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JESUS AS DIAKONOS IN TRANSFORMING URBAN COMMUNITIES:

A DIACONAL STUDY

BY

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SEPTEMBER 2024

DECLARATION

I declare that “**JESUS DIAKONOS IN TRANSFORMING URBAN COMMUNITIES: A
DIACONAL STUDY**” is my work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged using complete references.



21 October 2024

.....
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APPROVED BY: Prof S De Beer



Supervisor:

DEDICATION

To all the servants and urban mission activists that dedicated their lives to serve their communities without hesitation and reservation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my wife Makhosazane Nkosi, and children Gugulethu, Ntonkozo, Sinethemba, andENZOKUHLE. My Supervisor, Prof. S. De Beer thank you for your patience and support. And my mentor and tutor Dr. L. M Ngoetjana. TEAM and the Union Bible Institute for paying part of my fees.

Acronyms

EECMY: Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

FMCSA: Free Methodist Church of Southern Africa

IDAMASA: Interdenominational African Ministers Association in South Africa

IUM : Institute for Urban Ministry

NDP : National Development Plan

UBI : Union Bible Institute

UCH : Ubunye Cooperative Housing

PACSA: Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action

TDPUMCN: The Diaconal Plan for the United Methodist Church in Norway

Key Terms

Diakonia – Diaconate, Diakonos, Ecumenical, diakonia, Urban, Diaconal, Development, Community transformation, Context

ABSTRACT

The subject matter for this research is to understand Jesus as “Urban Diakonos” who serves to transform urban communities in a way that will bring wholeness and mutual benefit to the community. This research seeks to interrogate an understanding of Jesus as ‘diakonos’ with a specific meaning for the urban situation and to see how far such an understanding could shape the methods of training for urban workers, servants, and deacons.

The findings of the study will hopefully contribute (i) to understanding the mission of Jesus as diakonos, (ii) to understand processes of urban community transformation, (iii) to critically reflect on the conventional praxis of urban transformation in which diaconal praxis is marginalized and (iv) to influence the processes of training and preparation of ministers of religion and urban workers. In doing the above, I propose an understanding of Jesus as an urban diakonos in contemporary society.

The research paradigm will be qualitative based on the assumption of how an understanding of Jesus as “urban diakonos” can contribute to or serve to transform different communities in **Msunduzi** municipality. Most of the work of this research and my practice of ministry take place in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

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Chapter one

The purpose and the motivation of the dissertation

1. Introduction

Chapter One introduces the purpose and motivation of the dissertation. It also stipulates the problem formation and research question. The methodology and data collection processes are explained here, and the theoretical framework is described. The last part of this section includes summaries of all the dissertation chapters.

1.2. Purpose and motivation of the study

On 1st July 2013, I arrived in Pietermaritzburg, at Union Bible Institute, a theological institution in Pietermaritzburg. I have come to take up my appointment as a lecturer in the institution. The Institution had twenty staff members and 80 students. The school was fully fledged and functioning quite well. The environment on the campus was positive, the tuition fee was not expensive at all. The staff members were not expecting huge salaries. All the work they were doing was because they sensed a calling to be Union Bible Institute staff members.

The institution receives students from different places in Southern Africa who come from different backgrounds - poor, middle-class, and rich. Students give it all to study and make sure they complete their Certificate, Diploma, or Bachelor in Theology in record time. Yet, the challenge remains that several of them get frustrated that their theological education and training do not bring holistic transformation to their communities. Some of the students feel redundant when they complete their three to four years of study and start looking for greener pastures and all the years of theological training is a waste. They choose different vocations because some of their churches do not have work for them, some feel that theological education did not prepare them enough and they cannot deal with some of the community issues they are affected by. Instead of using their training to bring transformation in their communities they opt for different professions and make money for themselves.

This research endeavours to challenge conventional ways of doing ministry in urban areas and see it as charity. It will recommend the phenomenon of diaconate for urban transformation and learning from Jesus, “the urban deacon” as Cox (1966:144-155) stated.

1.3. Problem statement and research question

Cox (1966) asserts the processes of transformation of urban communities. The education and training for ministers of religion and urban practitioners should not only produce professionals and academics. It should not only prepare the ministers for ordination and liturgical purposes, but it should prepare them to be urban deacons who will serve to transform their communities. This is because the situations in urban communities, inner cities, townships, suburbs, or informal settlements are different and have a huge impact on the lives of people in those communities.

In most cases, ministers of religion and urban practitioners fail to follow the mandate of Jesus because there is a lack of understanding on how to serve people according to his command. Ministry is limited to preaching, liturgy, and pastoral care for the members of a particular congregation or organisation. Yet, when Christ calls a person to serve him it is about serving people and seeking justice for the oppressed and to be the light and salt of the earth, (Mt. 5:13-14). It is a calling to live out the Lordship of Christ in the marketplace and political arenas and to be a prophetic voice. To be prophetic here means to raise your voice against issues of injustice and human rights violations but also to act against all forms of injustice directed at human beings. It also means “to nurture in us the courage to stand publicly where God stands, while making a public and prophetic appeal to our communities in God’s name” (Kritzinger 2014: 10).

According to Baron & Maponya (2020: 9) to be a prophetic voice is to be a public witness by becoming “a better citizen, carer of the environment, economically intelligent, health conscious and politically intelligent”. It is for this reason the following question is asked: How does an understanding of Jesus as “urban diakonos” serve to transform urban communities? This research aims to present Jesus as diakonos transforming urban communities. We shall end up by analysing the Book of Luke to illustrate that Jesus does transform people the economic situation of communities to liberate people from the economic burdens as well.

In the light of the research question, the following are the sub-questions asked in the dissertation:

- How did the diaconal ministry evolve historically about the city?
- How does an understanding of Jesus as ‘urban diakonos’ assist us in equipping urban workers for transforming ministry?
- How can we train ministers of religion and urban workers for a diaconate of community transformation?
- How can the diaconate as Christian social praxis serve to transform communities from below?

1.4. Theoretical framework

This study is a diaconal study within the discipline of Practical Theology. Practical Theology is interested in faith practices, such as homiletics, pastoral care, and Christian education. But this is a limited description of Practical Theology. Scholars such as Tobia Steyn and Maake Masango argue that Practical Theology should be more than just a department of an institution.

Practical theology should meet the praxis of pastoral care for the people it seeks to serve as it ‘interprets’ human needs. Understanding and interpreting human needs points to a theological and hermeneutical analysis of a practical pastoral problem. In this context, we mean that pastoral problems cannot be separated from their urge to caregivers to find solutions in the praxis of the same (Masango & Steyn 2011).

This description and understanding of Practical Theology, explains why the diaconate fits well within the discipline of Practical Theology. Both Practice Theology as a whole, and diaconate as a sub-discipline, concern itself with the welfare of people, and tend to be praxis-based, or interested in the praxis of ministry.

My understanding of diaconate and its focus for this study is influenced by the fact that I am an ordained minister of the Free Methodist Church of Southern Africa under the Southern Kwa-Zulu Natal conference. Therefore, as a Free Methodist Church minister the theological paradigm for this research is shaped by the social teaching of John Wesley. John Wesley’s social teachings are contextual and focus on community transformation; his whole life was

delegated to the well-being of other people. He was concerned with “where and how people lived, and whether they possessed at least the necessities and opportunities of life” Yrigoyen (1996:85).

This concern of Wesley’s is the concern of this research as well: how does the church concern itself in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg with whether people have at least the necessities and opportunities of life, and whether theological education at UBI prepares students to be prepared for such a concern?

This is a diaconal study therefore diaconal theories will be used, and the focus will be on ‘transformation, empowerment and reconciliation’ (Lutheran World Federation 2009). Diakonia is the subfield of Practical Theology, and the diaconal framework can be applied in different fields such as social work, health care, and community development. For this study, the emphasis is on education and training. Many Diaconal scholars see this phenomenon in the following manner:

The study of Diakonia at an academic level is marked by an interdisciplinary approach as it aims at bringing together knowledge from different disciplines, primarily theology, and the social sciences. The goal is to perform empirical research related to what is (or could be) designated as diaconal praxis, as well as to elaborate theoretical and normative frameworks when analyzing and evaluating diaconal work. (Dietrich, et al. 2014:1)

I will also use Hermeneutics as a tool to interpret Biblical texts speaking about Diakonia as a method and the practice of Jesus for urban transformation. I will also use hermeneutical interpretation for some of the dialogue and interviews that will take place.

Kvale (1996:46) states that,

The research interview is a conversation about the human life world, with the oral discourse transformed into text to be interpreted. Hermeneutics is then doubly relevant to interview research, first by elucidating the dialogue producing the interview text to be interpreted, and then by clarifying the subsequent process of interpreting the

interview text produces, which may again be conceived as a dialogue or a conversation with the text.

1.5. Research methodology

Research Methodology refers to the process undertaken by the researcher, and it involves reflection and logical thinking. For Groves (1997:8) it “[is] the explanation or rationale as to how the researcher has gone about her work.” [And] the knowledge gathered [is] arranged in a “well thought-out procedure” (Lawson 1999:7). The methodology for this research will involve social constructivism and participatory and emancipatory processes. This is a participatory action research approach within a broader social constructionist theoretical framework desiring to be emancipatory.

These approaches or theories are chosen because they involve human interaction and participation. This methodology that is chosen here for this study will also be integrated into the pedagogies and curricula of the UBI especially since the people who are students at UBI are adults. These students have their independent minds and are liberated to think, to be critical, and are liberated to co-construct knowledge together with others.

1.5.1 Social Constructivism

Knowledge is constructed socially because the knowledge begins with what the participants already know, and participants shape how we know together (cf. Wittgenstein 1953 in Lock & Strong 2010). There is cognitive development between already known, what is not known and finally what is desired to be known. Learning is gained through social interaction. Learning is achieved when the undertaking is consistent with the stages of human development. It is a process of inquiring, discovering, and exploring (Dewey 1933, Bruner 1990, Piaget 1972, Vygotsky 1978). Delanty & Strydom (2003:421) states that it is the participation of individuals and groups in creating their social reality.

Creswell (2014:8) asserts that “Constructivism or social constructivism (often combined with interpretivism) is such a perspective, and it is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research”. I will also use this Social Constructivism as the theory that will go hand in hand with hermeneutics. The exegeses principles will be applied where we will interpret our data and

texts considering the literary context and the historical cultural practices, we will unpack words to understand their meaning (Kostenberger 2006). And there will be “a continuous rearticulating of our interpretation as our different social and historical contexts change” (Ackermann 1998:357).

Social Constructivism is a theory that takes the views and understanding of people and communities into consideration because the constructivists “believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objectives or things” (Ackermann 1998:357). The nature of the constructivism is that,

Researchers often address the process of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific context in which people live and work to understand the historical and cultural setting of the participants. The researcher recognises that their background shapes their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experience (Ackermann 1998:357).

Ackermann (1998:357) states that “as I research working in collaboration with participants, I cannot escape the fact that my own experiences and values contribute to the construction of knowledge. Ackermann (1998:357) agrees that “personal values can be brought into the study”. This is important for me to be aware of my own biases and self-critical in the process of doing theology. It is also important to note that UBI is a social construct and a culmination of various socially determined processes of constructions over many years. How far UBI willing is to engage itself critically, considering what the factors were that produced it is a matter of concern in this research.

1.5.2. Participatory and emancipatory research

This section will discuss research approaches and they are participatory and emancipatory research. It will also show how these approaches will be used for this study.

1.5.2.1 Participatory approach

Participatory research is a process of producing knowledge together between the researcher and the researched. The researcher and the researched are seen as equal partners. The design and plan of the research are done jointly and there is mutual respect between the researcher and the researched. The strength of this type of research approach is that there is mutual respect, trust, accountability, reflexivity, and dialogue (Swartz & Nyamnjoh 2018:4).

This is kind of a research that involves people participating in the study and participating in the research by choice. It is done collectively, and self-reflection inquiry is undertaken by participants (Lawson 1999). The researcher and participants work as partners (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995). It gives qualitative results. It is people's right to shape the choices and decisions that will affect their lives (Kumalo 2004). In philosophy, it is assumed to be transformative (Creswell 2014).

The participants in this reach will be people from different sectors. A focus group will be established and made up of eight people from different sectors in Pietermaritzburg. The group will consist of theologians, ministers of the religion community workers, and civil people. The group will meet four times in six months. One facilitated with an assistant will be appointed.

1.5.2.2. Emancipatory research approach

Unlike the participatory research approach where the researcher and the researched are partners, the emancipatory research approach gives the researched more power and ownership of the research. The researcher takes the leadership role and the researcher is willing to relinquish the power to the researched and only become a facilitator and provide methods and skills. The participants have the responsibility to choose what can be on the agenda or not. The participants can also choose to ask the researcher to consider their concerns. In the emancipatory research approach, participants decide what to do with the findings of the research (Swartz & Nyamnjoh 2018:4).

Emancipatory research is a type of research that has a dual approach, and it is reciprocal. It uses “an ethics of parallel perspective” and giving back by employing “an intentional ethics of

reciprocation” (Swartz 2011:49). A relationship is built with research participants and the researchers convey their subjectivity. The planning of the research is interventional and as a result, both the researcher and the participants benefit and they both experience transformation (Swartz 2011:49). The researcher is willing to receive critiques from the participants and learning happens in a socially constructed manner. In participatory research, the researcher holds the power, to go into communities, act with communities, and leave when suitable to the researcher. The emancipatory research is liberatory for both parties. It is ‘reciprocal’. The researcher cannot and should not just pitch and leave on their terms, because a kind of ‘social contract’ is established clarifying the mutual emancipation the research should be aiming at.

Both the participatory and the emancipatory research approaches are designed to empower the participants and the researcher. In both approaches, both the researcher and the researched are involved. The difference is rather on a scale of intensity – whereas participatory research is such that the researcher can work with the researched in collaboration, the researcher can move on after the research without emancipation having taken place for the researched and this is improbable. In an emancipatory approach, emphasis is placed on the researcher becoming freer because of the research process, new skills, and understanding they gain. But the importance of the research cannot be undermined for they are equally free in the process

In this research, the approach that will be applied is participatory research. The reason for choosing this approach is that the author is willing to share power, he is willing to consult different people as she is developing the agenda of the research. And that the research is for community development. On the other hand, the researched have the same power and privilege.

1.5.3. A praxis-based approach

The praxis-based approach or the pastoral cycle is a theological method, coming from contextual and liberation theology, and it focuses clearly on liberation, change, and transformation. This approach will help to develop a theory of urban transformation.

The praxis approach or pastoral cycle (Holland & Henriot 1983) will be used since it is a contextual or a liberation tool for community and urban transformation. The praxis-approach theory is a four-step cycle and these steps are insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and planning for action.

- ***Insertion***, practical involvement in Christian praxis for the sake of the kingdom of God.
- ***Context analysis***, which involves the conscious use of analytical tools to unlock the underlying dynamics (often hidden from view in a naive approach to reality) that are at work in a particular situation or context.
- ***Theological reflection*** on the situation (which includes the church) which consists of a re-reading of the Bible and the Christian tradition in response to the questions raised by insertion and social analysis. This dimension of doing theology is sometimes regarded as the only “real” theology, but a contextual approach argues that it is only one dimension of a fourfold process of theologizing, which can easily become distorted if it is not studied about the other three dimensions of this circular process.
- ***Planning for action***, which completes the cycle since it leads back to insertion. This final element underlines the view of contextual theology that theology should not be abstract theories that are of no earthly use to the people of God, but instead give them direction and courage as they worship and struggle to be faithful to the gospel in daily life.

1.5.4. Specific Research Methods

The following step discusses the specific research methods of data generation that have been used for this study. These specific methods of data generation were used at every moment in the praxis cycle or the praxis-based approach. Different kinds of documents were used.

- Documents, in this case, written reports, statistics, and minutes of meetings. Documents about the context (Kumalo 2003) of the uMsunduzi municipality will be accessed. Newspapers and pamphlets will be and different documentaries will be watched to collect more information about the context.
- Observations is the third qualitative data source (Kumalo 2003). In this category, I will do my observations in meetings, when I do visitations to organizations that are serving their communities. I will keep a notebook to record all that will happen. Academic sources will be carefully selected to get a

broader understanding of the study and also to come to a point where we can tie together the information collected (Nkosi 2016:5).

The research will not be participatory, or emancipatory but it will also be interactive. The researcher will use his freedom to make the research benefit those who are participating in the study. Activities will be planned with participants (Swartz & Nyamnjoh 2018).

1.6.Unpacking the key terms

Diakonia: In the Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, Nicholas Lossky, et al. (2002:305) defines “Diakonia” as “responsible service of the Gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people”. This definition contains several important elements. It is first of all clear that diakonia is an action and cannot be limited to statements and good intentions. Diakonia contains deeds and words, formed as “responsible services” which means action for which one is accountable. It is an affirmation of the distinctive nature of diaconal work. Diaconal work has a focus, namely the needs of people.

“Diakonia may be present as the social ministry of the church and as an academic discipline, it is often located within the area of practical theology...” (Dietrich et. Al., 2014:1). Diakonia is a theological concept that points to the very identity and mission of the church (LWF 2009). Dietrich, et al (2014:3) refer to the work of Collins on Diakonia: “John N. Collins did an exegesis of “diak – words (diakonia, diakonei, and diakonos) and his findings show that diakonia in the first place means an assignment or mission”.

“Diakonia is the caring ministry of the Church. It is the Gospel in action and is expressed through loving your neighbour, creating inclusive communities, and caring for creation and struggling for justice” as stated by (Dietrich et al 2014:3).

Diakonia as a caring ministry of the church means that the task of the Church is an expression of God’s compassion as an essential dimension of God’s mission in the world - “that you may serve”. This idea of mission as God’s compassion for humanity, applied to urban transformation, could be taken to mean that humanity can well serve one another and in turn serve God by showing compassion in the distribution of land, access to land, reconstruction of

human dignity, and assurance of life in abundance for all as promised by Christ Himself in the context of urban spatial planning for justice to the poor urbanites. The issue of land will merge in this dissertation when we analyze the Book of Luke, especially chapter 4: 18 – 20, where the issue of jubilee is raised. This is the issue of returning to ancestral as a way of redressing poverty for socio-economic transformation.

Urban: Urban areas are places of concentration for many different people and many different uses. Urban areas are the economic hub of a country and can also be defined administratively, statistically, and functionally. “An urban area is defined as an area with land use which is irreversibly urban. Pre-requisites for inclusion of settlements are a continuous area of urban land extending for 20 hectares or more, and a minimum of approximately 1000 persons” (Roger (1999) in Davey 2001:16).

Baffi, Turok & Vacchi-Marcuzzo (2018) say, for South Africa, the meaning of urban can be defined as an industrial place because of its “distinctive economic history of mineral extraction and it can also be influenced by extreme political history”. “it is a contested space, a fight “for the right of the city, but more essential for being human” De Beer (2014:1) asserts.

This discussion raises the question of urban spatial justice regarding urban land distribution. Spatial justice or injustice is about the administration of the allocation of land predominantly in urban areas. Ironically and paradoxically, there is no land to speak about seriously in urban areas. The idea of the urban is that which is already situated in a built-up area. The geographical space in which we seek justice or condemn injustice is not in the galaxy or universe. The contestation of the understanding of spatial justice and injustice in urban areas is fallacious and is a disputable question. Urban areas are pavements with buildings and no land to occupy. Theologically speaking the quest for the understanding of spatial justice and injustice can be satisfied and gratified in the theology of land. The theological understanding of the distribution of justice and most justice laws in the Scriptures are based on land issues. This includes the spiritual, political, cultural, economic, and social affirmation of the people of Yahweh as people who own land and use it in ways that are just and pleasing to Yahweh.

“According to ancient historian Josephus, the territory was not divided into shares of equal size but of equal agricultural value. The landmarks that protected these allotments were protected by the public and solemn denunciation of a curse against anyone who should dishonestly tamper with them (Deut. 27:11-16; 19:14). At the end of every fifty years, any alienated lands

are given away, sold, or lost from unpaid debts --- would be restored to the original families. Temporary possessors were to be compensated for any unexhausted improvements they may have made on the land” (Ngoetjana, 2016).

Community transformation: This is a process that brings change in the lives of people. The process starts by challenging the status quo and will not leave the community unchanged. It is a mission planned with a method leading to a significant change in the relevant community (Kumalo 2004). The Lutheran World Federation document of Mission in Context states, “Transformation is a process, but at the same time, transformation envisions the achievements of certain goals, of arriving at a new situation where human dignity is more respected with peace and justice for more people. Thus, transformation is closely related to what also may be defined as social change, progress of development” (LWF 2009:44).

The notion of transformation from the perspective of Jesus applied to open communalism, equality, and inclusivity. Jesus propagated a message of open communalism which means, an open and an all-inclusive table. Jesus introduced a reordering of the table to include those who were excluded from it through the alleged traditions of the Fathers, which went along with the required ceremonial cleanliness, which the majority of the poor and the marginalized during the time of Jesus could not afford. In other words, Jesus was saying no one must be excluded from the table during mealtimes. Jesus aspired for the good old past when Yahweh was still King and when people were still equal even as it was depicted through the arrangement of the table at mealtime.

Crossan (1991:304) says,

Miracles and tables constitute such conjunction and it is the heart of Jesus' program. That intersection of (healing)/miracle and meal, miracle and table are pointed directly and deliberately at the intersection of patronage and client age, honour and shame, the very heart of ancient Mediterranean society.

In other words, one must look at the actions and the words of Jesus at Simon's table with Mediterranean society in mind. Put differently, the actions at Simon's table were meant to be a testimony and a demonstration that no one must be excluded from the company of people especially when it comes to mealtime. Whether a person is a woman or not is inconsequential.

Whether one has followed all the rules and the law of cleanliness is inconsequential. The table must always affirm that all humans are equal before the eyes of God.

With Jesus at the table, many barriers and gaps were closed. The strong and the weak, men and women, Jew, and Gentile, wealthy and poor, clean, and profane, tax – collector and Zealot, patron, and clientele, all must share the same table, all are equalized around the table. Around the table all are levelled, all are equal, all have to fellowship, and all have to share their plight, their concerns, their status, and their destiny as humans. Everyone had to be entangled around the table like it was in the olden days. Crossan (1991:344) writes:

Commensality was rather a strategy for building or rebuilding peasant communities on radically different principles from those of honour and shame, patronage, and clientele. It was based on an egalitarian sharing of spiritual and material power at the grassroots level.

This is a group of people in a particular area, who share the same values and are faced with the same struggles and injustices. Confronted by all these struggles they are forced to organize and act as a collective (Schenk 1996) struggle for justice and seek for transformation.

Context: It is the awareness and consciousness about the current economic, cultural, socio-political, and religious issues of your environment and also about larger regional, national, and even global issues. Considering a context is important because it gives one an idea of how to address a situation and does not give irrelevant and redundant solutions but rather plans an action in response to the context (De Beer 1998:50).

