

**MISSION, THE POOR AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE MINISTRY OF THE METHODIST  
CHURCH IN IVORY PARK**

**By**

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**Submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

**in the**

**DEPARTMENT OF MISSIOLOGY**

**in the**

**FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**FEBRUARY 2001**

## **Summery**

In 1994 South Africa celebrated the election of a new democratic government. This came with the abolition of the Group Areas Act 36 of 1966, which controlled the movement of black people from rural areas to urban areas.

The repealing of this act led to the rapid movement of people from rural areas all over Southern Africa to the cities and towns in search for a better life. In turn this led to rapid urbanization and the growth of informal settlements also known as squatter camps. These communities are characterized by poverty and lack of basic necessities such as houses, water and employment.

The church was caught unaware by the need to minister to these communities that need more than the gospel that satisfies spiritual poverty but also the satisfaction of material poverty. This exposed the need for a model of ministry that will be holistic. This study shares a model of ministry that has been used by a Methodist congregation in an informal settlement community called Ivory Park in Midrand. This church uses a model of ministry that propagates the gospel both through preaching and community development.

## **Key terms:**

Mission, The Poor, Poverty, Methodist Church, Community, Community development, Mission, Empowerment, Ivory Park, Theology, Christianity and economy, South Africa

### **Declaration**

*I declare that " Mission, the Poor and Community Development: A Case Study of the Methodist Church in Ivory Park" is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.*

**Signed**



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**Simangaliso Raymond Kumalo.**

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my parents Phillimon Khayeni and Dorah Kumalo - who taught me: "To fear God is the Beginning of All Wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7). What a privilege it has been for me to be raised by faithful Christians and to walk on the path of the fear of the Lord. Although they were poor materially they were rich spiritually they gave that spiritual richness to their children. It is my prayer that I can also instill this wisdom in my children.

### Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to a number of people who have helped me do this work. Firstly I thank the people of Ivory Park Methodist church who gave me some time to do my studies. I also thank my family, wife and children who shared me with my congregation and my studies. Some days they had to do without me, I am grateful for their understanding.

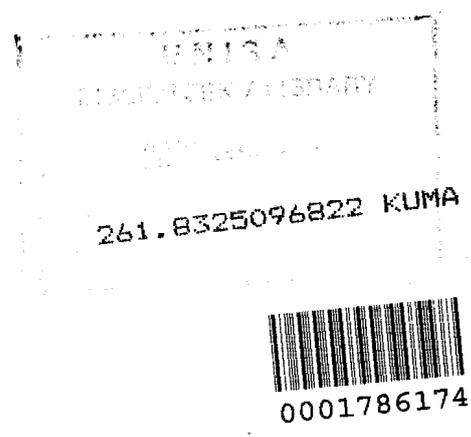
I am also grateful to my church the- Methodist church- that helped me financially to continue my studies. My church also offered me a lecturing post at John Wesley College (Jabavu Campus). By giving me this opportunity they introduced me to students who sharpened my thinking and raised even more interest in theological enquiry.

I would also like to thank my two supervisors Dr (s) De Beer and Van Schalkwyk without whom I would not have done this work. Their loving guidance have been a amazing to me throughout this journey and they made this journey easy for me. This dissertation was written not in a university setting but in the midst of a busy circuit ministry, and no doubt suffers from all the defects of having been snatched from sometimes a hectic schedule. That is why I am grateful to my supervisors and Madeline my editor for their patience with me. It is my prayer that God will bless all three of them abundantly.

I am also grateful to my Bishop Paul Verreyn who believed in me. From the beginning of my ministry until today, he never gave up on me. He also supported me when I was studying and encouraged me to work hard. He is more than a father to me.

It is my prayer that this study could be used by all those who love God so that they can take the good news of abundant life to the poor. This must be done so that the poor can glorify the Lord who is where they are.

To God Be Glory and Majesty.  
For He has loved us All even before we could love Him.



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# MISSION, THE POOR AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE MINISTRY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IVORY PARK

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

*The poor are sometimes said to be the rag, tag and bobtail of humanity. But Jesus does not leave them in that condition. Out of material others would throw away as useless he fashions people of strength, giving them back their self-respect, enabling them to stand on their feet and look God in the eye. They were cowed, cringing, broken things. But the Son has set them free! (Origen, 3rd century AD)*

#### 1.1 MOTIVATION OF STUDY

On 13 December 1997 I arrived in Ivory Park, an informal settlement in Midrand. I had come to take up an appointment as minister of a small Methodist congregation in this community. There were only about 55 active members in the congregation: 15 women, 10 men, twenty members of the youth and fewer than 10 children in the Sunday school. They worshipped in a small dilapidated shack which gave no protection at all against rain and sun. Only about 25 of these people were employed and could give money to support the church. This was a particular problem, because the expenses of the church were very high.

For instance, Ivory Park Methodist church's budget for the year 1998 was about R100 000. The expenses could be broken down into minister's stipend, maintenance of buildings (church, mission house and office), water, electricity and stationery as well as funds for mission work.

The circuit subsidized our church to the tune of 90 percent in 1998, so the congregation was expected to raise R10 000. The following year the subsidy went down and the church needed to raise R30 000. This year the subsidy dropped again and so the church is expected to raise about R60 000. The expenses are realistic: they are for important things, but how can the people raise such an amount? In this church only 40 percent of the congregation is employed - 70 percent of these as helpers/maids or gardeners, 28 percent as artisans and only 2 percent in any professional capacity. There is no question that for the church to have money it needs its members to support it. If the members are poor, there is a problem - especially when they are faced with an unemployment rate of 60 percent, which is the case in Ivory Park. Although the richer churches subsidize this church, the subsidy is progressively cut every year. The subsidy also has a lot of strings attached to it, which makes it very difficult for the church to grow. Every quarter a financial report has to be submitted to the supporting church, and when they are not satisfied with the financial growth, the minister and leaders of the new church are humiliated time and again. They are told that they are not working hard enough, they are reminded that they are a financial burden on the circuit (the group of local Methodist churches that Ivory Park Methodist church falls under). When they express ideas of their own on how to develop the work, they are checked and told what to do and how to do it. This leaves a lot to be desired about the ownership of the church.

It was this struggle that prompted me to explore a way for the church to do mission that will also lead to the economic empowerment of the poor, so that they can support their church financially. Then they will be able to own and direct its mission activities according to the needs of their community as they see them, without any outside control. In short, I would like to find a solution to the problem of doing mission in communities of the poor. I will do this by looking critically at the ministry of Ivory Park in which I have participated, and by using the pastoral cycle.

I think it is important to see whether we have learnt any lessons from this ministry that can be used by the church to do mission more effectively - lessons that can be used in other communities faced by economic poverty, especially informal settlement communities like Ivory Park. I hope this study will also help me see what we need to do to improve the effectiveness of our church so that it can lead to an improvement in people's lives.

## **1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION**

The Church in South Africa, especially the Methodist Church, has largely failed to involve itself in ministering to informal settlement communities in a way that will bring about positive change. This is true despite the fact that the church has institutional and practical strengths and resources that can be used to make a real impact on the development of informal settlement communities. For instance, the Methodist Church has endeavoured to start churches in informal settlements, but these have been neglected in terms of transforming ministry. These churches have outstation status, which deprives them of opportunities to be trained in how to focus on their communities as agents of change. This is because the minister, who has to act as a catalyst or facilitator, visits such a church only once every quarter. Most of the time he does not belong to the community: he lives outside it and comes only to bring the sacraments. In these circumstances, the church is unable to grow to a point where it can focus its ministry on the needs of the poor community.

The reason why such communities do not have their own minister is that they are economically poor, so they cannot afford the expenses that go with having a resident minister. Past and present economic injustices make it difficult for the poor to have a church that they can own, support and even direct in terms of its missionary vision and its ministry. Their churches are always dependent on those who pay their ministers and support them financially. As a result, the local informal settlement church tends to focus

on ministry that does not lead to development and independence. There is a subtle disempowerment and dependency at work in which the relationship between congregations from established communities and those from informal settlement communities inhibits the latter from practicing a transformational ministry.

*The aim of this study, therefore, is to find a model of ministry that we can use in informal settlements or communities of the poor in order to bring about holistic development (both spiritual and physical) in these communities.*

Although this study is biased towards economic development, I am aware that transformational development is holistic. I am therefore of the opinion that the Church has to bring holistic development to the community. I shall be focusing mainly on community development, but as a subsection of this I shall also consider the economic sustainability both of members and of their church.

All over South Africa informal settlements are experiencing absolute poverty. There are a number of reasons for this continuing problem. Rapid urbanization is one of the principal causes. Ever since the repeal of the Group Areas Act, which used to control the free movement of people from rural to urban areas, people have been flocking to the cities in their thousands in a search for greener pastures. When they arrive in the city, they find that it is unprepared for them in terms of accommodation and employment opportunities. Consequently they end up in the informal settlements, without jobs and in poverty. Informal settlement communities are characterized by poor living conditions and a lack of the essential resources that enable people to live decent lives.

The problem of the South African economy is that, for decades, it has been centred on the tiny white minority and has left the black majority with meagre economic resources to survive on. This has led to huge and ongoing problems of poor living conditions, lack of resources and a high rate of illiteracy. Even those who are educated received an inferior education under the Bantu Education system, which did not prepare them for a

challenging job market. The people of the informal settlement communities are the ones most adversely affected by this problem of poverty.

To address this problem, the government introduced the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). This strategy seeks to address the economic imbalances so that even the poorest of the poor can benefit.

This goal is echoed by the RDP (1994:3) document itself when it states that

[t]he economy was built on systematically enforced racial division in every sphere of our society. Rural areas have been divided into underdeveloped Bantustans and well-developed white-owned commercial areas. Towns and cities have been turned into townships without basic infrastructure

Through this programme the government has been able to build and provide thousands of houses for the homeless; hundreds of clinics; schools, roads, water pipes and other essential resources. Despite all this, huge numbers of people continue to live in poverty. People's economic conditions have not improved; they struggle to buy food, electricity, clothing and other basic necessities.

Even the new economic strategy - the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) - has not made any difference. Its aim is to develop the economy so as to generate more employment opportunities. However, it has not created jobs; we still have a great many people living in poverty. Some have RDP houses, roads, and water from the programme, but these things mean little if people cannot earn money to pay their rent, buy electricity, pay their water bills and meet their basic needs.

Ivory Park is one such community that faces the problem of poverty. RDP houses, water, roads, two clinics and three schools have been provided, but people are still poor because of a lack of job opportunities. Most people there live in absolute poverty.

The church in this community is not unaffected by these economic problems. This is so simply because the church is situated in the informal settlement. The church consists of the same people who are unemployed, who live without food and other basic necessities of life. It is a church of the poor. Members of the church bear a double economic load, namely the needs of their families as well as their church. Because of this situation, the church cannot ignore the economic needs of the community. Usually the church addresses these problems through charity. De Beer (1997:10) notes that the church tends to function as a charitable organization:

Where the church responds to social problems in the community it is usually in the form of service ministries, not necessarily dealing with the causes of poverty and marginalization. The church tries to provide relief on the surface while the community is slowly disintegrating underneath. The church is not involved, in other words in the transformation of the inner city into a better environment and therefore it becomes part of the downward spiral.

The problem with charity is that it does not liberate anybody - rather, it enslaves both the giver (who has to give all the time) and the recipient (who has to beg all the time). Therefore charity has to be discouraged, because it does not deal with the root cause of poverty by seeking strategies towards finding permanent solutions to the problem.

Most churches get so discouraged by the complexity of the problem that they do not attempt to do anything at all. Some claim that they lack models. I see it as a deeper problem than just a lack of relevant models. I agree that the lack of models is a difficulty; but the real problem, I think, is the lack of a theology of the church in the informal settlement. The church in the informal settlement has not developed a theology appropriate to the unique challenges of the situation. In calling for a theology of the inner city, De Beer (1997:11) says that 'theology goes even deeper to epistemology and methodology applied by ministers (practicing theologians) in the inner city.

This leads me to say that the informal settlement church, too, needs a theology that goes deeper, addressing the need for an epistemology and methodology of ministry in such a community. This theology will unveil the unique dynamics of such a community and produce a ministry that is contextually relevant to informal settlement communities. It will help the church to discover the right approach to ministry in informal settlement communities, one that will lead to the transformational development of these communities. A theology of this kind will make it possible for such a model of ministry to be discovered.

Transformational mission must lead to transformational development, which will result in transformed communities where the church is working. What I am hoping to discover in this study is how can the church minister in communities of the poor (informal settlements) in a way that will lead to transformational development, so that people can agree that the church is a bearer of good news to the poor? (Luke 4:18).

### **1.3 FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

- This is a missiological study, focusing on an informal settlement with a view to developing a praxis of ministry for the transformation of the community.
- Although it is a missiological study, it will integrate other disciplines such as development theory.
- The approach adopted is a contextual approach of doing theology in the informal settlement.
- Within the contextual approach I shall apply the pastoral cycle method, since this method converges with other relevant methods.

- The area of study is the informal settlement of Ivory Park in Midrand, Gauteng Province.
- Community development with an emphasis on economic empowerment will be the focus of this study.
- It will not deal in detail with every kind of poverty but will concentrate on economic poverty.

#### **1.4 CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION**

The question to be answered by this study is as follows:

*How can we do ministry in informal settlements and other communities of the poor in a way that brings about holistic (spiritual and physical) development in those communities and an end to poverty and suffering?*

In the light of this central research question, the following subsidiary questions will be asked throughout the study:

- (1) How can the mission of the church in communities of the poor lead towards transformational development?
- (2) What attitudes should the church adopt towards poverty and the poor?
- (3) What is the relationship between mission, the poor and economic development?
- (4) Are there any elements of a theology of mission that may form a theological foundation for the church's involvement in community development?

- (5) What do we mean by the church's involvement in the empowerment of the poor?
- (6) Is the pastoral cycle the ideal model for such a situation?
- (7) How has the Ivory Park Methodist church survived and continued to do mission under financial strain?
- (8) Are there any lessons to be learnt from it that can be helpful to other churches in similar communities?

#### **1.4.1 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

In its 1991 Conference in Benoni, the Methodist Church embarked on a mission campaign that they called A Journey to a New Land. On this journey the Methodist Church sought to discern God's call to them in terms of their mission as they approached the 21st century. Amongst other things, the Church felt it was being called to reach out to the poor in informal settlements and to be involved in education and community development in those communities (Minutes of Conference of the Methodist Church 1991:373).

This meant that the church needed resources, such as money and human resources, in order to reach these communities and do mission. Then the Church's mission found itself in a crisis because it meant that the Church had to minister to the very poor. It needed funds for economic empowerment; but how was the church to set about finding funds to minister to the poor? Because of the lack of financial resources, no successful ministry has been done in informal settlements. Even good mission work, started on grants from the Methodist Church, had to be discontinued because of a lack of funds (Minutes of the Conference of the Methodist Church 1999:147).

This study is therefore vitally important to research in this area because it seeks a solution to the problems of mission in poor communities. It assumes that the answer lies in mission that leads to the total transformation of people's lives, or community development; more specifically, so that the poor can take charge of their lives and can genuinely proclaim that the gospel is good news for them, because it addresses their situation.

## **1.5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

### **1.5.1 Mission**

Mission can be defined as

'the work of the church in the world as commanded by God' Kritzinger 1988: 5).

Hastings (1996:8) defines it as

'the proclamation and immediate inauguration of salvation seen as the divine gift of liberation both spiritual and temporal'.

According to this definition, mission affects reality in terms of the church's participation in God's work - the church's participation in bringing about salvation in the world. It does not leave people and their context unaltered. Mission is understood, in other words, as an enterprise that transforms reality (Bosch 1991:xv).

It liberates people not only spiritually but even temporally, by addressing their physical needs. It enables people to realize that the Kingdom of God is in their midst. Through the gospel that it preaches, mission brings liberation from sin and reconciles people to God (Gutierrez 1986:15). This reconciliation with God is freedom from sin (Galatians 5:1).

Such liberation is also freedom from oppressive structures and from exploitation by other human beings (Gutierrez 1986:15). Our understanding of salvation determines the way we carry out mission. As Bosch puts it, 'however we understand salvation determines the scope of the missionary enterprise' (Bosch 1991:393)

In this study mission is understood as an enterprise that brings about the kingdom of God by liberating and saving people from the power of sin and oppression. It is with this understanding and in this sense that the concept will be used.

### **1.5.2 Poverty**

Poverty can be defined as the powerlessness and alienation of people from the key institution of society that makes it possible for them to access resources they need for their lives to be whole, thus being in a state of deficiency materially, spiritually and culturally (Schenk 1996:16).

In this study the poor are perceived in a material and not a metaphorical sense. They are those who suffer basic economic need, those who are deprived of the material (and spiritual) goods necessary to conduct their lives with any dignity. It is in this sense that the term will be used in this work. The poor are taken as a collective phenomenon, not as individuals. Moreover, they are so understood without separating them from the social conditions that place and define them (in this case, an urban informal settlement).

Although poverty has a lot of dimensions to it, such as the spiritual, cultural and communal dimensions, in this study we shall be concentrating on economic poverty. This stems from the assumption that material poverty can give rise to other kinds of poverty. If we address it, we may be able to work towards addressing the other poverties (Schenk 1996:16).

The subjects of this study live in a condition of absolute poverty, with a tiny minority living in relative poverty. According to a study done by Mary Tomlinson (1995:55), 80 percent of them live in absolute poverty while only 15 percent fall into the relative poverty classification. A mere 5 percent may be regarded as better off (Tomlinson 1995:55)

### **1.5.3 Economy**

This term is commonly used to denote the function of money, industry and employment. Sometimes it also refers to resources that help people meet their basic needs. The Catholic Church (SACBC 1999:5) has defined economy as follows:

... the policies and plans which control the wealth and resources of a community, about how resources are distributed between people and about how the means of production such as land, factories and technology are owned and controlled (SACBC 1999:5)

The original definition of economy states that it refers to 'the laws of the household'. That, in fact, is what economy is all about. In this study we shall look at economy as the distribution of basic resources in the household of God. Sin has distorted God's plan for the economy. It has done so by alienating people from God and from one another, resulting in selfishness, structural injustice and economic oppression (Sider 1971:78). In the household of God, the power of sin is broken and the new community of the redeemed begins to display an entirely new set of personal, social and economic relationships. That is the relationship that the economy has with mission in this study. Mission promotes the defeat of sin and the creation of the new community, which is no longer controlled by selfishness and economic oppression. This community is a foretaste of the kingdom of God. In the words of Sider: 'As economic relationships are redeemed

in the body of Christ, the churches' common life of mutual availability is to point convincingly to the Kingdom of God' (Sider 1971:79).

This is a very broad definition of economy. In this work economy is going to be understood as the basic resources (such as money, land, food, water and housing) which help people to meet their basic needs and live with dignity.

#### **1.5.4 Empowerment**

Empowerment may be defined as follows:

The process whereby individuals and groups attain personal or collective power, which enables them to actively improve their living conditions (Cronje 1996:37).

What this definition emphasizes is that empowerment involves the development of knowledge and the learning of skills in order to acquire the necessary power. In this work the term will mean the expansion of the abilities, knowledge and skills of individuals and communities in order to mobilize economic resources to meet their needs and improve their living conditions.

This kind of empowerment is achieved through capacity building, which 'is the process aimed at empowering individuals and organizations by expanding capabilities to plan, organize and implement decisions through knowledge building, development of self confidence, innovativeness and initiative and acquiring skills in conflict resolution and planning' (Cronje 1996:37).

#### **1.5.5 Church**

The church is a living community [of believers] that comes into being when the message concerning God's self-giving, redeeming act in Christ calls people into the fellowship of God through the Spirit (Nurnberger 1993:8).

The term 'community' in this definition refers to the community of believers. It is also used to refer to a particular denomination. Sometimes it refers to the universal body of those who profess Christ and express this through organized worship under the guidance of appointed officers (I Cor 16:32). In this study it will refer to a circle of believers in a

given locality - a local church, regardless of whether its members are assembled for worship or not (Acts 5:11). In this work the term 'church' will signify a specific local community which meets regularly for worship and also to discern God's will. The church exists in the world and amongst other communities (Theron 1996: 1). Its members come from other communities. So the church is in a direct relationship with society (Theron 1996:2). This means that it exists in society. In the context of this study, it means that the Ivory Park Methodist church's congregation exists within the Ivory Park informal settlement community. The term will therefore refer to the local Methodist church in Ivory Park, and sometimes it will refer to the church as an institution. I shall therefore be using it interchangeably.

### **1.5.6 Community**

Community may be defined as follows:

People in a geographic area with shared interests and a sense of mutual commitments and solidarity usually associated with certain common values and needs and who have a network of social interaction and regular contact or the possibility of such contact, which enables them to act collectively (Schenk 1996: 20)

In this study, 'community' will refer to members of the local neighbourhood in Ivory Park in which the church finds itself. The smaller unit of people with whom I work in this community are the members of the Ivory Park Methodist church. Some of them form the nucleus of the congregation and are involved in the development forum. They started off as a Bible study group and also got involved in the building of the church. I shall be using the term 'community' to refer to this nucleus, but the term will also refer to the larger body of people in Ivory Park. The nucleus and church congregation as well as the larger Ivory Park community will all be termed 'community' in this study.

### 1.5.7 Development

Development is a process by which members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations (Mpumlwana 1997:18).

The reason for development must clearly be to bring about the economic as well as the social and political transformation of a community. It is there for the improvement of people's lives in every aspect. Development is about people, not projects and programmes; it has to be about improving the quality of life of ordinary people in their local communities.

I do understand that development is not only an ambiguous concept but also one that has become discredited and unpopular amongst communities on the receiving end of so-called development work. This has happened because the history of the concept is closely associated with Western ideas of modernization, technological advancement and liberal and free-market economic ideologies.

Later it proved that this understanding of development was not good enough. It propagated colonization and the disempowerment of Third World countries by those of the First World. It failed to improve the economic, social and political lives of the poor in Third World countries. For many, development aid became a tool for extending the dominance of Western culture. To solve this problem we need an understanding of development as a comprehensive social process that includes the interdependence of economic, social, political and cultural factors, both nationally and internationally (Van Schalkwyk 1996:48). This understanding of development implies a challenge to the status quo and a breaking down of oppressive structures, thus changing the perspective of development to that of liberation.

I agree with Van Schalkwyk (1996:48) that the breaking down of negative structures is not enough for development. Once oppressive structures have been broken down by the liberating processes of development, there is a need to build up a new society, and this process is called *social transformation*. According to Anne Hope (in Van Schalkwyk 1996:48), social transformation implies building up a new society with an entirely different set of values as well as alternative economic, political, legal and educational structures which will create a just and equitable order. That is the approach we shall use in this study.

Koegelenberg (1992:16) and his colleagues refer to three stages through which development has passed in the South African context - a very helpful approach in terms of this study. First there was development in the context of the political economy of apartheid. Here development served the purposes of a racial capitalism which sought to develop progress and affluence for a white minority while under-developing the black majority (Koegelenberg 1992:16).

The second stage kicked in after 1990, when the economy was restructured in the direction of nonracial democratic capitalism. It called for the development of blacks so that they could appreciate, harness and participate in the potential for self and communal improvement promised by the oracle of the Market. As Koegelenberg (1992:17) puts it, this approach viewed the 'developed black' as one who has graduated into entrepreneurial utopia.

The third stage, according to Koegelenberg, is characterized by the failure of the promise of prosperity, when the poor become poorer and face destitution. In this era the white minority has been replaced by a multi-racial elite that manage the South African version of the world economic order. The foundations of development are laid *on sound investment* and privatization (my own emphasis).

When it comes to the relationship between church and development, it must be understood that the church takes development seriously because development is

ultimately about a new vision for society. It is about the transformation of society from oppression to liberation, from poverty to well-being. The church takes development seriously because God takes the pain, poverty and suffering of this world very seriously (Koegelenberg 1992:3).

### **1.5.8 Liberation**

According to Gustavo Gutierrez (1986: 15), liberation is 'the fulfillment of the human person and is a condition for a new fraternal society'. Gutierrez reminds us that liberation is a gift of our Lord Jesus Christ because he has set us free (Galatians 5:1). This implies freedom, firstly, from sin, selfishness, injustice, need and situations calling for deliverance (1990:15). Secondly, the purpose of this freedom is love and communion, which is the final phase of liberation. This freedom in Christ is life-giving and signifies communion with God and others. Being in communion with God means that the Spirit overcomes sin, which consists in the denial of love and hence all the consequences of sin. When sin is overcome, it signifies the coming of the Kingdom of God in our lives. Freedom from sin also implies liberation.

All this means that the kingdom of God is a historical process that takes place through liberation. Without the liberating events of history, the kingdom of God does not grow; but the process of liberation only destroys the roots of oppression and of the exploitation of one human being by another. This does not represent complete salvation. It is no more than a historical embodiment of the kingdom, pointing towards the fullness of the kingdom (Gutierrez 1986:16)

Liberation, then, can be understood in terms of two levels of freedom, the first being freedom from sin and the second freedom from exploitation and poverty. In this study liberation will mean these two freedoms and their relationship to the mission of the

church. This implies understanding the mission of the church as a liberating event - liberation from both sin and exploitation.

### **1.5.9 Transformation**

Transformation can be understood as a process of change in people's attitudes and situations leading to a change in their reality (Hope in Van Schalkwayk 1996: 34 ).

I view transformation as an integral part of mission. Wherever mission is done, situations are transformed, people's lives changed and their social conditions improved. As Bosch has put it, mission is an enterprise that transforms reality (Bosch 1991: 1). My belief is that mission makes a difference; it brings about lasting change wherever it is practiced. In this study mission focuses on transformation, and transformation can be the outcome of mission. Seen in this perspective, mission is that dimension of our faith that refuses to accept reality as it is but seeks to transform it. It is with this understanding that the word will be used in this study

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I introduced and motivated my research topic. I then demonstrated its relevance and formulated the problem at the centre of this study. Next, I defined terms which I propose to use - all of them important terms for this study. The aim of this first chapter was, therefore, to introduce the study.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I shall be discussing all the methods I am going to use in the study. I shall start with the method of research (which is participatory research) and proceed to methods of involvement in the community. These are: Paulo Freire's action-reflection method, the pastoral cycle, and Croatto's method of interpreting the Bible. The end result will be the comprehensive method produced by combining the above three methods. Next, I propose to show how participatory research fits into the comprehensive method. I conclude the chapter by discussing the way in which I did this research.

