TOWARDS A RELEVANT MINISTRY AMONG THE POOR.

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR MISSION IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT COMMUNITIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ORANGE FARM COMMUNITY

By

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PHD)

In the Faculty of Theology of the
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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Department of Science of Religion and Missiology
PRETORIA
MAY 2005

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following people without whom the completion of this study would be difficult:

- A very special thanks is expressed to the University of Pretoria for giving me the opportunity to study at their institution

- My most esteemed supervisor Prof. Piet Meiring for his constant guidance, motivation, support, formative criticism, language editing, and assistance, "*Without you, I could not have completed this study. May God bless you and keep you*".

- Dr. Attie van Niekerk for his input, assistance and support in bringing this thesis to fruition.

- My thanks goes to the church council and all members of my beloved congregation The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa: Orange Farm who granted me the study leave and stood by my side. Thank you for encouraging me to further my studies. To them I want to say '*Orange Farm I love you*'

- My colleagues Rev. and Mrs. Kanyane, Rev and Mrs D.J Taiwe, Rev. and Mrs. P. Mohapi, Rev and Mrs M.P Loving, Dr. and Mrs. Maboea and the Presbytery of Evaton.

- A word of thanks to Busack Papi Maloisane who has been so kind and helpful in typing and editing my script.

- Thanks to those who helped me with the research: Matshepiso Mokoena, Morakane Lekote, Charlotte Afrika, Matshepo Mphoso, Thandi Masondo, Lerato Sekgesa and Teboho Maloisane

- My friends: Mr.M Phuphuma, Mr. M. Molelekoa, Dr. J.Bosman, Rev. Terrance Jacobs, Ds. J Steurer and Ds. A.van Rooyen thanks for your support.

- My Parents: Molahlehi and Matshediso Ntshumayelo, I thank you for your education and your parental guidance that nurtured the love and concern for God and humanity in my life. My relatives '*Mashwabade amahle, Bobhuqa, boMthimkhulu boRadebe*'. Thanks for your unwavering moral support throughout the difficult days of my studies.

- To my in-laws Mr & Mrs Legae thank you for your support in those difficult years, I say: "*Sa bohweng seratha se iname*"

- To Bellinah Legae-Ntshumayelo "please call your love', my wife I say thank you for your attitude of believing in me more than I believe in myself and to our three daughters Thulethu- Mathapelo, Makgotso-Mathabo, and Mbalenhle- Basetsana. We have been missing each other, many thanks for your patience and constant support.

- To the Almighty who gave me life and insight into this study I submit in humbleness and love.

Soli Deo Gloria!

SUMMARY

The topic for my study is: "*Towards a relevant ministry amongst the poor. Developing a comprehensive strategy for mission in informal settlement communities with special reference to the Orange Farm Community*". The study aims at developing the best strategy the church can use in ministering effectively in the areas of the poor. The Orange Farm Informal Settlement has been used as reference.

The informal settlement communities in South Africa are mushrooming rapidly on a daily basis. There are millions of poor people who are staying in these areas. From the South African perspective, they constitute the largest unclaimed frontier Christian mission has encountered in recent history. They stay in houses made of plywood, corrugated iron, plastics, bricks, etc. The panoramic view of the informal settlement is unbearable and overwhelming. Most of the people are unemployed, illiterate, HIV-AIDS affected and infected, drug abusers, prostitutes, homeless, widows and orphans. The data given in this study shows that they are a diverse group and that their needs are deepening. This thesis attempts to develop comprehensive missionary strategies in addressing the problems of the poor in the informal settlement communities.

The church cannot, and should not relinquish its evangelistic mission in these areas, as it is obliged to minister in *word* and *deed*. It is called to

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preach the good news to the poor. Christ's compassion for the poor was holistic, He was concerned with the poor and the marginalized, their sick bodies, empty stomachs, and perishing souls. Both his words and his works were expressions of his compassion for the poor people.

The church of Jesus Christ is called to bear witness in the present context of the poor. The kingdom of Jesus Christ is to be advanced in the informal settlement communities through a series of actions that are identifiably Christian in content and style and that bring overall health and healing to poor people in need

The church needs to develop authentic urban mission strategies to reach specific ethnic communities and multiply churches in the informal settlement communities. We need to remember that informal settlement communities are not single homogeneous units, but conglomerates of different groups and they require a specially designed missionary strategy.

The departure point for this thesis is biblical. Chapters Two outlines a number of biblical passages from the Old and New Testament and provides us with examples of outstanding urban ministries, which gives us important insight into God's will for serving the poor. Chapter Three illustrates that throughout history, churches have had a deep concern for the poor and the oppressed. Chapter Four explains that evangelism is part

of the mission of the Church. Chapter Five interprets the results and analyses the data of the empirical research that was done in Orange Farm. Chapter Six proposes models for ministering for the poor in the informal settlement communities. I conclude my study in Chapter Seven by referring to the research question that I introduced at the beginning of my study and further by looking at areas that need further research.

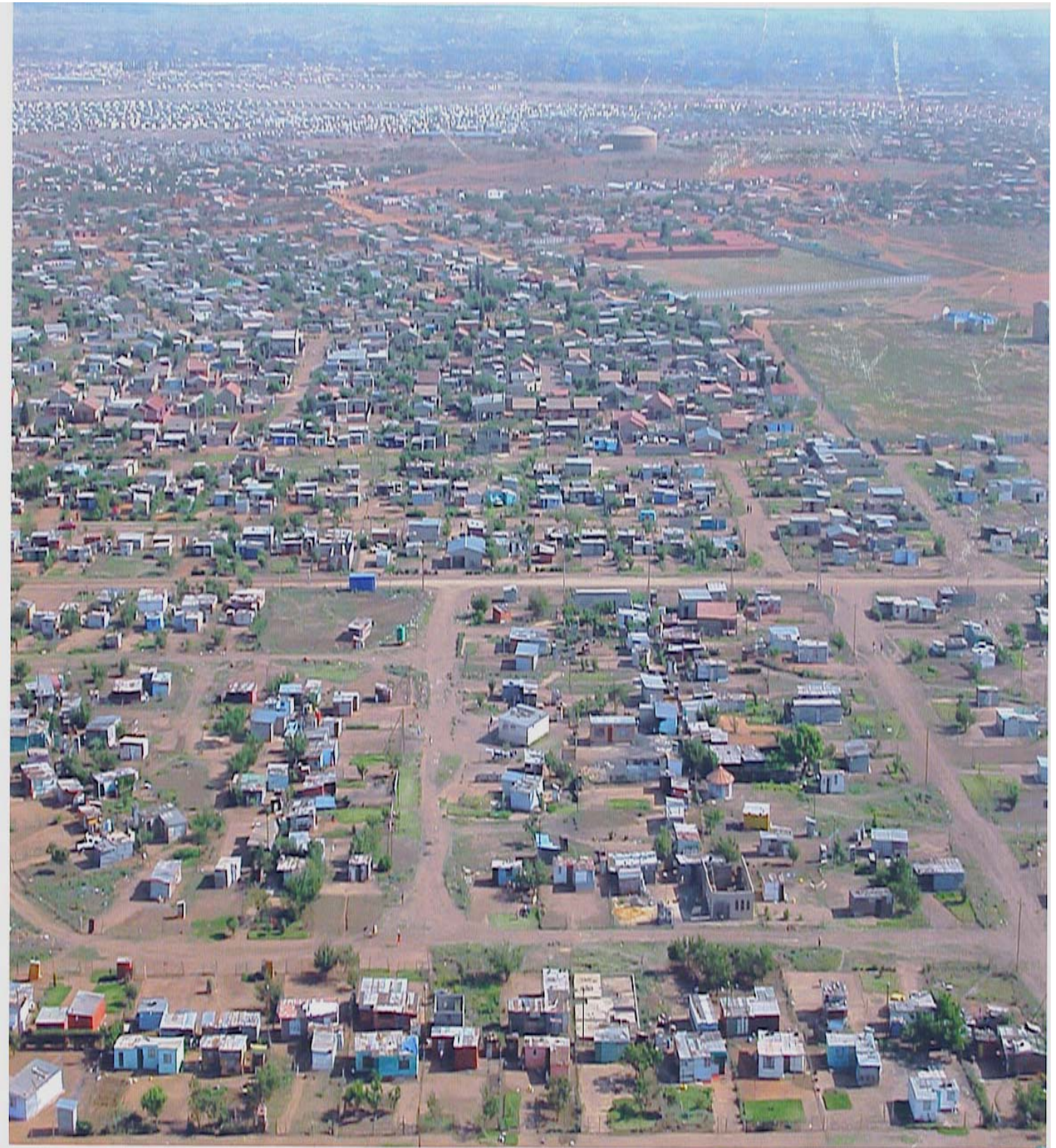**ORANGE FARM INFORMAL SETTLEMENT PHOTOGRAPH**

(ARIAL VIEW)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   The problem that calls for a research

In 1996 Gauteng had a population of 7,4 million people, 48,4% of households lived in houses on a separate stand and 51,6% in informal dwellings or shacks (Census 2001). The informal settlements constitute probably the fastest growing component of the population. Most of this settlement is occurring in the metropolitan areas, but there is also rapid growth of informal settlements in medium and smaller towns in the rural areas, where a process of densification appears to be taking place in areas, which are transforming from rural into urban.

In South Africa today there are millions of people who are now staying in the informal settlement communities. These areas are mushrooming daily. Rapid urbanization has resulted in millions of people living in shantytowns on the peripheries of the metropolitan areas.

In terms of statistics published by the Department of local Government and Provincial Affairs the number of squatters and backyard occupants were as follows: 1989-8: 962 611 squatters and 1 603 642 backyard occupants; 1990-1: 446 164 squatters and 1 936 717 backyard occupants; 1991-2: 891 520 squatters and 1 716 881 backyard occupants. The Urban Foundation on the other hand is of the opinion that

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there are at least 7 million squatters in metropolitan areas and 1,5 to 2,4 million on the Reef (Olivier 1992: 3). Estimates of rates of growth of the squatter areas indicate that they are growing faster than the cities.

In view of the rapid growth of the population, nearly 50 percent of the South African population now lives in cities, and the majority of them is poor and is outside the Christian faith. The poorest are housed at the greatest distance from the city centers where most job opportunities and services are unavailable. They are the poorest of the poor, the destitute, and the unwanted. In many cases this distribution was achieved through the mechanism of forced removals in terms of the Group Areas Act and other legislation

Accordingly, population densities in urban areas tend to be highest on the periphery of the city. Many of the shack-dwellers live in townships established by the government for African people on the outskirts of the cities. There is, however, another side to the picture. Along with an increase in population, there has been an increase in crime, graft, violence, drug addiction, abuse of sex, pornography, divorce, abortion, and a host of other social evils in the informal settlements communities.

It is no exaggeration to call cities the new frontier of Christian mission. The urban poor constitute the largest unclaimed frontier Christian

missions has ever encountered. The urban masses especially in the informal settlement communities have not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ nor seen it demonstrated in ways that affect their lives. They live outside the normal reach of established churches, and few attempts have been made to draw them into Christian congregations. Their living conditions are largely unseen except in printed statistics and photographs. The causes of their poverty are barely understood by the vast majority of mission-minded Christians (Greenway 1989:45)

There is a tragic coincide that most of the poor have not heard the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; or they could not receive it, because it was not recognized as Good News in the way in which it was brought. This is a double injustice: they are victims of the oppression of an unjust economic order or an unjust political distribution of power, and at the same time they are deprived of the knowledge of God's special care for them. To announce the good news to the poor is to begin to render the justice due to them. The church of Jesus Christ is called to preach the Good News to the poor following the example of its Lord who was incarnated as poor, who lived as one among them and gave to them the promise of the kingdom of God. Jesus looked at the multitude with compassion. He recognized the poor as those who were sinned against, victims of both personal and structural sin (Stromberg 1983:57)

Out of this deep awareness came both his solidarity and his calling (Mathew 11:28). His calling was a personalized one. He invited them to come to him, to receive forgiveness of sins and assume a task. He called them to follow Him, because His love incorporated His respect for them as people created by God with freedom to respond. He called them to exercise this responsibility towards God, neighbors and their own lives. The proclamation of the Gospel among the poor is a sign of the Messianic kingdom and a priority criterion by which to judge the validity of our missionary engagement today (Stromberg 1983:57).

Living with the poor and understanding the Bible from their perspective helps to discover the particular caring with which God both in the Old and in the New Testament thinks of the marginalized, the downtrodden and the deprived. We realize that the poor to whom Jesus promised the kingdom of God are blessed in their longing for justice and their hope for liberation. They are both subjects and bearers of the good news; they have the right and the duty to announce the Gospel not only among themselves, but also to all other sectors of the human family.

In South Africa today, the **informal settlement** communities and the **squatter settlements** are the homes to the urban poor. Informal housing has been condemned by some social commentators as a vehicle for the reproduction of urban and rural poverty, and it has been celebrated by

others as an expression of the creativity and determination of people who do not enjoy access to formal housing (Hart 1992:19).

The South African Freedom Charter proclaims that all people shall have the right to lie where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfortable and security and 'slums' shall be demolished and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, crèches and social centers, the crises of homelessness has grown rather than been solved.

There is a serious lack of clarity regarding definitions and terminology in the context of informal hosing in South Africa. Informal housing is essentially housing which is established unconventionally. Two broad types of informal types of informal housing can be recognized within this broad definition. The first is spontaneous informal housing, and the second is site-and-service housing (Hart 1992:21).

We need to distinguish between the two terms. The **squatter settlement** is typically a 'shanty-town', that is, a collection of impermanent dwellings made of recuperated waste material. Shacks or shanties are built of wooden packing cases, flattened kerosene tins, plastic board, cardboard, and indeed any serviceable item of refuse (Shorter 1991:48). Whereas Hart (1992:22) best describes squatting as the people who are in illegal

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occupation of land or dwellings; hence site-and-service schemes are not squatting. Also, squatters occupy not all spontaneous informal areas. Illegal squatting was never entirely eradicated under apartheid era, but after being reduced to small hidden pockets in the 1960's it began to grow again in the 1970's, mainly in the form of clandestine illegal settlement near townships.

Rev. Paul Ntshumayelo, a minister of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa in Orange Farm describes a squatter camp as a place where people live on a piece of land without prior permission given to them. South Africa has many squatters and they are especially found on the outskirts of 'white' cities. Some of them come from the farms where their owners stayed in big houses, mansions with electricity, water, flushing toilets and other facilities, but the poor black workers would stay in houses made of clay or corrugated iron (ISWEN Kommunikassie-kerk en Plakkers December 1994:15). Informal housing refers to unconventionally established housing whereas squatting refers to the unlawful occupation of property.

Wherever land can be found, huts and plywood shacks go up. Few governments have the capacity to prevent it or to provide services for the people arriving. The majority of new arrivals remain in squatter areas. The cities continue to grow exponentially as it exploits the resources of its

rural hinterland.

Whereas the term **informal settlements** can be defined as the occupation of land in the absence of

> a) Legal rights to land,

> b) Official approval of land use and development standards, and

> c) Provision of infrastructure.

Generally, these settlements are formed by some form of land invasion, the process that falls into one of two broad categories. The first is gradual invasion, through individual action, while the second is sudden, through organized collective action. Such organized action may be orchestrated by homeless communities, by political parties for political gain) or by government officials (Abbott 2001:v)

Dr. S.D Maluleke, the director of Church Aid in Need of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa describes the informal settlement as the place where many people with low income stay. The local authorities are authorizing these settlements. Some of these sites have been serviced, some not. Most of the sites have been planned and are numbered. Some of these sites have water taps while some are using one common water tap for up to twenty families (Maluleke 1997:22).

The shared characteristic of the settlement types is usually low incomes,

poverty and precarious infrastructure. People who are staying in the informal settlements are not squatters. You may find squatters who are squatting within the informal settlement dwellers, but they are not all called squatters. The term 'squatter' is not acceptable because it dehumanizes the people. When you are looking at these people from afar, their condition is the same. The cloud of poverty covers them all. The shelters of the people living in the informal settlement and those of the squatters are the same. Their life style is the same as that of the squatters (Maluleke 1997:22-23)

At the beginning of 1990, over seven million people lived in informal houses in South African Urban and metropolitan areas. The vast majority of these were black (African). Not only do squatters share a common economic history and system, they also share universal religious characteristics. Also, cultural characteristics in the informal settlements are as much universal, as they relate to the prevalent cultures in each city.

Socially each squatter community perceive itself as a distinct social entity, linked to the city, but with life, society and subculture of its own. In each city the squatters have coping strategies independent of middle-class life, including middle-class religious life, to which they have little or no relationship (Grigg 1992:26)

Language in the informal settlements communities tends to draw migrants together as all learn to speak the 'lingua franca' of the city. Yet almost all realize they cannot read and write properly and, unlike the middle class are uneducated. As a result, ethnic barriers are lower in the city, but a strong class barrier between the lower class and the middle class emerges (Grigg 1992:22).

R.S Greenway (1999:68), in his book *Cities, Missions' New Frontier* mentions the nine causes of the urban poverty that are similar to the lives of the poor in the informal settlement community today, these causes are:

1. The lack of employment opportunities, particularly among new comers.

2. Scarcity of decent and affordable housing.

3. Abandoned children by millions who live in the streets, perpetuating the cycle of suffering, crime, and despair.

4. The gravitation of the elderly to the cities without adequate financial, social, emotional, and religious support systems.

5. The breakdowns of family structures, which traditionally have been society's bulwark against spiritual, moral, and material attack

6. Corruption at all levels of government and society, coupled with callous indifference to the needs of the poor and powerless.

7. Inadequate public services. This is due in part to the precarious

financial condition of Southern World countries, and the rapid pace
of urbanization, which defies even the best efforts of public officials.

8. An abnegation of responsibility on the part of many urban churches,
   which either relocate at a distance from the poor or refuse to get up
   deeply involved in social ministry.

9. The secularization of many churches in Southern World, shown by
   their concern for self-aggrandizement instead of ministry to the poor,
   who seem to offer little in return (Greenway 1999:68)

In the informal settlements there is similarly a market for drugs. These
are usually obtained fairly cheaply and drug taking includes the smoking
of marijuana. Drug- taking and drug peddling are also related to crimes of
violence. Hard drugs, like heroine, cocaine or opium, are rarely found in
the informal settlement communities, since they are expensive imports,
but professional criminals, who can afford them and who may be in
contact with international drug-smugglers, can resort them to.

Prostitution of women and children is one of the commonest ways of
making a living in the informal settlement community. The preponderance
of male migrants, the need for female economic independence, the
phenomenon of street children and the reality of crowded living conditions
all favor it. The absence of normal family relationships and the morally
disorienting experience of the shanty- towns favor sexual promiscuity. This

also means that the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases is high. These include HIV infections and the disease AIDS. Theoretically, prostitutes are both vulnerable to infection and instrumental in its bilateral transmission; however, it is notorious difficult to assess the extent of HIV infection and the prevalence of AIDS in the informal settlements (Shorter 1999: 50)

The difficulty in assessing the AIDS potential is the result of many factors: official sensitivity, incomplete case-detection, delays in case reporting, and imbalances in the distribution of cases. The picture is further complicated by the urban medical scene, in which the AIDS patients are treated in the clinics not in the hospitals.

1.1.1 Migration to the cities

We are living in the days of incredible global massive migration. The world-wide increase in population is an underlying cause of migration to the cities. The need for more jobs comes with the increase in population. This forces millions to leave their traditional rural homes and move to cities in search of employment. There are other factors. Cities offer educational opportunities that are not available in small towns and villages. Cities offer hospitals and health care centers for people with special medical needs. Young people, especially, are attracted to the cities for excitement, entertainment, and new opportunities. They often come to cities dreaming

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of riches and a better life, only to have their dreams destroyed by the hard realities of urban life (Greenway 1999:116).

If we picture the image that comes from Psalm 107, we see people who are hungry, thirsty and crying out in the desert, in parched paths of life; they cry out to the Lord, and the Lord answers their prayer. He leads them from the north, the south, the east, and the west to a city in which to dwell. Psalm 107 portrays what we see happening worldwide. We are also living in the midst of the greatest migration in history. The world is in motion: the Southern Hemisphere is coming north, the East is coming west, and on all six continents migrations are to the cities (Bakke 2002:29)

The informal settlement communities are like giant magnets attracting people. They present amazing challenges. We use two terms to explain migration. By *urbanization* we refer to the city as a magnet. Urbanization pulls people in from rural areas. By *urbanism* we refer to the city as a transformer, transmitter, and magnifier of culture (Bakke 2002:30). In most cases it appears that first-time migrants to the cities are men. Often, family members or circumstances force them to leave their villages or circumstances force them to leave their villages and make the move. For a time, they maintain their families in the villages and send money regularly. They keep close connections with their families and clans in the villages. After a time, these men either bring their wives, children and siblings to

the informal settlement communities, or eventually get married.

In the recent years, more rural people are migrating to the informal settlement communities with their families and households. This is particularly true when there is large -scale famine, flooding, or rioting in countryside. Those people who live in villages near major cities migrate to the cities with their entire families because the expansion of urbanization absorbs their land and livelihood. They are left with no possible means of support in their village, and having no other option, they take shelter in the informal settlement. Men, women, and even children begin a struggle for survival as they move into the informal settlement communities. Many women and children must seek work in the nearby cities.

Many people assume that migration from the rural areas is the primary cause. But migration has always occurred. It is not the only cause of growth. The growth of cities is made up of both migration (called explosion growth) and natural increase within the cities (sometimes called implosion growth). Causes of migration are described as push and pull factors (Grigg 1992:29). Migrants come from diverse religious background into a melting pot of religions.

The processes of urbanization are not new phenomena. Urbanization have been occurring since Nimrod and Babel. But there are historical

differences occurring today that have resulted in the world rapidly becoming urban and more of the world's people becoming urban poor.

As migrants arrive in the cities, they find no place and they end up squatting in the unused land or looking for residents in the informal settlements. As they arrive in the informal settlement they initially appear to be uprooted and dislocated. A closer look reveals a different picture. When the rural people migrate to the cities they do not come arbitrarily. In most cases, they come to the city with some kind of initial contact (Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:149)

Normally, the contact is either a close relative, someone from the same clan, or a friend. This explains why one can find groups of people from the same caste, language, and village background in specific areas of the city. Monsma (1980:14) is right when he says, " Networking relationship help people to find work, provide clothing, shelter, and food when needed protect from destructive acts, provide help when sickness or death strikes and fulfill mankind's desire for social contacts"

Some of the worst suffering is found among people that have recently arrived in the informal settlement communities. Peasants are seldom prepared for the difficulties they find in the informal settlement communities. They do not have the skills or training required for the jobs

that are available. They do not have money to buy property or pay high rent. They are forced to stay in squatter camps, which are shack built of pierces of wood, tin, and tarpaper, usually located on the city borders. These squatter communities lack water, sewage, electricity and regular streets. The residents are open to eviction and sudden loss of their homes because the land does not belong to them. Life for the poor is hard in cities. They are often victims of crime and injustice. Nevertheless large number of people continues to arrive in large numbers to the informal settlement communities. They are drawn to these informal settlement communities as though by invisible magnets. They have great hopes and dreams for the future despite the poverty and suffering they experience now. They firmly believe that if not the parents; certainly the children will enjoy better lives in the informal settlement communities.

1.1.2 Push factors behind migration

1.1.2.1 Rural poverty

The primary driving force behind migration is the rural economy. In an increasingly cash economy, the same levels of agriculture provide declining level of effective cash. It becomes increasingly rational to migrate to the town, even if there is only a one in three or a one in two chance of getting a job. People primary migrate to the cities for economic reasons- to earn a living. When there is little rainfall, drought displaces thousands of people, forcing them to leave their villages to find work in the cities. A substantial

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body of research on rural-urban migration in various world regions shows that most people move to the cities for economic reasons (Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:170).

Members of the lower castes and landless laborers compose sizable segments of those who migrate to the informal settlements. In addition, partly because of changes in the traditional caste system, many landless laborers lose their traditional occupation and must seek employment outside the village. Thus most of the people who migrate to the informal settlements do so primarily for economic reasons.

1.1.2.2 Weather factors

Weather also affects migration. People came to the cities because of river erosion and flooding. Disasters such as famine, flooding, and community unrest force people to migrate to the informal settlement communities.

1.1.2.3 Unemployment

Most of the people came to the cities seeking for employment. Data concerning unemployment in South Africa especially in the informal settlements is really unsatisfactory. Unemployment is probably the most severe problem South African society is experiencing and is conceivably the root cause of many other problems such as high crime rate, violence, and object poverty. A person is said to be unemployed if he/she is without

work, is currently available for work and is seeking work or wanting to work (Barker 1998:113)

1.1.2.4 Money

Money has increasingly become an important commodity, because it is acceptable in all social and economic transactions, including "bride price" and other traditional compensations. Today social prestige dictates the use of money to finalize the transactions (Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:171).

1.1.3 Pull factors behind migration

Throughout the centuries men and women have needed permanence, security, community and achievement. The city, good in its reflections of the godhead, in its communality, opportunity for creativity, and creation of order; and evil in its infiltration with the demonic components of abusive power, exploitation, and arrogant rejection of God, has always been the Mecca for such aspirations.

When the impact of radios, television, films, magazines and newspapers resulted in rising expectations among the rural population. This plus the new highways into the rural towns, open up a bewildering array of alternatives for people who for centuries have lived at subsistence levels. This is a prime reason why those who live in rural areas that are closer to centers of politics or economics migrate at a greater rate.

The desire for education and health are also pulling factors. Rural schools often prepare people not for rural lives for the modernizing influence of the city. In the rural areas there are no hospitals, no doctors and in despair people moved to the cities where life is infinitely better. They have a roof over their head and the possibility of a permanent piece of land.

Industrialization is considered a "pull" factor that attracts thousands of people to the city. Cities offer numerous options for employment, primarily in industry. Many educated and skilled people tend to move to the city. In recent decades, the significant growth of industrial centers in major cities has attracted millions from all over the country. This is a major reason why people move to the informal settlement communities, where some kind of employment is normally available.

There are other reasons why people migrate to the informal settlement communities. The availability of educational facilities in the nearby cities, the allure of the mass media, and increasing freedom attract thousands to the informal settlements.

The physical manifestation of urban poverty are evident in all cities in the developing informal settlement communities: majority lack water, sanitation, urban transport, adequate shelter, and unnerved by social

services such as health and education. Poor quality of life is worsened further amidst a deteriorating local environment. It is evident that there is a strong relationship between poverty and informal settlements.

At the same time there is also a strong link between perceptions of urban poverty and intervention in informal settlements. Perception of poverty inform the way in which poverty is measured, which in turn informs alleviation and the design of intervention strategies

The churches in South Africa are engaged in compassionate outreach to help the people in need and to change conditions that need changing. These churches organize and support similar programs, but the ways they explain their ministries are different, unique to their churches own character and compelling to many of its members. This research is a calling for a comprehensive method, which churches can use in helping the poor by developing social ministries in the informal settlement communities

Most churches become involved in social ministries for many reasons. Some ministries respond to the needs of families and individuals in their community, some reflect the fear of changes in the church neighborhood, some result from the efforts of a few committed members, and others seek to recruit new members. Most congregations act from a mixture of

motives, but their ministries of concern are virtually always a natural expression of their Christian faith (Dudley xi)

Mission is a comprehensive concept, 'embracing everything which God sends his people into the world to do' (Bosch 1985: 16). Mission has to do with the crossing of frontiers towards the world. These frontiers may be ethnic, cultural, geographical, religious, ideological or social. Mission takes place where the Church, in her total involvement with the world and the comprehensiveness of her message, bears her testimony in word and deed in the form of a servant with reference to unbelief, exploitation, discrimination and violence, but also with reference to salvation, healing, liberation, reconciliation and righteousness (Bosch 1986: 18). It describes the total task, which God has set the Church for the salvation of the world. It is the task of the Church in movement, the Church that lives for others, the Church that is not only concerned with herself, that turns herself 'inside out' towards the world (Bosch 1986: 17).

Mission is thus comprehensive (but not all-inclusive) and comprises more than Jesus public ministry in Nazareth, he outlines it in terms of mission: 'He said '*As the Father has sent me even so I send you*' (John 20:21). He began his ministry with these compassion words from prophet Isaiah:

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> "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,*
>
> *Because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*
>
> *He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners*
>
> *And to recovery of sight for the blind,*
>
> *To release the oppressed,*
>
> *And to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor*" (Luke 4:18-19).

Surely with these words Jesus modeled the gospel as primarily good news for the poor. And he defined ministry to the poor declaring that the ministry to the poor is holistic, involving preaching, healing, deliverance, justice and doing good deeds. Jesus had a particular interest in the poor and other marginalized groups. The first words Jesus spoke in public according to Luke 4:18-19 contains a pragmatic statement concerning his mission to reverse the destiny of the poor. The prisoners, the blind and the oppressed are all subsumed under the poor, they are all manifestation of poverty, and are all in need of the good news (Bosch: 1996:100).

Jesus' ministry is a model of the way the Christian's twin responsibilities of evangelism and social involvement is to be integrated. Jesus preached, taught, and healed. His concern for the physical needs of people flowed from his love and compassion for them as people, image-bearers of God, who are burdened down by sin and its consequences, hurting, hoping, seeking, and dying. His healing ministry served as a bridge to his

preaching ministry, as he blended concern for the temporal and eternal dimensions of human existence (Greenway 1989:175).

