

**TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE POOR IN THE  
AMALINDA FOREST COMMUNITY, EAST LONDON: AN  
EXPLORATORY PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my work, both in conception and execution.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M.K. Mazantsana", is written over a horizontal dotted line.

M.K. MAZANTSANA

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late dear Mother Leonorah 'Matshezi' and my late dear Father, Mabhaso 'Bhele' for their guidance from my early childhood and for equipping me with a sound understanding of the Superior Being 'Our Heavenly Father' on whose grace we all depend for our survival.

## ABSTRACT

This practical theological study sought to explore the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community of East London in the Eastern Cape. The problem of poverty and inequality still exists in the post-apartheid South Africa. This is a call for the commitment of all social institutions including the church to journey with the communities in bringing about transformation in people's lives (Bowers du Toit & Nkomo 2014:2; Clesi & Bowers du Toit 2019:8). I focused on the actual lives of poor people of the Amalinda Forest Community and the experience of the church members involved in the transformational development.

The church has two mandates, the spiritual, to announce the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ and the second calls for Christians' responsible participation in human society (Bowers du Toit in Swart et al. 2010:266). For effective transformation, the relationship between the two mandates needs to be observed. Coupled with that, the poor as made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) deserve freedom from oppression (Pillay 2017:9).

Responding to the above call, the Amalinda Methodist Church of Southern Africa engaged in a soup kitchen programme to alleviate poverty in the Amalinda Forest Community. This study brought to light how the church addressed the problem of poverty within the immediate community. Their practical theological action was witnessed in a soup kitchen programme aimed at transforming the lives of the poor. They are challenged to promote a sustainable and accountable theological performance when rendering services. Key research findings highlighted the challenge of socio-economic needs and the lack of service delivery for the poor who were living in shacks with no hope of development.

## **ISISHWANKATHELO**

*Intlupheko nokungalingani kuMzantsi Afrika ochasene nobandlululo iseyinto ehleli ikho. Oku kumelela amasebe eenkonzo zoluntu kuquka neenkonzo zakwalizwi ukuba zihambisane ngamxhelo mnye neendawo zasekuhlaleni ukuzisa inguqu kwintlalo yabantu (Bowers du Toit noNkomo 2014:2; Celesi noBowers du Toit 2019:8). Ndixine ngqo kwintlalo yabantu abahluphekayo eAmalinda Foresti kuquka namava abantu benkonzo yakwaLwizi abathathe inxaxheba ekuziseni inguqu.*

*Inkonzo yakwaLizwi inezigunyaziso ezibini, ukuvakalisa iindaba ezilungileyo zenguquko ngoYesu umKristu, okwesibini ukuba amaKristu abenenxaxheba kwintlalo yabantu (Bowers du Toit ku Swart nabanye 2010:266). Ukuze ke iphumelele inguqu, zozibini ezi zigunyaziso zimele ukuqwalaselwa. Ukongeza, abahluphekayo bamele ukukhululeka kwincinezelo njengabadalwe ngokomfanekiso kaThixo (Pillay 2017:9).*

*Kulo mceli mngeni ukhankanywe ngentla, ibandla lamaMethodi omZantsi Afrika lase-Amalinda lwaqalisa inkqubo yokunikezela ngesuphu eAmalinda Foresti. Olu phando lubeke elubala indlela eli bandla elazinikezela ngayo ukujongana nengxaki yentlupheko kule ngingqi. Ukuthatha kwabo inxaxheba ngokobuThixo bungqinwe yinkqubo yokunikezela ngesuphu ejongene nenguqu yokuphila kwabahluphekayo. Umceli mngeni abajongene nawo ngowokugcina izinga elingapheliyo lwenxaxheba yengqiqo buThixo xa kunikezelwa ngeenkonzo eluntwini. Iziphumo zophando ezingundoqo zibonakalise umceli mngeni kwezintlalo nophuhliso nokunqongophala kokuziswa kweenkonzo kubantu abahluphekayo ababonwa behlala kwimikhukhu kungekho themba lwanguqu.*

## Table Of Contents

### Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study, statement of the problem and general layout of the study	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.1.1 The rationale of the study	3
1.1.2 Background of the study	3
1.1.2.1 The historical background of the Methodist church	4
1.1.3 The problem of the study	5
1.1.4 Some other challenges related to the present study	5
1.1.5 An interpretation of practical theology	6
1.2 Poverty as a challenge in practical theology	7
1.2.1 Service delivery management in South Africa	7
1.2.2 The management of the church's development ministry	9
1.2.3 A lack of studies on transformational development in churches	10
1.2.4 Population explosion and unemployment in South Africa	10
1.3 Objectives of the study	13
1.3.1 Conceptualisation of the study	13
1.3.2 Practical theology	14
1.3.3 A brief history of practical theology	15
1.3.4 The Church	17
1.3.5 Community	18
1.3.6 Community development	19
1.3.7 Creation	19
1.4 Development	21
1.4.1 Human development	23
1.4.2 A challenge to humanise development for human existence	24
1.4.3 Empowerment	27
1.4.4 Leader and leadership	29
1.4.5 A leader	29
1.4.6 Servant leadership	30
1.4.7 Transformational leadership	31
1.5 Poverty	32

1.5.1	Transformation	34
1.5.2	Some assumptions regarding transformation	34
1.5.3	A call for transformation in South Africa	34
1.5.4	Transformational development	36
1.6	Transformational development challenges of the modern world	36
1.6.1	Transformational development from a Christian perspective	37
1.6.2	The role of religion in transformational development	38
1.6.3	Sustainable development	39
1.7	Research design	40
1.7.1	Delimitation of the study	41
1.7.1.1	The field of the study	41
1.7.1.2	Research population	41
1.7.1.3	Research techniques	42
1.8	Contribution of the study	42
1.9	Problems encountered with the study	43
1.10	Conclusion	44
Chapter 2: From the grassroots towards a practical theological perspective		
		45
2.1	Introduction	45
2.2	Towards a black liberation practical theological transformation in South Africa	46
2.2.1	How practical theology contributes to human well-being	48
2.2.1.1	The first dimension is the visual dimension	49
2.2.1.2	The second dimension of practical reasoning	49
2.2.1.3	The third dimension is the tendency-need dimension	50
2.2.1.4	The fourth dimension is the environmental social dimension	50
2.2.1.5	The fifth dimension is the rule-role dimension	51
2.3	A challenge for a renewed practical theology	53
2.3.1	Practical theology and postmodernity	53
2.3.1.1	The views of the late modern supporters	53
2.3.1.2	The views of counter-modern and radical postmodern supporters	54
2.3.1.3	The counter modern positions	54
2.3.1.4	What the three postmodern positions offer in contemporary practical theology	54
2.3.2	The liberation theology	55
2.3.2.1	The feminist approach to liberation	56



2.3.3	Reconstructive motif as reflected in Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matthew 5)	58
2.4	The church and the struggle for South Africa	59
2.4.1	The nature and the purpose of the church	61
2.4.1.1	Preaching and worship	62
2.4.1.2	Care serves as a function of the church	63
2.4.1.3	The socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political role of the church in South Africa	64
2.4.1.4	The hermeneutic mission of the church to the world	66
2.5	John Wesley's role in church organisation and development for transformation	66
2.5.1	The development of the Methodist Church in South Africa	68
2.5.2	The engagement of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in politics	68
2.6	A brief historical background of poverty in South Africa	69
2.6.1	Poverty in post-apartheid South Africa	70
2.6.2	The third world poverty as identified in South Africa	71
2.6.3	The challenges of social disintegration in South Africa	72
2.6.4	The Statistics South Africa report on living conditions	73
2.6.5	Progress in alleviating poverty in South Africa post-1994	74
2.6.6	Corruption as a hindrance to the alleviation of poverty in South Africa	75
2.6.6.1	How is corruption challenged in South Africa?	76
2.6.7	An example of a residents' protest action for demands not met	77
2.6.8	A critique concerning the efficiency of leadership	78
2.6.9	Distinction between service delivery and public service	79
2.6.10	How can poverty be addressed from a Christian perspective?	79
2.6.10.1	How can the peace of God be delivered to the world for effective transformation?	81
2.6.10.2	What can we learn from making a difference in people's lives through some programmes?	82
2.7	Leadership for development	83
2.7.1	Leadership from a Christian perspective	84
2.7.1.1	Poor as made in the image of God	85
2.7.1.2	Poor as people in Rebellion	85
2.7.1.3	Poor as Christ incarnation	85
2.7.1.4	Poor as God's favourites	85
2.7.1.5	Poor as lost souls	86
2.8	Empowerment through leadership	86

2.8.1	A role model of empowerment — World Vision Tanzania (WVT)	87
2.8.2	Participatory development and empowerment	87
2.9	Conclusion	88
Chapter 3: Towards a theoretical framework for transformational development		
<hr/>		
		90
3.1	Introduction	90
3.1.1	Poor relationships as the cause of poverty — what needs to be done?	92
3.2	Framing the future towards transformation	92
3.2.1	Discovering the true identity	94
3.2.1.1	Challenges faced by the poor including exclusion	94
3.2.1.2	The challenges of the non-poor and their vocation	95
3.2.1.3	Respecting the human identity of a social being in the community	96
3.3	Affirming the role of the church	97
3.3.1	'Ubuntu' for just and peaceful relationships	99
3.4	A call for servant leadership	99
3.5	Freedom of the poor — A key to transformational development	101
3.6	Promoting sustainability	102
3.6.1	Physical sustainability	102
3.6.2	Mental sustainability	103
3.6.3	Social sustainability	104
3.6.4	Spiritual sustainability	105
3.7	Promoting pervasive evil awareness	106
3.8	Towards the best human future — The kingdom of God	108
3.9	Critiques of Transformational Development	109
3.10	Conclusion	110
Chapter 4: Research in practical theology: The construction of information gathering instruments for this study		
<hr/>		
		111
4.1.	Introduction	111
4.2	Towards practical theology research in South Africa	112
4.2.1	Acknowledging the Methodist Church leadership to conduct research	113
4.2.2	Organising procedure for the empirical research interviews	114
4.3	Considering empirical research for the present study	114
4.4	The position of the empirical researcher in this study	116

4.5	The research design	117
4.5.1	The sampling procedure	118
4.5.2	Research methodology	119
4.5.3	An interview as a research tool	119
4.5.4	Some advantages of interviews	120
4.5.5	The semi-structured interview	120
4.6	The interview schedules for semi-structured interviews and the recording of data	121
4.7	Techniques for the effectiveness of interviews	122
4.7.1	Communication relations during interviewing	122
4.7.2	Conducting the interviews	122
4.8	The focus group interviewing	123
4.8.1	The reasons for using focus groups	124
4.8.2	The size of the focus group	124
4.9	Direct observation	125
4.10	Limitations	126
4.11	Conclusion	127
Chapter 5: The Research Findings		
		128
5.1	Introduction	128
5.2.	Interview responses of the Women’s Manyano (Methodist Women’s Prayer and Service Union)	129
5.2.1.	Findings concerning Women’s Manyano membership	129
5.2.2	Relating to how the women felt when first engaged in the programme	130
5.2.3	Findings about the first experience in the community	130
5.2.4	Findings concerning how often the soup was served	131
5.2.5	Findings about the challenges to be addressed in the programme	131
5.2.6	Other means made to transform the lives of the poor	132
5.2.7	Findings concerning the participation of the community members in the programme	133
5.3	Responses from the Young Men’s Guild (YMG) interviews	133
5.3.1	Findings on the role of the YMG members in the soup kitchen programme	133
5.3.2	Responses concerning the place where soup was served	134
5.3.3	Findings concerning the community’s response to the programme	134
5.3.4	Other challenges to be addressed in the programme	135
5.4	Data gathered from the church leaders’ interviews	135

5.4.1 Responses from the first society steward	136
5.4.1.1 Information about what happened at the beginning of the soup-kitchen vision	136
5.4.1.2 Response concerning the engagement in the programme	136
5.4.1.3 Findings on how the soup kitchen was operating in catering to the poor in that community	136
5.4.1.4 How the church devised means for the sustainability of the programme.	137
5.4.2 Response from the church secretary	137
5.4.3 Responses from the treasurer	137
5.4.4 Responses from the second society steward	138
5.4.4.1 Findings on the background of the soup-kitchen programme	138
5.4.4.2 Response concerning challenges in the programme	139
5.5 Responses from the initiators of the soup-kitchen programme	139
5.5.1 Findings on how the soup-kitchen programme started	139
5.5.2 The first experience of the soup-kitchen initiators in the Amalinda Forest community	141
5.5.3 Responses concerning the participation of the community in the programme	142
5.5.4 Some challenges faced by the church in transforming the lives of the poor in that community	142
5.5.5 Responding to the vision to be shared for the sustainability of the programme	143
5.6 Research findings from the Amalinda Forest focus group	143
5.6.1 <i>Ukuqinisekisa ngokuba ngabahlali eAmalinda Foresti</i>	143
5.6.2 <i>Indlela abeva ngayo ukuqala kwe suphu kitchen</i>	143
5.6.3 <i>Ukuchaza ukuba iqhuba njani le soup-kitchen</i>	144
5.6.4 <i>Ukuqonda ukuba bahamba inkonzo eWesile na</i>	144
5.6.5 <i>Into abangayibalisayo oko yaqala le nkqubo yale suphu apha ekuhlaleni</i>	144
5.6.6 <i>Ukucebisa ukuphucula ngakumbi le nkqubo yale suphu</i>	145
5.6.7 <i>Indima edlalwa ngabahlali ekuhambiseni le suphu</i>	145
5.6.8 <i>Ezinye izinto abathanda ukuba ziqwalaselwe kule ndawo bahlala kuyo eAmalinda Foresti</i>	146
5.6.9 Research findings from the Amalinda Forest focus interview group number two (2)	146
5.6.9.1 Findings concerning being residents	146
5.6.9.2 Responses to how they felt when the soup-kitchen started	147
5.6.9.3 How they felt about the Methodists' support	147
5.6.9.4 Information about their church denomination	147
5.6.9.5 How they felt since the programme started	147
5.6.9.6 Their participation in the soup-kitchen programme	147

5.6.9.7 Findings on challenges in the community	148
5.7 Research findings from direct observation	148
5.8 Observing the community	153
5.9 Observing community members	154
5.10. Conclusion	154
Chapter 6: Analysis of the research data	
	155
6.1. Introduction	155
6.1.1. The analysis of the Women's Manyano interview results	155
6.1.2. The feelings of the women about the programme	155
6.1.3. The first experience in the community	156
6.1.4. Serving soup on Sundays and challenges of the programme	156
6.1.5. Other means of transforming lives of the poor	157
6.1.6. Considering the role of the community	158
6.2 Analysis of data from interviews with YMG members	159
6.2.1. The role played by the YMG members	159
6.2.2. The convenience of the venue and its effects on the programme	159
6.2.3. The relationships with members of the community	160
6.2.4. Challenges to be addressed	160
6.3. Analysis of data gathered from the church leaders	160
6.3.1 Feelings about the vision of the programme	160
6.3.2. Engagement in the programme	161
6.3.3. How the soup-kitchen was operating	162
6.3.4. The challenges and sustainability of the programme	162
6.4. Analysis of data from the soup-kitchen initiators' focus group	163
6.4.1. How the programme started	163
6.4.2. First experience in the community	164
6.4.3 Participation of the community, challenges faced by the church and vision for the sustainability of the programme.	165
6.5. Analysis of Amalinda Forest focus group interview results	166
6.5.1. What the focus group experienced	166
6.5.2 How the soup-kitchen was operating	166
6.5.3 Some changes since the programme started and suggestions to improve the programme	166
6.5.4. Some challenges to be addressed in the community	167

6.5.5 Analysing direct observation results of the church members from a practical theological point of view	168
6.5.6 Analysis concerning the community	169
6.6 Conclusion	169
Chapter 7: Summary of the research findings and suggestions for future research	171
7.1. Introduction	171
7.1.1. A noteworthy realisation of transformational development in the Amalinda Forest Community	172
7.1.2. The research findings	174
7.1.2.1. Summary of the findings concerning the role of the community	175
7.1.2.2. Findings concerning challenges in the programme	175
7.2 Suggestions and recommendations for designing a programme:	176
7.2.1 Designing the programme	176
7.2.2 Guidelines for effective participation	178
7.2.3 Inviting the Almighty for the programme design	179
7.3 Unity amongst the churches	179
7.3.1 Promoting unity in neighbouring communities	179
7.3.2 Unity in preaching and social commitment	181
7.3.3 Recommended church teachings in the context of higher education in Africa	182
7.4 A critique of the church's actions	183
7.4.1 Neglecting the diaconal ministry	183
7.4.2 Failing to be a body of Christ	184
7.4.3 Concentrating on being of this world	185
7.4.4 A captured church	186
7.5 Collaboration	187
7.5.1 What should be addressed during the collaboration process?	188
7.5.2 Collaboration with the local government	188
7.5.3 Collaboration with the department of education	189
7.5.4 Collaboration with the department of social development	190
7.5.5 Collaboration with the department of justice	191
7.5.6 Promoting love, trust, morals, and justice through leadership	191
7.6 A critical analysis of leadership in South Africa	192
7.7 Summary and conclusion	193
Bibliography	197
Appendix: A1	228

Appendix: A2	230
Appendix: B1	231
Appendix B2	232
Appendix C1	233
Appendix: C2	234
Appendix: C3	235
Appendix: C4	236
Appendix: D1	237
Appendix: D2	238
Appendix: E1	240
Appendix: E2	241
Appendix: E3	242
Appendix: E4	243
Appendix: E5	244
Appendix: E6	245
Appendix: E7	246

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

ABRECSA	-	Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in South Africa
AFM	-	Apostolic Faith Mission
ANC	-	African National Congress
ASGISA	-	Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BTP	-	Black Theology Project
CDPs	-	Community Development Programs
Col.	-	Colossians
Cor.	-	Corinthians
DEA	-	Department of Environmental Affairs
DPME	-	Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation
DPM	-	Department of Planning and Monitoring
ECLB	-	Eastern Cape Liquor Board
Eph.	-	Ephesians
FNB	-	First National Bank
GEAR	-	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GVA	-	Gross Value Added
HDI	-	Human Development Index
HDR	-	Human Development Report
HIV/AIDS	-	Human immunodeficiency virus, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome



Is.	-	Isaiah
Kg	-	Kilogram
LCS	-	Living Conditions Survey
Lk.	-	Luke
LWF	-	Lutheran World Federation
MCSA	-	Methodist Church of Southern Africa
MEC	-	Member of the Executive Council
Mk.	-	Mark
M.W.P & S.U	-	Methodist Women's Prayer and Service Union
NDP	-	National Development Plan
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
NGP	-	New Growth Plan
NPC	-	National Planning Commission
P.A.C	-	Pan Africanist Congress
Phil.	-	Philippians
PPAs	-	Participatory Poverty Assessments
PSC	-	Public Sector Commission
RCC	-	Roman Catholic Church
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Plan
Rev.	-	Reverend
RSA	-	Republic of South Africa
SACC	-	South African Council of Churches

- SUD - Substance Use Disorder
- Tim. - Timothy
- UBPL - Upper-bound poverty line
- UNDP - United Nations Development
- WVT - World Vision Tanzania
- YMG - Young Men's Guild

# Chapter 1: Introduction to the study, statement of the problem and general layout of the study

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## 1.1 Introduction

In the beginning, God, the Creator of the Universe engaged in a practical activity by word of mouth when the Heavens and earth were created. However, there was a transformation on the sixth day of creation as the Lord commanded: “Let us make man in our image after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). We bear witness to that change because every former act of creation had been a singular act like when God said ‘let there be light and there was light (Gen1:1–3). But there was the transition to an ‘us’ and ‘our’ when man was made.

The man’s image of God, therefore, raises expectations that human beings should continue setting an example of being responsible for transformation on earth which is the very image of God’s creative rule. Tutu (2004:26–29) supports this by stating that human beings are the stewards and representatives of God’s creation, caring and ruling over the world. Human beings are thus called by the will of God to engage in transforming the world and God will always be the supporter, the pillar, the anchor and the sustainer of every effort for transformational development. Poe and Davis (2000) argue that it is this stewardship responsibility of caring for the world, which separates man from the rest of creation.

The emphasis is that although man has much in common with other created beings and things, he is unique, for God did not only create him but also embraced him to be intellectually superior to the rest of the animal creation (Genesis 1:28). The uniqueness of man has to be found in his moral and spiritual capacity. This then means that, unlike all the other created beings, man is capable of entertaining and pursuing ideals. He is aware of values, can differentiate between right and wrong, and can notice and describe something as good or something else as better. What is of great significance is that the

voice of conscience that man has, is the voice of God. In the present study, therefore, human beings as instruments of transformational development should listen to the voice of God and behold God (Baker 1962:68–69; Poe & Davis 2000:133).

In the same vein, McGrath (2012:47) stresses that the human soul has been created according to the image of God so that it may use reason and intellect to apprehend and behold God. In using their intellect, Myers (2011) points out that human beings of every community need to consider the story that frames their lives and understanding of the world. This involves knowing their identity, location, what went wrong which led to poverty, pain and injustice, and identifying what needs to be changed and how it can be changed (Myers 2011:13–14).

The human beings' story is formed by three stories namely; The story of our culture, Modernity and the Christian story. The challenge is that before we can transform the lives of others, we must note seriously that the story of what God wants and is doing is the one that directs us to care for the poor and work for their transformation. God's story is the core foundation of our motivation, vision, and values of being, thinking and acting in God's world. The Christian story that is always vibrant in our lives is that God sent his son to die for our stories to be restored in God's story (Eurich 2015:17; Myers 2011:22–57). The Biblical story, therefore, has the final say. In this regard, an approach to transformational development must take cognisance of the greatest command of loving God with all your heart and with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind and loving the neighbour as yourself (Matthew 23:36).

The loving practice should be carried out because God also loves us all, the poor and the non-poor. In the case of the present study, those involved in the transformational development programme could be taken as responding to the call of loving the neighbour for they know the Christian story. Having depicted the picture of creation and transformation by God's will, let us turn our focus with great interest to our research topic and the reason for its choice.

### 1.1.1 The rationale of the study

This study, as the title suggests, seeks to explore the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. The said community is located southwest of the Amalinda suburb, East London in the Eastern Cape. One section of the Amalinda Forest Community is exposed to severe poverty conditions with closely built shacks. This research was conducted in that area. The researcher's interest was aroused by the Amalinda Methodist Church after an announcement that the members of the Amalinda Methodist Church Mothers' union were taking turns in the soup kitchen programme for the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

It was so challenging to notice that even women pensioners of the church were fully involved in the practical process of the programme. The Women's Manyano (Mothers' Union or Prayer Group) started, an early rise, campaign every Sunday morning to serve soup in the Amalinda forest before going to church. This was an appealing sacrifice that needed attention. "In God's intention for the world, He places the church at the centre of His purpose" (Swart, Erasmus, Green & Rocher 2010:269). The Christian ministry practised by the church members in helping the poor of that community could be viewed as God's will.

According to Mouton (2001:28), the origin of a research idea is listening critically to what people around you are talking about. This may range from current issues in political, social, environmental, economic, education and other arenas like the religious one. That is what happened after the researcher had listened to and heard about the soup kitchen programme for the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. It is then that this empirical theological study was decided upon to explore what was taking place in the said community. The practical role of the Amalinda Methodist Church invited a more in-depth exploration of the community's transformational development needs. This led to the researcher's final decision to conduct the proposed research.

### 1.1.2 Background of the study

The researcher had once stayed in Amalinda about 14 years ago. At the time, there were few shacks as compared to the present situation in Amalinda Forest. She was so

concerned to explore what was being done by the church to transform the lives of such a poor population through its compassionate ministry of the soup kitchen programme. It was of great interest that the Amalinda Methodist Church was in the process of showing a response to the dire need which might ultimately lead to the transformational development of that society. Sugden (2003:71) argues that through transformation, God's vision of society needs to be actualised in social, economic and spiritual relationships. If this can be done successfully, God's will and His love will be experienced by all, including the poor.

In supporting the aforesaid, Myers (2011:178) contends that the poor and non-poor are the same in God's eyes. The argument is that God's will is changing people's lives for the better living in every community. The case of transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest is thus no exception to God's will. The purpose and interest of this study are that transformational development should involve everyone with a mission. What is expected is the common goal of community development and to sustain it for generations to come.

The common goal referred to above is that the results for the poor in any society should be nothing other than poverty alleviation. There are various manifestations of poverty namely among others; hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited access to education, and lack of a safe residential and occupational environment (Belshaw, Calderisi & Sugden 2001:219). It is the aim of this study to explore what manifestations of poverty are experienced by the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community and, of course, how the church is dealing with some of these problems. The Methodists observe the background of Methodism in their mission of evangelism and development especially as it relates to the poor.

#### 1.1.2.1 The historical background of the Methodist church

The Methodist movement started with the work of Samuel and Susanna Wesley's sons John and Charles in the 18th century in England. This was through their vision of preaching scriptural holiness throughout England to crowds on open fields across Britain and Ireland (MCSA 2007:11). After the death of Samuel, Susanna continued to

support her sons and the influence of her strong character encouraged her sons to engage in what later gave birth to the Methodist Church separating from the Anglican Church of England. John Wesley's emphasis on the system, organisation and discipline that is expected in the life of a Christian led to them being called Methodists (see Kretzschmar 2005:101). According to Offutt (2012:45), a Wesleyan theology of development can serve as a ladder to theoretical, social and practical levels. Wesley's love for the poor is spelt in his saying "I love the poor — If I might choose, I would still, as I have hitherto, preach the gospel to the poor" (Synder 2011a:22 in Offutt 2012:45). The emphasis is that to be Wesleyan means to change our focus and see the world through the eyes of the poor (see Offutt 2012:46).

### 1.1.3 The problem of the study

The most burning problem observed and identified in the Amalinda Forest Community is people living in severely poor conditions. They are identified as poor because some of them cannot afford their daily bread on the table. Their right to dignity as people created in the image of God is violated by a lack of material possessions. These include not having houses and living in shacks, some do not have enough clothing making it very difficult for them to cope with the cold weather during the winter season. The Amalinda Methodist Church took an initiative to engage in a soup kitchen programme to help with poverty alleviation in that area. For the present study then, the following research question has been formulated: How does the church expand its role to transform and develop the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community?

### 1.1.4 Some other challenges related to the present study

There are more often than not, some challenges that retard the progress of development and hinder the transformational development of the poor to take place in South Africa. Sometimes misinterpretation of some terms and concepts might hamper the usage of such concepts. Amongst others, we can mention poverty as the burning problem faced by practical theology, service delivery management, and management of the church's development ministry, population explosion and unemployment in South Africa.

### 1.1.5 An interpretation of practical theology

At this stage, only Heitink's (1999) interpretation of practical theology will be given and more about what it entails will be discussed under its definition by other scholars. There is a problem arising from the interpretation of the term *practical theology*. According to Heitink (1999) most of the time, practical theology is open to misunderstanding for many. This argument gives rise to an incorrect dismantled interpretation and the reason is merely based on our daily general practice of referring to practical as the opposite of a merely theoretical approach. However, such an interpretation is not denied and cannot be done away with, but in essence, practical theology is not just practical, instead, it also attempts to share in the development of Practical Theological theory.

In a wider context, its practicality leads to the development of theological theory, which will give guidance on how things ought or should be done. In addition, it will also look at how some things that have already been done and experienced can be investigated or examined if they were done according to the will of God. Another objection against the term *practical theology* is that as a discipline, it says little about the unique objects and their theological character. What must be noted is that "praxis" does not mean "practice" but "action, activity". In short, the word *practical* expresses the theological nature of the discipline (Heitink 1999).

To get more clarity about action or activity one could refer to Acts in the Bible which deal with divine action through the ministry of the apostles (Acts 2:42–47). To support this, the letter of Apostle Paul to the Romans (12:4) reveals the different functions of the members of the church as the body of Christ. It becomes vivid then, that practical theology in its totality deals with God's activity through the ministry of human beings (Heitink 1999:6–7). Deducing on the aforesaid statement, the problem of interpreting the term *practical theology* needs to be taken into consideration and observed during the process of empirical practical theology research.



## 1.2 Poverty as a challenge in practical theology

The South African democratic change has brought some social changes but there are still some structural socio-economic and infrastructural problems that need to be addressed. One of those is poverty, which can be identified as affecting larger parts of the African continent (Ogbonnaya 2016:6). The service delivery in the so-called reconstruction and development programmes in South Africa raised some hope for the liberation of the poor. However, poor service delivery has led to the poor being more oppressed. From this observation, Swart et al. (2010:2) claim that service delivery in South Africa can be viewed as a crisis.

The problem of the neglect of the poor is also revealed in a statement by the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki who states that: 'the hard reality we face today is that our country is trapped in a general and deepening political economic and social crisis which has, for many years, begun to turn what was an age of hope into an age of despair' (Seale 2016:1).

Practical theology in Africa as well as South Africa has a great challenge to address the problem identified in Mbeki's statement. The service delivery needs to be activated by an enhanced servant leadership to reconstruct pervasive poor living conditions which have resulted in a problem of degrading the African community's quality of life (Adhiambo 2012:158).

Furthermore, African theologians as agents of transformation are faced with the problem of addressing and facilitating change by engaging the church in the demands of the community be they socio-economic, political or cultural. The church is called to note that there is a need for a balanced human life, which has to be brought about by practical engagement in the gospel (Edusa-Eyison 2008:110–111).

### 1.2.1 Service delivery management in South Africa

Service delivery is the basic necessity for the effective transformational development of any society. Service delivery management is expected to be the one that satisfies and meets the needs of the society in question. The challenge we are faced with as far as

service delivery management is concerned in the present era is that there is not a single moment we can pinpoint where we are told about a successful service before we are told of corruption involving the mismanagement of government coffers. What we see, hear and experience day in and day out is the burning of tires and the blockage of our roads in retaliation to lack of service delivery. The daily news exposes those in power who continue to enrich themselves while neglecting the poor. According to Manala (2014:249), poor service delivery by the new leadership in post-apartheid South Africa has denied the poor opportunities and their right to basic human needs. Ordinary people are also hindered from being economically empowered.

The above-mentioned problem of service delivery management triggers a call for social institutions (like the church) and NGOs to intervene and deal with the challenges of transformational development in South Africa. In the present study, The Amalinda Methodist church (being a social institution) is expected to exemplify how service delivery challenges can be demonstrated through its compassionate effort rendered on the humanitarian ground - an act informed by "*Ubuntu*". *Ubuntu* is an African approach to morality and ethics that involves serving humanity with humility. This means that human dignity is protected and the common good of every community including the poor and non-poor is promoted (Dames 2017:8; Ogbonnaya 2016:9; Mkhize 2008:35). An example should be set because, on the other hand, the poor of the Amalinda Forest Community are trapped in the service delivery shortfall and crisis by those in power. This leads to the poor retaining their marred identity as if they were born with it. On the contrary, Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* declares that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and right. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood (Rembe 2005:2). Equivalent to this is the brotherly love which is emphasised by Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Romans 12:10).

To sum up, the emphasis is that every single living being is specially and individually precious to God. In this stance, each of us is essential and deserves the same treatment. The delight and generosity of God in the first Chapter of Genesis (1:27–31) reads: God created humankind in his image...God blessed them, and God said to them,

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...see, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good (Vest 1996:23). That is why if service delivery is to serve all who have multiplied the earth by the goodwill of God, it must be good and well-managed service delivery to be enjoyed by all.

### 1.2.2 The management of the church’s development ministry

Good management in the church’s development ministry, within the context of this study, is what would lead to positive effective transformation. According to Belshaw et al. (2001), the general working culture of the church in Africa is called upon to prioritise the use of its resources. There is a common understanding that the system of the church is most of the time dominated and overpowered by the clergy in cases of policymaking and reference committees. This happens sometimes although there are members available as appropriate practising professionals within and outside the church. One other problem is undermining the involvement of women in decision-making.

In some cases, the whole congregation is neglected when decisions are made. Another problem is that there is still discrimination in including non-members of the church on project management committees. What is usually noticed is that the church leaders do not fully approve, nor do they generally appreciate the professionalism in management aspects. The expertise and intellectual capacity of some members are not taken into consideration. The lack of paperwork has been identified as a pervasive weakness in the church’s working environment in Africa (Belshaw et al. 2001:231–232).

In the present study, the church in its Christian ministry of caring for the poor will be expected to showcase transformational development management of an acceptable standard.

### 1.2.3 A lack of studies on transformational development in churches

There is an outcry that transformational development studies by churches are still lagging. For instance, the neglect of the poor is observed daily, because human progress in this world is being reduced to a mere accumulation of wealth. This raises a challenge to our development practitioners as well as the academics in our churches who are concerned about transforming and developing the lives of the poor in our societies. Myers (2011:5) stresses that the church's concern for the spiritual well-being of human beings must not supersede the demand for the well-being of the poor. For instance, the neglect of the poor is observed daily, because human progress in this world is being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth. There is a challenge of moral obligation for the church to speak to the world about the truth, which is about God and humankind. Furthermore, Myers (2011:49) states that there are very few PhD studies by Christian practitioners on transformational development and what remains unclear and problematic is Christian relief and development agencies including the local churches. The findings are that little has been said about the right and proper role of local churches in the development of their communities. An urgent need for accelerating transformation was voiced out by Warren (1995) who urged churches to show action through deeds to reflect God's Kingdom life effectively amongst the lost (see Van Wyk 2017:3). The present study about transformational development of the poor by the Amalinda Methodist Church congregants in the Amalinda Forest Community is therefore facing a challenge to promote a sustainable and accountable theological performance when rendering services through their soup kitchen programme.

### 1.2.4 Population explosion and unemployment in South Africa

Population explosion and unemployment harm development. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) (2015) cites urban development as contributing to population increase and unemployment. The argument is that South Africa reached the urban tipping point of just over 50% of the population in urban areas in the early 1990s and there has been an increase of up to 63% of South Africans living in urban areas. As far as the National Development Plan (NDP) is concerned, there is an estimation that by 2030 the urban population will grow to an increase of an additional

7.8 million people. It is expected that higher levels of urbanisation generate greater opportunities for growth, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability (DPME 2015:67).

Furthermore, the DPME (2015) states that to be economically dynamic, the potential cities have included productive activities, entrepreneurs, workers, consumers and support institutions such as universities and business services. Municipal services and other social services rendered to highly concentrated populations are presumed to be cheaper compared to a more geographically dispersed population. However, the problem is that whereas these expectations are the case, many developing countries experience high rates of urbanisation resulting in huge increased demand for housing, services, employment opportunities and infrastructure. In South Africa, the situation is that cities are struggling to meet the demand for housing and social and economic infrastructure for a growing population of poor households.

Many of these are informal settlements like the Amalinda Forest. There is a great demand to improve the conditions of living standards in urban areas. The observation and the findings are that although South Africa's cities and large towns account for 80 per cent of South Africa's gross value add (GVA) - there are concentrations of high levels of poverty in booming wealthy areas. Another problem is rapid urbanisation which leads to increased pollution and waste generation. These all pose risks to the environmental sustainability of urban settlements.

The above-mentioned problems need to be addressed by the government to meet the requirements of putting in place an urban development strategy that will make urban spaces livable, equitable, sustainable, resilient and efficient as well as to support economic growth and social cohesion (DPME 2015:67).

Another argument in Kretzschmar (2014) concerning poverty and unemployment in South Africa is that the facts and figures condone the emphasis on the population that still suffers. These include those affected by unemployment and some other related factors. More emphasis to highlight the problem of poverty in South Africa has been made by comparing it with Chile. According to this comparison, poverty in South Africa

has been identified to be worse than in Chile. In 1995 for example, an estimation was that 18 million people in South Africa could be classified as poor. An additional claim about poverty is that although it is described as affecting all racial groups, black Africans are still the worst affected. In 2002, it was estimated that between 45% and 55% of South Africans were living in poverty and of course, this depended on the poverty measure used. The other report was that 11 million children under 18 years of age are living in poverty (Kretzschmar 2014:5).

