

**CHURCH AND POVERTY:POSSIBILITIES FOR POVERTY ERADICATION IN  
THE THABA'NCHU REGION.**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of academic requirements

by

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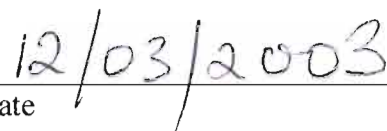
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DECLARATION

I hereby state that the whole thesis, except where specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, it is my own original work


  
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Kutu Sydney Trupa

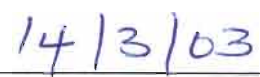
  
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As supervisor, I have agreed to the submission of this thesis.

  
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Dr. S. de Gruchy

  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the role that the church can play in alleviating poverty in Black rural communities in South Africa, through a case study of the Thaba’Nchu community in the Free State Province.

The thesis argues that the policies of racial segregation of the apartheid era impacted very strongly on the Black communities in our country. Blacks were dispossessed, marginalized and suffered greatly. It is further argued that the New Dispensation after 1994 did very little to ensure that the poor in places like Thaha’Nchu enjoyed a meaningful standard of life. Poverty has continued to be a large factor in the lives of the rural Black South Africans.

This situation obliges the church according to its calling to make a difference in the lives of the rural poor communities such as in Thaba’Nchu. It is argued that the Church does have a contribution to make in development.

When poverty and unemployment have entrenched themselves in the community, the Church locally and ecumenically have the capacity and the potential to wage war against the scourge. To combat poverty, a clearly drawn programme of action needs to be formulated. This research proposes a two-pronged strategy where first, hunger gets addressed and second, sustainable income generating projects are initiated to empower the poor.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Phellimon Khanyane and Sarah Mantsho Kutu for introducing us to the Christian faith, very early in our life. We were taught as children, that the Earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof. What a difference you have made in my life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude goes to my family; my loving wife Zodwa (colleague and friend), my children, who unselfishly afforded me the opportunity to engage this project. For a whole year I was away from home, and sometimes though I was present I was absent busy with the computer. Thank you for your encouragement and support.

Shate! shate! Shate!

I wish to thank my supervisor Dr. Steve de Gruchy, for agreeing to working in a supervisory role in this difficult process. Your gift of supervising and your critical mind was much appreciated.

I want to thank the Rev Dr. Neil Oosthuizen for the splendid work of proofreading. I asked that you walk with me for a mile and you walked with me an extra mile. Thank you!

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the intention and purpose of the whole thesis. Thaba’Nchu is introduced, focusing on its brief history and the geography. This chapter is closed by outlining the motivation, the research problem, the research question, the hypothesis and the methodology followed by the aims and objectives and the definition of terms. But first, a brief history and geography.

### 1.2. HISTORY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND GEOGRAPHY

#### 1.2.1. The Brief History of Thaba’Nchu

The history of Thaba’Nchu begins with the Barolong, a Setswana speaking people, who are not indigenous to the area. They are descendents of their last great warrior chief Tau, who occupied the land between the Molopo and the Vaal rivers (Murray 1992:13). Chief Tau’s death in 1760 saw the creation of communities named after his four sons: Ratlou, Tshidi, Seleka, and Rapulana. In subsequent years the population increased; and many Seleka Barolong settled at Maquassi (South of Wolmaransstad) and Motlhanka-wa-Pitse on the Vaal River, under the chieftainship of Moroka.

By 1833 the community had migrated further south of the Vaal in order to settle west of the Caledon River. They entered into negotiations ( involving payment by means of cattle, sheep and goats) with chief Moshoeshoe of the Basotho, who granted them the land below a huge mountain called “Thaba’Nchu” (Murray 1992:15).



**Thaba 'Nchu Mountain in the background**

They settled there, making that land their own. In 1977 the then Republic of South Africa granted Bophuthatswana “independence,” thus making Thaba’Nchu, together with other areas, part of the Bantustan. Its lifespan under Bophuthatswana’s control lasted until 1994, when it became again part of the democratic free South Africa. The new government opened doors to the people who otherwise would have been refused permission to settle. This means that everybody is now entitled to live in the area regardless of his/her ethnic background.

### **1.2.2. Infrastructural Development**

The infrastructure is comparatively well developed given that it is a small rural town. The railway line (and station) runs across Thaba’Nchu, connecting the town with Bloemfontein in the east and Tweespruit/Durban in the West.

Approximately 10 kilometres outside Thaba’Nchu stands a small airport, which used to be active during the days when Kgosi Lucas Mangope was President of the Bantustan.

The town also boasts a silo/mill which appears visibly clear from a distance. Truck loads of Premier Foods products from this silo/mill can be seen on Bloemfontein/ Tweespruit main road for distribution to other town and cities.

### **1.2.3. The Geography**

Thaba’Nchu is situated in the Free State, 80km east of Bloemfontein and 12km north east of Onverwaght along the Bloemfontein -Tweespruit main road (Murray 1992:6).

The town derives its name from Thaba’Nchu ( Black mountain), a huge black mountain that stands towering over the town.

There are no perennial rivers running across the area, only non-perennial ones. There are four dams in the region known as Seroalo, Rooifontein, Feloana and Sediba ( For more information on geography please see the map attached at the end of the theses).

## **1.3. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

The motivation behind this study is the cry of the people of God to be freed from the bonds of poverty. Poor people have made their voices heard in the national “Speak out on Poverty” hearings, which detail the horrific experiences and frustrations caused by poverty. The time has now arrived when we need to move away from words and more words; what is desperately needed is action. Tsele [sa -2] quickly cautions that such action should not exclude the poor

because doing so will be counter productive and injurious to their cause.

Of particular importance to this study is the cry of the people of Thaba’Nchu, who survived the government of Bophuthatswana and are now in the new South Africa. During the time of the Bophuthatswana government, the rate of poverty was not high. This is mainly due to the government policy of introducing foreign companies, such as those from Taiwan, to invest in the region. To avoid disinvestment by these companies in case of strikes and boycotts the government ruled with an iron fist. Trade unionism, for instance, be it for mining, public service or factories, was outlawed. The government provided a “safe” environment for economic exploitation to occur and there was “order”. As a result of this, there was a 0% percent unemployment rate during the period. However, workers were not free to campaign for a living wage, and so labour was cheap.

The period immediately before the end of Bophuthatswana self-rule, and before the new dispensation saw relocations by these companies away from Bophuthatswana. The environment was no longer safe for business to continue as normal. The workers had joined trade unions and were fighting for their rights, and would not settle for the use of cheap labour. This period caused the rise of unemployment and poverty in the region. Workers were laid off as a result of relocations. Workers had skills but could not utilize them because they had no starting capital.

The new dispensation after 1994 also came with its own problems. Poverty and unemployment increased. Schools and hospitals were negatively affected under government policy of retrenchments, redeployment and rationalization. Many people became unemployed.

In other cases, services which were already existing were relocated elsewhere in the province. The cry of the people of Thaba’Nchu is about poverty and thus unemployment. It is about the high rate of unemployment, among the uneducated and educated alike. But much more, it is about the effects that it has on the community; there is poverty, a high level of criminal activity, alcoholism and drug abuse, and the disruption of family life.

The Church of Christ is called to adopt a preferential option for the poor and mandated to take care of weak members of the community. There is a need to take a conscious decision to side with and to act with the poor with the purpose of overcoming whatever obstacle lies in their way.

Included in the motivation for the study is the researcher's lived experience in poverty. Jones (1990:15) makes this distinction between individuals whose confrontation with poverty is indirect and removed, who know and engage in poverty discourse only as a condition in which others live. These people, it must be acknowledged, are making an invaluable contribution to development in spite of their being outside the experience.

He goes on and contrasts that with individuals who know poverty first hand, in experiential and not in theoretical fashion alone. To this group the researcher belongs. It is this experience of confrontation with poverty that is the driving force behind this study. There is this desire to emancipate communities from this vicious cycle of poverty. The advantaged position of the researcher is that he is better placed in the communities to identify the real problems, the real needs and solutions that will have a positive and lasting impact on community development. The scripture tells us in James 2:15-16 that "If one of your brothers or one of your sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on and one of you says to them I wish you well, keep yourself warm and eat plenty, without giving them the bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that: if good works don't go with it, it is quite dead." The Church has to live up to what it preaches.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Poverty is growing and widespread in South Africa. The rich, who are a tiny group in the total population, enjoy, a greater share of the wealth produced in the country compared to the majority of the population, which has only a small share of that wealth. Poverty is not evenly distributed across the population. It exists in the urban areas among black people especially in townships and informal settlements. But it is more severe on the periphery, where there is very little economic activity. On the periphery, it is characterized by a lack of services such as water, health care, and education. It is also about lack of land, adequate food supplies, proper housing infrastructure, and unemployment. This is particularly true of the Thaba' Nchu region, which is the focus of this study.

##### **❖ Access to water and electricity**

At the time of writing this research project work is being done to ensure that piped water is made available in communal taps to the rural communities. Be that as it may, the fact of the matter is that in Thaba'Nchu the rural poor have no utilities such as clean water and proper sanitation. Women spend hours, which they could have used to do other things, to draw water,

usually far away from home. Because not all households are electrified, they have to walk distances to collect wood.

#### ❖ **Education**

Education remains a problem in rural areas such as Thaba’Nchu. Though there are a few educated people, the adult poor have very little or no education at all. Because of the lack of education and lack of job opportunities, the rural communities are poor. Poverty becomes an inheritance whereby poor parents who cannot afford to school their children contribute in turn to their children being poor

#### ❖ **Land**

The problem of poverty is also compounded by unavailability of land. Rural communities depend on land for survival. Land is used both for grazing and for cultivating crops for the families. Through land dispossession, many people who depended on land for survival were compelled to sell their labour to earn a living through a system of migrant labour. Land dispossession from the Blacks meant land possession for the Whites. According to Farisani (1993:65), prior to colonization the idea of land possession and ownership among various indigenous peoples was non-existent. The people of the land had access to as much land as they wished.

#### ❖ **Unemployment**

This study focuses on unemployment in Thaba’Nchu and maintains that it contributes to excessive poverty in the area. There is a high rate of unemployment, which affects men, women and the youth; and it exists among educated and uneducated alike. This study examines the causes of unemployment and looks at what effect that has in the community.

The research is important in that it is hoped that both church and communities will work towards eradicating poverty. Poverty cannot be fought alone. The nature, extent and causes of poverty demand co-operation and co-ordination of efforts. The church’s participation with communities succeeded in bringing down Apartheid structure. It is therefore imperative that the very same partnership is forged, and the community mobilized, for the eradication of poverty. With unemployment rising, and the rural community the most affected, it is hoped this research will contribute to the education, conscientization and bringing together of communities to work out programmes of poverty eradication relevant to the context. No amount of money and

outside intervention is able to bring about the kind of change that can be brought about by the community itself.

It is also hoped that this research will empower the community. True development is about the poor being empowered, so that they can take charge of their lives. The hungry and poor need both to be given a fish to eat, and empowered so as to catch a fish for themselves. This double-pronged approach to development is essential when it comes to poverty eradication. The hungry and powerless victims of unemployment need food now as empowerment takes place.

### **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTION**

Given the nature of poverty, its causes and effects in the community a solution is essential, but such solution cannot be found in what any one individual organization can do to eradicate poverty. The fight against the scourge of poverty and unemployment requires that organizations on the local level combine efforts to eradicate poverty. The research question is “What can the church’s participation with local communities do to eradicate poverty?”

### **1.6. HYPOTHESIS**

Poverty can be addressed if the church can participate with communities in identifying, designing and implementing the necessary programmes of combating poverty and unemployment. There is a need for food now, income generating projects, and the growing/cultivation of crops and food gardens.

### **1.7. METHODOLOGY**

Data was collected through the use of available sources in the library. Since this study is not about information gathering and analysis for its own sake but is focused on empowering communities, it was imperative that qualitative research was done. Interviews, as well as published and unpublished documents were utilized.

### **1.8. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to explore ways of community income generating projects that are sustainable and will, in the long run, eradicate poverty. Attention is also paid to non-economic projects.

To achieve this, the following are guiding objectives:

- Identify the needs of the community.
- Identify income-generating projects relevant to the community.
- Identify non-economic projects intended for poverty eradication.

#### **1.9. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Church : It is meant the local ecumenical movement consisting of both ordained and lay members.

Communities : It is meant communities generally, but in another sense it also refers to the stakeholders such as business, NGO, welfare organizations, house of traditional leaders, local government and other community structures that have an interest in local development.

Thaba’Nchu Area: The area that falls within the magisterial district of Thaba’Nchu.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **SEEING POVERTY IN THABA'NCHU**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze poverty as it occurs in Thaba'Nchu. Because various studies render poverty differently, we will look at the definitions of poverty, and see which best fits our situation and context. The definition is important in that to a great extent it determines the types of programmes to be followed. Having done this we will look at the root causes of poverty, and will argue that unemployment is the single greatest contributor to poverty in the area. Again, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of the causes, as they will determine solutions. This chapter will be incomplete unless the impact of poverty and unemployment on the community is considered. We will argue that there is indeed a link between poverty, unemployment and social problems. Let us now turn to the definition of poverty.

#### **2.2. WHAT IS POVERTY?**

##### **2.2.1. Towards a Definition of Poverty**

Studies define poverty differently. Poverty is defined as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living, measured in terms of basic consumption needs or the income required to satisfy them (SAGOVT,1998).

This definition of poverty uses money indicators and is based on income or consumption expenditure. It works on the assumption that individuals and households are poor if their income or consumption falls below a certain threshold or a set poverty line. This definition is a narrow understanding of poverty, which does not take into account the socio-economic conditions constitutive of poverty. Poverty cannot be measured on income level alone. People are poor and thus earn less because they live in conditions of poverty. This understanding of poverty is inadequate and results in programmes of action, which do not address the real cause of poverty.

In this context people's salaries would be increased with the hope that they would be able to afford basic necessities of life and thus eradicate poverty; while other problems such as access to housing, health, electricity, infrastructure and water suitable for consumption are not addressed. This is an insufficient strategy for dealing with poverty. Another problem, raised by this definition is in the "minimal standard of living," which Jones (1990:110) refers to as a subsistence definition of poverty. According to Jones this definition dehumanizes the poor. He puts this across well when he says: "For instance, policies founded on such definitions are content to provide 'basic necessities' without so-called 'frills.' But such 'frills', e.g., educational enrichment, social and

cultural participation which are not directly bound up with subsistence are often vital to the enjoyment and development of human life within given social settings” Jones (1990:114).

The problem with such definitions and the studies that formulate them, is that they take the full human development of the poor to be “a frill”. The poor can only be provided for up to the point where their basic necessities are met, and then no further. This understanding of poverty indicates why poverty is never really eradicated from among poor communities, because the rich and powerful define and determine what is best for the poor. The poor simply become objects of development, and no effort is made on the part of the would-be donors to hear from the poor about their experiences and what they think would be real solutions to their problems. When the poor speak about combating poverty, they don’t speak about poverty alleviation. The poor don’t speak about a “minimal standard of living” which will keep them in perpetual poverty. The poor don’t speak about a situation whereby they will be able to afford “basic necessities”. The poor speak about a comprehensive approach to poverty, which takes account of their full human development. The failure of poverty alleviation measures is noted by Swanepoel and de Beer (1997:3) who rightly argue that such measures often lead to only a short-term relief, after which the beneficiaries return to their previous balance or equilibrium of poverty.

This research adopts the position that to fight poverty successfully one would have to go further than providing a “minimal standard of living”, to empowering communities so that they take charge of their own lives. A comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of poverty needs to be worked out by the church and communities to ensure that poverty is properly dealt with.

### **2.2.2. The UNDP Definition of Poverty**

The United Nations Definition of Poverty is the most comprehensive so far. Poverty is defined as

...the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect from others. (Stats South Africa 1996)

This definition of poverty considers the poor not merely as a group of people who lack the ability to attain a minimal standard of living or those whose income is lower than what they need for survival. The poor are those who are denied opportunities, and are deprived and impoverished.

This is best captured by Jones (1990:103) who contends that:

Indeed, there is more to poverty than the lack of resources. Of course, it is true that poor people lack resources, but that does not explain everything about their lives. Their exclusions make them vulnerable to bad experiences, and they are targets for destructive actions, ill treatment, bad services and malevolent neglect. To use a theological metaphor, the nature of their suffering is not a passive absence of good, but an active presence of evil... [Their] misery is caused not only by the absence of wealth, but even more by the presence of ill health.... The life space of the poor is not an empty vessel simply deprived of the good things that fill the lives of everyone else... on the contrary, it is filled with bad experiences.

Cochrane, de Cruchy and Petersen (1991:61) agree: "To be poor is to suffer not just lack, but an injustice that has a structural basis in the society within which one lives." It is to "have not," among those who "have" in abundance.

This study will follow this understanding of poverty, especially where poverty is understood to be a denial of opportunities, the blockage of human life, deprivation and dispossession.

Having defined the problem it is imperative that we focus on the extent and causes of poverty in Thaba'Nchu. This is crucial since any attempt to address the issue of poverty would have to consider very seriously the causes of this scourge.

### **2.3. THE EXTENT OF POVERTY IN THABA'NCHU**

For measuring poverty in Thaba'Nchu we are going to use the works of Statistics South Africa who conducted a poverty profile in the area alongside local government and other service providers. This work is sufficient for measuring poverty as it contains critical information such as who do we expect to be poor, where are the poor to be found, and what are the major characteristics of the poor.

In drawing up a poverty data line, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) adopted an R800 per month baseline set up by the local government in 1996. Other poverty lines can be found, for instance other studies use a poverty line of R301 (de Beer & Swanepoel 1997:15). Estimated consumption expenditure at household level was used combining census and survey data. What is very

interesting about this study is that it shows poverty distribution at district council level and at magisterial district level as shown by Figure 1 and Figure 2 (see below), with respective poverty rates. Thaba’Nchu’s poverty rates at district council level are given at 40% to 60% below the poverty line, while at magisterial district level it is rendered at 58% to 60%.

Bringing the seriousness of poverty even more into the open is figure 3 (see below), which shows the extent to which poverty is widespread in the area. What this reveals is that Thaba’Nchu is a poverty- stricken area, compared with the fact that its poverty rate is anything up to 60%. We need to take into cognisance the fact that while the poverty line is R800 per month, most poor households earn far less, which makes the situation even worse.

The findings of Stats SA are supported by the communities who, when interviewed, spoke of the poverty rate being very high in the area (see interviews 1, 2 and 4). Poverty, according to the people in the community, is complicated by high rates of unemployment, as will be shown later in this chapter. Poverty is characterized by lack of access to safe drinking water and electricity, shortage of land and housing, lack of proper sanitation, and a high unemployment rate, among other things. Without repetition (this has been dealt with in chapter 1), we shall just highlight the depth of poverty in Thaba’Nchu.

### **2.3.1. *Access to safe drinking water and electricity***

The rural poor have no access to such utilities as clean water and proper sanitation. Women walk distances to fetch water, investing in this chore lots of time, which could have been used doing something else for the family. Not all houses are electrified, and so they also have to spend hours collecting wood.

### **2.3.2. *Land***

The rural poor in Thaba’Nchu have access to only a small portion of available land, and not to the land necessary for embarking on farming and agricultural projects. This is important for rural communities who depend on land for their subsistence and survival. The problem of land shortage was brought about by Apartheid policies which dispossessed communities of their land, compelling them to sell their labour to earn a living through a system of migrant labour, in towns such as Bloemfontein and the Goldfield Mines.