Christ's compassion was holistic, concerned for sick bodies, empty stomachs, and perishing souls. Out of compassion for a leprous man he reached out and healed (Mark 1:41). Moved with compassion for people without spiritual direction, He set aside plans for a restful retreat and taught a multitude (Mark 6:34). When people were hungry and had no food left, Jesus used his power to feed them (Mark 8:1-10). Both his words and his works were expressions of his compassion for people. In the prayer Jesus taught us, he kept humankind's two essential needs together-daily bread and the forgiveness of sins (Greenway 1989:175)

Churches create community ministries in response to the great commandments: "You shall love God your with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Mathew 22:37-40). The church is trying to live out the expectations of our Lord that we will feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome strangers, and minister to the infirm and imprisoned-remember that just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me (Mathew 25:40)

Churches have generated a wide variety of social ministries, from soup kitchens and food pantries to shelters for the elderly and educational enrichment for children and youth. Other churches have launched justice ministries that advocate for minority rights and social responsibility. This thesis is an attempt to advice churches to put their faith into action

The church of Jesus Christ is called to bear its witness in the present context of social change, political uncertainty, religious quest and cultural dialogue. Many voices desire to be heard. In this context of political, social and religious ferment, the church is called to carry out its mission. In a land of extreme diversities and innumerable divisions the church is called to be an agent of reconciliation and peace by fighting on the side of the oppressed backward classes (Hedlund 1991:13).

1.2 The Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to reflect on what is happening in the lives of the poor in the informal settlement communities and collect information by means of a research and then develop a comprehensive strategy, which will help the churches serving in the informal settlement communities to evangelize the poor effectively. A proposal regarding a method for the comprehensive mission strategy for the churches in the informal settlement communities will therefore also be made.

The second purpose of this study will also be to make a contribution towards the churches interpretation of the Great Commission for a new generation struggling with issues of poverty within the context of the informal settlement communities

This study can therefore help the church's ministries towards those in informal settlements and similar circumstances. It is part of the Christian community's ongoing endeavor to care for the poor and to be relevant to their needs in ministering to them, because part of the unique situation of the informal settlement communities include poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and crime. Jesus came as the supreme expression of God's love for a fallen world. He taught us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves (Mathew 22:39). He had passion for the poor, the blind, the cripple, the leprous, the hungry and those who weep. It is the example and commission of Jesus that inspired his church to continue seeking to be present and visible even among the poor

1.3 Research Question:

In this research we will be trying to answer these two questions:

- Will the church be able to develop a comprehensive mission strategy for the poor in the informal settlement?

- Is it possible to develop comprehensive method, which the church can use in assisting the poor in the informal settlement community

both in word and deed?

The people of Orange Farm informal settlement function as a special reference. Emphasis will be given to the following aspects:

a) The biblical understanding of mission for the poor

b) The socio-cultural situation of the poor in the informal settlement communities

c) The comprehensive strategy, which the church can use in assisting the poor.

1.4 Methodology and some basic presupposition

The methodology employed in the development of this topic will include the following steps. The foundation of this study rests upon a careful examination of the biblical and theological literature that helps us understand the mission strategy, which the church can use in evangelizing the informal settlement communities.

This study will also involve the collection and examination of contemporary missiological literature describing the real meaning of mission research.

The examination of this literature will be accompanied by correspondence and interviews with individuals possessing wide experience and

professional skills in the work of the church. Books and journals written by theologians, researchers and activists are a very good source of information on the experience of people, but these are no substitute for the contribution, which comes from those who go through experience.

Empirical research will be done through a survey of questionnaires that will be developed in collaboration with a team of church leaders in the community to ensure that it is as representative as possible. We will seek to determine the range of topics and issues to be covered, to remove ambiguities at the investigative phase and to ensure validity and reliability at the analysis phase. The office of the Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research (IMER) will be contacted for assistance in formulating these questions.

Lastly, this study will be approached subjectively through my personal experience in the community. For the past thirteen years the researcher has had the privilege of serving the Uniting Reformed Church In Southern Africa in Orange Farm. This in fact is an advantage because it forced me to approach the study with an open mind prepared to read the material on informal settlement communities, ask questions and listen before drawing conclusions and making recommendations. The fact that the researcher lives and works within the Orange Farm informal settlement is not considered to be a handicap for this investigation. This is viewed as an

advantage as the researcher has already established networks within the community and is likely not to be suspected when seeking further information about aspects associated with the community.

It is assumed throughout the work that although the Orange Farm informal settlement community is unique in certain aspects, it does have much in common with other informal settlement communities in South Africa. This assumption makes it possible for other studies of informal settlements in South Africa to be helpful in understanding Orange Farm. The present study's results may also be useful when other informal settlements are researched.

Another assumption, which guides this investigation, is the authority and inspiration of the Bible. It is for this reason that an effort will be made to submit whatever observation and evaluation of the research to validate an interpretation informed by acceptance of the Bible's authority.

1.5 Definition of terms

1.5.1 Strategy

Strategy is one of the most important themes discussed in mission today. The term strategy is derived from the Greek word 'strategos', which means a plan or policy to achieve something or the planning of a war or campaign. Strategy focuses on how mission has been carried out and the

numerous attempts to form plans for world evangelization.

The overwhelming panoramic view of the poor in the informal settlements communities shows that the church needs to develop authentic urban mission strategies for ministering in the informal settlement communities. The church is compelled to develop strategies to reach these communities and multiply churches among the poor.

1.5.2 Mission

The term mission is derived from the Latin word "mitto" which means to send. In more general terms the word mission describes a person's vocation as his mission in life. This means that every person has a task and this task is called mission. In Christian terms the word mission means to be sent into the world with a specific task.

The church has a mission to the informal settlement communities. Bringing the witness of Christ to the poor is one of our heaviest burdens as Christians today. The church cannot, however relinquish its evangelistic mission in the areas of the poor but it is obliged to minister to them. David Bosch (1980: 20) puts it clearly when he says mission takes place where the church, in her total involvement with the world and the comprehensiveness of its message, bears its testimony, in word and deed in the form of servant, with reference to unbelief, exploitation,

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discrimination and violence, but also with reference to salvation, healing, liberation, reconciliation and righteousness.

1.5.3 Informal Settlement Communities

It can be defined as the authorized settlement for the poor. It is the home for the poor. Some of their sites have been serviced, some not. Most of the sites have been planned and numbered. Some of these sites have water taps while some are using one common tap for up to twenty families. Their houses are made of plywood, shacks, plastics, bricks etc.

The shared characteristic of the settlement types is usually low incomes and poverty. The cloud of poverty covers them. Their lifestyle is the same as that of squatters. There many people who are staying in these areas and these people are in need, their needs are deepening, and they are a diverse group, for example, the homeless, the HIV-AIDS affected and infected, the prostitutes, the drug addicts, the widows and orphans. It is no exaggeration to call informal settlement communities the new frontier of Christian mission. Our encounter with these people should result in an inclusive and loving response. We are commanded to love these people as we love ourselves (Mathew 22:38-40).

1.6   Key words

Church History, Comprehensive approach (in missions), Development, Evangelism, HIV/AIDS, Informal Settlements, Local Church, Marginalized

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Communities, Mission, Poverty, Relief, South Africa, Urbanisation.

1.7 Overview

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the thesis. It clarifies the scope of the study by providing the problem statement, the purpose and background of the study, motivation, relevance, and the planned methodology behind this study.

Chapter 2 gives a detailed biblical and theological perspective of mission for the poor by looking at various concepts derived from certain Old and New Testament passages. From these passages the scripture clearly demonstrates that God has a great concern for the poor and that God has an equal concern for the well being of every single person. The Bible teaches that God is angered when people are oppressed and that He always stands on the side of the poor.

Chapter 3 is a presentation of the historical overview of the church being involved with the mission and Christian social concern for the poor. Throughout history, concern for the poor has been constant in the church. The history of the church manifests a continuing care for the poor, sick and the homeless.

Chapter 4 describes the need for a comprehensive/holistic approach to the

problems of the poor. This is done by exploring the four crucial aspects of mission: marturia, koinonia, diakonia and leitourgia. This chapter further challenges us to set up relief and development ministries and convey the gospel to the poor in word and deed.

In *Chapter 5* an empirical research was done within the context of Orange Farm through a survey of questionnaires. The study focuses on the community's circumstances, traditions, worldview, behavior and beliefs. The data given in this chapter shows that there are many poor people who are staying in the informal settlement communities, and that their needs are deepening. The research demonstrated the value of and need for developing a comprehensive mission strategy.

It is in the light of *Chapter 6* that a comprehensive mission strategy was developed. The models for ministering in the informal settlement communities are explored by looking at the different effective strategies

Chapter 7 is the closing chapter of the entire research. I am offering a number of challenges to the churches in South Afrca. I also indicate areas of further research

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MISSION FOR THE POOR

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to shed light from scripture on the nature and scope of the church's urban mission. The Bible contains fourteen hundred references to the city, and there are at least twenty-five examples of what can be called urban ministry in the historical books alone. With the amount of scriptural data before us, it is not surprising that both the Old and New Testaments provide examples of outstanding urban ministries which give us important insights into God's will for cities.

A number of these passages will be examined and we will apply their insights to the contemporary world situation. At the same time the experience of working in the informal settlement of Orange Farm will be drawn in the hope that through the interplay of biblical teaching, field experience, and contemporary challenges, new insights will be found that will help us to develop the comprehensive mission strategy for the poor in today's informal settlements.

As the background for understanding Jesus' proclamation of good news to the poor, we need to turn first of all to the Old Testament, and then to the literature written in the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Today there is great misconception that mission began in the New
Testament or with Jesus. Mission did not begin with Jesus. That is why
the study of mission theology should begin with the Old Testament. Jesus
Christ is to be understood against the background of the Old Testament
(Bosch 1996:16). It is He who gives the Old Testament its perspective. In
order for us to understand the New Testament, we must begin with the
Old Testament. Jesus himself recognized the authority of the Old
Testament. The Old Testament should be taken seriously because it gives
much background for the New Testament, including its concept of mission
(Hedlund 1991:19). J.H Bavinck (1960:11) once remarked: 'At first sight
the Old Testament appears to offer little basis for the idea of missions'

The Old Testament is important for understanding Christian mission. The
Christian mission, which begins in the New Testament, has its roots in the
Old Testament, where long before the incarnation of Jesus, God was at
work. God has been involved with man right from the very beginning of
history (Hedlund 1991:20). We find a consistent strain of thought in the
Old Testament that appreciates wealth as a gift of God and regards poverty
as blight upon human life, either as divine punishment or as a self-
inflicted wound.

As the background for understanding Jesus' proclamation of good news to

the poor, we need to turn first of all to the Old Testament, and to the literature written in the period between the Old and New Testaments. There is a continuous tradition running throughout the Old Testament that regards possessions as a sign of God's blessings. In this view, wealth and poverty are regarded as good gifts of God and the fact of possessing wealth, even great wealth, is interpreted as a sign of God's favor (Pilgrim 1981:19).

This is true already in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis, which describe, often in great detail, the considerable wealth of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 13:2; 26:13; 30:43; 41:40). With their large flocks and families and numerous servants and slaves, the patriarchs bear the covenant promise of God without any hint of God's displeasure over their wealth. Along with this, goes an emphasis upon their generosity and hospitality to friends and foes alike. But magnanimity and wealth are comfortably compatible in these early traditions (Pilgrim1981: 19).

A fundamental missionary motif in both the Old and the New Testament is that of God's compassion. God refuses to bypass humankind: He sends prophets, messengers, even His Son into the world (John 3:16). This divine compassion manifests itself already in the election of Israel. Israel had no claim to God's attention and yet God took compassion on Israel (Bosch

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1993:180).

The Bible depicts God as the One who has compassion on the lost and marginalized (Ezekiel 16:4-7). This is why the Exodus event ("*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery*" (Exodus 20:2) became the corner stone of Israel's confession of faith: God took compassion on a band of slaves in Egypt and saved them (Bosch 1993:180). Psalm 68:5-6 says "*Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God gives the desolate a home to live in*".

The term "Poverty" is an ambiguous term. According to the Oxford Dictionary its meaning refers to the external, economic, and social circumstances in which people live. The real-life situation described by this term, however, depends on the specific socioeconomic condition of society as a whole and on the social status of the person using the term (Oxford Dictionary).

The poor are mentioned 245 times in the Old Testament. The Hebrew terms '*ani*' and '*anaw*' appear most frequent, '*ani*' about 80 times and '*anaw*' about 25 times. The two terms refer back to the same root. So '*ani*' refers to the oppressed poor, and '*anaw*' to the humble and meek. In the Old Testament poverty is considered as an evil, as a consistently painful

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fact, issuing in the establishment of relationships of dependence and oppression, which leads to the false elevation of the powerful and to the humiliation of the helpless (Nissen 1984:7).

There are some passages in the Old Testament, which imply that poverty is a punishment from God. We see this in the legal traditions, where poverty is one of the threats used against the violators of the Law (Deuteronomy 28:15-24; Leviticus 26:14-26). Likewise the prophets threatened evildoers with the loss of their treasured luxuries and a life of "sackcloth" instead of a rich robe (Isaiah 3:24). The oppressed, too, threaten their persecutors with poverty (Psalm 109:10-12). This same negative view of poverty appears in a somewhat different form in the Wisdom literature. Here we find a number of criticisms against the poor that sounds too familiar. The poor are lazy (Proverbs 6:6-11), or drunkards and gluttons (Proverbs 23:21), or carefree spenders (Proverbs 21:17). In these cases, it is observed that poverty is self-inflicted. And beggars, who shamelessly display their poverty, are much despised (Pilgrim 1981:20)

Thus we find a consistent strain of thought in the Old Testament that appreciates wealth as a gift of God and regards poverty as blight upon human life, either as divine punishment or as a self-afflicted wound. A more pervasive and fundamental theme throughout the Old Testament is the upholding of Yahweh as the protector of the poor and needy. The

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needs and rights of human beings have been violated and one of the results is poverty. The language of the Old Testament is very precise; the texts speak much more frequently of the poor than of poverty

2.1.1 The Poor in the Old Testament?

Some see the poor as the pious, some as a particular social group. Some see them as those who have voluntarily abandoned their possessions, and others emphasize the condition of those afflicted with literal poverty. Still others see the poor in the light of the Old Testament, as the designated heirs of salvation.

2.1.1.1 The Poor are the Pious

There are many people who think the term "poor" is virtually synonymous with the "pious", though frequently with the qualification that such piety thrived chiefly among the literally poor. Even in the Psalms it is doubtful that the "poor": can be treated as a synonym for 'pious'. The poor and the pious are used in the Psalms principally to describe the socially deprived, people in great need, and the nation of Israel. (Seccombe 1983:25)

In Israel nation, God was seen as the defender of those with inferior social or economic positions. Poor or not, they were his people and enjoyed his protection. The king, as God's vice-regent, came thus to have a special responsibility for the poor. This inevitably gave the poor a religious value

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even when they were seen in a purely socially light, but their poverty was in no sense a virtue (Seccombe 1983:26)

Because God is pledged to uphold the cause of the poor and needy, who have no other defender, it is natural that a man in trouble should plead his poverty and need before God. Therefore poverty terminology in the Psalms comes to refer to a whole range of need and suffering in addition to literal poverty. Persecutions in particular a lead the Psalmist to cry to God that he is poor and needy. This does not mean, however, that 'poor' has a religious meaning akin to pious. It is a description of need. The religious dimension of this language lies in God's known character as a Savior who rescues those who are in need (Seccombe 1983:27)

The third use of the terminology is to describe the nation Israel. It is clear that in Psalm 9 it is Israel, over against the nations that oppress her, who is described as "poor". In Psalm 68:10 the congregation, which God saved from Egypt is called "the poor".

Thus the dominant idea behind the poverty vocabulary of the Psalms is need, most frequently the need that arises from the attacks of enemies, be they rich oppressors, or enemies of the king, or enemies of the nation. The "poor" are saved in the Psalms not because "poor" and "pious" have any relation, but because only those in need have anything to be saved from

(Seccombe 1983:27-28).

2.1.1.2 The Poor as a Particular Social Grouping

Most scholars identify the poor with the '*amme ha'aretz*', the term, which is used for abuse almost equivalent to "gentile" and noted that this group consisted of more than just the economically poor; the rich men were also numbered among them. Their poverty consisted in the fact that they did not know or practice the law in the way the Pharisees did. The converse is that the rich are the Pharisees (Seccombe 198329)

To see "the poor" as the '*amme ha'aretz*' is to opt for a metaphorical meaning of "poor" which is entirely conditioned by a Pharisaic viewpoint. But in a time when other parties existed, when the Pharisees, whatever their influence, were a minority, and when a large population of pious non-Pharisees practiced their traditional faith, paid their tithes, and made their pilgrimages to the Temple, to think that all but the Pharisees were regarded as despised outcasts seems unrealistic (Seccombe 1983:30).

2.1.1.3 The Poor as Those who have Left All

The Qumran sect gave an impression that their new member must give up their possession to the poor in order that they should be without property. For other people possession of property did not mean poverty; for some it probably meant the end of poverty. A number of scholars focus on the

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actual condition of poverty as something, which conditions people to virtue, or makes them receptive to the message of the Kingdom (Seccombe 1983:32).

2.2 SOME GENERAL INSIGHTS ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE MINISTRY FOR THE POOR DERIVED FROM CERTAIN OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES

2.2.1 God's creation and His purpose for humankind

Any comprehensive treatment of mission in the Old Testament must begin with God's creation and his purpose for humanity. The notion of mission is intimately bound up with his saving plan, which moves from creation and has to do with salvation reaching the ends of the earth (Kostenberger & O' Brien 2001: 25).

The activity of God in the biblical drama always originates from without. As the Creator, God transcends the world He has made and is totally distinguishable from it. Yet his compassionate nature compels him to be involved with his creation. He is always present in the world through his involvement with humanity- persons whom he has made in his own image. God's benevolent intention with his creatures is ultimately redemptive, though humanity's need of correction also compels God to acts of judgment (DuBose 1983:60).

The first indications of God's plan for the world appear in the creation account of Genesis. From the opening verse of this chapter God's control over all creation is asserted. In the first six days eight acts of creation are presented (Genesis 1: 3-31). On the sixth day, as his crowning act, God created human kind in his own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-28). Man as the image of God is installed as his vicegerent over all creation with mandate to control and rule it on behalf of his maker (Kostenberger & O' Brien 2001: 26).

Man was to live under the divine command (Genesis 2:16-17), but instead rebelled against his Creator. The sinner finds himself under the wrath of God, and this involves a change in relationships

2.2.2 The fall of humankind and spread of sin

Genesis 3 describes the transition from innocence to guilt-the fall of Adam. Man becomes a sinner in this chapter, and the whole story of humankind is disastrously affected by the consequences of his disobedience to God. Man was to live under the divine command (Genesis 2:16-17), but instead rebels against his Creator. In chapter 3 sin begins with doubt regarding the trustworthiness of God's character, which then leads to the desire for independence from him, and this results in direct disobedience (Genesis 3:1-6). Sin, which is described as a serious moral lapse, is also the reversal of the original order of relationships, God, man, the woman and

the animals (Genesis 3:1-6; 2:18-25)- and thus a deliberate attack on the divine order is established at creation.

The sinner finds himself under the wrath of God, and this involves a change in relationships: the intimacy between the man and the woman is broken, the woman will feel the pangs of childbirth (Genesis 3:16), and the man is cursed in relation to the ground. His relation to the environment is marked by frustration and pain (Genesis 3:17-19); Romans 8:20-23), and he is unable to exercise his dominion over nature in a proper way. Both the man and the woman are banished from the Garden, and their relationship with the Maker now assumes a negative rather than a positive form (Genesis 3:22-24). A bright note, however, appears in verse 15, where the Lord promises that the seed of the woman will defeat the serpent (Kostenberger & O Brien 2001:27).

2.2.3 The Book of the Covenant

The book of Exodus recounts how the Lord began to fulfill his promise of the land to the assembled multitude of Israel. The exodus of his people from slavery to the Egyptians is presented in the song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-18) as a new creation (Kostenberger & O' Brien 2001:32).

One of the earliest collections is connected with the giving of the

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Commandments, as narrated in Exodus. Yahweh speaks to Moses and provides instructions on legal ways to deal with violations of his commands. One of his basic assumptions is that all permanent or hopeless poverty will be done away with (Pilgrim 1981:22). To fulfill this, the charging of interest is forbidden, the taking of clothing as a loan pledge is negated, bribery condemned and justice required (Exodus 23:6-7).

Every seventh year slaves are to be released, the land is to lay fallow, the vineyard and live orchards intended, all for the benefit of the poor (Exodus 21:24; 23:10-11). Singled out for special mention as the objects of Yahweh's protection, are the stranger, the widow, the orphan and the poor (Exodus 22: 21-27). His motive for the poor is made clear: Yahweh's Himself rescued his people when they were strangers and slaves in Egypt; hence his redeemed people should act in like manner toward the helpless in the midst (Exodus 22:21; 23:9). As further evidence of Yahweh's compassionate care for the poor and afflicted, He promises to hear them in their afflictions and to act (Exodus 22:23,27). (Pilgrim 1981:22)

In the several periods of its history Israel understood its election either as an expression of favoritism or, especially in later Judaism, as something that it had deserved (it was something even suggested that Yahweh needed

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Israel; without Israel He would have been a God without worshippers) (Bosch 1993:180).

Israel's calling in Exodus 19:5 had the whole world in view. The nation was to be holy and to serve the world by being separate. Her life was to give clearance evidence of Yahweh's rule over her, and thus to be a model of his lordship over the whole world. Israel had been chosen by the Lord from among the nations of the world, which were in rebellion against him. But, in fact, Israel failed to live up to her calling (Kostenberger & O'Brien 2001: 34).

2.2.4 The Deuteronomic Law Code

It is generally agreed that in the book of Deuteronomy we have an updating of the Mosaic legislation appearing in Exodus. The Law of tithe is spelled out, coupled with the admonition to care for the Levites, who possessed no lands (Deuteronomy14: 22-29). At the Passover and the Feast of Booths, the celebration is to include servants, Levites, strangers, the fatherless and widows. As in the covenant code, the theological underpinning of this regard for the poor is echoed in the repeated refrain, *"You shall remember you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord God redeemed you"* (Deuteronomy 24:18,22). With these words, Yahweh affirms his promise to come to the aid of the poor who cry out for relief and to punish evildoers (Pilgrim 1981:23).

In the midst of this legal material is a passionate appeal *"Not to harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother but you shall open your hand to him, and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be"* (Deuteronomy 15:7-11). The appeal to generous and ungrudging care is linked with the promise of the Lord's blessing to those who give freely (Deuteronomy 15:10). Although it is recognized that the poor will always be around, nevertheless, *"You shall open wide you hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land"* (Deuteronomy 15:11).

It is here that we meet the concept of the Sabbatical Year, which figured so prominently in Israel's poor legislation. The Sabbatical Year required three things every seventh year:

a) The land lies fallow (Exodus 23:10-11);

b) All debts are remitted (Deuteronomy 15:1-2)

c) Slaves are offered release (Deuteronomy 15:1-6, 12-18).

The purpose of the Sabbatical Year was to prevent gross injustice and oppression from taking root in society. It was Yahweh's desire that *"there will be no poor among you"* (Deuteronomy 15:4). We can say with certainty that the Sabbatical Year existed as a powerful symbol to Israel of God's concern for the poor and for justice (Pilgrim 1981:23).

2.2.5 The Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26)

This collection is considered to be later priestly material, perhaps from the time of the Exile, even though it embodies many traditions that go back for into Israel's earliest history.

It is in this legislature that we also encounter the concept of the Jubilee Year. The Jubilee year is closely connected or related to the Sabbatical Year. But it adds one further provision, which makes it theoretically the most radical social legislation in the Old Testament. According to Leviticus 25: 10ff, every 49th year the following is required:

   a) The land lies fallow;

   b) Slaves are freed;

   c) Debts are remitted; and

   d) The new Jubilee prescription, the ancestral land is returned (Pilgrim 1981:24)

This additional, provision of returning ancestral lands and possessions to their original families was obviously formulated to prevent great disparity in wealth and lands among the Israelites. Its theological premises are plainly stated: '*all lands belong to Yahweh; He has given it to his people as a gift. Each has received an inheritance, and no one can sell his portion or keep another's in perpetuity. All have a continued right to their own land*' (Leviticus 25:23-24). Obviously such legislation, unique in history, would

prevent the accumulation of gross injustice, if carried out (Pilgrim 1981:24).

The concept of Jubilee was kept alive in Israel's memory as a reminder of the kind of just social and religious community Yahweh desires. And in the later prophets, especially Second Isaiah, it becomes the symbol of the eschatological age. In all of these themes throughout Yahweh is the defender of the poor and needy. He desires justice and mercy on behalf of the poor, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. His words are a call to remembrance:" *I am the Lord your God who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt*" (Leviticus 25:38)

2.2.6 The Prophetic Tradition

Doubtless the most familiar sections of the Old Testament on the theme of the poor are the prophetic warnings and judgments addressed to the wealthy and powerful during the various periods of Israel's monarchy. It was especially during this time of the monarchy in both the northern and southern kingdoms that greater and greater social disparities developed, bringing with them increasing oppression and exploitation. Out his social and political period of crisis in Israel emerged one of the most unique religious phenomena in the world's history, the prophetic movement (Pilgrim 1981:24-25).

In the name of the God of Israel, who had called them and sometimes compelled them to be his spokesmen, the prophets directed their words against the social injustices of the people and rulers and became the staunch defenders of the poor and powerless. It is to their message that we now turn, even though with great brevity (Pilgrim 1981:25)

2.2.6.1 The Early Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah

The early eight-century prophets became the earliest prophets spokesmen on behalf of the poor. Their critique against the social abuse of their society was grounded theologically in God's covenant with Israel, his act of election. This covenant had called for faith obedience, as expressed in the Torah. But Israel had become indifferent and unfaithful to the covenant, and this unfaithfulness was most clearly evident to the prophets in the trampling upon the poor and neglect of the needy (Pilgrim 1981:25).

The citing evidence against the poor is long and all too familiar-unjust courts (Amos 5:12; Isaiah 10:1-2; Jeremiah 5:28) fraudulent trade (Amos 8:4-5), unfair taxation (Amos 5:11-12), theft of land (Micah 2:1-3), violence against the poor (Ezekiel 16:48), wasteful affluence amid poverty (Amos 4:1,6:4f), selling debtors into slavery (Amos 2:6; 8:6), and even suffocating tithes. These prophets all agree that social injustices are most indicative of a falling away from the covenant God. They are all certain that God is on the side of the poor.

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2.2.6.2 The latter Prophets

2.2.6.2.1 Prophet Jeremiah

When Jeremiah is called to prophecy, the fate of the southern kingdom is all but sealed (627 –580 B.C). Jeremiah speaks to this situation, but in judgment and in grace. He knows Judah's day of reckoning has come, yet the rulers and people live on under false hopes. And they continue their oppression of the weak in their midst. Therefore Jeremiah proclaims the true knowledge of God, which expresses itself in a just response to the cause of the needy and afflicted. In a particularly powerful passage, Jeremiah condemns King Jehoiakim, the son of good King Josiah, because of his luxurious expansion of his already luxurious palace.

> "*Doomed is the man who builds his house by injustice*
>
> *and enlarges it by dishonesty; who makes his countrymen*
>
> *work for nothing and does not pay their wages…The Lord has spoken* "(Jeremiah 22:13-17)

Jeremiah spoke of the poor in several different contexts. Firstly, he, like most of the prophets, referred to them in his oracles of judgment Jeremiah 2:34; 5:4, 28; 22:16f. In all these instances certain people (kings, officials, priest, prophets and the wicked rich) deserve to be punished, partly because they have wronged the poor.

A second context in which Jeremiah speaks of the poor is when, in one of

his confessions, he sees himself as one of them. In the passage he appeals to the people to praise the Lord, since the Lord rescues the poor from the clutches of the rich (Jeremiah 20:13).

The third context in which Jeremiah speaks of the poor is that of the fall of Jerusalem. The vineyards and fields were given to the poor to cultivate (Jeremiah 39:10; 52:16). They were entrusted to governor Gedaliah's care (Jeremiah 40:7) and some of the very poorest people were also carried off (Jeremiah 52:15).

Fourthly, the poor themselves are accused. Jeremiah says that at first he had thought that the poor acted foolishly because they were ignorant of the Lord's will (Jeremiah 5:4); but he found that they like the great (Jeremiah 5:5) were rebelling against God

The fifth and final context in which Jeremiah refers to the poor is when he judges a king (Jeremiah 22:13f). King Jehoiakim's actions were unacceptable because he was intent on enriching himself at the expense of others, in contrast to his father, king Josiah, who had fought the cause of the weak and the poor (Van Heerden 1993:221-222).

Jeremiah's instruction to the exiles in Babylon included a word about prayer. *" But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile,*

and to the Lord on its behalf" (Jeremiah 29:7). Prayer for the informal settlements is a holy war against all the hostile forces that militate against the peace and well being of the city. By their prayer, God's people distinguish themselves from those who delight in evil. Prayer for the informal settlement communities is a missionary prayer. It pleads that Christ's Lordship be established in the informal settlement community

2.2.6.2.2 Prophet Nehemiah

Nehemiah's prophecy recounts the returned exiles from Babylon gathered at the Water Gate of the temple in Jerusalem. They were celebrating the Feast of Trumpets, a secret festival that God had ordained as an annual celebration on the first day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:23-25).

