

MISSION TO AND WITH THE POOR OF MANKWENG IN POLOKWANE:

A POST DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

By

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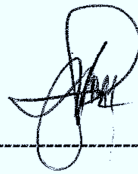
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JANUARY 2013

DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 35474718

I declare that **MISSION TO AND WITH THE POOR OF MANKWENG IN POLOKWANE: A POST DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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SUMMARY

The Church social missions have undergone different paradigm shifts whilst trying to respond to challenges faced by the poor in the society. It seems that at the beginning the Development paradigm was the one used by churches in designing their social mission strategies. According to this paradigm, help for the poor in the society was to come from the Western countries' development initiatives; in the process of implementing such strategies the local people's cultural aspirations were often neglected. On the other hand, the poor were not given a chance to take destiny into their own hands in order to define the solutions to their problems. However, this paradigm was later declared a failure and a need to move to the Post Development Paradigm was advocated.

This study argues that most churches in Mankweng still base their social missions strategies on the Development paradigm and therefore they fail to adequately respond to the challenges faced by the poor in that community. The study therefore looks at a possibility of developing a new social mission strategy in Mankweng that is based on the Post Development Paradigm. Though the title is about Mankweng, the focus of the study is on the Western part of the Township called Ntshitshane. Observations and interviews were conducted amongst the community members in that area. After a thorough analysis of the findings it was established that the poor in that context relies among other things on their cultural ethic of *botho* as a means of addressing their social challenges. This study concludes that the same cultural ethic of *botho* used by the poor there can be a viable point of departure in defining a social mission strategy within that context.

Key words

Social missions, Development Paradigm, Post Development, Transformation, *Botho*

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DECLARATION AS TO TERMINOLOGY

In the context of this study

- i. **The poor** people are those who lack basic human facilities such as nutritious food, clothing, housing, shelter and health services
- ii. **Social missions** are used to define the local church activities aimed at addressing the social needs of the community.
- iii. **Botho** is a Pedi word also known in Zulu as *Ubuntu* implying the aspect of humanness and collectivism as opposed to individualistic attitude.
- iv. **Respondent** denotes those who participated in this study through interviews and group interviews.
- v. **Post Development Paradigm** refers to an era when a call for replacing the Development discourse in the development of the poor societies was made

Abbreviations

AOG - Assemblies of God

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BTH - Bachelor of Theology

CAP - Community Assistance Programme

CWC - Christian Worship Centre

FABC - Federation of Asian Bishops Conference

FBO - Faith Based Organisations

HIV - Human Immune Deficiency Virus

LWC - Lutheran World Federation

NBTC - Nicholas Bhengu Theological College

NGO - None Governmental Organizations

UNISA - University of South Africa

UN -United Nations

PCD - People Centred Development

ZCC - Zion Christian Church

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation to the study

The church's social missions to the poor in South Africa are now more critical than ever. From the past centuries, churches based their social mission's strategies on the premise of the Development Paradigm (this paradigm will be addressed in details in section 1.14.5 of this chapter). Based on the assumptions of that paradigm, churches designed social mission strategies for the poor in the quest to alleviate poverty. The poor in the society were often treated as objects of missions who only waited for technological advancement in order to improve their lives (Bosch 1991:433-434). However, the Development Paradigm was later accused of inadequacies and was perceived to be promoting the dependency of the poor on the rich in the society (Haynes2008:19).

Moreover, there was also a concern that the Development Paradigm neglected the cultural aspirations of the poor when responding to social challenges (Long 1992:35). The Development Paradigm was eventually declared a failure and a call for its replacement was made (Bonino 1975:21; De Santa Ana 1977:3; Speckman 2001:8).

In a quest to replace the Development Paradigm, the notion of the Post Development Paradigm was eventually coined (I will discuss this paradigm in detail in section 1.14.8 of this chapter). The clarion call now for local churches is to consider the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm when developing their social mission strategies (Le Roux2011:25). This route will imply that churches will then embark on social missions amidst the poor by discovering together with them social missions strategies relevant in the poor's particular context

(www.lutheranworld.org/iwf/index.php¹).

The Post Development Paradigm oriented social mission strategy will also mean that churches will also have to take cognisance of cultural ethics of the poor as a point of departure in the transformation of their lives in the society. Such transformation does not place the church in a position of being above the poor and therefore decide what is best for them - it rather calls for the mutual encounter between the church and the community. This encounter is best defined by Kritzinger (2011:52) as *transformative encounters*. It positions the mission of the church as a praxis that focuses on concrete transformation. The transformative encounters take place among people being called, sent, healed and empowered and happening between the living God and the entire human race.

I have in many instances, observed local churches engaging in these transformative encounters. For a period of ten years that I served as a pastor in a semi-rural community of *Mankweng*, (the background information of this area will follow in section 1.2 of this chapter). I have observed that most local churches there have programmes and projects aimed at transforming the lives of the poor. However, it seems that those local churches relied on the assumptions of the Development Paradigm when developing their social mission strategies. My stance here is that those strategies cannot be immune from the criticisms levelled against the Development Paradigm. This research is therefore geared towards charting a contour for a new social mission strategy amidst the poor in Mankweng.

This new social mission strategy will be based on the premise of the Post Development Paradigm. However, in the process of developing the envisioned new social mission strategy, I will not attempt to cover all the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm. For the purposes of this study, I will only focus on the assumption that the poor should be allowed to take destiny into their hands in the

¹The Lutheran World Federation [LWF] consultation on poverty and the missions in Africa held in September 2006 in Arusha, Tanzania urged churches to engage the poor in the struggle against poverty.

transformation of their lives. From this perspective, the poor in the society must be free to use their own cultural ethics in the transformative encounter. Again, I will not attempt to address all the social missions' strategies of all the local churches in Mankweng. As a pastor in a particular Pentecostal church, I will only use the social mission strategy of my local church as a point of departure in the quest to develop a new social mission strategy in Mankweng. I will now turn to the background setting of the Mankweng area in order to provide a clear picture of the geographical area covered in this research.

1.2 The background of the Mankweng area

Mankweng is situated 30 kilometres east of Polokwane - the capital city of Limpopo Province of South Africa. It is along the R72 road to Tzaneen not far from the renowned Zion Christian Church (ZCC)² headquarters known as ZionCity, Moria. Mankweng is also known as "Turf" named after the Turf-loop farm where the University of Limpopo is built. It was this University that hosted the 2007 African National Congress (ANC) conference commonly known as the *Polokwane conference*³. This conference addressed amongst other things, issues of rural development and challenges facing the poor people in the rural South African villages.

Mankweng consists of a number of sections which include the affluent Unit A, Unit B, Unit C, Unit D and Toronto. There are, however, some less developed sections in Mankweng such as Unit F, Mamontintane, Sekgopye and Ntshitshane situated on the outskirts of that township. Picture 1 below shows some well-developed sections of Mankweng Township as well as the less developed Ntshitshane section in the Western part of the township.

²For further information concerning the ZCC see Muller, R. (2011) African pilgrimage ritual travel in South Africa's Christianity of Zion.

³For the details of the conference and issues addressed during that conference can go to: www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/history/cof/coference52



Picture1: The view of Mankweng adapted from McCusker&Ramudzuli 2007

In contrast to the less developed sections of Mankweng, the affluent sections boast of many development achievements. Not far from the University of Limpopo, there is a beautiful shopping complex called Tintis. On the South Western part of the complex there is the Mankweng Provincial Hospital and Limpopo College of Nursing. Moving further south there is a Magistrate complex, which houses a number of departmental offices including Home Affairs, Social and Community Development. All these improvements in Mankweng have made a positive contribution in the lives of the community members. However, the common trend of poverty that traps other communities in Limpopo Province is also rife in this area. Gyekye & Akinboade (2003) maintain that Limpopo Province is one of the poorest regions in South Africa, and that poverty is rife in these rural areas as compared to their urban counterparts. Some politicians also lamented the persistent dire poverty in the rural Limpopo villages (Shilowa 2010:25).

1.3 Why is this study theological?

Poverty issues prevalent in societies can be investigated through various scientific disciplines other than Theology. Disciplines such as Developmental Studies, Sociology, Political Science and other social sciences can, through analysis, contribute to legitimately address those pertinent issues. However, theological perspectives have to be prominent in any dealings with human beings, especially in the transformative encounter between churches and the society. Theological

perspectives are critical here in that they bring keymoral and developmental issues to the light of the Christian faith and the Bible. Therefore, spirituality, ethics and culture becomes the critical dimensions of the transformative encounters. This perspective here takes theology serious based on the notion that addressing social problems without a theological dimension becomes nothing more than a humanitarian act (Speckman 2001:5).

1.4 Why Missiology?

In the field of theology, this study falls under the discipline of Missiology. The preference for Missiology here is based on the study's emphasis on the transformative encounters between the local churches and the poor in Mankweng. This transformation comes through the redemptive power of the Gospel and the action of faith that refuses to accept reality as it is and aims at changing it (Bosch 1991: xv). This emphasis on the transformative encounters therefore rightfully places this study under the field of Missiology (Le Roux 2011:86). As a student studying Missiology at the University of South Africa (UNISA), I was also influenced to carry on with this transformative emphasis in research, after completing the five Missiology modules offered at the honours level.

The honours level comprises of five streams. The first is called the *Mission Praxis*, which addresses the importance of the reciprocal interaction between action and reflection through the cycle of mission praxis (this cycle will be addressed in detail in section 1.8.1 of this study) The second one is called the *Intercultural communication of the Gospel*, which emphasized the implementation of communication process and the presentation of the Gospel in an intercultural setting. The third stream is called *Theology of interreligious encounter in Africa*, which looks at the dynamics of relationships between different religious groups in Africa. The fourth stream is called the *Challenge of liberation theologies to mission*. This stream focuses on contextual theologies and how they affect the missions of the church. Then the final stream is called *Theologies of mission* - here the focus is on the theological and missionary themes operating in different contexts at different times.

Theologies of mission have been the preferred stream in conducting this study. The reason for its preference was that it is flexible and provides reflections on a theoretical (theological) basis for developing a new social mission strategy. As a researcher using this stream, I was at liberty to conduct the study within the Mankweng area and in the process to discern together with that community, viable social mission strategies that can be relevant within that context.

1.5 The statement of the problem

I have already mentioned in section 1.1 of this chapter my participation and observations of the situation in Mankweng. The observations revealed that most local churches still base their social mission strategies on the assumptions of the Development Paradigm. The problem for those churches is that the Development Paradigm oriented social missions are not adequately responding to the needs of the poor in that community. Now churches are challenged to come up with new social mission strategies which respond to the challenges brought by the inadequacies found in the Development Paradigm. Those inadequacies are clearly pointed out in what became known as Post Development Paradigm. There is therefore a need for a paradigm shift as Bosch (1991:181) argues:

We should, rather with creative but responsible freedom, prolong the logic of the ministry of Jesus and the early church in an imaginative and creative way to our own time and context.

In order for the social missions in Mankweng to adhere to the demands of the Post Development Paradigm, churches will have to allow amongst others, the poor to be the subjects of their own social missions. This can happen if the poor in the community are allowed to use their own cultural ethics in defining the contents of the transformative encounters.

1.6 The research question

Having defined the problem faced by the churches in Mankweng in the previous section as the need for developing new social mission strategies based on the Post Development paradigm, the following questions emerged: Is it possible to integrate

the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm with a church social mission, and that mission still remain true to the aspirations of Christianity? Also, if the Post Development Paradigm assumptions can be used in the development of a social mission strategy, what will be the best way of doing that? These two questions have therefore led to the following research question which will be the main focus of this study:

How can the local churches in Mankweng use the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm in developing their new social mission strategies?

1.7 The structure of the study

In order to conduct this study in a systematic and coherent manner, I used the structure below:

1.7.1 The rational of the study

Christians wrestle within their contexts with questions of what their faith and social missions mean to them. They are often confronted with issues that cry out for responses that are relevant to their times, yet still in harmony with the essence of Christianity (Bosch 1991:182-188). Answers emerging as Christians try to respond to these new challenges can produce new social mission strategies.

This study is significant in that it seeks to respond to the new challenges brought to church social missions by the inadequacies identified in strategies based on the Development Paradigm. Those challenges affect the definition and development of social missions within local communities, and demand for relevant answers from the church thereof. This study can eventually contribute in pointing in a direction for churches which seek to respond to the challenges brought by this new paradigm.

1.7.2 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to help the local churches in Mankweng to develop new social mission strategies. Such strategies can be a response to the challenges brought to social missions by the Post Development Paradigm. Through this research, the church can also discover the presence of God in the cultural ethics of the poor living

in the Mankweng community and consequently be able to develop new social mission strategies.

1.7.3 The objective of the study

I have used, in this study, the *cycle of mission praxis* (I will discuss this cycle in detail in section 1.8.1 of this chapter) as a Missiological tool to examine the lived experiences of the poor in Mankweng. These experiences helped in realising the objective of this study, which is to develop together with the poor in Mankweng, a new social mission strategy. Such strategy can serve as a model for other local churches in Mankweng and elsewhere.

1.7.4 The relevance of the study

The timing of this study is very crucial in the social mission landscape of churches in South Africa today. From my preliminary observations, most churches seem to be clinging to social mission strategies based on the Development Paradigm and therefore keep on getting the same outcome, i.e. the poor remain the object of social missions. On the other hand, it seems that the challenges and insights brought by the Post Development Paradigm to the church's social missions are not yet adequately responded to. This study can serve as one response to some of the challenges by bringing in a Missiological point of view to the present Post Development discourses (Rahnema&Bawtree 1997).

Again, other scholars elsewhere have already deliberated on the subject regarding church social missions⁴. However, it seems that the issues raised by the Post Development Paradigm have not yet been fully exhausted. This study will therefore attempt to address some of these issues and consequently contribute towards finding relevant social missions in particular local communities. There is a need in the twenty-first century for church social missions that will transcend the present Development Paradigm-based social missions (Speckman 2001:1). This study can also contribute in further exposing the inadequacies of the Development Paradigm and

⁴ For more details on those discussions see www.tearfund.org/en/resources

also show how the Post Development Paradigm can contribute to the present debate by addressing some of those inadequacies.

1.8 Research methodology and design

Two main approaches to the research practice are often used by researchers as they embark on research projects. Quantitative studies on the one hand, emphasize the measurement of the casual relationship between variables, not processes (Denzin& Lincoln 2000:13). It can also be used to measure concepts in the form of questionnaires, surveys and then process the results statistically (Pieterse 2004:15). On the other hand, the qualitative approach implies any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin1998:11). The latter will be the preferred approach in conducting the investigation proposed in this study. Qualitative also implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on the processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount or frequency. It also stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin& Lincoln 2000:8).

The qualitative methodology is also capable of correcting some of the flaws levelled against the quantitative methodology. Quantitative research is sometimes accused of stripping the context, whereas on the other side, qualitative research redresses that imbalance by providing contextual information. It can also provide rich insight into human behaviour and helps to avoid the ambiguities produced by quantitative methodology's inapplicability of its generalised data to individual cases (Denzin& Lincoln 1994:106-107).