The word context, from which ‘contextualisation’ is derived comes from the Latin root ‘contextus’, which means, weaving together. The light that is shed shines clearly when one realizes that contextualization has to do with the whole of a given context woven together. In a single context are many people, experiences, regulations, institutions, sub-cultures, ideas, and all that constitute the situation. All the uncountable components of a context have roles they play in shaping people, society, trends, history, culture, and ideas. Contextualization looks at all that and brings out reasons and meanings for problems and answers. This applies to faith life and any other discipline of life. Imagine how much the Bible can be revealed if we have

the skill of contextualization which opens up the situation we are studying and how much the Bible can speak to us more directly if we have the skill of social analysis which opens up a social context for us to see what is happening inside there. Contextualisation therefore is the skill of getting into a socio-cultural situation, analysing it, and beginning to see and understand what is happening inside there. This is what we shall attempt to do in our study of Jesus as diakonos, transforming urban communities with special reference to Pietermaritzburg in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

1.7. Summary of chapters

Chapter One introduced the purpose and motivation of the study and stipulated the problem formation and the research question. The methodology and the data collection processes were explained in this chapter. The theoretical framework in this chapter is explained. Key terms are unpacked and chapters of the dissertation are outlined.

Chapter two is a vivid profile of Pietermaritzburg a discussion of the demographics of Pietermaritzburg and looking at the needs of the community in the city of Pietermaritzburg. It is also my journey in Pietermaritzburg, the Union Bible Institute, and the Free Methodist Church.

Chapter three is the analysis of the current theological education in Pietermaritzburg focusing on Union Bible Institute. It is also looking at the current models of the diaconate ministry in Pietermaritzburg focusing on Ubunye Haven a shelter for women and children at risk. And analyze their programs to see if they bring sustainable community transformation rather than give temporally relief to urban communities.

Chapter four is a discussion on diaconate as the church's social practice. The history of the diaconal ministry in the church is reflected upon. This theological reflection leads the discussion to a direction of learning from Jesus the diakonos for urban transformation. Is also about planning for action, here I will look at different ways theological education can be offered. Further discussion on community organizing, planning, and implementation takes place in the dissertation and discusses the theological education in Pietermaritzburg with

specific reference to Union Bible Institute. The discussion about this theological education will suggest a curriculum that will include subjects or modules such as contextual theology, theology and development, theology of work, diaconal ministry, and Ubuntu.

Chapter five provides a socio-economic analysis of the economics of Jesus as diakonos transforming urban communities in the Book of Luke. Among the synoptic gospels the Book of Luke comments more about money and material realities than any other of the synoptici. The relevance of this materialistic gospel to this study is that the urban setting has a lot to do with material exchanges where transactions with money are put into question by Jesus the Deacon. On the other hand, the ministries of Ubunye House, Project Gate Way, and Haven, because of the nature of their philanthropic outlook need money to operate, to respond to the needs of the poor, the homeless, the disadvantaged, the old, and the destitute. Ad their need for money is for humanitarian reasons. They are operating in the city of Pietermaritzburg which by its nature, is mismanaged as it is, also, needs money to keep it abreast with other cities.

Chapter six is a shorter conclusive chapter with summaries, findings, and recommendations on tools for planning a diaconal ministry and some strategies to apply when using the tools for the diaconal ministry.

Chapter two

Insertion: the urban context of Pietermaritzburg

2. Introduction

Insertion refers to my present experience and action of ministry in response to my context (De Beer 1998, Kumalo 2003:30). In this section I will give a profile of Pietermaritzburg. Here, I will discuss the demographics of Pietermaritzburg focusing on the needs of the community in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg and the neighboring townships. I will also discuss my journey into Pietermaritzburg and at the Union Bible Institute. Since this study deals with human experience and adversities, I will apply, a tool of “insertion” to recapture the whole context. Notwithstanding that, this is the profile of Pietermaritzburg’s urban context where we shall insert the probable actions and ministry of Jesus as the urban diakonos.

2.1. The officially endorsed face of Pietermaritzburg

Although the focus of this study will be on the inner city of Pietermaritzburg, I will start by describing Msunduzi Municipality and later discuss the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. The Integrated Development Plan for Msunduzi (2019/2020) describes the city as such:

Msunduzi, as a city, sits at a critical point of change. As the second largest metropolitan complex in the province, it has the ever-present possibility of reaching Metropolitan Status and a shift toward City Development. The geographic location of Msunduzi municipality allows it the opportunity to become well-connected in the global economy due to the access it has to the N3 highway leading to major harbours and airports. The surrounding municipalities and towns access various connectivity and growth opportunities through Msunduzi, across various sectors such as Tourism and Agriculture. As such it is essential for physical connectivity to be further improved to stimulate these economic linkages. Msunduzi is located within the UMgungundlovu district it is boarded by Mshwathi municipality on the northern boundary, Mkhambathini on the eastern boundary, Richmond municipality on the southern boundary, and Impendle and Umgeni on the western boundaries. Msunduzi is the economic powerhouse of the district and has a huge potential for agri-processing since the district is dominated by agriculture. The location along provincial and national

routes also supports this proposal. The N3 also forms part of Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) namely SIP2 (Durban Free State-Gauteng Logistics Industrial Corridor). Positioning Pietermaritzburg as a strategic location in terms of infrastructure nationally amongst other major cities. The City of Pietermaritzburg forms part of Multi-Sectoral Nodes as identified by the PSEDS contributing to the province's economy as a major employer amongst eThekweni and Richards Bay. The area of Msunduzi experiences high rates of migration as it comprises pull factors such as employment opportunities, with many people migrating into the city at high rates daily searching for better opportunities.

Above is a brief description of Msunduzi Municipality but for this study the focus will be on the inner city of Pietermaritzburg and the neighbouring townships. Pietermaritzburg is the city that falls within the boundary of Msunduzi municipality. Pietermaritzburg is called a "City of Choice" and the vision of the city is to be "a safe vibrant city in which to live, learn, raise a family, work, play, and do business" (IDP 2019/2020). Pietermaritzburg is also the Capital of Kwa-Zulu Natal and the host of the provincial legislature. According to Statistics South Africa:

Pietermaritzburg, the second-largest city in KwaZulu-Natal, falls within the boundaries of the Msunduzi municipality. The city is both the administrative and legislative capital of the province, which boosts investor confidence, resulting in the city's economy growing at an astounding rate. **1) People**, the population of Pietermaritzburg is 500 000 - 1 035 116, and the dependency ratio is slightly above 46%. Black Africans constitute 81% of the population, which is most of the population in the district. The Indian population constitutes 10%, while there is a smaller proportion of white people (6%) and coloured people, who constitute only 3%, **2) Living conditions**, 45, 2% of households are headed by females. The percentage of households residing in formal dwellings is 73, 7%, with 47,9% of the household having access to piped water inside the dwelling and 51,6% of households having access to a flush toilet, **3) Economy**, of the 229 672 economically active people in the municipality, 33% are unemployed (uMgungundlovu District Municipality IDP 2012/13)¹

¹ Statistics South Africa: Republic of South Africa: uMgungundlovu District Municipality IDP 2012/13. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=the-msunduzi-municipality

The above statistics covered a bigger area of Pietermaritzburg, and it presents an official face of Pietermaritzburg. This face of Pietermaritzburg is always displayed by politicians mostly during their political speeches. It is also portrayed in magazines, books, and posters that are used to advertise the city to attract tourists. But there is also a hidden face of Pietermaritzburg that will be discussed later in the next section.

2.2. Pietermaritzburg's triangle of decay

Above is the official description of the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. The description of religious and church landscapes and the identification of assets, skills, and gifts that are in the city. However, the real and hidden image of Pietermaritzburg is seen when you enter the city and do a critical reading, observing what is taking place in the city. By listening to the voices of the many people who are marginalized and vulnerable, and seldom heard, a different face of the city comes into view. The group of people we are talking about here are vulnerable women and children, the homeless community, foreign nationals, the unemployed community, and many other groups.

This group consist of people who are victims of gender-based violence and those who lack access to housing, water, and other basic services. Thirty-three per cent of people in Msunduzi are unemployed with minimal education and cannot secure any permanent employment and, in most cases, they survive through informal trading or by doing odd jobs such as driving taxis and domestic work.

It is important to indicate that the following description is not exhaustive to characterize all issues that affect people. But will highlight the features describing the hidden face of Pietermaritzburg focusing on the inner city and neighbouring townships. The themes that will be highlighted are the following poor governance, homelessness, housing, crime, violence etc.

2.2.1. Poor governance

Pietermaritzburg faces daunting challenges and Msunduzi Local Municipality has failed to cater to the basic needs of people coming into the city. Most people moved into the city with a conviction that life would be more different being closer to amenities and economic opportunities that townships lack. They thought living in the inner city would make all their basic needs accessible. They thought schools, workplaces, hospitals clinics and all necessary

services would be nearby, solving a number of their problems like transport money and time spent travelling to work and school daily. However, their dreams met with the reality of the municipality maladministration that prompted the provincial government intervention. Kaveel Singh (2019) who was in the political conversation that led to this has this to say: "The Msunduzi Municipality, where KwaZulu-Natal's Capital Pietermaritzburg is located, has been placed under administration following a host of issues, including irregular expenditure, maladministration, and absenteeism by councillors."

Consequently, in the absence of proper leadership and administration to stir the visions and dreams of citizens, the city descended into the phenomenon of anarchy and overcrowding leading to the deterioration of basic infrastructures. As a result, urban spaces are increasingly being contested between vulnerable informal traders, and their counterparts in formal businesses.

One of the deficiencies in managing urban space arises from degradation in residential facilities like flats that are rapidly turning into squalid slums. Ntuli (2020) in Nkosi (2020) writes about the dilapidated, abandoned, and hazardous buildings surrounding the city and she further says all the decaying state of the city is the result of the lack of leadership that will stir up transformation.

2.2.2. Homelessness and housing

A concerning reality is that homelessness sweeping across the City of PMB. The number of people sleeping under shop balconies has increased in the city and informal settlements are increasing. A big informal settlement called "Jika Joe", is in the central business district and is one example of homelessness and the decaying conditions in the city.

Jika Joe is an informal settlement in the heart of the city of Pietermaritzburg in the South. It has a population of 5000 people with a slight majority being females over males. It is adjacent to Pietermaritzburg's central business district (CBD) and bordered by the N3 highway south of the settlement. The people in this community built their homes here to be close to jobs in the city. The area has been plagued with fires that jump from house to house. These fires have forced some people to live in tents on a local sports field. The Msunduzi Municipality has provided prefab temporary housing units alongside 41 homes that the community built. The city plans to remove the

community from the area and move them to formal housing that will be far from these people's jobs (Mkhize 2018).

I also observed that the Jika Joe community is living in poverty and consequently young girls between the ages of 18 and 25 years are forced to be sex workers for survival. The incessant abuse of substances like "iwunga"², crime and violence in the area is nonstop.

2.2.3. Crime and violence

The city has in recent years attracted an influx of many foreign nationals, mostly refugees who are from the Democratic Republic of Congo-Kinshasa (DRC), Ethiopia, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe. This experience of transnational shows clearly how Pietermaritzburg has become more diverse being a multinational host. But the challenges are the management of all these changes and the lack of capacity to control the influx of foreign nationals. A lack of leadership on such matters can lead to several devastating consequences such as crime, violence, xenophobia, and political intolerance. All these realities make the city and its neighbourhoods dangerous and unsafe. Here are a few crime patterns that are taking place in the city: Violent crime is at a peak in Pietermaritzburg and neighbouring townships (Pillay 2019).³

The eruption of taxi violence leaves taxi owners, drivers, and passengers injured or killed (Citizen 2019).⁴ Protests against illegal immigrants in the city tend to turn into violence and become xenophobic (Presence 2015).⁵

Reporting on political intolerance regarded as a key sponsor of underlying challenges the City of Pietermaritzburg faces, it is recorded that the Office of the City Administrator can move

² (Iwunga, whoonga, nyaope) - is a drug cocktail in South Africa rumored to contain illicit drugs and HIV antiretroviral (ARV) medication.

³ Kerushun Pillay (2019) in the Witness newspaper wrote an article and spoke about crime taking in Plessislaer a township that is six kilometres from the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. *"Plessislaer is the crime capitals of KwaZulu Natal and ranks among the worst in the country for murder with 166, rape with 179, home burglary with 1 219, and in Pietermaritzburg, murder is 41 – 44"*

⁴The Citizen online newspaper reported an incident that took place in the lower inner city of Pietermaritzburg in the Brookside taxi rank. The dispute erupted at the taxi rank was over the taxi routes between Howick and Pietermaritzburg and leaving one person dead and several were injured (2019).

⁵ Chantall Presence (2015) in the article "Xenophobia attacks spread to PMB" reports that *street vendors were robbed by looters by on Wednesday as xenophobic attacks spread to Pietermaritzburg in Kwa-Zulu Natal*. Also, Ntombi Mbomvu (2015) from the Groundup online newspaper wrote an article expressing how foreign nationals are living in constant fear in Pietermaritzburg. *She said an Ethiopian shop owner was one of the victims who had his goods stolen and had no choice but to close the shop. The Ethiopian shop owner said he does not want any fights but what they are experiencing in South Africa is worse than what they were experiencing in Ethiopia*

forward because of serious menace. An expression that Ntuli (2019: 1) uses to show the political turmoil is, “Msunduzi is Captured” and goes on to alert the public of the circumstances of the City Administrator as follows:

He has received death threats over his mission to get the city back on its feet. Msunduzi is worse than it was before – politics are worse. You just must look at the attacks that we are suffering at the moment. The councillors who pretended to be acting in the best interest of Msunduzi were intricately linked to some of the companies looting the municipality.

The situation has gotten worse in such a way that; some politicians are occupying shelters of the most vulnerable people in society. For instance, Ndou (2019: 1) exposes an attempt to occupy children's shelter by the MK Veterans. In his report, he also annexes details of the same and their involvements in hijacking several houses in the centre of Pietermaritzburg and the municipality has not acted on the matter." The War veterans we are accusing the municipality of "reneging of its promises to build them houses". It is in this same way, Pillay (2019:1) reports on how frustrated businesspeople in the city joined the race: "We are taking the city from drug dealers, criminals, and filth and we'll do it ourselves if we have to."

Extending on the previous concern of the city with human struggle, it was noted that the issues the residents of Pietermaritzburg face are diverse and structural to the extent that involve the following elements stipulated by Nkosi (2020): Difficulty in accessing information; Emergency services are poor; Courts are often used as a political battlefield; In most departments, it is a struggle to get proper and satisfying service. The public hospitals' service has collapsed. People wait for more than six hours to get service.

Consequently, it is such a lack of urban vision and proper governance that paved the way for anarchy and chaos to an extent that, Khanyile (2020) describes "Pietermaritzburg, a filthy and stinking city." This lack of leadership to stir up transformation concerns media reporters like Ntuli (2020:1) records that dilapidated, abandoned, and hazardous buildings surround the city. He goes further to warn that "health hazard buildings contribute to the grime, urban decay, and the overall decline of the city."

The city of Pietermaritzburg was named after the two leaders of the Afrikaner voortrekkers – Piet Retief and Gert Maritz – hence Pietermaritzburg. Then there were three thousand white

people who occupied the city and the surroundings. African people, we prohibited from occupying the city unless they came in to offer their labour to this emerging urban city. With the demise of separate development dubbed Apartheid, African people were allowed to settle nearer the city in the townships which were meant to be labour reservoirs for the growing city in the province of Natal as it was known in those days.

With the fall of Apartheid, the city was gradually occupied and ruled by African people. At the time of the writing of this research, the district of uMgungundlovu which harbours the city is occupied by three million people. The capacity of the city has not expanded much from carrying three thousand people to three million people. With this situation, the city is bound to collapse on its own. Thus, the triangle of decay described above is the result.

This scenario can be seen in the emergence and growth of cities among people. The phenomenon of overpopulation creates challenges such as the encroaching of poverty, exploitation, dehumanisation, and corruption in the upper echelons of society. As it was with the emergence of Jerusalem in Israel. Due to overpopulation: Israel was for a considerably long time a self-sufficient people.

These people who were all along self-sufficient as subsistence farmers migrated to the emerging Hellenistic cities like Jerusalem - cities causing situations of overpopulation and squalor. These people formed a pool of labour market. They had to survive the hardships of a growing urbanisation through selling their unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labour. The nature of a growing urbanisation is that it does not afford to pay lucratively. The new urban workers remain at a worker level with no scope of rising to highly skilled employment opportunities. Yet demand for labour always stands (Theisen, 1987).

2.3. The description of the churches' landscape in Pietermaritzburg

Since this is a theological and diaconal study, I shall also discuss insights into the religious and church landscape in the inner city. I shall look at the church's landscape in the city twenty years ago and look at the transition that the church went through in these past twenty years.

Twenty years ago, the face of the church in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg was different from the current face of the church in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. I can vividly remember that even the number of churches in the city was not many when I was a student at UBI between

the years 1998 and the year 2000. The inner city was mostly dominated by mainline and reformed churches, and these were the Roman Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans, the Reformed Church, Baptists and the Free Methodist Church. Most of these churches were aware of the issues that were concerns during those days, but their response had no firmness to address contextual issues. For example, institutions like the Union Bible Institute (UBI) were silent during the times of wars in Pietermaritzburg even the theological education offered in those days did not address issues of politics, democracy, and governance.

In Pietermaritzburg organizations such as PACSA, and Project Gateway played a vital role in the processes of embracing democracy and addressing the challenges that came with a democratic state. The organisations did what I assume was supposed to be done by individual churches and denominations to be a prophetic voice, to accompany those that were affected by the transition and to educate and facilitate the process of democratisation of a country.

The context was different and the themes that were discussed then were different from what is discussed today. The struggle of the church was also different from the current struggle of the church. In the early 2000s, the role of the church was more in a transition from the Apartheid regime to democracy. The church celebrated the dawn of democracy at the same time the church was not ready for such a transition because this transition had its new challenges.

This is still a challenge for the church even today after twenty-seven years of democracy in South Africa. There are new challenges such as poor governance, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, crime, and violence, and the list cannot be exhaustive.

2.4. The critical response of the church in Pietermaritzburg to the triangle of decay

The church is a key stakeholder in the city, therefore its response is critical in addressing the city's triangle of decay. But in most cases, the church fails to respond to the decay in the city because of many issues. One of the issues is that the church fails to read the times and it finds herself irrelevant to the ever-changing community. The church also operates in her corner fails to develop a relationship with the community and also fails to create trust amongst the people. The church often fails to respond to the city's decay because the ministers and leaders are not adequately trained to serve their community and address the issues in the community. It is also

true that some churches try to engage their communities and try to address social ills and decay in the city. The challenge for these churches is limited resources and these churches when they try to solicit support and funding from the private sector are denied the opportunity. The reason the churches fail to get funding is the assumption that church people are not professional, they lack skills in financial management. The other assumption is that churches do not serve a broader community but rather serve their church members only.

2.5. The church's response to a city's triangle of decay

Pityana & Villa-Vicencio, (1995:152) say: The church and the state should be separated but the church and the state should continue to interact on matters that concern the people. The church should develop a “critical solidarity” with the state. John Stott (2006:172-173) suggests that the response of the church to societal issues should be “prophetic, pastoral and educational.” This will mean that the church becomes a prophetic voice to the state. To be a prophetic voice means to speak against all injustices, it is to advocate with and by the poor and to lobby the government officials to deliver what they have promised to the society. A pastoral response of the church is also important, this will mean that the church should be present and accompany the vulnerable communities.

2.5.1. The Role of the Church: Central Message

Though the central role of the message of the church to the world is a contested theological space, this dissertation embraces that message as the epistemological privilege of the poor and the preferential option for the poor. The message is that God is on the side of the poor who understand the structures that oppress them and that any meaningful community transformation should consider the emancipation of the poor from socio-economic marginalisation.

“At the outset, we need to be reminded that the main contribution of the church to the well-being of any society is always that of proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom (sic) of God about the context within which the church finds itself” (De Gruchy 1988:166 in Nurnberger and Took (eds.)).

Much that the proclamation of the Reign of God is for all people, it has been realised in many instances that God takes sides with the poor. In every context within which the church finds itself. Its ministry and energy should be focused on the poor and their plight.

“If the church relinquishes the task of the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom of God ... it might become another political organisation or social, welfare agency amongst others, but it would no longer be the church of Jesus Christ. It is this alone which provides the church with its identity and basis for its relevance” (De Gruchy 1988: 166 in Nurnberger and Took (eds.)).

2.5.2. Church as Redemptive Community

The church is a redemptive and eschatological institution – meaning that the church has the present responsibility of ministering for the well-being of humanity here and now, and yet simultaneously pointing forward to the ideal coming of the Reign of God for which it is labouring in hope. Inevitably, the church must be an open society (everyone is welcome – poor and rich etc.) working with contradictions inside and outside it. These may be contradictions in political, ethical, ideological and missiological positions and so on, and yet expected to reflect the hope that humanity holds in God.

Historically the church has always found itself caught up, as an open society inheriting tensions between state and society, and church and state, and church and society. In a theocratic society, the church would be the institution in power and realise less contradiction between legislating for social and spiritual realms. In a Constantinian society, the church would be in cahoots with the state or government. During the Reformation era, the idea of the separation between church and state emerged strongly against the church in collaboration with the state.

In the apartheid segregationist era, the church in South Africa⁶, in the form of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in particular, had to take a position in opposition to the state or government. The present ideal for the church to be in solidarity with the state is very appealing and tempting. The church should rather be in solidarity with the poor and dialogue with the

⁶ Churches/ denominations/ parishes/ ministries took different contradictory positions against and for apartheid. Visibly, it was mainly the ecumenical movement and its network and politically progressive para-church organisations and individuals who openly challenged and rejected apartheid despite opposition, ridicule and rejection by fellow believers, friends and families.

state, supporting what is congruent to the ideals of the Reign of God and challenging that which is not.

2.5.3. Taking Sides with the Poor

Taking sides with the poor presents a challenge to the church to re-consider the understanding and undergirding formative values of the people of Yahweh and the Jesus movement. “Both these societies were driven by an understanding of God who takes sides with the poor and destitute (Lev. 25), with those whose basic needs are not satisfied (Mt.25: 32f), with the empowerment of the weak and judgement of the strong (Lk. 1: 46f)” (Villa Vicencio 1995: 67 in Bam and Raiser (eds.)).

‘Differently stated, the biblical God is never revealed in a neutral place (whether in the mind of intellectuals or among the counsellors of the high priests), but among the slaves (Exodus 1: 8 - 11), the peasant farmers (Amos 1: 1 - 15), the widows and orphans (New Testament) (Villa Vicencio 1995: 61 – 68 in Bam and Raiser (eds.)).

The church needs to ask whether the interests of the poor are considered in all socio-political and economic contexts it finds itself. It is upon the church to inform itself about the needs, aspirations, the frustrations, and the questions of the poor, so that, with the poor playing a central role in their struggles, the church should speak and act compassionately with the poor. The church, as it provided space for the muzzled political voices of the past dark era, must provide space for the voices of the poor to emerge and be heard. The questions of the poor need to be presented to the echelons of market capitalism and probe whether it can serve the interests of the poor (Ibid. 66).

2.5.5. Radical Prophetic Theology

A prophetic theology is radical, means - attending to the extrication of issues from their roots. It also means being in a mode of confrontation with the status quo all the time. It implies being in a mood of discontinuity with the present and continuity with the future. Radicalism is the very core of a prophetic paradigm and is intricately inseparable from it.