Armstrong, Lekezwa and Siebrits (2008:3) stress that the poverty struggle continues even after the first non-racial democratic elections of 1994. This is the case because several key factors still exist and prevent poverty reduction. These include increased unemployment, geographical location, population growth, gender household structure, the age of the head of household and employment status accompanied by deficient access to infrastructure services, high transport cost burdens, limited education attainments and exposure to hunger. This is also supported by Bowers du Toit and Nkomo (2014:2) by stating that poverty in South Africa remains largely a legacy of the structural inequality of the past.

Another argument is that women, children and the elderly remained negatively affected despite the increased government social grants as of 1999. The problem of patriarchy in South Africa also stands as an impediment on the way of women's progress and development. This has a negative impact that affects women not to experience the brutal realities of poverty only, but to find themselves in an entangled poverty situation and makes them unable to free themselves to change their circumstances. The result is that to a greater extent, women, children, the elderly and those with disabilities are more negatively affected by poverty than men. Hopefully, with the recent new developments in the Methodist Church women's leadership in South Africa and trade unions, etcetera, one would hope for better in this regard.

Another obstacle to decreasing poverty levels in South Africa is the high number of HIV-infected persons (Kretzschmar & Snyman 2008:198–220). There is family dysfunction, HIV/AIDS and violence. Women are again viewed as attacked by the critical effect of

unemployment. It is argued that even when women get employment, it is usually part-time in semi-or unskilled employment which is a low wages job. The gender dimension of poverty reduction is the one often neglected in policy development (see Kretzschmar 2014:5). The transformational development practitioners within a post-apartheid South African context are faced with the challenge of poverty reduction and inequality within this context (Bowers du Toit and Nkomo 2014:2).

### 1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the nature, purpose and outcome of transformational development by Amalinda Methodist Church in the Amalinda Forest Community.

The following were secondary objectives:

- To establish insight into the acute social needs and problems in the poor Amalinda Forest Community based on the residents' own experience.
- To establish how the Methodist Church leaders maintained balanced cooperation with the church members for rendering transformational development services to the poor in Amalinda Forest Community.
- To establish how the members of the Amalinda Forest Community perceive the role played by the Amalinda Methodist Church as a social service provider in their community.
- To further establish more closely and directly from the people of the community how they were involved in the services rendered by the Amalinda Methodist Church - empowerment included.
- To establish whether this transformational development would be sustainable.

#### 1.3.1 Conceptualisation of the study

The present study is a practical theological study and as such, it is very crucial to start with defining practical theology as it differs from other disciplines of theology.

### 1.3.2 Practical theology

Practical theology is the critical study of contemporary activities and experiences of Christians and the church concerning the will of God and its purpose for them. An emphasis is that it is a discipline concerned with human life particularly human activity and human experience (Hawkes 1989:29). A more distinct explanation by Swinton and Mowat (2006:5) is that the difference that can be mentioned between practical theology and other theological disciplines is that practical theology takes human experience seriously as its starting point. Its role includes acknowledging faith as a performance and embodied act that considers and takes seriously the belief of the gospel. The gospel so to say, is grounded in human experience for the interpretation of the work of the spirit.

The above-mentioned authors, Swinton and Mowat (2006) further elucidate the following concerning practical theology:

- Practical theology focuses on faithful practice and its practice and content should have a positive effect on and for others.

In the present study, for example, the practice done by the Amalinda Methodist Church will be expected to have a positive effect on the recipients of the practice, in this case, the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

- The Christian practices by the church indeed should be a reflection of the continuing practices of the triune God's redemptive mission to the world. Just as the Gospel of John (14:26) emphasises the unity and interconnectedness of the practices of our Lord Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit, in the same manner, the community church needs to reflect faithful participation or activity in the Trinitarian actions of God in the world. The Amalinda Methodist Church is thus called to be faithful in its mission of transforming the lives of the poor in the said community under investigation. On the other hand, the poor of that community will be expected to be faithful recipients of the practice to be liberated from poverty not only physically but also mentally and spiritually. There is an



understanding that when a practice loses this dynamic and just becomes a technique, it ceases to be faithful.

However, the practices sometimes are carried out imperfectly and thus can easily be distorted and result in confusion. It is then that practical theology should carry out its critical task to identify the distorted practice. That task will be expected to involve calling the church back to the theological significance of her practices to engage faithfully with the mission of God, in, to and for the world. When this engagement is done, it will reveal that the aim of practical theology is not restricted to understanding the world only, but also changing it and this involves critical discernment. The emphasis in practical theology is on knowing who God is and knowing fully his truth. On that note, the practical theologian is invited to the task of ensuring that the practices of the church remain faithful to the practices and mission of God as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and his continuing redemptive practices (Swinton & Mowat 2006:17–19, 25–27). In support, Heitink (1999:7) stresses that practical theology deals with God's activity through the ministry of human beings. Appropriate to the aforesaid, in this study, God's activity of transformation is revealed through the Amalinda Methodist Church members' Christian ministry in the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. The definition and clarification of practical theology raise a question of curiosity to augment our knowledge about this study. It is therefore essential to relate a brief history of practical theology.

### 1.3.3 A brief history of practical theology

The discipline of practical theology started at the University of Vienna with the institution of a professional chair of pastoral theology. Its first phase of development involved considering pastoral action (see Heitink 1999:98). The idea was to replace pastoral theology with a church-oriented practical theology. This then means that the pastor was regarded as the leader entrusted with the responsibility of leadership and management (Theron 2011:6).

There was a transition from the first phase to the second phase of practical theology development. During this phase, there was a change in that the role played within the

church was not exercised by the Pastor but included other church leaders as well. The participation of the leaders in the church together with that of the pastor was studied. This was advanced by Graf in 1841 (see Heitink 1999). He argued that clerical pastoral theology should be replaced by a church-orientated practical theology. In 1974 there was a change from clerocentrism to the community of faith. With this introduction, all the sub-disciplines of practical theology adhere to the activities of the church. These include organising, communicating and shepherding (Van der Ven 1988:9).

The third phase which started in the late sixties led to a broader context. The context of society has been taken into consideration. The church has been identified to serve the whole community to contribute to the liberation of humanity through its evangelical praxis. This means that the scope in which the church functions has broadened extremely and the lived experiences of people could be studied. In the early 1980s, Edward Farley expressed his view that practical theology had lost its grounding in practical wisdom. This aroused interest for theologians to revitalise practical theology toward Farley's idea of habitus (practical wisdom) (Van der Ven 1998:12).

Farley's idea was centred on the relationship between theory and practice. The whole church was to be prioritised in theological education and the role of practical theology with public and social issues (Cahalan 2005:64). From the above argument, it is apparent that in the second and third phases the development of practical theories and theology has grown immensely and in plurality. The whole people of God become subjects and the bearers of their communicative praxis within both the context of the church and the society with an objective of liberation (Van der Ven 1998:12). This has motivated the theologians who are exponents of the empirical scientific approach to be critical and insist that practical theology should proceed empirically to follow the example of modern operational sciences. In South Africa, practical theologians at UNISA in particular, have pioneered the empirical and operational scientific approach (Hawkes 1989:32). Practical theology is believed to be vital to the well-doing of the church. This leads us to define the church.

### 1.3.4 The Church

The Greek word “*kurake*” that we translate into “church” is used to describe a local gathering of a group of Christians. The church is therefore the Body of Christ with a commitment to corporate worship as explained in Hebrews (10:24–25, as cited in Cru 2007:6). Nurnberger supports this by adding that the church is still the church when its membership is dispersed in the multiplicity of its secular engagement at home, at school, on farms, on the factory floor, in business, in politics, in administration, in management, in prison, in hospital wards, during wage negotiations and strike action- wherever (Nurnberger 1992:49).

The other Christian understanding is that the church, the body of Christ, can be referred to as the community of faith and the bearer of the biblical story. It is where the good news of God is announced so that we as a family can be united with Christ for nurturing lives (MK 3:14, cited in Myers 2011:77). A more detailed explanation is given by Makula (2015) as he elucidates that the church means a body or group of people united in the belief in God the Father and Creator, in their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and their acceptance and belief in God the Holy Spirit. They then, in fellowship with one another, are keen to obey and do God’s will on earth. This is what the visible church on earth becomes. The church’s action in this way is in obedience to Christ’s appeal to his disciples: “Go, then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples...and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19–20, as cited in Makula 2015:97).

McGrath (2012) contends that according to Christian theologians, the term “church” has to be defined theologically and not sociologically. They argue that believing in the church does not mean trusting the institution of the church but affirming that the church is called into being by God with a mission and authorisation from God. A central theme of the Protestant understanding is the presence of Christ in the nature and mission of the church. This is demonstrated by the proclamation of the word of God in preaching and the sacraments. For instance, the belief is that whenever and anywhere the word of God is preached, the true Holy Catholic Church and Christian people must be there,

even if there are very few, for God's word cannot fall on deaf ears and therefore shall not return empty (Isaiah 55:11, as cited in McGrath 2012:148).

Furthermore, McGrath (2012) quotes Calvin who also hailed the proclamation of God's word as the definite identity of a church. He argues that whenever the word of God is preached, listened to and the sacraments administered it is no way to be doubted that a church of God exists. This is like that because His promise cannot fail: "wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them (Mathew 18:20). Agreeing with Martin Luther and John Calvin, Karl Barth also states that the church is the community that comes into being in response to the preaching of the word of God. Barth's ecclesiology is Trinitarian involving the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in a dynamic understanding of the nature of the church (McGrath 2012:149).

It is within the above Trinitarian guidelines that transformational development workers should be motivated and dedicated. Last, de Gruchy (1979:229) emphasises that the church of Jesus Christ is the bearer of witness to the gospel of justice and liberation, peace and hope. Having defined the church as a community of faith, let us now look at the community as a social entity.

### 1.3.5 Community

According to Chipkin (1996), in South Africa, the notion of community has become associated with a variety of other referents including class, race, people etc. However, members of communities in whatever way we might define them, are as much part of larger structures namely: districts, provinces, racial or ethnic groups, political parties etc., as they are communities (Emmett 2010:503).

Parallel to this, Polsby (1960:481) attests that everyone in a community is a member of at least one but no more than one class at any given moment, and no one in the community falls outside the system. Another argument by Nelson and Wright (1995) is that community is a concept not used by people themselves but often used by states and other organisations. The above-mentioned authors further explain that the concept of community carries connotations of consensus and "needs" (Mohan & Stokke 2000:253). There are many other sociological and anthropological definitions of the term

community. In a nutshell, a community means a local environment of people who have interests in common, as well as differences of interests. A community has an identity, a sense of place of “us” who are not “them”, and that is the collective significance of a distinctive name (Ball & Newby, 1972:30). In this study, we may point out that the identity of a community is that the members of the Amalinda Methodist church share something in common which is their faith and therefore are the community of faith. On the other hand, the members of the Amalinda Forest share something in common which is being the residents of the Amalinda Forest Community.

### 1.3.6 Community development

The term ‘community development’ has come into international usage to connote the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress (United Nations, 1956:14; also see Van Wyk, 1985:335).

There are two models for community development. These are planning (from the “top-down”, and participation (from the “bottom-up”). Both relate to long-term processes. In the planning model, projects are proposed to the community, and this involves making community members realise that the project is consonant with their interests. Planning in Tanzania for instance is called “education for self-reliance,” the aim is to “instil among students’ new attitudes and values about the importance of social service concerning personal benefits and their duty to the nation and the community” (Sine 1979:357). Community development is a demand for every created being.

### 1.3.7 Creation

This is God’s engagement in making something out of nothing. In Genesis 1:1, we are told that God spoke the creation into being. Creation results from the purpose of God and the creator God is involved in the life of human beings on earth (Myers 2011:60–61; Nwaigbo 2010:60; Poe & Davis 2000:128). To be more specific, God’s engagement in creation is through His action words derived from the first few lines of the Bible. Since

creation results from the purpose of God, God has a need and a purpose for each one of us to fulfil. Each one has a relationship not only with God but with all others. This is a sense of humanity – to treat each other as human, and this relationship should be kept and maintained right through one’s life. Human beings in their vocation need to be assured that God has a new name for everyone and this Name is given when one is ready to hear.

The above reality is a transformation that humans must undergo. The physical life must change to meet the challenges of a challenging physical environment and on the other side, spiritual life must change to meet the challenge of a changing spiritual environment. Jesus explained in John (3:3) that it is the same Spirit who caused creation in the beginning who will transform a human spirit in a way that is called new birth (Poe & Davis 2000:128, 138; Vest 1996:24–25).

God’s action words from His performative speech can be traced by referring to the following Christian theological conclusions:

- God is Creator whose powerful nature is evidenced.
- God is transcendent for He is not part of creation but configures creation.
- Creation is Holy, seen and designated by God as good.
- Creation includes time in that as the author of light, God is the author of time, there is no ‘before’. Instead, the passing of an evening and a morning indicates this-the first day.
- Creation bears witness to God. An original revelation of God since creation comes about because of God’s word (Towey 2018:22).

The above theological conclusions bring to our attention that every creation including human beings both poor and non-poor are equal to God and therefore deserve to be treated with dignity. To add more, their lives need to be transformed for the better, especially for the poor. According to Luther, God made a provision by establishing certain orders within creation so that it does not collapse into chaos. Those orders are the family, the church and the state (McGrath 2012:52). These said social structures

need to be responsible for every effort of development. This is the praxis of practical theology.

## 1.4 Development

To deal with the demands of the modern world, we need to bring greater clarity to the concept of development. The concept 'development' has its historical use as far as the early 1950s in the West. It was used to describe efforts to improve the well-being of the poor. However, from a Christian perspective, development is understood as a theological Act leading to problem-solving (Myers 2011:26, 47). From an environmental point of view, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) (2011) states that development is seen as a way of funding conservation efforts, or a process through which technology or innovation can be applied responsibly in the interest of improving the environment. Furthermore, development could be witnessed as supporting social welfare which in term allows people to free themselves from conditions that trap them in a cycle of poverty and environmentally degrading situations or activities (DEA 2011:19).

In this stance, development discourse cannot be disconnected from the history of colonialism and imperialism where the African continent that has suffered from exploitation for centuries is now being castigated and degraded as undeveloped or underdeveloped and poor (Adogame 2016:2). There is an argument that for effective development to take place, human development needs to be considered a priority. The Human Development Report (HDR) introduced a new way of measuring development by combining indicators of life expectancy, education and income into a composite Human Development Index (HDI) (Adogame 2016:3).

According to Ribeiro (2005:11), the sense of the word "development" in various areas of knowledge converges to "a state, process, well-being, progress, economic and human growth or ecological balance". Another suggested interpretation by an international institutional vision of United Nations Development (UNDP) states that development is expanding the range of choices for the population that allows development to be independent. However, this independence must not be seen as an end in itself,

because man never finally becomes complete- he is always becoming (see Gunter 1981:15–16).

In support of the above statement, Griessel, Louw and Swart (1986:18) say “The human being’s world is open, and not finished or complete, for during this period of development and from cradle to the grave, he is exposed to different influences by which he is moulded”. It is therefore the aim of transformational development to inculcate into the poor the concept that they must be willing to expose themselves to further change and development in a changing world (Griessel et al. 1986:18).

The development gives rise to many varying interpretations and is thus referred to as a complex dynamic concept. In the past, until the late 1960s, this concept was characterised by progress, evolution and economic growth. The post-colonialism period gave rise to it termed as the ‘Modernisation Theory’ and was provided with technical assistance in the Third World countries with the aid of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (see Swart et al. 2010). As a theory, it assumes that productivity is equivalent to development which should promote traditional societies as they are backward and underdeveloped. The benefits of the system are to help the poor, eliminate dependency, global reformism, basic needs, capacity building by the people and sustainable development. In recent years, a current approach has been expounded by Burkey (1992). According to him, development is more than the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies. It involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals as well as between groups, and cannot be imposed from the outside (see Swart et al. 2010:262).

The publication of Mattessich, Mousey and Roy (1997:59) describes development as the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities. These communities are integrated into the life of the nation and enabled to contribute fully to national progress. This complex process is made up of two essential elements. The first one is the participation of the people themselves to



improve their living with as much reliance as possible on their initiative (see Swart et al. 2010:262).

The second one is the provision of technical and other services in some ways that will encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help to make those more effective (Nadine Bowers Du Toit in Swart et al. 2010:262). However, although the participation of people leads to a process of conscientisation, development through social change hurts many. For instance, our contemporary world is still suffering from deepening poverty, social disintegration and environmental destruction characterised by failure to deal with poverty. A debate on development centres on the relationship between development and social transformation.

The relationship mentioned above has led Groenewald (2000:18) to define social transformation. He argues that social transformation, accordingly, refers to change in human relationships, communities, and the living conditions of people. It is the process of change in the conditions of the lifestyles of people and the character of human societies. The above argument makes us understand that the concept of development has been refined to the term 'transformation' to describe development holistically. There is more emphasis on human beings as part of effective and meaningful community development and no longer on infrastructure (Klaasen 2019:6).

Another explanation by Mathafena (2007) is that development is an act or a process of developing a gradual and unfolding growth in an individual. This includes the advancement, skill, competencies, and improved behaviour of people within the organisation for their personal and professional use (Mathafena 2007:2). The said individual growth leads us to define human development.

#### 1.4.1 Human development

The concept of 'human development' should be understood as including the religious and spiritual dimensions of life. The Human Development Report (HDR) has infused a human face to the conceptualisation of development and thus defines human development as a process of enlarging people's choices' (UNDP 1990:1). Indeed, these choices can be infinite and change over time. There are three essential levels of human

development namely: for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. The premise is that if these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities would not be accessible. Furthermore, there are also additional choices that are highly valued by people. These range from political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive and enjoying personal self-respect and guaranteed human rights (see Adogame 2016:3).

Another factor to be taken into consideration concerning human beings in development is that human features encompass physical and spiritual categories. This balance needs to be observed because it might happen that although a person has features of maturity and biological ripeness, he is not in a spiritual sense fully developed and cannot be independent and responsible without being transformed. To be fully developed, one has to become more democratic and participative (Soares & Quintella 2008:107). This is a call for every human existence.

#### 1.4.2 A challenge to humanise development for human existence

We have noted earlier that the aim of development and its possibility of eradicating poverty started as a norm in the West (Myers 2011:27). However, the dualistic worldview has separated the material and the spiritual world causing the meaning of development to be misinterpreted. Furthermore, this view continues to emphasise individualism and competition neglecting the common good (Ogbonnaya 2016:1). Development has thus been viewed in a segregated way in First, Second and Third world countries. These countries are labelled as developed and developing. Those in the Northern Hemisphere for example are said to be developed and the poor pre-colonial countries like South Africa are labelled as developing.

The dominating theories put into practice by the Western power over underdeveloped countries have caused the people to neglect the history of their cultures. Rist (2002) argues that the history of humankind which includes the progressive access of every nation to the benefits of development is guided by how Western society, excluding all

the others, has conceptualised its relationship to the past and the future (Rist 2002:44). The said Western Worldview harms development progress in Africa.

To move away from experiencing stagnant progress caused by Western theories, a new approach to development has been considered. This challenge has led academic researchers to advance a more integral African worldview by linking the material world to the spiritual to progress towards the common good. Groody (2007:108) points out that the common good rests on two related biblical ideas:

- The first one is that God of love intends for all of us to make in His image a life that is life-giving and good irrespective of our productive value or any other secondary identifier.
- Second, to be fully human means to be in good relationships aiming at the well-being of all.

There are expressions and expectations of a common good that speak to living a moral life for others as well as for us. Therefore, to meet this requirement, a practical theological approach is a moral obligation of every social institution including the state, the market, the church and civil society to create acceptable social conditions that will allow and accompany every group to flourish (see Myers 2011:53). Dreyer (2004:4) supports this by stating that practical theology is deeply concerned with human well-being and human flourishing.

Another appropriate statement is that when we consider well-being, we also need to pay attention to those who suffer as a result of poverty, disease, violence, social and economic inequality as well as other injustices. This is a challenge for those who are responsible for transformational development (like the church in this study) to be aware of how practical theology is interacting with their practices with those of society.

Practical theology, in essence, is expected to contribute knowledge to interdisciplinary discourses on human well-being in transformational development programmes within specific communities. It does not end there; practical theology can also contribute

knowledge to national and global programmes that are aimed at development (Dreyer 2004:17–18).

From the above argument, we can note that in Africa, we need to humanise development through Christian anthropology. Christian anthropology emphasises the belief that human beings irrespective of race, gender, mental capacity, or achievement are created in the image and likeness of God. Each person, therefore, is created as being conscious, with a full mindset and free with his/her moral personality (Slavcheva 2011:115). Because every human being has inherent dignity embedded naturally by God the creator, nobody should dehumanise others including even those we label as poor.

Christian anthropology further promotes interrelatedness for members of the human community to take responsibility for the common good ensuring the well-being of the community (Ogbonnaya 2016:8). To add more, we need to consider African Christianity for human well-being in whatever strategies we use in development. According to Sen (1999), human well-being should be best understood by what people are and do and not by what they consume. We may quote for example being literate, healthy, and economically active and of course participating in the life of their community.

The above is referred to as functions which are the basics of human life. They include having enough to eat, living in adequate housing, breathing clean air and drinking clean water, as well as promoting higher-value ideals like possession of self-respect, having enhanced dignity, participating in community life and choosing safety. This is God's intent for all human beings (Sen 1999:5; 30). The fact of the matter is that God's will and the call are for human beings to develop and not just survive. They are intended to be productive and act as co-creators after God (Myers 2011:30).

According to Maxwell (2007:v—vi), the aforesaid human development has to be accompanied by leadership development as well. If leaders are developed within the community, they will understand the real needs of the people. That will lead to being able to respect them, work with them and serve them effectively. There is a belief that every success or failure will be determined by leadership in action. It is thus envisaged

that without leadership development, everything will pass away (see Mwambazambi & Banza 2014:1). This is supported by Mathafena (2007:29–30) by describing the development as an act or process of developing a gradual and unfolding growth in an individual. During this process of people development, there is advancement, skills competencies, and improved behaviour of people for their personal and professional use. On the other hand, the Human Development Report (UNDP 1990:1) expressed their concern about development as a process of enlarging people's choices. Three levels of development have been identified as being for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living (Adogame 2016:2). This then implies that people need to be supported to live as human beings without discrimination whether they are poor or non-poor. They need to be empowered and equipped with resources to be able to develop and become independent.

There is a great significance and great demand that in preparation for transformational development, human development should take the lead, otherwise the goal of transformational development will not be attained. It should be noted that for development to take place, empowerment is the prerequisite.

### 1.4.3 Empowerment

Empowerment refers to equipping communities with skills for development and it goes together with engagement and local participation. Mohan and Stokke (2000:247) point out that in development practice, a parallel move towards local participation and empowerment has been observed as producing *albeit* with different agendas a high level of agreement between actors and institutions of the 'new' left and 'new' right. Some new debates within the development literature have also led to an understanding of empowerment as a process by which the poor and disenfranchised men and women start to be critically and practically aware of their socio-political and economic situation within their local context (Friedman 1992; Kabeer 1994; Rowlands 1997). Furthermore, whenever an individual is empowered, there is a qualitative change in his/her self-perception as well as his or her ability to engage in active participation that leads to changing the *status quo*. The liberal understanding of empowerment is that it is men

and women as individuals who should participate and will thereby be empowered. Theories of empowerment also state that on an interpersonal or social level the development of specific skills will enable one to influence other people or processes (see Kelsall & Mercer 2003:293–294).

On the other hand, the post-Marxists understanding is that empowerment is a matter of collective mobilisation of marginalised groups against the disempowering activities of both the state and the market (Mohan & Stokke 2000:248). Swanepoel and De Beer (1997) argue that when these marginalised groups of people embark on a collective activity of the learning process, they share a mutual interest, sentiment, or concern to tackle bigger problems through their newfound weapon of collective action. That is what led Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988:725) to define empowerment as “the ability of individuals to gain control socially, politically, economically, and psychologically through access to information, knowledge and skills, decision-making, individual self-efficacy, community participation and perceived control’ (see also Swanepoel & De Beer 1997:41–42).

In a wider context, empowerment is a term that is currently used in various fields of social, political and for the present study in practical theological studies. It is more often taken to be the development of an urge by people to gain an understanding of and control over the world in which a person finds himself. The purpose of empowerment may be to improve your standing in your society or to enhance the powers of society as a whole to improve the quality of life (Kindervatter 1979:60). Another emphasis supporting Kindervatter (1979) states that the essence of empowerment is that there is a process of social change directed by people themselves as individuals and groups by which they can be able to shape their own lives in ways that they choose. To this effect, empowerment is closely linked to participating in development (Kelsall & Mercer 2003:294; Myers 2011:218).

Responding to the above-mentioned need for empowerment, Christian leaders in South Africa have the challenge to empower the powerless who, like the poor of the Amalinda

Forest Community in the present study, want to improve the quality of their lives. Empowerment may include the following indicators:

- Access: greater opportunities;
- Choices: ability and opportunity to choose wisely among options;
- Status: improved self-image, esteem and positive sense of cultural identity;
- Critical reflection: capability of using experience to accurately assess the potential merits of diverse problem-solving options;
- Legitimation: people's demands considered by officials as just and reasonable;
- Discipline: self-imposed standards for working productively with others (see Kindervatter 1979:63).

It is within the interest of the present study to discover whether empowerment of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community will be presented. When people are empowered, they are expected to pursue development goals through leadership.

#### 1.4.4 Leader and leadership

Leadership plays a significant role in human life because it indicates or directs a way forward – where to start and where to go. This vision should be the one towards achieving a goal and ultimately should lead to successful results. A question arises then- who is a leader?

#### 1.4.5 A leader

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

To support the aforesaid, Bentley (2010:553) quotes Kretzschmar (2002:46) who describes leaders as "... people who have willing followers... have an impact on the lives and views of people, and on situations and structures...people who can inspire, encourage and guide others". In an article by Kretzschmar (2010), leaders are referred

to as moral agents who, in their leadership, should exemplify the moral life of Jesus. When we speak of moral agents, these are people who sought to move an entire society in a new direction with a moral vision.

We can mention leaders like Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Albertina Sisulu, and the groups of trade unions who managed to combine and mobilise to overthrow apartheid. They were moral agents, for the entire society was moved in a new direction with a moral vision of a non-racial South Africa (see Kretzschmar 2010:567).

#### 1.4.6 Servant leadership

In whatever is done when serving in this world, we need to follow in Jesus's steps. Kouzes and Posner (2004) point out the following when referring to Jesus's servanthood:

- He is the role model that was not elected to serve as the formal leader of a movement.
- Our Lord had no formal organisational power to do anything that he did but just acted as a leader.
- As a leader with good services, others started to follow and believe.

The lesson taught by the reference above is not about position, but it is about practice, which is simple to serve. This is the most significant Christian teaching and emphasis on the nature of servant leadership. These writers also point out that the concept of servant leadership is emphasised in leadership literature. Kouzes and Posner (2004) cite Robert Greenleaf (1970) who stressed that the great leader is seen as a servant first, and that simple fact is the key to the leader's greatness. In his writing about leadership, he observed that those people who believed foremost in the concept of service and acted as servant leaders were also the most successful (Kouzes & Posner 2004:29–30).

Some questions need to be answered when engaged in servant leadership. These are as follows:



- Do those being served grow as persons?
- Do they, while being served become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely to also become servants?
- Will the least privileged in society benefit and not be further deprived?

When we take the above questions and compare them to the servant leadership of Jesus Christ, we would argue that his leadership was the one that can give a positive answer to all of them, because His leadership was the one that spoke to the heart of every Christian (Matthew 20:26–28). It is apparent then, that one cannot be a Christian leader unless he or she sees him- or herself as a servant first, just as Jesus did (Kouzes & Posner 2004:30–31).

Transformational development, therefore, demands leaders who are demonstrating servant leadership. This is what would be expected from the Amalinda Methodist Church leaders in the present study.

#### 1.4.7 Transformational leadership

Effective transformational leadership in Africa is very crucial. This is not just necessary for the present, but for the future of the continent. Rotberg (2004) points out that there is an outcry that a weak economy and weak institutions in Africa are caused by a lack of transformational leadership in this continent than in any other part of the world. This invites us to define and clarify who transformational leader/leaders are.

According to Mwambazambi and Banza (2014:2), a transformational leader is a leader who understands his or her moral responsibility as that of contributing to the transformation and also enhancement of individuals and communities or organisations for a higher communal good. Mathafena (2017:75) supports this by stating that transformational leaders transform followers by creating changes in their goals, values, beliefs and aspirations. The influence of these leaders will be promoted by sticking and behaving according to transformational leadership principles that make them become admired role models who are respected, emulated, and trusted.

It is imperative then, that in our churches, leaders need to be formed through a process of moral formation so that they can inspire people to take part in the moral vision of building the church to take initiative towards the transformational development of communities. For this purpose, Porter (2008) promotes Christianity as the core. He states that Christian unity should be a sign to which God in Christ is calling all humankind. This is supported by the message of Jesus in John (13:35) when He says, "All men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another" (Porter 2008:131).

Transformational development based on Christian leadership, therefore, is in great demand in cases of poverty alleviation. At this point, we need to give an overview of how poverty can be defined and clarified.

## 1.5 Poverty

The definition of poverty by the United Nations Development Programme (1996) is that poverty is a lack of productive resources, income and capacities that contribute to individual and or group isolation, vulnerability, and powerlessness, to economic, political and social discrimination and participation in unsustainable livelihoods (UNDP 1996). In support, Allen and Thomas (2000:12) state that individuals, families and groups in the population can be identified as suffering from poverty if they lack the resources.

In economic terms, childhood poverty in South Africa (2002:1) states that poverty can be defined as the inability of individuals, households, or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. Along the same line, Ribeiro (2005) argues that whoever is deprived of survival basic means is classified as poor because s/he is not capable of satisfying her/his needs in the way s/he so desires. This simply means that there is no freedom to decide on the use of the means at one's disposal in a way that is appropriate for him or her (Ribeiro 2005:6).

It is of great interest to note an argument that poverty can be classified into absolute and relative poverty. The Development Policy Research Unit in South Africa clarifies that absolute poverty means the inability of people to meet basic needs, such as food,

clothing, housing, and medical care. On the other hand, relative poverty refers to a lack of income concerning the average standard of living (DPME 2015:43).

From a Biblical perspective, the bible has rather a lot to say. In the book of Proverbs, for example, poverty is sometimes associated with laziness (Proverbs 6:6–11; 24:30–34). However, in prophetic books like Isaiah 1–39, Amos, Micah and others, poverty is seen as resulting from economic and political injustices. This prophetic tradition in the New Testament was followed by Jesus regarding the poverty issue. An example is that of Luke the apostle wherein he focuses on Jesus as the Messiah who will deliver the poor from their burden to be seen as outcasts who do not enjoy God's favour (Luke 4:18–19) (see Kretzschmar 2006:83).

Another explanation of great significance is put forward by the Chilean economist and needs theorist, Manfred Max-Neef (1989). He elucidates that poverty means the lack of something(s) of special importance. He then argues that we must rather speak of poverties, not poverty, for different important things may be lacking. He measures this as equivalent to needs theory wherein what is lacking can be specified as the requisites for survival, health, dignity, flourishing, and so on –or as those things themselves. Alternatively speaking, poverty-like development is a vector, not a scalar concept, though sometimes we find aggregation useful just to make decisions (see Gasper 2004:14).

To a large extent, we learn that poverty concerns not only the lack of income and wealth. This is illustrated by Narayan, Chambers, Shaw and Petesch (2000:53) by citing an illiterate mother in Pakistan who remarked 'I am illiterate. I am like a blind person.' This reveals that without education that woman felt poor because there was something of importance that was lacking in her life. Something debatable is that while poverty is material in nature, it also has psychological effects (Narayan et al. 2000:37). That has led others to call these psychic poverties and they include: having no voice, no dignity, being humiliated, feeling powerless, and being unable to participate in one's community. These said poverties also vary independently of material poverty. Narayan et al. find that to a large extent, dependency, lack of power and lack of voice emerge as core

elements of poor people's definitions of poverty and the said aspects cannot be classified as only material in nature but can also be classified as multidimensional (Narayan et al. 2000:64). To fight poverty, transformation should take precedence.

### 1.5.1 Transformation

Transformation is about a vision of society, it is forward-looking, and it is about the action of God in bringing change. This change should reflect the new and the passing away of the old (1 Thess.3:12–13, as cited in Sugden 2003:74). Put more simply, to transform means change from one point to the other. What comes first is the vision with a leading question- what better future is expected and what are the goals? All in all, a vision must lead to a goal. It is therefore expected that those who are busy with the vision will be engaged in the process of transformation (Myers 2011:173).

### 1.5.2 Some assumptions regarding transformation

Our assumptions should be made explicit by taking note of what we believe people are transformed from and transformed to. An example is that if we see people as lost souls, then transformation is about saving souls. When we see people suffering from hunger, then transformation will be about feeding them. If the problem is an unjust system, then the tools of transformation are community organising, advocacy, or political activism. Differing views of poverty therefore lead or drive us to differing approaches to transformation. In the present study, for instance, people are seen as suffering from absolute poverty - hunger. But be that as it may, the way we understand the causes of poverty also tends to determine our response to poverty (Myers 2011:152).

### 1.5.3 A call for transformation in South Africa

Transformation in South Africa is a challenge for the government, its social institutions, and the transformation agencies of civil society. The emergence of community transformation can thus be viewed as a sub-field of practical theology. To elaborate on this, a statement just after the freedom from the oppression era reveals that transformation does not refer to social per se but spiritual as well. The statement referred to above is that of the former first Black president of the new South Africa, Nelson Mandela. The words shared by him in the statement can be quoted here: "In

striving for political and economic development the ANC recognises that economic development and social transformation cannot be separated from spiritual transformation” (Swart et al. 2010:261). From these words of the liberation stalwart, one can deduce that first and foremost, to be involved in transformational development everybody needs to be spiritually transformed. By so doing, the vision of a peaceful society will be promoted and the will of God for all human beings created in His image will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. In carrying out God’s will, social institutions including the church therefore should take a wider view of their role in the communities they serve. These are most of the time communities that are poor, underdeveloped and lacking resources. The social development programmes devised by churches are a means of alleviating the problems related to poverty. The challenge faced by churches is to consider getting rid of self-centred attitudes and accept interactive, participatory methods to be able to reach out to the community.

Having been engaged in such programmes that encourage and promote community participation, the belief is, not just theology will be served by churches, but they will become worthy transformational development partners (Swart et al. 2010:38–41). The role of the researcher in this study, through the Amalinda Methodist Church, could be viewed as an attempt to bring to light a move towards the foresaid consideration of the transformation of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. One would hope that the participants (that is, those involved) will be sensitised to catch the flame. Each community in South Africa has its immediate needs. These needs are the needs of the people settled in communities. All in all, both the people and their communities must be transformed. The agents of transformation in these communities need to take the responsibility of transformational development upon themselves. This will thus mean having transformational leadership that cares about the people and their needs. An emphasis by Mathafena (2007:75) is that transformation is about a vision of society or community, not of the leader. It is the community’s forward-looking and about God bringing change. Paul in Romans (12:2) reminds us not to be conformed to this present world but transformed. Transformation in this case should entail reflecting new and the passing away of the old (1 Thess. 3:12–13) (see Sugden 2003:74). To support this,

Kelsall and Mercer (2003:295) contend that during transformation the old selves expressed through a variety of ways of being in the world stand to be destroyed.