The preference for the qualitative methodology here was motivated by the relevance of its characteristics which are applicable in the context of this study. These characteristics include that qualitative methodology is systematically and rigorously conducted, it is accountable for its quality and claims, and it is strategic and conducted in a moral practice (Mason 1996: 7-8). Therefore, the findings of this study cannot claim to be above critique. The findings however provide the reasons for the

conclusions made and justify the quality of their claims. I will however in this study use the qualitative methodology in conjunction with the cycle of mission praxis. I combined these methodologies here in order to provide a ground for the applicability of the research findings within the field of Missiology. In the next section will therefore discuss the cycle of mission praxis.

1.8.1 The cycle of mission praxis

I have already indicated in section 1.7.3 that I will use the cycle of mission praxis as Missiological tool, which however as stated in section 1.8 will be used in concurrence with the qualitative methodology. From chapter two going down to chapter five of this study, each chapter will be based on one element or moments of the cycle. The cycle of mission praxis represents the close relationships between four mediations of experiences (Karecki 1999:14). The mediations of insertion, context analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning form the cycle. However in this study I modified the aspect of pastoral planning and replaced it with the term Missionary planning. The reason for this modification was as the result of the objective of this study mentioned in section 1.7.3, as the quest for developing a new social mission strategy.

Distinction is further made between academic and pastoral approaches. The former studies a particular social situation in a detached, fairly abstract manner, dissecting its elements for the purpose of understanding. On the other hand, the pastoral approach looks at reality from an involved, historically committed stance, discerning the situation for the purpose of action (Holland &Henriot 1983:7). I preferred to use the pastoral approach in this study because it enables researchers to participate in the experiences of the poor in the community, even though they also come as outsiders. The pastoral approach should however not be confused with the moment of pastoral planning which was mentioned above. The cycle of mission praxis, which I will explain below, builds on the pastoral approach and eventually leads to the stage of missionary planning for action.

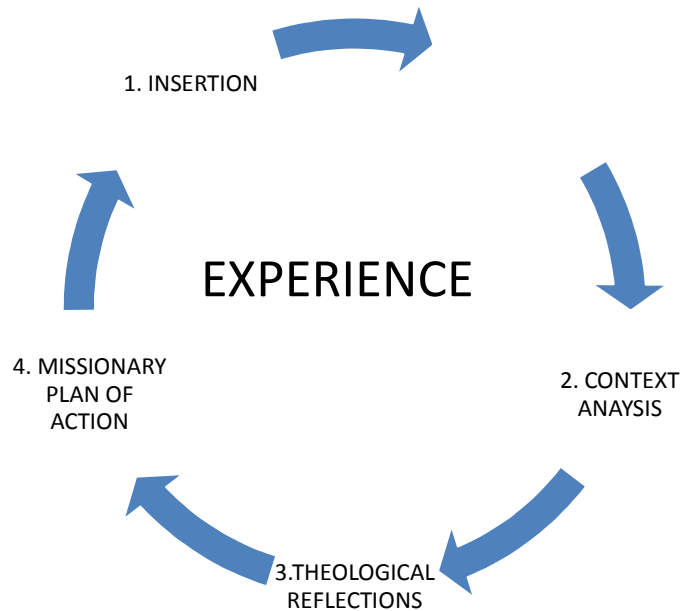


Figure 1: The cycle of mission praxis adapted from (Holland &Henriot 1980)

1.8.1.1 Insertion

The first moment in this cycle is called insertion. It locates the geography of missionary responses in the lived experiences of the poor in rural communities. Insertion allows researchers to relate their personal stories in relation to the stories of the poor they come in contact with and be in a position to detect the real challenges facing those communities.

1.8.1.2 Context analysis

The second moment is called context analysis. It helps in examining causes, probing consequence, delineating linkages and identifying actors. During this phase I will scrutinise the local church's social missions to the poor within the context of Mankweng.

1.8.1.3 Theological reflection

The third moment of the circle is known as the theological reflection. This process can be carried out through a number of different sources. The Christian tradition has, however acknowledged Scripture, reason, tradition and experience as legitimate

sources of theology. It is not my aim in this study to discuss in details all the four sources of theology. During the theological reflection, I will focus mainly on Scripture because of my rootedness in the Pentecostal tradition where the authority of scripture is held with high esteem. In doing so, I will however not neglect the other sources - on the contrary, I will only refer to them as a way of supporting Scripture.

The term *Scripture* here refers to a body of texts which are recognised as authoritative for Christian thinking, saying and doing. It bears witness to the revelatory events on which the Christian faith is based. The Bible has been accepted by the Christian church as an authentic Scripture bearing witness to the revelation of God (Van Niekerk&Veldsman 2005:124). For the purposes of theological reflections in this study, I used some verses from the Bible as a theological foundation supporting the research findings.

1.8.1.4 Missionary plan of action

The final moment is called the missionary plan of action. The term *missionary planning* is used here because the final outcome of this study is to develop a new social mission strategy. Such a strategy can become a transformative encounter between the local churches and the community. The missionary planning also challenges the local churches in Mankweng to engage in actions that will transform the living conditions of the poor in that society whilst considering their cultural ethics as a point of departure (Holland &Henriot 1983:8-9).

1.9 Data collection techniques

I used observations, interviews, group interviews and documentation as tools for data collection in this research project. The aim of using these techniques was to gain the participant's insight on the experiences of the poor in that community. I further used these techniques to examine the cultural ethics used by the poor in order to discover the ones which is commonly used by the poor in the fight against poverty in that community.

The interviews were conducted in April and May 2010 at Ntshitshane section. I used a recorder and field notes to record the results thereof. The focus groups were conducted amongst the members of the CWC and also those coming from other local churches in Mankweng. Community members from different ethnic groups, different economic classes and gender were also interviewed. I also conducted group interviews at the CWC church hall during the month of June 2010. Members from the Ntshitshane community also participated in those group interviews.

1.9.1 Observations

Observations entailed my immersion as a researcher into a research setting. The aim of the immersion was to experience and watch at first hand, a range of dimensions in and of that setting (Mason2002:84). Such dimensions included social actions, behaviour, interactions, relationships, events, emotions and practices which are common in Mankweng. I therefore regularly visited my research setting in order to observe the community's daily interactions and practices.

Observations provided insight regarding the poor people's cultural ethics in Mankweng. The same cultural ethics influenced the development of the envisioned social mission strategy in that area. Since observation has to be purposeful, systematic and selective, I therefore sometimes spent days in that community with the aim of observing the community's conduct and their use of cultural ethics when addressing poverty challenges.

1.9.2 Interviews

I used the qualitative interviewing method as another data collection technique. These forms of interview are an in-depth, semi structured or loosely structured. The interviews here may take place face-to-face, over the telephone or the internet (Mason 1996:60). The flexibility of this kind of interviews made it easy for me to interview many people within a short space of time. These interviews also allowed the participant to actively engage in the process.

Qualitative interviews are interactional exchange forms of dialogue and may be relatively informal in style. They are also thematic, topic centred, biographical and narrative. Qualitative interviewing also operates from a perspective that knowledge is situated and contextual. The job of the interviewer is to ensure that the relevant contexts are brought into focus so that a situated knowledge can be produced (Mason 2002:62).

1.9.3 Group interviews

During the group interviews, I brought together different groups from the community within my study population. We then discussed issues relating to the social missions of the churches to the poor people within their society. Members of the group were encouraged to present their views and experiences in a free flowing, open-ended discussions as suggested by (Taylor&Bogdan 1984:111)

1.9.4 Documentation

Newspapers, articles, magazines, books, periodicals, community files and journals have been classified as documentation by (Marshall & Rossman 1995:85). Some of the documents consulted substantiated the other techniques used in this study. Their use in this research was to compare and evaluate the data generated from other sources such as interviews reports and observation notes.

1.10 Data analysis

I used Miles & Houberman to analyse all the data collected through documentation, observation and interviews. This approach maintains that analysis consists of three co-current flows of activity namely: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing or verification (Miles&Houberman 1994:10).

1.10.1 Data reduction

This activity entails selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcriptions. It is a form of analysis that sharpens sorts, focuses, discards, and organises data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified. Qualitative data can be reduced and

transformed in many ways such as selection, summarising or paraphrasing. During this stage all information gained from the participants and different sources were sifted in order to choose the relevant and discard the insignificantas (Miles &Houberman1994:10-11) suggested.

1.10.2 Data display

This second major flow of data analysis is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action. Here, data displays can be in a form of newspapers, computer screens, factory analysis and printouts. Examining displays helped me to understand the context of Mankweng as I conducted the research. At the end, I was able to organise the data into immediately accessible information (:11)

1.10.3 Conclusion drawing and verification

This is the third stream of data analysis activity,from the start when collecting data, meanings were attached to the context. I noted regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions. I had to hold those conclusions lightly maintaining openness and scepticism. But the conclusions were still there, inchoate and vague at first, then increasingly explicit and grounded. Final conclusions did not appear until data collection was over. These depended on the size of the corpus of field notes, the coding, storage, and retrieval methods used, but they often were prefigured from the beginning, even when my claims had to proceed inductively. The meanings emerging from the data were tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness and their validity (:11-12). The comparison and validation of data enabled me to reach authentic conclusions and not just mere generalisations.

For the purposes of this study, I applied all the three streams concurrently as addressed above. This choice was influenced by the simplicity of the design which if followed correctly can be easily implemented and can produce the desired results. Taking this route led to a proper sifting of data and the arrival into validations and conclusions.

1.11 Selection of cases

Kumar (2005:165) maintains that qualitative research does not make an attempt to either quantify or determine the extent of the diversity of their enquiry. In order to explore the diversity of this study, I continued with investigations until I reached a saturation point. This point was a subjective judgment which I had to make as a researcher. Cases from Community members, in particular those coming from poor family backgrounds within the Ntshitshane section of Mankweng were selected.

1.11.1 Study population

The study population consisted of the poor community members in Ntshitshane. The term “the poor” in this study is used as defined by Van Schalkwyk (1996:54) as those who are deprived of satisfaction or realization of their fundamental needs (detailed discussion on this term will follow in section 1.14.3 of this chapter).

1.11.2 Demarcation of the scope

Mankweng has a number of sections as mentioned earlier in the introduction. I, however, concentrated on the experiences of the poor residing on the Ntshitshane section. On the other hand, with regard to the social missions’ strategies to the poor in Mankweng, I focused on the community assistance programme (CAP) of the Christian Worship Centre (this programme will be addressed in detail in the relevant sections of chapter 2).

1.12 Ethical considerations

During the research process, I adhered to Dreyer’s (2004:5-8) ethical principles in order to guard against unethical behaviour. He points out the following guidelines which I committed myself to observe as I engaged with the participants in this study:

- Firstly, I ensured that all the participants during the process of this study took part voluntarily. Their dignity and privacy were always respected throughout the whole process of the study.
- I also ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the informants and participants.

- In addition to the above, I always asked for permission when collecting data from participants in their homes.
- Finally, I acknowledged all sources directly and indirectly used in this study.

1.13 Theoretical framework: The contextual hermeneutical theory

This theory stems from the two important concepts, the Latin *contextere*⁵ (context) and the Greek verb *hermeneō*⁶, (interpret'). Contextualisation is used here to refer to the process of wrestling with God's Word in such a way that the power of the incarnation, which is divine form of contextualization, is realized. Therefore, the context, people's experiences and divine activity play an important role in this process (Pobee&Bonino1990:985; Speckman 2001:69). In order to justify the use of the Post Development Paradigm in this study, contextualisation becomes a relevant theoretical framework. Through contextualisation I was able to use the experiences of the poor inNtshitshane to develop a new social mission strategy.

This research also took hermeneutics seriously. According to Conn (1990:54), theology must always ask what the Scripture says. But it always asks in terms of the questions raised by cultures. In order to find answers to cultural questions raised by local communities, the hermeneutical process is vital. Van der Ven (1994:37) insists that the hermeneutic approach establishes the framework within which the empirical research has to be conducted. He further highlights the following five principles which were also critical in this study:

- Firstly, researchers meet their topic of study from their own prejudices. The process of becoming aware of one's own prejudices does not take place before one meets one's research topic. This confrontation between one's own

⁵ Contextualization is a derivative of the Latin word, *contextus*, which means "weaving together". Its cognate, "contextual" from *contextere* means "to weave together". The word is usually used in relation to a particular setting in history (Speckman, 2001:69).

⁶ According to the New Dictionary of Theology (Ferguson, Wright & Packer, 1988:293) hermeneutics may be defined as the theory of interpretation. It concerns not only interpretation of texts, but the interpretation and understanding of any act of communication, whether written or oral, verbal or non-verbal.

prejudices and the “otherness” of the human actions or data under investigation produces the real understanding of hermeneutics.

- Secondly, researchers participate in the life world of their fellow human beings, whose praxis they are studying. Their results influence and are influenced by the particular context they are studying.
- The history of the texts or persons under study has to be carefully investigated. This has to be done from the perspective that history influences today’s life of both the researcher and those who are being researched.
- Researchers have to take into account the context of life, in which the person or persons under study live. This includes ecological, economic, political, social and cultural factors of that context under investigation.
- Then the thoughts, feelings and praxis of subjects under investigation have to be explored and analysed from an ideological- critical point of view (:37).

This theory is also based on the principle termed *pro bono pro publica principle*⁷. This term denotes that the study under investigation must be of value to the public, while at the same time, its academic integrity is not compromised. In order to achieve such value, the following three interlocutors were taken seriously while conducting this research: the academy, the society and the church (Speckman 2001:63). I will now turn to the first interlocutor (the academy) through literature review. The analysis of society will be addressed in section 2.3 and 2.5 of chapter 2 and the elements regarding the church will be covered by the theological reflections in chapter 4.

1.14 Literature review

The statement of the problem in section 1.5 of this chapter has clearly defined the critical matter under investigation in this study. I found it logical to conduct a literature review in order to gain more insight and in-depth understanding of the nature and extent of the problem from a scientific and scholarly point of view. My aim when doing literature review was to establish a theoretical base in which I could

⁷*Pro bono pro publica principle*’s author is anonymous (Speckman, 2001:62). This key principle is addressed in an HSRC (1995) invitation leaflet to a conference on contextualisation. The Latin phrase means to the “good or well-being of the public” (:80)

ground the findings of my investigation. The review of literature also helped me to join other scholars such as (Bak 2004:17) in the discourse about the social missions to the poor in the society.

The following issues emerged in the process of the literature review: Mission and missions, missions and the participation of the poor, the poor, challenges facing the poor in rural communities, the Development Paradigm shift, African perceptions on development, development as modernisation, development as dependency, development as liberation, development as reconstruction, the people centred development, the challenge for a new paradigm, the Post Development Paradigm, the relevance of the Post Development Paradigm to mission and transformation based on the Post Development Paradigm. I will now, in the next section, turn to each of those issues.

1.14.1 Mission and Missions

The concept of mission and missions has two different but complimentary meanings. Distinction is made between the term mission singular, which refers to "*Mission Dei*" (God's mission) and missions (plural), the *missiones ecclesiae* (the mission ventures of the churches as they participate in the mission of God in the society) (Bosch 1991:10). This distinction here is critical because it provides clarity on the use of the term social missions in this research. The social missions of the church amidst the poor in this study refer to the *missiones ecclesiae* of the local churches in Mankweng not "*Missio Dei*." However, it should be borne in mind that the *missiones ecclesiae* are activities which are propelled by the "*Missio Dei*". It can therefore be said that the two are not in contrast rather; the former is a response to the latter. It should also be noted that every aspect of the church witnesses to the gospel and forms part of the "*Missio Dei*" (Le Roux 2011:105).