#### 2.1 METHODOLOGY

Methodology can be defined as

... the explanation or rationale as to how a researcher has gone about her work  
(Groves 1997:8).

Research can be defined as

... the precise and systematic search for new knowledge, or the re-interpretation of existing knowledge (Lawson: 1999:6).

This knowledge is obtained in a stipulated manner and by means of well-thought-out procedures (Lawson 1999:7).

Thus it is fitting that, in this section, we should examine the concept of knowledge and the search for new knowledge - this being the end product, as it were, of the process of examining and sifting material towards (in this instance) the completion of a dissertation.

## **2.2 PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH**

Since participatory research is the paradigm that has largely shaped the development of this research project, it is essential to clarify the nature of this model and the implications it has had for the research process. It can be defined as follows:

A form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in a social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practice, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out (Lawson 1999:285).

Participatory research developed out of the adult education tradition as a reaction to the research paradigm of positivism and empiricism that dominated the 1950s and 1960s (Wilson 2000:12)

The traditional model is based on the idea of controlled and objective measurement, classification and interpretation of data in relation to hypotheses and theories. The research is required to be value-free; and the results are regarded as objectively true facts concerning the reality which has been studied. Only during the last thirty years has the dominance of this model been challenged.

### 2.2.1 Characteristics of participatory research

- Participants are part of the research by choice, because of the action they take in being involved (Wilson 2000:11).
- The research method is by nature participatory; (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:56).
- It provides an opportunity for people in a local community to study (1) their own practices, (2) their own understanding of their practices, and (3) the situations in which they practice (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:6).
- The researcher's focus is on learning from practice, then improving it - not simply in order to describe practice or validate a theory through its implementation but to transform reality.
- This process of learning from practice includes (1) concrete experience, (2) observation and reflection, (3) the formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, and (4) hypothetical implications of concepts tested in new situations, leading to a repetition of the cycle (Nightingale & O'Neil 1994:101-102).
- Participatory research requires that participants seek to understand social reality, as well as their own role in creating it, in order to change it. Here we discern a key difference from interpretive research.
- The problem originates inside the community (not outside).
- The ultimate goal is fundamental structural transformation in a community or wider society.

- It involves people from the community in the control of the process.
- Its focus is on working with the oppressed (not for them).
- A central role of participatory research consists in strengthening people's awareness of their own abilities and resources, and supporting the mobilization and organization of the oppressed.
- Those with special knowledge or training (researchers) often come from outside the community, but they are committed participants and learners in a process that leads to involvement rather than detachment.
- There is a greater use of qualitative than of quantitative methods of research.
- Researcher and researched work as equal partners who, together, plan and implement a project to investigate a problem and its underlying causes in order to take collective action with the purpose of bringing about long-term solutions (Bless & Higson- Smith ( 1995:6).
- In this relationship between researcher and researched, the question of power is an important consideration. Such a participatory research approach implies that the researcher should move away from a top-down to a horizontal power relationship. For this shift in power relationships to take place, the researcher needs to be immersed in the community and humbled by the knowledge that the community has something to teach him or her.
- During participatory research, the variables are not controlled but described.
- The researcher does not take an objective stance but is subjectively involved in the research process. This makes it difficult not to be vulnerable to experimental and subjective effects (Wilson 2000:14).

- A dynamic process takes place between researcher and research participants, which leads to the empowerment of all participants (including the researcher). This brings about that the researcher's initiative or leadership is sometimes pre-empted by the community. All the participants in the process (both researchers and participants) cooperate in extracting meaning from the data and contribute to the selection of intervention strategies. There is usually a good deal of communication between the participants, and research is often validated by unconstrained dialogue (Elliot in Kemmis & McTaggart 1990:122).
- Participatory research draws members of the local community into the process. The participants from the community, in this specific research project, are - with a few exceptions - members of the local Methodist church Bible study group, as in the case of the consultation we held on 7 November 1999. When I speak of the community, I am referring to members of the local neighbourhood which surrounds the church. The Bible study group, however, denotes a group of members from the local congregation, now referred to as the development forum (the term is used literally). In this study, not all the ordinary community members participated directly in the research process - only those who are members of the development forum and of churches in the community.

### **2.2.2 Accountability**

Accountability for the research process is due both to the 'scientific' (academic) and to the 'grassroots' communities (Philpott 1993:22).

### **2.2.3 Benefits from the process**

The research must be accountable to the community (Maluleke 1994 : 84), in this instance the Ivory Park community and more specifically the members of the Ivory Park Methodist congregation. The community has had an opportunity to reflect on their situation of poverty and to seek solutions from a biblical perspective. This has helped them to form a clear picture of their situation and encouraged them to do something about it.

Today they have four churches, and three of these have pre-school care facilities. These 'pre-schools' have created employment for 10 members of the community. Some community members are working on the candle-making project, which employs 15 people, and 20 others have been assisted to get jobs since the start of this research. The community has benefited from the project to a large extent.

The scientific community will also benefit, because in this study they will hear the voices of the poor communicating about their plight. It will also give them access to knowledge from a grassroots level or below. They will be able to engage with the poor in knowledge production rather than engaging purely with themselves in the person of the researcher (Maluleke 1994:45).

#### **2.2.4 Motivation for choosing this model**

Another motivation for the development of participatory research has been the continued, ever-increasing exploitation and oppression of a large majority of people. It is recognized that knowledge has been and will continue to be a source of power. Participatory research is an attempt to shift the balance of power in favour of such of the oppressed as can be drawn into a research project of this kind.

Through participatory research, ordinary people such as those of Ivory Park have an opportunity to generate knowledge that will be recognized and used, by them and by others in similar situations, to improve the quality of their lives. Others in the mainstream of knowledge production can make use of the same knowledge. In this way the poor are given an opportunity to generate knowledge instead of always being at the receiving end of knowledge generated by academics.

It is important that this method should assist the poor in working for themselves to transform their situation of poverty. They must use it to improve that situation. The key to this type of research is that it is done with the people, and that its objective is to transform the participants' situations. It is not an occupation for armchair academics: the poor themselves can use it to take part in the production of knowledge. It also clarifies the position of the researcher as one who is there to assist people, to reflect critically on their situation and to act as an interlocutor or animator for the local community in order to improve their understanding of their own problems and needs.

This method enables the poor to see their situation and allows them to contribute to the solution of the problems they face, so that they are not mere recipients of knowledge. They also participate in the production of solutions. This method therefore becomes a tool of empowerment. Hammond (in Philpott 1993:22) has this to say about the method:

Participatory Research is an educational tool used to help oppressed people gain awareness of their situations through collective investigation and collective

analysis, and to plan to change their situations through collective action. The researcher in this process is an equal participant in the group, who assists others to reflect critically and work together more productively than might otherwise have been possible (Hammond in Philpott 1993:22).

The position of the researcher in this instance is not to do the analysis for the people but to assist them in their own attempt to analyze and understand their situation. The important thing for me, the researcher, in this process is that it gives the poor an opportunity to share with me the knowledge that they have, so that knowledge from that level becomes recognized as scientifically valid knowledge. During Bible study discussions they engage with knowledge from high institutions of learning. Thus they generate knowledge that will be used for the whole of society, even at academic institutions, as they analyze their own situation and their share in the struggle in which they are engaged. At the end of the day, then, they are not passive recipients of knowledge from above: during the processes of participatory research they take part in creating knowledge for the purpose of transforming their own community.

Secondly, the process of reflection is not just talk without results. The whole point of it is to transform the people's situation. People are helped to reflect critically on their situation so that they can clearly see the obstacles that need to be removed in order that their lives may be improved.

Participatory research also attempts to integrate the three components of this approach - social investigation, education and action - thereby strengthening all three aspects through their interaction (Philpott 1993:24). Consequently it is an empowering process in itself, because people are involved in it by interactively teaching and learning from one another.

The traditional scientific method was intent on what a scientific expert could scientifically prove to be the truth (Grove 1997: 8). It does not take account of knowledge based on personal experience, faith or intuition, or knowledge acquired through a

learning and transformation process in a community (Lawson 1999: 6). Consequently it marginalizes the contribution of people's experiences and life stories to the production of knowledge. Knowledge therefore becomes impersonal and alien to the reality of ordinary people, especially the poor who cannot write and do not have access to a variety of tools used to produce knowledge in traditional science. Postmodern narrative theology takes seriously the need to listen to the poor (Rossouw 1993:49). It is important, because they share both their individual and their communal knowledge and experience of God as well as their stories (Healey & Sybertz 1996: 4). Their experiences can be used to further the production of knowledge. In this study, I shall therefore refer to people's experiences of poverty and their experience of the church in their community (Healey & Sybertz 1996: 137). The inclusion of these voices is important both for the poor and for the agent of mission (who is, in this case, also the researcher) because the input of the poor will shape the methodologies of practical mission as well as the missionary's approach to the poor. For this study, the narration of people's stories is so important because it locates the researcher in the midst of the researched community, so that he can listen to their voices and learn from them. It is with this in mind that I have decided to use people's stories as sources for this study.

#### *2.2.4.1 The purpose of knowledge*

Participatory research is done with the object of transforming the community. In this process the generated knowledge should not just be fitted into the mainline doctrines: it must at the same time be allowed to inform the development initiatives taking place in the community. Knowledge is for social transformation. This was well put by Frank Chikane, former Secretary-General of the SACC and theologian, when speaking at the Rustenburg conference in 1991 (Alberts & Chikane 1991:58): 'Authentic knowledge is... concerned with the transformation of things ... authentic knowledge sets presents itself to us as social criticism and the transformation of the old order to the new .....

In this way knowledge is generated not for its own sake but for the purpose of social transformation; and so Cook and Fonow (in Nielsen 1990:89) can say that '...The most comprehensive type of knowledge results from attempts to change what one is investigating'. Driver (1981:94) similarly contends that '...As long as it is authentic, truth is inseparable from its liberating function ... Every institution and every belief is to be judged by its liberating result'. Millman and Kanter ( in Harding 1987:34) concur: 'Social science should explore needed social transformation and encourage a more just, humane society...'. In the context of participatory research knowledge should also come from the poor themselves. The local knowledge that they have must be allowed to develop and be used in the process of transforming their society. They must not depend from knowledge that has been developed from outside their communities in places such as universities and other institutions, but their knowledge is very important in the development of their communities. In this way the poor are not just recipients but they also contribute to the creation of knowledge.

## **2.2.5 Major objections to this model**

The next step is to discuss the objections put forward by critics of participatory research.

### *2.2.5.1 Objectivity of the researcher*

While it is not possible to be totally objective in any inquiry that one undertakes, it is possible to some extent. One gets involved simply by being in the world which one is investigating (Philpott 1993: 21). The objection with regard to objectivity is not a valid one. The mere fact of embarking on any particular study means that one has some biases, whether positive or negative; the researcher is already affected and influenced by the field of research. I do not consider it possible, therefore, for researchers to be totally

objective: they will influence the study one way or another. This is echoed by Susan Groves (1997:8) in her dissertation:

The very choice of one's field of research reflects a certain inclination to the subject. There is no such thing as impartial research. Thus from the outset, there is a large element of subjectivity in the journey towards knowledge.

Even in the empirical research method the researcher influences each phase of a project, including the selection of the problem, the choice of research method, the analysis of data and the presentation of the findings (Philpott 1993:21). So it is impossible to be objective during research, and I cannot lay claim to any objectivity in this research project. Groves (1997:9) expresses the same sentiment: 'The sort of questions one might pose, one's interpretation of data and the way one chooses to present data are all reflections of the subjective choice of the researcher, it cannot be otherwise'.

#### *2.2.5.2 The interdependence of social reality*

Secondly, the nature of the reality under examination also raises questions for the traditional model. The traditional model assumed that small selections of social reality could be isolated and experimented with, without the interference of outside conditions. This view is rejected by the exponents of participatory research because it does not take into consideration the complex interdependent nature of social reality - for instance, the fact that conditions within a community are influenced by decisions and strategies carried out at regional level (Philpott 1993:22). Participatory research is an attempt to respond to these problems, consciously countering the dominant norms in traditional social research.

Thirdly, a measure of objectivity is possible with this method, namely when the researcher is removed out of the context in order to analyze data. For example, I got out of the community and visited Natal University to look at the information and at my

research context from a distance. While I was in Natal, I shared with friends and we critically analyzed the situation. I think objectivity can be maintained to some degree and that the objections to participatory research are not weighty enough to discourage the use of this method.

## **2.3 PRACTICAL METHODS**

The next step is to discuss the practical method which I used during the research process. I shall start by explaining how I collected the data, then how I analyzed them.

I shall proceed by analyzing the data I have collected in order to develop categories for classification purposes (Tuckmann 1995:38). Some of the data collected are quantifiable and that makes it easy to analyze them (Lawson 1999:300). I will decide on the percentage that may be considered significant for decision-making purposes - for example, levels of poverty in my congregation. This information is obtained from membership forms – we calculate the percentage of the total congregation that indicated that they were unemployed and therefore living in poverty. I shall also scrutinize the data obtained from informal interviews and structured written interviews, observations, or discussions with the Bible study group to identify what appear to be the relevant trends, major ideas or important elements.

### **2.3.1 Sources**

In a case study approach there are three types of data sources (Tuckmann 1994:372): interviews, documents and observation.

### *2.3.1.1 Interviews*

The procedure during interviews is to ask questions of people. I employ both formal and informal interviews so as to obtain a maximum of information about my research question. Most of them are informal conversational interviews. In the course of these, the questions arise from my immediate context and are asked in the natural flow of events; there is no predetermination of questions, topics or wording (Tuckman 1994:374). The strength of this type of interview is that it increases the relevance of observations, and that the observations and interviews can also be matched to individuals and circumstances (Tuckman 1994: 374). These are the advantages of this form of interview. I am also aware of the weakness, which is that it tends to produce a collection of different questions which complicate data organization and analysis (Tuckman 1994:374). I have done informal interviews with members of my congregation, local leaders, social workers, ministers and so forth. As a result, the data organization and analysis has been quite difficult.

I also did a few formal interviews. The advantage of this approach is that the topic and issues to be covered are specified in advance and in outline form (Tuckman 1994:375; Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:56). In November 1999 I interviewed a number of ministers from different churches in Ivory Park - the priest of the local Catholic parish, Father McKew; Revd Joe Zibi of the Presbyterian church; and Pastor Ndlovu of the Church of God in Christ. I also listened to a number of people sharing their life stories of poverty with me during my pastoral visitations. On November 16, 1999 we held a one-day workshop on church and economic development. The workshop was attended by Christians from different churches and church projects in the community. This was held at the Ivory Park Methodist church and its aim was to provide an opportunity for people to share their experiences and what they thought churches in poor communities could do to address economic poverty. This workshop also gave me an opportunity to listen and take notes, which I have used in this study.

### *2.3.1.2 Documents*

In this category I am using documents such as minutes and written reports of the “mission work” in the Ivory Park Methodist church congregation (Tuckman 1995:377). There are documents about the context of Ivory Park and about life in that community that I have accessed from the Midrand Local Council offices. I also read books about mission, economy, empowerment and community development, and - since this is a theological study - the church and the Bible.

I also read a lot of newspapers and pamphlets. I watched many of the documentaries on poverty, economy, and the church that are broadcast on television.

### *2.3.1.3 Observation*

Since I came into this community I have been keeping a diary of meetings, experiences and reflections. When I am doing visitation I keep my notebook handy and have also documented a number of meetings that I have attended. These notes from my diary have been helpful as a source of information from lived experience. Tuckman describes observation notes and reports as the third qualitative data source (Tuckman 1995:378).

### *2.3.1.4 Poverty statistics*

The statistics on poverty in my congregation were collected from our congregational membership forms. In this form we ask people whether they are employed or not, and what jobs they are doing. The Bible study group analyzed the responses and was able to

deduce what percentage was or was not working. We also consulted a community profile compiled by the Midrand town council in 1997 and a second compiled in 1995 by Mary Tomlinson of the Interfaith Community Development Association (ICDA), an NGO that was involved in development in the community.

#### *2.3.1.5 Interpretation of data*

I shall also use the following questions suggested by Johnson and Koran-Kelly (in Tuckman 1995:205) for the interpretation of the data:

- (1) How do the data answer the original question?
- (2) Were the answers those I expected to get?
- (3) Are there any surprises?
- (4) What was successful?
- (5) What was not successful?
- (6) What conclusion did I reach?

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- (5) What was not successful?
- (6) What conclusion did I reach?

## 2.4 THEOLOGICAL METHODS USED IN A CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT

In this study I am going to use three converging methods. Since the study falls under the heading of development, I shall use Paulo Freire's action-reflection model, because it has proved a credible and helpful model in the conscientization of communities for development. This model evaluates the minister or outside agent as an animator or facilitator. The second method is that of Croatto - the hermeneutic cycle. It is used to interpret texts in a context that needs to be transformed.

The third model I shall use is that of Holland and Henriot, known as the pastoral cycle. This theological method combines the other two models (action-reflection, and reading a text in a context). It is a method that is used to critically analyze the social dynamics of a context in order to get a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the situation. It has four steps being social analysis theological reflection, planning and action.

In discussing the method of involvement I will start with Paulo Freire's action- reflection method simply because it is the parent of the pastoral cycle. I then proceed to describe the pastoral cycle and finally I introduce Croatto's hermeneutic approach. I then summarize the three models with the help of some diagrams.

First let us define what we mean by theological method. 'It is a process by means of which we bring to bear various sources (resources) on the practical decisions of ministry and on the intentional reflection on our praxis' (De Beer 1998:49).

### 2.4.1 Paulo Freire's action-reflection method

#### Introduction

The action-reflection model may be defined as follows:

A pedagogy, a very pivotal teaching method which frees people from the control of old ways of thinking and of acting, and enables them to take charge of their own future (Linthicum 1991b:61)

The action-reflection method was devised by Paulo Freire, a native of Brazil. He developed this method in the context of oppression of the poor. His aim was to liberate the poor from the dependency syndrome enforced by their oppressors (Nurnberger 1999:232). Freire understood that the oppressed normally internalize oppression and even resist potential liberators, especially if these come from outside the oppressed group. Then he developed his educational method against the backdrop of this risk. His aim, as Nurnberger (1999:234) puts it, is that the people should consider the revolution to be necessary; they must be committed to it; they must take responsibility for its implementation. The people must think for themselves and act for themselves. They must analyze their situation themselves. The facilitators (those who are educated) must refrain from imparting the contents of their consciousness, but together with the people they must bring into the open and reflect upon ideas that are already present in the consciousness of the people.

The first stage in Freire's method is to gather 'generative themes'. These themes cause discomfort and immediately result in discussion.

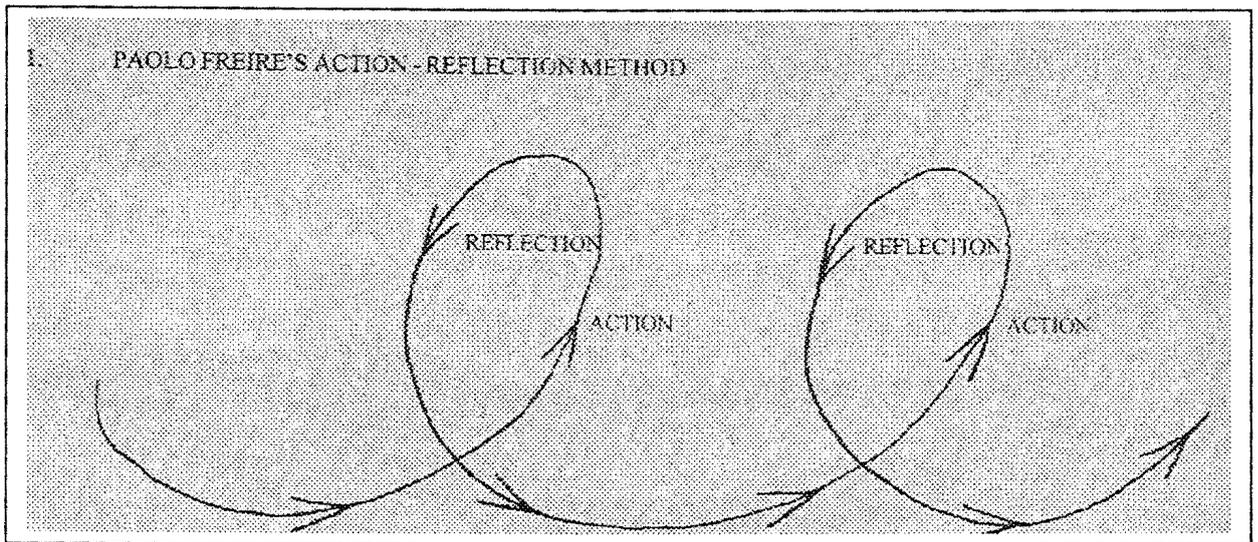
When explaining the nature of such themes, Nurnberger (1999:235) writes: 'Generative themes always call up 'borderline situations', that is, situations that limit one's sphere of action. They pose a challenge of borderline actions'

The themes are then coded, conceptualized or presented in a way that the people understand and subsequently decode by finding them in their own world of experience. This develops interest in the people, which in turn leads to discussions and action.

Underlying this method is the belief is that when people act, their action affects the way they think about that action. Likewise, reflecting in a new way creates receptivity for further and more adventurous action. Linthicum goes further:

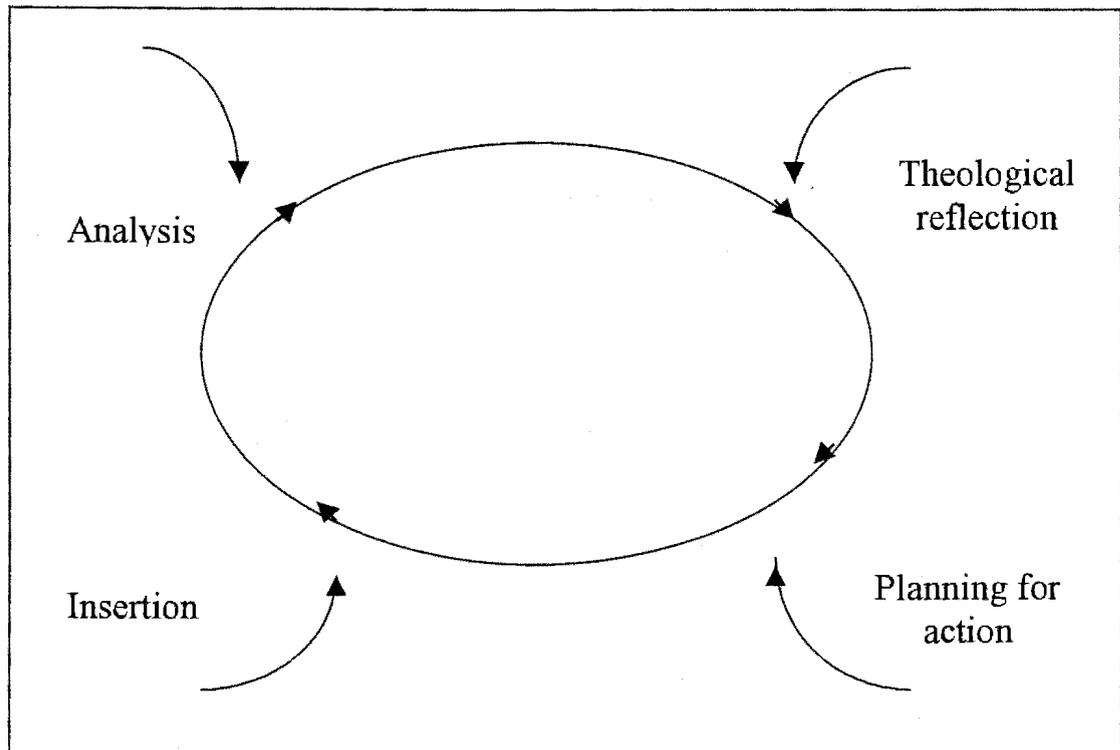
Thus, action and reflection feed upon each other, with each action leading deeper and more insightful reflection which, in turn leads to a more courageous action. Thus, a spiral is created, with action pushing towards reflection which results in a more decisive action which in turn causes deeper and more analytical reflection which leads to further action, and thus to reflection. So the spiral goes deeper and deeper (Linthicum 1991b:61).

In the context of transformational development in Ivory Park, the researcher's responsibility was to be a facilitator of the Bible study group, to help the community to reflect on their situation of poverty and to see clearly the causes and effects which then motivated them to take action. I did not tell them their problems or the solutions to these problems. The more the Bible study group reflected on issues, the more they became motivated to act; and as they acted, they reflected more deeply on issues arising from their context of poverty. The rebuilding of the ruins of Jerusalem in the book of Nehemiah helped them to reflect on their own situation. Spiritual nourishment from the Bible studies led to practical actions transforming the situation of poverty in Ivory Park through development. In this way mission goes hand in hand with community development.



#### 2.4.2 The action - reflection cycle (Van Schalkwayk 1996:50)

I shall now discuss the pastoral cycle as the method I am using in this study. It was developed by two Catholic theologians named Holland and Henriot which was first published in (1980) in by Orbis books. The title of the book is *Social Analysis: Linking faith and justice*. Cochrane (1991) later developed it as a tool for pastors in the context of the struggle in South Africa. The Institute for Urban Ministry (1998) also adopted it. In Ivory Park it was used for ministry there together with Paulo Freire's action-reflection method and Croatto's hermeneutic cycle, which was used for the interpretation of scripture. The pastoral cycle falls into four stages: insertion, analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning.