Nehemiah's, the architect of Jerusalem's urban renewal had put forward every effort to inspire the people to rebuild the ruined city. They had cleared away the rubble, erected the walls, and built new houses. It had been a tremendous undertaking, and Nehemiah was proud of the people's accomplishments. But something more was needed. Nehemiah realized that moral and religious reforms had to be made, to give the nation a spiritual reform; they had to be made to give the nations and prevent the kind of decay that had precipitated its reformer destruction.

For social and political reforms to take hold in a way that would please

God and preserve the people, spiritual renewal had to occur. This could happen only if God's Word was known, understood, and obeyed (Greenway 1978: 45-46). The second lesson that can be learned from Nehemiah's is that the Word of God is never outdated. The Bible is always relevant, and it speaks to us in our time as powerfully as it did to people centuries ago. Thirdly, the Word of God speaks to the issues of the heart and society. When people understand what God's Word is really saying to them, when they repent on account of its judgments and take heed to its precepts.

2.2.6.2.3 Prophet Isaiah

The book of Isaiah comprises of three parts. The first 39 chapters deal mainly with the time of Isaiah (740-690 B.C) when Judah and Israel were in danger of Assyrian conquest. Isaiah prophesied in the southern kingdom where he probably had a long ministry.

Justice and righteousness are a common theme in Isaiah. If one reads the entire vineyard song (Isaiah 5:1-7), one observes that justice and righteousness are a response to what the Lord has already done for his people. In Isaiah 1:17 justice and righteousness are mentioned in the same breath as " doing good", which consists in counter-acting oppression and caring for widows and orphans. They require action. When justice and righteousness were neglected, God himself acted as judge on behalf of the poor (Isaiah 3:13-15).

Isaiah mentions a number of ways in which the poor are oppressed. The rich grabbed all the houses and land for themselves, so that the poor in the end had no place of their own (Isaiah 5:8). The laws made by the mighty caused that the poor should suffer; the poor were deprived of their rights, widows were exploited and orphans were victimized (Isaiah 10:1-2). There are even instances of robbery and murder (Isaiah 3:14-15). (Van Heerden 1993:218-219)

After destruction befalls Judah at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the cruel of Babylonian oppressor, the people were carried off to exile in Babylon. During this time another great prophet comes to the fore, the unknown author(s) of Isaiah 40-66. His words mark the high point of the prophetic movement. Even if he was preoccupied with bringing a word of comfort to his people and with searching out the meaning of their future, he also made a powerful appeal for justice and the cause of the poor (Pilgrim 1981:28).

It is this same Second Isaiah who envisions the coming new age as a time when God will send his anointed servant with the news of good tidings to the afflicted (Isaiah 61:1-2). This eschatological hope, as we shall see, becomes the primary vehicle by which Luke interprets the ministry of Jesus in his gospel, with the help of the text from Isaiah 58:6, which we

have just quoted (Pilgrim 1981:28).

2.2.6.2.4 Prophet Zephaniah

The book of Zephaniah contains two sections in which the poor feature In Zephaniah 3:12 the prophet speaks thus about the poor: *"For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord"*

Hence the concept of poverty (rendered as "humble" and "lowly") does not refer to a specific socio-economic stratum of society, but to specific attitude towards the Lord. The humble and lowly in Zephaniah 3:12, contrast sharply with the "proudly exultant" in the previous verse. In Zephaniah 2: the prophet enjoins the poor to seek to discover the Lord's will, and to strive for righteousness and humility. If they do this they may escape the punishment of the Lord (Van Heerden 1993:222)

2.2.6.2.5 Prophet Habakkuk

Habakkuk's depiction of injustice assumes the form of not of an oracle of judgment, but of lament (Habakkuk 1; 2f). To him the suffering ones, among whom he includes himself (Habakkuk 1:2-4) and the poor (Habakkuk 3:14), are exposed to oppression both from within and from outside. His own society is guilty of injustice, oppression, strife, contention and perversion of the law (Habakkuk 1:2-4). On top of that they live under

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threat from Chaldeans. The latter are a nation of greedy and haughty people who became rich on goods that were not their own (Habakkuk 2:5-9). In this way they built themselves a "nest on high" (Habakkuk 2:2-9) to secure themselves against calamity but in this way they in fact forfeit their lives (Habakkuk 2:10).

The punishment that awaits his own nation is that the Lord will summon the Chaldeans to do to Judah as they have already done to many other peoples: to conquer what is not theirs (Habakkuk 1:5f) Ultimately God's judgment will come on the Chaldeans as well, they will suffer the same fate as their victims (Habakkuk 2:7-10, 15-17)

This survey should suffice to remind us how central is the theme in the Old Testament prophets that because Yahweh is the defender of the poor and needy, loyalty to the covenant requires social justice. Israel's judgment and grace are in large measure based on its fidelity to God's demand for justice and mercy. When we turn to the critique of Jesus towards the rich and powerful in Luke's gospel, we dare not forget this powerful prophetic tradition. A straight -line links the two together, both in Jesus' words of blessing upon the poor and his woes against the rich (Pilgrim 1981:28).

2.2.6.2.6 Prophet Jonah

The book of Jonah begins by saying, *"The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai."* This means that God communicated this message to his prophet. Jonah lived at the time when the Jewish nation was divided into two groups. In the north was Israel, and in the south was the kingdom of Judah. He was from the northern kingdom. He lived in the eight century before Christ. He is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 as a prophet from Gath Hepher, who prophesied that Jeroboam the king of Israel would restore the boundaries of Israel.

Jonah was sent to the great city of Nineveh to preach against it, *"because its wickedness has come up before me"* (verse 2). Nineveh was a big city with many people. Nineveh was a doomed city (Nah. 3:5-7) and yet the object of God's gracious dealings. Nineveh was a "great city" in many ways. It was a world and capital of a powerful empire. The city lasted for fifteen hundred years. Nineveh was famous for its beauty. It took ten thousand slaves twelve years to build the king's house, and the city's parks and public buildings were praised throughout the world. The city's bewildering diversity, high crime rate, pollution, congestion, poverty, and squalor have created a kind of anti-urban prejudice. Cities are becoming dumping grounds for the poor people (Greenway 1978:17).

The evidence of God's concern for Nineveh was seen in the mission, which he gave to Jonah, who became the first apostle to the city. Jonah preached

to the Ninevites in a bitter and resentful spirit, but despite this God used him. God was grieved by the city's wickedness. God made this clear when he commissioned Jonah to go and preach in Nineveh: *"Arise," he said, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me"* (Jonah 1:2).

The entire political and economic life of the city was based on military aggression, the exploitation of weaker nations, and slave labor. The prophet Nahum spared few superlatives in describing this betrayer of nations and city of harlotries (Nahum 3:40). Nineveh was the mistress of witchcrafts and a capital of vice. Obscenities, her culture by idols, and her beauty by violence fouled Nineveh's artistic achievements. She was called "city of blood" (Nahum 3:1) for booty and plunder had made her rich (Greenway 1978:20).

We tend to view the book of Jonah as a storybook about a missionary who was sent to proclaim God's word to a pagan nation. Jonah was not sent to preach a message of salvation but to denounce judgment on Nineveh. The thrust of the story lies elsewhere. It ridicules the narrow ethnocentrism of Jonah who allowed God to work only within Israel (Verkuyl 1978:97). And sulked about God treating those outside the covenant the same way he treats those inside.

Jonah is the only "missionary" who fervently hoped that his listeners would not heed his message! But God does not allow his compassion to be subverted. So the story of Jonah is about God's people to be converted to compassion comparable to that of Yahweh. The story of Jonah is a story about compassion, which knows no boundaries and which, ironically, forms the basis of Jonah's complain against God (Bosch 1993:181).

> *"O Lord! Is this not what I said while I was still in my own country?*
>
> *That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning;*
>
> *For I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding*
>
> *in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishment"* (Jonah 4:2)

God's strategy was very simple: He commissioned Jonah to preach to Nineveh to return to him. The occasion for the mission was Nineveh's great wickedness and impending doom. When we speak about Jonah's mission to Nineveh, an important point to be observed is this: the initiative for the entire undertaking comes from God. It is all a commentary on the prophet's exclamation from the stomach of the fish: "*Salvation is from the Lord!*" The book of Jonah begins with a word from God: "*Arise go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me*" (Jonah 4:11). God also has the last word in Jonah: "*And should not I pity Nineveh, hat great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand person who do not know their right hand*

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from their left, and also much cattle?" (Jonah 4:11).

Nineveh was a wicked city, infamous the world over for its bloody wars of plunder and oppression of helpless people. It was heathen city in every respect, full of idolatry and vice. Holy God was concerned about unholy people. He wanted his servant Jonah to get involved with that city. He found no pleasure in seeing the Nineveh destroyed.

The church, God's new Israel, has similar problem. It is constantly tempted to be concerned exclusively with itself and ignore the unsaved world outside. Jonah represented all who have heard God's call to serve him in far away places and found it very difficult to his calling as a prophet as long as he was allowed to stay within the borders of Israel.

Just as Nineveh as a capital of ancient Assyria, was the logical place for an effort aimed at influencing the entire nation, so the great cities of our days are the strategic centers that must be won if nations are to be discipled. Failure to win these areas means failure to win he world.

2.2.7 The Wisdom Literature

2.2.7.1 Psalms

The poor also occupy a special place in the Psalter. Yahweh is depicted as the One who extends his hand of protection to the poor and lowly, as they

cry out to him

There are several types of Psalms, which especially contain this motif. For example, in the Royal psalm it is the king who is appointed as the representative of Yahweh to uphold justice and care for the needy (Pilgrim 1981:28)

>"*He rescues the poor who call to him and those who are needy and neglected*" (Psalm 72:10)

In the Psalms of lament and other petitionary psalms, the speaker often identifies himself *God's promise to rescue the afflicted.*

>"*Listen to me, Lord, and answer me,*
>
>*For I am helpless and weak.*
>
>*Save me from death, because I am loyal*
>
>*To you; save me, for I am your servant and I trust you* as a poor man, who is confronted by his enemies or by severe afflictions".

In this situation he cries to God for help (Psalm 86:1-2)

Also in the psalms of praise, God is extolled for rescuing the needy and bringing the unrighteous to ruin. Psalm 146 seems almost like a text from Luke's gospel:

>"*Happy are those who have the God of*
>
>*Jacob to help them*
>
>*And who depend on the Lord their God,..........*" (Psalm 146:5-9)

In many of these palms, a collective sense of the poor can be identified. Here the beseecher identifies himself either with a group within Israel or with Israel itself, who see them as standing in direct need of God in the face of their enemies.

> "*But remember, O Lord, that your*
>
> *Enemies laugh at you,*
>
> *That they are godless and despise you.*
>
> *Don't abandon your helpless people*
>
> *To their enemies;*
>
> *Don't forget your persecuted people!* "(Psalm 74:18).

The poor and downtrodden in this Psalm are Israel itself, and the enemy are the rival nations. However, it is not always possible to distinguish between the individual or a group as the speaker frequently identifies himself with his people or a cause. (Pilgrim 1981:30).

But who are the enemies who afflict the poor and needy? And what is the concrete situation of the afflicted? The petitioners describe themselves as the afflicted (Psalm 25:16), the needy (Psalm 35:10), lowly (Psalm 147:6), downtrodden (Psalm 73:21), meek (Psalm 86:11), poor (Psalm 40:18), orphans and widows (Psalm 68:60, little ones (Psalm 116:6) even barren women (Psalm 113:9). In some instances we can be certain that the distress involves economic and political hardships, with their consequent

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oppression and suffering. Yet the circle is wider than these social ills, since it also includes sickness and different kinds of moral and religious conflicts (e.g. despair, guilt, persecution). But in all of these situations, except for the penitential psalms where guilt is the person's own responsibility, the poor of the Psalms see themselves essentially as victims who cry out to God for relief and vindication (Pilgrim 1981:30)

This brings us to the most unique feature about the poor in the Psalms, namely the merging of identity between the socially poor and the religiously pious. In effect the "poor" and the "pious" become synonymous terms, and when this happens the meaning of the poor becomes synonymous terms, and when this happens the meaning of the poor becomes "those who place their total dependence upon God." "*God my truss is in you!*" (Psalm 88:1-2). This type of stance defines most profoundly the meaning of the poor in the Psalms (Pilgrim 1981:30).

Even though it is true that we find a spiritualization of the concept of the poor in the Psalter that is not all. The social and political life-settings are still there. The situations of distress are still those of literal poverty, persecution, oppression, and afflictions. The poor are truly the victims of life and their enemies the powerful and well to do. What make s them "*anawim"* is the fact that their hope is in God and their enemies cries out to Yahweh with confidence in his promised deliverance.

God is depicted as the One who has compassion for his people. He took compassion of those who were suffering: "*Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God gives the desolate a home to live in*" (Psalm 68:5-6). This is indeed one of the most powerful "mission statements in the Bible.

2.2.7.2 The Proverbs and Ecclesiastes

The wisdom literature has much to say about the plight of the poor. The wisdom literature shares a tradition that regards wealth as a good gift from the hand of God and correspondingly condemns the poor as lazy and careless, with beggars held in special contempt. There is also a sharp criticism of the rich, coupled with appeals to share generously with the poor. We also find frequent admonition to the rich to help the poor, Benevolence and almsgiving are praised and stinginess reproved (Proverbs 22:9; 21:13).

Above all God is recognized as the defender of the poor. "*He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker,*" while "*He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord*" (Proverbs 14:31; 19:17). "*Do not rob the poor, because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate, for the Lord will plead their cause and despoil of life those who despoil them*" (Proverbs 22:22f).

Finally, in addition to these familiar themes, the Wisdom writers are fond of another motif, namely, the anticipation of a reversal of fortunes between the devout and the ungodly. This reversal motif often includes a change of status between the rich and the poor. For the present moment the poor may be in want, while the ungodly enjoy good fortune. Yet the day is surely coming, when the tables will be turned. Therefore we find repeated admonitions not to be upset by the present prosperity of the sinner. *"Do not let evil people worry you; and don't be envious of them. A wicked person has future- nothing to look forward to try to "* (Proverbs 24:19-20). Or we find reassurance that reaches lead to sin and that the reaches themselves will be taken away (Proverbs23: 4-6; Ecclesiastes 5: 12-17).

Thus the Wisdom literature, too, takes up the cause of the poor and challenges the life and practice of the rich. Yet there is an ambiguity about wealth that runs through much of this literature. The afflictions of the poor are met primarily with the assertion that God will not let the righteous suffer forever (Pilgrim 1981:32).

2.3 SOME GENERAL INSIGHTS ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE MINISTRY

FOR THE POOR DERIVED FROM CERTAIN NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES

2.3.1 Introduction

The Greek term most commonly used in the New Testament for "poor" is '*ptochos*'. The term used most often in the literature of ancient Greece (*penes*) occurs only in 2 Corinthians 9:9, in a quotation from the Old Testament. A related term, '*penichros*', also occurs only once in the New Testament (Luke 21:2). The predominant use 'ptochos' in the New Testament for poverty refers to the people who are desperately poor, wretched creatures who are fighting for survival. We will now look at the way the poor are being described in the New Testament:

2.3.1.1   The Poor are the sick

The poor in the New Testament are mentioned in one breath with the sick; the maimed, the blind, the lame, and others-all are numbered with the poor (Luke 14:13, 21; 4:18-19; 7:22; Mathew 11:5; 25:35). Luke 14:12-13 contains the exhortation to invite precisely this "gallery" of the poor to the banquet, rather than his friends, relatives, and rich neighbours. And Luke 14:21-23 implies that, apart from the local poor- the crippled, the blind, and the lame- there were also the itinerate poor: "*Go our to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in*" (Luke 14:23).

For Lazarus, this personification of a poor man, lies ill at the door of a rich

man and waits to eat from the latter's scraps (Luke 16:20). Therefore, overly subtle differentiation between those destitute who are not yet sick on the one hand, and the blind, the lame, and the cripple on the other, is hardly meaningful. Conversely, it is likely that in many New Testament passages the treat of the poor, particularly in the Gospels; precisely this social milieu of the destitute is implied. Many of Jesus' healings occur in this setting (Luke 4:31-37, 38-42; 5:12-16, 17-26; 6:6-11,18-19). The account of the blind beggar Bartimaeus is an especially vivid portrayal of this correlation (Mark 10:46-52) (Stegemann 1984:16).

2.3.1.2 The Poor are the naked:

The plight of the destitute person is aptly portrayed in Revelation 3:17 when it states that he or she is naked (*gymnos*). To be sure, the blind Bartimaeus still had his coat (*himation*) (Mark 10:50). In fact Luke 3:11no longer exhorts the crowd*: "He who has two coats (chiton), let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise",* To be "naked"- undoubtedly to be clothed only in rags, left to freeze in the cold (James 2:16))- is the mark of the poor. This is also clear from James 2:15 and Mathew 25:36. Job 24:10 already assumes that the poor person literally loses the last shirt-right off his or her back- to the creditors. In Mathew 6:25 it is also assumed that the poor who are addressed have nothing to wear: "*Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you*

shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

(Stegemann 1984:17).

2.3.1.3 The Poor are the hungry

Often in the New Testament an immediate connection is made between the lack of clothing and utter lack of sustenance. Poverty is synonymous with being hungry (and thirsty). This association is made in Luke 3:11, also in Mathew 6:25 and 24:35-36 and in James 2:15-16. The beatitude concerning the poor in Luke 6:20- "*Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God*", characterizes the circumstances of the poor; they are in sorrow and want food. The poor do not know from one day to the next whether they will eat or drink; they are always on the verge of starvation (Mathew 6:25-26). This is the situation of the poor when James 2:15-16 describes them as naked and without daily sustenance, lacking the essentials for physical survival (Stegemann 1984:17-18).

2.3.1.4 The Poor are the destitute:

To be poverty- stricken (ptochos), in the New Testament terms, is to be destitute. Such people depended on alms for even the basics of life. For this, too, there are vivid examples: apart from those beggars already mentioned, Bartimaeus and Lazarus, there is the lame beggar in the Temple in Jerusalem whom Peter heals in the name of Jesus. (Acts 3:1-10). Alms might be given and received in the form of food and clothes as

well as in the form of money (Mark 14:7; Mathew 25:35; Luke 16:20). The poor in the New Testament are presented as the destitute, always close to starvation, often identified with the disabled and severely ill, poorly clothed, and dependent on the help of strangers (Stegemann 1984:17-18).

2.3.2 John the Baptist

A direct forerunner of Jesus who was known for this attitude was John the Baptist, whose life and thought are important in our study of the challenge of the poor and poverty to the community of faith. According to Luke 3: 3-6, John the Baptist was noted for his use of the prophetic words of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3-5), which announced salvation "to all flesh".

One of the demands of the baptism of repentance by John was the acceptance of humility as a preparation for receiving the Messiah who was to come. Only the meek, the poor, the rejected, who experienced the tearing pain of death, could receive the "Servant of Yahweh". So, when John sent messengers from prison to ask Jesus if he was "He who was to come", the Nazarene's answer was to describe the events which confirmed that He was the Son of God: "*The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised-up, and the poor have good news preached to them,*" (Mathew 11:5) (De Santa Ana 1981:12-13).

2.3.3 Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom to the poor

In Mathew 11:5, Jesus indicates the great importance of the poor in the development of his ministry. It is to them that the Kingdom of God is announced. Jesus used the words of Isaiah 61:1-2 saying that it is to the poor the good news is preached:

> *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, to recover sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptance year of the Lord."* (Luke 4:17-19).

Jesus is the Spirit-anointed prophet who announces the new area of salvation which he brings to pass as the anointed Messiah (Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6). The nature of his mission is marked out by four infinitival expression, three of which involve preaching: *'to preach good news to the poor', to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind', 'to release the oppressed' and 'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'.* The 'poor' to whom the good news is announced refers more generally to the 'dispossessed, the excluded' who were forced to depend upon God (Kostenberger & O'Brien 2001:117).

'He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor'. We regard this phrase as the most significant in Luke. The idea of being anointed to carry out a divinely-commissioned task is central to the Old Testament, and in Isaiah it is linked with the proclamation of good news to a captive people.

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In this passage the good news is said to be directed specifically to the poor (Pilgrim 1981:67).

'He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives'. The word for release seems to provide the best clue to Luke's intention. In Septuagint, "release" is used as a technical term for the Year of Jubilee ("Year of release" Leviticus 25-27) or for the Sabbath year (Deuteronomy 15:1; Exodus 23:11), so that it has the social and economic meaning of release of debts. But in Luke /Acts it has the primary meaning of "forgiveness". Therefore, in both the ministry of Jesus and in the apostolic preaching, the word "release" is used specifically for the bondage of sin and evil, which is removed through the forgiving power of Jesus. Still, its presence in the Old Testament quote from Isaiah may suggest that it retains something of its connection with the jubilee hope of social and economic release (Pilgrim 1981: 68).

'Recovering the sight to the blind'. Only once in his writings does Luke employ the metaphorical image of the blind (Luke 6:39/Mathew 15:14). In all other cases it has its literal meaning. The encounter between Jesus and the blind result in the joyful recovery of their sight (Luke 7:21; 18:35-43).

'To set liberty to those who are oppressed'. The literal meaning of word for oppressed means "broken in pieces," which would suggest social

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injustices, and the context of Isaiah 58:6 supports this. The use of the word "release" by Luke points in the direction of the burden of sin, which is removed by the gospel of forgiveness (Pilgrim 1981:168-69).

Jesus identifies Himself as the messenger proclaimed by the prophet and, at the same time, explains that His mission is addressed to the unfortunate, the poor, to whom He already announces an end to their suffering. Their special place is confirmed buy the beatitudes (Mathew 5:3-11 especially verse 3, and the parallel passage in Luke 6:20, where the blessed are the poor in the material, and not only in spiritual sense).

In these texts Jesus indicates that with His coming the poor will be blessed, "*for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven*". Because they have nothing, they are particularly ready to open themselves to the saving action of Jesus. "*Only the outcast, the publicans, sinners and harlots are ready to repent. Jesus knows that it was to them He was sent*" (Mark 2:17). God takes more pleasure in one sinner who repents than in ninety- nine just persons (Luke 15:1-10). It is the hungry and those who mourn, those who know they are poor, who receive the promise of salvation (Luke 6:20ff; Mathew 5:3-60). (De Santa Ana 1981:14)

2.3.4 Christ's presence among the poor

According to the Gospel message, although the poor are granted privileges, they are also the unfortunates who must be helped. They are the needy people whom we must assist. No other text makes this so clear and emphatic as the famous passage in Mathew 25:31-46, where the Lord describe the nature of the last judgment, with which the evangelist concludes the public ministry of Jesus. The all-powerful judge considers the unfortunate, the poor, hungry, naked, homeless, thirsty, prisoners, and others as his brothers; what has been done to them has also been done to Him meaning of Christ's presence among the poor has a clear eschatological dimension. It does not mean that poverty is sanctified as a virtue, but rather that, while therefore, be ready to accept His will, which is not only for the last day since what we do or do not do today to recognize his presence among the poor is already something the Judge will take into account in his judgment. This is also vital important to the Church which, in the light of Mathew 25:31-46, defines its faithfulness to Jesus Christ in accordance with its position in relation to the challenge of the poor and poverty (De Santa Ana 1981:19-20).

To sum up, the importance of the poor in the massage of Jesus can be seen fundamentally in the life of the Nazarene himself: Jesus' whole existence is a clear demonstration of what it was to be really poor. He was the full incarnation of the "servant of the Lord", through whom is fulfilled the justice of God (Isaiah 53; Mark 14:50-16:8).

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Those who are poor in this world can have confidence in this life full of fruit, the seeds of deep hope the expression of justice into account, sharing so many things with them, shows that God does not forget them. Although the life of the poor seems to be a sterile tree, they can continue to live in hope, for God has not left them to one side. Examples of such poor were Mary, the Lord's mother, and Simeon (Luke 2:25-32) despite the setbacks and pain they each had to suffer they could see the glory of God and- even more important- they could be instruments of his will.

They were not people who sought material poverty because it represented some virtue, neither did they feel spiritually superior or great. Rather, they were poor people who were ready to share with others the little they had (and thereof ready to practice brotherly charity), not making their humble condition a motive for pride, but neither were they greedy for riches. In reality, their poverty was linked with a total and absolute trust in God, shown in a limitless availability to the Lord. Instead of keeping things for themselves, the truly poor are ready to share what they have with those who in any way live humility. That is why the poor, although lacking in material possessions, try at least to share their hopes. The witness of the poor of Yahweh is seen in their active waiting for the Kingdom and its justice, and not by the cultivation of poverty as if it were an ideal for life.

2.3.5 Jesus' sending of the twelve (Luke 9:1-6)

The sending of the twelve forms an integral part of Jesus' own mission. From a larger group of disciples Jesus chose and commissioned twelve 'apostles' (Greek- 'apostoloi', Luke 6:12-15). He now shares his power and authority with them, and sends (apostello) them on their mission (Luke 9:1-2), which involves them also in preaching the rule of God and healing the sick. This ministry has in view the reconstitution of Israel (Luke 6:13; 22:30). Luke's description of the twelve's mission is reminiscent of his portrayal of Jesus' mission and message which was developed in the light of the Isaiah quotation in Luke 4:18-19

The twelve are to depend on God as they journey, recognizing the urgency of their message. They are to take no extra provisions, relying instead on those who respond to supply their basic needs. Since they are an integral part of Jesus' mission to God's people, Israel, the twelve can expect the sort of opposition that he faced; some of the towns they visit will not welcome them (Luke 9:5) (Kostenberger &O'Brien 2001:119).

When Jesus sent his disciples out to preach and to heal He made them fully dependent on the hospitality of those who received them, quoting a time honored principle, "*the laborer deserve his food*" (Mathew 10:10; Luke 9:4; 10:7-8) Jesus' himself frequently accepted the hospitality of others, not only at banquets in the homes of wealthy but in the homes of his own

followers, as Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:31) or in sisters at Bethany (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1).

Moreover, Luke tells us specifically that Jesus and his disciples received financial aid from a group of Galilean women, whose support continued even when he went up to Jerusalem for the last days of his life (Luke 8:1-3). We further learn that Jesus and his closest followers lived from a common purse. Without any private income of their own from the time they accepted Jesus' call to follow Him, the disciples placed the gifts of others into their common fund and from this they purchased their daily needs, paid the temple tax, helped the poor and celebrated the great feast days. Judas Iscariot's role as purse-keeper is well known (John 13:29) (Pilgrim 1981:46-47).

2.3.6 The Poor and Poverty in the Church of the first century

The Acts of the Apostles is a narrative of missionary expansion which commences with a small group of Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem and extend across significant ethnic, religious and geographical boundaries to end in Rome where Paul preaches the gospel of the risen Christ to Jew and Gentile alike. The opening verses of Acts show close literary connections with Gospel of Luke (Kostenberger &O Brien 2001:127-128).

St Luke's gospel and the book of Acts reflect the interpretation of the

communities influenced by the missionary work of the Apostle Paul, although it is important to note that their author shows an interest in social questions which is less obvious in the thinking of St. Paul, at least as it appears in the Pauline texts available today.

In those days, when Rome's domination had spread throughout the Mediterranean, constituting the most empire the region had ever known, the definition of rich and poor was based on the ownership of property, and especially buildings. Those who had them were powerful; ownership was seen as the foundation of happiness, giving the right to freedom and independence, and a sign of power. The lack of property was synonymous with dependence and with obligation to earn one's daily bread by work which was considered to be inferior.

The Lord's acceptance of the Gentiles and pagans, which constitutes one of the basic elements of St Paul's preaching, must be understood as the confirmation in history of the fulfillment of God's justice with the coming of the Kingdom of God. The attraction of the Christian communities for the poor did not encourage them to escape from the world and ignore their social condition, but to assume it fully. This attraction was not exclusive to the first century A.D.; a couple of century later, it become more marked.

Many of the names clumsily carved on the walls of the Roman catacombs

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were certainly those of slaves who were freed, but never became rich for example Stephan's, Herman's and so on. Their awareness of their social condition, in the ideological and political framework of that time, strengthened their hope in the coming of the Kingdom of God and the imminent return of the Lord, whom they awaited so anxiously. This hope in turn inspired the Church's missionary work, whose rapid expansion was due to affinity between the aspirations of these sectors of society and the content of the Gospel message, which was presented to them.

2.3.7 The Primitive Christian community in Jerusalem

There is no evidence that the community in Jerusalem included people with power or strong social influence. The book of Acts says they were ordinary people with varying amounts of possessions, but who were ready to share them. The atmosphere of prayer and expectation of the imminent coming of the Holy Spirit and the return of the Lord indicates that their members came from the category that we can describe as "the poor of Yahweh".

The decisive experience in the formation of this community was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the days of Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2). Many were baptized as a consequence of this:

> "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the*

breaking of bread, and prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts"
(Acts 2: 42-46).