#### 1.5.4 Transformational development

According to Myers (2011:3–4), transformational development is referring to changing human life materially, socially, psychologically, and spiritually. A call is for the spheres of life to be developed right through the revolving lifelong journey. This is an obligation for everyone, the poor, the non-poor together with the practitioners of development workers. It is only by caring for all people in God's world that success will be attained.

Another clarification by Sugden (2003:75) is that transformational development is a process whereby concepts, tools, attitudes, and skills facilitate the acceptance and application of the values of the kingdom of God in human communities. This refers particularly to communities where the majority of people are economically and socio-politically deprived and incapacitated. In this sense, it can be interpreted as a specific Christian approach to promoting a moral community. To support Sugden (2003), Myers (2011) further elaborates that when one speaks of transformational development it reflects the picture of the community which exists, which is for human existence as created by God. From a Christian perspective then, the community will still exist and be the environment to be lived in for as long as there are inhabitants until the second coming of Jesus. This statement brings an awareness that development will carry on being transformed for as long as there are people on earth. An emphasis is that whatever heals and restores the body, mind, spirit and community included, can be viewed as a direction towards transformational development (Myers 2011:173–175).

### 1.6 Transformational development challenges of the modern world

The modern world has its challenges characterised by continuous demands for social transformation and transformational development. Botman (2000:201) argues that social transformation aims at dismantling the edifice of apartheid, the reconstruction of a new society free from division and domination and a practical theological process

whereby society is “constructed to be increasingly consonant with the vision and values” of the rule of God. More clarity of the term ‘development’ therefore has led to the term transformation. A common understanding of transformation is change and development is understood as progress. Transformational development in this stance will mean progress in a changed manner or form. The argument is that there is still development but there is an advanced change in the way or manner by which development is taking or will take place. The term ‘transformation’ was applied to Christian involvement in what was known as development in Wheaton’s (1983) “Transformation-the church in response to Human need” (Sugden 2003:71).

The above statement was promoted by Christian development organisations working among the poor. In the biblical view of human life, transformation is the challenge from a condition of human existence contrary to God’s purposes to one in which people can enjoy the fullness of life in harmony with God (John 10:10; Col 3:8–15; Eph 13). The term transformation, therefore, helps to assure those involved in evangelism that their vision and mission statement for transforming people would not be lost in the concern to transform the social relationships in which people were set. That is why in his 1999 statement Vinary Samuel wrote that transformation is to enable God’s vision of society to be actualised in all relationships, social, economic and spiritual, so that God’s will may be reflected in human society and his love be experienced by all communities, especially the poor (see Sugden 2003:72).

### 1.6.1 Transformational development from a Christian perspective

To tend for human basic transformational development needs and to progress towards the accepted common good in Africa, more attention is paid to religion. This includes the extent to which religious people, practices and organisations are gaining increasing visibility in international development initiatives. This also involves taking into consideration the concept of ‘*ubuntu*’ which expresses the concept of development in a broadened manner (Adogame 2016:1; Ogbonnaya 2016:1–2).

This then means that humans must belong together to survive. This survival must not be aimed at incorporating only species of one's kind, Kith and Kin or relatives, but strangers and humanity as a whole including the poor (Ogbonnaya 2016:8).

Religion must play a major role in the transformation and development thereof.

### 1.6.2 The role of religion in transformational development

Religion helps many residents cope with the daily struggle to provide for themselves and their families. In Gallup's world poll survey (see Swart et al. 2010) in at least eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, all residents who responded that religion is important in their lives are poorer nations.

A question arises here: Are Africans more religious because it is a way to cope with the hardships associated with underdevelopment? In response to this question, what can be mentioned is that religion can be a cohesive factor that helps to join people together, giving them strength for their ability to determine their priorities concerning their planning and actions. Empowerment in a practical religious theological approach can assist and support the needy. Communities will therefore not only overcome the hardships, but the benefits will also help people overcome the psychological feeling of degradation and dependency suffered by the poor (Swart et al. 2013:40).

Another argument by Mbiti (1999:15) is that religion in a very crucial way pertains to the question of existence and as such the nexus between religion and existence cannot be dismantled. This is because religion has a set of rules about conduct that guides life within a social group and is often organised and practised within a given society or community (see also Agbiji 2015:1). As a theological discipline of Christian faith, practical theology also engages by focusing on global, local and particular issues to do something about reality and some problems confronting society (Hendriks 2010:284). Transformational development needs to be sustained. This leads us to define sustainable development.



### 1.6.3 Sustainable development

This is keeping the balance of development going and maintaining it for the future. For every community under development or transformation sustainability must include the physical, mental, social and spiritual. This goes together with maintaining the well-being of individuals and their communities (Gough, McGregor & Camfield 2006:5).

The concept of 'sustainable development' is popularised by a specific definition that was published by the Brundtland Commission in its report 'Our common Future' (Brundtland Commission 1987). It defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Becker 1993:49). From a reasonable point of view, we may argue that for every development to be sustainable it must be in line with the future improvement or development even for generations to come. In this regard, Emmett (2010:516) suggests achieving the goals of development through a process of collective action by all in the community.

As long as any changes will suit the demands of the present and the future, transformational development will be regarded as sustainable. Once there is an element of doubt and uncertainty or failure, it ceases to be sustainable development and will collapse (Soares & Quintella 2008:110). It should be noted that in every effort towards transformational development we must put our trust in God. He is the sustainer of everything on earth. Metzger (1988) emphasises that without the goodness of God in creating and sustaining the world, man indeed could have no hope (Metzger 1988:16; 213). For the present study, it is expected that the sustainability of the soup kitchen programme by Amalinda Methodist Church is taken into consideration. Development programmes do make a difference when the necessary resources to process and protect it are available. Contrary to this, when the community depends on external resources the programme runs a risk of collapsing or usually collapsing. We, therefore, need to consider the following for sustaining development:

- Recognise that even the poorest community already has some level of sustainability in terms of food, water, housing and living within environmental constraints (Jayakaran 1996:8). In supporting Jayakaran, Soares and Quientella

(2008:112) stress that to be sustainable, development should provide or allow for the conditions of harmonious maintenance of man's well-being including economic, social, political and the environment to be sustained.

- Second, we should take that sustainable life is not controlled by us, but by the controller of the universe through Christ who sustains life. An assurance to this is revealed in Psalm 104 that God plays an active role in making springs, giving drink, causing the grass to grow and bringing forth food from the soil, providing wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and also bread that sustains a man's heart (Psalm 104:14–6). This clarifies that the sustainer of any form of transformational development is God.
- Third, we must never stop seeking sustainable growth, we need to learn more to continue with transformation.
- Finally, we need to consider two ways of defining sustainability- that the transformational development process must not be dependent on us and that once started, transformational development needs some precautionary measures so that it does not collapse (Myers 2011:193).

The transformational development practitioners as well as the communities in transformation are urged to monitor its sustainability from all angles and from time to time continuously. This will make even generations to come to acknowledge the past whilst forging the future.

## 1.7 Research design

The modern practical theological methodology that has made a great contribution in South Africa is that of the prominent practical theologian from Nijmegen in the Netherlands, J.A. Van der Ven. His latest book 'Practical Theology: an empirical approach' challenges the reader to a magisterial systematic account of modern practical theological methodology (Pieterse 1994:77). The empirical approach in practical theology provides methods and tools to describe and elucidate what goes on in the actual lives of actual people to evaluate their religious experience and to explore and validate the interpretation of these experiences. Finally, there will be tentative answers

to the problems formulated with these experiences and the texts and contexts with which they are connected (Van der Ven 1993; see also Pieterse 1994:79).

In the present study, the research focuses on what is going on in the actual lives of poor people in the Amalinda Forest Community. Their experiences are voiced out which follows the interpretation and analysis of data as obtained from their experiences. For this study, therefore, the research design is qualitative. According to De Vos, Delport, Fouché & Strydom (2015:310) in qualitative research, researchers are committed to a naturalistic perspective and the interpretive understanding of human experience. In the current process of this research, the need for transformational development of the poor in the community will be brought to light. On the other hand, information regarding the experience of the church members involved in the transformational development service delivery will also be provided. Swinton and Mowat (2006:5) support this by stating that in practical theology research, practical theology has its beginning point which is the human experience.

The entire discussion of research and the research methodology for the present study will be dealt with in Chapter 4. Let us now give a reflection on the delimitation of the study.

### 1.7.1 Delimitation of the study

For this study, the researcher had to limit the research to the transformational development field of study including the test population to be engaged as respondents in the soup kitchen programme.

#### 1.7.1.1 The field of the study

The field of this study, in terms of the title thereof, was limited to the role of the Amalinda Methodist Church in the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

#### 1.7.1.2 Research population

The respondents were selected from the members of the Amalinda Methodist Church. These included those who were engaged in the soup kitchen programme, namely: the

initiators of the soup kitchen programme, the members of the Women's Manyano (Mothers' Union), the members of the Young Men's Guild (YMG) and the leaders of the church. The other respondents were selected from the members of the Amalinda Forest Community where the transformational development programme was taking place.

#### 1.7.1.3 Research techniques

The information required for the present study had to be gathered from the people mentioned as respondents above; therefore the researcher decided to use the interview research method to gather information from some respondents from the Amalinda Methodist Church, while for the other respondents and the members of the community focus group interviews were used.

### 1.8 Contribution of the study

The study might reveal the present state of affairs concerning transformational development by the Methodist Church in the impoverished Amalinda Forest Community.

This research might draw the attention of the church leaders as well as the Provincial Municipality management to consider making contributions towards transforming the lives of the poor in that community.

The need for empowerment of the people in that community would be brought forward with the ultimate aim of promoting the people's use of God-given talents, skills and potential.

All church members might further be motivated to be the servants of God for the service of the people in alleviating poverty.

The community members would be expected to voice out their priorities for better living in that community.

The present study might promote consideration of the collaboration between the church and other government departments and NGOs with one mission of transformational development in the poor area under investigation.

Strategies to maintain and sustain the existing structures of transformational development might be promoted.

It might also reveal what more needs to be done for further development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

## 1.9 Problems encountered with the study

There were some problems encountered during the process of this study including the following:

- The study was not completed as scheduled. There was a delay in conducting research due to the researcher's problems. There were also problems faced by some of the respondents which made it impossible to conduct interviews at the scheduled time.
- The researcher managed to contact the Ward Councilor of the Amalinda Forest Community telephonically, but efforts to organise a meeting with him failed in 2019. There was hope to organise another meeting in 2020 but due to Covid 19, this did not materialise.
- The researcher discontinued the study in 2020 due to some Covid-19 challenges.
- The Residing Minister of the Amalinda Methodist Church was to be changed to another circuit during the period of this research. However, his contribution in consultation with the church leaders to grant the researcher permission to use the church hall for conducting the research was of great support.
- On two occasions, there was a challenge of a shortage of some ingredients for preparing soup on Sunday morning and the researcher had to rush to the shop to buy these to rescue the groups responsible for soup preparation on the specified dates.

- The researcher's phone had a problem and the photos of the church members serving the soup to residents were deleted in 2019. Arrangements to take other photos in 2020 did not materialise due to Covid-19.

## 1.10 Conclusion

In this first Chapter, the introduction to the study has been presented. The research topic and the reason for its choice have also been discussed. The background of the study, objectives and the statements of the problem concerning the topic has been put forward. The terms used in the study were discussed for clarity, and the research design, the delimitation of the study, the test population, the research techniques, and the expected contribution of the study have been discussed. Lastly, the problem encountered during the period of this research was stipulated.

In the ensuing Chapter, a review of the literature will be presented.

# Chapter 2: From the grassroots towards a practical theological perspective

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## 2.1 Introduction

Theology in its wider context is a never-ending process in the living world. Johnston (2008) argues that it does not belong to ivory towers and ivory-covered walls, but on the contrary, is something practised concretely by a great many people during their lives. In their daily efforts, people engage in the doctrine of religion in a systematic fashion with ideas organised into a reasonable, logical, and coherent manner. This leads to the understanding that the truth about theology is that it enquires into the implications of faith. In this regard, it sifts out what is not consistent with its truth and values (Johnston 2008:1–2).

The rise of pastoral theology later called practical theology is closely related to the education of ministers or priests. However, Heitink (1999) argues that the rapid changes in church and society due to enlightenment and modernism led to understanding practical theology as the theory of the praxis (Heitink 1999:132). In this regard, the objective of practical theology is not only biblical or historical, but instead, practical theology is empirical theology in the strict sense of the word (Pieterse 1994:79; Heitink 1999:132). It is from this perspective, that Van der Ven (1993:20) introduced the term 'empirical theology' to stress the need for empirical research (also see Heitink 1999:136).

For an empirical practical theological approach to the transformational development of the poor, some historical trends that have made a mark for a call for transformational development in South Africa will be reviewed. Literature covering what has already been done in the South African context concerning the transformational development of the poor will also be consulted. From this background, it is within the interest of this study to explore the theological approach to transformational development of those affected in disadvantaged communities such as the Amalinda Forest Community under

study. An approach to development through post-apartheid practical theology in South Africa will form part of the literature review. Leadership, empowerment, and service as challenges of the church in transformational development programmes will also be discussed. Involvement and participation by those whose lives are transformed will be brought to light in the relevant literature.

In summary, all the relevant literature falling within the scope of the research topic will be reviewed. Logic in presenting correlated theories and ideas will be considered to keep the balance of coherence and relevance.

## 2.2 Towards a black liberation practical theological transformation in South Africa

Concerning practical theology transformation in South Africa, our challenge is to walk through the gates of History. The case in South Africa can be traced to the rise of Black Theology (Botman 2000:201). The historical context of the development of black consciousness can be traced to events that took place after the Sharpeville tragedy of March 1960. The inhuman treatment experienced by black people including the banning of two major liberation movements namely: The African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the imprisonment of the key members resulted in student actions of resistance in several black universities. Several activist students escaped to exile (see Kretzschmar 1986: xii). That period could be likened to the Bible illustration when the Israelites escaped Pharaoh's oppression in Egypt to Canaan (Exodus 3:7–9). However, Allan Boesak (1984:9) a prominent liberation theologian emphasised that the God of the Bible is the God of the poor and the oppressed and is always present on their side (in Naudine Bowers Du Toit 2016:5).

The transformation from the stage of confusion and uncertainty to a realisation of Black identity was an invitation to Black theologians to stress a proclamation of the gospel to the immediate needs of Black people to avoid humiliation. This led to Black Theology being propagated throughout South Africa employing the Black Theology Project (BTP) (1970). The process was carried out through seminars and ministers' caucuses that



promoted the church's teachings against oppression by apartheid South Africa (Motlhabi 2008:23).

The history reveals that the first phase of black theology which made its inroads in South African universities burst out to the fore with the outbreak of the Soweto riots in 1976. The second phase was brought about by a noteworthy document, the Charter of ABRESCA (Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa) formed in 1981. It brought a shift in understanding the word 'Black' from referring to pigmentation to meaning a socially constructed conditioning. The efforts of these phases led to the dawn of the third phase which identified the church as a confessing church that recognised blackness as expressed in confessing terms (Botman 2000:204). Another point of departure given by Botman is that on 1994, 14 April, two Black churches of the Dutch Reformed Church family namely: The Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa united to form the Uniting Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. The uniting churches had a responsibility of empowering their members. Dr Nelson Mandela supported such unity and stated that uniting churches must empower the members so that they can play a proactive role in building a nation (Botman 2000:205). The unity referred to above by the post-apartheid churches should bring about liberation theology that bears all the hope to transform the living conditions of the poor towards a future that is free from slavery and oppression. An argument is that there is still a state of poverty and deprivation amongst the citizens in South Africa and the old familiar modes of doing theology had become inadequate to meet the new challenges (Swart 2008:128).

In support of the above, the post-apartheid practical theology in South Africa has been emphasised by Jim Cochrane, John de Gruchy and Robin Peterson to be rooted in social memory. In this regard, their statement 'Towards a Practical Theology of Social Transformation' serves as a benchmark (Botman 2000:201). According to them, to understand the purpose and history of practical theology, one needs to understand what they refer to as *status confessionis* and prophetic theology with a liberation emphasis located on the experience of the poor Black people. Agreeing with the above-mentioned scholars, Cone (1985) states that Black Theology calls the church as a 'body of Christ'

to take the responsibility of servanthood for the victims of injustice and those whose dignity has been undermined in society. The focus therefore should be on the poor and challenge the socio-economic structures that are responsible for their poverty (see Manala 2014:259). Putting more emphasis on this, Burgess (2020) states that what is of utmost practical benefit is looking at the well-being of all human beings to flourish in communities (see Hankela et al. 2022:5). This leads us to discuss practical theology and human well-being.

### 2.2.1 How practical theology contributes to human well-being

To illustrate how practical theology contributes to human well-being one will refer to a few views drawn out of contributions by several scholars on the subject. Particular attention will be paid to Dreyer's (2004) article, 'Practical Theology and human well-being: An exploration of a multi-dimensional model of human action as a conceptual framework,' and to the interdisciplinarity of practical theology, Gasper's discussion 2004 on 'Human well-being: concepts and conceptualisation,' will also be reviewed.

For a start, we shall look at Dreyer's views on the subject. Dreyer (2004:3–22) elucidates that the first part of the article argues, "in view of the theological importance of human salvation and human flourishing, practical theology could contribute to these academic discourses" (Dreyer 2004:3). Dreyer further stresses that there is a need for a broad conceptual framework concerning well-being. By this, he visualises a framework that transcends narrow disciplinary approaches. Introducing his article, Dreyer argues that the aim is to explore a multi-dimensional model for human action as a possible conceptual framework for interdisciplinary discourses on human well-being. It is clear from the approach Dreyer uses that practical theology has an immense contribution to the topic of human well-being. Driving his point home, Dreyer refers to the five dimensions of the multi-dimensional model of practical reason as presented by Browning (1991).

Browning (1991) is viewed with high regard in his academic career. According to Dreyer (2004), one of the assumptions underlying his work is that Christian practical theology should, of necessity, participate in public debate about the common good (Browning

2007:318). Second, another key assumption of Browning's work is that practical theology's interest in religious praxis requires that attention be paid to the actual aspects of actions (Dreyer 2004:7). A further examination of the Browning argument will highlight this point. According to Browning (1991:110–111), there are five dimensions or levels of practical moral thinking to be able to give what he terms 'thick descriptions' of moral action.

#### 2.2.1.1 The first dimension is the visual dimension

This is a reference to the basic metaphors and narratives that inform our practices and that together form our practices and our world views (Browning 1991:11). Browning sees these as the "outer envelope or practical reasoning." He also refers to them as inherited narratives and practices that tradition has delivered to us. This could be related to living the good life, health and success (Dreyer 2008:15). Referring to the basic metaphors Dreyer (2008) further cites Jantzen (1996) who states that in the Old Testament the metaphor of flourishing is revealed in the literature "the tent of the righteous shall flourish" (Proverbs 14:11) and in Psalm 92:12, "the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree" (Jantzen 1996:15). However, in the New Testament, the concepts used for well-being are the "fullness of God", blessings in abundance and living a life of abundance. Finally, due to social and political developments of modernisation, Jantzen (1996:59–60) maintains that Christian theology replaces the vision of flourishing and abundance with salvation (Dreyer 2008:15).

#### 2.2.1.2 The second dimension of practical reasoning

The second dimension of practical reasoning is what Browning describes as an obligational dimension with a focus on helping us answer the question: "what are we obliged to do?" (Browning 1983:53). It is at this level that we encounter various ethical and moral traditions. It is then our obligation to exercise our practical reasoning for our well-being and those around us whenever the Christian tradition invites us to do so. The great commandment to love your neighbour as you love yourself is found within the Christian tradition (Leviticus 19:18, 34; Matthew 22:39). Added to this, is also the golden rule stressing to 'do to others as you would like them to do to you' (Browning 1991:105–106). Dreyer (2008:6) quotes another commandment, "you shall have no other gods

before me" (Exodus 20:1–17) as an obligation that we have and that always awaits us in all other commandments. In this regard, it is vivid that biblical texts have much to offer in the obligational dimension of human well-being (Dreyer 2008:16). This is witnessed by Barth (2000) who emphasises that to be human means to stand with God ontologically and structurally. He goes on to stress that from the very outset the human being stands with God (Barth 2000:160).

#### 2.2.1.3 The third dimension is the tendency-need dimension

The tendency-need dimension focuses on the motivation for our actions. Central to this is the question: "which of our human tendencies and needs are we justified in satisfying?" (Browning 1983:53). The tendency raises claims about human nature, its basic human needs and the kinds of moral goods required to meet these needs. For instance, the daily demand in God's universe is that without access to clean water, clean air, affordable housing, adequate health services, employment, proper skilled education, and security, it is impossible to attain human well-being, as also witnessed by Prillelitensky (2005) that individual well-being is impossible without social and communal well-being (Prillelitensky 2005:53-60). In the same vein, Kwiyani (2013:43) emphasises focusing on the material needs of the society, protection of ecology and honouring the ancestors. In this sense, practical theology could conduct research on the influence of welfare policies, family life structures and social institutions such as the church in the present study on people's well-being from a religious perspective (Dreyer 2008:17).

#### 2.2.1.4 The fourth dimension is the environmental social dimension

This dimension has to do with the social, environmental, and ecological context of our actions. The focus here is on the limits that the natural, social and ecological environment places on our actions. These dimensions can be related to the processes such as modernisation and globalisation that place restrictions on our moral actions (Browning 1983:53; 1991:71). What is of great significance is the planning and use of natural resources that exist in the environment. This promotes everyday life choices about what people can do for themselves to support their well-being as well as social well-being (Shorthouse 2002:2; see van der Westhuizen 2019:3).

#### 2.2.1.5 The fifth dimension is the rule-role dimension

The key question in this dimension is: What specific roles, rules and processes of communication should we follow to accomplish our moral ends? (Browning 1983:53). The dimension itself deals with the concrete patterns of action in our daily lives. We can mention the moral value that one must pay tax which results in specific sanctions that govern this moral value should we not adhere to it (Browning 1991:104–105).

In his paper, “Practical Theology and human well-being: An exploration of a multidimensional model of human action as a conceptual framework,” Dreyer further makes some very informative contributions made by Browning to the subject under review which cannot be ignored that the above dimensions together form a chain of practical thinking. They interpenetrate smoothly and intertwine in a manner that makes us unaware of them as different aspects of experience (Dreyer 2008:09). There is an argument that practical theologians through their normative, empirical and strategic inputs in these interdisciplinary academic discourses on well-being (Pieterse & Dreyer 1995), can contribute to the theory and practice of well-being in the present world that longs for salvation and human flourishing (Dreyer 2008:19).

According to a theological ethicist approach, Gasper (2004), well-being is interpreted from different angles. There is a line of thought which equates well-being with the pursuit of happiness or immersing oneself in religion. An opposing view contends that happiness is but one aspect of a well-rounded human experience. Therefore, those engaged in considering well-being as a human need should take into account that human beings are creatures of reasoning and imagination, meaning, making intra and inter-societal links and of course, identities. It is imperative then that in this context, discourse in well-being considers both the quantity and quality of life (Gasper 2004:1–2). To support Gasper's view, Soars and Quintella (2008) cite Holtz (1995) that in the modern era, the term well-being is used in various fields of development like economic, human development, quality of life, health and happiness (Soars and Quintella 2008:112). Along the same line, in this process of striving towards well-being and human flourishing neither the human race nor the natural order must be made

subservient to unnecessary material gain, but what must be theologically affirmed is the infinite dignity of humankind (Rowland 2007: 196).

In Gasper's document on well-being, the following assertions are worth noting (Gasper 2004:07) "given the many relevant aspects of well-being, it seems better to use well-being as an umbrella term rather than seek for a single key aspect or theme." This sounds like a wise caution to whoever tackles this subject. There is another debatable argument when a person's well-being is reflected by income. The premise is that this reduction must be tested by comparing how income is used because some forms of consumption can impede progress toward well-being. For example, heavy use of alcoholic beverages and compulsive gambling are damaging to both consumers and those close to them (Gasper 2004:03). Furthermore, Segal (1991:3) states that the Aristotelian tradition takes well-being as well as the living. In this regard, it becomes apparent that discussing well-being should not focus on one aspect but rather should draw together the physical, psychological, and socioeconomic aspects. At this point, practical theology is challenged to be concerned about the theological aspect of struggle for balanced well-being and this, according to Bosch (1991), is theologically expressed in the term 'salvation'. He further stresses that salvation in Christ is salvation in the context of human society's en-route to a whole and healed world (Bosch 1991:393–400). The aforesaid is what drives Dreyer (2008:3) to support this by stating that practical theology should consider the theological importance of human salvation and human flourishing. A Bible text (Matthew 6:24–34) where Jesus warned his disciples to seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness bears witness to this.

In summary, the input and contribution of practical theology to human well-being could be lined up as follows: a call for a holistic and inclusive broader approach; a strong passion for justice issues, especially concerning the downtrodden, and a deliberate effort to broaden the scope as opposed to limited tendencies. It would not be far-fetched too, to submit that the notion of the concept of '*ubuntu*' seems to be the key to informing the inputs and contributions made by practical theologians to human well-being (Meylahn 2017:1).

Human action has been mentioned as striving for transformation towards salvation and human flourishing and therefore, we need to look at what the theologians have explored in terms of the challenge for a renewed practical theology.

## 2.3 A challenge for a renewed practical theology

According to Cahalan (2005), the modern change in practical theology has been a response to a decline of Christianity in the postmodern realities where congregations in the pluralistic society are no longer communities of faithfulness and vitality (Cahalan 2005:63). Cahalan (2005) traces the situation as it first took place in American Society where theological educators had called for a change in practical theology (Cahalan 2005:64–65). Regarding this change, the work of Edward Farley during the early 1980s towards the revitalisation of practical theology is worth mentioning. Farley's idea of habitus is centred on the relationship between theory and practice, theology education for the whole church and the role of practical theology in relationship to public and social issues. To be ready for the renewal of practical theology, the steps to modernity with different views need to be considered. In addressing this, Cahalan uses Paul Lakeland's (1997) description of three postmodern options in philosophy and theology as follows:

### 2.3.1 Practical theology and postmodernity

Lakeland (1997) describes three emergent responses to the crisis of modernity namely: the late modern, the counter modern and the radical postmodern. The mentioned responses are represented within various approaches to Practical theology, theological education and ministry. The following are the views concerning these responses:

#### 2.3.1.1 The views of the late modern supporters

The late modern view modernity as an unfinished project and seek to explore the possibility of grounding ethics and politics in universal principles. According to them, reasoning power needs to be modified by a community that is engaged in dialogue to understand how to move towards truthful engagement in and with the world.

#### 2.3.1.2 The views of counter-modern and radical postmodern supporters

The counter-modern and radical post-modern supporters are different but have one common feature. For them, modernity is short of value and its mood is leading human beings to destruction. The counter-modern supporters put forward that this collapse of modernity needs to be challenged by recovering the integrated community and community-dependent truth claims that defined worlds of discourse and action before modern projects. This means that the counter-modern considers and refers to the past to revive the present. However, the radical post-moderns are opposed to referring to either the pre-modern or modern past claiming that both encompass totalising discourses which distort, corrupt and oppress people including their cultures and communities.

#### 2.3.1.3 The counter modern positions

There are two positions identified by Lakeland (1997) as counter-modern views. They are the fundamental option and a position that includes both neo-conservative and post-liberals. In their position, the counter-moderns mention a loss of religious authority with traditional legitimated moral norms and practices. Liberalism instead, has bequeathed to use the evils of individualism, secular humanism, moral relativism, and loss of community and families that are plagued by every social problem. So to rectify this, Alasdair McIntyre (1981) created a counter-modern project 'After Virtue' which was aimed at retrieving values left behind by the enlightenment. Those values and practices of a particular religious and cultural tradition would be considered to be put into action. On the contrary, the radical postmodern replaced the counter modern position that embraces authoritarian religious ethics with irony. The emphasis is that the radical postmodern position announces a rejection of both the counter-modern claim favouring tradition and the modern notion of universal truth claims (Cahalan 2005:66).

#### 2.3.1.4 What the three postmodern positions offer in contemporary practical theology

Despite their opposite challenges, these three approaches to practical theology tally in their engagement in three issues: Studying the postmodern situation with an analysis of the enlightenment's impact on Christian thought and practice; offering constructive



proposals to the Christian Community to live faithfully in secular post-Christendom and finally, advancing a model of the church ministry with theological education proposals to be implemented in seminaries and schools of theology (Cahalan 2005:67). Each of these approaches needs to be viewed in the context of the modern demands in every society. Postmodernity in our communities, including the community under study, shows a decline in Christianity. This brings a challenge to the church and the community under study to consider the counter-modern approach and apply Christian practices in their engagement in the transformational development of the poor for effective liberation.

### 2.3.2 The liberation theology

The mode of doing theology that was considered relevant after the apartheid era was liberation theology. However, having been liberated from the constraints of apartheid, the struggle was viewed as no longer for liberation but for the development of people in the new post-apartheid South Africa. There were expectations of development in a new society with political and economic liberation that would lead to nation-building. Supporting the aforesaid, Swart (2008) states that the term 'liberation' was strongly supported by development as the key to a new paradigm. It is argued that organisations were expected to design their programmes according to the developmental plans of action for the new era. Pre-1994 through liberation theology, the church was urged to take political action in campaigning for the abolition of pass laws, land ownership and influx control of black people. Post-1994 saw a progressive demographic relocation of black people into cities for the improvement of their family lives. Moreover, throughout this period, churches were called upon to challenge the unjust state by promoting not only an individual's dignity but also structural and systemic discrimination in multiple structures of society (Swart 2008:109).

The objectives of the theology of liberation are a continuation in the present study as demonstrated by the response of the Amalinda Methodist Church to the challenge of poverty in the Amalinda Forest community through, for example, the soup kitchen programme. Their intention to improve the lives of the families in that area tallies with

what is expected in liberating those who have come to the cities and are located in squatter camps with nothing and without dignity. The said commitment by the church needs to be observed because according to Govender et al. (1992:14) it has been noticed that even after some years of the fall of apartheid the poorest of the poor are still neglected.

Concerning the promotion of dignity through liberation, it would be expected that the equality of all human beings irrespective of gender, creed, race, etcetera should be respected. In this case, a feminist approach, in particular, needs to be explored.

#### 2.3.2.1 The feminist approach to liberation

The feminist approach to practical theology that has been at the centre of the discussion is that of the feminist theologian Rebecca Chopp (1995). She gives serious attention to theological education in her book, "*Saving Work: Feminist practices of theological education.*" Her approach to practical theology is 'critical theory' that supports and encourages models arising in a specific situation. To shape the new forms of flourishing, that situation is addressed by using symbols, images, and concepts to move against distortion and dysfunction that prevail. In this approach, feminist theology will accept a range of women's experiences from different social locations and address them. Three feminist practices that make a feminist approach to theological education unique are narrativity, new practices of an *ekklesia* and reconstructive and transformative approaches to theology and Christian life (Chopp 1995:83). Let us look at how these practices function:

- Narrativity refers to the capacity to write one's life as an agent in participating in the determination of cultural conditions as a particular condition of the postmodern situation since narratives of modernity have disappeared. In this way, narratives that stand against oppression and dehumanisation must enter the cultural and religious fabric. Women begin to reject old definitions imposed by patriarchal forms and set in search of new models (Chopp 1995:83).

- New practices – feminist theology put forth new practices of *ekkklesia*. *Ekklesia*, according to Chopp (1995), stands in the space of the already and not yet and grace begins holy living that is saved from the temptations of sin. Feminist models of *ekkklesia* are thus observed as demonstrating resistance to present structures as well as alternative visions and practices of the church activated now and for the future (Chopp 1995:83–84).
- Reconstruction and transformational approaches to Christian life honour the church as a community of friends with a spirituality based on praxis and they also respect the church as a counter-public sphere of justice. Transformation is brought about by a model of knowledge which begins in concrete human situations to the transformation of concrete realities. This ethical and moral practice is aimed at survival and flourishing, and its basis is formed by three feminist practices of justice, dialogue and imagination (Chopp 1995:84).

The essence of these aspects in the community under study is promoting the joint effort by all the members of the community including men, women, youth, and the church to fight for the liberation of the poor. What needs to be emphasised is good interpersonal relationships for the practices of justice for all. In consideration of the aforesaid, liberation in the Christological approach has been replaced by the term reconstruction introduced by the proponents of the reconstructive motif in African theology including Mugambi (1995), Mana (1993) and Wachege (1992) as cited by Gathogo (2015:01). According to the African liberationist Christologists, Jesus is the liberator who was crucified and died fighting against injustices, oppressions, and dehumanisation. He was then raised as a mentor of struggle and invited African Christians to come together in unity and participate in Christ's liberating mission (Gathogo 2015:03).

In the interest of the present study, it is vital to note that in all the endeavours towards transformation and reconstruction of the poor, all those involved need to put their trust and faith in Jesus the reconstructor, especially for the transformational development of the poor in South Africa. To give more clarity to the above question of reconstruction or

restoration, it is essential to look at the constructive motif in the Bible as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount.

### 2.3.3 Reconstructive motif as reflected in Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matthew 5)

The theologians involved in the intercultural-liberation approach to development argue that for social reconstruction to take place, our director must be Christ the reconstructor. We need to remember and refer to his engagement in transforming the world and human beings for their peaceful and humane living on earth (Mana 1993:10). Jesus' reconstructive motif in the Sermon on the Mount can be witnessed by looking at the following Bible references in Gathogo (2015:5–7).

- He reconstructs the theologies of scribes, the Pharisees, and Sadducees by challenging them to stop hypocrisy (Matthew 6:1–9; 23; Luke 18:9–14). He emphasised praying in one's room and not in the open to be seen and approved by the public. What Jesus stresses is that God is not convinced by many words for God, Our Father, knows everything we need before we ask him (Matthew 6:5–8). He is even ever ready for our needs for transformation.
- Christ as the Liberator brings to our attention that he has not come to abolish the law nor the prophets but instead to fulfil them (Matthew 5:17). Christ was God and is even today, he participated in the enactment of the law (John 1:1) and he is, of course, able to reconstruct it. In Matthew 5:21 we witness his role as a reconstructor when he says: You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, do not murder..." (Exodus 20:13).
- Christ challenges the controversial law of Revenge that instructed 'eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth' (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21) and places a reconstruction that not to resist an evil person but to continue showing brotherly love when one strikes one on the right cheek turn to him the other also (Matthew 5:38–42).

- Again, like the above, Jesus reconstructed the law by giving a new Dimension to the manner of teaching and enemies by quoting (Leviticus 19:18) about loving neighbours and hating the enemy. He gives the opposite of the aforesaid by pleading to us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:43–44).
- He raised the question of being perfect just as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). In this way, seeking perfection will be the quest for reconstruction.
- The general mode of worship was reconstructed by Jesus questioning the wrongdoing and reconstructing by giving parables, sayings, analogies, teachings, evangelising and preaching, and we can mention his act of driving out those who were buying and selling in the temple (Matthew 19:45–48) bringing the awareness that the temple is a House of Prayer referring to Isaiah 56:7. His reconstructive teachings have formed the basis for abstract thinking in 21st Century Africa which is engulfed by tensions, rivalries, wars, promiscuity and general immorality which hinder progress in the transformation and development of our societies.

In essence, Jesus' qualities as a re-constructor have gone beyond the African leaders who were expected and who are still expected to build up societies by doing the work of a shepherd effectively to guarantee their prosperity (Gathogo 2015:06). We need to note that Christ established his family, the church, and made it stable by loving it as a family of hope (John 16:33). Because practical theology deals with God's activity through the ministry of human beings, the church is called upon to protect people from any evil that degrades the humanity of God's people. In light of the above, we need to bring to light how the church has been involved in the struggle for South Africa.