A prophetic ministry seeks to uproot the causes of socio-political, economic and spiritual ills and comprehends life as holistic, and so understands that the categorisation of facets of life is only for analytical purposes, but the reality is that life is intricately one. Each aspect of life affects all others simultaneously. A prophetic ministry cannot be satisfied with any earthly

human social arrangement but seeks to achieve what it perceives as the Reign of God on earth. The churches', if adopting a prophetic motif, approach to government or state may not compromise the radicalism of its prophetic ministry even though it seeks to help the government emulate the Reign of God.

The government and the state at large are not the church, and yet the church can participate in governance and the well-being of the state through its pastoral ministries and prophetic conscientisation of the state or government. "The struggle for justice (with the poor) is not for the sake of confrontation, even though that may often be the immediate, penultimate, and necessary effect. Injustice (and corruption against the poor) and those who perpetrate it must be confronted with the claims of justice and truth, the demands of the gospel. This is all for the sake of reconciliation (justice, democracy, good governance, service delivery) ... and eradication of poverty" (De Gruchy 1988: 167 in Nurnberger and Took (eds.) additions mine).

2.6. The church as the facilitator of education for ethical moral formation and social transformation

The church should be a facilitator of education for different communities in cities, townships, and rural areas. The purpose of this education will be to bring transformation. For a city like Pietermaritzburg the church's response to issues such as poor governance, homelessness, crime, and violence, should be in the following manner:

2.6.1. Money, Greed, and Poverty: The church should "exercise its prophetic ministry in the areas of money, greed and poverty", this is for the church to find a way of standing up and speaking truth against greed, corruption and all kinds of fraud" (Nolan in Pityana & Villavicencio, 1995:153).

2.6.2. Addressing Homelessness: The church should be groundbreaking and think of ways of addressing homelessness and start projects like low-income social housing. Ubunye Free Methodist Church is one example of a church that responded to the challenge of homelessness and housing in the city. The church embarked on a project called Ubunye Housing Cooperative and the purpose of this project was to provide low-income housing for people living in the city that are without proper homes.

2.6.3. Community Projects: The Project Gateway is another example of the Church responding to issues affecting the city of Pietermaritzburg negatively. Here a group of twenty-three churches gathered and started a community project in the city. The project became a hub of education for different people in the city. The following services are offered at the project's school from Grade RR to Grade seven, a school of fashion design, a craft shop, a creative art school and office space for different organizations. All these programs contributed positively to the city thus addressing issues of unemployment, crime, and violence among the youth.

2.7. Dilapidation of the city

In most cases, churches in cities are affected negatively by the decay that is continuously dilapidating the city. Churches are not able to respond because they lack the resources to address issues affecting the community. The resource that is mostly mentioned to be a challenge for the church is money. I have attended several church meetings and in most of these meetings, the lack of financial resources was the main excuse for the church's failure to be effective in the community. My criticism of this excuse is that the church has not exhausted all the options because other means can be used to address issues that are affecting the churches and the community at larger in the city.

For instance, in the case of Pietermaritzburg, the city is full of assets, riches and different kinds of gifts. These assets may appear as if they are overshadowed by the decay in the city. But it is also important to make means and identify and mobilise the assets to use the assets to confront the decay in the city. The starting point for a community to overcome its rot is to realise that every community has assets.

The first asset for every community is the people in that community. The people in the community are an asset because they have minds, skills, talents, and dreams. All these will need to be mapped out or put in an inventory. John McKnight and John Kretzman put it well that,

Every single person has capacities, abilities, and gifts. Living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed, and gifts

given. Every living person has some gift or capacity of value to others. A strong community is a place that recognizes these gifts and ensures they are given. A weak community is a place where lots of people cannot or do not give their gifts (McKnight & Kretzman, 1993).

Msunduzi is a multi-religious city that has many other rich resources in other faith-based communities, such as Mosques, Hindu temples, and many other African Traditional religious groups but for this research, the focus will be on the Christian faith in the city.

In the Christian faith, most times lay people are undermined and not given a chance to operate fully and use their skills, talents, and gifts. The clergy seem to be the only people who can use their gifts, skills, and talents. Yet in some instances, the clergy is not adequately equipped and gifted to handle matters that impact a community negatively. But if the whole congregation is given a chance to participate individual assets, associational assets, institutional assets, physical assets, faith-based assets, and economic assets will be discovered.

For a city like Pietermaritzburg if all these assets can be discovered we shall see old dilapidating buildings renovated. Churches will support ecumenism and start sharing resources, share their buildings with other congregations. Churches will organise combined ecumenical services for special days like Passover, Pentecost, and Christmas. Churches will form strong partnerships and start community-developing programs.

Pietermaritzburg has good models of the impact of asset mapping and using these assets to establish Christian faith-based organizations in the city. Below are three examples of FBOs that I have engaged since I inserted myself in the city of Pietermaritzburg.

2.7.1. Project Gateway: a church-based non-profit organization serving the city of Pietermaritzburg. Their purpose of existence is to empower, care and educate communities.

2.7.2. PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action): a faith-based social justice and development Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). Their focus is on socio-economic rights, gender justice, youth development, livelihoods, and HIV & Aids.

2.7.3. The Haven: an NGO of the Ubunye Free Methodist Church of Southern Africa. The Haven is a transitional shelter for women and children at risk. This project provides psycho-

social, spiritual support to women and children who have experienced different kinds of abuse and neglect.

2.8. Institutions in the city of Pietermaritzburg

The city has more than 23 primary and higher primary schools, 20 High Schools, more than 15 Tertiary institutions, and more than 12 theological colleges. The city is surrounded by churches and faith-based organisations. The city has a strong political presence and a rich history of events that took place in the city, a vivid example is the old prison now called Project Gateway. The place is significant because significant people like the late President Nelson Mandela, Harry Gwala and Mahatma Gandhi were held as political prisoners in that facility.

We also have the Pietermaritzburg train station. In this train station history was made when Mahatma Gandhi refused to be removed from a “white-only compartment” in the train and was forcibly thrown out of the train in Pietermaritzburg train station. The list is not complete but above are some of the few examples indicating that the city of Pietermaritzburg is rich with assets, gifts and resources that can be strategically used to address the needs of the people in the city.

2.9. Assets of the city of Pietermaritzburg

The city of Pietermaritzburg has assets such as churches and religious groupings. The churches of the mainline confession are participating in ecumenical organizations such as the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council (KZNCC), Project Gateway, and IDAMASA (Interdenominational African Ministers’ Association of Southern Africa) to name a few. There are other theological institutions besides the University of KwaZulu-Natal as one more asset among others such as Trinity College, the Cluster of Theological Institutes, and other colleges of mainline churches, such as the Emmanuel University of Theology International. These institutions as assets of the city of Pietermaritzburg are entangled in the challenges of the triple challenges of the city.

There are also assets such as the informal networks like the Informal Msunduzi Chamber of Business (MCB). This is a parallel chamber of business formed by informal traders in the city of Pietermaritzburg. It works along the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business (PCB) which is constituted by formal commercial business. Though badly managed Pietermaritzburg has infrastructure that was at once well managed. There are stadiums for soccer, rugby, hockey,

athletics, baseball, and basketball. Pietermaritzburg has both public and private libraries and swimming pools.

2.10. Union Bible Institute: my entry point into the city of Pietermaritzburg

My first visit to Pietermaritzburg was in 1998 when I enrolled to study for my Diploma in Theology. I stayed in Pietermaritzburg for three years and most of what I was doing during my stay was to focus on my school work and nothing more than that. It was only when I returned in 2013 as a lecturer I developed an interest in networking with local churches and other faith-based organizations.

2.10.1. A brief description of my context

I am located in Pietermaritzburg in the Msunduzi Municipality; I am staying between a suburb called Hilton and a semirural area called Sweetwater. My first encounter with Pietermaritzburg was in 1998 when I was enrolled to do my Diploma in Biblical Studies. I stayed in Pietermaritzburg for three years studying. During my stay at the Union Bible Institute as a student, I did not move a lot my focus was on my books. The only time I went out of UBI was when I was going to town, church and to do my fieldwork at our church Ubunye Free Methodist Church. During my tenure as a student, I was not exposed to a lot of activities that were taking place in the neighbourhood. For that reason, I could not contribute much to the development of my neighbourhood or the city.

Also, the kind of theological education that we received did not encourage us to insert ourselves deeper into the community. Subjects like community development, politics, advocacy, and lobbying were not taught and neither we were encouraged to participate in the politics of the day as students, our was to get trained as pastors and return to our sending churches to be pastors. My exposure to the city and the neighbouring townships in Pietermaritzburg happened when I returned to UBI as an employee in June 2013.

When I returned to Pietermaritzburg in 2013, I was mature and no longer naïve and complacent. I was a transformed person because of the training I received at the Institute for Urban Ministry. At the Institute for Urban Ministry (IUM) I did an Advanced Certificate in Urban Ministry,

and I was introduced to the “pastoral praxis”, a model of doing ministry in the city or the urban areas.

The training I received at IUM opened my eyes and I was able to see things from a different perspective. My involvement with the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) in Pretoria for six years increased my scope of seeing things and people differently. At TLF I was exposed to programs for women and children, homeless people, and refugees. I was also exposed to different community forums, to street parades and was trained on how to engage and lobby people in power like the government officials and influential leaders in the community.

It was when I returned to Pietermaritzburg in 2013 that one of the actions I took was to look for communities I could join and work with. I was introduced to the following organizations. The Project Gateway, Kwa-Zulu Natal Christian Council (KZNCC) – which is a provincial chapter of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and IDAMASA (Interdenominational African Ministers Association of Southern Africa).

- Project Gateway assisted me in rekindling my passion for community development and taught me the rich history of inner-city Pietermaritzburg. The organization also exposed me to the real context of the city and introduced me to different structures and entities.
- Kwa-Zulu Natal Church Council, became a platform for me to reflect and engage on social justice issues and activism to promote ecumenism, cohesion, liberation, and development.
- IDAMASA, a strategic partner and a supporting system for me as a minister of the religion and a place for networking, learning, and reflecting.

2.10.2. My insertion at Union Bible Institute

Johanson (1971) says: “The Union Bible Institute started on the 12th of April 1939 and its purpose was to train black South African pastors who sense the call of God”. My first immersion at the Union Bible Institute was in 1998 when I was enrolled as a student to do a Diploma in Biblical Studies. After I completed in the year 2000, I returned to Soweto to serve the church. The second time I was immersed in UBI was on the 1 of June 2013. I moved

together with my wife and children to Union Bible Institute in Pietermaritzburg and started working as a lecturer. At the beginning of 2014, I was asked to be the Student Affairs Coordinator. In 2015 March, I was asked by the school Board to be an Acting Deputy Principal. It is fulfilling to be working in this field of theological education and equipping leaders for ministry. But all that journey comes with the greatest challenges and one of the challenges is the ever-changing context.

One of the challenges I have encountered as a lecturer at the UBI is that some students expect the teachers to have all the answers to their ministry problems. I have this under that a lecturer's responsibility is not to be an expert but rather a facilitator in learning processes. Therefore, responding to this perception of the students I encourage students to apply their minds and ask relevant questions to learn. One question that they need to ask while they are in the training is about the relevancy of the theological training, they are receiving at UBI.

They need to ask if the training is giving them tools that will enable them to serve the communities in their current context. In some instances, it is a challenge for old institutions to contextualise the theological education that is offered to students and to adapt to change. Here is an example UBI is an old evangelical college that may find it difficult to work with other colleges that have different theological ideologies. This proved itself that UBI was not participating in the Pietermaritzburg Cluster for Theological Colleges even though such a partnership had many advantages and opportunities for individual theological colleges to grow. Pietermaritzburg Cluster for Theological Colleges was a platform created to reflect on the current theological themes, a space to share information and resources and to grow as a college. **However, UBI was not interested because some of the theological institutions in the cluster did not hold the same ideologies that UBI uphold.**

Also, as a person who is interested in transformational urban education, I found it strange that there was more emphasis on Biblical and Systematic theology but less emphasis on practical theology. Even the module allocation at times where in such a way that modules for practical theology were mostly elective modules but modules for systematic and biblical theology were compulsory.

As a result, most of the UBI students were good with theory, and good with exegesis but poor in terms of the practical ministry. Some of them have failed dismally to work and serve an ever-changing world but theirs is to point out fingers and criticize. Their theological training did not transform them into servant leaders who are committed to the great commission as per the vision of UBI. One of my battles and challenges at UBI especially because times are changing, I feel as if UBI is detached from reality, or the change is taking place at a slow pace.

I feel as if we are behind as a school and even delaying our students in some instances. We tend to keep our students in the four walls of our classroom a lot and they are not adequately exposed to the real context while they are still in training to learn different skills of engaging the changing world after they graduate.

2.11. My insertion at Ubunye Free Methodist Church

Ubunye Free Methodist Church was initially one of the real signs of hope for the inner-city ministry in South Africa. Ubunye was demonstrating how a local church should respond to its context through social programs that were addressing issues that were affecting the community. The Haven's Constitution (2008) states that: "The Ubunye Free Methodist is based in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, as a local church of the Free Methodist Church".

The church has social programmes running on its premises including a shelter for women and children at risk called Ubunye Haven, and a low-income housing project called Ubunye Cooperative Housing. The Free Methodist Church started a ministry in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg in 1991. The vision of the church was to be an urban multicultural church, a church that was going to engage the community and address issues of their context. Dan and Kathleen Sheffield describe the ministry well,

Ubunye Free Methodist Church presently⁷ has attendance between 50-60 persons for Sunday morning worship. Our converted carpenter's workshop which serves as a worship centre only holds 70 people. It is in the backyard of the pastor's home, and therefore not highly visible from the street. About one-third of our people are members

⁷ "Presently" - Dan Sheffield was referring to 1998 because currently the Ubunye Free Methodist Church is not active although the Ubunye Haven is still functioning and the low-income housing is collapsing.

of the Free Methodist Church, but all hold their membership in other local churches elsewhere in South Africa or other parts of the world. The rest of the congregation consists of persons with some Christian background but who belong to other denominations. Many believe they should retain the membership they have in their home churches in the rural areas. However, in the urban context, they have not found the "white" congregations of their denomination to be an accepting environment. People in the congregation come from varied backgrounds; Bible college lecturers, nurses, teachers, social service professionals in NGOs, tertiary level students (university, technical college, Bible college), tradespeople, street hawkers, and domestic workers. About one-third of the congregation is children and teens, and at least 80% of the congregation is within walking distance of the worship centre (Yamamori et al, 1998)

It was in 1998 when I was studying at Union Bible Institute that I was first introduced to the work done at Ubunye Free Methodist Church. But after I graduated, I left Pietermaritzburg and for twelve years I was not part of that work. It was only in 2013 when I returned to work as a lecturer for the Union Bible Institute, I was introduced for a second time to Ubunye Free Methodist Church. When I returned the shape of the church, and its ministry was not appealing. In 2014 the Southern Kwa-Zulu Natal Free Methodist Church asked me to be an assistant pastor to Ubunye Free Methodist Church. I worked at Ubunye as an assistant pastor for a year.

It was not long before the senior pastor also asked me to be a part of the management of the Ubunye Haven. I was hesitant at first but in the end, I accepted to be part of the management of Ubunye Haven which is the only programme that is still functioning. Yet at the same time, Ubunye Cooperative Housing was and is facing serious challenges. The property was not managed well, the residents were now not paying the rates and utilities and were subletting.

Ubunye Cooperative Housing started evicting the tenants, and the tenants sued the Ubunye housing company. The evictions did not take place, yet the houses continued to dilapidate, tenants continued to sublet, and a continuous culture of non-payment of rates and electricity prevailed. The problems Ubunye is still dealing with today are a build-up of many years of wrongdoing and my assumption is that the church did not encourage community participation from the people they were serving. This challenge of Ubunye is a challenge many social

housing companies in South Africa find today – rent boycotts, little support from the courts, and hijacking of properties.

The church tried to be a saviour of the community but that was not sustainable. The church looked like an expert with all the answers and solutions. For that reason, the church created a dependency syndrome in their community, but this was not sustainable. The danger with “this dependency syndrome can be transferred to a new leader [community] simply because the basic structure of dependency can be transferred” according to (Kumalo 2003: 73).

The other challenge was that the Free Methodist of Southern Africa in the Southern Kwa-Zulu Natal Annual Conference relied on the leadership of Dan Sheffield and did not anticipate that his time in South Africa would end. When Dan Sheffield left South Africa returning to Canada the Free Methodist Church in the Southern Kwa-Zulu Natal Annual Conference did not have a pastor who was sufficiently equipped to pastor an urban church and manage the social ministries of Ubunye.

The above picture is one of the examples of the challenges of the Churches in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. There are many churches in the city, but they lack knowledge of addressing issues that are affecting the communities in the city. For the Free Methodist Church, the leadership in the Southern Kwa-Zulu Natal Conference did not have a clue how an urban church was supposed to be led. I remember in one of the meetings some members from the Free Methodist Church leadership had a question, “What will the church gain by working together with the Ubunye Free Methodist projects?” This was a clear indication that the church did not understand its immediate context and lacked a vision for the city. It is for that reason the Ubunye Free Methodist Church is not striving but battling to survive.

For a ministry like the one of Ubunye Free Methodist Church and for all other diaconal ministries that are offered by different organizations and people to survive some aspects need to be considered for the social and diaconal ministry of the church to be sustained. These are some of the examples of sustainable development strategies for the diaconal ministry of the church: 1) Understanding the context of the community and the setting in which people live and work, which includes “social, economic, educational, religious, philosophical and

political” (Gehman 1987), 2) Community participation, 3) Organizing resources, 4) Proper succession planning.

Ubunye was initially one of the real signs of hope for inner city ministry in South Africa. Ubunye was in the city of Pietermaritzburg at Pietermaritz Street. In those days, it was a shining star of diaconal ministry. Ubunye has been as it is at the writing of this research a home for women and girls who are destitute, who need shelter and protection from the ravages of society. Ubunye is a place of recovery and recuperation toward re-adjustment of one’s life, getting one on her feet to face the world with new strength and determination to succeed in life.

Ubunye as it was visualised by the Free Methodist Church was a demonstration of how a local church should respond to its context through action pact ministry of practical salvation. Through the ministry of Ubunye, Jesus was demonstrated as the practical Diakonos.

The challenge of Ubunye came with the social mutation and change in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. The inner city was gradually becoming black racially speaking. The white communities that occupied the city left but Ubunye did not leave. Somewhat the leadership of Ubunye either lost the vision of this diaconal house or could not cope with the societal change of the population of the city of Pietermaritzburg. It could be that people with resources and financial muscle left the church or the city and Ubunye was left to see her means end.

But Ubunye was resilient. Ubunye with all the miniature resources survives till this date. Ubunye is still doing the same diaconal ministry with little resources. Other challenges that might have caused the weakening of Ubunye could be a lack of vision in the new democratic dispensation or a lack of suitable leadership. Or lack of energy, but the house is still standing strong, still accommodating people in distress, still has a committee and housekeeper, and still has some form of administration running it.⁸

⁸ All the programs of the Ubunye Free Methodist Church are no longer in existence but for this study were used as testimonies of how the church responded to the triangle of decay and were also my insertions points.

2.12. Conclusion

Having discussed my insertion in Pietermaritzburg and at the Union Bible Institute I have learned that Pietermaritzburg has such a rich heritage of theological education, yet has so little impact on the city. There is a great lack of skills in how to read the city and a lack of understanding of the urban systems and powers. In most cases, the programmes of the churches are not contextual and relevant to the urban communities. Hence there is less impact or no impact or transformation in the community. Most of the time churches come to people as experts that have all the answers for every issue and such an attitude from the church will not bring transformation. It is for that reason that as the pastor and lecturer in a Bible school, I must not allow my qualifications and experiences to be a hindrance for me to learn new experiences. I should also take into consideration that I have my vulnerabilities. Nouwen asserts that,

These broken wounded, and completely unpretentious people force me to let go of my relevant self – the self that can do things, show things, prove things, build things – and forced me to reclaim that unadorned self in which I am completely vulnerable, open to receive and give love regardless of any accomplishments (Nouwen 1989 [2009]:24).

It is for that reason I resolved not to be an expert (manager) but rather take the role of a broken and wounded servant as per the words of Nouwen (1989). I should also consider the fact that I am an outsider and this will mean that I need to deepen my insertion process to learn and understand the context I am serving in. As a wounded servant, I should not be afraid to look irrelevant or incompetent in some instances. I should be able to allow other broken people in the community to strip me of everything that I thought was working and start learning from them. Hence the insertion step becomes one of the important steps in the pastoral cycle as one begins to engage the city. Insertion is like you have been immersed deeper into the challenges of the city. The following are the examples of some of the challenges that surfaced during my immersions in the city, 1) Unemployment and poverty, 2) Crime and violence against women, and 3) Homelessness in the city. These social issues bring us to a point where we should start asking a difficult question such as: how can we train ministers of religion and urban workers for a diaconate of community transformation?

In this chapter, I have addressed the question of my insertion into the city of Pietermaritzburg. In this way I demonstrated how I was initiated to the city and the missiological needs which called for the transformation of the city from the perspective of Jesus as the deacon, transforming urban settings.

This chapter discussed the challenges of poor governance, homelessness, crime, and violence dubbed the triangle decay. This was meant to lay down the context in which urban mission is operating, and that the church, wide and many as they are in the city have to respond as a redemptive community. It is in the context and light of this chapter that the central message of the gospel should be proclaimed for the transformation of communities. The next chapter will deal with, Context Analysis: Theological education and diaconal ministry in Pietermaritzburg.

Chapter three

Context Analysis: Theological education and diaconal ministry in Pietermaritzburg

3. Introduction

In chapter three, I will analyze the current theological education in Pietermaritzburg and focus on the Union Bible Institute (UBI). I will also look at the current models of the diaconal ministry in Pietermaritzburg focusing on Ubunye Free Methodist Church and its community development work (a shelter for women and children at risk and low-income housing). I will do a critical reflection on these two programmes to find out if these programs facilitate processes of transformation in the city instead of offering temporally relief to their urban community.

I chose to do a contextual analysis of UBI and Ubunye Free Methodist Church because they are my location now. This context analysis will involve the conscious use of analytical tools to unlock the underlying dynamics often hidden from view in a naive approach to reality that is at work in a particular situation or context. Kumalo (2003:32), asserts that this process “is an attempt to understand one’s social context and this includes questions, such as why things happen the way they do.”

3.1. Analysis of the theological education and ecumenical activism in Pietermaritzburg

Different models can be used to analyze theological education in Pietermaritzburg. Cheesman (1993:486-499) identified five models, that is: “Academic Model, Monastic Model, Training Model, Business Model, and Discipleship Model”.

3.1.1 Academic Model: The academic model uses the scientific approach, for instance in the empirical study of the Bible, the scientific model will consider the mastery of Biblical languages, textual criticism, historical materialism, context, genre, customs, and traditions of the Bible.

3.1.2. Monastic Model: The monistic model emphasises orthodoxy and strict observance of rules and procedures. Monastic approaches value traditions and in most cases are hierarchical. The monastic model cherished order and protocol.

3.1.3. Training Model: Supposedly all models are somewhat doing training according to their order. But to have just training for the sake of it becomes a model. A model which does not monitor what one does with the training. A model that does not consider the ethical consequences of that training.