Throughout the process of this study, the terms missions and social missions were used interchangeably. These terms were used hereto make it clear that the intended new mission strategy envisioned in this study seeks to address a specific social problem in Mankweng i.e. the challenges faced by the poor in that community.

1.14.2 Missions and the participation of the poor

Missions are participatory in nature and also foster assimilation of the Good News of Jesus from a point of departure in the matrices of the various cultures of the dominated and the poor (Boff1991: xiv). The assimilation of the Good News here means that the local community will be able to receive the Gospel message through the churches' preaching of the Good News and their practical contribution through social missions.

The participatory aspect of missions was also recognised by (Gibellin 1986:31) and O'Brien 1992:136). This then calls for local churches to venture into co-operative programmes with the poor in the society, rather than designing programmes for them. I concur with this scholar; however, the proposed missions go further than a mere calling for the participation of the poor. It further demands that the poor should decide for themselves the content of change according to their own cultural ethics. The poor should take their destiny into their own hands and decide what the solutions for their challenges are.

Mattey (1980: xii) maintains that participation in God's mission in the world should be understood primarily as joining the poor in their struggles for liberation, self-determination and self-reliance. The church, through missions, should overcome limits, break walls of boundaries and go out to the periphery and live with the poor in their social milieu. The church can join the poor as they grapple with their plight, not the other way round (: xiv). Participating and joining the poor forms the important part of understanding Christian missions proposed in this study. It is therefore important that I provide clarity on what I mean by the term "the poor".

1.14.3 The poor

The notion of "the poor" has been discussed in different fields including the academic, business and government sectors. Many scholars have also tried to show their understanding of the concept and others went further in defining ways in which the phenomenon can be addressed in the society. According to Moss (2011:171-172) those who are interested in defining solutions for the poor should first be in a position of defining and measuring poverty. Moss went further to defined

poverty as the human deprivation manifested in the absence of adequate food, poor health, and lack of education (:172). This definition paints a picture which allows a better description of what the poor are encountering in the society. I will now turn to other definitions of this concept.

Rist (2001:230-231) argues that the concepts of poverty and the poor are a social construct, therefore definitions varies according to whoever formulates them. He further highlighted the following examples which can help in the quest of understanding the poor in the society: In Africa, it is not those who are lacking in material goods who are seen as “the poor”, but those who have nobody to turn in the time of crisis. On the contrary, the Westerners definition of the “the poor” is based on economic terms and one’s level of education. Having addressed the angel in which these scholars viewed the concept of “the poor”, I will now turn my focus to other angels in order to shed more light to the discussion of the concept.

In their study Belshaw, Calderisi&Sugden (2001:132) presented a diverse concept of poverty which can help in further defining the concept of “the poor”. They mentioned relative poverty which classes the poor as those who have fewer resources than most others in the society. Again, there is what they termed food poverty; this one makes those who don’t have food to be regarded as “the poor”, whereas those who don’t have income they classified them under the income poverty. They further referred to what they called absolute poverty where by “the poor” are viewed as those who lack the basic human necessities such as nutritious food, clothing, housing, shelter and health services. Finally they raised the issue of vulnerability which renders those who were not poor before to be classified as “the poor” due to pandemics such as HIV/AIDS. It is however not only these three scholars who clarified the concept of the poor. Others also tried to define the concept from an Evangelical Pentecostal perspective. Looking at the concept from different angles will help in bringing in a clear understanding of the term. I will now look at one example of those who looked at the concept of “the poor” from that perspective.

Stott (1990) classified the concept of the poor from the Pentecostal view under the following three categories: the indigent poor, the oppressed poor and the humble poor. He maintained that those that are indigent are those who are economically deprived; they may lack food, clothing or shelter. The oppressed poor are those who are socially or politically oppressed. And finally, the humble poor are those who are spiritually hungry for God (:234-251). Whilst acknowledging the importance of addressing oppression and spiritual poverty, I focused in this study on the indigent poor in Mankweng. The indigent poor and absolute poverty guided the use of the concept of the poor in this study. I will now turn to the challenges that face the poor in rural communities.

1.14.4 Challenges facing the poor in rural communities

According to the study conducted by Pieterse (2004:1-121) South Africa is divided into rural and urban areas. The urbanites have access to basic service delivery whereas those in rural areas live in dire poverty (:33). Among the challenges facing the poor he highlighted diseases caused by bad circumstances, lack of proper housing, illiteracy, helplessness, vulnerability and powerlessness as common in rural villages (:31-44)

On the other hand, Maluleke (1995:4) insists that the crisis facing the poor in rural communities also include a great need for self-discovery. Addressing the aspect of self-discovery will eventually intensify the community's cultural values and belief systems. It is my view that the poor in Mankweng have been denied the opportunity for self-discovery throughout the whole era of the Development Paradigm based social missions. Therefore this study carries the assumption that through missions based on the Post Development Paradigm this gap can be bridged.

In another study, Bruwer (1994:5-13) maintained that the poor in rural areas suffer from overcrowding, struggle for resources, hunger and endemic sickness. These sicknesses go hand in hand with bad living conditions, such as lack of shelter, lack of clean drinking water and lack of proper sanitation in their communities. In addressing the challenges facing the poor in rural communities these studies

however delve on the use of cultural ethics of the poor in social mission strategies. Therefore this research can make additions to the observations made by those scholars and also bring in the cultural ethics as a way of addressing poverty. It can also guide the process of shifting from the Development Paradigm towards the Post Development Paradigm based social mission.

1.14.5 The Development paradigm shift

The Development Paradigm entailed different theories which attempted to define the process of poor community's transformation and poverty alleviation. The following are some of those theories of development and the subsequent paradigm shifts: African perspective on development, a theology of development, development as modernization, development as dependency, development as liberation, development as reconstruction and the People centred development. I will now look at each of those development paradigm shifts; however I will not discuss them here according to their chronological order. I will only focus on their contribution in this study.

1.14.5.1 African perspective on development

According to Speckman (2001:92) African view of development is localized, meaning that all the values that constitute the larger framework become effective in various ways in local communities. It lies in a local community to bring out the potential of its members which in turn can move that community towards the realization of the destiny for all. The localized development approach is in line with the proposed new social missions strategy proposed in this study; however the proposed study moves further and seek to scrutinize the African perspective on development through the spectacles of Christian faith and practice.

1.14.5.2 Development as modernization

In their study, White & Tiongco (1997) maintained that the modernization view of development sees traditional societies moving forward towards 'modernity'. They are all travelling along a single path called progress, but others are further behind

while others are well in advance (:45). They further pointed out the obstacles of development as lack of capital, skills, technology and modern political institutions. Development here assumes that the poor are backward, what they need is technological advancement of the West in order to improve their situation (Sbert 1992:194).

1.14.5.3 Development as dependency

Levi (1989) sees development as a dependency syndrome. He argues that there is great need of shifting from such understanding because it emphasizes economic progress more than the social wellbeing of the people (:30). The current missions of the church in Mankweng seem to encourage the dependency of the poor on the rich. The giving of alms as part of missions in Mankweng also carries the connotations of development as dependency as Speckman(2007: 17) also observed.

1.14.5.4 Development as liberation

Bosch (1991:432-447) however called for a move from the Development Paradigm into a liberation era. His argument stemmed from the premise that since the West has failed to uproot poverty through technological advancement, a call should now be made to the people in the South to take destiny into their own hands and free themselves through revolution (:434-435). Based on such arguments liberation theologies challenged oppressive structures in both the church and society. Liberation was therefore seen by most scholars as a point of departure in addressing the social problems facing the poor in the society. However the issues around the liberation of cultures of those living in the periphery were not adequately addressed by Bosch in this study. The present study can therefore address the flaws of the Liberation Paradigm by adding the aspects of cultural ethics as a point of departure in social mission strategies.

Another study by Sawyer (1992) challenged the Development Paradigm and claimed that liberation has to be a point of departure in addressing poverty and oppression (:96). Boff&Boff (1986) also emphasized liberation on the quest to prove that the poor are made poor by others, such as the oppressive structures in the society (:4). The

move from development to liberation helped the church to raise a prophetic voice against oppression including apartheid in South Africa. However, in the post-apartheid dispensation, there is a great need to move forward into a new paradigm. The proposed study can provide a relevant point of departure towards that move into a new paradigm.

1.14.5.5 Development as reconstruction

Mugambi (1995) believed that reconstruction was a relevant point of departure in the transformation of the poor societies. He insisted that there is a great need to shift from the liberation paradigm to post exile imagery, with reconstruction as the resultant theological axiom (:5). It is my view that reconstruction cannot fully take place if cultural ethics of the poor are still undermined by churches when developing social mission strategies. There is therefore a need for responding to the integration of cultural ethics in the transformative encounter, the new social mission strategy can also contribute in that venture.

1.14.5.6 The People Centred Development (PCD)

Korten (1990:67) defines the PCD as a process by which members of the society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources. Here, communities seek to produce sustainable solutions to their problems. They also seek improvements in the quality of their lives; such improvements should be consistent with their own aspirations. The proposed study borrowed from PCD some ideologies such as enabling members of the society to increase their personal capacities in addressing their own needs. The distinction however, is that the Post Development Paradigm does not argue for an alternative development as PCD does. It however takes alternative to development as a point of departure in the transformation of the lives of the poor (Mathews 2004:376-377)

On the other hand, Speckman (2007) believed that the PCD was a relevant point of departure in addressing the problems facing the poor in the society. His understanding of PCD was based on Pope John VI definition of development as a complete and integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every human being (:27).

Such an understanding is genuine and acceptable, however the mission proposed in this study calls for the poor to promote their own good and not wait for an outsider to assist them.

1.14.6 A theology of development

Vaughan (1972) insists that the church has to review its theological assumptions which encouraged the Development paradigm and its negative impact on the members of the society (:10). He further insisted that a new theology of development is required so that the church's participation in the promotion of change can be directed by theological guidelines. These guidelines should be thoroughly examined in the light of what is happening in the community (:10-11). This study can respond to such a theology of development whilst bringing in the Post Development perspective.

The need for a theology of development has also been pointed out by Van Schalkwyk (1996:40-59). She argued that church members and their leaders want to be practically involved in development projects, but they lack a developmental and theological basis for their involvement. She therefore called for the formulation of a theology of development (:41). Whilst acknowledging the importance of a theology of development the proposed study moves further and try to respond to thequest for a social mission that is based on the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm but remain true to theology.

1.14.7 A challenge for a new paradigm

After the Second World War, church missions were influenced by the assumptions of the Development Paradigm, but later it was proved that the paradigm had its own flaws (Bosch1991:434). ThePostDevelopment Paradigm challenges the development agents to free the poor people in the society so that they can decide for themselves what strategies are viable in their context. It was argued however that those strategies should move from the poor people's cultural ethics. Therefore thePost Development Paradigm in this study seeks to articulate a social mission strategy whichallows the poor in Mankweng to take their destiny into their own hands.

The poor in Ntshishane should define the solutions to poverty based on their own culturally aspirations as Rahnema (1992:158-172) argued. Communities here should be allowed to lead in the development of social mission strategies using their own terms to articulate from their own experiences and perspectives the content of change (Swart 2006:226). The Post Development Paradigm also made it clear that the poor do not refuse change or improvement of their living conditions. However, the change which they needed was the one which was going to give them the freedom to change the rules and content of change. They should bring change according to their own culturally defined ethics and aspirations (Rahnema 1997:384).

Cultural values of the people in the grassroots can be viable in the process of societal transformation (Du Toit 1996:29). In order for this transformation to take place Pieterse (2004:100) saw a need for the understanding of the worldviews and God's concept of the poor, from an insider point of view. He further stressed that in the midst of rapid changes in the South African society, communities try to cling to their traditional values in order to articulate their understanding of God in difficult times (:100). This study therefore considers the Post Development Paradigm as a way of moving forward in defining a new social mission strategy in Mankweng.

It is however not my aim in this study to provide a detailed analysis of the Post Development Paradigm. I will also not attempt to address the diverse cultural values prevalent in the South African society. I will however focus on the assumptions of this paradigm which call for the use of cultural ethics of the poor in local communities when seeking to transform their lives (Long 1992:35). Africans have the ability to solve their own social problems through their value systems.

1.14.8 The Post Development Paradigm

The Post Development Paradigm is defined by Esteva & Suri Prakash (1997:277-288) as a notion challenging the Development Paradigm. It is against the universalizing of the problems affecting the poor in different societies. It also challenged the claim of superiority of Western worldviews over those of the people from the South (:282). They further claimed that Post Development Paradigm can contribute much in the

rediscovery of culturally specific and alternative definitions of good life feasible in different local communities (:285).

According to Maiava (2002), the Post Development Paradigm is not a reformist but revolutionist thinking. It stands for the need of indigenous people of determining their own future without being intimidated by outsiders. Indigenous people gain the power to determine what they want to do, and then do it on their own, exercising urgency and actively moving forward to create better lives and improve their well beings. The Post Development Paradigm is also about reclaiming confidence and reliance on local ways of thinking and indigenous knowledge. Maiava contributed much in this research, especially in the quest of defining the Post Development perspectives within the social mission circles.

Rahnema (1997:377-402) sees the Post Development Paradigm as a search for the sign posts, new language and new paradigm. This search is fuelled by the negative attitude of the elite in poor countries, who claim that the only way for people in the periphery to re-emerge as dignified human beings is to sacrifice their traditional way of life and catch up with the West (:378). These sign posts can give direction to the poor in Mankweng. It can also contribute in identifying positive aspects in the cultures of the poor through which they can bring change. In the process of following those sign posts new social mission strategies can emerge (:400).

Throughout this study, I used the term Post Development assumptions and Post Development perspectives interchangeably. I now therefore turn to some of those assumptions in order to clarify their use in this study. The Post Development Paradigm assumes that in order for change to be relevant in the lives of the poor in the society, firstly the politics of representation embedded in conventional Development discourse should be challenged. Secondly it assumes that the problematic nature of the institutional context of the Development Paradigm should be exposed (Schech & Haggis 2000:81)

Another assumption of the Post Development Paradigm is that it seeks to advocate a radical rethinking of the assumptions and goals of the Development Paradigm,

which are thought to be based on the Western cultural mind-set. This mind-set imposes materialistic values and idealised the scientific power of environmental destruction (Carrier 2006:475-476). It is therefore important that I should now turn to the relevance of the Post Development Paradigm in the social missions to the poor in rural communities.

1.14.9 The Post Development Paradigm and social missions

In a study on the question of alternatives to the Development paradigm, Matthews (2004) pointed out the need for an African scholarship in addressing issues raised by the Post Development Paradigm. She argued that most studies on Post Development Paradigm were conducted by scholars from outside Africa, whereas the concerns they address affect Africans directly (:377). The proposed research can contribute in bringing in African scholarship in the discourse and further address the paradigm from a Missiological angle.

Escobar (1997) believed that the Post Development Paradigm was relevant in correcting the pervasive policies of the Development Paradigm. (:85). I concur with Escobar that such correction should be made, however it should not only be made in the secular development debate, but also in the church and its social missions. Escobar also perceived change as being rooted in the interpretation of each society's history and cultural traditions. Such perception seems to have been omitted by the Development Paradigm and can be addressed in this study through the social mission based on the Post Development Paradigm (:91).