The pastoral cycle

(diagram from UNISA tutorial letter 101/2000)

*2.4.2.1 Insertion*

Insertion describes the present action and faith experiences of theological practitioners. It locates pastoral responses in the lived experience of individuals and communities (Cochrane 1991:17). This entails being in the selfsame context and experiencing the feelings, fears, perceptions and responses of the people with regard to their predicaments. For us as Christians this moment is preceded by faith. Sometimes it is our faith that leads us to insert ourselves into communities. We enter communities and their cultures, engage with them, observe and experience their life.

It is during insertion that we encounter a great deal of suffering such as hunger, malnutrition, homelessness, violence and so forth (my own insertion will be discussed in detail in chapter 4).

#### *2.4.2.2 Analysis*

Analysis concerns the social, cultural, ecclesiastical and political dynamics of the community. It is the stage when the minister or practitioner studies “the signs of the times” in the context into which he / she is inserted. It means interpreting events in the community in order to understand them clearly. Holland and Henriot (in Cochrane 1991:18): interpret social analysis as follows

Social analysis examines causes, probes consequences, delineates linkages and identifies actors. It helps make sense of experiences by putting them into a broader picture and drawing the connections between them.

Holland and Henriot (1989:15) express this in simple terms, as follows:

Social analysis is the extension of the principle of seeing clearly, moving from the personal realm to the social.

In other words, social analysis is an attempt to understand one's social context. It includes asking questions, such as why things happen the way they do. Cochrane and his fellow editors include ecclesial analysis in social analysis. They do this because of the key importance to the church of understanding its role within society or the immediate context. The church needs to analyze its role in order to be relevant to its context and to shape itself for mission. This will help it to minister in a way that responds to the needs of the community. As Cochrane (1991:19) says, 'Social-ecclesial analysis includes

analysis of the structure and dynamics of the Church and determines the life and witness of the church'.

Cochrane (1991:18) goes on to suggest that there is a need for those engaged in this process to go further in order to understand their particular social-ecclesiastic location and interests.

#### *2.4.2.3 Theological reflection*

This is the stage when the analysis looks at the position of the church with regard to the context. It subjects various sources (Bible, context, church tradition, spirituality, and personal journey) to a process of reflection and interaction (De Beer 1998:49).

The purpose of the analysis is to understand the church's calling and its mission in this particular context. It is concerned not only with the spiritual practices of the church but covers all other spheres affecting human life. According to Gutierrez (1986: 9), '...Theological reflection offers a critical look at current economic, cultural and socio-political issues especially as they manifest themselves within the Christian community.'

Some important points need to be touched on in the course of this critical reflection.

Firstly it is *shared reflection*, which means that a number of participants are drawn together around the same table to share their experiences, insights, failures and observations and to learn from one another.

Secondly, the act of doing theology focuses on *Christian praxis* (lived faith, present action, etc). It is the point where considerable interaction occurs between different sources (as noted above), thus bringing new insights to those involved. De Beer and

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Venter (1998b:50) notes three steps that need to be taken when doing theological reflection, namely attending, asserting and decision making.

As we have seen, reflection takes place by listening carefully to people's problems and collecting relevant data. Assertion is the process of engaging the information one has collected in order to deepen religious insights. Decision-making is the stage when one starts taking concrete decisions for ministry, based on the insights gained from insertion. One takes a decision to do what needs to be done for ministry in this situation. Effective ministry happens, therefore, not when the minister does what she thinks necessary but when the minister, having reflected on the situation *with* the people, does what the situation requires.

#### *2.4.2.4 Pastoral planning*

According to De Beer, pastoral planning is the stage when 'very specific decisions and plans are made with regard to the praxis of ministry in the context' (De Beer 1998: 74). This involves pastoral planning for action, decision-making, plans for new action, and evaluation. This involves decision making planning, action and evaluation. Pastoral planning for action includes answering questions such as: what are we going to do, how will we do it, who will do what, when will they do it and when will they report?

##### *a Decision-making*

This is the stage when the church or community decide what they discern to be God's will for them. What, in other words, are they called to do as a church and to be as the people of God in this community? The minister becomes the facilitator and enabler of the process. This phase also consists of four steps. For example, once we had understood our

situation in Ivory Park through our Bible studies, we came to see what we were supposed to be as a church in that community. We felt that God was calling us to help the people, by serving them, to realize the Christ who was present in the community, and this became our mission statement (*To take Christ to the community through serving*). The next question is how to do that. And that question leads us to strategic planning.

*b Planning*

This is the stage where one does strategic planning which will include goals, objectives, action plans, deadlines, accountability, structure, funding, marketing strategy, recruitment and budget (De Beer 1998:77).

To put it simply, this is where the church decides on what its long-term and short-term goals will be and how they will be achieved. What needs to be done? Who will do what, when will they do it? Where will they do it? When and where will they report? I found in our church that this stage was so exciting. People jumped to it and wanted to do things, even those who had not shown any interest in social analysis and theological reflection. People were hurrying to be part of projects. As a result, some of our projects did not succeed because we did not plan them properly.

*c Action*

At this stage the insights and strategic plans are implemented and translated into action as De Beer and Venter a) says (1998:76)

Only when newly gained insights are adequately translated into praxis can we really speak of theology.

Action is then taken so as to transform the situation. The situation is addressed with a well-planned mission strategy so that insights are translated into praxis. As a result, the situation is transformed for the better.

*d Evaluation*

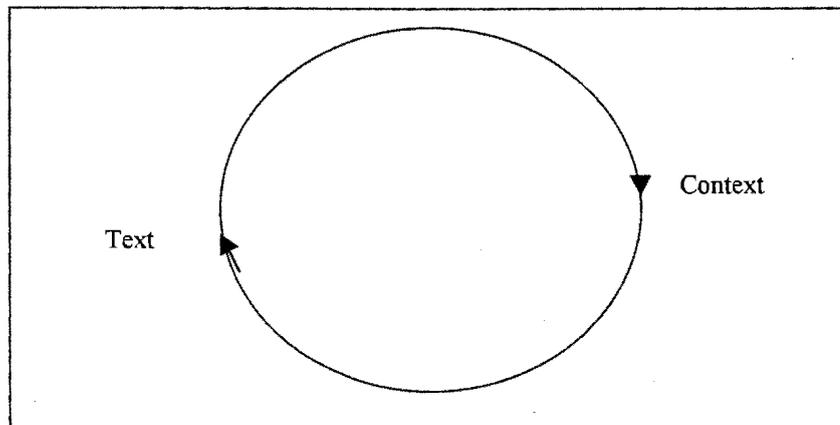
For us to learn from our praxis, there is always a need to evaluate what we have done. That is the stage when we look critically at our actions, suggesting adjustments where needed. Evaluation must occur not only at the end of the process but even at other stages; it needs to be done so that the church can constantly determine whether it is still doing God's will.

Right from the beginning of my ministry in Ivory Park I have tried to follow this model, though at times I did not follow it properly. It has stimulated my enthusiasm for ministry and given direction to my own ministry and to that of the wider church. The problem has been to help the people to appropriate it. They have struggled with this, especially in following the steps properly. As a development forum we have monthly meetings where we seek to evaluate the work. We look at progress and at what needs to be corrected (ownership of the projects by Ivory Park people instead of Calvary people, for example), at lessons from each project, and at finding a way forward. This stage of the process is driven by the need to listen to the poor, by letting them direct you on how they want their church to be run and how they want to be ministered to. It gave me an opportunity to challenge them to minister with me in that congregation, and this has produced positive results.

### 2.4.3 Croatto's hermeneutic approach

We used Croatto's hermeneutic approach for the interpretation of texts during Bible study. I have also used it in interpreting texts for this research. For these reasons it is important to discuss it here.

Croatto is a native of Latin America and an Old Testament scholar. As Speckman (1999:48) says, his main concern is with contextual theory and exegesis, and he believes that the text is a product of historical circumstances which no longer prevail.



Croatto's Hermeneutic Method

In this method the biblical text presents issues that are discussed by the people as they seek to understand their context in the light of Scripture. Again the people reflect on their situation for themselves, as they do in Paulo Freire's method and in the pastoral cycle. The people are given an opportunity to reflect on their situation and to produce a clear understanding of their context. It is then that they feel motivated by the discussion

process to do something about their situation. They move on to action. In this way the method relates to the other two methods.

#### *2.4.3.1 Characteristics of this method*

This method affirms the context in which the Bible is being read. Speckman (1999:48) states that the text is understood in a postmodern sense as both oral and written and is seen as 'coded language' or a system of codes which needs to be understood in terms of the context in which it was written.

Three major elements of speech as a language event can be observed in Croatto's method. These are (1) a transmitter or speaker who selects signs, (2) a receiver or interlocutor to whom the speaker addresses the signs, and (3) a common context or 'horizon of comprehension' which permits 'coincidence in reference' (Croatto 1983:143).

In speech, says Croatto (1983:143), it is not only the transmitter who is active; the receiver is engaged as well. She/he is engaged in a process of grasping the 'code' or 'key' for language because it is a 'communication code'. Confusing one code with another may lead to a disturbance of the message where speech in a certain context uses a determinate code as a form of 'meaning-closure'. Croatto (1983:143) refers to the process from language to speech, from speech competency to performance, from system as first distantiation. This is the process that the text has gone through from the author to today's reader. The first distantiation happens when an author writes to his audience. The audience tries to find meaning by interpreting the written codes without question the author in person but seek to find meaning from the text they are reading. That is the first distantiation.

The second distantiation occurs in the same areas. The original transmitter disappears. This means that text and the author cease to exist as the text becomes public property

through the (public) act of coding the message (Croatto 1983:144). The original receiver, who is the first interlocutor, also disappears. The present reader of the text is not its first addressee but follows in the footsteps of the first interlocutor by means his/her interpretation of the codes which have been transmitted through the ages.

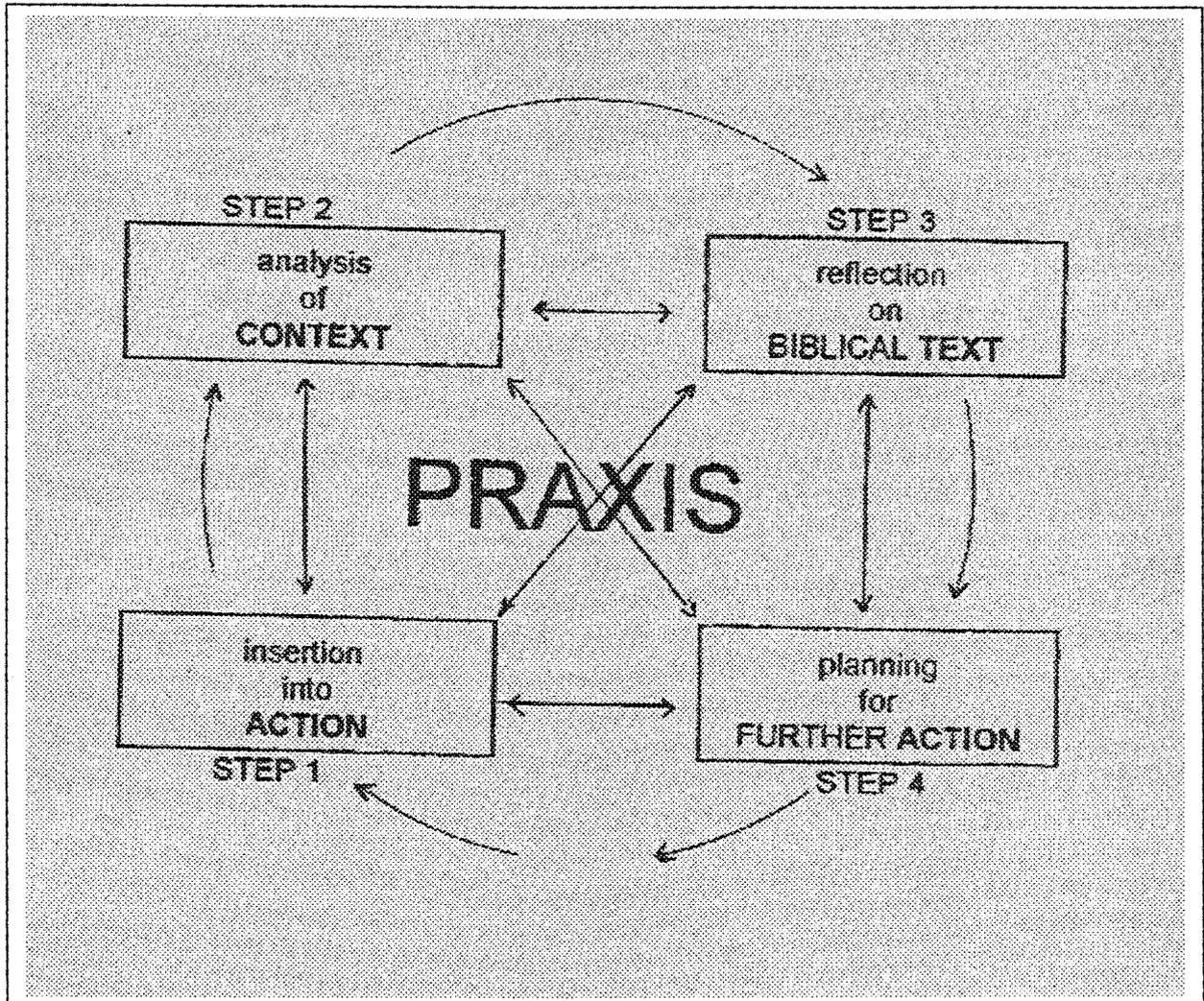
This affects the formation of the meaning the reading and interpretation of the original text down the ages.

The original horizon of discourse has now vanished. The cultural and historical context is no longer the original one. The present reader lives in a world with its own interests, concerns, culture, and so forth (Croatto 1983:144). The hermeneutic process here revolves around the fact that the author no longer has to explain or defend himself or herself. For Croatto (1983:144) this absence of the author connotes 'semantic wealth'. It leaves the meaning of the text to whoever will read it. New readers add their own intonations and gestures which will be effective and meaningful communication within their own horizons. As soon as this happens, a new meaning comes into being. Croatto calls it 'textual infinitude'. Whilst the point of departure might be the text, a reading of that text produces its own discourse.

The last stage is that of comparing the text to the context. Here the context is as important as the text. The context is the starting point.

Macglory Speckmen (1999:52) says it is the situation, the present experience that forces the reading community to 'go back to the Bible' to discover its messages anew. "That the context can be understood as the existential situation of a particular life situation of either the text or its interpreter and all its networks and dynamics".

#### 2.4.4 A comprehensive model and its characteristics



A comprehensive model

Source (UNISA Tutorial letter 101/2000)

The reason for me to use these three methods is because I need to do three very important things. Firstly, I must analyze my context so as to understand it clearly. Secondly I need to reflect critically on my ministry and this again need skills of action-reflection. Lastly as a church we base our mission on the scriptures which form the foundational motivation

for our involvement in mission and theologically based development. This means that I need a method of interpreting the message of the Bible so that it is contextually relevant. The comprehensive model has got all the above mentioned requirements so that is why I regard it as comprehensive and want to use it.

First, we need to understand that Paulo Freire's method of action-reflection is the father of the other two models. Consequently the pastoral cycle has both models in it - both Paulo Freire's model and Croatto's hermeneutic approach. Once we use the pastoral cycle, there is no need to include the other two, but I have decided to include them so as to demonstrate the richness and inner dynamics of the pastoral cycle which is of great relevance for the context in which the study project was undertaken.

The most important thing here is the interaction of the three models. They all emphasize the importance of the context in which ministry is done. The context has to be analyzed and understood if ministry is to be effective; it cannot be ignored. Secondly, the text is very important. Theological reflection is done in order to read and interpret the text so that it yields a contextually relevant message. Croatto gives us the skills to interpret the text properly. After combining the three models, one is left with "a model of convergence" which becomes a model of ministry in a community of the poor; a community that is in need both of spiritual satisfaction and of transformational development.

This model has three vitally important components. First there is the pastoral cycle, which becomes the basis of ministry. Then there is the action-reflection model, which is a model of development and can also be used in a church environment. It is extremely useful for the analysis of contexts and for reflection. It is also most helpful in motivating the poor to see their plight and act upon it. Lastly, Croatto's hermeneutic approach forms a good resource for the interpretation of the text, so that the congregation's interpretation of the Bible becomes the centre of ministry.

The pastoral cycle locates the practitioner in the context during insertion. Then the practitioner reads the Bible in the context in which s/he finds herself or himself. The interpretation of the text is informed by the context as experienced by the practitioner. This is explained by Croatto (in Speckman 1999:50): 'The interpreter is located in his/her present context, not in an ancient context. His/her capacity to comprehend is determined by the framework provided by the context.'

My comprehensive approach has different elements and now I am going to discuss them.

#### *2.4.4.1 Theological*

First of all, it is important to understand that the three component methods - Croatto's hermeneutic cycle, the action-reflection model and the pastoral cycle - are all theological. They can be used in secular contexts and can, I believe, be very helpful there; but in the context of Ivory Park and this research they have been used theologically. This has been possible because of Croatto's model, which enabled us to use and interpret the Bible in all the steps of discussion and ministry.

#### *2.4.4.2 Contextual*

This model is also contextual because it considers the contexts where ministry is happening. The context of insertion is very important and informs the other stages of the model. The other stages therefore respond to the specific dynamics of the context of insertion, so that the context of insertion informs practice. Croatto's model helps to interpret the text in order to confer meaning on the experienced reality. Then it casts light for the church in mission on the people's understanding of the *MISSIO DEI*, which has to be implemented as a response to the demands of the context. As a result, the

involvement of the church in community development is backed by a contextually relevant textual message.

#### *2.4.4.3 Transformational*

Being transformational, this model never leaves the community unchanged. It challenges and changes reality. Mission that has been done according to this method leads to significant change in the relevant community. It does not leave the community as it was, and for me that is what the gospel means. The gospel never leaves the status quo as it is but changes it. That is why, for me, this model is appropriate for ministry, especially in poor communities that are seeking to transform their situation. And that is why I decided to use this model when I started my ministry in Ivory Park. The method is transformational in a way which affords a new way of interpreting Scripture and relating its message to one's context, and which encourages constant analysis and reflection during the course of mission.

#### *2.4.4.4 Participatory*

This method allows other people to take part in the ministry of the church and in the development processes in which the church is involved. It is in line with the great doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. In the Bible study group, for instance, all people from all groups in the church were welcomed as members and their voices were heard in the shaping of that church's ministry. Even when it came to running the services and implementing the mission statement and strategies, space was created for more people to participate. As a result, this method empowers more people by allowing them to use their potential and by developing them. All three methods both require and allow the involvement of more people at all stages. They are not just the domain of the educated

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and ordained but can be done with others. This is very important for transformational development because it encourages the participation of all stakeholders. It is people-centred.

#### *2.4.4.4 Process*

The other advantage of this method is that it is a process. By a process I mean that it gives those involved an opportunity to learn from the experience and to grow as a result of the process of development and ministry in their church. Development is by nature a process; it cannot be rushed. This method is therefore very appropriate, because it, too, is a process.

#### *2.4.4.5 Measurable*

Perhaps the most important aspect of these methods, in my view, is that their results can be measured. Generally speaking, the ministry of the church is not measurable. It is always postponed as something that only God can see and measure. This method, however, presents a ministry that can be measurable. In Ivory Park, for instance, the ministry of the church can be seen in the number of projects that have been started and are helping the community. It can also be seen in the number of people employed by the church and the children who benefit from our pre-school centres. This makes the method the best to be used so far. The effects are measurable when you see the people involved in initiatives to develop their community. In Ivory Park they started a pre-school centre which provided education for their children and jobs for some of them. They also started the candle project, which has been a source of income for some of them for the past two years.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed the method of research used in this study. Participatory research has proved to be the right method, and it has fitted in well with the three theological methods which I used in the ministry in Ivory Park. Because of these methods this whole study is a practical and participatory one, which is very important for the development of a transformational ministry. Participatory research has given me, as the researcher, an opportunity to observe, analyze and reflect on the activities happening in my place of work. At the same time I could record what I saw happening, had an opportunity to interview participants and to read more on the subject. This method exposes researchers to many opportunities of getting information and knowledge on the subject of ministry and transformational development, in so far as this applies to the community of Ivory Park.

## CHAPTER 3

# HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENTAL AND MISSION

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I am going to discuss the developmental and missiological framework on which this study is based. I shall start by discussing the historical relationship between the church and development, basic concepts used in this study, and some missiological themes that are relevant to the church's involvement in development.

### 3.1 HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH OVER THE YEARS

Under this heading I shall look briefly at the three phases through which the church has passed over the years in its relation to community development. There is a critical approach to the modernist paradigm and a consequent move towards transformational development as a new approach.

#### 3.1.1 Development as modernization: uncritical acceptance by the church

The 1960s were characterized by the dominant understanding of development as modernization. This meant that the technological development of the West was considered to be the answer to development in the Third World. Van Schalkwyk (1996:48) clarifies this when she writes: 'It meant that the technical and economical

development within the capitalist framework was considered to be the panacea for all socio-economic problems'.

Development was also understood as a form of colonization. Even the church fell into the trap of facilitating this kind of development. At this stage there was a clear identification between development, mission and political power in colonies all over the world.

For the church this stage meant missionaries working to bring about Western civilization, which they thought would solve the problems of poor Third World countries, and this was a form of colonization by the First World. These sentiments were clearly expressed by John Phillip (in De Beer 1997:26), Superintendent of the London Missionary Society in the Cape from 1819 onwards. He said 'While our missionaries ... are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilization, social order, happiness, they are by the most unexceptional means extending British interest, British influence and the British Empire'.

At a later stage he wrote:

Missionary stations are the most efficient agents, which can be employed to promote the internal strength of our colonies, and the cheapest and best military posts that wise governments can employ to defend its (sic) against the predatory intrusions of savage tribes (in De Beer 1997: 27)

Even here in South Africa the National Party government saw themselves (as Afrikaners) as having the responsibility of civilizing and Christianizing the indigenous people of Africa. Magubane echoes this perception: 'The responsibility and the task laid upon the European is to Christianize and civilize the indigenous people's demand that the former should retain the direction of affairs in the foreseeable future' (in De Beer 1997:27).

To civilize and Christianize was perceived as a calling, because the African way of life was seen as barbaric and pagan. It therefore had to give way to the so-called Christian life, which was simply modernization and colonization disguised as Christianity. This

oppression in the name of modernization, development and Christianization also formed the basis of the apartheid system and Afrikaner political power.

Daniel F Malan, the first South African Prime Minister to propound the doctrine of apartheid and also an ordained minister, propounded the doctrine of apartheid when he said:

The difference in colour, is merely the physical manifestation of the contrast between two irreconcilable ways of life, between barbarism and civilization, between heathenism and Christianity, and finally between overwhelming numerical odds on the one hand and insignificant numbers on the other (in Lelyveld 1982:107).

This view of development was perceived by the poor as exploitation, not empowerment or liberation. David Bosch (1991:357-8) echoes these sentiments: 'Development was not a new word for peace ... But it became another word for exploitation. More and more Third-World countries started to reject the entire concept of Development.'

This led to the negative attitude adopted by the poor towards this type of development.

### **3.1.2 Critical Acceptance**

It did not take long for the deficiencies of this approach to the development of the poorer countries to be realized. Two important factors were appreciated: firstly, that development is more than economic growth, colonization and Christianization; secondly, that development, over and above the creation of projects and programmes, has to take seriously the development of people.

The understanding of development as economic growth was a very limiting perspective which does not take into account 'the total process of human and social development' (De Beer 1997: 27).

The Bible study group saw the ethical implications of the involvement of development in all aspects of their lives - economic, social, political and cultural. The comprehensive approach built on the comprehensive method of development was adopted. This included the interdependence between economic, social, political and cultural factors, both nationally and internationally (Van Schalkwyk 1996:48). This was a better approach than the previous one, which emphasized technological and economic factors. It included the need to take people seriously in the process of development. Hence this approach was people-centred or humanistic (Van Schalkwyk 1996:48). The new approach promotes the perception of development as liberation. It is viewed as the radical breakdown of an oppressive and negative status quo so as to free the poor and oppressed. This goes hand in hand with the understanding of development as liberation, which means the struggle against and breaking down of oppressive systems.

### **3.1.3 Towards transformational development**

The humanist approach to development emphasized development as liberation, which meant the removal of oppressive structures. A new paradigm emerged which moved away from developmentalism. This paradigm emphasized the need for development to be viewed as the transformation of society. This transformation was coming not only from above (imposed on the poor) but also from below, from the people themselves. They now became important role players or participants in developmental processes.

Anne Hope (in Van Schalkwyk 1996:48) goes on to mention a fourth approach, according to which it is not sufficient to base development on the breaking down of negative structures. According to her there is a need to go further by building a new society, a process which she calls social transformation. This term refers to the building up of an alternative society with new values and a new order. Now development can be understood to mean social transformation, which transcends liberation in the sense of a simple breaking down of old systems. In fact, the development of this understanding of development can be clearly traced by considering the beginnings of development. It started as modernization, then moved towards a comprehensive approach which was humanistic: then it became liberation, and lastly it is understood as the building of a new society. When one brings together all the stages that development has undergone, it converges with a meaningful and transformational framework: *development as social transformation*. In this study I shall therefore refer to development as 'transformational development'.

### **3.2 SOME BASIC CONCEPTS THAT WILL BE USED IN THIS RESEARCH**

It is time to look at the basic concepts of development that I am going to use in this study.

#### **3.2.1 Community development**

As we continue shaping the theoretical framework, we need to continue defining community development, because that is what we shall be dealing with in this study.

Community development may be defined as follows:

It is the process whereby a community would, collectively and on its own initiative and responsibility, attempt to realize self-identified needs, according to

pre-established procedures in order to reach set goals (Swanepoel in Van Schalkwyk 1996: 49)

This approach starts off as a coherently functioning system. It normally does so with the help of an outside agent to determine the community's priorities and plans and to execute its own development programmes. The importance of community development is that it is local, carried on by the local people themselves for their own benefit. The most important thing for them is that community expertise is rated as very important, so that the whole exercise is more about the local people than about projects and programmes. When the community is engaged in this exercise, it learns to take its destiny into its own hands.

