

TOPIC:

SOUP KITCHENS THAT CHRONICALLY PERPETUATES POVERTY:
A PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

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DECLARATION

I, BASIL HUBERD JOHN MATTHEWS, hereby declare that this research which I submit for the degree of Master in Trauma at the University of Pretoria is my own original work and has not previously being submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university. All sources I have used have been indicated and duly acknowledged by means of complete reference.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Globalisation	Is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of worldviews, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture.
Church	The local group of Christians meeting together.
Parish	A church territorial unit constituting a division of a Diocese.
Diocese	Is the geographical area consisting of parishes under the supervision of a Bishop.
Apartheid	System of racial segregation in South Africa legally enforced by the National Party government from 1948 to 1994.
Dependency Syndrome	Is a personality disorder wherein the individual exhibits longstanding, inflexible, excessive dependency on someone or something.
ANC	African National Congress
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
World Bank	Institution that offers loans, advice and other resources to developing countries.
IMF	International Monetary Fund
AAC	Anglo American Cooperation
Peace Job	An occasional work such as gardening

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The parish of Christ the King Coronationville where the author ministers the leadership started a ministry of poverty alleviation through their Social Responsibility Outreach Program. This was one small effort of the parish to address the challenges of globalisation and the legacy of Apartheid which was still prevalent in society today. The main focus of this outreach program is to supply certain identified needy families in the Church and community at large with a monthly food parcel. There is also a bi-monthly soup Kitchen where 50–100 individuals (children and adults) are being fed on a hot meal and/or sandwiches and soup. The members of the parish involved in this caring ministry take real pride in what they are doing and are committed to these projects.

Having said this though, the author is rather of the belief that the parish must employ a more sustainable and holistic approach in ministering to the poor, and not merely giving out hand-outs – thus creating a dependent personality process. This thesis will therefore, critically evaluate this outreach project, especially in relation to the author's parish and to see how it is helping the poor on the one hand, or sustaining a dependent personality disorder with regard to the hand-outs that they received.

In dealing with the poor, we need avoid doing things for them, but rather engaged them as human beings and not merely people in need of something, and through this attempt to restore their dignity and the belief that soup kitchens and food parcels are

the only answer to escape this dependent behaviour. In other words, doing something with them becomes priority of helping them. The reader need to be aware that 'we do it for them and not with them'. Thus we take over their lives and make them handicap (dependency syndrome).

Globalisation has brought different challenges to the church, especially ministry and today's challenges give us a way of entering into the lives of those who are troubled. The author is of the belief that in the process of this ministry, both the church community and the poor people had lost their dignity. This dignity can only be recovered through a process of dialogue or what Wimberley terms a "conversation" (2003:15). Wimberley's theory is

"That a meaningful-building process comes about through conversations between individuals, between individuals and groups, and between groups"
(2003:15).

The author is therefore of the belief that this process of "conversation" will assist both the church community and the poor to come to grips with where they are in this situation. For example, Wimberley says that we need to be in conversation with one another, "even if one listens" (2003:16). This process when employed among the rich and the poor help bring people closer together. In short, to minister to the needy, we need to be in conversation with those who are helped, and therefore create a new base of being liberated out of the problem faced by helpers and the helped. In the rest of this Chapter, Introduction to the Research, the author will present the research problem and also provide background information to this research. It will

also outline the aims and objectives, the relevance, research gap and the methodology that will be introduced in this research.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The above has raised a number of questions to the author. These questions are: *How should the Church respond to poverty within the ranks of her own membership and the wider community? Where do the resources come from to respond to poverty in a meaningful way? What would the relationship between the Church and Government be in fighting poverty?* These are some of the many questions Churches are facing in addressing the issue of how the Church and the Christian community at large should respond to poverty.

Of course there are many different kinds of responses that the Church over the years developed in order to assist with the alleviation of poverty, but many of these responses were not sustainable and were merely stop-gaps in a worsening situation. This research will therefore endeavour to help empower members to be able to respond to poverty in a meaningful and sustainable way and to present the church community with a working alternative to the hand out approach of soup kitchens.

But the main question remains. Are soup kitchens and food parcels a solution to the problem or is it just enhancing a chronically dependent personality disorder among the poor? Are the poor really poor, and what needs assessment has been done, especially in relation to the situation at Christ the King Coronationville? Did the poor articulate what they need or is it a case that the church people believe they know

what they (the poor) need? Is it because there are some people living in an Informal Settlement that makes the people of Christ the King believe that these people are poor and needed to be fed?

Is this outreach project a real sense of compassion, adhering to Jesus' teaching of feeding the poor (cf. John 6:1-15) or is it a matter of conscience? Is this type of ministry not destroying the image of God? How can we exercise a caring ministry and still retain the dignity of those we minister to? These are some of the questions that are troubling the author that will help to challenge the parish in order to understand what they are doing to the people. The above questions will help in creating a new way of caring for the less fortunate in the world.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg, of which the Church of Christ the King is part of, embarked on a Diocesan Vision to engaged the membership in their involvement in all spheres of ministry of the local parish. This was received with great enthusiasm and eagerness by the people of Christ the King. One of the aims of the Vision requires "that we engaged prophetically and pro-actively in social justice issues in community, community projects and government, supporting or challenging policy and practice in the light of Christian values."¹ This aim gave rise to outreach projects like soup kitchens, food parcels and other projects to care for the poor and homeless in our communities where we exercise a caring ministry on behalf of Christ in the Diocese of Johannesburg.

¹ From the Vision and Mission Statement of the Diocese of Johannesburg.

The Aims and Objectives of this research are to engage with the people of Christ the King Coronationville about the outreach ministry program they are running. In the end the author hopes to bring about a change in mind-set of the church and how to deal with the poor in our midst, and on the one hand, and challenge the poor who receive these hand-outs so as to become dependent on them, that there is a better way to sustain them as marginalized people.

The aim is also to offer a plan for pastoral care that can be developed by both so that the Church may use in their advocacy on behalf of the poor living in abject poverty in the informal settlements around our city. According to Pieterse,

“The role of the Church is: ‘To give the poor inspiration and vision so as to empower them to ameliorate their circumstances and thus bring about liberation from their situation of poverty’” (2001:115).

The author therefore agrees with this statement of Pieterse because the Church has a prophetic ministry to the marginalised in order to bring them hope in a hopeless situation.

1.3 RESEARCH GAP

Many studies have been researched on the topic of poverty, but not much researched has been done in terms of the chronic dependency that soup kitchens create in the mentality of those desperately in need of care. This research gap will

contribute and adds value to the field of Practical Theology, especially in liberating those who are cared for by this project.

1.4 RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that it will motivate the Church to rediscover a new and meaningful way of ministering and caring to the poor. The hope is also that this research will give the Church a tool in making the people more self-reliant than just giving them hand-outs. This will be a useful resource of restoring the human dignity that those who are helped can be resourced as a way of be liberated.

The concept of Ubuntu has been a main source in which African people have helped each other, for example, when one was in need, the family that has provided for them who did not have – they will give a cow so that the other family may have milk. Once that cow has a calf, they will then return back the other cow. This concept needs to be recaptured. This concept of life has made the people care for each other.

This will also give the ordinary member in the pew an opportunity to reflect on their gifts and talents and how they can use them in the best way possible in responding to the poor in our midst. The author hopes that through this research the poor will also be empowered with ways to be self-reliant and self-sufficient as people of God.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main focus of the research methodology of this research will be that of the Gerkin's shepherding model of doing research and it will be a good methodology to employ in this situation as the author is of the belief that the situation is in desperate need to caring for the people of God. This model differs from the common psychotherapeutic pastoral model that was used in pastoral care. The common understanding of pastoral care is that it is the domain of the church.

As this research will be exclusively church based, it is important that this research follow Gerkin's method of shepherding of the flock because the care of the people of God involves care that confronts issues of justice and the morals of the people and the community, especially those living in abject poverty (Gerkin 1997:25). This method will help the author to journey with the individuals who come to the soup kitchen that they can come to terms with their situations and assist them finding ways to be free from it. To support this model of Gerkin, the author will also introduced aspects such as listening which is in essence a very important aspect of shepherding.

Shepherding is not so common in our modern and urban life today as it is in the rural areas of years gone by and very few of us in this post-industrial, post-modern culture have ever actually seen one. But shepherds are a regular appearance throughout the Biblical narratives, beginning with Abel in Genesis 4. The best-known chapter in the Bible, Psalm 23, is about shepherding. In the New Testament Jesus took the image of the shepherd as a primary metaphor to represent his

relationship to us, and that he, Jesus, will be our shepherd throughout eternity (Rev 7:17).

Apart from this verse, Jesus' most famous discourse on shepherding is found in John 10, where he said, "*I am the good shepherd*" (10:1-18) which describes his relationship with his followers as personal, intimate, and mutually affectionate. He suggested that his shepherding offers protection, guidance, and friendship.

Peter would later writes that our calling is to imitate the example left for us by Jesus, following "*in his steps*" i.e. to be shepherds after his example (1 Peter 2:21). Since Jesus is the Good Shepherd, persons in ministry sometimes refer to themselves as "under-shepherds," as we offer care in his name. In the next chapter the author will offer more detailed analysis on the ministry of shepherding.

Nick Pollard's Positive Deconstruction Theory will also be helpful in order for the poor to change the current mind set of both those who receive the hand outs and those who are giving the hand outs. According to Pollard's theory of deconstruction people who had been oppressed can be assisted to give their lives its meaning back and reconstruct them to take up their rightful place in society. Pollard's method will help the author to come to some conclusions with regard to the lives of people he is ministering to.

According to Pollard positive deconstruction is done in a positive way in order to replace it with something meaningful and better (Pollard 1997:44). The main aim of using this method is to assist those coming to the soup kitchen for assistance and care. This method is especially helpful for pastoral caregivers in their ministry to the poor, marginalised and outcasts as it give them an opportunity to take stock of their situation and guided to do adjustments. In the next chapter the author will go into more detail with regards to the research methodology.

Preliminary Conclusion

The research will emphasize on the dependency personality disorder effect that soup kitchens have on the poor people on the receiving end of this social outreach program. It will also show that that the issue of dignity on the part of both parties are affected as a result of this. In the next chapter the author will introduce the research methodology with special reference of the methodology of Gerkin and Pollard. The shepherding and positive deconstruction will be employed as a way of dealing with this problem.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As stated in Chapter One, the methodology that the author will employ is Charles Gerkin's Shepherding model, as put forward in his work *An Introduction to Pastoral Care*. For the author, this is an appropriate methodology because Gerkin's advocated the caring model for individuals as well as the community at large. Gerkin's Shepherding model explains the four Biblical models of ministry, i.e. priest, prophets, wisdom and shepherds for pastoral care (1997:27).

This model viewed care as the central metaphor of the life in the Christian Community where the priest is regarded as the shepherd who cares for his/her flock. The history of the people of Israel is one of God speaking to the people through his representatives, i.e. the prophets who spoke God's word, the priest who offered sacrifices, prayers and praises on behalf of the people to God and finally the king (wisdom) who rule over the people as God's representative (Albert C. Clavo 2008: 32).

These three representatives of God was in a sense the forerunner of the ministry of Christ to come into the world. Jesus offered therefore more insight into the shepherding model as he declares himself as the ultimate Good Shepherd in John 10:15. But Jesus was of course more than just an ordinary shepherd because as the Good Shepherd he laid down his life for his sheep in the ultimate sacrifice on the

cross – he even had the power to lay down his life or to take it up again, meaning his resurrection (Clavo 2008:25). These scripture is a clear indication that it is appropriate to speak of shepherding as a metaphor for pastoral ministry. To develop this metaphor further the priest or pastor has been given the task by Jesus Christ to “nourish, protect, seek, sacrifice, know, manage, heal, love, lead and unite the flock of God.” (Clavo 2008:25). It is therefore appropriate that the next section will explore Gerkin’s understanding of the shepherding model as the author will use this methodology extensively in this work.

2.1 Exploring Gerkin’s Shepherding Model

This model was first introduced as a metaphor in the religious life of the people of Israel whereby it refers to God’s care for his people, and according to Gerkin

“the prophetic, priestly and wisdom models of caring ministry we inherit from the Israelite community are not, to be sure, the only biblical images with which we pastors have to identify. Another, in certain ways more significant, model is that of the caring leader as shepherd” (Gerkins 1997:27).

The shepherding model is a very good model to be employed to assist the poor and needy therapeutically to overcome this way of life. The models of healing, sustaining, guiding and caring will be employed and the hope is that this will help this poor people to reintegrate into the community at large. It is important to understand that these people can play a meaningful role in society and given that opportunity they will indeed. Thus they need that assistance, caring and guidance to help them on

this route of rediscovery and acceptance. The shepherding model is therefore ideal in this process of caring, listening and guiding.

The author believes that this model is important in this research, because the church today is seen as the new Israel, and as such, we see ourselves as a continuation of this caring and prophetic ministry of Israel of the Biblical times, which is the driving force behind the caring ministry of the people of Christ the King, Coronationville. In working with the poor, therefore, the church needs to be a shepherd, leading the flock to greener pastures. Gerkin put this caring ministry in its context when he says that;

“From very early in the life of the Israelite people, images, themes, and narratives appeared that held before the people their obligation to care for one another and for the stranger in their midst.” (1997:92).

Sunderland supports this theory of a caring ministry when he says that;

“God’s people are called to be prophets, to oppose the conditions that generate and perpetuate human deprivation, indignity, and oppression (Is 1:17; Amos 5:14-15). By doing so, God’s people respond to God’s love and compassion for all revealed in the humanitarian legislation of Israel, in the oracles of Israel’s prophets, and in the person and ministry of Jesus.” (Shelp and Sunderland 1987:87).

It was this that has driven the people of Christ the King to start the Soup Kitchen because their belief is that they are called by God to this ministry of caring especially for the poor people. This is not only peculiar to the author's situation, but many people who are involved in a caring ministry are of this belief that God calls them to it.

Both Gerkin and Sunderland are right in reminding and also challenging the church, the Body of Christ here on earth of her God-given obligation to be a caring agent because God is always concern for the plight of the poor, outcasts and needy as depicted in Scriptures, especially in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (1987:82).

Although the church's primary role is to preach the gospel, this is being done in different ways, i.e. through the proclaiming (preaching the Word, celebrating (the sacrament of Holy Eucharist and other sacraments, e.g. Holy Baptism) and enable the members to experience a new life in Christ. This process of empowering people is extremely important in the way God work with broken people in the world. Good examples came from Christ's ministry when walking the earth as we read in Matthew 15:32; "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

But the main aspect of delivering this new life and hope in the people of God is to witness to Christ and according to Albert Nolan churches live out this witness by,

“Practises what it preaches by actions or campaigns and by social services such as feeding the hungry or running hospitals and schools.”
(1988:209).

This is an affirmation of the thesis of Gerkin and Sunderland that the church is called to a prophetic ministry and witness of caring to those less fortunate. Shepherding God’s people is a most important way of entering into the lives of those who are troubled by an oppressive world. Gerkin helps us to journey with the poor people through a methodology of shepherding. This is a wonderful concept that places the church in a place of serving the poor.

2.2 Exploring Pollard’s Positive Deconstruction Model

Where Gerkin’s work helps us to shepherd people, it lacks a way of reconstructing their lives. As a result of the above, the author will also borrowed strongly on the methodology employed by Nick Pollard in his book, *Positive Deconstruction Theory*, which aims in “identifying the underlying worldview, analysing it, affirming the elements of truth which it contains, and finally, discovering its errors” (1997:48). Positive deconstruction can be described as a methodology that engaged with worldviews in Christian Theology.

The process is one of *deconstruction* because it involves 'dismantling' the worldview in order to identify areas of conflict with a Christian worldview. It is *positive* because the intention is not to destroy a person's ideas and belief system, but to build on areas of agreement between the two worldviews in order to argue for the truth of the

Christian worldview. In his own words Pollard explained *Positive Deconstruction* as a process that “recognizes and affirms the elements of truth to which individuals already hold, but also helps them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world views they have absorbed.” (1997:44).

Pollard is therefore of the belief that in order to reach these people or even start to offer them assistance or caring we need to understand their worldview. This means what beliefs, values and attitudes are communicated to be that will have an influence in the approach of those who want to assist them. This is central to the study of the research as the author will endeavour to change the views hold by the people of Christ the King, and hope to use Pollard's *Positive Deconstruction* to this effect, with a view to change their attitudes and perceptions they may hold that influenced them in this ministry and those who are dependent on the Soup Kitchen ministry. Through this method the author will reconstruct the lives with the poor not to depend on soup kitchen, but use it as a way to construct their lives. This process of caring will help them bounce back into an independent life.

2.2.1 The Elements of Positive Deconstruction

Pollard's theory of positive deconstruction is born in the belief that almost all people have a worldview and many are very much deeply entrenched in his or her worldview. Two processes can be identified in positive deconstruction, i.e. the process of 'deconstruction' which means to assist people in deconstructing what they believe in order to look carefully at another belief and analyse that belief.

The second process is 'positive' which means that deconstruction is done in a positive way so that it can replace the old with something new and better, thus positively seeking for the truth. It must be noted that the process of positive deconstruction recognizes and affirms the elements of truth that an individual already hold to, but also helps them to discover for themselves in inadequacies of the underlying worldviews they have observed.

According to Pollard there are two mistakes that are regularly being made in positive deconstruction. The first is the assumption that positive deconstruction is not needed where people would simply adopt the attitude that "all we need to do is pray for people"; and the second is that positive deconstruction is all they need in order to help the poor (1997:46).

Positive deconstruction is one way in dealing with a specific problem but needed to be assisted by the gifts, abilities and strategies that can help different people in their unique circumstances. Pollard theory of the process of positive deconstruction involves four elements that include identifying the underlying worldview, analysing it, affirming the elements of truth which it contains and finally discovering its errors (1997:47).