On the other hand, Rahnema (1992) saw the Post Development Paradigm as indispensable, because it supports the pluralistic and communal approach in responding to the needs of the poor in the society. It also includes the need for considering the spiritual wellbeing of the poor when addressing their needs (:162). His emphasis on the spiritual wellbeing of the poor in his study justified the use of a secular Post Development Paradigm in developing a church social mission strategy suggested here.

The Post Development paradigm can also liberate the poor from the internalized oppression and poverty (Sachs 1992:5). In using this paradigm in the transformative encounters, cultures can provide the relevant means of transformation. This can happen through the use of indigenous languages in defining the social problems within a specific context (:5). Social missions based on the Post Development Paradigm can be relevant here in bringing such transformation based on the cultures of the poor in Mankweng. I will now discuss in the next section the transformation based on the Post Development Paradigm. I will do so in order to unearth the positive contribution that this new paradigm can make within the church social missions.

1.14.10 Transformation based on Post Development Paradigm

In his study Du Toit (1996) articulated possibilities of meaningful change which are inspired by the Post Development Paradigm. He stressed the need for empowering the poor to evaluate their own context and find solutions to their own developmental problems. He further argued that initiatives taken by the poor prove to be much more successful than initiatives taken for them (:23). The poor in the society can construct original and cultural forms that allow them to survive the rigorous of living on the edge and eventually be in a position to transform their lives (:23). The poor are not calling so much for charity; rather, they need to be the subjects who have the rights to become authors of their own liberation (Brennan, Knitter & Madges 1997:396). I will now turn to the chapter outline in order to address the issues raised in this chapter in a systematic manner.

1.15 Chapters outline

Chapter 2

This chapter is based on the first moment of the cycle of missionary praxis called insertion. Insertion here takes a form of my missionary journey in Ntshitshane. The chapter further presents the cycle of poverty prevalent in Ntshitshane. The social missions of the local churches and the CAP are also presented as a way of addressing the poverty challenges in that community. Finally the chapter

presents *botho* as a cultural ethic of the poor in Ntshitshane which they use to fight poverty.

Chapter 3

The research findings are presented in this chapter in order to examine the causes and the interconnectedness of factors contributing in the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane. I used the aspects of the macro, meso and micro influences manifesting when analyzing the Ntshitshane community. This chapter also presented my personal reflections and the analysis of the research findings.

Chapter 4

This chapter is about the theological reflections on the research findings and on the missions amidst the poor people in Mankweng. Sources of theology and mainly the scripture were used to provide a theological base on the development of a new social mission strategy in Mankweng.

Chapter 5

A missionary plan of action with regard to the new social mission strategy amidst the poor in Mankweng is presented in this chapter. The aspects of planning, action and evaluation are addressed as a way of defining a process of the development of that social mission strategy. The chapter then highlights some shortcomings of the study but also validates the research findings. Finally, it provides some concluding remarks and recommendations towards the development of a new social mission strategy in Mankweng.

CHAPTER 2

MY MISSIONARY JOURNEY IN NTSHTSHANE

2.1 Introduction

The first moment of insertion in the cycle of mission praxis calls for the researcher to touch reality through objective observations and subjective feelings (Wijzen, Henriot & Mejia 2005). This chapter presents the story of my personal journey with the poor community of Ntshitshane in Mankweng. The narrative here seeks to respond to the following questions: Who am I as a researcher? What is happening in the lives of the poor in Ntshitshane? Who are my interlocutors? What are the social missions of the local churches there? And how does the poor themselves respond to poverty challenges?

My stance here is that the church's missions should not claim to have all the solutions to the poor communities. On the contrary, churches can also learn from the poor's cultural ethics and discover together with them missions relevant to their particular context. I therefore concur with Botha,

Stories of insertion are about leaving the relative comfort of the convent to live with the poor as a poor sister or brother amongst them. Through this praxis, the church in mission listens to, and learns from the poor by respecting their culture and the reality of the situation. The church then discovers the seeds of the word already present in the lives and experiences of the poor. (Botha 2010:188)

My story here reflects on how as an outsider I came to live amongst the poor community in Ntshitshane, and in the process discovered the presence of God in their cultural ethic of *ubuntu/botho*. For the purpose of narrating my journey, I will firstly introduce myself in the research scene by providing my personal background information. Telling about who am I and where I come from can help in shedding a light about my journey of understanding the role of the church in social missions. The background information here also brings to light the nature of social mission to the poor which are common in most local churches around Mankweng. Secondly, I turn my focus to the experiences of the poor in the Ntshitshane section of

Mankweng. Then thirdly, I provide a discussion about the contributions made by different organizations in the fight against poverty in that community. Fourthly I looked at the current social missions and developmental efforts prevalent in Ntshishane. Finally in the last part of the chapter, I reflected on some of the key themes which emerged while addressing the concept of *botho* in relation to social missions in Ntshishane. I will now turn to my personal background as a researcher in order to link my personal story with the stories of the poor people in Ntshishane.

2.2 Who am I, as a researcher?

2.2.1 My journey as a Pentecostal pastor in social missions

I am a Pentecostal pastor from a rural village called Gabaza in the Limpopo province of South Africa. During my childhood years I followed my parents and became a member of a renowned Pentecostal church called the Assemblies of God⁸ (AOG). The teachings and practices of the AOG shaped my understanding of social missions to the poor. In AOG, socio economic development is promoted through encouraging church members to work with their hands, education and community development (Lephoko 2005:72). However, based on the pioneer of the AOG, the Rev Nicholas Bhengu's views, church planting was prioritized more than the social missions. Bhengu stressed the importance of salvation and rarely made socio political pronouncements. He believed that the economic and political liberation of the black South Africans was going to come through the power of the gospel (Anderson & Pillay 1979:239). My understanding of social mission was further strengthened at the AOG seminary college. I will now look at my seminary training and how it contributed and reinforced my understanding of social missions.

In my early years of ministry, I went to study theology at the AOG seminary called the Nicholas Bhengu Theological College (NBTC). I studied for three years in that

⁸The Assemblies of God consists of a group of over 140 autonomous but loosely associated national groupings of churches which together form the world's largest Pentecostal denomination ([www.en.wikipedia.org/Assemblies of God](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/Assemblies_of_God) accessed 03/02/12) . In South Africa, this church was pioneered by the late Rev Nicolas Bhengu and it is also one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Southern Africa.

college following a curriculum that emphasised mostly the AOG teachings. The experience at NBTC further reinforced my AOG based understanding of social mission. Upon completion at the college, I was appointed as a senior pastor of an AOG congregation in Mankweng. There also, I continued with the same understanding and prioritized evangelism above social missions.

I served for a period of seven years in the Mankweng AOG congregation then moved to the Christian Worship Centre (CWC). At the CWC, I served for a year as a pastor in probation and was then appointed as a senior pastor and also as a coordinator of their community assistance program⁹ (CAP) in Ntshitshane. In this congregation, their approach to social mission was different to that of the AOG. At CWC, evangelism and social missions to the poor are given equal attention. They emphasise a holistic approach when preaching the gospel. People who are told about the love of God are also visited in their homes in order to establish their social wellbeing. As I participated in CAP my initial stance on missions to the poor people discussed in section 2.2 of this chapter was gradually transformed. I then began to acknowledge the importance of addressing both spiritual and material poverty equally. My new understanding of social missions was further reshaped by my studies of Missiology at UNISA, to which I will now turn my focus to.

2.2.2 My studies at UNISA

Apart from being a pastor, I am also a young theologian. I take seriously the social challenges in my local community. After completing the seminary training at NBTC, I continued studying theology at UNISA. I started with the Bachelor of Theology (BTH) degree. As a prerequisite of completing the BTH I had to do the *Capstone module*¹⁰(UNISA 2007:42-44). This module required students to practically engage

⁹The community assistance program of the CWC is a program aimed at responding to the social needs of the poor people in Mankweng. The details of this program can be found in the CWC constitution 2010:6

¹⁰ In the last year of registration for the BTH programme, when there is a realistic possibility of completing the programme, the students must enrol for the capstone

with their local communities, and then identify a social problem which was to eventually lead them to construct a practical intervention strategy. In order to meet this requirement, I identified a problem of dire poverty in the Ntshitshane section of Mankweng. I easily identified this problem through CAP and my services as I was daily engaging with the local community through my pastoral ministry. As part of the capstone project, I engaged some community and church members in the process of identifying the problem and developing a practical intervention strategy.

After completing the BTH, I then carried on with the Honours Bachelor of Theology in Missiology (the contents of this program were discussed in section 1.4 of chapter 1). In order to fulfil the requirements for that degree I had to engage the community in different projects, whilst continuing with the church missions to the poor. The honours degree made me to engage deeper with the poor in Ntshitshane and in the process gained more insight to their experiences. The Honours program further contributed in the process of strengthening my new stance on social missions. It was therefore through CAP and studying Missiology at UNISA that gave me access to the lived experiences of the poor in Ntshitshane. I will now in the next section turn to my experiences in Ntshitshane.

2.3 My experiences in Ntshitshane

I have worked with the Ntshitshane community for a period of ten years now. Throughout that period, I witnessed many instances of the poor grappling with poverty in their lives. I also observed and tried to understand their situation from a researcher's point of view. With my new understanding of social mission, I developed a need to contribute in the poor community's quest of finding solutions to their challenges. The first thing I did was to listen to the poor defining their problems. I then observed in Ntshitshane an occurrence of a perpetual cycle of the effects of poverty. After a thorough observation of this trend, I then labelled it as

module, Integrated Theological Praxis (BTH 3720) it is one of the four modules at NQF level seven that constitute a major (UNISA 2009 calendar part 5)

“the cycle of poverty” in Ntshitshane. The figure below show that cycle and its details follow in section2.3.1



Figure 2: the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane.

The cycles of poverty in Ntshitshane here depicts the trends of poverty in that community. It shows the manner in which the poor there are affected in a cyclical pattern by different challenges exacerbated by poverty in their lives.

2.3.1 Social challenges

A number of social challenges that affect the poor in Ntshitshane can be vividly seen by outsiders visiting that community. The following are some patterns of social challenges I observed as a researcher in that community:

2.3.1.1. High rate of crime

Due to high levels of poverty and unemployment many community members resort to criminal activities. The common criminal misdemeanours in that community are inclusive of assault, domestic violence, robbery, house breaking, murder, theft and rape (www.saps.gov.za/./Mankweng.pdf Accessed 15 February 2011) When doing pastoral house visits in the community, members often asked for prayers begging for God’s intervention in the reduction of crime.

2.3.1.2 HIV/AIDS

There are also high numbers of HIV infections and HIV/AIDS related death cases prevalent in Ntshishane. I often visited the local mobile clinic and engaged in conversations with the nurses and health care workers. They often showed concern about the increasing numbers of new infections amongst the community members. The increase of the infections is also attested by a number of child headed families in that community. In some cases both the parents have succumbed to the virulent HIV/AIDS pandemic and the children are left in the care of their extended families. I have also observed cases whereby helpless HIV infected community members are left alone in their dilapidating houses with no one to look after them.

2.3.1.3 Teenage pregnancies

After closely observing the youth in my local church and those in the local community, I realised that the number of teenagers who fall pregnant is growing very fast. This problem eventually forces a number of teenagers to drop their studies in order to take care of their new born babies. I regularly visited the Mankweng Shoprite store during pay days when beneficiaries of social grants receive their payments. The long queues which teenagers often form the majority have confirmed that a number of teenagers in Mankweng are on a payroll for child support grants, and it can therefore be deduced that they form part of the high statistics of teenage pregnancies in that area.

2.3.1.4 Housing problems

Most houses in Ntshishane are either dilapidated, shacks or build of mud. There are cases within that community where bigger families are compelled to share a one room house. One day while I visited a certain family, I noticed that the whole family was sharing a room which was only demarcated in the centre by a transparent curtain that separated the kitchen and the sleeping area. Another sign of the housing problems in Ntshishane is confirmed by the small number of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses in that area. Though some poor families in Ntshishane were allocated houses through this programme, some

community members claim that they have waited for a long period without being allocated a house.

2.3.2 Political challenges

In addition to the above mentioned social problems, there are also political challenges existing in that community. Listening to people's comments in the streets and the observations I made during my visits in that community, I discovered the prevalence of the following political challenges:

2.3.2.1 Traditional Authority

The offices of the traditional authority are situated in the far-flung area which renders them inaccessible to the community. Consequently the needs of the poor in that area are either inadequately addressed or neglected. When decisions regarding the development projects are made, the poor are unable to attend the meetings because of the distance to the places where meetings are often held. It is during those meetings where decisions are made for the poor without even considering their contributions.

2.3.2.2 Unfulfilled development promises

When talking to some community members, they showed concerns about politicians who only visited their community during the election campaigns. Other community members further claimed that some politicians often make development promises but usually disappears after they won the elections. Some mentioned that promises to fix the local roads, to supply water and other basic necessities were made by politicians, but when the time to deliver those services was due, those in authorities started to shift the responsibility to other community leaders.

2.3.3 Economic challenges

The poor in Ntshitshane are also affected by different economic challenges. I have often noticed the prevalence of the following challenges when engaging with that community

2.3.3.1 Unemployment

There are many unemployed community members in Ntshitshane. Most families there depend either on the child support or the old age grant for survival. Most of the unemployed youth eventually resort to criminal activities due to lack of job opportunities. On the other hand, there are also some community members who usually go from one house to the other in the affluent sections of the Mankweng Township looking for either babysitting, clothes washing or gardening opportunities.

2.3.3.2 High prices of food

The poor in Ntshitshane are not immune to the ever increasing prices of food which is a common trend in South Africa today. Because shopping areas are far from this village, those who are from poor families have no choice but to buy groceries from the local *spaza*¹¹ shops. Most of those spaza shops are owned by foreign nationals who are often accused by the community for inflating the food prices thus making their life miserable.

2.3.4 Spiritual challenges

From my observations on Sundays when some people go to their churches to worship, most community members in this village either visit friends or continue with their daily chores. People there seem not to be concerned about their spiritual wellbeing. Some community members complained about the scarcity of places of worship in their area. My observations also confirmed that many churches are concentrated in the affluent sections of Mankweng. Most of the emerging ministries and new churches are crammed in those affluent sections and this can constitute a "*spiritual hunger*"¹².

¹¹ A "spaza" shop is an informal convenience shop business in South Africa, usually run from home. They also serve the purpose of supplementing household's income of the owners. These shops grew as a result of sprawling townships that made travel to formal shopping places more difficult or expensive (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spaza_shop. Accessed 17 September 2012)

¹² The term "spiritual hunger" here is taken from Luke 4:18 where Jesus speaks about "preaching the Good news to the poor". It denotes the hunger for the word of God.

2.3.5 Cultural challenges

I visited some churches in Ntshitshane several times and I noticed that through their sermons, preachers often discourage church members from observing cultural practices and traditional celebrations. There is also a common belief amongst some Christians in Ntshitshane that cultural ethics and practices are demonic and are usually equated to ancestral worship. Such tendencies have contributed in making European worldviews to seem to be superior over those of local origin. Other community members still believed that their cultures were backward and uncivilized; therefore it was incomprehensible for them to believe that solution to their poverty can come from local cultural aspirations.

