the poor must be addressed, especially privatization of water system.

2.6 THE CHURCH, A SHEPHERD OF THE POOR

As a shepherd of the poor and the voiceless the church should participate in the public and international discussions on water. In this situation, the Church has to be prophetic and become an alternative community to the system. She is called to offer resistance and be prophetic in such as liquid modernity.

This is what Gerkin is referring to when he says: "Christians through their ministry to each other are to exemplify Jesus' ministry in his disciples" (Gerkin 1997:93). The author aligns himself with Wright in his definition of pastoral care when he says it is "a helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose trouble arise in the context of ultimate meaning and concern" (1982:23).

The role of the church as a shepherd of God's flock is best explained by Tokunboh Adegemo that: "Where people are bruised, the Church supplies the balm; Where people are battered, the Church restores with dignity; Where people are broken, the Church brings healing; Where people are buffeted by the scourge, the Church soothes; Where people are banned from society, the Church provides a home" (Dortzbach 1996:5).



In addressing the privatization of water system with authorities, and also empowering the poor the church should not be directed by multinational companies operations, who seek to furnish the image of God among the people. It must not be governed by fear, but by wisdom rooted in its own identity as it addresses the issue of privatization of water system.

As an African young man who experienced what Adegemo is referring to above, the researcher is reminded of his early days as a herd-boy looking after the flock. The onus was upon us as herdboys to see to the well-being of the flock. We were to see to it that the flock was led to good pastures, taken for a drink, protecting the flock from wild animals and ensuring that whichever beast was hurt got the necessary treatment and healing.

The shepherding model is therefore the approach needed to change the plight of the poor in developing countries and in South Africa in particular. Like Jesus the church needs to opt for the poor and show them preferential treatment by being champions of the cause of their poverty. Just as Jesus in his ministry was drawn especially to the marginalized, excluded and deprived members of the community, so the church is called to reflect God's biasness to the poor.

Like the Old Testament prophets, the church in its mission is called to expose injustice, to stand alongside those most afflicted by its effects, and to point in the direction coming reign of God. The church takes to heart the cries of the poor, which it hears through close partnership with partner churches in impoverished countries.



It seeks to express practical compassion and forthright advocacy in order to bring liberation and hope to those in the terrible bondage of poverty, with a special emphasis on women and children.

During his historic incarnation, Jesus pointed to his identity with human suffering as evidence that the Messiah had come. This was manifested in the seven characteristics of the Messianic age:

The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them (Luke 7:18-22).

This is the Jesus who reveals himself daily in the suffering of needy people; the hungry; the thirsty; the stranger; the naked; the sick; and the imprisoned. Amongst these was his meeting place with his followers. His followers and their awareness of the cries of 'his little ones' would be the basis of judgement and separation, acceptance and fellowship before God. In the suffering of needy persons Jesus comes upon us in fullest clarity. He thrust us into active involvement with the sick, the spirit-possessed, and the deprived ones.

The church's attitude towards the poor must therefore be a positive one that endeavours, in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to change poverty in whichever form it is found (Shorter 1986:60). This is the situation our Lord has shared and wants us to share. Maluleke describes the deaconate of the church as that of striving towards equality in sharing God's gifts to us all. Maluleke goes on



to remind the church that: “A church that does not take part in transformation of the rural settlements has lost its status as a church. The whole work of the church is to put plans into actions. It is to transform structures that perpetuate suffering by creating poverty. The church must concentrate on both material and spiritual things in rural settlements” (1993:58). It cannot afford to remain silent when the poor and the marginalized are being sacrificed to the benefit of the multinational companies who are there for profit and not for the poor.

The faith community therefore has a responsibility as a watchdog in society to speak for those whose tongues are silenced. The church should understand her calling to be prophetic in advocacy, challenging the forces of evil and death and speaking in places where the victims of oppression, injustice and suffering do not have a voice of presence. The church at its core means being critics of structures in church and society, which contradict the life-giving message of Jesus Christ. It is part of the church’s ethos to be agents of transformation in this way, i.e. transforming, criticising and changing whatever contradicts the fullness of life for which Jesus came.

This is better explained by Professor Maake Masango in his address at a United States Congressional Briefing on Africa when he said: “where there are people broken; where there are people who are oppressed; people who have no voices; the church ought to rise to the occasion and begin to be a voice to the voiceless” (AACC Newsletter, July 16-30, 2006:4).