2.3 The Method of Qualitative Research

From here the author will employ the qualitative method of research as the process of gathering the necessary information needed for this study. The reason for making use the qualitative method is that this method is a typical scientific research

methodology. This research methodology consists of an investigation that seeks answers to a question, systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question, collect evidence, produces findings that were not determined in advance and that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

The author will therefore make use of two sets of questionnaires (see Appendix A and B for questions), one designed to interview the ladies of the church that are responsible for running the soup kitchen, and the other is to interview a group of 15 people from the Informal Settlement that are normally in the queue for the hand-outs. The author will collect all these stories from these participants as part of the case study in chapter five. In Chapter Five the case studies will be analysed in order to come out with a methodology of caring for the poor.

The questionnaire is an essential method of understanding where the people are, especially in understanding the reasons behind them, becoming so dependent on the Soup Kitchen. The author decided on this methodology because through this process challenging questions can be posed in order to get in touch with emotions and feelings, images, words and impressions.

The questionnaire will be supported by interviews that will particularly focus on adult individuals as well as groups, and they will be gathered together in the church hall for the author to engage as a way of getting the necessary information needed to complete the survey.

2.4 Understanding the Ministry of Shepherding

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:1-3).

The above portion of Psalm 23 set out a scenario which introduces the element of caring in the most beautiful way. The image of a shepherd tending to his sheep is a rare phenomenon in our urbanized society today, but in the rural areas it is still a common occurrence. Through the biblical narratives, from Genesis, the image of the shepherd and his flock is a common appearance.

As quoted above, Psalm 23 is the best-known chapter in the Bible about shepherding. In Jesus' earthly ministry he uses images and metaphors as his primary teaching method and the image of the shepherd was one of his favourites. In other words, caring in an African life becomes part and parcel of journeying with people.

In John chapter 10 we find Jesus' famous discourse on shepherding, where we read the words of Jesus himself: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:14-16 NIV).

In this text Jesus compares his relationship with his disciples with that of a shepherd, and the characteristics of this relationship is personal, intimate, and mutual affectionate, offering protection, guidance, friendship and care in the process. This process can also be traced between a good shepherd and his sheep. In the African context, the work of a shepherd is primarily that of boys and men.

In this research the author will therefore endeavour to offer this shepherding model as a way of nurturing, caring, and healing the lives of those affected by the effects of poverty. This model will also seek to empower them to identify alternative and sustainable ways of caring for themselves and their families, and on the other hand offer the people of Christ the King with new ways of doing ministry with the poor and needy. In all this the role of the local priest as pastor is very important in acting as a changed agent with his people.

According to Gherkin, the role of the pastor as a caregiver was over the years “less-developed” and that there must be a “rediscovery of the congregation as a primary context and agent of care for the people of God.” (1997:92). Gherkin continued by saying that:

“Although emphasis has fluctuated from time to time, the ordained pastor’s care for the individuals has usually been given a dominant emphasis. Furthermore, in the recent history of pastoral care, in large part because of the influence of individualism and psychotherapeutic psychology, the organizing conceptualisation of pastoral care has

focussed on the individual care of the pastor for individual persons.”
(1997:92).

This assertion by Gherkin is very true in especially the denomination that the author is from whereby the main responsibility of pastoral care is in the hands of the local priest. In the end this leaves him/her exhausted and in need of caring themselves. When analysing the Biblical model of caring it is evident that God used a variety of people to be carers to the flock.

Gherkin is here putting up a challenge to priests, pastors and other religious leaders, shepherds of the flock to look for new and creative ways of a caring ministry to the people of God. Whether they will live up to the challenge is to be seen as many of them, and speaking as a priest myself, we are set in our ways and not eager to tread into unknown waters. But this is not only a challenge of Gherkin, but an example set by Jesus himself, and if we are serious about our roles as Christ’s ambassadors, we need to follow in his footsteps of caring for the flock.

Adams, another exponent of the shepherding model offered the following way of caring for the flock. He says,

“Shepherds are with the sheep, keeping watch over their flock by night, passing through the valleys where in every shadow lurks the possibilities of death from a wild animal, gently leading those with young and gathering the lambs. It is the shepherd who leads them out of the fold

and who goes before them. He defends them from wolf with his rod. No wonder shepherds are called leaders.” (1980:322).

Likewise the pastors and priests are the protectors of the vulnerable in society, guiding them through the pitfalls of life to the safety of the green pastures.

It is interesting that the birth of Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep was first announced to shepherds who kept watch over their sheep by night (Luke 2:8 NIV) – this can be perceived as a prophetic image of the future ministry of Jesus as the Shepherd. No wonder our Lord followed this great theme of caring for those in need. He worked with them in such a way that they got out of poverty. Thus, they gain back their dignity.

2.5 Understanding Pastoral Care

It is imperative in this research to understand shepherding, one need to understand pastoral care as it is at the heart of the shepherding model. To start with, one needs to ask the question, what is pastoral care and here the author would like to offer a definition put forward by Clebsch and Jaekle, which is:

“The ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns.”
(1964:4)

Clebsch and Jaekle's understanding of pastoral care is that it is representative care, meaning that anyone doing pastoral care in the context of a congregation gets their authority from there to exercise it. They continue to say that through ordination, a pastor is given that authoritative responsibility to be a caregiver and to represent the congregation (1964:4).

But in many cases the caregiver is not an ordained person and likewise, as a representative of a said community, that representative dimension remains. It is also important to note that pastoral care is usually exercised in a group context and not as an individual, meaning that the caregiver has a responsibility to those whom he/she represents.

Again the author would like to draw on the example of Jesus the Great Shepherd as a model for our own ministry as caregivers. In this the author will draw on the encounter between Jesus and the Blind man at Bethsaida as recorded in Mark 8:22-26 (NIV). In this text the blind man was brought to Jesus by his friend, but instead of healing him right-away, Jesus took him by the hand and leads him outside of the village. This process introduced a way of giving individual attention, discussion and the curing of the ailment of the one in need.

This is very strange behaviour by Jesus, but perhaps he wanted to connect with this man in a special way. In doing this, leading the man outside the village away from the staring eyes, Jesus establishes a personal relationship with this blind man. This is an important element in pastoral care, showing that you care

for the individual. Gerkin seeks to support this way of caring by saying that “good pastoral care embodies the gospel in relationships by speaking to the inner being of individuals.” (1997:88).

Gerkin continues this concept of caring by saying that, in order that pastoral relationships at every level may open up and invite this level of connection pastoral leaders need both the skills and the discerning sensitivity to relate to people’s inner lives. What Gerkin is saying is that each individual is unique and so his/her circumstances and this must be treated with sensitivity.

This can be seen in Jesus coming apart with the blind man, taking him outside the village to give that attention that he needed. This process initiates listening and giving him time. It was only in this secluded scene that the blind man became at ease with himself and open up to Jesus by telling him that he only sees figures like trees (Mark 8).

This man trusted Jesus enough to allow him to again touch his eyes and this second time there was healing and restoration. In this example we see the full spectrum of pastoral care in the caring ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. He shows us that pastoral care centres around a personal relationship where careful listening, gentle probing and a discovering with the person needing care are the basic elements. Gerkin puts this in context when he says:

“For the pastor involved in day-to-day relationships with persons at all levels of social life, at least two observational capacities are of crucial

importance, each of which has been emphasized by one or the other approach—concern for the individual or concern for the community—during the twentieth century.” (1997:91).

He identified the “art of listening”, which involves more than words and the “capacity to observe” as two of the most crucial elements in care giving (1997:91). The author is of the believe that if this is being exercise properly the church, the Body of Christ can be true to her calling as a shepherd of the flock and in this way the church is strengthened and the presence of Christ manifested. The next section will deal extensively with the topic of listening in the context of pastoral care.

2.6 Listening in Pastoral Care

2.6.1 What is listening?

Listening is one of the most important skills one can have or can acquire through developing the art of listening. This is therefore an important tool and skill to acquire in ministering to people, especially with regard to the shepherding model as advocated by Gerkin and others as mentioned in this study. How well you listen has a major influence on the effectiveness with which you can do a work and on the quality of your one on one relationship.

We listen to get information on a certain topic or about a person, to understand, for enjoyment and to learn. Diana Corley Schnapp, in her book *Listening in Spirituality and Religion*, puts forward a working definition of listening “as a

multi-dimensional process which involves the physical, mental, emotional, and social behaviours of individuals.” (2010: 239).

Corley Schnapp puts the hammer on the nail by saying this because listening involves all the aspects of our physical, mental, emotional and social behavioural patterns and attitudes. But there is also another school of thought that suggests that “there is no single accepted definition or model of listening, which is a complex cognitive and behavioural process, and that scholars focus on different aspects of the process.” (cf. Janusik 2002 see Schnapp 2010:240).

Every minute of the day we are engaged in one way or another in listening and given all this listening we do, we would be regarded as experts in it by now. But it must be stated that most of us are not good listeners, and “research suggests that we remember between 25 percent and 50 percent of what we hear.”² In the light of this research it is suggested that when talking to your boss, colleagues, customers or spouse for 10 minutes, they pay attention to only half of the conversation.

This is indeed not a good scenario. Clearly, listening is a skill that we can all benefit from improving, especially with regard to pastoral care. By becoming a better listener, you will improve your productivity, as well as your ability to influence, persuade, negotiate and in the end avoid conflict and misunderstandings. All of these are necessary tools for the workplace, home and ministry.

² Information obtained from <http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm#sthash.7WymTYGu.dpuf> dated 28 November 2013

The way to become a better listener is to practice "active listening" by making a conscious decision not only to hear the words that the other person is mentioning but, more importantly, to try and understand the complete message you are hearing. In order to do this you must give your undivided attention to the other person all the time. It is important not to become distracted by whatever else may be going on around you, or by forming counter arguments that you'll make when the other person stops speaking. This process of listening as we shepherd the poor will help them reclaim their dignity back.

Also as the listener you must not allow yourself to get bored, and lose focus on what the other person is saying – regard the other person as most important and that he or she are taken serious. All of these contribute to a lack of listening and understanding. In the light of this Michael P. Nichols says that,

“We define and sustain ourselves in conversation with others. Recognition—being listened to—is the response from another person that makes our feelings, actions and intentions meaningful.” (2009:23).

Corley Schnapp agrees to the above concept by identifying listening to other people as one of three different areas of listening; the other two being “listening to a higher power or spirits; listening to ‘inner voices.’” (2010:243). While listening to a higher power and the ‘inner voices’ are important, listening to other people seems to be the one essential ingredient that shapes and forms people in relational behaviour. In this case it is all the more important as you deal with people who were over the years ignored and discarded and because

of this, come to the believe that they are worthless. Through the process of listening you give them that self-worth back.

2.6.2 To whom, why and to what do we listen to?

To answer this question is important in the authors' research on the topic of listening as this will indicate what is involved in the processes of listening. Listening shapes us and it connects us with each other as we live in community with each other. Therefore, Nichols indicates that "striking a balance between expression (talking) and recognition (listening) is what allows us and the people we care about to interact as sovereign equals." (2009:23).

This is an important observation because if you treat the person you ministered to as an equal in your pastoral care, you will give that person your undivided attention and make him/her feel important. Thus listening is very critical in forming firstly a strong and healthy self, the hearer, and in your relationship with the other, the talker. Listening shapes both the two persons/individuals in the conversation or it can breaks a relationship because of a lack of it.

In dealing with listening with regard to those vulnerable, especially in the context of poverty, the person to whom we minister already lost a sense of self-respect and by being listening to can re-build that level of self-respect. Self-

respect is important in our understanding of who we are and what we became through our interactions with one another. Nichols puts it that “the self is how we personify what we are, as shaped by our experience of being responded to by others. Character is formed in relationships, and the quality of self depends on the nature of that response, the quality of listening we receive.” (2009:25).

In our relationship with other people we often come to that point in our lives that we feel lost and not whole. The question to ask is what makes a person feel lost and not whole. Nichols suggests that “the desperate anguish of those who feel empty and alone, unable to connect to themselves or to others, leads to the question ‘What does it take to make us feel whole?’ A large part of the answer is listening.” (2009:25).

Thus it is important to be listened to and taken seriously as this contributes to that feeling of wholeness. It was also suggested that second to our need for food and shelter is our need to be understood and taken seriously, especially in the time of need.

That is why Schultz and Ahrens define pastoral care or as they call it, caring ministry as “to respond to fellow human beings in their time of physical, spiritual, and emotional need on behalf of one’s faith community.” This time of need can include, but not exclusive to

“Bereavement, birth, adoption, job loss, chronic illness, divorce, moving from one community to another, anger, youth in crisis, terminal illness

and other life crises.” (cf. Schultz and Ahrens 1996 see Schnapp 2010: 249).

These times of need are very influential to the person in need as these experiences tend to shape a person negatively by a lack of listening and understanding or positively if there the person in need feels that he/she is listened to and the experience taken seriously.

Gerkin is a great advocate of individual pastoral care and listening as a pastoral concept can be use by the pastoral care giver in caring for the individual. Listening is therefore an important aspect of shepherding the poor in their quest claim their dignity back because when seeing that there are someone listening to them they acknowledge that they are being taken seriously as human beings.

2.7 Data Collection and Analysis

This research will be conducted through in-depth, frank but very sensitive interviews. These interviews will be guided by questions that will assist the participants to participate in a non-threatening environment. During the interviews the author will also employ methods such as observations, and focus group discussions in order to make the interview speak to the research.

The reason for using the interview method is that it assists and is most appropriate data collection technique for research. The author found this

method appropriate as it focus on the individual and his or her needs, especially with regard to the problem at hand.

Preliminary Conclusion

This chapter only seeks to emphasize the crucial importance of the shepherding model of Gerkin as supported by people like Adams. While it is important for the poor people as well as the people of Christ the King to deconstruct their own situations, to move forward they need a model of caring and this Gerkin offered. This will in the end identified certain problems and in the end empower them to look for other ways in caring and seeking care. In the next chapter the author will deal with the issue of poverty as this is at the heart of the soup kitchen ministry in Christ the King Church, but not limited to it.

CHAPTER THREE

POVERTY

INTRODUCTION

Nelson Mandela, when addressing South Africans, once said that poverty is the biggest problem we need to face. He said:

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity it is an act of injustice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.”³

³ From the website: http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/367338.Nelson_Mandela 17 July 2012.

In order to create a model of caring that lift up people out of dependency personality disorder, the reader needs to understand the issue of poverty and systems, whether institutionalized or voluntary, that hold them to be dependent.

Before we come to that greatness that Nelson Mandela ask us to aspire to in order to alleviate poverty, we need to examine what poverty is all about, and in this chapter the author will look at a definition of poverty in order to gain a scientific understanding of the issue. This research will deal exclusively with poverty in the South African context, with special reference to soup kitchens in the author's parish. As poverty in the South African context is such a politicised issue, the author will also be looking at the historical and political issues that played a role in contributing to the current situation.

In chapter five the author introduces individuals that was interviewed about their lives and why they are coming to the soup kitchen. All these interviewees have over the years in one way or another experienced poverty. They do not know any other way of life than that of being poor. It is important to note that to these people poverty is a daily reality, where they do not know where the next meal would come from. People living in poverty are being identified by the area in which they are living, and all of them are living in Informal Settlements with no proper housing, water, electricity, sanitation and other needs such as schools for children, healthcare facilities and businesses.

Their lives are a daily struggle to survive because they have been trapped in poverty and the hope of ever escaping from this is non-existent because it has become an

intergenerational norm for these people. Research by Hoogenveen and Ozler indicate that there are only a quarter of Africans households who have access to running water compared to the unlimited access to this resource by whites, Asians and Coloureds (Hoogenveen and Ozler 2006:59).

This is true today still as in many of these areas one can see long queues of people waiting to fill a container with water at these communal taps or have to collect water from nearby streams or rivers that is polluted in most cases contributing to health hazards.

To understand the concept of poverty it is important to start with a biblical understanding of poverty as the history of Israel is one of persecution, struggle, oppression, landlessness (exile) and survival. Long before Jacob became Israel, since the ancient beginnings of Genesis, this tiny nation has been in a constant state of survival. From the moment of Abraham's arrival in the land of Canaan, God's people have been surrounded by enemies on all sides.⁴

Over the course of its history, time and time again, this band of 12 tribes has faced extermination, yet today stands among the world's elite. It can therefore rightly be said that the history of Israel is one of fighting for the right of land, started with the Exodus which is directly link to poverty as landlessness equals poverty:

"The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the mystery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of

⁴ From the book *A History of Israel* by John Bright

the Egyptians and to bring them up out of the land into a good and spacious, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.” (Ex 3:7-8)

In the above text God promised Moses to intervene in the lives of the Israelites and liberate them from their slave masters, the Egyptians and give them a land of milk and honey (Ex 3). This sets the scene for a history of conquest and struggle for land and also of occupying forces and landlessness that lead to poverty. The author will now in the next paragraph look at the biblical understanding of poverty and the role landlessness played.

3.1 A Biblical understanding of Poverty

As indicated in the previous section, the entire social history of ancient Israel land was a fundamental means of production. As such, ownership or non-ownership of land formed the basis of the wealth or poverty of those people. Thus the concept of poverty in Scripture is dealt with as both social and spiritual. In it the words ‘poor’ and ‘poverty’ is loaded with meaning and used with terms like ‘widow’ or ‘orphan’ and this emphasises the very nature of the topic. In addition, because not all poor people are destitute the meaning of these terms is heavily dependent upon context. In order to do justice to the topic the author will first look at the Old Testament concept and then deal with that of the New Testament.