3.1.4. Business Model: The business model functions as the purpose of offering theological training is to make a profit from those who engage in such an institution. Earlier, it was mentioned that the lecturers of the Union Bible Institute were committed to the calling of teaching theological education with no intention or attitude toward the idea of material gain.

3.1.5. Discipleship Model: Ethical character formation spiritual nourishment to emulate Christ and commitment to preach and teach the Gospel is what the discipleship model is all about. The discipleship model is about making the disciples like their teacher to the extent that they may supersede the teacher when necessary.

The model that is adopted in this section is the “discipleship model”. This model is chosen to analyze the theological education and ecumenical activism of Pietermaritzburg. The focus will be to look at the two historic examples of theological education and ecumenical activism in Pietermaritzburg.

3.2. The Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions: The Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions which was founded in March 1990 is one of the powerful bodies that included a range of institutions into one ecumenical body. Its other members are St Joseph’s Theological Scholasticate, the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) (then called the School of Theology, the successor of the Department of Theology of the University of Natal (UN), Pietermaritzburg Campus and the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA), (Then the Evangelical Bible Seminary of Southern Africa (EBSEMSA). Other members were the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI), The Anglican House of Studies and the Evangelical Theological House of Studies (ETHOS) which was symbiotically associated with the Department of Theology of UN, PMB Campus. And later they were joined by the UCCSA (Uniting Congregational Church of Southern Africa. The Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions emulated the model of the Chicago Theological College. The cluster was almost a form of emulation and resuscitation of FEDSAM (Federal Seminary). The Cluster maximises the resources of the

partner institutions and provides many opportunities for ecumenical exchange among students and staff.

In the context of this study, the cluster is mentioned as, like UBI, a contextual contributor to the theological and societal formation of the city of Pietermaritzburg. That UBI has never been a member of the cluster. In saying this, it means UBI might have gained or lost a lot of its evangelical character. Perhaps, so, that evangelicalism as a movement has not been very much keen on ecumenical relations. Evangelical Institutions like UBI are not into what may be called the social gospel and political engagement in the public arena or public theology.

Ntlha (2007:127), writes about evangelicalism and ecumenism. In his writing, he speaks about the positive, neutral, and negative postures of evangelicals toward ecumenism. All these postures are found among both traditions – the evangelical and ecumenical, but as for the evangelical he says:

“While this may be true elsewhere in the world, the experience in South Africa is that evangelicals have been unable to be ecumenical even among themselves. EWISA noted that the most startling part of this question of evangelicalism and ecumenism is that evangelicals find it difficult even to relate to one another. One finds various forms of ecumenical structures between the so-called ecumenical Churches within evangelical circles there is very little ecumenical activity or fellowship.⁹

Probing the reasons for such a situation, the EWISA document states:

Some of the reasons advanced are dogmatism, purism (i.e. a holier than thou attitude), the belief that one has the whole truth as against everyone else, the problem of individualism (individual faith) as against community faith, their ecclesiology.... a ghetto theology, fear of being influenced and misled, etc.¹⁰

Putting the failure of prophetic witness squarely at the door of this lack of ecumenism, the document states: We feel that this spirit amongst us which makes fellowship and joint efforts together difficult or impossible is responsible for our failure to minister effectively to a society

⁹ EWISA p 28

¹⁰ ibid 29

at war. We need to broaden our base through ecumenical cooperation to meet both the spiritual and social needs of all the people of South Africa.¹¹

This point aside, it is the case that this negative posture towards ecumenism enables evangelicals to stick to their kind, in their doctrinal purity and thus redefine their ecumenism, in an ahistorical manner. A manner that considers irrelevant critical issues about Apartheid, where politics, geography, and culture are contested in a life and death struggle in which only the dominant can afford the luxury of transcending them”.

3.3. An overview of theological education and ecumenical activism in Pietermaritzburg with lenses on the contribution of PACSA¹²

Manda (2014) narrates that in 1979 a faith-based organization was established, and the name of the organization is PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness). The organization started with a group of people who were gathering to do Bible studies. The organization’s purpose was to raise awareness amongst the white Christian Church about the unjust realities of the apartheid government. The organization also accompanied partner communities that were seeking their liberation from the power that was depriving them of their freedom as human beings. Charles Manda (2014) further gives three examples of theological formation that influenced this Bible study group to start awareness campaigns against the apartheid regime.

The text in Micah 6:8, “What does the Lord require from you? To act just, love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.” This text prompted the Bible study group to start advocating for “freedom and equality” because when they read the text, the text was totally against the model of the politics of the day. The state politics of the day maintained the “status quo theology that brutalized and oppressed black people. The Bible study group rejected the status quo theology but began to walk alongside the communities that were neglected.

- The group was motivated by the Black Conscious Movement (BCM). The champion of the Black Conscious Movement was driven by Steve Biko who once said this about the black

¹¹ ibid 29

¹² PACSA was closed down during this study and it used here as a testimony of an organization that facilitated transformation in the city.

minority: “If black people felt themselves as victims, they are victims of their passivity; liberation that is first of all, psychological event, lay in their own hands.” This message of Biko revolutionised many groups, amongst those groups were students, religious groups, and workers.

- The group was also inspired by the rise and involvement of other Christian groups such as the South African Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Christian Institute. The involvement of these groups encouraged more black Christians to stand up and to be part of the struggle for the total emancipation of black people. Emergent to that was black theology.

These three examples show that a Bible study group with a correct form of theological persuasion ended up being an organization that impacted not only Pietermaritzburg but the whole Msunduzi municipality as well. These Bible studies gave to a theology of accompaniment, which was one of the theological education in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. The theology of accompaniment is about “going with another on an equal basis ... it is not only concern about the person, but also about the place, places where the poor live, die and struggle for survival” (Goizueta 1995; 2009). This theological education is different from the status quo State Theology that encourages the inferiority and superiority of other people.

“As Jesus accompanied his disciples, the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) seeks to accompany community partners to achieve healing and transformational development. God has been and continues to be present in history with and for humanity, first with his chosen people the Israelites and then through the incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ for all people. Inspired by God’s example, accompaniment is Christians’ humble attempt to mirror God’s work in the world.

3.4. Assessing the work of UKZN and ESSA

As part of the members of the Cluster of Theological Institutes (CTI), both the University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Theology and the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA) began a course called Theology and Development (TD). This course was meant for the post-

graduate students. It is in this background that UKZN and ESSA are discussed together. As mentioned as part of the background, the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) and ESSA developed and offered a progressive “Theology and Development Programme”. This program was designed for people who are interested in being community developers, and who are also interested in doing advocacy work and addressing issues that concern human rights. Haddad (2016) explains,

The Theology and Development programme at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu Natal, is an interdisciplinary programme that attempts to reflect theologically on the social issues confronting the continent of Africa, with a particular emphasis on systemic injustice and the role of faith communities in addressing these injustices.

This programme was conceptualised in 1994 and the aim of the programme “was to challenge African church leaders to engage social issues from the perspective of prophetic theology and so bring about social change” (Haddad 2016).

The two examples of theological education and ecumenical activism in Pietermaritzburg (accompaniment and development theology) that we have discussed are still relevant and are well-designed for the current context of our cities and this theological education is still offered to date. Even though South Africa has been a democratic state for the past 27 years, yet we still have social issues confronting our cities. Cities are flooded by people who are unemployed, homeless, abused and living in extreme poverty.

Therefore, the current urban context seeks a church or faith-based organization to practice their diaconal ministry by accompanying those who are crying, protesting and addressing injustices in their context. Also, about the development of the city or the country, it is important to have conversations about developing the city and the country. These discussions should not only be confined to departments of sociology and theology in higher learning institutions but development should also be reflected upon it in different platforms.

These theological discussions about development must be allowed to take place in different platforms, the formal discussion in the sub-division of theological studies in the higher learning

institutions is necessary but also the voice of people on the ground is necessary for the development of cities. These two should inform each other on this subject matter, the theory of developmental studies must be informed by the real issues that are experienced by people daily. The theory of development studies in the universities should assist in organizing a structure and a strategy on how development should unfold especially in the urban context. If the theory and the practical reality are knotted together, we get a balanced and informed education that will bring transformation. As De Gruchy (2015:117) points out,

We must create a learning environment that balances the lessons that can be learnt through books and the insights of scholars, with lessons that the students have already learnt through their life and ministry. We must balance the value that we place on the ‘expert’ knowledge, with that which we place upon their insight as practitioners.

This balance is essential if we want to facilitate the processes of transformation for urban communities through diaconal ministry. Because diaconal ministry is a practical mission that is driven by what we see and act upon is not just an academic component that is restricted to a university and only understood through books and perceptions of academics.

3.5. Assessing the work of UBI

As part of a continent-wide project considering urban theological education in African cities, I engaged my institution critically. To do so, I asked a set of questions to analyse the situation of UBI and to understand the current position of UBI as a theological institution that has existed for the past 76 years. The questions are (Nkosi 2020:140):

- What is the role of UBI in South Africa today?
- What is the current theological education in UBI?
- What is the role of UBI in a city like Pietermaritzburg engulfed by several social ills and the failure of political systems?
- How can one foster a new urban theological vision in an institution that has existed for more than seven decades?

This set of questions will assist us in understanding UBI's role in society, UBI's immediate context, and its theological education. This will also be a process of reading the signs of the times in the context I am inserted in and presenting my reflections as a pastor and educator.

3.5.1 The Origin of the Union Bible Institute

The role of the Union Bible Institute (UBI) when it was established in 1939 was to train black ministers who did not have theological training but were already in ministry. When the institution was established the purpose of its existence was clear and that was to train black evangelists and pastors in South Africa (Johanson 1971, Nkosi 2020). The students of UBI came from different provinces and regions of South Africa and at least a year UBI admitted students from other neighbouring countries like Swaziland and Lesotho. Most of the education that was offered by the UBI was done in the four corners of a classroom. The only ministries that forced students can engage in the city, township, and neighborhood were through children and youth ministry, and hospital visitation ministries. These ministries were only done on weekends. These students stay at UBI for three years to complete their Diploma.

The context was only demanding for ministers of religion to be trained as church workers. From 1939 to the early 2000 things were running smoothly for the UBI. The school had numerous supporters and the student turnover was amazing. UBI was known as a school for evangelists because the emphasis was more on Biblical theology. The students were asked to memorize a substantial number of verses. There was less reflection in their learning. Most students were taking what the teacher was saying and applying it without applying critical thinking sometimes.

The Union Bible Institute was also not registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training for many years. This was a challenge for students who were intending to further their studies at the University. I am one of those students who struggled to be accepted at a university because the qualifications I received from UBI in the year 2000 were not recognized. Several potential students could not register at UBI because of UBI's non-accredited modules, and these potential students went to other institutions. It is also fair to note that UBI is now accredited by the Department of Higher Education since the year 2010. And this is an advantage

for the institution to grow and explore more opportunities that will make their theological education more contextual.

As a student at UBI between 1998 and 2000 I observed and witnessed discrimination that was practised within the institution, for example, there were courses/modules that were only offered to male students, not to female students. Homiletics and pastoral theology were not offered to the female students; the female students were not allowed to preach in a combined service. They were also treated differently and at times isolated and not allowed to participate in the social life at UBI. They had their small kitchen and were not allowed to sit in the same dining hall as males. Fair enough with equal treatment of female students a lot has changed. This was after some churches engaged UBI about its practice of depriving female students of modules like homiletics and pastoral theology.

The other challenge is that UBI during the armed struggle in the 1990s failed to have a voice as a theological institution unlike other theological institutions in Pietermaritzburg which raised their voice and concerns. This was because the school leadership of that time was feeling vulnerable because of the powers and systems that were ruling and students were also not encouraged to speak up. For this reason, UBI operated in isolation and did not partner with any other institution in the area. To substantiate what I just said, to date, UBI is not a member of the Cluster of Theological Institutions in Pietermaritzburg. The reason for this lack of participation in the cluster is that UBI is an evangelical school that is hesitant to affiliate with liberal theologians. This decision has deprived the institution of participating in many discussions and events that are organised by the Cluster (Nkosi 2020).

3.5.2 The Theological approach of the Union Bible Institute since its inception

The theological education philosophy of UBI is to be Bible-based, Evangelical and Practical in its approach (UBI, unpublished brochure, 2020). The philosophy is good and seems to be balanced but my observation is that biblical theology courses that are more likely to be endorsed and are made to be compulsory, but practical courses are mostly made to be electives. This could be a disadvantage for students if only one stream of courses is more encouraged than the other. The current context of UBI calls for students to be encouraged to take practical theology courses. This may sound as if one is advocating for one theological field more than

the others. Bias as it may look or sound the reality is that the issues that are daily faced by communities will need practical resolutions and ministers need to be trained as such.

Since the founding of UBI, it has been seen as theologically conservative and evangelical. The conservative UBI was meant to be reading the Bible, ahistorically, apolitically, and in inconsideration of the context in which the Bible school was operating. In this sense, UBI avoided any socio-political involvement in Pietermaritzburg. Towards the realization of the 1994 political transition from Apartheid to the new democratic dispensation, UBI is observed to move towards a progressive liberal theological mode very carefully. In doing so, they considered not compromising on what they would be the essentials of evangelicalism, which meant being rooted in the pronouncement of the gospel of the first-century church. So, the evangelical part of the theological understanding of UBI is that they are rooted in the message of the New Testament protestant teachings of the church. At the moment UBI will inevitably be challenged to embrace postmodern Christian thought and theology.

The other challenge that institutions like UBI will soon have to deal with is institutional stereotypes. This means a particular position that is held high by an institution. For example, UBI holds an evangelical approach kind of theology. This position of UBI can sometimes deprive the institute of the opportunity to partner with other institutions that hold different approaches to theology. It was no surprise for me to discover that UBI does not affiliate with the Cluster for theological colleges in Pietermaritzburg. The reason was that UBI is not comfortable partnering with institutions that hold a different view of theology, such as institutions that hold a liberal theology position (Nkosi 2020).

Since it is more than seventy years UBI has been in existence and its context has drastically changed it would be advisable for UBI to rethink its position and role in contemporary South Africa. To always review the theological courses, they are offering to different ministers enrolling with the institute will be necessary. Critical questions such as: how UBI can foster a new urban theological vision that will contribute to the transformation of urban communities will have to be asked by those in leadership.

3.5.3. The Theology Approach of the Union Bible Institute and the Contemporary Issues

Considering contemporary issues that are affecting different neighbouring communities of UBI, the institute will have to develop a new strategy for teaching and learning. UBI will have to expand its pool of partners and be open to starting new and intentional relationships without allowing bias lest it becomes a stumbling block for new partnerships.

Since we have discussed the role of UBI from when it was established in 1939 and between 1998 and 2000 when I was a student there, to balance our discussion, it is better to go back to the four questions we asked at the beginning of this section.

The first two questions will be combined; they are: what is the role of UBI in South Africa today? And what is the current theological education at UBI? The Union Bible Institute is still offering theological education to men and women who sense a call to minister in different ways to the churches and community. Several things have changed since the inception of the institution. One would remember that the institution was not accredited by the Council of Higher Education until 2010. The school was offering Diplomas and Postgraduate studies, Diplomas in Biblical studies only in the past but that has changed since the school is now accredited. The UBI is now offering one-year Higher Certificates, Diploma and B.Th. Degree in Theology. The school offers its course to full-time students attending during the day, part-time students attending evening classes, and a distance learning program for students who cannot be able to stay full-time because they have no time. Another extra program offered by UBI is mentorship for its students, here each student is allocated to a mentor for the duration of the course the student is enrolled for. The role of the mentor is to disciple the student in his journey of studying. There is also a program called “*Ukuthazanani*”, which is an isiZulu name for encouragement. These are small groups consisting of five to seven people meeting bi-weekly to support and encourage one another as lecturers and students. Progressive fieldwork is planned for students to continue taking place for the duration of their stay at UBI. The fieldwork is divided in this manner:

- First-year, children's ministry
- Second year, hospital ministry and a field trip, youth ministry
- Third year, apprentice in a local church, Faith Based Organization

Looking at the third question is about the role of UBI in a city like Pietermaritzburg engulfed by several social ills and the failure of political systems. One must be honest that UBI's mandate was never to engage the community, but it was only training pastors and sending them back to their churches after completing their training. Now things are slowly changing and improving. I suppose it is because most staff members are South African, and it is the post-apartheid period. Unlike in the apartheid era, most lecturers were foreign missionaries who did not want to be on the wrong side of the law and lose visas and work permits. The UBI is starting to partner and work with different stakeholders in the city and townships. The school is now represented in different fraternals and forums.

The last question is; how can we foster a new urban theological vision in an institution that has existed for more than seven decades? The first step UBI should take its context seriously and “discern the will of God for their situation” (Mbewe 2002:3). UBI should understand “God’s mission as contextual, addressing faithfully the challenges of ever-changing and complex context ...” (Lutheran World Federation 2004). To foster the new urban theological vision at UBI the conformist models of teaching should change and a new model to be proposed. This new model will seek to see an integrated Competency Training Model for UBI. The proposed model is the “Discipleship Model” (Cheesman 1993), this model “is praxis-based pedagogy that upholds the concept of learning as an apprentice than a student”. This model allows a student to grow holistically for effective ministry. Therefore, programs like fieldwork, ministry trips, mentorship, and *khuthazanani*¹³ groups are essential for UBI and they need to be strengthened and become more intentional about them.

3.6. Theological education and community transformation

Theological education is a discipline in a higher learning institution, and it is not a compilation of models, philosophies, and ideas (Jacob 2010:1). But theological education should facilitate processes of transformation for different communities. Those who receive this kind of education need to be ready to transform themselves first through what they are learning. Their transformation needs to also impact their communities. This theological education that will

¹³ Khuthazanani means to encourage in English. So Khuthazanani are small groups where students meet with lecturers to encourage and to pray with one another.

have an impact on the community will involve three facets: academic (intellectual), personal (moral & spiritual), and ministerial/missiological (vocational), (Jacob 2010:1). According to the assertion of (Peter1999: 93) “theology is to serve the church to help towards education which is the primary mission of the church.” This is a call for an integrated theological education program that is developed by both the church and the seminaries. The lack of an integrated theological program will result in seminaries failing to offer a theological education program that will assist the church in giving a holistic service to the community and as a result, no transformation take place. Therefore, the nature of a theological education program that will facilitate the transformation of a community must have the following elements:

- The theological education must train pastors and ministers to do theology at the grass-root level (Naidoo 2010)
- The theological education must not only end with the cognitive acquisition of appropriate knowledge but should also transfer ministerial skills develop personal character emphasize formation and be contextualization (Naidoo 2010).
- Theological education must go beyond the acquiring of cognitive qualifications to more integrated human transformation and development (Naidoo 2010).
- The resources for theological education must not be limited to books, articles, and journals. But other means should be considered as sources for example a city can be a resource for theological education (De Beer 2012) because in the city you can find intermediaries such as civil organizations, non-governmental organizations, and urban social movements (De Beer 2017).
- A theological education that will revive the spirit of Ubuntu as a theological reflection for urban communities.
- A theological education that will free people from a leadership fiend called prestige, power, and influence (Nouwen 2009), but to a diaconal leadership model.

The above elements do not jettison the quality assurance process that is expected by the departments of higher education from registered theological institutions. Instead, these elements have a possibility of enhancing a contextual theological education that will bring transformation to different communities.

3.7. Analysis of diaconal ministry in Pietermaritzburg

The diaconal ministry can be interpreted or explained in different ways. Some churches see it as a junior position for a minister who is in preparation to be fully ordained as an elder senior pastor or priest. In some instances, the diaconal ministry is understood as the position of an usher or a steward in the church. Others see this as a position of someone who is appointed by a church to take care of the members of that congregation only, for example, to prepare sacraments like the eucharist and baptism. It is about taking care of the needs of the elderly, the poor, the sick, and the bereaved members of the congregation. But in this section and the rest of the study, I discuss diaconal ministry as a social service of the church to every person in a community and focus on the inner-city Pietermaritzburg and neighbouring townships connected to the city.

3.8. Overview of a diaconal ministry in the city of Pietermaritzburg

Although history taught that Kwa-Zulu Natal was a province for the Zulu nation over time the shape of the province has changed. The inner city of Pietermaritzburg is one of the parts of the province that are now diversified and multicultural. This diversity in the city brings along a few good and challenging effects. It is, therefore, essential for those serving in the city to be ready to address all these effects. One way to address these effects is to have a vibrant diaconal ministry in the city.

In the city of Pietermaritzburg, we have a few diaconal ministries that have a good record of serving the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized communities. It is worth noting that the diaconate ministry in the city of Pietermaritzburg is not only offered by churches but by civil communities as well. I am saying that services offered by civil organizations are diaconal as well because another definition of the diaconal ministry is “a call to action, as a response to challenges of human suffering, injustice and care for creation” (LWF 2009). Genrich (2004) gives an overview of different diaconal ministries that took place in Pietermaritzburg during the scourge of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

- Thabitha Ministries was established in 1998 by Sister Gail Trollip. They offer a holistic response to those in need and infected by HIV and AIDS. They also offer training on home-based care and have a door-to-door outreach program.

- In 2001, St. Martins Anglican Church established an Empowerment Centre in Edendale. This project was established by Revd. Mary Moleko. This project was self-supporting and self-sustaining. They also trained people on subjects such as HIV and AIDS, Human Sexuality, self-esteem, and Life Skills. Also, a networking program was formed and three denominations in the community came together, and these are the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Lutheran. This led to the pooling of more resources and more people that were infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, people that were affected by poverty were supported.
- Entabeni Community Church (ECC) was founded in 2002 by Pastor Albert Chetty. The ECC trained volunteers in Aids awareness and home-based care. They also embarked on poverty alleviation strategies and started a feeding program feeding approximately two hundred children.
- PACSA, 1979 a faith-based organization was established, and the name of the organization is PACSA. The organization started with a group of people who were gathering to do Bible studies. The organization's purpose was to raise awareness amongst the white Christian Church about the unjust realities of the apartheid government. The organization also accompanied partner communities that were seeking their liberation from the power that was depriving their freedom as human beings.
- African Enterprise has more than 50 years in operation doing holistic urban evangelism. The organization also played a major role in bringing peace and reconciliation during the conflicts. Many people were served through its programs and these programs provided options for many vulnerable people around South Africa and other neighbouring countries.

Here are more examples of Non-Governmental Organizations and Movements that have contributed positively to local community development and transformation in the city of Pietermaritzburg in the 1990s identified by (Nkosi 2020)

- The Built Environment Support Group (BESG) was established in 1983 as a support group that defended communities against eviction from informal settlements in urban areas. BESG became a key player in shaping planning and housing policies from local

to national levels. Since 1995, BEG has been a leader in enabling poor communities to access land, basic services, housing, and administrative justice.

- Church Land Programme, established in 1997 with its focus on church land while also encouraging the church to engage in issues concerning the national land question.
- Abahlali baseMjondolo, a large social movement with followers from 30 informal settlements in Durban and other cities throughout South Africa. Their purpose is to engage the government on matters concerning the land and forced removal, access to water, electricity, health care, and education for the poor and marginalized.

The above Movements or NGOs were not founded or informed by a theological vision or values yet, they could be great partners and city intermediaries and assist in implementing the church's diaconal programs. Many of their staff members might be church members who will support the diaconal ministry of the church because of their understanding of faith.