One of the basic characteristics of the new community, then, was the common ownership of goods. The significance of the community of goods in a group such as the primitive Christian church in Jerusalem basically reflects at the material level the kind of spiritual communion, which should prevail in the Church. In other words, it is an expression of a deep fellowship, emphasized by the summary of chapter 4:32: "*Now the company of those who believed were one heart and soul.*"

Since they share one faith, the unity of Christians is expressed above all in the union of the spirits of those who compromise the community; this is why they pray together, share the Eucharist in each other's homes, and meet together in the temple. Inevitably, this had the effect, particularly in the early days, of eliminating the poverty of many who joined the community. This can be seen in Acts 4:34: " *There was not a needy person among them*", which seems to confirm the promise found in Deuteronomy 15: 4 "*But there will be no poor among you.*"

Goods are shared not to make oneself poor because poverty is seen as an ideal, but to vanquish and eradicate poverty, so that there shall be no poor. The road we are shown, the ideal we are to pursue, is brotherly love, which is expressed by the act of sharing with the poor. Now this does not mean that the community of goods had the force of a law in the Jerusalem church; this would be a denial of the Gospel and the freedom, which it brings. A quick reading of the story of Ananias and Sapphire (Acts 5:1-11), who sold a possession and did not give the whole of the proceeds to the community, might indicate that sharing goods was an obligation. So the practice of community of goods did not imply the abolition of all type of private ownership, but demanded great honesty in the act of sharing. In it was a clear indication that they should not accumulate wealth, although small properties could be maintained, as the mother of John Mark did, recorded in Acts 12:12; she had not sold her house, and it was here that the brothers of Jerusalem met to pray.

The account of the ministry of deacons (Acts 6:1-6) shows how the practice of brotherly charity and service was organized following its spontaneous manifestations. Notwithstanding the importance of this, the story contains revealing signs of how democratically the Christian community in Jerusalem was organized. Faced with the need to structure the services, the apostles did not decide on their own authority that should carry out this ministry, but brought it to the community of believers for discussion.

2.3.8 St. Paul on Poverty and assistance to the poor

Paul insisted on the need to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, without imposing upon them the demands of the law, and this brought severe criticism from those whose concept of Christianity was closely linked with the existence and perspectives of the Jewish people. The controversy began to take a more structured form, and certain points of compromise were reached on the occasion of the council of Jerusalem (43-44 A.D) recorded in Chapter 15 of the book of Acts. Among other things, the compromise gave Paul the possibility of going out on mission to the Gentiles on condition that he should "*remember the poor*" (Galatians 2: 10).

 A study of Pauline vocabulary produces amazing results: the typical Greek expressions for poverty, such as '*endees*', '*penes*' and even '*ptochos*', are completely absent from the letters of St. Paul. The texts where the epistle clearly uses the term '*ptochos*' are Romans 15:16 and Galatians 2:10. In both cases, he refers to the members of the Jerusalem community where there are the "poor of the saints". We do not know exactly what were the functions of the "deacons" of Philippi (Philippians 1:1; Romans 12:7) and 'our sister Phoebe,' a deaconess of the church at Concrete (Romans 16:1). We know the titles given to them, and conclude that these people were responsible for 'serving at table'.

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For the apostle to the Gentile, the most important thing was the exercise of brotherly charity, and this would certainly to some extent imply an active disposition towards the practice of charity within the Church, since the same members of the same body, the same community, were to take care of each other (1Corinthians 12:26: 11:18). We can say that within the Church there should be no needy, not even any poor, for, if the unity of the church is based on brotherly love, which presumes the equality of all members of Christ's body, any thing which create tensions, divisions, or rivalry, whether for social, economic or any other reasons, should be fought and overcome.

2.3.9 The Epistle of James

The direct message of this epistle brings us back to daily reality. By this, we do not mean that the thinking of the Apostle Paul led us away from it, but, just as the problem of poverty is not given priority, daily reality certainly does not occupy first place in his attention which is preoccupied with theological reflection on the cosmic and transcendental aspects of the Christian life, from which result the admonitory pages of his epistles.

But, in the extent of James, we are confronted directly with the problems of ordinary people of the time. It is not surprising that James spoke out so strongly against the rich; this indicates that the problem was not avoided, but squarely faced, in the communities in which the texts were written. In

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James the poor are the '*penes*'; the wretched, the weak, and oppressed, of low social standing, who are easily exploited and persecuted, such as, widows, orphans and slaves (De Santa Ana 1981:47-48).

They are the ones who can lose nothing in this world, for they have nothing. But, they are also the ones who have everything to hope for in their poverty, hence their anxious expectations of the Kingdom of God. James' contemporaries were more familiar than we are today with theological conception of poverty which must have been well known to them through the Psalm (Psalm 22:25-27; 69:34), and the books of the prophets.

In Isaiah for an example we read that the shoot which is to come forth from the root of Jesse (that is the Messiah who is expected to come in the future) will not judge according to appearances, but will bring justice to the poor and '*decide with equity for the meek of the earth*' (Isaiah 11:3-4, 58 and Mathew 3:5)." We can add that He will act, as Mathew says (5:3) on behalf of the humble and merciful, and those who in general area not now treated with justice. "*This will be the miracle of the end time: the poor shall be rich and will inherit the Promise land; strength will grow up in the in the heart of the afflicted, the lame will leap like the hart, and grass will spring up in the desert*" (Isaiah 35) (De Santa Ana 1981: 48).

The expectation of these humble people must have been so strong, and their material needs so great, that the author of the Epistle feels compelled to take their part and challenge the Christian community. "*God destines the poor to be 'heirs of the Kingdom'* (James 2:5). It is therefore in keeping with the will of God' to visit orphans and widows in their affliction' (James 1: 27). He who tries to win the favors of the rich, giving them the best places in the assembly and giving the poor to '*sit at his feet*' (James 2:3), '*is guilty of being a friend of the world and therefore an enemy of the God'*.

As for the rich, all their effort to gain more profit and satisfy their passions will 'fade away ' (James 1:11; 4:13; 4:3). Decomposition, rust, and fire will reduce their possessions to nothing (James 5:1-2). Their lives will bring them only tension, conflict and injustice (James 4:1ff; 5:4). And their hearts which have no pity for others   because they are 'fattened in a day of slaughter' can only lead them to ruin" (de Santa Ana 1981:49).

The exploitation of the poor through the rich is particularly voiced in James 5:1-6 which contains a severe denunciation of the unjust rich. The condemnation in James 5:1-6 of the rich is probably the most severe in the whole New Testament. The author here displays a general aversion towards the rich and takes the side of the poor completely. These threats against the rich are turned directly against a whole group of society (Nissen 1984:101).

The author of the book of James states that the Christian should respect the poor and behaves justly towards them in accordance with the hope, which opens the hearts of the people of God towards the future and leads them to live in an attitude of brotherly love and mercy.

> "*My brethren, show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory. For if a man with gold rings and in fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing comes in, and you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, 'Have a seat here, please, ' while you say to the poor man, 'Stand there', or, 'Sit there',.......*" (James 2:1-13).

James takes a stance on behalf of the poor because he associates himself with the tradition of the whole people of God, throughout Yahweh was always on the side of the humble. The Lord's judgment is very different from the judgment of the rich, who are always ready to accumulate and exercise power, which prevents them from having mercy and practicing brotherly love.

The justice of the Kingdom, outlined from choosing of Israel up to the sending of the Son of God to the world, was always with the needy, the weak, the unhappy and unfortunate. God's action in history is to repair the injustice of the rich and powerful. James text can be considered, then, as a teaching to the faithful in the form of warnings and guidelines aimed at encouraging Christians to live and carry out true piety.

His attention to the poor is like an echo of Jesus' words in Mathew 25:31-46, which we have already mentioned. For James, the ethics of service and love are closely linked with the eschatological expectation of the Kingdom of God (James 4:12; 5:7).

In contrast to the direction of the teachings offered by the author of this text, the rich man enjoys what he has, guarding his possessions, dominated by them, and subjecting all other things to the demands of the administration of his capital. James condemns him for this, especially at the beginning of chapter 5: He is condemning the rich, and declaring that the end is at hand, which not only terminates their cupidity and enjoyment of it, but ism divine punishment upon them. There is a definite eschatological note in the warning.

This condemnation indicates that the author of the Epistle assumes that it is difficult for the riches to become Christians. It is the rich as an entire social group who are judged so harshly by this passage. Jesus had said that a man could not serve two masters. For the grave error of the rich is to have a divided heart, even going so far as to deny Jesus (1Corinthians 12:30). James is concerned with the situation of the former, the '*dipsychoi*', who behave "like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind". These people claim to be part of the community of faith. Their

double-mindedness constitutes a certain danger for the life of the people of God, since, in the end, they will act as a "counter-power" to the Lord, opposing the Spirit of God.

It is this 'dipsychoi' who practice unfair discrimination, and thereby threaten the equality, which should exist between all the members of Christ's body. The social differences they represent are introduced along with them in the community of faith. They cause murmurings and jealousy among the people of God. That is why James urges: *"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only"* (James 1:22).

2.4 Conclusion

Hundreds of biblical verses show that God is especially attentive to the poor and needy. God is not biased. Because of unequal needs, however, equal provision of basic rights require justice to be partial in order to be impartial. Scripture speaks of God's special concern for the poor in at least four different ways:

1. Repeatedly, the Bible says that the Sovereign of history works to lift up the poor and oppressed. God acted to keep the promise to Abraham and to call out the chosen people of Israel. The text says God intervened because God hated the oppression of the poor Israelite (Exodus 3:7-8; 6:5-7).

2.   Sometimes the Lord of history tears down rich and powerful people. Mary's song is shocking: "My soul glorifies the Lord, He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1:46,53). James is even more blunt: "Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you"(James 5:1).

3.   God identifies with the poor so strongly that caring for them is almost like helping God. "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord" (Proverbs 19:17). On the other hand, one "who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker" (Proverbs 14:31).

4.   Finally, God demands that his people share his special concern for the poor. God commanded Israel not to retreat widows, orphans, and foreigners the way the Egyptians had treated them (Exodus 22:21-24). Instead, they should love the poor just as God cared for them at the exodus (Exodus 22:21-24; Deuteronomy 15:13-15).

5.   The Bible clearly demonstrates that God have a great concern for the poor. God has an equal concern for the well-being of every single person.

6.   Although poverty affect individuals, they are to a large extend associated with broad social factors. The prophets' minds were primarily directed to discovering God's will in regard to certain social problems. Consequently they sometimes focused directly

on the problems of poverty.

7.   According to some prophets, mainly the effects of national socio-economic policies caused poverty. Poor people had nobody to fight their cause. Price increases, the introduction of taxes, interest, mandatory tribute and the confiscation of land were all results of this policy.

8.   Exploitation of impoverished, defenseless people assumed various forms. This means injustice especially towards widows, orphans and aliens by way of perversion of the law, business abuses, theft or confiscation of the property of the poor and personal or bodily harm done to the defenseless.

9.   The expectations of the justice of God and the Kingdom announced by Jesus motivates men to assist the poor, weak the orphan and the widow. By this means they practice and not only proclaim the word-true faith, true piety. This means taking the side of the needy, but also confronting the oppressors who are a real danger to the people of God. The oppressors are the enemies of God because they practice the unfair discrimination; their hearts are given to what is transient. Therefore, like the things they own, which are today but tomorrow will cease to be, they too will be ruined. Hence within the community of believers there must not be any of the social divisions, which exist in the 'world': judgment must go hand in hand with mercy and unpretentious

love for one's neighbor.

10.   Paul requires that every Christian should, as far as possible, meet his needs through his own work (1Thessalonoan 4:12). In other words he does not feel attracted to voluntary poverty. The believer must not allow himself to become the slave of riches, but should adopt an attitude of self-denial based on and nourished by the freedom of life in Christ in the Spirit. Thus, although he himself is in need, the apostle is able to say: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

CHAPTER 3

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR: HISTORIC OVERVIEW

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we were presented with the grim picture of the plight of the poor in the biblical times. In nearly 2000- year history of the Christian church there have been many fruitful missionary periods, for example, the age of the first apostles, the journey of the medieval monks, the era of the padres who accompanied the 16th century explorers and conquistadors, and the beginning of Protestant evangelical missions in the 18th century. These are only a few instances of committed individual Christians and groups who crossed frontiers in often dangerous and heroic efforts to reach previously un-evangelized territories.

However, this chapter is not a purely historical study, I did not attempt to study poverty in the history of the church in great depth. I used especially the missiology books of B.J Nichols, De Santa Ana and other sources.

Throughout history, churches have had a deep concern for the poor and oppressed. They have been involved in evangelism and Christian social concern. They could not do otherwise but had to maintain their faith in Jesus Christ who came "*to preach good news to the poor and set liberty the oppressed*". Evangelism and social concern was both seen as two sides of the same coin. If one side of the coin is missing, that coin has lost its

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value. Jesus combined evangelism and social involvement in His life and ministry. His ministry was characterized by both proclamation (Kerygma) and service (diakonia). His words and deeds were expressions of compassions for persons.

By focusing on the history of the church throughout the centuries, will help us to understand that beyond any reasonable doubt that there has been a real concern for the poor among Christians. The church exists in history as a visible reality, where a wide range of cultures has shaped its existence and life. The church never exists in a vacuum. Every ecclesiology, therefore, is developed within a particular cultural context. There is no other way to be the church except within a concrete, historical setting. This means that all 'ecclesiologies' must be seen as functioning relative to their context (Van Gelder 2000:40). In this regard, all thinking about the church, all 'ecclesiologies' reflect to some extent the historical circumstances of the eras in which they were developed.

The reality of poverty as a human condition is evident from the beginning of history. The concept of poverty as a social problem is a relatively recent phenomenon. Christianity has always had a concern for the poor.

Even today, there are so many poor people in the informal settlement community churches, who attend Christian celebrations, some of them

participate in Christian liturgy, and they share their religious concerns with Christian communities. However, the problem for them is not whether they are in the Church or not, but the problem is whether the churches represent the poor, or at least if the churches can become representatives of this kind, standing for the fulfillment of the aspirations and hopes of the poor. If we can understand both the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of historical perspectives on mission, this will help us to develop a comprehensive strategy in which we can be able to help the poor in their communities.

Christian missions have always been a result of renewal movement in the church. Such movements, more often than not, attempted to transform their own societies, or at least to focus on evangelism and service to the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed. Thus, it is natural that the missions coming out of such movements took the same concerns for the poor and these missions was the command of Jesus Christ to go into all the world with the Good News, to call people to faith in him, and to plant the churches. Additionally there was the desire to especially manifest the love of Christ to the needy, the hungry, and the poor. This desire was seen as a valid ministry in itself, but it was seen also as a witness to the greater gift of God- the forgiveness and eternal life which came in Christ (Pierson 1985:8)

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A part of great debate over the centuries in the church has been whether it is appropriate for churches as organization to engage in social action. Many of them have been engaged to some extent in social action. Whereas some have been involved in social action. I have selected for this chapter a few historical examples, which may help us to see how the church has heard with both ears. The examples reveal that the church, like individual Christians has sometimes had hearing problems with both ears. In the history of the church we encounter a rich and complex story of how the Spirit of God has created, led and taught the church through the centuries.

3.2 The Early Church

The relationship between evangelism and social responsibility in the early church should be looked at from two perspectives: the Jewish-Roman-Hellenistic context, into which the church was born and grew, and the teachings and impact of the New Testament upon the Christian community.

Almost everybody would agree that the early church was evangelistic. The church combined the evangelism and social ministry in her confession. The earliest creed of the church was the quintessence of the gospel message, which the church proclaimed, but it was also a political term. The early Christians were political enough to remember that politicians

had executed Jesus. As the Apostles' Creed said of Him, "*He was crucified under Pontius Pilate*" (Miles 1986: 39).

A second way in which the early church put evangelism and social involvement together was in her internal fellowship. The church's gospel transformed the internal life of the church into an inclusive fellowship. An inclusive church was a consequence and sign of her internal fellowship by proclamation that Jesus is Lord. Hellenistic Jews were brought into the church along with Palestinian Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The Eunuch from Ethiopia became a Christian (Acts 8). Samaritans   were brought in (Acts 8). Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and his Gentile household were added to the faith (Acts 10 and 11). An evangelistic mission was launched to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-52). A conference at the mother church in Jerusalem concluded that Gentiles did not have to be circumcised in order to become Christians (Acts 15). The Acts of the Apostles closes with Paul in Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, "*preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about   the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered*" (Acts 28:31) (Miles 1986:40).

The Epistle of the New Testament tells the same story of inclusiveness that we read in Acts. That prophecy of Joel 2 was being fulfilled in the church (Acts 2:16-21). God poured out His Spirit upon all- Jews and Gentiles, men and women, young and old. Those who were far off were brought near

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in the blood of Christ: "*For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two*" (Ephesians 2:14-15).

Slaves abounded in the Roman Empire, but converted slaves were considered brothers and sisters in the early church. Paul led Onesimus, a runaway slave, to Christ; but Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon, his owner, calling him "*no longer a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother both in the flesh and in the Lord*" (Philemon 1:16).

The same apostle who evangelized Onesimus declared: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3:28). Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed, heard Peter say to him: "*Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed*" (Acts 9:34). "*all the residents of Lydia and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord*" (Acts 9:35).

The lame beggar at the Temple in Acts 3 is another example. People had to carry the man about. He had been lame from birth. Peter told him, "*I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk*" (Acts 3:6). What a marvelous sight that must have been! Where was the evangelism to accompany the social service of healing? A

crowd assembled quickly. Peter began: *"Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"* (Acts 3:12). That was the occasion for a sermon in which Peter called the people to repent of their sins and turn to the One who had healed the lame man.

When the seven were appointed (Acts 6) to serve the tables, Luke summarized: *"And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith"* (Acts 6:7). In that instance, an internal act of service to Hellenist widows was coupled with a powerful evangelistic thrust (Miles 1986:42).

The Christians in the early church represented a very small minority. They were often misunderstood by the Jewish-Roman-Hellenistic world. Knowing that they were a small minority, the Christians were challenged to grow numerically and spiritually by faithful witness in word and deed. The Christians suffered persecutions under the Roman emperors. They were tortured and executed mercilessly for their faith. To be a Christian was a matter of life and death (Bong 1985:13-14).

The early church's tremendous concern for the 'lost,' caused it greatly to emphasize evangelism. The early church's concept of 'conversion' was

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unique. It demanded a complete break from the past pagan life to a new life in Christ. The early church shared their possessions with the needy. As described in Acts 4, Christians in the Jerusalem Church shared their possessions with each other. Such generosity, motivated by deep love for the Lord, made a profound impact on the early church and on society. This willingness to sacrifice self- interest for the sake of others and for the furtherance of the gospel made it possible for Christians to evangelize the Graeco-Roman world by the end of the 5th century. The sacrificial love of these humble believers was the professed allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the population of the Roman Empire (Bong 1985:14).

There is no way we can escape the fact that, in the early church, the disciples followed in the footsteps of our Lord. They shared the good news as He did. The image of the church as a communion of saints was also rooted in direct biblical language in the word 'koinonia' which can be translated as "communion" or "fellowship". They served others like He had done; and they even suffered as He had. The church of the fourth century viewed itself as being one, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. It was a unified and visible social community that existed in a relational organizational unity throughout the world, displayed the presence of God, and exercised apostolic authority on his behalf through the office of the bishop (Van Gelder 2000:51)

The image of catholic, apostolic, and the communion of saints also touched on the nature of the church. Catholic refers to the church as being universal; meaning that it also, by nature, is able to be inherently contextual in any setting, Apostolic refers to the church as representing God's authority on earth. It also means that the church was founded on the work of the apostles and prophets. Its inclusion confirmed that the church's authority and teaching were based on the work of the original founders of the church. The apostles' authority and teaching were viewed a continuing in the church through the office of the bishop (Van Gelder 2000:50-51).

3.3 The Apostolic Fathers

The Church of the Apostolic Fathers is the "holy and universal Church sojourning in every place". The earliest notions concerning the nature of the church include some kind of universal or catholic idea. Theirs is not just a Church of one race, one nation, or one language. It is a Church "gathered together from the ends of the earth". This idea of the universality of the Christian Church must be understood as the substance behind the word "catholic", first used by Ignatius (c.35-c.107) in his Epistle to the Smyrnaeans where he made the well known statement, "*Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal Church*" (Van Engen 1981:195)

The Apostolic Fathers had a meaningful experience of Jesus Christ, cherished their salvation, and had a deep desire to obey the Great Commission in the pagan world. Their faith was not expressed in words only. Their faith was translated into actions through love and concern for the needy people around them. Practical social concern was the inevitable result of their spiritual conversion. Clement of Rome explained this intimate relationship between justification and good works by saying:

> *'Let the strong care for the weak and let the weak reverence the strong. Let the rich man bestow help on the poor and let the poor give thanks to God, that He gave him one to supply his needs'.*

The Epistle of Barnabas best explains the way of light by saying:

> *'Thou shall share all things with thy neighbor and shall now say that they are thy own property; for if you are shared in that which is incorruptible, how much more in that which is corruptible?'* (Jefford 1995:1,5)

The Shepherd of Hermes said:

> 'The rich man, therefore, helps the poor in all things without doubting. Bit the poor man, being helped by the rich, makes intercession to God, giving him thanks'. (Lage 1966:5-7).

3.4 The First Three Centuries (150-325 A.D)

During this period the motivation for Christian charity changed during this time. During the period of the Apostolic Fathers, Christian charity was the result of spiritual conversion. Good works were one of the fruits of a believer's new life in Christ. But during the period of the Old Catholic

Church, one of the motives for Christian charity became the hope of future reward. During this period, an organized structure was developed to take care of Christians' social activities on a large scale. Although Christians confined their charity largely to their own community, they also supported the unemployed, orphans, widows, the injured, the sick, and travelers. Churches sent relief goods to other churches during famines and other calamities. Christians were encouraged to fast to help the poor (Bong 1985:16)

3.4.1 Tertulian

Tertulian encouraged each Christian to deposit a small amount on a certain day of the month according to his or her ability to help the needy (Dowley 1986: 111). Tertulian further said:

> "The money therefore is spent not for banquets or drinking parties or good-for-nothing eating houses, but for the support and burial of the poor, for children who are without their parents and means of subsistence, foraged men who are confined to the house; likewise, for shipwrecked sailors, and for any in the mines, on islands or in prisons" (Luthardt 1889:47,50)

3.4.2 Clement of Alexandria (c150-215)

Clement of Alexandria found himself in a church that included many wealthy and influential members and he wrote a commentary on the story of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-31). According to Clement, Jesus did not want the rich young man to get rid of his wealth, but to get rid of his

anxiety bout his wealth. It is not wealth itself that is problematic, but our attitude to wealth said Clement. This interpretation was well received by Clement's members and by wealthy Christians ever since, Other Christians. However, have disagreed with Clement's interpretation of this gospel story. To be fair to Clement, he did stress that people did not experience happiness by holding on to their wealth, but by using it for the benefit of others. " *It is not he who has and keeps, but he who gives away, that is rich*" said Clement (White 1981:55).

3.5 Post- Constantine Era (313-590 A.D)

During this era the close co-operation between the church and state became a very powerful institution. Both evangelism and social concern became a joint endeavor of the church and state. Christianity became the official state religion through the edicts of 380 and 381. The continual hope of early Christians for freedom from official persecution and social contempt became through the Edict of Milan 313 (A.D.), of the Emperor Constantine. Theodosius I through the Edict of Constantinople (392 A.D.) banned the sacrifices and attendance at pagan temples. (Latourette 1955: 266). The state support meant that now the church had the immense task of evangelizing not only those who were already living in the Roman Empire but also the great masses of Barbarians (Teotonic, Viking, Slav, and Mongol people) who had migrated into Europe from the north and east between 375 and 1066.

In the Byzantine world poverty was above all urban. Concentration of land-owning and sub-divisions of holdings forced smallholders into slavery and migration to the cities, where they formed concentrations on the outskirts, reduced to begging, prostitution and crime. The state tried to find work for the "deserving" poor: those with good health and useful trade, while trying to "cleanse" the cities of the non-deserving (Boff and Pixley 1989:159).

The church took the latter under its wing. An example was St Zotikos: an aristocrat, he defied the imperial edict by building leper hospitals in Constantinople, for which he was condemned to death by being dragged and torn apart by mules. Rehabilitated after his death, he was hailed as a martyr and known as "nourisher" of the poor throughout the empire (Boff and Pixley 1989:159).

3.5.1 St. Augustine

His concern for the poor was expressed well when his congregation sang the Psalm, *'Blessed is the man who regarded the needs of the poor.'* St Augustine praised the rich who helped the poor, the church and monasteries. St Augustine, like Paul was concerned more with the proper relation between master and slave than he was with abolishing slavery and with reconstructing the social order. Every home had a large number of

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slaves and wealthy homes kept hundreds of slaves. Many slaves did not want to be freed because then they had difficulty in finding new jobs. Although it was considered a 'good work' for Christians to liberate slaves, St. Augustine never in his writings advocated the wholesale liberation of slaves. (Bong 1985:18).

St Augustine, in his Commentaries on the Psalms, gives an example of how Latin Fathers, like the Greeks, criticized this abhorrence:

> "*All men do whatever good or evil they do to free themselves from the causes of their misfortunes and to acquire happiness, and they always seek to live happily, whether by good or evil. However, not all of them attain what they seek. Everyone wants to be happy, but only those who act justly will be happy. I don't understand how those who are evil can hope to be happy. How? By owning money, silver and gold, land, houses and slaves, by the pomp of this world and worldly honor which is fickle and transitory. They seek to find happiness by owning things". (*de Santa 1981:72*).*

3.5.2 St Ambrose

According to St Ambrose nothing could do more to ensure the community's appreciation of the priest than his charity towards people in difficulties, especially the needy, he was to ensure that they had enough food to keep them from starvation. Moreover the Bishop of Milan calls attention to the need to give special priority to what he calls "the poor who are ashamed", that is, those who were rich but had been ruined by socio-

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economic changes which often occurred in the Lower Empire, forcing them into misery and deprivation where once they had lived in comfort. These people, who were ashamed of their poverty and tried to hide it, should be helped as far as possible, said St Ambrose. But the priest's charitable work should not be limited to these "poor who are ashamed": it must also extend to prisoners and all those who might fear the powerful, for example, those condemned to death, in whose defense should be ready to plead (de Santa 1981:66)

Apart from generosity, St Ambrose also emphasized that charity should be practiced with discernment. We must not confuse generosity with prodigality. The priest must be able to judge how to be liberal without exhausting the reserves on one case, but sharing them among all in need. The search for vainglory must never replace the search for justice! If this happens, he will easily fall victim to importers and swindlers who are legion. Many pretend to be poor. They come asking for alms, which they do not need, just so they can walk the streets and do nothing. They wear ragged clothes. They disguise their true age so as to receive more. They pretend to be in debt, or claim to have been robbed. All this must carefully checked, so that the poor man's money shall not end up in the swindler's pocket. In a word, the priest's generosity must lay exactly half way between thoughtless prodigality and meanness which might lead him to give the money of the faithful to the undeserving."

Elsewhere, the Bishop of Milan insisted on the need to ignore social differences in the Church, since God's justice makes no distinction between rich and poor. Herein lies the particular emphasis of St Ambrose concerning the problem of the poor and wealth: the determining element is God's justice as we know it in the Scriptures, and principally in Jesus Christ; hence the following quotation which is clearly an echo of the parables of the foolish rich man, and the rich man and Lazarus, in the Gospel:

> "*A narrow piece of ground is sufficient at the moment of burial, for the poor as well as for the rich, and the earth which was never enough to satisfy the ambition of the rich now covers him completely. Nature makes no distinction between men, either in birth or in death. It creates both alike and receives them in the same way in the tomb. Who can establish classes among the dead? Dig up a grave and see if you can tell who is the rich man. Then dig up another tomb and see if you can recognize the rotted around the rich man*".

These quotation from the Latin Father clearly reveal the two lines: the organization of charity by the ministers of the Church, and the confirmation of the Gospel's demands concerning the justice of God and the importance of caring for the poor (de Santa 1981:66-67).

The Bishop of Milan was wealthy; he gave away all his reaches and property to the poor and the church. His office was always open to the

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poor and the oppressed" (Boer 1978: 148)

3.5.3 St Basil

He was known as the "Great" Bishop of Cappadocia. He believed the bishop should have ultimate authority over monastery. At the same time, monasteries started to become more outward- looking. Basil's monastery provided medical treatment for the sick and relief for the poor, and also did some work in education (Dowley 1985: 207).

He saw in his time a tremendous gap between the rich and the poor. The poor were so destitute that many sold their children into slavery in order to support their family. St Basil condemned irresponsible wealthy people as 'thieves and robbers'. In his 'Ta Ethika' he instructed Christians to use any possessions beyond their basic necessities to help needy people. He created, no doubt very largely from his own resources, a whole complex of charitable welfare institutions. There arose a 'whole new city' grouped around the church and monastery, consisting of hostels, almshouse, and hospitals for infectious disease, and the bishop himself took up residence there.

The foundation was imitated and much admired, and also criticized. It was regarded as the threat to the State administration, an objection which Basil himself refused to accept. The spirit that inspired these works of

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charity was more monastic than political and hierarchic. Basil sermons were full of practical exhortations and examples, stimulating to acts of Christian love and practical virtue. Especially the great famine of the year 368, he proved his mettle in impressive sermons against the profiteers and the indifferent rich. He himself organized free meals for the people, which were also available to immigrant foreigners, pagans, and infidel children of Israel (de Santa Ana 1981:67-68).

In the first place he saw wealth as "a good to be administered, and not a source of enjoyment". St. Basil also criticized irresponsible economic growth. On the basis of the parable of the foolish rich man (Luke 12:16-21), St Basil equates economic growth whose aim is the accumulation of wealth with human wickedness (de Santa Ana 1981:68). St Basil emphasizes that the rich must repent, for the greater a man's wealth, the less perfect his charity, even though his behavior may seem very worthy: All this indicates that the Fathers of the church during the empire of Constantine insisted, as do the Gospels, that the Christian must share what he has for, in so doing, he bears witness to the injustice of God. The man of faith responds to the challenge of the poor in such a way that he shows himself to be a disciple of Jesus, the true "poor of Yahweh". The message of the Fathers to the faithful of the time indicates, among other things, that a person is never less valuable than his wealth, and that solely the goods he possesses cannot judge a human being.