### **2.3.3. *Housing***

Thaba’Nchu, like other areas in South Africa, is faced with a critical housing need, which is evident

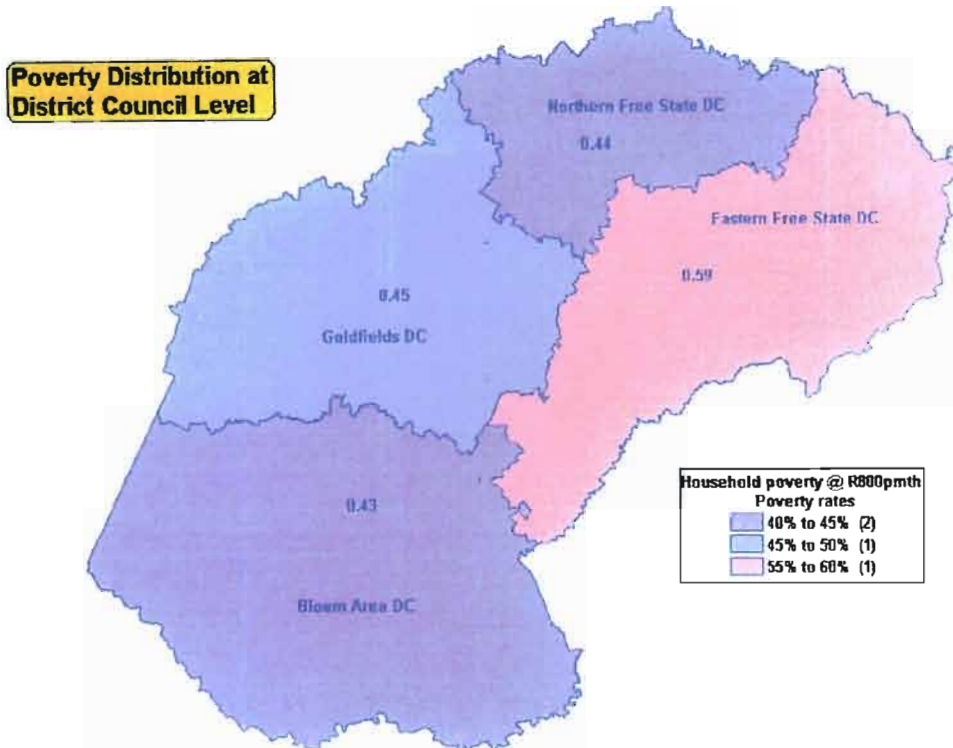


Figure 1

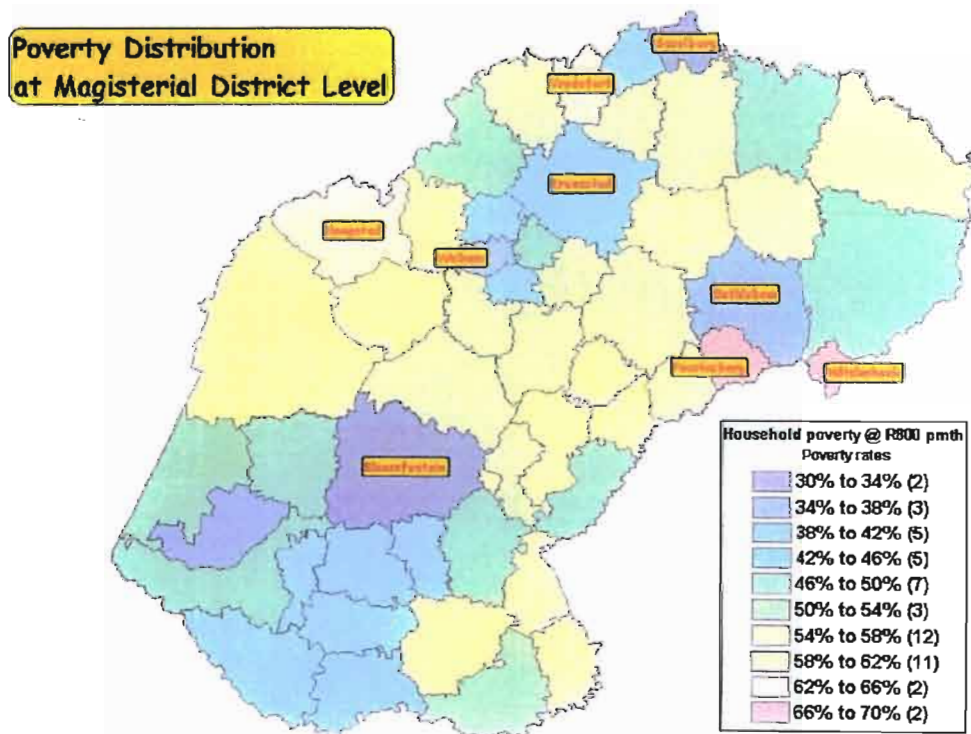


Figure 2

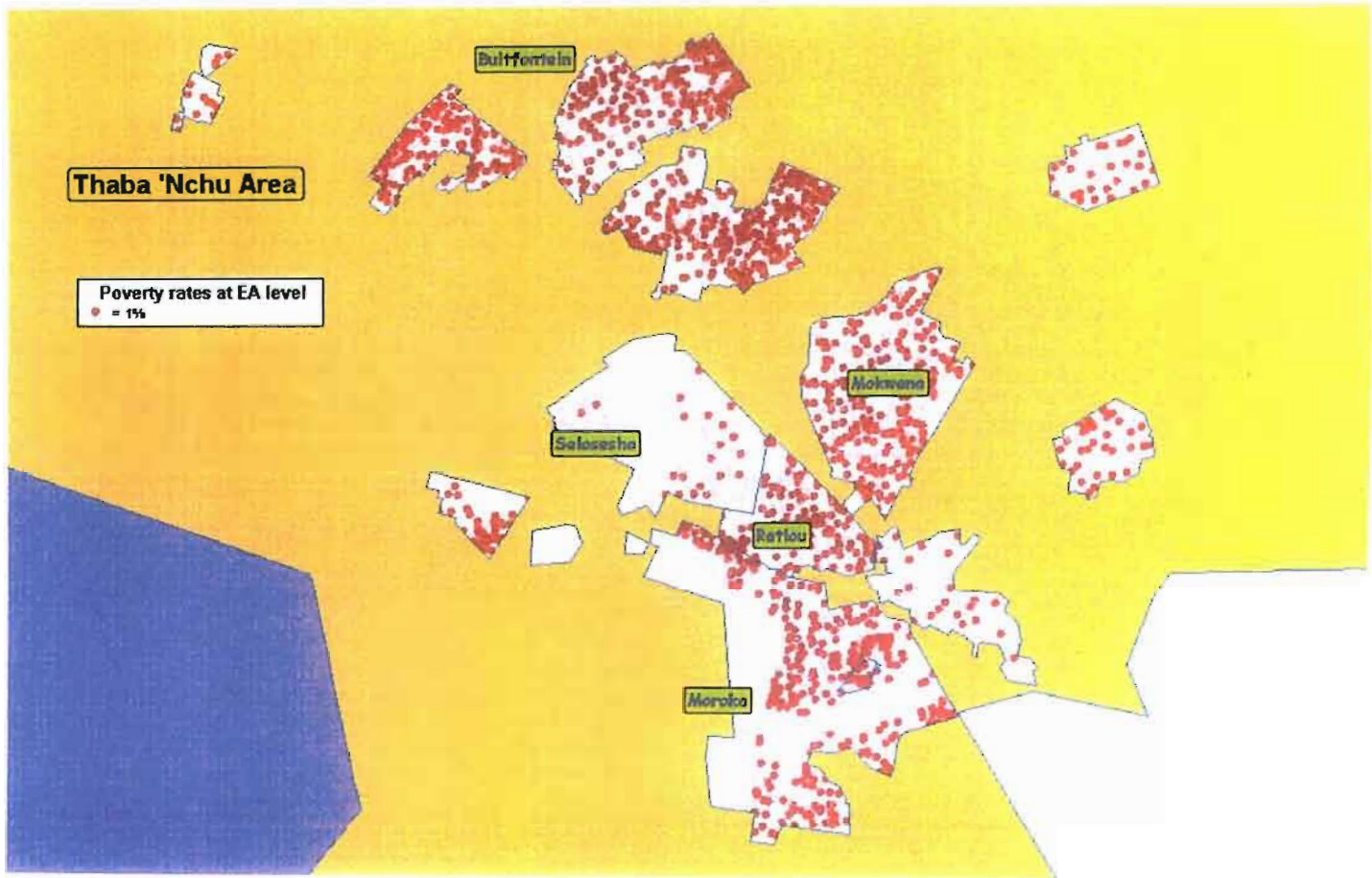


Figure 3

in the mushrooming of informal settlements in the region. The pressure for housing has compelled people to occupy vacant plots. As this research was being written, the national government has embarked on a massive housing programme intended to meet the housing need. As to whether such a programme will ultimately meet everybody's need remains to be seen. There are far too many people making demands on the government for it to deliver.

#### **2.3.4. Unemployment**

Finally, one of the characteristics of poverty in Thaba'Nchu is unemployment; which is both a symptom and a cause. Unemployment is understood to be very high and contributing to poverty. Of all the characteristics of poverty discussed above, this study focuses on unemployment, its causes, effects and what can be done for its eradication. It needs to be mentioned therefore from the very outset that this study does not offer a comprehensive solution to poverty, as the subject is too broad to be properly dealt with in a study such as this one.

Let us turn to the causes of poverty in Thaba'Nchu.

### **2.4. THE CAUSES OF POVERTY**

Here it will be argued that the problem of poverty has arisen as a result of South Africa's political history. We look at past racial policies in South Africa, and those that took place in the new South Africa, to see how these impacted on poverty in Thaba'Nchu. These events have had a direct impact on the incidence and prevalence of poverty in the area. The problem of poverty in Thaba'Nchu, therefore, needs to be looked at against such a background. That will constitute the first part. In the second part, we shall focus on events that took place in Thaba'Nchu itself which contributed to a high unemployment rate in the area. It is here that we are going to hear voices of people who experience poverty first hand, speaking about what they perceive are causes of poverty in Thaba'Nchu. Let us begin with the legacy of apartheid and the institutional racism it entrenched.

#### **2.4.1. Land Dispossession**

This section maintains that much of rural poverty today was caused by land dispossession. Central to the dispossession of the original owners of land anywhere in South Africa was the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts, which provided for Black reserves, and also for segregation of Blacks and Whites in rural areas (Makhaya 1990:5). The abovementioned Acts had very painful results for the people of Thaba'Nchu.

Murray (1992:85) cites Sol Plaatje who had this sad tale to write on the occasion of land

dispossession of the Thaba’Nchu people:

The morning was showery. Thaba’Nchu Hill in the background, always visible for scores of miles in every direction, towered high above the surrounding landscape. Its stony slopes covered with a light mist from peak to base, it stood like a silent witness to the outraged treaty between the Barolong and the Boers.

The land in Thaba’Nchu belonged to Black owners long before the settlers came. They had vast tracts of land on which to farm and for grazing. These Black people did not depend on money for a living, they produced for themselves what they needed from farming. The problem came with colonization and, subsequently, the Natives Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, which saw most black landowners dispossessed. The result was that whites owned 87% of the land whilst blacks had the remaining 13%. On the consequences of these Acts, Makhaya (1990:5) writes that rural households were made landless tenants and deprived of engaging freely in agriculture. The obvious result of this was poverty. This is true considering that black people were removed from land on which they were free to cultivate crops, to the reserves where most often land was not conducive for agriculture and being small, made it impossible to continue with livestock farming.

The problem of poverty in Thaba’Nchu then is a decades’ old problem manufactured by the racial policies of subjugation, domination and control of the people. As this research is written, the poor in Thaba’Nchu are landless and riddled with poverty. Much as poverty in Thaba’Nchu has got to do with the fact that there is high unemployment, the historical fact cannot be ignored that Black people were dispossessed of the land. If poverty is to be eradicated, a comprehensive strategy will have to be adopted which will ensure not only that there is employment, but that land is redistributed so that agricultural projects can be embarked upon by communities.

We can further argue that racial policies are to blame for much of poverty in Thaba’Nchu because their livestock was culled, thus making people poorer by the day. Murray (1992:177) records the people’s bitterness as they said:

We were born here on the reserve. We used to have between one and a hundred animals. I had 18 cattle, 25 sheep and 2 horses. That was in 1940. Today I have 2 cattle and 2 calves. The rest have been branded. I don’t have a horse or a sheep left. My cart stands idle. I can’t use it because my horses were also branded. I am just told to point one out and it is branded ‘C’. If I prevent my cattle from being branded, the inspectors turn to the



sheep. [Meeting: Yes! That is the complain of us all!] in the course of the years my stock has gone down in numbers. In 1940, 7 cows and 1 bull were culled; my sheep went down to 15 and my horses to 1. The next year two of my cattle and one horse were branded. During the following years, every year one head of cattle was branded, so that today I have just two left. I now have no sheep left. I just had to slaughter the branded sheep.

Apartheid was costly: it cost the people their land, but it also cost them their livestock. Numbers had to be culled periodically, to ensure that there was no over-grazing and overpopulation of animals. The end result of land dispossession was the dependency on wage employment. Many of those who were once the people of the land, sold their labour either to the farmers as farm workers or to the neighbouring town of Bloemfontein (Murray 1999:162)

#### *2.4.2. Overpopulation*

Overpopulation contributed to poverty, especially in rural areas. The racial policies referred to above (1913 and 1936 Land Acts) provided for black reserves. Black landowners who lost their land became tenants and labourers on white farms and some were compelled by law and restricted to these reserves. The reserves became dumping grounds for all those Blacks who were found outside the designated areas. The apartheid laws were therefore responsible for this exodus of people into the reserves. The result was overpopulation, overcrowding, and thus poverty. Murray (1992:119) writes about the problem of overcrowding in Thaba’Nchu reserves and cites W.Z. Fenyang who is vocal about the problem: “There are so many landless natives today that the position is really alarming,” and adds “We ask for more land because more than half the inhabitants of the reserves have no land.” Adding to the problem of overpopulation was the politico-economic restrictions, which fueled the population density. The Influx Control Act confined and made it impossible for anyone to escape to other centres in search of employment (Makhaya 1990:5). The above explanation shows that there are other reasons behind overpopulation and population growth unlike those who often blame them on the Blacks, arguing that they have too many children (Wilson and Ramphela 1989:244). Other opinions made about them are that the Blacks are idle, and being bored, indulge in regular sexual activities.

The truth is that apartheid policies were directly responsible for forcing people and restricting them into reserves, thus creating overpopulation, and subsequently, suffering. Overpopulation has a bad effect on the environment. It creates a situation of imbalance between people and resources and exerts great pressure on the land, straining its carrying capacity, resulting in degradation and

increased poverty (Nurnberger 1999:72).

The lack of capital and the small land allocations made matters worse, and contributed to more suffering. People who lived in the reserves had lost everything. They did not have the money nor did they have a span of oxen to pull the plough when planting, since most had been culled. What all this means is that the poor people did not have the capital to sustain themselves in farming activities. The problem of small land allocation presented severe economic hardships for the people. The prerequisite for good agriculture or farming activity is an open piece of land, sufficient for cultivation and livestock farming. The small land allocations meant that people could no longer engage in farming to maintain their families.

### *2.4.3. Bantu Education*

The contributor of much of poverty generally in SA and particularly in Thaba’Nchu is the system of Bantu Education. This education system, which was made law by the Bantu Education Act of 1953, aimed to make Blacks perpetually inferior, and subservient to white people. To prove that this was the goal of such an education, Dr Verwoerd did not mince his words in his address to Parliament:

When I have control of the native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood to realize that equality with Europeans is not for them. There is no place for him (the black child) in European society above the level of certain forms of labour... what is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice.

(Mathabane,2000)

Contrary to the South Africa Bureau of Rural Affairs (1955:4), which maintains that there were opportunities offered to blacks by Bantu Education, it is clear that this system of education had more to offer whites than blacks. It was designed to frustrate and retard black progress and advancement. Blacks were expected not to participate, and thereby be active in leadership roles, but to assist whites to rise up the economic and political ladders. Schools, therefore, were instruments of apartheid, which were utilized to oppress Africans so that the status quo of master-servant could be maintained.

Changes brought about by this system of education were that the education of Africans was transformed from that of old mission schools. According to Leonard (1969:155), such

transformation involved a cut of subsidies to private schools, and those still running had to apply for a license to stay operational. Soon private schools were closed, and private colleges transferred to governmental control. This transformation had a negative impact on education in Thaba’Nchu, which had both a mission school and hospital. The purpose of the Bantu Education Act was to end the progress that had already been made by the mission and private schools, which had taught African children mathematics, English and the sciences. These schools sought to ensure that Africans would leave school ready to actively participate in the modern South Africa (Mathabane,2000).

Because Bantu Education was founded on apartheid, even the funding of education was done along discriminatory lines. Bantu Education also meant that the distribution of resources to schools was done along racial lines. Black schools were characterized by an acute shortage of resources compared to white schools. Education for a black person was a struggle. This system of education is partly to blame for the majority of the people who are illiterate. Of those who managed to go to school some dropped out because education was not interesting and there were no resources to clarify difficult concepts. Wilson and Ramphela (1989:141) note that African pupils, each with a subsidy of R234 in 1983/4, got only one-seventh (14 %) of the subsidy of R1654 available for white pupils. They also make a valid point that, given the subsidy provided for Blacks, almost all White children of school going age are at school when most of the Black children are out of school.

Bantu Education was also known for a lack of quality. Compared to white pupils, the ratio in 1984 registered an average pupil-teacher ratio of 19:1 for whites and 41:1 for Blacks (Wilson and Ramphela1989:143). The prerequisite for sound and successful learning is a balanced ratio that will enable the teacher to know each pupil in-depth so as to attend to them individually. Apartheid education made that impossible for Blacks. A further problem was the poorly qualified teachers, who did not have the training to deal with overcrowded classrooms. Due to insufficient desks, schools in a bad condition, unavailability of textbooks, and aids such as libraries and laboratories seldom being available, teachers lacked the morale necessary for successful teaching (1989:144).

Research on Education in South Africa (Resa) refers to a situation whereby due to limited finance, parents had to dig deep into their pockets to build schools in the Bantustan and to buy all books required by the school (1988:16). This means that rural parents in rural communities had to struggle along to see to it that their children were educated because the government provided little funds for education. Along with other problems that impacted on education of Blacks was the

problem of transport, since schools were often a distance away, especially in rural areas. Sometimes pupils had to walk to school on an empty stomach, because parents could not even afford to provide for all their meals (Wilson and Ramphela 1989:147).

Much of what has been said is to illustrate that education for Blacks was specifically designed to frustrate efforts towards self-advancement. The difficulties and poverty that we face in SA today, and also in Thaba’Nchu, was long planned by the white Nationalist Party who wanted to placate their constituency among the white working class, who were afraid of job competition with the skilled and educated Blacks.

#### *2.4.4. Silencing Organizations*

Any mention of causes of poverty would be insufficient without including the desire on the part of the apartheid government to deny political power to the Black people. Much of today’s poverty is directly attributable to the lack of political power during apartheid South Africa. The fact is emphasized by Wilson and Ramphela (1989:226) who argue that: “A necessary condition for getting to grips with poverty in any society is that the poor must have political power and be able to participate effectively in the decisions that affect their lives.” The whites had both political power and economic power, and excluded Blacks from deciding how power and wealth were going to be distributed among all the inhabitants.

The contradictions in this power and wealth are clearly shown by a study done by Alao (1997:60) who writes that consistent with apartheid policies, 95 percent of managerial occupations were occupied by the Whites, with a tiny minority of less than 1 percent occupied by Blacks in the same category. The contradictions were more conspicuous when it comes to the labour force. Figures show that while Blacks occupied a huge 85 percent, Whites had only one percent. That illustrates clearly the results of a power imbalance, and the refusal of whites to share with blacks. This is no coincidence, as the apartheid government made every possible move to ensure that white interests were protected. Blacks were excluded from the voters’ roll, and from actively sharing in economic benefits of the country. Blacks were denied political participation and the government of the day was exclusively white. Laws were passed which entrenched apartheid and defended the status quo. For instance, there were facilities for whites and blacks. Blacks were not allowed, by law, to live in the same areas as whites, they could not be schooled together, or even use the same colleges and universities.