2.4 My interlocutors in the study

In section 1.13 of chapter 1, I identified the academy, society and church as my interlocutors. The academy was addressed through literature review in section 1.14 of chapter 1. The society has been covered by the experiences of the poor in section 2.3 and the social mission to the poor in Ntshitshane in section 2.5. The church is represented by the theological reflections dealt with in Chapter 4 of this study

Through the course of this study, I worked together with a number of different structures originating from my three interlocutors. Individuals, organizations both nongovernmental and governmental, faith based organizations (FBO'S), the traditional authority, local churches and the poor themselves contributed in the process of this study. Whilst acknowledging the contribution made by these different structures, I will however not attempt to cover their different activities within the scope of this study. I will only present few activities from three community organizations, the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches, the CWC missions to the poor in Ntshitshane. Finally I will look at the contribution made by the poor themselves in the fight against poverty in Ntshitshane.

2.5 Social missions to the poor in Ntshitshane

Different organisations, local government departments and some churches offer assistance to the poor in Ntshitshane with the aim of transforming their conditions. Although local churches do not label their actions as social mission their contributions in the fight against poverty can be termed social missions. Their actions fit in this category because they do not offer help solely to address the material needs of the poor but they do so also as a way of announcing the good news. Tables 1, 2 and 3 below show the activities of the community organizations, Non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal Churches aimed at responding to the challenges faced by the poor in Ntshitshane.

2.5.1 Community organizations

Table 1

ORGANIZATIONS	ACTIVITIES
Mankweng community development projects	Community projects such as farming and skills training
Faith based organizations	Palliative care and home based care for HIV/AIDS patients
Department of health and social development	Social grants for pensioners and child support grants
Non-governmental organization	Home based care groups and children's homes

2.5.2 Non-Pentecostal Churches

Table 2

CHURCHES	ACTIVITIES
The Baptist Church in	Orphanage,

Mankweng Unit F	Feeding scheme and Sewing lessons offered to the community members
Rehoboth Christian Centre in Mankweng (Mamadimo park)	Pastoral care programs Feeding scheme for children coming from poor families
Zion Christian Church in Mankweng Unit E	None
The Lutheran Church in Mankweng Unit C	Financial assistance to the local orphanage
Roman Catholic in Mankweng Unit A	None
Presbyterian Church in Mankweng Unit B	Food parcels
Methodist in Mankweng Unit A	Distribution of old clothes by individual Christians

2.5.3 Pentecostal churches

Table 3

CHURCHES	ACTIVITIES
Assemblies of God in Mankweng Unit C	Food parcels to poor families during Christmas
Apostolic Faith Mission in Mankweng Unit A	None
International AOG in Mankweng Unit D	None
Nazarene Revival Church in Mankweng Unit B	None

StrongTower MankwengKga-thoka	in	Support and care HIV infected persons
Pentecostal Holiness Mankweng Unit A	in	None

2.5.4 The Community Assistance Program [CAP]

I will now in this section turn my focus to the CWC missions amidst the poor in Ntshitshane executed through CAP. The CWC stresses that missions to the poor is one of their core activities as they participates in God's mission. For them, social mission is a constitutive dimension of the gospel (CWC Constitution 2010:8). In response to challenges affecting the poor in different sections of Mankweng, CWC developed a program called the CAP.

It is important here to highlight that the CAP is not only aimed at responding to the poverty challenges in Mankweng, it is also used to show the love of God for those affected by poverty. Before the execution of any CAP activity, prayer and the sharing of the word of God precede the items to be addressed on that particular day. CAP is executed within the *evangelism and church growth strategy*¹³ of the CWC.

This program covers the following activities which are implemented in different sections of the community depending on the identified needs: Care and Support, HIV/AIDS Palliative care and Education. Figure 3 shows the details of each activity in the CAP:

¹³ The evangelism and church growth strategy is a means of the Christian Worship Centre to reach out to the local communities through the preaching of the good news and responding to social challenges. CAP is part of the strategy which this church uses to reach socially to the communities around Mankweng. For details of this strategy see(CWC constitution 2010:15)

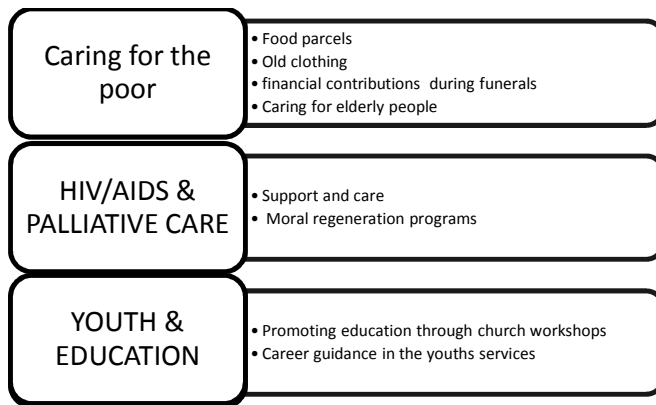


Figure 3: CAP (CWC constitution 2010:12)

All the activities outlined in section 2.5 above are the efforts of community structures and churches of addressing poverty problems in Ntshitshane. However, it has been my observation that in the execution of these programs the recipients are often treated as *tabula rasa*¹⁴. In order to correct this misconception I now therefore turn in the next section to the cultural ethic of *ubuntu/botho*¹⁵, which seems to be a common cultural ethic in Ntshitshane.

I should however highlight, before delving much into the discussion about the ethic of *botho* that although *botho* seems to be a relevant cultural ethics which is common in Mankweng and also in other African communities, it does have its limitations. In the age of technological advancement and civilisation, some may see the concept of *botho* as absurd and outdated. Also for the new generation of young people, using *botho* as a tool of social change might seem like taking a step backward instead of moving

¹⁴Tabula rasa is the epistemological theory that individuals are born without built in mental content. It is from a Latin word which means scraped tablet, one which the writing has been erased c.f. Hanks, Long & Urdag 1985:1478).

¹⁵Botho defines a process for earning respect by first giving it, and to gain empowerment by empowering others. It encourages social justice for all. It has to permeate every aspect of our lives, like the air we breathe; so that no one will rest easy knowing that another is in need (www.vision 2016.co.bw)

forward towards progression. However, after carefully observing the behavioural patterns in Ntshitshane, I noticed that most of the poor community members there still rely on the ethic of *botho*. Their actions showed that *botho* was still regarded as viable means when fighting poverty in their community. I will now turn to a detailed discussion on the *botho* ethic in response to the assumption of the Post Development Paradigm which calls for the use of cultural ethics in defining solutions to the poverty challenges.

2.6 Botho in Ntshitshane

As an outsider and a visitor in Ntshitshane, I often observed the poor community members displaying their reliance on the ethic of *botho* in dealing with poverty. Whenever there is a community gathering such as *kgorong*¹⁶ or *kopanong*¹⁷ it is a norm for community members there to use idioms and proverbs to instil the principles of *ubuntu/botho* amongst each other. Teachings about *botho* in Ntshitshane also form the socialization process, where children are taught from a young age to be considerate and to support each other. This is done in order to promote unity amongst community members when dealing with the predicament of poverty in the society.

2.6.1 Idioms and proverbs promoting *botho* in Ntshitshane

Elderly people in Ntshitshane often talk to their children using idioms which promote the ethic of *botho*. The following Pedi and Tsonga idioms are commonly used to encourage togetherness when addressing poverty and other social challenges in that community:

- “*Mothokemothokabatho*”¹⁸ (I am because you are). This concept aims at helping individuals to remember the importance of others in their lives.

¹⁶*Kgorong* is a Pedi word referring to a traditional courtyard

¹⁷*Kopanong* simply means a meeting place where members of the community gather to address issues affecting their community.

¹⁸ This is a Sotho saying which denotes that an individual person cannot survive alone without the help from other people.

Individuals in the community are often reminded about the responsibility they have towards other people.

- “*Xandlafambaxandlavuya*”¹⁹(a person who gives to others will also receive something in return)this expression is used in Ntshitshane to promote hospitality in the community.
- “*O se rotelesediba*”²⁰[do not urinate in the well after drinking the water because you will in the future need the water from the same well to drink] meaning that one should not repay good with evil. It is used to warn people who have a tendency of mistreating those who once helped them in the past whilst forgetting that they might need their help again in the future.
- “*Xi hundle xi ta kuhundla*”²¹[help a child to grow and the same child will take care of you in the future] Some Tsonga speaking community members in Ntshitshane use this idiom to promote communitarian values. A child according to this community does not belong to a specific family, rather all children belongs to the entire community.
- “*Tau tsahlokaseboka di sitwakenare e hlotsa*”²²[lions that fail to be united when chasing a prey cannot even catch a limping buffalo]. It’s equivalence in English will be the saying “united we stand and divided we fall”. This proverb is used by the community in Ntshitshane to encourage members of

¹⁹ The Tsonga speaking people use this idiom to remind each other that when you are given something by your neighbour, remember to give them something in return.

²⁰ The Pedi people use this idiom as a warning that urinating over a well after drinking the water will work against you tomorrow when you are thirsty.

²¹ According to the Tsonga people, taking care of someone will make that person to help you in the future when you are in need.

²² Working as a group brings more achievements than working as individuals.

the community to work together in all their projects in order to achieve the desired goals i.e. fighting poverty

- “*Mabelegaajekemolemi*”²³[those who plant crops do so in order to share the harvest with other community members]. Based on this proverb, community members in Ntshitshane share their harvest with each other and retain seeds to be used in the future. The community here has a number of communal fields which they work collectively to plant maize and peanuts. During the time of harvest the whole community come together to divide the crops amongst themselves.

2.6.2 Expressions of *botho* in Ntshitshane

I also observed that the notion of *botho* in the lives of the people in this community is not an abstract concept, but it permeates and forms part of every aspect of their being. This transformative power of *botho* is expressed in Ntshitshane community by their collective:

2.6.2.1 Singing together

When people in Ntshitshane are happy or mourning the death of someone, they show their solidarity and *botho* by coming together and sing wedding or funeral songs. These songs bring joy into their hearts and make them cope with their situations. When the community sing together during funerals, the bereaved family finds comfort and hope in the midst of their loss.

2.6.2.2 Community celebrations

During different celebrations the community play traditional songs and drums. This is accompanied by members of the community dancing together. They also show *botho* by dancing together without discrimination of gender, religion or creed. When a child is born, the relatives and neighbours come together to dance and ululate as a way of showing togetherness and expressing of happiness.

²³ People having fields in rural communities were expected to share the crops with their neighbours.

2.6.2.3 The community working as a Collective

When there is work to be done in the community, all members are expected to take part and contribute in the completion of the task. Neighbours show *botho* by helping each other to plough their fields and look after their livestock. They also work together during funerals, women come with their cooking utensils and prepare the meals, whilst men slaughter the cow and help in digging the grave.

2.6.2.4 Relating of stories in the community

Children are taught to be humane from an early age through stories told by the elderly people. Usually families sit around the fire at night and the elderly people tell stories of how they lived in unity in the past, and how such unity helped them to deal with their poverty. Elders instil *botho* through telling of stories and their children grow knowing the importance of being neighbourly.

2.6.2.5 Grieving together as a community

When disaster strikes, all community members come together to show their expression of grief together with the affected family. Members of the community are expected to give their support even when they are not related to those who are affected by the disaster.

2.6.2.6 Respect as a sign of *botho*

Children in the community are taught to respect elderly people even when those elderly persons are not biologically relating to them. A disrespectful child is labelled as *phoofolo* (an animal), someone who is not a human being. Respect then is an important value that is instilled from birth and it is promoted throughout all stages of life. Respect here includes respect for the poor in the community.

2.6.2.7 Sharing of food with one's neighbours

People in the community often share their food and give to those who are in need. The recipients are also expected to contribute to the givers either by helping them in

the fields or by looking after their livestock. After receiving the food those in need are also encouraged to share with others who are also in need.

2.6.2.8 Compassion amongst community members

Compassion is another element of *botho* promoted within the Ntshitshane community. When someone in the village is in pain, either because of ill health or death in their families, the entire community share in their grief and contributes towards finding a solution to the problem

2.6.2.9 Initiations and rituals in the community

When boys come back from the mountain school after circumcision, the whole community comes together to celebrate the event and perform the initiation rituals together. During the winter season, families contribute money to buy gifts and choose one family where the celebration will be held when the boys return from the circumcision school.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a story of my personal journey with the poor people in the Ntshitshane section of Mankweng. It introduced my background as a researcher and the development of my understanding of missions to the poor. The chapter then addressed the challenges of the poor and showed how different organizations and churches attempt to bring solution. Finally it introduced the concept of *ubuntu/botho* as a cultural ethic of the poor in Ntshitshane. The poor use this ethic to address their poverty challenges. In the next chapter therefore, I will provide an analysis of both the church missions in Ntshitshane in order to examine the possibility of using *thebotho* ethic in developing a new social mission strategy.

CHAPTER 3

Research Results

3.1 Introduction

I have already mentioned in chapter 1 section 1.8 that the qualitative approach was the one preferred in conducting this research. This chapter then presents the empirical findings of the investigation made during the research. The observations made during the insertion period, the data gained in the form of interviews, group interviews and documentations were validated here. The observations which included that of the experiences of the poor in Ntshitshane as presented in the form of a cycle in chapter 2 sections 2.3, figure 2; also the CAP in section 2.5.4 and the ethic of *botho* in chapter 2 section 2.6 will be addressed. I used here the aspects of *macro*²⁴, *meso*²⁵ and *micro*²⁶ levels of influences (Hendriks 2004:76-79) to structure the qualitative interviews and group interviews made during the course of this study.

I will start by presenting a figure which indicates the influences of *macro*, *meso* and *micro* poor community in Ntshitshane. Secondly, I will address the issues raised by the participants during the research process, and thirdly I will present the research findings. I will then discuss the interviews questions, followed by the discussions on the research findings, then the analysis of the findings and finally, I will draw the conclusion.

Figure 4 shows the details of the influences of *macro*, *meso* and *micro* influences on the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane, CAP and the ethic of *botho*.

²⁴The macro level includes the global level and it refers to relatively large quantities or on a large scale

²⁵ According to Hendricks (2005:77) meso, include groups, groupings, organizations etc in our immediate surroundings.

²⁶The micro is a word originating from Greek meaning small see(www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/micro)

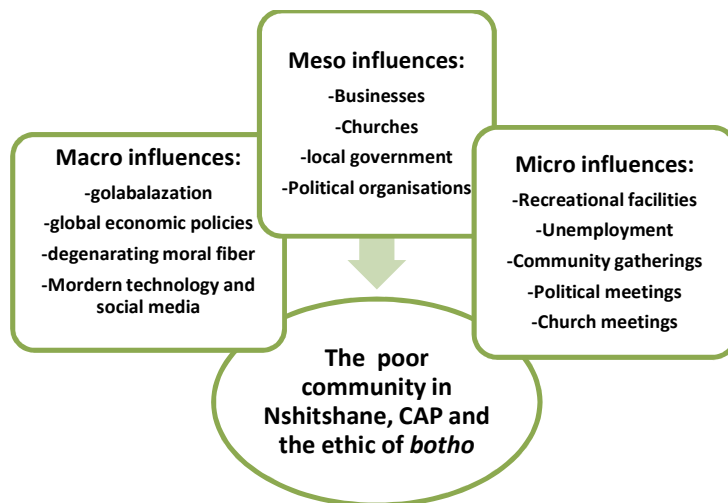


Figure 4: The macro, meso and micro levels of influences

3.2 The participants

The participants in this study consisted of the poor who had an experiential knowledge of the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane, (see section 2.6) members of the CWC who understood and participated in the CAP and ordinary community members who believed that the ethic of *botho* was still viable to address poverty and other social challenges in Mankweng. All the respondents resided around Mankweng; therefore it was easy to access them during the course of the study.