As Shenck (1996:xi) says, such a process improves the capacity of the people in a holistic manner:

It (community development) is an evolutionary and learning process of facilitating transformation. It includes changes in the awareness, motivation and behavior of the community towards a better quality of life in terms of initiative, participation and collective action towards positive change in the community.

The important element in community development is that the local community moves into growth mode as it takes the initiative and responsibility for improving its own conditions and meeting its own demands. Community development as a process takes seriously the need to involve the local people so that they can also grow. Community development is not about projects and programmes. These are important, but the most important element is the growth of the people.

### **3.2.2 Human-scale development**

It is necessary at this point to mention the human-scale development approach. This will be used to clarify what we mean in this study by basic human needs and the holistic approach to community development. Human-scale development focuses on three sets of fundamental needs that determine the whole of life. It includes not only subsistence needs but also immaterial elements such as identity, affection and recreation. This approach was developed by a team of Latin-American researchers led by Manfred Max-Neef (Van Schalkwyk 1996:50). These needs are the building blocks of any given culture. They therefore exist in every culture. If these needs are met, life in its fullness is realized. If they are not met, the consequences are social pathology in the form of corruption, destruction of family life, substance dependency, violence and crime. Human-scale development is closely linked with people-centred development. By people-centred development we mean that development and relief work is concerned with improving the lives of people - women, men and children - on a scale for which people can take responsibility. Interventions must always be measured in terms of how they affect people's lives in ways that are meaningful to the people concerned. People should also be able to take control of such endeavours to improve their quality of life. By people-centred development, then, we mean interventions that accord priority to people and the satisfaction of their needs. It is also important to note that people-scaled development not only implies the *facilitation* of development by outside agents, but also that such facilitation (rather than intervention) by outside agents should empower people to take control of themselves, of programmes and projects to improve the quality of their lives.

### **3.2.3 Participation**

Effective participation refers to the people's right to shape decisions that affect their lives. Women and men are disempowered when they cannot exercise this right. Development and relief work should strengthen people's capacity to participate positively in social

change in terms both of personal growth and of public action. That, to my mind, is what mission encourages and does.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this section I have looked at the developmental and missiological framework that justifies the involvement of the church in development. This framework lays the groundwork for such involvement. I went on to discuss the basic concepts that are important for development so that they may be properly understood when I use them in the study.

### **3.3 THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT BY THE CHURCH**

This section of the study is going to focus on the relationship between mission and development. It will look at the purpose of mission and development and also try to discover why mission is done and whether it can be synchronized with development.

Over the years, 'mission' has become a controversial topic (Kritzinger 1988:33). People no longer all mean the same thing when they speak of 'mission'. In fact, they all have their own perception of what mission is.

David Bosch (1991:1) lists a number of meanings attached to this word, such as (1) the sending of missionaries to a designated territory, (2) the activities undertaken by such missionaries, (3) the geographical area within the overall territory where the missionaries

operate, and (4) the agency that dispatches missionaries towards mission fields. The non-Christian world, or mission fields, or a local congregation without a minister.

The definition of mission has changed over the years with the development of the debate on what mission is and what its purpose is. For instance, earlier definitions of mission as evangelism, which emphasized the preaching, witnessing and proclamation of the gospel (Kritzinger 1988:33) are now understood to be very narrow. These definitions see people simply as souls in need of conversion: once that is done, mission is accomplished. They do not include the need to serve people or to take their situations of struggle into account. For all these reasons, such definitions are inadequate.

People such as Du Preez (in Kritzinger 1988:34) felt this definition to be unsatisfactory because it reflects only one dimension or aspect of mission. According to him, mission is multi-dimensional. In fact, he argued that mission had ten dimensions to it. These ten dimensions were narrowed down to three inclusive dimensions: KERYGMA (proclamation), KOINONIA (fellowship) and DIAKONIA (Christian service). This simply means that in fellowship the church builds a community and then practices what it preaches through Christian deeds in response to real-life struggles. This rendering of what the church preaches by action and does by responding to people's life struggles can be described, inter alia, as community development. Adrian Hastings (1996:15) writes as follows:

In Christian KOINONIA, KERYGMA AND DIAKONIA communion, proclamation and service - or to put it in still jargons terms, a loving fellowship, sturdy witnessing to truth and a continual care of one's neighbor in need - actually constitute the worship, leirtourgia, which are acceptable to God and they do so in their very togetherness and secularity. A formal distinct lirtugy is indeed needed to remind us of the demands of our seven-day week lirtugy.

This constitutes the best understanding of mission so far, but the problem has been that churches in their missionary endeavours have tended to separate the dimensions. They are sometimes very one-sided, choosing one dimension and focusing on it at the expense of all others.

Hastings (1996:16) holds that this one-sidedness is mistaken because the gospel is holistic:

Little by little other sides of life reassert themselves as one attains a more rounded wisdom at the risk of becoming bland. The art of life, and of mission too, is to overcome one-sidedness, without falling into blandness. That may seem impossible. It is still a challenge....

A broader definition of mission is the one developed by David Bosch, (1991:19) namely 'the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus' Christ. It is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.

Two important points in this definition merit attention because they relate to both development and mission. These are participation and liberation. Participation means that mission is carried out not by a small minority (the ordained) but by all the people, and this makes it developmental in its approach. Bosch (1991:467) holds that mission is ministry by all the people of God. He builds this understanding on the foundation laid by other theologians such as Jurgen Moltmann, (in Bosch 1991:467) says that 'Christian theology will no longer be simply a theology for priests and pastors, but also a theology for the laity in their calling in the world'

This definition also builds on liberation theology as a response to the conservative understanding of mission, which was based on Western theories of development that in turn were aimed at Third World 'objects' and were therefore oppressive. The problem here was that mission was very closely related to the Western influence of colonization and modernization.

The harmony between mission and colonization was supported, moreover, by the mission agencies abroad and the arrogance they displayed towards the local people in the 'mission fields'.

From development there was a move towards liberation. It was realized that poverty would not be uprooted by imposing technological skills on the poor but by removing the root causes of injustice.

These two approaches to development converge with a new liberation-oriented perception of mission in which it is understood as the total transformation of the whole of life and the realization of God's shalom in both the present and the future.

I do think that in the process of doing mission in communities of the poor, mission must lead to liberation and social transformation. This means that it has to remove social, economic and political injustices that exist in those communities. It has to transform an oppressive situation to a non-oppressive one. If it does not do that, it is simply offering the 'pie in the sky' of salvation some day in heaven. This does not mean that anything that is done is mission: that would be simply activism. To make them mission, these works of liberation and social transformation need to be done in the name of Jesus Christ.

Church-based development can be regarded as mission because it is based on Christ's great commission to the church. It is done for the glory of God and in anticipation of his kingdom. It is not done for purely humanitarian reasons but for reasons that transcend humanitarianism.

### 3.3.1 Purpose of mission as the realization of the reign of God

Now that mission has been defined, I can proceed to talk about its purpose. The purpose of mission is to establish God's reign of peace, also known as shalom.

Linthicum (1991b: 86) defines mission as '...A state of wholeness and completeness possessed by a person or a group that includes good health, prosperity, security, and deep spiritual contentment'. This is what mission seeks to bring about, and this wholeness of life can only be experienced under the reign of God, because the rule or reign of God is understood as the power of God working to bring about change (Philpott 1993:47). *It is the power of God in action*. Power is not perceived as a negative attribute that casts God in the role of vindictive omnipotent dictator. Rather, power is a necessary expression of God's activity used to support the oppressed and to implement God's plan (Philpott 1993:52). First and foremost, the power of God shows itself in miraculous deeds, such as the casting out of demons and the healing of the sick.

According to Bosch (1991: 32), God's reign arrives wherever Jesus overcomes the power of evil. Then as now, evil took many forms: pain, sickness, death, demonic possession, personal sin and immorality, the loveless self-righteousness of those who claim to know God, the maintenance of class privilege, the brokenness of human relationships. Jesus is, however, saying: If human distress takes many forms, the power of God does likewise.

In terms of my focus on development, mission therefore means bringing liberation and fullness of life to the poor. The aim of mission is to bring life to its full potential in whatever situation people find themselves. As Kritzinger puts it (1994:146), 'The ministry of the Christian church is holistic. Its mission is to bring all of life of the gospel (the whole truth) to all people in the entire world, and to teach them to obey all of God's commandments (Mathew 28)'.

In short, the purpose of mission is, in the words of Kritzinger (1994:1), 'the glory and manifestation of God's divine grace'. This covers all aspects of life - political, social and

economic. In this way it is holistic. De Beer (1997:386) says that wholeness covers all spheres of life political, social, economical, ecological and psychological.

The second purpose of mission is the making of disciples of all nations. Jesus (Matthew 28:15-16) said this when he commissioned his people to do mission in the world:

All authority and in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in name of the father, Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you, surely I will be with you to the very end of the Age

This command is in fact the basic reason why the church is in the world. This is clearly explained in the Methodist Report on Mission Work (1985:2):

Mission means that the church has been sent into the world to make disciples of all nations and the church cannot abdicate this responsibility, because it does, it will lose its reason for being.

Adrian Hastings (1996:14) understands mission as 'the proclamation and immediate inauguration of salvation seen as a divine gift of liberation both spiritual and temporal'.

Hastings also writes that the task of the church is to proclaim the word of God, to enact his works and by so doing to generate among people a fellowship which is in some way already the society of God. This is done in order to break the power of sin in people and lead them to God - in other words, to liberate the slaves of sin.

Mission as the making of disciples therefore focuses on the church's conversion motive - emphasizing the value of a decision to commit oneself to God. David Bosch also refers to the eschatological motive of mission - fixing the people's eyes on the reign of God as a future - but this does not mean escaping an interest in the exigencies of this life, as some

have done or thought (Bosch 1991:5). I do think that the reign of God is broader than only the church.

Moltmann (1977:11) has this to say about the purpose of mission:

Mission is directed not only for divine service in the church but also towards divine service in the everyday life of the need. Its practical implementation will include preaching and worship, pastoral duties and Christian community but also socialization, education towards self-reliance and political life.

The other purpose of mission is to create the community of God. It is a community of people committed to God in every community in the world. But this community must not be identified as the kingdom of God: it is an enactment of the kingdom of God. It is the church. In every society where a small community gathers which is committed to God, that community is the local church and must be taken seriously.

The church that is founded as a result of mission activities becomes a community of believers. It becomes a community of disciples of Jesus Christ - one that differs from the local community of citizens or local neighbourhood (Theron 1996: 4). This newly formed community of disciples then assumes a responsibility for doing mission, taking part in the missionary activities of God. It is sent out to propagate the gospel of Jesus. As much as mission is for building a Christian community it is also an act of building more disciples.

Bosch (1991: 11) has this to say on that point: 'This community of God is in the world, called out of the world and is sent out to the world to make disciples.'

The purpose of mission, then, is the building of Christian communities in the world who will also be disciples going out to the world to spread the gospel of God.

### 3.3.2 Beneficiaries of mission

The poor are the first beneficiaries of mission because the gospel is good news to the poor. The to be asked question is : who are the poor? Let us briefly look at the poor. They are not only the materially poor but also the spiritually poor. People can be rich materially but poor in spirit or rich spiritually but poor materially. Others are poor both materially and spiritually and therefore need the church to minister to them and change their situation of poverty. There are, however, a few who are rich both materially and spiritually. They, too, need the church's ministry to nourish their spiritual lives and to help them not to be slaves to their wealth. Therefore the ministry of the church is directed to all people, because all need it (Kritzinger 1994:124).

To my mind the target of mission is all people in their situation of need, whether spiritual or material, because the gospel of Jesus Christ confers life in its fullness (John 10: 10). Spiritual nourishment leads to well-being and empowerment, and this has to happen to the poor. So mission (which is the proclamation of the good news) leads to the transformation of lives, especially those of the poor.

Those who are rich materially need the gospel to liberate them from the enslavement of wealth, so that they do not lose their whole life but gain it. The gospel also presents an opportunity to share their wealth with those who need it most; this will prove truly redemptive and fulfilling. They need, moreover, to be liberated from situations of greed and exploitation of the poor who are the victims of Mammon. Jesus said that 'if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed' (John 8:36)

Sometimes the wealthy even become blinded to the poor as people like themselves. They would rather see the poor as lazy people who can be ignored and blamed for their poverty. Once they are touched by the gospel, they see the poor as victims of forces beyond their control. Therefore the rich also need conversion - they need the message of the gospel.

Both individuals and the community as a whole are in need of conversion. Everyone has a specific enslavement or sinfulness and everyone needs salvation. The poor also need to be freed from specific sins and enslavements such as idolatry. They, too, can be spiritually poor. The gospel is directed towards them as well.

On the other hand, the materially rich may be spiritually poor and in need of liberation from all that stops them from being spiritually rich. The gospel is for them too. In the context of Ivory Park, mission is done to free the poor from spiritual as well as material poverty. It is also done so that the rich of Midrand and other affluent neighbouring communities may be freed from the sin of exploiting and enslaving the poor by paying them poor wages. It offers the rich the opportunity to see the plight of the poor, so that they can be touched by it and see the need to change and take part in ministering to the poor. The point I am making is that mission is done for the benefit of all people, rich and poor.

To conclude this part, I must say that mission is done for all people; none are excluded or exempted from mission. As in the case of transformational development, all people need to be included - both rich and poor - in understanding the transformational development of the poor. These two groups have gifts they can share with each other in the process of transformational development and mission. The rich have financial and material resources which are greatly needed by the poor, while the poor have human resources such as love, patience, care, ubuntu, community and a deep dependence on God - essential qualities which the rich have largely lost. Mission reconciles the two communities (rich and poor) and facilitates the process of mutual sharing so that the sin of selfishness and individualism may be broken. I also agree with Annie Ogilvie (1999:2) a participant of the pilgrimage of pain and hope done by Ivory Park and Calvary Methodist in her report. She (1999:2) says that the church relationship has been a good example of transformational development that includes both rich and poor and the mutual exchange of gifts and lessons which has been appreciated by both.

### 3.3.3 Identity of Missionaries

Traditionally ministry has been carried on mainly by the ordained, but recently there has been a shift. Ministry is no longer the domain of the clergy; it is the work of all people who are committed to God. Jurgen Moltmann (in Bosch 1991: 472) addressing the issue of the church and theology today, has this to say: 'Christian theology will no longer be simply a theology for priests and pastors but also a theology for the laity in their calling in the world.

Once people have accepted the gospel, they are no longer subjects of mission but become actors or doers, participants in the active phase of mission. In other words, such a person becomes both the subject and the object of mission. These lay members of the church are important participants in the *Missio Dei* that starts with God himself and then draws people in to participate in it.

In Ivory Park, the moment a person joins the church, she/he is asked to enroll in the introductory course. This course encourages the person to see his/her gifts and the areas of concern and enthusiasm in which s/he would like to be involved in the life and mission of the church. In this way all are involved in some church group or project that helps them to grow spiritually whilst also offering an opportunity to take part in mission. In this way it is not the minister who does mission: it is the new Christian community that becomes the primary bearer of mission. These people do not become little pastors, replicating what the minister does; their ministry is lived in the community, it is offered in church projects and programmes, in community meetings, in their families and their places of work. They serve the sick and support other people in times of need. So all the people of God perform this mission. Mission is done not by a few Christians but by all. All, as soon as they make the commitment to follow Christ, take part in mission.

In the process of taking part in the projects and programmes of the church, people grow spiritually, intellectually and physically. There is a recovery of self-esteem rather than the constant loss of dignity that poverty brings to people. It is through this involvement that

people experience transformational development. Members of our church are encouraged to live the Christian faith even in their places of work, and to witness for God by developing a work ethic and a willingness to help anybody who is in need either at home or in the workplace. This transforms people's view of their work and their attitude towards fellow workers. They become positive about their work, their lives and the lives of others. This change of attitude is attributed to the teaching of the gospel which they receive from the church and its mission.

### **3.4 MISSIOLOGICAL THEMES RELEVANT FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The next points of interest are the themes relevant to the involvement of the church in community development. These themes are important because they justify church involvement in the developmental sphere of ministry. They assist the church in claiming its right to do holistic ministry. They help, moreover, to form a developmental framework for the ministry of the church.

#### **3.4.1 God and the poor**

Theologians have been saying of late that God is biased in favour of the poor. They even call it 'God's preferential option for the poor' (Bosch 1991:436). This does not mean that God glorifies poverty (so that those who want his favour must live in poverty) or that poverty is better than wealth. However, it does mean that God desires the salvation of the poor before that of the rich. It means that God focuses first on the poor, then on the rich.

As Bosch (1991:436) has expressed it:

The point is rather that the poor are the first though not the only ones, on which God's attention focuses, therefore the church has no choice but to demonstrate solidarity with the poor.

This theme is very important for transformational development, because it builds the rationale of the church towards supporting the poor and seeking to help them in their struggles to transform their conditions. The theology of development is built on the belief that God is on the side of the poor and oppressed and wants to see them delivered from their plight; the privileged have to take sides with the poor and assist them. As Ronald Sider (1980:314) puts it, 'God is on the side of the oppressed and if the privileged are really people of God, they, too, would be on the side of the poor, indeed, those who neglect the needy are not really God's people at all'.

### **3.4.2 God identifies with the poor**

The Bible demonstrates this clearly. The book of Proverbs says that 'he who oppresses a poor man insults his Master' (Proverbs 14:31). Another text states, more specifically: 'He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord' (Proverbs 19:17). The story of the incarnation of our Lord also clarifies what we mean by God's identification with the poor, weak and oppressed. 'Though he was rich, he became poor for your sake', cries St Paul (2 Cor 8:9).

Jesus openly identified with the poor. This was a sign of his Messiahship. Listen to him answering the disciples of John when they came to verify whether he was the Messiah. Jesus pointed to his work with the poor who were healed from blindness or paralysis (Sider 1971: 62). In the words of Ronald Sider (1971:61) 'He (Jesus) was healing the sick and preaching to the poor (Matthew 11:2-6). Jesus also preached to the rich, but

apparently it was his concern to preach to the poor, that validated his claim to Messiahship.

In terms of development this means that when we help to develop the poor, we are doing God's will - in fact we are serving God, because he is with them in their plight. This means that where the poor are there is God, so when we serve the poor we are serving God.

### 3.4.3 God's special instruments

The Bible is full of stories in which God uses poor people rather than the rich and powerful. It is not that he did not use the rich, but he is seen to use the poor and they also seem ready to listen to him. Sider (1971:62) notes the following instances of God choosing the poor: 'When God selected chosen people he picked poor slaves in Egypt. When he called the early church, most of the members were poor folk. When God became flesh, he came as a poor Galilean.

God might have chosen rich and powerful people, but he chose to use the poor. This says something about God's attitude towards the poor. It shows that he loves them. If this is God's attitude, it shows that the church has to adopt a similar attitude to the poor. The church has to look for the poor so that it can minister to them. The church needs the poor, rather than the poor needing the church (Bosch 1991:436). This means that God can use the poor to show us the need to help the needy, to remind us of our responsibility towards the poor. This reminds us of the need during mission to care not only for people's spiritual needs but also for their physical needs, and that reminds us of the importance of transformational development as part of the church's mission.

### **3.4.4 Economic relations in the household of God**

God has never separated his dealings with his people into religious and secular. He has always addressed the totality of people's concerns. In the Scriptures, God created mechanisms and structures to prevent great economic inequalities amongst his people. The following are some of God's chosen economic principles that are relevant to development.

### **3.4.5 The Law of Jubilee (Leviticus 25)**

God commanded that all land should be returned to the original owners without compensation every fifty years. Physical hardship, the death of a breadwinner or a lack of natural ability may cause some people to become poorer than others. By means of this law God equalized land ownership every fifty years (Lev 25:10-24). Land was very important - it was a source of wealth, because this was an agricultural community.

God owns the land; for a time he permits his people to sojourn on his good earth, cultivate it, eat from its produce and enjoy its beauty, but we are only stewards (Sider 1971:79).

Seen in terms of development, this means that God has given the land and all its produce to all people, to administer and use it for the benefit of all. Good stewardship of land means that all people, not just a few, must have access to it and its resources. It also means that people must not fold their arms and complain of hunger when they could be cultivating the land that God has given them to earn a living. And it means that during the Jubilee justice has to be done; the poor must be given another chance to improve their lives. They must be given back resources that were taken from them, so that they can rebuild themselves and their future. It is there to remind the rich of their indebtedness and

responsibility to the poor. In terms of development it reminds the rich of the responsibility they have in assisting the poor to be free from poverty.

#### **3.4.6 The Law of the Sabbath**

Another relevant law was the one that provided for the liberation of the soil, slaves and debtors. Again the dominant concern is justice for the poor and disadvantaged (Sider 1971:79). The text says that: 'on the seventh year, you shall let your field rest and lie fallow, but the poor of your people may eat' (Ex 23:10-12). On the seventh year, the poor were free to gather for themselves whatever grew by itself in the fields and vineyards.

What it means in relation to development is this: God requires that during the Sabbath there must be justice for the poor. The poor must be allowed by the rich, to share the available resources. The rich must share with the poor. It means that the poor must be helped to develop themselves. They must be given the resources they need so that they can start once again to improve their conditions.

#### **3.4.7 The law of tithing and gleaning**

These laws extended the Jubilee and Sabbatical laws, such as the law that called for one tenth of all produce and animals to be set aside as a tithe. After three years these would be brought to the Levites to feed the wanderers, the fatherless, the widows; and the Lord would bless those who kept this law (Lev 27:32; Deut 26:12-15). This is another example of concern for the poor in the economy. As Sider phrases it: 'The law of gleaning was an established method for preventing debilitating poverty among the people of God and sojourners in the land' (Sider 1971:83).

In the New Testament we find Paul dramatically broadening the vision of economic sharing among the people of God. He devoted a great deal of time to raising money for Jewish Christians among Gentile congregations. In the process he developed intra-church assistance (within local churches) into inter-church sharing among all the scattered congregations of believers.

Expressions of this commitment to raising funds for the poor of Jerusalem can be found in Paul's letter to the Galatians (Gall 2:10). He also wrote to the church in Rome on this topic (Rom 15:22-28). Paul was concerned with fellowship (Koinonia) among believers. That is why he asked for these donations. He believed that believers experience fellowship with Jesus, and that this fellowship entails sharing in the self-sacrificing, cross-bearing life he lived (Phil 3:8-10). As he saw it, Koinonia with Christ involves Koinonia with members of his body (I Cor 16:17). Paul therefore believed that Christians had to help one another escape from poverty. This understanding of the economy in the household of God should inform our economic attitudes and activities. We live in a world divided between rich and poor. As Christians we need to share, and to exercise God's laws of economic justice that seek to liberate and empower the poor.

This point is a reminder to Christians of their responsibility towards the poor. As Christians we have to be concerned about the plight of the poor and to be involved in strategies that seek to alleviate poverty, just as Paul was. Christians must raise funds and other resources to improve the lives of the poor - without, however, creating dependency. Whatever we do must help the poor to develop themselves.

The implications of the above themes for a Christian ministry of development is that God is concerned for the poor and wants us to be involved in addressing their plight, not to ignore it and support the status quo. It is clear that God wants economic equality among his people. In my opinion this means that the poor need to be uplifted from poverty so that they can have enough for their needs. How do we do that as a church? The answer is:

by bringing them the gospel, the good news. The gospel must be accompanied by transformational development so that it becomes real to the poor in their situation.

### 3.5 CHURCH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Having been exposed to the economic situation of Ivory Park, and having seen God's positive attitude towards the poor, the church had to take a decision about how it would minister to the poor. Would it ignore them and concentrate on the rich and powerful? Would it concentrate on their spiritual lives and ignore their material poverty?

The question was : How can a poor church ignore material poverty in its ministry? On the other hand, how could it minister in a way that would address both spiritual and material poverty? These were the questions faced by the Ivory Park Methodist church.

For the church to minister, it must first discover itself to be the church of the poor. This means that the church has a duty to see itself as consisting of the poor, who need empowerment and who have to empower themselves. Robert Linthicum (1991b:24) has this to say: 'The task of the church is not to empower the community but to join in the empowerment of the community, to participate in it, to be an integral part of it. The task of the poor is empowering themselves.'

According to Linthicum (1991b:25), the task of the poor in the community is their own empowerment; the task of the church is to come alongside the poor - both in becoming their advocates in the face of the rich and in joining their struggle to deal with forces that exploit them. In the case of Ivory Park, the church belongs to the poor - who are members of the community of faith, who come from the broader community, who are sometimes called 'the community of citizens' (De Beer 1997:46).

The community of faith (the poor people in the church) has to join the broader community and work with them as they seek empowerment. The ministry of empowerment by the church leads to an independent community-wide leadership which Linthicum (1991b:26) applauds by saying:

The poor people begin taking charge of their situation as the result of problem-solving coalitions. The community is organized, the church becomes integral to community life and the poor are empowered. Under such community organizing, the community's quality of life radically improves and the people increasingly take charge of their own lives and of their community.

In its service to the poor, the church has to move away from an ambulance ministry, relief or charity, seeking instead to accompany the poor as they work to empower themselves. The church has the resources and mandate from its Lord (Luke 4:18). It just needs to do the work. Because we were in too much of a hurry, some of our projects did not succeed: we had failed to take the time for proper reflection and planning in order to accompany the poor in their empowerment of themselves.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed a basis for the theology of transformational development in the church. I started by tracing the historical relationship between the church and development, the reasons for mission, and the relationship between the mission of the church and transformational development. I considered the reasons why the two must go together. Then we explored some themes that are relevant to mission and development. I concluded by looking at the relationship of the church to transformational development. All that this chapter tried to do was to prove that the church's mission and transformational development can be brought together to bring about community development in communities of the poor. There is no basis for separating the two as being 'secular' and 'spiritual' respectively.

## **MY STORY: INSERTION AND CONTEXT OF STUDY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

My insertion refers to my present experiences and actions of ministry in response to my context. I am located in an informal settlement community called Ivory Park. I have always regarded informal settlements as part of the cities because they are consequences of the movement of people between rural areas and cities. Rural places have no job opportunities, so that rural people are attracted to the cities with their economic opportunities and apparent promise of a good life.