But this state of affairs could not go on unchallenged forever. Apartheid gave birth to political movements, which challenged this monopoly on power. Foremost of these is the African National Congress (ANC), which was formed in 1912 (Alao 1997:63). The 1970s saw the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement that also entered the struggle for power. The struggle for power was intensified in the 1980's with the mushrooming of political movements, among which was the United Democratic Movement. These organizations were democratic representatives of the poor, who were opposed to the monopoly of power, and wanted a stake in that power.

The response of the State to the grievances of the poor was violent. Wilson and Ramphela (1989:226), correctly had this to say on the state response: "In South Africa, down the years, political movements, trade unions, and student organizations have been banned and their leaders harassed, some killed." The wars in the name of "counter insurgency" that the State carried out within and outside the country were meant to protect and secure power in white hands. This period witnessed what was commonly known as the "total strategy" against opponents of the state. The security establishment ensured that the laws were applied, by detaining, torturing, and killing leaders and freedom fighters (Amnesty International, 1999).

The might of the state could not, however, silence the poor victims of state power. That is understandable, because the issue central to the war was power, which in the eyes of the Blacks was illegitimately wielded by whites. The state, the arguments went, did not have the moral authority to power. The power that the state had was derived from a tiny section of the population and, as such, was illegitimate. In my opinion, it was inevitable that the state was going to collapse, given that whereas white soldiers fought to support the apartheid structure, freedom fighters were engaged in a war that was based on a moral conviction that the state was not entitled to power.

The government's resolve to cling to power at all cost resulted in the birth of the "independent" states, which the state thought would be the answer to Blacks' demands. Of the ten Bantustans four were granted "independence" among which was Bophuthatswana in 1977 (Murray 1992:156). But Bophuthatswana became nothing more than an emphasis on ethnicity. Access to work, residence, and old age pensions depended on whether one was in possession of a residence permit or not. This claim is well made by Murray (1992:157) who states:

Scarce resources were administered through the Bantustan bureaucracies. Competition for them was structured in terms of who 'belonged' and who did not 'belong' to the dominant ethnic group associated with each Bantustan. Thus the experience of general socio-

economic deprivation - gross over-crowding, high unemployment and extreme poverty - was routinely transported into experiences of specific inter-ethnic antagonism.

Bophuthatswana, just like the South African government at the time, relied on force to protect its power. Opposition to government was not tolerated. The Bophuthatswana government used all its might to suppress the revolutionary spirit. Research on Education in South Africa (1988:11) attributes the lack of activism on the part of people in this area as due to acute repression, which was inflicted on the communities through the youth groups who terrorized progressive youth.

What we have tried to show in this section is that much of poverty is to be blamed on the apartheid government's claim to power, denying the greater majority of the people participation in the decision-making processes, which affect their lives. The minority White government, and later the bantustan, made laws which were favourable to only a section of the population and not to others. As a result of such abuse of power on the part of the authorities, many poor people continued to be impoverished.

#### *2.4.5. Migrant Labour*

The search for the causes of poverty in Thaba'Nchu will be incomplete without a mention of the contribution of the migrant labour system, especially to the mines, and how it impacted on the region. Migrant labour resulted in poverty in the area. The mining industry became aware that its success as an industry relied on its ability to call and hire men to keep the wheels of its profits rolling. For that to happen the industry, through the Chamber of Mines, recruited men for its labour on a wider area than South Africa and later in the "independent" homelands (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:198). The former Bophuthatswana (of which Thaba'Nchu was a part) also served as a supply area for migrant labour to the mines (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:198). Able bodied men, were recruited to the Goldfields Mines in the Free State and Johannesburg. To ensure that there would be a consistent supply of labour from the Bantustan, the Chamber of Mines established its labour recruiting arm called The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA), which set up offices in Thaba'Nchu as well as in other areas of the country. With this recruitment body in place, men in their great numbers crowded TEBA offices in search of employment. At the time of writing this research, figures of men who were already recruited to the mines from Thaba'Nchu were not available. Wilson and Ramphele (1989:198) estimated in 1984 that most of over 1,5 million migrants came from reserves within the country. If that number is broken down according to the number of reserves, we are able to estimate how many able bodied men were recruited from each reserve. Jooma's (1991:28) study later reveals that in the former "independent" homeland of

Bophuthatswana a total of 264 373 were in the mining industry, let alone other sectors of the economy to which others were employed. If we give the allowance that there are other illegal migrants who are employed and are not covered by the statistics the figure can be even higher.

On the estimates of the number of men who work as migrant labourers the work of Nattrass (1976:92) is helpful who contends that “for every five economically active men in the Bantu Rural Homeland areas, there are six more absent from home, working as migrant labourers.” The reason why we have had to dwell a lot on the estimates is twofold: (1) To give a picture of the number of men absent from the area and (2) to help us understand better what impact that will have on the local economy.

What are the consequences of men leaving their homes and region and going out to work in other areas? Of what economic value is such a movement to the supplying and receiving areas? Wilson and Ramphela (1989:199) are agreed that both areas benefit, which explains why the system was persistent. It may be so, but economically speaking both do not benefit in the same way. The receiving area's benefits include: the workers' invest energies in building areas where they work, such as spending money in the urban areas thus strengthening its economy. On the other hand, management also makes a contribution, such as investment in capital, job creation, and a general economic growth of the area. In short what takes place in the receiving area is wealth accumulation and a high standard of living.

Compared with the sending area, the contradiction is obvious. With the absence of men whose duty it is to plough fields, look after livestock, make and repair tools for farming, the economic impact cannot be overemphasized. Wilson (1972:175) notes a decline in agricultural production when men go out to work. Although there will be an increase in income with migration, those who are left behind at home are considerably poorer (1972:196). The problem with migration is that it creates a situation whereby men do not belong anywhere, thus preventing them from engaging in gardening, renovations to the house or any other thing of economic value to the family. The maintenance of any one family is not easy, but having to maintain two, is even more difficult. The ideal situation would have been that all are accommodated together in the area close to where the spouse works. With migrant labour the large share of the earnings is spent where the worker lives.

From what has been discussed above it becomes clear that migrant labour has robbed rural communities of able bodied men who had their part to play in the economic development of the

area. That has resulted in the agricultural decline, and consequent poverty.

#### *2.4.6. The Colour Bar and Job Reservation*

One of the reasons why blacks are in poverty today is also due to the Colour Bar. The Colour Bar was used to safeguard the concerns and interests of Whites over against those of Blacks. Wilson and Ramphela (1989:195) trace the problem of colour to slavery and conquest through to the Dutch East Indian Company. In subsequent years it was “buttressed by the whole worker’s fear of unemployment” (Randall 1972:40). Randall also contends that the problem of the Colour Bar was made worse by politicians who propagated messages such as one that the upgrading of Black workers may make Whites subordinate to Blacks, and result in Whites having to take orders from Blacks.

The Colour Bar affected all sectors of the economy. It meant that Blacks would remain perpetual servants of Whites. Blacks would take orders from whites and not vice versa. Randall (1972:4) echoes the words of the Minister of Labour who did not mince his words when he said that “the National Party was determined to apply its policies on the basis of certain guidelines: no White workers would work under a Black; there would be no labour integration and no White would be pushed out of his job by Blacks.” The Colour Bar caused major economic setbacks for Blacks because it meant that salaries paid to Whites would remain higher than those for Blacks. But it also meant that Blacks would never be promoted to any higher level because that was reserved for the Whites. Thus the colour bar went hand in hand with job reservation.

According to Wilson and Ramphela (1989:196), compared to other sectors of the economy, there is nowhere where the Colour Bar was as rigid as it was in the mining and railways. This is partly so because scholars are agreed that mine managers themselves supported the colour bar (Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman 1991:80). The managers appreciated the colour bar because it separated whites from black labour. The other reason is that the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 served the interests of the mines because it justified the pass laws and other controlling measures on blacks. With this law, the Colour Bar was firmly entrenched in workplaces. Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman (1991:83) contend that in successive National Party governments under Malan, Strydom and Verwoerd, the mining Colour Bar was entrenched, especially in the 1956 revision of the Mines and Works Amendment Act. The result was that, not only did the ratio of black and white narrow, but the wages of Whites increased at a faster rate than those of Blacks, which remained stagnant.



Mention was made earlier that the Colour Bar affected all sectors of the economy. It affected how government expenditure was allocated to education, housing, health, agriculture, job creation, and energy. This meant that blacks were discriminated against over wages, educational subsidies, where and how one was to be housed, how Blacks were to receive medical attention, availability of land and assistance for agriculture, work, and energy. If this is how the Colour Bar worked, then one can make this fitting conclusion that it was made to channel resources away from Blacks to enrich the Whites. Resources were provided for Whites, whilst Blacks were blocked from having access to resources, thus impoverishing them.

For the Thaba’Nchu people, like all black people in South Africa, this must have been very harsh; having to be discriminated against in a workplace, kept and held down in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations, being paid less than what Whites received, and receiving less in state expenditure compared to their whites counterparts. The causes of poverty in Thaba’Nchu are as a result of a history of denial of a people to share equally with Whites in the economy. It is about institutional and economic conditions for Whites’ self-advancement.

In the discussion about the causes of poverty in Thaba’Nchu we have tried to show how they are linked to the history of the apartheid policies of the then South African government. The causes of poverty in Thaba’Nchu therefore, cannot be ascribed to the period under the new South Africa alone, but are results of a conscious and a deliberate bias against the Blacks by the apartheid government over a long period of time. During that period Blacks were dispossessed, impoverished and exposed to conditions of poverty. Having considered the causes of poverty as emanating from apartheid policies, we shall now look at globalization to see how it contributed to poverty.

#### **2.4.7. Globalization**

As we look for the causes of poverty in Thaba’Nchu, in my opinion, globalization cannot be avoided. Globalization impacts on national, regional and local level of our country’s economy. People are divided over what benefits globalization has for the world. On the one hand there are those who contend, such as Clare Short (New Agriculturalist, 2001), that the system will benefit the poor, thus rejecting attitudes that the effects thereof are disadvantageous to the poor. This mentality is representative of the multinational corporations and most supporters of globalization (New Agriculturalist, 2001). On the other hand there are those such as Denis Brutus who argue against the system believing that it is going to increase the already prevalent poverty (News Hour, 1998). Brutus’ views are representative of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

(COSATU), NGOs, trade unions, student and other organizations, which represent the poor. Globalization means most things to most people depending on how one sees it.

But clearly considered, globalization is the “order” of the world that defies national boundaries and territories. Ntloko (1999:5) aptly defines it as a strategy of international capital to create more markets for itself. That is occasioned by the crisis of over accumulation, over production and the consumer capacity to buy those goods. Driven by the greed to make more profit at whatever cost, national states and markets are overcome and replaced by this new “order.” As a result of this, governments are rendered powerless because they can no longer strive for the interests and protection of the workers, as doing that would be slowing the government’s race to catch up with the advanced nations. In our context, the result of globalization is among other things, the adoption by the government of the macro-economic strategy of Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). GEAR is a clear example of what international capital can do to the economy of a country, as it was not a construct of the people as the Reconstruction and Development Programme was, but as part of globalization was manufactured by and served the interest of the international investors. (Ntloko 1999:7)

The impact of GEAR on the economy, and employment or unemployment, can be realized by looking at the promises made and what actually took place. GEAR had promised 250 000 jobs in 1997 (Franklin, 1997). Ntloko (1999:6) records job losses during 1990 to 1996 of 9.1% in the manufacturing, construction 21,3%, and mining 27,5%. Instead of about a million jobs promised by 1999 almost 422 000 workers had lost their jobs! That there was a critical rise in unemployment was inevitable considering that globalization goes hand in hand with privatization, whereby the means of production no longer are in government’s control but are now in private ownership, whose interest is not job securities but profits. To achieve targeted growth and profits, companies “downsize” or even “rightsize” their staffing, thereby contributing to massive unemployment. The result is the retrenchment of workers and growing marginalization of the poor. Globalization is known by its lack of uplifting the standard of life of the poor; the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Due to the abhorrence of trade unionism by companies, those in the workplace have no job security, the casualization of labour increases and the emphasis on part-time contracts reduces workers’ wages even more.

As this research was being conducted, estimates of workers who had been directly affected by this system could not be secured from the Department of Labour in Thaba’Nchu. Such records are not

available, or the information unknown. What is known, however, is that privatization contributes to high unemployment and poverty in the area. A description of what happens is given by Lenong who says: "*Puso e rekisa mesebetsi mme seo se dira hore batho ba latlhelwe ke mesebetsi ya bona.*" Translated it reads that "government is selling off jobs and that makes workers jobless" (See Appendix 1). Privatization did not affect workers employed in Thaba'Nchu alone, but affected those working in and around Bloemfontein, but resident in Thaba'Nchu.

## **2.5. THE EXTENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

Unemployment is a global problem, which continues to grow, affecting both the industrialized nations of the world and the developing countries (Nürnberg 1990:6). But its effects and impact are greatly felt by the majority in the less developed parts of the world. In South Africa it is highest among Africans "and in rural areas, among women and the youth, and among those with no previous work knowledge" (SA Govt, 1998). It is generally agreed that the most significant contributor to poverty is unemployment. In this part of the research we are going to look at the situation of unemployment in Thaba'Nchu and how that contributes to poverty in the area.

It is difficult to establish the exact figures regarding the extent of unemployment in Thaba'Nchu from current written sources, as these are unavailable. The records available contain figures pertaining to the period of Bophuthatswana government. What is available to us is the information provided by South Africa Census 96, which has obvious limitations since it relies on registered work seekers. Excluded are those unemployed who are not registered, and others who are discouraged from constantly seeking employment. These limitations, however, cannot prevent us from understanding unemployment in Thaba'Nchu, since it is generally agreed amongst scholars that rural areas are the most afflicted with unemployment (Nürnberg 1990:7).

Be that as it may, the rate of unemployment in Bophuthatswana is given by Viljoen (1991:51) between 1980-1990 as growing from 14,7% to 33,1%, a staggering growth of 18,4% in 10 years. However, this is a regional figure. The rate of unemployment in Thaba'Nchu in 1990 was 37,6% Viljoen (1991:121). If we agree that unemployment was already as high in 1990, and given that it grows annually, then it should be terribly high by now. Looking at the following Table 1, we note that the number of those who are not employed almost equaled the number of those who are employed.

Table 1: CSS/SSD South Africa Census 96 Employment Status by Gender for Person weighted, Thaba’Nchu

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Employed	8,536	7,211	15,748
Unemployed, looking for work	5,249	6,818	12,067
Total	13,786	14,030	27,815

Table 1 by Statistics South Africa 1996

The rate of unemployment is supported by the perceptions of people in Thaba’Nchu who, in interviews, talk about a very high unemployment rate in the area. Though they do not have the conventional tools of measuring unemployment, they are able to tell that it is “extreme” (see interview 1, 2, 3, 4). Unemployment affects everyone, but the women and the youth are the most affected since a number of men have gone out under migrant labour, or are working locally or in the neighbouring towns. As shown above on Table 1, most statistics show that a greater percentage of the unemployed consisted of women.

## 2.6. THE CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THABA ’NCHU

We are going to look at the economic situation in Bophuthatswana just before the new South Africa and the post 1994 government policy and see how that contributed to unemployment figures rising in Thaba’Nchu. Unemployment was already high, and was made worse by the collapse of Bophuthatswana, and SA government policies. Let us look at events that contributed to unemployment.

### 2.6.1. Disinvestment by Taiwanese Investors

During the Bophuthatswana period Taiwan came and invested in Bophuthatswana. Across the homeland, industries and firms were built where among others, shoes, jugs, jewellery, and plastic items were manufactured (see Appendix 3). The creation of these firms provided employment mostly to rural women in Thaba’Nchu. The Bophuthatswana government, in exchange for

investments, gave the Taiwanese 50% in subsidies for the wages of their factory employees (Kutu 2000:7). To ensure that business was going to go on undisturbed and that no large amounts of capital were going to be invested into Bophuthatswana, if circumstances were not favourable, the government embarked on a system of repression and suppression of political activists. Militarization of the state provided the right atmosphere for the Taiwanese to operate. Employees could be exploited and dismissed with nowhere to run to. The “stability” of the economy was protected by the state.

With the coming to power of the new government, the Taiwanese business people realized that things were not going to be the same again. They disinvested from Thaba’Nchu and relocated elsewhere in South Africa, leaving behind empty structures which still stand today. As a result of relocations vast numbers of people were left unemployed (See Appendix 1). These former employees who had the skill and the know-how could not continue with business because they did not have the resources to do so.

#### **2.6.2 Government Policy after 1994**

The problem of unemployment in Thaba’Nchu is also blamed on the provincial government (See Appendix 1, 2, 4). Thaba’Nchu was a part of the self contained homeland of Bophuthatswana; boasting a hospital, teaching training institution, a boarding school, and a few primary schools, which served a great number of people (both skilled and unskilled) with employment. Adding to the list was a fire brigade, Bophuthatswana National Development Corporation (BNDC), a hospital for the mentally ill called Poloko Sanatorium, Bartemea (a school for the deaf and blind), and last but not least the orphanage. All these institutions were important for the locals, but also for the rural poor, who depended on them for employment. Men and women could be seen coming from their homes in the buses to work, and would return to their homes in the afternoon. Employment made a difference in the lives of the people because even if they were poor and living in conditions of poverty, wages made the difference between life and death.

However, government policy after 1994 brought a turning point in as far as public servants were concerned. The provincial government did not see the need for so many institutions, and identified an “overpopulation of public servants” in Thaba’Nchu. To ensure that these were distributed equitably in the province, government embarked upon a policy of rationalization. That meant that government institutions and the number of public servants were to be trimmed (Kutu 2000:8). It made no sense in the eyes of those in power that one region was self sufficient with the

infrastructure and resources when other regions had a lack or shortage thereof. The other problem that faced the government was that it had no resources to invest in the public service in this area, overpopulated both in buildings and in human resources, at the expense of other areas. The result of rationalization of the public service was downsizing, retrenchments, and closures of some government institutions (See Appendix 1, 2, 4).

We are going to look at all affected institutions and see how they were impacted by rationalization.

a) The Health Service

M.B. Setlogelo in Kutu (2000:9) contends that rationalization presented the health service with the greatest challenge of doing away with the fragmentation and duplication which characterized the public service. There were two hospitals in Zastron, a small town, one for Blacks and the other for Whites. The new Free State Province had four departments rendering health services, i.e. the National Department of Health, Free State Provincial Department of Health, Bophuthatswana Department of Health and Qwa Qwa Department of Health. These services and facilities had to be rationalized in order to secure justice, fairness, quality and equitable resourcing to the communities.

Rationalization in Thaba’Nchu resulted, in the conversion of a fully fledged Moroka Hospital into a small health service provider (See Appendix 2). Moroka Hospital is claimed by the community to have once been both a training institution for nurses but also a place that offered employment to the poor. It served doctors, nurses, the skilled and unskilled with employment. With the transformation of the hospital some members of staff relocated to Bloemfontein while others took retrenchment packages. The most unfortunate were the unskilled who had to be retrenched, thus adding to the already high numbers of the unemployed. With such changes many were simply squeezed out by the health system. Some other institutions of health affected were Poloko Sanatorium, Bartimea and the orphanage.

b) Education

Nkgoedi in Kutu (2000:8) alludes to the fact that the Department of Education in the new South Africa was faced with a problem of dealing with an overpopulation of teachers and schools in Thaba’Nchu, inherited from the Bophuthatswana government. The provincial government did not have the necessary resources to provide for that concentration of public servants. To ensure that there was equitable distribution of resources throughout the entire province, government embarked

on a policy of rationalization. This meant, for example, that some full-time teachers were to be redeployed outside Thaba’Nchu. According to K Sebolai in Kutu (2000:9) early retrenchment packages were offered to those who were not interested in being redeployed elsewhere. The impact of this policy came to be felt most especially by the part-time teachers, all of whom were retrenched.



**Moroka High School affected by rationalization**

But the problem of unemployment in Thaba’Nchu was also caused by what Cawker and Whiteford (1993:2) refer to as a problem of the demand of labour in an economy which is unable to match the supply of labour in that economy. Thaba’Nchu, like most places in South Africa, is faced with the problem of having to deal with an over-supply of qualified teachers.