## 2.4 The church and the struggle for South Africa

At the beginning of this Chapter, we have referred to the history of inhuman treatment experienced by Black South Africans under apartheid. In this case, the role of the

church as the servant of God cannot be ignored. A brief background of the church and the struggle for South Africa to be presented here is that of De Gruchy (1979). According to him, a common feature of third-world countries is that of being products of an apartheid society. In South Africa, this led Blacks to start the struggle for liberation by participating in reformist programmes to fight for justice, peace, and hope (De Gruchy 1979:232).

The intervention of the church from its long history supported Black political movements where some Black political leaders of the ANC and PAC were involved. We can mention leaders such as Albert Luthuli, ZK Matthews and Robert Sobukwe to name but a few. It is also mentioned that some whites like Trevor Huddleston also supported them (De Gruchy 1979:233). With the gradual change over time and more state oppression awareness, the liberation struggle escalated spreading to the South African people in 1968. This gave rise to Black theology as well as the World Council of Churches Programme aimed to confront racism launched in 1969. The churches that formed the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in South Africa declared apartheid a false gospel, theologically and morally bankrupt, indefensible and beyond reform. The call for an end to the unjust rule was raised after the Soweto 9th anniversary on 16 June 1985 which gave birth to the publication of the Kairos document. The said document was a Christian response to apartheid that redefined the church struggle. Furthermore, it meant to be a prophetic challenge to move the struggle for liberation faster and was supported both in South Africa and internationally (De Gruchy 1979:239).

Concerning the above context, De Gruchy (1979) further suggests several themes to guide the church in its liberation struggle in South Africa as follows:

- The Kairos document was developed in the heat of the crisis but seeks to grapple seriously with biblical, prophetic traditions in relation to the context of the struggle at a given moment. Therefore, the church cannot be neutral in the struggle for a just society, but different complementary strategies need to be observed.

- The church must participate in critical solidarity with movements of social change. However, she must stick to being the servant of the Kingdom of God and as such should take note of justice for everything that dehumanises people in communities, especially the powerless, disadvantaged, and poor.
- The Gospel of reconciliation and liberation together with strategies of political negotiation should be taken as two parallel sides considering that God reconciled the world in Jesus. This confirms that reconciliation with God is inseparable from reconciliation with one's neighbourhood. In South Africa then, all races must long for Christian reconciliation for peace and must accept the possibility of change.
- Christians should always be aware that the suffering witness of the cross illustrates non-violent redemptive action and as such, the Christian tradition of just and peaceful revolution should be honoured.

In a nutshell, the church in her struggle in South Africa needs to be aware of the nature of violence that is endemic in society and be able to identify why there was the use of violence to bring about change. Such identification must be directed to those who suffer injustice and devise means and organised strategies for social change for the future of South Africa (De Gruchy 1979:229–243). To exercise the guidance given above, the church should consider and take note of her nature and role in society. This invites us to examine the nature and the purpose of the church.

#### 2.4.1 The nature and the purpose of the church

The church as a servant of God is reminded to consider its nature in any form of transformational development. We are made aware in Acts (20:28) that the church was acquired by God himself with the blood of his son. For this absolute reason of its nature, the church should not consider only those who already know Jesus, but also those who have not known him and of course, the ones who are still struggling and wishing to know him (Armstrong 1979:60–61). It is very crucial to note that we do not just believe in the church as an institution, but ours is to affirm that the church is called into being by God. Its mission and authorisation also derive from God (McGrath 2012:148). Let us

look at what the church is presenting in response to challenges concerning transformational development.

According to Nieman (2006) in South Africa, churches are in a state of introducing some changes to cope and adjust to the present demands. This challenge has compelled them to consider expanding their role in the modern communities where they are stationed to serve. In most cases, those are the communities that are referred to as poor and lacking resources resulting in being identified or labelled as underdeveloped. However, from a traditional and historical background, churches have demonstrated social and political will and sacrifice in their mission by being practically involved and devoted to transforming the lives of the poor, destitute, sick or helpless. They have expressed their mission by doing good in different forms like changeable practices and institutions (Nieman in Swart et al. 2010:37).

Expatriating on the mission of the church in transformational development, Belshaw (2001) relates that the involvement of the church in development is contained in the declaration of Jesus concerning his mission (Luke 4:18–19): bringing 'good news' to the poor. Therefore, Jesus' mission is the mission of the church (Belshaw 2001:223). Carrying on with its mission, the church in society presents ecclesiology, which is Trinitarian involving Father, Son and Holy Spirit (McGrath 2012:150). By so doing, amongst its purpose of transformational development, its mission and function are to transform people through preaching and worship as God's missional imperative for the church.

#### 2.4.1.1 Preaching and worship

The church as the bearer of witness in practical theology bears witness to the risen Lord. This witness is brought forward by the word, deed and sign that announced the whole truth about God and humankind. The means to render this service is preaching about creation and how God has given humans the responsibility to make it fruitful through their work (Myers 2011:77).

When the word of God is preached, God is evidenced as a Sending God. For example, in Exodus 3:10 God is expressed as sending Moses to Pharaoh to lead his people, the



Israelites out of Egypt. Again, the same God's voice is heard by Isaiah the prophet 6:8 when asking "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" and he responds: 'Here I am, send me.' In the New Testament, in Saint Paul's letter to Romans 10:15, a question arises "But how shall they preach unless they are sent? From this, we can conclude that the church responds to the sending God when engaged in preaching and worship to save everything and everyone (Porter 2008:196–197).

Preaching and worship performed at church encourage the social and personal responsibilities of the believers as agents of transformation. In this regard, the church acts as a new community where all relationships are being transformed and its challenge is to embody its identity as a transformative agent in society (Nadine Bowers Du Toit in Swart et al. 2010:269). Pretorious (2013:5) supports this by pointing out that the church preaches the gospel about the specific human function (see van der Westhuizen 2019:2).

#### 2.4.1.2 Care serves as a function of the church

Before we present the role of the church in society, that of care and service, it is important to pay attention to the following question: What are the characteristics of the sociological concept of the church? In response to this question, Van der Ven mentions the following characteristics as the clue to our understanding of the sociological concept of the church namely: Including all the members of the society; functioning as a basis of individual and societal integration (Van der Ven 1988:10). The following discussion on the role of the church will be presented alongside the said sociological concept of the church.

The role of the church in the transformation of development in society tallies with ours, to love the community and serve it with a spirit of encouragement. It does this by working hand in hand with all people towards a stable social order by bringing fallen structures closer to God's original purposes (Mangayi 2016:72). The purposes of transformation amongst people are promoted by the church's motivation to care for those in need, the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in

prison. This care is crucial and is expressed in the Bible as showing love for the neighbour (Matthew 22:39).

In caring and rendering services, the church is seen as not proclaiming the word of God but demonstrating the love of God. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1:13) we read: 'If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not to love, I gain nothing. What this spell is that love is more important than all the spiritual gifts that the church can exercise (Ferreira; Groenewald in Swart et al. 2010:179). This practice of caring for people and showing Christian love in practical theology is referred to as the diaconal work of the church. The emphasis is that the diaconal work should also encompass the opportunity for the poor to express themselves concerning their own lives in public so that they can experience themselves as being self-determined. The poor are then expected to run public events they have organised, argue about definitions, criticise publicly and initiate public campaigns. Engaging in diaconal action, therefore, leads to a political dimension to stand up for the rights of disadvantaged people (Eurich 2015:13).

Furthermore, diaconal action as an expression of Christian love in complex societies will also mean learning to perceive hardship, to look for and to find suffering neighbours. A parable can be applied to support this situation: "like the Shepherd who seeks the one lost sheep" (Matthew 18:12–14). Diaconal action as an expression of Christian love will seek those who are lost in the confusion of modern societies. The challenge of the church is to move out of the walls of the church building to be involved in community work that reaches out to the poor (Belshaw, Calderisi & Sugden 2001:221). The Amalinda Methodist Church that has moved out of the church walls, as presented in this study, would be expected to perform her diaconal task for the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

#### 2.4.1.3 The socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political role of the church in South Africa

The socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political role of the church in South Africa can be witnessed when supporting social institutions such as schools and universities, the state and industrial communities. For example, universities started the fees must fall

movement in mid-October 2015 in supporting the students who could not afford fees that were increased at South African universities (Kgatle 2018:1). The Movement's motivation is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26(1) which states that everyone has the right to education...; the Freedom Charter of 1955 states that education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children. In addition, higher education and technical training shall be opened to all through state allowances and scholarships awarded based on merit...; the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, act 108 of 1996 section 29 states that everyone has the right:

- a) To Basic education including adult basic education and
- b) To further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (see Rembe 2005:5, 332, 341).

Whilst violent action cannot be supported, higher education in society is one of the necessities to alleviate poverty. It is the socio-cultural role of the church to support universities to drive knowledge which is a key to social and economic development in our global world (Kgatle 2018: 6).

For transformational development, the church is expected to take responsibility to use a Christian approach in the socio-economic calling. This involves participating in a free education outcry which includes working with businesses, and charitable institutions from the public and private sectors in cases of bursary funding. It is suggested that for sustainable human development, education and training in South Africa should be based on the realities of the African context where beneficiaries participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives (van der Westhuizen 2017:2). Universities need to be supported in their high-level skills development strategies that are currently scarce and so urgently in demand across the public and private sectors. This, if well-attended, will provide opportunities to ordinary citizens who are capable and talented in the social and economic field of development to promote social mobility and enhance social justice (NPC 2011:262). It is thus expected that no meetings for such discussions and negotiations will start without a prayer.

Belshaw et al. (2001) support the above Christian approach to development by emphasising that programmes that relieve the tragic suffering of the poorest of the poor should not be neglected, but the church should promote sustainable livelihood that can be adopted widely (Belshaw et al. 2001:227). Another argument raised by Mashabela (2017) concerning uplifting the local economy by the church in Africa is considering commercialisation and commodification. For instance, the church should not be afraid to commercialise and mobilise some of the church buildings and resources to be used for business opportunities that would help fund theological education to respond to the needs of the poor and oppressed in Africa (Mashabela 2017:19). In this way, the church would be carrying on with its hermeneutic task in the local communities.

#### 2.4.1.4 The hermeneutic mission of the church to the world

In the 21st century, there are complex challenges that demand the involvement of the church to promote Christianity. According to Gibbs (2001:23), the church should play a critical role in the transformation process if it is to be relevant in effecting change. He argues that the current church needs to be biblically vocal about its message and mission to the world. It is also argued that to be relevant, the church needs specific opportunities and possibilities provided by the church leaders, especially the assurance of God's presence in the face of all that threatens to make life meaningless. The result would be helping people to connect and support one another which would also help them to seek out others in their needs (Van Wyk 2017:3–4). In this way, the church's hermeneutic mission is to proclaim the gospel story and at the very same time, it is also in its life of witnessing the gospel (Niemandt 2019:16). The church that is faced with challenges to transform the lives of the poor, in this study, is the Amalinda Methodist Church of Southern Africa. This raises interest to give a brief discussion on John Wesley's role in church organisation and development for transformation.

## 2.5 John Wesley's role in church organisation and development for transformation

John developed the 'class' system by organising Christians into groups with a leader. The different classes had to meet every week to discuss their faith, pray and express

their understanding of Christianity. This strategy is still used by the Methodists even in the present era. The class leader is to report to the Minister whenever there is a problem in his or her class such as reporting when there is someone sick (Bentley 2010:560). From an ethical point of view, transforming people's lives was John Wesley's passion as he was devoted to an expected practice of working amongst the poor including visiting schools, orphanages, hospitals, and prisons (see Kretzschmar 2005:101).

John Wesley also made a mark in transforming people's lives spiritually through his excellent work in preaching. His practical activity of spreading the gospel was to make it a deeply felt reality in the hearts and minds of ordinary people so that they could be transformed (Johnston 2008:129, 131). His emphasis was on the Grace of God in three forms namely: prevenient grace, justifying grace and sanctifying grace. The grace of God is affirmed by Paul the Apostle in 1st Corinthians (15:10), "but by the grace of God I Am What I Am, and His grace to me was not without effect..." What is entailed in the Grace mentioned above is that prevenient grace prepares us for our encounter with Jesus Christ and is always in the journey of our lives. This then means that the talents and accomplishments we have are the fruits of God's prevenient grace. Justifying grace refers to the experience of spiritual transformation and being born again and gaining new life in Jesus Christ. Finally, sanctifying grace is experienced by believers who have accepted the free grace of God and continue their relationship with God who supports them in every progress in their lives (Johnston 2008:131). The fact that the grace of God is free to all human beings on earth cannot be denied. We should note that it is by the grace of God that we survive even during difficult times such as the stressful period of Covid-19 which affected all, the poor and non-poor alike.

The works of pity and mercy were another focus in John Wesley's works. These included bible reading, prayer, regular attendance of Holy Communion, fasting to advance holiness, and visiting the sick and those in prison (Johnston 2008:131). One of the best-known and most often quoted sayings of John Wesley is that which he describes the Methodist as, 'the friends of all and the enemies of none' (Baker 1962:9).

### 2.5.1 The development of the Methodist Church in South Africa

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa started through the influence of missionaries from England and was first known as the Wesleyan church in South Africa (see Naidoo 2012:92). The transformation took place in 1816 when Reverend Barnabas Shaw arrived at the Cape to start working among indigenous people. In 1820, with the arrival of another Reverend William Shaw in the Albany District at Salem in Grahamstown, there was a chain of missions established towards Natal and throughout the Eastern Cape. These missions were instrumental in starting educational institutions where scholars of the day were educated. Two Methodist institutions can be mentioned in the Eastern Cape namely: Clarkebury and Healdtown where Nelson Mandela was educated after which his hostel was Wesley House at the University of Fort Hare (Mandela 1994:41, 22; Naidoo 2012:92). After the conference of 1927, the South African Methodist became independent and in 1933 was named Methodist Church of South Africa but in 1978 it was transformed and expanded to the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. Based on the historical background above, Methodism in South Africa is evidenced by the promotion of missionary evangelism. Methodists are identified by the uniformed Methodist organisations, namely: the Women's Manyano, the Young Men's Guild and the Wesley Guild. They are known for observing Wesley's teachings and giving attention to his simple threefold rule of life to, 'do no harm, do good and attend upon the ordinances of God' (MCSA 2007:26). However, their obedience to the threefold rule does not prevent them from fighting for righteousness in dealing with the poor even in political situations.

### 2.5.2 The engagement of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in politics

In Southern Africa, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) has directly and indirectly been involved in politics. Mthembu and Mtshiselwa (2018) point out that the MCSA contributed before the 1994 democratic elections in the struggle against apartheid as a member of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) (Mthembu and Mtshiselwa 2018:3). Just after 1994, history has been revised in the Methodist church's involvement in party politics and is among churches that occupied places of

social prominence in democratic South Africa (Forster 2016:63). The MCSA (2006:27) announces that the church's theology teaches that, "God calls us to champion the needs of the people, especially the poorest. In our relationship with the government: We must challenge promises that are not kept and protest excessive expenditure through public statements" (Tenai & Mbewu 2020:6).

In support of the above statement, the MCSA is described to be a church in solidarity with the poor. However, Christians should express Christianity during participation in party politics and be guided by their Christianity as human beings made in the image of God (Vika 2008:66). In this way, it would be clear that to lead a spiritual life is to live as God's servants in all aspects of life (Tshaka & Senokoane 2016:1). Thus, a call for the MCSA to provide ministry to political parties is that of reflecting both a degree of faithfulness to Christ and dependence on the Holy Spirit for transformational guidance in South Africa (Mthembu & Mtshiselwa 2018:6).

These challenges of the church in South Africa are highly concerned with those who suffer from identity and are labelled as poor. This leads us to trace poverty and the poor in South Africa.

## 2.6 A brief historical background of poverty in South Africa

South African history which opposed the inalienable rights of all human beings serves as a living testimony to racial discrimination and forced segregation that has led to poverty (Du Toit & Nkomo 2014:2). The sad story is that a person's life was determined by his or her identity and from 1948 all South Africans not designated 'white' were denied democratic participation and state resources were allocated differently for services such as education and health (Graven 2014:104). This then led to an accelerated wealth gap between the poor and the rich in South Africa. Ncube et al. (2012:8) also stress that the historical exclusion of most of the citizens from sharing the country's wealth has caused structural rifts that will take decades to mend. This is evidenced by chronic poverty that persists amid wealth and prosperity. In the same vein, Howard (1990) contends that inequality of opportunities for the poor causes their poverty to become self-perpetuating because wealth is concentrated in the hands of the

minority elite (Howard 1990:40). The hope for change was raised when the ANC took over reign as a ruling party in 1994. However, the great expectations of freedom from oppression and being impoverished were fruitless, because the extent of poverty is still reported as accelerating even in post-apartheid South Africa with Black people still the worse affected (see Kretzschmar 2014:5).

### 2.6.1 Poverty in post-apartheid South Africa

Various factors have been identified leading to poverty since the rise of democracy in South Africa. A report in the online publication, Quartz Africa (2017) highlighted the fact that more than two decades following the official end of the apartheid regime, Black South Africans continue to be the worst affected by rising poverty. According to this report, nearly half of Black South Africans are considered below Statistics South Africa's lower boundary line of poverty and are defined as individuals who have to sacrifice buying food for other essentials. Less than 1% of white South Africans are said to be below this dire line. Seekings (2014) argues that poverty in South Africa is caused primarily by the rate of unemployment of the less skilled. This also includes young people who are further employed as they lack experience (Seekings 2014:15).

Whilst transformational development of the poor was expected to be the priority in post-1994 South Africa, Statistics South Africa released a report in 2017 acknowledging an additional 3 million South Africans having been pushed below the poverty line between 2011 and 2015. At that time, this translated to roughly 30.4 million South Africans – 55.5% of the population- living on less than R922.00 per person per month (see Quartz Africa 2017). The current unemployment rate was then at a record high of 34.4%. The prevailing circumstances have also been attacked by the University of Cape Town Children's Institute which published the South African Child Gauge Report which revealed that about 6 million in South Africa live in poverty. According to the report, families can hardly provide the minimum amount of nutrition required for a child to survive and flourish. The report found that only 25% of children live in nuclear families, while 62% live in the extended family arrangement. Single-headed households make up about 22% of all households in the country. More than 7 million children live in



households where the head is defined as their grandparents or great-grandparent (Zodidi 2018).

Along the same line, Baker (2019) argues that Mandela's rainbow nation was supposed to show the world how a new, equitable society could be built out of all the ashes of repression and racism. However, the reality is that inequality in the country today is worse than it was under apartheid. Baker (2019) further quotes one unemployed lady complaining that in 1994 they were told that Blacks would be in control and things would be better, but what is seen now is corruption amongst the Black leaders and whites are still in control of the economy.

### 2.6.2 The third world poverty as identified in South Africa

In the discussion of third-world poverty, it is absolute poverty which is usually referred to. This implies that there is a definable level below which the human organism cannot survive and below which starvation and exposure to the elements will eventually kill (Griffin & Khan 1982:236–241). Kgatle (2017:2) also states that statistics show that the majority of people in South Africa live in absolute poverty. Gumede (2014:58) contends that poverty remains very high in South Africa, and there is a view that it might be increasing as the South African economy is further deteriorating.

According to Terreblanche (2004), some other factors that have been identified as inhibiting poverty reduction since 1994 are the increased number of unemployed; current economic policies which do not benefit the poor, except in terms of welfare grants; the lack of education and the negative effects of crime, violence and infectious diseases (Terreblanche 2004:228). Another cause of poverty in post-1994 South Africa is corruption which is taking from the poor. Besides being ethically unacceptable, it results in the exploitation, oppression and impoverishment of society. It also obstructs the service delivery everyone needs, in particular, the poor as a result the poor are getting poorer (Khotseng & Tucker 2013:05; Vorster 2007:64).

An added critical point raised concerning poverty in the African continent is the great capital outflow caused by the rich countries that own most of the industrial output. This increases the poverty of the poor and the wealth of the wealthy (Ogbonnaya 2016:2–3).

To support this, Mills (2012) contends that Africa has historically lacked the critical mass of skilled people to participate in development resulting in high labour costs and low-income growth (Mills 2012:15). What is noted is the internalised idea that Africa has a majority of underdeveloped people which has led to African leaders being self-centred and neglecting the poor (Swart et al. 2010:2). The consequences of the aforesaid are disintegration in South African communities.

### 2.6.3 The challenges of social disintegration in South Africa

The key institutions including family and community in South Africa have been subjected to profound processes of disintegration. According to Ramphele (1991), the following analysis reflects the causes and consequences of social disintegration in South African communities:

- Family breakdowns with increasing divorce rates, separation, parenthood, and teenage pregnancy
- Breakdown of the authority of parents and teachers
- High alcohol and drug abuse
- High unemployment and unemployability rates
- Low performance in life including school and skills training
- High crime rate and endemic violence at all levels of social interaction
- Despair and acceptance of the victim's image
- Flight of skills and positive role models from the townships into higher-income areas (Ramphele 1991:15).

Needless to say, the above symptoms of disintegration by Ramphele (1991) point to our daily news nowadays in South Africa. For example, in News24 an article stated that there was a campaign started by the Eastern Cape Liquor Board (ECLB) aimed at students in response to reports of alcohol abuse on campuses. In the GO! & Express (2021) newspaper of East London, it was revealed that between July and September 2021, nearly 6000 murders were recorded. Cash-in-transit robberies were also rising

and the community safety MEC was called to urgently address the matter (GO! & Express 2021:4). In another article in the New York Times in November 2020, it was reported that the secretary-general of the African National Congress faced 21 charges of corruption. The living conditions of the poor for example, have been studied by Statistics South Africa as stipulated below.

#### 2.6.4 The Statistics South Africa report on living conditions

The following are some key findings published in the report, Men, Women and Children: Findings of the Living Conditions Survey 2014/15 by Statistics South Africa on 29 March 2018 regarding poverty in South Africa.

- **Approximately half (49.2%) of the adult population are living below the upper bound over the line (UBPL)**

According to the LCS 2014/15, there were 35.1 million adults (aged 18 years and older) in South Africa in 2015. When looking at the poverty headcount by sex using the UBPL, adult males and females experienced a headcount of 46.1% and 52.0% respectively. Adult females experienced higher levels of poverty when compared to their male counterparts, regardless of the poverty line used.

- **Gauteng and the Western Cape had the lowest portion of adults living in poverty (UBPL)**

The provinces with the highest headcount of adult poverty were Limpopo (67.5%), Eastern Cape (67.3%), KwaZulu-Natal (60.7%) and Northwest (59.6%). For these provinces, significantly more than half of the population was living in poverty. Gauteng and Western Cape had the lowest proportion of adults living in poverty at 29.3% and 33.2% respectively.

- **Female-headed households mostly felt the experience of poverty**

According to the LCS 2014/15, approximately 40% of South Africans were living below the UBPL. The poverty gap (the distance away from the poverty line) and severity of poverty measures were larger for female-headed households compared to households

headed by males. The proportion of females living below the UBPL was 16.9% points more than that of households headed by males (49.9% versus 33.0%). Almost six out of every 10 households headed by males (59.3%) compared to over seven out of every 10 households headed by females (74.8%) in traditional areas were living under the UBPL.

- **Poor children were twice as likely to have no access to safe play areas**

Having a safe play area is fundamental for the healthy development and growth of a child. At the UBPL, more than half of non-poor children (53.7%) lived in neighbourhoods with safe play areas compared to just a quarter of poor children (25.7%).

- **Poor households headed by females and better access to housing and electricity, but not to water, sanitation and refuse removal services**

About 91.4% of poor male-headed households were connected to electricity compared to 95.2% of female-headed households. For poor female-headed households, 69.6% had full access to water compared to 71.7% of poor male-headed households (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

Despite the above-mentioned challenges of living conditions identified by Statistics South Africa, attempts have been made through some programmes to alleviate poverty in South Africa.

### 2.6.5 Progress in alleviating poverty in South Africa post-1994

Some progress in transforming poverty-stricken South Africa has been achieved since 1994. Government policies introduced different programmes to address the issue of poverty. These include:

- the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994;
- Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1996;
- the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) in 2006;
- the New Growth Plan (NGP) in 2010; and
- most recently, the National Development Plan (NDP) (Department of the Presidency in 2013) (see Kretzschmar 2014:6).

The central objective of the RDP is to improve the quality of life for all South Africans, in particular the poorest and marginalised sections of communities. It emphasised economic growth and development through reconstruction and redistribution and argued for a living wage as a prerequisite for achieving the required level of economic growth (see Kgatle 2017:4). The results of the RDP were witnessed in the erection of RDP houses for those who were identified as qualifying as it continues currently. Besides the RDP, GEAR, ASGISA and NGP, the 484-page National Development Plan (NDP) (Department of the Presidency 2013) showcases the six pillars namely: to unite all South Africans around a common programme to fight poverty and inequality and to foster a spirit of unity; an active citizenry; a growing and inclusive economy; to build capabilities; a capable and developmental state; and the responsibilities of leadership throughout society to work together to solve our problems (see Kretzschmar 2014:7; Kgatle 2017:5).

The above scholars further note that the NDP is being reviewed as an encouraging and motivating plan in terms of infrastructure improvement and the creation of jobs to alleviate poverty although its implementation involves some hiccups. To name but a few is a problem of nepotism in the issuing of jobs within the provinces and local municipalities. Another crippling problem is a culture of cadre deployment by the ruling party where people are given jobs despite a lack of requisite qualifications (Kretzschmar 2014:6; Kgatle 2017:5). Considering that the government policies have not been successful in alleviating poverty, this brings us to examine corruption that continues to cripple progress.

2.6.6 Corruption as a hindrance to the alleviation of poverty in South Africa  
Corruption has been cited as one of the unethical causes of poverty. Supporting the said statement, Naidoo (2012) described corruption as one of the South African government's greatest challenges in the public sector. For instance, the Public Sector Commission (PSC) presents the five most common manifestations of corruption that are on the increase in the South African public sector as fraud and bribery, mismanagement of government funds, abuse of government resources, identity document fraud and procurement irregularities (see Manala 2014:250). Another explanation is that

corruption is an intentional act by a public official who knows what his or her duties are but prefers to neglect them to obtain some personal gain (Bauer 2005:53).

Accountability Now (2012) states that corruption is a major enemy in public administration and political decision-making, especially of those who wish to address the challenges of poverty. In this capacity, it leads to an unstable and insecure society as opposed to the type of society that was envisaged by the founders of the new democratic South Africa. There is a call that corruption needs to be challenged because if it is left unchecked, it leads to failed status and the further exacerbation of poverty (see Kgatle 2017:3). The situation starts to become worse when demonstrated in protests.

#### 2.6.6.1 How is corruption challenged in South Africa?

The result of corruption in South Africa has been witnessed in the daily protests by those who demanded service delivery. According to Swart (2013), in the late 2000s, South Africa exploded in a series of often violent protests caused by the failure of the state to deliver housing, electricity, sanitation and other services to the country's areas that had not been transformed since the end of apartheid. The way these actions of toy-toying and matching by black South Africans were performed, resembled those in the dying days of apartheid which makes it questionable that there has ever been any transformational development in the said areas under protest. To some extent, the areas in which the protest took place did not look much different than they had been under apartheid, and this reflected the staggered and uneven nature of post-apartheid service delivery (Swart 2013:1).

Adding to the above-mentioned situation, there is a strong argument that the act of corruption in the public sector drives the poor to indignant behaviour expressed in acts of violence. They engage in such actions because they are neglected, they are not listened to, they are not treated as made in the image of God, they do not get the necessary facilities, and as they are angry resort to acts of violence. Chimhanda (2010) notes that the Black elite that makes up Black leadership are sometimes accused of corruption, nepotism, poor service delivery and lack of expertise. Consequently, among Blacks themselves, protests against poor service delivery emerged. These protests

sometimes result in clashes between protesters and the police which ultimately end up in deaths and the destruction of public property (Chimhanda 2010:437). It is evident that the actions of the police are so questionable as to warrant legitimate parallels to be drawn to those of the apartheid-era when Biko (1978) went so far as to equate apartheid to Nazism as he says:

No average black man can ever at any moment be absolutely sure that he is not breaking the law. There are so many laws governing the lives and behaviour of black people that sometimes one feels that police only need to page at random through their statute book to be able to get a law under which to charge a victim (Biko 1978:75).

#### 2.6.7 An example of a residents' protest action for demands not met

The protest action involving the residents from the informal settlement, Sweet Home in Philippi of Cape Town can be used as an example to illustrate the reasons why the angry residents felt compelled to protest in a disruptive manner by blockading routes, burning tyres and destroying traffic lights. Reasons put forward included the following:

- Irregular garbage collection schedule leaving the settlement dirty and unhygienic,
- Broken, leaking and generally unsanitary toilets
- Incomplete electricity coverage,
- Unsanitary and insecure sewage systems,
- Health issues for the residents including children and the elderly as a result of the above,
- Perceived lack of engagement and cooperation by the local ward councillor in addressing the residents' concerns (see Swart 2013).

The above study on protest politics indicates why the miserable living conditions and experience of public neglect and unfair service provision in a poor local community in South Africa constitute the basic causes of resorting to such a civic protest. This study further expatiates that the community members insisted they were not provided with the same services as other parts of the city whilst the services and infrastructure provided were failing. Moreover, residents' attempts to engage with the local government and

municipal leadership were futile, and that kind of protest was the only way of getting the attention of the government (Swart 2013:4).

The situation of the poor in South Africa is viewed as remaining unchanged and is lacking transformation. Since 2004, it is argued that South Africa is experiencing a movement of local protests resulting in a rebellion of the poor and has been observed to be widespread and intense. In most cases, these emanate from poor or no service delivery as well as uncaring, selfish, and corrupt leaders of municipalities (Alexander 2012:25).

#### 2.6.8 A critique concerning the efficiency of leadership

A critical debate concerning service delivery that leads to protest is whether there is institutional capacity and competency at the municipal leadership level. These include its administration, management of finance and public participation in the transformation of development of the poor (Manala 2014:3–5).

Some commentators as Swart (2013) puts it, have interpreted the deficiencies of local government as essentially a crisis of democratic government itself in post-apartheid South Africa. Some of the problems identified are:

- The governmental and state apparatus is simply not geared towards the principles of participatory governance; they are authoritarian and technocratic in their very nature, outlook and approach to development.
- Decisions are taken on behalf of our communities, for example in the case of houses given to shack owners whilst shack renters are left homeless.

From this point of view, the proponents of the democratic perspective argue that the protests should be understood not so much only as people's demands for more efficient service delivery, but rather as expressing their feelings against the way services are rendered by the state. Therefore, they demand a transparent model of development whereby they are included in decision-making (Pithouse 2011; Friedman 2009; Swart 2013:5).



The question of leadership in South Africa has been demonstrated in the Marikana Massacre in the Northwest province on 16 August 2012 where 34 mineworkers were killed by security forces (Alexander *et al.* 2012; cf. Dlangamandla *et al.* 2013:01). These results of questionable leadership challenge practical theologians to become the voice of the voiceless. The practical theologians will be called to represent the suffering and flourishing of ordinary people in the policy-making world (Couture 2012:154).

#### 2.6.9 Distinction between service delivery and public service

One prominent proponent of the democratic perspective position Steven Friedman (2009) suggests the distinction between 'service delivery' and 'public service'. According to him, service delivery entails officials – and commentators – deciding what people need and then dumping it on them. By contrast, public service needs to consider democracy as not just delivering to citizens but also listening to what the majority asks, and if not possible, working with them until what is done is as close to what they want as it can be. This stems from the democratic ideal that the government works for citizens and therefore cannot do without listening to them. In this light, protesters are demanding public service not delivery (see Swart 2013: 5).

The crisis of service delivery and corruption in post-apartheid local government is a matter of great concern. We know the saying, 'Rome was not built in one day', and we also know that full transformation cannot be achieved overnight, but what has happened during the post-apartheid period leaves much to be desired. That is why Kgatle (2017) points out that although the apartheid government contributed to the causes of poverty, the democratic government cannot continue blaming the apartheid system which no longer exists. The period of democracy is too long for the leaders in a democratic government to be still pointing fingers at the past. The democratic government should be responsible and accountable for its actions and the potential generational consequences thereof (Kgatle 2017:3).

#### 2.6.10 How can poverty be addressed from a Christian perspective?

The challenge of poverty in post-1994 South Africa challenges all those involved in transformational development in this country to observe Jesus' teachings about the kind

of compassionate and merciful justice that delivers the poor from poverty and restores the community (Stassen & Gushee 2003:413). It is time to challenge the negative impact of poverty and strive for transformational development in all sectors of society. The time has come that we promote humanity as human beings created in the image of God and loving one another as exemplified in the Bible. The following ethical teachings and principles are brought to our attention:

- The extensive expression of God's expectations of social justice is revealed in Isaiah 1:16–17. Where the Lord emphasises that evil deeds should be stopped and learn to do right, seek justice, and encouraged the oppressed.
- God's expectations of practical concern for the plight of the poor in Isaiah 3:14 states that the Lord enters judgement against the elders and leaders of his people and questions crushing and grinding the faces of the poor. The Lord further warns those who make unjust laws and who issue oppressive decrees that deprive the poor of their rights in Isaiah 10:1–2.
- In the same vein, in Amos 2:6–7, the Lord warns those who trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. His wrath will not be turned back for those sins.
- The justice, righteousness and mercy of the reign of the promised Messiah in Isaiah 9:1–7 are announced through the birth of Jesus Christ who will bring light and remove the root of the oppressor and bring peace, justice and righteousness by dying for all at the cross. He will thus be called the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. The aforesaid peace and justice to be brought by Jesus are contrasted with false religion that in Isaiah 58:1–4 questions those who engage in fasting but do as they please, exploit workers and end fasting in quarrels and striking one another with wicked fists. (see Kretzschmar 2014:1).

#### 2.6.10.1 How can the peace of God be delivered to the world for effective transformation?

The church as a change reformation agency could be the driver of a formative and transformational agenda in enhancing transformation to address the socio-economic needs in the new democratic South Africa (Van Wyk 2017:104).

Parallel to the above statement, Pillay (2017:11) argues that the church had always had a concept of transformation and change in its mission and ministry, especially as it relates to the poor. He goes on to raise a question as to how churches can partner together in God's mission of transforming the country and society. How can they exercise a prophetic voice together and how can they journey with the poor? He emphasises that the goal is not to get people to church but to get the church into the world. This truly means to transform the world with justice and peace of God so that all may experience the fullness of a life on earth (Pillay 2017:11; see also Phiri 2017:3).

Given the aforesaid, Kretzschmar (2014:7) in support of the practical theological view states that in South Africa, the 2001 census identified 79.8% of the population as Christians. Churches include the Reformed churches, Anglicans, Methodists, Catholics, Pentecostals, Charismatics, and many indigenous African churches, which means that the churches can wield influence over millions of the country's people. According to Van Wyk (2017:3) transformation is necessary even during the present new democratic dispensation, because the insidious effects of both ideologies and practice continue perpetuating structures that diminish human life. He elaborates citing Warren (1995) who proposes an urgent need for reformation in the world and identifies South Africa as in particular need of a reformation, not of creeds but deeds. Furthermore, Pastor Warren's (1995) emotional speech pleads for an agency amongst churches to show action through deeds to accelerate the transformation process. In the Bible, the book of Apostle James states: 'Faith without work is dead' (James 2:26). The time has come for the church to speak out against all evil of discrimination, corruption among political and business leaders, racism, rape, bullying and human trafficking in South Africa (Van Wyk 2017:3). In full support, Kretzschmar (2014) further notes the commitment and efforts of the members of the church and many others are a prerequisite to reducing poverty and

suffering and to bringing about major changes in people's lives. This can be done through sacrificial care, dedicated work, moral integrity and courage to achieve the envisaged goal (see Kretzschmar 2012:146; Kretzschmar 2014:8).