The requirement to practice charity is understood by these Fathers in terms almost as radical as those of Jesus' teachings in the Gospel: one must give what one has, and not what one has left over. *"That is not almsgiving. Almsgiving is the action of the widow in the Gospel, who gave up all she had to live on"* (Mark 12:44).

The message of the Fathers of the Church during the empire of Constantine insisted, as do the Gospels, that the Christian must share what he has for, in so doing, he bears witness to the injustice of God. The man of faith responds to the challenge of the poor in such a way that he shows himself to be a disciple of Jesus.

The Fathers' message to the Christian community can be summarized as a call to practical solidarity and, here again, they concur with the demands of the Gospel, inspired by the book of Acts' accounts of the Jerusalem community. This is their way of putting into practice Christ's mandate concerning brotherly love and the way He was to be served by helping the needy.

3.6 The Early Mediaeval Church (590-1300 A.D.)

Christian social concern in the medieval church was strongly influenced by the concept of the 'Corpus Christianum'. Advocates of this concept

believed in a universal Christian state in which both church and state are God's instruments to achieve God's purpose for man. It was, therefore, the responsibility of both the church and state to promote evangelism and social responsibility. It was the duty of popes, councils, monks, and clerks in the in the medieval church to regulate feudalism, protect laborers, and establish educational and charitable institutions. And it was the duty of the state to support these program. This close co-operation of the church and state provides us with a perfect example of the 'identification model' in church- state relations. Evangelism in this period was interpreted as not only bringing people to Christ but also bringing them to the church. Since Salvation rests only within the church, the role of parish priests became very important.

During this period the poor were regarded as being victims of natural disasters: plague, earthquake and the like. These were also seen as punishment for sin, as shown by the procession against the plague organized by Pope Gregory the Great   in the year 590.

The "structural poor " were in effect the "rustics" –that is, free agricultural laborers; but they were free only to an extent, since they were strictly bound by feudal oaths. Unlike in the East, poverty in the west was mainly a rural concern. The misfortunes of the poor were misfortunes of the poor were multiple. Churches put out marble vessels in which abandoned

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babies were placed. Some of these grew up saints, at least in popular legend, such as St Vincentian and St Odilia. The greatest of these was St Martin of Tours, the son of a Roman officer, who became known as the patron saint of the poor because he divided his cloak in two to share it with a poor man. Another example was St Sigiramnus (Cyran), Archdeacon of Tours, who opted for a poor and contemplative life, and is supposed to have gone to live amongst poor agricultural laborers (Boff & Pixley 1989:160)

3.6.1 Francis of Assisi

Among the medieval church fathers, one of the best fleshed out examples of evangelism and Christian charity was St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), founder of the Franciscan Order. He was the youth who led a carefree life, was destined for a career as a knight, until converted through illness, a pilgrimage to Rome, a vision and the words of Jesus in Mathew 10:7-10. He was the son of a wealthy Italian cloth merchant, and his father was angry because Francis interpreted the gospel to mean that goods should be freely given to the poor. Leaving home in a ragged cloak and a rope-belt taken from a scarecrow, he wandered the countryside with a few followers, begging from the rich, giving to the poor and preaching. His charm, humility, and kindly manner attracted many followers (Dowley 1986:264)

He is called the 'Apostle of Love', because of his God given generosity. He

became known throughout the medieval and modern world for his love for the poor as expressed in his desire to marry 'the noblest, richest, and most beautiful girl' who he called 'Lady Poverty'- a symbol for his commitment to the needy. (Bong 1985:21).

3.6.2 Peter Valdez

He claimed to stand in the tradition of the mission given by Jesus to the seventy (Luke 10). Poverty becomes a condition for liberty; only the Lord of the Gospel, as Jesus was poor, in a position to be free and to pledge their whole being to the mission entrusts the poor, to them. Valdes did not see the fulfillment of mission only as being able to preach the Word with freedom. It was much more than this. Mission leads to service to the poor, for this is the means of expressing the "sequela Christi", of being faithful to the Lord (de Santa Ana 1981: 85)

3.7 The Carolingian Period: The "Economic Councils"

A great contrast in this period (ninth and tenth centuries) was between paupers and potens (poor and feudal lord). The Second Council of Aachen in 836 made a distinction between the "indigent" (those living below subsistence level) and the "poor" (freedmen of the countryside, though subject to feudal oath).

The kings, and bishops in particular, appeared as "protectors of the poor,"

meaning of the weak of all kinds. In the early ninth century, several councils took the defense of the *paupers* against the *potentes*. They denounced the frequent dragging of the poor before courts of law, fiscal exploitations of the poor, unfair pricing and trading methods, raising prices by hoarding in periods of famine, low prices paid for agricultural produce.

Such measures, however, had little effect. Even saints and wise men, in the ninth century, failed to see structural implications of land ownership. They therefore tried to correct inequalities rather than eliminate them. They encouraged the myths of the "good king" and "rich administrator" of goods to the benefit of the community. So they were left dealing with the results of basic injustice. The great Bishop Hinkmar of Rheims wrote to his suffragan, Bishop of Beauvais: "It is the Episcopal duty of the utmost importance to receive the poor and pilgrims in suitable hospices." Count Geroud had always been a *potens*, who never had to work with his hands, only to manage the family estates. But he took real care of the poor, distributing a ninth share (more than a tith1) of his income to them, and judging their suits with strict justice (blinding thieves, for example!). The people canonized him, long before the first worker was canonized, which happened only at the end of the twelfth century (Boff &Pixley 1989:161).

3.8 The Bishop and the Poor: An Old Alliance

Numerous meetings of the Bishops before the ninth and tenth centuries resolved round the social problems of the poor. Bishops were seen as "*procurator et dispensator pauperum*" (advocate and provider for the poor). The Council of Macon in 585 declared that the Bishop's house was the house of the poor. One quarter of ecclesiastical goods was distributed to the poor, a custom that originated in Gaul in the fifth century and spread to the whole of Europe (Boff & Pixley 1989:162)

The teaching of the Fathers had been enriched by the contributions, especially, of St Gregory and St Isidore. It now comprised four main affirmations:

       (i)   Any surplus belongs to the poor by right;

       (ii)   Possession means management for the good of all;

       (iii)   Almsgiving obtains pardon for sins;

       (iv)   Christ is in the poor.

The Gallic Councils excommunicated those who withheld goods from the poor- even the Bishops themselves. This shows the extent to which actual, practical love of the poor was considered essential to church communion. It was not for nothing that gifts for the poor were accepted in the context of the Eucharist/ sacrament communion. For the same reason, the church of the Fathers refused gifts from those who exploited the poor (Boff & Pixley

1989:163).

3.9 The Twelfth Century

3.9.1 Monks

The late third and early fourth centuries saw the beginnings of monastic asceticism in Christianity. The monks aimed to live the Christian life to the full, and felt that continued residence in the 'world' hindered this. They tried to achieve a pure Christianity and a deep communion with God, which they considered unattainable in the existing churches (Dowley 1986:205)

Nearly all Christians from the fourth to the eighteenth centuries were monks. There were four main traditions at the time: the Benedictines, the Nestorians, the Orthodox and the Celts. These communities of monks functioned as ambassadors of the faith, moving into areas where the Christian faith had not yet penetrated, forming their communities and establishing alternative societies in areas which were either victims of constant warfare or chaos as older societies broke down (Pierson 1985:8-9)

The original intent of monasticism was to encourage men to develop lives of discipline and prayer away from the concerns of normal life. But the monasteries, and the soon-to- follow women's houses, which arose, became self-sustaining communities organized around rules for daily life,

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rules that pertained to work as well as prayers. This concept was revolutionary in the ancient world, where manual work was seen as fit only for slaves. (Pierson 1985:9)

When the focus of poverty shifted from the cities to the countryside, monasteries became the main centers of help given to the poor, taking over from Episcopal sees. Aid was now institutionalized, adopting "matriculations" and building hospices. Each Abbey supported an arranged number of poor people, devoting the tenth part of its resources to this. In the Abbeys, the liturgy of service prevented the bureaucratization of charity. The poor, in fact, were welcomed with the ceremony of the *mandatum*, the washing of feet. This was particularly solemn on Good Friday, when each monk would file out to stand in front of a poor person. At a sign from the abbot, they "bowed, adored Christ in his poor," then blessing and promising to serve them (Boff &Pixley 1989:164).

The monks were encouraged to become scholars. Thus, for the first time the practical and theoretical were embodied in the same individuals. The monks were the first intellectuals to get dirt under their fingernails. This combination helped create an atmosphere favorable to scientific development, including both workshops and libraries. The monasteries became centers of Christian faith, learning and technical progress as they expanded into northern Europe (Pierson 1985:9).

3.9.2 Theologians

Theology up to the thirteenth century maintained the tradition of the Fathers, but with one new element: frequent reference to the fifth chapter of the Letter of James- the warning to the rich. This theology appreciated the importance of the poor as those by their work maintained the fabric of society. So it saw the poor as *workers*. It defended strict equality between rich and poor and sharing of goods as a natural right It also recognized the rights of the poor, particularly that of "theft arising from necessity." This was proclaimed in the context of famines and plagues of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which forced the poor to steal in order to survive (Boff & Pixley 1989:165)

3.9.3 Hermits

The Hermits adopted the way of life of the poor, in dress and work. They sought the company of manual workers, farm laborers, lepers and prostitutes. This also led to a growing cult of St Mary Magdelin. The *"liberalitas erga paupere"* of the rich changed into the "*conversatio inter paupers*" of the impoverished hermits. This marked the start of the prophetic challenge directed at the church to adopt an effective form of evangelical poverty.

The hermits changed the social image of the poor; they began to be seen from the standpoint of the poor themselves. So one of the hermits, Peter of

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Bois, said: "It is the poor and the weak who will possess the kingdom of God and the Holy Land, the two Jerusalem earthly and heavenly. But it was above all St Francis, followed by St Dominic, who took a new look at the ever-ambiguous phenomenon of poverty, and caused the church to do the same. They accomplished this through their radical choice of life like and with the poor of the city outskirts (Boff and Pixley 1989:166)

3.9.4 Apocalyptic Messiahs

Famines were endemic in the twelfth century, which led to outbreaks of rebellion amongst the poor. These had two main characteristics:

- Messianism: an apocalyptic prophet usually led the rebellion;

- Milleniarism: people hoped in the miraculous advent of an era of plenty.

- These sudden outbreaks of anger amongst the poor led to arson, stoning and various other forms of revolt.

- The Aeon of the Star, in Brittany: the prophet demanded the purification of the church, leading a mass of poor people who were put down mercilessly

- Gillaumme Longebarbe in 1196: the "Savior" claimed for himself the title reserved to bishops- "protector of the poor". He preached equality and moral conversion. He was hanged and the people attributed miracles to him and venerated him virtually as a saint

- Then there was Foulque de Neuilly, who went about shouting: "Feed

those who are dying of hunger, because if you don't, you're a murderer!" He attracted a lot of disciples. But in the end he "quietened down" somewhat, accepting favors from the rich, and so ending up largely discredited. (Boff and Pixley 1989:166-167).

3.9.5 Canons and Laity

While the bishops defended the poor, the monks fed them. Those who thought about their problems (theologians), those who lived among them (hermits) and those who fought for them (messianic leaders), there were also those who actually worked for them. These were those who devoted themselves to "works of mercy" in the twelfth century.

In the first place were the canons, secular clerics who created or restored hospices for pilgrims and the poor, mainly along roads, in woods and hills. Monasteries were no longer able to cope with the ever-increasing numbers of poor people. In particular, a new class of poor was emerging, consisting of outcasts of all sorts: prostitutes, beggars, vagabonds, petty criminals and the like. This situation was brought about by social changes- the growth of populations, cities, wealth, and aggravated by natural disasters,

Then were groups of lay people, who did most of all, caring directly for the poor, without delegating this task any longer to monks or clerics. They built bridges over the rivers (pontifices); they founded confraternities of

charity, such as the Hospitallers (Boff and Pixley167-168).

3.10 The Renaissance and the Reformation (1300-1600 A.D.)

3.10.1 Late Medieval Church (1300-1500)

The political, social-economic, and religious climate changed during the Late Medieval Age (1300-1500). Feudalism began to decline and strong central monarchical governments were established in Europe.

Economically, the continual development of trade and industry encouraged a capitalistic economy and changed the social structure. Large influxes of migrant peoples into towns for jobs brought economic impoverishment to large sections of society, especially peasants and country gentry.

From fourteenth century onwards the peasants onwards were often restless because they suffered from growing economic pressures from landlords whose land was declining in value and who demanded more remuneration because of increase in the costs of the life style of the nobility. Suffering from these injustices and burdens of famine, pestilence (such as the Black Death from 1348-49), and war (such as the One Hundred Years war from 1337-1453), the peasants revolted against both secular and religious rulers. They forced the ruling classes to make economic reforms. Christ's example of poverty, the monastic emphasis on

poverty, and asceticism in some segments of the medieval church were not enough to suppress the aspirations of the town population for freedom from the oppression of the church and state. The town populations demanded even more radical changes in the social structure (Bong 1985:22).

3.10.2 Protestant Reformation

The Reformation was a religious and political movement of the 16th century Europe. It began as an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church and resulted in the establishment of the Protestant churches. The term "Reformed" is used to distinguish the Calvinistic from the Lutheran and Anabaptist traditions.

The Protestant Reformation occurred largely as a reaction to spiritual apathy and corruption in certain sectors of the Roman Catholic Church. Its leaders were "protesting" against what they saw as misunderstandings and misuses of the Christian faith.

The reformers doctrines of 'Sola gratia, sola fide, sola scripture and soli deo gloria' challenged the church every major tenet of the Roman Catholic Church. For the reformers, evangelism meant the restoration of the erring church to the Scripture's teaching. Their doctrine of justification by faith downgraded the medieval concept of meritorial works to obtain salvation

through the sacramental system of the church. Sola gratia simplified the complicated Roman Catholic soteriological system, and 'sola scriptura' denied the concept of the 'Corpus Christianum' and shattered the entire monolithic structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet even though the Protestant reformers were sufficiently radical in the sixteenth century to make many needed reforms, they still retained many medieval traditions (Bong 1985:22)

The reformers were really concerned about the poor; they taught the people that they were responsible for the poor. The reformers were all convinced that the re-appropriation of the gospel and a renewed sense of accountability to God would issue in new concern for the neighbor in need. But each of these Reformers places an emphasis on a different aspect of Trinitarian faith, an emphasis that shapes his response to poverty.

3.10.2.1 Martin Luther

The core of Luther's protest was not economic but spiritual. It was however, connected to material life in a number of ways. The medieval church, like every institution, required financing, and practices such as the sale of indulgences were the surface manifestation of a number of attempts to preserve an elaborate edifice of priestly organization to mediate sacerdotal grace to temporal humanity. It was assumed that the spiritual estates had special access to divine grace and that it was their vocation to

mediate that grace to the people. The temporal estates, in turn, had access to material resources; it was their vocation to offer them up to God by giving them to the church (Neuhaus 1988:6)

In order to understand Luther's views on evangelism and social responsibility, one has to grasp his concept of two kingdoms-the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. The Christian as a child of God, belongs to the former, and as a citizen of this world belongs to the latter. He, therefore, is responsible to God as well to the civil authority. (Forell 1971:157)

Since God is in control of both kingdoms, Luther believes that God does not want the Christian to compartmentalize his life into sacred and secular categories. The Christian is to live his life in this world in order to show forth the love of the kingdom of God. Luther had a deep concern for evangelism. Most of his letters carried this phrase: 'By grace of God, Evangelist at Wittenberg'. Luther's preaching on the 'Law and Gospel' explained clearly the way of salvation to the people of the sixteenth century. (Bong 1985:22-23).

In regard to social responsibility Luther taught two important truths. First, he rejected the medieval notion that good works bring pardon for sins. In his *Ninety five Thesis* (1517) Luther declared:

1. *Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends   to the needy does a better work than buying pardons.*

2. *Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need, and passes him by, and gives (his money) for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.*

Luther was quite concerned about poverty   and its effects, and this concern moves in several directions of considerable importance to subsequent Christianity and history. For one thing, he gave work a new dignity. He overturned the view that physical labor was subordinate in value to spiritual labor: slopping the hogs, brewing the beer, and changing the baby's diaper are quite as spiritual as the work of cardinals and abbots. He transformed the ascetic injunction of the monastic, *'Ora et Labore'*, to a new asceticism in the heart of each worker: *'Labore est Orare'*, if done in the right spirit (Neuhaus 1988:8).

Yet was by no means an advocate of free trade in any sense. He shared with the medieval period a deep suspicion of trade, commerce, and finance of all kinds and thought that they should be politically regulated. His peasant experience supported with the rather elaborate body of medieval teaching that only the earth was fecund, and that manufacture and exchange, investment and interest, corporations and banks- indeed any economic gains made outside the direct control of family and government-

were nothing more than sophisticated forms of stealing by artifice.

Allowing such practices simply gave license to greed (Neuhaus 1988:9).

At local as well as the national level, Luther was deeply concerned with the problem of poverty. Like the early Reformers, he viewed it as having a double nature. On the other hand, begging had been institutionalized as an acceptable practice for priests, monks, and nuns for several centuries. Luther had little patience for voluntary or 'evangelical' poverty of this sort; he believed that it resulted from a misunderstanding of the gospel and that those who practiced it were leeches on others. In his "Ordinance of a Common Chest" Luther once said:

> *"No monk, or church beggar shall be permitted or allowed to beg or have others beg for him in our perish, city or villages, indeed anyone not in capacitated by reason of age or illness shall work or, with the aid of the authorities, be expelled from the parish, the city, and the villages"* (Neuhaus 1988:10).

On the other hand, as a pastor Luther recognized that some individuals were impoverished by age, illness, or other circumstances, and that these needed the support of others. To this end, he advocated the founding and careful administration of a common chest by trustees elected from the parish.

3.10.2.2 John Calvin (1509-1564)

Calvin took much of what he believed directly from Luther, but a fundamentally different understanding of the relationship of law and gospel modified all his social views, and he read his Bible less through the lenses of the neo-Platonic hierarchies of medieval thought than through the cosmopolitan.

Calvin believed that Christians constitute a small society inside the larger corrupt society. The church 'is the embryo of an entirely new world where the once perverted social relations find anew their original nature'. Calvin was not satisfied with the medieval ecclesiastical attempt to solve social problems through an extensive system of almsgiving for ecclesiastical merits and through the example of mendicant priest (Bong 1985:24).

Calvin was committed to equality, but it was equality based also on a radical sense of the objectivity of sin and a saving God: all are equally sinners and all equally in need of salvation. The principle that we are justified by grace through faith implies a need for transformed patterns of thought and life. First of all, it demands an obedient regard for the justice and truth of the one true God, but the social corollary of this view is that the "natural" structure of the common life are rooted in corruption, and so they have to be reordered according to godly principles (Neuhaus 1988:11).

Calvin "*desacralized poverty*" more radically than perhaps any of other

Reformers; and he "*resacralized*" concern for organized benevolence and welfare by making diaconal service to the poor a central office for laity in the church and the city. But it was not only care for the poor that he "*resacralized*," it was also care for those who labor. In the Social Humanism Calvin says: "God assigns an earthly goal to his creature. Man is created to work. The blessing of the Lord is on the hands of him who works. Certainly God curses laziness and loafing" (Neuhaus 1988:14)

Calvin sanctifies work in precisely those areas where Luther found severe moral temptation. Commerce, trade, manufacture, and banking are proper arenas of sanctified labor in Calvin's eyes; indeed, they are essential to the common life, for material exchange shows the interdependence of individuals in society and of societies in the international context. Calvin rejected the conviction that money is not fecund and that all proper production is elated to the fecundity of land. He understood the nature the nature of money and usury in a new way. He remained aware of the danger of worshiping Mammon, but he asserted that the circulation of money through commerce, investments, and working capital could also be redemptive. It can bind together in common interests people not previously connected, it can produce more wealth for the relief of need and for the benefit of all, and it can free us from pagan loyalties to a "tribal brotherhood" (Neuhaus 1988:15).

Further Calvin maintains that the quest for reasonable gain from commerce, trade, and investment-profit-ought not to be motivated by greed. He recognized avarice, hording, and the ostentatious display of wealth as perennial temptations. But he distinguished reasonable profit from these. Jesus Christ had himself approved of return on wise and prudential investment in the parable of the talents, said Calvin. What is gained fairly in diligent stewardship under the mandate of the righteous God is to be honored? It should be invested quickly that it might not be horded and that the unemployed might be given work, to the benefit of the whole human community. It should be supervised by both the church and state authorities, who are appointed agents of the sovereign God, so that the radical sinfulness of humanity will not destroy the fragile bonds of mutuality and trust that business both requires and so easily subverts in the human commonwealth (Neuhaus 1988:16).

3.10.2.3 Ulrich Zwingli

Zwingli made an attempt to reform society through the Little and Great Councils. The Great Council abolished street begging in 1524 and transformed the preachers' monastery into a 'poor house' where food was served each morning for the poor. The council also converted monasteries and convents into schools, hospitals, and orphanages and established a charity bureau to distribute food for sick, and pregnant women (Bong 1985:24-25).

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3.10.2.4 Anabaptists

Anabaptists believed in strict separation between   the spiritual and temporal powers. They believed that there was an absolute antithesis between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world. Although they emphasized a life separated from this world, they also believed that the state was ordained of God and that Christians obey the civil law as long as it did not contradict God's commandments. Because Anabaptists were the victims of persecutions by the state, they withdrew support from the state.

Anabaptists were certain that the task of evangelism and social concern did not depend on the combined authority of church and state. Rather, the task depended on the obedience of individual believers. Their concept of a 'brotherhood of believers' was very strong, and in this brotherhood, they cared for each other (Bong 1985:25).

3.11 The Evangelical Revival Movement

Many Christian organizations for social reform were born out of the momentum created by Pietism, the Wesleyan Revival in England, the First and Second Great Awakenings in North America. These revivals in the church created major, lasting changes in the societies of Europe and North America.

In the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, workers labored long hours for low wages and lived in urban slums worse than their rural homes. Children and women worked long hours for lower wages than men. The mechanization of noise of assembly lines robbed workers of a sense of meaningful community, personal significance, and tranquility, which they had enjoyed in rural society (Bong 1985: 26).

3.11.1 The Pietistic Movement

Towards the end of the seventeenth century a protest arose in Protestant circles against dead orthodoxy and ecclesiastical conservatism. It was centered in lay movements nourished by the study of the scriptures. In Germany it was called "Pietism". The Pietistic movement started with Phillip Spener (1635-1705), a German Lutheran, who had been influenced by reading Puritan authors such as Baxter, initiated the movement which was called Pietism, and his disciple (1663-1727) August Francke (Van Engen 1981:259; Pierson 1989:12).

Spener initiated private meetings for the edification with a few parishioners. He published Pia Desideria in 1675 with suggestions for the renewal of the church. The included a more extensive use of the Word of God among the people, the establishment and diligent exercise of the spiritual priesthood and the recognition that it was not enough to have

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knowledge of the Christian faith because Christianity consists rather of *practice*. Thus, Christians were to demonstrate to non-believers that they were considered to be their neighbors, as the Samaritan was a neighbor in Luke 10. Christians were called to love others as they loved themselves (Pierson 1989:120)

The small groups of believers or associations of piety (*collegia pietatis*) stressed Christian perfection because they believed that a Christian's justification is fulfilled by means of sanctification. By sanctification the Pietists did not mean sinlessness; rather they believed in definite progress in the Christian life. Reacting to the emphasis on theological scholasticism in the Protestant churches, the Pietists emphasized the living presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer (Bong 1985:26)

The Pietists believed in changing society through changing individuals, particularly leaders, by the power of the gospel. They understood the doctrine of perfection to mean that a Christian should not just give intellectual assent to justification but he should also practice his faith by loving others as himself.

They believed that when he inner personal conviction to care for the poor as a mark of true piety is not cultivated, the social will to provide such care evaporates among the people, and the governments are unlikely to

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take on h task either. What social services are provided are often given grudgingly, coldly, and simply as a matter of state interest. Diaconal service to the dispossessed through hospitals for the sick, schools for the simple, soup for the hungry, and homes for widows and orphans has been understood as a major mark of the presence of the Spirit (Neuhaus 1988:19-20)

3.11.2 Moravians

The most distinctive strategy developed in the 18th century was that of the Moravian Church developed under the direction of Count Zinzendorf and Bishop Spangenberg. The Moravians who grew out of German Pietism and pre-Reformation movements constituted one of the most remarkable missionary movements in all history.

The Moravian missionaries beginning in 1734 were purposely sent to the most despised and neglected people. They were to be self-supportive. Known for their one hundred year prayer watch in which members of the community were praying around the clock for that period, they were a highly disciplined, monastic like community of married men and women devoted to world mission. During their early years, one in every fourteen members became a missionary to some far corner of the world. They were intensely evangelistic with "souls for the Lamb" their primary goal, but their work among the Indian tribes along the western frontier of North

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America is an indication of their holistic approach to mission (Pierson 1989:14)

The developed industries and business concerns which not only supported the work, but brought the missionaries into intimate contact with the people. The profits supported the missionaries. Moravian missionaries were told not to apply "the Herrnhut yardstick" (i.e., German home base standards) to other peoples and to be alert to the recognition of the God-given distinctive traits, characteristics and strong points of those people. Furthermore the missionaries were to regard themselves as assistants to the Holy Spirit. They were to be primary messengers, evangelists, preachers, who were not to stress heavy theological doctrines but rather tell the simple gospel story of God's loving act of reconciliation of men to Himself in Christ our Savior, who lived and died for all men. In God's providence the time would come when the Holy Spirit would bring converts into the church in large numbers. Meanwhile the missionary messengers would rather gather the first fruits. If there should be no response, they were to go elsewhere. Actually, the missionaries left only when persecuted and driven out. They were remarkably patient and did not give up readily (Beaver 1992:246)

3.11.3 The Wesleyan Revival in England

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It is impossible to overestimate the spiritual and social impact of John Wesley, Charles Wesley, and George Whitfield, evangelists in England in the eighteenth century. The Wesleyan movement in the eighteenth century called attention to Christ to Christ's teachings and actions as a model for ministry to the deprived in contemporary society. The combination of serious stewardship and personal concern of the poor, became a hallmark of the Methodist movement. Not surprisingly, the Wesleyan revival movement attracted a large following from the ranks of those who might be considered poor.

According to Hulley,

> "*Wesley introduced a number of programs to alleviate the worst effects of poverty. He started a school for the children of poor parents and for adult education; he set up a home to house destitute widows and established a medical free medical dispensary. He was concerned about unemployment. To finance his assistance programs he collected money from wealthy friends and sometimes walked from house to house-soliciting funds. These funds were strictly accounted for, whether they were employed as a loan fund to help the needy people or to provide food, clothing and heating for the destitute*" (Hulley 1983:156)

In their assisting the poor he advised the stewards in his London society to treat the poor graciously even if they were unable to provide assistance. "*Put yourselves in the place of every poor man; and deal with him as you would God should deal with you*" was the principle he advised him to apply

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(Hulley 1983:157)

The Wesley brothers started with a small group known as 'Holy Club of Oxford' in 1729 and other brothers brought a spiritual revival to England. John Wesley often preached at 5:00 am so that people could hear the gospel before they went to work in mines and factories. He also preached in midmorning and midday in markets so that the crowds there would have opportunity to hear the gospel. His passion to help the poor did not, however, stop with preaching. (Bong 1985:27)

Wesley himself did more than just talk about social reform. Among other things, he agitated for prison, liquor and labor reforms; set up loan funds for the poor; campaigned against the slave trade and smuggling; opened a dispensary and gave medicines to the poor; worked to solve unemployment; and personally gave away considerable sums of money to persons in need. Even before they experienced the assurance of salvation, the Wesleyans and the Holy Club at Oxford showed concern for the poor and prisoners along with the spiritual disciplines that earned them the name "Methodists" (Pierson 1985:14). The early Methodists of the eighteenth century gathered clothes and send to the poor; opened free medical clinics to draw in the sick from the streets; and stood on street corners and begged for the poor (Heitzenrater 2002:15)

In his early years at Oxford, Wesley demonstrated a concern for the widows, orphans, and prisoners in the city. He contributed to the Grey-Coat School in town (a charity school). He helped provide a teacher for poor children in a school that William Morgan had started, by which the Methodists taught at least twenty poor children. He gave money to debtors in the Castle prison and Bocardo jail. He gave of his resources to many in Oxford who lacked the necessities of life (Heitzenrater 2002:25).

Wesley often furnished more than just money. In some instances, he bought flax for children in the workhouses to use, and he gave food to families for their health and strength. He was convinced that he should not enjoy the comforts of life if others did not have the necessities.

John Wesley raised money and collected resources of all kinds from those who could help. He privately 'begged' from the rich, many times soliciting known benefactors door to door. It might seem ironic to be collecting money from the poor for the poor. But as early as 1742, Methodist people were expected to give a penny a week to their class leader in support of the beneficent programs of the connection. The Methodist program of assistance to the poor was, first and foremost, a way to help those in their own societies who had special needs (Heitzenrater 2001:31-32).