3.9. Analysis of the ministry of Ubunye Free Methodist Church

Ubunye Free Methodist Church is the inner-city church of the Free Methodist Church of Southern Africa. Ubunye Free Methodist Church was started in 1991 in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg (Sheffield 1998). A group of people met in the city centre and started to worship together. Sheffield (1998) states that "at that time, the ministry goals essentially involved growing a multicultural congregation to a size that could support a full-time pastor and provide for a worship centre that could seat 150 – 200 people". The neighbourhood of the church is a residential area with a few low-rising buildings. There are several small retail shops and auto repair shops, two taxi ranks within the area, and informal drinking shebeens in the area. Sheffield further says, there were 6000 residents at the time when the church was planted, and the community was made up of:

- Single and single-parent families and the average age was under 35 years.
- No primary school in the area but several secondary schools and adult education centres.
- Most adults had limited education and houses functioned at a survival level.

- The area is ethnically diverse (40 per cent Zulu speaking, 10 per cent coloured, 15 per cent Indian, 5 per cent Africans from other areas or countries, and 30 per cent of low-income whites).

The church was thriving, and it looked like its vision to be a multicultural church was coming to pass and a size that could support a pastor and have its worship centre was forthcoming. At that time Dan and Kathleen Sheffield from Canada joined the Ubunye Free Methodist Church, and their purpose was to develop the work further. Their first discovery was that within a ten minutes' walk they found ten to fifteen churches in the area. These churches were serving white congregations who drove from the suburbs to come to church and leave after church services. They realized that there was a need for a congregation that would be rooted in the city and “in the affairs of the community” (Sheffield 1998).

Henceforth, Dan Sheffield together with the leadership of the Ubunye Free Methodist Church began to analyze and discuss issues that were affecting the community. These issues were brought to the larger congregation for more discussions and four issues surfaced: housing, employment, women's safety, and civil cooperation. The period of analysis and reflection continued, and the congregation was also growing and had more multicultural worship services and more people joined the church. Dan Sheffield (1998) succinctly describes the Ubunye Free Methodist Church,

- 50 to 60 persons for the Sunday service, the congregation is formed by people from varied backgrounds: professional people, students (universities, technical colleges, Bible colleges), trade people, street hawkers, and domestic workers.
- One-third of the congregation are Free Methodist Church members elsewhere in South Africa or other parts of the world.
- The services are held at the carpenter's workshop located in the backyard of the pastors' home.
- The primary service is on Sunday morning, the service is at least one and a half hours long and led by a multicultural worship team. Once a month, communion is served followed by a communal meal and congregational social interaction. An age-level children's service is offered in the second half of the service up to the age of twelve.

- The Sunday worship service attempts to engage with the realities of peoples' experiences as they live in the city. Therefore, time is for sharing the joys, struggles, and concerns of peoples' lives and mutual prayer is done. Sermons are developed to address issues and provide solid biblical teachings. Tea is served after the service for social interaction.

While the Ubunye Free Methodist Church congregation was growing, the analysis and reflections on the issues that were affecting the community led to the initiation of two projects by the church. The two projects are the Ubunye Cooperative Housing and The Haven an emergency shelter for women and children at risk.

Having looked at the brief history of the Church, in this section, we will give a thick description of Ubunye Cooperative Housing and The Haven. We shall also seek to analyze and ask some critical questions as well.

The Ubunye Cooperative Housing is in the inner city of Pietermaritzburg. Its address is 72/78 Pietermaritz Street. The establishment was built close to educational institutions, bus and taxi ranks, clinics, hospitals, and many other necessary facilities. The place was known as Ubunye Centre before Ubunye Cooperative Housing was established. Ubunye Centre was functioning as a residential hotel and retirement home.

The area is about 3000 square meters. Ubunye Cooperative Housing occupies 1 415 square meters. The population of Ubunye Cooperative Housing is more than 270 people and their economic situation is not firm. This was an indication that this place was occupied by unemployed people, and some fell under the informal economy of the city and that is how they survived from day to day.

The first piloted housing project was initiated in 1995 when the church bought a building on Berg Street. At the same time, another property in Berg Street was available. This property had three bedrooms and an illegal tavern in the backyard. The property harboured about 25 residents. This was after the place had various problems such as the lack of security, electricity, and water and it was also a health hazard. All these unbearable issues attracted the attention of the city officials and the place was declared not suitable to be a residential place it was shut

down by the city and the owner realizing that the place had become a liability to him decided to sell the property.

The Ubunye Free Methodist Church leaders located the owner of the building and offered to buy the building for him. The church spent a month cleaning and renovating the house and the property was available for renting under the Ubunye Cooperative Housing. The goal was to provide dignified and affordable housing for low-income earners, As stated by Sheffield “Our goal was to keep rent affordable, maintain the property and tolerate no violence” (Talbot 2002:61). Later on, the Ubunye Cooperative Housing was registered as a not-for-profit company, a separate entity from the church. Dan Sheffield volunteered to be a Managing Director; one full-time maintenance supervisor was appointed with a half-time cleaning person under the maintenance supervisor. In 1996 Ubunye Cooperate Housing bought another property, the Holmdene building at 78 Pietermaritz Street, the building was a residential hotel, and had enough space to rent out to sixty rooms. The first resident was a mother with three boys. More people were referred and admitted, and the rent was kept at an affordable price. Since then, Ubunye Cooperative Housing has provided shelter for more than 150 people.

Ubunye Cooperate Housing was an excellent initiative to address homelessness in the city, especially amongst people who were not able to afford home loans, yet had employment. However, the vision of the Ubunye Cooperative Housing failed as per the expectation and different kinds of attempts to implement the vision have been explored but with no success. A question may arise as to why the initiative failed. Ezekiel Ntakutimane in his Master’s dissertation attempted to answer the question by pointing out three issues that were lacking to implement the housing vision. The three issues are “resident’s participation, women’s involvement, and tenant’s training and education” (Ntakirutimana 2004: 58-59).

3.9.1. Residents’ participation

The lack of resident participation was one of the issues that created a collapse of the Ubunye Cooperative Housing, Ntakirutimana (2004: 58) states, “It was revealed that out of ten board members, only one member represents all residents”. He further says, “the was no representative in the Executive Committee, the decisions were taken from a high level and were implemented without consulting the residents”.

3.9.2. Women's Involvement

Women's involvement and participation were insignificant and women being the minority their voice had a limited influence. "The Ubunye Housing Cooperative had only two women representatives out of ten men and the Executive Committee of Ubunye Cooperative Housing has no women representatives" (Ntakirutimana 2004: 59). For that reason, the decisions concerning women's issues were not heard. The negative implication of not involving women is that the leadership of the project may be perceived as people who are against gender equality.

3.9.3. Tenants' Training and Education

Tenants who are not trained and educated about the processes, rights, and responsibilities detailed in the policies and procedures governing the facility tend to create anarchy. For Ubunye Cooperative Housing the training and education of tenants was lacking, consequently, the tenants lacked information regarding their rights and responsibilities. The only instruction they were aware of was to pay rent to be allowed to continue staying in the facility. The other set of rules they were cognisant of were the ones in the lease agreement. Besides those rules they did not have any knowledge or idea of what social housing is about. Hence the place is disintegrating, and the tenants have hijacked it and have turned it into a squalid slum.

Having discussed the Ubunye Cooperative Housing initiative we shall proceed to discuss the Ubunye Haven. The Ubunye Haven is under the auspices of Ubunye Cooperative Housing (UCH). The UCH also initiated a ministry for women and children at risk. The Ubunye Haven has a different structure and it also gives a service that is different from the Ubunye Cooperative Housing. Ubunye Haven has 1) Board Members, 2) a Management Committee, and 3) Staff members. The Board Members meet every quarter to discuss and monitor the progress of the project and the committee consists of people from other churches and sectors. The Management Committee oversees all the activities that are taking place in the project. The Staff members are the Coordinator, Social Worker, Housemothers, Maintenance personnel, and volunteers from within the Free Methodist Church and outside the Church.

The project was established in 1995 and its purpose was to journey with women and children who were at risk and give them support. The increase in domestic violence and gender-based

violence in the city and its neighbouring townships contributed to the existence of the shelter. The survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence were coming from different racial groups. “These are Colored, Indians, Whites, Africans. This made the shelter a multicultural shelter” Ntakirutimana (2004:60). Following were the number of activities that were envisaged the help the survivors (Ibid: Ntakirutimane):

- Liaising with referring agencies and undertaking interviews
- Drawing a personal development plan with each woman
- Facilitating personnel by appropriate professionals
- Assistance in relevant court, welfare, or medical procedures
- Evaluate of progress made and the need for ongoing accommodation and conducting an exit debriefing.

The Haven would also have a childcare facility and have these activities for children:

- Daily interaction with the children of the residents
- Regular trauma debriefing support groups
- School, crèche support to traumatized children
- Developing empathetic childcare skills with the mother

The activities would be done in the shelter as a means to address the special needs of women and their children. It is worth noting that some of the above-mentioned services would be possible to render them to the women and children at the Haven. It is for that reason that The Haven has a broader network of other service providers, including NGOs’, government departments, and the police. The ministry is also completely funded through government grants and donations from various bodies.

The Haven, like any other community development project, has both success stories and challenging stories. The Haven has been successful in taking women and children who were at risk. The women and children were removed from the perpetrators and put in a safe place. The challenge begins when those working in the shelter are supposed to implement the activities envisaged to assist the survivors. Some of the challenges are 1) governance of the shelter, 2) Privacy and Confidentiality, 3) Security, and 4) Homelessness (Ntakirutimane 2004: 61-62).

3.9.4. Governance of The Haven

Poor governance of the shelter was the result of the lack of skills to operate a charity organization. Lack of proper systems to enhance the smooth running of the shelter. The lack of proper skills and poor systems led to issues about the women at the shelter not being addressed accordingly.

3.9.5. Privacy and Confidentiality

The UCH and The Haven shared the same office, and this idea was compromising the privacy and confidentiality of the survivors. The files with the information of the women and children in the shelter were in the public domain thus making them vulnerable and privacy no longer maintained.

3.9.6. Safety and Security

The Haven shelter was not supposed to be open to the public since it was supposed to protect the identity and the destination of the survivor from the perpetrator. But this was not the case since The Haven was operating in a building of the UCH. The Haven was not secured. The women and children at the shelter were exposed to several social ills like drinking, verbal abuse, and insults, loud noise from the radio. Such an environment was not conducive for the survivors of gender-based violence, especially during their counselling sessions in progress.

3.9.7. Homelessness

Homelessness was another challenge for the survivors who were supposed to leave the shelter after a certain period of their restoration. The ladies in the shelter were not willing to go back to their abusers at the same time they were not allowed to stay in the shelter indefinitely. Some of the survivors had no choice but to return to their abuser and suffer for the sake of the children who would be homeless after shelter life. Other survivors would move from one shelter not another shelter because none of the families would be willing to accommodate them.

Based on the above discussion we realized that the lack of proper training for Staff members, Board members, and Executive members on how projects like The Haven should operate will

lead to several continuous challenges. The lack of proper systems, policies, and procedures has negative implications. These may lead to an organization like The Haven not fulfilling its envisaged activities to bring transformation into society.

3.10. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the analysis of theological education and ecumenical activism in the city of Pietermaritzburg. I presented the models of theological education. I then proceeded to single out the discipleship model as the one predominantly used at UBI. As said earlier, in this chapter I have looked at the theological education that is offered in Pietermaritzburg and the theological education that is offered by UBI about diaconal ministry. The findings are, that the theological education that is offered in the context of Pietermaritzburg must be a Discipleship Mode theological education because this model is praxis-based. Here a student is more of an apprentice rather than just a normal student who is just receiving information but as an apprentice, the focus is holistic growth and equipping to be effective in ministry. This approach of learning is necessary if we are about training people to do a diaconal ministry that will bring transformation to a city like Pietermaritzburg.

We also discussed the two ministries of the Ubunye Free Methodist Church namely the Ubunye Cooperative Housing (UCH) and The Haven. Here we described, analysed, and identified some challenges in both ministries. The findings indicate that UCH and The Haven are ignoring the context of their ministry. A diaconal ministry must “develop and administer social ministries that correspond to the relevant needs of the community” (Sheffield 1998).

I managed to demonstrate that at the beginning UBI was not keen on ecumenical activism. The white staff members were cautious about their participation in the struggle. Their licenses to teach in South Africa would have been revoked. While the complete change of the staff component, the predominantly black staff, who are more sensitive to the socio-political situation steered the theological shift towards the concerns for social and community transformation as a goal of the mission. The conclusion is that the Bible-based ministry of UBI does not necessarily have to ignore the social needs of the community they are serving. This means that UBI can be very critical when and if they can learn from the failures of the ministry of Ubunye House and The Haven.

Theological education can be grounded better if spaces like Ubunye and the Haven and other community-based organizations in the city can be used as classrooms. The space can be excellent for the insertion of theology students because these organizations are not isolated from reality and their context.

The partnership between theological education and community-based organizations can bring about good results because there will be mutual learning. By mutual learning we mean partnering, integrating knowledge and practice. There will be collaboration when doing different ministries, research, campaigns, and fieldwork.

Chapter four

Theological reflection: Jesus as Diakonos

4. Introduction

I will discuss diakonia as the church's social practice in this section. Diakonia as the church's social practice is not just charity but also partnership and social justice. I will also look at the history of the diaconal ministry and the history of the church. This section will look at the lessons that can be learned from Jesus the Diakonos for urban transformation. Also look at Jesus, Diakonia, and the city of Pietermaritzburg.

4.1. Diakonia as the church's social service

In some instances “Diakonia may be presented as the social ministry of the church. It can also be presented as an academic discipline that is often located within the area of practical theology...” (Dietrich et al 2014:1). Yet diakonia can also be understood as a “theological concept that points to the very identity and mission of the church” (LWF 2009). “John N. Collins did an exegesis of “diak – words (diakonia, diakonei, and diakonos) and his findings show that diakonia in the first place means an assignment or mission” (Dietrich et al 2014:3). This mission does not just one-sided but a holistic mission of the church.

The holistic mission of the church can be better understood when we combine proclamation, fellowship, and Christian service. According to Simangaliso Kumalo (2003:47), “This means that in fellowship the church builds a community and then practices what it preaches through Christian deeds in response to real-life struggle.” Adrian Hasting writes the following about the mission of the church:

In Christian koinonia, kerygma, and Diakonia communion, proclamation, and service – or to put it in still jargon terms, a loving fellowship, sturdy witness to the truth, and continual care of one's neighbour in need – constitute the worship, *lirtugia*, which are acceptable to God and do so in their very togetherness and secularity. (1996:15)

This explanation jettisons the one-sidedness of the mission of the Church and embraces the holistic approach of the mission of the church. These dimensions must not be separated if we

want to understand the mission of the Church. When this is realized, the communities will be developed, and God will be Reigning. It is an establishment of God's Reign is known as shalom (Kumalo 2003). "A state of wholeness and completeness possessed by a person or a group that includes good health, prosperity, security, and deep spiritual contentment" (Linthicum 1991:86). The ministry of the Church should be holistic and 'cover all the sphere of life political, social, economic, ecological, and psychological [and spiritual] (De Beer 1997:386).

In this holistic mission of the Church, it is important to notice that Diakonia is one of the dimensions. This dimension is important in the ministry and mission of the Church, and it was also embraced by Jesus. Collins states,

If Jesus says to himself that he has come to engage in Diakonia which will involve giving up his life as a ransom, then Diakonia takes on an absolute value that the church must embody in its way of life and its structures of ministry (see Mark; 10:45 (Collins 2014:255).

Collins (2014) continues and quotes Reicke (1965), "... the concept Diakonia receives a new meaning through the fact that Jesus describes himself as the model of service to one's neighbour and of sacrifice to many" (Ibid). Jesus announced his ministry in (Luke 4:18-19, NIV) when he read from Isaiah 61,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

This declaration by Jesus should be the motivation for the Church to be diaconal in its mission's approaches. And through the Bible we see Jesus practising his declaration and confirming it multiple times that "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The exegeses of serve are the Greek term "diakonia" and Collins cited by Dietrich, et al (2014) calls that are an assignment and a mission. Therefore, the assignment and mission of the Church cannot differ from the diaconate mission of Jesus. He did not only declare that he was a servant, but he was practical and left an example for his disciples when he washed their feet. Being their master, he took the position of a slave. He washed their feet without prejudice and discrimination although he was aware that some of

them had ulterior motives, they would betray him, and abandon him (John 13). He became the “diakonos” until his death. This is the “Gospel in action ...” (Dietrich et al 2014).

This diaconal mission should not be limited to charitable Christian social services, but it should involve the act of mutuality, partnership, and conviviality. The holistic mission of Jesus addresses the questions of justice. The justice of God and God’s righteousness are inseparable. The diaconal mission of the Church is about justice and righteousness.

Stephanie Dietrich (2014) in her article discusses Diakonia as an “act of mutual service in accountability and reciprocity...” It is a process of building our communities in a symbiotic way. There is a sense of interdependency and mutual reliance. Some scholars would go as far as calling it ‘Ubuntu’ (Dietrich 2014:17). The diaconal ministry has a gender perspective in its approach because every human being despite of sexual orientation, creed, or color is made in the image of God. Therefore, every diaconal ministry leads toward a defence of the dignity of all human beings (Dietrich et al: 2016).

4.2. Diaconal ministry in the history of the church

This section will deal with the diaconal ministry in the history of the church. The historical perspective will assist the church and community workers in perceiving the meaning and the best application of the diaconal principles (Yun 2012:33). In the history of the church the diaconal ministry was expressed by showing kindness and benevolence to those in need (Molokotos-Liederman 2011). Diaconal ministry comes a long way in the history of the church, and it was an important aspect of the church. It was a service rendered by different churches, convents, and benevolent groups (Delkeskamp-Hayes 2009).

The diaconal ministry has always been part of the early church (Yun 2012). In the early church, the diaconal ministry was part and parcel of prayer, thank-giving, liturgy, and charitable work (Yun 2012). According to Yun (2012) in the history of the church, we have witnesses and people who were examples of various diaconal ministry aspects:

- Tertullian: Christians in the early church used their money to take care of the poor, amongst those it was the orphans, pensioners without pension, and prisoners. The diaconal ministry of the Church during the times of Tertullian was a daily business.

- Julian the apostate and emperor of Rome in 361-363 was aware of the Church's ministry to care for the poor and their diaconal ministry. History teaches that he encouraged the pagan priests to imitate the Christian priest and practice benevolence.

In the Middle Ages, the diaconal ministry of the church was mostly done by individuals, and it was a private initiative. The diaconal ministry of Christians was seen during the plagues and pandemics. Christians offered service during times when everyone was in danger because of pandemics and diseases and people had options to flee but Christians chose to stay and do the diaconal ministry. Latvus (2008:145-146) observes that:

During the epidemics, these disasters in the middle of the second and third centuries killed a large part of the population. Because of the horrifying mortality rate, people usually abandoned all who were sick including relatives. Christians broke this pattern and instead of fleeing, gave help to those who were suffering. Also, the burial of corpses was known as a Christian practice. These acts had several effects. Even the simple care of sick people saved many because they got water to drink and something to eat which helped their recovery.

This diaconal ministry of the church impacted many communities and the church continued with the diaconal ministry even after the pandemic. The diaconal ministry continued and people who were living in poverty, affected by war and diseases were taken care of by Christians in those days. During the scourge of the Cyprian plague (249–262 AD), this pandemic also killed a lot of people with a mortality rate of 5,000 a day in Rome (Horgan 2016). People fled leaving the sick to die alone but Christians decided to stay behind and do their diaconal work to the sick. According to (Scrivener 2020, Latvus 2017) Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, noticing the Christian behaviour during the pandemic, reported:

Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbours and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing

others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead. But with the heathen, everything was quite otherwise. They deserted those who began to be sick and fled from their dearest friends. They shunned any participation or fellowship with death, yet, with all their precautions, it was not easy for them to escape.

These benevolent actions by Christians did not only impact the social life of people during the epidemics but also their spiritual life was impacted. Yun (2012: 36) observes that “this diaconal ministry not only served the need of community and its people but also led non-Christians in the community to become congregational members to attain salvation”. The diaconal ministry was a form of evangelization to the communities. But people were not forced to be part of the church to receive service of the church rather the diaconal ministry of the church was for all that were affected.

It is worth noting that the diaconal ministry changed in the late Middle Ages. The diaconal ministry became increasingly diverse and individualized, and more difficulties were encountered (McKee 1984: 48-49). One of the challenges and difficulties I observed was maintaining the original meaning of the diaconal ministry or the inconsistency in the use of the word deacon (Latvus 2017:30). For example, the Roman Catholic Church had a ministry called “deacons” this was just a liturgical position and a lower-level position for a person on the way to the full priesthood (Latvus 2017:30). In some instances, the term deacon was referring to a person involved in charity ministry, civil servant, or a ministry in charge of the social ministry (Latvus 2017:30). Another example is the deacon’s ministry of the Free Methodist Church, the deacon’s ministry has several responsibilities such as care, mercy, worship, music, administration, organization, spiritual nurture, counselling, outreach, and services (FMCSA Book of Discipline 2017:141). For John Wesley his understanding of the church’s diaconal mission was not just about a liturgical position or a lower service level position for a person on the way to full priesthood. But John Wesley’s diaconal mission was about social justice, equality, community empowerment, education, and community care. He saw every human being as the image of God and therefore no human being was supposed to be treated with contempt, unfairness, marginalized, or discriminated against. He saw the need for community empowerment, in building the self-esteem of individuals. John Wesley’s diaconal mission also included community education; he was convinced that education would help the communities to facilitate their change in the community. But such an education must be liberating not

maintaining the status quo that perpetuates oppression of the poor and vulnerable. John Wesley's other diaconal mission was to build communities of care. This was not just a theory for Wesley but caring for communities was to be practical and Wesley said the following words about caring:

I had done what in me lay to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, employ the poor, and visit the sick; but was not alone, sufficient for these things; and therefore, desired all whose hearts were as my heart, 1. To bring what clothes each could spare, to be distributed among those that wanted most. 2. To give weekly a penny or what they could afford, for the relief of the poor and sick. My design, I told them, is to employ, for the present, all the women who are out of business, and desire it, in knitting. To these we will have a common price for what they do; and add, according to their need. Twelve persons are appointed to inspect these and to visit and provide things needful for the sick. Each of these is to visit all the sick within their district, every other day: And to meet on Tuesday evening, to give an account of what they have done, and consult what can be done further (Wesley 1979:309).

It is for that reason that the diaconal ministry will need to have a clear strategy and vision. It should not just be one of the hierarchical programs of the church. There is a paradigm shift in how the diaconal ministry has unfolded in the modern time. The diaconal ministry grew from being just charity and benevolence to be more formal and organised ministry to different communities.