#### c) Assets of Thaba’Nchu

The problem of unemployment is made worse by the continued possession of the assets of Thaba’Nchu by the North West province (See Appendix 2 and 4). When the new South Africa government took over control of Thaba’Nchu, the then former capital of Mafikeng froze all its assets in Thaba’Nchu. These assets, among others, include the former Bophuthatswana National Development Corporation (now the North West Development Corporation), and the site where the Taiwanese erected their factories. These buildings still stand today unoperational. The cry of the community is that the North West Province hand over these assets, so the community can begin to embark on employment creation schemes. As this research was conducted the local government is hopeful that plans are underway to ensure that such much needed assets are transferred back to

the community. The Free State government had already made a commitment to renovate and upgrade those properties once a formal transaction had taken place (See Appendix 2).

We have made the point above that assets of Thaba’Nchu were frozen. The implication that had on the Bophuthatswana National Development Corporation was that its staff had to be retrenched.

### **2.6.3. The impact of HIV/AIDS**

This chapter will be incomplete if we were to exclude the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on unemployment. The pandemic is a contributor to unemployment. Studies conclude that HIV/AIDS causes a decline in labour demand which in turn is caused by a decline in economic growth (Arndt and Lewis,2001). This makes economic sense, the less output one makes in a country or region as a result of HIV/AIDS, the more it will affect economic growth and labour demand. The other way of explaining how HIV/AIDS impacts on unemployment is when employees, suffering as a result of this disease, are laid off, thus increasing the statistics of the unemployed. In my opinion HIV/AIDS contributes to unemployment in that large amounts of money is spent by government in caring for the sufferers, instead of financing job creation projects, thus not combating poverty and unemployment. In other words, HIV/AIDS is very costly in that it not only robs us of a life, but has financial implications as well.

## **2.7. THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

Davidson, Honey and Thomas (1990:7) make the important observation that it is not easy to distinguish between the causes and the effects of poverty, as there are complex interrelationships which exist between them. We are going to make use of the works of De Beer and Swanepoel (1997:9) who make the following worthy comments on the cycle of poverty. They argue that the poor are caught in a deprivation trap, ie: the poor suffer poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, and powerlessness.

### 1) The household is poor

In most rural communities the majority are the poor, who suffer community poverty. The rich are found, but are very few in number. While the relatively rich enjoy their wealth, the poor endure poverty and depend on others to break this cycle. The rich among the poor also suffer poverty of a different kind. Theirs is not how they are going to get income because they have stable jobs which ensure that their wealth is maintained. The poverty that they suffer are conditions that other rural poor suffer.



2) The household is physically weak

Rural households are characterized by big families who often rely on one person for their livelihoods. Since the family is large, consisting of the elderly and children, food becomes a scarce commodity as income received is inadequate to supply for the entire family needs. The result is the reliance on foodstuffs, which are very low nutritionally. This, in turn, contributes to sicknesses such as malnutrition, but it also affects performance at school and labour output.

3) The household is isolated

The households in rural communities are isolated and far removed from hospitals and clinics. Transport between communities is irregular. Communication is slow, which adds to the difficulty the poor find in economically liberating themselves. Isolation also contributes to illiteracy as communities are removed from key centres of learning.

4) The household is vulnerable

Poverty makes the household vulnerable from several things such as, for example, when the person upon whom the family depends for their livelihood dies or is retrenched. In such situations the partner who is left at home is compelled to leave the children behind in search of work. But vulnerability is also caused, according to De Beer and Swanepoel (1997:10), by the poor's dependence on landlords and traditional authorities, who also make claims on them.

5) The household is powerless

The poor are powerless in the face of those who have more than them. Powerlessness is caused by stigmatization which according to Jones (1990:206) effectively denies that the poor are fellow human beings who are "fit, willing and able" to participate in the world of human affairs. Before the rich, the poor are of no status, and only serve as reservoirs for cheap labour. Very often they lack the power to influence public policy on matters that affect their lives.

According to the Institute for the Study of the Bible (1999:3), the unemployed poor also suffer from low self-esteem and depression. Both men and women are affected although the situation can be very difficult for men who traditionally are expected to be providers in the home. When it does happen that one can no longer provide for the family, that becomes devastating. Unemployment results in the region not developing. That is true because development depends on the participation of its members in the economy. Development in this case becomes stagnant if not regressive. This is the case because the region is unable to use its full strength for growth since its dependent

members are pulling it down.

Poverty and unemployment contribute to high levels of crime in Thaba’Nchu. People are unemployed and hungry. When there is no source of income they end up involving themselves in criminal activities (See Appendix 2). Maribe in Kutu (2001:12) attributes criminal activities to unemployment in the region. Unemployment contributes to violence in the family. This is a result of stress exerted on the family causing conflict situations and misunderstandings (Nürnberg 1990:9). In many families, stress manifests itself in fights caused by deep rooted feelings of insufficiency and inferiority complex.

There is also the aspect of alcoholism that is brought about by suffering. Because life is so difficult for the unemployed poor, they will use almost every opportunity to relieve themselves of suffering, and drinking intoxicating beverages becomes the “right” option for them. This also explains why it is that social deviants and beer shops are common among the poor. Unemployment also contributes to suicide rates and murders (Kutu 2000:14). Parents very often cannot cope, especially in the community where support structures are lacking.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is a persistent poverty in Thaba’Nchu caused by the racial policies such as the Land Dispossession, Bantu Education the Colour Bar and Job Reservation. Apartheid ensured that blacks were, for years, discriminated against in the distribution of resources in education, residence and work. Poverty is a result of dispossession and disempowerment over many decades. In South Africa after 1994, poverty in Thaba’Nchu was made worse by the closure of the Taiwanese firms, the freezing of Thaba’Nchu assets, government policy of rationalization, and the impact of HIV/AIDS. Unemployment is very high, and this contributes to social problems such as criminal activity, conflict in the family, and suicide. There is a need to end the suffering.

## CHAPTER 3

### JUDGING

#### INTRODUCTION

In this part of the thesis, reference will be made to different biblical texts, to show God's concern for the poor. The point that will be made is that God is actively involved with the cause of the poor. The Bible does not present God as passive in the face of poverty: God acts in Exodus, through the law, the prophets, Psalms and the New Testament writings, in aid of the poor and oppressed in different stages of history.

We shall look also at the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the Lutheran Church, and the Methodist Church, to see their perspective on poverty. These church bodies are selected because the researcher is most familiar with the Lutheran doctrine and practice, that both (his spouse and himself) are Methodist ministers, and the SACC is an ecumenical and inter-denominational body.

To the extent that the Biblical God is concerned with the poor, identifies, sides with them, and acts on their behalf, it can conclusively be said that God is the God of the poor.

In this chapter each Biblical reference will be engaged with the situation in Thaba'Nchu.

#### 3. THE OLD TESTAMENT AND POVERTY

First let us examine various Biblical terms that signify poverty. It is important because we come to understand poverty in a deeper level and how it occurred in its different forms. We rely on the works of Walker and Jones, whose studies contain sections dedicated to Old Testament terms and what they signify. For Walker (1990:80) the first of the Old Testament terms that bear on the notion of poverty is *dal* meaning frailty and weakness. Whybray (1990:20) cautions that *dal* expresses the condition of being defenseless. Poverty is related to power. Jones (1990:24) further explains that it stands for both physical and social weakness. That means one is physically and socially weak in relation to the power that is exerted over oneself. The second term is *rash* or *yarash*, which renders poverty as dispossession. One lacks and one is deprived because one has been dispossessed of something. Jones (1990:25) contends here that poverty does not come across as something desirable or that the poor are privileged by God. The third term is *chaser*, which signifies lack or inadequacy. It has a meaning of one being in need. Walker (1990:80) argues that here we have a term that speaks intensely of hunger: the lack of bread and water. The fourth term

is *ebyon*, which refers to poverty as need and dependence. The poor have needs and therefore are dependent on others to satisfy their needs. Poverty in this sense exposes victims to become beggars for their livelihood. The fifth term is *ani*, which is derived from the root that means “to bring low, to be afflicted, subduing and exercising force in dominating.” Walker (1990:81) and Jones (1990:25) are both in agreement that *ani* expressed poverty, oppression and affliction. Of particular importance here is that compared to other terms discussed above, *ani* is the Old Testament word that is mostly translated in English to mean poor (Walker 1990:81). It becomes clear from the above discussion that the poor in the Bible were subjected to various forms of poverty. The poor are the dispossessed, the afflicted, the needy and hungry, those dominated by the rich and the powerful. Now that we have arrived at an understanding of the Biblical terms that signify poverty, we turn to the texts themselves. We begin with the Legal Tradition.

### **3.1 The Legal Tradition Demands Justice for the Poor**

The Pentateuch contains laws which Yahweh, who had liberated Israel from Egypt, revealed to Moses, for the people to abide by and to live according to. These laws, according to Pixley and Boff (1989:32), provided a framework within which all subsequent state edicts could be made. It is within these laws, which were compiled into the Code of the Covenant (Exod. 20:22-33:19), the Deuteronomic code (Deut. 12-26), and the Law of Holiness (Lev. 17-26), that we see the demand for justice for the poor. According to Boesak (1977:10) God becomes a God of justice rather than of oppression. Pilgrim (1981:20) ably puts it that Yahweh becomes the defender of the poor and the needy. God in the Old Testament is in solidarity with the poor (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1991:63).

In this section we are going to deal with each law code to further highlight this intention and purpose of God, that of love and care for the poor and needy, and of bringing about a situation that removes poverty from the land.

#### **3.1.1 Code of the Covenant (Exodus 20:22-33: 19)**

These are the earliest legal writings that are connected with the Ten Commandments. Contained in these writings are Yahweh’s lengthy instructions to Moses about how God’s people were to deal with the poor in their midst. They are an attempt on God’s part to deal with permanent poverty, with the purpose of removing it from among His people. We shall cite a few examples of these texts to get to grips with the issues under discussion.

You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless (Exodus 22:21-24).

Three groups of people who were likely to suffer poverty were the fatherless, widows and the landless aliens. These were often the victims of oppression (Amos 2:6-7a). But Yahweh becomes their vindicator. Boesak (1977:19) aptly puts it when saying that God comes to the aid of the downtrodden, saving the needy, but punishing the oppressor. In their powerlessness and hopelessness God ensures that they are freed from exploitation by the rich and the powerful.

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild beast may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard (Exod. 23:10-11).

Pilgrim (1981:22) is correct in saying that the prescription of this law, as it stands above, provided for the benefit of the poor. It is strange to note that as early as that, nature (wild beasts) was also taken into consideration economically. This law is directed at the rich and the powerful, to those who own economic power and who exploit and oppress the poor.

You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his suit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not slay the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right (Exodus 23:6-8).

Yahweh requires that justice be done. In their dealings with the poor the powerful are reminded to avoid corruption and to encourage justice to take its course. To do that they were disallowed to kill, and take or receive bribes. The basis for Yahweh's defense of the poor and needy is to be found in the fact that God rescued God's people when they were slaves in Egypt. Israel, therefore, is expected to act with compassion towards more vulnerable members of the society (Carson et al 1994:93).

The prescriptions of the Code of the Covenant stand in contrast to what actually happened in

Thaba’Nchu. Instead of the rich and the powerful administering justice in their dealings with the poor, they allowed corruption and economic exploitation to prevail. The history of Thaba’Nchu is a history of land dispossession and economic exploitation. It is proper to argue that the rich and powerful were participants of corruption because they planned and participated in the exploitation of the black land owners, thereby making them landless, and taking whatever was of economic value to them. The rich and the powerful have made and passed oppressive laws, which made life miserable for the poor. In subsequent years the said group of people exploited workers through the Taiwanese investors. The state banned worker organizations to ensure a favorable working environment for business. The poor were not even allowed to voice their dissatisfaction with these investors: whenever it happened the army was called in to administer “order”.

But the Code of the covenant is also a critique to the present government and its actions. Justice was not done to the community when the little that they had to sustain themselves was taken away from them. Justice demands that government reconsiders its actions and return whatever assets it has taken from the community. The cry of the poor is one of dispossession.

### **3.1.2. *The Deuteronomic Law Code (Deuteronomy 12-26)***

Pixley and Boff (1989:39), and Pilgrim (1981:22), agree that this law code is the product of a revision of the large tradition intended to secure what was the best of the Old Tradition. Like the Code of the Covenant discussed above, this law code presents Yahweh as protector of the poor. Yahweh is against charging of interest, the keeping of a pledge from the poor, evasion of justice, the taking of bribes, and cheating the poor (Deuteronomy 24:10ff, 14ff and 16:18-20).

You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you, he shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place which he shall choose within one of your towns, where it pleases him best; you shall not oppress him (Deuteronomy 23:15-16).

What becomes clear here is Yahweh’s position with regards to poor slaves. Slavery in Israel, according to Carson et al (1994:215) was to be understood not as a permanent condition. Yahweh provides that having escaped from their overlords slaves should not be handed back to their masters but rather be accommodated wherever they choose.

You shall not oppress a tired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brethren or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns; you shall give

him his hire on the day he earns it, before the sun goes down for he is poor and sets his heart on it, lest he cry against you to the Lord, and it be sin in you (Deut. 24:14-15).

In this passage Yahweh instructs that the poor and the needy be provided with wages after their day's work. Wages shall not be withheld from servants as their livelihood depends on them. It is worth noting that Yahweh's concern for the workers goes beyond servant-master relationship to what they are to eat and drink. After harvest some sheaves of olives or grapes should be left behind for the poor in each harvest time (Deut 24:19-22). For Pilgrim (1981:22) this is an important welfare measure in Israel.

The Deuteronomic Law Code is a challenge to the church, especially in ThabaNchu, where ministry is understood along the lines of the spiritual alone. The church ministers to the spiritual aspect of the person at the expense of the economic and the social. There is this tendency to overemphasize the importance of the life still to come in heaven at the expense of the present life here on earth.

The gospel is spiritualized. The church has neglected the urgent need for a worker ministry where issues that directly affect workers are addressed. Instead of understanding its role as a protector of poor workers, and ministering to worker needs, the church has disappointingly aligned itself with the rich and the powerful upon which it depends for survival. For example, the Bophuthatswana Ministers Fraternal (BOMIFRA) an organization that represented and was the mouth piece of the church in the whole region, was married to the state, and unmoved by the cries of the poor. This explains the silence of the church during the time of the Bophuthatswana government.

As in the Exodus tradition, there is a concern here for the stranger, fatherless, widows, servants, and Levites, of whom it is required that they be included at the Passover and the Feast of Booths celebrations. The people were required to take care of the poor and needy in the community because: "You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there, therefore I command you to do this" (Deut. 24:17-18).

### ***3.1.3 The Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26)***

Scholars are agreed that the composition of this material dates to just after the exile though it contains laws that date far back into Israel's history. Pixley and Boff (1989:40) contend that the naming of this material makes the links between Yahweh's holiness and Israel's, with the expectation that Israel will live a holy life before the Lord. Holiness means that Israel will lead a life of moral purity and exemplary behavior (Carson et al 1994:93).

This material is preoccupied with the poor. Though there are clear similarities between the Deuteronomic Law code and the Holiness Code, the Holiness Code is different in that it puts emphasis on the return of ancestral land. Pilgrim (1981:24) contends that the issue of ancestral land makes the Year of Jubilee the most radical social legislation in the Old Testament. To ensure that inequalities did not occur, and that the poor did not lose their heritage, the law provided that after every fifty years all arable land was to be returned to its original owners. The basis of this law is very clear according to Lev. 25:23-24, which provides that: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine, for you are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the country you possess, you shall grant a redemption of the land." Israel was expected to understand that "land is indeed a gift" from God (Carson and others 1994:214). Lets conclude that similar to the Deuteronomic Code and the Code of the Covenant before it, there is found here again a concern for the poor and needy.

The Holiness Code is a challenge to the government and the wealthy farmers, who are presently the major owners of vast tracts of land, which, over decades, was expropriated from the Thaba’Nchu people. The land belongs to God. This makes a mockery of anyone’s claim to land. That means that the land does not belong to the government, but it is entrusted under government’s care for equal and fair distribution to the communities. This is in accordance with indigenous people’s understanding of land: that it cannot be possessed nor owned Farisani (1993:65). The land could not be a commodity for sale. Over the years this very important asset was systematically taken away from the people, resulting in poverty.

This research is conducted at the time characterized by land invasions in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Land invasions, 1998). These land invasions, that are so widespread today, arise as a result of the reluctance on the part of government and farmers to return speedily ancestral land back to the people as the Year of Jubilee prescribes. The solution to the land question is a speedy re-distributive process, to ensure that the landless become landowners so they can begin to take charge of their own lives. Land redistribution is a prerequisite for poverty eradication.

With respect to Thaba’Nchu it means land which was taken during colonial times and apartheid should be returned. In situations where that is impossible some form of compensation needs to be entered into with the people because it is not only the question of land that is involved: people lost their livestock as well. In the event where there is a willingness on the part of the landless to embark on livestock farming, government should encourage that, but also make the necessary



resources available so that the poor can have somewhere to start. The Year of jubilee demands that government and farmers face the challenge of sharing arable land with the community.

From our reading of the legal tradition the following can be deduced: Yahweh is concerned about the poor and comes to their aid. It is expected that Israel deal kindly and justly with the poor among them, failing which the angel of God will be directed upon them. Because God dealt kindly with Israel in Egypt, it is expected that Israel will do the same to others.

Now that we have explored the Legal Tradition lets turn to the Book of Psalms.

### **3.2. In the Book of Psalms the Poor Turn to Yahweh as Their Defender**

A selection of texts will be presented out of the Book of Psalms, which show that the poor turn to God, and Yahweh becomes their defender. The Book of Psalms consists of a selection of prayers and hymns, which used to be recited in the Jerusalem Temple. Pixley and Boff (1984:44) make this important point that many of the Psalms are petitions of those in need who turn to the God seeking deliverance from their troubles. It is a kind of book that provides lots of space for the voice of the poor among whom are strangers, widows, and orphans. The poor cry out to Yahweh with the expectation that God will hear their prayers and deliver them from their problems. Here is an example of one such Psalm: "Incline thy ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am godly, save thy servant who trusts in thee" (Ps. 86:1-2).

We are faced here with the voice of one single person. This is not strange, according to Pilgrim (1981:28); in the Psalms of lament and other petitionary Psalms, the speaker often identifies himself as a poor man, who is confronted by his enemies or by severe afflictions. In the next Psalm, a king has been appointed and the poor are petitioning for Yahweh's blessing, i.e. for justice and protection of the poor and needy. "Give the king thy justice, O God, and thy righteousness to the royal son. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor" (Ps. 72:1-4). In this following Psalm of praise Yahweh's name is lifted up for saving the needy and bringing the way of the wicked to ruin:

Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever. Who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free, the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners, he upholds the widow

and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin (Ps. 146:5-9).

For Pilgrim (1981:30) the poor and the needy in the Psalms are the afflicted, lowly, downtrodden, meek, orphans, and widows. The cry of the poor result from different causes. In some instances they suffer from political and economic oppression, but also from pure sickness, or moral and religious conflicts. Pixley and Boff (1989:46) note that in the Psalms God appears as a judge, and not as a father. The judge has to issue the proper judgement in favour of poor petitioners. The petitioners are wronged, and to right their wrong Yahweh has to judge those who subject the poor to sufferings. They go on to make the observation that there are two groups of people involved: on the one hand there are the supplicants who describe themselves as poor, and on the other hand there are the enemies who possess lots of wealth. The following texts serve as examples: "Better is a little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; but the Lord upholds the righteous" (Ps 37:16-17).

Let us now focus on the Prophetic Movement to see what they have to offer.