The impact of the Wesleyan movement on various movements for social

reforms in England is well known. Robert Raikes started Sunday School in order to give moral and religious instruction to the poor children on the one day of the week they were not working. This involved teaching many of them to read. He organized schools among neglected miners and colliers. John Howard tirelessly worked for the reform of the appalling conditions in prisoners locally, and then moved Parliament to act to improve prison condition conditions throughout the nation (Pierson 1985:14).

Wesley did not consider the poor to be lazy and indolent, as did many of the upper class and some of the lawmakers. He worked very hard to counteract that view, which was contained in much of the literature of his day, especially as voiced by critics of the Poor Laws. From his extensive traveling about the country, Wesley concluded that poor government policy, economic management, and societal choices, seen especially in three areas, caused the problems of hunger and unemployment: distilling, taxes, and luxury. For instance, he pointed out that too much grain had been used for distilling liquor, leaving a shortage of grain to make bread, which drove the price up and especially hurt the poor. From his point of view, most everyone who was able to work was, in fact, working, and yet many were still hungry. In one sermon, Wesley lambastes those who quote classical poet who said that "poverty brings no unhappiness worse than this: it exposes men to ridicule (Heitzenrater 2002:33)

In his attitudes toward and programs for those in need, John Wesley was a man of his time. He followed models that were available to him from scripture, government, church and society. Wesley continually developed programs to deal with a variety of problems faced by his people:

- First, to relieve the helpless (the impotent poor), he took nourishing food to the hungry, collected decent clothes for the threadbare, and furnished adequate housing for widows and orphans.

- Second, to assist those who were unfortunate (the able poor), he boosted their employment by sending the weavers yarn fro their looms and establishing a loan program to distribute seed money to struggling merchants or manufacturers.

- Third, for the children, Wesley established schools to train the minds, bodies and spirits of young boys and girls.

- Fourth, for the literate but uneducated adults, Wesley established a prolific publishing program that provided important literature for his people- much of which produced inexpensively- to be given away to those who could not afford to purchase it.

- Fifth, to assist the sick and infirm, Wesley hired apothecaries and doctors to staff free medical clinics in his programs lay a desire to encourage industry, thrift, learning, health, and godliness (Heitzenrater 2002:34).

Wesley's views of providence also led him occasionally to see poverty as

God's punishment to bring people to an awareness of their sins. On the other hand, it is interesting o note that Wesley did pinpoint some of the systemic causes of the problem in the structures and attitudes evident in government and society. He did occasionally connect poverty with human oppression. On one occasion, he also used the language of justice in relation to the need to free the poor from their plight. (Heitzenrater 2002:35)

3.11.4 The Clapham Sect

The Clapham Sect was an evangelical group of aristocratic politicians, bankers, and Anglican clerics of Clapham and Cambridge who worked for reform from within the church establishment. They frequently gathered in the home of William Wilberforce, one of their leaders who lived in a suburb of London known as Clapham. That is how these evangelical philanthropists became known as the Clapham Sect. They were not a formal religious party. All of them were members of the Church of England, though they were frequently denounced by High Anglican Tories as Methodists (Miles 1986: 47).

These men were products of the evangelical awakenings in both England and America. Particularly were they indebted to the earlier work of John Wesley and George Whitefield. Though they were connected with the establishment, their primary business was with personal salvation and

moral reforms with individuals as opposed to corporate religion. Mostly they were a group of Christian laymen in the London area dedicated to applying Christian principles in public life (Miles 1986:47).

Two of the prominent members of the Clapham Sect were William Wilberforce (1759-1833) and the seventh Lord Shaftersbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper (1801-1885). Let us look briefly at the work of these two men. Wilberforce conversion began in 1785, his conversion altered the lives of   multitudes of persons whom he never saw because   he was largely   responsible for the abolition of slavery in the British empire. When converted, Wilberforce was already a Member of Parliament. His intention was to become a vocational Christian minister John Newton persuaded him instead to serve the Lord in the House of Commons. Wilberforce determined to champion the cause of abolishing the slave traffic and slavery itself. Wilberforce kept hammering away against slavery and after 30 years slave trade was abolished. The Parliament voted the money to indemnify the slaveholders and free some 800,00 slaves throughout British dominions (Miles 1986:48)

Lord Shaftesbury, another member of the Clapham Sect, did much to Christianize the socioeconomic structures of Great Britain in the nineteenth century. He attacked the chimney- sweep scandal, child labor in factories, female labor in mines, the overlong working hours, lack of

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safety and medical protection, and unhealthy working conditions (Miles 1986:49).

3.11.5 The First Great Awakening in North America

Jonathan Edward started the first Great Awakening, he preached on justification by faith. His concern for social justice was linked with the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In Pressing into the Kingdom of God, Edwards encouraged every Christian to 'press into the Kingdom of God', firmly believing that the Kingdom of God could be established on the earth with the transforming power of the gospel. Edwards also wrote in his Obligations to Charity ' that it is the absolute and indispensable duty of the people of God to give bountifully and willingly for supplying the wants of the needy (Bong 1985:28-29).

3.11.6 The Second Great Awakening

The name of Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) is almost synonymous with the Second Great Awakening. Finney introduced new measures into revivals, such as holding protracted meetings in cities for four consecutive days and nights, calling penitents to make an immediate decision to come forward in the service during the public invitation to an inquiry room for counseling, and letting women pray publicly in mixed gatherings (Miles 1986:49).

Finney is the foremost promoter of revivals and social reformation in the nineteenth century. Among the benevolent works, he specified good government, Christian education, temperance reform, the abolition of slavery, and relief of the poor. Long before the advent of liberation theology, Finney recognized that God has a preference for the poor, not because He is prejudiced but because He is the God of justice. Finney insisted on a system of free pews in churches. In Finney's day, many churches used rentals to raise construction and maintenance costs. Prices actually varied like in a theater where the best seats cost the most (Mile 1986:50).

A practical result of pew rental was often that church seating reflected social and economic class. The poor were relegated either to the few, rugged, free pews in the balcony or in the back of the church house; or, more tragic still, they were altogether excluded from the churches. Finney and his friends found that this abominable system of church financing a direct contradiction to a gospel feely offered to all. The built "Free Churches" open to all.

3.12 The Protestant Missionary Movement

William Carey is rightly called "the Father of Protestant Missions'". In 1792 he formed the Baptist Missionary Society; the following year he sailed to India.

His primary goal was to lead people to people to personal faith in Jesus Christ and eternal salvation; however he saw no conflict between that goal and his other activities in education, agriculture, and botany.

Carey labored widely to withstand social evils and bring change in Asia. He was better known as a horticulturist around the world than as a missionary. He fought valiantly against the practice of infanticide, the burning of widows, the inhuman treatment of lepers (who were often buried or burned alive), and needless deaths at the great religious pilgrimages of the time (Pierson 1999:265)

3.13 Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918)

Another example of a Christian response to issues of wealth and poverty is Walter Rauschenbusch. After his theological training Rauschenbusch was sent as a pastor to a German-speaking Baptist church in New York City in USA. Confronted with poverty, malnutrition, poor housing and general misery of the inhabitants of "Hell's Kitchen" near the church, Rauschenbusch's social conscience was awakened. He realized that sin was not only a personal issue, it had massive social ramifications. He later became a social prophet in the mould of the Old Testament prophet, Amos, and was intensely critical in his writings and preaching of the materialism and capitalism of his generation. For him, as for many others in the

Christian tradition, one could not separate one's Christian faith from the social issues of his day. It was morally wrong form Christians to pursue "the profit motive" while ignoring the needs of the poor (Kretzschmar 2000: 141)

3.14 Missionary strategy of the 19TH /20th Century

Missionary Strategy of the 19th century (down to Edinburg 1910), aimed at individual conversions, church planting, and social transformation through three main types of action, which became known as evangelism, education, and medicine. Evangelism included preaching in all its forms, the organizing and fostering of churches, Bible translation, literature production, and the distribution of Bibles and literature (Beaver 1999:249-250) In the realm of education, industrial schools were stressed in earlier times, but generally abandoned because of the desire for an academic education. By the end of the century, a vast educational system was in existence, ranging from kindergarten to college, and including medical schools and theological schools. The first doctors took care of the families of the missionaries, but it was soon discovered that medical service to the general populace brought good will and provided an evangelistic opportunity. It was not only in the middle of the twentieth century that it came to be realized that health services in the name of the spirit of the Great Physician are in themselves a dramatic form of the preaching of the gospel.

It was the same spirit of general helpfulness and cultivation of good will, as well as out of a desire to improve the economic base of the church, that missionaries introduced improved poultry and livestock and better seeds along with new crops. When women came into the church, their children followed them (Beaver 1999:250).

As the 20th century opened, with the rapid expansion of Christian missionary movement from the West, the gospel was being preached and Christian churches planted in all the continents and in virtually every open country of the globe as never before, societies and new missionary organizations by the thousands were organized but the was very little done to communicate the gospel to the informal settlement communities (Ntshumayelo 2001

3.15 Liberal and Orthodox Polarization of the Church

The seeds for major theological polarization in Protestantism were sown in the mid-nineteenth century with the rise of biblical criticism. The humanism and rationalism, which predominated in the twentieth century had their roots in the Age of Reason in mid-seventeenth century.

3.15.1 From Social Gospel to Salvation Today (1970-present)

Mission and evangelism have been a primary concern of the 20th century ecumenical movement. This movement is generally reckoned to have begun at the World Missionary Conference at Edinburg in 1910, it decided as follows.

> "*The church must find its way to the places where men really live. It must penetrate the alienated world from within, and make the minds of men familiar with the elementary realities of God, of sin and of purpose in life. This can be done partly through new ventures of self-identification by Christians with the life of that world, partly through Christians making the word of the Gospel heard in the places where decisions are made that affect the lives of men. It can be done fully only if. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Church recovers the spirit of prophecy to discern the signs of the times, to see the purpose of God working in the immense movements and revolutions of the present* age, *and again to speak to the nations the word of God with authority*" (Van der Bent 1986:15)

The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 19190 was a watershed event, which climaxed decades of regional missionary cooperation. Edinburgh 1910 brought the movement to evangelize the world to a heightened state of global awareness and planning. Edinburgh was a conference to design the strategy for a final campaign by the concerted forces of the kingdom of God as they assayed what was needed to complete the "unfinished task". Delegates of the Edinburg conference were impelled to missionary activity by such motives as God's love for the whole creation, compassion for the lost, Christ command to preach the

gospel, pity for the dying, expectation of the Lord's early return, and a grateful sense of stewardship (Scherer 1987:15)

The increase industrialization of Europe and North America, massive immigration from southern and eastern Europe to America, problems of urbanization, recurrent depressions, social tensions, and many other factors aroused the consciences of many Christians to various social issues.

The whole emphasis in evangelism was shifting from the traditional eschatological understanding of the kingdom to a horizontal earthly kingdom attainable here and now through purely secular means. In order tom establish this kingdom, Rauschenbusch advocated political democracy, government control, mild socialism, and unions. He condemned the laissez-faire system of capitalism. His social gospel became the major thrust of the Federal Council of Churches (Bong 1985:31).

The world find the church where it is, right out in front of it in the community, in the wider, public, community of which the church is part. The world is a complex reality and the church's performance in it is hinged to its willingness to get its hand dirty and put in the hard work of social analysis required to discover it. The church is called not only to live in the world but also to live for it. This is implied in the meaning of "royal

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priesthood," As members of Christ priesthood, Christians are intercessors for the world, representing God to human kind and humankind to God (Snyder 2001:90-91).

3.15.2 Liberation movement

A movement known as "Liberation Theology" sprang up during the second half of the twentieth century in Latin America and spread over much of the world. Liberation Theology was mainly concerned about the poor and was weak in the areas of religious conversion and personal salvation (Greenway 1999:124)

Preaching the gospel ("word") and helping the poor and oppressed ("deed") were done together throughout most of Christian history. Early in the twentieth century, however, liberal theology entered many churches. They denied the basic teaching of the Bible, such as the virgin birth of Christ, the atonement, and the physical resurrection of Christ. Liberation theology promoted what was called the "Social Gospel" in mission (Greenway 1999:124).

Liberation Theology focused on oppression and the political and economic causes of poverty. The solution that it promoted contained strong elements of Marxism. Marxism was discredited by the end of the century, and Liberation theologians were left without the answer that they thought they

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had found. Liberation Theology tried to solve the problem of oppression and injustice, but the biblical gospel of the kingdom of God offers the only genuine solution (Greenway 1999:125)

Liberation Theology is based on the Christian theory of Jesus' primary importance as the "Liberator", personifying the poor and devoted to freeing them from oppression (Mathew 19:21; 25:35,40). It was initiated by the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutierrez in the theology of liberation (1969). Mbiti (1998:141-158) tells the story of African liberation theology as follows:

> "*Since 1970's. theological discussion in southern Africa has focused mainly on the Theology of Liberation. This was a living issue for Christians there while African peoples suffered the painful experience of oppression by the European settlers, were denied basic human rights, and had little or no say in matters of their own destiny. Further, they were unjustly exploited economically. So, for them, the gospel was the good news of liberation "because its message brings a new light to dehumanized and oppressed people*".

3.15.3 A new Global context for mission

Mission Theology in the late 1980s has entered a period of reconstruction and consensus building. We now shall survey common issues that are likely to challenge all Christian communities as they carry out their mission in the future. The era of the 'new mission' will look remarkably different from the relatively peaceful and stable colonial context of the late

19th century. Here is the scenario of the present situation:

1. Widespread poverty and starvation characterizes much of the poor areas. The gap between the rich and the poor widens. Chronic poverty, underdevelopment, inflation, and low productivity will make it difficult for churches in the poorest communities to achieve self-reliance.

2. Political instability and authoritarian political systems on both the right and the left will plague nations of the poor communities.

3. Despite these inhibiting factors, the Christian community in the informal settlements will continue to grow both in numbers and maturity. By virtue of severe testing and missionary engagement, the quality and vigor of the faith of these Christians is likely to surpass that of Christiana in the suburbs.

4. Massive demographic changes will mark the new missionary area with the population of the poor rising on daily basis. These trends justify mission planning and strategy systematically directed toward the un-evangelized segments of the world's population (Scherer 1987:46).

A new urban style of mission along with requisite training for Christian survival in the informal settlement community is highly demanded. On the one hand the informal settlement communities with their anonymity and secular atmosphere will offer nearly impenetrable barriers to mission

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activities.

3.16 Conclusion

The evidence that God has a bias toward the poor, runs throughout the biblical narrative. The election of Abraham, the liberation of Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians, the prophetic insistence on justice for the poor, and the teachings and ministry of Jesus all point to God's particular concern for the poor. From the very beginning to the present, the history of the church has manifested a continuing care for the poor, sick, and homeless.

Virtually, all missionary movements during the history of the church have been concerned about and involved in what is called comprehensive ministry for the poor. They have seen it as a part of their ministry of communicating the gospel. Further more, they demonstrated a remarkable degree of consistency through history with their focus on education, health care, agriculture, and various kinds of social uplift for neglected or oppressed members of society.

But the central thrust of Christians concern for the poor follows as a response to the love shown toward humans by God in the salvation event of Jesus Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ a particular kind of love –agape- reaches out to reconcile a fallen humanity.

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So the Christian confession goes.

This redeeming love, received in faith, is to become active in service to and care for the neighbor. Christians are to love others as Christ loved them: that is the new commandment. The qualities of agape shown by God toward humanity are to be reflected in some way in the Christian life. Such a calling is the center in terms of motivation and vision, of the Christian concern for the poor.

The social involvement of the churches implies being aligned with the poor in their struggle. When the church is aligned with the poor, therefore, and shares their concerns and struggles, the proclamation of the Gospel is substantiated by its being rooted in the praxis of liberation which opens up the way in history for a new, more just and more participatory society

Throughout history, concern for the poor has been constant in the church. The spirit of an "option for the poor" has a long history and is ultimately rooted in the gospel itself. And demand for this option has grown whenever individual Christians or groups of Christians have made the gospel their own. It is equally impressive to see how the whole history of the church is studded with shinning examples of Christians from all walks of life who practiced love of the poor to a heroic degree

The contribution made by the hermits and mendicants to changing the image of the poor within the church must be given its due. By going to live with and like the poor and no longer just for them, they helped foster a better appreciation of the state in which the poor lived and the need to rescue them form it. Another great step in the affirmation of the poor was taken by messianic and apocalyptic leaders, who, not content with living with and like the poor, put themselves at their head in a process of struggle, thereby moving from a mysticism of poverty to a politics of poverty

There has always been a notable ambiguity affecting both the image of the poor and of poverty (swinging between rejection and veneration), and of the actual struggles of the poor (with social movements strongly marked by alienation, ineffective strategies and unreliable leaders). This ambiguity is linked to the actual historical settings in which the thinking and practice of the church moved.

The church made a tremendous effort to "solve" the problem of the poor, but failed to see what we can see today: that all this generosity, effective, and affective, produced for the poor mere "crumbs" of society's total production. Economic and mechanisms and social systems worked in favour of small minorities- among which we have to include the hierarchy of the church. During the Middle Ages, people did not- and could not- see

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poverty as a structural programme. They were tied to the idea of society as a static system: people could change their status with in this, but what made up the different levels of status-the social system- could not be changed. So the history of the church up to the close of the Middle Ages is the history of the poor Lazarus and the good rich man.

Probably the greatest contribution the church made to the liberation of the poor was in educating the conscience of men and women; it made them sensitive to the state in which the poor lived, awakening feelings of mercy and generosity to, and solidarity with, the poor. In this sense the Christian mysticism that saw the poor as the image and incarnation of Christ had an immense influence. Its, effects, however, remained on the personal (saints) or institutional (works of charity) level, without ever penetrating to a truly structural level.

The process of secularization of charity, moving from the official the official church to the laity and finally to the state (and now to the poor classes struggling for their own liberation), can be seen not as a perversion of Christianity or even as a breaking away from the church, but as logical development of Christianity in the historical world

When one sees how far the church has been involved in social and political questions, it seems strange that we should have to justify such presence

and intervention theologically today. It is symptomatic that we have to speak of "political" or faith and politics- something that in the past went without question and so without the need for a specific theology to thought strange and unsuitable for the church to engage in least in part to the politically revolutionary stance taken by the church on some questions.

This historic pilgrimage from the old to the new missionary order would not be complete without a reminder that global mission, in the final analysis, is not simply the church's task but is God's own cause. The church is in mission because "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son so that who ever believes in Him should not perish but have an everlasting life (John 3:16). The church continues its mission into the new era because it is from start to finish God's own mission.

The Christian Church was socially the most mobile of communities in the world and that people could expect to find social equality within the Church if not outside it. The church's work among the poor was not unique, of course. There were many well-placed and well disposed pagans who also worked among the poor and were generous to those less fortunate than themselves.

As we have seen already, this commitment to the poor, mutatis mutandis, in one way or another, has continued in the history of the Church, even

though there have been many in the Church who have actually oppressed the poor. The commitment continued, for example, in the provision of medical care or of universal education in which we find that Christian churches have played a major role.

Throughout history, Christians have been active in helping the poor and disadvantaged. Both universal education and medical treatment for all may be traced back to Christian initiatives. Christians have been heavily involved in the campaign for the abolition of slavery, in improvements in the conditions of life for workingmen and women and in the struggle for equal rights for women. It is true that from time to time Christians and Churches have not been faithful to the gospel and have compromised with those who have oppressed the poor.

CHAPTER 4

NECESSITY OF A COMPREHENSIVE/ HOLISTIC

APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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the form of servant, with reference to unbelief, exploitation, discrimination and violence, but also with reference to salvation, healing, liberation, reconciliation and righteousness.

4.2 A Comprehensive Ministry

The ministry of the church therefore has a fourfold dimension:

   a) Kerygma: the gospel must be proclaimed

   b) Koinonia: the gospel must be lived and its power made visible in the actual life of the community, which embodies the new covenant relationship

   c) Diakonia: the Gospel must be demonstrated in humble service

   d) Leitorgia: Worship God through mission

4.2.1 The Ministry of Evangelism and Witness

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

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

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

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

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

The New Testament declares an important message, which needs to be communicated. This message comes from God in the person of Jesus Christ. He is both the evangelist par excellence and the one who embodied the Good News in dynamic works of power, signs, and authoritative teachings, which He gave to his disciples. This message is of such importance that it has the power to convey the abundant life of the Kingdom of God to those who are willing to receive it (Dayton & Fraser 198027)

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

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World Evangelism (1974) gave a more detailed definition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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convictions of their neighbors.

4.2.2 The Ministry of Fellowship

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

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

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

Each community should covenant together to have no poor among them. Each is responsible to care for the needs of its participants. Each community should strive for the spirit and practice of equality, so that

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) Adopt the Zacchaeus principle for sharing wealth: Zacchaeus' sharing of one –half to the poor means that he gave as much to the poor as he kept for himself. The response to the gospel, however, requires that we keep this kind of costly paradigm of discipleship before our eyes. T o continue to live like the rich fool, seeking to accumulate more than enough for our own security and pleasures or to live like the rich man in daily indifference to poor Lazarus cannot be reconciled with faithful Christian discipleship.

b) Simply the way we live: If our present affluence cannot be justified because of the existence of the poor and needy at home and throughout the world, then it is time to begin new life-styles. We learned that the first communities of believers in Acts became models of caring for society around them.

c) Become advocates of the poor: We called to stand on God's side, with Jesus as advocates of the poor and oppressed. To be such an

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

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

4.2.3   The Ministry of Service

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

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

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b) A specialized meaning: a function or office within the church.

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

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

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

the cross:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

deaconate outreach.

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

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

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

separated they must work together.

2. In choosing deacons and organizing diaconate, keep in mind the entire community to be served: The deacons must coordinate the diaconal task of the congregation, present proposals and suggestions. They must take the needs of the community into consideration.

3. Acquire insight into the total situation of the informal settlement community which the local congregation work by making contacts between Christian Pastors: To avoid this there must be an overview of the entire situation and a careful evaluation of the existing challenges. Such study can be of great help in enabling the diaconate to assume a more responsible role in urban mission

4. On the basis of such shared reflection and insight, each local diaconate, should draw up a work plan that will define its task within the large field of urban mission. This will involve the selection of several projects and programs within the capacities of the local congregation which take into consideration the charismata present among her members, and which will fit into a situation of meaningful Christian teamwork

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

4.2.3.1 Projects and Programs

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

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

b) Advancing a sense of community: Loneliness is one of the biggest problems in the informal settlement community. Loneliness and community poverty presents a challenge to the diaconate in all communities.

c) Bridging the gaps between the conflicting groups: We should think of programs that can heal the unhealthy relations between the various groups in the informal settlement communities, for example, various political parties, taxi violence etc. There are various ethnic and interest groups that live next to and in antagonism towards one another. The diaconate has been working with the individuals and has seldom recognized the healing of relations between groups as a part of its task. If our congregations want to be diaconal congregations they will have to lend a hand to the task of healing these broken relations wherever they are found.

d) Struggling against unemployment: Unemployment is in the first place the task of the government. Nonetheless unemployment is also the task of the church's diaconate. Help in educating young people to enable them to find work is the task, which the church is called for. The stimulation of projects to put people to work can also be undertaken. Unemployment is demoralizing and in the struggle against it churches are called to be inventive. This too belongs to the outreach of the diaconate.

e) Serving justice: The diaconate chose the example of the Good Samaritan as its example, but it is time also to see that Exodus 3:7-8 is also the example of the diaconate: Then the Lord said,

"I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard

them cry out to be rescued from their slave-drivers. I know all about their

sufferings, and so I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to

bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land, one which is rich and fertile and in

which..."

The God of mercy and charity is also the God of justice, who defends

the rights of the poor and powerless. We should not forget this when

we serve the people of the informal settlement communities. These

people are frustrated for they have been profoundly disappointed by

the various unjust situations. They come from all over the places.

They came to the informal settlement with hope, looking for

something better, but instead they lost their identity and their sense

of personal worth even more (Verkuyl 1979:216)

f) Establishing projects: The self supporting associations offer a wide

variety of services to establish projects e.g Gardening projects,

Sewing and knitting, Candle making, Literacy classes etc.

The congregational diaconate is called to be attentive to these

situations and to actively serve the cause of justice. Verkuyl

(1979:216) suggest the following examples that can shed light:

1. Inexpensive or free legal aid

2. Helping people find housing and assisting them in rent problems.

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3. Aiding people who have been imprisoned to adjust to normal social life

4. Encouraging the development of self-reliance and group power for the powerless.

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

4.2.4   The Ministry of Worship

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

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

a) It is used for the service rendered by man to man. So Paul when he is set on taking the collection for the poor saints of Jerusalem, uses 'leitourgein' This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God (ll Corinthians 9:12)

b) 'Leitourgein' is used specifically for religious service (Luke 1:23; Acts 13:2)

c) In the letters of Paul, the word 'Leitourgos' in the later Greek simply meant 'a workman' (Baclay 1973:17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3 Relief

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

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

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

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

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

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

where it is written:

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

4.4 Development

We live in times when development has become common property.
Government organizations, the non-government organizations (NGO's), the
private sector, and many thousand-community organizations see it as
their task to be involved in development.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We live in times when development has become common property. Government departments, non-governmental organizations, the private

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

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

Development enhances the happiness of the human being, bring greater

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

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

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

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

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

- Firstly, their silence can be attributed to bad exegesis of scripture, apathy born of theological ignorance an ethnocentric model; of development and simple greed. James Watt was an advocate who justified on the basis of biblical grounds the opening of national forests to leases, and expediting surface mining of coal" My responsibility is to follow the Scriptures which call upon us to occupy the land until Jesus returns" Ironically this is a misquote of Scripture "Occupy the land until Jesus returns" is a misapplication of Luke's parable of the talents, where Christ is really teaching the opposite of exploitation: good stewardship. In the parable, the wise steward multiplied rather than diminished resources.

- Secondly, other Christians have also asserted that the Scriptures teach exploitation rather than care-taking, based on Genesis 1:28-31 passage where the Hebrew *Kabash*, "subdue," may also mean: to tread down or bring into bondage", and the word for "rule," *redah*," can mean "to trample" or to prevail against. "We are to subdue the creation and rule it as good stewards. We are called to be shepherd of God's creation"

- Thirdly, apathy and theological ignorance is another reason for silence. Most Christians attend religious services but they know less

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

- Fourthly, another reason that there is not an outcry by evangelicals against the exploitation system is that we are part of it as members of western society and as participants in the institutions that represent the modern, developmentalistic perspective. We are blinded by our ethnocentrism. The structures of our society are fallen and need reform and that the modernization approach to resolving human problems is bankrupt. The modern technological solution to human need is seriously flawed.

- Still another reason, perhaps unconscious, for our silence is greed. Christians in rich nations benefit immensely from the current arrangement. Christians from the rich society benefit own two thirds of the earth's entire resources. However only 13 percent of them live in absolute poverty. This disparity represented in the above figures needs addressing if there is to be any equity and justice within the Christian community worldwide. It is not a new problem. The early church also had to face disparities. The apostle Paul instructed the

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

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

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

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

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nothing to supply their bodily needs, what good of that" (James 2:15-16).
He warned them against piling up wealth at the expense of exploited laborers and against living wantonly in luxury, "fattening yourselves like cattle" (James 5:1-5). If James were alive today, his message would be appropriately applicable to the wealthy church that benefits from an exploitative system and then gives back a misery charity to the poor.

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

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

4.5   A need for developing a comprehensive and holistic approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- From start to finish the ministry must be identifiably Christian.

- Christ's example of blending the spoken word with deeds of compassion towards the suffering must give continual direction to Christian urban development ministry.

- Christian ministry to the urban poor must follow the principle of indigenization.

- Material resources must be used as efficiently as possible

- The planting and development of compassionate churches in every part of the city must be long-term goal.

4.6 Conclusion

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a case study. The data presented here is drawn from the case study conducted in Orange Farm informal settlement community. The data consist of the fieldwork conducted by means of a questionnaire, field observations and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with pastors, church leaders and lay people in the community. I recorded field observations and took extensive field notes during all the quantitative and qualitative meetings and boards retreats I had with pastors and residents from Orange Farm. Selected individuals involved in the research were asked to comment upon the initial analyses and interpretation of findings, their comment is incorporated into this final work.

In this chapter I intend analyzing the results of the empirical research, which was conducted among the members of the different churches in the community of Orange Farm informal settlement community.

As far as it could be established no empirical research has been done on this theme in Orange Farm. What is presented here are the results of sample research, on developing a relevant mission strategy for the poor in the informal settlement communities. The empirical research flows directly

from the arguments and theological stances analyzed in the preceding
chapters

What is presented in this chapter and in the tables below, will provide
relevant information, which is necessary for the church in assisting the
poor in the informal settlement communities.

In order to test our own experiences and observations against those of
others serving God in the informal settlement communities, I prepared a
questionnaire which I sent to hundred congregations (Annexure I) in the
community of Orange Farm. The themes used to construct this
questionnaire emerged from the literature study that was done in the
previous chapters. Accompanying the questionnaire is the letter, which
appears at the end of the questionnaire (Annexure iii)

Like most informal settlement communities, Orange Farm contains a wide
variety of ethnic groups drawn from every corner of South Africa. Very few
groups have strong evangelical churches, but the majority has hardly been
touched by the gospel. Very few churches in South Africa are seriously
involved in planting and growing churches and also in assisting the poor
of the poorest in the informal settlement communities. They neglect the
immense work they should do in these areas. The socio-cultural
background of the poor in the informal settlement communities prompted

me to do a study of this nature. It is against this background that I decided on an empirical research and sent a questionnaire to the various church leaders in the community of Orange Farm to determine their standpoints, opinions and attitudes concerning the role of the church in helping the poor. Without empirical data at one's disposal, one runs the risk of endless speculation about the best method of helping the poor in the informal settlement community.