4.3. Jesus the teacher and example of a diaconal ministry

The diaconate ministry is not just a personal service to another but also about interpersonal healing, community development, and advocacy for systemic justice. Jesus Christ was a model of this holistic service to others, he became a model of service to others through his teachings and by his action. Through his teaching, we read that he trained his disciples to be servants of their communities. In Matthew 20: 25-28 we read a passage about Jesus specifically teaching his disciples about servant leadership style. The context of the passage is that the son of Zebedee, James and John together with their mother approached Jesus and they were requesting

honourable positions in the kingdom of God. But the reply of Jesus was opposite to their expectation. Taylor (2004) asserts that,

Jesus' response reveals that the values of the two brothers and, probably those of the other ten disciples, reflect those of the world's leaders, not those of the Kingdom. Jesus uses the Gentile leaders as a negative example because Jewish people knew well that neighbouring pagan rulers often exhibited an abuse of power. The Gentile model of authority was based on arrogance and overbearing dominance. Ancient Near Eastern kings had long claimed to be gods and ruled tyrannically. Greek rulers had adopted the same posture through much of the eastern Mediterranean. The Roman emperor and his provincial agents would have been viewed in much the same light: brutal and tyrannical. Leaders quested after power and relished it. In a domineering way, they enjoyed exercising authority over others.

For Jesus to be the greatest in the kingdom a person was supposed to be willing to empty him/herself and take the position of a servant. This process would call for leaders to overcome the temptation of power just like Jesus Christ in Matthew 4, may it be political, military, economic, moral or spiritual power (Nouwen 2009:55). For Jesus seeking after power and control was not a requirement for leaders in his kingdom. But "leaders who would be great or first in God's community must not strive for positions of honour but become the community's servant and slave" (Taylor 2004). Jesus' incarnation was the manifestation of the diaconal ministry this is according to (Philippians 2: 5-7). He inserted himself amongst the people, to fill their sufferings and pain and therefore Jesus can empathise with human beings. Jesus Christ did not only teach about the diaconal leadership, but he lived this lifestyle with his disciples.

In John 13 we read about Jesus taking a position of a servant and washing the feet of his disciples. The culture of the day considered Jesus as "Rabbi - teacher or master and Lord - Kurious the slave owner" (Mutavhatsindi 2008:128) but paradoxically Jesus acted as a slave not as a slave owner and washed the disciple's feet. This was also the purpose of the mission of Christ here on earth, he was sent to liberate the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed (Luke 4:18). Therefore, Jesus is seeking such disciples that will serve the world not looking for the world to serve them. At the end of Jesus' mission on earth, he gave a commission to his

disciples that they should go to the ends for the world because “ the world as a whole is the open arena for the diaconal ministry” (Mutavhatsindi 2008:151). This means fighting for recognition, competition, and power struggle is not necessary for the calling of a disciple to serve others. The church is called to serve the nations, but the first church must “learn that the diaconal ministry is a key to understanding the person of Jesus Christ and his Gospel” (Mutavhatsindi 2008:151).

According to Matthew 28: 19-20 we read about the “Great Commission or the Command” and Jesus said to his disciples “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you ...”. For this dissertation, I am not going to exegete the whole passage and without ignoring the context of the passage I will only extract the following line from the passage “and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you”. This instruction of Jesus to his disciples can be fulfilled in different ways. One other way to see that this instruction was fulfilled is that the early church practised the diaconal ministry. This is one of the lessons the church took from Jesus Christ. In the book of the Acts of the Apostle, we find different examples of how the early church followed Christ's diaconate ministry. According to Dr Marion Avila's (n. d. 16) assertion, the Apostles knew that they were to continue with the diaconal ministry and Peter defined the Apostle's ministry as the “Diakonia” (Acts 1:17). Even the person who was going to replace Judas Iscariot was supposed to be someone who was going to share in the “Diakonia” of the apostles. Acts 2 – 4 and 6 give stories about the community of believers in Jerusalem. This church was genuine, spontaneous, and generous in addressing the needs of the people they applied diaconal principles (Avila n. d. 16).

4.4. Jesus, Diakonia and the city of Pietermaritzburg

In my context in Pietermaritzburg, a defence of dignity must be focused more on women since they are the most vulnerable and their life is at risk in most cases. The source of human dignity is God expressed as the Image of God in humanity. It is for that reason the Reverend Sheffield, a missionary who joined the Ubunye Free Methodist Church in Pietermaritzburg not only became a pastor of the church but also started two community ministries. Those ministries are the shelter for women and children at risk and low-income social housing. Sheffield realised that there were basic needs in the community that were supposed to be addressed. His influence

by Wesley's diaconal response to issues that were affecting people made him respond and address issues of homelessness in the city. He addressed issues of gender-based violence and abuse of children and women. This process of establishing these two programmes began with a proper insertion in the city of Pietermaritzburg. The two programs were a result of taking time to do analysis and critical reflection of the context and planning. There was also a process of soliciting strategic partners and supporters for this work.

One of the challenges for Theological Education Institutions is the failure to train the students to be able to analyse and critically reflect on the dynamics of their context especially in the urban areas. The students should be equipped with analytical tools to be able to address pressing issues that are affecting their community. The skill of knowing how to use limited resources and still bring more results. The ability to see opportunities that can be explored by working together with other stakeholders and partners. Also, critical reflection skills are essential for students for theology students to understand the power dynamics, culture, and expectations of the community.

4.5. Understanding community transformation

Community transformation is the action and leadership of the masses. Mutemwa et. al (2018: 11) asserts that "external experts should play a minimal role and grassroots action should play a key role." Community transformation starts with understanding the needs of the communities and responding to the needs of the most vulnerable groups such as the homeless community, elders, women and children and the list is endless (Adeyemo 2006, Swanepoel and De Beer 2015).

It is also understood that there will be obstructions, and there will also be a balm to bring healing as well. Areas of influence should be recognised and local assets such as the dreams, skills and talents of the local people should be utilised (Mutemwa, Hattingh–Rust and Hattingh 2018: 11). As we progress with our discussion about understanding community transformation, we also need to have principles that will help us facilitate the process of transformation. According to Mutemwa et. al (2018) the following principles must be considered: (full community participation, planning and implantation).

4.6. Full community participation

Community participation is about the involvement and the actions of a community (Brown 1994). There are different levels of community participation. Some of these levels are good because they can bring sustainable development to the community. Sometimes community participation can be a defeating exercise if it is about standing on a receiving end waiting for relief from international bodies or waiting for service and knowledge from experts. In instances where community participation is not serving the purpose of community transformation, the experts and theology students should come and learn from people on the ground to understand the role of community participation. The transformational task of community participation is to ensure that people participate in all things together and include all people in the community (Mutemwa et. al 2018).

The strength of community participation is that it can bring change and this change will not come from outside but from within. Swanepoel & De Beer (2015) argues that action should take place in masses and if there is any help from outside it should play a minimal role if necessary. There should also be a clear identification of community-felt needs and this must be done by the local people (Mutemwa et. al 2018). The reason why the locals must identify their concrete needs is that they know and understand their context and situation better. There “should also be an integrated holistic approach” to addressing the needs of the community (Mutemwa et. al 2018). For example, if a community project runs a transitional shelter for vulnerable women and children, the shelter should not only stop by giving a place of safety but also should think of programs that will bring healing and restoration and the next step be a process of developing and sustaining until the last stage of reintegrating the person to the community.

Mutemwa et. al (2018), assert that Community participation should be about endowing the local community with willpower. I concur that without empowerment, transformation cannot be sustained. Mutemwa et. al (2018) further say empowerment is complex, and it is explained differently by scholars but there is a similar assumption that empowered communities react differently to their contexts because:

- Individuals are in touch with their feelings and know their needs more than anyone else.
- Personal knowledge and experience are valid and useful in coping effectively.

- People have a starting point and can build from that point going forward using their talents, skills, and dreams.
- Participate in decision-making, planning, and implementing
- All have a mutual understanding of how they with each other and address the issues of their context.

Mutuality can be defined in many words; these words are as follows, “to share in, “to participate in”, “friendship, fellowship, companionship” and it also involves “generosity” (Bromiley 1988:447). All these values are supposed to be embedded in the Church, a community, or a family of God. Mbaya (2012: 5) states:

The Church is regarded as the family of God ... a people of God ... who is a community of love and fellowship. Love and fellowship are the most important things in life, based on ‘God’s love’ ... The God, who receives them as children, stimulates a sense of belonging to God and one another. He makes them into a community of support, accepting one another, and sharing their needs.

A family is a vivid picture of mutuality; it is a place of empathy, sympathy, and support. In a family, they serve one another, and all the contributions are for the benefit of family members. They carry each other’s burden, and pain and joy are shared. No one is allowed to have selfish ambitions. Those who have the ability assist those who do not have the means at that time and when your time of need arrives you receive the same help as well. The relationship in the family is reciprocal. The Church of Norway Plan for Diakonia (2010:7) states the following about reciprocity:

There are periods in life when we have the ability and possibility to give, at other times we need to receive. Reciprocity is a keyword. The conditions we live under are different; some people experience greater difficulties than others. The capacity to change varies from one person to person. Loving and caring for one’s neighbour is based on reciprocity, equality, and respect for the integrity of others.

This is a family or community and has a mutual approach in the way of building and developing each other. It is a service with a commitment to one another. According to Bromiley (1998:154-

5), this is “a true act of Christian love, services and responsibility involving personal commitment. Mbaya (2012:2) observes, “In other words, Diakonia, as service rendered, relates to ministry as an obligation driven by personal commitment.” This should be a common goal for everyone, and the benefits are shared by the community. This community has a changed language, it is no longer the ‘us’ and ‘them’ but mutuality is about ‘we’. There is interdependency and the transformation is in a symbiotic manner.

[In Diakonia] being an inclusive community is an important way in which the Church shows that it cares. The Bible describes this community as one body with many parts and functions (1 Corinthians 12). The church community consists of people of both sexes of different abilities and different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. In an inclusive community, every individual can see and be seen. Here mutual comfort and help are given, and new strength and new hope are released. (The Church of Norway Plan for Diakonia 2010:7)

This inclusive community welcomes and respects everyone’s input: no one is supposed to be a spectator - all people participate. There is no room for “passive observers but all are active participants” (The Church of Norway Plan for Diakonia 2010:7). Mutual help and participation are essential in the processes of democratization, transformation, and development. This mutual participation should follow these activities as stated in Community Participation (2005)

Expressing opinions about desirable improvements, prioritising goals and negotiating with agencies. Planning – the formulation of objectives, setting of goals, and criticising plans. Mobilising – raising awareness in a community about needs, establishing or supporting organisational structures within the community.

This reminds me of the women's community initiative in South Africa in Soweto my township. Women were the most likely people who would suffer when someone died at home. Because of poverty in the area, it was difficult to organize groceries to cook for mourners during the funeral because in Africa funerals are attended by many people. Women organized themselves and started a grocery club to assist one another with groceries when death occurs in a particular family. They organized themselves, formed a committee, and agreed on an amount each woman would contribute when there was a death in the neighbourhood; they drew a list of

necessary grocery items that are essential for the funeral. This initiative and mutual agreement between women elevated the burden of dealing with the shame of not being able to cater for your mourners. This initiative improved people's condition, women were mobilized to establish a supporting structure within the community and there was mutual understanding between the women.

This kind of service was essential; it was practical and motivated women to be actively committed to the vision. Such initiatives can be an example for the Christian communities that are faced with daily injustices. Christian communities can mutually agree among themselves on ways to fight injustices. Gutierrez (1973:102) speaking of the commitment of Christians, says:

The different sectors of the People of God are gradually committing themselves in different ways to the process of liberation. They are becoming aware that this liberation implies a break with the status quo, and that it calls for a social revolution.

Therefore, social revolution can only be possible when the people of God have mutual understanding. Their Diaconal action will be an act of mutuality. The process will help in creating inclusive communities, and overcoming loneliness and people will not operate in isolation. ho(2023:28) coins it well when that mutuality is “theology with others, a partnership between the helper and those in need for help.” Dietrich et. al (2014: 14) states that “were not merely donors or merely recipients of help but bound together in this community, we are both at the same time – sometimes more as givers, sometimes more as recipients.” Mutuality can also be practiced in theological education; a new paradigm can be that the classroom will not only be the four walls of the class in a theological institute but rather the informal settlement, a shelter for women and children at risk can be spaces of learning. In these spaces knowledge can be generated together in a mutual form in dialogical and sharing ways. Theological institutions and community based organizations can exchange knowledge in a mutual manner.

4.7. Planning and implementation

Proper planning and implementation require strong leadership in the process. Different leadership styles can be explored to determine the excellent leadership style that will help implement diaconate as a community transformation.

4.7.1. Servant leadership

The servant leader is a servant first ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. ... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant leader to make sure that other people's highest-priority needs are being served.

As a result, those who are served grow, they are freed and skilled. A servant leader is emulating Christ who once said, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve ..." (Mat. 20:28, NIV). Smith observes that:

A servant leader leads to serve, serves the highest priority needs of others, and prizes the contributions of each individual to the whole ... servant pastors lead in such a way that members of their congregations and the churches themselves grow healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and likely themselves to become servants. (1996:40-41)

This kind of leadership is in opposition to any leadership where a leader demands to be served such as transactional leadership. The second leadership style like the servant leader is the supportive leadership style.

4.7.2. Supportive leadership

This style encourages the followers and stimulates commitment and the morale of those you are leading. This leadership is inclusive, and everyone has a part to play and contributes accordingly. People here are respected as human beings not treated as tools to accomplish the work. This writer says:

Genuine leadership is of only one type: supportive. It leads people: but it does not drive them. It never loses sight of the most important principle governing

any project involving human beings: namely, that people are more important than things. (Walter 1987:11)

In most communities, such a kind of leadership has been missing. As a result, leaders drive to the limit those they are leading and expect them to work and deliver but with less support, encouragement and resources. Mathafena (2007:78) says: “supportive leadership style increases employee’s commitment, satisfaction and productivity.” Our discussion leads us to the analysis of another style of leadership, transformational leadership.

4.7.3. Transformational leadership

“A transforming leader is one able to recognise and enhance an existing need or demand of a potential follower” (Banza 2013: 68). Such leaders according to Burn:

Looks for potential motives in the followers seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents (1978:4)

He further says:

Transforming leadership becomes “moral” in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leaders and the leaders, and thus it has a transforming effect on both. Perhaps the best modern example is Gandhi, who aroused and elevated the hopes and demands of millions of Indians and whose life and responsibility were enhanced in the process (Ibid:20).

It is necessary to have such leadership since there is a lot of change taking place not only in organizations but in South Africa, Africa, and the continent. This world today is not only looking for leaders who have qualifications of leadership but rather for leaders who can influence in a way that they will be transformed. Such leaders need to be transformed first and be free from all the temptations of leadership such as trying to be “relevant, to prove that they have power” [at the expense of the community] (Nouwen 2009: 24-25).

Transformational leadership is needed because our societies are being transformed daily and if such leadership is not available the society will keep on deteriorating. When we have

transformational leadership will have a vision and action will take place and will bring transformation. I concur with Thomas in Egercioglu and Ozdemir when he states that:

In general, urban transformation has been defined as a “*comprehensive vision and action*” which tries to solve urban problems and provides permanent solutions regarding the economic, physical, social, and environmental condition of a district undergoing specific changes (2003: n.p.).

Thomas further says:

It is intended to change the nature of a place and in the process to involve the resident community and other actors with a stake in its future. It usually involves some form of partnership working among different stakeholders, although the specific institutional form can vary (Ibid).

The above assertions reveal that the goal of leadership for community or urban transformation is to implement programs that will address actual issues that are identified by the community people. And that everyone must have a responsibility or a task and that the work must be implemented step by step and be completed (Mutemwa, Hattingh-Rust and Hattingh 2018).

4.8. Resource mobilisation

Resource mobilization must be a collective effort of a community because this will have a long-term impact on the community. But if help is always expected to come from outside, that community is not going to be sustained for a long time. This community has the potential to nurture a paternalistic mentality where the people in the community will seek help even if they have the means and ability to do more by themselves. Corbett & Fikkert (2009: 115) “Do not do things for the people that they can do for themselves.”

The statement of Corbett and Fikkert does not nullify the fact that the community may still need some help from outside, but that kind of assistance must be for emergencies. As Corbett & Fikkert (2009: 115) put it relief is for emergency and temporary situations, rehabilitation must be the next to restore the community to its first position and last is development. This development process should be an ongoing change that moves everyone that is in the community and places them in a better place in life (2009: 115). Such kind of development should be sustainable, and the sustainability will depend on the efforts of the community.

Sustainable development is not built by help that comes from outside but in most cases, it is when a community will look from within and discover the skills, dreams, talents and all the untapped potentials of the people. An asset-based community recognises everyone's gifts, capabilities and abilities without discriminating against them because of their background (McKnight & Kretzman 1993).

Voorheis in Yamamori et al. (1996:131) argues that “no community is poor to contribute something” and research substantiates that every person in a community can contribute and that local investment can transform a society. Here are some of the stories compiled by (Sigurd Haus 2017) given as examples of community development initiated by the community:

Rev. Mwingirwa Benson Linguli, a minister in the Methodist Church in Kenya was my schoolmate at VID Specialized University in Norway in 2017. He writes that most children attending school in Kenya come from poor families that cannot even afford a meal for their families. These children are forced to come to school with empty stomachs and probably go home sleep without food or get a simple little dinner. Most of these children must walk long distances barefoot under the scorching sun. Linguli, realizing the difficulty experienced by these children organized his former schoolmates in Kenya, and they initiated a feeding scheme program for these school kids.

They collected a few sacks of maize, beans, oil, pots, and other ingredients. They also involved the school committee and asked the school to get some volunteers to help cook this common meal for the children. They tried this program for a term, and it worked. It was then they decided to involve the parents of these school children and they shared the idea and asked the parents to start contributing some ingredients to prepare the food and to ensure that every school-going child gets a standard simple lunch at school. The project did not only solve the issues of hunger amongst the school children, it also brought equality amongst all students despite their family background. The project also allowed parents to work freely and earn money for their families and not worry about the children's lunch. The number of school dropouts at school was reduced, and students improved performance in class.

Grace Aumua, former leader of Tuinuane Savings Group Programmes writes that the group was formed for women in Kenya to alleviate poverty. The group saves their own money and gives loans from their savings. There is no external funding to the group. The group assists women in discovering their talents and promotes the use of talents, skills, and local knowledge in development. Their slogan is “helping to help themselves”. Members of this group recognize talents as readily available resources that need little or no capital to use.

Members, therefore, use their talents to generate income. They cater for events and sing. They do weave, poultry keeping, and rearing livestock. They are also involved in community activities such as farming, repairing roads, participating in community leadership roles, improving businesses, church development, and motivating others to start their own business. This group has empowered women to bring together different ways of thinking, gifts, and learning from each other. Women are trained to be patient, to empathize with each other, to network, negotiate, nurture and educate their children. This program become a drive for many women to see themselves succeed and to have the ability to embrace complex social, environmental, and political challenges.

Tesfayo Noko is the Operations Manager of the EECMY¹⁴ in Shelle Mella. This is a creative congregation establishing cooperatives and small-scale associations in their area. As a result, this work has paved financial freedom for the village ladies in the area. He says the congregation is using natural talents to generate its income, both for evangelistic and Diakonia work. Shelle Mella is one of the largest cotton-growing areas in Ethiopia. This is one of the opportunities for the women of Shelle Mella since they are talented in spinning cotton, and this is one way of making an income-generating scheme benefiting both community development and congregational diaconal work.

The congregation women also played another role of bringing dairy products from their homes to the junction of roadsides where passengers were moving. Their sales of milk and butter answered the demand and gained customers. This project grew and customers came from 20 kilometres to buy milk the business has more than one thousand customers and this paved the way to greater financial freedom for the village ladies.

¹⁴ Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is a Lutheran denomination in Ethiopia.

Rev. Prof. Simangaliso Kumalo (2003) in his book “Turning Deserts in the Forests Through Missions” reflects on the change that took place in a Methodist Congregation in Ivory Park, Midrand in South Africa. He says when he arrived as a minister in that congregation there was no hope for that church, but a turnaround took place when the church started to engage the community. They agreed that they would help people to help themselves.

Their project was called the Nehemiah project and they had a mission shop that was providing clothes to the poor communities at an affordable price. This shop created employment for the poor and resources for the mission work of the church. The second project was the candle project, the candles that were sold in this project were a symbol of prayer and hope for a community that has experienced a lot of pain. The people who were working on the project received crafting skills. Their lives were transformed both spiritually and economically. The third program was the Nehemiah preschool. The pre-school provided an education that was based on the Christian faith. It was a place of care and safety for children who have witnessed different kinds of abuse.

The above examples confirm that the strength of a community is directly proportional to the number of people who contribute their abilities to the well-being of the community. These are alternatives different communities can draw from. The faith community’s scriptural examples show the success of different communities that were willing to share assets with their communities. Acts 2: 42-47; 4: 32-37, the community of believers contributed and shared their assets. Acts 6:1-7, the community of believers applied their minds to address a situation without depending on outside experts for solutions. Romans 12: 1-15 and 1 Cor. 12: 4-11; 27-31, the community has different gifts, and these gifts need to be expressed for community development.

Christ himself encouraged the ability and contribution of a larger community. We read that when the crowds were hungry Christ did not miraculously give them food instead Christ asked his disciples what they had to offer to the crowds. The disciples did not have food to offer to the crowds until a young boy offered his lunch and Christ multiplied the lunch and fed the crowds. In this scenario, we see that Christ himself included a broader community to address a

matter that was affecting everyone in that community. The answer to their problem of hunger did not come from the outside but from within the community.

It is therefore important that a community diaconal ministry should be coordinated in such a way that it shows openness to using people's skills, talents, and dreams without favouring and rejecting some. The ministry should demonstrate a willingness to delegate responsibility and should also invite wide participation of the community rather than developing a paternalistic mentality toward people. The Asset Based Community Development process can be summarised in the following manner as stated by Cunningham & Mathie (2002:5)

- Collecting stories about community successes and identifying the capacities of communities that contributed to success.
- Organizing a core group to carry the process forward.
- Mapping completely the capacities and assets of individuals, associations, and local institutions.
- Building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem-solving within the community.
- Mobilizing the community's assets fully for economic development and information-sharing purposes.
- Convening as broadly representative group as possible for building a community vision and plan.

However, is worth noting that the above summary is not a prescription on how to implement the ABCD programme. It can only be descriptive since every community is unique and the context and situation of every community is different from the other.

4.9. Strategic Management

Every mission that is expected to perform and produce results will need a strategic management process and plan. The emphasis of strategic management in any organization is on what the organization wants to achieve and the time frame of when should the achievement happen (Wolvaardt 2009). This process will involve formulating a vision, objectives, strategies, implementation plan and monitoring and evaluation (Thompson & Strickland 2001: 6).

You cannot manage any project unless it was conceived or there was a vision and a plan of execution before. Henceforth a detailed plan of diaconal ministry is necessary, especially for urban communities. The Church of Norway is one of many examples we can learn from. The church has a clear vision and a plan for their diaconal ministry. According to the Church of Norway National Council (2010), the vision is “The love of God for all people and the whole of creation revealed through our life and service.” Their plan for diaconal ministry includes:

- loving your neighbour
- creating inclusive communities
- caring for creation and
- struggling for justice

The Church of Norway has deacons who are appointed permanently to focus on diaconal ministry these people work in different sectors in the country. Some of these deacons are trained as social workers, and nurses and others are church deacons and these people are recognised, and they are paid for their work.