The role and influence of the church are also highlighted by Oladipo (2001) as he maintains that the church can play a pivotal role as a moral generator, builder, and value-based organisation in the interest of the poor. It plays the role of advancing cultural diversity, building relationships amongst communities and across racial barriers to transform the current society. However, whilst the church is engaged in such an approach, the current role and mandates to preach good news must not be neglected or forsaken (Oladipo 2001:220).

2.6.10.2 What can we learn from making a difference in people's lives through some programmes?

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) has a programme called '*uMephi*' which was launched to do with children in distress namely: street children, maltreated and sexually abused children, abandoned children and infants saved from abortions. They also have another programme, 'Africa Cares for Life' which runs pregnancy care crisis centres to assist pregnant unwed mothers to save their babies. Another programme 'Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) orphans' caters for the social problems of orphans with AIDS (Burger & Nel 2008:467). According to Mathole (2005), AFM should be applauded for making a significant difference in the lives of the poor. However, he mentioned that AFM has not reached a point where it can be deemed enough because of the high levels of poverty in communities (Mathole 2005:258).

Another contribution that has been made to the recognition of the poor is that of the Special Collection, Reformation, Transformation and Change Agency. The said Agency was initiated by the Discipline of Church History at the University of South Africa as a major contribution towards a global celebration to mark the 500th reformation anniversary on 31 October 2017. A joint statement by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) that was signed by Pope Francis and Bishop Murib Younan president of the LWF was brought to light and it entailed a pledge to Catholics and Lutherans to:

- Working together and witnessing together to God's grace, made visible in the crucified and risen Christ and removing the remaining obstacles that hinder the attainment of full unity because Christ desires that so that the world may believe.
- Praying to God for inspiration, encouragement, and strength to stand together in service, upholding human dignity and rights, especially for the poor, working for justice and rejecting all forms of violence.
- Their joint service in the world must extend to God's creation which suffers exploitation and the effects of insatiable greed.
- Recognition of the rights of future generations to enjoy God's world in all its potential and beauty (Vatican Radio 2016, as cited by Phiri 2017:1).

The above challenges of change concerning the realisation of the poor need extended services through Christian leadership. This brings us to discussing leadership.

## 2.7 Leadership for development

In cases of development, we find leaders at the local community level, provincial level, national level, and international level (Ngara 2004:36). The one common ground in leadership is the qualities that the leader should have and how he or she deals with followers, and it is an art and a skill that can be acquired. In this regard, Ngara (2004) suggests the following qualities that a leader is expected to have:

- Vision and purpose – to be a leader one must have a vision of what he or she wants to accomplish. The vision must be inspiring to the followers and be related to the conditions of existence of the followers and be capable of taking them out of their present predicament to a better future.
- Commitment – a leader must be committed to a dream. For example, people who start a project should not expect their Followers to show a high degree of commitment to the project.
- Character and modelling – A leader needs to be guided by a code of ethical conduct. Leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere and Mahatma Gandhi

are recognised as great men in history because of their qualities of moral excellence and soundness.

- Courage and tenacity – leadership entails standing up for principles even in the face of opposition and hostility. A leader must be prepared to challenge authority and uphold the truth in the face of opposition from authority. This implies that a leader should be prepared to take risks and face criticism. However, courage is said to be risky and can lead to torture, imprisonment and sometimes death. Tenacity is the ability to persevere in the face of difficulties, delays, and disappointments. Those involved in liberation struggles know that such undertakings are not quick. For example, Nelson Mandela had to spend 27 years on Robben Island before he could become the first president of a democratic South Africa. All others involved had the courage and tenacity to persevere which may never be realised (Ngara 2004:43).
- Good management skills – the vision must be translated into reality. For example, political leaders should not only be capable of bringing about change, but they should be able to manage the change and have around them people who can assist them to manage the change without fear or favour (Ngara 2004:39–44).

### 2.7.1 Leadership from a Christian perspective

From a Christian perspective, we need to look at the leadership that plays a significant role in human life. What is clear is that when Jesus proclaimed, " you are the salt of the Earth..." (Matthew 5:13) he expected his followers to have a positive impact on transforming the world for the better. The leadership problem in South Africa is inviting Christians not to fold their hands and hope that the government will fully succeed in transforming South Africa. The responsibility that committed Christians are faced with is to influence social structures to deliver the people from economic poverty, violent crime and political strain (Ngara 2004:34–36). In this regard, value-based leadership is the prominent leadership style with leadership traits including ethical, spiritual, servant and transformational leadership (see Dames 2014:1).

From a Christian point of view, Christian leaders need to uncover their views of the poor by using the following typology of Christian perspective below:

#### 2.7.1.1 Poor as made in the image of God

The poor, as created in the image of God, need to be allowed to discover their talent and use their skills. The transformation of developers should consider linking the material world and the spiritual when assisting the poor towards progress which is connected to the common good (Ogbonnaya 2016:1 of 11).

#### 2.7.1.2 Poor as people in Rebellion

Because poor people are discriminated against, they cannot make good choices. What is necessary for assisting the poor through a practical-theological attempt of using the Christian church's religious rules and conduct that guides life within a social group? Christian stewardship should promote environmental and economic justice for the benefit of the poor (Agbiji 2015:2).

#### 2.7.1.3 Poor as Christ incarnation

The poor lack love, have no relationships and thus have no sense of belonging. Transformational developers, like in the present-day study, should relieve as much suffering as possible. As the Bible promises love for the neighbour this must be practised in the transformational development of the poor. Karl Barth (2004) emphasises that even in great poverty, weakness, and contradiction there exists humankind's genuine faithfulness concerning God's faithfulness (Barth 2004:3). The poor therefore need to be strengthened by the basic truth that it is by the power of God that they will be transformed (Myers 2011:151).

#### 2.7.1.4 Poor as God's favourites

The poor suffer from oppression by social systems that keep them poor for the benefit of the non-poor. During their transformational development, a note should be taken that they are also created in the image of God. God identifies in a very special way with the poor. The Gospel of Matthew (25:31–46) stresses discipleship that is evidenced in love and mercy. In placing the poor as God's favourites, a kingdom reversal is affected and in this case, the powerless do not become powerful but become empowered. This

reversal affirms the dignity of the poor and thus the non-poor are conscientised to treat the poor as human beings that are worth an equal status (Pieterse 2014:183).

#### 2.7.1.5 Poor as lost souls

This reflects a dichotomy between the spiritual and physical of the modern world. The suffering experienced by the poor causes them to feel lost and forgotten. Christ stressed the need to serve the less fortunate. The call is not to interpret the Bible, but to interpret life with the help of the Bible (Rowland 2007:192). The life of the poor in South Africa should be changed through a process of empowerment.

## 2.8 Empowerment through leadership

There is an urgent need for the empowerment of African leaders in South Africa to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for further development. The argument is that whilst the empowerment of the poor and the disadvantaged is considered, conversely, leaders also need to be transformed and empowered for effective transformational development (De Beer & Venter 1998:33). Transformed leaders would be able to identify the skills and talents of those whose lives they wish to transform so that they can stand on their own. The church leaders in action should have transformational leadership qualities that include a vast range of character traits and abilities (Mwambazambi & Banza 2014:04). The aforesaid message attempts to stress the urgency of designing effective transformative programmes for their communities (Mbigi 2005:05).

Kelsall and Mercer (2003) attest that during the process of empowerment, the poor and disenfranchised men and women come to be critically aware of their socio-political and economic situation within their local national or international context (Friedman 1992; Kabeer 1994; Rowlands 2007; Kelsall & Mercer 2003:293). Thus, the process of empowerment refers to the poorest, the marginalised, the beneficiaries or just women who are marginalised (Kelsall & Mercer 2003:294).



The beneficiaries in the development projects are expected to transform from outside. In the process of transformation, the older selves exhibited through different ways of being in the world tend to fade away and be destroyed (Kelsall & Mercer 2003:295).

### 2.8.1 A role model of empowerment — World Vision Tanzania (WVT)

In South Africa, employment for transformation can be learnt from that World Vision Tanzania. The approach may not be the same, but the key programme involving participation can be considered in a way that will suit the structures of a South African situation.

In empowerment, World Vision Tanzania (1992) regards itself as an international partnership for Christians. Its mission is to follow Jesus in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the kingdom of God. It further focuses on transformational development which is community-based, involves a special concern for children and accords women and men equal respect (see Kelsall & Mercer 2003:295).

Since its inception in 1981, it has done a tremendous job in about 72 projects with a target population of over 2 million people. These involved projects that are known as church Community Development Programmes (CDPs) composed of local churches and local governments. In this regard, it is identified as the type of organisation suitable for advancing and promoting empowerment agenda (Kelsall & Mercer 2003:296). In any country that is still lagging such as South Africa, the suggested programmes can be used.

It should be noted that development projects are not an end in themselves, but rather how to foster participatory development and community empowerment (Myers 2011:214). This is what is expected in any development project like the one under investigation in the present study.

### 2.8.2 Participatory development and empowerment

According to Mohan and Stokke (2000), the neoliberal counter-revolution in development theory has observed the state as a barrier instead of being a driving force

in the process of development. This resulted in a shift from a singular emphasis on market deregulation and an emphasis on institutional reforms and development. In this context, civil society has been identified as an arena in which most development objectives can be achieved (Mohan & Stokke 2000:248).

Civil Society institutions have thus become vehicles for participation in development programmes and empowerment of target groups of poor people. There has been a move to challenge the centralisation of top-down state planning that involves stakeholders and local governance. For example, the World Bank has practised Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) which seek to identify local people's perception of poverty and its causes. The basis for the World Bank's Social Fund programmes is formed through trust and co-corporation in poverty alleviation and NGO intervention (Mohan & Stokke 2000:248). In this way, empowerment is transformed from being the disempowering activities of both the state and the markets to a collective modernisation of marginalised groups. Practitioners of participatory research and development assume that the old stereotypes by the state have been treating locals as passive recipients. Therefore, local knowledge would reverse such previously damaging interventions by involving communities in the participatory action process (Ignatius Swart in Swart et al. 2010:309).

For this study, leadership and empowerment in their entirety will be dealt with in the following Chapter.

## 2.9 Conclusion

In this Chapter, the relevant literature within the scope of the research topic has been reviewed. There is a call for the improvement of standards of living in Africa including South Africa. A challenge is the constant participation by government and church leaders who should take the lead. African countries such as South Africa must liberate themselves from their prevailing crisis of lacking human interdependence. This can be supported by African Christian theology which seeks to contribute to liberation and development through implementing the virtues of '*Ubuntu*' into Africa's economic, political, social, and educational structures. This would help to alleviate poverty for a

holistic integral development including the social, cultural, religious and personal values of Africans (Ogbonnaya 2016:10).

To achieve the aforesaid, Larney (2006:3) argues that we need to examine what transformational development entails and how it engages in transforming societies of the poor and the marginalised. During this process of transformational development, the task of practical theology which is to develop authentic practices of support and help regarding the personal and communal needs of people should be taken into consideration (see Dames 2017:7). In the ensuing Chapter, transformational development will be discussed, and its theoretical framework will also be presented.

# Chapter 3: Towards a theoretical framework for transformational development

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## 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the core of the research topic, the transformational development of the poor, will be brought to light. A brief overview of the challenges faced by the agents of change will be given and this would lead to presenting and discussing a theoretical framework for the transformational development of the poor within the interest of this study.

The background of transformational development as a theological concept can be traced far back from the international Christian evangelical movement that led to a christ-centred perspective of development. Evangelicals around the world engaged in evangelical development work that focused on liberation from the misery which was witnessed daily. This evangelical approach served as the beginning of the Transformational Development paradigm which is described and recognised as the world's most rigorous and cohesive development (Offutt 2012:43). It is from the above background that in 1974 evangelicals gathered from around the globe for the Lausanne Congress in Switzerland. The outcome of the Congress was Article Five in the Lausanne Covenant and it became the most important evangelical document of the twentieth century. What is highlighted in the article is the importance of loving our neighbor, ideas of reconciliation and the belief and understanding that evangelism and socio-political activity are not mutually exclusive (Escobar 2011 in Offutt 2012:39). The Transformational Development paradigm, therefore, has three basic components and these include transformational development that defines poverty as broken relationships, restoring all these relationships and to ultimately live in Shalom (Offutt 2012:40).

A practical theological approach to the eradication of poverty in Africa including South Africa is a moral obligation of every social institution for every group in society to flourish

(Dreyer 2004:4). This then poses a challenge for those responsible for the transformational development of the poor like the Amalinda Methodist Church in this study, to be aware of how the practices of practical theology are interacting with those of society. Related to this, Dames (2014:1) mentions that there are challenges where practical theology has a role to play to promote relationships between faith, culture, and public life. Therefore, transformational development practitioners should focus on the mutual, reciprocal growth towards our God-given humanity (Klaasen 2019:3). Furthermore, person and community cannot be separated but instead they form a co-partnership for more effective community transformational development. This is referred to as interdependence between the individual and the community because if the person grows, the community also grows (Klaasen 2019:6).

In supporting and assisting one another in all levels of transformation, Ogbonnaya (2016:8) states that all human beings should take responsibility to create favourable conditions where everyone would live an optimum life and show their potential at every opportunity. The premise is that involving everyone with potentialities serves to support the post-development theories that have introduced the term 'transformation'. However, a contrasting argument is that the term development in itself is not the problem, but the problem is the failure to combat poverty (Nadine Bowers Du Toit in Swart et al. 2010:263).

The argument presented above concerning challenges to development and transformation leads us to present a more strategic theoretical framework for transformational development. This includes several practices and changes that have to take place in many communities such as the one in this study so that people can enjoy their morally acceptable heritage in creation (Sugden 2003:71). The theoretical framework for transformational development involves the commitment of the agents of change including the church of God, the holistic transformational developer or practitioner, being engaged in just and peaceful relationships, discovering the true identity of both poor and non-poor who have a vocation. All these agents should be aiming at transformational development that is physically, spiritually, mentally, and

socially sustainable for a better future that is directed towards the Kingdom of God; and of course, not forgetting to be aware of the evil one who is always in opposition (Myers 2011:2012).

### 3.1.1. Poor relationships as the cause of poverty — what needs to be done?

There is an argument that poverty can be caused by broken relationships in terms of economic scarcity, justice and relationships between humans and God. The restoration of those relationships can be achieved along the four relational areas namely: humanity's relationship with the Triune God. The second is the human's relationship with himself or herself to process one's identity and act honestly and truthfully. Coupled with this is personal integrity which includes the instillation of values within one's self, Christian spirituality and personal formation. The third category is relationships with other people. In this sense, it is clear that people in communities need to be interdependent despite their ethnic, racial, class or religious affiliations to effect positive change. The final relational area that needs to be restored is the interaction of humans with creation. God placed humans to be in control of everything on earth and this obligation of caring for the environment and maintaining development which is sustainable needs to be recognised (Offutt 2012:41-42).

## 3.2 Framing the future towards transformation

According to Myers (2011:202), the future is framed by twin goals of transformation, namely, changed people and changed relationships that are just and peaceful. Changed people involve the poor whose lives need to be transformed and the non-poor as transformational developers who also need to change their attitude in the manner, they handle their approach to transform the lives of the needy. Both parties should be people who have discovered their identities and vocation (Myers 2011:202). On the other hand, changed relationships refer to a principle-centred process of change that should prevail amongst the agents of change in the community. This means that people must work harmoniously guided by truthfulness, peace, justice, and righteousness. To this effect,

Manala (2010:4) points out that effective communication is of great significance in building positive interpersonal relationships and solving problems in a productive working community. On the contrary, it should be noted that during the process of striving towards the best human future, there is the evil one whom we must be aware of because of his evil means of destruction and dividing those who are busy with the process of transformation (Myers 2011:202). This is the reason why God must be the partner with whom human beings are always involved in any process of transformation (Barth 2000:163). This is supported by Adamo (2011:3) by stressing that the basic belief in the Supreme Being, the unique and incomparable God, cannot be disputed all over Africa.

The following diagram illustrates the framework for transformation which involves the twin goals as described above. The change to be brought about is principle centred and these principles are expressed through unity and working together of persons in the community including God, the church, the holistic practitioner and the presence of the Evil One. It should be noted that the first three support the goal of transformation that is sustainable physically, mentally, socially and spiritually towards a better future which is the Kingdom of God (Myers 2011: 202).

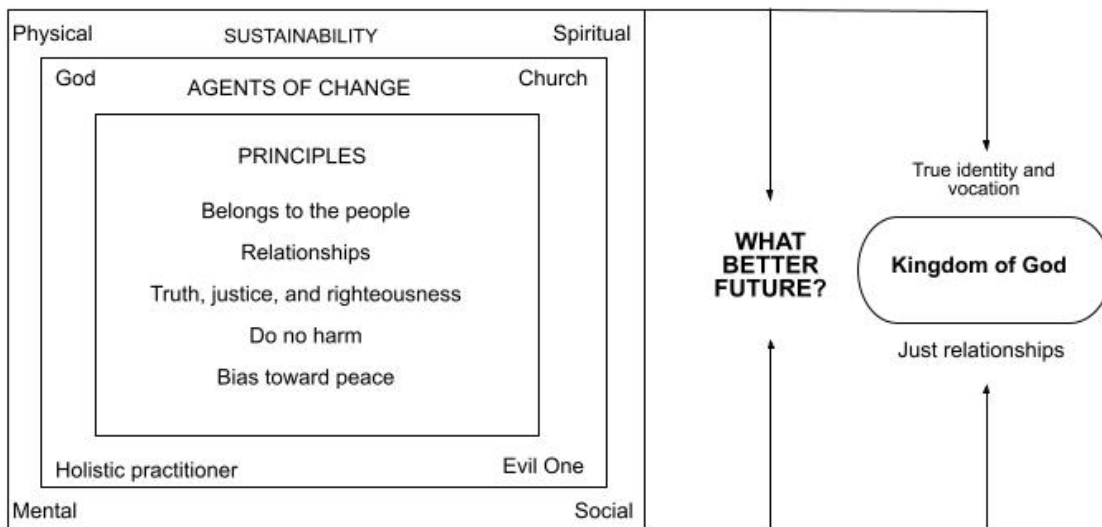


Figure 3.1 Framework for Transformational Development (Myers, 2011:202)

The essence of the above diagram will be witnessed in the discussions of the following subheadings:

### 3.2.1. Discovering the true identity

First and foremost, the recovery of one's true identity is needed in the transformation of the poor. The reason is that the poor always internalise a view of themselves as being without a contribution to make, as a result, they believe that they are God-forsaken (Sugden 2003:183-201). However, the story of creation states that humanity has been created and cared for by God and as we read Psalm (8:4), the question arises "What are human beings, that You are mindful of them?" The question for each one, including the poor, non-poor and the practitioners of transformational development should be: Why are we here? What is our destiny? What is the meaning of human existence? (McGrath 2012:46). The doctrine of creation offers a framework for understanding the appreciation of the above questions because the biblical story is for everyone (Myers 2011:14). Hankela et al. (2022:9), state that the proactive identity to be emphasized is bringing people to Christ and not only in church but by going out for evangelism.

#### 3.2.1.1 Challenges faced by the poor including exclusion

The challenge of poverty and exclusion in South Africa is identified as affecting the poor from all fronts. According to Swart (2008), the policy adopted by the post-apartheid South African government the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) has proved to be failing to help the large population that is poor in South Africa since its implementation after the end of apartheid era. What is observed is adhering to the rules of the global economy with great emphasis on economic growth through export orientation privatisation, trade and currency deregulation. However, South Africa is witnessed as having a higher level of industrialization and diversified economy as compared to Sub-Saharan Africa. On the contrary, the problem of social exclusion continues to affect the poor in global capitalism. The chosen few capitalists enjoy the restructuring, technological intensification and remain in higher levels of competition. Poverty is witnessed by large numbers of youth unemployment (Swart 2008:114-115).



According to Wink (1992), three causes can be identified as having an impact on the marred identity of the poor. First, the poor are always labelled ignorant and unworthy, and as a result are excluded as active members in many programmes and other social activities. The result is that the non-poor are not prepared to listen to the voices of the poor. Second, the poor suffer from judging themselves in an undermining manner as a result of internalised exclusion and they doubt themselves and for what purposes were they created. Last, their poverty makes them live a humiliating life as they feel non-existent (Wink 1992:101).

It is within the context of the above challenges that the poor should be recognised as having self-worth, and their self-worth needs to be supported by and in relation with others (Sugden 2003:74). There is hope that when identity is rediscovered and character is developed, transformational development will empower people with values of a new vision and explore their vocation according to their natural gifts and talents. This would affirm man's existence as a human creature as is required by and corresponds to God's providential will (Genesis 3:19) (Barth 2000:235).

#### 3.2.1.2 The challenges of the non-poor and their vocation

In South Africa, the interpersonal relationships of brotherly love by the non-poor to the poor are the demand of the day. The book of John (4:20) expresses: "If anyone says, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar." Love of God is interpreted by the love of neighbour (Bosch 1991:33). An argument brought forward concerning brotherly love is a call for the non-poor to refrain from playing gods against the poor, but instead should aim at making the difference into equality. The motive behind this is that what is good for one is also good for the other (Klaasen 2019:2). It is in this sense that Molefe (2017:11) observes the interpersonal relationships in African morals as concerned with responsibility and accountability for all to preserve the well-being of other human beings. Another point is that any form of transformational development of the community such as the power to name, organise, create and become productive creature agents comes from God and is not created by anybody. It is therefore God's

act of generosity that gives people the courage to have power as human agents of change (Middleton 2005:278).

From the above argument, it can be noted that the vocation of the non-poor is to be actors placed by God to make the environment productive for life in peaceful relationships that cannot be separated (Klaasen 2017:40). Such relationships will be identified as mutually enriching interactions of everyone as a unique person in the shared life of the community (Myers 2011:183). This is also enshrined in the Freedom Charter that there shall be peace and friendship amongst all people of South Africa (Rembe 2005:333). Another need for peaceful and just interpersonal relationships in a community under transformation is communication. The emphasis is that communication as a transformational action transforms old habits, perspectives, experiences, and situations in a meaningful manner for new possibilities (Habermas 2001:X).

Winding up the whole argument of communication, it is vital to point out that God's plan gives human vocation a communitarian nature which implies that among other things, human beings are interdependent on one another. It is for this reason that Abbot (1966) attests that individualistic ethics should be avoided and instead support social justice because God created man for the formation of social unity (Abbot 1966:230). Therefore, every human being should be respected as a social being to contribute to the transformational development of the community.

### 3.2.1.3 Respecting the human identity of a social being in the community

1. According to De Gruchy (2015), personal identity involves psychological and physiological development that takes place within the culture of every community because the person is also interpersonal. It is through this process of socialisation that personhood is developed to the extent that the agency of the poor will move beyond the focus of identity to the agency. The power will no longer rest on the dominant elite, but the voices of the poor will also be heard (De Gruchy 2015:74). Adogame (2016) stresses that development from below which starts from the grassroots and is associated with people's lived experiences

would also promote people's religious sensibilities, how persons imagine and get involved in development (Adogame 2016:2). In support of the aforementioned religious sensibilities, the Christian religion is mentioned as a process of practical theology aimed at creating individuals to be capable of entering into a community of practical theology reflection and to participate in such activities that would follow from it (Browning 1983:79). The unity for transformation in the community should include men and women, poor and non-poor, church, religious and cultural groups that would work within peaceful relationships to effect change. There is an argument that the lack of democratic inclusion and participation in services in the previous dispensation, and of course in the current dispensation, promoted a culture of dependency which inhibited personal and socio-economic growth (Harvey & Luid 2005; see van der Westhuizen et al. 2021:3). To respect everyone as a social being to be involved in the development of the community, there are some principles that are viewed as complementary to social justice including:

Consciousness-raising would take into consideration the needs of others within the community without one group ruling over another one.

2. Grassroots actions that would consider needs; assessment, planning and implementation of strategies to address well-being within a community.
3. Another emphasis is on inclusivity and community building to encourage a sense of belonging. Such social justice would emphasize equal opportunities for and support from all sections of the community.
4. Diversity — this is aimed at valuing the different resources, knowledge, skills and understanding to respect human dignity and tolerance (van der Westhuizen 2021: 3-4).

The practical theological approach to the above social unity in South Africa is the challenge of the church.

### 3.3 Affirming the role of the church

The suffering of the poor in South Africa as observed by Vorster invites the church to God and the Scripture to decolonise the minds of African Christians to reaffirm the

equality of all South Africans irrespective of the human race. During this process, the African concept of *ubuntu* needs to be embraced to enhance an approach to humanness coupled with the human relationships of a rainbow nation (Vorster 2007:210). Furthermore, there is a challenge to rediscover a missional ecclesiology that defines the church as an instrument in the mission of God in the whole world, including South Africa. An emphasis is that mission is regarded as a movement from God to the world through the church as an agent for that mission (Bosch 1991:309).

The present mission of the church is observed as transformed broadly to a more comprehensive scope than it traditionally used to be because it involves local, economic, and social development for the common good which is life sustainability (Mangayi 2016:24). What is proposed is that for an effective mission, the church should find its identity in its close interaction with the world and share in secular problems of ordinary life by helping and serving all those in need (Bonhoeffer 1971:382). Along the same lines, Hankela et al. (2020:5) state that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Pentecostal churches should not just focus on people's basic needs but also on new opportunities that would promote human flourishing in every community under development. In the same vein, van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:751) suggest that the future function of the church is directed at creating a platform where inclusion is actively pursued and where the voices of vulnerable groups including parents and children are being heard and where civil values and a sense of belonging can be experienced. This is really needed in South Africa where Xenophobia is rife. In this sense, the conceptualised church as suggested above will not only be oriented towards the world but will certainly position itself on the margins of society to hear and listen to the suppressed voices of the poor and unemployed. By so doing, the welfare of humanity will be promoted in a holistic, integrated, incarnational, intentional, and empowering sustainable manner (Mangayi 2016:25), because churches are regarded as subsystems of a community where people live in and practice 'Ubuntu' (Magezi 2017:9).

### 3.3.1 'Ubuntu' for just and peaceful relationships

For Africans, caring for one another '*ubuntu*' is embedded in their traditional cultures from the period of their ancestors. In this context, some basic values manifest themselves in the ways people think and behave towards each other and everyone they encounter. *Ubuntu* is the foundation for these basic values and ethics (Mangaliso 2001: 24). Ncube (2010:77) contends that the essence of '*ubuntu*' for ethical change in Africa includes solidarity, propriety, helplines, mutuality, caring and sharing. From a Christian point of view, '*ubuntu*' is a Christian value inviting people to start nurturing one another as children of God (Battle 2009:28). The sense of '*ubuntu*' philosophy needs to be taken seriously by the transformational development leaders and followers for the promotion of good citizen interaction (RSA Constitution 1996 Chapter 7, 152(i)).

In reality, *Ubuntu* supports the Xhosa saying '*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*' — 'A person is a person through other people.' This affirms one's humanity through recognition of an 'other' in his or her uniqueness. The result will be good interpersonal relationships of '*Ubuntu*' between the two (Klaasen 2019:2). In the case of the present study, it will be between the poor of the Amalinda Forest Community and the Amalinda Methodist Church transformational developers including the church leaders, members of different organisations, the preachers, and the initiators of the soup-kitchen programme. In support of '*ubuntu*' Du Toit (2017:5) contends that there is a need to 'tap into' Ubuntu spirit found in poorer communities to help them support one another and also encourage them to share whatever they have even if it may not be much.

Finally, '*ubuntu*' in leadership leads to considering what type of leadership must be demonstrated by transformational development leaders. Some of these have been mentioned in the previous Chapter, but more emphasis not just on leadership but on servant leadership needs to be addressed.

## 3.4 A call for servant leadership

A call for the practices of transformational development leaders is to be like those of Jesus, the great Shepherd and committed servant who came to serve and even

sacrificed His life for the sinners (John 10:11-18; Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:26-28) (Manala 2014:253). These practices should be guided by the following practices:

- Demonstrating agape love: Servant leaders need to show the character of philanthropists by showing love to the needy or poor. Love as described by Paul “is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited, love is not ill-mannered or selfish nor irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy for evil but is happy for truth. Love never gives up and its faith, hope and patience never fail” (1 Cor. 13:4-7). With this application of love, servant leaders will never let those who need support, the oppressed, the poor and the neglected down (Meylahn 2019:2).
- Acting with humility: According to Morris et al. (2005:132), humility in leadership is exhibited by actions that are other-enhancing instead of self-enhancing. Second, popularity is not a priority over serving. This is the type of leadership needed for both church leaders and community leaders involved in transformational development.
- Being altruistic: This involves acting in the interests of others instead of being egoistic. For example, Jesus set an example in John (10:11) by sacrificing as a Good Shepherd who is willing to die for the sheep, and acts as a warrior image in the interest of the people so that they may have abundant life (Manala 2014:255). We need such quality leadership in South Africa because service delivery is a dominating problem as has been mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. For effective results, the following elements of altruistic behaviours are worth mentioning:
  - Benefiting another person;
  - Voluntary performance;
  - God-oriented benefit;
  - Performance that does not expect any external reward (Manala 2014:255)

The most important tool to be used by servant leaders in benefitting their followers is to delegate by giving duties to be performed to boost the follower's self-confidence. However, delegation should be followed by monitoring and role-model engagement (Russell & Stone 2002:152). This delegation and monitoring can also be used in programmes designed for poverty alleviation such as the one in the present study. This can thus lead to the poor viewing themselves as people who can be recognised as having identities equal to those who are said to be non-poor.

### 3.5 Freedom of the poor — A key to transformational development

The goal of empowering the poor is to tackle bigger problems through newfound collective action (Swanepoel & De Beer 1997: 41—42). The essence is that during this period, social change is directed by people to shape their own lives in ways that they choose. This understanding has been referred to by Chambers as "handing over the Stick" and serves as an affirmation of development that increases the freedom of the poor (Myers 2011:218). The church leaders therefore should have transformational qualities with a vast range of character traits and abilities including conflict management (Thomson 1996:45; Smith 1996:64). It is believed that once their transformation has been prior considered, they will be able to design effective transformative programmes for their communities (Mbigi 2005:5). For example, such leaders would address the socio-political problems by organising cleansing ceremonies whenever there are conflicts in the communities that disturb transformational development. By so doing, they would be respecting the action of the Almighty God who empowers them to pray for peace in their communities as exemplified in Jeremiah (29:7) and Timothy (2:1-4) (Mwambazambi and Banza 2014:5).

Having been well-equipped and engaged in the process of transformational development, the poor and their leaders need to focus on the sustainability of any development in action.

## 3.6 Promoting sustainability

This principle focuses on inter and intra-generational interdependence. It means that today's actions must not compromise tomorrow's needs. Long-term change that benefits the whole community is, therefore, a preferred outcome of authentic community development (van der Westhuizen 2021:4).

The development for which the poor are empowered needs to be sustainable. The great significance is that when the social ills are redressed in South Africa, an inclusive society should emerge. The previously disadvantaged must be granted improved access to education and health services, water, electricity, housing and social security, employment, and reduction of poverty levels (NPC 2011 in DEA 2011:17). Chambers (1997) supports by stating that for sustainable development, we need to make sure that even the poorest community already has some level of sustainability in terms of food, water, housing and living within the environmental constraints (Chambers 1997:24). The DEA argues that amongst other things, sustainable development is critical about ensuring that nature with its natural resource base will not be ruined over time (DEA 2011:98). However, Rockstrom et al. (2009) state that we are now living in a time of anthropogenic climate change equilibrium that has been existing for the past 10 000 years and it is thus evident that environmental sustainability can never be as stable as it was in the past (see DEA 2011:21). To face this challenge, the National Framework for Sustainable Development has been adopted as a response to the sustainable development agenda in South Africa. Its main purpose was to implement strategic interventions to re-orientate South Africa's development process in a more sustainable manner. This would be done by responsibly managing the limited ecological resources for current and future generations (DEA 2019:22).

### 3.6.1 Physical sustainability

This includes all the basic needs of people to sustain their living such as food, water, health, livelihood, and a sustainable environment. It also involves people who can empower everyone to be independent.



According to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, physical sustainability is a challenge for the state. To alleviate the problem of malnutrition, for example, the government's social grant programmes and nutrition education programmes are aimed to assist the needy (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation 2015:65—66). The Department further notes that every human needs shelter which is a home that offers a sense of being a full citizen in South Africa. Sustainable human settlement has been advanced by the democratic government since 1994. Approximately 3.7 million subsidised housing opportunities for the very poor were offered with 56% being allocated to female-headed households engendering housing in South Africa with an indication of the black middle class (DPME 2015:68).

It is worth noting that physical sustainability is concerned with supporting the poor to boost their well-being by being involved in micro-enterprise development programmes that are introduced to them such as the soup-kitchen programme in the present study. These would teach them to take responsibility to learn and become independent to run their programmes just like the material sustainability of the so-called developed countries (Myers 2011:194).

### 3.6.2 Mental sustainability

For mental sustainability, Myers (2011) argues that psychological and spiritual well-being needs to be restored. This can be done by listening to and recognising the poor as having God-given gifts to contribute to life. This mental transformation will change and sustain them from the inside. Ultimately, they will gain experience to evaluate their efforts as instruments of transformation (Myers 2011: 195).

For all human beings including both the poor and non-poor, the psychological experience of maturity is in dealing with failure and frustrations. To counteract this, Watts et al. (2002) maintain that teaching remains a crucial challenge for Christian ministry. This can be done through a learning process where people participate in forming what the psychologist describes as "Schemata" which integrates experiences into a whole, helping people to be confident in mastering what they have been taught

and what they have learnt. This Christian teaching to maturity is effective when using methods and strategies in small groups (Watts, Nye & Savage 2002:79—129). An example in our societies is the system of classes used by the Methodists. In these small groups or classes, a method that can be used for mental sustainability is referring to the scriptures with great emphasis on God's inspired Word (2 Tim 3:16). This can serve as therapy to discuss biblical truths relevant to people's struggles in life. The purpose is to comfort, clarify, correct, change character, cleanse, convict and cure (John 15:3; Psalm 119:9, 11; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:2,3) (see Tan 2011:352). The Bible as a self-help book, it is argued, has been helpful to more people than all therapists combined (Tan 2011:355). Along the same line, neuropsychology advises that the brain and the mind are naturally interrelated, whilst the soul and body make a unit. This is witnessed by Incarnation and the Resurrection that keeps on sustaining us mentally (Watts et al. 2002:248—280). Supporting body and soul sustainability, God was revealed as Emmanuel's God working with us amid the problems and ills of social challenges. This is what motivates the believers in His church to be responsible and carry on sustaining His work here on earth (De Toit in Swart et al. 2010:269).

Another method suggested by Watts et al. (2002) for sustaining the mental state of the poor is counselling and pastoral care. When people suffer from hunger and poverty, their mental well-being is affected. It is at this point that people, both the poor and the transformational development practitioners should turn to God. This happens through prayer, and support from family and friends. The Ministers of religion then, are expected to focus on the body's healing. Salvation, as one of God's desires, needs to be highlighted when dealing with human depression and problems (Watts et al. 2002: 173—181).

### 3.6.3 Social sustainability

Social sustainability starts with control over local natural resources. According to Friedman (1992), the emphasis is on local decision-making, local self-reliance, local participation in democratic processes, social learning, acceptance of social constraints and the influence of global economic forces. This then implies that sustainability

requires sustainable social systems (Friedman 1992: VIII). De Waal (1997) adds that social sustainability should include supporting local organisations. The NGOs for example, help where the state has a backlog in providing services (De Waal 1997:219).