Throughout the Old Testament the equitable treatment of the poor are emphasised with justice for the poor as a pre-requisite because the poor person cannot defend

himself (Ex 23:6). Such equity is illustrated by the collection of ransom money from rich and poor alike. As part of the covenant community the poor person was to be treated with respect (Deut. 24:10-11) and supported, even economically, by other Israelites, since they were not to charge interest to the poor of their people (Ex 22:25; Lev 25:35-38). This is a clear indication that God was and still is very concerned for the plight of the poor person in our midst.

Apart from these direct legislative actions there were also special provisions for the poor with laws that focused on the widow, the fatherless, stranger and the destitute (Lev 19:9-10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19-22). In the Book of Deuteronomy God commanded the Israelites to keep a Sabbatical year (every 7th year) where the debts were to be cancelled (Deut. 15:1-9) and the original landowners to be restored as they had become servants on their own land now living in poverty (Lev 25:39-41; 25:54). It is noted that during these festivals the poor could eat freely of the produce of all of the fields (Ex 23:11; Lev 25:6-7, 12).

Further stipulations to aid the poor included the right of redemption from slavery by a blood relative (Lev 25:47-49, support from the third-year tithe (Deut. 14:28-29), and special provisions regarding the guilt offerings. This law is a very good illustration of the relative nature of the concept of poverty. If someone cannot afford the normal atonement lamb he or she can bring two pigeons (Lev 5:7) but further consideration, (substituting one-tenth ephah of flour), is made for one who cannot afford even two pigeons (Lev 5:11). Clearly, the Law emphasized that poverty was no reason for exclusion from atonement and worship, which were central to the Israelite relationship to Yahweh (God) and their national psyche as the people of God.

The great motivation for such legislation was God's concern for the poor. God listened to the cry of the needy (Ex 22:27), blessed those who considered them (Deut. 24:13, 19), and held accountable those who oppressed them (Deut. 24:15). The Lord based this position on his relationship with his people; he was their God (Lev 23:22) and they were his people whom he had redeemed them from slavery (Deut. 24:18).

The highest concentration of terms for the poor in the Old Testament is found in the poetic books. The psalms dramatically portray the difficulties of physical poverty. Helping the poor is identified with righteousness (Ps 112:9) while oppression of the afflicted is one of the crimes of the wicked (Ps 109:16). The psalms also move beyond the sphere of social poverty to speak of spiritual humility (Ps 25:9).

The poor are paralleled to the godly (Ps 12:1, 5), the upright and those who love the Lord's salvation and are contrasted to evil men. The Book of Proverbs gives us the visible causes of poverty because the emphasis in this book is on controllable circumstances but other reasons are also included. According to Proverbs poverty is a result of laziness (6:10-11; 10:4; 20:13; 24:33-34), lack of discipline (13:18), idleness (14:23; 28:19), haste (21:5), excess (21:17; 23:20-21), and injustice (13:23).

The Biblical notion that poverty brings sorrow and can lead to crime is very evident in the happenings of people's lives today. Poverty is quite realistically presented in Scripture where the poor are portrayed as hungry, thirsty, naked, and suffering from various kinds of injustice and oppression including the loss of poverty, family, and life. Yet obedience to the Lord is more important than riches.

This priority is evidenced in the comparison of poverty with other areas of life. Regardless of these causes Scripture is emphatic in its encouragement to help those who are poor. Giving to the poor is encouraged (Prov. 11:24; 28:8, 27) while oppression of the poor is against the law of God. Rulers are taught not to oppress the poor and those who help the poor are to be regarded as the righteous (Job 29:12-17).

Certainly the most grievous examples of poverty and severest rebukes come from the prophets. It should be noted, however, that the prophets were not primarily spokespersons for the poor or the oppressed peoples; they were spokespersons for God. The key terms for "poor" are used almost exclusively by prophets like Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah while Hosea and Micah, who also showed great sensitivity to the needs of their people, do not use the terms at all. Prophets clearly called attention to the misuse of riches and the abuse of the poor but they were primarily messengers of the Lord. Attempts to narrow the agenda of the prophet to one interest group or another have not understood the generosity of God and his concern for all persons.

In the New Testament most of the teaching about the poor occurs in the Gospels. Jesus understood the reality of poverty in society (Matt 26:9-11) and the difficulties of the poor (Mark 12:42-44). In this he stressed the need to give to the poor and to provide for them (Luke 14:13, 21). Jesus himself identified with poor people and, like many poor persons, did not have a home (Luke 9:58). He taught how difficult it was to be rich (Matt 19:23-24) and the necessity of spiritual poverty for a relationship with God (Matt 5:3).

Norman Gottwald, in his monumental work, *Sociological Method in the study of ancient Israel*, redefined the origins of ancient Israel and contributed significantly to our understanding of the role of land in the enrichment or impoverishment of social classes in that society (Gottwald in N.K. Gottwald 1993:142). According to Gottwald the basis of the exodus movement is the struggle over ownership, control of and ability to work the land.

In the period of the Amarna letters bitter struggles were fought by peasant producers inside Palestine for continued ownership and control of their land as many of the meagre produce which the peasant classes were producing, was being confiscated by the servants of Palestinian ruling class in lieu of rental payments. This was a well-organised and structural exploitation of the masses by the Palestine elite that kept them in a habitual state of poverty and landlessness (Gottwald in Gottwald 1993:146). A good example of this is the Parable of the Tenants as told by Jesus about the behaviour of the religious leaders of the day (Matthew 21:33-42; Mark 12:1-11).

In the Letters of St Paul we discover his sensitivity to the poor is consistent with the teaching of Jesus and the agenda of the early church. He understood that the word of Christ cut across sociological boundaries and that the church was made up of poor and rich alike (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor. 1:27-29). His stress on the collection for the Jerusalem church exhibits this concern in a practical way (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:3).

The equality of persons before God is an important principle of the New Testament with the most powerful statement of the equality of rich and poor coming from James, who emphasizes God's sensitivity to the poor and their faith (Jas 2:5, 6). He notes that discriminating between the rich and the poor is both a sin against God and an insult to the poor.

Scriptural terminology that is used includes those who are "meek" and "poor in spirit" as we read in the Sermon on the Mount discourse (Matt 5:3), yet the Bible stresses that both the individual and the church are to be engaged in helping the poor of society. The life of Jesus and the Word of God forms the basis for the engagement of believers with the plight of the poor and this should be done with sensitivity which is in the very nature of God himself.

3.2 A Definition

It is important for the author to start with a definition of poverty, as this will assist in clarifying the issue. To come up with a working definition for poverty the author consulted *A Dictionary for Christian Ethics*, which describes poverty as a "voluntary condition" on the one hand, or as a "social problem" on the other hand (Macquarrie 1986:487). According to *A Dictionary of Christian Ethics* poverty as a voluntary condition is particularly evident in the New Testament (1986:487).

The author does agree with both definitions as during the Early Church many Christians walk away from earthly wealth to live a life of poverty. This can be seen in the many men and women who voluntarily join monasteries and nunneries over the years. These two concepts will be discussed in the next paragraphs of this work which will hopefully explain the author's stand on it.

In this context poverty is commended by the example and precept of Jesus Christ where he called on his disciples to abandon their earthly possessions in order to receive the kingdom of God (Luke 5:11; 12:33; 18:22). There are also examples in the Book of Acts of the same principle where voluntary poverty was advocated and this new lifestyle became the norm for later the monastic life (Acts 2:44-45). The author is of the belief that this is not the norm for Christians to follow, but rather a challenge put forward by Jesus Christ on how we should be living in community with our brothers and sisters.

Poverty as a "social problem" can be found in the unjust and oppressive systems of government that people had to live under throughout history (Macquarrie 1986:488). In the New Testament the main focus of Jesus' ministry was to better the poor and their situation. He did not hesitate to challenge the rich that they must sell their possessions and give the money to the poor (Luke 19).

Some biblical scholars referred to Jesus as having a preferential option for the poor and this is particularly evident in Jesus' teachings especially the Sermon on the Mount as described by Matthew in chapters 5 and 6, in particular reference to the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3ff "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom

of heaven” (Macquarrie 1986:488). The author agrees with this statement and will in a later section of this work substantiate this conclusion.

As the author is dealing exclusively with the South African context, it is just proper to give a definition of poverty from this context. Many researches have been dealing with the issue of poverty in the South African context and according to Pieterse researchers had agreed on the following definition of poverty, that poverty is;

“The inability of individuals, households, or entire communities, to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living” (cf. May & Govender 1998:27 see Pieterse 2004:30).

The author would like to agree with this definition, and though it does not exhaust the definition of this topic, covers most of the essence of what poverty is all about. This raises the question as to what causes this inability of these individuals, households and communities to provide for themselves, and what external forces are at work that prevents them from an acceptable standard of living. In order to answer this question, the author will now deal with the causes of poverty within the South African context.

3.3 Addressing the Problem of Poverty

Ever since the dawn of history, poverty and human deprivation have been recognized as one of the most essential challenges facing the development of human society. The issues of the creation of wealth, possession and the distribution

and our attitude thereof are also determining factors. It is no wonder that poverty is considered as a major constraint in the development of human beings.

Over the years many had endeavoured to study and research the phenomena, especially ways of eradicating it. Tremendous amounts of resources and time have been spent on this problem by both governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions for several generations. Regardless of these efforts, the chronic suffering and deprivation of human beings continues than ever in history. Recent estimates show that nearly half the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day. Most of these are destitute, trapped in absolute poverty.

It is a known fact that throughout the world the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer – so the disparities between the so-called 'haves' and 'have not's' is ever increasing. With a world full of natural resources that can be used to the benefit of all God's people one can rightly ask the question, why is there poverty, suffering and hunger in a world so blessed by an abundant God? What is our responsibility as Christians and the wider faith community towards this continued spiral of poverty?

What role or approach should the Christian Church emphasize as they prepare their members to face poverty, hunger and suffering in a world so full of natural resources? These are the issues that the author would like to address in this chapter, but first we need to look at different poverty concepts in order to understand it better as a means of tackling it head-on.

3.3.1 Different concepts of poverty

As previous in this chapter ascertained and acknowledged there is no single agreed definition of poverty. Poverty signifies insufficiency of means (resources) to meet the day to day needs of people but the standard by which these needs are determined vary from community to community or person to person. Thus there is no single worldwide standard of poverty and therefore no universally accepted count of the poor.

However, for a long time, poverty has been viewed and measured as lack of money, which also includes chronic inadequacy of resources of all types to satisfy such basic human needs as nutrition, rest, warmth and bodily care. This makes Pieterse concludes that for “to many people in South Africa poverty means not knowing where their next meal is coming from, or fearing eviction from their meagre dwellings because they cannot pay the basic rental. There is also the fear that the breadwinner will lose his or her job.” (HJC Pieterse 2001:30).

The author agrees with this conclusion of Pieterse about poverty though this is quite a narrow view of poverty. Even though it includes such material deprivation, many such needs can be satisfied without money, as by one's own agricultural production. There is another school of thought that believes that poverty is a much broader concept including many dimensions, though the narrower definitions still remain relevant. The different views show that poverty is not only material deprivation but also powerlessness i.e. lack of opportunities and choices open to others. Poverty can therefore be described as follows:

- **Poverty as material deprivation:** *This is at the core of poverty. It is indicated by low income and consumption levels, resulting in inadequate food intake and poor nutritional status of food, poor health and education, lack of clothing, housing, consumer durables, fuel insecurity and absence of provision for survival in an emergency, making the household highly vulnerable.*

- **Poverty as isolation:** *This is been reflected in geographical location, and in social and political marginalization particularly of rural households. Most poor people live in rural remote areas or are far from development and service institutions and so lack sufficient weight to influence decisions. They lack transport (roads) and communication (radio, TV) links. They suffer from illiteracy which cuts off access to information and alienation and interaction with the political process.*

- **Poverty as alienation:** *This stems from isolation and exploitative social relations and carries a sense of being without identity or control. The poor are alienated from growth processes such as new technology. They are unable to take advantage of new technology. They lack marketable skills. With limited access to training and education, they are further alienated. Educational alienation causes communication gap between the poor and the rest of society. The languages of administration commerce and learning have remained all alien particularly to the rural poor.*

- **Poverty as Dependence depresses the bargaining power of the poor** in a world of unequal social relations between landlord and tenant, employer and employee, creditor and debtor, buyer and seller, patron and bonded laborer. Dependence can also take the form of reliance on remittances and transfers (gifts, free or subsidized food, etc.) as a major source of income and/or consumption for a poor household.
- **Poverty as a lack of decision-making power and freedom of choice** in production, consumption, employment and socio-political representation reflected in the absence of flexibility and reduced opportunities open to the rural poor.
- **Poverty as lack of assets:** This forces the rural poor to work at a very low level of productivity. The condition of landowners with small-holdings but without complementary assets can be worse than the landless. It can be measured by levels of holdings and changes over time, in the ownership of land, livestock, fishing boats and gear, tools, equipment and machinery.
- **Poverty as vulnerability of external shocks and internal social conflicts:** This can quickly and significantly change the poverty status of rural households. Vulnerability can arise from natural factors (such as drought, flood, cyclone and attack from locusts and other pests) and from changes in the market (collapse of commodity prices), in demography (loss of earning family member) in health (illness of earning members), in marital status

(divorce, desertion and widowhood) in the labor market (loss of employment) and from war.

- **Poverty as insecurity:** *This defines the risk of being subjected to physical violence, because of low social status, or physical strength, gender, religion, race, ethnic and linguistic status.*⁵

From this discussion, poverty can be viewed narrowly (being without money or material deprivation) or broadly (to include other less materialistic dimensions like powerlessness). The broader the view, though it is more encompassing, it is also harder to measure. The narrow is based on income and consumption definitions. The broader view is more inclusive of much less materialistic aspects described above. With this in mind the author will now turn to the causes of poverty.

3.4 The Causes of Poverty

Michael Taylor, in his book, *Christianity, Poverty and Wealth* describes the causes of poverty as follows: “Poverty has many causes, some deeply rooted in history. Bad governance, ‘natural’ disasters, personal qualities and cultural practices all contribute.” (2003:12). He continues to highlight a lack of income, power, the economic policies of the world and unfair trading systems between rich and poor countries as perpetuating poverty (2003:12). Thus he came to the conclusion that this is the reason why some people are poor and some are rich (2003:12).

⁵ http://ict.aiias.edu/vol_28/28cc_343-362.htm. Retrieved 17 September 2014

According to Pieterse many people in South Africa believe that “poverty means not knowing where their next meal is coming from, or fearing eviction from their meager dwellings because they cannot pay the basic rental. There is also the fear that the breadwinner will lose his or her job” (cf. Wilson & Rampehele 1989:67 see Pieterse 2004:30).

The author believes that Pieterse is correct in making such a conclusion as those living from handouts like Soup Kitchens, begging on the streets of towns and cities, those evicted from lands by unscrupulous landowners and those losing their jobs because the economic situation causing them to readjust their living conditions, are regarded as poor and living in poverty.

Some scholars like Taylor, Pieterse, Wilson and Rampehele suggest that the reality of poverty is as complex as its causes, meaning that not every situation is the same when it comes to poverty. Research that has been done on this subject highlighted the causes of poverty as follows: “historical, economic, governance, land, natural, personal and cultural.” (Taylor 2003:13).

Apart from these realities that poor people are struggling with on a daily basis, it is also true that poverty is “self-perpetuating” (2003:13). There are people that are very content with their situation, especially with regards to receiving handouts from soup kitchen. They do not need to work as the food, etc. comes to them on a regular basis. Some members see this as carrying others and this will create dependency.

This is the result of a vicious cycle created by a lack of proper education, which leads to school drop-outs, which leads to unemployment and which in turn leads to crime. The apartheid system of the past was so designed and structured to create a poor class of black people in order to rule over them. Taylor reflects on this vicious cycle by saying that

“Poor people are unemployed, uneducated, powerless, and caught up in conflict; and they are poor because they are unemployed, uneducated, powerless, and caught up in conflict.” (2003:13).

It will be proper in this research to focus on some of these causes of poverty highlighted by Taylor individually so as to grasp the enormity of the problem, especially from the South African context. The global village is structured in such a way that developing countries can never get out of this problem through the World Bank, IMF and other structural adjustment programs.

The causes of poverty in any situation are a profoundly political issue and the reason for this can be seen in the way millions of people are struggling to make ends meet. According to Prof Francis Wilson⁶, one of the main causes of poverty is the inequality that exists in public life and this brought about a lack of human community. He says that World Bank reported that South Africa is an upper middle income society which in effect means that all people should live fairly comfortably.

⁶ All the statistical information in this section is from Wilson and Ramphela in their work *Uprooting Poverty in South Africa*. In, *The Hunger Project Papers*. 28 November 2013

But a closer look into the statistics reveals a very shocking picture, because the top 40% of people in the country earned 86,6% of the country's wealth, while the bottom 40% are earning only 5,6% of the country's wealth. This structure has caused the poor to fight for service delivery, job creation and recognition as human beings in a democratic society.

The fact that South Africa was for years colonised, made the access to land and other natural resources of "earth, fire and water" of the country unavailable to the majority of the people (Wilson & Ramphela 1989:5). Contributing to this is the history of slavery and the development of the migrant labour system.

This, the migrant labour system, is to Wilson the major cause of poverty in not only our country, but also the neighbouring states of Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. In other words, men were removed from their families, working for low wages, joining their families for one month in a year – thus creating marriage breakdowns which expounded poverty.

The migrant labour system impacts negatively on the social fabric of the society where these workers came from because there exists now an imbalance of males and females. The husbands leave for the mines, visiting their families only once or twice a year, while the wives stayed behind to see to the family in the role of mother and father.

These workers helped develop the urban areas where they live and work, while the rural areas where they came from remain poor and under develop. With the migrant

labour system came also the pass law system, whereby the workers and their families' access to the urban areas were controlled in order to keep them in the impoverished rural areas.