In order to get a broader perspective during the two interviews sessions conducted in April and May 2010, six people who were conversant with the theme were selected.

- The first respondent was a 27 years old young man who had just completed his Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A) in the University of Limpopo majoring in development studies.
- The second was an unemployed 29 years old young woman who is also a mother of two boys.
- The third was a 37 years old local school teacher who is also a member of the CWC; he also participated in the CAP.
- The fourth was a 32 years old nurse from the local mobile clinic which visits Ntshitshane at least three time a week

- The fifth one was a 55 years old man who is a member of the local traditional council.
- The sixth was a 64 years old woman who worked together with other old woman in their local communal farm.

The group interview conducted in June 2010 consisted of three members of the CWC who were also church leaders and participated in the CAP, three members from other local churches, three members of the community and two elders from the local traditional council. All the respondents in the group were between the ages 27 and 65. During both the interviews and the group interviews, respondents were asked similar questions, but questions were not framed the same way each time they were asked.

3.3 Presentation of the research findings

I have already indicated in section 1.5 of chapter 1 that I used observations, interviews, group interviews and documentation as the means of collecting data. The previous chapter presented data primarily obtained through observations made during my insertion period in Ntshitshane. I will now therefore, turn my focal point to the data obtained through interviews and group interviews and then use documentation as a tool to validate and analyse the findings.

3.4 Discussion of interviews questions

The qualitative interviews conducted in this study have already been labelled as an in-depth and semi structured interviews in section 1.9.2 of chapter 1 of this study. During the interview process respondents were asked questions not according to the sequence below, however in some cases questions were asked depending on the context and the arrangement made with the respondents. Again not all the questions were asked to each respondent. The number of questions depended on the flow of discussion and responses given. In some cases respondents gave more answers to one question and those answers responded to other questions as well, making it not necessary to ask the question again.

3.4.1. Questions relating to the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane

The first group of questions were asked in relation to the respondent's understanding and experiences of the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane. These questions were selected in order to verify the findings made through observations during my insertion period in Ntshitshane.

1. What in your views are the social challenges facing the poor in Ntshitshane?
2. What do you think are the root causes of the challenges facing the poor in Ntshitshane?
3. Which global issues do you think exacerbates the poverty challenges in Ntshitshane?
4. What are the intermediate issues influencing the rise of the poverty problem in Ntshitshane?
5. What are the immediate influences exacerbating poverty in this community?
6. What are the consequences of poverty in your community?

Box 3.1. Questions relating to the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane

3.4.2 Questions relating to the social missions in Ntshitshane

The second set of questions were asked in relation to the contributions made by development agencies, other local churches and the CWC in responding to the cycle of poverty in that community

1. What are the development agencies such as NGO'S, FBO'S and local government doing in response to challenges facing the poor in Ntshitshane?
2. What is the contribution made by local churches in responding to the poverty challenges in Ntshitshane?
3. What does the CWC do in order to help in solving the challenges facing the poor in Ntshitshane?
4. Who are mostly benefiting from the CAP of the CWC?

Box 3.2. Questions relating to the social mission in Ntshitshane

3.4.3. Questions on the use of cultural ethics by the poor in Ntshitshane.

These third set of questions were asked to establish the cultural ethic which is commonly used by the poor in Ntshitshane when responding to their poverty challenges. These questions were important because they are in line with the aim of this study referred to in section 1.1 of chapter 1 as seeking to develop a new social mission strategy based on the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm.

1. Which cultural ethic do the poor in Ntshitshane rely on when fighting poverty in their community?
2. Which actions confirm the dependence of the poor on that ethic when they fight poverty?
3. How do you understand *botho* in the fight against poverty in this community?
4. What makes you think that *botho* is not just an abstract concept which was only relevant to the poor in the past?

Box 3.3 Questions on the use of cultural ethics when the poor fight poverty challenges in Ntshitshane.

3.4.4. Questions about the use of *botho* in the Christian social missions

These final set of questions were asked in order to verify the respondent understandings of spirituality in relation to the ethic of *botho*. They were all relevant in order to check if *botho* could be used in the church social mission.

1. Why do you think the ethic of *botho* is relevant to Christian social missions?
2. How can *botho* be used in defining a Christian social mission in Ntshitshane?
3. How can you relate *botho* to the teachings of the church?
4. How do you relate *botho* to the Bible?
5. Which Biblical concepts can you relate with the concept of *botho*?

Box 3.4 Questions relating to the relevance of *botho* in the Christian social missions

3.5 Discussion of interviews findings

The findings of the interviews here include the responses given by the participants during the group interviews. Since these were semi-structured interviews,

respondents may not have equally answered all the questions listed in the four boxes above. However the responses provided here sums up the general responses to all the questions asked in the four boxes during the interviews. Responses are therefore structured according to the following themes: The poverty challenges in Ntshitshane, the cultural ethics as a weapon to fight poverty in Ntshitshane and *botho* and Christian social missions.

3.5.1 The poverty challenges in Ntshitshane (box 3.1)

In responding to the first question, respondents pointed out that the poor in Ntshitshane were facing the problem of unemployment, high rate of crime, HIV/AIDS, lack of housing and poor service delivery.

With regard to the root causes of those challenges, most of the respondents indicated that political leaders did not fulfil their promises of community development they usually make when canvassing for votes. Others cited that economic policies favoured the rich and disadvantaged those who are poor. Participants in the group interviews pointed out to the problem of selfishness, whereby other community members were not willing to share the limited resources with other poor community members, they viewed that as lack of *botho* amongst those community members.

To the third question, respondents had a view that global economic policies had a negative impact even in a small village such as Ntshitshane. Other respondents cited the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a global problem which also affected local community members. There were still others who saw the degeneration of moral fibre as a contributing factor in the rise of poverty in Ntshitshane. On the other hand, others saw globalization and the influence of the modern technology and social media as contributing factors in the aggravation of poverty in Ntshitshane.

To the same questions during the group interviews, participants presented similar ideas reflected during individual's interviews. In opening the discussion a 35 years old man who is also a local school teacher said:

Our community is negatively affected by the effects of globalization. The people in Ntshitshane are now failing to embrace the communitarian values because globalization promotes the rights of individuals over those of the entire community.

Most members in the group concurred with him, and one of the group members added that because of the influence of globalization most people in the community are gradually turning against their cultures. The group also agreed that most people within the Ntshitshane community are now adopting foreign cultures whilst neglecting theirs.

Another respondent during the discussion was adamant that globalisation had negative impact in their lives, she therefore said:

The whole idea of a global village is bad because people tend to generalize when addressing poverty issues whilst forgetting the unique experiences of every community.

A young respondent in the group contributed in the discussion by saying:

Modern technologies which include television, movies and social media such as internet, cell phones, Facebook²⁷ and Whatsapp²⁸ are examples of global factors which have a negative influence in our lives.

Another youth support the first respondent by this Pedi statement:

Rena baswa a renanakoyamotho emonwe re lebeletsikgochatafela [As the youth we usually don't have time for other people, we spend more time on the social media.]

²⁷ According to <http://www.wikipedia.org/> facebook is a social networking service and website launched in February 2004, owned and operated by Facebook, Inc. Users must register before using the site, after which they may create a personal profile, add other users as friends. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/facebook.

²⁸ it is a proprietary, cross platform instant messaging application for smart phones (en.wikipedia.org/Whatsapp)

In responding to the fourth question, respondents cited the failure of local governments to render basic service delivery as a cause of the rise of poverty problems in their community. There were those who claimed that the traditional authority was to blame in this regard. The reason for the blame was the geographical location of traditional offices which are in a far flung area where the poor in the community are unable to reach. There were still others in the group who maintained that churches, NGO'S and community development agencies were failing to prioritize the concerns of the poor in their community development programs.

The group also indicated that sectors such as business, local government, churches and political organisation are presently contributing less in the fight against poverty. For those group members, the said sectors contributed much in exacerbating the poor living conditions of the community members.

To the fifth question regarding the immediate influence on the lives of the poor in Ntshitshane, respondents mentioned that due to the lack of recreational facilities in the community, most young people resorted to criminal activities and promiscuity. In turn, their behaviour contributed in the rise of poverty because some of those young people eventually dropped from school and as a result find it difficult to get employment. They also mentioned that other young people contracted sexual transmitted infections whereas others find themselves trapped by unplanned pregnancies.

The group further showed that micro issues such as community gatherings, political meetings and church meetings can be viable in addressing poverty challenges in Ntshitshane. They also showed that if poverty issues can be prioritised during those meetings the community can be impacted positively.

Then to the last question in box 3.1 some respondents showed that most parents did not afford paying for their children's school fees and therefore their children drop out of school. There were also respondents who claimed that the high rate of crime in Ntshitshane was as a result of poverty.

3.5.2. Social missions in Ntshitshane (box 3.2)

Respondents mentioned the existence of community feeding schemes, farming projects sponsored by the local government under the local community development project. They also mentioned the community home based care services offered by FBO'S as the positive contribution of the development agencies in their area.

However, respondents had differing views when talking about the contribution of local churches in addressing poverty. The first view was that churches were partially contributing towards finding solutions. On the other hand, some respondents bluntly said that churches were not concerned about the conditions of the poor people in their community. The majority of respondents during the group interviews however maintained that local churches were not contributing much in fighting poverty and other social ills in Ntshitshane. Other participants claimed that most local churches were only concerned about spiritual issues than with social problems. A member in the group said in Tsonga:

Tikereketilangutisantsenatimhakataximoya, atinamhakanioutomibyasiku

rinwananirinwana. [Churches are only focusing on spiritual matters whilst neglecting the genuine concerns of the poor in the community].

With regard to CAP, some respondents said that they were not even aware of such a program; however others commended the CWC for Cap and claimed that it was helping the poor in their community, one respondent commented in Pedi:

Re leboga Christian Worship Centre kakgo re thusamosechabeng[wethank the Christian Worship Centre for helping us in our community]

On the final question about the beneficiaries of CAP, there were mixed feelings amongst the participants. Other participants claimed that only the poor who were members of the CWC benefited from the program. Whereas, there were those who believed that the program was helping the community, however, there was still a need for some adjustments. These adjustments included the freedom of the poor to decide what was relevant in their situation.

money and collectively buy grocery in bulks at the end of the year. Those women claimed that *Stokvels* promoted the spirit of *botho* because every time they met as women groups they encourage each other to work collectively and as a result they achieved best results in their different community projects.

Respondents also highlighted that community group schemes such as *lebele*³⁰, where community members collect Ten Rand per family in order to cover funeral expenses of a deceased community members shows the prevalence and importance of *botho* within their community. Finally some mentioned that the support showed by community members to each other during celebrations, funerals, rituals and community projects was a proof that the concept of *botho* was not just an abstract ideology but something real in their community.

3.5.4 Botho and Christian social missions (box 3.4)

Respondents showed that the concept of *botho* had a Christian and religious connotations. They pointed out that the *botho* ethic did not contradict Biblical and church teachings. The love for neighbour as the love for God, giving to those in needs and expecting no reward, having compassion on the poor in the society and doing to others as you would them do to you were some of the *botho* concepts which were quoted by the respondents as being on par with the Biblical teachings.

3.6 Analysis of the findings

I now turn in this section to my personal reflection and analysis of the research findings. I will carry out this task here by looking at the contributions made by other interlocutors in relation to the research findings. When doing analysis here I will only focus on the general analysis of the research findings and then in the next chapter I will bring in the element of theological reflections. I have indicated earlier

³⁰Lebele is Pedi word meaning a wheel. Women in Ntshitshane use lebele to collect money and some groceries among themselves and contribute to families when there is a funeral or wedding. The use of the word lebele is in line with the notion of rotation, meaning that all members in the group will eventually benefit from their contributions.

in section 3.1 of this chapter that local community can be affected by *macro*, *meso* and *micro* influences. I will now look at the research findings and analyse how they affect the local community in Mankweng.

3.6.1 Globalization

Globalization has come to mean different things to different people depending from the angle where they tackle it. However Held (2004:15-16) summarised the concept of globalization by providing its four distinctive features. These features can also provide a generic understanding of the term globalization as used in this study.

Firstly he pointed out the stretched social relation as the first feature; here cultural, economic and political processes in society are increasingly stretched across nation state boundaries so that what happens in another country impacts other countries. Secondly he pointed out the intensification of flows where by networks of interactions transcend nation state. Thirdly increasing interpretation of economic and social practices brings apparent distant cultures and society face to face with each other at local as well as on the global level. Finally global infrastructure pushes the nation states and causes them to be at the mercy of global powerful markets. These four features summarize the understanding of globalization that can have a negative impact on the lives of the poor in Mankweng and elsewhere.

It was also reflected during the interviews that globalization was one of the macro aspects having influences in Ntshitshane (see section 3.3.1). The living condition of the poor in Ntshitshane which were revealed by this study shows that globalization in that community represents a situation where by the community bases their ideas of change on what other people are doing elsewhere and in the process forgets the rich solutions available in their local cultures.

LenkaBula(2010:100) presented the other side of globalization. She accuses globalization for advancing human freedom in which individuals are free to live any lifestyle they chose irrespective of the negative impact of their choices on others in the community. Based on LenkaBula's understanding, it can therefore be deduced that due to the effects of globalization communitarian values are now being

disregarded in local communities including the poor community of Ntshitshane. Now people seem to be freer to do whatever pleases them as individuals even though their actions are harmful to their fellow human beings. Such kind of behavioural patterns contributed in the advancement of individualism which in turn exacerbates poverty.

Finally, another aspect of globalization which can have a negative impact in the lives of the poor in rural communities is the advancement of the free-market economic principles. These principles together with economic recession have a great impact on poor communities (Le Roux 2011:10-11). When local markets fail to compete in the international markets the poor in rural places suffer the consequences. .

3.6.2 HIV/AIDS pandemic

Another element which was prominent during the research was the issue of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This deadly disease affects people in both urban and rural areas alike including the poor in Ntshitshane. In line with the claims made by the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane regarding HIV/AIDS, Phiri, Hadad & Masenya (2003:78) argued that HIV pandemic is concentrated among the poverty stricken regions of the world because of lack of information, insufficient food, and lack of medical facilities. They also mentioned mobility that separated families and in the process increased extramarital sexual activities. These extramarital sexual activities contributed highly to the spread of the pandemic, high mortality rate and poverty.

A recent study has shown that HIV/AIDS is still among the greatest challenges for Africa today. The United Nations (UN) estimated that out of the 33 million people living with HIV worldwide, two thirds are in sub-Saharan Africa and the mortality rate on the continent from the disease has been nearly four thousand per day (Moss 2011:185)

The increase of new infections and mortality rate inevitable has a negative impact on the economic and social sectors. I concur with Whiteside & Sunter (2000:84-95) that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has a negative impact on the national economic growth, households and human development. Again, I also agree with Kedia & Himmelgreen

(2011:77) that HIV/AIDS has emotional, psychological and financial effects, because families affected by this pandemic incur higher healthcare expenses, exorbitant costs for necessities associated with daily care of the infected family member.