### **3.3. The Prophetic Movement**

The prophetic movement is a movement that emerged during various periods of Israel's life. (For the purpose of this chapter we shall confine our discussion under the prophetic movement during the monarchy). The prophets appeared primarily to speak against the rulers, the rich, and the powerful, who exploited and oppressed the poor. Supporting this statement, Pilgrim (1981:25) writes that the prophets spoke against the social injustices committed by the people and rulers, and became defenders of the poor and the powerless. Our argument will be supported by the following selected passages:

When will the new moon be over, that we may see grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make ephah small and the shekel great, and deal deceitfully with false balances, that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals (Amos 8:5-6).

Amos showed that love of luxury makes a mockery of their devotion to God. As can be seen in this passage those who committed these crimes of which Amos spoke were the traders or business people of the day. Amos exposes their corrupt dealings. This prophet's message is also directed against a particular group of rich people who lay on ivory beds, and had enough to eat; who drink

wine from bowls and anoint themselves with expensive oil (Amos 6:4-6).

The attack of Amos serves as a critique against the world global economy today, where the rich are the masters of the world. The whole world has been turned into a market for the sale of consumer goods of transnational companies, who respect no national boundaries in their pursuit of financial profitability. The global economy moves like a deluge that conquers “all territories, all markets, all natural resources and all human labour, skills and ingenuity”(Ntloko 1999:5). With its accompanying emphasis on profits and more profits, no mercy is applied to the weaker competitors who are found on the peripheral parts and regions of the world.

In our context, globalization can be seen with the privatization of state assets owned and managed by the rich, who as a result of wanting more profits “downsize”, “rightsize”, and retrench workers at a shocking rate. The attack of the rich is on their lack of morality in their dealings. The economic process is one sided and favourable to the wealthy. Globalization is rejected for its lack of social responsibility to the poor. The workers “have no job security; there is an increased casualisation of labour; part time contract and temporary workers labour costs are reduced and wages are low or are frozen” (Ntloko 1999:6).

In the context of Thaba’Nchu the church has abdicated its duty as a prophetic movement, a movement whose responsibility it is to speak fearlessly against the authorities, especially in situations where it has become clear that the interests of the poor are not being taken seriously. It is expected that the church should follow in the rich traditions of the prophets of old such as Amos, Nathan, and Jeremiah; to confront leaders of the day on behalf of the poor. The only way out for the church is the way of confession. Confession is necessary in these two ways: First, it helps the church to come to terms with its failure. This is important for the future work of the church, if it is to be renewed and to be the “salt” under similar circumstances. Second, the church will win credibility and support of the masses, especially those who had become disillusioned, discouraged but also suspicious of the church’s silence.

The story that best demonstrates the defense of the poor against the ruler is to be found in the story of Naboth’s vineyard (found in I Kings 21): Naboth had a vineyard which Ahad the king wanted. The king’s request for the vineyard in exchange for another was refused by Naboth who said: “The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers” (I Kings 21:3). To gain access to the vineyard the king murdered Naboth. Elijah the prophet comes to the defense of

Naboth by challenging the king.

See this attack by Micah on the corrupt rulers in Jerusalem:

Woe to those who devise wickedness, and work evil upon their beds.  
When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand.  
They covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away;  
They oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.

Pixley and Boff (1989:43) see Hosea as standing against the use of religion as a deceitful cloak for the accumulation of wealth. Religion is practiced not for love but for gain. The prophets defended the poor and believed that Yahweh was on their side.

### **3.4. The Wisdom Literature of Israel**

We have so far dealt with texts whose involvement with the poor is traceable to the liberating motif of the exodus. The Wisdom Literature is different in that it had its roots in the popular culture of Israel (Pixley and Boff 1989:49). The theological foundation of these writings is not based on the liberation of Israel out of slavery but on “observations of life in which God’s work is seen in the setting of the stars, the seasons of the year, and order in the social life” (1989:49). This characteristic makes the Wisdom Literature distinct from prophetic writings.

This collection of writings considers poverty and foolishness to be the greatest misfortune that can ever befall a person.

The poor man is detestable even to his neighbour  
but the rich man has friends and to spare (Prov.14:20)

The rich man wrongs a man and puts on airs,  
While the poor man is wronged and apologizes (Ecclus.13:3)

What peace can there be between hyena and dog?  
And what peace between rich man and poor?  
Wild donkeys are the prey of desert lions;  
so too, the rich abominate the poor (Ecclus.13:18-20).

The world as presented by the Wisdom Literature does not move people to change structures or even forecast of a better world to come.

### **3.5. THE NEW TESTAMENT AND POVERTY**

Our focus here will be on what the synoptic gospels say about God, Jesus, and the poor. The researcher will rely on Luke about whom Walker (1990:99) rightly says that in his gospel “the poor are specially emphasized.” We conclude with selected texts from Paul and the letter of James.

#### **3.5.1. Jesus’ Mission is for the Poor**

Jesus announcement of his mission in the synagogue in Nazareth where He reads a text from Isaiah says much about the nature of His mission and how He sees it. Jesus says:

The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives,  
And to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free,  
To proclaim the Lord’s year of favour! (Luke 4:18)

Jesus’ mission is directed to the poor and the oppressed. It is for the needy and it is because of them that He had come. Supporting this statement is the fact that most texts concerning the poor and oppressed in the New Testament, are with the actual poor themselves (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Peterson 1991:65). Jesus’ portrayal in the New Testament points to a bias to the poor (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1991:63).

Jesus’ mission is a critique of the church’s mission today. Clearly, the church in Thaba’Nchu has not done much along the lines of proclaiming good news to the poor and liberation to the captives and the downtrodden. The church seems not to have understood its place within Jesus’ mission, hence its silence and apathy. There should be no difference between the church’s mission and Jesus’ mission, in fact the church’s mission forms a continuity with Jesus’ mission. It will do the church a lot of good to identify itself with Jesus’ mission and to strive for the freedom of the poor victims of society. The church in Thaba’Nchu needs to understand itself as a church commissioned by God to carry out this daunting task of engaging those in authority on behalf of the poor. Such an engagement must not be postponed, it cannot be deferred to a later date.

Jesus’ mission to the poor means that Jesus did not choose to take his mission to the rich. This does not mean that Jesus is not for the rich but that compared to the rich the poor are the most

suffering. What that also means is that the rich need no protection, as most of this suffering of the poor is inflicted by the rich. The role of the church in Thaba’Nchu is to be among the poor, identifying with them, but also working with them as they reclaim their liberation from poverty and whatever powers that keep them oppressed.

### **3.5.2. The Poor are Recognized**

In Mary’s song, the Magnificat, two things become clear: First, God becomes mindful of the humble, the poor and needy. The state of those of low degree, who are despised by the rich becomes recognized by God. The second thing that is clear in the song is the reversal of roles Mealand (1980:49). For Walker (1990:99) this is about the reversal in fortunes where the rulers and the humble, the rich and the poor change places. All is done in favour of the poor.

Let us allow the text to speak for itself:

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
And my spirit rejoiced in God, my Saviour,  
for He has scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts,  
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,  
And exalted those of low degree.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent empty away (Luke 1:46-53)

The Song of Mary, the Magnificat, stands as a critique of the state and church’s attitude to the poor. The government deals with poor people as though they are not worth anything, hence their exclusion in decision making processes and matters which involve their lives.

The poor are important to those in power only in so far as they secure votes which put governments in power. The focus of government is more visible during election campaigns and gets removed almost immediately thereafter to serve the interest of the rich and the powerful.

The church’s silence says more about its attitude to the poor victims of state violence than anything else. This also explains why the church, during the state’s repression (especially in Bophuthatswana), was married to the state and therefore pretended it does not see evil before its eyes. The actions of the church emanate from what it perceives the poor to be. This attitude on the part of the state and church is contrasted with the attitude as shown by the Magnificat. If only the

church can learn that before God all people are the same, regardless of positions they occupy in the community. Because God is mindful of the humble, the poor and needy, no one is to behave otherwise.

The Magnificat has the following implications for the church, which are: the church should be found among the poor comforting and conscientizing them that they are important before God. God could have chosen to make God's revelation among the rich, but instead the less privileged are preferred. This is important for the poor, given their life experience of poverty, oppression, victimization, and stigmatization.

### **3.5.3. The Privileged Position of the Poor**

The poor in the sermon on the plain in Luke stand in a privileged position. It is not the rich and the powerful but those who, as a result of oppression, are poor, hungry, cry, and are hated. Jesus addresses them when He says: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20).

Walker (1989:102) comments about this sermon: "Here unquestionably we have an immensely strong emphasis on the special place occupied by the poor in the thought and emphasis of Jesus." Like the Magnificat we have here a reversal of roles, where the poor now become rich, and vice versa.

Jesus' address to the poor must have been very comforting, given the conditions in which they found themselves. Their life experience is that of stigmatization, marginalization, rejection, and hate. These people of no status in the community are suddenly privileged by God! Jesus' address to them is in direct response to negative attitudes which they receive from others, attitudes such as those which puts blame on the poor for being in that condition, as though poverty was some type of gift which was freely offered depending on whether one liked it or not. Poverty was never a matter of choice unless one speaks of religious poverty, which falls outside the scope of this research.

The church is challenged to change its attitudes to the poor because once attitudes are changed, actions involving the poor will be changed. The space, attention, and privileges, enjoyed by the rich and the powerful in the church will be replaced by the poor. The poor will be seen not as lazy, but as victims and products of a sick society.

#### **3.5.4. Paul Raises Money for the Poor**

Part of Paul's ministry was raising money in Gentile churches for the poor Christians in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-29 and Gal. 2:10). He also taught these churches to take care of the poor among them. The theological rationale for giving is to be found in his teaching that: "Remember how generous the Lord Jesus was: he was rich, but He became poor for your sake, to make you rich out of his poverty" (2 Cor. 8:9). For his congregation at the time it was a challenge for those who had to share. Speaking of this, Walker (1989:112), contends that the context presents a pattern where concern is removed from personal accumulation to the welfare of those who lack. This text serves as an example for all followers of Jesus to emulate.

Paul's action of collecting money for the poor Christians serves as an example of Christian love to others. Global, national, and local poverty is not difficult to beat. This is possible if only Christians can take their faith seriously. Taking their faith seriously means the church needs to understand itself as a steward appointed and commissioned by God for that task. Stewardship is about taking care of the world and rendering the necessary service depending on the needs at the time.

Statistics reveal that compared to other religions in South Africa, Christianity leads by an uncontested majority of 68% (World Fact Book, 2000). There is a potential for poverty eradication only if the church nationally can mobilize resources, especially among the rich, to help those who are most affected. That is possible if the church on the local and national level work in partnership with the church globally. Paul's teaching of a Christian community is a call for the church to act, and not to take suffering for granted.

All that has been said so far is about the social responsibility of the church, as if to say government was not commissioned by God, and therefore has got no social responsibility. The government, like the church, has a mandate of its own. Just like the church, it is commissioned by God to take care of the world, but most especially the weaker members of society (Romans 13). The government has got the potential to fight poverty. It has the capacity to fund and to move such funds to areas where need has been identified. Through its linkages and connections on the highest level, such as the United Nations, and on other levels such as the national and the regional, government is better placed to combat poverty effectively. The government, the church, and civil society have failed in their responsibilities to ensure that jobs are secured, or created, to combat poverty. While it is the responsibility of government to create jobs it is also the task of the private sector to see to it that work is available for everyone. It is expected in the event of poverty and hunger that key



organizations in the community would mobilize and conscientize communities of the different ways of fighting the scourge. Mobilization and conscientization of communities should be accompanied by identification of needs and provision of assistance in the form of starting capital, for instance, in the event where people want to embark on small business ventures.

We conclude this part on poverty in the New Testament by turning to the Letter of James.

### **3.5.5. The Letter of James and the poor**

Reading the Letter of James, two things become clear. First, we find God's option and solidarity for the poor. Second, judgement is pronounced on the rich and the powerful for their exploitation of the poor workers. Compared to other Epistles, James is forthright on these issues (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1991:63). The rich dealt unkindly with the poor subjecting them to unfair labour practices such as work without pay; as we shall see in the following reading:

Come now you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the labourers who moved your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you (James 5:1-6).

See also (1:9-11 and 2:1-7, 14-17.)

This text links the wealth of the rich with the oppression of the poor. Sider (1980:58) notes here the failure of the rich to pay wages due to the poor workers. Walker (1990:113) makes this valid claim that this passage makes condemnation of a wealth, which exists at the expense of poverty. The Letter of James could not have concluded this section better. Judgement is pronounced on all who participated in the economic exploitation and oppression of the poor. God's anger is visible and real for all who inflict suffering on the less privileged. God is not pleased by government's actions on the poor. Justice needs to be done to the poor, which means the issue of the land must be addressed. The question of economic justice is a relevant one if poverty is to be eradicated in Thaba'Nchu. Coupled with the land question is compensation to families and victims who in the

process lost economic power in the form of possessions.

After our consideration of the Letter of James and other New Testament writings we can make the conclusion that there is a clear biblical bias for the poor. God, the prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles Paul and James speak and act for the poor.

### **3.6. THE CHURCH'S PERSPECTIVE ON POVERTY**

In this subsection focus is put on the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the Lutheran Church and the Methodist Church. The point at issue is whether or not these church bodies are in solidarity with, and in support, of the cause of the poor in the light of the Biblical witness they profess to follow. As will be seen, the researcher maintains that indeed the SACC, the Lutheran, and the Methodist Church concern themselves with the poor and oppressed. The basis of their involvement is the mandate given them by the God of the poor. We first turn to the SACC.

#### **3.6.1. The South African Council of Churches**

The SACC was a parent, protector and defender of the poor during the apartheid South Africa and thereafter. Others argue that it is precisely that fact that saw its membership become increasingly black (TRC Hearings, n.d.).

The SACC became unwavering in its resolve to ensure that injustice is removed and justice is done to the poor and oppressed. For that to occur, the church had to be among the poor, cooperating with them and supporting them in their struggle. The Council of Churches became a voice for the voiceless on a regional, national, and global level. Given the situation of the poor and the rich it became imperative according to Huber in the South African Council of Churches (1986:42), for the SACC to decide on the preferential option for the poor. This is important since the gospel from its beginning to end is the gospel of the poor Huber in the South African Council of Churches (1986:42). The option for the poor is supported by Tutu in the South African Council of Churches (1982:3) who, representing the SACC, writes that God is on the side of the oppressed and downtrodden, who wishes their freedom, and leads them out of whatever obstacles that prevent them from attaining liberation.

##### **(a) Who are the Poor?**

The poor are those who suffered the effects of apartheid such as oppression, lack of food, health facilities, educational and work opportunities, adequate housing and safe drinking water. It is these

who were denied freedom and the right to political participation. Generally, the poor are the black majority.

**(b) The SACC and the Bible**

The SACC felt inspired, and thereby mandated, by the biblical texts to side with the poor and to ensure that they are freed from oppression. The God of the Bible is seen and understood to be siding with the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalised. The organization, is firmly grounded in the traditions of the prophets such as Isaiah, Amos, and others, who in Tutu's words in the South African Council of Churches (1982:25), were not silent but spoke on behalf of God for the poor members of the community. Jesus' attitude and actions are of considerable inspiration to the organisation. Through the Bible, the SACC has always been a partner and agent of God's will in the world.

**(c) The SACC and Development**

Commenting on the contribution of the SACC on the poor, Tutu in the South African Council of Churches 1982:27) writes: "Our division on Inter Church Aid is deeply involved with community development schemes, helping people to feed themselves and to become more self-reliant." It is true, the organisation has been deeply involved with the poor and marginalized. They provided relief in drought stricken areas, and encouraged garden projects. Through funds collected during August Month of Compassion they provided blankets to the needy, the infirm and the aged. The Council of Churches also ensured that the poor are educated, the unemployed are encouraged to get involved in self-employment and self-help projects. Political prisoners, detainees, banned people and families were also cared for. The contribution of the SACC to the poor has been so great that it can never be fully described in this section.

The work of the SACC among the poor has not ceased with the coming into power of the African National Congress led government, there is, in fact, a continuity. This can be seen in, *inter alia*, the SACC response to the 2001/2002 national budget, where it calls for a budget that exercises a preferential option for the poor. While it supports some points on the budget it is concerned that not much has been done to ensure that the poor benefit from it (SACC Document, 2001). The question of the option for the poor was highlighted by Mofokeng, who in his address to the SACC National Conference said that as the organisation engages with issues of reconciliation and poverty it has to stand on God's side which is the side of the poor (SACC News, 2001).

The Free State Council of churches played a role in identifying, siding with, and engaging in, practical action of liberating the poor in Bophuthatswana as part of the church summit on Bophuthatswana (Church Summit, 1992).

### **3.6.2. The Lutheran Church**

For the Lutheran Church, involvement in issues of poverty derive from their biblical understanding of service to the world, and Jesus' great commission (Lucsa 2001:No page). The church's action therefore is a response to God's creation and salvation. Mark 10:45, among others, serves as an example of texts which inspire Lutherans' social responsibility to the world. "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Again, the involvement of Lutherans in social upliftment issues can be understood against the background of Luther's Two Kingdoms doctrine, which maintains that God rules the world in "the kingdom of the left" and "the kingdom on the right." According to this doctrine the kingdom on the left includes government, churches and families; whereas the kingdom on the right is about God acting through the Holy Spirit to root out evil. Moila (1990:23) contends that these two institutions are intended to protect humanity from evil and injustice. It is through these doctrines of the Two Kingdoms that Lutherans feel duty bound and empowered to engage an unjust government. On that Moila (1990:25) writes: "Luther believed that it is the right of all Christians to challenge the powerful wherever they are failing to do their duty of protecting the needy and the poor." For Lutherans, God is on the side of the poor and the needy. Maimela (1988:106) speaks about options for the poor and weaker members of society by the Lutherans. As the church sides with the poor, and engages the powerful on behalf of the poor, it will be reminding the state of its responsibility for the poor.

#### **(a) Who are the Poor?**

According to Lucsa (2001:No page) the poor are those who hunger and have no food, the unclothed, those who have no energy for cooking, those who lack non-food requirements such as shelter, the unemployed, and disaster victims who cannot stand on their feet. Tsele (No date:3) describes them as the have nots, the destitute, the powerless and humiliated.

#### **(b) Church Service to the Poor**

The Lutheran Church established a developmental arm of the church called ELCSA Development Service. This organisation is a non profit organization and provides assistance to the poor and

victims of disaster on the basis of need, irrespective of race, creed, gender and political affiliation (ELCSA Development Service, 2000). The mission of this organisation is to serve the people in need in South Africa through the provision of emergency relief aid to victims of disasters and provision of technical and material support for activities that empower the disadvantaged. ELCSA Development Service empowers individuals and communities to overcome whatever obstacle has trapped them in poverty and dependency through sustainable development activities which ensure that they enjoy improved living conditions.

### **3.6.3. The Methodist Church**

The involvement of the Methodist Church in social problems among the poor can be traced as far back as the time of John Wesley. The situation at the time is aptly provided by Thomas Madron who (in Eli 1993:30) contends that in Wesley's time England was a stratified society, where landlords and magistrates were the economic and political leaders of the community. Those who were at the bottom of the economic ladder were exploited and disenfranchised. Half of the population were paupers, consisting of the unemployed, the outcasts, criminals and the illiterate poor (Bowen 1937,viii). These groups of poor people whom Marquardt (1992:27) refers to as the "lower classes" comprised his membership.

#### **(a) Option for the Poor**

John Wesley took a conscious decision early in his ministry to side with the poor in the community. In his journal he writes:

It is well a few of the rich and noble are called. On that God would increase their number!  
But I should rejoice (were it the will of God) if it were done by the ministry of others. If I must choose, I should still (as I have done hitherto) preach the gospel to the poor.  
(Marguard 1992:27)

He could have worked among the rich and the powerful of his day; instead he chose to work among the poor.

#### **(b) John Wesley's Work among the Poor**

Wesley's work among the poor was inspired by the biblical understanding of the love of God and of neighbour. It is one thing to love one's neighbour; but it is another thing to translate that love into concrete actions. Wesley believed that this was important. Vertical relationships were as

important as horizontal relationships. In fact, the vertical relationship became for him the basis for love of the neighbour. Christianity, for him, therefore, was not personal and individual, but had social implications. Eli (1993:30) puts it so well when he states: “Wesley’s notion of Christian love was a social concept, extending beyond the personal sphere of the individual believer.”