Supporting the above statement, Mohan and Stokke (2000) argue that for the effectiveness of social sustainability the World Bank has put in place social capital in its policy to justify the creation of social funds. These are channelled through NGOs which act as implementing agencies. However, a sustained critique of social capital is the problem concerning its localism. There is an argument that those regions which have possessed high stocks of social capital for a long time are the ones that show successful progress as far as social sustainability is concerned (Mohan & Stokke 2000: 256-257).

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation observed that in South Africa, the demand for poverty alleviation funding is witnessed in the urban areas. South African cities are struggling to keep up with the demand for housing, and social and economic infrastructure for a growing population of poor households. Many of them are in informal settlements like the Amalinda Forest of East London (Buffalo City). There is a claim that rapid urbanisation increases the population. This problem of population explosion which was also mentioned in Chapter 1 leads to waste generation, posing risks to the social environment sustainability of these urban settlements. It is for this reason that the NDP (National Development Plan) required the government to devise an urban development strategy to transform urban spaces to be liveable, equitable, sustainable, resilient, and efficient to support economic growth and social cohesion (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation 2015:76).

#### 3.6.4 Spiritual sustainability

We all depend on God's grace, and this forms the basis of our spiritual sustainability. In this regard, Myers (2011) discusses that the church can contribute to transformation and spiritual sustainability by serving and loving the community with a spirit of encouragement. Ministers and preachers, for example, are the source of inspiration

because they are living the word of God under the disciplining of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the church with her prophetic voice addresses the ones who are reluctant to follow Jesus (Myers 2011:193-200). The emphasis is that the church within a larger community witnesses and reveals the true story of the Word of God to challenge any form of lies that is formed to disrupt spiritual sustainability amongst the members of the community under transformational development (Myers 2011:193-200). This is the challenge that was faced by the Amalinda Methodist Church in this study for the spiritual sustainability of all those involved in transformational development and progress. Spiritual sustainability may be supported by restorative justice through facilitating reconciliation, healing and wholeness in local communities. This remains the purpose of the church, that is, reconciling humankind to God and humankind to each other. In this way, reconciliation includes all relationships - social, economic and spiritual. The church as God's people must reconnect power, love and justice (De Gruchy 2002:199). It is argued that the success of the efforts made by the church need to be supported by the clergy as they have a theological understanding of poverty and injustice failing which, its efforts will not be sustainable (Du Toit and Nkomo 2014:8). We need to be reconciled with God, with ourselves, with others, and with the earth. All other dimensions of reconciliation through Jesus Christ are impoverished if we miss the biblical accent on the earth (Snyder 2011b:150; see Offutt 2012:46). This then means that there should be Christian development dialogue that includes the restoration of human relationships, the aspiration of Shalom, and the concern for the environment (Offutt 2021:46).

It should be noted that during the process of transformational development there are ups and downs caused by the evil one. Transformational development practitioners as well as transformed communities need to devise means to avoid the disruption that the evil one might cause.

### **3.7 Promoting pervasive evil awareness**

The road to transformation is not easy. The Christian process is faced with the opposition of the devil who gives wrong directions and encourages bad choices. When comparing good and evil, Adamo (2011) contends that God is the one who brings forth

good, but human beings cause harm to themselves and others by following the devil's temptation (Adamo 2011:4).

What needs to be recognised is that the process of transformation is about a vision of a society where God's will be done and His love experienced. This is located by identifying Christian action against sin, challenging corruption and the sinful evil systems and structures within the communities. The whole mission is to enable individuals and communities to experience God's transforming power. Transformational development leaders need to perform their tasks by expressing discipleship concerning the challenges of ministry with and for the poor. In this way, the powers of evil will be defeated (Sugden 2003:72).

It is imperative therefore that those involved in support of the poor should guard themselves not to be disturbed by the powers of the devil who disrupt everything performed in God's power (Myers 2011:186). It is also significant that the ethical provisions regarding rules of conduct provided by religion to society should help to sustain the social group or society. For example, starting every event with a short prayer (Mbiti 1999:15). A Christian approach to avoiding the evil one is emphasised in the Lord's prayer which teaches us to ask God to lead us not into temptation but to deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13). Another biblical source of strength and courage for the transformational development practitioners as well as the recipients of transformation in Galatians (6:9) states that people must not grow weary in well-doing for in due season they shall reap if they do not lose heart. These means of fighting evil call for Christians to act with the knowledge that they are accountable to God for their actions. Therefore, the love of God should be witnessed in people and they should bring the problem of suffering to their attention and engage in sacrificial acts in very concrete material terms (Naude in Thesnaar 2010:101; see Du Toit and Nkomo 2014:5). To avoid the evil one, the whole process of transformational development needs to be redirected towards the kingdom of God.

### 3.8 Towards the best human future — The kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God is unshakable, and it is the best human picture that everyone seeks to attain. The frame of the Kingdom of God is inclusive of the physical, social, mental, and spiritual manifestations of poverty. These are all areas of focus for a Christian transformational developer as they are identified as healing, restoring body, mind, spirit, and community (Myers 2011:175). Sugden (2003) also stresses that the good of the transformation is best described by the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God. During this process of transformation, there is submission to the Lord to bring peace among individuals, races and nations. This involves sharing basic resources through participation by all people in the agreed-upon decisions which affect their lives. Their focus is on Christian growth and maturity as people dependent on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Christ the Saviour (Sugden 2003:72). The implication is that the available basic resources should be shared amongst the haves and the poor if we are working towards the Kingdom of God.

The book of Matthew explains that even the little ones must not be despised, for in heaven the angels behold the face of our father (Matthew 18:10). We are further informed that the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of heaven which may be compared to a King who forgave his servant a debt (Matthew 18:23-27). Parallel to this, McGrath (2012) points out that the base of the human future is set by God for everyone to move on. This is witnessed in the Bible when Apostle Paul in Romans (1:10) declares that God's power stands forever. It stands to reason that humans are part of God's creation with a special function within it. The human responsibility therefore must always be towards the Kingdom of God (McGrath 2012: 43; 57). In this sense, the church must lead and transform with the love of God for the well-being of all in the neighbourhood to rescue the poor from all the different spheres of poverty including spiritual poverty. The main aim is to get salvation that will bring them home where everybody belongs (Myers 2011: 175—177). This also applies to the Amalinda Methodist Church which was engaged in the transformational development programme in this study.

According to Henry (2004) when development practitioners are energised by a biblically rooted vision of the Kingdom of God, those whose lives are being transformed would develop holistic mission strategies to evaluate the spiritual evaluation of development. For example, the horrors of the past would be replaced by an expression of faith. This can be witnessed in the experience of the Israelites in their shortcomings and painfulness of existence, but consequently perceived God first and foremost as a redeemer and subsequently as the only Creator. The book of Job is also powerful in elucidating that through faith we have a vision of the kingdom of God (Henry 2004:5—6).

### 3.9 Critiques of Transformational Development

Transformational development is said to assist Christian initiatives against poverty into productive actions that benefit all communities in the world. However, some weaknesses may be identified during the time of transformation until the end of the transformational development project. The reason is that the ultimate goal of shalom is never reached because human life involves broken relationships as part of sin that has not yet been overcome in this world. The reality is that despite the well-organised and designed project with its skilled development practitioners including the creative community participants, no fullness of shalom is ever achieved and as such shalom remains an aspiration and not an intended ultimate goal. This then has a negative impact towards the community under development, because the practitioners cannot leave the community without having attained the desired goal (Offutt 2012:44).

Another problem of great concern raised by Tonnies (1935) in Tilman (2004:583) is that modernisation neglects the traditional relationships that are granted to an individual at birth in traditional societies (*Gemeinschaft*) as witnessed in family and kinship. In contrast, modern societies (*Gesellschaft*) promote legal or contractual relationships which are not granted at birth. There is a difference in peaceful relationships here because in *Gemeinschaft* the individuals live peacefully and dwell together united despite the separating forces whereas in *Gesellschaft* there is the separation of relationships despite all uniting factors (see Offutt 2012:44).

### 3.10 Conclusion

For effective transformational development, all those involved need to promote human existence that is guided by the Holy Spirit and strive to reach the destination of us all which is the Kingdom of God. Paul in his letter to the Romans stresses that the Kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. In this context, the language of the theology of transformation is expected to enable poor people to believe in Jesus Christ and seek a better human life whenever their human needs have been addressed (Sugden 2003:76).

It is of great interest to note that knowledge of everything concerning the transformational development of the poor must be redemptive for human existence. Henry (2004) argues that when knowledge of the world has no reference beyond itself it can seem pointless. This also applies to theology which only begins to live when it seems to be assisting people to cope with the human predicament (Henry 2004:6). The call for every community, therefore, is to decide about the better future it needs. This involves being considerate about the well-being of everyone in good relationships (Myers 2011:167).

In this Chapter, the transformational development of the poor including its theoretical framework has been presented. In the next Chapter, we shall discuss how the research for the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community was planned and conducted. This will include the use of research design, methodology and techniques that were used in the process of empirical research.



# Chapter 4: Research in practical theology: The construction of information gathering instruments for this study

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## 4.1. Introduction

In this Chapter, the methodology and techniques for the collection of data will be presented. For more relevance and reliability, the methodologies that are used in theological research by different scholars will be discussed. Within the interest and purposes of the present study, an overview of the introduction of practical theology research in South Africa will be briefly brought to light. This background will assist in considering the relevant research approach to be used in this study including the research design, sampling, and research methodologies.

In practical-theological studies, there is a multitude of methodologies that are used to obtain valid and reliable information. These include historical, hermeneutical, and ideological critical enriching approaches. Next to these methods is an empirical approach which is preferred as a useful science for problem-solving in everyday church practice in the modern era (Van der Ven 1994:30; Pieterse 1994:82). It is also argued that for accountable research, the empirical approach provides practical theology with the methods and tools to describe and explain what goes on in the actual lives of real people. This involves taking into account, analysing and also evaluating the texts used as guides by people in their religious experience. These guides assist in exploring and validating the interpretations of those experiences according to the context with which they are connected (Pieterse 1994:79).

The positioning of practical theology in research has been advanced by Schleiermacher's understanding of it as a science that studies Christian religion as it is found in the praxis of a person's life (Grab 2005:182). In addition, Grab states that practical theology has the challenge to explore how a sense of life is made through the symbolic strength of Christianity to cope successfully with life as it takes shape in the church under the prevailing complex socio-cultural conditions (Grab 2005:196). This

challenge makes it inevitable that practical theology will lean on social science for its description and understanding of human behaviour within the context of religion. An argument is that practical theology has developed to the level of social sciences by adopting and depending upon the methods of social sciences. Bringing more light to the above argument, Dames (2013) attests that numerous new trends in the field of practical theology were the result of its critical distance ability to merge with and reflect on the social sciences (Dames 2013:5).

Another emphasis concerning the development of practical theology is that it has developed into a reflection of multi-disciplinarity and intra-disciplinarity models resulting in a relationship between church and society. This then has led to empirical research taking place in a complex society for the contextuality of practical theology (Van der Ven 1994:30-31). The implication is that there is a shift from a church-based approach to a social science and hermeneutical-empirical approach with more focus on the broader extended society beyond the church (Heitink 1993:14-15). This is what was envisaged in the present study because the members of the Amalinda Methodist Church were actively engaged in a soup kitchen programme in the broader Amalinda Forest Community.

## 4.2 Towards practical theology research in South Africa

According to Pieterse (1994:78), the visit of Van der Ven from the Netherlands to South Africa's Department of Practical Theology at Unisa made a great contribution towards the introduction of an empirical approach to practical theology research. In the present-day context, the relations between church and society for ordinary human life are of great concern and it is for this challenge that an empirical approach in practical theology serves as an assistant to any uncertainty (Van der Ven 1993:19). In South Africa, there is a case for the practices in practical theology to acquaint themselves with the diversity and complexity of relationships and human experiences to be explored. These include political, economic, and social (Swinton & Mowat 2006:1). In its transformation approach, practical theology in South Africa has another challenge to consider the existential realities of the past, present and future that focus on an interdisciplinary approach as a priority to tackle the convergence and divergence in diverse perspectives

of cultural, public and Christian life (Osmer 2008; Van den Berg 2010; Bosch 1991; Newbigin 1989 in Dames 2013: 4). In the same vein, Dingemans (1996:83) argues that during the era of postmodernity practical theology has a challenge of dealing with an individualised pluralistic world with global tendencies of uncertainty – an approach in the reciprocity with social sciences that aimed to search for constructive change in church and society.

In the light of the above-highlighted arguments, it was within the interest of this study to take human experience into account on how changes were to be brought about and what the future goals were for constructive transformational development in both the Amalinda Methodist Church and the Amalinda Forest Community. For this purpose, Pieterse (1994:79) argues that the modern world, including South Africa, needs to consider empirical research to see a correlation between text and context in the past and also in the present time of transformation. In this regard, a theological project will need a hermeneutic praxis calling all the disciplines of theology to contribute by using their paradigms, methods, and tools, studying their object and developing their own identities. In this practical theology study, for example, the identities of the poor need to be developed. It is thus envisaged that the result of each discipline's research could in essence enrich the whole of theology when all its disciplines showcase the critical correlation of relations between texts and contexts within that framework. This then would lead to relating the results obtained in one field to other fields of theology to augment our understanding of Christianity in the modern world (Van der Ven 1993:19).

#### 4.2.1 Acknowledging the Methodist Church leadership to conduct research

In preparation for conducting the research, the researcher had to obtain consent from the Circuit 313 Superintendent of the Methodist Church in East London where the Amalinda Methodist church is located. The request for consent to conduct research will be reflected in Appendix A1 and approval thereof will be in Appendix A2. The Amalinda Methodist Church where the research was to be conducted has a resident Minister and it was necessary to request permission to use the Amalinda church hall as an interview venue. This will be presented as Appendix B1 and its approval will follow as Appendix B2.

At an early stage of the research, the researcher needs to prepare himself/herself to decide how to enter the research setting including how permission should be obtained from the gatekeepers; how a relationship could be formed between the researcher and the subjects; what role the researcher should play and how data will be recorded (de Vos et al. 2015:327). The researcher considered this before starting with the research.

#### 4.2.2 Organising procedure for the empirical research interviews

Before starting with the interviews, the interviewees had to sign a consent form after having decided to voluntarily take part in the interviews and this is reflected in Appendix C1. Appendix C2 is the interview schedule for the members of the Women's Manyano (Mother's Union). Following this will be Appendix C3 as the members of the Young Men's Guild (YMG) interview schedule. The interview schedule for the church leaders will be in Appendix C4. There were two focus groups, one for the soup kitchen initiators and the other involved the Amalinda Forest Community members. The soup kitchen initiators' focus group interview schedule is reflected in Appendix D1 and the one for the Amalinda Forest community focus group will be in Appendix D2. The direct observation by the researcher will be in Appendix E1 to E7.

The aforementioned tools form the backbone of a qualitative design (Mason 2002 in de Vos et al. 2015:323). The above-mentioned research tools combined present the result with a fascinating way of doing theology in the modern era (Van der Ven 1988:24). To sum up, the reason for the decision to choose empirical research for this study was based on its relevance to solving problems that are challenging research in the modern era in the Amalinda Forest Community. The resultant research findings may be of value to local communities around the country with similar existential challenges.

### 4.3 Considering empirical research for the present study

In the present study, practical theology functions to enable communities of faith, like the Amalinda Methodist Church in action, to practice what they preach (Graham 2017: 106). The above statement reflects what it is to be human in a context in which ministry should be understood to take place. It involves starting from formation and nurture, to

worship, to pastoral care, to community engagement and outreach and ultimately to public statements on social issues (Graham 2017: 2). All in all, the emphasis is that the word 'practical' in practical theology refers to action. The reality is that theology deals with God's activity through the ministry of human beings (Heitink 1999:6-7). In this study, we refer to the ministry of the Amalinda Methodist Church as was witnessed in its engagement in a soup kitchen programme for the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. To witness such engagement, there was a need to conduct research.

The empirical research for this study, as stated in Chapter 1, was decided upon after the researcher's interest was aroused by what the Amalinda Methodist Church was doing to transform the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community through their soup kitchen programme. Mouton (2001) argues that research topics originate in research ideas. This simply means that someone has raised an interesting and valid idea that stimulates the need for research. It is suggested that people who are more aware of what is going on around them, and sensitive to their surroundings, are more likely to reveal interesting topics for research (Mouton 2001:27).

The use of an empirical research approach as Van der Ven (1988) puts it, is important for the interaction between what is and what should be in any empirical approach to contextual practical theology. The leading constitutive factor is the metaphor of the Kingdom of God. This refers to the dialectical relation between the ongoing realisation and concurrently the desirable future of the religious praxis. Supporting the aforesaid, the book of Matthew (6:10) and Daniel (2:44) explain that God's Kingdom will put an end to all bad things and bring lasting peace on earth. The people on earth need to support this by making conditions on earth the way God wants them to be (Matthew 6:33; 13:44). It is therefore imperative that theologians should consider qualitative methods to be appropriate within empirical theology. An argument put forward for this choice is based on the principle that the respondents and test subjects should be treated as human subjects (Van der Ven 1988:19-23). Another argument is that the empirical-theological approach is formed by empirical and theology as the two compounding elements for its richness. Therefore, when these are combined, the result is a fascinating way of doing theology in the modern era (Van der Ven 1988:24). By

combining the two elements of *empirical* and *theology*, for example, we may refer to the church and pastoral care as forming a hermeneutic-communicative praxis. This involves an understanding of the gospel in the concretely examined church in-society praxis. This focuses strongly on the religious experience and the understanding of common believers in the poor community of Amalinda Forest and the communication of this understanding through the praxis of the Amalinda Methodist Church (Pieterse 1994:78).

To sum up, the reason for the decision to choose empirical research for this study was based on the fact that the empirical approach is directed at being a useful science for solving problems in everyday church practice. In South Africa, this leads to a liberating praxis which must include a reconstructing praxis for a decent transformed human existence in which a sound economy is vital. Thus, the approach in this study should help to phrase problems researched in terms of modernity (Pieterse 1994:82).

#### 4.4 The position of the empirical researcher in this study

When conducting research, the empirical researcher was conscious of how the topic under study was appropriately communicating itself. For hermeneutic understanding, during the investigation, the researcher faced confrontation with the text, human actions, and the data under investigation. One other important role was to participate in the life world of her fellow human beings whose praxis she was studying by being engaged in direct observation (Van der Ven 1994:37). The researcher also considered that the lives of people are not isolated on an island and therefore the entire context in which the people under study live should be taken into account. What is of great significance is exploring the thoughts, feelings, and praxis of the subjects under investigation from an ideological point of view. In this case, the feelings of the subjects engaged in the soup kitchen programme were considered and the condition of those who were the recipients of the soup in the Amalinda Forest Community was observed (Van der Ven 1994:38).

Furthermore, the researcher took into consideration what the practices of the church attested to in scripture and tradition, forming a distinctive policy through which theology engages the creator's world. To this effect, the primary concern of practical theology is

the practices of the church and the theological recondition of the human condition which in the present study would be the condition of those whose lives were transformed in the Amalinda Forest Community (Graham 2017:7). In the same attitude, De Villiers (2004) suggests that in a new South Africa, theology must estimate the degree to which the situation allows for organised religions and theology to influence the public sphere (De Villiers 2004:17). Therefore, in this study, the influence of the Methodist religious group in the Amalinda Forest Community through the soup kitchen programme would be revealed. This led to considering a research design to collect data from the Amalinda Methodist Church congregation, the Amalinda Forest Community and being engaged in direct observation (Ward 2012:6-9).

#### 4.5 The research design

For every research process, there is a necessity for a research design. In a nutshell, a research design encompasses a set of decisions regarding what the topic to be studied is about, among what population, with what research methods and for what purpose. This involves the whole process of focusing the researcher's perspective on a particular study (Babbie 2007:12). In this sense, hypotheses may emerge from the development of the investigation and can often not be rejected (Ngulube 2009:34). According to Swinton and Mowat (2006) for practical theology research, the researcher should consider that practical theology is distinct from other theological disciplines by its beginning point within human experience (Swinton & Mowat 2006:5). If then, the topic surrounds experience just like the experience of the poor and those engaged in a programme to transform the lives of the poor in this study, one would consider using a qualitative research design. It was for this purpose that the research design used in this study was a qualitative one. In support, Creswell (2007:37–39) points out that qualitative researchers collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. The researcher in this study was expected to collect data from the Amalinda Methodist Church participants who were engaged in the soup kitchen programme and the Amalinda Forest Community members to whom the programme was implemented.

In consideration of experience as a starting point in practical theology research, Swinton and Mowat (2006) state that practical theology emerges as a response to and recognition of the human experience which emerges in response to those actions. There was a challenge to use a qualitative research approach in this study to take such experience as necessary for future reference and further practical theology development. The above-mentioned scholars also argue that within the creation, which is profoundly fallen and broken, all human beings, including the church, fall short of the good purposes of God (Romans 3:23). In that respect, all human practices are inadequate, including those of the church (Swinton & Mowat 2006:11). However, be that as it may, it was necessary to investigate those practices to identify the goods and shortfalls in preparation for the better future of practical theology. For this purpose, the researcher had to choose a sample to prepare for collecting valid data during the process of research.

#### 4.5.1 The sampling procedure

Sampling involves identifying, choosing, and gaining access to relevant data sources from which the researcher would generate data using the chosen methods. These sources usually belong to and relate to a relevant wider population. In this sense, the sampling strategy needs to link the sources chosen meaningfully with that wider context (Mason 2002:120). A sample for the present study was selected from the members of the Amalinda Methodist Church who took part in the soup kitchen programme. Those included the members of the Women's Manyano (n=6), the Young Men's Guild (n=3), the members of the three classes who initiated the starting of the soup-kitchen programme (n=5) and the church leaders (n=4). This sample was made representative of the Amalinda Methodist Church congregation that participated in the programme. Another sample was withdrawn from the members of the Amalinda Forest Community (n=16) where the transformational development soup-kitchen programme was implemented.

The qualitative paradigm focuses on the subjective experiences of individuals and is said to be sensitive to the contexts in which people interact with one another. In this case, an interpretative phenomenology to obtain information regarding the meaning



attached to every participant's experience that might be relevant to the purpose of the research was considered (Van Wyk 2017:5). The purposive sampling was decided upon for church members who were in the same field of operation, that is, of preparing the soup kitchen for the poor of Amalinda Forest Community. Mason (2002) states that qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position which is explanatory, the interpretation of the social world and how this world is understood, experienced, or produced. Another fact is that the research is based on methods of data generation which are flexible in the social context where data is produced rather than being rigidly standardised. Last, there is more emphasis on holistic forms of analysis and explanation in this sense than on charting patterns and therefore statistical forms of analysis are not a big deal (Mason 2002:03). This was the reason for choosing purposive sampling in this study as the qualitative research design is more concerned with detailed and in-depth analysis as compared to statistical accuracy (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:45).

#### 4.5.2 Research methodology

A multi-method approach was used for collecting research data in this study. These included interviews, focus groups and direct observation.

#### 4.5.3 An interview as a research tool

The key tool of qualitative research which is linked to the researcher is the interviews that lead to rich insights into the meanings that people place on particular forms of experience. It is believed that by engaging in forms of deep conversation, knowledge will be gained (Swinton & Mowat 2006:63). de Vos et al. (2015) support this by stating that interviewing uses personal contact and interaction between interviewer and interviewee and seeks to raise awareness about people's experiences concerning a certain phenomenon. An emphasis is that the validity of the research findings is enhanced by using this appropriate information-gathering instrument (de Vos et al. 2015:342). According to Behr (1983:14) interviewing is a direct method of obtaining information in a face-to-face situation. Mann (1968:92) stresses that an interview may range from an informal 'chat' to the most carefully pre-coded and logically systematised set of questions set out in an interview schedule.

#### 4.5.4 Some advantages of interviews

According to Grinnell and Williams (1990), the following can be cited as some of the advantages of interviews:

- It is easier and more natural for the respondents to give spontaneous answers orally.
- During the interview, the interviewer is there for a high response rate to each question raised.
- The researcher can observe the non-verbal responses of interviewees in which case he or she would probe for explanations.
- The researcher has entire control over the environment as to when, where and how the interviews should be conducted (Grinnell & Williams 1990: 268-369; Huysamen 1994:145).

Swinton and Mowat (2006) also highlight that interviews share similarities and differences with conversations and thus are observed as both open and dynamic. Moreover, if there is a harmonious encounter between the researcher and the participant during the interview, the findings will be of standard (Swinton & Mowat 2006:63-65).

The above advantages were taken into consideration when the decision to use interviews was taken.

Many types of interviews may be used as data collecting methods including the following: the one-to-one interview which has different types namely; structured, unstructured one-to-one interviews, semi-structured one-to-one interviews, ethnographic email, telephone and focus group interviewing. For this study, semi-structured and focus group interviews were used.

#### 4.5.5 The semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the church members who were respondents. Grinnell (1988:274) argues that a semi-structured interview is used for

respondents who have shared a common experience. In this study, the members of the Amalinda Methodist Church shared the same experience before and during the transformational development soup kitchen programme implementation in the Amalinda Forest Community. Another shared information is that semi-structured interviews are organised around areas of particular interest but still allow considerable flexibility in scope and depth. (Dicicco-Bloom & Grabtree (2006) as cited by de Vos et al. (2015:348). The area of particular interest in this research was within the scope of transformational development of the poor by the Amalinda Methodist Church in the Amalinda Forest Community. It was within the scope of this study to get in-depth information about how the church was engaged in transforming the lives of the poor in that community.

#### 4.6 The interview schedules for semi-structured interviews and the recording of data

The interview schedules were drawn for the Amalinda Methodist Church respondents. These included interview schedules for the church leaders, members of the Women's Manyano, and the Young Men's Guild.

The interview venue was the Amalinda Methodist church hall which was used after getting permission from the resident Minister and the society stewards. The researcher observed the research ethics by first introducing the topic to the respondents and informing them about what was being studied (Rubin & Babbie 2005:71; Babbie 2007:26-27). The respondents were not forced to participate but instead, voluntary participation was every respondent's choice. The research data was not to be used simply as a process of exploiting respondents and there was no implication that the study might benefit them in some other way (de Vos et al. 2015:116). The respondents were kindly asked to sign consent forms which were treated with the utmost discretion and stored correctly so that they could be found whenever needed. Anonymity and confidentiality of subjects were protected (Marlow 1998: 189; Creswell 2003:64). The researcher treated all the respondents with humanity during the process of the interviews and the ethical quality of this study as a whole remained her responsibility (Bless et al. in de Vos et al. 2015:115; Henning 2005:73-74).

## 4.7 Techniques for the effectiveness of interviews

The researcher established good relations during interviews. This was done by:

- Putting the interviewee at ease and trying to gain his/her confidence by letting him get more chances of talking to give all the information needed.
- Asking clear and brief questions which were open-ended starting with the simple.
- Avoiding questions leading to embarrassing the interviewee.
- Trying to complete and wind off the process of interviewing within a reasonable time (Behr 1983:146; de Vos et al. 2015: 343-344).

### 4.7.1 Communication relations during interviewing

To get good results, the researcher followed communication techniques during the process of interviewing. This was done by:

- Paraphrasing the participants' words for good meaning and clarification. At any given moment when the researcher had to reflect on an important issue, the interviewee was humbly requested to say more.
- The researcher had to listen carefully to what was said to be able to summarise all the ideas to check understanding.
- Encouragement and motivation during the process of interviewing were promoted by giving the participant compliments so that he or she could see that the information given was appreciated, valued, and acknowledged (Okun 1982: 6-63).

### 4.7.2 Conducting the interviews

The number of the Women's Manyano to be interviewed according to the research proposal was ten (10). However, given the same experience which might be shared the researcher considered six (6) to be adequate. She then decided to include four (n=4)

members of the Young Men's Guild to gather more data as they were also actively involved in the programme.

The interviews with the Women's Manyano respondents were conducted on three (3) separate dates due to some personal problems of two members. The first interview date was the tenth of May 2019 with four members, one member on the twenty-seventh (27) of May 2019 and the last one on the fourth of June 2019.

The Young Men's Guild respondents were interviewed on the Seventeenth (17) May 2019 including two members and the last one on the 27th of May 2019 due to his work situation. One respondent excused himself as he was out of town and could not make it for the interviews. However, data from the three members could suffice. The interview data for all these members were recorded on paper and the researcher transcribed everything that was said during the interview to collect the meaning of what was said.

The interviews were started with the Women's Manyano respondents. Before the interviews, there was a pilot study where the questions on the interview schedule were presented, and some clarity was given. There was not much to be rectified as the respondents managed to grasp what was required of them. The interviews for the church leaders were conducted on three separate dates due to some work, church, and personal commitments. On the scheduled date for the interviews, the 16th of July 2019 only one respondent, a society steward was interviewed. On the 23rd of July 2019 two leaders, the treasurer and the secretary were interviewed. The last one, a society steward who was the founder of the soup kitchen programme and also a member of the Women's Manyano in good standing had so many demanding commitments and could only make it for an interview on the 19th of November 2019. This made a total number of four Church leadership respondents.

#### 4.8 The focus group interviewing

Focus groups are group interviews used to collect data through group interaction on a research topic determined by the researcher (Morgan 1997:6). A group of people in a focus group share a similar type of experience. For example, a focus group could consist of people who are affected by a need for transformational development of their

lives but who do not know each other in the normal course of their lives (Terre Blanche et al. 2006:304-305). This was the case in the Amalinda Forest Community because in that informal settlement people come from different backgrounds including rural areas to work in town. According to Fontana and Frey (1994:652), focus groups are useful for collecting rich data that are cumulative and elaborative. To this effect, the reason for using a focus group is to look for a range of feelings that people have about something. In the case of this study, the focus was on the feelings of the soup kitchen initiators, and the feelings of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. In all qualitative research, focus groups draw on three fundamental strengths namely: exploration and discovery, context, and depth and finally, interpretation (de Vos et al. 2015:360-362). It is therefore significant that the researcher should select respondents by liaising with people knowledgeable about the context to identify participants fitting the criteria, thus, sampling is often purposive (de Vos et al. 2015:365). In this study, the initiators of the soup kitchen were a focus group targeted to participate. Some members of the Amalinda Forest Community who were there from the beginning of the programme were also considered to form a focus group to participate.

#### 4.8.1 The reasons for using focus groups

The use of focus groups was decided upon because the initiators of the soup kitchen programme served as the principal source of data as the people who started the programme. Their data would thus be used as a supplementary source of data to the interviews and direct observation (Morgan 1997:2). The self-disclosure among the participants concerning what people thought and felt would give multiple viewpoints on the topic (de Vos et al. 2015:361). Therefore, the researcher wanted the ideas to emerge from the group as people were encouraged to give every relevant information that was needed (de Vos et al. 2015:362).

#### 4.8.2 The size of the focus group

The size of the focus group usually includes 6 to 10 participants. In this study, there were 5 participants in the soup-kitchen initiators focus group. However, it is recommended that smaller groups of 4 to 6 are preferable when the participants have

intense and lengthy experience related to the topic (de Vos et al. 2015: 366) – in this case, these were people who initiated the soup kitchen and had amongst them the founder of the soup kitchen in whose house the soup kitchen first operated and therefore 5 participants were considered to be meeting the requirements.

The basic steps of planning the focus group were taken by the researcher by obtaining permission and writing the questions in a question guide and the location date and time for the session was in the evening as people were to be from work. The focus group interviews for the initiators of the soup kitchen programme were conducted on 23 July 2019 from 17h00 to 18h30.

The Focus group for the Amalinda Forest Community was composed of 16 members who volunteered to participate. That number was accepted as the representative of the larger community. The questions were prepared, and the time set was on a Sunday after the respondents had had their soup. The focus group interviews were conducted on two separate dates. The first one was on the 28 of July 2019 and the second one was on the 27 of October 2019.

## 4.9 Direct observation

For more validity of the present study, direct observation was considered as one final research tool. According to Swinton and Mowat (2006: 241), direct observation tends to be more focused than participant observation. In this case, the researcher is watching rather than taking part. Certain sampled situations and people are observed, and this does not take long as participant observation. Furthermore, observing people within their context leads to reflecting on their words and actions. In this way, vital information will give a clear and more authentic understanding.

Ngulube (2009:34) states that in qualitative research observation is subjective. This means that the researcher observes and experiences it personally. The researcher in this study performed in that way when she was directly engaged in observing how the programme was operating from the church to the informal settlement in Amalinda Forest.

During the direct observation, the researcher was more focused when she started to wake up very early on six (6) Sunday mornings to watch how the soup kitchen was prepared by the Methodist Church members. She first visited the venue which was the Church Hall kitchen when the schedule had been changed by the society stewards to include every class to participate and the visit was during the turn of class one (1) which mostly included youth. It was on the 5th of May 2019, a challenging wintertime but the first-hand experience of the congregants and the poor members of the community was gained during that period.

When this flexible method of data generation was used, field notes were taken by the researcher. Saldana (2009) suggests some questions be considered when coding field notes of qualitative research as follows:

- What are people doing and what do they want to accomplish?
- How exactly do they do this: the specific means and strategies they use?
- What assumptions are they making?
- What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes? (Saldana 2009:18)

The above questions were considered relevant as they tally with the research question in the present study: How does the Amalinda Methodist Church expand its role to transform and develop the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community?

## 4.10 Limitations

The researcher focused mainly on the relevant concepts as stated in the title of the study taking into consideration the purpose and the reasons for the needs of this study.

In her proposal, the researcher proposed a purposive sample of about fifty (50) respondents for the present study. This had not been the case, because of some reasons already given in conducting the interviews for this study. However, the researcher ascertained that there were commonalities in some experiences of the



respondents and the total sample of thirty-four (34) was an adequate representative of the total population.

## 4.11 Conclusion

This Chapter has indicated that from its historical background, practical theology is an action-oriented discipline. Research, therefore, demands the use of different methodologies for the challenges of modern society. The actions of the church should be demonstrated and spelt in a manner that satisfies God's will for the lives of people. To meet the said requirements, we need faith and experience to open the way for an empirical approach through the hermeneutic communicative praxis (Pieterse 1994:82-83; Heitink 1999:3).

During the research process, people express their experiences by way of communicating it. Therefore, the researcher had to follow the sampling procedure by specifically selecting the relevant source of information with rich data concerning the actions of the church in transforming the lives of the poor. Religious experience or experience of oppression may be expressed and assist to shed light on the observations made. It was within the above-mentioned context that the researcher considered direct observation in addition to interviews used in this study. The main objective was to be informed about what was happening concerning the transformational development of the poor. This was done by witnessing and listening to what people would say and communicate, both the members of the church and the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

The emphasis is that the focus in empirical research should be located within the hermeneutic frame of reference including methods and practices that describe the most basic facts of social life (Van der Ven 1993:21).

The research methods including the interviews were identified as valid and reliable in gathering information about what was taking place in the community.

In the next chapter the findings obtained after using the aforementioned research tools will be discussed.

# Chapter 5: The Research Findings

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## 5.1 Introduction

The burning problem in this study as indicated in the first Chapter was the poor living conditions of the people in the Amalinda Forest Community. Those conditions had led to people being identified as suffering from poverty. The Amalinda Methodist Church started a soup kitchen programme to transform the lives of the poor in the said community.

The main objective of the study amongst other objectives was to explore how the intervention of the church through the programme was transforming the lives of the poor for their total well-being. This implied not just feeding the hungry, but also transforming the poor on all sides of humanness, that is, mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. Furthermore, what needed to be observed included the application of the theories of restoring the identity of the poor, caring, showing love, and finally empowering the poor to be independent for a better future that will be sustainable.