3.6.3 Political structures and transformation in Ntshitshane

I also observed in Ntshitshane after being motivated by the claims made by the respondents during the interviews that the contribution of political structures in the plight of the poor there is evident. I have seen the common practice where during the times of elections political leaders come to the community and make several promises. However, they usually disappear after the elections. Community members often showed concerns that political affiliation also played a major role in deciding the beneficiaries of service delivery. They claimed that those who belong to specific political parties seem to get preference compared to the rest of the community members.

3.6.4 The role of women networks in Ntshitshane

During the interviews, some respondents also cited the importance of *Stokvels* in their fight against poverty. Though *Stokvels* are not aimed at addressing religious issues, women in Ntshitshane still find a way of incorporating their spirituality to such networks. When these women meet to collect their monthly contribution or to discuss important issues, they start by praying together and motivate each other through passage of scriptures from the Bible. Kritzinger(2011:130) show that there is a religious significance in *Stokvels*. Such networks form a micro-economic movement for the mission of the church and in the process becomes an indigenous people's response to poverty.

3.6. 5. The use of cultural ethics in the fight against poverty in Ntshitshane

Cultural ethics within a community can hinder or speedup the transformation processes. When churches engage in missions to the poor, they need to comprehend cultural complexities of every context. This task can be easily done through taking cultural element in every society seriously (Tshehle 2001:41). During the research

process, respondents showed that the cultural ethic of *botho* was a viable means in addressing poverty in their community. Therefore the church needs to listen and learn from the poor so that its social missions can be relevant.

3.6.6 *Botho* as missions amidst the poor

I have discussed extensively in the previous chapters and sections about the challenges facing the poor in Ntshitshane. I will now therefore show in this section that *botho* embraced by the community in Ntshitshane can be used to define the church missions amidst the poor in the entire Mankweng community. The missions however will not be defined by the church for the poor; rather the poor themselves can use their cultural ethic of *botho* in addressing their poverty challenges. This ethic does not only encompass issues relating to human beings, it is also concerned about the environment which is also Missiological concern. "*Missio Dei*" to the world includes both human and non-human elements of that world. Missions that encompass the caring for creation are the good news of the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. It is good news for the poor, communities, and for a groaning creation. (Le Roux 2011:93)

Churches in Mankweng can therefore search for the presence of God in the cultural ethic of *botho*, this can help them in their missions ventures aimed at transforming the community in Mankweng. The presence of God in the community's cultures can help the church in its missions to discern where God is at work and therefore join God there. The church in missions should listen very carefully to the interpretation of the gospel and the meaning of missions from the point of view of the poor's cultural aspirations. By allowing the poor in the society to contribute to social missions efforts, the church will be able to bring the kingdom of God to local communities. This is also applicable in the transformation of the lives of the poor in Mankweng, if *botho* can be correctly integrated to the social mission strategies, the church can eventually bring shalom in the community.

3.7 Conclusion

The research findings gained through interviews and group interviews were presented in this chapter. It was highlighted that the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane was as a result of macro, meso and micro influences. The poor in Ntshitshane used their cultural ethic of *botho* in addressing social challenges including poverty. Since *botho* can be a viable means of addressing poverty in that community, the chapter then moved on to reflect on the possibility of using the same ethic as a point of departure in developing a new social mission strategy amidst the poor in Mankweng. It is however important to analyse the assumptions of the envisioned missions in the light of the Christian faith and the Bible. This analysis will be done in the form of the theological reflections in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

4.1. Introduction

While presenting the research findings in the previous chapter, the following three focus areas emerged as critical in the development of a social mission strategy amidst the poor in Mankweng: The cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane, the CAP and the importance of the ethic of *botho* in addressing the challenges facing the poor in that community. In this chapter I will reflect on the same focus areas from the perspective of the Biblical teachings and the teachings of the church from the historical past. The following question emerged in this chapter and an attempt to respond to it was made: What is the Bible saying about each of those areas? In answering this question, I had to reflect on some Biblical teachings which may directly and indirectly address them. I then move further to reflect on the role of the church in addressing each of those areas. I will now turn to those three focus areas and attempt to answer the question raised above.

4.2 Theological reflections on the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane

The first theme to be addressed concerns the challenges facing the poor reflected in the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane in section 2.3 of chapter 2. Here, I will reflect on some Biblical teachings about the issues in the cycle and also reflect on the role of the local churches in responding to them. Now I turn my focus to each of the questions regarding the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane.

4.2.1 What does the Bible say about the experiences of the poor?

The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments provide examples on how God wanted the poor in the society to be treated. Such examples can serve as a guideline to other communities including the Mankweng community on how to respond to poverty challenges. I will however in this section cite only few portions of scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments.

4.2.1.1 The provision for the poor people in the Old Testament

Poverty challenges have been prevalent even during the Biblical Old Testament times. The Old Testament community received guidelines on how to address those challenges. God commanded the people of Israel not to reap the edges of their fields or gather the gleanings of their harvest. They were further commanded not go over their vineyards the second time in order to gather the grapes that have fallen. The purpose of these commandments was that the poor amongst them could follow behind the harvesters and collect the leftovers (Leviticus 19:9-10). I will now turn to another Old Testament example.

When Ruth and her mother in law Naomi returned from the land of the Moabites, they had nothing to eat. Ruth had to go each morning and glean in the community fields (Ruth 2: 2-9). Because of obedience to the law of God, the community members did not restrict Ruth from gleaning in their fields. Here in this story also, Ruth initiated the solution for her family's material needs. Boaz the owner of the field did not call Ruth or offered to give her something for her needs, on the contrary Ruth went to glean in the field that belonged to Boaz and the owner did not stop her from doing so. I will now look at the comments made by Henry on the two examples.

Henry (1991:173) sums up the teachings of these scriptures as a lesson that God is pleased to see the poor in our communities supplied and refreshed. He further stressed that we must not think as a waste when we share what we have with the poor. I concur with Henry's understanding of refreshing the poor in our societies. The two portions of scriptures are also on par with the ethic of *botho* used in this study. The poor were not given alms or technological advancement; however, it was the poor's decision whether to go and glean in the field or not to glean. The poor also had a choice of collecting what they wanted and the amount which was sufficient for their needs, without the owner of the field dictating to them.

4.2.1.2 How do scriptures relate to the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane?

In relation to social challenges pointed out in the cycle as the high rate of crime, HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancies, the community can be motivated by the ethic

of *botho* start taking care of each other's interests. Leaving something behind for a fellow community member to glean was an act of kindness, mercy and showing care for the fellow human being. The same kindness can be applicable to the church and community members who are propelled by the ethic of *botho* and the love of God.

4.2.1.3 God's concern for the poor in the New Testament

When Jesus returned to Galilee he went to the synagogue and when the scroll was handed to him, he read the portion of scripture that confirmed that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. He was therefore anointed to preach the good news to the poor (Luke 4:18). This story also confirms that God cares for the poor. God anointed Jesus so that the poor could hear good news. The good news is about God's love for them and that God is on their side (Keane 2005:164). Churches in Mankweng can show the love of God to the poor by showing them that God is on their side. The notion of God being on the side of the poor denies exclusiveness as though God would be interested only on the poor, on the contrary it only denotes that the poor are the first on which God's attention focuses (Bosch 1991:435-436) I will now turn to other discussions on the experiences of the poor in our communities.

4.2.1.4 Scripture and the situation of the poor in Ntshitshane

With all the challenges presented in the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane, the social, political, economic, spiritual and cultural, the poor in that community can still find hope in hearing the good news that God was on their side and their ethic of *botho* was on par with the Biblical teachings.

4.2.2 Biblical teachings and the experiences of the poor

There are several Biblical themes which can be applicable to the experiences of the poor people in our societies. The box below shows some of those teachings and how they can be applicable to the experiences of the poor in Ntshitshane.

Lesson	Scripture	The context of the poor in Mankweng
Compassion	Jesus had compassion on	The social, political,

	people who came to listen to the sermon and commanded the disciples to give them something to eat (Matthew 14:13-20)	economic, spiritual and cultural challenges can be addressed through the compassion of church members.
Care	The Good Samaritan showed care for the man who was attacked by robbers (Luke 10:30-37)	The poor who suffer from the challenges of poverty in Ntshitshane are looking for the care from the church and other community members
Love	If one fails to help a fellow community member who is need, how can the love of God dwell them? (1 John 3:17)	When the churches in this community prioritise social missions, their actions will be the example of the love of God.
Sharing	The believers sold their properties and shared everything they had amongst themselves (Acts 4:32-34)	Church members in Mankweng moved by <i>botho</i> and the love of God can learn to share whatever they have with the poor community members.
Communitarian values	The believers leaved as a community in fellowship and sharing of their meals. Therefore they gain the goodwill from the community (Acts 2:42-47)	The church in Ntshitshane can better show the entire community that communitarian values are on par with the will of God.

BOX 4.1: Biblical teachings about the experiences of the poor people

4.2.3 What is the role of *ecclesia*³¹(the church)in the experiences of the poor in the society?

Different church gatherings addressed the situation of the poor in different societies. I will not attempt to look at all those contributions within the scope of this study. However, I will cite only a few of those gatherings which can serve as an example of how Christians understood their role regarding the challenges of the poor in the society.

4.2.3.1 The issues of the poor at the Melbourne conference (1980)

During this conference discussions about the poor in the society took a centre stage. Through Missiological reflections, the conference made a critical affirmation that solidarity with the poor was a central and crucial priority of the Christian missions (Bosch 1991:435). Since this conference realised the importance of solidarity with the poor in the community, it is also important for churches in Mankweng to follow in the same attitude and stand in solidarity with the poor in that community. I will now turn to another conference which also contributed in the issues regarding the missions to the poor people.

4.2.3.2 The Federation of Asian Bishop's Conference (FABC) Indonesia (1990)

Another conference which discussed issues regarding the poor in the society was the FABC. During this conference the option for the poor, and becoming the church of the poor became the integral understanding of the mission of the church. The affirmation here was that the church should be with the poor and seek to respond to their needs with sensitiveness to the presence of God in their cultures and religious traditions. Therefore a call to a dialogue with local cultures and traditional religions was made (Mattam& Kim 1997:60). It is also critical to look at other gatherings that

³¹ The Greek concept *ekklesia* means literally called out of empire. The church therefore is the community of people called out of empire by the Spirit of Jesus to live as an alternative society in the midst of the imperial world (Brook 2004:7). The use of the term in this study refers to the universal church of God which comprises of many denominations and traditions. I am of the view that churches can learn from each other when engaging in social missions.

also addressed this issue from within an African context. I will however look at one of those gatherings in the next section.

4.2.3.3 The churches of Africa/World Bank conference Nairobi, Kenya (2000)

The reflections made at the end of the conference pointed out to the importance of the shift from focusing on poverty to focus on the poor themselves. A statement was made that in the 1970s the focus of Development was on helping the poor, in the 1980s, it shifted to concerns on the sound macroeconomic policies, and in 1990s it moved on to focus on poverty reduction through growth. The current debate now calls for the focus on the poor as subjects not objects of development and adopt their approaches which they use to fight poverty in their communities (Belshaw, Calderisi&Sugden 2001:238). It is therefore clear from the arguments made during this conference that the Post Development Paradigm raised valid concerns with regard to the development of the poor in the society.

4.3 Reflecting theologically on CAP

The CAP of the CWC was defined in details in section 2.5.4 of chapter 2 and some questions were asked during the interview in section 3.2.2 of chapter 3 regarding this program. It is important here to reflect theologically on this program in order to validate its importance within Christian missions. There might not be any direct scriptural or church teachings relating to this program as it was developed for a specific local church in a specific geographical area. However some theological themes can emerge when the program is analysed. After reflecting theologically on CAP the following themes emerged:

4.3.1 Caring for the poor in the society

Almost all the issues reflected on CAP revolve around caring for the poor in the society. The food parcels, contributions made during funerals to the poor families, caring for the elderly, support and care for the HIV patients and promotion of education especially to the children coming from poor families can be seen as elements of care. In the Bible, God commanded the people of Israel that there should

be no one poor amongst them (Deuteronomy 15:4). They were also commanded to make sure that the needs of their fellow Israelites were met (:7). This command shows that God is concerned about caring for the poor, therefore legitimizing the CAP.

4.3.2 God's love for the poor in the society as reflected on CAP

The church is a sign of the love of God to the world, therefore through the CAP; the CWC shows such love through contributing to the social needs of community members. In John3:16, the Bible speaks about God loving the world so much to the point of offering Christ as a sacrifice. The love of God is also reflected through the CAP, when Christians give their time and resources in order to contribute to those who are suffering because of the effects of poverty, they are sending a message of love to the entire community.

4.3.3 CWC response to HIV/AIDS pandemic

For CAP to seek to respond to the effects of HIV/AIDS is a sign that CWC understands its missionary responsibility to the community. The church should be in the front line by providing support, care and understanding to those who are infected and affected by the pandemic. Belshaw, Calderisi&Sugden (2001:139) maintain that the reasons for the church to lead in addressing HIV/AIDS are that it has a long history of presence, proclamation, and persuasion. They further stressed that the church can lead in the battle against HIV/AIDS because it has the Bible, a manual with tested and proven effectiveness in changing behaviour and morals. The argument laid down by these scholars proves that the concern about HIV/AIDS of the CWC is a social and spiritual concern as well. I will now turn to the theological reflections on the cultural ethic of *botho* in order to validate its relevance within the Christian social mission.

4.4 Theological reflections on the ethic of *botho*

I mentioned earlier in section 2.1 of chapter 2 that if the church listens to the stories of the poor in the society, it can discover the seed of the word already present in

their lives and cultures. Though the ethic of *botho* is not a Biblical concept, other elements of Christianity can be deduced from this concept. Some Christian concepts which emerged from the ethic of *botho* during the theological reflection process include the following: God and the ethic of *botho*, compassion, social teaching, Christian faith, spirituality and the reign of God. I will now turn to each of these concepts and look at them in the light of God, Biblical teachings and the teachings of the church.

4.4.1 God and the *botho* ethic

In addressing this issue, I looked at the idea of hospitality which is a critical element in the ethic of *botho*. It is best defined by its derivation *Mothokemothokabatho*³². When Jesus was teaching the multitudes he had compassion on them, he was not only concerned about their spiritual wellbeing, but also cared for their need for food. From an African perspective, that can be seen as an act of *botho*. Furthermore, the concept of *botho* is not only concerned about human acts; but also values that an individual person contributes to the wellbeing of others, including showing hospitality (Munyaka & Motlhabi 2009:63-65). Because of these concerns reflected in *botho*, the elements of the love of God can be detected in the *botho* ethic. I will now turn to the element of compassion which is also prevalent in both *botho* and Christian teachings.

4.4.2 Compassion as reflected in *botho*

Botho is also opposed to individualistic and selfish world views of many Western countries. Compassion is reflected in the mutual caring and sharing within African communities and the welcoming of strangers, offering them hospitality (Richardson 1998:45). *Botho* is also the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining community. It calls us to believe and feel that other people's pains are also our pains, our wealth are their wealth and my salvation their salvation

³² This is a Sotho saying literally meaning [A person is a person through other people] in most African communities this phrase is used in promoting hospitality particularly showing hospitality to strangers.

(Nussbaum 2009:100-109). God sent the Lord Jesus Christ to the world, He in turn is sending the church to go and show compassion to the poor. I will now turn to other social teachings apart from the teachings of the church in order to show the relevance of the ethic of *botho*.