In this chapter I am going to share my story of Ivory Park. This will include how I came into this community, the beginnings of the church here, a profile of both the church and the community. I proceed to speak of my experiences in this community and the work we have done in the church. I hope to give a clear picture of my context of insertion and the ministry in which we have been involved.

I also hope to give a brief profile of the community of Ivory Park as I have observed, experienced, analyzed and understood it since my insertion. This will be followed by a discussion of my insertion in my own church (the Ivory Park Methodist church) and my work. This will include the experiences of church and community that I have had and observed since I came here. It is important to realize, as I tell my story, that it centres on insertion and analysis. It moves backward and forward. This chapter will also include my ministry in this community.

#### 4.1 THE GENESIS OF THE IVORY PARK METHODIST CHURCH

It was in late 1993 that the Rev Phillip Shongwe of the Alexandra Methodist church encouraged four ladies from Ivory Park to worship in one of their shacks instead of travelling to Alexandra by taxi every Sunday. The Rev Shongwe organized a street revival. Members of the Alexandra Methodist church came to Ivory Park one Sunday and started singing and preaching in the streets, calling people to God. Among those who committed themselves to the Lord was Mr Wellington Gudla. Mr Gudla had been a Methodist before, but when he came to Ivory Park (which had no church of its own) he stopped going to church and stayed home. On the day of the revival he recommitted himself to the Lord, and when they needed a shack where they could hold a service that day, he offered his own home.

Mr. Gudla had a big family, and so every Sunday the original four ladies would join his family for worship. This was the beginning of the Ivory Park Methodist church in 1993. They worshipped in this shack until the end of 1996, when they decided to invade (*zabalaza*) an open space in Ivory Park. They built a big shack, fenced the space around it and started using it as their church. In December 1996 the Midrand Town Council granted them that site as a church site (Minutes of leaders' meeting, January 1997). The church was growing, though at a very slow pace. Mr Gudla died in 1995 and a lay preacher, Mr Wellington Makhaphela, was sent from Alexandra Methodist church to help this small congregation. By the year 1996 they had a membership of 30 adults and a youth group of about 15 members.

Towards the end of 1995 the Alexandra/Johannesburg circuit (a group of five Methodist churches working together under one Superintendent minister) had bought a small house in the township of Ebony Park, very close to Ivory Park. This house was to be used as a mission house for a minister who would be sent to the Ivory Park Methodist church.

At the beginning of 1996 a student minister was sent for a year to pastor this congregation. This was the Rev Mogomotsi Diutlwileng. He left at the end of 1996 and

another student minister, the Rev Sox Leleki, came in his place - also for a year, leaving at the end of 1997. Both these ministers worked under extremely difficult conditions. There was no church building, services were conducted in a poorly built shack and the membership of the church was very low. But they did an excellent job in building up that small congregation which was often faced by internal power struggles. The Rev Leleki left a congregation that had grown to about 50 members in all, including the youth.

I was invited to join the congregation in 1997 while I was completing my postgraduate studies in theology at the University of Natal. I commenced my work at the beginning of 1998, having been invited to stay for a period of 5 years. This year (2000) is my third in Ivory Park.

When I speak of Ivory Park Methodist church in this study, I am not referring only to the original Methodist church that was established in the township but also to the satellite congregations which we have planted in other extensions of this community. I am speaking, furthermore, of the development projects in these churches, which are situated in Kanana, Phomolong, Mayibuye and Ebony Park. We have planted four churches and in each of them we have one or two projects. These will be discussed in detail in the next section, in which a community profile is given.

## **4.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE OF IVORY PARK**

### **Introduction**

The next section of this discussion will be a profile of Ivory Park as a context of study. I begin by sketching the beginnings of this community. Secondly, I talk about life in this community. Thirdly I consider it within the broader context of Midrand, examining its relationship with neighbouring communities. Fourthly I discuss my insertion, followed by an analysis of poverty in the congregation. Then I tell the story of the ministry in that community.

### **4.2.1 Geographical location of Ivory Park**

I now come to a description of life in Ivory Park as I have seen, experienced and read about it while ministering in this community. Most of this knowledge was gained during pastoral visitations, street revivals and community meetings, and through reading about the community. It might at first seem a little irrelevant to my insertion, but it is what I have experienced and seen in this community. Ivory Park is located East of Halfway House. N1, South of Olifantsfontein and the K27, West of Tembisa, K21 North of Kempton Park and Chloorkop, Midrand and these roads binds Ivory Park with these other places. Hence Ivory Park is located in the heart of Gauteng. It is easily accessible by road via the N1 and K21, serviced by its own airport (Grand Central) and within 20 km of Johannesburg and Lanseria Airports.

#### 4.2.2 Who was Ivory Park intended to accommodate?

Ivory Park was planned to accommodate people from various parts of the region, but particularly the homeless from areas falling under two black local authorities: Tembisa (in Midrand) and Alexandra (north of Johannesburg). These municipalities had to identify homeless residents who would then be housed in Ivory Park. This was during the violence between IFP and ANC followers in the townships, especially in Alexandra. There was also an overflow of squatters in Alexandra who had accumulated as a result of rapid urbanisation before 1990 (Tomlison 1995:12). By mid-August 1990 the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) began moving the overflow of squatters from Alexandra to Ivory Park. Amongst the 600 families who moved from Alexandra to Ivory Park were four women who belonged to the Alexandra Methodist church. These were Mmes Mathildah Ndlovu, Lucy Zabeko, Elizabeth Dladla and Phinah Mathabathe. These women arrived in Ivory Park, put up their shacks and lived under very difficult conditions. They were elderly women. Every Sunday they would take taxis to Alexandra Methodist church until they decided to meet on their own in Ivory Park and start a church.

Midrand was recently reported to be one of the fastest growing cities in South Africa, and this rapid growth is also caused by the mass movement of people from former homelands, other countries and rural areas to Midrand in search of greener pastures. According to the 1996 statistics, Ivory Park has a population of about 300 000 people (Boston Associates 1995). Poverty and an associated lack of basic services characterise this community.

### 4.2.3 Housing

Housing is mostly constructed of old pieces of corrugated iron, other metal and packing cases. The community is divided into two parts. The first is serviced with water and lights. The second consists of the squatter areas (*imizabalazo*) which have not been serviced yet. They do not have permanent sites, no water and sanitation facilities and water has to be collected (mostly by women) in 25-litre drums. Electricity is illegally distributed at some agreed price from those who have it to those who do not.

At present the squatter areas have no electricity, no sewage system and no rubbish removal. These conditions in themselves pose a serious health hazard to the community. There are two health clinics in the area, namely Hikhensile and Thuthukani. They are really not adequate for this big community. Education facilities provided by the State are minimal (there are only one high school and four primary schools in the community) and all are poorly serviced in terms of resources. There are no opportunities for post-matric training, and very few young people from Ivory Park are able to gain access to tertiary training institutions. The lack of basic services ensures that the poverty cycle continues, and limited education opportunities inevitably lead to a high unemployment rate. It is estimated that about 60 percent of economically active people in Ivory Park are unemployed.

### 4.2.4 Rural bias

Another disturbing observation I have made in this community is the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the local people themselves about getting involved in development processes. One of the main reasons for this lack of involvement is the fact that most of them come from rural places where they still have their homes. For them Ivory Park is a temporary home to be used while they need employment, but they still belong to their rural homes. This kind of thinking results in a lack of enthusiasm when it comes to

development. As a result, the community is significantly quiet during December because most of the people have gone home. Even their commitment to the church is derailed by these rural biases, some people still belonging to their rural churches and seeing the local church as no more than a temporal spiritual refuge.

#### **4.2.5 Religious life**

The dominant religions in Ivory Park are African traditional religion and Christianity. The church here is somewhat in competition with sangomas and traditional doctors all over the community. Members of my congregation speak openly about their visits to these people for help, either herbs for sickness, help in getting jobs, and so forth.

There are a number of churches in Ivory Park. Most of them are African Independent Churches that meet in people's houses and shacks. At the moment we have only four mainline church congregations - Methodist, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and Roman Catholic. A large number of people are Zionists. The history of the mainline Church has been one of white domination and Western doctrinal formulations, which are often alien to the black poor and their experience. The faith of the Zionists is more relevant to their daily lives.

Their faith is alive in their small praying and worshipping communities Not in there written statements of faith and powerful position in society. It revolves around their daily struggles for life (Phillpot 1993:35).

Midrand, too, is a religious community. There are numerous churches, a Bahai centre and a mosque. The churches in Midrand have gone to Ivory Park to evangelize, plant churches and support them. Ivory Park Methodist church is one of those that has been supported by the Methodist church in Midrand, which is called Calvary Methodist church.

#### 4.2.6 A bustling life

In the midst of poverty and suffering, life in Ivory Park is seldom quiet and not very private. Here one is a member of a large community and is included in all aspects of that community's life. There is a rich network of support relationships, which is an essential source of the daily necessities of life in the midst of uncertainty and poverty. In the evenings there are church services that can be heard throughout the community, and there are also some music centres which cheer the young people. At the same time one also hears random gunshots almost every night. Life begins very early in the morning when people go to work. It is not a hurried life, but it is busy - filled with people, obligations and responsibilities. Life here is a mixture of joy, celebration and pain. There is the celebration of birth, death, and marriage; parties, braais, ancestor veneration (*umsebenzi*) and prayers. There is food and plenty of drink at these celebrations. The best thing about them is that they are very inclusive: they are an opportunity for the community to enjoy and affirm their togetherness and dependence upon one another.

#### 4.2.7 Broader context

Ivory Park was built on a 700-hectare farm called Kaalfontein in the Midrand municipal area, which already had a few homeless people squatting. To the north of the farm, slightly less than a kilometre away, lies the formerly prestigious white suburb of President Park; to the right, the (formally) coloured community of Rabie Ridge. The two communities are separated by Republic road which is the main road in Ivory Park. This road runs from Midrand to Ivory Park and was used by the previous town council to enforce racial barriers. Coloureds and white did not cross the road, it served as a buffer zone. Blacks were not allowed in either of these communities unless they worked for whites or coloureds. Blacks had to remain in Tembisa, which is 20 kilometres away, or Alexandra, 30 kilometres away. Rabie Ridge is about 5 minutes' walk from Ivory Park; President Park about 10 minutes' walk. These three communities are now divided only by

economic status. The rich stay in President Park, the lower middle class stays in Rabie Ridge and the poor remain in Ivory Park.

To the west of Ivory Park, just 50 meters away, there is the community of Ebony Park. This accommodates the lower middle class of black people. Although these communities are black and next to each other they are also separated by Republic Road. The true barrier between them is no longer race or colour but economic status. Ebony Park is for those who can afford subsidies to build better houses. The interesting thing about these four communities, to me, is that they present a clear picture of South Africa within a radius of 100 metres. You have Ivory Park (shacks) and Ebony Park (black, but beautiful houses) - the two of them separated by Republic road. In the same vicinity, the same road divides Rabie Ridge (a coloured community) from President Park (mostly white). Rabie Ridge (coloured) and President Park (white) are separate from Ivory Park and Ebony Park, which are black.

#### **4.3 RELATIONS BETWEEN THE BROADER MIDRAND COMMUNITY AND IVORY PARK**

This section is devoted to an overview of relations between Ivory Park and the broader Midrand community. The aim is to understand the dynamics that are created by Ivory Park being where it is, and whether it is an advantage or a disadvantage for it to be located in Midrand.

#### **4.3.1 Political (control)**

Originally Ivory Park was administrated by the Transvaal Provincial Administration, which was also its founder. Not until 1993 was the administration of Ivory Park transferred to the Midrand Metropolitan Local Council (MMLC) in recognition of the fact that Ivory Park was becoming a permanent feature of Midrand (Tomlison 1995:2). In November 1995 the community of Ivory Park established a Community Development Forum to consider and initiate issues of reconstruction and development, and this structure worked together with the Midrand Town Council (MTC). In January 1996 Midrand and Ivory Park were formally amalgamated with the establishment of the North East Metropolitan Council and its substructures. The Midrand Metropolitan Local Council presently administers Ivory Park.

#### **4.3.2 Social (cultural alienation)**

We have noted that Ivory Park was the first legal informal settlement to be sited next to an established municipal area. The reaction of Midrand residents to the prospect of an informal settlement in their area was not enthusiastic, perhaps predictably, since there is a wide gulf between the profiles of established municipalities and informal settlement communities (Tomlison 1995:21). Midrand is a relatively affluent area catering for middle and upper income English-speaking white families.

Ratepayers in the area, particularly in the suburbs closest to Ivory park - Glen Austin, Rabie Ridge and President Park - were outraged, first at the mushrooming squatter settlements and then at the prospect of a legal low-income informal area in their midst. They blamed the MTC and directed their anger towards it. Many appeared to feel betrayed by their elected councillors for allowing such developments on their doorstep. As a result there has been a gulf between those in suburbs and the people of Ivory Park.

### **4.3.3 Economic (dependency)**

Midrand is the industrial capital not only for the people of Ivory Park but for the whole of Gauteng. Big companies have moved from Johannesburg to the more spacious and central town of Midrand.

Most of the people of Ivory Park work in Midrand. They work as labourers in the factories, or as clerks. Others, mostly women, are employed as domestic workers in the suburbs of Midrand. Many are selling goods in the streets of Midrand. Most of the economy of Ivory Park depends on Midrand, so the people of Ivory Park are servants of Midrand and in one way or another are entirely dependent on it for their survival. The workshop that we held was on church planting and economic development in Ivory Park. The aim was to find out if the churches in Ivory Park saw any relationship between the two and were doing anything about them. It was organized by Ivory Park Methodist church, and a number of churches in Ivory Park were invited.

## **4.4 NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY**

This section will be a simple reflection on the needs of the community as they came up at our workshop on 16 November 1999.

### **4.4.1 Employment**

Presently there is a 60 percent unemployment rate in Ivory Park, and this is a crisis. It underlies the problem of poverty, which is escalating day by day in this community. The causes of unemployment are numerous. Firstly, the South African economy itself has not been helpful in creating jobs. Over the past five years, the number of people retrenched

has been greater than the number of those who found jobs. Secondly, an influx of job seekers is flooding Midrand - not only from other parts of South Africa but even from other African countries. Thirdly, people do not have the skills and education that would enable them to find jobs. These are some of the causes of unemployment in Ivory Park. Almost every day Republic Road is full of people walking to Midrand to look for employment. Even the Ivory Park community itself is always alive with people moving around because they are not working, so it is busy every day.

#### **4.4.2 Safety and security**

It is well known that poor communities are more prone to violence than the more affluent ones. Ivory Park is a very violent community. Its violent nature is expressed, for example, in random fights in the taverns after drinking. Street fights often break out too; sometimes people get killed in those fights. This has made this community an unsafe one. Violence is also apparent in the way women and children are treated and abused by men.

According to some statistics, about five women are beaten every day in Ivory Park and five children are sexually abused every week ( Community Profile 1997 :14) . Crime is the order of the day. There are burglaries, muggings in the streets at night, often accompanied by shootings of innocent people. Sometimes suspects are tortured and burned to death. This is the outcome of a loss of confidence in the national police and justice system.

#### **4.4.3 Land**

One of the greatest problems in this community is the lack of land for people to settle on. It seems to be a continuous problem: every day a number of people move into Ivory Park looking for accommodation. As a result, people are forced to rent a shack from somebody

else. Another alternative is to squat on any open space, no matter who owns it or what it is allocated for. The shortage of land has also been a problem to churches. They struggle to obtain land for church buildings, and when they do get sites they live in constant fear of squatters invading the church sites by force. Tomlinson (1997:24) says that “Midrand has a tiny minority of white people occupying 80 percent of the land, whereas Ivory Park residents - who are close to half a million - occupy about 13 percent of the land: the rest is occupied by business and public institutions such as schools and halls”.

#### 4.4.4 Dignity

One of the sources of pain in these conditions is that one loses dignity. People begin to accept the conditions and internalize them. They start believing that they were created to be poor and cannot do anything to change or transform their situation. Prevailing conditions in our country have perpetuated a class consciousness and caused the poor to feel inferior. There is a feeling that people who live in informal settlements are inferior to township dwellers (and indeed the informal settlement dwellers are worse off in terms of poverty). This does consciously affect the people in informal settlements, causing them to lose their pride and dignity. I should add that not all have been affected by this feeling. There are those who still hold on to their pride. But when they compare themselves with their rich neighbours in Midrand they feel poor and undignified

In response to all these needs we formed a Bible study group which tried to understand our situation from the scriptural point of view and to discover what God is saying to informal settlement churches. In my role as a preacher I dealt with the topic of poverty and human dignity for several months. My aim was to help people see that it is not God's will that they should be poor, that God is with them and working with them to transform their situation. Despite their poverty, people worked hard for survival. Some started small businesses; some washed cars in the taxi rank just to earn a living. A number of people depended on help from their neighbors in order to get food.

#### 4.5 My Journey into the Church and the Community (My experiences)

When I first arrived, the church was a small dilapidated shack which leaked badly when it there was rain. There were no chairs. There was no cement floor. The congregation numbered about 50 people including children. Some Sundays we had an attendance of only 10 people. The congregation itself was very demotivated. Before I came, there had been some power struggles between members; some had even left the church. Morale was very low. Nor did they receive me very warmly; they were still suffering from the loss of their previous minister. All in all, these problems meant a cold reception for me. On my arrival I found that a church building had been started but was still far from completion. I had to continue with the building programme, which was very arduous and required a lot of work. In addition, fifteen families were squatting on the church premises, which meant there were over fifteen shacks in addition to the church building. All this made things very difficult, because we had to get the squatters off the property.

The first struggle in this community was that I felt like a misfit. I was an outsider, and of course I still am. I was sent to the congregation straight from university after completing my Honours degree in theology. I was staying in a three-bedroomed house just outside the community; I was employed and earning a salary. I was driving a good car. And I was expected to minister to poor people who had little or no education, they were worshipping in an old dilapidated shack, living in shacks, and most of them were unemployed. This was a paralyzing contradiction. I felt inadequate to minister to them. I was not experiencing their lives and could not understand their struggles with God in their situation or their perceptions of the church and its ministers. Yet I was convinced that I had a vital role to play both in the church and in the larger community. As Ray Bakke (1987:30) has said of a minister: 'The minister is a shepherd to his congregation and a chaplain to the community'.

Even though I had these questions and struggles within myself, I was touched by the hospitality of the people both in the church and in the community. After the initial

reluctance they accepted me as their minister. Then I decided that, since I was inadequate to minister *to* these people as they and the church expected of me, I would minister *with* them. This was a shift from the traditional model of ministry where the minister knows what the church has to do and directs its work. The people are just spectators, or at best they rubber-stamp the minister's decisions. I did not want to create a situation where my congregation would depend on me as the Messiah who had come to address their needs and solve all their problems. I was afraid I might perpetuate the dependency syndrome that is prevalent in most poor communities. This dependency syndrome can be transferred to a new leader simply because the basic structure of dependency is transferable. Nurnberger (1996:150) affirms this:

The basic structure (of dependency) is transferable, when a great power higher or higher authority appears, it is not difficult to yield to the new master. The transfer only requires some familiarity with the values norms and patterns of behavior, that go with the new realm of power.

I then decided that my role in this community would be that of a catalyst (or animator). My work would be to arouse the initiative of the people themselves so that they could transform their situation. I vowed not to run that church on my own but to form a team that would work with me. I did not need them to be my dependants but to be my co-workers in God's mission.

The problem was that the people did not expect a minister who would consult them about his work. They expected me to know everything - after all, I had university training and my reliance on them was interpreted as weakness. I made myself vulnerable to liberate them from their dependency. Speaking of catalysts, Nurnberger (1996:150) affirms the misunderstanding of the poor about the catalyst who descends so as to enable the people to ascend when he says they would not understand the humility of the leader because the dependency syndrome needs powerful superiors. They would misunderstand humility as weakness and feel orphaned, turn away disappointed, perhaps even disgusted

In the early stage the catalysts are above subordinates. If they win the trust of the subordinates, the dependency of the latter will be transferred to the former. This stage cannot be avoided. The rank and file is still in dependency and would not understand the 'humility' of the leader because the dependency syndrome needs powerful superiors. They would understand humility as failure and weakness and feel orphaned and turn away disappointed, perhaps even disgusted.

For the people to be able to accept this new role of leading the church rather than being led all the time, there is a need for them to be trained. They needed to see that it was not weakness on my part, or a failure to lead, and that I was not doing them a favour by allowing them to take part in the leadership. They had to see that this model was scripturally based so that they had to believe in it. They needed to be trained: and that is why I started a Bible study group to which all interested people could come. The aim was to equip them for the leadership of the church. Nurnberger (1996:164) writes: 'It is also necessary for the subordinates to be empowered not only technically but also spiritually (or psychologically) to take up their responsibility.'

I concluded that my job would be to empower my congregation to do ministry both within the church and to the community. Then I decided to form a Bible study group through which people would be taught and empowered for ministry. This Bible study group would also be a forum for discussing all the concerns and visions of the church so that we could shape its ministry and future.

## **4.6 A CHURCH EMBARKS ON MISSION (CENTRAL ELEMENTS OF THE CHURCH'S MISSION)**

### **Introduction**

In this section I shall be discussing the beginnings of the ministry of Ivory Park Methodist church. I will start by showing the discussions that took place at circuit level and the conflict between the circuit and the Ivory Park Methodist church led by the Bible study group.

#### **4.6.1 Background**

The Ivory Park church was fairly new; by 1998, when I arrived, it was about 4 years old. The congregation met in a shack, with a tiny membership of about 50 people. This congregation was supported financially by the circuit - 90 percent of its expenses were met, and that was why the church was controlled and decisions taken without consulting the local leadership. Even when they were consulted at quarterly meetings, the meeting was run in English because the leadership consists of a white and black elite: no concession was made to accommodate people from this congregation. Even the decision to send ministers there was reached without consulting the local people. When I was invited, they were only told that I had been invited and that they would need to pay running costs of the mission house such as electricity, water and rates.

When I arrived, the circuit had its own picture of my responsibilities for the people of Ivory Park. My responsibility was to build up the church to a membership of 100 members by the end of the year. This I had to do by maturing and evangelizing the community of Ivory Park so that people would come to church. A new church building was being erected to replace the shack. I was told to concentrate on Ivory Park, not outside it, because that would hasten the pace at which the church grew.

The people of Ivory Park had to give financially in order to meet their obligation of R2000 quarterly plus the expenses of maintaining the mission house, which came to about R500 a month. They also had to pay insurance for the mission house and for the church building which was under construction, which came to R900 a year. These expenses were very heavy ones for this church to carry.

The circuit officials ordered our church not to start any other church but to concentrate solely on this one. People had to travel from all corners of Ivory Park to this church for worship. Two reasons were given for this:

Firstly, the Ivory Park church needed to be built up until it was very strong - numerically, financially and spiritually - before we could think of reaching out to people outside and starting satellite churches. They thought starting another church would make it impossible for the Ivory Park church to grow and that it would be neglected.

Secondly they felt that if we started another church, it would mean more expenses for the circuit because they would have to buy a church site and build another church for us, whereas they were already building a church and supporting the minister.

#### **4.6.2 The Bible study group**

One of the first things I became aware of was the enormity of the task of doing mission in such a complex and dynamic community. From the start of my ministry here, I was aware that I could not do it on my own.

As Kraemer (1965:74), puts it, ministry is for all the people of God not just the ordained minister.

The other reasons for the formation of the Bible study group were as follows

- To have people with whom to reflect on the situation, people who understood the dynamics of the community better - in short, people who would teach me about the community.
- To have people who were hungry for knowledge of the Bible
- To have people who felt called to discern God's will for our church and who were prepared to do that will in that community.

To bring together a number of people who had the welfare of both church and community at heart, who would want to be involved in the church's ministry to the community. Then a call was made for people who would like to form a Bible study group with me.

The representation in this group was six women, four men, two young men and three young girls. I was excited with the representation because all age groups and gender were represented. This was very important because we would here all people's experiences and expectation. Most importantly we would share one another's understanding of the scriptures from all perspectives.

This Bible study group met on Saturdays at 2.30pm at the church. At first we had 10 people, and as time went by this grew to 15. It later became the development committee. It was in this Bible study group that discussions were held about the community from the biblical perspective and then tabled at our monthly leaders' meeting for approval or disapproval by the church leadership. They believed that their poverty did not preclude them from knowing what their church should be or that it should be engaged in mission.

The questions that we asked one another from the beginning: what was the message of the Bible for us? How do we make our church a source of life and hope in this community? How can we do mission with the scanty resources that we have, in such a

way that both the church and its people are empowered? There was a clear realization that we were a poor church (or a church of the poor), but we could not just sit there and focus on spiritual poverty only. We needed to identify our church's role in the light of the struggles faced by the community. So we dealt with the question of our role as a church in this community.

After long discussions and struggles, the group agreed that the church in this community was meant to be a community of hope. It was meant to work towards transforming the situation of poverty. It believed that in situations of darkness, such as poverty, Jesus was always the light that shines (John 1:5). The mission of the church in a community must always be to bring transformation of the reality, because that is what Christ did: he healed, and the sick and the blind could see (Luke 4:18-20). We needed to help the community to become aware of the Christ who was there already, to seek to work with him for its transformation. The committee agreed on the approach to mission that we would adopt, which was a comprehensive or holistic one.

#### **4.7 ANALYSIS: A CHURCH IN A WORLD OF POVERTY**

##### **Introduction**

In this section I shall briefly present some statistics on the extent of poverty in our congregation. The aim is to show how poverty in the community affects members of the church. These statistics emerged from research that was done by the Bible study group with the purpose of discovering the effects of poverty on our congregation. The practical aim was to be able to minister to the poor by responding to the pressing needs of the congregation. A questionnaire was given to people to complete. Another tool was the membership form that every member of the church fills in when joining the church. This form contains information about every member, including his or her employment status.