The Swedish Free Church Movement strategic plan of 2012-2014 is another example. Their vision is “A world where all people live in dignified circumstances in a just and sustainable world, free from poverty. All people are part of God’s sacred creation and created in God’s image.” Their goal of diaconal work is to “change unfair political, economic, social and cultural structures that generate poverty, oppression and violence” (Diakonia: n. d.)¹⁵

The diaconal ministry of the church or faith communities in South Africa must start by acknowledging that our country is a country that is under a lot of strain. The church also is struggling with several issues hence the church cannot fully implement its diaconal mission. In the focus group that I was participating in one of the highlighted and frustrating issues was the polarization that is caused by the church in the urban area. Instead of these churches in the city coming together and developing a strategy that will bring transformation to the urban area they choose to work in silos. De Gruchy & de Gruchy (2005) in their book titled “The Church Struggle in South Africa” identifies struggles the church is still facing today and they are:

¹⁵Swedish Free Church Movement strategic plan of 2012-2014, available at: <https://www.diakonia.se/globalassets/documents/diakonia/how-we-work/summarydiakoniastrategicplan2012-14.pdf>.

- nation reconciliation
- the plight of those who live in poverty
- the issues of sexuality and gender justice
- the reality of pluralism in a secular state

These struggles are still confronting the church today and the church should develop a strategy to address these issues. These identified issues will be discussed further in the section about the diaconal strategy for urban communities. Identifying the issues that need to be in the diaconal plan is not the only step towards strategic management. One of the essential steps in strategic management is assessing the needs of the community.

4.10. Needs assessment

Needs assessment is essential in the strategic planning and management of a diaconal ministry because each group or community have different needs that should be addressed. Even Jesus in most cases of his ministry life when he met someone in need, would not impose his service on that person's private life but would normally ask to offer help first or ask them about their situation first. Here are a few examples: do you want to get well? (Jn. 5:1-15), why are you so afraid? (Mt. 8:26), why did you doubt? (Mt. 14:29-31), do you still not see or understand? (Mk. 8:17), do you love me? (Jn. 21: 15-17).

All these questions that were asked by Christ touched touching different aspects of life somewhere more on emotion, attitude, and concerns, and some were more relational. In my observation of all these Scriptures, I can conclude by saying Christ was assessing the needs of these people. Yun (2012) speaks about determining the actual need for community presence through the following process:

- A questionnaire can be drawn based on the needs that were discovered during research.
- The budget, the resources and the skills of people be aligned with the needs.
- Prioritise the needs and address them effectively with the resources at your disposal.

To be able to address a need of a community you must assess the needs first because the needs of the community can only be discovered from that community (Yun 2012)). The praxis cycle can be one of the models that can be used to assess the community's needs. Dialogue can be used to assess the needs as well and when the needs have been assessed a programme of a diaconal mission can be started.

Community transformation dictates that the full community must participate in the conceptualization, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all the projects of development that need to be done in their localities. This chapter said that for transformation to happen there is a need for servant leadership, supportive leadership, and transformative leadership. By transformative leadership, it means communities and leaders who are committed to social justice. These people must be aware of the needs of the community. They should collaboratively raise resources together and if possible, raise them among themselves. All the people must see to the proper management of resources they have raised to make the envisaged project succeed. This way of doing things will give them satisfaction and restore their dignity.

It is for UBI to learn from how Ubunye has done before and learn from their failures and successes. They should build on the successes and eliminate the negative results of the previous implementation of the social transformation projects they had.

We affirm community transformation is action and leadership of the masses as per the assertion that external experts should play a minimal role and grassroots action should play a key role. The community through its leaders and ordinary members must lead all the processes of community projects through their activism and the manner they know how to make a difference in the community. The community must not only lead. They must all participate in the activities of the community. The community must take responsibility for mobilising resources needed to accomplish their mission and diaconate work. They must oversee the management of their diaconal work. They should do a needs analysis to find out how much their project will cost and what else is needed to do the work and finish it successfully.

The community may do the conceptualisation, the planning, and the implementation of their transformative programmes. They must be supportive of each other and support the work of the transformative project they are all about. In so doing we shall be promoting the

empowerment needs of the community and preparing them for a successful future in developing their community. The next chapter will present the need for a plan of action to realise diaconal community transformation.

4.11. Understanding the Contribution of Diaconal Ministry and its Application to the Communities of the Poor: Jesus the Diakonos

The contestation of good news to the poor as the central message of Jesus the Diakonos illustrated at the exposition of ‘Good News’ to the poor, Jesus might have understood in the following manner. Jesus read Luke 4: 18-20 quoting Isaiah 61.

In this section, we are making a further examination of this claim. It shall be presented as Jesus calling for the transformation of the oppressive structures of His time. These structures were social, economic, political and religious.

4.11.1. Jesus the Deacon, Diakonia in the New Testament and Poverty

When one reads the parables and the way Jesus dealt with issues of his time it shows how he advocated for the poor and marginalised in his ministry. In the gospel of St. Luke 4: 16 one can see that the poor are on top of Jesus' list when it comes to his manifesto as a deacon. In the oldest Christian teaching and the New Testament one can trace evidence of Jesus' diaconal ministry whereby he went around healing and doing good to those who were the outcast and marginalised (Nordstokke, 2000: 9).

From the beginning it became imperative for the Christian community to be in continuity with Jesus' diaconal mission (Nordstokke, 2009: 32). Nordstokke (2009) seems to be recalling that we need as the church to follow the example of Jesus when it comes to dealing with Diakonia as a ministry to the poor or in the situation where poverty is affecting our societies. Nordstokke (2009) says that Diakonia is a service to the poor and disadvantaged people. The poor people within our church are not just to be seen as passive people who must be recipients of the services. They must be participants of the change needed. They must be empowered to transform the resources which God has put in place for all people to enjoy.

This calls for the Church to avail its resources to teach people the importance of sharing resources. Also, to be able to use the biblical evidence in trying to challenge even the systems which are oppressing and marginalising the people around us. In this way, people may be able to use biblical evidence and relate it to their current situation by contextualisation of the text. The Bible may be seen as ancient, but it still can be used to equip people.

The foundation of Diakonia can be traced from the Biblical roots from time immemorial. The New Testament Church started based on its diaconal approach to the needs of each member. The response of Diakonia to the issues that people are facing can be of great assistance when it comes to poverty amongst other hardships which people face daily. The New Testament is having a trend of people coming together and responding to challenges of one another.

Diakonia is the heartbeat of the New Testament Church. Diakonia is a useful biblical term reflecting the church's own identity and basis of faith. The term has been used to explain the Church's service in a world of suffering and conflict. The term is useful also in our time and missionary work. It proves to be appropriate in making clear the fact that "faith works through love" (Galatians 5:6).

Moreover, the term Diakonia early seems to have become an accepted term for describing certain duties within the congregation, in particular, duties of leadership (1 Corinthians 16: 15; 2 Corinthians 5: 18-19). The term is seen to have assisted a lot in it being used to support efforts organised by the congregation such as the collection of money to support the poor people in Jerusalem (Romans 15: 31; 2 Corinthians 8: 1-6) (Nordstokke, 2000: 4).

It is imperative to understand that the word *Diakonia* cannot be associated with a cult of power, exclusiveness, or the right to privileges; on the contrary, it is about the readiness to serve. The New Testament has quite a variety of texts which are in support of the above-mentioned statement. People who desire to be deacons or to do Diakonia must be ready to serve and be free of any agenda which seeks one to be power-hungry and so forth.

4.11.2. Sharing at the table

The practice of sharing at the table¹⁶ was followed by Jesus. The practice was used to illustrate the equalisation of society and the eradication of poverty. The practice was done to show how possible it was to have an egalitarian society where poverty is no longer.

In the New Testament, the Pharisees used to scorn people who did not follow rules like washing of hands before and after mealtimes. They would call the ‘these people who do not know the Torah’. Jesus was held with the same derision as a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Jesus introduced transformation and change of oppressive structures wherever He did His Radical Diaconal ministry. Jesus introduced a type of community that equalised people ate together. Joining such a table would mean that one is equal with those they are eating with materially and spiritually. In the New Testament, the Jews would not eat with Gentiles at the same table for the avoidance of the material especially the spiritual equalisation with people who were not of the commonwealth of Israel. As time went on Jesus began to challenge the Pharisees when they took these traditions of the Fathers and misconstrue them to oppress, burden and condemn others especially those who did not slavishly follow the Mosaic law and Pharisees. Jesus stood for transformation and equalisation.

4.11.3. Socio-spiritual transformation

In terms of Socio-spiritual transformation, Jesus propagated a message of open commensality which means, an open and all-inclusive table. Jesus introduced a reordering of the table to include those who were excluded from it through the alleged traditions of the Fathers, which went along with the required ceremonial cleanliness, which the majority of the poor and the marginalized during the time of Jesus could not afford. In other words, Jesus was saying no one must be excluded from the table. Jesus aspired for the good old days when Yahweh was still King and when people were still equal even as it was depicted through the arrangement of the table at mealtime.

According to Jesus, the table was supposed to be inclusive, the strong and the feeble, men and women, Jew, and Gentile, rich and poor, clean, and profane, tax – collector and Zealot, patron, all were considered equal around the table. Around the table all were equal, all had to be in

¹⁶ A table is used as a metaphor to indicate equality but I am aware that in other contexts and cultures a table is a foreign piece of furniture. But metaphors like sitting around their fire or in a circle in the kraal indicate mutual respect and equality.

communion with one another, all share their trouble, and their concerns, and carry each other's burdens in their journey of liberation.

Commensality was rather a strategy for building or rebuilding peasant communities on radically different principles from those of honour and shame, patronage, and clientele. It was based on an egalitarian sharing of spiritual and material power at the most grassroots level (Crossan 1991: 344)

Jesus made it possible for the grace of God to be accessible to all humanity including women of His society. Those who were side-lined because of their racial background, physical appearance and many other limitations

4.11.4. Good news to the poor

It was not easy for the poor during the years of Jesus, they suffered oppression, exploitation and harassment from different leaders and people. In comparison, it has not been easy for the poor of Pietermaritzburg too. During the socio-economic arrangement in colonial times, they were excluded and chased out of the city. During the Afrikaner rule, they were discriminated against and beaten out of the city. During the British rule, they were secluded in the confines of the emerging Black townships. During the time of this democracy, they are reduced into squatter camps, dirt, grime, crime, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and inequality.

The Jubilee system that Jesus proposed in the times of Roman rule was meant to return the human dignity of the poor and oppressed and to protect them from continuous suffering. Now, organisations such as Ubunye, Project Gate Way, PACSA, Haven, UBI as well, and the Cluster of Theological Institutions of KZN, though operating from the faith-based approach somewhat were opting for Jubilee as the possible answer to the oppression and marginalisation of the people of the city of Pietermaritzburg by providing shelter, housing, community projects, theological education that espouses liberation, accompaniment with communities of the poor, protecting women and children in distress and at risk, did their part yet the city is not saved. Hence, a question may arise how can transformation and development happen in a city where there is maladministration, corruption, cadre deployment, nepotism, callousness, vandalism of infrastructure, theft of essential materials such as copper, neglect of health facilities stealing of

so much money. We have come to a point where the poor look for money more than God. On the other hand, the political and capital elites have replaced God with money.

4.12. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have affirmed that the diaconal ministry of Jesus did not take place only in the confinement of the synagogue or of the temple. The diaconal ministry is actions of service to others in communities, families, individuals, men and women, and all people from all backgrounds. Since the disciples were instructed to go around the world proclaiming this good news and that commission was passed through to us we have a responsibility to take further what was started by Jesus. Different research findings indicate that rapid urbanisation is taking place and in the coming thirty years more places will be urbanised in Africa. It is therefore imperative that churches and faith communities have a diaconal ministry strategy that will focus on the transformation of urban areas.

This section looked at the lessons that can be learned from Jesus the diakonos for the transformation of urban contexts. We affirmed that Diakonia is about social transformation for justice and peace in the service of God for God's people and God's glory. Jesus Christ was a model of this holistic service to others. He became a model of service to others through his teachings and by his actions.

Chapter five

Planning for action: Theological education

5. Introduction

Every theological institution intends to seek quality theological education that will empower students with the tools and skills to be able to be effective in their ministry. This kind of theological education should be able to respond to the real needs of communities. This comes as a challenge for many theological institutions. They try different kinds of ideas to make their education relevant to different contexts. In most cases, it becomes a huge challenge that involves a lot of reflection, improvements, and innovation. It has financial implications. Is it therefore important for theological institutions to be ready to offer theological training that will support the diaconal ministry?

This chapter is on the plan of action. This plan of action will be drawn from the previous chapters to inform the planning. It will be based on what the research has discovered during the research journey and the findings. This will include a summary of shifts or interventions that UBI and Ubunye must make as informed by this research.

5.1. What was discovered in the research process?

Firstly, the research discovered that the city of Pietermaritzburg has a rich theological heritage but that has no social impact on the lives of the People of the city. Knowing without doing so is insufficient. Orthodoxy must be affirmed by orthopraxis. Praying without work is futile.

Secondly, there is a lack of proper social analysis done by the practical theology practitioners in the city. The practitioners do not understand the power dynamics of the city and result what they teach theological institutions to their students does not address the real issues of the city.

Thirdly, there is a lack of contextual programmes for the city. Programmes of evangelisation and offering safe shelter, helpful as they might be have failed in the past. The people of the city are burdened by bad governance, corruption, crime and violence.

Fourthly, the attitude of know-it-all is not helpful. The residents of the city must make an input according to their felt needs on what the purported transformative programmes must be implemented in the city.

Lastly, the diaconal ministry for what it stands for became ineffective in the city.

5.2. What shifts can UBI and Ubunye Haven Do?

Firstly, the discipleship model of ministry is telling. People must be disciplined for human development as much as they need spiritual and character formation. The work of spirituality must be exemplified by the work of production in the diaconate ministry to the city.

Secondly, UBI and Ubunye Haven practitioners' must be committed to social justice, peace and transformation of the material conditions of the poor in the city.

Thirdly, the diaconal ministry must be seen to be assisting the poor of the city. The poor can be assisted with counselling services, information dissemination, mediation, and capacity building.

Fourthly, most importantly, the poor of the city need ethical financial, economic and commercial education and training. This is what UBI and Ubunye Haven can assist with. If the theological institutions do not have these, they are well placed in their daily work to find financially educated people who can assist without exploiting the poor of the city.

Fifthly, the deacons must seek to involve the poor in the conceptualisation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the purported programmes.

Sixthly, as far as it is possible, the poor of the city must be taught how to use sustainable livelihoods. Meaning that they should first seek to use their resources before asking for help from outsiders. If not, so the outsiders they would need for help must be ethical people when dealing with the material needs of the poor.

Seventhly, the poor who shall be the beneficiaries of the projects will be trained to be trained on meticulous stewardship of the resources. The poor must be empowered with the knowledge of accounting for what they have received and how they use the resources.

All of the above will be the choices of the poor communities to be trained, and empowered on the skills they lack. The Union Bible Institute and the Ubunye Haven will not be dictators in this process of upskilling the poor communities but these two institutions will work as mutual partners with the poor communities. These trainings will not only be empowerment sessions but the training will have to be formal and accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training or Services SETA. Those who complete the training and meet the requirements will qualify as Community Development Workers of Deacons.

5.3. Theological education underpinning the diaconal ministry

Diaconal theological teaching is “a call to action and a response to challenges of human suffering, justice and care for creation” (Lutheran World Federation 2009). For diaconal ministry to produce workers it will depend on how the institution will formulate curriculum. These are different theories about curriculum development but for this study, we use the diapraxis model. Diapraxis is “inter-religious cooperation”. It is about people of different religions coming together to improve the lives of people (Dietrich et. al 2016).

The participatory pedagogical approach will be applied in this curriculum. All those who participate in the learning process will be allowed to reflect, and critically analyse what they are learning and they can create their theology and conclusion. The learning process will involve people with different backgrounds such as police, priests, community developers, academics and ordinary people with life experiences.

Learning takes place in different places such as classrooms, different strategic areas in the city like churches, non-governmental organizations boardrooms and open fields.

This curriculum will have to involve the following modules: Spiritual formation, Ubuntu, Theology and Development, Contextual Theology for Urban Communities, Theology of Work, and Tools for planning the diaconal ministry.

5.3.1. Spiritual formation

The subject of Spiritual formations has its roots in the Roman Catholic Church, and it is used for both academic and spiritual reasons in the training of ministers. It is a discipline that instils prayer, fasting and reading of the Bible (Teo 2017). Some writers like Willard (2002) argue that spiritual formation can be practised by any person despite of their faith or spirituality. For those reasons, different faith groups will give different definitions of what spiritual formation means to them. Even amongst different Christian groups, the terminology can also be different. The Protestants do not speak much about spiritual formation, but they prefer to call it devotional life or theology. For the Protestants spiritual formation or devotional theology means to grow in Christ and become more like him. This process only happens after committing your life to Christ and being in constant fellowship with him through prayer, reading and meditation upon the Scriptures (Foster 1989¹⁷, Adoyo 2006, Nene 2018, Neighbour 2019). This process of formation shapes a person in a particular direction. This process involves the following aspects:

- Spiritual: worship, liturgy, prayer, meditation, fasting and pilgrimages.
- Personal: emotions, relationships, personal growth, self-determination.
- Ministerial: calling, and servanthood.

All these aspects are interconnected but slightly different in their focus.

5.3.2. Ubuntu as a theological concept of spiritual formation

Since spiritual formation is about shaping a person into a particular way of life, in the context of Africa this can mean that African Spirituality is one of the processes of shaping the lives of different communities. Africa is known as a place of “Ubuntu practice”. In most cases the term “Ubuntu” “is a Zulu and Xhosa word for “humanness” meaning positive attribute of being human such as the sense of belonging, selflessness, hospitality, sharing, humility, respect” (Kumalo 2017:23). This means everyone is treated with dignity and as an image of God not because of what they have or do not have but as human beings. In Africa children belonged to

¹⁷ I am aware that Richard Foster is an old source. I chose this source because these disciplines are clear to understand manner especially for Academic purposes. These disciplines can be found in the book titled “*Celebration of Discipline Handbook*” published in 1989.

the community, women were treated with respect and strangers were welcomed. But along the way the spirituality of Ubuntu faded. Africans lost the sense of dignity and the sacredness of life and for that reason social ills, gender-based violence, poverty, etc. increased. It is therefore imperative that the Spirituality of Ubuntu must be rekindled to see transformation in different communities. Masango (2006) observes that:

Modern societies are re-visiting the old concept once again, in order to correct the values and dignity of Ubuntu that is lost. Why? South Africans lost their concept of Ubuntu during apartheid times when they fought for their liberation. During those days, life lost its meaning – especially the concept of the image and likeness of God, which kept them respecting each other. In the new democracy, with the emphasis on human dignity and human rights, the community is trying to recover old concepts that kept villagers and people respecting each other. The above has given us reasons why we should re-evaluate or re-examine the concept Ubuntu.

The concept of Ubuntu cannot be limited to an academic discussion or an intellectual idea in the minds of academics, but it should be an ongoing practical discussion in communities. Ubuntu can be a spiritual tool that shapes communities in the post the liberation struggle period. The concept can also assist to facilitate processes of transformation in urban areas since urban areas are perceived as place where every person is for him/herself. But the “Ubuntu concept” can be a vision for development in cities of Africa where people will come together and have one agenda on the table.

In diaconal studies the concept of Ubuntu is a community dimension of social interaction (Dietrich et. Al 2014). The social interaction means a person is only a person in relation to other people (Ibid). The concept of Ubuntu can also address issues of people working in silos but with a hope to get a solution to address matters concerning a community. Ubuntu can encourage collaboration in the processes of developing African cities. It also will strengthen the processes that are involved in community participation because the community people will know that without my neighbour my struggle is weakened. Kumalo (2017:27) gives five purposes of Ubuntu extracted from the response of King Lobengula to missionaries:

- Ubuntu ensures political stability within the family, clan, or ethnic group under the leadership of a chief or king. (Ubuntu can also give political stability within the urban communities under the leadership of a political system)
- It will ensure that resources are shared amongst the people (rich or poor).
- It was meant to ensure security against other rivals.
- It also served the purpose of providing social cohesion.

Since the Ubuntu concept is one of the heritages in Africa and South Africa. It is a subject that cannot be ignored when spiritual formation is discussed because Ubuntu has to do with the spirit, soul, and body of a human being. This human being is created to have fellowship with other human beings despite of our colour and creed. It is only when Ubuntu is lived “that we will be able to take Africa to the next level” (Kumalo 2017). Adapting from the article by (Breed & Semeya 2015) I conclude that Africa can be taken into the levels when Ubuntu is live in this manner:

- Koinonia, where a community choose to live in fellowship with one another and still celebrate their diversity.
- Diakonia, a community will endorse the principles of stewardship by using their resources to serve one another’s needs.

Ubuntu can contribute to the development, democratisation and nation-building of developing countries like South Africa and “scholars and leaders like Tutu see Ubuntu as theology that has to do with the Imago Dei, and it is also an African ethic that cannot be separated from religion and theology” (Kumalo 2017: 28).

5.4. Theology and development

There are different development theories we read about in the history of Sociology Studies looking back from the 1940-1980s. Each context since that time had a different development theory that was addressing issues of that time. For example, the conversion of individuals from being heathens into Christians was perceived as transformation and moving from a traditional to a Western way of life was seen as civilization (Speckman 2016: 1085-1086). Another form of development was seen after World War II in 1948, here it was introduced as a form of relief for the nations that were in economic crisis after the war. Those who criticized the nature of development said it created a dependency syndrome (Ibid). An Alternative Theory of

Development was introduced, and its focus was on the power of people Korten called it the “People-Centred Development”. Korten (1990:67) defines this theory as:

A process by which the members of the society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvement in their quality of life consistent with their inspirations.

Speckman (2007:26) observes that the definition by Korten must be analysed further for a clear understanding. He says for example the word “process” is used to indicate that development is not a one-time event but is a continuous act of individuals and it is also a corporate effort to determine transformation. This process is completely against the notion of waiting for help from outside. The other word observed is the “improvement” which means the augmentation of the quality of life is consistent with the community’s vision and future (Speckman 2007).

Unlike the other development theories that opted to put economic growth and international relief first in the development of underdeveloped communities. Korten’s view puts human beings first because he assumes that “growing the people will in turn grow the economy”. The community understands that “ubuntu ungumuntu ngabantu” (a human being is a human being because of other human beings) and that human beings are a capital for development. For South Africa a developing country with a lot of underdevelopment the understanding of “people first” was the motto of the day. As a result, post 1994 South Africa a new democracy strived to change the scenery of the country by improving “areas such as housing, human rights, gender, culture, liberty, water and technology” (Klaasen 2013). Why? It was because people were the first on the agenda. But since then, there was a shift of focus from people to party politics development was subdued and the emergence of service delivery protests grew. Bottlenecks such as fraud and corruption thrived, and development was stalled.