The previous Chapter has dealt with the research methodologies used to gather the above-mentioned needed information. In this Chapter, the findings resulting from the interviews and the direct observation will be presented. The interview responses will be given in a summary fashion and other responses will be given as reflecting the actual answers as they were voiced by the respondents in their mother tongue (Xhosa). Semi-structured interview schedules that were compiled, included one for six (n=6) Women's Manyano respondents, three (3=n) members of the Young Men's Guild, four (4=n) members of the church leaders, two (2=n) focus groups interview schedules, one (1=n) for the soup kitchen initiators and the second (1=n) one for the members of the Amalinda Forest Community.

The results of the interviews will be presented as follows: the results from interviews with the Women's Manyano, the Young Men's Guild, the church leaders, the initiators of the soup kitchen focus group and the Amalinda Forest focus group. Last, the findings resulting from the researcher's direct observation will be presented.

## 5.2. Interview responses of the Women's Manyano (Methodist Women's Prayer and Service Union)

The history of Mothers' Union originated in England and was founded by Mary Sumner in 1876. She gathered women to teach them the spiritual value of motherhood. This included the great responsibility of parents for their children and the power of prayer in dealing with all challenges. In the South African context, the first publication on Manyano groups was written by Brandel-Syrer (1962). She explained that the term 'manyano' is originally a Xhosa noun from the verb '*ukumanya*' which means 'to join'. It was first used by Methodist women to refer specifically to their weekly meetings of prayer (Brandel-Syrer 1962 in *In Her Name* 2013:102).

In South Africa, the members of the Manyano are identified by their uniform which is a red blouse with a round neck and four buttons, a red belt with one button, a black skirt with a closed slit at the back, a white club which is tied with a pin badge (initialled M.W.P & S.U) (Methodist Women's Prayer and Service Union), a white hat with six panels, black socks and black shoes (MCSA, n.d. *Umgaqo Siseko: Umanyano lwabaFazi*).

The following are the responses to questions on the interview schedule Appendix A prepared for the Women's Manyano.

### 5.2.1. Findings concerning Women's Manyano membership

To obtain reliable information, the researcher deemed it necessary to make sure that all the respondents were members of the Amalinda Methodist Church Women's Manyano. All the participants were members of the Women's Manyano in good standing. Each one identified the Manyano she belonged to, for instance: Respondent 1: "I am a member of Women's Manyano in good standing." There were two Women's Manyano groups, one was gathering on Thursdays from 15h00 to 16h00 and for those who were working their gathering was on Saturday. The respondents for the face-to-face interviews were four members from the Saturday group and two from the Thursday group.

### 5.2.2 Relating to how the women felt when first engaged in the programme

The researcher wanted to know the feeling that the women had when they got involved in the programme. According to Seidman (1998) one interviews to know other people's stories because these are a way of knowing. The meanings that reside within participants are of great value in qualitative research (Seidman 1998:1). The respondents mentioned similar responses that when the soup kitchen was introduced to them, they thought about those who were suffering in that community and were keen to be actively involved in that poverty relief initiative, for example, Respondent 2: "This was quite fascinating within me to be involved in a programme that would help the needy." When sharing this information, they were so excited and proud to be involved in that programme.

### 5.2.3 Findings about the first experience in the community

Practical theology takes human experience into account and its beginning point is within human experience (Swinton & Mowat 2006:5). The researcher considered this when she asked this question. Some rich insights into meanings that they placed on their experience would then give a clear picture of what happened, for example, Respondent 3: "I still remember that Sunday morning, when we were led by our Evangelist Mtshakazi to the community to introduce the soup kitchen, it was a joy and praising the Lord." The first experience that these women had was an interesting one because they depicted how the whole process was started through evangelism which was led by the church Evangelist. That was pre-planned and on that first Sunday morning, they woke up very early, gathered at the church and went to the community where they started by singing and preaching in the street alerting people to come to the site identified to serve the soup. Community members joined and gathered at the site. The first thing was to sing and pray. The soup kitchen was introduced to the community and thereafter the soup was served. Another point that was raised was that the soup was intended for children, but the adults also came to queue for the soup as well. One could see that those people were hungry, and they were happy, some saying that was a great relief for them as they only depend on grants. The respondents experienced some challenges concerning the way the people in that community were living. They observed several

people living in one shack, children not well looked after as some little ones came without parents. Some adults even came to the site wearing gowns – a probable sign of desperation.

#### 5.2.4 Findings concerning how often the soup was served

In whatever we do, time is of great significance. The researcher needed to know on which days of the week the soup was served. The response was that the soup was served on Sunday mornings only before the church started: Respondent 4: “We serve it on Sunday morning, first thing before going to church.” The arrival time at the church hall kitchen to prepare was from 06h00 to 07h30. Thereafter they would proceed to the Amalinda Forest Community site to serve the soup and bread from 08h00 to 09h30. The Women's Manyano was divided into groups to alternate in preparing and serving on different Sundays of each month.

#### 5.2.5 Findings about the challenges to be addressed in the programme

This was to ascertain if the programme was well organised to meet the needs and the goal of transforming the lives of the poor. According to Sen (1999), transformational development programmes should address the needs for human well-being (Sen 1999:4). The Women's Manyano raised a need for the involvement of more members from the congregation in the programme. According to Respondent 5: “We need to include everybody at church in this programme and not the members of the organisations only. Uniform does not guarantee that we have all the gifts to contribute towards the success of this programme.” The reason was that there might be other members from the congregation who were not members of the organisation but with more expertise in running the programme with their God-given gifts that might help in making this programme a success towards responsible well-being. The youth also needed to be involved and active as the future generation. There was occasionally a problem with the shortage of ingredients when preparing the soup caused by a lack of communication between the leaders and those who were to prepare the soup after the last group that served, that is, in identifying what would be needed for the following Sunday.

The open space in the community where the soup was served was another challenge that needed to be addressed as it was very bad on rainy days to have the children queue for the soup. This was also not good for the health of the respondents and resulted in some delays in dishing out the soup after waiting for the rain to calm down. So was also the case on windy and chilly days.

#### 5.2.6 Other means made to transform the lives of the poor

The researcher was quite aware that one could not say he or she has transformed one's life by giving something to eat only. Whatever heals and restores the body, mind, spirit, and community should form part of the better future towards which transformational development should point (Myers 2011:175).

The respondents mentioned some other means of assistance to meet the requirements of the needy in that community including supplying old but still good quality clothing. Respondent 6 responded: "We collected some clothes to give to the poor as well." There was a strategy to request all the members of the church to donate their children's clothing that was no longer used and even those of adults so that they could be given to the community before winter. This request was taken seriously by the congregants and there would be boxes full of clothing as per request. One respondent shared that the objective of evangelism was to win souls by preaching and spreading the word of God in that community. Evangelism, therefore, was another form of transforming the lives of the poor in that community. Two of the respondents also explained how they helped learners who were doing grade 12 in that community by bringing them application forms to apply for further education. Assistance was given to complete the application forms. They made a follow-up, and one girl went to Queenstown College to study where she stayed with a family relative. The members of the Women's Manyano who were health workers offered the community members referral letters to attend the clinic and this was followed up to check if they did go to the clinic and would motivate them to take the medication until their conditions improved. The Women's Manyano had once visited the community to identify homes that needed support and bought groceries for those poor families.

### 5.2.7 Findings concerning the participation of the community members in the programme

The first concept of the phases for participation in the development of the poor as described by Carr (2011:4) is the powerless position acknowledgement where individuals must be aware and accept that they are powerless with a desire to be empowered. The researcher wanted to check whether there was this state of awareness and if the members of the community needed to be empowered to take part in the programme. It was also vital to know if the respondents were giving the members of the community a chance to participate in the programme for their benefit and further development, for example, Respondent 6 observed: “Not much was done by them except for helping us with the queue for serving the soup.”

The respondents mentioned that the role played by the members of the community was to help with the queues during the process of dishing out the soup. They would also be asked to help the young ones who came alone and could not hold the hot soup carefully. They also helped in maintaining order during the clothing donation.

## 5.3 Responses from the Young Men’s Guild (YMG) interviews

The Young Men’s Guild is an organisation known as (*Amadodana*) in the Methodist Church. They are identified by their uniform of grey trousers, white shirts, red waistcoats with five buttons, black ties, black blazers, a YMG badge, black socks and black shoes. Some of them are lay preachers. *Amadodana* abide by John Wesley’s teachings and observe his threefold rule of life to do no harm, do good and attend upon the ordinances of God (MCSA 2016:26). Their mission is to be dedicated and devoted to serving the Lord through an outstanding missionary witness in societies (Masela & Gaba 1973:12).

### 5.3.1 Findings on the role of the YMG members in the soup kitchen programme

This information was needed regarding their role in co-operating and giving moral support to the members who were waking up very early to prepare the soup.

The three members were members of the Young Men's Guild at Amalinda Methodist Church and one of them was a Chairperson. As members, they offered free use of their vehicles to deliver soup to the Amalinda Forest Community every Sunday morning. Note the Chairperson's response: "We all help with our bakkies to deliver the soup to the community as YMG members." They did that whenever they were requested to do so by each group responsible for preparing soup on that particular Sunday morning. The Chairperson mentioned that in a meeting that they held as the YMG they decided to assist the programme with financial support. They agreed amount to contribute was R600 per month to be handed over to the society stewards in preparation for buying the soup kitchen groceries.

### 5.3.2 Responses concerning the place where soup was served

This was asked for the sake of convenience for serving the soup in that centre. This included whether the place was well organised and could be reached by everyone. The safety of everybody as well as a matter of great concern.

The response confirmed what was said by the Women's Manyano that soup was served in an open space. Respondent 2 observed: "It is just an open dusty space next to a dumping site." The respondents complained about the access road to the site which was very bad and made it very difficult to reach the venue on rainy days. However, although the conditions were as such, they would carry on driving slowly to reach the open site.

### 5.3.3 Findings concerning the community's response to the programme

Interpersonal relationships between the poor and the practitioners of transformational development are of great significance. This question was raised to check those relations and how the members responded to the service because without transforming relationships there is unlikely to be any transformation (Myers 2011:185). The people in the community were quite appreciative and voiced out that they needed that support as most of them were not working and some depended on grants. This was confirmed by their rushing to queue for the soup both children and adults. Respondent 3 mentioned the following: "One day I was travelling from Umtata and I offered a man who stays



there a lift and during our conversation he mentioned that in that community they appreciate what is done by the Amalinda Methodist for them.”

The area was observed by the YMG leader as having a hopeless future with inhabitants living in shacks that were built close together. One respondent shared that he had once offered an adult a lift from that community who commented that they would never forget what the Amalinda Methodist Church had done for them. This served as a testimony to the YMG member and showed how the programme was enhancing good relationships.

#### 5.3.4 Other challenges to be addressed in the programme

During the process of transformation, there are challenges faced by those involved in the process of transformation, both the practitioners and the poor. Getting there is not easy (Myers 2011:186). These needed to be identified for a better understanding of the way forward.

The leader of the YMG mentioned that in the first place, the support of the councillor of that Ward who knew about this programme was needed. As it was, his involvement to see the conditions in which the people were serving the soup was lacking. For instance: The Chairperson’s response was as follows: “The support of the local government is needed in this programme and we need more support from our Ministers.”

Other challenges mentioned were fixing the roads, the involvement and motivation of the Ministers and a need for a shelter where the soup would be served. Fundraising activities and the involvement of the community needed to be taken into consideration. The sustainability of the programme was shaky and therefore plans could save the programme from a state of collapse.

### 5.4 Data gathered from the church leaders’ interviews

The church leaders' interviewees included two society stewards, the secretary and the treasurer. The duties of the society stewards amongst others are to cooperate with the Minister and leaders of society to promote its spiritual and temporal welfare. They should also ensure that all approved collections are duly made at the proper time (MCSA 2016:84; 87). The Secretary is appointed to keep all the records of the meetings

of the Society. The Treasurer is responsible for the finance department, and they are all appointed for a 3 (three) year term (MCSA 2016: 84).

#### 5.4.1 Responses from the first society steward

##### 5.4.1.1 Information about what happened at the beginning of the soup-kitchen vision

The first respondent, a society steward, and a lay preacher remembered very well when the soup kitchen started but by then he was not yet a steward. He pointed out that the church leaders forwarded the vision to the resident Lady Minister then, the late Reverend Dlamini who expressed great appreciation for the initiators' vision and permission was granted to start the programme. As a society steward during the time of the research, he was also supporting the programme and kept on organising whenever there was assistance needed by the leaders of the programme in preparation for the soup.

##### 5.4.1.2 Response concerning the engagement in the programme

The society steward was one of the society organisations (the YMG) that were actively involved in evangelism when the programme started in the community. He also explained that there was a lady who led the Children's Ministry and she organised Sunday school for the young children in that community teaching them songs and some passages that would be read from the Bible. As one of the members there, he would help to maintain order during that Sunday school session. He would also help in organising and controlling the queue for the soup on the site.

##### 5.4.1.3 Findings on how the soup kitchen was operating in catering to the poor in that community

This question was asked to ascertain whether there was cooperation and dedication by the members of the church and what feedback they were getting as leaders.

The response was that there was indeed cooperation amongst the members of the church but support from the Ministers was lacking and this made the church leaders and the members of the church to be demotivated.

#### 5.4.1.4 How the church devised means for the sustainability of the programme.

The society steward pointed out that there was a shortage of finance, and the sustainability of the soup kitchen was mostly dependent on individual volunteer donors from the church. A portion of the Sunday collection was given to the soup kitchen leader to buy soup.

#### 5.4.2 Response from the church secretary

The church secretary stressed that what came to her mind when the soup kitchen was introduced was that the church was doing something good to assist those in need with nutrition. Her feeling was that the church was part of the community and the contribution made by the church would make people understand that. She was actively involved in preparing the soup during their turn as the members of the Women's Manyano.

The challenges that she mentioned were that more people were coming for the soup than was expected because initially, it was intended for the children. The open space where soup was served was a challenging issue especially on winter and rainy days, even on very hot days for that matter. A shelter was needed. People in that community were exposed to unhealthy conditions.

There were volunteers in the church who kept on donating to help for the sustainability of the programme but that support was dropping gradually.

#### 5.4.3 Responses from the treasurer

When the vision of the soup kitchen was brought forward, she had a good feeling that it was a mission of the church to give back to the community and change the lives of those in need. Her engagement was in preparing the soup, praying, and dishing when they came to the site. She related that One Palm Sunday they came back with some members of the community to the church. Challenges observed were lack of houses, substance abuse, and unemployment was a big problem, and one could see that that was the only breakfast they could get. As a treasurer, she could confirm that funds were not enough to cater for the programme and were dependent on group donations and from some individuals. From the Sunday collection, a sum of about 30% of the collection was to buy the soup and ingredients.

#### 5.4.4 Responses from the second society steward

The female society steward was the last to be interviewed in the leaders' category due to some reasons mentioned in Chapter 4. She depicted a picture of how the soup kitchen programme started by relating the background as follows:

##### 5.4.4.1 Findings on the background of the soup-kitchen programme

This society steward was also a member of the Women's Manyano and the founder of the soup kitchen programme. She gave the background explaining that the vision was not brought to her but initially she was the first person in the church to listen to the call. She related that one Sunday in 2010, the late Reverend (Bishop) Matyumza was preaching and in his preaching, there was a message that was delivered on how Christians should be helping one another as Black South Africans by also reaching out to the community at large. He even raised the following questions: If one would say the church was no longer there when waking up the following day, what would people around say? Would people be saying they regret it or are happy about it? What legacy would be left behind? (*Yandichukumisa ngaphakathi le imibuzo*) The respondent was deeply touched by those questions. After church, as a class leader, she decided to go and discuss with her class sixteen (16) members and sell her vision of starting a soup kitchen. Her class members were also for the idea and decided to do something for the poor to transform their lives. They decided as a class to sell this vision to the other two cluster classes which were class twenty (20) and class twenty-three (23). They then formed a group of soup kitchen initiators to start the programme.

The three classes approached the society stewards, but it was not easy as they were reluctant and thinking about its sustainability. However, two mothers from the Women's Manyano donated soup and another one donated a gas stove, and the three classes started the soup-kitchen programme outside the church premises still waiting for approval from the society stewards. From 2010 to 2016 the soup kitchen was started and continued to operate at the respondent's house in Amalinda. The three classes transported it to Amalinda Forest Community using their vehicles. It was mid-2016 when the soup kitchen was sold to the congregation by approaching the church stewards again and the resident Minister, the late Reverend Dlamini supported the vision. She

proposed that there should be an amount taken from the Sunday collection to be given to the leaders of the soup kitchen for the soup kitchen's needs. A record would be kept and would be made available whenever needed.

The second society steward responded to the same questions as reflected in the interview schedule used for the first steward.

#### 5.4.4.2 Response concerning challenges in the programme

During the period of the interview in 2019, the respondent was observing many challenges the church was having concerning cooperation by some groups who would not wake up and only three to four members would come to cook and prepare the soup. The mood was not as before. As a society steward, she could also notice that the Sunday collection had to cater for many demands:

“The Church tried to keep on giving an amount to the soup kitchen but due to prices that had gone up in groceries, the individual donors were asked to come forward. The YGM members gave great support with their monthly donation”.

## 5.5 Responses from the initiators of the soup-kitchen programme

The initiators of the soup kitchen are the first three classes (*iiRamente*) that started the programme.

### 5.5.1 Findings on how the soup-kitchen programme started

The researcher wanted to get relevant and valid information as these were people who initiated and started the programme. The following briefing was given:

#### **A. Background**

It was after the preaching of the late Rev. Matyumza in 2010 when he stressed the mission of the Church that one of the members had the vision to start the soup kitchen. After some joint discussions by the three classes, the decision was taken to start with the project. The first thing to do was to identify the place with needy people where this transformational development programme could be started. They first visited the area

next to the tip side but on arrival, they found out that there was already one programme that was operating and helping there. They then decided to visit the area with shacks, the Amalinda Forest informal settlement about 3 km from the Amalinda Methodist Church. The area was identified as poverty-stricken and needed help. The soup was started at the house of one of the congregants and then delivered to that settlement, Sunday school lessons and Christian teaching were also given before soup was served. The project was intended for children but when it started about one hundred and sixty (160) to two hundred (200) people, mostly children and other adults came for soup every Sunday morning.

## **B. Donors**

The soup was initially donated by one member of the Women's Manyano from 2010 to 2011. In 2012 another Women's Manyano member joined to donate soup and the other donated bread from inception until 2013. When the idea was discussed with the society stewards at the society leaders meeting in 2013 the late Rev. Dlamini suggested that the first Sunday collection be used for the project. It was then only in 2013 that the project was adopted as a society church project supported by all. The full congregation took responsibility, and the support came from goodwill gestures and donations by certain individuals. There were Women's Manyano who donated vegetables, and tinned stuff and money donations from the YMG individual members were received. The initiators also approached the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and they received donations of some warm and other clothing items for distribution to that needy community every year in May and June. There were also members of the church who donated clothing time and again.

## **C. Operational Budget:**

The donation from the church collection varied between R900 to R1800 per month. In 2016 an account was opened as MCSA Amalinda Methodist Church Soup Kitchen FNB account. The budget then was as follows:

- Bread costs were R304 for 40 loaves of bread = R1216 per month ordered from Star Bread Bakery.
- Vegetables to thicken soup - R300 per month
- Cleaning material - R300 per month
- Gas every second month - R215
- Soup R450 per 25 kg multiplied by 7 bags per year = R3150 ordered from Port Elizabeth.

#### **D. Operational Planning:**

Four classes volunteered to cook and serve the soup for a start. However, the members started to dwindle since some of the members were ageing and unable to wake up at 06h00. Volunteers were encouraged to come forward.

The following is the continuation of the questions on the interview schedule of the initiators after the briefing was given about how the soup kitchen programme was started in response to the first question.

#### **5.5.2 The first experience of the soup-kitchen initiators in the Amalinda Forest community**

The first experience the respondents were exposed to when they started with the programme in that community was needed to ascertain whether the programme was accepted by the members of the community. That would help to plan how to carry on with the programme.

The respondents mentioned that they first consulted with a councillor and told him about their mission, and he supported their initiative to help the needy in that community. When they arrived there, they were shown an open space where they could serve the soup. The children and adults came in numbers, and it was not easy to control the queues as hungry people were pushing one another and others would come back to double their share. People were happy and the response was positive to have some

people who came with such relief from poverty. Some related their problems of not getting grants and houses. One could notice that the children were not well catered for especially with regard to cleanliness and to engaging in prayer before anything started. The initiators also mentioned that at first there was a misunderstanding concerning the programme. Some of the residents thought that it was the ruling party project that brought them the soup through the church, but that was rectified, and they ultimately understood what was taking place.

### 5.5.3 Responses concerning the participation of the community in the programme

Transformation is change reflected in people who are ready to be transformed (Van Wyk 2017:6). It was significant to know if the community members were keen to participate and cooperate in serving. At the very same time, the motivational actions of the respondents towards involving the members of the community to participate in the programme were necessary.

The leader of the initiators responded that they had once asked that the open space be used to put a structure where soup could be served but the response from the community was that the open space was for their children to play netball. A few members of the community did help to assist the church members in organising the people to queue for the soup.

### 5.5.4 Some challenges faced by the church in transforming the lives of the poor in that community

This information was required to direct the progress of the project.

The intervention of the councillor was needed, and the support of the church Ministers was also a demand. There was a problem of political affiliation amongst the members of the community which made it very difficult to make decisions. The access road to the community and the illegal electric connections posed great danger to both the members of the church and those of the community. When they described the conditions of the shacks, they emphasised giving the whole picture in Xhosa. *“Amagali mancinci, kodwa baninzi abantu phakathi, asondelelene ingaba yingozi xa kunokutsha. Amanye andiswe*



*ngamaplanga ayaneetha ngathi angawa.*” Some were very small and closely built posing danger if there could be fire. Others were extended with wood, but not firmly built, leaking and in a state of collapse. That needed the involvement of the local government.

#### 5.5.5 Responding to the vision to be shared for the sustainability of the programme

*“Ifuna ukuvuselelwa le programme.”* The involvement of the whole congregation as it first started needed to be revived. Plans to organise fundraising were suggested. However, it was mentioned that time has changed and there were a lot of financial constraints amongst people at large.

### 5.6 Research findings from the Amalinda Forest focus group

The Amalinda Forest Community members formed two focus groups and they were interviewed on two separate dates as was explained in Chapter four. To accommodate the members of the community to feel free and voice out their feelings, the researcher posed questions in their mother tongue (Xhosa).

#### 5.6.1 *Ukuqinisekisa ngokuba ngabahlali eAmalinda Foresti* (Confirmation of being a resident of Amalinda Forest)

This information was needed because sometimes in an informal settlement people come and go. For valid information, those who were there when the programme started would give valid and reliable information.

Those who participated in this group were residents since the inception of the programme and they included 6 females and 1 young man.

#### 5.6.2 *Indlela abeva ngayo ukuqala kwe suphu kitchen* (How they felt on the first day when the soup was served to them)

*Impendulo: “Savuya kakhulu”*

The focus group responded that they were very happy and appreciated what the church had done for them. They related that some adults were sick and so it would help them to take their medication after eating the soup and bread. Another thing they mentioned was that those who were heavy drinkers could also start eating before drinking. They maintained that the problem of unemployment made some of them drink.

*5.6.3 Ukuchaza ukuba iqhuba njani le soup-kitchen* (Responding about how this church soup-kitchen programme is operating)

This response served to know their reasoning about the services brought by the church through the soup kitchen.

They viewed the church people as kind people to help. They also saw that prayer is good because those people prayed for everything and could remember when they started with evangelism — that was nice. They were also appreciating the clothes that they got from the church because they helped them, especially in winter.

*5.6.4 Ukuqonda ukuba bahamba inkonzo eWesile na* (Response to whether they were also members of the Methodist Church)

It was interesting to know if they knew about church and if they were attending any other church.

Those who were in this group were members of the church but not the Methodist Church. They mentioned Loyiso Community Church, Word of Faith and New Covenant Church. They explained that those churches were a distance from the community, and they attended alone leaving the children behind because it would cost them more taxi fare to go with them.

*5.6.5 Into abangayibalisayo oko yaqala le nkqubo yale suphu apha ekuhlaleni* (Something they could relate to since this programme started in their community)

This information was required to know what changes the programme had made in their lives as members of that community.

They mentioned that there was a relief of hunger at least for a day during the weekend. This was helpful mostly for their children as the school nutrition was not there on weekends. They had hoped to get something on Sunday mornings. Their children learnt a lot from the guidance given by the lady for children's ministry and even the elderly could learn something from the young ones including praying before eating.

#### 5.6.6 *Ukucebisa ukuphucula ngakumbi le nkqubo yale suphu* (Suggestions to improve this programme)

It was significant to know if the community respondents were keen to participate and share some views on the transformational development of their lives and the community at large.

*“Siyacela kongezwe noba lusuku lunye siyifumane kabini isuphu evekini. Usuku olunye alwanelanga abantu bayalamba nyani apha.”* “Their wish was that one day could be added so that they could get the soup twice a week. They said one day was not enough because people were starving there.” They also pointed out a shelter where the soup could be served as needed. The open space exposed children to cold in winter and sometimes when it was raining some would not come and stay hungry for the whole morning or the whole day for others. They suggested that if the dumpsite opposite the site could be removed and cleared, that might be used for the soup kitchen shelter so that they could assist church people to prepare and serve the soup. They were even prepared to build up a team to help. This group mentioned that there were young men in the community who had building skills. The bushes below the settlement had trees where they used to go and cut trees to make poles for buildings. They were gifted and could also make walking sticks.

#### 5.6.7 *Indima edlalwa ngabahlali ekuhambiseni le suphu* (The role played by the residents in serving the soup)

The current involvement would show how they were being empowered and participating.

*Impendulo: “Siyanceda ukumisa abantwana kakuhle kanti naba badala siqande nabanye abafuna ukuphinda abanye bengekafumani. Siyanceda nasekuhambiseni isonka ngelinye ixesha. Xa kunikezelwa impahla kuyatyhalwana funeka siqande.”*

Response: “The respondents were helping in controlling the children and the adults’ queues and checked on those who wanted to repeat so that everybody could get. They were sometimes asked by the church members to help in giving out slices of bread to the recipients. When clothes were distributed, they helped to control the chaos of pushing one another.”

*5.6.8 Ezinye izinto abathanda ukuba ziqwalaselwe kule ndawo bahlala kuyo eAmalinda Foresti* (Other challenges they would like to be addressed in their community)

*‘Kunini sahlala apha ngapha kwe twenty years aside sakhelwe tu!* “The residents mentioned that some of them were staying there for more than twenty (20) years but still living in shacks. There was a great demand of houses for the people.” *Asinambane, sitsalizinyoka, itepu ziyavuza indlela zimbi, kukho ubundlobongela, sisokola negranti kuba asinazi id.* “Electricity was a great problem, and they were dependent on illegal electricity connections. Their taps were leaking, the road was very bad, and crime was rife. The members also added that they needed help with social grants because there was a high rate of teenage pregnancy. Some teenagers did not have identity documents and getting birth certificates for their children was another challenge.”

**5.6.9 Research findings from the Amalinda Forest focus interview group number two (2)**

This focus group responded to the same questions as the first group.

**5.6.9.1 Findings concerning being residents**

- “All of them were residents of Amalinda Forest Community, however, two of them were not there on the first day when the soup kitchen was introduced but had been residents there for quite some time”.

#### 5.6.9.2 Responses to how they felt when the soup-kitchen started

- “They were excited when the programme started because they were provided with something to help them survive. People were suffering there, especially young children of the unemployed and those dependent on social grants and pensions. They described their poverty as very critical and even on Sundays, they went to seek jobs. The soup helped the job seekers to eat first because sometimes they went hungry not even knowing whether they would get the jobs. Sunday morning always brought some hope to get something to eat and go job seeking”.

#### 5.6.9.3 How they felt about the Methodists’ support

- “*Bayasinceda shame abantu bakaThixo sifumana nempahla zokunxiba.*” They referred to church people as good people, God’s people and were very pleased to be helped by them. What they also appreciated was the clothing they were receiving.

#### 5.6.9.4 Information about their church denomination

- “Nobody was a Methodist amongst them and were not attending church but could remember that their parents were members of different denominations such as Messengers of God in Zion, Zion Christian Church”.

#### 5.6.9.5 How they felt since the programme started

- Since the programme started, they could save the little they had on Sunday mornings as they wouldn’t have to cook for breakfast. Their children also had some clothing to change into. They also got used to praying and thanking God for everything.

#### 5.6.9.6 Their participation in the soup-kitchen programme

- Their role included helping with queues and they had also started to help with the washing of the soup buckets at the tap to help the church members.

#### 5.6.9.7 Findings on challenges in the community

- Some challenges mentioned were unemployment. There were sick people, and some did not have identity documents needed by social development when one needed to apply for a state grant. The health services were poor. Most of the people had no clinic cards. Illegal electricity connections which they called “*izinyoka*” were very dangerous and they had once experienced two deaths from those connections. There were no other means they could make it because the local government was not helping them. There was a complaint that their shacks were leaking when it rained. The housing project could not be accessed by them for quite some time although they were staying there for some years. There was no development there.

### 5.7 Research findings from direct observation

The researcher was engaged in direct observation for six Sunday mornings. Three of those were devoted to observing the preparation of the soup and serving it in the community. During the other three visits, the researcher specifically observed the social situation of the community including the living conditions of people, their actions, and behaviour including those of their children. The upbringing of their children and other parental responsibilities were also observed. She even concentrated on observing and identifying some problems and challenges faced by the community members for their transformational development and well-being as people created in the image of God. Their personal and communal abilities, potential and creativity were also a matter of great concern for the researcher as these might be developed for their benefit and development.

The researcher started to wake up very early to visit the church hall kitchen where the soup was prepared. It was during the soup kitchen turn of the youth, most of them in class one (1) led by their leader, a preacher in good standing. What the researcher observed was that the procedure for the programme was well organised. There was a chart against the kitchen wall with a list of ingredients to be used in preparing the soup (menu). The utensils were in order. The members were busy preparing. Some were cutting veggies, and others putting big pots with water on the gas stove. Some were

preparing buckets where the soup would be poured and carried. About thirty (30) minutes later the YMG members arrived to join the youth. They started loading the bread in the *bakkies* and when the soup was ready it was also loaded. The utensils to be used to dish out the soup including mugs and big spoons were taken by the youth and the cars left with the soup for the needy community members.

At the entrance of the community village, YMG members pressed hooters to alert the community that the soup was coming. That was quite touching for the researcher to see how the children were running to the venue with their small dishes to queue for food. Something amazing was that even the adults were also rushing to queue, some in their gowns carrying their containers and plates. There was a crowd within some minutes, and some were pushing to be in front of the queue. This needed attention to try and organise the queues and nobody from the community members were prepared to monitor the resultant chaos. However, the youth and the YMG seemed to be used to the situation and queues were organised, one for the children and the other for adults. Before serving, the children were asked to sing the Methodist church hymn 360 "*Owaqal' esemncinane Ukumkhonz' uThixo wakhe...*" '*The one who started at an early age to praise and worship the Lord is happy for he will be saved from many troubles*' and thereafter to say the thank you prayer for food. The soup was then served. What the researcher noticed was that after being served the children and the adults would leave and the youth had to go and wash the buckets at a nearby tap. Thereafter they joined hand in hand and prayed to thank God's support for the work of the morning. This is in support of and promotion of service and public worship. It was a rush back to the church to clean the kitchen, wash the dishes and pots and then go back home and prepare for starting of the church at 11h00.

The second visit for observation was during the turn of the Women's Manyano and the routine was the same. However, there was a delay in preparing the soup because there was a shortage of ingredients and one had to go and buy more ingredients.

On arrival at the site, there was a challenge of space because there was a big tent from the gospel church that visited the community to preach in the evenings. The *bakkies* with soup had to park close together to get space for dishing out the soup. Other

members had to park their cars at a distance and the researcher had to park below the dump-site. It was a risky situation. The programme started as usual and whilst the YMG members were helping with the queue and women dishing out the soup one boy grabbed a loaf of bread from the bread boxes and ran away with it. That was so quick, and no community member chased that boy but just remarked that he was known to be troublesome in the community and it ended there. Perhaps, a form or act of desperation!

On that very same day, there was the distribution of clothing. It was very challenging as people were pushing one another to get some clothes. The church members had to be quick to direct aside those who had already received. People wanted to get more even for those they had left at home. Children were also pushing one another, and others pulled some clothes already taken by others. Monitoring was very difficult. However, no one left the site without having received something to wear during the winter. The researcher could see how they were happy, appreciative, and thankful for the clothes that the church had donated to them. Shoes were in great demand, and all were gone within a short space of time.

The last visit for observation with the Women's Manyano group to the Amalinda Forest Community was on the 27th of October 2019. It was the turn of class 27 and there were eight (8) members who prepared the soup on that day. The members of the congregation in the Methodist Church were divided into classes and class 27 was one of those classes with members of the Women's Manyano. The researcher on this day, per permission from the group, took some pictures during her observation. These will be reflected and described on the following pages:



**Class 27 members in the church hall kitchen**

**Figure 5.1 - The Leader of class 27 getting ready for the first soup pot.**



**Figure 5.2 - The researcher in her white jacket observes what the women were doing.**



**Figure 5.3 - One woman stirring the soup.**



**Figure 5.4 - The researcher watching the dedication of the women.**



## 5.8 Observing the community

The access road to the community was very bad with big stones and illegal electric wire connections running along the road and others hanging on thin unbalanced poles to the shacks. The taps were leaking, and the shacks were closely built and could catch fire if one of the shacks would burn. The community was densely populated and there was no clinic for health facilities.

## 5.9 Observing community members

The people were looking withdrawn and suffering from poverty. Some of them approached the researcher asking for jobs. The others, including both males and females, youth and the old were victims of substance abuse. Some looked sick and to a large extent, cleanliness was lacking. So many members of one family were living in one shack and children were not well looked after as one could see them in the streets without even having washed, the same applied to adults. The youth were without jobs and were dependent on their parents' grants.

## 5.10. Conclusion

In this Chapter, the interview responses of the church respondents were presented. This includes the two focus groups' responses. The research findings of the researcher's direct observation were also presented with some photograph pictures of the active involvement of some church members in the programme. Finally, the research findings resulting from direct observation of the community and the community members were presented. It has become clear to the researcher that much was needed to transform the lives of the poor in that informal settlement. This needed an analysis that would give the whole picture of how and what happened during the church's practical theological approach to transforming the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

In the next Chapter, the analysis and interpretation of the research findings will be presented.

## Chapter 6: Analysis of the research data

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### 6.1. Introduction

Having completed the recording of the research findings, the researcher started with the data analysis. According to Silverman (2011) in qualitative data analysis, the recordings from the interview schedule are the tools to draw on to enable engagement with the data. This is done by using line-by-line or paragraph-by-paragraph coding. Such coding practicalities are done by highlighting a word, line, sentence, or paragraph and then giving it a label. The said labels can range from descriptive to abstract and conceptual format. From these labels, one may sum up a few words, phrases, or sentences (Silverman 2011:201-208). Supporting the above-mentioned data analysis from interview recordings, Ngulube (2009) states that data analysis should be organised and presented according to the response to research questions. This format is recommended for the exact issues of concern to the researcher, and it also helps to preserve the coherence of the material (Ngulube 2009:92).

The researcher considered the above-mentioned technique for data analysis in this study. Some related responses from different questions were combined in a sentence and such coding was given a label according to the format relevant to the information obtained.

#### 6.1.1. The analysis of the Women's Manyano interview results

The following has references:

#### 6.1.2. The feelings of the women about the programme

All the members expressed a positive attitude towards the programme when it was introduced to them. Their willingness to be engaged in the project showcased unity. Although they were from the Thursday and the Saturday groups they were united in Christ and this exemplified good human relationships that were emphasised in Chapter 3 theoretical framework for transformational development. The common goal that they

thrived to achieve was that of transforming the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. The role they played in attaining that goal was witnessed by their dedication to waking up early and leaving their houses and families behind for the benefit of those who were starving in that community. Their feelings for the hungry demonstrated love for the neighbour (Matthew 23:36). The actions of these women as one group affirmed the saying 'unity is strength'.