The study is intended to pastorally come up with strategies where the leadership of the church are educated on what privatization of water system is all about, its impact on the poor and how this can be averted taking into account as already indicated that people need to be educated so as to take full responsibility with regard to the correct management and use of water resource.

To support this process, however, public awareness needs to be raised. Educational strategies, including non-formal education programmes on environmental and social issues, are needed. Educating the next generation to become responsible water users is an important task for the future. The study is therefore intended to lobby the churches in various countries and their specialized ministries to join together in the Ecumenical Water Network in working for the provision of fresh water and adequate sanitation and advocating for the right to water. Access to water is indeed a basic human right.

The United Nations has called for an International Decade for Action, Water for Life, 2005 to 2015. It is essential for churches and Christian agencies to work together and to seek cooperation with other partners, including other faith traditions and NGOs, and particularly those organisations that work with vulnerable and marginalized populations who hold similar ethical convictions. It is necessary to engage in debate and action on water policies, including dialogue with governments and multilateral or corporate institutions. This is essential to promote the significance of the right to water and to point to alternative ways of living, which are



more respectful of ecological processes and more sustainable in the longer term.

These organisations are lobbied to:

Call on the churches and ecumenical partners to work together with the aim to:

- *promote* awareness of and take all necessary measures for preservation and protection of water resources against over-consumption and pollution as an integral part of the right to life;
- *undertake* advocacy efforts for development of legal instruments and mechanisms that guarantee the implementation of the right to water as fundamental human right at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- *foster* cooperation of churches and ecumenical partners on water concerns through participation in the Ecumenical Water Network;
- *support* community-based initiatives whose objectives are to enable local people to exercise responsible control, manage and regulate water resources and prevent the exploitation for commercial purposes, i.e. to come up with practical theological care methodologies and interventions that can be used as tools by the relevant stakeholders including the church.
- *urge* governments and international aid agencies to give priority to and allocate adequate funds and other resources for programmes designed to provide access to and make water available to local communities and also promote development of proper sanitation systems and projects,



taking into account the needs of people with disabilities to have access to this clean water and sanitation service. The care of the poor and marginalized in our communities should be taken as a priority.

- *monitor* disputes and agreements related to water resources and river basins to ensure that such agreements contain detailed, concrete and unambiguous provisions for conflict resolution;
- *contribute* to the International Decade for Action, Water for Life, 2005-2015, by exploring and highlighting the ethical and spiritual dimension of the water crisis.

These organisations should focus on the correct treatment with regards to the environment, the planet earth, and the necessity to be vigilant in view of all attempts to privatize water resources. The church is therefore lobbied to commit herself to the struggle against economic and ecological destruction.

The church leadership, other Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), civil society, and the church are here encouraged to campaign for a clean environment. This will be to respond to the impacts of climate change which causes unpredictable rainfall, prolonged droughts, devastating floods, desertification and the drying up of water sources.

The environment that is polluted has adverse effect on global warming and climate change in Africa, resulting in posing serious challenges to the management of world's water resources. They also pose a problem in reaching the United Nations Millennium



Development Goals on water and food security, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. We therefore need to dedicate ourselves to taking care of God's creation so that we can participate in addressing the adverse effect of global warming.

These organisations should also be lobbied to put pressure on their governments to preserve water and stop its privatization. The church is therefore lobbied to resist the evil of an economic system that dehumanizes millions of people and plunder the planet. This should be done by taking the side of the poor, that of, the One who offer abundant life for all.

Again, this should be done by condemning the powerful profit-driven advocates of globalization who continuously try to manoeuvre the injustices so as to maximise profit which continue to impoverish the people of Asia-Africa and the two-third world countries.

The researcher aims at lobbying human rights activists, local government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other cadre of people to put a strong case for water not to be commercialized for profit, and to ensure that it is made available for all.

The church particularly in Africa where the majority of its inhabitants are living in abject poverty, should be encouraged to condemn the exploitative system and structure of international and national financial institutions and multinational corporations that continue to drive many people into abject poverty. It should



commit itself in the struggle of the poor and to ensure that all have access to safe drinking water.

The availability of water helps the poor in the fight for the alleviation and eradication of poverty by growing food, etc. People however, should be encouraged to be “water wise”. By this, meaning that people are encouraged to use water responsibly and not to waste it.