5.2 Gathering of primary data and the sampling process

The purpose of a survey in a particular community is to build a complete and accurate data bank with a view to evangelization, church planting and applying the correct strategy in helping the poor. The data collected will be made available to churches and mission organization desiring to assist the poor people in the informal settlement communities.

Both the qualitative and quantitative method was used to gather primary data. For the quantitative method a questionnaire was used to get information from the different leaders in every extension in Orange Farm (See attached annexure 1). A qualitative method (annexure ii) was also used in the form of informal interviews for the focus groups about certain issues. Apart from the familiar planned in depth interview technique, I involved engaging people in conversation at every opportunity irrespective of time, place or situation. What I learnt from this approach is that what

people say in a conversation is a far richer source of information on a whole range of experiences than I could get from organized interview approaches. Participant observation is followed by informal interviews. An informal interview is a conversation with informants who may not be aware of their status as such; the informant does most of the talking. These informal interviews will be followed by more formal interviews, which was scheduled in advance. Researchers used a notebook and a tape recorder and asked people questions about specific items that are relevant to this study. More open-ended questions were asked in the interview to test the leaders about their ideas on specific issues. Ministers of certain congregations were consulted. The reason for this decision was to get their support in allaying their fear about the nature of the investigation.

5.3 Quota sampling method

The quota sampling method is employed in the research. The sample is random, that is to say, the researcher did not select people because they are acquainted to him or because they are ready at hand. But the method was systematic. Each selected church is generally represented in the sample proportion as in the entire population. Out of the hundred questionnaires sent out, only sixty church leaders and lay people managed to complete and return the questionnaires. Amongst the respondents, there are widows, the unemployed, the elderly, the youth and the church leaders.

5.4 Responses

The ideal with every questionnaire is that all members of the initial sample complete and return their questionnaire. A total of hundred questionnaires were distributed equally amongst the Mainstream churches, Charismatic churches and the African Initiated Churches. As stated above 60 people responded. A minimum of a 50% in response is adequate for analysis and reporting

An analysis of what has been achieved will be drafted in this chapter; it will cover the content of what has been asked in the questionnaire. A good report will not only present the data but also it will analyze the data and bring out the conclusions to which they lead. A report which thus draws together the pertinent information in concise and arresting fashion, evaluates it in the light of Scripture, and comes up with concrete recommendations will prove to be valuable for church growth, church planting and for church mission strategy for assisting the poor in the informal settlement communities.

5.5 Quantitative Case study of Orange Farm Community

5.5.1 Background information of Orange Farm:

Orange Farm is recognized as one of the biggest informal settlements in South Africa. It is situated between the N1 South of Johannesburg and the Vaal Triangle. Statistics from the latest census indicate that there are just

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more than six hundred thousand people living in the area. To facilitate geographical location the area is divided into numbered sections called extensions, for example Orange Farm extension 1-10, Stredford extension 1-10, Drieziek extension 1-6, Lakeside extension 1-4. Another division is based on the kind of houses in which people live. There is older part with brick built homes. Only the four walls of the house have been built with no room division inside. The other part of Orange Farm is composed of shacks (imikhukhu), made of anything that people can find like the corrugated iron sheet, cardboard and plastic sheets. The other part of houses is known as the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) houses initiated by the present government.

5.5.2 The origins of Orange Farm

In 1988 Orange Farm grew into one of the largest informal settlements in the PWV area. It was originally earmarked for agricultural land use, especially in the production of maize, milk and chickens. Most of the people were forcefully removed from the three squatter settlements, namely Weilers Farm/Sweetwater in Walkerville, Mshenguville in Soweto and Jukskei in Alexander. There were other people who came from the nearby townships like Evaton and Sebokeng. The others were coming from rural areas.

All these people did not want to be transferred to Orange Farm because

they were not paying rent services in their respective areas. Since they did not have any infrastructure they were promised that they would be given enough land, water and electricity at Orange Farm. On their arrival the people were faced with many challenges of living in an area without the proper infrastructure.

5.5.3 Services in Orange Farm

There were hardly any services in the form of retailing facilities. For groceries people rely on tuck shops, which operate in people's homes, in shacks or open stalls. There are obviously health implications when food is sold in this way. Meat will be exposed in the sun, and dust from passing vehicles. Fruits and vegetables are exposed to the heat of the sun. There are hardly any services in other areas. In other areas people had to dig their own pit latrines and they had one tap of water that supply 20-30 families in one street. In the past there were no schools but the present government in the late 1990's had to built more schools. There are no job opportunities in the community; the rate of unemployment is extremely high. At least there are now health facilities like clinics and doctors, even if they are not enough.

5.5.4 Empirical Research

In order to arrive at the results of this research, the following questions

(printed in *italics*) were asked. After each series of questions, I present a summary of the answers given.

5.5.4.1 Biographical information (Demographics statistical characteristics of human population):

Table 1

(Tick the correct answer)

1. Gender (Sex of respondent):

- *Male*

- *Female*

2. What is your present age?

3. Home language

- *Southern Sotho*

- *Zulu*

- *Northern Sotho*

- *Tswana*

- *Xhosa*

- *Venda*

- *Xhosa*

- *Tsonga*

- *Other language*

4. School qualification

- *No schooling*

- *Grade 0-12*

- *Diploma*

- *Tertiary institution*

5. Work experience (Occupational status)

- *Pensioner/ Retired*

- *Employed Full time (Formal)*

Full time (Informal)

Part time employed

- *Medically unfit (disability)*

- *Housewife*

- *Student*

- *Unemployed*

The total number of people who filled the questionnaire is 60, only 45 are males (75%) and 15 are females (25%), the people responded positively to the questions. The average age of the respondents ranges from 30 –63 years. About 42 respondents speak Southern- Sotho (70%), 10 people speak Zulu (16,66%), and 8 people speak Xhosa (13,3%). "In most countries, city populations are composed of people from many different background. They represent different tribes, castes, races, and social classes and they speak different languages. This unavoidably affects mission strategy and church development" (Greenway 1999:118). Only 58 respondents (96, 66%) went to school up to Grade 12. A big number of respondents about 44 (73,33%) are unemployed, only 8 respondents

(13,33%) are employed part-time, 4 people (6,66%) are disabled, 2
respondents (3,33%) are housewives and only 2 respondents (3,33%) are
pensioners

Table 2

6. *How much do you earn per month?*

 7. *How many are you in the household?*

8. *What is the main material used for the walls of the main dwelling house?*

- *Shack house (build with tin or plastic shack)*

- *Permanent house (build with cement bricks)*

- *Muddy house (build with soil or clay)*

9. *Is there any infrastructure (access) where you stay?*

- *Yes*

- *No*

10. *If yes, what kind of infrastructure (access) is there?*

- *Water on the stand*

- *Sewerage*

- *Proper streets*

- *Electricity*

Since most of the respondents indicated that they are unemployed, it
clearly shows that they do not have any source of income. Only 8 of the
respondents (13, 33%) are working and they earn between R1500, 00-

R2000, 00 per month. The number of people who are staying in the household ranges between 4-9 members. About 51of the respondents (51,85%) used corrugated IBR sheets, tins or plastic to build their houses/shacks. Only 9 respondents (15 %) live in permanent houses build with cement bricks. Even though they have stands where they live, about 45 respondents (75%) say they do not have access to infrastructure, whereas 15 of the respondents (25%) say they have an infrastructure where they live, 15 people (25%) say the kind of infrastructure they have is water on stand, sewerage, proper streets and electricity whereas 45 people (75%) might have one or two of the infrastructure in their areas.

5.5.4.2 Denomination

   Table 3

11. What is your church denomination?

- *Charismatic church*
- *Independent (Zionist) church*
- *URCSA*
- *Methodist*
- *Anglican*
- *Other denomination*

12. Leadership role in the church

- *Sunday school teacher*
- *Elder*

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- *Deacon*

- *Reverend*

- *Priest*

- *Bishop*

- *Archbishop*

- *Other role*

13. How many confessed members do you have?

- *Below 200 members*

- *Between 200-500 members*

- *Between 500-1000 members*

- *Above 1000 members*

14. When did you plant (establish) your church in Orange Farm?

- *Year…………….*

15. With how many members? …………..

16. Is there any growth in membership?

- *Yes*

- *No*

Almost all the denominations exist in the informal settlement community. Roger Greenway says "Most people follow one particular religion when they live in villages. City people, however, follow a variety of religious beliefs and practices" (Greenway 1999:118), 4 respondents (6,66%) are from the charismatic church, 40 respondents (66,66%) are from the African Initiated Churches, and 6 respondents (9,99%) are from the

mainstream line churches, like the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, Anglican Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist church. Monsma (2000:21) says "Already at this point it can be said that the presentation of the gospel must be accompanied by a demonstration of the gospel in tangible Christian compassion for those in need".

All the respondents (100%) are leaders in their respective churches e.g Sunday school teachers, deacons, elders, ministers and bishops. On average, the African initiated churches have a membership, which is below 200, whereas the mainstream line churches have a membership, which is above 1000, and the Pentecostal churches it varies between 200-500. Most of the churches were established between 1988-1993. On the average there is growth in all the churches. But most leaders especially in the African Initiated churches when they were interviewed they raised a concern that when their churches grow there is always a split.

Table 4

17. Where do you conduct your services?

- *Members houses*
- *Under a tree*
- *Church building*
- *Classroom*

- *Open field*

- *Other place (specify)*

18. Do you have a church leader: Bishop, Reverend, Deacon elder etc?

- *Yes*

- *No*

19. Does he/she stay in Orange Farm?

- *Yes*

- *No*

20. In your opinion what is the main task of the church?

- *to preach the gospel*

- *to bring good news to the poor*

- *to comfort those who are crying*

- *to burry the dead*

- *to be on the side of the poor*

- *to initiate projects that can help the poor*

- *to give handouts*

- *to give people food/soup everyday*

21. Is your church involved in mission work?

- *Yes*

- *No*

22. What kind of outreaches/mission work do you normally conduct?

- *distributing the Christian pamphlets*

- *selling Bibles*

- *showing the Jesus Film*

- *open air*

- *revivals*

23. What kind of program do you have to assist the poor?

- *Soup kitchen*

- *Needlework*

- *Gardening project*

- *Literacy classes*

- *Computer classes*

- *Life skills*

- *State the other method*

24. Are you a born again Christian?

- *Yes*

- *No*

Most of the African initiated churches conduct their services in the school classrooms or in the shacks; they do not have permanent buildings except the Old and New Apostolic Church, which is emerging strongly in the areas of the poor. The main line churches like the Uniting Reformed church, the Anglican church, the Methodist church and the African Methodist Episcopal church have physical church structures, whereas the Pentecostal churches conduct their services in the tents because of the outreaches they conduct. Roger Greenway (2000:155) confirms this by

saying "A building provides a congregation with a fixed address and a place to which people can be referred. A building may help convey a sense of identity to both members of the congregation and outsiders. Church buildings are available for use seven days a week, and that is a big advantage. Another advantage is privacy for worship, for counseling, and for the various meetings of the church".

All churches (100%) have leaders like the bishops, reverends, deacons etc. Paul learned at Antioch (Acts 11:25-30) that the key to developing strong and effective churches is local leadership. Imported leaders like Barnabas and Himself had important roles to play in getting the church started, but then they moved on, leaving the new church in the hands of local believers

Pastors of the mainstream churches like the Methodist, Uniting Reformed Church, African Methodist Church, Anglican Church and Lutheran Church do not reside in Orange Farm except the Roman Catholic Church white Priests. They are in most of the time not available. The other reason might be that most of these ministers do a tent-making ministry and have little time during the week to visit their members. Most of their duties other than administering sacraments are performed by deacons and elders e.g conducting services, conducting funerals, and giving counseling. All the leaders of the African initiated churches are staying with their people in the informal settlement community.

All the respondents 100% describe the role of the church to be the preaching of the gospel, bringing good news to the poor, comfort those who are crying, burying the dead, be on the side of the poor, to initiate projects that can help the poor, to give handouts and to give people food parcels.

About 80% of the churches are not involved in mission work, its only 20% Pentecostals who are seriously involved in mission work by means of outreaches like the open air revivals. "People who have recently relocated and are experiencing major changes in their loves generally are more open to the gospel than they were before" (Greenway 1999:117). The Uniting Reformed Church say they distribute literature pamphlets, sell Bibles, and show Jesus film, whereas the Roman Catholic Church see their mission to be associated with the poor. "Outreach to the new ethnics in the new community has brought overall renewal to the church and a vision for evangelism that is embraced by the entire congregation" (Greenway 2000:116).

Very few churches have the programs of assisting the poor; they are ministering in word and deed. The Roman Catholic Church has needlework classes, gardening project, literacy classes, computer classes and offer the life skills. The Uniting Reformed Church has a soup kitchen and gardening project. Only 30 people (50%) said they are born again,

whilst the other 30% is not sure about their salvation. "At the heart of the New Testament missionary strategy lies the presupposition that people everywhere need to be converted to faith and allegiance to Jesus Christ and enrolled in continuing, active discipleship. They will then be baptized and will seek membership in Christ's visible body on earth, the church" (Greenway 2000:38)

5.5.4.3 Community

Table 5.

25. Are there any poor people in your community?

- *Yes*

- *No*

26. Who are the poor of the poorest in your community?

- *Street children*

- *Unemployed*

- *HIV-AIDS sufferers*

- *Orphans*

- *Prostitutes*

- *Homeless*

27. What are your community needs?

- *Running water*

- *Sewerage*

- *Houses*

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- *Schools*

- *Clinic*

- *Churches*

- *Electricity*

- *Streetlights*

- *Ownership of the land*

28. Are the social services easily accessible in your community?

- *Yes*

- *No*

All the respondents 100% unanimously agreed that there are poor people in their community. The poor of the poorest people are street children, unemployed, HIV-AIDS sufferers, orphans, prostitutes and homeless. Greenway (2000:168) best describes the poor as " The poor fall into several different categories. First, many people are poor because they are physically or mentally incapable of working at a normal level. Many others are in the category of working poor. They are employed, but as a result of poor education, low skill levels, or racial factors, they do not earn enough to rise above poverty. The third group is relatively small, consisting of the lazy people who would rather survive on welfare than find a job and go to work. The fourth group is growing rapidly, it consist of women who are head of the family with dependent children". Their basic needs are the running water houses, sewage facilities, schools, clinics, churches, electricity, streetlights, and land ownership. On the issue of social services

accessible, 75% responded positively, 25% negatively. They mentioned that social services are very far from where they stay. "Squatter communities lack water, sewage, electricity and regular streets. The residents are open to eviction and the sudden loss of their homes because the land does not belong to them" (Greenway 1999:116).

Table 6

29. What caused poverty to dominate your life?

- *Unemployment*
- *Welfare donations*
- *Mother as head of the family*
- *Drug addiction*

30. Are there children who are poor in your area?

- *Yes*
- *No*

31. Who are worst hit by unemployment in your community?

- *Mothers*
- *Youth*
- *Single parents*
- *Specify*

32. Do you support each other in the informal settlement?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Overwhelming majority (100%) agree that poverty causes unemployment. 75% responded that there are poor children (homeless) in their area, 25% said there are not. The worst hit by unemployment-are the mothers and youth (75%), single parents (25%). Most of the respondents (75%) agree that we support each other in the informal settlement whereas 25% disagree

5.5.4.4 HIV- AIDS

Table 7

33. Are people aware of the HIV-AIDS?

- *Yes*

- *No*

34. What is being done to educate people about Aids?

- *Pamphlets distributed*

- *Volunteers*

- *Teaching*

35. Are people suffering from HIV-AIDS visited?

- *Yes*

- *No*

36. What is the age group of the infected?

- *below 20 years*

- *between 20-30 years*

- *between 30-40 years*

- *above 40 years*

37. In your community, which sex group is reported to have HIV-AIDS? :

- *Male*

- *Female*

38. In your community, how do you help the HIV-AIDS sufferers?

- *started home based care centers*

- *refer them to the clinics*

- *consult the traditional Doctors (Inyangas)*

An overwhelming majority 100% of the respondents are aware of HIV AIDS. People are educated about HIV-AIDS, 50% say through pamphlets distribution, and the other 50%say through teaching. About 75% of respondents say people with AIDS are being visited, 25% of respondents disagree.

About 33,3% say people between 30-40 years are infected, only 8,3% of the respondents say the age group of people infected is below 20 years and 50% of the respondents say it is between 20-30 years, and only 8,33 say it is people above 40 years who are infected. It is most likely that people below the age of 20 are being infected with AIDS in great numbers but are only showing symptoms when they are older (from 20-30 years).

AIDS affects both gender equally. In S.A today people are aware of HIV-AIDS because of the advertisements and there are numerous number of condoms distributed. Charity organizations, the church, and health department educate the masses about AIDS. Through the home care base the HIV- AIDS are being visited and looked after. Mostly the youth are being infected. Today there are many home care centers in the informal settlement communities.

Table 8

39. Is there a denial or acceptance from the people?

- *Yes*

- *No*

40. Where do they get help?

- *they get Government grants*

- *churches give food parcels*

- *business help with money*

41. Tick which one is correct

- *HIV is transmitted through*

- *Casual contact*

- *Toilet seat*

- *Unprotected sex*

- *Mosquitoes*

- *Blood transfusion*

- *Mother to baby breastfeeding*

42. Can HIV AIDS be cured?

- *Yes*

- *No*

43. Who has the power to cure HIV-AIDS in your community?

- *Traditional doctors (Inyangas)*

- *Zionist prophets*

- *Medical doctors*

- *No one can cure AIDS*

44. Is your church offering assistance to the HIV AIDS sufferers?

- *Yes*

- *No*

45. If yes, what kind of help are you giving the HIV-AID patience?

- *Food parcels*

- *Distribute condoms*

- *Counseling*

- *Teach unmarried people to abstain from sex*

HIV-AIDS patients are helped through: home-based care centers, referrals to clinics, and consulting traditional doctors. For most of the people there is denial (91, 66%) and only 8,33% do acceptance they are infected by AIDS. Landman (2004:8) say "today our funerals are funerals of denial.

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People die of HIV/AIDS and we deny it". Common explanations include tuberculosis, bronchitis, or bewitchment.

People get help from government grants for families with young children, churches giving food parcels. An overwhelming respondents (100%) said HIV is contracted through unprotected sex, blood transfusion and breast milk. Mosquitoes, casual contact, toilet seats were not given as means of getting AIDS. HIV can be transmitted by vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected person. However there is a greater chance of transmitting or becoming infected with HIV through anal sex than through vaginal or oral sex. The consistent (every time) and correct use of latex condoms can substantially reduce the risk associated with any of these sexual activities (Shumsky 1989:353).

The second main way that HIV is acquired is by injecting drugs with an HIV-contaminated needle or syringe, or by receiving contaminated blood products during a transfusion or other medical procedure. Injecting with an HIV- contaminated syringe is a very efficient way to transmit he virus from one person to another. Therefore, injection drug users who share needles and syringes with other drug users are at high risk of becoming infected.

A woman can infect her baby while it is still in the womb (HIV can cross

the placental barrier), during child birth (through exposure to cervico-vaginal fluids), or afterbirth (as a result of breast feeding. Fortunately, antiretroviral medications given to pregnant women before they give birth can reduce the likelihood of perinatal transmission by one-half to two-thirds. Reported exposure categories for HIV transmission vary by gender (Shumsky 1989: 330)

AIDS continues to be a serious global health problem. A person only becomes infected with HIV through direct contact with HIV infected body fluids. HIV is not transmitted by casual contact, by toilet seats or by mosquitoes. There are three major routes of transmission: sexual behaviors, including vaginal sex, anal sex, and oral sex.

About 91,6 of respondents believed AIDS cannot be cured, 8,3% believed it can be cured and they believe traditional doctors (the Inyangas), the African potato (Izambane) can cure HIV-AIDS. Only 33, 33%believe that the Zionist prophets can heal AIDS and only 16, 66% said no one can cure AIDS). Only 83,33% of churches are not offering assistance to HIV sufferers, 16,66% say their churches are offering assistance. "We found that only two churches had programs to support people affected by HIV/AIDS. They were the Roman Catholics and the Doppers. The other churches denied that they were any HIV-positive people among their members." (Landman 2003:8).

Mary Tyler (1996:30) best explains this by saying "Even in the midst of these problems the communities continue to be very supportive of one other. This mutual support is strengthened by their poverty. Families assist others with weddings, funerals, and educational expenses as a kind of investment towards the same provision in the future when the time arises. Life increasingly revolves around death and death rituals. No family is untouched by AIDS, so all are involved with someone for whom they had to arrange a funeral. But even this sense of family and community is under strain. Extended families find their resources further stretched as they take in the increasing numbers of AIDS orphan ".

One reason is that people are reluctant to tell people they have AIDS is because AIDS is regarded as a curse to them. Method churches are using to give help to AIDS patients/people is to tell them to abstain from sex and to give food parcels. The church is in a unique position to confront the AIDS situation. We have the Good News in a situation that has no good news from a medical or political standpoint. God has called us as a church to be the salt and light of the earth.

5.5.4.5 Abuse

Table 9

46. How are people abused in your community?

- *Sexually*

- *Physically*

- *Verbally*

47. Where do they get help?

- *Police*

- *Clinics*

48. Why is the rate of abuse so high?

- *Unemployment*

- *Stress*

49. Is your church offering assistance to the abuse?

- *Yes*

- *No*

50. If yes, what kind of assistance are they giving?

- *Counseling*

- *Pray*

An overwhelming majority 100% says people are abused-sexually, physically and verbally and that most people get help from police (96%) and clinics (3, 33%). "In our society today children (like women and the elderly) remain one of the most vulnerable groups. Not only are children grossly, they are victims of untold abuse and suffering in many societies. Behind the walls of the neat homes of middle class suburbs the world over, children are subjected to verbal, psychological, material and even

sexual abuse" (Maluleke 2003:15).

About 91,66% say unemployment, and 8,33 % say stress causes poverty. Very few respondents 3,33% say churches offer help for abuse victims and about 96,66% say churches do nothing to help the poor. The kind of assistance the church is giving is counseling (3,33%) and prayer 96,6 %).

5.5.4.6 Drugs

Table 10

51. What kind of drugs are young people taking in your community?

- *Cocaine*

- *Dagga*

- *Glue*

- *Spirits*

- *Tobacco*

- *Alcohol*

52. Where is the market for the Drug-Lords?

- *Schools*

- *Free markets*

- *Streets*

53. Is your church offering assistance to the drug addicts?

- *Yes*

- *No*

54. If yes, what kind of help?

- *Counseling*
- *Referrals*

55. Do drugs kill?

- *Yes*
- *No*

56. Is the selling of the drugs in the increase in your community?

- *True*
- *False*

57. Do you think people harm themselves if they

- *take drugs once or twice*
- *take drugs occasionally*
- *try one or two drinks of alcoholic beverage*
- *smoke one or two packs of cigarettes per day*

58. What is the variety of factors implicated in the use of drugs?

- *poor self- image*
- *low religiosity*
- *poor school performance*
- *alienation from parents*
- *family dysfunctional*
- *physical abuse*
- *parental divorce*

59. In your opinion, who has a greater influence on the teenagers in taking

drugs?

- *peers*

- *parents*

- *media*

60. Smoking makes one feel (tick the correct answer)

- *sexy*

- *athletic*

- *behave wiser*

- *behave differently to other people*

61. Alcoholic parents are likely to produce biological children who are

alcoholics

- *Tue*

- *False*

About 80% of the respondents say young people take the following drugs: cocaine, dagga, glue, spirits, alcohol, tobacco, and the market for drug lords is schools (91,6%) and streets (8,33%). An overwhelming majority 100% says churches are doing nothing to help the drug addicts. So there is no assistance offered to drug addicts.

About 93,33% says drugs kill, whereas 3,33% said drugs does not kill, and only 3,33% said they are not sure. About 93,33% say drug selling is on the increase in the community and only 6,66% disagree.

An overwhelming majority 95% said only if they take drugs occasionally it will harm the addicts. All the respondents 100% agreed with all the choices. Only 33,33 said peers have great influence and 25%said its parents and about 41% media have greater influence on the youth. Almost all the respondents 99% said smoking does not cause people to behave wiser and differently to other people. About 90% respondents said alcoholic parents are likely to produce kids who have drinking problems.

5.5.4.7 Literacy

Table 11

62. What is your highest school qualification?

- *Never at school*

- *Primary education*

- *Secondary education*

- *Tertiary*

63. Is your church leader trained for leading your congregation?

- *Yes*

- *No*

64. Are community leaders in your area educated?

- *Yes*

- *No*

65. Are your members illiterate?

- *Yes*

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- *No*

66. Can they read their Bibles?

- *Yes*

- *No*

According to the Oxford Dictionary of current English, the term illiterate means 'not able to read or write' or 'ignorant in a particular field' (Crowther 1996:591). Most of the people have the perception that the people of the informal settlement are illiterate. They think that most cannot read nor write. This can be true to a certain extent, we meet these people in our different churches and we can see that some of them cannot read their Bibles. Most of these suffer from an inferiority complex. They are afraid to be laughed at by other people who are educated. They are afraid to take part in matters that concern their lives, thinking that they cannot make any worthwhile contribution (Maluleke 1997:8).

About 66,66% say most people went to school up to primary level and only 30% of the respondents say most of the people went to school up to secondary level and only 3,33% say only a few people went to school up to tertiary level. Most church leaders are trained to lead their congregations but they got their training from Bible Schools. "Churches are growing so rapidly in some parts of the world that pastors cannot serve them effectively. There is the potential for more growth in other places, but there

are not enough trained ministers to organize and lead new congregations.
Everything depends on the pastor in some churches, and lay members are
not motivated or trained to do anything" (Greenway 1999:105-106).

The question of adequate training for such leaders is more difficult. The
New Testament emphasizes the need for such study of Scriptures and for
instruction in the Christian faith, especially for those who are leaders
(James 3:1,2 Timothy 2:2). About 80% say most of their congregants are
illiterate. Some cannot even read their Bibles

5.5.4.8 Homelessness

Table 12

67. What causes people to be homeless?

- *Laziness*

- *Overcrowding*

- *Poverty*

*68. Are you aware of the RDP projects, funded by the government in your
community?*

- *Yes*

- *No*

69. Who are the homeless people?

- *the poor*

- *prostitutes*

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- *immigrants*

- *children*

70. Where can we find the homeless?

- *on the streets*

- *garbage's*

- *unused buildings*

71. What causes homelessness to increase in your community?

- *shortage of affordable houses*

- *unemployment*

- *unplanned marriages*

72. What kind of programs can the church introduce to offer shelter for the homeless?

- *offer shelter*

- *teach life skills*

Housing is a problem for most of the people. Most of the families are really struggling to find a place to live because they came to the cities to look for jobs. Annually thousands of the poor move to the cities in the hope of work, excitement, and better life. With no money to rent even the poorest of the apartments, they are forced to built cardboard, wood or tin shelters where they find unused land (Hiebert 1999:270-271).

About 91,6% of the respondents say most people are homeless because of

overcrowding in their families and because of poverty. An overwhelming majority 100% says almost all the people are aware of the RDP houses that are being built in their areas. Seleoane (2004:27) " True, more houses have been built for black people in the period under review than in any comparable period under previous regimes. However, it is equally true that the houses we have built are of a much lower quality", he continues and say "Many of the houses we have built have collapsed as soon as the keys were handed to the occupants. They are testimony to poor workmanship and sheer dishonesty. We steal and sell the cement that is meant for the construction of these houses and build them with mortar that has the wrong mixture of cement and sand".

All the respondents (100%) say the homeless people are the poor, prostitutes, immigrants and children, and they can be found around garbage's and in unused buildings. All 100% said homelessness and unplanned marriages causes the shortage of affordable houses. About 75% of the respondents say churches offer shelter for the homeless-teach the people life skills

5.5.4.8 Prostitution

Table 13

73. Are you aware of prostitute in your community?

- *Yes*

- *No*

74. Why are they practice prostitution?

- *poverty*

- *unemployment*

- *it is a game/sports for them*

75. What kind of assistance do you offer to help the prostitutes?

- *counseling*

- *referrals*

Most people (75%) say they are aware of prostitution in their area

An overwhelming majority 100% says these ladies practice prostitution because of poverty and unemployment. All the respondents say most churches pray for the prostitutes and wants them to repent and they also give them counseling

5.6 Qualitative Research

5.6.1 Single Parenting

1.What age group did of the single parents did you interview?

Our case study shows that most of the single parents who were interviewed are between the ages of 40- 60 years and that most of them are not working.

2. Describe their household?

They stay in shacks made of corrugated iron, plywood and asbestos. The division of their rooms are between 1/5.

3. What does the household use for cooking, and warming themselves?

Most use electricity and a few responded by saying they use a brazier.

Though most of them complain of the expensive electricity but they do manage to buy for the minimum of twenty rand?

4. Is the heating system safe?

Due to lack of electricity they use Brazzier, which is mostly harmful to their lives. It caused sickness like Asthma and flu related illness. Those who afford to buy electricity use it for lights only and for things like cooking, warming up the house, ironing, boiling water they use coal stoves or Brazier, which produces Carbon Monoxide.