The Bible study group then analyzed all this information, so that we obtained a good picture of the effects of poverty in our congregation.

The conditions under which people have to live in this community can best be described as a constant struggle for survival. Hard toil and creative schemes secure basic needs, with no certainty of their provision in the future. Life for the poor is expensive in every way: shack shops (spaza- shops) charge more for basic groceries than large supermarkets do (which, in any case, do not exist in the community). The shops in town (Midrand), are intended for middle-class people; they are quite expensive. There are three big supermarkets in town - Game, Pick n' Pay and Checkers. For the poor people of Ivory Park, these are not cheap. Since some people do not have electricity in their shacks, they have to go to the expense (both financial and in terms of security) of using paraffin and candles. A forgotten candle or lamp often starts a fire that burns down people's shacks and all their belongings.

Poverty results in a number of children's deaths caused by a combination of diarrhoea and malnutrition. Although there are health workers in the community, trying to help, they only reach a small fraction of the people because they (the nurses) are few and under-resourced. In this situation of poverty, people do struggle to survive and form a community. They do not despair or lose hope. Graham Philpott (1993:33) observed the same phenomenon in Amaoti when he wrote:

Part of the harshness of poverty is found in the despair, which engulfs one in the face of insurmountable difficulties, the sense of being trapped by anonymous forces and circumstances. And yet in this harshness people survive, families survive, communities survive and create their own way of being .

#### **4.7.1 Data on the extent of poverty in Ivory Park, derived from Bible study group research**

- (1) The Ivory Park Methodist church now has a membership of 1150 people, of whom 850 are adult members over the age of eighteen and the rest (300) are juveniles members under the age of sixteen.
- (2) The above mentioned total of 1150 members represents approximately 226 families.
- (3) Of this number of nuclear families, approximately 20 percent earn their living from fixed salaries and wages for employment in mainly the public and industrial sectors. They include drivers, clerks, cleaners and pre-school teachers.
- (4) The next group consists of those nuclear families who earn their living by entrepreneurship. They constitute approximately 27 percent of the total membership of our church and can be categorized as relatively poor.
- (5) The remaining group (53 percent) are people who live in absolute poverty, most of them unemployed and the rest informally employed.
- (6) Statistically, one concludes that Ivory Park Methodist church consists of 80 percent poor people. As Venter (1998a:7) says that “ In terms of the majority of its members, a congregation like this can be described as a church of the poor”. We must also be aware that the classification even of the 20 percent which constitutes the middle to upper class in the Ivory Park church does not necessarily imply that none of the people belonging to it are poor. They are classified as they are in comparison to those who live in absolute poverty.
- (7) These statistics reveal a severe problem of poverty and therefore alert us to a church that exists in poverty. This poverty has affected the church profoundly,

because the church *is* the poor people who are the subject of these statistics.

Venter (1998a:144) affirms this thinking by saying that: 'Any congregation which exists in such a context of poverty will inevitably suffer from the very being and effects of its context'.

#### **4.7.2 A Comprehensive approach to ministry**

The first agreement made by the Bible study group concerned the nature of our church's ministry in this community. They agreed on an approach that would take into account both the spiritual and the social needs of the community, which would hopefully result in an effective transformational ministry.

So the group agreed that my job would be divided into two categories: pastoral work and community development (Minutes of Bible study group meeting, 28 February 1998). In the first category we placed preaching, teaching, pastoral visitation, praying and the administrative work of the church. In the last category we placed community development.

I have always believed that mission is comprehensive. It is not only the propagation of the gospel in terms of evangelization or preaching. I have seen it through the eyes of Adrian Hastings, (1996:8) who perceived it in three dimensions: preaching (Kerygma) of the gospel and Christian service (Diakonia); formation of a Christian community (Koinonia). These three dimensions of mission inform my involvement in the community and my practice as a minister - this development of the community in the name of Christ while preaching the gospel so that the people can have eternal life.

In the words of Peter Storey (1992:4): 'We campaign so that people can have bread but we preach the gospel so that they cannot live on bread alone'

All this meant that we were involved in meeting both the spiritual and the material needs through the gospel.

One of my responsibilities as a pastor is to visit members of my congregation at their homes on Thursdays. During these visits I have learnt a lot as I got into people's shacks and listened to their stories and their various struggles. What characterized these homes and circumstances was their situation of poverty, which is caused by a lack of jobs and education. In almost every house I have visited they shared with me about poverty and unemployment. This constant confrontation with the problem of poverty has prompted me to do this study, seeking a way in which the church in its ministry to people can help them deal with it.

#### *4.7.2.1 The ministry of pastoral care*

My pastoral work includes preaching to my congregation every Sunday. I also preach at various services, prayers and night vigils in the community. I am assisted in this work by a number of lay preachers. I also visit members of my congregation in their homes, deal with their problems and pray with them. I have to take communion to the elderly and the sick members of my congregation and those in hospitals. I do a lot of counseling at my church office. Since I am in a growing community, I also have to do a lot of evangelism, so I organize street revivals calling people to Christ and his church. My work is to preach the gospel and build the Methodist church in Ivory Park. I have also organized workshops on different topics in order to educate my leaders and church members on the subjects of Christianity, church and leadership.

Among the hardest situations I confront are funerals where the family cannot afford the expenses of burying the deceased. The HIV-Aids virus that kills people almost every day exacerbates this problem. Sometimes the deceased has to be transported to his/her home and there is no money to do so. Some people end up being buried in an undignified

manner by the government and this leaves a mourning and guilty family behind. I have found this to be the most painful part of my ministry in this community.

The Bible study group agreed that I needed to preach sermons that affirm, motivate and encourage people to believe in themselves. If the gospel was to be good news in this community, it needed to look at the good that people have and emphasize their potential rather than their failures as sinners. Sometimes sermons were planned in the Bible study meeting so that they could be well focused and contextually relevant. For the first two months, sermons dealt with God's special care for the poor and oppressed and how that was relevant to Ivory Park. The purpose of this was to free the poor to understand God's care for them. Soon after we had started our ministries, members of the Bible study group were placed in charge of the projects. They had to manage and coordinate them so that they could report to the group. More people joined the projects, people who were not interested in the Bible studies - some of them from other churches. This resulted in the formation of a different group that concentrated on the ministry of development and on growing the projects. This group was called a development forum. It became so busy with development that there was no time for Bible study, and that was the death of Bible study in our church.

To me this has been a tragedy. I miss the biblical reflection on the ministries that we have in the church. Doing projects without biblical reflection is causing our involvement to lack a theological foundation; we are in danger of becoming an NGO and not a ministry.

#### 4.7.2.2 *The ministry of community development*

I understand development in the same way as David Korten: development embraces the restoration of broken people to human freedom, dignity, love, holiness, power and creativity.

I also define development as Korten (1990: 8) does:

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

Development is not primarily about projects but about people - it is people-centred (Korten 1980:481). It is about people being able to take control of their lives, which can simply be explained as regaining their dignity. I see the need for the church to get involved in development because it helps to restore the image of God in them, the image that is lost when people are suffering. It was clear to me from the beginning that in a poor community like Ivory Park it was important to relate the church to the development processes of this local community.

I found that although the people were poor, they were not looking at the church as an agent of change; they saw it as a source of charity, not development. This stemmed from the fact that people have been taught to view development as secular and the church, by contrast, as purely spiritual. I then made it my responsibility to teach my congregation that development is part of the church's ministry. In this community I preached the Christ who is concerned not only about people's spiritual well-being but about their material conditions as well. The two cannot be separated, for Christ is concerned about the whole person. As he (10:10)"said that: 'I have come so that they may have life and have it in its abundance'.

I found myself in a community where people were prisoners and captives. I preach and work for the Christ who has come to set them free. I was inspired by the Christ who made his mission comprehensive, covering both the community's spiritual need as well as their material needs. This he made clear when he said:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19)

The church, in whatever context, has to take action that shows the Christ it preaches as Saviour of the world. As Mutambara has phrased it, 'the social action of the church is to reflect on the salvific aspect of the gospel which is God's action in Jesus Christ' (Mutambara 1994:130). The churches' entry into the sphere of the material is part of its evangelistic programme and expresses the comprehensive gospel for humanity the goal being the humanization of society.

#### **4.7.3 Identification of available resources: strategizing for mission**

One important thing Nehemiah did was to identify his potential as a king's servant (Neh 2:1-10). From Nehemiah the group learned that in development you first need to recognize the resources you have before you even think of asking for resources from outside your community. He used to his advantage the fact that he was the King's servant. In the same way, we had to use our own resources. It was at this stage that we looked around to see what we had at our disposal for this mission enterprise. Thus transformational development starts with the assumption that poor people already have some resources with which to start the development process. The point of departure is to identify what they have. The Bible study group discovered the following resources in the community:

#### *4.7.3.1 People*

We discovered that we had people - normally regarded as the 'frozen assets of the church' (Mogoba 1992:70). These people, a majority of whom were unemployed, were both participants in the mission venture and also beneficiaries of the ministry of the church in the community. They could become involved in church projects and also in the starting of new satellite congregations. This made us realize that, no matter how poor and illiterate people may be, they are vitally important. People always have something to contribute towards their own development, either from their education or from their natural gifts: they are never useless. They are always a resource to themselves, both for their ministry and for development. This is important, because we begin to believe in people and affirm them no matter who they are and what their social status is. This positive attitude towards people is very important in the gospel message.

#### *4.7.3.2 Church building and site*

At this point in time our church was just about complete, so we saw that we had a church building in which we could worship and which we could also use for projects. There was also a piece of ground behind the church which we identified as a resource, even though we did not know what we were going to use it for. This made us realize that even though we were poor, we had some resources that we could use for the upliftment of the community. This brought hope and encouragement to the group.

#### *4.7.3.3 Other Methodist churches*

Another thing that helped us a lot was the realization that as a church we were not on our own: we belonged to the larger family of the Methodist church. Firstly we had the circuit which started the mission work in Ivory Park. It was the best resource, one that was willing to give us all sorts of support. Then we had Calvary Methodist church in Midrand, which was also active in the building of the Ivory Park congregation. This encouraged us. We were going to be helped by fellow Methodists on our mission journey. So we were not just a poor congregation struggling to survive on minimal resources. As the writer of Hebrews says of the broader church, even of departed believers (Hebrews 12:1), we had the 'cloud of witnesses' surrounding us with prayer and material support. This made me realize that the church generates hope in the community because it makes people see that they are not on their own: they belong to the larger Christian community out there. The other important thing about the Calvary church was that it was a white, rich church. This was an opportunity for us to build a ministry of reconciliation between a black and a white congregation. It also offered a chance of working towards bridging the gap between the poor and the rich.

#### **4.7.4 Mission in action**

This brings us to the point when the group started to do ministry in this community. The first step was to build networks for the ministry to happen. The networking consisted of inviting other people and churches to be part of the ministry in Ivory Park. The most important network we had was the relationship with Calvary Methodist church in Midrand, which will be discussed later.

#### *4.7.4.1 The networking process*

One of the first things done by the group was to look at what they had as current resources from which to build. These consisted of three basic resources: firstly, themselves as people with different gifts and potentials. Secondly, they had friends who would bring skills and would be willing to be involved in the development of the community. Thirdly they had the church building as their shelter where they could do anything. Lastly they had the whole community as a field of mission, where they could start churches and projects.

The first step taken was to build networks. The group invited the Methodist church in Midrand (which is predominantly white) to join the Bible study group, which was now becoming the development forum. The minister came with a few members of his congregation. A social worker by the name of Lisa Broekmann, working for another Methodist church in our circuit, also joined the group. This group became the development forum.

#### *4.7.5.2 Partnership*

The Ivory Park church works in close partnership with Calvary Methodist church. This partnership came about as a result of the networking activities of the Bible study group. When this group mustered their resources they also looked at the nearest Methodist church, which happened to have an interested minister, the Rev Alan Storey. We invited the Rev Storey to be part of the development forum, and he came with a few members of his congregation. The ministries we have done in Ivory Park have been built in partnership with Calvary. The journey of these two congregations has been an interesting one.

Calvary is a middle-class congregation and Ivory Park is a very poor one. The two have complemented one another. Calvary has supported the work in Ivory Park financially and with other material support. Sometimes people from Calvary have been physically involved in the starting and running of projects.

#### *4.7.4.3 Financial support*

Calvary sponsored the Nehemiah Pre-school in Ivory Park financially. A part of their tithes go to this project. Members of Calvary also adopt some of the pre-school children and pay their fees at the pre-school centre, and this contribution by Calvary forms 70 percent of the pre-school centre's annual budget. Calvary also sponsors the evangelist in Ivory Park by paying his salary every month, which is about R1 000. These contributions from Calvary Methodist church have helped our community and church in a big way. They have made ministry possible here.

Secondly, the people of Calvary also donate material things such as clothes, utensils and other useful objects, and these become the stock for the mission shop which has been able to supply the community with resources, employment and funds for the church.

## **4.8 Mission as reconciliation, transformational development and church-planting**

### **Introduction**

The story continues as I move to the work of mission and development as reconciliation, transformational development and church planting on which we embarked as a church. In telling the story of mission and development, I can best start with the projects and then move on to the satellite congregations that we established during our evangelism and church-planting campaign. I conclude by looking at our present situation.

#### *4.8.1 Ministry of reconciliation*

Another venture in which we are involved with Calvary is the journey of hope and pain. The rationale for this is the establishment of relationships between the poor people of Ivory Park and the rich people of Calvary in Midrand.

#### *Objectives*

- (1) To build relationships between the rich and the poor
- (2) To encourage forgiveness and reconciliation between whites and blacks
- (3) To build unity between Christians of different backgrounds
- (4) To expose the rich to the plight of the poor and give them an opportunity to minister to them

- (5) To provide an opportunity for mutual learning about one another's conditions and way of life

We organize visits from Calvary to Ivory Park over weekends, when people from Calvary spend a weekend in Ivory Park, visiting the community and sleeping in people's houses. Then we also plan a reciprocal occasion when people from Ivory Park spend a weekend in Midrand as guests rather than workers. This ministry has grown and has been an interesting one for both parties. Through this ministry we have been able to reconcile people across all sorts of barriers such as race and economic status. It has also helped to create relationships between Christians from Ivory Park and Midrand.

#### *4.8.2 The Nehemiah projects*

Part of the ministry consisted of community development through projects. We had agreed to embark on these so that we could help people to help themselves.

##### *4.8.2.1 Nehemiah Mission shop*

The aims of this project were:

- (1) To provide quality clothes to the poor at affordable rates
- (2) To provide opportunities for sharing to those who would like to share with the poor
- (3) To provide employment for the poor

- (4) To create a resource fund for the mission work of our church

This was the very first project. Before 1998 some members of the Methodist church in town used to send clothes to Ivory Park, and these would be distributed among the members. Usually they were old clothes and not very attractive. It was charity; people would take the things and wear them, or sometimes not even use them. At the development forum we decided that we were not going to allow charity, because it enslaves both parties, both giver and recipient, instead of liberating them. It saddles the giver with a permanent responsibility to give and reduces the recipient to a position of begging all the time, which leads to dependency. So the forum decided to sell the clothes at the lowest possible price. We asked churches to sponsor this project with good clothes that would bring dignity to people who buy them. An old room was used to open a shop at the church where people could buy, and two unemployed people were hired to run the shop. They earned 40 percent of every item that was sold and the remaining 60 percent went to a special fund which we called a development fund. The aim of this fund was to generate money to maintain our church and to start new projects. And so this fund became a resource for mission.

#### *4.8.2.2 Nehemiah candle project*

The aims of this project are

- (1) To provide a symbol of prayer and hope for those in pain
- (2) To provide a source of income and restored dignity to the poor
- (3) To encourage the culture of praying and belief in the Christ who transforms situations

- (4) To provide craft skills to the unemployed
- (5) To provide funds for the mission of our church through tithing

This project was started at the beginning of June 1998. In view of the injustice, poverty, suffering and violence in our community, we saw the need for the people to call, pray and work for justice, peace and hope in poor communities. The Peace, Hope and Justice prayer candle celebrates the truth that the light of Christ shines through darkness, pain and violence in the world, symbolized by the barbed wire that surrounds the candle. People are encouraged to light this candle every day at the same time, taking a moment to pray for a particular situation of struggle and pain in the world. This helps the craftspeople to earn a living from these candles. We have twelve people working for this project, and their lives have been transformed both spiritually and economically since they started. Some of them have been on the project since 1998 and it has been their only source of income.

#### *4.8.2.3 Nehemiah pre-school*

The aims of this project are

- (1) To provide pre-school education based on the Christian faith
- (2) To provide a place of care and love for children who constantly witness violence and rejection in the community.
- (3) To plant the seed of education in children so that they can cope when they get to school
- (4) To reach out to children with the gospel while they are still young

The Nehemiah pre-school was started on September 1994. It sought to offer good pre-school education founded on Christian principles to children in this community. The aim of the project is to prepare children for entry into good schools - any school in this country - not just public and township schools. The school tries to break the vicious cycle of marginalization and illiteracy of which the children are victims. This project was started inside the church with only twelve children and two teachers. Today it has about 80 children, four teachers and a cook. The medium of teaching is English.

#### *4.8.3 Development of satellite congregations*

When I came to Ivory Park, my biggest responsibility or mandate from the leadership of the circuit was to plant a church in this growing community. The circuit believed that only one church was needed for the whole community of Ivory Park. I was to encourage people to come to this one church and build it into a strong Methodist church. When we discussed it with the Bible study group, it became clear that we needed to plant more churches - in part because the community is big and growing very fast. One church could not possibly serve the whole community. This, however, was contrary to the orders of the circuit, and so it created a conflict between the two bodies (circuit and Bible study group).

As the circuit was busy making its decisions on how the ministry at Ivory Park should be done, the Bible study group of Ivory Park was busy seeking to understand the role of the church in this community. Finally the Bible study group rejected the dictates of the circuit. They felt that it was their church and they were the ones who needed to decide what it meant for them to be the church in their community {informal settlement}.

They stated the following objections to the circuit's approach to ministry in Ivory Park: Firstly, Ivory Park is a huge community with thirteen sections plus adjacent communities such as Ebony Park, Kanana, Phomolong, Mayibuye, Klipfontein and so forth. Our current church was tucked away in one corner of the community, which makes it difficult for people to know about it.

Secondly, mobility within the community is so low that it was hard to see how people were to get to our church in any numbers. The transport problem made the accessibility of the church to other communities a major obstacle. And people in this community do not have cars like those in townships and suburbs.

Thirdly, they felt that the Ivory Park church needed to grow in numbers as soon as it could in order to carry the financial burden they were facing. Rapid growth would be impossible under the circumstances, which meant that they would be financial slaves for a long time.

Fourthly they questioned the ownership of the church. They felt that the church did not belong to them as long as the circuit was telling them what to do. They felt that they were the church and should do as they see fit in their situation. They questioned the morality of the circuit controlling their church simply because it was supporting them financially.

The circuit was adamant in its stance on the Ivory Park church and its mission. It wanted Ivory Park to have only one church. Finally the Ivory Park church decided that it was going to plant satellite churches in the community without the support of the circuit. This decision added another responsibility (church planting) to my list. I was expected to seek ways and means of planting small churches around the community. The aim was to take the church to the people instead of calling people from where they stayed to come to a church that was tucked away in one corner of the community.

We then decided to take the church to all sections of the community. The aim was to put our mission statement into practice, which is taking Christ to the community by way of

service. We used all sorts of strategies to get to communities and start churches, as will be apparent from the stories of individual congregations.

#### 4.8.3.1 *Kanana*

The first church to be started was in a section called Kanana, which is in sections 4 and 5 of Ivory Park. There were only five people who used to walk from Kanana to section 2 in Sherry Park where the church was. So after negotiations with the local school principal in Kanana, those 5 people started to worship in a classroom on 16 March 1999. A number of street revivals were held in this community. A powerful preacher from Ivory Park was deployed to be the leader of this emerging church. Two of the five people were also asked to become leaders of the church. After a long struggle this church became strong, growing from strength to strength. Many people were converted and led to Christ. Today this congregation has a temporary structure which they built themselves, and they worship in it and have a pre-school centre in it. The church members started the pre-school and they run it themselves. Their membership is about 250 people and it is growing every Sunday. Even the circuit leadership is now excited about this church and supports it.

#### 4.8.3.2 *Phomolong*

This congregation was started on 30 February 1999. At this stage, we did not have a single member from the Phomolong community. What happened was that the Edenvale Town Council was advertising church sites in the community of Phomolong, so we decided to apply for a site. The Council granted us the church site at a cost of about R12 000. We applied to the Methodist Church District Office for a grant, which we got, to the amount of R15 000. Then we handed both letters - the one from the Town Council

and the one granting us money to pay for the site - to the circuit and asked them to take over the process of buying, as the procedure requires.

There was anger from the circuit authorities that the Ivory Park church had not followed procedures, but at the end of the day we bought the site. According to procedure, we should have got permission from the circuit to purchase a site before we could talk to the Town Council and raise money. The people of Ivory Park did not consult the circuit, since there had been some disagreements on whether Ivory Park should have other churches besides the one in Ivory Park itself. The circuit stated that it was opposed to the building of any other church in Ivory Park. Members of the Ivory Park church fenced the site, put up a shack and started to worship in it. Again a few members from the Kanana church were deployed to start a church here. Today that church has a membership of 160 people and it is growing. The old shack was demolished because it was too small. A zozo (a shack built out of corrugated iron) was bought which is bigger and better constructed than the first shack. Members have also started a pre-school centre in the church. There are 30 children and 3 staff members. The school has a committee consisting of members of the congregation and of the community; no outsiders. Even the minister (myself) was told not to bother: they will run the pre-school on their own. I just have to be there when they need assistance and guidance. This, to me, is empowerment. At the moment we are preparing to build a proper church structure.

#### *4.8.3.3 Mayibuye*

This church was started in November 1999 in a new community. It was started in the house of a woman called Martha Mahanke who used to worship at our Ivory Park church. Then she got an RDP house at Mayibuye when the new houses were built, and she agreed when we asked if we could start a church in her house. It has grown to a membership of about 50 people. The congregation is growing very slowly here. We assume that people dislike worshipping in somebody's house: they would prefer a neutral venue.

#### *4.8.3.4 Ebony Park*

This church is the youngest one we have. It was started on the first Sunday of September 2000. Since the beginning of 1999 we have been looking for a way to enter the community of Ebony Park and start a church. It has been very difficult, since there are no church sites available for sale in that community. Then we decided to buy an old dilapidated house in President Park, which is right next to Ebony Park. This house has five bedrooms and a double garage. We repaired the garage and started a church in it. Today the church has a membership of 50 people. We are already planning to start a pre-school in the main house once it is fully renovated. We are hoping to open the school in January 2001.

This means that we now have five churches including the main church in Ivory Park. All these churches have been planted in a space of two and a half years.

#### **4.8.4 Results of doing mission as transformational development**

The next point of interest is the outcome of our ministry in Ivory Park, achieved by means of the model of ministry which we used in this community.

##### *4.8.4.1 Additional staff*

The growth of the church has brought about a considerable growth in the work load. To solve the problem, the leadership of the church decided to employ a pastoral assistant, Mr Wellington Makhaphela, working on a part-time basis. His responsibility is to evangelize, urging people to join our church and to look after our new church.

He works for us at weekends and on Mondays. Since he started, the work has grown: more people have joined the church through his ministry. The church also decided to employ an administrator, whose work is to run the affairs of the church so that the minister can concentrate on the pastoral work and development. Again the Ivory Park people decided on this move; they did not ask permission from the circuit authorities, they merely reported it. The church itself, with help from other Methodist churches both local and abroad, raised salaries for these people. As a result, the church is run efficiently and it is growing. Counting all the people employed by this church, including our pre-school and candle project staff and caretaker, it comes to a total of 25 people. All this has happened in the space of two years.

I see this as economic empowerment of the poor by the church, which is why I believe that the church through its mission can transform reality. It can be a source of good news not only for spiritual poverty but for all sorts of poverty.

#### *4.8.4.2 Present structure and membership*

When we speak of this church today, we speak of a total membership of about 1180 members in four congregations. We no longer call it Ivory Park Methodist church but Ivory Park section, to accommodate the other three churches besides the main church in Ivory Park. In each of the three churches we have a pre-school centre. In the main church we have a pre-school, candle project and mission shop. This church continues to grow and has a very bright future.

As I have mentioned, the Bible study group collapsed and was replaced by the development forum which is in charge of all the projects we have now. This group meets only about twice a year to discuss the projects and their future. There is a need to include theological reflection in these evaluation meetings so as to keep the legacy of the Bible

study group alive and also to remind ourselves that this is a mission. The word of God needs to be at the center of our ministries.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have looked at the context of study and at the church in Ivory Park. We have looked at the development of this congregation, from a small congregation in a shack to a section with five congregations within a space of three years. We have seen how the congregation was mobilized to take part in mission and to drive the vision and action of that mission. Projects were started and people benefited financially from those projects. The church has satellite churches and pre-school centres in the community and all of these benefit the community, especially because the community has taken part in the process and learned to participate in the processes of community development. The church, on the other hand, has been faithful to its mission, which is good news to the poor. We have also seen how the use of the pastoral cycle and holistic approach to mission led to the growth of the church in membership and staff. It also brought with it a number of ministries that have benefited members of the community.

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

### INTRODUCTION

I shall now take a critical look at the ministry that was done in Ivory Park. I shall consider why things were done the way they were done, reflect critically on the theology behind the ministry of this church, and then discuss themes of a theology of development which I and members of my congregation learned from our ministry in the community. These developed as new insights which motivated us to further action. This is important, because it will determine the arguments in favour of following this model: whether it is theologically correct for it to be used in ministry, especially in communities of the poor.

#### 5.1 SELF-AWARENESS

Very shortly after entering the Ivory Park community, I was struck by the following realization: It is extremely important that anyone who arrives in a community to do ministry should be aware of his or her opportunities and shortcomings. It is crucial to realize that God has been in that congregation long before we came, and what we need to do is to look for His involvement in the community's life and seek to nourish this living presence of God in the lives of the people. Warren (in Cassidy 1974:164) also emphasized this:

Our first task in approaching another people, another culture another religion is to take off our shoes for the place we are approaching is holy or else we may find ourselves treading on 'men' dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was here before our arrival.