Wesley became aware of the plight of the poor, noting that they are the recipients of charity. The situation of the poor and their condition of need was known to him. It is precisely this contact and engagement with the poor that made his heart touched and transformed. Wesley went out of his way to ensure that the poor were relieved from poverty. He put in place various measures individually and in company with other social upliftment organizations to ensure that poverty was combated. These included self-help and works of charity for poverty alleviation. Marquardt (1992:28) records one such measure as he explains:

The earliest of most widely practiced aid for the poor was the weekly “class meeting;” conducted by the class leader, with the aid of the members of the fellowship assigned to him. After careful consultation among administrators expressly chosen for this task, the collective contributions were distributed to the needy, partly in cash, partly in clothing, foodstuffs, fuel or medicine.

In cases of severe suffering resulting from poor harvest, Wesley encouraged special collections, and in some cases he would embark on fund-raising travels to feed the needy. He identified unemployment as one of the chief causes of widespread poverty, and to combat that he put in place the loan fund and a job finder. When many jobs could not be secured, he introduced projects, among which were cotton processing and knitting, mainly for women (Marguard 1992:29). Wesley’s work among the poor will be incomplete without mentioning the service he rendered to the prisoners of his day, and his efforts to ensure that slavery was abolished.

Having considered John Wesley and poverty we shall now turn to the Methodist Church in Southern Africa.

### (c) **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

The Methodist Church, like John Wesley, understands itself as a church for the poor, founded from amongst the poor. *The New Dimension* (January 1999) in an article headed, “Methodists advocate support for the poor this Christmas” reinforces this contention even further: “Methodism was born

among the poor, it can be argued that it was a movement of the poor, by the poor and for the poor.” The Methodist Church made a significant contribution during the struggle for the poor in apartheid South Africa. Together with other churches it became a voice for the voiceless. The Methodists, were outspoken about apartheid, arguing that differences of language and culture are not sufficient reason for separation (SACC 1958:8). It is significant that as early as this the Methodists engaged the government on behalf of the oppressed poor. The contribution of the church was not limited to issues of separation, it established within itself relief and developmental organizations. Through its different departments such as the Christian citizenship and Relief and development among others, the Methodists ensured that the poor and victims of natural disasters were clothed, fed, and housed.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The Bible adopts a clear stance of opting for the poor and the oppressed. God sides with the poor, engages the rich and powerful on their behalf, and provides spiritual and material needs. The three church bodies discussed (namely the SACC, the Lutheran, and the Methodist Church) are following in the tradition of the Bible by siding with the poor and the oppressed, and ensuring that they are freed from any form of suffering in their midst.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 2 we looked at the incidence of poverty and unemployment in Thaba’Nchu and have agreed that it is caused, among others, by government policy past and present. We have also looked, in Chapter 3, at both the Old and New Testament as to how the people of God should treat poverty and the poor. We concluded that God is on the side of the poor and the oppressed and ensures that they are provided for their needs. This present chapter deals with what action needs to be undertaken to combat poverty. Such action will not be decided alone by the church, but involves the participation of the communities who are the victims of poverty and unemployment (See Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4). The view that is adopted in this research is that the poor are not mere objects of development, but have a valuable contribution to make with regard to anything that involves their lives. It is important that the church ensures such a valuable contribution in planning, empowerment, decision-making, control, initiating, implementation, and evaluation (to mention but a few key tasks in development).

Let us turn to the church’ contribution.

#### **4.2. THE CHURCH’S CONTRIBUTION IN DEVELOPMENT**

To ensure that development takes place the church must do the following:

##### **4.2.1. Planning**

It is important that whenever a development project is planned, the community is involved from the very beginning. Mostly, the church does not take into consideration the interests of the community in its planning. Usually planning is done for and on behalf of the community. In its execution of its planning it employs a top-down approach which is often resented by the people. As a result of that, people have no sense of ownership and end up deserting projects. This is to a large extent due to the fact that they were not included in the initial stages, and excluded from being part and parcel of the planning. The projects planned without the contributions of the communities do not address the real interests and needs of the people, but those of the planners. It is for this reason that such projects end up failing. De Beer & Swanepoel (1998:20) give examples whereby the poor people were reluctant to own and support projects which were planned for in their absence. The church therefore needs to consider planning with the communities so as to avoid situations whereby people reject development projects.



#### **4.2.2. Empowerment**

The church needs to desist from doing things on behalf of and for the communities. Doing things on behalf of the communities without empowerment creates in them a feeling of worthlessness. The approach which the church should be taking is one which will be empowering to the community. Empowerment is an approach of development which, according to De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:272), focuses on the creative initiatives of the people. The implication is that people must begin to do things for themselves. Empowerment is transforming and addresses concrete human needs through a learning process, done by a group of people with the purpose of freeing them from bondage. The church can begin doing this by allowing its communities to identify their areas of need and enable them to take active steps to remedy the situation, and thus own the process and outcome of their deliberations.

#### **4.2.3. Decision-making**

The third crucial factor for the church's consideration is decision-making. Usually decision-making comes not from below, but from above. Decisions are made by the church and imposed on grassroots communities, who often, by virtue of the authority of the church, feel threatened or afraid to decide against the decisions. The communities have a contribution to make in as far as deciding on what is essential and important for their livelihood. De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:273) argue that decision-making must come from the people, who have the capacity and the right to include within such decisions their own values and needs. For the church to support progress it has to decide with the people concerned, and not for or on their behalf without a mandate to do so.

#### **4.2.4. Control**

What the church needs to consider practicing in development is giving power of control to the people, where it belongs. Roodt (1996:318) contends that participation is access to and control of resources necessary to protect the lives of the community. This statement recognizes that where the authorities control "on behalf of and for the people," there is no participation. One of the reasons why development projects fail is to a greater extent due to the reluctance on the part of authorities to give control to the community. Where there is no sense of control, there will be a sense of lack of ownership, and therefore little participation. Participation is linked to both control and ownership.

#### **4.2.5. Initiative**

What the church needs to acknowledge and act upon is that communities are able to initiate projects and to take control of their own lives. Therefore, its approach should not be one which identifies the needs of the community, planning the course of action, and managing, apart from the community. This approach, according to De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:23), fails to acknowledge and accommodate the initiative and ability of people to take control of their own development.

#### **4.2.6. Implementation**

It was said above that the church needs to plan with communities. It is also equally true that the church carry out implementation with communities. De Beer and Swanepoel(1998:23) correctly add that implementation cannot be regarded as “donkey work” while planning is a ‘thinking activity” by professionals. These two cannot be separated. That means implementation cannot be relegated to any of the two; it is done by both the church and the communities in this case.

#### **4.2.7. Evaluation**

The church needs to involve communities in its evaluation. Evaluation cannot be done by the church or experts alone without the communities who are also members of projects. If empowerment is to be achieved it is imperative that all who have a stake in a project together conduct the evaluation, if it is to be a beneficial learning process for all.

What all this means is that the church has to make it possible for men, women, youth, the illiterate, and all those previously disadvantaged in any form or manner, to participate in development.

### **4.3. SHORT TERM STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING POVERTY AND HUNGER**

This research adopts a two-pronged approach for fighting poverty in Thaba’Nchu. First, we propose some short-term strategies to address hunger. Second, in chapter 5, we propose medium-term strategies to address sustainable income generating projects for and by the poor. It is the resolve of the researcher that, while there is a need for income generating projects both for economic independence and empowerment, there is also an immediate need for food. People are starving now and desperate, and cannot wait for planning and implementation of each project for their hunger.

#### **4.3.1. Food Aid to the poor**

Literature abounds on the critique of aid to the poor in the form of handouts such as food, clothing

and shelter, among others (Community Agency for Social Enquiry 1998:48). Such a critique is based on the fact that handouts create in the recipients a dependency syndrome, and instills in them a sense of powerlessness. This results in the recipients failing to liberate themselves, since all their needs are being met. There is truth in the statement. However, each case should be judged on its own merits before a decision is made whether to allow aid to the poor or not. For we may ask, To what extent is aid to the elderly, the sick and children in remote rural areas going to make them dependent? The elderly, the sick and children are already in a state of dependency. The elderly depend on their children( who are adults) and children on their parents. In an African context children are a form of investment to their parents, parents depend on them in their adult life. Parents are also there to ensure that their children are fed and schooled. The point that is made is that rural communities are “reservoirs” of the elderly, the sick, and children, who are battered by poverty more than their counterparts in cities.

This research advocates a strategy of addressing hunger where the poor will be aided materially, not for any other reason other than that they are starving. Aid to the poor will always be problematic to those who do not know poverty first hand, to those who describe poverty at a distance. Skweyiya in Paton (2001:21), after having travelled extensively through the country and witnessed horrible scenes that “cannot leave my mind,” argues: “I know people argue that it will make people very dependent. But when you look at the faces of the people, you find that they are very hungry. Sometimes you come to a meeting and find the meeting full. You think people like you. They don’t. Yes, they have come to listen - but afterwards they just want to have some food.” That gives gravity to the question whether to provide aid or not.

The following steps are crucial in ensuring that hunger is stopped.

(a) ***Identifying the Poor***

The church should call a meeting with communities. The question to be asked is “who is poor?” It is generally known that with community poverty, there are those who are relatively poorer than others. There are also those who are relatively richer than others. The purpose of this meeting is to identify those who are most in need in the community. This step is crucial, in that one avoids a situation whereby assistance is given to people who do not really deserve it, and that limited resources are directed to those who are mostly in need. The church cannot tell who is poor in the community, only the community can, since almost all families know each other. The tool that the community can use is that of mapping, although some use indicators such as the type of dwellings

and clothes worn by the poor, malnutrition, kwashiorkor, and the type of food (*such as morogo, a type of spinach*) mostly eaten by the poor (Community Agency for Social Enquiry 1998:39).

Another way of identifying the needy poor is to identify all these households who do not have any member of the family in full employment. To verify this, the committee elected by the community will have to go house to house to ensure that indeed no member of the family is in full employment, and that the circumstances of the household warrant assistance.

Preferential option should be given to the women and children who, according to Tsele (no date:1) are mostly affected in rural areas. Rural women often lead households single-handedly and have to deal with provision of meals for the family, ensuring that there is water, firewood or cowdung. These women are disadvantaged in many ways and have needs making it impossible for assistance to exclude them.

#### **(b) *Election of a Committee for Hunger***

A committee of at least six people that includes women should be elected at such a meeting, comprising of the chairperson, the secretary, the treasurer and three additional members. It is imperative that the treasurer be a person who is literate so that he/she can read figures. The committee is responsible both to the community and to the church.

The purpose of this committee is:

1. To identify the poor.
2. To keep the records/books in order.
3. To assist the church in seeking aid and donations for the poor.
4. To distribute food to the poor according to the list in the records.
5. To raise funds.

These shall, in short, be the responsibilities of the committee.

A constitution shall be drawn up which shall be a guiding structure for the committee, and will also serve as laws and regulations.

#### **(c) *Aid for the Poor***

It is the task of the church to ask for aid/donations in the form of food or money. It is true that the task of the church is to minister to the spiritual needs of the community, but it is equally true that the duty of the church is to assist in seeking and providing food to the poor (Acts 6:1-6). The church stands a good chance of doing that since it enjoys the trust of the community. Whilst most

organizations emerge and disappear on the scene, the church is one single organization that is forever permanent among, and with, the poor. Nürnberger (1999:371) refers to these strengths of the church as assets that no other secular organization in the periphery has. All these advantages of being built on a spiritual and moral foundation, of easy access and residence among the poor, and of having a good network among other agents of change makes the church the best organization to deal with and handle donations meant for the poor, be it money or food parcels. The church and government need to be targeted for donations of food.

i) Government

The church should first target government, whose responsibility it is to support community initiatives through an enabling policy, provision of expertise, infrastructure, and finance (De Beer & Swanepoel 1998:35). That should pose few problems since Skhweyiya (in Paton 2001:21) made a commitment saying “government must intervene to stop people from starving to death either through the provision of food vouchers or a cash grant.” What the church needs to do is to make formal representations to the necessary Department of Social Development. Once such resources are made available to the community, government should be excluded from handling and controlling such donations. Here we disagree with Jeppe (1998:34) who contends that the place of government in community development is, among others, to control. The responsibility of government should end with making resources available to the community. It is the local people who will take responsibility for development. When aid has been given it will be under the sole control of both the church and the committee for hunger.

ii) The South African Council of Churches (SACC)

The church should target the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in the Free State who have the necessary developmental department which deals with, among others, aid to the poor. The South African Council of Churches has much experience of being engaged in community development schemes. In 1982, the SACC was already involved in helping the poor to feed themselves and to become more self-reliant (South African Council of Churches 1982:27). But even in the post apartheid South Africa this ecumenical movement still sees itself in a struggle not against apartheid, but against apartheid legacy (De Gruchy 1995:12).

These resources which are available from the SACC can be channeled from the Free State Council of Churches to either the church or the committee for hunger, which will in turn make them available to the community.

### iii) The Church in Thaba' Nchu

Different denominations which comprise the church in Thaba'Nchu have the muscle and the capacity to organize and to secure food aid for the community. Denominations should link up with their own higher bodies for food aid. For example, the Lutheran Church in Thaba 'Nchu can make requests to the diocesan level and the national level for food donations. If each denomination, in its own way, contributes to the food pool, the response will be overwhelming and hunger will be to a greater extent addressed. It is this advantage which Nürnberger (1999:371) refers to as "networking," which is of benefit to the church in food aid.

### iv) Food Outlets and Hotels

The other thing that could be done is for the church in Thaba'Nchu to make formal requests for food from the surrounding food outlets and a chain store. The Thaba'Nchu Sun Hotel which lies 27kms outside Thaba'Nchu, as well as Naledi Sun could also be of assistance. The request that is made here should be for food that is not good for selling but healthy for the body. The target should be for the type of food that they normally disposed of, but is still consumable. As the process of food donations goes on, the church should arrange storage and security.

Church buildings and traditional leaders' compounds could be of assistance in this regard. But one venue should be identified. The advantage here is that both are neutral areas and are most accessible to the communities, if not owned by the communities. The community shall decide who will be in charge of the keys to the storeroom to ensure accountability and responsibility. But clearly it should be someone who enjoys the trust and respect of the community.

Once it has been established that enough food has been collected for distribution, the church shall announce that, on the appointed standing day of the week and time, communities can collect their food parcels. As it has been discussed above, the distribution of the food parcels is the responsibility of the committee. The committee shall have organized food parcels into equal portions for only those people who registered their names. The committee shall ensure that food is given to the relatives of the poor household in the event where the registered person, due to illness, cannot avail himself or herself. A register shall be brought to this venue to ensure identification and monitoring.

The second short-term strategy for hunger is that of food gardens which is discussed in the following section.

### **4.3.2. Food Gardens**

The strategy discussed here, is how to make use of individual churches' lands or yards, private lands, and unoccupied lands which most of the time lie fallow, to ensure that there is food available to fight hunger in the community.

#### **(a) Church lands**

The church should call a congregational meeting, for which the agenda will be making food gardens to fight hunger. The congregational council should make it clear in their announcement that at the appointed time and place a meeting to that effect will be taking place. There must be enough time between the day of the announcement and the actual day of the meeting.

At the congregational meeting a report should be given that the congregational council have availed the church yards to be used by the community. It is important that this project involves people who are not only members of the congregation. It should be open to all members of the community.

The question that should be asked at this meeting is "who is it that has an interest in making a food garden in the church yard?" As we already said above, the purpose is to identify people who want to make gardens, but also those who have an interest in doing that. We try to avoid a situation whereby people backslide as they have no interest in the project. Once people nominate themselves, their names are written in a register.

If it so happens that they are more than twelve members, that group should decide among themselves who is going to do what. Responsibilities should be shared among them. There is a need also for a meeting where they are going to strategize for the project.

Like anywhere else, for beginners there is always the need for training. If the group feels the need for training someone within the community who has the skill can be invited to train members. Usually rural people have the skill of growing vegetables, and that can be used. Community development, if it is to survive, has to rely on local knowledge and resources, both human and material. In as far as collecting seeds is concerned, members of the group can make a contribution for that. The Farmer Support Group (1995:20) refers to the situation where women who engaged in gardens had to collect money from among themselves to buy seeds. On the question of tools, communities can use their own resources.

The ways of fighting hunger are varied and numerous. Communities can also embark on “Eduplant,” a project sponsored by the Department of Water and Forestry, which ensures that learners are taught about the importance of greening the environment (Agricultural News 2001:10). The benefit of this project is not only the growing of vegetables for food, but ensuring “green awareness” among communities. The advantage with this project is that it is financed by the Department.

(b) *Private lands*

Members of the community could even make use of their own yards to grow vegetable gardens. The church should make communities aware that they have the resources to engage in vegetable growing. The church could do that by mobilizing communities around that idea. All members of the community need to be brought on board. Most communities afflicted by poverty have the yards to cultivate vegetables. Rural households are generally accommodated on bigger yards than we find in towns and cities where blacks stay.

Communities should be mobilized, and one of the ways to do so is by calling a meeting. The church can assist communities by making them identify the assets that they already have for vegetable gardens. At these meetings, people who are skilled who also have ploughing instruments and knowledge can be identified, for the purpose of availing those gifts for the betterment of the community. To encourage and build capacity a prize should be put up for the community gardener of the year. Communities are going to enter that race with the purpose of getting the first prize. There is going to be a spirit of competition, which will ensure that energies are channeled towards the fight against poverty and community building.

We looked at the fight against hunger through the use of church and schoolyards and individual household yards. Let us see how communities can engage in community gardens using unoccupied lands.

(c) *Unoccupied lands*

The community garden project should be embarked upon by residents. Though the purpose, first and foremost, should be the provision of food it should also ensure renewal in the residential, economic, cultural and spiritual life of the community (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993:318). This is best suited for the area to avoid situations whereby people throw away rubbish in open spaces. It needs to be mentioned that creating a community garden project is good for the life of the



community precisely because communities begin to take charge, in a sense, of their own lives. Residents will begin to realize that the cleanliness of their environment depends both on the municipality and on themselves. They will take responsibility for all of their actions.

Again, community gardens relieve residents of dependence on towns for the supply of vegetables. Economically, they are advantaged. This also ensures that money, which they would have spent, remains within the community. Community gardens are also good for the spiritual life of the community, as they afford the space for communication and the breaking down of stress and tension. As it was the case with other points made above, we are going to follow the following steps which are crucial to ensure that the process is successful: Identification of the space, acquiring the space, developing and sustaining the space.

i) *Identification of the space*

The church shall call a meeting of the community whereby the residents shall identify vacant spaces in their surroundings. Since residents' knowledge is limited in as far as which vacant space is zoned for what and when, it is important that consultations be made with the municipality, who are in a position to inform reliably. Herein lies the essence and importance of partnership in development. Once such space has been identified correctly beyond any doubt about its availability, the following step will be necessary.

ii) *Acquiring the space*

Land in a residential area belongs to the municipality, but in rural villages the tribal authorities are in charge. No one can embark on any kind of project without negotiations with the relevant authorities. The residents can ask for the free lease of land, or ask for the use of it, so that it becomes the sole possessor. Acquiring the space should be formalized and documented to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings between the residents and the authorities. Once the space has been formally handed over to the residents, development can begin.

iii) *Developing the space*

Developing the space means that the residents will have to decide whether they are going to prepare the ground themselves, or whether they are going to rely on the services of other role players such as Department of Public Works. To ensure that this project is sustained, residents need to rely on expert knowledge and experience of farmer support services, if available. Expert knowledge is essential in this respect, as residents would be told about the status of the soil which is crucial for

the way forward. Once planting has taken place what is left is sustaining the project.

iv) *Sustaining the project*

Questions that should be considered here are: Security, tending the garden, management. To ensure that this project is sustained there is the need for security. Security involves fencing and ensuring a gate and padlock. Leaving the garden exposed without a fence is risky. Before embarking on their community garden the people of Cornfield prioritized fencing among others (Farmers Support Group 1995:20) as a need they could not do without. To ensure sustainability, residents need to draw a roster which will commit each family for a day's work in tending the garden. The essence of sweat equity is that members do not work for a wage, but work for food and self fulfillment and dignity. A garden needs to be watered and occasionally weeding needs to be done, otherwise plants will have to compete with weeds for nutrients, resulting in plants having to suffer. Last, to ensure that the project is sustained, we need management. Residents will need to know who is going to take care of the books, finances, and sales of the vegetables. Vegetables are to be provided to the needy. A committee shall be elected and charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the project is kept running, reports shall be made on days decided by the residents. Much has been said about short-term strategies to address hunger. Given the fact that Thaba'Nchu is both a farming area and has a rich soil conducive to agriculture (See Appendix 1 and 3) it is hoped that these strategies, if applied, will yield better results. Communities will not only be fed but enabled to deal with similar situations in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

The poor in Thaba 'Nchu are hungry and starving. If hunger is to be brought under control the poor need to be fed. To ensure that food is made available and distributed to the needy, requests should be made to the local food outlets, chain stores, the government, and the church. Food gardens also have the capacity to fight hunger. These strategies are short-term, and intended to meet the immediate need felt by the poor.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABLE INCOME- GENERATING PROJECTS TO HELP THE POOR**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter looks at Medium-term strategies to address sustainable income generating projects to help the poor in Thaba’Nchu. We will focus on the types of projects communities need, the key issues necessary for running the business and how to introduce and ensure community support for the projects. These projects, if well managed and conducted, have a potential of bringing not only economic growth but also renewal in the life of the community.