5. Is there privacy in the house?

Most of the respondents indicated that there is not enough space in their houses and as such, they do not have privacy to themselves, hence they use curtains to divide the rooms.

6.What are the main reasons for single parenting?

About 100% of the respondents indicate the following reasons to be the causes for single parents.

- Death of the spouses.
- Separation /Divorce.
- Abuse by the Spouses.

7.What are the challenges they meet as single parents?

Most of the respondents see life to be difficult and challenging because they raise the children alone, and at end of the day there should be a meal on the table, they believe in the Southern Sotho saying which says "Tlou hae sitwe ke morwalo wa yona" meaning you have to take care of your responsibilities. Life is challenging to them because they don't want to see themselves as failures. They want to proof a point that they can raise a child in a difficult situation and successful.

8. How do they survive?

Most of the single parents survive by working temporary as domestic workers in the nearby suburbs, even around the areas.
Secondly, they are assisted by relatives or neighbouring.
Thirdly, by opening small business like selling fruits/vegetables sweets etc.
Fourthly, others survive from children grants.

9. Where do you get help?

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Since most are depressed they go for counselling from local churches and clinics

10.What caused the death of your spouses?

They gave us the following reasons for the death of their spouses:

- Accidents
- HIV/AID
- Bewitchment by the Spouse

11.Can the single parent neither read nor write?

Most of them responded by saying they are illiterate. In their days it was believed that girls were only schooled in the kitchen girls were only taught to do house chores, because it was believed if you educate a girl she will never know how to clean sweep and fetch water. Boys were the only ones who were allowed to attend school a very small percentage of the single parents are aware of the ABET education and very few of the respondents go to these institutions.

About 80 % of the single parents are not prepared to engaged themselves in the second marriage due to the following reasons:
- Spread of HIV AIDS
- Sexual of Abuse.
- Their churches do not allow them to get involved in other relationships.

11.How does he/she see the role of the church in her life?

All the respondents believe that the church is the only institution that can help them and alleviate poverty. The churches help them in a variety of ways like:
- The church give them hampers and clothes every month (Moslem Faith)
- Supply soup and bread twice a week (Uniting Reformed Church).
- Their Pastors help them to fill the government forms.
- Churches give them special kind of water to drink and the ointment (Z.C.C)
- Churches baptise their children even when parents are single.

5.6.2 Child-Adopting Families

1. *What are the reasons for the families to adopt?*

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The respondents gave the following reasons for adoption:
Others it decided to adopt because the children were orphans whilst
other parents had no children of their own, they then resorted to
adoption. Others, their parents passed away, they were then
adopted by immediate extended relatives Some of the children were
picked from the streets

2. *What are the reactions of your society towards families who are
   adopting?*

   People had no problem of adopting
   To the other families they had no problems in adoption for them
   it is a kind of ministyr they are showing.

3. *Did you report the case of adopting the child to the social welfares?*

   Almost all the cases were reported, the other reason is that for most
   of them it's a kind of investment because they know they would get
   the grant for the children

4. *Did they test the adopted child's status?*

   50% responded by saying said yes, whilst the others said no. This
   might be because of negligence.

5. *What is the age group of the adopted child?*

   Mostly it is from one month to 18 years.

6. *Does the child receive any professional help after adoption?*

   Yes because the social workers pay them visits and most pastors
   come in for pastoral care.

7. *What is the role of the church in helping this child and his/her family?*

The respondents said most of the churches give clothes, whilst others
give soup and food to the adopted and there are visits made by the
pastors

5.6.3 Orphans

21. *Where does one find the orphans in Orange Farm?*

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Most of the orphans in Orange Farm stay with neighbours relatives and friends and up to so far there are only 3 orphanage homes. Almost all these orphans are homeless, they include the run away boys and girls, displaced families legal and illegal refuges prostitutes alcoholics and drug addicts.

22. What are the causes of orphanages?

    a. Abundances
    b. Separations
    c. Death
    d. Undisciplined children who want to control themselves

23. Do you know your parents?

About 40 % they do not know their parents and 60 % know their parent, but they feel they are no longer part of their families. Because of the lack of family support and family resources.

24. Is security good for them?

Most feel comfortable where they stay. Most children are not rebellions and are not looking for freedom. Instead they are typically from problem families or have generated problems from their families. They describe their families they had left as unstable, neglectful and abusive often accompanied by parental substance abuse and alcohols.

25.How do they experience life on the streets?

Regardless of the stress they experience in the home, they find life on the streets very difficult.

26. What are their needs?

Their greatest needs are:
- A place to sleep
- a job or job training
- a loving and caring family,
- a stable family food a place to shower
- medical and dental care and
- money

27. How do they see the role of the church in their lives?

Very few churches give food to these children.
Most of the churches in the informal settlement do not do so much, they

just preach and pray for the orphans. They all appreciate the role of the schools, which gives them the feeding schemes and free education.

5.6.4 Grand Parents

28. What is the age group of most of the grand parents in the informal settlement?

Most of the grand parents in the informal settlements are in the ages of the late 50's and above. Their dependents are the great grand children. Most are abandoned by their children and they stay alone in the shacks. There is no home for the old age in Orange Farm. There is a need to develop a home.

29. How do you survive?

    a. Through the government grants.
    b. Looking after neighbours children.
    c. Involved in project like, gardening, sewing etc.

30. How do you manage your electricity?

Most of the grand parents say they buy an electricity of R50-00 for lights and for other things they use Brazzier and coal stove. They also indicated that electricity at night damages their eyes and hence they prefer to use a candle. They see electricity to be dangerous.

31. Do they have any illness?

Most of the elderly people complain of Arthritis, Sugar Diabetes, High Blood pressure and Asthma

32. Do they receive any treatment? Please explain where

Yes, most of them do receive treatment from the local clinic. They only complain of standing in the queue from 4 O 'Clock in the morning so that they can be attended at 8:00 when the nursing staff starts with their daily work.

33. What do you expect the church should do?

    a. Initiate elderly clubs which can keep them busy with sewing, gardening project and physical exercise.

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b. Raising funds to buy food for them.
c. Attend weekly prayer meetings
d. Helps them to apply for ID'S or Grants.
e. Pastor should give them Holy Communion to those who cannot walk

5.6.5 Child Headed Families

34. Please tell me, where are your parents?
Most say their parents are:

a. Dead
b. Separated
c. Working very far and come home once in a month or year.

35. What is the cause of your parent's death?
Most of the respondents say the cause of their parents death was caused by

a. Flu related illness.
b. HIV/AIDS
c. killed

36. Who is taking care of them?

Most the children responded by saying the following people care for them:
a. Breadwinners
b. Neighbours
c. Families
d. Christians

37. How does it affect your life?

Most of the respondents indicated that the situation in which they find themselves causes the following:
a. Stressful if parents do not sent money.
b. Become dependent at an early stage.
c. Causes the girls to have several boyfriends who are working so that they can support her siblings.

38. How can you be helped so that your situation can change

Most of the respondents indicated that they can be helped if the following things are done for them:
a. Offered job
b. Offered skills

39. Do you feel secured in the house?

Almost all the respondents say they feel very secured and their neighbours look after them. They have indicated that their gates are locked at all times and their houses have burglars, so they are always indoors and criminals are free always outside, rumouring in the streets.

40. How do they cope if one becomes sick?

They have indicated that if they are sick they call an ambulance or they go to the nearby clinics

41. How does the situation of being alone affect you?

Most of these children have indicated that they end up taking drugs, smoking and drinking. They also end up mixing up with bad friends. And hence they make wrong decisions in life that can make one to regret.

42. How does your church help you?

Most of the respondents indicated that their churches help them in applying for the grants at the Social services Department, whilst others indicated that they do not go to church because they do not see the need of going to church. In their families there are no elderly people who encourage them to go to church.

5.7 Conclusion

This case study demonstrates the value and need of developing a

comprehensive mission strategy for the churches in helping the poor in the

informal settlement communities. The data given in this chapter shows

that there are many poor people in need in these areas, their needs are

deepening, and they are a diverse group, for example, the prostitutes,

street children, HIV-AIDS sufferers, homeless, and the drug addicts. In

ministering to them, we should therefore develop a relevant ministry that

can address their needs. The mission of the church for the informal

settlement communities should be seen in the sacrificial service, which

Christ has sent his redeemed people into the world to perform

(Ntshumayelo 2001:105).

The suffering of the poor is not limited to material needs. Their life is also

characterized by dependency and oppression. They have very little

opportunity for their own decision-making to shape their lives. What and

when they eat, where and when they work, what ages they should receive

and what price they should pay, where and how they should live, how

many children they should have and how to bring them up, what they say

and how they should sat it, even when they should laugh and when they

should cry and how- all these and many other aspects of life are

determined or conditioned by the economic system political power and

religious sanctions controlled by the rich, the powerful and the influential.

The poor live a life dominated by other human beings in their own society

and even abroad (de Santa Ana 1979: xvii).

An encounter with these people should result in an inclusive and loving

response. God's people are required not only to welcome them as

neighbors, and to extend hospitality to them, but also to identify fully with

them as members of God's family. We are thus commanded as the church

to them as we love ourselves. Moreover, this love of God- that Christ died

for our sins while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8), compel us to be

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ambassadors for Christ (2Corinthians 5:1

CHAPTER 6

DEVELOPING A MISSION STRATEGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

6.2 DEVELOPING MISSION STRATEGIES

6.2.1 Networking

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

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

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

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- Networkers seek first to learn what the people's *substantive problems are.* If a church is to reach out to its community, it is irrelevant what the church perceives as the issues. One must begin where people are, with their issues, and the only sure way to uncover those issues is to ask the people.

- The second thing networkers seek to learn is *who are the real leaders of the community.* Very rarely are the elected or business leaders of a community the real leaders; and that is particularly true of an informal settlement community.

- The third thing networkers want to know is, *who in the community cares so much about an issue that he'll get involved in dealing with it.* No community issue can be addressed successfully unless the people address it.

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

6.2.2 Community organization strategy

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

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

- The first assumption is that people who are best able to deal with a problem are those most affected by it. The people involved must own any activity and its implementation. They must feel it is theirs.

- The second assumption is that people who are excluded from full participation in the social, economic, and political life of their city or neighborhood can be empowered to participate when they act collectively (Grigg 1992: 268)

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

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

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

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

- Second, a church may perceive itself as a church *to* the community. Some urban churches realize that if they do not interact with their neighborhood they will die. So they began to become concerned about the neighborhood and its problems. This is a holistic approach because it recognizes that the church must be present to the people around it and concerned with both evangelism and social action. "It is inadequate to be concerned with people's soul, particularly of the poor, unless the church is also going to be concerned about their social and economic needs" (Linthicum 2000:117).

- Thirdly, a church may be the church *with* the community. This means that the church incarnates itself in that community. It becomes flesh of that people's flesh, bone of that people's bone. It enters into the life of the community and becomes a partner in addressing its need. This means that the church allows the people of the community to instruct it as it identifies with the people. It respects them and joins them in dealing with the issues they have identified as their own. The church joins with the people in addressing the issues of that community, not from advantage point

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

6.2.3 Mission strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.2.4 The need for incarnational ministry strategy

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

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

a. Go to the poor

b. Live among the poor

c. Learn from the poor

d. Work with the poor

e. Start with what the poor have

  And build upon what the poor have

f. Teach by showing

g. Learn by doing

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

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

- First, we know that to develop a holistic ministry in a community, to minister in word and deed, one must know the needs of the community. This is what we call needs assessment. It cannot be done accurately if we do not understand the community.

- Second, in order to be relevant in our presentation of the gospel, again in both word and deed, we must contextualize all aspects of our presentation, and this requires an intimate knowledge of the community and its people. Although we are advocating incarnational living, we must remember that being incarnational in itself is not enough; our goal goes far beyond that.

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

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

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

Incarnation was a profound historic symbol for Jesus. It is from such symbols of humility, sacrifice, and love that men and women are emboldened to transform them. Incarnation was a profound economic act of Jesus. It reversed values, defined jubilee principles, and demonstrated the active intervention of heavenly Father in providing for needs. Incarnational ministry among the poor, is the primary step to transforming the economics of an emerging Christian community earth (Greenway 2000:161).

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

6.2.5 Understanding the community strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.2.6 The Need for Evaluation

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

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

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

6.2.7 Developing a Holistic Ministry

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

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

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

6.2.7.1 Ministering to the community of the poor

People staying in these communities are the poorest of the poor

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

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

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

6.2.7.2 Ministering to the HIV-AIDS sufferers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.2.7.2.1 HIV-AIDS Ministries

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

6.2.7.2.2 Church-Based Care

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

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

6.2.7.2.3 Inter-faith ministries

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

6.2.7.3 Ministering to the Homeless

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

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

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

- Firstly, seek an understanding of the problems related to the poor and the homeless and sponsor direct services to the homeless on the streets.

- Secondly, churches must be prepared to respond to the needs of homeless people who may show up at their door at any time.

- Thirdly, Christians should commit themselves to mission careers among the homeless. Rescue missions and rehabilitation centers should be developed.

- Fourthly, start soup kitchen, near the cheap hotels, and the alleys where the homeless can sleep.

6.2.7.4 Ministering to the Victims of Abuse

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

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6.2.7.5 Ministering to the Street Children

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

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

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

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lessons or a brief Bible story and some singing.

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

6.2.7.6 Ministering to the Drug Addicts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.2.7.6.2 Stand with victims and their families

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.2.7.6.4 Build community

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

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

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

6.2.7.7 Ministering to the illiterates

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

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

following into cognisance:

- Firstly, the spoken language of the people must be respected.

- Secondly, the church should address the spiritual, social, and educational needs in an integrated fashion; the church will change the lives of its youth, and impact the community at large.

- Thirdly, the church must train the educational leaders for ethnic diversity in their communities.

6.2.7.8 Ministering to the Prostitutes:

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

Greenway (2000:210) says God's righteous indignation against adultery is clear throughout Scripture, but so is his power to forgive and restore public sinners. There were plenty of prostitutes in Palestine in Jesus day, and their unrighteous activity placed them far outside the kingdom of God. But the Gospel tells us that prostitutes and sinners went out to hear the preaching of John the Baptist, and many responded (Mathew 21:32). There were fallen women among the converts of Jesus, and to one of them, a Samaritan, Jesus taught deeper truths about God than are found almost anywhere else in the New Testament (John 4:7-29). On one occasion Jesus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.2.7.8.1   Ministry of the local church to the prostitutes:

Every church can minister to prostitutes; some congregations will develop

full-orbed ministries specifically designed for those who are seeking

healing in the area of their sexual practice and desires. Every congregation

can create a hospitable climate and an inclusive environment for those

who experience same prostitution

6.2.7.8.2 Creating a hospitable climate:

Use language that assumes and describes the church community as the

family of God. The church is a new community of Jesus Christ's followers,

who are single, married, and from all varieties of backgrounds. In other

words, teach that the church is not simply a collection of biological

families or parts of families. Because the church is a new community, it

needs to provide a home, a haven, for its members

Provide an environment for confession of sins and accountability to other

Christians. In small-group settings as well as in public worship, provide a

safe place to share struggles, confess sins.

6.2.7.8.3 Some practical ways to develop a comprehensive ministry

a) In congregational prayers include those who practice prostitution that

they should come to repentance.

b) During liturgical confession refer by name to specific sins, including the

practice of prostitution. Use scripture and prayers that refer to the fact

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

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

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

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

6.2.7.8.4 Ministry that local churches can offer

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

a) Prayer partnership with others within the congregation

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

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

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

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

I conclude my thesis by referring to the research question that I introduced at the beginning of my study: "Will the church in the informal settlement community be able to address the problem of poverty if it takes into account the needs of the poor, their socio-cultural and political situation into account? ". The research conducted has established that the people in the informal settlement communities do suffer and their suffering is probably more severe than in other communities in the country, and that the church indeed faces numerous challenges in this regard.

In view of scriptures and the history of the church over the years we noted that the church was always involved in the works of charity and caring for the needy. The literature review has also revealed that mission must involve both verbal witness and exemplary deeds. It has become clear that the church developed a variety of strategies to address the needs of the poor. Even today God is calling His church in the informal settlement communities to address the problems of the poor: the street children, prostitutes, drug addicts, the HIV-AIDS sufferers and the homeless people. We must be able to give hope to needy people. These acts of compassion on the part of the church should result in the consistent integration of word and deed in our ministry. Our goal in ministry is not simply to help

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poor people to meet their daily needs, but to see them transformed by the power of God and empowered to be people of dignity and worth in society. This implies that the transformation of people and of social structures also form part of the church's agenda.

7.1 Main conclusions

My main conclusions coming from my research are as follows:

- Informal settlement communities are the new frontier of Christian mission for the church of today. The church cannot relinquish its mission in these areas. It is obliged to minister in word and deed to all the needy in the community.

- God demands that his people share his special concern for the poor. He commanded us to love the marginalized, the widows, the sick, etc. An encounter with these people should result in an inclusive and loving response.

- Our ministry must begin by learning to know poor people and identifying ourselves with them. Then in partnership with them, answers can be sought to meet their needs.

- There is a need for churches to develop a comprehensive mission strategy in helping the poor in the informal settlement communities.

It has become evident that if we take into cognizance the socio-cultural situation, as well as the political situation of the poor if the church wants

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to be able to answer to the needs of the poor in the informal settlement communities. The church must also go beyond relief and development programs. It must call people to be transformed by the gospel. Only as people themselves are changed will there be a change in their conditions.

The church must also work to transform the social structures that keep the poor in bondage.

- It can help the homeless to start projects and build their own homes and assist the poor to get their titles.
- It can speak out publicly for the rights and dignity of poor people
- It can lobby the government to provide them with water, sewers, and roads.
- It can change structures that oppress the poor
- It can empower people to live a meaningful lives

Poor people need dignity and hope. On a daily basis, they are despised by the society in which they live. The church must provide people with a sense of their dignity and power as new creatures in Christ. With this comes hope, joy and the ability to change conditions.

The church must continually be informed about people suffering in our communities. We must respond spontaneously and generously to help meet the needs. "Let each according his ability, decided to provide help for

the brothers living in Judea" (Acts 11:29).

The ministry of sharing our resources with the poor, fellowship with them in our churches, and witnessing that Jesus is Lord, was demonstrated in the life of the early Christians, "All believers were together and had everything in common, selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone who was in need. Everyday they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people" (Acts 2:44-47)

Today we are also called as a church to bring back the self-respect and self-image of the poor by enabling them to stand on their feet and become independent. This is the unique work to which all of us as urban Christians have been called to do. The poor call us to bring the gospel and show mercy upon them. We must not ignore their cry. These people are also human beings made in the image of God. They have many needs, but above all they need Jesus Christ and the salvation through him. There is a tremendous missionary challenge awaiting us in these communities.

7.2 Further Areas of Research

In this study I have concentrated primarily on the need for the churches to develop new strategies for a comprehensive outreach to poor communities.

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A number of issues have been left untouched, that warrant further research. They include:

- Strategies to empower the laity as well as the clergy in local congregations to rise to the challenge of the marginalized communities.

- Research the way in which the needs of the poor and the challenges of the Gospel in this regard are incorporated in the curricular of theological faculties and seminaries.

- Research the role that the South African Churches, especially the Dutch Reform Church family, have played in combating poverty in recent years.

- Analyze the way in which the churches may form networks which the governmental sector as well as with non-governmental organizations (NGO's) to better the position of the poor and the marginalized.

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QUESTIONNAIRE (ANNEXTURE I)

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (DEMOGRAPHICS/ STATISTICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN POPULATIONS):

1. Gender (Sex of respondent):

    Male

    Female

2. What is your present age?   Yrs.

3. Home language

    Southern Sotho

    Zulu

    Northern Sotho

    Tswana

    Xhosa

    Venda

    Xhosa

    Tsonga

    Other

4. School qualification

    No schooling

    Grade 0-12

    Diploma

Tertiary institution

5. Work experience (Occupational status)

Pensioner/ Retired

Employed Full time (Formal)

Full time (Informal)

Part time employed

medically unfit (disability)

Housewife

Student

Unemployed

6. How much do you earn per month?

7. How many are you in the household?

8. What is the main material used for the walls of the main dwelling house?

Shack house (build with tin or plastic shack)

Permanent house (build with cement bricks)

Muddy house (build with soil or clay)

9. is there any infrastructure (access) where you stay?

Yes

No

10. If yes, what kind of infrastructure (access) is there?

Water on the stand

Sewerage

Proper streets

Electricity

B. DENOMINATION

11. What is your church denomination?

Charismatic church

Independent (Zionist) church

URCSA

Methodist

Anglican

Other

12. Leadership role in the church

Sunday school teacher

Elder

Deacon

Reverend

Priest

Bishop

Archbishop

13. How many confessed members do you have?

Below 200 members

Between 200-500 members

Between 500-1000 members

Above 1000 members

14. When did you plant (establish) your church in Orange Farm?

      Year

15. With how many members?

16. Is there any growth in membership?

      Yes

      No

17. Where do you conduct your services?

      Members houses

      Under a tree

      Church building

      Classroom

      Open veld

      Other place (specify)

18. Do you have a church leader: Bishop, Reverend, Deacon elder etc?

      Yes

      No

19. Does he/she stay in Orange Farm?

      Yes

      No

20. In your opinion what is the main task of the church?

      To preach the gospel

      To bring good news to the poor

To comfort those who are crying

To burry the dead

To be on the side of the poor

To initiate projects that can help the poor

To give handouts

To give people food/soup everyday

21. Is your church involved in mission work?

Yes

No

22. What kind of outreaches/mission work do you normally conduct?

Giving the literacy pamphlets

Selling Bibles

Jesus Film show

Open air

Revivals

23. What kind of program do you have to assist the poor?

Soup kitchen

Needlework

Gardening project

Literacy classes

Computer classes

Life skills

State the other method

24. Are you a born again Christian?

     Yes

     No

C. COMMUNITY

25. Are there any poor people in your community?

     Yes

     No

26. Who are the poorest of the poor?

     Street children

     Unemployed

     HIV-AIDS sufferers

     Orphans

     Prostitutes

     Homeless

27. What are your community needs?

     Running water

     Sewerage

     Houses

     Schools

     Clinic

     Churches

     Electricity

Street lights

Ownership of the land

28. Are the social services easily accessible?

Yes

No

29. What caused poverty to dominate your life?

Unemployment

Welfare donations

Mother as head of the family

Drug addiction

30. Are there children who are poor in your area?

Yes

No

31. Who are worst hit by unemployment in your community?

Mothers

Youth

Single parents

Specify

32. Do you support each other in the informal settlement?

Yes

No

D. HIV AIDS

33. Are people aware of the HIV-AIDS?

       Yes

       No

34. What is being done to educate people about Aids?

       Pamphlets distributed

       Volunteers

       Teaching

35. Are people suffering from HIV-AIDS visited?

       Yes

       No

36. What is the age group of the infected?

       Below 20 years

       Between 20-30 years

       Between 30-40 years

       Above 40 years

37. In your community, which sex group is reported to have HIV-AIDS? :

       Male

       Female

38. In your community, how do you help the HIV-AIDS patience?

       Started home based care centers

       Refer them to the clinics

       Consult the traditional Doctors (Inyangas)

39. Is there a denial or acceptance from the people?

Yes

No

40. Where do they get help?

They get Government grants

Churches give food parcels

Business help with money

41. Tick which one is correct

HIV is transmitted through

Casual contact

Toilet seat

Unprotected sex

Mosquitoes

Blood transfusion

Mother to baby breastfeeding

42. Can HIV AIDS be cured?

Yes

No

43. Who has the power to cure HIV-AIDS in your community?

Traditional doctors (Inyangas)

Zionist prophets

Medical doctors

No one can cure AIDS

44. Is your church offering assistance to the HIV AIDS sufferers?

      Yes

      No

45. If yes, what kind of help are you giving the HIV-AID patience?

      Food parcels

      Distribute condoms

      Counseling

      Teach unmarried people to abstain from sex

E. ABUSE

46. How are people abused in your community?

      Sexually

      Physically

      Verbally

47. Where do they get help?

      Police

      Clinics

48. Why is the rate of abuse so high?

      Unemployment

      Stress

49. Is your church offering assistance to the abuse?

      Yes

      No

50. If yes, what kind of assistance are they giving?

       Counseling

       Intercede

F. DRUGS

51. What kind of drugs are young people taking in your community?

       Cocaine

       Dagga

       Glue

       Spirits

       Tobacco

       Alcohol

52. Where is the market for the Drug-Lords?

       Schools

       Free markets

       Streets

53. Is your church offering assistance to the drug addicts?

       Yes

       No

54.If yes, what kind of help?

       Counseling

       Referrals

55. Do drugs kill?

Yes

No

56. Is the selling of the drugs in the increase in your community?

True

False

57. Do you think people harm themselves if they

Take drugs once or twice

Take drugs occasionally

Try one or two drinks of alcoholic beverage

Smoke one or two packs of cigarettes per day

58. What is the variety of factors implicated in the use of drugs?

Poor self- image

Low religiosity

Poor school performance

Alienation from parents

Family dysfunctional

Physical abuse

Parental divorce

59. In your opinion, who has a greater influence on the teenagers in taking drugs?

Peers

Parents

Media

60. Smoking makes one feel (tick the correct answer)

   Sexy

   Athletic

   Behave wiser

   Behave differently to other people

61. Alcoholic parents are likely to produce biological children who are

alcoholics

   True

   False

G. LITERACY

62. What is your highest school qualification?

   Never at school

   Primary education

   Secondary education

   Tertiary

63. Is your church leader trained for leading your congregation?

   Yes

   No

 64. Are community leaders in your area educated?

   Yes

   No

65. Are your members illiterate?

   Yes

No

66. Can they read their Bibles?

Yes

No

H. HOMELESSNESS

76. What causes people to be homeless?

Laziness

Overcrowding

Poverty

68. Are you aware of the RDP projects, funded by the government in your community?

Yes

No

69. Who are the homeless people?

The poor

Prostitutes

Immigrants

Children

70. Where can we find the homeless?

On the streets

Garbage's

Unused buildings

71. What causes homelessness to increase in your community?

        Shortage of affordable houses

        Unemployment

        Unplanned marriages

72. What kind of programs can the church introduce to offer shelter for the homeless?

        Offer shelter

        Teach life skills

I. PROSTITUTION

73. Are you aware of prostitute in your community?

        Yes

        No

74. Why are they practice prostitution?

        Poverty

        Unemployment

        It is a game/sports for them

75. What kind of assistance do you offer to help the prostitutes?

        Counseling

        Referrals

ANNEXTURE 2

QUALITATIVE METHOD

A. SINGLE PARENTING

1. What age group of single parent did you interview?

2. Describe their household?

3. What do the household use for cooking, and warming themselves?

4. Is the heating system safe?

5. What are the main reasons for single parenting?

6. Is there privacy in their houses?

7. What are the challenges they meet as single parents?

8. How do you survive?

9. Where do you get help?

10. Can you read nor write, please explain?

11. What caused the death of your spouse?

12. Is she/he prepared to engage in the second marriage, why?

13. How does he/she see the role of the church to be in their lives?

B. CHILD-ADOPTING FAMILIES

1. What are the reasons for the families to adopt?

2. What are the reactions of your society towards families who

adopt?

3. Did you report this case of adopting the child to the social welfare?

4. Did they test the adopted child's status?

5. What is the age group of the adopted child?

6. Does the child receive any professional help after adoption?

7. What is the role of the church in helping this child and his/her family?

C. ORPHANS

1. Where does one find the orphans in Orange Farm?

2. What are the causes for having orphans in our community?

3. Do they know who their parents are?

4. Is there any security for them?

5. How do they experience life on the streets?

6. What are their needs?

7. How do they see the role of the church in Orange Farm?

D.GRAND PARENTS

1. What is the age group of most of the grand parents in your community?

2. How do they survive?

3. How do they spend their money for electricity?

4. Do you have any illness, please explain?

5. Do you receive any treatment, please explain where?

6. What do you expect the church should do for you?

E. CHILD HEADED FAMILIES

1. Please tell me, where are your parents?

2. What is the cause of your parents death?

3. Who is now taking care of you?

4. Does this affect your life?

5. How can you be helped so that your situation can change?

6. Do you now feel secured in this house?

7. How do you cope if you are sick?

8. How does the situation of being alone affect you?

9. How can the church help you?

ANNEXTURE 3

LETTER TO THE CHURCH LEADERS

Dear Friend

Greetings in the wonderful name of our savior Lord Jesus Christ

Rev. Paul Ntshumayelo of the Uniting Reformed Church in Extension 1 Orange Farm, is doing a Phd research study with the university of Pretoria. The topic for his research is 'Developing a comprehensive mission strategy for the churches in the informal settlement communities: Orange Farm as a case study.

Enclosed please find a questionnaire concerning the church's role in assisting the poor in the informal settlement communities. The enclosed questionnaire is being sent to church leaders like yourself who live in Orange Farm. Please pour a cup of coffee for yourself, relax and answer these questions as candidly as possible. Some of the issues you probably have thought about many times in the past, and the answer is on the tip of your pen. In other cases you may want to do some fresh thinking. Your insights and observations are worth a great deal; the number of people who can help in this type of research is not great, so I am depending heavily on your answers. So fill in the questionnaire and send it back to me
Hoping to hear from you sooner

In His service

Rev. Paul ka Ntshumayelo