The researcher integrated and reflected on the interpretations and significance of the collected data by drawing a thematic analysis at the end of the research. The final dissertation is made available to the University of Pretoria and other institutions of higher learning, including those individuals and stakeholders who have interest in this subject. The evaluation was done as against the existing situation and circumstances so that other researchers can continue searching other gaps not covered by this research.

2.7 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The world is running out of fresh water. Per capita water consumption has gone up dramatically. This is mainly due to a number of factors such as population growth, increased demand for agricultural water, industrialization, urbanization and economic growth (Uitto and Biswas 2000:226). Humanity is polluting, appropriating or contaminating an increasingly large fraction of the earth’s fresh water supplies as well as diverting and depleting the wellspring of life at a startling rate. With every passing day, demand for fresh water outpaces its availability, and thousands



more people are put at risk due to carelessness of other people and privatization (Gleick 1998:1).

Gleick lists the following most disturbing characteristics of the current situations with regard to water resource:

- Per-capita water demands are increasing and per-capita water availability is declining due to population growth and trends in economic development.
- Half the world's people lack basic sanitation services. More than a billion lack potable drinking water. In much of the world these numbers are rising, not falling.
- Incidences of some water-related diseases are rising; resistance to drugs is increasing; and disease ranges are expanding.
- The amount of land irrigated per capita is falling, and competition for agricultural water from cities is growing.
- More than 700 species of fish are formally acknowledged to be threatened or endangered; the ecological disasters of the Aral Sea, Lake Victoria, and other bodies of water are now in our textbooks as examples of what we do either intentionally or unintentionally to our aquatic environment.
- Political and military conflicts over shared water resources are on the rise in some regions.
- Groundwater overdraft is accelerating. Unsustainable groundwater use occurs on every continent except Antarctica.
- The scientific community has acknowledge that human interference in global climate is now evident and that the



hydrologic cycle will be seriously affected in ways we are only now beginning to study (1998:1).

Already, global warming and climate change, the social, political and economic impacts of water scarcity are rapidly becoming a destabilizing force, with water-related conflicts springing up around the globe. Quite simply, unless we dramatically change our ways, between one-half and two-thirds of humanity will be living with severe freshwater shortages within the next quarter-century.

The researcher shares the same view with Postel that “we have so taken water for granted that our use and abuse of it now threaten to undermine the very life-support system we depend on” (Postel 1997: xxxvi). Awareness should be raised to make communities to be environmental friendly. This will make people to be good stewards of water resources.

One of the policy approaches and policy options that are seen by water planners to facilitate a long-term sustainable water use is its privatization. The World Bank and the IMF are pressurizing developing countries (particularly African countries) to privatize water including their doctrine of ‘full cost recovery’ where users are expected to pay for the full cost of their water consumption. This privatization often forms part of conditionality packages for donors whereby the release of aid funds is conditional on the implementation of privatization policies.

On the other hand, poverty in Africa has become a real stigma. It cruelly prevents access to the most basic of human needs such as



food, shelter, health care and water. It also denies the education so essential to break the cycle.

Lack of water is one facet of poverty that impoverishes the poor even more. In the rural areas such as the former homelands of South Africa, lack of this resource is a major problem as people live far below the poverty line. Pastoral care givers should hold the ANC led government accountable for their promises of fighting for a better life for all.

The unprecedented privatization of water system makes the situation even worse. People are not able to pay for this essential service as this has a track record of skyrocketing prices, water quality problems, deteriorating service etc. Poor people are unable to pay for this essential commodity, and without water there is no life. The absence of water makes people to be vulnerable to poor health and other negative effects.

The study aims at alerting church leadership, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders of the impact of privatization of water system to the poor. Gerkin's shepherding model is preferred by the researcher as the model to be used in reminding the church, government and other stakeholders of their pastoral responsibilities to the people under their care. It is the researcher's view that water remains the government's commodity to be made affordable even to the poorest of the poor.

In the next chapter, the researcher chooses to deal with the whole question of privatization of water system, as this irreplaceable



source of life is becoming a topic of conflict and concern in many places of the world. Animals and plants cannot live without water. The idea is to raise awareness to the readers, the church leadership, government, private sector and other stakeholders on how water is sourced, how it is managed and how its privatization negatively impact to humanity with special reference to the marginalized and the poor.