Since the government is failing in facilitating processes of development the church needs to be the custodian of development. The kind of development the church should facilitate must be “a process or releasing an individual’s potential to enable him/her to contribute to the welfare of the city” (Speckman 2016:1087). The term “development” is not found in the Bible, but this does not mean we cannot find scenarios that relate to the development of people. Speckman (2016) asserts that development is not a biblical term but that does not mean that biblical texts

are functioning well in a context of development. He then gives the following examples implying that there are biblical concepts of development:

- Jesus frees individuals from the power of sin, sickness, and disability so they may stand for themselves and their families.
- The Acts of the Apostle encourage the healthy to work so that they can earn
- The transformation of the mind, an encouragement for psychological emancipation

The stated above examples should motivate the church to be active in the development of the people. It is undeniable that the church has been involved in the development work yet the work at times has been quiescent. The development work of the church is uncertain at times because of different factors that contribute to this challenge. To mention a few is that the message of the church is sometimes opposite to the praxis of the church (Ibid). My observation is that development in the church is not sustainable because churches are still depending on outside donors and if the funding stops the development project is suspended or it faces out. However, the sustainable development of a community depends on the choices of that community. Korten (2009) says:

Our defining gift as humans is our power to choose, including our power to choose our collective future. It is a gift that comes with a corresponding moral responsibility to use that power in ways that work to the benefit of all people and their whole life.

This calls for “active citizenship instead of being passive recipients” (Klaasen 2017) waiting for the government and international donors to bring relief. It calls for an individual in a community to realise the power they have within themselves to facilitate transformation in their societies. It is recognising that humans are a resource in the development of a community and thus they need to take responsibility and initiate the development of their community.

I have been in the ministry for the past twenty years. Amongst several frustrating things that I have experienced as a minister the most frustrating was to fail to implement our strategic plan because we lacked money. The cry was that the church was poor because the missionaries left with all the resources. Even to date, the church is still battling to implement several programs because of financial challenges. The real issue is not the lack of money, but the church members

are spoilt by the sponsorship from missionaries. Now that the missionaries returned home to their sending countries the financial support of the church has dropped drastically. According to (Speckman 2007) this is “the problem of dependency”, here the church always poses as a beggar waiting for help from the outside.

Speckman (2007) treating the subject of development from a theological point of view presents a narrative of a man who was lame and sitting near the gates of the temple begging for money from those who were going into the temple, see (Acts 3-4). The man was unable to walk, and he was carried by others daily to the temple’s gate to beg. The man begged for alms from those who were coming to the temple. The fact that this beggar could ask for charity shows that this man was not mentally ill. The man was crippled for many years and only surviving through charity and there was no sense of development. This man had a dilemma that his situation was not changing instead it was created by the dependency syndrome.

The only change he experiences happens in the beggar’s life when Peter and John come across him and offer a better solution. The response of Peter and John was different instead of sponsoring the poverty and the shame of this lame beggar they came up with an alternative. These two disciples of Jesus were mere fishermen (sic) and the Pharisees did not even expect such a miracle to be performed by ordinary uneducated people. The help for the beggar came from unexpected sources. As a result, the healing of the lame beggar “resurrected a revolution which they thought dies with Jesus” (Speckman 2007).

The miracle that took place in the life of this beggar was more than just physical healing, it was freedom from the dependency syndrome. He was now able to freely worship God. He would now be recognised as someone who would add value to the community. Reading the story of the lame beggar my analysis is that the health and wellness of a person contributes to several factors in a human being. The lame beggar probably had money from the alms he received but there was no transformation because he was fixed in one position and depended on those who moved him. It was only after a miracle that took place the beggar was emancipated and the healing that took place was an act of empowerment [and development] (Speckman 2007:227).

Looking at the context of South Africa we have the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP is a document that will require people to be responsible for their development. The NDP references to that:

We, the people of South Africa, have journeyed far since the long lines of our first democratic election on 27 April 1994, when we elected the government for all. We began to tell a story then. We have lived and renewed that story along the way. Now in 2030, we live in a country which we have made. We have created a home where everyone feels free yet bound to others, where everyone embraces their full potential. We are proud to be a community that cares. We have received a mixed legacy of inequalities in opportunity and in where we lived, but we have agreed to change our narrative of conquest, oppression, and resistance (National Planning Commission 2011:1).

The first line of the NDP's vision indicates that the development of a nation depends on the power of the people. Klassen (2017:1) states that the vision has three important parts, and these are: First, the people are active participants. Second, a community where everyone feels free yet bound to other others. Third, a person can reach their full potential. For such a vision "people are not merely passive observers or receivers of welfare but rather they are active participants in their development. This kind of development will focus more on the poor and enrich them to be able to stand by themselves.

5.5. Contextual theology for urban communities

Radical changes are taking place in the world currently, we are seeing rapid urbanization, climate change and the advancement of technology etc. It, therefore, is imperative for theological education to be contextual and it should be a process where "learning to be a minister encompasses the holistic development of individuals rather than being limited to an acquisition of knowledge" (Naidoo 2010:352). I completed my Diploma in Biblical Studies in the year 2000 at the Union Bible Institution in Pietermaritzburg. I did well in my studies. At graduation, I received an award as the second top student in our class. I was excited that I was going to make a difference in the church and the community. Little did I know that it was not going to be easy because I was not a qualified theologian. Naidoo (2010: 347) alludes to the frustration that is faced by young ministers when they are faced with the reality of their context.

She says ministers have “a great deal of intellectual knowledge and yet with little practical understanding of how to lead and administer the church population [and to serve their communities effectively]” (Naidoo 2010:347).

‘Many African theological institutions make common mistakes in how they approach theological education: First, “most theological reflection remains captive to a western model of theologising” (Naidoo 2010: 347). Second, most learning if not all takes place in the confinements of the four walls of the institution and the focus is on the transferring of knowledge (Cannell, 2006). Such a kind of education has less or no impact on the community and it is a theology that is insensitive to the context of people. But contextual theology has the potential of transferring not only knowledge but also skills and competencies to contribute to the emancipation and renewal of a community.

Pedagogies of contextual theology stress that a minister’s work is situated in a particular social context (Foster et al. 2006). This means the whole liturgy; pastoral care assignments and the administrative processes take place in a particular community and the minister cannot ignore the realities of that community. But without proper contextual ministry training to work in such a context will be impossible. It is for those reasons theological training must “help the student to develop a consciousness of context, content and agency” (Foster et al. 2006). This means that theological education must also develop the student’s ability to engage constructively in matters that concern his community. For example, in 1985 academics and church leaders met and developed “The Kairos Document”. This document was a Christian biblical and theological explanation of the political crisis of South Africa. The attempt was to reflect on death in the country. It was also a critique of the theological model that determined the type of activities the church engages on or not. It was also, to articulate alternative biblical and theological models that will make a difference in the country (The Kairos Document 1986). The Kairos Document is a model of how theologians and church leaders should have a contextual approach to ministry.

As I have mentioned after completing my Diploma in Theology, I assumed I would just thrive, but the reality was different. It was only after I completed my Advanced Certificate in Urban Ministry that I was able to work better as a minister and a community worker. The training took me through a process where I was educated about my context, and I was immersed in my

community to understand my context. The model that was introduced was the praxis cycle by Holland and Henriot (1983). One other concern that I argued was to confine a class within the four walls of an institution. To address this the conservative method of teaching theology to students De Beer (2017) asserts that social movements can be intermediaries to learn from. These groups are not intimidated to address issues of homelessness, HIV and AIDS, land, fees must fall and many other contextual issues. Social movements have the zeal, skill and resilience and theological institutions can learn from them how to contextualise theology.

In the context of South African cities, theological institutions need to have intentional collaboration and partnership with social movements. Since our urban communities are submerged by poverty, inequality, gender-based violence and homelessness and social movements work on these issues daily, theological institutions can learn and integrate theological education and social programmes. A contextual theology “relates to the context of the community and focuses on transforming the world through emphasis on missiology. The theological education is seen as a dimension of mission and missiology is considered as the mother of theology” (Banks 1999). Banks also emphasizes hands-on partnership in ministry and that learning should be a relationship between action and reflection and a relationship between theory and practice. This also is a challenge to both the theological institutions and teachers. The theological institutions must work on their curriculum and make it speak to real-life situations. Teachers should embrace and live what they are teaching, they are not only sharing information and information, but they are also sharing their lives with students (Wahl 2013).

5.6. Theology of work: A Motivation for urban deacons

Many Christians fail to find meaning and purpose in their work as a result we lack good stewards and diligent workers. If people lose the significance of their work productivity is hampered and the economy of the country gets affected. In this section, I will discuss vocational theology or the theology of work. My supposition will be to look at the theology of work or vocational theology as a framework for urban transformation. Vocational theology is being able to discern your call to duty beyond Sunday. It is realizing your socio-spiritual capital as a faith community (de Beer 2018). It is to be open to serving in different spheres in the market and expanding your vocational call beyond the confinements of your church. It is to embrace

that work is God's mandate for human beings, not a curse. According to Genesis 1:26-28, human beings were created to work.

The theology of work goes as far back as 1949, several scholars wrote significantly about this subject to show that human beings have a role to play in the creation work of God. Woolley (2007: 3-5) suggests three facets concerning the theology of work: 1) God as a worker created the heavens and the earth, 2) human beings are the image of a working God, and 3) a human being was instructed to work by God. I agree with (Pope John Paul II:1981) that human beings are sacred and distinguished beings they have also distinguished characteristics and one characteristic that makes human beings to be unique is the capability to work.

Another contributing fact that people cannot find significance in the work they are doing is the erroneous sermons preached from some of the well-known podiums that as a Christian you just "name and claim" and it will come to you. Such sermons created wrong perceptions about work, especially in developing countries like South Africa and others. As a result, many people and those who are of the Christian faith assume that working is a curse. But Robert Tamasy (1995:3) has a different opinion about work:

Work is sacred. It was ordained by God from the beginning, before the fall of man. After the Fall, it just got tougher, frustrating, exhausting, and sometimes even boring. But work pursued with excellence and integrity is still pleasing to God, a way of honouring Him by serving in the unique ways He has equipped us. Our work often provides the opportunities to proclaim Him to a broken, unredeemed world—through our example, as well as by our words.

When we work the expectation is not only to get compensation but also it is to "embrace dominion over nature, service to others (diaconate ministry) and all productive activity" (Woolley 2007). Consequently, if there is productivity the economy of the country is improved and stabilizes. And, when we give service to other communities are transformed.

The practice of theology of work can bring transformation to the community when there is the formation of community skills, reduction of inequality and proper conduct is developed. For a diaconal study, I would therefore suggest that the church is one of the platforms where

communities can be trained, and their skills are developed. Djupe and Gilbert (2006) point out that research has proven that the church assists in the formation and development of community skills. They also suggest that small groups can be effective for skill development since small groups are more cohesive compared to large groups. Kumalo (2003:100) says in their church Bible study groups were keys to empowerment. UJamaa Centre for Community Development & Research in Pietermaritzburg many years ago introduced the “Contextual Bible Study Methodology”. This pedagogical tool was designed for communities to be able to sit together and reflect biblically about their context. The process of the Bible study begins with the analysis of your context, followed by allowing the Bible to speak to your context and take action by responding to what is God saying to us (Contextual Bible Study: A Resource Manual (2014)). This is one of the many methods that can be used for skills development in the community, and it can encourage people to find significance in their work and service to the community. For example, in the case of the Ivory Park Methodist Church in Gauteng, South Africa, church people became working members with the rest of the community to support the projects that were initiated by the church (Kumalo 2003).

Theological education must be a process of formation of individual members of the community and should be a process that will revive Ubuntu. The theology must be contextual not just an academic exercise but a process that will bring transformation and development. Through theology, people must be able to find the purpose and significance in their service to different people. This will happen when theory and practice correspond, theological institutions become the custodians of such a theological education and teachers embrace and live what they teach. However, this process will require a rigorous process of planning and having tools in place to implement the plan. Planning is a step that comes after theological reflection (Kumalo 2003: 108). Although the diaconal ministry is the social service of the church for the ministry to be effective it must be approached holistically. Therefore, the next step in planning the diaconal ministry is to put in place tools. This next section will give some practical examples of diagrams that can be used as tools for planning a diaconal ministry.

5.7. Tools for planning the diaconal ministry

The diaconal ministry was one of the ways that was used for community organizing especially amongst faith communities in the 1980s to fight against the apartheid regime according to (Walshe 1991)

Diakonia contributed to the growth of prophetic theology. It raised the awareness of small Christian groups throughout the Durban area, witnessed strong ecumenical cooperation in combating injustice, and supported the liberation movement, in particular the UDF and Cosatu.

Much of the diaconal ministry in the 1980s supported combat injustice and supported liberation and enhanced prophetic theology. The diaconal ministry can still contribute significantly to the post-apartheid era in a city like Pietermaritzburg. Instead of being complacent or suffering from nostalgia the church and faith communities can rekindle their diaconal ministry and begin to be advocates against injustice, and corruption and serve the poor, the oppressed and those who are violated by the current systems and partner with different civic movements. For a diaconal ministry to unfold and be implemented either by a church, community, or any organization a proper plan will be required. Below are examples of the tools that can be used to plan a diaconal ministry.

This is a diaconal plan of action of the United Methodist Church in Norway and the plan is as follows (TDPUMCN 2010):

- Surveying the needs (present work being done, the needs found in the local society, resources for the survey).
- Choose what you wish to accomplish and give the reasons for that.
- Make a priority list.
- Create a plan for the work.
- Implement and carry through what the group has agreed upon
- Evaluate the results.

5.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have spelt out what this research has discovered. This was meant to undergird the plan of action proposed in the chapter. We stated what is lacking and what UBI and Ubunye House can do about it, towards urban transformation and community development. The chapter addresses topics such as theological education, underpinning the diaconal ministry. And topics such as theology and development, contextual theology for urban communities and the theology of work.

Our affirmations in this chapter are that theological education for diaconal ministry is orthopraxis (practical) balancing and actualising orthodoxy (doctrine). The theological education we are espousing is that of practising in communities what we have learnt about the right doctrines. It is a theology of spiritual formation. A theology of spiritual formation is that of character building and enhancement of moral integrity.

This is the diaconal and missional theology of being human (*uMuntu*), practicing humanness (*uBuntu*), through and with other human beings in communities (*aBantu*). The central tenet of this living understanding of Ubuntu is respect for yourselves, others, young and old and all human beings including those you do not know – the strangers so to speak. But strictly speaking, the so-called, stranger is a visitor who may not be visiting you in any case.

In this conclusion, we affirm that the theologies and theories of development are embraced in the scheme of the diaconal ministry of transformation and development. Theological education in a diaconal setting is contextual theology. It embraces the theology of work. It is a vocational theology and is a prophetic theology. And this is what must be practised in urban communities with integrity and the confidence of the gospel of Jesus the Deacon – Jesus the community worker.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1. Summary of Chapters

The first chapter deals with matters of the problem statement, research methodologies, and the unfolding of the entire research. It is then followed by the elaboration of the actual research. Chapter One is setting the scene. In chapter one we said that the subject matter for this research is to understand Jesus as “Urban Diakonos” who serves to transform urban communities in a way that will bring wholeness and mutual benefit to the community. This research seeks to interrogate an understanding of Jesus as ‘diakonos’ with a specific meaning for the urban situation and to see how far such an understanding could shape the methods of training for urban workers, servants, and deacons.

In the second chapter having discussed my insertion in Pietermaritzburg and at the Union Bible Institute, I have learned that Pietermaritzburg has such a rich heritage of theological education, yet has so little impact on the city. There is a great lack of skills in how to read the city and a lack of understanding of the urban systems and powers. In most cases, the programmes of the churches are not contextual and relevant to the urban communities. Hence there is less impact or no impact or transformation in the community. Most of the time churches come to people as experts that have all the answers for every issue and such an attitude from the church will not bring transformation. It is for that reason that as the pastor and lecturer in a Bible school, I must not allow my qualifications and experiences to be a hindrance for me to learn new experiences. I should also take into consideration that I have my vulnerabilities.

As said earlier, in this chapter I have looked at the theological education that is offered in Pietermaritzburg and the theological education that is offered by UBI about diaconal ministry and presented an analysis of theological education and ecumenical activism in the city of Pietermaritzburg. I presented the models of theological education. I then proceeded to single out the discipleship model as the one predominantly used at UBI. The findings are, that the theological education that is offered in the context of Pietermaritzburg must be a Discipleship Mode theological education because this model is praxis-based. Here a student is more of an apprentice rather than just a normal student who is just receiving information but as an

apprentice, the focus is holistic growth and equipping to be effective in ministry. This approach of learning is necessary if we are about training people to do a diaconal ministry that will bring transformation to a city like Pietermaritzburg.

The fourth chapter was able to elaborate that Jesus is the proponent of social justice and social service for community transformation. The ministry of Jesus was that of service to the people especially the poor and the oppressed who are mainly found in urban settings, though many are living in rural areas.. This chapter explains the ministry of the Ubunye House of the Free Methodist Church. Though at the end the ministry dissipated, it was promising in the beginning. In this chapter, we learnt that throughout the New Testament, even the whole Bible and the history of the church diakonia as the practice of social justice has been at the centre of the message of the gospel. We have demonstrated that Diakonia has not been understood and practised as charity but rather as partnership and social justice.

I also looked at Jesus as diakonos, transforming urban communities from the analysis of the Book of Luke. Diakonia is a service to the poor and disadvantaged people. The poor people within our church are not just to be seen as passive people who must be recipients of the services. They must be participants of the change needed. They must be empowered to transform the resources which God has put in place for all people to enjoy. Among the synoptic gospels the Book of Luke comments more about money and material realities than any other of the synoptic gospels. The relevance of this material gospel to this study is that the Urban setting has a lot to do with material exchanges where transactions with money are material. On the other hand, the ministries of Ubunye House, Project Gate Way and Haven, because of the nature of their philanthropic outlook need money to operate, to respond to the needs of the poor, the homeless, the disadvantaged, the old, and the destitute. And their need for money is for humanitarian reasons. They are operating in the city of Pietermaritzburg which by its nature, is mismanaged as it is, also, need money to keep it abreast with other cities. Community transformation dictates that the full community must participate in the conceptualisation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all the projects of development that need to be done in their localities. This chapter said that for transformation to happen there is a need for servant leadership, supportive leadership and transformative leadership. By transformative leadership it means communities and leaders who are committed to social justice. These people must be emersed in the needs of the community. They should

collaboratively raise resources together and if possible, raise them among themselves. All the people must see to the proper management of resources they have raised to make the envisaged project succeed. This way of doing things will give them satisfaction and restore their dignity.

Chapter five: We have spelt out what this research has discovered. This was meant to undergird the plan of action proposed in the chapter. We stated what is lacking and what UBI and Ubunye House can do about it, towards urban transformation and community development. The chapter address topics such as theological education, underpinning the diaconal ministry. And topics such as theology and development, contextual theology for urban communities and the theology of work.

Chapter six: This dissertation has done the analysis of the current theological education in Pietermaritzburg focusing on Union Bible Institute. It looked at the current models of the diaconate ministry in Pietermaritzburg focusing on Ubunye Haven a shelter for women and children at risk. And analysed their programmes to see if it brings sustainable community transformation rather give a temporally relief to urban communities. The dissertation concludes and recommends that UBI must venture out to look for other institutions with which it can partner to continue seeking Jesus as diakonos from an evangelical point of view and venture into finding this transforming servant in ecumenical relations. UBI must find a way of getting involved with the Cluster of Theological Institutions in Pietermaritzburg. UBI as recommended may enter bilateral relations with these cluster theological institutions. It is recommended the students of UBI be introduced to community work done by other non-governmental organisations in the city of Pietermaritzburg.

The history of the diaconal ministry in the church is reflected upon. This theological reflection has led to the discussion to a direction of learning from Jesus the diakonos for urban transformation. The dissertation has dealt with the developments of ecumenical relations especially among theological institutions and churches in Pietermaritzburg and demonstrated how Ubunye house was involved in social transformation. On the other hand, the dissertation has shown why UBI was not responsive to the public concerns, seeing that there were historical challenges exacerbated by how it was structurally constituted. But now that we have a changed situation in South Africa, UBI as recommended must be active in the social and public

discourse as a way of demonstrating the diaconic ministry of Jesus in the city of Pietermaritzburg.

It is concluded and recommended that the diaconal ministry must be based on a plan of action for mission. Using the participatory and the emancipatory approaches, the targeted communities must be involved in the crafting of the plan of action for social transformation. The outreach must have a clear mission, vision objectives, situational analysis, goals and envisaged outcomes. The transforming mission must be based on a solid theological rationale informed by the evangelical distinctive that are informed by the theological scenario of the city of Pietermaritzburg.

The dissertation recommends that theological education in Pietermaritzburg must be based on both orthodoxy and orthopraxis with specific reference to Union Bible Institute. It is recommended that his theological education find a way into the curriculum that will include subjects or modules such as contextual theology, theology and development, theology of work, diaconal ministry, and Ubuntu.

The dissertation has provided the socio-economic analysis of the economics of Jesus as diakonos transforming urban communities in the Book of Luke. It was observed that among the synoptic gospels, the Book of Luke comments more about money and material realities than any other of the synoptic. This was relevant to this dissertation in that working with urban communities, at some point one will have to deal with material things. The dissertation has instructed us on how to deal with money and transaction issues.

The relevance of this materialistic gospel to this study has taught us that the urban setting has a lot to do with material exchanges where transactions with money are put into question by Jesus the Deacon. On the other hand, the ministries of Ubunye Cooperate Housing, Project Gate Way and Haven, because of the nature of their philanthropic outlook need money to operate, to respond to the needs of the poor, the homeless, the disadvantaged, the old, and the destitute. And their need for money is for humanitarian reasons. They are operating in the city of Pietermaritzburg which by its nature, is mismanaged as it is, also, needs money to keep it abreast with other cities. The dissertation concludes that money issues cannot be excluded from

the ministry. We should have the right attitude toward material things as we work with Jesus the Deacon, transforming urban communities.

6.2 Summary of Curriculum Transformation

- 6.2.1 Content: the content of the curriculum should be practical and be able to give tools for survival.
- 6.2.2 Pedagogy, the pedagogical approach will be mutual, and participatory and be a process of constructing knowledge together
- 6.2.3 Space, the space for learning will not confine the participants in a classroom but different organizations will be asked to host some of the class sessions.

6.3 Summary of transformation required in the local urban church and urban community development organizations

It is a huge challenge to facilitate the transformation processes in urban areas as a church or a non-governmental organization. It is therefore imperative for urban churches and urban organizations to contextually operate. Partnership and community engagement will also be necessary for these organizations. Strong relationships will have to be fostered. These organizations will have to diversify what they offer to communities by considering that have different people with different age groups and backgrounds. A holistic approach will be necessary in the service they give to their community because people have physical, spiritual, and psychosocial needs.

6.4. Summary of findings and recommendations

The finding of the research was that Pietermaritzburg with its rich history of theological heritage has less social impact. There is also poor social analysis done by practitioners. There are no proper contextual programs that are thriving in the city but the city is burdened by violence of all kinds, crime, and corruption. Those who claim to give assistance and relief to the poor do not work in partnership with communities but they come as know-it-all saviours. The diaconal ministry is not effective in the city.

The recommendations for what was discovered in the process of the research are:

- 6.4.1 A “diapraxis” must be implemented, and collaboration and partnership of different stakeholders must take place.
- 6.4.2 A proper social analysis will be important and this will assist the community workers to be aware of what is happening in their city.
- 6.4.3 The social ills in the city will have to be addressed, including issues such as violent crime, gender-based violence, bad governance, and corruption. Strong advocacy programs and lobbying of government officials should be done.
- 6.4.4 Those who have resources and provide aid to the community will have to work as partners with their community. Also, remember that they are vulnerable and therefore they must be partners, not saviours.

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