#### **5.2. INITIATING AND SUSTAINING PROJECTS**

We are going to explore ways and means that will ensure that the poor are employed and empowered to do things for themselves, bearing in mind that whatever projects communities engage in, there are five key issues that are applicable and need to be discussed:

- a) A business plan,
- b) A constitution,
- c) A committee and Manager,
- d) Training,
- e) Conscientizing,
- f) Funding.

Let us begin with a Business Plan.

##### **5.2.1. A Business Plan.**

Beginning a business does not consist of hurrying to get started without considering business planning. One needs to know where one is going. Hawley and McGregor’s in Rogers (1998:10) make sense when they say you would not set off to a new destination in your car without making enquiries and without a road map. Business fails because of faulty planning, or the complete lack of planning.

STEP 1: The first step to consider is what is it that the community wants and what is it that the community is capable of doing? This is crucial, since the project gets to analyze its own strengths and weaknesses. The importance of this step is in the fact that you cannot do something that you are not capable of doing. Questions to answer are of an experiential nature and background. Does

one have the experience and the necessary background in the proposed business venture? The other question is, “Why are we engaging in business at all?” We have seen above that poverty alone should not be the motivating factor, as one has to have the love and passion for the business.

STEP 2 : The second step is to identify the product that best suits your interest. In the case of the project, a choice has to be made of products which are special and different, but also those that will rouse interest in the buyer. The other thing that needs to be looked into is the impact of the product on the customers. Is it going to have a positive impact to the environment? This is very critical as business ventures have to be environmentally friendly.

STEP 3 : The third step will involve conducting a feasibility study to test whether the project will be viable. Foremost is the identification of the customers. This is important in that they constitute a section of the population which is going to buy your product. Having identified the customers, one needs to know their monthly income. This tells whether or not there is buying power for your products. Related to buying power is the demand for the product. Obviously, one cannot embark on a business for the mere sake of it: the prerequisite should be the demand for the goods. This study should also cover the area where investigation is done on other service providers, if any, who already engage in this business. For the survival and sustainability of the project these and other questions cannot be avoided.

STEP 4 : The fourth step is that of calculating sales. Calculating sales is done on the basis of the information in Step 3. The project here has to forecast whether, with the speed with which customers will be buying, where one will be in a year or two. The question is: “will the buying power ensure that the project is sustainable?” Again, this is very important for any business because one cannot engage in a project that cannot take you anywhere. The prerequisite of a good calculation of sales forecasting is a very good feasibility study or market research.

STEP 5 : The choice of premises is important. The site in which one’s business is placed will have an impact on the product. For instance if the business is placed in a hidden place, where there is very little movement, it will be affected to a greater extent than one in clear view of people. The project will have to take this into consideration.

STEP 6: This step involves the production plan, that is, on the basis of the steps above how big should your project be. In terms of labour and machinery one would have to think how many

people and machinery to involve. The production will be determined by the rate of demand and supply.

STEP 7 : the seventh step is about a marketing plan, which involves creating customers. Central is the question how one is going to create customers. Is it through advertising, and, if so, at what price?

STEP 8 : the project will need an organizational plan which is about the relationships of workers in the business. This explains who is answerable to whom. The duties of workers in a business need to be clearly laid out.

STEP 9 : The legal plan is essential as it formalizes the project. One is also to know whether business is formed on sole proprietorship, a partnership, or a corporation.

STEP 10 : The project needs to make an accounting plan which involves the type of records and reports preferred.

These are tentative suggestions which are very crucial for starting a business without which no project can afford starting up.

### **5.2.2. A Constitution.**

A Constitution shall be drawn up detailing the name of the project, the mission statement, the management, the committee, and their different responsibilities. Constitutions are important, especially when it comes to funders, who always insist on being sent a copy of the organization's constitution. A constitution also serves to direct decisions whenever discipline is to be meted out to any one member of the project.

### **5.2.3. A Committee and Manager.**

The Committee shall be elected consisting of the Chairperson, the Secretary, the Treasurer and two additional members. The duties of the Chairperson shall be to call and guide the meetings. The Secretary shall ensure that the minutes are recorded and all books that belong to the project are kept in a safe place. The Treasurer shall ensure that the financial books of the project are kept in order. A quarterly financial statement shall be issued to a quarterly meeting. There shall be a regular audit of the books. The Committee shall be accountable to the church, the project, and the community. The project shall have a Manager whose responsibility it is to manage the affairs of

the project. The Manager shall have the appropriate personality, be honest, and avoid nepotism in the workplace. But the cornerstone of many a successful project is the principle of accountability, and how staff subject themselves to it. Business demands that workers be accountable. The best business practices, and a well established work ethic, complement other efforts in making a business venture a success.

#### **5.2.4. Training.**

The importance of training cannot be overemphasized. Training exposes the staff member to the best possible way of running the project. In the competitive environment in which any business finds itself, only those who take training seriously survive. If business is to produce quality it will depend on training of staff. Training involves the changing of behaviour by transferring new knowledge, skills and attitudes (Bekker & Staude 1988:155). The success of any business depends on the development of staff. MacLeod (1995:89) contends that training is important in that it results in staff loyalty and motivation. We need to emphasize however, that training works well when the person undergoing training is willing and interested in it. It is very difficult to measure whether some members of staff are reluctant to be trained or not. But it is obvious that training a person who is not interested is wasteful of both resources and time.

#### **5.2.5. Conscientizing.**

For the projects to enjoy community support and be sustainable the contribution of the church, to which we shall now turn, is essential. The church should embark on conscientization of communities concerning economics. Communities should be mobilized to know that the economic survival of Thaba’Nchu relies on its residents, that people should be encouraged to not go outside the community to spend their money. The basics of economic education are necessary so that communities can know how the system works. When one invests his or her money outside the community, that person is actually disinvesting in one’s community.

It is agreed almost overwhelmingly, by people in the community of Thaba’Nchu, that the right answer for poverty and unemployment is income-generating projects (See Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4).

The types of projects that will be discussed below have been decided by communities as being conducive for the economic environment in this area (See Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4).

#### **5.2.6. Funding**

Funding plays a very important role in development. For the projects to be sustainable they shall have to ensure that they approach potential organizations for funding.

### **5.3. INCOME GENERATING PROJECTS.**

#### **5.3.1. Sewing and Knitting**

The church shall call a meeting of women who already have the skill of sewing and knitting. The target is those who already have the machinery and are prepared to make it available to the project. Many women in communities have skills which have not yet been tapped. At such a meeting the idea shall be put across about the envisioned project which will ensure employment, income and the ability to decide about one's livelihood. It should also be explained that the church has offered its buildings at an affordable price to the project.

The question that should be asked here is, "Who is interested in joining the project?" The purpose of this question is to identify women who want to commit themselves freely by investing in this idea. It will not help the project to take everyone, even those who are not interested because the survival of this project will depend partly on their interest and commitment. Oosthuizen (1997) makes a very important point here that poverty is not the only motivation for small business formation. That means the situation of poverty is not the only guarantee that workers are committed. Other than poverty, we need to look at other factors, that drives people to engage in projects. If questions which check the level of interest are avoided, the result over time will be the situation where people just disappear because they were not properly screened. One needs to be business-like (Bekker-Staude 1988:88). The next thing to do is forming a committee which will take the project forward.

The women present shall elect, for a start, the manager, the secretary, and the treasurer, for administrative purposes. That does not exclude other women from participation in decision-making. Since the project is just beginning, and for other organisational matters, the number of those who begin should be limited to eight. Here Lessem (1982:119) rightly argues, that to start one needs few people. It is important that the portfolio of a treasurer be filled by a woman who can read and write but also one who has basic concepts of figures. It will be expected of her to communicate income and expenditure in language that makes economic sense.

. To ensure good sales there will be this need for the project to forge partnerships with hospitals, schools and churches. The purpose of this partnership is to ensure that money does not flow out of the area, but circulates within it. Arrangements could be made whereby the project provides all schools in Thaba'Nchu with uniforms and curtains, as the need may be. Black churches place great emphasis on uniform when it comes to dress. There is always this demand for uniforms by churches, which could be provided for by a small business. The hospital could also get its linen,

curtains, and clothing from the project.

There is also a need for the church to change perceptions of blacks about black products. People leave their local shops in the area and go out to malls and big companies for the goods. The reason for that is lack of confidence in anything produced by the local people. This, of course, has to be balanced with black people beginning to provide quality and wanting to achieve high standards. It has to do with wanting to out compete others. This healthy competition is healthy in business. The church can do that through the production of workshop material which among other things includes: case studies, taped talks, and relevant printed material (Randall 1972:110).

### **5.3.2. *Small scale farming***

The communities need to move away from subsistence farming. Farming as practiced before where communities engaged in farming for the sole purpose of consumption needs to be avoided. The motivation for farming should be both economic and consumption. Stella (in Mboyane 2001:17) argues very strongly against the case of consumption as practiced in subsistence farming, arguing that the motive should rather be profit making. This is correct since one would be able to feed oneself, and also to invest. The poor communities need to use the skills they already have for economic empowerment if poverty is to be addressed. Such transformation is urgent, and the only organization locally which has the potential and the capacity to effect that is the church. The following are ways in which small scale farming can be done.

The church should call a meeting of the whole community. The purpose of this meeting should be the identification of suitable ways of farming in the area, and the identification of those who want to engage in community farming projects. It is important that the community itself decides on the type of farming, because local people know best about their environment, and what ways of farming are suitable to them. For instance, they know from experience as most rural people rely on farming as a means of livelihood. This type of information could even be provided by the older people in the community, who are reservoirs of farming skills and knowledge. Only if the community lacks such knowledge can experts from outside be called in to advise. These experts consist of agricultural extension officers, or the neighbouring farming community, who will be willing to assist. Only once communities have been satisfied by the information given, and once they have made their choices can they think about the project in detail. Since it is not all members of the community who want to farm, those who have an interest need to be identified.

One way of doing this is for the church to ask, "Who has an interest in communal farming?" The



list of names of all interested people should be compiled in a book. After names have been written down the next thing is to form a committee which is going to ensure that farming life in the community goes on. The committee will have to take into account that there are people who are more inclined to farming crops, whilst others prefer dealing in livestock. The following tentative points will be important for those who will be doing farming with crops: To engage in crop farming you need the land. Questions to ask are “Does the community have the land on which to do farming?” Whose land is it, does it belong to the individuals or to the community? How does one get access to such land? Negotiations can be entered into between the community, traditional leaders, and the local government for leasing of such land for development.

There is also the question of water. It needs to be asked, Where does the community get its water and how will it be used for watering the plants? Is the community going to use modern irrigation schemes or is it going to be manually done? What about relying on the rain? Farming cannot get on without fencing, how is the community going to get a fence? Are members going to put hands together or are they going to depend on sponsorship from somewhere? Fencing is important for both humans and animals. If farming is to be sustainable security is inevitable. The Farmers Support Group (1995:8) raises the following important questions for anyone keen on farming, i.e.:

1. What does the market want?

This question is important for planning as to a great extent it determines what is going to be planted. One sells what the market demands. It will be wasteful on the part of the community to embark on farming without seriously considering what the demands of the market are.

2. Which vegetables fetch the best prices at the market?

If farming is done for profit then one needs to know what kind of vegetables get sold at which price so that one does not work towards a loss. For instance crops which were too difficult to grow will be too expensive.

3. When will one get the best price for vegetables?

Vegetables are being used almost everyday, but there are days on which the demand is higher than others. It is important that farmers know what times of the year sales will rise.

4. What is the cost of selling each crop?

Farmers will need to know an estimation of the cost of selling which will include among others, transport and packaging, all of which will cost the project something. What this means is one spends when one sells crops.

5. Where will one sell different crops?

There is a need to identify places where crops will be sold. Some areas will be in cities which will obviously affect your price. As pointed out earlier, some form of transportation will be necessary

to take your crops to other markets.

Now that we have spent lots of time on a few ideas which are essential for planning we shall now look at the following method essential for farming on a small scale.

**Intercropping:** Intercropping is an old farming method, where many crops are cultivated at the same time. Unlike sole monoculture, intercropping makes full utilization of the given area of land. Intercropping as a system, was practiced over many years by poor small scale farmers in South Africa (Agricultural News 2001:9). The advantage with this way of farming is that farmers in communities will be doing something that they already know, although this does not mean that training is unnecessary.

The committee, and community, should know that compared to sole monoculture, intercropping has advantages, both in terms of crop yield and pest control. The fact is substantiated by researchers who agreed that different crops not only contribute to high yield but also to reduced pest damage (Karel, Lakhani and Ndungura 1982:102). But again it should be noted that intercropping cannot be done haphazardly, for maximum output one needs compatible combinations.

This concludes our section on crop farming. What follows is cattle sheep farming.

### **5.3.3. *Farming in Cattle and Sheep***

We are not going to dwell a lot on what one needs for this type of farming, as most of these have been dealt with under crop farming. Questions that were raised are also relevant for cattle and sheep farming. What one needs before embarking on crop farming is also necessary for cattle and sheep farming. We are only going to mention items which were not covered.

Dealing in cattle and sheep, means that farmers are going to ensure that there is enough grazing available. In situations where there is a shortage of grass, farmers can supplement that with lucerne, which is available from corporations. Whether the livestock will be fat or lean will depend to a great extent on the availability of grass. Farmers will need enough water for the running of their business. To ensure that water is freely available, basins must be provided at key points on the farm. Farmers must ensure that there is an availability of water at any time of the day.

But the other thing that is important is knowledge about worms and ticks, and how they are

harmful to livestock. Farmer Support Group (1995:8) isolates three phases of symptoms which affect worm infested animals, i.e.

a) Early symptoms, b) Late symptoms, and c) Postmortem symptoms.

If any animal display such symptoms, farmers must immediately consult a veterinary doctor. The following measures can be taken to treat an animal:

- 1) Supply the animal with electrolytes
- 2) Ensure that the animal is given substances that will do away with worms.
- 3) Monitor the progress.

It will also do farmers good to know about the ticks and how they affect animals. Ticks carry very small organisms that cause diseases in animals, they are therefore carriers of diseases to animals.

The following diseases are known to be caused by ticks: Redwater, gall sickness, heart water, and East coasser fever (Farmer Support Group 1995:9). The most effective solution to ticks is a dip in a solution prepared to fight these organisms.

The advantage with cattle and sheep farming, is that there is always a standing demand for milk and meat. The local community and business people are potential markets. Instead of going outside the community to buy bulk meat for parties and deaths, as is often the case, communities can rely on local farmers to provide.

#### **5.3.4. Poultry Farming.**

Among other strategies for poverty eradication is poultry farming. Poultry farming will provide employment possibilities as well as food in the form of proteins and fats necessary for the body. For instance, eggs contain saturated fat, protein and a host of 13 vitamins and many minerals (Poultry Bulletin 2001:333). Poultry farming has advantages, given that rural areas are generally known for producing meals of a low nutritious value. Eggs and meat sold will ensure that communities receive a balance of nutrients necessary for life.

Now that communities have already identified the need, the next step will be for the church to call a meeting. The purpose of such a meeting shall be to identify people from the community who are interested in forming a community poultry project. At this initial stage the extension officer from the Department of Agriculture from the Free State province should be invited to address the meeting on possibilities offered by the Department to the project, and advantages of poultry farming

in the area. This will be necessary as communities and the participants of the project will be able to understand the role of the Department and its capability, but also the benefits of such farming to the community. After presentations and discussions have been done a list of all who are interested in forming a community poultry farm shall be compiled.

If this project is to survive, a site survey will have to be done by the extension officer and members of the steering committee to establish the suitability of the climate to the project. Though Blanks (1999:20) admits that climate plays a less important role in livestock, there is a need nevertheless to research that. According to Farrell (2000:3) one needs a shady and dry place for chickens.. Once the above steps have been followed and communities are satisfied with their results they can begin to think about staffing.

This involves a situation where communities shall have to send names of people they have identified as poor but interested in working in the project. It is best sometimes if the selection is done by communities to avoid situations of favouritism and corruption, which contribute to many projects stagnating and eventually dying out. The number of workers shall be determined by the community.

The project is bound not to fail since it will be community driven, supplying products not only to the local communities and business people, but to outside markets.

We have examined the possibilities of small-scale farming in detail. We now move to conclude by discussing a preschool.

#### **5.3.5. *Preschool***

One of the business possibilities that have a potential for income generation is a preschool. Preschools and children, in my opinion, will always coexist. One cannot exist without the other. At the meeting the church should make it clear to the community that the aim of running a preschool is twofold. First, since poverty and unemployment are known to prevail in the community, the preschool shall serve as a business venture where community members will be employed. Second, the purpose for the preschool is educational.

To ensure sustainability, the church shall encourage residents to enroll their children in this preschool, instead of taking them to those outside the community. The community will also be encouraged to support the fund raising efforts initiated by the preschool.

The next thing to do is to elect the steering committee. Communities will elect those whom they want to be members of this steering committee. Henderson and Lucas (1981:89) make this interesting and valid point that a head of another pre-school should be invited at this stage with a view of co-opting him or her in the steering committee. The steering committee should be tasked with the responsibility of directing the process until the next general meeting where the proper committee is elected. It must be emphasized that gender consciousness must be taken into account in the election process. Once the steering committee has been established and has its chairperson, secretary and treasurer it will be necessary to fund raise for the project. The following ways of fund raising will be essential:

a) The preschool must have a rule that compels parents to pay fees a month in advance, as failure to do so means that the project cannot be sustained. In the case where parents cannot pay for at least a month, the principle of sweat equity should apply. This means, instead of payment being done in the form of money, parents shall do manual work in favour of the preschool (e.g. Working in the preschool garden which ensures a supply of vegetables to the project).

b) The church locally shall make it its business to fund raise for the project by making requests to the Thaba’Nchu representatives to the Free State Council of Churches. Denominations in the region that have in abundance, can be asked to assist.

c) The church and the steering committee should approach and encourage local business people to invest in the region by sponsoring the education of the children and stationary.

d) The Department of Social welfare and development should be approached for financial and material assistance.

e) The other ways of fundraising shall include raffles, tea parties and competitions or contests that will inject funds into the project.

Once the financial vision of the project is clear, staff can be appointed.