This means that when we enter a community in order to minister, we should realize that God is already in that community and we need to learn from the people there. The fact that we are ordained and trained does not mean we should impose ourselves on the people in the name of ministry.

Just as I had to come to terms with this realization, it was important for the Bible study group to realize that God was already present in their community, working with them to transform their situation. The Bible study helped them to do that.

## **5.2 FORMATION OF BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

In my opinion, the establishment of a Bible study group was the right thing to have done. I was aware of the enormity of the task of ministering in this community and needed people who would work with me and reflect with me on how we should go about it. It was important for us to start the process of theological reflection and planning in the congregation and to involve the congregants in this process of reflection, conscientization and planning right from the start. Not only would this contribute towards people's ownership of the ministry but it would also help them understand why the work was important from a theological point of view. Unfortunately, there was not great enthusiasm for this idea at the start but we were ultimately able to make some positive progress.

Meeting with the group made it possible for me to study the Bible with people instead of preaching to them all the time; they also had an opportunity to share insights with me. People were always able to relate the Bible stories to their own lives of poverty and suffering. In this way the Bible became alive and meaningful to them. Secondly, people could identify their life stories in the Bible and draw courage from the success achieved in similar situations by others who believed in the Lord.

Thirdly, the Bible study helped me to teach people that we were all ministers and preachers of the gospel. It was not for me to work alone: we had to exercise the ministry of all believers. In this way the ministry of the church in Ivory Park did not rest solely on me but became our ministry as a church. We were all disciples.

Fourthly, the Bible study gave the congregation an opportunity to shape the ministry of their church. They could give their own input on what they thought that ministry could be and where it should go.

The other important thing about the Bible study was that it sought to study the Bible in context. The community sought to understand their lives, and the dynamics of their community, in the light of the Bible. At the same time they were enabled to understand the role of the church in their community. They had a unique opportunity to reflect on their community and discover the situation of poverty and hopelessness in which it was caught.

The representativity of the group was another positive point. All groups in the church were represented in the Bible study: men, women, young people, the poor. Generally, in the Methodist church, the leadership is dominated by rich or educated men. Women and the youth are usually forgotten when it comes to filling leadership positions. The Bible study group was an opportunity for all the people in the church to voice their wishes and concerns and truly come to feel that the church was theirs.

### **5.3 INTERACTION IN THE BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

The interaction within the Bible study group was a very important factor in the success of the group and the process that followed on it. At first people were shy and did not feel free to speak in depth about themselves. Others were unable to interact very openly with the minister. This meant that the minister had to open himself up first and create an

atmosphere conducive to a free and open sharing of people's deepest feelings. It took only about three meetings before people opened up and became used to sharing. As they shared their experiences of poverty, it helped me to learn more about the circumstances of most of the people in the congregation. I also learned from the people as they shared their understanding of God in the midst of poverty. Their deep faith, built on a simple theology of the God who is present and can be depended upon even in the midst of poverty, was a big lesson to me. It has informed my ministry ever since. The people gained access to the minister, they shared ideas with me, learned from my theology, asked questions and together read the Bible *with* me instead of depending on me to preach it or to read it for them.

Another good result produced by the interaction was the experience and understanding which became prevalent in the Bible study group in Ivory Park: God's transforming power working in our community of suffering and hope, creating a new healing community of brothers and sisters, comrades and kinsfolk.

#### **5.4 PARTNERSHIP: GOOD INTENTIONS, BAD STRATEGY**

It was also through the Bible study meetings, as we reflected on the theology of Nehemiah, that we saw the need for networking if our ministry was going to be effective in the community. We needed to mobilize as many resources as possible and involve more people in the ministry of the church. That is where Calvary came into the picture.

At first, only the minister of Calvary joined our development forum group. As the work grew, he involved six members from his congregation. In these meetings we planned, started and managed our projects, such as the pre-school and the candle project. The Calvary group contributed ideas, finance and other resources such as papers, typed minutes and so forth.

The problem was that, as the group from Calvary grew, those from Ivory Park began to lose interest and their participation in meetings slackened. When I asked the Ivory park

the reason for their lack of interest, they told me that the English language was a problem: they could not understand the proceedings fully or participate freely. The other problem was that the white members were very quick to understand issues and would rush the pace of the meeting. The Ivory Park people were slower, took time to understand and did not enjoy the forced pace. As time went by, people from both sides got frustrated. The members from Ivory Park began to drop out and the Calvary members dominated meetings.

By the end of 1999 the development forum collapsed. We are left with an independent committee that ran the pre-school and candle projects in Ivory Park only. This had three members from Calvary, including the minister, and five members from Ivory Park. Then we have a separate committee that runs the other projects from Kanana and Phomolong. These have no members from Calvary at all. They belong entirely to the Ivory Park people. However, this committee has a representative on the management committee of the joint projects in Ivory Park.

We still run pilgrimages jointly with Calvary. No formal committee organizes this. The two ministers always do the planning and run it.

I regret the breakdown of the development forum. I think it was caused by a lack of preparation and good strategy, when the Bible study group became the development forum and included people from Calvary Methodist church. There should have been thorough teaching and assurances to the people of Ivory Park that this was their project and they must not be intimidated by the presence of the people from Calvary. Also, the people from Calvary should have been prepared to adapt to the standards of the Ivory Park people and to listen to them rather than assuming the leadership. That would have averted a lot of hurts and dissatisfaction.

At present we have different projects functioning that are accountable to the church council, that is, the meeting of the leaders of the local church for reflection, planning and decision-making. This is the body with ultimate authority in the local church. Each

project has a staff member sitting on the church council to report on its progress. I am planning to bring together all the members and leaders of projects to revive the development forum.

## 5.5 THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

The ministry of reconciliation is an important one that any church in South Africa needs to take seriously. Our country has a bad history of racial division, fear and mistrust between blacks and whites. There is a need to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation as part of the mission of the church. This is not an easy task, as we in Ivory Park discovered. It takes a lot of sacrifice and determination. The problem is that the playing field is not level: we come from different backgrounds. In our ministry we discovered that whites were very assertive and proactive, tending to dominate meetings and always be in hurry to get things done their way. Blacks were shy, struggled to communicate because of language problems and were slow in getting things done.

There is a need for both sides to be patient with one another. Most importantly, whites need to learn from blacks and allow them to own their development processes rather than telling them what to do, which merely perpetuates dependency. There is a need for both parties to understand that both are victims of the legacy of apartheid. Blacks were taught to submit to domination by whites, and whites were taught to dominate blacks. They must help one another to deal with these prejudices. They have to understand that they should respect and learn from each other. They must guard against perpetuating oppression and against practicing discrimination in reverse. The ministry of reconciliation must be established on an even basis, firmly assuming that human beings are all equal since all are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). Both sides must be aware that there will be suffering in the process of reconciliation. I agree with Nurnberger (1988:8) when he says that "reconciliation implies the suffering of the cross and that there can be no reconciliation without the cross".

## 5.6 THE CHURCH AND EMPOWERMENT

The Bible study group was the key to empowerment within our ministry, since it allowed people to participate in the action-reflection of the church. The use of Nehemiah as a role model gave people an indication of the fact that they needed to be involved in the reconstruction of their own community.

The minister and church leadership were also challenged by this notion of empowerment. Having been exposed to the economic situation of Ivory Park, and having seen God's positive attitude towards the poor, they had to make a decision about how to minister to the poor. Would it ignore them and concentrate on the rich and powerful? Would it concentrate on their spiritual lives, ignoring their material poverty? The question is: how can a poor church, when ministering, ignore its material poverty? How can it minister in a way that will address both its spiritual and its material poverty?

For the church to minister, it first has to discover itself to be the church of the poor. This means that the church has to see itself as a church of the poor, who need empowerment and who have to empower themselves. As Robert Linthicum (1991b:24) has put it: 'The task of the church is not to empower the community but to join in the empowerment of the community, to participate in it, to be an integral part of it. The task of the poor is empowering themselves'.

He goes on to say that the task of the poor in the community is their own empowerment; the task of the church is to come alongside the poor, both in becoming their advocates before the rich and in joining with them in their struggle against forces that are exploiting them (Linthicum 1991b:25). In the case of Ivory Park, the church belongs to the poor who are members of the community of faith, who come from the broader community.

The community of faith (the poor people in the church) have to join the broader community and work with them as they seek empowerment. I do think that to some extent we have realized this in our ministry in Ivory Park. Church people are now

working with members of the community in supporting our projects, especially the pre-school, because it benefits not only church people but the whole community. Even people who are not Methodists are members of the management committee of the pre-school, representing the community on our committees. They make a contribution in respect of how we can improve the work of the pre-schools.

The ministry of empowerment by the church leads to an independent community-wide leadership which Linthicum (1991a:26) applauds:

The poor people begin taking charge of their situation as the result of problem-solving coalitions. The community is organized, the church becomes integral to community life and the poor are empowered. Under such community organizing, the community's quality of life radically improves and the people increasingly take charge of their own lives and of their community.

The church has to move from serving the poor (with its ambulance ministry, relief or charity) to seeking to accompany the poor as they work for their own empowerment. The church has the resources and a mandate from its Lord (Luke 4:18). It just needs to do the work. This has been achieved in Ivory Park by income-generating projects such as candle-making and the mission shop, which gives people opportunities to earn money for themselves.

## 5.7 CRITICAL REFLECTION AND PROJECTS

### Introduction

In the following section I shall reflect critically on the church's two main projects, namely the pre-school and the candle project. I will consider their effect on the community and the church. I assess the contribution they make to the enhancement of mission and the improvement of people's lives in the community.

#### 5.7.1 The pre-schools

The pre-schools are an excellent ministry. They are much needed in the community. Many children need pre-school education to prepare them for school. In the pre-school we also offer love and care, which is vital to most of our kids because they come from broken families. The pre-school also makes it possible for the church to give these children a Christian education. This is an opportunity for a mission to children, which is vital, since we have a secular state where Christianity is not taught at schools any more. Most of the children at the pre-school come from non-Christian homes and go back to their families to teach the parents about customs such as praying before meals and about basic Christian principles. Good food is also served at the centre, and this is important because these children come from poor families where sometimes there is little food or none at all.

The pre-schools provide employment to unemployed members of the church who are then trained through the church to be pre-school teachers and cooks. The schools also give a tithe of their profit to the church, thus helping to cover the running costs of the church. Clearly this project has many advantages.

At present the Ivory Park pre-school is dominated by members of Calvary Methodist church. There is a need for the local people of Ivory Park to take full ownership and control of this project. It has gone out of their hands. Workshops on the running and ownership of community projects are being planned for next year (2001- 2002). It is true that people from Ivory Park have not had much opportunity to develop self-confidence, and no capacity building has been done; we have been busy starting projects and churches. Next year the focus is going to be on the building of local leadership.

### **5.7.2 The candle project**

The candle project is another that provides jobs for local people and brings money into the community from other areas, even from abroad. Twelve people have been working on this project for two years now and have depended entirely on it for their survival. Candles have been made for export to America, England and Germany, and this has produced a turnover of over R100 000. About 80 percent of this money went to the workers' salaries, 10 percent to running costs and 10 percent to the church. Here again the project has benefited local unemployed people and helped the church financially.

Again, this project is not fully controlled by the workers as it should be. It has a committee comprising the ministers from both Calvary and Ivory Park, two workers, a member of Calvary Methodist church and one from Ivory Park. Somebody from Calvary does the marketing of the candles. This is because white people buy the candles - because of the price, and because the symbolism is more appealing to them than to black people. The candles are priced at R30 each. The Calvary people also have the marketing skills and means such as faxes, telephones and contacts locally and overseas. Obviously this gives them an advantage. The candle-makers are people with little or no education and no access to marketing tools like those available to the Calvary people. Consequently the candle project has depended on Calvary for survival. Obviously, this has been an impediment to local ownership of the project.

Once more the challenge is to develop local ownership, which we are hoping to do next year. There is a need to train the candle-makers to market the candles themselves and to take full ownership of this project.

## **5.8 THEOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT UNDERPINNING OUR APPROACH TO MINISTRY**

### **Introduction**

In Chapter 3, dealing with the theoretical framework, I introduced certain themes of a theology of development. Now I propose to introduce further themes of a theology of development around which my practical ministry revolved. These themes, as I saw them during my ministry, have helped me to grow both theologically and developmentally. Theology is very important to a church because it can inform our practice. Even in society theology is important: it reminds us of the worth of all people, and that is crucial both to the mission of the church and to transformational development. As Canaan Banana (1994:59) put it:

Theology is important to society, also because it reminds us of the worth and potential of all people. I believe it tells us that no one is expendable and that the rights of the ones regarded as insignificant in society are to be treated with respect. Only then can we have peace.

### **5.8.1 The image of God and the theology of development**

At the centre of a theology of development we must place the truth that every human being is made in the image of God. This is central to our creation theology. We attribute to it certain elements that are crucial to our understanding and experience of God - such as dignity, freedom, creativity, power, holiness and love. These elements must be redirected back to their divine source. A theology of development has the task of restoring and recovering God's image in humanity. We fulfil that task by helping each other to reflect this human fullness or wholeness (the image of God) which Jesus demonstrated to perfection. One can only do this by oneself, but we can facilitate and make it possible for one another. Iranius (in Mpumlwana 1997:73) wrote that 'our humanity is fundamentally rooted in our divinity. So the incarnation makes sense in the way that God became human in Christ so that we may become more holy'.

### **5.8.2 Holism**

This concern for our Christ-like humanity implies a concern for the whole of life and all its aspects - not only the spiritual but also the material being of a comprehensive human being. Theology and the church must be concerned with all the needs of people, just as Jesus was. He cared for every aspect of human experience and suffering and made people whole again. Consider all the healing he did, causing people that had been objectified by society to be subjects of their own lives again. A theology of development defines development as the comprehensive progression and well-being of individual humans as well as of the whole of creation. According to Nurnberger (1994:10), comprehensive well-being covers the immanent needs for human survival and well-being as well as the transcendent needs of human beings (the right to existence and empowerment in order to find meaning in one's life) and a personal relationship to God. Nurnberger (1994:10) places the various types of needs in concentric circles, the transcendent and religious needs (personal relationship to God) being the inner circle and the immanent needs the

outer circle. Salvation, then, presupposes an analysis of human needs. This holistic understanding of salvation also means that the well-being of creation - humans as well as animals and nature - is central to a theology of development.

### 5.8.3 Solidarity

We are stewards responsible for the creation which is our bread and our life, and we are accountable to God for it. God's incarnation means that God says yes to creation when Jesus becomes a part of it - vulnerable, not transcendent and untouchable but bleeding as earth is bleeding. Again, creation cannot be objectified as something we possess, because it belongs to God. Humility towards the earth that we need in order to survive, is essential for all (Van Donk 1992:5). Humans are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and are given the responsibility for the rest of the creation (Gen 1:28). This implies that we must rethink our present roles as human beings in the totality of creation. As Christians we must speak out against the current mode of excessive capitalistic development in developed countries, which threatens the future well-being not only of the present generation but of generations to come. This is crucial to any theology of development. This over-development gives rise to over-consumption of global resources by one group in society and less or no consumption at all for other groups, which is rank injustice.

A fundamental element of our theology is that all human beings, irrespective of their social position; status, gender, color or creed, are created in the image of God. A person who discriminates against others accords them less dignity than God intended (thereby insulting not only that person but God himself) and degrades their own humanity and human dignity because they are, according to God, part of the same humanity (Ngewu 1996:64). A people-centred theology of development, on the other hand, acknowledges that one's life is related to and shaped by the lives of other persons and of the environment. Therefore a situation of poverty and suffering for some is a challenge to the human destiny of all.

#### **5.8.4 People-centredness and a theology of development**

This theology of development is people-centred, based on community needs and dependent on human resources; but in its comprehensiveness, its concern for social justice, it implies a bias towards the suffering, the marginalized and the poor, and the concomitant task of restoring their humanity. It requires a perspective on reality which is universal, but which is focused around the experiences of the poor - since their context reveals the nature of our reality most clearly. The focus on and bias towards the poor in a people-centred theology of development is therefore imperative.

#### **5.8.5 The prophetic role of the church**

The church has a prophetic role in a theology of development. According to Gustafson (1961:23) “ A theology of development has a prophetic function in relation to government and society as well as in relation to the church - which, as an institution, is a human community which should be put under the spotlight of social theory, as well as being the body of Christ in its prophetic capacity”.

The role of the church is to be the voice of the poor and to speak for them. Albert Nolan (in Challenge 1998:26) says, in support of the prophetic role of the church in fighting poverty by calling on government to act: 'The role of the church community is to ensure that the voices of the poor reverberate in the halls of public policy.' This prophetic role means that the church will at times be unpopular with the powerful, but it should not be discouraged on that account. Nurnberger (1994:52) echoes these sentiments by saying that: 'Being prophetic implies becoming unpopular. Motivated by redemptive love, Christians surely do not seek to become unpopular by confronting and accusing others.'

### **5.8.6 The local congregation as the church in mission**

Lastly I want to highlight the issue of what we mean by the 'church' as an important role player in a theology of development. Structures or church buildings do not constitute the church. The church is the congregation, the people in the local community (community of faith) who are baptized to belong to Christ and engaged in mission. They are the church. The function of the church is to be an agent of the Kingdom of God. This means that the church's primary responsibility is to take the Kingdom of God as good news to all people, especially the poor and oppressed. This comprehensive understanding of the Kingdom of God requires the church to be in the vanguard of development in society.

### **5.8.7 Theology of development as theology of hope and power**

A theology of development must generate a spirituality that brings hope, strength and power to the poor and marginalized. It should also give rich people the courage and insight to transform themselves. The images of God in a spirituality of development should stress issues such as freedom, love, holiness, dignity, power and creativity. Humans are created in the image of God. These elements are part of our existence and should be the basis for all people's lives.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, these insights which were used as a theology of development have raised other insights which we had to discuss, and so the action-reflection cycle continues. This process has helped us gain more insight with regard to theology, mission and development in communities of the poor. It helped us to gain confidence in doing mission by way of community development and gave us reasons for continuing the work in our church. It broadened our understanding of the church in mission and allowed us to see our context in the light of Scripture so that we could discern God's will for us.

## **PLANNING FOR MISSION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter picks up my own story again. I would like to discuss in brief how we did our pastoral planning. I shall talk about the strategic planning that we did and the changes we implemented in our church in preparation for a new phase of mission. Since 1998 we have been meeting in November every year to do our evaluation and ongoing planning. I am proposing that other churches should follow this format when planning for mission. I present this proposal by giving an example of the planning which has brought us where we are as a church and which directs our future planning and action.

### **6.1 PLANNING IN THE PASTORAL CYCLE**

In the pastoral cycle, planning follows theological reflection. In theological reflection the church has discovered God's will for it in a particular local community. It has come to understand the dynamics and needs of that community and has discerned what God requires of it in that community. It is at this stage that the church decides on its mission and plans that mission strategically. The cycle as a whole includes strategic planning, action and evaluation. My next step will therefore be to discuss what happened in Ivory Park when we reached this stage of planning.

### 6.1.1 Decision-making

The Bible study group came to the decision that its ministry in this community was to preach the gospel to the people of Ivory Park. The gospel needed to be preached in such a way that people could see that in their struggle for survival and against poverty they are not alone, that they are with Christ. The mission of the church was to reveal the Christ who is present in the community, so that they could come to him and work with him for the salvation of all (Minutes of Bible study, March 7; 1998). Another important decision was that all the people would take part in the ministry of the church; nothing would be reserved for the minister except the administration of the sacraments. It was agreed that space should be created for all people to participate in the church's ministry and to use their gifts wherever they see the need for them.

It was agreed, thirdly, that because of the poverty of the community there was a need for the church's ministry to be holistic. It had to take seriously both the spiritual and the physical needs of the people. The gospel in this community had to be preached both in words and in deeds, and both were a matter of urgency. It was also agreed, however, that charity should be discouraged, because it does not liberate people - on the contrary, it enslaves both the giver and the recipient. It does so by keeping the recipient dependent on the giver instead of fostering self-reliance. We agreed that people should be, as the saying goes, "trained to catch fish" - and more than that, to "produce fish". This became our focus in the practical ministry. We were committed to moving the ministry of the church from service to empowering the local people to stand on their own feet instead of depending on the services of the church.

Fourthly, it was agreed that we needed to take the message of the gospel to the rest of the community, because people were hungry for it. The reason for this was that there were not many churches in Ivory Park at the time. In some sections of the community people did not have a church in their vicinity at all. This led to spiritual hunger and frustration, and so we needed to start as many places of worship as possible. These places would be

viewed as centres of healing, because they are designed to address the spiritual and physical needs of people. Each of our churches would therefore include a pre-school centre and other empowerment projects, depending on the needs of that particular community.

## **6.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING**

One Saturday in February 1998 we did our strategic planning, based on the decisions we had taken about what we wanted to be and do as a new church in this community. Strategic planning is not common in the church, especially in the black church; it is often associated with business. Churches have been doing it, but it has not been propagated as one of the crucial elements in the church's ministry. There are three reasons for this in the Methodist church, especially in black communities.

The first is the itinerancy of ministers, which makes it difficult for them to plan ahead for what a church will do. The minister is appointed for a short and uncertain period. Ministers in the Methodist Church are appointed to congregations for a period of five years, and the appointment is reviewed annually (Methodist Yearbook 2000:22). This makes it difficult for ministers to plan the work of their churches because of the uncertainty of the length of the time they will spend there.

Secondly, strategic planning is not taught at our seminaries. Ministers are not told how important it is for their congregations. It is seen as coming from the business world; it is therefore a secular thing and nobody thinks of it as a desirable activity for the church.

Ministers believe that they just have to work until the Lord comes. There is one goal, which is making disciples for Jesus Christ, and this goal never changes. They need to carry on doing that until the Lord comes. So the church carries on from year to year

making disciples. The need to plan that strategically - by setting goals and evaluating the ministry - is often overlooked.

We, at any rate, decided to do strategic planning to provide a focus for our ministry as a new church and to see where we were going; in fact, to evaluate our effectiveness as the years go by.

### **6.2.1 Formulation of mission statement**

Our next step was to decide on our mission statement. Looking at our decisions on what we wanted to be in this community, we formulated our mission statement as 'taking Christ to the community through serving'. We are aware that in missiological terms this is not a safe statement, since Christ came to that community long before we did. As Warren (in Cassidy 1974:164) once said of the so-called pagan places: the Lord is already there before the arrival of any missionaries, therefore missionaries must not forget that.

We realized that Christ was already in the community. Our task was awakening people to this truth. Our task was not to bring Christ in, or to introduce him like a new product; it is to persuade people to accept him in the community and to accept his salvation, which will give them life.

### *6.2.2 Relevance of Mission statement*

For us, taking Christ to the people meant carrying on the mission of God in that community. Christ is the gospel; he is the good news to the people. For us this was the proclamation part of mission or **kerygma**. Taking him to the community was an emphatic

way of stating our kerygmatic task (the first leg of mission), which is to preach the Christ whom we believed to be already present in that community.

#### 6.2.2.1 *The Community, the poor*

The community, as we see it, consists of the local poor people of Ivory Park, who are a community of citizens. Our aim in preaching the gospel is to create a new community, which is a community of believers or a community of faith or disciples. This then becomes the second leg of mission, which is **koinonia**, the creation of a Christian community. Our task in this mission statement was therefore to proclaim the gospel to a community of citizens in such a way that it becomes a community of believers. This is an important task, because Christ commanded it when he said 'Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:16-20).

#### 6.2.2.3 *Service as community development in the context of people-centred or holistic development*

The other important point in the mission statement was the service by way of which we would carry on our ministry. Here we were committing ourselves. We were not just going to preach the gospel, form a Christian community and live; the commitment was that we would serve the people. We would listen to their needs and struggles and seek to address them while we ministered to them. This would be done in order that the gospel might be not just a sleeping pill for hungry people but a source of hope and a satisfaction of their hunger. Under service we would add the proclamation of the gospel by words but we would also proclaim it by works of grace, by which I mean projects and programmes that seek to address people's needs. This aspect of proclamation is the third leg of mission,

which is **diakonia**. As already stated, this service to the people was designed not to keep them dependent on the church but to help them to be independent.

This became our mission statement, and those are the terms in which we saw it as relevant to the community we were ministering to.

### **6.2.3 Mission vision**

'To have a church of 2000 members by the year 2002 that is owned, run and supported by the poor themselves.' This was how we formulated our vision and there was good reason for us to target at least a thousand members. We need as many members as we do for two reasons. Firstly, to ensure that we are actually carrying out our mission, which is to reach as many people as possible with the message of the gospel - our main task. It is important, because it will give us the means to be financially independent and not to be dependent on the circuit to such a large extent any longer

Secondly, 2002 is the end of my term as minister of this congregation. It is therefore important to set a target that we can work for and reach whilst I am here, so that by the end of my term we can evaluate the ministry and what we have achieved.

## **6.2.4 Goals (the two processes of community development: the church-based process and the larger process)**

### **Introduction**

In our planning we developed both short-term and long-term goals. The short-term goals we wanted to achieve immediately; the long-term goals we wanted to achieve by the end of 2002 - the last year of my contract at this church.

#### *6.2.4.1 Short-term goals*

Our short-term goals were:

- (1) to plant small churches in every section of the community
- (2) to obtain as many church sites as possible in the community
- (3) to train members in church leadership and giving
- (4) to encourage members to offer themselves as lay preachers so that they can assist in the planting of churches.
- (5) to start a pre-school centre and a an income-generating project at our Ivory Park church.

#### 6.2.4.2 Long-term goals

Our long-term goals were:

- (1) *To have a Methodist church in every section of Ivory Park.* In each and every one of these churches we wanted to have a pre-school centre and other development projects that would empower the poor. This was understood as the practical interpretation of the gospel that we preached in that community.
  