4.5 *Botho* in the light of social teachings

Social missions compel the church, community and the poor to show hospitality to each other. Nelson Mandela claimed that because of *botho*, travellers through a country could stop at any village, and they didn't have to ask for food or water. Once they stop, the people would give them food and entertainment. (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ubuntu Accessed February 2012). The community in Ntshishane made it clear through the interviews that the poor in that community regarded *botho* as part of their social teachings and socialization processes. The validity of this ethic is supported by social teachings prevalent within the South African communities.

4.6 *Botho* through the spectacles of the Christian faith

There are Christian elements that can be detected in the cultural ethic of *botho*. This can be done through engaging this ethic in rigorous theological reflections. Community practices often contain values, beliefs, theologies which for the most part go unnoticed until they are complexified and brought to our notice through the process of theological reflections (Swinton & Mowat 2006:20). The communitarian value of *botho* practiced by this community resembles the Christian teachings of loving one's neighbours as loving oneself. I can then conclude that when the Ntshishane community embraces each other by showing *botho*, their actions are on par with Christian faith.

4.7 The spirituality in the ethic of *botho*

An intuitive reflection on the notion of *botho* makes it to be inherently a spiritual action. Its central features of communitarian values, unity, caring for the well-being of others are perceived to be aspects of Christian faith. Within the Christian

tradition, believers are often encouraged to live as members of one family. Symbols such as members of one body (I Corinthians 12:27) and the church as being joint together as one temple (Ephesians 2:20) are often used to promote the unity of believers. *Botho* stresses that a person can only survive through relying on others.

4.8 *Botho* and the reign of God

Apart from the scripture, there are some Christian concepts which are also on par with *botho*. Discussions on the reign of God and its meaning to the mission enterprise have been going on for long. Ralphs (2002:106) defined the reign of God as a way of describing the mission of Jesus who came to establish the realm or rule of God on earth. The realm can be experienced now as God's saving presence in our lives. Missions in the perspective of God's reign includes putting the poor, the neglected, and the despised on their feet again as having recovered before God and people their full humanity (Bosch 1991:34). It is against this backdrop that *botho* and the reign of God goes hand in hand and has a meaningful impact in the lives of the poor in Ntshishane. Both *botho* and the reign of God strive to resuscitate the full humanity in the lives of the poor in the society.

4.9 Other Christian movements supporting *botho*

Throughout the church history there were several movements which also regarded communitarian values as a way of fighting poverty challenges. The commission of life and work was pioneered by the Lutheran archbishop Nathan Soderblom (1866-1931). This movement stressed that Christians could co-operate with one another in addressing challenges facing the world (Pillay&Hofmeryr 1991:278). The commission further emphasised unity through Christian action in the world; by showing compassion for the poor (:279). The unity of Christians emphasised by this commission in fighting social ills is on par with the communitarian value of *botho* which the research findings claimed to be viable in Ntshishane.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided theological reflections on the research findings presented in chapter 3. The cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane and the use of the ethic of *botho* in the church social mission were also reflected upon theologically. Having covered the other three elements of the cycle of mission praxis from the second chapter, I will cover the final aspect of missionary plan of action in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

A MISSIONARY PLAN OF ACTION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the final element in the cycle of mission praxis called the missionary plan of action. This plan of action moves from the premise of praxis which calls for a thoughtful reflection and action that occur in synchrony in the direction of transforming the world (UNISA 2007:33). I have already mentioned in section 1.1 of chapter 1 that the transformative encounters form the understanding of social mission in this study. The plan of action here will therefore aim at developing a new social mission strategy that is based on the Post Development Paradigm as indicated earlier in section 1.1 of chapter 1. The process of developing that particular social mission strategy can be illustrated by the petal figure 5 below:



5.2 Figure 5: The planning process of a new social mission strategy

The figure 5 places the “*Missio Dei*” at the top centre of the cycle because all mission activities should be based on God’s mission as Maluleke (1995:9) argued. The poor people and their cultural ethics follow below *Missio Dei*. When the poor take destiny

into their hands and define the content of their social mission strategy, *Missio Dei* should be the first thing in the centre of their planning. That will be followed by the church that will support the poor through identification with them, bringing in the Christian perspective to the strategy that is led by the poor (Swart 2006:47). I will now turn to each of the elements in the planning process in order to provide a broader understanding of each one of them. I will show how each element relates to the centre of the figure. This will be done by engaging other Missiologists and scholars in the discussion. I will also show how each element is used in the process of developing a social mission based on the ethic of *bothoin* Mankweng. The process here is guided by the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm discussed in section 1.14.8 of chapter 1.

5.2.1 Identification with the poor community

The first step in the process of developing a new social mission strategy in Mankweng will be the churches' identification with the poor community. Identification entails churches being in communion and in communication with the local community. It also presupposes active participation in the community's life in which solidarity is built up (Karecki 1999: 15, Pieterse 2004:86). In conducting this study, I took the process of identification seriously by immersing myself into the local community in the Ntshitshane section of Mankweng. Through the identification process, I learned the customs and practices of the community and was in a position to observe their common cultural ethic which they use in addressing poverty challenges. After the identification stage, the next aspect is of listening to the stories of the poor.

5.2.2 Listening to the stories of the poor

As a stranger in the community of Ntshitshane, it was important to listen to the stories of the community members. Through narratives, story tellers allowed me as a researcher to be part of their experiences and mind-set. I started to see things the way they see them and. Using stories to access the experiences of other people is supported by (Van Schalkwyk&Masenya 2005:139). As a pastor I often listened to

stories told by the poor in the community, such stories helped me to understand their experiences better. These stories also helped me to develop the cycle of poverty in Ntshitshane as discussed in section 2.3 of chapter 2 of this study. In listening to the stories told by the poor, the church can be made aware of cultural ethics which can contribute in developing a relevant social mission strategy as Bruwer (1994:55) puts it:

To pity the poor and humour them with hand outs will certainly not motivate them, on the other hand, listening to them do motivate.

I will now turn to the next step which deals with observing the community's cultural ethics.

5.2.3 Observing and identifying the community's cultural ethics

Cultural ethics play an important role in the way the poor understand and think about solutions to their challenges. There is therefore a need for researchers to observe and identify the dominant cultural ethics when addressing issues of social missions. The question to be asked when approaching local communities is: how to approach the dominant and sub-cultures in the society? In responding to this question, the following five possibilities can be applicable in the development of the new social mission strategies within the churches in Mankweng: Christ against culture, the Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture on paradox and Christ the transformer of culture (Niebuhr 1951:103-190). Taking into consideration the cultural aspirations of the poor in Mankweng can position the churches there into the possibility of accepting the position of the Christ of culture. This will therefore mean that Christ is not against the cultural aspirations which promote the wellbeing of the poor in the society.

In the context of social mission amidst the poor in Mankweng, the understanding of the dominant culture of *botho* will be necessary in choosing the relevant relationship between Christ and culture. The poor in Ntshitshane and other sections of Mankweng still believe in communitarian values of the society. These values see an individual as being integrated with the whole community life (Jonas 1996:87). I will

now turn to the next aspect, which argues for a reflection on the problems and solutions of the poor in the society.

5.2.4 Reflecting on those problems and solutions in the light of the Christian faith

Reflecting on the problems and solutions of the poor is critical in order to avoid rendering the envisioned social mission strategy a mere theory that is not in line with practical Christian mission. Since the new social mission strategy developed in this study moves in a circular manner, the whole process does not end at a particular stage. The cycle does not close; rather, it gives rise to new experiences that must also be reflected upon. Therefore the whole process can give rise to further action. This stage also enabled me to look at the research results in the light of Christian faith, and in the process discovered the presence of Christian elements in the local cultural ethic of *botho*.

5.2.5 Engaging in dialogue with the poor community

The transformation process cannot be carried exclusively by the church. Christians are called to discern and to follow the presence and work of the Spirit blowing within and outside the church (Banawiratma 2005:76). Through the dialogue with the poor in Ntshitshane, the church can also learn other values are on par with the Christian faith and which can be used in developing other social mission strategies. Though there are different cultures and ideologies in Mankweng, it is still possible to agree on a common cultural ethic through dialogue (Amalamados 2005:176). Through the dialogue with the poor in the community and other partners we discovered the prevalence of the ethic of *botho* which can be used as a point of departure in the social mission amidst the poor within that community.

5.2.6 The contributions from other stakeholders

Whilst acknowledging that the poor should be the pioneers of the new social mission strategies in their local communities, it is important that they should also gain contributions from other interlocutors addressed in section 2.4 of chapter 2. I should, however, make it clear that the interlocutor's contributions are only needed

to supplement the decisions made by the poor themselves. The contributions from outsiders should not alter the original solutions made by the poor in the community. From contribution, I will now move to the decision stage.

5.2.7 Allowing the poor to decide what will work in their context

I have already mentioned in section 1.1 of chapter 1 that another flaw of the current social mission to the poor in Mankweng is that most of the churches' strategies are designed for the poor not by the poor. The change of attitude from church members here is critical because in this case the poor, not the church, decide about strategies that will work within their context. A distinction that was made in section 1.14.5.6 is also critical here in order to avoid confusing this new strategy with the PCD. The new strategy looks for an alternative to the Development Paradigm, whilst PCD falls within the alternative Development Paradigm. While conducting this study the poor people in Mankweng were the driving forces behind the whole process, my work as a researcher was just to facilitate the process of developing the new social mission strategy. I will now turn my focus to the stage of defining the problems and solutions.

5.2.8 The poor defining their problems and solutions

During this stage the poor have the privilege of defining their own problems and solutions to those problems. Local churches in this regard do not go out to render some social mission projects; on the contrary, churches constitute the constant base from where the poor engage in the process of transforming their own lives (Swart 2006:206). It is the poor who should define what their problems are and the solutions to those problems. Transformation of the poor's living conditions must come from within the individuals and groups in the society, and cannot be imposed from the outside (Burkey 1993:48). Allowing the poor to define their own problems will make them active agents in their own development and it will reduce the insider-outsider, top down-bottom up attitude of the Development Paradigm (De Gruchy 2005:66). After defining their problems, the poor will have to lead the process; I will now turn to this aspect in the next section

5.2.9 The poor leading in the transformation of their lives

After deciding on the content for the strategy, the poor again lead the way in the development of the social mission strategy. Allowing the poor to lead in the transformational encounters here is to guard against the error of the Development Paradigm where the recipients were merely objects of social missions. Those having a problem are the ones best qualified to identify the need and show the way out (Bruwer 1994:59). The process of allowing the poor to lead the way can be done through the community gatherings such as *lekgotla*³³. During these gatherings, the poor can be given a chance to define their social mission strategies.

The poor community members can also chose those who will facilitate the process in order to ensure progress and positive results. During the process of this study I often listened to the deliberations during community gatherings. Those deliberations confirmed that the poor are better positioned in identifying solutions to their social problems and can be able to lead the way towards change.

5.2.10 Implementation of the social mission strategy

This is another critical stage that also distinguishes the new social mission strategy from the present Development Paradigm orientated strategies. While in the most present social mission strategies, implementation is done by the church *for* the poor; in the new strategy proposed here, it is the poor who actually do the implementation. I also discovered during this study that the poor find it motivating to implement strategies which they feel they have ownership of. During this stage, the church's role is to promote, through the preaching of the Gospel, the contents of change defined by the poor themselves. However, such preaching should include reflections on the cultural ethics of the poor through the light of the Christian faith and biblical teachings.

³³*Lekgotlais* a Pedi word which refers to community gatherings where members of the community come together to discuss issues involving their wellbeing.

5.2.11 Evaluation and review

This process is critical in order to avoid rendering the envisioned missions a mere theory without practical outcomes. Evaluation and review will also provide a room for detecting the inadequacies of the new mission strategies and also provide a way for rectification through review. After the last stage, the whole process starts again in a circular manner as reflected in section 5.1. The purpose of the whole exercise is to insure that the new cultural ethics that suffice in the process are also given consideration and if possible be integrated within the new social mission strategies. I will now in the next section turn to the final and critical question which will provide more light to the envisioned new social mission strategy.

5.3 How should the new social mission in Mankwengbe?

The new social mission strategy amidst the poor in Mankweng takes cognisance of the poor's cultural ethic of *botho* seriously. It is through this ethic that the poor in this community continue to find reasons for helping each other during the times of need. *Botho* can therefore be a viable point of departure in the social mission amidst the poor in Mankweng. Tshehle (2001:213) is therefore correct when saying:

A religious approach to development takes ubuntu/botho as its primary operating guide. That means that one works in the spirit and conduct that reflects this inner respect for the dignity of others, especially the recipients of our goodness. The root of the principle of ubuntu is the confession that there inheres in every person a core of being who cannot be nothingness; that all of us, despite our apparent differences, are united at a deeper level where commonality as persons with histories, experiences, destinies are located.

These words support my understanding of a mission to and with the poor in Mankweng based on the perspectives of the Post Development Paradigm. I will now turn my focus to the recommendations regarding further research endeavours on this subject.

5.4 Recommendations

This study does not claim to have covered all the aspects necessary in articulating social missions moving from the Post Development Paradigm. I therefore

preferred to use the terms missions and perspective in order to leave a room for other deliberations and contributions to the study. The former suggests that this study is just about another mission strategy amidst other strategies prevalent in Mankweng. It also denotes that other social mission strategies can still be developed within that context. The latter shows that this study does not claim to have responded fully to the challenges facing the poor in Mankweng. It is just a perspective amongst other perspectives, but certainly one that takes seriously the assumptions of the Post Development Paradigm. There is still a great need for a research regarding social missions based on the Post Development Paradigm in Mankweng and in other communities as well.

5.6 Conclusion to chapter 5

This chapter is very crucial in this study because it finalises the whole process of the cycle of mission praxis and the issues addressed in other chapters. A missionary plan of action has been presented in a form of a new social mission strategy. The strategy was presented in the form of a petal figure showing the following stages of the process: identification, listening, observing, reflecting, dialogue, contribution, deciding, defining, leading, implementation, evaluation and review. This final stage in the process calls for more reflections and evaluations to be made so that the process can start afresh and following the same sequence.

5.6 Final Conclusion

This study has covered the five elements of the cycle of mission praxis. The aim of using the cycle was to provide a structure for this study which has credibility within the field of Missiology. Chapter two provided a story of my missionary journey in the Ntshitshane community. The narrative helped to unearth different stories and experiences of challenges facing the poor in that society. Then chapter three provided the research findings and also analysed those findings. The analysis revealed the interconnectedness of different factors and structures exacerbating the challenges of the poor in that community. After probing the consequences of those structures and factors it was discovered that the poor in Ntshitshane depended on

their cultural ethic of *botho*. They used different proverbs and sayings as a way of promoting solidarity amongst themselves when dealing with poverty challenges. Then chapter four presented a theological reflection to the research findings and related the use of the ethic of *botho* with the church social mission strategy.

Finally, chapter five addressed the element of missionary plan of action. It was made clear that the purpose of the whole study was to finally develop a new social mission strategy. The strategy engages the church in practical action and therefore responds to the call made by the Post Development Paradigm. The final remarks and recommendations showed that the study is not a final answer to the long sought missions to the poor in that community. There is still a need for further research and development with regard to this new social mission strategy. The new social mission strategy amidst the poor in the Ntshitshane community of Mankweng is therefore based on the Post Development Paradigm assumption, this assumption calls for the use of cultural ethics in developing social mission strategies. The local cultural ethic of *botho* can therefore be used in the social mission strategies of churches in Mankweng.

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