With this in mind, the author shall therefore be looking at the causes of poverty in South Africa, with special reference to our history of inequality. The reader can understand how poverty was created by a system which excluded the majority of South African, hence this huge problem of poverty. The other problem adding to an already worsening situation is that South Africa is surrounded by poor countries and the men come here in search of jobs and this in itself places more strain on the resources of the country adding to the ever growing problem of poverty.

3.4.1 The South African History: A quest for land and power

The previous sections provided us with an introduction to the issue of poverty, pinpointing to the causes of poverty in order to come to grips with this social sickness that affects God's children. In this section the author shall be looking at a concise historical analysis of South Africa with the object to show that the poverty that many millions of the citizens of South Africa are experiencing today is a result of "systemic exploitation" (Terreblanche 2002:3). In order for us to understand the causes of poverty in South Africa, it is important for this study to analyze a short history which contributes immensely to our current situation and which people like Terreblanche named a history of inequality (2002:3)

The history of South Africa is a history of conflict, where one ethnic group tried to gain the upper hand over the other. A characteristic of these conflicts and wars was that it was mostly conflicts about territory (land), whereby these “groups tried to enrich itself by plundering the others” (Terreblanche 2002:6). Terreblanche pointed out that these conflicts and wars followed certain patterns amidst the mess of warfare (2002:6). He describes it as follows:

“One of the clearest patterns is that, during the long period of European colonialism and imperialism, the colonial masters were mostly the victors in the group conflicts, and the indigenous population groups mostly the losers. A second pattern – closely link to the first – is that in the post-colonial period local whites (the descendants of the settlers from erstwhile colonial Europe) were again (at least until 1974) mostly conquerors, and therefore in a position to enrich themselves, mostly at the cost of indigenous people”. (2002:6)

There was also a definite pattern followed by the colonialists and settlers i.e. they create political and economic structures of power and this put them in positions of privileged to that of the indigenous people. As the new landowners controlled and exercise power over the economic and political structures, the indigenous people found themselves deprived from the natural resources (i.e. land, water and livestock) of their country of birth.

Through vicious land and labour laws the indigenous people became cheap labour in an exploitative and unfair labour market. Terreblanche points out that these trends of

systemic exploitation “have run ominously through South Africa’s modern history, from mid-17th until the late 20th century” (2002:6). In considering the facts presented above about the systematic exploitation of people in the South African context, the author agrees with Terreblanche in his arguments about what was and still is happening. Hence, the poor are still wrought in this cycle.

Pieterse, in his work *Preaching in a context of Poverty*, said the following on this subject: “the apartheid policy, which became statutorily entrenched after 1948, caused tremendous poverty among the black population of South Africa” (2001:46). He highlighted the following laws passed by the South African Parliament as a direct cause of poverty: “The Group Areas Act of 1950; The Population Registration Act 30 of 1950; The Bantu Education Act of 1950; The Native Construction Workers Act 27 of 1951” (2001:46).

He continued to say that though these laws were abolished by 1990 they “systematically debarred the black population from the significant economic progress. Present day unemployment and poverty are largely attributable to this history.” (2001:48) The author came to the conclusion that both these scholars are right in their view that the laws of the country was one of the main contributors in causing poverty and in the same time perpetuating it. For example, many thousands of black people stay far away from cities, they are poorly paid and a huge portion of their salary is used for transport from home to work. This contributes to them living from hand to mouth.

3.4.2 Structural Poverty

The previous section on the historical overview of South Africa just highlighted the fact that in this context we need to speak about structural poverty because it was not an accident of history that made people poor but which Terreblanche termed a “systemic exploitation” that was entrenched in a socio-economic and political structure of apartheid (Terreblanche 2002:3). Smith agrees with this notion of systemic exploitation by saying that:

“Poverty is a cruel trap. For many of the unfortunate people who are ensnared in this painful leg-hold, escape on their own can be all but possible (Smith 2005:ix).

Poverty is more than a lack of money, but is the very conditions that people live in day by day with no end in sight. It is a vicious cycle that will take years to break down because it is entrenched in the hearts and minds of the people. Even in South Africa, after nearly twenty years into democracy, it seems that the lives of millions of ordinary people just got worse.

Like in most societies the rich become richer and the poor poorer. The irony of the situation is that a new elite and middle had been created by democracy in which you see many black African millionaires created through the BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) deals. It will be interesting to see whether they will behave like other rich people after climbing the social ladder.

In the South African context poverty is directly a result of the political system of the past where laws were designed to keep the majority of the people of the land in a state of perpetual poverty. In this process we see a systematic and structural effort to maintain certain people under the yoke of poverty. Mveng is right when he says that “poverty is both anthropological and structural.” (Mveng 1994:157). This clearly shows that it is not by accident that people are poor, but it is because a systematic and well-created policy of apartheid that deprived the majority of its people from their birth-right in their own country.

According to Wilson and Ramphela poverty in South Africa is unique in the sense that it was the only country that had statutory discrimination along racial lines especially towards the black population. They continued by saying that poverty is deep and widespread and the degree of inequality is greater than any other country in the world (1989:4). When political power was transferred from the apartheid regime to the ANC government in 1994, the economic power remained in the hands of the minority whites. Terreblanche says of this that,

“Parallel with the negotiations on constitutional issues at Kempton Park during the early 1990’s, representatives of the corporate sector and core ANC leaders also negotiated informally on economic issues.” (2002:95)

He continues so say that,

“by convincing ANC leaders to accept the AAC’s approach, the corporate sector in effect persuaded – or forced – the ANC to move away from its

traditional priority, namely to uplift the impoverished black majority socially and economically. As soon as the ANC's leaders agreed to the statement, they trapped in the formidable web of the domestic corporate sector and the international financial establishment, represented by the IMF and the World Bank.” (2002:96-98)

This clearly shows that the transition towards political power was treated more serious than the transition of economic power. While the negotiations for a political dispensation was treated serious and in the open view of public and world scrutiny, the economic future were left in the hands of the owners and shareholders of the companies that had the economic power.

The conclusion can be made that the ANC representatives that negotiated the economic future of the country accepted what was on offer and that was not in the best interest of the majority people of the land. It shows clearly that the ANC leaders abdicated their responsibility to fight the cause of the poor in order to achieve political power. Unless the majority of South Africans blacks are not economically free, they will remain in their current state of poverty.

Many times accusations are thrown around that people are poor because of laziness and a lack of vision and determination. This is very far from the truth because the socio-economic and political structure was carefully design to keep one section of the population poor and the other one third wealthy.

But the fact is that people continue to live in poverty and government is still blaming apartheid. The question remains, when will we stop blaming apartheid and start with the work of uplifting the poor out of their miserable existence? It is interesting to note that after 20 years of democracy we are still blaming apartheid for things going wrong.

3.4.3 Poverty and Inequality

Terreblache has the following to say about inequality:

“Racial inequality and social injustices are writ large in South Africa’s history. These inequalities are often characterized as the ‘inequalities of apartheid’, but this is an oversimplification. Many reasons of a historical, cultural, and demographic nature can be given for any number of these inequalities. The theme of this study is, however, that racial inequalities should largely be understood in systemic terms, i.e. in terms of deeply ingrained white power and lack powerlessness.” (2002:391)

Again Terreblache hit the hammer on the nail by describing racial inequality as part and parcel of the problem of injustice and therefore poverty in South Africa. According to the Gini-coefficient indicator that measures levels of inequality between countries, South Africa is measured the highest amongst 57 countries which date was available to be measured (Wilson and Ramphela 1989:4).

This is just another confirmation how the racial classification and discrimination history of South Africa has set back the majority black people. It would be interesting to get the latest statistics the number will be higher than the one of 1989. Terreblanche says that there can distinguish between four different levels or types of racial and class inequalities, which are as follows:

- *“racial inequalities in the share of the income and per capita income of the different population groups;*
- *Racial inequalities in the distribution of political, military, economic, and ideological power and the ensuing power struggle in South African history;*
- *Racial in equalities in the distribution of economic, entrepreneurial, and educational opportunities; and*
- *The highly differentiated class structure that has emerged among blacks, and the rise of a black elite.” (2002:391)*

The result of the inequality can also be seen as manifested in poverty that is characterized by;

- An ever deepening gulf between the rich and the poor;
- That poverty continue to exist because of current economic policies;
- The legacy of the racist policies of the past has reinforced this attitude of inequality on the human dignity of the people. (1989:4)

These issues are all contributing to the continued and prolonged level of poverty because first it was the policies and laws that prevented all the citizens of the country to share in its wealth, but now only a handful is benefitting from the new democracy while the majority continued to suffer. The result of this is a deep level of anger that is boiling over in communities rising up in service delivery protest and the continued strike action in the mining sector demanding a better wage. These protests is characterized by high levels of violence as people's patience and anger can no more be curtailed.

South Africa has a history of violence. It started during the periods of colonisation where white political supremacy was at the order of the day and violent methods were used to dominate and subject the indigenous people of the land politically and to exploit them economically and oppress them on a social level. These levels of violence were often justified as their right as a legitimate government of the day.

But when a government is illegitimate in the eyes of the majority of its citizens, state sanctioned violence becomes very controversial and difficult to explain and justified. These violent oppression and exploitation were answered by fierce resistance and at times counter violence by the oppressed masses. We must understand the racial inequality and poverty that is still prevalent in the South African society today against this short historical background – a history of “institutionalised or systemic violence” (cf. Lotter 1997:21-31 see Terreblanche 2002:401).

3.4.4 Economic Deprivation

The author is of the opinion that the existence of poverty is an issue that must put everyone in South Africa to shame, as it touches to the heart and soul of a person's dignity, because most of the time those people living in poverty are victims of other people's greed. It is an indictment against South Africa who exports millions of worth of food every year, while millions of our people are still experiencing food insecurity and under-nutrition. All is done in the name of greed.

One of the major concerns in dealing with poverty and the poor and uplifting their situation is the current economic growth rate of the country. According to Pieterse in order for the country "to combat poverty, the economic growth rate must be higher than 5% per annum" (cf. Barker 1999 see Pieterse 2001:51). Pieterse concluded that this growth rate was never achieved, apart from a small improvement of 3% in 1994, which then dropped back to 2% in 1998 (2001:51), and this is the reason why there is not much that has been done in relation to the state of poverty.

The current state of the government where the plundering of state assets through corruption, fraud and theft is at the order of the day continues to perpetuate this situation because state departments are rendered ineffective in their main function, and that is service delivery to the people. On this inability of governments to provide for their people, Taylor says that "Governments contribute to poverty when they are bad, corrupt, inept or weak." (2003:17).

He also stated that international financial institutions like the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) whose policies on lending money does not make it

easy for country to get the necessary funds to assist with programs and projects of poverty alleviation (2003:17). The author believes that these sentiments are highlighting the real issues that continue to keep poor people of this land in the state they are in, and that is why it is necessary for the people of Christ the King and many others to run soup kitchens as a means of addressing the issue of poverty that lives among them. They must go beyond soup kitchens to create structures that create opportunities for jobs or skills development as a means of addressing the issue of poverty that lives among them.

Having said this though, researchers reached a conclusion amongst them that South Africa is an upper-middle income country. The per capita income of South Africa is ranked the same with countries like Botswana, Brazil, Malaysia and Mauritius (Whiteford and McGrafth 1994:1). This was endorsed by May when he says that,

“In per capita terms South Africa is an upper middle class income country but most African households experience outright poverty or vulnerability to becoming poor. In addition the distribution of income and wealth in South Africa is the most unequal in the world.” (1998:1)

Herein lies the problem with the above statement that how could South Africa been in the upper-middle ratio of income earners and there is such a high rate of unemployment that leads to poverty and causing people to be dependent on Soup Kitchens? The other problem is that South Africa is a country rich in natural minerals such as gold, diamonds, platinum, coal, iron, to mention a few but the country is suffering from high percentages of unemployment and poverty.

The answer to this lies in the fact that the wealth of the country is in the hands of a minority of the people. Those who control the countries mines are individual families and overseas investors that only concern their own profit margins regards of those working in the mines and other big industries.

The reality is that we live in a society in which there exists great disparities between the rich and the poor and tragedy is that the wealth of our country, and in fact the same applies to other countries in Africa does not reach the majority of the population to enjoy it. The country's mines and industries produce enough wealth for its people to enjoy, but this is not the case. This is the great discrepancy and the biggest injustice that a country that enjoys so many natural resources cannot care and provide for the people. One can make the statement that in the midst of plenty, poverty is thriving.

3.4.5 The role of Education

Many formal and informal studies, as well as the voices of individuals had advocated strongly that education is a means of ending poverty. One of Nelson Mandela's favourite quotes was on education, encouraging young and old to better themselves through education where he says:

"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of

*a mine worker can become the head of the mine and that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.*⁷

Though having passed matric or being a post-graduate is not a guarantee to enter the job-market, it gives the person with it the bargaining tools necessary. But this is just one way of helping people to care for them.

According to research done there is a definite link between educational levels and poverty (cf. May & Govender 1998:33 see Pieterse 2001:37). May and Govender put down a table indicating the education/poverty ratios: No education – Poverty = 69,1%; Primary education – Poverty = 54,2%; Secondary education – Poverty = 23,7%; Tertiary education – Poverty = 2,5% (cf. May & Govender 1998:33 see Pieterse 2001:37).

This shows clearly the link that exists between the level of education and poverty, but another alarming fact is also true. According to studies done in South Africa in 1998 and announced by the Ministry of Education, out of the 600 000 matriculants that year 480 000 will either not get acceptance to tertiary education or even find employment (2001:37). Furthermore many young people finishing school or even university has no hope of employment, thus no income to support themselves or dependence.

⁷ From the website: http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/367338.Nelson_Mandela 2 August 2012.

There must be therefore a greater emphasis on guiding our young people to become employers rather than to be employed through skills development and education that is geared towards becoming entrepreneurs. These are some of the issues facing South Africa and the rest of the world. But having said this though, the shepherds need to be involved in shepherding the flock by educating and empowering them with skills that will take poor people out of the cycle of poverty.

Preliminary Conclusion

In this chapter the author dealt with a definition of poverty indicating that poverty in the South African context is mainly the cause of the past system of Apartheid, land inequality, the economic status of the people and the lack of proper basic education. The picture that emerged from this study can stem one with a spirit of despondency, but through this engagement a better idea to alleviate poverty can start to develop. In the next chapter the author will be presenting the case studies that were interviewed in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the author will be dealing with specific case studies of people interviewed for this study. These six people, three male and three female are regularly attendees of the soup kitchen. The author will also put forward comments

from the ladies manning the soup kitchens of the reasons what motivates them to come regularly, especially during the cold winter days to give soup and bread to these people. Part of this study will also be a reflection on the St Martin's in the Veld Parish's Soup Kitchen and in doing so the author would like to highlight the different reason why these people are coming to the soup kitchens.

As indicated in the Introduction to this work the Christ the King Soup Kitchen came about after a challenge by the Diocesan authorities for the church in the Diocese of Johannesburg, Anglican to become more outward looking in their ministry. A few ladies of the parish took up the challenge and start feeding the people of Slovo Park Informal Settlement and the surrounding community of Coronationville. One important aspect of the Slovo Park community is that people from different races live side by side with one another.

They started off by serving soup and sandwiches, with fruit (orange) in the winter. Initially the soup kitchen was self-funded by the ladies, but gradually the church community started to buy-in by donating food stuff and a regular monthly contribution by the Parish Council. They feed these people twice a month during summer and every week during winter as the need for a warm meal is more desperate. They feed on an average Saturday between 50-100 people including children.

In addition the parish outreach project also provides about 30 food parcels to needy elderly to supplement their monthly income. The soup kitchen ladies also arranged an annual Christmas Party for the children of the community where they feed about 300 children with a hotdog, cool drinks and sweets. The prayer is that by God's

grace this soup kitchen will continue to provide this very important ministry to the needy community of Slovo Park.

In the next section the author will be dealing with the individual case studies. The questions that were posed to these case studies were the following:

1. Why are you coming to the Soup Kitchen?
2. Are you employed / unemployed. Give reasons why not employed?
3. How do you feel standing in the queue?
4. Do you think that there is something more the community can do regarding your situation?

4.1 Case Study 1: Themba*

**Not his real name*

Themba is an unemployed man in his 40's living with his life partner and three children in Slovo Park. They do not have a steady income apart from the monthly Government grant for the three children. Themba is not educated as he only finished Gr 10 and he does not see a future for him. Unfortunately there is no adult education programme running in the area to further his education. His wife also left school in Gr 9 and she had over the years some domestic work in the homes of the more affluent people around Coronationville. Whenever there is a possibility Themba will do a "peace-job" that is cleaning the garden of people. He is constantly looking for more permanent employment but in the current economic situation he found it very difficult to find one.

Themba see the soup kitchen as a vital part of his survival where he and his whole family can be provided with a warm meal. He got to know the ladies well and whenever there are left-overs he will get some to take home. He find it very humiliating standing in the queue to wait his turn and rather send his wife and children to queue and he will join them as soon as they reach the front of the queue.

According to Edward Wimberly, Themba here portrays the classical symptom of shame and guilt (Wimberly 1999:25). Wimberly relates this feeling of shame to that of Jesus's time where "Artisans forms about 5 percent of the population and were recruited from the dispossess members of the community." (1999:25). He continued by saying that there were even lower classes of people, calling them the 'expendables" (1999:25). This makes Wimberly to conclude that in such a class classified society, "a person's worth was value-laden based on honour and shame" (1999:25).

Themba expresses a real anger at the empty promises regularly made by politicians during election times. These promises involved proper housing as they are staying in a shack made of corrugated iron sheets, wood and a plastic cover for extra protection against the rain and also work opportunities. Needless to say that nothing comes from the promises and this makes not only Themba, but many in the community in the same situation very frustrated and desponded. He would like to see real opportunities for him and his wife so that they can provide better for their children.