- (2) *To have a church that is owned, run and supported by the poor themselves in that community.* We recognized a few problems that are faced by mainline churches in poor communities. Firstly, the church in such communities is usually controlled from the outside simply because community members do not have either the education to understand the complex dynamics of how a church is run or the money to support their church and direct its mission. As a result, the local Methodist church is in the community in terms of location and membership but control rests with another Methodist body or church outside the community. That raises critical questions about the ownership of the local church and thus about the direction of its mission. We therefore wanted to have a church that is owned by its members, who would control its mission and finances. We would do this by training members of the church to understand the policy and mission of the Methodist church, in the hope that by the year 2001 we will have a church that is efficiently run and directed by members of the Ivory Park community.

### **6.3 STRATEGIES**

We intended to plant churches, using all sorts of resources and strategies, as long as they were practical and did not contravene the Christian principles of church planting. We would do evangelism campaigns and revivals.

Secondly, we would transform the leadership of our church. At that early stage it consisted of only two stewards and twelve old people who functioned as the leaders' meeting, which is the executive body of our local church. We planned to include more young people and women in the leadership and also to extend the membership of the leadership body so as to foster representativity. We would include women and young people as society stewards to foster the ownership of the church by all groups. We would also provide an opportunity of training for leadership to every group in the church.

Thirdly, we were going to encourage lay members of the church to become lay preachers. They would be trained for this work and then posted to other sections of the community to start churches. We would give training in mission and church leadership and on giving in the church.

### **6.3.1 Evangelism and caring (formation of community)**

The vision held by the group was to do evangelism that would be holistic and empowering to the poor people of Ivory Park. The aim was to invite them to Christ, and in that process we would help meet their immediate needs (charity) while also helping them to help themselves through our projects. That was how we understood evangelism. It is a call to life, a call to the healing of all problems through Christ; not just a call to follow the Methodist Church but to follow the Christ who gives life.

### **6.3.2 Conscientizing the people to take the initiative**

We also believed that people needed to take the initiative in order to improve their lives. The Bible study group as an agent of transformation had a good understanding of the church. It was seen as a body with the ability to conscientize people to take the initiative in solving their problems. This was a very important thing for our church to do because of the location in which it found itself. The Bible is a most subversive book that can be used to conscientize people to believe in themselves and change their situation. We thought that we would need the message of the gospel to call on people to stand up for themselves. This was done by means of the preaching in our streets revivals, and also by the messages that came from our pulpits. For the first six months it was agreed that we would preach messages showing Christ as a friend of the poor, the lowly and the outcasts of society. This was done so that the congregation could see Christ identifying with them in their poverty, and could hear him challenging them to stand up for themselves. The aim of this type of message was to encourage people to take the initiative, and to assure them that Christ was with them. For us this was the opposite of leaving them in their poverty and giving them messages that would make them accept their condition. Instead we gave them a message that challenged their poverty.

### 6.3.3 Participatory approach in meetings

The structure of the Methodist church congregation allows only a few people to be in a decision-making position. The leaders' meeting is the decision-making body of the local church. Normally members of this meeting would be older men and women, especially those who think traditionally and resist change in their understanding of the church. The Bible study group had committed itself to creating a structure that would allow more people to participate in the church. It was convinced that the present structure was not democratic enough and that we needed to include as many groups as possible in leadership positions. This meant that we needed to include the youth, more women, and be as representative as we could in terms of ethnic groups. This was done so that all the people could own the decisions taken in the church; they could indeed own the church itself and its mission. As a result, more people participated in our church's decision-making process.

Divine service was also transformed from a minister's domain to that of the members. Normally the minister or preacher would do everything that concerned the worship - Scripture readings, the sermon, notices and so forth. We made sure that the service would be shared. We even included young people; giving them the responsibility of Scripture readings, and we elected two of them as society stewards. We also elected women to senior positions in the church. We had two of them as society stewards - traditionally positions reserved for men.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the planning stage was also a learning curve for us. It was a move away from the traditional method of just doing ministry without a clear plan of action. This strategic planning helped us to allocate duties and to shape the vision of where we were going with our mission as a church. We could measure our achievement and set up new goals. On the basis of our experience, I would recommend that all churches do planning. Our strategic planning could be used as an example for any church that is doing mission.

## **PROPOSAL: A MODEL OF MINISTRY FOR CHURCHES IN INFORMAL AND POOR COMMUNITIES**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I shall propose a model for ministry in communities of the poor that leads to transformational development. Most of what I have to say is not new, but I would like to underline it. Furthermore, most of these ideas have grown out of the experience I have gained from this community together with the development forum. I believe that although contexts may not be the same, the dynamics will be similar, so that the suggestions will work in some though not in all contexts. Ministers can extract what is valid for their contexts.

### **7.1 THE MINISTER AS A CATALYST OR ANIMATOR**

This role is of specific importance in a context where mission is necessary. The minister must assume this role so that s/he can help the poor to develop themselves and transform their situation.

Any minister who is in a community of the poor must have a passion for holistic mission. This is imperative because of the needs of the people that the minister will constantly be dealing with while working in the community. One cannot bury one's head like an ostrich and ignore the cry of the poor. The minister will need to develop an interest in the healing ministries of Jesus Christ, such as feeding the hungry with both material and spiritual bread. The minister will need to read books on mission and development. Even though the church is the people of God, and the people are the doers of mission, the truth is that the minister is still very important in a congregation. The minister must also be aware that

he needs to learn a lot from the congregation. Poor people are the ones who know what type of ministry they need. The minister also has to contact other people who are involved in the community, such as development officers and social workers, to find out what is being done and what is expected of the church. I understand the minister's catalytic role to mean the facilitation of transforming ministry in a community. A facilitator, especially in a church context, can be defined in the words of Gerald West (1993:24): a facilitator is one who helps the progress and empowerment of others, who makes it easier for others to act, to contribute and to acquire skills.

The minister has the task of facilitating a holistic ministry to his congregation. He needs to use a method of ministry that encourages as many people as possible to participate in the church.

Being a facilitator means learning to be an enabler, not a dominator - a constant temptation in the ministry. There is a need to allow the growth of mutual respect and trust between minister and congregation. This will in turn foster self-confidence, responsibility and accountability. These should be the underlying principles for a minister to follow as he prepares for ministry.

## **7.2 THE PASTORAL CYCLE: AN ADEQUATE THEOLOGICAL METHOD FOR TRANSFORMATION**

There is a need to learn about the community. The pastoral cycle provides the guidelines and steps that a minister can use to understand the community, especially the first three steps: insertion, analysis and theological reflection. Ministers should go through the pastoral cycle on their own in trying to understand their context. Pastoral visitation affords an opportunity to listen to the stories of the people, which in turn supply more information enabling him to understand the dynamics of the community.

### 7.3 THE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

I consider this group to be vital to any church of the poor. This is the platform where people can talk about their poverty and be helped to understand God's will for them. The Bible study group will also act as a think tank and vision developer. It does not replace the normal church council, but it there to advise the church council and other relevant bodies on what God's will is for the church in that context. It is there to make recommendations, not to take decisions and impose them on other church structures. Members of this group will also understand the importance of the church for their lives and situation.

Most importantly, this group must be representative of all sectors of the church. It must be representative in terms of gender, color, age and ethnic groups. This will make the sharing richer and broader, relating to virtually all the groups in the church. I must caution against including people who are not members of the congregation for whatever reason that might seem valid: I believe membership must be restricted to members of the congregation in order to avoid conflicts of interest and unnecessary arguments and hurts. Members of the group must first be allowed to grow before people from the outside can be included. This is to allow the members to own the vision and not to be intimidated by others who are not the real owners of the church and its vision.

The Bible study group must not be there simply to do Bible studies that do not relate to the context. In this case the method of Bible study that is chosen will be critical for the usefulness and relevance of Bible study to the mission of the church. I recommend Gerald West's (1993) contextual Bible study method and Croatto's hermeneutical method. I also recommend doing Bible studies on particular individuals such as Jesus, Nehemiah, Amos and others.

#### **7.4 FLEXIBILITY OF CHURCH STRUCTURES**

Problems experienced by the Ivory park Methodist church may lead one to conclude that some conservative church traditions tie the hands of missionaries and limit their activities, since they have to get approval for any initiatives they may want to undertake. At times the local minister and his congregation find themselves facing challenges different from those the church is used to, and for this reason they need to change certain traditional procedures in order to address their new context. This is well illustrated in the conflict that the Ivory Park church had with the circuit.

Another important point about leadership is that of representativeness. In Ivory Park it was discovered that the leadership of the church rested on a few old men and excluded women and youth. Although the Methodist Church has a leadership policy which states that 40 percent must be women, 20 percent youth and 40 percent men, this had not been implemented in this congregation. There was a need for the church to include more people in structures so that their voices and concerns could be heard in our meetings. This made it easier for all the people to take ownership of the church, because they were part of the decision-making processes.

#### **7.5 FUNDING THE WORK**

Any church that wants to do mission in an informal settlement community or any other community of poor people must be aware that it has to support itself. Like any other ministry, this work takes a lot of resources - financial, human and material. There will be a need to collect funds for mission, invite people with a call to be involved in the mission of the church and to identify resources already available for this ministry.

This will be difficult because the people are poor. It will be necessary to go to those who are rich. Usually the rich are not members of such a community. The poor need to do

their planning first. They need to know what it is that they want to do, why they want it, how will they do it and how it will benefit them and their ministry. Then they can take that programme of action and ask for money. This will avert the problem of being told, by those who have got the money they need, what they should do and how they should do it. They can accept advice from those who fund them but must never allow them to dictate terms. Funders should help to restore the dignity of the poor rather than disempowering them by not listening to them. The role of the minister is to facilitate this process of empowerment so that the poor will be able to draft their programme of action, identify possible funders and retain the ownership of the programme.

## **7.6 FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE**

The need for financial independence is important in any church. Lack of financial independence gives rise to a lot of problems such as lack of ownership and lack of effective ministry in younger churches. Although the church may succeed admirably in self-propagation and self-support, financial dependency remains a problem. Moreover, every church has a missionary responsibility - no matter the conditions in which it finds itself. Even though the church may be a victim of circumstances such as poverty, it has to find means of carrying out its responsibility for *the Missio Dei* with which it has been entrusted. A church without financial independence runs the risk of being dictated to by its financial sponsors, and this is not a liberating experience.

## **7.7 CHURCH PLANTING ACCOMPANIED BY DEVELOPMENT**

An important point is that for any church that is started, a project must be started which will be the practical implementation of the gospel. For example: in Ivory Park we agreed that for every church we start, we will also start a pre-school centre. This constitutes a

ministry to the children and provides employment. The church in a poor community has to preach the gospel in word and deed. This improves the level of acceptance of the word of God. Every church must have a project. The church can be used as a place of worship over weekends and for development projects during the week.

## **7.8 EVALUATION**

Constant evaluation of the work is very important in such a context. It is absolutely essential for monitoring the ministries and the churches. Evaluation is also a good thing because it offers an opportunity of growth to those involved. They will learn new lessons and implement them, and this allows further reflection; and so the cycle continues. In the context of Ivory park we were caught up in the demands of the ministry so that we did not do detailed evaluation, but we were able to look back on our achievements and failures, though without going into much detail.

## **7.9 A MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP**

Drawing on my experience in Ivory Park, I think that for any partnership to start there is a need to understand the reason behind the partnership.

### **7.9.1 A theology of reconciliation and partnerships**

There is a need for a theology of a justice-based reconciliation on which we must build. Such a theology has to be taught first to the minister and then to the congregations involved in this process, both black and white. A theology of reconciliation must come

from both the congregations who seek to unite. It must build on the belief that reconciliation is our urgent need and that it is good news (Nurnberger 1988:126). It must be clear that unity amongst people is what God wants from all Christians.

### **7.9.2 Formulation of the terms and guidelines of the partnership**

I discovered that the black congregation is usually the more vulnerable party in these partnerships. For them to own the process of partnership, it is important that they should draw up their own terms of partnership. They must be free to influence the partnership. The white congregation must be clear on why they want to be part of the partnership, and they must share this openly so that there can be mutual trust.

### **7.9.3 The reciprocal pilgrimage**

Then there is the need for a visit to the township. This is important for two reasons. One is that the black congregation will be more relaxed, because this is its comfort zone. Secondly, the whites need to show commitment to the process by leaving their comfort zone for the township to see for themselves and listen to the stories of black people, so that they may be moved to take the process more seriously. During these visits a briefing about the profile of the community is made and people are placed in pairs across racial lines. The blacks become hosts to the white people and are encouraged to live their normal lives as if there was no visitor. This becomes an opportunity to talk and develop a relationship - a very important matter if the partnership is to be successful. The suggestion is that the pilgrimage from town to township should be done over a weekend so that it can be concluded with a service of holy communion on Sunday at the black church in the informal settlement. After that there can be a plenary where people reflect on their feelings and struggles about this weekend.

#### 7.9.4 Partners in mission

Only those who have been part of such a pilgrimage and crossing-the-gulf process should be allowed to become members of the development forum or Bible study group. This is because they have a relationship with the community and understand something about how they are placed. Only then can we talk of partnership in mission - once people have developed relationships of mutual respect and humility. The role of the Ivory Park community at this stage is to own the mission vision and programme. They must also take the decisions on what needs to be done and how. The mission must be done in terms of the community and at a pace they are comfortable with: they must not be forced to run before they can walk. So the role of the poor community is to set the agenda, own it and carry it.

The role of the Calvary Methodist church in our context is to give informed and controlled support to this poor community that is in the process of developing itself. They can give advice but must not exert control. They need to understand the African way of doing things, which is relaxed and not built on competition and individualism. This is also an opportunity for this affluent community to learn another way of doing things instead of imposing their own way all the time. If the process is done properly, there is bound to be mutual benefit for all involved. It is not a one-way street where the rich come to help and teach the poor: they, too, have an opportunity to learn another way of looking, understanding and doing things. This is what a justice-based reconciliation and partnership can do for all involved.

Our problem in Ivory Park is that we started the partnership in mission before building the relationships: that is why we have problems. We did not have guidelines and teaching on what we were doing - we just did it. This is a lesson for me and I propose to correct it by doing the teaching and the guidelines for our partnership. I suggest that any church seeking to be involved in partnerships should follow the above steps and build on them.

### 7.9.5 Conclusion

To conclude this section, I want to summarize the model of ministry that I have presented in this chapter as a way forward for holistic ministry in the informal settlement. Firstly, the minister who has to minister in a community of the poor must understand that a minister in this situation is merely an animator or catalyst. She/he must also understand that ministry in such a context is holistic. Then the minister has to be aware of the need to read the Bible and do ministry *with* members of the congregation as opposed to doing it for them. Then you need a Bible study group, representative of all the groups in the church. I have also suggested that the minister should use the pastoral cycle as a model of analysis, reflection and ministry, that the minister does strategic planning of the ministry, and that ministry must include development so that it can lead to transformational development. The last part I looked at was a suggestion on how the ministry of reconciliation or partnership can be done properly. I suggested a model to be followed.

### 7.10 CONCLUSION

An overview of this study and of the sources consulted makes it abundantly clear that no thorough study of this nature has been undertaken before in the South African context, let alone a study of the mission of the Methodist Church in the informal settlements. For this reason the main sources of information were reports, a few documents, articles, minutes, interviews and observation. It is saddening that informal settlements with their long history of involvement with the church should have so little written about them.

In this study I have shared the story of a young church which developed in an informal settlement and which has sought to be faithful in carrying out the *Missio Dei* despite the challenges posed by poverty. It has sought to bring good news to the people and to empower them both spiritually and materially. A lot of lessons came up throughout the study, and the proposed model in the last chapter is a summary of these lessons.

Apart from the missionary dimension of this church, which has been seen in terms of the activities of the researcher (myself) and the Bible study group, there are yet more aspects which could be researched. Areas such as the role of women in an informal settlement church are interesting and important, since they (women) have been regarded as pillars of the church where finances are concerned. The partnership of a poor black church with a white middle-class church would also be interesting to research.

The power in holistic development is that both the church and the people benefit from the mission. They do not benefit only in spiritual terms but also materially, as development initiatives are set up and people encouraged to develop themselves. This is not just an eschatological hope, it is practical salvation which is immediate and concrete. Holistic mission is the main focus of this study. I would therefore encourage other researchers to explore further areas of research around this subject so that the church can have a model of ministry for these communities.

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**APPENDIX**

- 1 Membership forms
2. Peace, Hope and Justice Prayer Candle
- 3 Preparation for the journey across the gulf 1
3. Reflection on the journey across the gulf 2
4. Reflection on the journey across the gulf 3

worship service :-

The gift of lighting this candle is that as the body of Christ in this world, we are called to share one another's pain and we can only do that when we try to understand and feel another's pain as if it were our own.

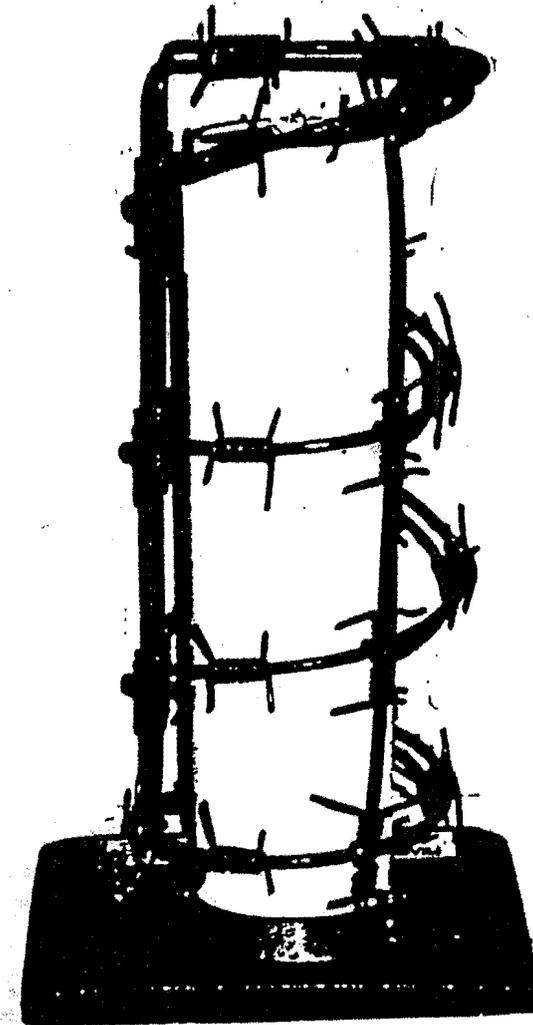
Today we light the Candle of Peace, Hope and Justice as we try to journey with the frustrations and trials of the disabled, but also giving thanks for the treasured gifts they share.

Light the candle

Let us pray :-

Lord we try today to understand disability better, as we compassionately and with deep feeling, pray for all those who in some way find themselves trapped - trapped in frustrated boundaries, which do not allow them the freedom that they long for - be it mobility and independence, be it eyes to see the beauty of each new day, or ears to hear a loved one's voice, or be it minds that struggle to comprehend. Lord God we ask you to fill them with your love, embrace them with your understanding and equip them with a hope that can trust and rely on your grace and mercy. And Lord for all those who so lovingly care for the disabled, we ask you to empower them with the strength and the emotional upliftment to cope.

But Lord God we thank you for the very special gifts that they share. Lord, disabled people are so often the most able with the things that really count in life - the Jesus things - gentleness, patience and endurance, courage, humility, the way they are able to express and show love - their perception of other people's needs. Help them Lord God to see their unique and wonderful gifts. Sometimes in our very 'ableness' we miss the mark and become crippled with trivialities - we become paralysed in our quest to do and be and have the things that mean nothing. Help us Lord to be a people who would not shun disability or feel embarrassed or uncomfortable - often a person's very disability is the most precious gift we can encounter. Help us to connect on an understanding and encompassing level. May each person feeling pain or sadness, anger or resentment, frustration or limitations - know that they are of great worth, and may they know that they are understood and deeply



PEACE, HOPE AND JUSTICE  
PRAYER CANDLE  
The Nehemiah Project  
Helping people help themselves

## THOUGHTS TO JOURNEY WITH OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS:

- ☺ **WHERE IS THE PAIN?**
- ☺ **WHERE IS THE HOPE**
- ☺ **WHERE DO I FEATURE IN BOTH - THE PAIN AND THE HOPE?**
  
- ☺ How are we different? Why do you think we are different? Did God structure us to be different. Have we entrenched our differences by our social structures?
- ☺ How can I use this opportunity to enjoy other's humanity this weekend – to share life as God's people – how can we explore each other's gifts. Both of us start at a different point. So who are you and what do you have? Who am I and what do I have?

### Conversation Topics:

- ☺ Introduce yourself. Family. This is how we grew up, what we had. Story of our parents. Schooling. Education. Where we lived – what sort of house. What we do in a white culture. What I enjoyed about my life and upbringing. What I do now. My family. Where I live – what does my house look like. What it costs – expenses, bonds, education of children. What we pay to live. (Creates an attitude of 'entitlement') Share that wealth doesn't take away the struggles – we still have divorce, pain, guilt etc. **FIND COMMON GROUND!**
- ☺ Find out about them. How do you survive on the little that you have? What are your problems. Discuss relationships. Whole thing of rich and poor. Education. What happens at puberty – why? . Culture differences. Views on marriage? Sex before marriage? Single parenthood? Tell me about your kids? Who is God to you? Who is God to me? (Black people doubt that white people are good Christians.?) Discuss our walk with Jesus/their walk with Jesus - and spend time in prayer as we understand one another.

### THIS WEEK:

Try to spend time in prayer this week as you think about your response to the pilgrimage. Pray for your prayer partner and commit to earnestly praying for one another over the next few days. Remember that we go too as a team, upholding and supporting one another with love and respect.

### PRACTICALITIES:

- ☺ Gift for host – Perhaps a P H & J Candle and 4 mugs or anything practical for their home
- ☺ Travel **light!** Take only the bare essentials and reasonably smart clothes for Sunday.
- ☺ Money for taxi there and back (+-R20.00) plus R30 (just in case!)
- ☺ Bring walking shoes as we are going to walk far around Ivory Park.
- ☺ As many cameras as possible with lots of spool. – we want to make a booklet that will encourage others to come on the pilgrimage. Great to give your host a phot of you and them together.
- ☺ We will meet at the church at 9.00am on Saturday morning and be back at the church after the service and feedback in Ivory Park on Sunday – somewhere between 1.30 –3.00pm! (I will have a cell phone for you to contact family if you need to on our return)
- ☺ Meat for braai on Saturday lunch time.
- ☺ **PREPARE TO RECIPROCATE**

REMEMBER THAT WE DO NOT LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE, WE LEARN FROM REFLECTION UPON EXPERIENCE.

PLEASE JOURNAL YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS!

## Very little difference ...

“There is a joy in Ivory Park I never expected. People are very poor and some much poorer than others but there is a community spirit there which is a real example. The social structure is amazing – people visit all the time and are welcomed with open arms. There is absolutely no privacy because these are not houses they are shacks. They leak, they are tacked together but the people in them are special – they don't feel bitter or angry or hard-done-by they are happy and they want the same things in life as we do.

Food to eat, an education for their children and at the end of the day I found that there was very little difference between us. Except that I have a big house and far too many possessions. Not once was I asked how big my house was, but they did want to know about my children and my husband – the important things in life. We chatted a lot about God and how wonderful He is and I found such a real faith there.

I found my visit very special and enlightening and I know for sure that Elizabeth and I will continue to meet, talk, pray and share our lives in the best way we know how and I am so glad that I crossed the gulf for that brief time and really learnt what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ.”



We talked and talked.....  
and discovered.....  
each other.



## The Have's and the Have-nots ...

“I wonder about the “face-saving” reasons for the have's wanting to connect with the have-nots. But I guess God will deal with each of us on our own. On an emotional level I have never felt so accepted and cared for by a group of strangers before. Laughter is free-flowing and giving is not a problem. Even within the constraints of language barriers and age differences and I didn't even feel guilty about being white and privileged.”

I have been blessed to travel internationally, to see and experience other places and cultures, but never has anything had a more profound impact, than staying in Ivory Park. The township weekend profoundly altered my attitude, my spiritual walk and my whole direction of life. It is less about journeying a few kilometers over the hills, and more about a trip into the very core of my own soul.

Walking to my temporary home through the dust-filled streets amidst the tin and wood shacks, is more like a walk back into my fondest childhood memories, except none of these neighbourhood details or the people, ever featured in those early carefree experiences.

Gathering my pride, I pretend that I am not really fearful. It's not shacks and dust and dogs, but feelings, attitudes and long held views, and sadly they are more squalid than my physical surroundings.

During my night in the shack, as I reflected on poverty I spent much of my time mentally gathering 'things' rather than 'thoughts'. Material habits die hard.

The week that followed contained repeated reflection. Plunging back into my material world was a relief, the essence of the visit was eluding me. I'm starting to wonder whether maybe the poverty, squalor and lack of safety isn't perhaps more of an affliction I suffer from than they do.

## A JOURNEY ACROSS THE GULI

Some reflections from pilgrims who decided to 'take the journey' and came back transformed - filled with love, compassion and deeper understanding after their rich encounter with special friends from our sister church in Ivory Park.

As we leave I pray...  
Through Your eyes, Jesus....  
Please let me see

You knock my socks off  
You are so kind  
Can we sometimes be so blind?  
You have so little 'things'...yet...  
You've perfected giving to an art  
All of yourself...and more  
You act with love unbound  
Command respect, and hand back kind  
You leave me humble  
As through the shacks we stumble

The shack is small, the welcome warm  
Come, all cram in - I'll show you proud  
My life, my home - this is what I'm all about  
Share my faith, my joy  
Share my soul, share my pain  
It's just like yours - just the same.

A peaceful Sunday morning - no noise  
Only a cock that crows -  
One that walks past open door  
Neat, purposefully, a child at play  
Piece of wire plastic wheel,  
No care about the time of day

Overwhelmed by all I've seen and heard, I experience such release  
That deep within I know - this is how God intended us to be...

**TOTALLY FREE**