The appointment of staff is the most difficult task as it does not only involve women who have an interest, but also those who have a gift of working with children. Grobler, Penning, Orr, Caliz and van Staden (19987:2) rightly say that the right personality is the most important requirement for good day care. They further contend that attractive toys and the best playroom cannot compensate

for the staff-member who lacks the right personality and attitude. The steering committee should make it clear that they are looking for a woman who meets the following requirements, whose number will be determined by the number of children enrolled:

1. They must have a love for children.
2. They must be in charge of their emotions, as moodiness will have a negative impact on the child. Instead, the person must possess the necessary enthusiasm, patience, and determination to be a teacher and not merely a child minder.
3. It is important that the staff be tidy and neat, because children learn by seeing. But this does not mean one should be over conscious with tidiness to the extent that one repels children and refuses their touch.
4. She must be approachable, accessible for both children and parents. Children must be free to approach and share with her anything they so wish, without any fear.
5. She has to be a very creative person. To ensure that children's creativity is unleashed, it is imperative that she be creative herself.
6. It must be a person who easily shares jokes and laughs with the children. A sense of humour is a necessity.
7. Willison (1989:28) adds that she must be patient, energetic and flexible.

The list is endless, but in short, these are a few requirements that the committee cannot avoid.

This project, if followed and implemented well, will ensure that a reasonable number of women are employed. The purpose of this project is not only to provide a preschool and employment for the women, but it is to provide a learning centre where other women elected by communities shall be trained so as to begin preschools in their own communities. The end result will be a situation where there is no community without a preschool.

Finally the preschool will be registered. The Child Care Act of 1983 maintains that all childcare facilities be registered with the Department of Welfare and Population development. Communities and individuals are thereby discouraged from operating without a certificate from the Department. Registration of preschools also comes with its own benefits, for instance, only those facilities who are registered with the Department are entitled to government subsidy (Midlands Women's Group 1999:222).

### **5.3. CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on income generating projects for fighting poverty. It was argued that to combat poverty and unemployment, income generating projects shall be introduced in the community which will be run according to key business principles. The rate of poverty and unemployment demands that action be taken immediately to relieve communities who are trapped in suffering. The church, business, and government have got the potential and the capacity to support income generating projects intended to fight poverty and unemployment.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

This final chapter serves as a conclusion for the thesis. The thesis will not be written over again, rather, the gist of the issues as seen from the perspective of the researcher will be provided. To ensure that this task is properly done, each chapter will be discussed after another. Since this thesis deals with finding solutions to poverty, a SEE- JUGDE- ACT method was followed.

In Chapter Two we looked at the extent and causes of poverty in Thaba’Nchu. It was shown that Thaba’Nchu is a poverty stricken area and that its poverty rate is estimated at 60%. Given that the statistics were prepared in 1996 and that the situation has not changed for the better since then, it was argued that the poverty rate has gone up dramatically. The research concludes: that poverty is caused by the legacy of apartheid and the institutional racism it entrenched. Factors which contribute to poverty are: (a) Land Dispossession, (b) Overpopulation, (c) Bantu Education, (d) Silencing Organizations, (e) Migrant Labour, (f) The Color Bar and Job Reservation, (g) Globalization and Unemployment.

The poor, it was argued, are not merely those who lack the ability to attain a minimal standard of living, nor are they merely those whose income is lower than what they need for survival. The poor, are victims of the powerful and the rich, who excluded and marginalized them from active participation in the matters that affect their lives. The poor are those who are denied opportunities, are deprived, impoverished and dispossessed. Jones (1990:103) correctly concludes that their suffering is not a “passive absence of good, but an active presence of evil.”

Since the poor suffered poverty in Thaba’Nchu, we searched for Biblical resources on the Bible and poverty in Chapter 3, to ascertain how the poor were treated in the Bible, and also how the church could assist them.

In Chapter 3 reference was made of different Biblical texts to show God’s concern for the poor. We looked at The Legal Tradition, The Book of Psalms, The Prophetic Movement, and the Wisdom Literature. In the New Testament we looked at selected texts where Jesus and Paul show concern for the poor. The conclusion that was made is that God, in both the Old and the New Testaments, shows a preferential option for the poor and the oppressed. God desires justice to be done.

The church’s perspective on poverty, through the South African Council of Churches, the Lutheran



Church and the Methodist Church was investigated. The church remained the only voice of the voiceless when all other organizations had gone into hiding during the struggle for liberation. It was concluded that these church organizations, in theory and practice, sided with the poor and the oppressed. Their work among the poor, then and now, is informed by what the Biblical God does for the poor and oppressed.

Judged against the background of the Bible the situation of poverty in Thaba’Nchu was found to be not what it ought to be. The government, and the rich and the powerful have contributed to the rise and prevalence of poverty in the area. The church in Thaba’Nchu was found to have failed the poor when, instead of siding with and working towards freedom for the poor, the church supported the status quo. It became obvious that the church was “married” to the state. It is this “marriage” which prevented the church from being prophetic and outspoken about the plight of the poor.

It was concluded that the church in Thaba’Nchu have to adopt a preferential option for the poor. The church needs to understand and act according to what the attitude of God is for the destitute, the homeless, the poor and marginalized groups in the community. The church must be true to its calling as the servant of God in the world.

In chapter 4 and 5, the programme of action which is divided into short term strategies for the former, and medium term strategies for the latter, based on the needs of the community, was provided. Since the rate of poverty is alarmingly high and the people are hungry, there is a need for immediate and direct action now to fight both poverty and hunger. These we discussed in chapter 4 under short term strategies for addressing poverty and hunger. It was concluded, that since people are poor and hungry now, the following strategies should be planned and implemented:

a) Food should be made available to the poor.

This can be achieved if the church can target government, the South African Council of Churches, the church in Thaba’Nchu and the local food outlets and hotels for food donations or the currency to purchase it.

b) Food gardens.

It was concluded, that the church should encourage and motivate communities to embark on community food gardening projects on available church lands, private lands and unoccupied lands. The benefits of such gardens is not only material, but is also spiritual, as they create space for communication and the breaking down of stress and tension.

These strategies, if planned and implemented, can combat poverty and hunger to some extent. The

nature and extent of poverty in Thaba’Nchu requires that the poor be assisted through other strategies; discussed in chapter 5 under Medium-Term strategies to address sustainable income-generating projects. It was concluded in chapter 5, that the projects discussed on sewing and knitting, small scale farming, cattle farming, poultry and preschool have the capacity to generate income so that the poor are not only materially independent, but are empowered, so that they can take charge of their own lives. To ensure sustainability the projects shall have a business plan, a constitution, a committee and manager, training and conscientization of communities on economics. Before we end this chapter, it is essential to make the following concluding remarks: What comes out very clear from this research project, is that it is vitally important, and possible, for the church to participate as an ecumenical body in development. Concerning this point Tsele (no date:9) emphasizes: “ We need to serve our people ecumenically, without favour to ethnic or denominational allegiance.”

This unity in ecumenism, in word and deed, is crucial for development on any given level of operation. It is essential for capacity building, trust and ownership by community, and also necessary for donors whose interest is not so much in funding individual denominational projects, but community based projects. In my opinion, when denominations work together in any given context, they have greater chances of success than when they do as individual denominations.

Again, it is clear from this work that the church ( as an ecumenical body ) can indeed work together with communities towards eradicating poverty. This cooperation is essential. The church needs the community and so does the community need the church. Whether development will be successful or not will depend on the cooperation of the stake holders.

When the church becomes a servant of the community it will be fulfilling the Lord’s imperatives recorded in Matthew 25: 34-40:

Then the King will say to those on His right,  
Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit  
The kingdom prepared for you from the foundations  
of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me  
something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink;  
I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and  
you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was  
in prison , and you came to Me.  
Then the righteous will answer Him, saying Lord, when

did we see You hungry ,and feed You, or thirsty, and give  
You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and  
invite You in, or naked , and clothed You? And when  
did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?  
And the King will answer and say to them, Truly I say  
to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers  
of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me

## APPENDIX 1

### THABA'NCHU ECUMENICAL FORUM

#### People present on the 22/MAY/2001, THABA'NCHU.

Kgosiemang, (Rev)

Mr. Morakabi.

Lenong, (Rev)

Mosipidi, (Bishop)

Mr. Setsumi.

S I am grateful that in your busy schedule you were able to respond to my appointment with you. We are going to talk about what is poverty and what you think are the causes of poverty and unemployment in Thaba'Nchu, its extent and effects in the community. The question will also be asked about what you think could be done to fight poverty in the region. To begin, What is poverty and what are its causes ?

TEF Poverty in Setswana is translated as Khumanego which means lack of resources causing hunger. The cause of poverty in Thaba'Nchu is unemployment. There could be other causes but unemployment is the main reason why people are in abject poverty today. Talking of poverty, many people around our area are unemployed and as a result, poor. The rate of poverty is very high. Poverty in Thaba'Nchu is inextricably linked to unemployment.

S What do you think are the causes of unemployment in ThabaNchu?

TEF Among the causes of unemployment in Thaba'Nchu is the government. We say government because government formulates and implements policies which are not for job creation, but for job losses. Much of the unemployment rate in our area came as a result of government policies.

Unemployment is a disturbing phenomenon. There are a lot of people who have the qualifications who are not employed. Many in the teaching field but also in other disciplines. Others have gone through the technikons and ought to have been employed in places where they could have been contributing to the development of the country. But there is also the firms which have closed down because they do not see themselves making profit in South Africa as a result of trade unionism who have come in and dictated terms to government. The firms could not see their role in the new government which did not provide a safe environment within which to function.

There is also the issue of privatization of institutions of government. One Lenong (Rev) was eloquent in describing what it means when saying: "Puso e rekisa mesebetsi mme seo se dira hore batho ba latlhehelewe ke mesebetsi ya bona". Privatization has got these weaknesses that whereas government tolerated unions and compromised to union demands, a private company often refused employees union membership and exploits workers. Whereas government could cope with its overcrowded workforce what often happens with privatization, is that workers lose their jobs because the owners are interested in profits and not much in the interests of workers. This is what happened in Thaba'Nchu. Workers lost their jobs due to privatization and rightsizing of the workforce. The issue is, the new owners under privatization do not see the need for the entire workforce, resulting in job losses.

The situation after 1994 saw people losing their jobs under the policy of retrenchment or rationalization. Public servants had no alternative but to take voluntary retrenchment. In Bophuthatswana after 1994 elections, government was faced with a problem of many public servants. Government decided to trim the public service to tally with the new realities of South Africa. Manpower (women power) and resources were to be distributed equitably in the region and outside it. Government had to rationalise its public servants, arguing that the former homeland had by far too many schools and too many teachers. That had far reaching effects for the region. It meant that schools, hospitals, fire brigade, had to shed jobs resulting in many people being jobless.

S What do you think are the effects of unemployment and poverty in the area?

TEF The first that is visible is crime. Poverty and unemployment breeds crime. People say they do not work so they have to steal to make a living. Poverty and unemployment accounts for the high crime rate in the area. Alongside theft and robberies are suicides, rapes and women and child abuse.

S What do you think can be done to combat poverty?

TEF Combatting poverty will involve the provision of food to the poor. It will also involve encouraging our people to cultivate food gardens. But it also means the community needs to embark on job-creation projects, such as knitting, farming, for commercial and for self-benefit, brick making, sewing and tourism, among others.

S Who do you think is responsible to ensure that poverty is eradicated?

TEF All stakeholders with an interest in poverty eradication are responsible to work for the economic survival of the area. We do not think that any single organisation can be successful without the participation of other organizations. Poverty eradication means the involvement of all and the participation of all.

## APPENDIX 2

### THABA'NCHU LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### People Present on 22 May 2001, in Thaba'Nchu

Mr. Molawa

Mr. Setlogelo.

S I am going to ask that we look at the problem of poverty in Thaba'Nchu. You are requested to share your views on the causes of poverty, its extent and effects in the community. Later in the interview, you will be asked about possible solutions which you think could be pursued to combat poverty and unemployment in the area. Just to start off, What is poverty and what are its causes?

LG The cause of poverty in Thaba'Nchu among others, is unemployment. Unemployment leads to poverty. Some institutions that were available during Bophuthatswana government were downsized while others were completely shut down. For example, Poloko Sanatarium which employed nurses and other non-nursing staff, was moved to Bloemfontein. The result is that some are unemployed. Moroka Hospital for instance, is no longer functioning as before, it has been reduced. It is no longer that institution that had a great population of nurses in training and those employed at the hospital. One other thing that affected Thaba'Nchu is the squabble of the North West and Free State provinces in connection with the assets of ThabaNchu which are still in the hands of North West province, which resulted in the departments closing down. This led to unemployment and poverty and eventually crime. Fortunately there is a promise that North West province will hand over assets to ThabaNchu where there is a possibility for investors to occupy those firms. The Free State government will renovate the firms. The shopping complex will also be renovated. The college of education has been closed.

S What do you think are the causes of unemployment in Thaba'Nchu?

LG In our case unemployment is caused by the Free State provincial government.

Because we have a very high rate of unemployment in our area, we also find that we have a high rate of poverty. Just before your appointment this morning, maybe as you entered our premises you were met by a crowd of people outside who are demonstrating against us. They are demanding that the local government provide them with jobs. This incidence is cited just to give you the picture of the seriousness of the problem of poverty and unemployment.

S Poverty and unemployment are serious problems in Thaba'Nchu! What do you think are the effects of unemployment and poverty in the area?

LG The serious problem which we have to contend with is the high rate of crime. Crime is very high. You see people are unemployed and at the end of the day that person has to eat. When people have no source of income they end up stealing. Some will steal because they are criminals. Criminal activity was there even during Bophuthatswana government when unemployment was not a problem as it is today. We cannot deny that people feel de-motivated, and turn to alcohol to drown their problems.

S What do you think can be done to eradicate poverty?

LG First, what needs to be done is for the North West government to hand over the assets of Thaba’Nchu among which are factories. The Free State government will assist us to ensure that these are renovated. Surely once these factories are operational in Thaba’Nchu in the form of rail to take our products to other destinations such as the Durban harbour. What also needs to be done is farming, Thaba’Nchu is a rural area. It has the potential. If people can embark on different farming projects such as poultry, agricultural projects, sewing and knitting and other small scale business ventures poverty will be fought.

Again, we need to educate our people to create jobs. They need to be trained so that they should not depend on being employed. Our people still believe in being employed by farmers you know, *maburu*. They do not think that they can create jobs for others. Tourism also has the potential for growth given different key places that are available here.

S Who do you think is responsible to ensure that poverty is eradicated?

LG All sectors should play a role in development. For instance churches have produced leaders and have a potential for poverty eradication. Food parcels should be given to the poor and hungry. Churches have a potential to build a whole person.

## APPENDIX 3

### A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

#### People Present on 23/May/2001, THABA'NCHU

Taunyane, J (Mrs)

Maphatchwane, E S (Mrs)

Blekie, E (Dr)

S I am very grateful that you have accepted my appointment. What is poverty and what are its causes? What do you think are the causes of unemployment in Thaba'Nchu?

NGO Poverty is lack of job opportunities. People are hungry and starving because they do not work and it is also because of lack of jobs that they are starving. Many school leavers, for example, are unemployed, we cannot even begin to talk about many men and women who are unemployed; looking for work but cannot find any. Related to the problem of poverty and unemployment is the closing of mines and investors pulling out. In Thaba'Nchu we had firms operated by the Taiwanese, which employed many of our people. These firms produced goods such as shoes, jugs, jewellery, plastics among others. With the coming to power of the new government these Taiwanese business people relocated elsewhere because the environment was not favourable for them to operate. Vast numbers of people were unemployed as a result.

Clearly the cause of poverty is unemployment. In Thaba'Nchu unemployment level is very high contributing to more poverty. People are hungry and starving. One would think that disability grant would be increased, that the social security net would be strengthened to enable families to cope. As it is now, the poor are faced with abject poverty.

S What do you think are the effects of unemployment and poverty in the area?

Joblessness breeds crime and related social problems such as alcoholism.

S What do you think can be done to combat poverty?

NGO While it is generally known that the issuing of food parcels is not the right solution since they create a dependency syndrome in the victim, the nature and extent of poverty in Thaba'Nchu demands that such a position be reviewed. We cannot stand against the provisions of food parcels to the poor when they are hungry and starving. We need to attack poverty by providing food parcels and ensuring that the poor are trained along the lines of job creation so that they can create jobs for themselves. Thaba'Nchu is best suited for projects such as knitting, sewing, handicrafts, brick making, Farming and tourism. The problem that we are facing as a region is that Thaba'Nchu is not in the best interests of the provincial department for tourism. Things are happening elsewhere in the province and not in Thaba'Nchu.

Again we need to ensure that the firms are opened up so that people who used to work in those firms can be re-employed again. The advantage is that these people come with the skills already learnt, unlike a situation whereby a totally new workforce was to be hired. In this case one does not need training in the same way that



one would need training of a completely new staff. Thaba’Nchu is having a rich soil. But there are also lots of farms which are not cultivated. A lot still needs to be done to allow for farming on a small scale so that the underprivileged are not only provided with land but also are made part of the local economy. There is the need to ensure that people work on the land to produce their food but also essential is that they have a market to sell their products.

There are many ways that could be tried to fight unemployment in our region, one of which is the formation of a catering group. Among people who have money planning and catering for any occasion becomes a problem.

There is a need for a catering group to take up that responsibility. Setting up of that group wouldn’t be a problem, we need to identify especially women who have an interest, have them trained and ask for sponsorship so that their business can get on its feet.

S Who do you think is responsible to ensure that poverty is eradicated?

NGO Poverty is so widespread and so high that to be able to wage a successful war one would need the efforts of all stakeholders in the community. Poverty cannot be a concern for one party and not for others, it is a problem that affects everyone and as such it needs combined efforts from all parties concerned.

## APPENDIX 4

### The Chief (Kgosi) of Thaba’Nchu

Date: 23/May/2001, THABA’NCHU

S I am delighted that I could secure an appointment with you today. This interview is about unemployment and poverty. It is about the causes of unemployment and poverty, its extent and effects on the area. But it is also about looking for a solution to the problem. What is poverty and what are its causes? What do you think are causes of unemployment in Thaba’Nchu?

KGOSI: Poverty is caused by unemployment. The problem of unemployment which results in poverty, it began in 1994 with the birth of the New South Africa and is increasing.

When we entered the New Dispensation each one of us had a job. Restructuring and attempting to form one South Africa (incorporating Bophuthatswana) has caused us problems. Many people lost their jobs, skilled and unskilled. When the new government came into power, they got rid of the old experienced civil servants. That should not be the case, the experienced workers should be around to transfer their knowledge to the new workforce.

In our area unemployment is very high contributing to high poverty level. As you can see for yourself the offices have been closed down. Firms have closed down including the hospitals such as Poloko Sanatorium and services are no longer available. Government does not create jobs instead it is taking away that which is already there. The government is building houses, but does not solve the problem of unemployment and hunger. It complicates the matter even worse because one may not be able to maintain that house. Government should have started by job creation because when people are employed, they are able to feed themselves and to pay for whatever service they need.

By doing that government is creating more problems for us. Removing and closing down service providers in ThabaNchu is not good for us. We do not know where they expect us to work. Are we expected to be employed in Bloemfontein when there is a high rate of unemployment already there? We can only request that they return our assets so Thaba’Nchu can be developed like it was before. Thaba’Nchu people are very quiet, maybe we need to have a sense of direction and purpose. We need to request for our properties to be returned to us, so our people can be employed again. Due to unemployment we have poverty today.

S What do you think are the effects of unemployment and poverty in the area?

KGOSI The visible effects in the community are high criminal activity.

S What do you think can be done to combat poverty?

KGOSI I have already said that our assets need to be returned back to us. Once that is done our people will be

employed. Again government needs to create jobs. But also as a nation we need to see what can be done along the lines of self-employment. Poverty and hunger go with crime, hence the high crime level in our area.

S Who do you think is responsible to ensure that poverty is eradicated?

KGOSI The provincial government needs to consult with the community before taking any steps to implement changes.

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### **Biblical Versions**

Revised Standard version

New American Standard

# FREE STATE - THABA NCHU AREA