4.1.1 Reflection on Themba's case study

The author picked up a number of issues that Themba had to face in order to remedy his situation. Firstly there is the problem with unemployment that many of the people in the same situation are struggle with. The fact that he do not have a formal educational background contributes to his situation and that of his wife. The church community offers a helping hand through the soup kitchen, but this in itself is a concern for Themba as he feels ashamed to go and stand in the queue for food. He is also feeling a lot of guilt over his situation because he feels that he could have completed his schooling for a better education and better work prospects.

Edward Wimberly writes, in *No Shame in Wesley's Gospel*, that guilt may have been a primary problem for 18th and 19th century people, but that shame is the more typical problem for 20th and 21st century people. What Themba is overwhelmed with a feeling of guilt and this in itself is the consciousness of having done something wrong. He needs to get rid of this feeling that he is to blame for their situation.

Shame is the deeper and more painful consciousness of being something wrong, or being completely helpless and exposed. Wimberly says that "the shamed person is never "good" enough or strong enough, and suffers self-condemnation." All these feelings of guilt and shame are being compounded by the feeling of been abandoned by parents, that is the case with Themba who was abandoned by his parents and grew up with his grand-mother.

4.2 Case Study 2: Faan*

**Not his real name*

Faan is an unemployed young man in his early thirties still living with his parents who are both receiving a Government grant. Faan completed his matric but became caught up in the drug epidemic of the greater Westbury area. Because of this habit which he sustained by stealing valuables out of his home, his parents has banned him from home so he lives on the streets. He does not have any inclination to get employment as his excuse is that nobody wants to employ a drug addict. Two years ago he did try to get help from his addiction through a community based organisation but he could not see the programme through.

Faan do not have any problem queuing for food on a Saturday. He actually thinks that twice a month is not enough for him to get a meal. He also sees this as an obligation on the part of the church to look after people like him. He often gets into trouble with the ladies of the soup kitchen because of this attitude of entitlement. For example he always wants to get more slices of bread than the others and demanding that he must get to the front of the queue.

He feels that the community is not doing enough to help people like him. He would love to get help for his problem so that he can live a life free from substance abuse and that he can get a job to support him. He also would like to restore the broken relationship with his parents, especially his mother with whom he had a very close relationship. One of his siblings who are employed by City Power is willing to help him but on condition that he stop his habit.

4.2.1 Reflection on Faan's case study

Faan's issues can be identified as the drug addiction and also his attitude of entitlement. He was in a situation to get help for his addiction but he could not go through with the problem. Faan's case is not unique in the community of Coronationville as there are many young people that through their drug addiction were chased from their homes and had to live on the streets. There are people who extended a helping hand, like his sibling but he refused that help also because he do not want to get help for his addiction which is a condition from his brother.

4.3 Case Study 3: Sipho*

**Not his real name*

Sipho is in his mid-fifties and are married with four children, two of whom are working. He was employed but lost it through ongoing strike action and stay-away. He hopes to get back to work when the labour court case is finalised and judgment given in favour of them. Though Sipho and his family are financially supported by the two working children, he still sees the need to come and queue for food. He is thankful for this as it releases some of the financial pressure.

He is also keeping himself busy by collecting scrap and other re-cycle material in order to support him and his family. From time to time one of the local churches also makes use of his skills as a gardener. There are talks that he will be employed by them on a more permanent basis. He must also take care of his wife who suffer from epileptic seizures and because of her condition she cannot hold a sustainable employment.

Sipho also hope that the promised development of Slovo Park and the business propositions that are envisage will bring them a new lease on life. He put not any hope on a possible return to his former employment and tries to make ends meet with his current endeavours. He also feels that not much has been done to uplift them as a community and blames the politicians for using them in their political games.

4.3.1 Reflection on Sipho's case study

Sipho's situation is that of someone who through no fault of his own is in the situation that he is in. he is an honourable person that is willing to help himself. He showed no dependency on the soup kitchen as he and his wife are being supported by their two working children. He also try his level best to be self-sufficient and sustaining by collecting scrap metal for an income. Siphon showed that if you want to better your situation there is always a way and through this attitude there is a possibility for a sustainable job for him with one of the local churches.

4.4 Case Study 4: Candy*

**Not her real name*

Candy is living with her two children, whose father passed away a few years ago, stays with her sick and aged mother. Their main source of income is her mother's government grant. She did not finish her schooling and finds it hard to hold on to a job because of the illness of her mother who needs special care and attention. When

the children's father was still alive he was the breadwinner as he had a stable job with the local City Council. He left some money behind through his pension scheme which was paid out to her and some are invested for the children's future.

She would love to finish her school and do some nursing studies as she is very good in taking care of her mother. She hopes that a local Non-government Organisation can assist her in getting her studies sorted out. If that is the case she will then be able to put her mother in a care centre for more specialized care and treatment. At the age of 28 she feels she is still young enough to get her life in order that she can make a better life for her, the mother and the two children.

She found it very embarrassing to come to the soup kitchen for food but she does not have any other choice. She is very grateful for the church community for this kind of support and for the monthly food parcel that they receive. But she is also very frustrated with the government not doing enough for them as a struggling community of Slovo Park. In her own words she does not want to live from welfare only but given the opportunity she wants to better herself in order to take care of her family. She also believes that they are being used by the different political parties as none come of their usual promises.

4.4.1 Reflection on Candy's case study

It is clear from her case study that Candy is a very caring person and with the right guidance she can make something out of her life and so escape from this life of perpetuate poverty. Candy also has the drive and ambition to better herself through

education and in meeting the right people she can be directed into the right direction for her to be trained as a nurse. She also struggles with the feeling of shame for queuing in the soup kitchen line for food but her current situation does not give her any other way out. It also seems that she will accept help with gratitude but she does not want to be dependable on hand outs only.

4.5 Case Study 5: Sibongile*

**Not her real name*

Sibongile is a married lady with four children and whose husband is unemployed now for the past five years. He was retrenched by one of the state-owned companies after restructuring. Immediately after his retrenchment life was easy for them and they lived in a comfortable house but they had to sell it eventually as they run out of money to live on. By her own admission they spend a lot of his package money on unnecessary things, had many friends to please but as soon as the money dried up, they lost everything.

Sibongile tried to keep the proverbial pot cooking by doing domestic work in the surrounding suburbs. She has a monthly income of R800 but that is not enough to support her family. She does not have any qualification apart from leaving school in Gr 10. She found it difficult coming to the soup kitchen but she has no other option but to do it because this gives them something to eat when her resources dries up. She also applied for a government grant for her children and hope that as soon as this is approved, will help to ease the pressure a bit. She also put her hope in the

future development of Slovo Park which envisage some job opportunities through the planned business ventures.

4.5.1 Reflection on Sibongile's case study

Sibongile is an employed married lady who through her circumstances became part of the poor statistics of the country. She is still able to have a job that brings in some money to get them through but obviously this is not enough to sustain a family of six. She sees the soup kitchen as a temporary solution to her problem as she awaits the development of her area where business ventures are envisaged. She is the kind of person who was used to a better life before her husband was retrenched and will do everything in her power to get that life back.

4.6 Case Study 6: Mary*

**Not her real name*

Mary is a single mother living with her one child and boyfriend in the Slovo Park Settlement. Both of them are unemployed and they live from the monthly government grant for the child. This money must also support her boyfriend drug habit and at times he becomes very violent if she dares to refuse him any money. From time to time she is helped by neighbours as she looks after the little children coming from school. She is thinking of developing this into a proper income bearing venture.

Mary finished her matric but because of a lack of funds there was never an opportunity to better her situation through further education. She is actually waiting

for her one sister staying on the East Rand to take her in with employment opportunities nearby. She found it embarrassing standing in the queue on Saturdays but accept the fact that if she wants to survive with her child, this is the only option. From time to time she is also asked by the local primary school to look after a class when a teacher is ill and this income comes in very handy. She hopes that she can get someone to assist her to become a teacher as she is very good with children.

4.6.1 Reflection on Mary's case study

Mary's situation is that of many thousands other young girls around our country. They became teenage mothers, finished school with no prospects of furthering their education and many of them ended up in an abusive relationship, like Mary. During the interview it was evident that Mary does have the ability and the determination to better her life in order for her child to experience another type of lifestyle. As she also struggles with this feeling of shame as she stands in the soup kitchen queue, she realised that this is just a temporary solution to her problem and she needs other more sustainable means to support her and her child.

4.7 Interviewing the Soup Kitchens

In order to get a balanced view about the ministry of the Soup Kitchen within the area, it was imperative of the author to interview the Coronationville ladies. In addition the author also visited the St Martin's Church Soup Kitchen in Rosebank in order to ascertain the situation there. These were the questions posed to them:

1. What was the motivation for starting a Soup Kitchen?
2. Why did you get involved in the Soup Kitchen?
3. Do you think this is the only way of helping people in need? And why?
4. What are your feelings about the people coming for help?
5. Any other comments relating to this project?

The answers to these questions are contained in the case studies below and after that the author will be dealing with an analysis or reflection to it.

4.7.1 Case Study: Soup Kitchen Ladies

This case study is of the four Soup Kitchen ladies with whom the author had a group interview. The author finds it important to interview these ladies as they play a pivotal role in dealing with those coming to the soup kitchen. They are the face of the caring ministry of the church and how they react towards these people will have a bearing on this ministry. The involvement of all of these four ladies in the soup kitchen was driven by their need to serve the people of God and to effect change in their lives.

They grew up with the understanding that as a Christian they need to do something and not only be a worshiper. They particular want to care for the vulnerable and less fortunate like the elderly and children and try to better their lives. They see themselves as care-givers helping in a particular need in the community and their Christian faith is a determining factor in this caring ministry.

Some of these ladies also came from a background where they had to work for what they want and now they see this as an opportunity to give back – God has bless

them with a better life and now they must bless others. They see these people not as objects, but as people like them created in the image of God, thus their brothers and sisters in Christ. They believe that as they treat the people with respect and dignity, their own self-respect will be build up and for those coming to the soup kitchen it will go a long way in restoring their dignity.

The soup kitchen ladies also expressed their frustration with the lack of government support for this noble task. They believe that if government can play a bigger role in providing resources to them as soup kitchens they will be able to do more and to get some sustainable projects going for the people in order to assist them to help themselves.

Though the church contributes to the running of the soup kitchen and they get donations from businesses around, many of them sometimes contributes from their own pockets in order to provide for the needy. Their vision is to start a sustainable project that not only provides food but also an income to sustain them for that better life they want for themselves and their families.

4.7.2 Case Study: St Martin's Rosebank

The soup kitchen of St Martin's Rosebank is an ecumenical run soup kitchen based at St Martin's Anglican Church Rosebank. This soup kitchen caters for 150 people (men and women) once a week. They provide a well-balanced three-course meal with soup, a main course of vegetables and meat and a desert. They ask a small fee

from the people but it is not compulsory and the reason for that is to prevent people from taking this for granted.

It is interesting that the majority that is making use of the soup kitchen are men with a small number of women, especially mothers with children. When listening to their stories you hear that some of them came from rural areas and as far as the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal to find work, some lost their jobs and homes and landed on the streets and a few are from neighbouring states like Zimbabwe. Though coming from various places they all have one thing in common, and that is looking for a better life for them. They also left their homes in search for employment and housing as in their areas these things are very scarce or non-existent.

4.7.3 Reflection on the Soup Kitchen Case Studies

In reflecting on the case studies the author came to a number of reasons why these people are coming to the soup kitchen. They see the soup kitchens as an opportunity to get a meal even if it is for a day and in this they are driven by their circumstances. These circumstances include a lack of housing, water, electricity and sanitation, and also a lack of employment.

This lack of employment caused people to live in poverty which is the largest problem facing South Africa to day. Millions of South Africans, like the people of Slovo Park live in very unsatisfactory conditions. It can be stated that after nearly 20 years of democracy in South Africa, the country has yet to achieve economic freedom. Thus is a growing level of impatience as can be seen in the wide-spread

service delivery protests and violent strikes particularly at the gold and platinum mines.

Though we must acknowledge that great strides has been made by the government with regards to poverty alleviation, the majority of South African are still unemployed or else the breadwinner of the family had lose his job as in the case of Sibongile and her family. In this situation there is no one to provide for the family with their basic needs of life and they had to rely on soup kitchens.

This situation is the breeding ground for a tragic cycle that increases the rate of poverty as in many cases there is no money to send children to school and it is a known fact that if you are uneducated you have not a good chance of getting a well-paid job that can get you out of this net of poverty. This is particularly evident in the case of Mary who finished her matric but a lack of money prevented her from pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher. It is therefore not surprising that in such circumstances many young people turn to a life of crime because they see this as the only way to put food on the table.

According to the findings of the latest Development Indicators Report that was released by the South African Parliament, “South Africa has being identified as one of the most unequal countries in the world.”⁸ It is a known fact that poverty and the transformation of the South African economy is one of the biggest challenges facing the government today. On the reply of report, the Minister in the Presidency, Collins Chabane, had the following to say; “While the poverty indicators show slight

⁸ <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/south-africas-biggest-challenges> 20 January 2014.

improvement over time, just more than half of South Africans still live below the poverty line of R577 and also 13.3% live in inordinate poverty.”⁹

The lack of ability of the government to assist its citizens with the means to break through this vicious cycle of poverty made organisations like churches and NGO’s to establish soup kitchens in order to deal with the immediate need for food and shelter. Many of these organisations also put up overnight shelters for homeless people to stay overnight in a comfortable and warm bed.

The author’s believe is that these are merely hand outs in an ongoing fight against poverty and there need to be a more sustainable approach where people would find employment that sustain them and break this cycle of poverty. Unless the government is playing their part in this ongoing fight, it will remain a loss cause and the people will continue to suffer.

4.8 Methodology Applied

In Chapter two of this work the author indicated that he will be using the methodology of Gerkin, i.e. his shepherding model in dealing with the people of Slovo Park. In this section the author will now, by using Gerkin’s shepherding model show how the people of Slovo Park can be care for. The church of Christ the King through its soup kitchen ministry assumed the role of pastoral care giver, walking

⁹ <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/south-africas-biggest-challenges> 20 January 2014.

with the people of Slovo Park assuming the role of the shepherd. According to Charles Gerkin,

“This theory is most clearly captured in the imagery of Psalm 23, here God is depicted as the good shepherd who leads the people in the paths of righteousness, restores their soul, and walks with them even among their enemies and the shadows of death.” (1997:27).

This clearly shows what the church’s role should be in this situation, to lead the people, care for them through listening and protect them against the ruthlessness of modern day society.

In listening to the stories of the people of Slovo Park it is very obvious for the author that these people is in need for God’s love and compassion to be revealed to them in a tangible way. In making this love and compassion of God to the people real is to exercise a ministry of presence by listening to the people. The author is of the belief that a caring ministry without being actively listening to the people cannot help people in need. By listening to them the care giver shows that he/she is interested in the person and his/her situation.

The current set-up with the soup kitchen does not allow this kind of ministry and ways should be devised to allow the people to have a time of sharing and listening. This is in line with the teaching and ministry of Jesus as Schnapp points out that

“Jesus and the writers of the New Testament books refer numerous times to hearing and listening, implying that listening is an important part of one’s functioning as a Christian” (Schnapp :244).

These processes mentioned above, shepherding and listening will allow the last process of deconstructing to happen. This is to change the views and stereotypes that the people of Slovo Park hold to concerning their situation. Nick Pollard in his book *Positive Deconstruction* advocated this methodological model to change the attitudes and perceptions of people especially with regard to their situation.

Many people in situations of poverty believe that it is a curse or God will for them and this kind of perception is instilled in them by certain churches who advocated a pie in the sky type of ministry. They also blame the government and everyone else to blame for their situation and do not see the possibilities of escaping from the hold that poverty has on them. They also became too dependent on the ministry of the soup kitchen as a means of survival and they need some reconstruction in order to become independent from it.

Preliminary Conclusion

These case studies just highlighted the great need that there exist amongst the people of South Africa as the author believes that they represent the current status quo that prevail in South Africa. The need for proper housing, employment, health and education are some of the important basic human needs and if the government fails to provide these basic needs to his people, the government fails dismally. In the

next chapter the author will provide some ideas of sustainable projects that can assist in this fight against poverty and homelessness.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHURCH AND POVERTY

As Christians we confess our faith in God who creates humanity in the Divine image, in Jesus Christ who has reconciled all people and opened to us a future of fellowship, peace and well-being, and the Spirit who calls us to act in

correspondence with this vision as disciples of Christ in the church, and as fully human citizens in the world. In contrast to this holistic vision for human life, poverty and inequality serves to frustrate the full flowering of human potential, fragment human community, produce strife and distress and render fragile our hope for the future. Therefore it is the ever-present task of Christians to confront and eradicate poverty, in obedience to the gospel which they confess.¹⁰

In this chapter the author will be dealing with how the church responded and is still responding to the poor in their midst. In the previous chapters it was established that poverty is a real issue and churches responds in different ways to the issue. The church is the Body of Christ, the manifestation of God here on earth and in this way the church should reveal God's intentions to all humankind. Its role is to care for those in need, thus what the church is doing and how it responds to the various needs in the world can be perceived as how God wants and will respond to these needs.

When Jesus started his earthly ministry according to the Gospel of Mark with the statement: "The time has come the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15). We see here God's intention for the world is very clear, to establish his kingdom where his subjects can live in peace and abundance. In order for God to bring about this kingdom he had his only Son to suffer and die on the cross.

¹⁰ <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/ricsa/projects/publicli/poverty/theodoc.htm>: retrieved 15 June 2014

This was a way for God to bring change into this world of sin and suffering. Samuel and Sugden make the following statement about suffering, saying, “Indeed, nothing indicates more clearly the imperfection and corruption of human society than the suffering we experience as its members and the persecution we endure as the church” (Samuel and Sugden 1987:146).

They continued by saying that the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus Christ

“Impels Christians to address the injustices caused by humanity and, as far as possible, to remove the sicknesses of the sick and the poverty of the poor.”
(1987:147).

In the light of this statement, the question is, how did we miss this ideal of the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus in order to alleviate the suffering around us, especially with regard to the poor?

The author hope to answer this question by examining at the response of the church to the need of the poor and in particular in response to the ideal as set out in the kingdom proclamation of Jesus Christ. In order for us to come to a proper conclusion about the church’s response to the needs around her, we also need to examine at the role of the state in all of this as the author is of the believe that there must be a good partnership and working relationship between the church and government in order to address these issues.

5.1 Stating the Background

To address the issue one needs to connect South Africa's new democracy which promises a new life to all her citizens as is the provisions made in the new Constitution. Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights of the Republic of South Africa¹¹, states the following in terms of the rights of its citizens:

1. *This Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.*

2. *The state must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.*

3. *The rights in the Bill of Rights are subject to the limitations contained or referred to in section 36, or elsewhere in the Bill.*

The basic aim of governments all over the world is to protect their citizens against the onslaught of hostile threats (wars, etc.), and also to ensure that even the poorest among them have access to basic services like education, basic health care, sanitation and safe drinking water. This aim is endorsed in the Bill of Rights of RSA as quoted above.

These services are provided by various state departments and institutions, and many of them outsourced these services to external development agencies as channels to benefit the poor. The author is of the view that the state departments with their external partners had failed dismally in their aim to provide the many poor people with the basic services that they so desperately needed.

¹¹ Chapter Two of the Bill of Rights which includes the 16th Amendment of the Constitution of the RSA: from <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons2.htm#10>. 12 Sept 2013

The reason for this failure is that poor people perceived these institutions as inaccessible, ineffective and disempowering. While there are pockets of excellent service delivery, the regular themes running through reports assessing levels of poverty are distrust, corruption, humiliation, intimidation, and helplessness and often anger. But it needs to be said that there are some departments and external partners that are sincerely dedicated to the humanitarian course of uplifting the poor. It is the author's belief that the higher our view of the poor people's worth, the more success we shall have in serving them.

We must admit that the government and many organizations have done and are still doing a lot more in trying to alleviate poverty among the poor through projects that provide skills. But the major problem has to do with the value we hold as individuals and as a society. It is also true that many human beings do not know how to share sacrificially because of greed and selfishness leading to corruption and dishonesty. Christians thus, must operate on a different set of values and ethics. They must view poverty and human suffering around us, not only as a socio-economic challenge but a God-given opportunity and obligation to serve the poor.

Words like 'poverty alleviation' and 'poverty eradication' have been used in defining programs and policy objectives on behalf of the poor. But God did not intend that poverty be completely eradicated or eliminated from among His people, (cf. Matt 26:11, Mark 14:7 and John 12:8). God, through our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us that we should learn to lovingly and sacrificially share our wealth with those less

fortunate among us as seen in Jesus' confrontation with the Rich Young man in Luke 19:16-26.

This rich man had the opportunity to share sacrificially with the less fortunate, but sadly he missed that opportunity. Having said this though, we must realize that the church is called to proclaim the Gospel of Christ in word and deed and "throughout history displayed active concern for the needs around them and continue to serve the needy" (Samuel and Sugden 1987:263). The church is therefore called to reach out to the needy in word and deed and her members to share generously the wealth and resources entrusted to them, unlike the Rich Young Man referred to earlier.

It must also be stated that human beings does not know how to share sacrificially because of greed and selfishness that mostly leading to corruption and dishonesty. Within the vacuum of poor service delivery to the poor, the church stepped in to fill this gap with projects of their own.

Many of these projects are worthwhile upliftment projects, but there are also those who believe that donating money and other resources to development organizations without getting directly involved themselves, is sufficient. Another phenomenon of the church's response to poverty is the running of soup-kitchens, and in this chapter the author shall endeavour to examine this and other responses of the church in her quest to address the plight of the poor.

In order for us to understand the different responses of the churches to poverty, the author believe that it is imperative for this study to understand the driving force behind people offering their time and money in these ministries.

The author's point of departure, therefore, will be to evaluate the Biblical teaching that humans beings are created in the image of God, what it means and the teaching of Jesus about caring for the poor, because it is precisely these teachings that undergird their caring ministry.

5.2 The God of the Poor

In a strict sense, God loves without any preference or discrimination. To state this statement otherwise would be to say that God cares for and loves all equally; God loves each individual with a very particular love, an infinite love that is impossible to quantify. This we know because according to Scripture we were all created in the image of God (Gen 1:27-29).

Thus no one should feel him or herself as preferred over another or discriminated against either positively or negatively. It is therefore impossible to speak seriously about preferential love on the part of God toward certain persons. The dignity of the human person and the impartiality of God demand that we affirm anew God's infinite love toward all people. Anything else is simply an inadequate form of speech that is too human.

God is not partial and has no favourites and therefore God is not motivated by race or colour or gender or culture. God loves all creatures with an incomparable and unqualified love. In God there can be no preferences or discrimination. Having said this though there is an area where God is radically and inflexibly partial: the area of justice. God places himself on the side of justice and against injustice, with no compromises or preferences, certainly not neutral: God is against injustice and takes the side of those treated unjustly, that is, the victims of injustice.

God does not make nor can he make a preferential option for justice: rather God opts for justice by placing himself in a radical position against injustice and totally assuming the cause of the victims of injustice. This option of God for justice is not rooted in his gratuitousness, nor is it some kind of divine decision which could have been determined by outside forces.

God's option for justice is rooted in his very being: God cannot exist in any other way and indeed without this option God would contradict and deny his very being. By His very nature God is Justice and when he exercises this option it is not gratuitous but rather inevitable, necessary and rooted in the very being of God which is partial and exclusive. To understand this it is important to examine the concept of the image of God that underwrites this basis of God caring about the justice of his people, especially the poor.

5.2.1 The image of God

Christian people have a sounder basis and reason for serving their fellow human beings because we are all a result of a Divine creation. According to the creation story in the Book of Genesis, human beings are godlike beings made in God's likeness, and possessing unique capacities which distinguish them from the animal creation (Gen 1, 2). George Carey supports this by saying that,

“This, according to Genesis, is the difference between man (human beings) and other creatures. In the command ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’ (Gen. 1:26), we have described the beginning of a new creative act and a wholly different relationship between creator and creature. Man alone is made in God’s image.” (1977:30)

Terry A. Veling confirms this by saying that “Human originality is found in divine resemblance. You are holy and like no other because you are in the image of God who is holy and like no other.” (2005:111) But we also see that the image of God being defiled by the fall of human beings (Adam and Eve) when they sinned against their Creator and defaced the divine image, but despite all this, the image of God has not been destroyed (Gen.9:6, James 3:9).

In the light of this, and regardless of the state of human beings, God will always have a grave concern for those he created in his likeness and image. This concern is especially directed towards the poor and the outcasts as we can gather when we read the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. This is confirmed by Shelp and Sunderland who argues that “God’s concern for the outcasts and the poor depicted in the Jewish scripture is echoed in the New Testament, especially the Synoptic

Gospels (Shelp and Sunderland 1987:82). Thus it is imperative on us as being created in his image to care for the less fortunate in our midst as they are also created in the same image, though one can say they lost that image because of their circumstances.

Many biblical scholars has commented on this concern of God, referring to it as his preference towards the poor, the needy, the sick and the outcasts as manifested in his Son, Jesus Christ. These are the people that did not fit into the “norms of worth and status” of contemporary Judaism (Shelp and Sunderland 1987:82). Through his earthly ministry Jesus therefore challenged this belief and replaced it with the belief “that all people are valued by God and that God’s will for relationships excludes no one” (1987:82). Thus, the author is of the belief that Jesus, through his preference in serving the poor during his earthly ministry, tried to restore that fallen image to its original glory.

5.2.2 Jesus and the Poor

Jesus’ purpose of coming to earth was to teach us that we must “recognized the worth and importance of people normally considered least important in society (Luke 9:46-48) (Shelp and Sunderland 1987:83). Richard A. Horsley puts Jesus’ coming to earth in the context of his Kingdom of God utterances saying that,

“The divine activity of the Kingdom of God is focused on the needs and desires of people. In fact Jesus’ preaching generally, and particularly his announcement of the Kingdom of God, rarely calls attention explicitly on God,

but concentrates on the implication of the presence of the kingdom for people's lives and on how people must respond.” (Horsley in N.K. Gottwald 1993:410)

It is therefore very clear that Jesus' coming to earth was a direct involvement in the lives of God's people and their relationship with one another. With this approach which came directly into conflict with the status quo, Jesus set new standards for ethical and moral behavior. Jesus teachings therefore was now a radical departure from that which was advocated by the Jewish religious leaders of the day because he taught that those normally regarded as the expendables, like children, women, sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, the poor and the sick were as much important than the wealthy.

According to Shelp and Sunderland, Jesus' message and example was very clear “that it is God's will and humanity's responsibility to find ways to enable these outcasts to participate fully in the ongoing life of the community” (Shelp and Sunderland 1987:83). This is just an endorsement that we need to follow in the example of Jesus Christ to care for the outcasts and the marginalized in our society.

Generally speaking, Luke, in his Gospel has a certain bias towards the poor and one may wonder why, especially in the light that he was a medical doctor. At the time of Jesus, there existed a large gulf between the rich and the poor, whereby the rich despised the poor and look upon them and hardened their hearts to their plight.

Though Luke expresses a definite concern for all people in general – the poor, the rich, the outcast and the underprivileged -- yet when he is confronted with the social practices that was in opposition to his vision of healthy relationships, e.g., the negligence and oppression of the poor by the rich, he does not remain passive but sternly addresses the rich to the evil that they cause in society and asks them to share their wealth and be just to the poor. In showing extraordinary sympathy to the poor, Jesus makes the rich feel miserable.

Right at the beginning of the Gospel, in the Magnificat (The Song of Mary), Luke make no secret about his preference of the poor¹² in favour of the rich (1:46-55). This sets the pattern that run right through his Gospel as can be seen in Jesus' pronouncements of Blessings and Woes (6:24-26) and then further intensified in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus through the reversals of fortunes (16:19-31). They are shown to be too attached to their riches which in turn become an obstacle to obtain the Kingdom (8:14; 12:13-21).

The extraordinary difficulty of their entering the Kingdom is made explicit in the case of the rich ruler where Jesus condemns him by saying: "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God" (18:24-25). These examples set the tone for the Church's ministry towards the poor and in this the Church employs various methods like soup kitchens in order to address this issue. It is one way though in which caring to the poor occurs. In the next section the author will

¹² The term "*preferential option of the poor*" was first introduced by the Latin American Liberation Theologian Gustavo Gutierrez in his book "*A Theology of Liberation*".

critically evaluate these poverty alleviations responses and projects that churches employ in order to adhere to Jesus call for the poor.

5.2.3 Preferential option of the Poor

In the previous section the author introduced the theological principle, preferential option of the poor, a term which was first articulated by the Latin American Liberation Theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez in his book, *A Theology of Liberation* (1971:291). Gutierrez reminds us in this book that “Poverty is a central theme both in the Old and the New Testaments” and this sets the agenda for our own need to side with the poor and oppressed everywhere in their struggle for justice (Gutierrez 1971:291).

It seemed that this new focus on the plight of the poor by Gutierrez charted a whole new course for the church, and not just for Latin America, the context from which he was writing. Gutierrez examined our concept of God and the Scriptures within the Latin American reality of extreme poverty and systemic injustice, saying that poverty is both a scandalous condition and a spiritual childhood (Gutierrez 1971:291).

That led to a renewed realization of Christ's presence among the poor and oppressed, especially in their struggle to end poverty and oppression. He also challenges the church to take the sides of the poor and oppressed. In other words we are called to care for the souls of those who are isolated and rejected within the community.

Over the years the church as representative of Christ here on earth has taken up this fight for justice on behalf of the poor in order to end poverty and oppression. This makes Charles Villa-Vicencio to say the following about this role of the Church in a situation of poverty and injustice:

“For this to happen the church is required not only to be in solidarity with the poor in the sense of making the struggle of the poor the struggle of the church, but to be enlightened by the poor and to allow itself to be taught and evangelized by them.” (1988:196).

Villa-Vicencio is highlighting an issue that was and still is a huge debate within the Christian Church, especially in the South African context, i.e. to speak on behalf of the poor as if they cannot speak for themselves and teach the church something. According to Villa-Vicencio, Gutierrez hit the hammer on the nail when he says the following in this regard:

“In recent years it has seemed more and more clear to many Christians that, if the church wishes to be faithful to the God of Jesus Christ, it must become aware of itself from underneath, from among the poor of this world, the exploited classes, despised ethnic groups, and the marginalised cultures. It must descend into the hell of this world, into communion with the misery, injustices, struggles, and hopes of the wretched of the earth---for “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” At bottom of it is a matter of living, as church, what the majority of its own members live every day. To be born, to be reborn, as church, from below, from

among them, today means to die, in a concrete history of oppression and complicity. In this ecclesiological approach, which takes up one of the central themes of the Bible, Christ is seen as the Poor One, identified with the oppressed and plundered of the earth.” (cf. Gutierrez 1983 see Villa-Vicencio 1988:197)

Villa-Vicencio concurred with Gutierrez by saying that the church, “called to be the presence of Christ in successive generations, the ministry of the church must be in continuity with the life and mission of Jesus. The command that the church be in continuity with the ministry of Jesus to the poor and the oppressed is, ipso facto, a judgment on the wealth and influence of the institutional church. It requires such a church to undergo a fundamental conversion, recovering its social origins.” (1988:198).

The author believes though that the church has lost its primary focus in this regard, i.e. being actively involved in alleviating the plight of the poor because there is too much debate between the spiritual versus the material needs of the poor. It is important to note that some churches are busy working with the poor to connect their soul to God, so that they may enter heaven. This is important but we should not forget to minister to the injustices they are experiencing in the world.

Albert Nolan observed the following in this regard with which the author agrees:

“The option for the poor is not a choice about the recipients of the gospel message, to whom we must preach the gospel; it is a matter of what gospel we preach to anyone at all. It is concerned with the content of the gospel message itself. The gospel may be good news for the poor and bad news for the rich but it is a message for both the poor and the rich.”
(cf. Nolan see Villa-Vicencio 1988:216)

Another Black Theologian, James H Cone supports this by saying that “Jesus had shown just such concern for the liberation of the poor during his earthly ministry.” (Cone 1985:32) He continued by saying that “The evidence was his teachings about God’s partiality toward poor, his healing the sick and lame, and especially his prophetic claim that God “has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18)” (Cone 1985:32).

This shows clearly and confirmed the notion that Jesus was and is still siding with the plight of the poor and that the Church today must continue with this mission if the Church wants to be true to her calling here on earth. In the next paragraph the author will suggest ways employed by the Church in her mission to the poor.

5.3 The Church and her mission to the poor

In the previous section the author shared an argument for the church’s involvement and mission to the poor and in this section we will be looking at specific responses of the church to the poor in her midst. It is now twenty years into the new free and

democratic South Africa and we are still sitting with the legacy of the apartheid system, i.e. problems on the political, economic and social spheres (2002:419). For the new democratic government their loyalties are divided between governing and consolidating this fragile new democracy, exercise authority and to keep the millions of expectant people and their demands happy. This is not an easy scenario or option, and this makes Terreblanche to believe that:

“The viability of the new democracy is threatened by bureaucratic incapacity, the inability of the state to make meaningful progress in de-racializing the economic system, and its failure to alleviate the widespread poverty and social deprivation inherited from apartheid.” (2002:419)

The current scenario in the post-apartheid, new democratic South Africa can be compared with that of the Israelite people after the Exodus and there is a lot of learning to be made concerning today's situation. Ulrich Duchrow sketch the post-exodus situation of the Israelites by saying that many different groups settled in the Promised Land, of which many of them freed themselves from slavery, forced labour and the hardships of their enslavement (Duchrow 1995:144).

These marginalized groups joined up with the Moses group that came from Egypt and these “impoverished nomads and bands of economic drop-outs’ survived under a common identity as the Hebrew people (Duchrow 1995:144). It is then when they arrived at Mount Sinai, the mountain of God that the Moses group from Egypt, who by now was joined by other groupings, was united by Yahweh in a covenant to be the people of Yahweh, and he will be their God as described in Exodus 19ff.

Duchrow's suggestion here is that the Hebrew people, in their efforts to establish themselves as a nation, started with their relationship with Yahweh. It is therefore an important characteristic in the relationship between Yahweh and the Hebrews that as long as they live up to the covenant with Yahweh, they experience prosperity, fortune and happiness, but as soon as the covenant was broken by the Hebrews, they were in for hardships. Yahweh constantly reminded them about their part to be played in this covenant relationship through the prophecies of the different prophets.

With the dawn of the new democratic South Africa, the so-called struggle churches, for whatever reasons, withdraw themselves from the public sphere. One can see this withdrawal from the churches as a way to escape from the church's social responsibilities. Maybe the church's decided that their own issues like financial survival, attending to their members social needs, structural renewal and re-orientation to the new democracy were more important as to attend to the needs of the wider community.

Was this the correct approach from the churches by withdrawing and leave it to the government to meet the needs of the people? I think that the churches should continue to be involved in engaging with the government concerning the social issues because they must adhere to their ethics of responsibility. Can the churches really do something in addressing this new Kairos?

The above discussion clearly shows that something desperate needs to be done about the current situation regarding poverty. The church and state needs to be

close partners in every effort of eradicating poverty from our society. It is a known fact that the churches have the infrastructure to coordinate and reach the masses with poverty alleviation projects. The churches can apply the same determined methods used during the struggle to address this issue. Especially Christians and the Christian churches must become more involved with imaginative action, and the church need to start praying for imagination, especially creative imagination, to help them dealing with the problem with poverty.

In looking at the concept of imaginative action it seemed that the Christian community must stop talking and become fully involve in the process of upliftment. New and fresh ideas of how to cope with the issue of poverty had to be forthcoming. Upliftment programmes in skill development, establishing employment projects and self-help schemes must be the order of the day. Though quite numerous attempts on self-help projects was started over the years, most of them failed dismally because they did not enable the people to become self-reliant.

The main problem was that they set programs of poverty alleviation for the poor, and not engaged with them. The Chinese proverb, teach a person to fish rather than giving hand outs must be the basis of these self-help projects. The emphasis must therefore be on equipping the individual to eventually see to his/her and the dependant needs.

It must be stated that the church's response to poverty included a variety of activities and projects (Taylor 2003:49). According to Taylor case studies categorized the variety of activities and projects "as charitable, service-providing, developmental and

advocacy.” (Taylor 2003:49). He continued by describing the charitable activities as “hand-outs of food, clothing and money; visiting and pastoral care; provision of safety nets and, on a large scale, disaster and emergency relief.” (Taylor 2003:49).

Many of today’s churches can identify with some of these charitable activities like hand-outs of food, clothing, giving of money, and pastoral care and visiting as these are some of the core functions they found themselves in. This is precisely what is happening in the author’s situation. The church is involved in a very good caring ministry like food parcels to the poor and aged, the monthly soup kitchen and also an annual Christmas party for the church and the aged.

While these initiatives are very good and honourable it remains hand-outs to people that reinforces the dependency syndrome and also a sense of entitlement amongst the recipients. The main problem is that the church has created this ministry for themselves, and have decided this about project without involving the poor people. As a result, it is their project, projected for the poor but not owned by the poor for whom the project was created in the first place.

In describing the role of the Church, Albert Nolan says the following:

“The Church is defined and constituted by the gospel. Put it simply, the role of the Church is to preach the gospel. This involves considerably more than preaching sermons from the pulpit on Sunday.” (1988:209).

Nolan is right in his thesis that the role of the Church is to preach the gospel, but what does that preaching entail. Is it only preaching from the pulpit or is it also being actively involved in the plight of her members? Nolan gives the answer to these questions when he says that “the Church preaches the gospel by its witness.

The witness of the Church is its activity of practising what it preaches (Nolan 1988:209). He continues by saying that the Church uses outreach activities such a feeding schemes, caring in hospitals and school projects as ways of witnessing to Christ and in the process serving the plight of the poor (Nolan 1988:210). The reader needs to note the good intension of the project for the poor, but planning is done by those who are not in need.

This brings the author to the problem of today where many Churches continued with this outreach projects in serving the needs of the poor, especially with Soup Kitchens as it happens in the author’s parish. The question that comes to mind and was raised in the Problem Statement of this work is whether soup kitchens is the best way in addressing the needs of the poor and what effects does this kind of ministry has on the poor and those doing the ministry. To answer this, the author will now critically look at soup kitchens in general and its effects on the poor.

5.4 The soup kitchen ministry

In this section the author will now critically look at the soup kitchen ministry in relation to what was experienced during the interviews. It was very evident through

the interviews that the soup kitchen is fulfilling a vital ministry of providing in a definite need among the people. The common response to the question of the reason for them coming to the soup kitchen was unemployment, and a lack of resources to provide in their own needs.

There was also a general feeling of shame and guilt as some of them do not really want to be in the soup kitchen queue but in order to survive, they had to. As previously indicated in this work the shepherding methodology of Gerkin will be of vital importance here. In order to understand the situation of the poor people, the church people need to come along them to listen, and walk a path with them. In this situation it is essential not to judge as this will cause more harm than good.

Nick Pollard's Positive Deconstruction will also help as to let these people understand that this situation is not the only way out for them and that they need to accept it as they only way. The next section will deal with defining what a soup kitchen is and also look at the effects of this ministry on the poor with special reference to the dependency that it creates in the poor people.

5.4.1 A definition

A soup kitchen can be described as an “establishment which offers meals to the needy for free or at very low cost.”¹³ These soup kitchens normally caters for the

¹³ Definition obtained from: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-soup-kitchen.htm> retrieved 16 September 2013.

poor and needy, the homeless and less fortunate in society in communities all over the world. It can rightly be described a world-wide phenomenon. People that make use of a soup kitchen do not need any other requirement than been poor or homeless and the meals that are provided without question to the receiver.

While communities have been embarking on various methods to minister to the poor, “the first soup kitchens in the modern sense may have emerged in the late 18th century. By the late 19th century they were to be found in several US and European cities. In the United States and elsewhere, they became more prominent in the 20th century during the Great depression.”¹⁴ Religious communities like Churches were at the forefront in providing food in the form of soup and bread to the hungry. This concept spread rapidly as the need of people became more and more desperate in the modern world.

A soup kitchen is mainly run and staffed by a group of volunteers of a certain denomination or a community based charity organisation that cook the food, serve it, and clean up the dishes after meals. In the more organised soup kitchen the help of the patrons are enlisted to assist with the preparation of the food, serving and clean up. The soup kitchen also depends heavily on local support from the Church members and businesses for donations or low prices for food.

In many instances particularly the businesses recognized this charitable role of the soup kitchen and they assist with generous donations which in a sense can be seen as contributing to the dependency of people on hand-outs. This process is one way control it does not involve those who seek help. In other words, all is planned for

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soup_kitchen retrieved 18 September 2013.

them, note not with them. In short, care givers know what the poor need. The question to ask is, would the Lord have treated the poor the same? The author is not surprised that the result causes dependent personal disorder.

5.4.2 Pastoral ministry and care to the Poor: Survival, Re-invention and Resilience

There is a school of thought that pastoral care is non-existent within the poor communities, especially with regard to the church. But the opposite is true that there is a history of pastoral care in the poor communities. It can be stated here that any ministry of the church that has as its end the tender care of persons in crisis is pastoral care. Pastoral care exists when the hungry are fed, when the naked are clothed, when the sick are healed, when the prisoners are visited. Therefore, it can be concluded that pastoral care has always existed especially in the black church because the needs of persons are ministered to by others all the time (Wimberly 1979:17-18).

Wimberly's is writing from the African American context and therefore his assessment and understanding of pastoral care within this context is of great value for the situation of poor people within the poor black communities of South Africa in general. The aim of this section is indeed to show that pastoral care, and in particular congregational care as from the viewpoint of the Christ the King Church community is part and parcel of their existence of people of faith, and this is the driving force of their ministry of care.

This is based on the biblical foundation revealed through the ministry Jesus as recorded by Matthew 25:31-46. Wimberly supported this and also subscribes to a broader understanding of pastoral care “as the bringing to bear upon persons and families in crisis the total caring resources of the church”. (Wimberly 1979:19)

Wimberly is absolute correct in his assessment that it is about “the total caring resources of the church”, not only about the pastor’s role in carrying out the four traditional functions of pastoral care, i.e. healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. This is important to understand that though the priest’s/pastor’s role is that of shepherding, it involves these for elements of healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling, but this is not exclusively his/her responsibility as the faith community in general must bear this ministry also.

This is important for the situation that poor people find themselves in because many congregations or parishes have been without a full-time pastor for longer or shorter periods, but have been able to sustain the life and ministries of that particular faith community. Herein therefore lies the role of members to organise themselves and take initiative, and this was the reason for the people of Christ the King to start the soup kitchen. Unfortunately this honourable pastoral care method has led to an attitude of dependency, an aspect that the author will deal with in the next section.

5.4.3 Dependent personality disorder

Dependent personality disorder can be described as “a personality disorder that is characterized by a pervasive psychological dependence on other people. This

personality disorder is a long-term (chronic) condition in which people depend on others to meet their emotional and physical needs, with only a minority achieving normal levels of independence.”¹⁵

This definition summarize precisely the author’s problem with soup kitchens in that it creates an environment of dependence on the recipients rather than fostering a culture of independence. This can be seen by the regular faces one observed in the soup kitchen line. One of the biggest problems and effects of the soup kitchen ministry is therefore the dependent personality disorder that it creates in people that come to be fed.

In conversation with some of these individuals they see themselves not in any position to take care of themselves and believe to be helpless. They also see them at a place where they are unable to cope on their own and thus turning to others to help them. These individuals will decline to be ambitious and believe that they lack abilities, virtues and attractiveness. Beitz and Bornstein confirms this in their research by saying that,

“Dependent personality disorder (PDP) is a personality disorder wherein the individual exhibits longstanding, inflexible, excessive dependency, which leads to difficulties in social, sexual, and occupational functioning.”
(2006:230).

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependent_personality_disorder retrieved 22 September 2013.

The above is true as this ministry creates people who will attend in order to be fed. For these people the solution of this helplessness is to find capable people who will be nurturing and supportive toward those of them suffering from Dependent Personality Disorder.

It can also be stated that within these protective relationships, individuals with DPD will be finding themselves and feel loved and belonged. They will deny their individuality and subordinate their desires to those significant others who provide for them. They internalize the beliefs and values of these helpers and even imagine themselves to be one with or a part of something more powerful and they imagine themselves to be supporting others.

By seeing themselves as protected by the power of others, they do not have to feel the anxiety attached to their own helplessness. It is into such a situation and towards these kind of people suffering from dependent personality disorder that the soup kitchens stepped into to provide a valuable service, but not knowing that they are enhancing a sickness that many of those coming to, suffers from.

Preliminary Conclusion

In this section the author dealt with the response of the Church to the situation of the poor in her midst. It is clear from this research that both the poor coming to the soup kitchen and the ladies serving them are created in the image of God and through this service they are trying to uphold it. It is also clear that the Church has a mandate to

take care of the poor as can be seen in Jesus preferential option for the poor during his earthly ministry.

But in exercising this ministry the Church need to be careful not making the poor that they want to help too dependent on hand-outs but rather than making them with projects that leads to sustainability and building up their self-worth. In this it is vital important for the poor to have a say in what these projects need be, how they will be organised and the outcomes of it. In the next chapter the author will now be dealing with findings from the interviews and this study in general and offer some recommendations as a way of providing more sustainable care to the poor people.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to give the reader an overview of the findings of this study and also to present some recommendations for implementation by the church community and wider society. The research project had explored the reasons for establishing soup kitchen by the church and or faith base communities and its effects on those coming to be helped by it. The author's presupposition was that soup kitchen developed a dependency syndrome on the people and that there are other ways to deal with poor people. The author therefore hoped that the methodology used supported his findings and therefore the recommendations.

It is a known fact that poverty, food prices and hunger are closely linked to each other, that poverty causes hunger and that not every person that is poor is hungry, but that all hungry people are poor. Studies have shown that lack of general education leads to unemployment in an already economically strained community, and this is perpetuating a cycle of poverty and hunger.

Recognizing the urgency of this issue, world leaders came together in 2000 at the United Nations and commit themselves to a framework of eight goals called the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that the first three and the seventh MDG's is directly related to the eradication of poverty. These four goals are: *Eradicate extreme poverty; Achieve universal primary*

¹⁶ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> retrieved 23 January 2014.

*education; Promote gender equality and women empowerment; and Ensure environmental sustainability.*¹⁷

6.1 Findings of the research

During the research the author made the following findings:

- Unemployment plays a huge role in people coming to the soup kitchen.
- The Soup Kitchen started off in order to address a specific need, but escalated into a scheme that undermines people's independence.
- There is a lack of skills amongst the poor that prevents them getting employed.
- The systematic and structural poverty played a role in making people dependent on hand outs.
- There is an attitude of entitlement amongst a certain sector of the people thinking that it is their right to receive these hand outs.
- Some of the people genuinely want to improve their lifestyle but the opportunities are far and few between.
- There is also a strong feeling of guilt and shame amongst some that needs to be address in order to totally uplift them from this vicious cycle of poverty.

¹⁷ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> retrieved 1 September 2014

From these findings it is clear that a holistic approach needs to be taken in addressing the root causes poverty. It is important to introduce capacity building programmes of women and men to move beyond poverty, training them in the skills, methods, knowledge and leadership needed to take self-reliant actions so that they can meet their own basic needs, improve their communities and build better futures for themselves and their children.

During this study it became clear that a holistic, creative and different approach in addressing poverty is desperately needed if the dependency syndrome that soup kitchens have on people are to be broken. In this holistic, creative and different approach the need of all the different spheres of society must work together if this problem is to be fixed.

It must be noted that over the years there was not a coordinated effort from state and society to address this. Rather each organisation, state and society through churches and Non-government organisations worked in their own little corner to address this only to work against each other in the end to the detriment of the poor people.

In the next section the author will offer some recommendations that hopefully will help in tackling the issue of poverty. These recommendations will hopefully cover the total sphere of life, i.e. education, economic influence, rural communities, the role of government, vulnerable groups like women, children and disabled, and finally looking at the role of the church. Some of these recommendations will not be new, but will offer a fresh look at how the issue of poverty can be tackled.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Poverty eradication programmes: Addressing Education

In order to address the issue of poverty effectively, human resource development, in particular education and skills development will play a significant role in preventing the transmission of poverty from one generation to another. An economy that creates jobs including self-employment opportunities and the ability of a country to improve the educational outcomes, skills and aspirations of children and young people are the most important factors in breaking generational cycles of poverty.

Education and training (skills development) are critical elements in the struggle against poverty. In any democracy, particularly a young democracy like South Africa's it is important that people are educated so that they can play a meaningful role in governance, whether national, provincial or local.

This also opens the doors for individuals to new economic opportunities and business ventures which will hopefully be sustainable and contribute to the overall economic growth of the country. It must be noted that education, training and skills development is a long-term solution to see that a skilled labour force enters the labour market. According to a discussion document by the Government about talking poverty,

“Apartheid left behind a segregated and highly inequitable education system.

Since 1994, major achievements in overcoming this legacy include:

- *The de-racialization of the schooling system, with the consolidation of the 17 different administrations established under apartheid.*
- *Re-allocation of educators between schools to ensure equitable learner: educator ratios for all.*
- *A substantial investment in schools infrastructure, leading to significant improvements in access to water and electricity in particular.*
- *Curriculum revision to eliminate racial bias.*
- *The introduction of feeding schemes, which improve educational output and provide critical nutrition for poor children.*
- *The establishment of a qualifications framework and industry-based skills system aimed at increasing the level of skills development, particularly for workers who were excluded from formal training through apartheid practices.*
- *the establishment of the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (Jipsa) to address skills bottlenecks.”¹⁸*

¹⁸ http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/docs/pcsa/economic/draft_antipoverty1008.pdf retrieved 24 January 2014

Despite the many strides and hard-won gains made in redressing the legacy of apartheid, the quality of education for poor learners, especially in rural areas, continues to be a problem, making it harder for them to obtain decent employment. The document also states that “the inequalities based on race of the previous regime have largely reproduced themselves along class lines.

Moreover, the training system has not led to a qualitative increase in opportunities for lower-level workers or the unemployed.”¹⁹ The result of this is that there are a very impatient people out there who believe that the new democracy did not bring them any changes in their lives.

The issue of school drop-outs also needs to be addressed. Drop-outs are those children of school going age, i.e. between 6 – 16 years that leave the school because of various reasons. But it must be stated that children from poor households are significantly more likely to drop out of school.

These are the people ended up in the soup kitchen queue as they are not employable in a very competitive labour market. One of the projects that could be taken up by the soup kitchen ministry is to attend to the children that come from these families – educate and nurture them so as to help the next generation to get out of the cycle of poverty.

The legacy of apartheid also left behind a huge number of historically black schools in poor communities, who after years of neglect and under-funding continues to struggle to put out quality education. This history left behind a legacy of poor

¹⁹ http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/docs/pcsa/economic/draft_antipoverty1008.pdf retrieved 24 January 2014

education which leads to a struggle to find proper employment. Thus education, training and skills development must address these issues so that poor communities and especially the unemployed can be better skilled to allow them to be competitive in the current economic situation. There must also be a concerted effort to address the economic structure that hinders poor people to get jobs.

6.2.2 Economic Upliftment

Any economy that shows sustainable growth creates employment opportunities that can help in ending the cycle of poverty. Strategies need to be employed for sustainability such as “full-time, secure and a reasonably paid employment; public employment programmes, which support social integration, build social capital and provide income relief; support for sustainable livelihoods – where households combine low or insecure income-generating employment with non-cash production and often grants; and direct state support through grants and free social services and infrastructure.”²⁰ But these grounds must be structured in such a way that they build people up to the level where they can be withdrawn. People should not depend on them for life.

Over the years the majority of the people under apartheid were economically marginalised and this in itself lead to high levels of unemployment especially after independence because lots of whites withdraw funds in order to grow the infrastructure of employment. They also find it difficult to start new and micro

²⁰ http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/docs/pcsa/economic/draft_antipoverty1008.pdf retrieved 24 January 2014

enterprises because they did not have the skills to be competitive in the market and the result is that they only produce for the household.

It is a known fact that the apartheid system deprived the black majority economically by preventing them from self-employment, but instead creating into a cheap labour force which kept them from living from hand to mouth because they were lowly paid. The laws of the country also limited black Africans to other resources that are necessary for the development of them as people. The result was a vicious cycle of sustained poverty and marginalisation of the black masses.

In order to address this Archbishop Njongonkulu, in his charge to the 58th Session of the Synod of the Diocese of Cape Town in 1997 had the following suggestions in addressing the plight of the poor (Ndungane 1997:8ff). He challenged Christian community towards sacrificing a meal a week, so that someone may have a meal a day. The object of this exercise is that the money can then be put into a special fund to be distributed to needy causes or being used for human development programmes.

He also suggested the creation of a “bank for the poor”, which can be started as a local church (Diocese) initiative and hopefully spread to become a national resource (Ndungane 1997:11). The main thrust of the type of financial institution will be that individuals and companies from all walks of life may contribute funds too, so that the needy can make loans from it to build houses and see to other needs. It was also stressed that this kind of initiative must be thoroughly planned and developed with the necessary expertise from the business community.

The above suggestions are all good and workable, but unless there is a total commitment and consciousness-raising from the side of both the poor and the rich alike to better the situation, all efforts to assist will fail dismally. The reason for saying this is that most poor people, while being poor for most of their lives, believed that this is the only way for them to live their lives.

With this in mind also came the moral and ethical decay of the people, which need as an important attention than building houses or provide work. The concept of individualism developed among the poor, as a result they stop caring for each other. Thus the two, addressing the moral standards and providing material needs, must go hand in hand.

Unfortunately the Christian church is also to blame for this situation many people find themselves in because some of them preached, which I will term a doctrine of acceptance, which in effect taught people to accept the situation because it is God's will and He will eventually provide. In this way thousands of people believed in a God that will one day provide and they did nothing in order to help themselves.

I do believe that this were much more damaging on the people than being deprived from a house with electricity, water and food. The economic structures worsen the situation as a result their health was at risk. The author will now look at this important aspect of health care for the poor.

6.2.3 Healthcare

Fundamental to the struggle against and the elimination of poverty is an adequate health care system in order to maintain a good quality lifestyle. This will ensure that people, and especially children will grow up in a healthy environment. It is the responsibility of any government to provide affordable and adequate health care for its citizens and where that is not forthcoming, whole communities can be plunged into a crisis of one sort or the other.

It needs to be acknowledged that great strides in providing health care had been made over the last decade or so. These strides include the desegregation of healthcare that was separated by race; the expansion of primary healthcare, including construction of new clinics; and the rolling out of the HIV and AIDS and STI Strategic Plan that promises decisive action against the pandemic.²¹ These important steps contributed to a more effective healthcare system but more challenges remain.

These challenges include understaffing and a lack of funds in the public healthcare system, especially with regard to poor rural communities. People living in poor households will inevitably make use of public healthcare services with long queues, shortage of medicines, uncaring and at times rude staff. The result is that many of those in need of healthcare are turned away without being seen by the system of health care givers.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic with the resulting secondary sicknesses put more strain on an already overburden healthcare system. Government made provision for very poor

²¹ http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/docs/pcsa/economic/draft_antipoverty1008.pdf retrieved 29 January 2014

households to be exempt from paying for healthcare but they are often not believed by the staff. People who received social grants are often automatically exempt from paying for healthcare but those working with a low income have to pay and this put more strain on a household who is already suffering from many other commitments.

What also contributes to this cycle is that many of these poor people live far away from clinics and hospitals and has to pay for taxi's and busses to get there which further exploit them and make them poor. For those working the possibility of losing their jobs is very real as they had to spend long hours waiting to see a medical practitioner. These are some of the issues that need to be address in order to address the overall problem of poverty and this is another element that needs pastoral care.

6.2.4 The Responsibility of the government

Any strategy aimed at the alleviation of poverty needs the government to take leadership for such a programme. That means there must be a partnership and cooperation between the different government departments responsible for addressing poverty, business sector, organised labour, and other society role players such as non-government organisations and faith-based organisations. Government needs to come up with initiatives that are workable in addressing the issue around poverty.

While many initiatives that the government introduced depend heavily on them running it, it is also clear that the same government do not have the capacity to see

these initiatives through. Thus the government should take the role as facilitating, providing political leadership and outsourcing these programmes to organisations better equipped to deal with it. This is where Gerkin's model of shepherding, especially prophetic ministry could help. The churches role in this regard is therefore very critical.

It needs to be stated that since 1994 the new democratic government did all in power to address the issue of poverty, but the massive legacy left by apartheid in this regard will take years to overcome. These initiatives includes successes with regard to poverty alleviation but what hampers continued eradication programmes are the high level of corruption and fraud with regard to government departments dealing with this issue.

There is a need therefore for a broad-based anti-poverty strategy that includes all spheres of society, i.e. government, business, labour, faith-base and non-government organisation to address these issues of poverty effectively. This strategy must address the root causes of poverty, including the inequality that leads to poverty and a commitment from government in order to give the political leadership in all of this.

The mobilisation of the local communities in which these programmes will be introduced is of highly importance for them to buy-in to it. Unless the local communities takes ownership of their own situation and also have the will to improve their lives any programme, how good and noble it might seemed will not be successful.

6.2.5 Vulnerable Groups in society

It is true to say that there are certain groups in society that are more vulnerable to poverty than others. These groups include single women with children, children, young people, the aged and the disabled. Huge strides have been made by the government in terms of the social grants to these groups but they still continue to live in poverty. Many households depend heavily on the social grant of the elderly living in a particular family as most of the time this is the only source of income. There is a dependency of abled-body unemployed members of a family that needs to be supported by this grant.

Statistics South Africa claimed that of the 2, 6 million children who did not have any of their parents in the household, 83 000 were not attending school. Those who live with their grandparents were more likely to attend school than those who don't live with their grandparents. Among those who live with their grandparents, 1, 7% did not attend school compared to 4, 9% among those who have their grandparents as members of their households.²² This shows a growing number of households headed by grandparents where parents are either working and living away from home or is no more alive.

There is also a growing number of unemployed youth that either cannot find work after matric or left schools early because they have to run households where there are no parents, some because of being orphans i.e. having lost parents due to

²² www.statssa.gov.za retrieved 30 January 2014

HIV/Aids. According to Statistics South Africa in the Metropolitan area of the City of Johannesburg 31.5% of young people from the age of 17 are unemployed.²³

This trend will probably continue with the thousands of matriculants who want to enter the job market as there are no prospects of them going to a tertiary institution for further studies. Statistics South Africa claim that 2.1 children between 7 – 17 years old are not attending school and this adds to the growing number of unemployed youth.

There is thus a desperate need to accommodate these young people with skills development programmes and education in order to make them ready for the labour market. Though there are programmes like learner-ships these are very limited or are excluding many young people as they require a certain level of skills and education. If the proper programmes are designed (with the help of the poor) and implemented there will not be that heavy dependency on the social grants of grandparents or disabled family members. South Africa is creating dependency through these programmes.

6.2.6 Involvement of Private Sector and Civil Society

The struggle against poverty is not only the business of the government but needs the support and input of the private sector (business), and civil society that include NGO's and Faith-based organisations. The level of support and input, and how this will work is up to the private sector to determine but special programmes such as the

²³ www.statssa.gov.za retrieved 30 January 2014

mentoring of small business ventures for young people, volunteer programmes, funding as start-up cash for business ideas and the provision of workshops for skill development.

These projects and initiatives will ensure sustainability and independence where the people can now become self-sufficient and not enhanced the dependency on hand outs like soup kitchens. These programmes may be overseen and facilitated by government as they are in the best position to identify and prioritise areas with the greatest need for poverty alleviation.

It is a known fact that the public sector and civil society do have the necessary intellectual capacity, skills and financial back-up and resources to have a considerable and positive impact of projects for the alleviation of poverty. They also need to act as an encourager for these projects to succeed and continue on an ongoing basis. An important aspect of these programmes should be regular evaluation and feedback sessions to determine whether these are still working properly, where the shortcomings are and what can be done to improve them. This is essential in order to realise a certain level of success of these kinds of programmes.

6.2.7 The role of the Church

At the very heart of the Christian faith is her responsibility to care for the poor and the needy and to seek justice for the oppressed. This responsibility is summed up in the Beatitudes, particularly verse 1 that reads; “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:1-12). This clearly indicates the high

level of solidarity with those who are poor and a deep concern to change the conditions for those living in poverty and working towards equality amongst all God's people.

God set the tone for this concern and care for the poor because when he wanted to implement his plan of salvation he chose a band of slaves in Egypt (Exodus chapter 2). This intervention of God in the lives of those suffering that started in the Book of Exodus with Moses and the Israelites continued throughout the Old Testament witnessing to that concern of God for the poor and the marginalised.

In the New Testament particularly in the ministry of Jesus Christ we see that everyone is equal in the eyes of God, the poor and rich alike. Jesus challenges both groups concerning their lifestyles and this he did with dignity and humility. All human beings are equal before God no matter their social standing in the community. The Apostle Paul continued this principle of inclusivity in Galatians 3 when he says,

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28).

This shows clearly that in God there is no favouritism (Ephesians 6:9). Thus the church here on earth must reflect that heavenly vision of a people gathered from all four corners of the earth awaiting the Lamb of God (Revelation 7; 9). This clearly shows that the role of the church is to accept everyone poor and rich, young and old as equal before God and work towards the dignity of all.

This is the first step in addressing poverty, to restore equality and human dignity, as it is a very complex situation and needs to be tackled holistically. But the church's vocation of a caring ministry for the poor and destitute makes her ideally suited for poverty alleviation. The church must also continue to advocate the biblical values that see all God's people as equal irrespective of their social status. As a redemptive community the church provides that space for individuals to change and be renewed as they are challenged about God's purpose for their lives.

It is not only in this sphere that the church is ideally suited to combat poverty it can also use its infrastructure for this purpose. Most of the churches do have well-equipped halls that is standing empty most of the time, especially over weekends. These premises can be used to house workshops and lectures for upliftment programs and skills development sessions and can be made available free of charge as part of the church's outreach to the community. Once again these programmes must be developed with the poor, so that they own them.

This will not be something new to the church to be involved in matters of teaching and educating as the church has an excellent track record and legacy in caring for the poor and needy in both urban and rural set-up through the many church schools. These schools and centres of education many times double-up as primary health care centres and education that were doing the basic responsibility of the state. It needs to be said that the face of poverty and inequality is being racially stereotyped and the church can play a role to help transform this stereotyping.

The new democratic South African leaders acknowledged this role of the church in addressing the legacy of apartheid when the then President Nelson Mandela said the following:

“As the Churches in South Africa and abroad accompanied us in the struggle for justice and peace, so should they now accompany us in building a just and equitable society? This is not a call for the religious community to accompany government uncritically. Uncritical support would endanger our infant democracy. On the other hand criticism without visible action to help alleviate poverty and suffering can only serve to discredit the message of the Church. Rather, the way forward is in what some theologians have called ‘critical solidarity’ with government in the reconstruction and development of the country. The track record of the religious communities, both before and after the achievement of democracy, makes us confident that in them we do indeed have strategic partners, in the project of empowering our people to use their freedom to work together for a better life.”²⁴

It is important to note that clergy has more audience every week, and should use this opportunity to care for people especially the poor. This just emphasizes the point previously made about the strategic importance of the church in poverty eradication and to bring about equality for all. The Church is constantly in touch with the grassroots, ministering to the poor that gathers Sunday to Sunday in the pews and this opportunity the Church needs to exploit. But the Church cannot do this alone

²⁴ Extract from the text of a speech by President Nelson Mandela on the retirement of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, issued by the Office of the President (23 June 1996); retrieved 2 February 2014
<http://www.polity.org.za/polity/govdocs/speeches/1996/sp0622.html> retrieved 1 February 2014

and need to work in partnership with government, NGO's and the private sector in order to accomplish this.

6.3 The way forward

“Our new constitution embodies and secures our collective vision of a just non-racial, non-sexist, democratic society. Making a reality of that vision is the supreme challenge that faces us all. As long as many of our people still live in utter poverty; as long as children still live under plastic covers; as long as many of our people are still without jobs; no South African should rest and wallow in the joy of freedom. The touchstone of our success in transforming South African society will be the extent to which we correct the imbalances and inequalities created by apartheid. The seriousness of our intent is inscribed in our macroeconomic strategy for growth, employment and redistribution. It is a framework within which all sectors of our society can join hands and, putting long-term interests above short-term considerations achieve our goals for transformation, for reconstruction and development.”²⁵

These words above of the late President Nelson Mandela echoed the commitment of the government to the eradication of poverty and equality for all. This is still the case today as the current government tries to live up to this challenge. It must be said that the post-apartheid's government strategy was to pass a large number of policies and anti-poverty legislation to address this issue. Couple with this was the determined

²⁵ <http://www.polity.org.za/polity/govdocs/speeches/1996/sp0622.html> retrieved 1 February 2014

effort improve social grants and extend it to previously disadvantage groups as one means of addressing poverty.

But let truth be told in a situation with limited economic opportunities that faces poor households, these grants make little or no difference. The reason for saying this is that many members of these poor household are unemployed and they are now depending on these grants for survival that is meant to target children, the aged or disabled. The result is that the value of the grant is so thinly stretched that it reduces its effectiveness on the intended beneficiary.

These grants are there to provide in the immediate need of the beneficiary but it become inadequate because it needs to assist in caring now for a household instead of an individual. Many of these households are located in remote areas far away from employment opportunities and schools for children to provide them with the basic skills required for employment. There is also a lack of interaction between government and these poor communities to let them know of programmes available for poverty alleviation.

In this regard are incentives like free healthcare for mothers with children, the aged and disabled, and also free education for children to a certain age. Another contributing factor is that new housing developments and services are planned without taking into consideration the total needs of the people. Many of these new housing settlements do not have facilities such as clinics, schools, plots for retail opportunities or even public transport. The result is that people in these areas must spend most of that meagre income to get to jobs, schools or clinics.

6.4 Strategies to combat poverty

The way forward and recommendations are offered as a way of addressing the problem. Therefore, the following are necessary and highly critical interventions that the government and civil society can apply in combatting poverty:

- Economic opportunities in the poor areas are most important for employment or self-employment. This includes making available small business sites, training for potential entrepreneurs and land for small scale farming to provide food for households and the selling thereof as an income. These developments should be creating sustainable opportunities for the poor to break out this cycle of poverty.
- The government must improve its capacity to provide more industrial development as a means of giving opportunities for more people, skilled and unskilled, educated or semi-educated to find meaningful employment.
- To provide quality and free education where skills development is a priority to break this cycle of poverty from one generation to another.
- Government needs to go into partnership with the business, organised labour and civil society, i.e. faith-based communities and NGO's in order to come up with workable and sustainable programmes of development and upliftment to eradicate poverty.

- To make existing legislation working in favour of the poor and to set in place mechanism to combat corruption and fraud with regard to employment opportunities for the poor.

The key to any anti-poverty strategy and in particular to a workable one in the context of South Africa is that it must have an effect on the economic growth to ensure that it translates to more job opportunities for the poor. It is also important that policies that effect both social and economic cohesion of the people must be in place to achieve the necessary outcomes to poverty eradication.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

In this study the author used the qualitative method in the research. Due to the extensive nature of any research and in particular this study the author could only managed to interview six participants and two Soup Kitchen groups. The reason for this is that many of those who queue for the soup kitchen are men and they are generally not eager to talk about their personal circumstances. They were also very suspicious by nature and it took the author sometime to gain their trust for them to start opening up and be willing to be interviewed. Because of the circumstances of some of these people, i.e. homelessness, many of the questionnaires were completed as an interview.

Another factor was also the language barrier and the author discovered that in many cases the interpretations was not so accurate. I therefore acknowledged that my

interpretation of the data collected was influenced by my own interpretations, perceptions and value system, but as far as possible tried to do justice to the feedback of those interviewed.

The author is aware that there are many Soup Kitchen operated in and around the City of Johannesburg operated many by Churches and or Non-Government Organisation but he limited his study to the groups operated by Christ the King Coronationville and St Martin's-in-the-Veld Rosebank as they were fairly representative of many of these groups.

Although many researches had been done on the topic of poverty, the author's approached was to determine the level of dependency that these soup kitchens created on those who stand in the queue. The author therefore came to the conclusion in this research that there is a considerable level of dependency that these ministries has on those who come for assistance because of the familiar faces noticed when visited these groups.

CONCLUSION

This thesis addressed the issue of soup kitchen that enhances the dependency of the poor on these forms of outreach programmes. It shows clearly the dependency hold that soup kitchens have on people, especially the poor and destitute. In order to come up with a solution to this problem a holistic approach is needed where government, business, organised labour and civil society work as equal partners.

The church's role in this regard is very important as she is task with the caring ministry. This ministry can only be fulfilled as the church takes the role as shepherd who is prepared to listen to the voice of the voiceless. It also shows that there are strategies that can be implemented to address the issue of poverty in order to provide meaningful change and opportunities.

This research therefore also highlighted the fundamental problem in the debate about poverty reduction, i.e. the link that exists between the widening gap of unequal distribution of income or wealth in general that sustains and contribute to poverty. The main aim of this research was to raise this issue as a direct cause for poverty

and the phenomenon of soup kitchens in particular and its role in making people dependent on hand-outs.

As social and structural phenomenon poverty cannot be erased by continue providing the poor with welfare hand-outs and opportunities to remain where they are; there is a need to transform the underlying structures like the state apparatus and income and asset distribution mechanisms that are today in operation in many other developing countries in Africa. Poverty alleviation strategies must transcend the boundaries set by religion and theology by integrating the best of other disciplines—economics, politics, science, ethics and sociology, to name a few, thus emphasising the need for a holistic approach in eradicating poverty. The hope is that this study provided the reader with tools in order to do just that.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE: SOUP KITCHEN MEMBERS Male / Female

1. What was the motivation for starting a Soup kitchen?

.....
.....
.....

2. Why did you get involved in assisting at the Soup Kitchen?

.....
.....
.....

3. Do you think that is the only ways of helping people in need? Give reasons.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. What are your feelings about the people coming for help?

.....

.....

.....

5. Any other comments relating to this project:

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX: B

QUESTIONNAIRE: MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

SEX: MALE / FEMALE **AGE GROUP:** 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41 – 50; OLDER

1. Why are you coming to the Soup Kitchen?

.....

.....

2. Are you employed / unemployed. If unemployed, give reasons why?

.....

.....

.....

3. How do you feel about standing in the queue?

.....

.....

.....

4. Do you think that there is something more the community can do regarding your situation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Any other comments:

.....

.....

.....

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