### 6.1.3. The first experience in the community

The whole process of starting with evangelism depicted how the identity of the church was appropriated as a transformation agent in that community. According to Du Toit in Swart et al. (2010:269), the church in South Africa needs to be 'humbly prophetic' in the current challenging times. Beginning everything with prayer and ending with prayer was the way of praising God for everything done within the interest of God's will including caring for the poor. Another kind of support by this group was being considerate in dealing with the adults who also came for soup although the programme was meant for children. The adults were not chased away but were accepted as additional members to benefit from the programme. Such action can be interpreted as acting with mercy and righteousness. The Bible states that those who are merciful shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7).

### 6.1.4. Serving soup on Sundays and challenges of the programme

All the respondents managed to adapt themselves to the new order in which they were going to function. Their Sunday morning schedule changed to a commitment to starting at the community before preparing for church. We can refer to this as walking in Jesus' steps as demonstrated by His healing on Sabbath (Luke 6:8).

The challenge mentioned by these respondents to include everybody in the programme tallies with their work in unity. This meant that they realised that belonging to an organisation or union in church does not mean one has got all the skills and gifts. There might be those who are not recognised by wearing the Women's Manyano uniform but with gifts and talents to contribute to the running of the programme. The emphasis on gifts is explained in 1 Corinthians (7:7) that each has his special gift from God, one of

one kind and one of another. These gifts then, need to be used to transform the existing situation for everyone to live a better life. By helping the poor through our skills, we would also be assisting them to discover their skills and talents. This would also affirm that we are all equal to God. Within this challenge of involving everyone in the programme, the respondents mentioned considering youth involvement. This was a matter of great concern because the elderly would retire, and the youth would be compelled to take over so that the programme could be sustained. Youth development, therefore, is part of the church community and the church must include youth in whatever programme is planned as they are leaders of tomorrow (Van Wyk 2017:8).

All the respondents also mentioned the delay caused by some shortage of ingredients. This could be interpreted as the breakdown of communication resulting in doubting the interpersonal relationships between the leadership and the groups involved in the programme. This harmed the time scheduled for serving the soup as the members were expected to be at church on time especially those who were members of the Church choir.

The other delay due to waiting on rainy days on the open site where soup was served was a challenge and also hurt the health of the community members with their children and also the church group.

#### 6.1.5. Other means of transforming lives of the poor

The research question in this study was: How does the Amalinda Methodist Church extend its role in the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community?

One woman mentioned that the use of evangelism was to win souls. This reminds us of Jesus' response when he was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:4) and stressed that it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The Christians therefore as God's servants on earth, need to transform the lives of the poor spiritually as well. Abraham (1989:95) states that Evangelism always involves proclamation, but, if done with intent, may include working for peace

and justice, prayer, acts of mercy, patient conversation and caring for the poor (Myers 2011:320).

The assistance that was given by two members to the grade 12 learners was for the well-being of those learners. In return, on completion of their studies, positive ploughing back to their community could be expected and that would be for the well-being of the whole community. The saying that education is the key to success always brings hope into one's life and of course, for the benefit of the whole nation. In light of the aforesaid, those who work for the government and have access to information are expected to show the way and give guidance to those in need. For instance, the women who were health workers assisted positively to transform the health conditions of the members of the community by providing them with referral letters to clinics. A good practical action indeed.

The means of transforming the lives of the poor community members through supplying clothing was a Christian act and an expression of humanity. It is also embedded and practised in our tradition even within families where one would give what he/she no longer needs to the younger one or one of the relatives. This is an act of interdependence demonstrating that a person is a person through others. The poor people in the community received clothing because the church members cared as God also cares for the naked. Giving to the poor would also transform the minds, teach and motivate those in the community to do the same to others when time permits whenever their lives have been fully transformed.

#### 6.1.6. Considering the role of the community

Engaging in the process of transformation needs participation by both the transformational developers and the members of the community. It seemed that the community was not fully involved in the programme. This could be the case because there was no centre to be used in the community where some members would be working together with the church members in preparation for them to be ultimately independent. It was also improbable that they could get up very early and walk a distance to the church to join the women in preparing the soup. Conversely, it would be difficult for the church members to start by fetching them from the community to the



church as that would be time-consuming and also involve petrol costs. This made chances of empowerment on the part of the community members to be lacking. However, the role they played in helping with queues gave them some responsibility and a form of caring for the young ones and maintaining order in the queues of the adults as well. That contributed to lessening the burden for the church women.

## 6.2 Analysis of data from interviews with YMG members

### 6.2.1. The role played by the YMG members

The readiness and the free goodwill to help in the programme were expressed by the Chairperson of this organisation as well as the other two members. These young men were called to be actors in the mission work of the church. They used their vehicles without expecting a return. Jesus stressed that everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father and mother or children for His name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. What these men did was pleasing to God. It is stressed that we lay treasure in heaven when we give (1 Tim. 6:17-18; see also Matt. 6:19-21). The agreed financial support by the YMG members for the programme spelt commitment and relationships between the leader and his followers. According to Ngara (2004:45) relationships between the leader and followers is an important aspect of realising a dream and bringing about the necessary change. This organisation acted out of compassion and not sacrifice. Jesus teaches that God's law is tempered with mercy (compassion) to meet the emergency needs with things we use (in this case, their vehicles and finance) and employ in service to God (Mc Nabb 2004:52). All was done to transform the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

### 6.2.2. The convenience of the venue and its effects on the programme

The picture of the site as depicted by the YMG members was not conducive to serving food. Its closeness to the dumpsite and dampness from the leaking tap posed exposure to negative health results. The longer time spent due to weather conditions sometimes harmed their punctuality at church. Whilst the church members were doing good, on the one hand, there were expected negative effects which needed attention if we talk about transformational development.

### 6.2.3. The relationships with members of the community

The response of the poor to the service rendered by the church was a positive one. This could be witnessed when the YMG members pressed their car hooters at the entrance to the location to alert them of the soup arrival as nobody would be reluctant to quickly go to the site. One testimony by a member of that community confirmed that although they were living in such an area with a hopeless future, there were people out there who cared about their survival, and they always had hope on Sunday mornings. This supports the statement that the church as a community of faith can imbue the poor with hope and must always try to infuse hope in all the people it serves (Belshaw et al. 2001:222).

### 6.2.4. Challenges to be addressed

The fixing of the access road to the community needed attention. The lack of cooperation by the councillor as was mentioned revealed the lack of care by the local government for those who suffer in the informal settlements. Those elected to the government were not performing their duties of service delivery. Plans needed to be put in place for the sustainability of the programme and the involvement of the local government would help in this regard.

## 6.3. Analysis of data gathered from the church leaders

### 6.3.1 Feelings about the vision of the programme

The first society Steward's information about how the then Minister granted permission when the vision of the soup kitchen was brought to the leaders exhibited her cooperation and good relationship with the leaders as well as her dedication to helping the needy. Her engagement during her time in office in holding meetings with the leaders of the programme could be viewed as good support for the best results of the programme.

The second society steward, whom we can refer to as the founder of that programme shared her vision with a positive goal of transforming the lives of the poor. Her decision to share her vision in a class meeting is within the principles of Methodism. According to

Marquardt (1992), Methodism and social aid to the poor grew out of class meetings. It was through class meetings that social ills such as poverty were discussed and solutions to address it was identified (Marquardt 1992:28). Her actions resembled those of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, who urged to support the poor through self-help measures and charitable deeds to alleviate poverty (Marquardt 1992:28).

### 6.3.2. Engagement in the programme

The first society steward's assistance to the lady of the Children's Ministry and help during the process of serving the soup was actually what was needed from those who care about the lives of the poor. Developing the children morally and accepting them as children of God was stressed by Jesus when he instructed his disciples to let the little children come to Him for the Kingdom of God belongs to them (Mark 10:13-16).

The second society steward demonstrated her commitment to fulfilling her dream by being involved from the beginning and going to serve soup in the Amalinda Forest Community. Needless to say, offering her house to start the programme was also a Christian commitment as a servant of God. Her explanation of how the first two women donated soup and a gas stove can be interpreted as a giving that is an acceptable sacrifice-well-pleasing to God (Phil. 4:17-18). In the same vein, the actions of the steward and those women can be likened to those of Tabita (Dorkas) in Acts (9:36) who is cited as an early disciple who cared for the needy through her good works and acts of charity. Their actions did not end there but promoted interdependence and just and peaceful relationships with other members of the two classes to work jointly for one common goal of transforming the lives of the poor. In preparation for transformation, we need volunteers who out of their free goodwill, are prepared to make the impossible possible. When that happened through those women it was clear that the goal of the vision was to be attained. The feelings of the secretary that the church was doing good as part of the community, made them work together with the community in the challenges of more people than was expected to benefit from the programme.

On the other hand, the treasurer expressed the feeling that it is the mission of the church to change the lives of those in need. The mission of the church is supported by Ketshabile (2006:104) by contending that mission work can be executed through

various mission groups such as the Women's Manyano and the Young Men's Guild. It is thus believed that through these organisations, spirituality, fellowship, and social holiness are nurtured. In this study, that was confirmed by the fact that one Palm Sunday some started to listen to the Word of God during evangelism in the streets of the Amalinda Forest Community and decided to follow the church.

### 6.3.3. How the soup-kitchen was operating

According to the first steward, there was cooperation amongst the members of the congregation which pointed a positive direction towards the attainment of the goal to transform the lives of the poor in Amalinda Forest Community. The second society steward also related a very positive and promising start in 2010 than in 2019 when there was a lack of cooperation by some groups. That case was caused by the ageing of some of the pensioners who were very active at the beginning. That needed attention to review the management structure of the soup kitchen leadership.

Another cause of demotivation might be due to a long term of service since 2010 by the members of the church. There was a lack of empowerment that would encourage the participation of the community members in running the programme.

### 6.3.4. The challenges and sustainability of the programme

The challenges mentioned by the leaders including lack of houses, unemployment, electricity, and access roads spelt the lack of service delivery by the local government. The future sustainability of the programme was bleak as no standing support was in place. The amount taken from the Sunday collection could not be guaranteed to sustain the programme. It became apparent that the challenges of finance as were observed after the Sunday collection was no exception to the challenges of the economy in all sectors of the national, provincial, and local government in South Africa (Swart 2013:1). Some members of the church work for the government and when the economy has affected the church also suffers. The others who work in the private sector experienced retrenchments and the majority were without jobs and dependent on pensions. Those who were still donating were making ends meet to keep the ball rolling. Nonetheless,

the responsibility taken by the congregation could be viable to the turnaround in the success of the programme.

The donations made by donors were generous gifts that every Christian is expected to give when one is blessed by God. Paul's letter to the First Corinthians (16:2) states that we are to give as we have prospered. The belief that we have as Christians is that it is all by God's grace that we prosper (1 Corinthians 15:10).

The grace of God mentioned above was referred to in Chapter 2 as was emphasised by John Wesley. We should note that grace exists, has existed and will exist as an irresistible power that always unites us to participate fully in the mission of God (The New Dimension 2019:7).

## 6.4. Analysis of data from the soup-kitchen initiators' focus group

### 6.4.1. How the programme started

The background of the soup kitchen programme that started after the late Bishop Matyumza's preaching confirmed what was mentioned by the society steward. The dedication of the late Rev. Dlamini was also stressed as a positive action that one would expect from any leader who has the interest of people in his/her heart, especially the poor. That was an act of motivation for the church leaders, the soup kitchen initiators as well as the congregation to unite and continue catering for all those who were disadvantaged as people created in the image of God. Unity and speaking in one voice are supported in 1 Corinthians (1:10). According to Manala (2014:258), teamwork is not only articulated but effectively practised as well for the common good of all.

We can interpret the soup kitchen initiators' concern of going around to identify a disadvantaged community as on par with John Wesley's concern about the poor. The Wesleyan movements, for example, were responsible for the establishment of schools and adults, and free education for children from underprivileged backgrounds and in 1746 the first clinic for the poor was established by the Wesleyans. From these achievements, we can note that John Wesley's leadership was concerned with preparing societies to be better placed for human existence (Bentley 2010:555-556).

And so were the movements of the soup kitchen initiators in preparing for the transformational development of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community.

#### 6.4.2. First experience in the community

The initiators' plan to cater only for the children of that community could not materialise given the existing poor conditions of some adults who also needed to benefit from the programme. This was the case although poverty levels were mentioned as having been decreased due to the expansion of the social grant system and other pro-poor government services (Department of Planning and Monitoring 2015:80). The question arises here if all the poor in that community did become aware concerning those programmes or if the government services were rendered to those who for example, did not have identity documents to qualify for the grants. The initiators' service in action to feed 160-200 people when they started with the programme was full of mercy and love despite the challenge of the numbers. They acted like early disciples who showed true mercy and compassion. Peter for example, without silver nor gold, gave a cripple beggar the gift of health (Acts 3:6). The misconception about the soup kitchen by the community members who presumed that it was from the ruling party, spelt the expectations that the community had as per promise after the 1994 elections that poverty was to be eradicated.

The initiators' concern to approach the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) for a donation of clothing demonstrated working together with other churches to help those in need. There is an argument that peaceful relationships through genuine dialogue are a need in transformational development (Leonard 2005:45). The inter-religious dialogue discourse with the RCC to help the needy in the Amalinda Forest Community was a dialogue of life that has to do with injustice, poverty and hunger (Gort 2008:760) (see Adamo 2011:5). Those dialogue relationships resulted in the continuous supply of clothing from the RCC every winter for the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. The approach of meeting with the councillor before starting the programme was a correct channel through which they could access information about the plans of development by the local government in that community. However, when they started with the programme the problems related by the residents vividly exposed the lack of the

councillor's visits to the community to address and listen to the needs of the people. This was a challenge for servant leadership which puts serving others as the number one priority (Spears 1996:33).

#### 6.4.3 Participation of the community, challenges faced by the church and vision for the sustainability of the programme.

Regarding the participation of the community in the success of the programme, there was doubt if they fully understood their priority when they refused that the open space where soup was served be used for a structure as a venue for the programme. Mostly, the respondents were dependent on their efforts for the running of the project. Time was so limited to have the residents to participate in the programme as the initiators had to go back and prepare for church. Participation by the community members was lacking because there was not enough time for their empowerment.

It emerged from the information gathered that the councillor's support was needed to address the needs of the community including the very access road which made people who came with help struggle to get to the community with their cars. Risking their lives in between illegal electric connections was the worst. There was a challenge for more exchange of ideas and proposed means for the sustainability of the programme. However, the donors, some from the church, made such an incredible contribution towards its sustainability thus far.

The first challenge that the initiators had was to get shelter close to the area where soup would be prepared and served but the society steward had to rise to the challenge by offering her house to be used for preparing the soup. Her free goodwill and finding a solution to that problem depicted that of a good Samaritan (Luke 10:33-37). It was quite sad to note that during the time of this study research the challenge of shelter still existed. However, like soldiers in a battle, the initiators faced all the challenges of preparing the soup, delivering in their *bakkies* to that open venue and starting to feed the hungry.

## 6.5. Analysis of Amalinda Forest focus group interview results

### 6.5.1. What the focus group experienced

The residents' state of awareness that they were disadvantaged and needed transformation was witnessed by expressing an experience of happiness when the soup kitchen was first introduced to them. They could compare the previous experience of poverty to the change that was introduced through the soup kitchen programme by the Church. The unemployment problem was mentioned as one cause of alcohol abuse and something for breakfast on Sunday mornings for a change, helped the unemployed experience relief from hunger and that also helped their children. However, some responses given by the respondents showed a lack of understanding about the role of parents and also some lack of responsibility. According to Zacharatos et al. (2000:214), parents should display and set an example as role models in terms of doing the right things and acting in ways that would build their children's respect. Resorting to alcohol was not the solution.

### 6.5.2 How the soup-kitchen was operating

The operational planning as designed by the soup kitchen initiators was described as running satisfactorily by the poor. There was no discrimination, but everybody was accepted regardless of religious denomination. This means that the programme was designed for transforming the lives of all the poor and not only those who were Methodists. Such care and the role played by the Methodists confirmed that all people are equal to God.

### 6.5.3 Some changes since the programme started and suggestions to improve the programme

The programme boosted their self-esteem to be recognised as people although they were in a poor community. They had an appreciation of the clothing, and this helped everybody to have something to put on, especially in winter. Although there was not much of their participation in the programme, their presence in controlling and maintaining order during the process of serving soup made things easier for the church members. The promotion of morals in their children through the guidance of the



children's ministry set an example of how each family was expected to practise at home. There is an argument that the consideration of basic needs at home can lead to further consideration of the basic needs of the community (Zacharatos et al. 2000:214). For this to succeed, we can mention the saying 'charity begins at home'. The leader of the Children's Ministry set an example for both the parents and the children to value the power of prayer in praising the Almighty. It was by His grace that the Amalinda Methodist Church started its mission of transforming the lives of the poor through that programme in the Amalinda Forest Community.

Some suggestions for improvement of the programme sounded to be within the parameters of reality. Given the situation of poverty in that community, the Sunday morning soup provision would be making a vast difference if there could be another day added during the week for the adults as children were getting school nutrition during the week.

Some of the members who suggested the building of a shelter after removing the dump-site for a venue for the programme demonstrated a sign of reasoning and responsibility. Building teamwork as they suggested, illustrated how they were keen to be participants in the programme. They also realised how it would be advantageous and supportive if they could start a vegetable garden on a site down below the houses. That was an indication that amongst them, some could be leaders to engage the others with potential, gifts, and skills to work together with the church to be more empowered so that they could ultimately run the programme on their own for the benefit of their community. This needed time and planning by both the community leaders and the church leaders.

#### 6.5.4. Some challenges to be addressed in the community

The needs of the poor to be addressed in Amalinda Forest Community were immediate needs for existence as people of God. They were also concerned about their rights as citizens of South Africa. Having no houses, electricity, health facilities, unemployment, and scarce to no visits by the councillor instilled a feeling of neglect by the government although they had cast their votes. Poor service delivery had led them to resort to illegal electricity connections. There is an argument that whoever is deprived of the basic

means is classified as poor because he is not capable of satisfying his needs in the way that he/she desires (Soares and Quintella 2008:112). The conditions in which the poor found themselves in that community fall out of the picture of what is expected in a country that has adopted democracy. In this case, we can mention the Universal declaration of human rights (Article 25) which states that everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. The Bill of Rights section 7(1) in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 also enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom (Rembe 2005:5; 334). It stands to reason that without the above-mentioned rights, there can be no transformational development of the poor in South Africa.

#### 6.5.5 Analysing direct observation results of the church members from a practical theological point of view

In Chapter 1 an emphasis was made that the practices of practical theology should have a positive effect on and for others. This then implies that God's will concerning the equality of all human beings made in His image should be taken into consideration. In this regard, Belshaw et al. (2001:227) suggest that programmes that relieve the tragic suffering of the poorest of the poor should not be neglected. Therefore, the engagement of the Amalinda Methodist Church in the soup kitchen programme as observed by the researcher could be interpreted as responding to the will of God. Human actions were the consequences of faith. God cannot be encountered at a distance, but through participation and once we engage in something - there we shall experience the presence of God (van der Ven 1988:5). We should also note that human activity cannot be without ups and downs, and we are warned that in this world people will have trouble, but we need to be strong just as Jesus have overcome the world (John 16:33). It was thus observed that despite the challenges of the conditions in Amalinda Forest Community, the Church respondents moved forward for the attainment of their goal of

transforming the lives of the poor. The dedication and willingness to prepare for those in need and working together as a Body of Christ demonstrated what we can interpret as 'Ubuntu' (humanity), mercy, loving the neighbour and caring for the poor as the fulfilment of God's will. God has a promise in Exodus (20:6) that He will show love to thousand generations of those who love Him and keep his commandments.

#### 6.5.6 Analysis concerning the community

The lack of full participation by the residents in the programme had spelt a lack of preplanning and consultation by the Church with the community members as to what their role would be during the process of the programme. The behaviour of some of the community members including alcohol abuse and their illegal actions could most of the time be driven by oppression and neglect by the local government. However, there was great hope that some were keen to seek jobs and were thankful to receive the soup kitchen. The actions of the church in one way or another had boosted the identity of the poor and they realised that they could do something.

By the look of things, the time frame to sort out everything from the site was very limited for the church members to prepare for the start of the church. It seemed; more time was needed.

### 6.6 Conclusion

The analysis of the findings drawn from the interview results of the church members illustrated a Christo praxis approach that had to some extent assisted the poor in their poverty-stricken Community. However, deducing some facts from the analysis, it was apparent that a lot of planning still needed to be done concerning the church's engagement in the transformational development of the poor. Be that as it may, the analysis from the different departments and organisations of the church demonstrated that the Church, as a community of love and faith had extended its role and function to the Amalinda Forest Community informal settlement.

Looking at the community focus group analysis of the interview results, we could note that the poor were starting to recover their identity and could give some suggestions on

how they could help and work together with the church for the sustainability of the programme. They started to be aware that there were people who always engaged in prayer and came to their rescue during the prevailing service delivery delays in their community. The slogan 'Feed the poor, develop the spirit of identity and transform the mind' could be adopted in this case. The good relationships between the church members and those of the community challenged the statement that states that poverty is about relationships that don't work, that isolate, abandon or devalue. Once those relationships are restored with God, with self, with community, with the "other" and the environment we can talk about transformation. Moreover, interpersonal relationships are the critical factor for change as contained in the theoretical framework for transformational development (Myers 2011:75; 202). There is a challenge that still lies ahead for more constructive mechanisms which will seek to help the church to dive into the water in search of a solution to the multidimensional nature of the causes of poverty in South Africa (Belshaw et al. 2001:220).

In the next Chapter, the summary of the research findings and suggestions for future research will be presented.

# Chapter 7: Summary of the research findings and suggestions for future research

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## 7.1. Introduction

We started this study with the most burning problem observed and identified in the Amalinda Forest Community, namely people living in poor conditions. It prompted the research question: How does the church expand its role to transform and develop the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community? Practical theology in Africa as well as South Africa has a great challenge to address this problem. We observed that African theologians as agents of transformation are faced with the problem of addressing and facilitating change by engaging the church in the demands of the community be they socio-economic, political, or cultural. We also noted that there is an outcry that transformational development studies by churches are still lagging (Myers (2011:5). We hypothesised that the present study about transformational development of the poor by the Amalinda Methodist Church congregants in the Amalinda Forest Community is therefore facing a challenge to that call of promoting a sustainable and accountable theological performance when rendering services through their soup kitchen programme.

To recap, the main objective of this study was to investigate the nature, purpose, and outcome of transformational development by Amalinda Methodist Church in the Amalinda Forest Community.

The following secondary objectives were set out:

- To establish insight into the acute social needs and problems in the poor Amalinda Forest Community based on the residents' own experience.
- To establish how the Methodist Church leaders maintained balanced cooperation with the church members for rendering transformational development services to the poor in Amalinda Forest Community.

- To establish how the members of the Amalinda Forest Community perceive the role played by the Amalinda Methodist Church as a social service provider in their community.
- To further establish more closely and directly from the people of the community how they were involved in the services rendered by the Amalinda Methodist Church - empowerment included.
- To establish whether this transformational development would be sustainable.

To meet these objectives, this research needed to focus on what was going on in the actual lives of poor people of the Amalinda Forest Community. Their experiences were to be voiced. The result was our interpretation and analysis of the data as obtained from their own, perceptions, experiences, and reality, thus we opted for a qualitative research design (De Vos, Delport, Fouché & Strydom 2015:310). Thus, the need for transformational development of the poor in the community was brought to light. On the other hand, information regarding the experience of the church members involved in the transformational development service delivery proved indispensable.

#### 7.1.1. A noteworthy realisation of transformational development in the Amalinda Forest Community

The intervention of the Amalinda Methodist church to transform the lives of the poor in Amalinda Forest Community through their soup kitchen programme can be viewed from a transformational development perspective and the following summary serves noteworthy.

It should be noted that the key factors such as supporting the personal identity and vocation as described in chapter 3 were observed when the church left the walls of the church to start its mission with evangelism. This is supported by Hankela et al. (2020:9) when emphasizing that the proactive identity is bringing people to Christ not only in church but by going out to people, winning more souls and sometimes do soup kitchen, giving people food and giving them clothes. This is exactly what the Amalinda Methodist church started doing to transform the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest community. The task of development that includes relationships with God, with oneself,

with others and with the environment was highly promoted at the soup kitchen venue where the members were gathering every Sunday morning, starting with prayer which is a relationship with God, each one getting ready to be served to carry his or her soup dish and even responsible for his or her child — relationship with oneself which boosted one's self-esteem, communicating together and assisting the church members in organising the queues — relationship with others, feeling as worthy beings as they were cared for and loved by the church members.

We can note the response of the focus group during the interviews in chapter 5 when they were asked how they felt when the soup kitchen started: "*Savuya kakhulu.*" They were happy and felt loved. This is the brotherly love that is expressed in the Bible. When they were asked how they felt about the Methodists' support the response was: "*Bayasineda shame abantu bakaThixo basipha nempahla zokunxiba.*" They referred to church people as God's people and were pleased to be helped by them, and also appreciated being given clothing to dress (see chapter 5 p.165). Responding to how the soup kitchen was operating, they appreciated that everything started with prayer and their children were involved in singing hymn 360 and then would say the thank you prayer for food — thus, a relationship with God was the key.

Another noteworthy realisation of transformational development in the Amalinda Forest community can be cited as demonstrated by the church members who worked as health professionals as they assisted those who needed to be referred to the clinics and those who work as teachers and helped the grade 12 learners with application forms to further their education which would help in human flourishing. This is what is expected of the Pentecostal churches in many societies in Sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, that is to encourage good relationships within the larger community that would assist in social services and related institutional initiatives such as in the areas of education, health and business, also to new opportunities for human flourishing (see Hankela et al 2022:5). Another thing worth mentioning is that the community members' realisation of the need for the local government to meet their needs evidenced their awareness about their rights. A response to a question about what other challenges would they like to be

addressed in their community was: “Kunini sahlala apha, ngapha kwe twenty years aside sakhelwe tu.” They mentioned that they have been staying there for more than twenty years but still live in shacks and no houses were built for them (see chapter 5 p.164). It was obvious that the broken relationships with their councillor could be one of the causes of their poor living conditions. According to Offutt (2012:40) poverty is caused by broken relationships. These relationships are reflected in figure 3.1 theoretical framework for transformational development in Chapter 3.

The above summary can be regarded as witnessing traces of transformational development in that community. It is essential to recommend a people-centred development in South Africa but it cannot be a short-term event but a continuous process that demands collective planning reflecting on the complexities of poverty. This should include a biblical understanding of poverty, identification of the role-players and potential players in the community, clearly set goals, levels of transformational leadership including political leadership involved as stated in chapters 2 and 3, decisions about the use of committees and action groups, identification of projects, programs and services that are appropriated to the context and comprehensive research on the target community and its people as reflected in World Vision Tanzania example in chapter 2. By so doing, meeting the challenges of poverty could be achieved (Swart 2008:119). The truth is that no matter how much or how little we can improve social measures for recovery from an immoral social past, we must keep on trying. Our belief that the church has a key role to play can be strengthened by doing just that — trying (Bowers du Toit and Nkomo 2014:8).

### 7.1.2. The research findings

The research findings indicate some positive engagement by the Amalinda Methodist Church in expressing their concern for the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community. The practical theological action they took was witnessed in a soup kitchen programme that was aimed at transforming the lives of the poor in the said community. However, transformation is not an overnight journey. There were still challenges including those of socio-economic needs. More effort to search for excellence was needed and the church



leaders were required to spearhead that challenge as a prerequisite (Van Wyk 2017:9). The challenge of great concern that was mentioned by the respondents was the lack of service delivery for the poor who were living in shacks with no hope of development. There seemed to be an urgent need for the councillor's involvement to bring the conditions of the poor to the attention of the local government. Although the Amalinda Methodist Church was carrying on with the programme, the problem of social capital was a challenge and the contribution made by some members was a means of social capital. The ministry of Amalinda Methodist Church through Evangelism expressed concern for the well-being of the poor so that they could experience freedom. This promoted belief in Christ as the one who changes people's lives for the ultimate goal which is the Kingdom of God. The following summaries of the research findings can be noted:

#### 7.1.2.1. Summary of the findings concerning the role of the community

Concerning participation by the members of the community in the programme, it emerged that most of the residents were passive subjects waiting for the transformation to be done for them. This is what was also directly observed by the researcher as only a few members of the community would even help with the queues and maintaining order during the serving of the soup. It appeared that a full consultation process with the entire community was not followed to decide about the goals of the programme. As a result, community involvement and empowerment through participation were lacking. World Vision (1995) as cited by Kelsall and Mercer (2003:296) points out that participation is regarded both as a means and an end to the development process. The ultimate goal should be the empowerment of the community to be responsible for their development. It is therefore vital that members of the poor community should be educated about their role in the programme. In this programme whether or not certain individuals were empowered was not an issue of great concern.

#### 7.1.2.2. Findings concerning challenges in the programme

When the programme was started by the congregation, there was great unity in working together. However, later, cooperation in waking up early to prepare soup was observed as lacking and unity amongst the members of the Amalinda Methodist Church needed

revival. The time challenge was another issue as some members were members of the Church choir and had to rush back to be punctual at church for rehearsal before the starting time. On the whole, working under pressure before church for some members who had to prepare at home before attending church was quite challenging. The lack of support from the Amalinda Church Ministers after the departure of Reverend Dlamini (see Chapter 5) was another matter of great concern. The respondents felt that although the Resident Minister, Reverend Matthews (see appendix B1 and B2) had once visited the community, some more support was needed from him. For example, to organise a meeting with the local government to discuss the poor living conditions of that community and plan for its transformation. It would seem, the flock needed to be joined by the shepherd. In support of working in unity as a Church, we must not forget that everything done must be for the support of building the congregation (1 Corinthians 14:26). The volunteering action by members of the congregation who supported the sustainability of the programme demonstrated mercy and compassion. The Sermon on the mount stresses that those pure in heart are blessed and they will see God (Matthew 5:8).

Significantly, the summaries of the above-mentioned research findings should pave the way for suggestions and recommendations for future research.

## 7.2 Suggestions and recommendations for designing a programme:

### 7.2.1 Designing the programme

Designing a transformational development programme needs proper planning that is directed towards successful results. The dominant approach to development both in South Africa and other parts of the world has been needs-driven. This approach invites the developers to start by focusing on the needs, deficiencies and problems of poor communities and then devise strategies to address these needs and problems (Emmett 2010: 511). The above-mentioned approach was the one that could have been used by the Amalinda Methodist Church in this study. However, their approach covered some of

the stages mentioned, for example, focusing on the needs of the poor who were starving by providing soup. Other deficiencies were observed and brought to attention during the research process — including clothing needs, housing, roads, lack of visits by the ward councillor, visits by the mobile clinic and assistance for the poor to get identity documents to help those who qualified for grants. It is suggested that starting by visiting the community to identify all the needs and problems be considered. The other departments with services could also be invited to assist during the project. However, Jick and Peiperl (2003:218) argue that transformation often entails false starts, derailments and the necessity to start over in some places.

In support of the approach mentioned by Emmett (2010) above, Myers (2011) in his book 'Walking with the Poor' proposes a programme design for transformational development by stating that:

- Assessment of the community assets and needs should be done to provide the information necessary to set the stage for the design of the programme. In this case, the transformational developers would visit the community first to meet the people and listen to their stories from the past to prepare for the present. Some questions should serve as guidelines — what do the people want to do? This would help in adjusting the way of planning for the future which needs good relationships between the community development practitioners and the community. It will thus be expected to look at the inputs, outputs, and outcomes that would benefit a changed context.
- The programme may be on its track with its plan, and this needs frequent assessment accompanied by regular monitoring (Myers 2011:239; 253).
- Mwambazambi and Banza (2014) support the monitoring process by stating that during the process of continuous monitoring, adjustments based on information gathered and observed may be done. It is suggested that both short- and long-term actions can be planned and revised as the need arises (Mwambazambi & Banza 2014:7).

### 7.2.2 Guidelines for effective participation

Guidelines for effective participation as proposed by Voorhies (1996:129-35) are as follows:

- Starting with the community's story and analysis: This involves listening to the needs of the community.
- Starting small to develop the community to end up managing largely on its own. Starting with a small project will motivate the members of the community to take part in the process of implementing the project.
- A process of learning approach should help the community to learn and not to be spoon-fed. This implies that everyone would be keen to learn by participating.
- Encouraging the community to mobilise its resources, in other words, getting them to invest. For example, if there is a soup-kitchen programme, they may identify the piece of land available in the community, where they can plant vegetables. This was what was suggested by the members of the Amalinda Forest Community in this study. The open space where the soup kitchen was served was also another resource where the structure could be erected whether it would be a temporary structure.
- Encouraging community members to run the programme and experience the joy of their success and learn from their mistakes. This is building confidence in all the members involved in the programme and helps them to discover their true identities.
- Build capacity: This will be attained through empowerment and skills development and would help the community members to succeed.

- Finally, there should be peace among the leaders and participants, mutual understanding and good communication (Myers 2011:216). In the same vein, Anderson and Ackerman (2001:45) attest that transformation cannot take place without communication between the transformational leaders and the participants.

### 7.2.3 Inviting the Almighty for the programme design

It should be noted that spirituality cannot be left behind during the process of programme design. The transformational developers together with the community need to be quiet and listen amid all the information that has been gathered and be open to God inviting him to lead them to the information and conclusion that God deems most important. Their prayer should seek God's grace to turn the programme design to be part of God's ongoing work in this fallen and chaotic world (Myers 2011:236; 247-248). The call is to remember not to exclude God in whatever we do. Wink (1992:312) states that prayer is the ultimate act of partnership with God.

Whilst the suggestions are made concerning designing a transformational development programme for the Methodist Church that was involved in this study, it is recommended that progress could be escalated if all Churches can be united and work together in their mission of caring for the poor.

## 7.3 Unity amongst the churches

### 7.3.1 Promoting unity in neighbouring communities

A recommendation put forward is unity amongst the churches. In Chapter 5 the researcher mentioned that on arrival at the Amalinda Forest soup kitchen serving site one Sunday morning, there was a big tent of the Gospel Church where preaching services took place in the evenings. That church could be approached to join hand in hand with the Amalinda Methodists to engage in one mission of transforming the lives of the poor in that community. They could also support the soup kitchen programme. In addition, some of the community focus group respondents mentioned that they did not belong to the Methodist Church and mentioned the Community church and Zion

churches. The said churches could also be recruited to join the Amalinda Methodist in the transformational development programme. This should not be the only case, but the neighbouring churches in Amalinda including the Anglican, the Roman Catholic church, the NG Kerk and others could also be approached and a vision of transforming the lives of the poor in the surrounding resettlements be shared with them. The programme could thus be expanded to organise a centre for skills training needed by the poor so that they can be well equipped to be independent and cater for themselves. The problem of poverty in South Africa cannot be addressed by one church only, but all Churches need to pull together to transform the lives of those who are marginalised, poor, sick, vulnerable and discriminated against. The suggestion is that the churches' mission should start with God's mission as lived by Jesus Christ among the poor and outcasts. This is a call for all Churches to leave their comfort zones and reach the peripheries with the gospel (Pope Francis 2013: 19-20). This is what the Amalinda Methodist church did when they started with Evangelism before introducing the soup kitchen programme in that poor community.

The recommendation that other Churches be involved would bring more healing in the said community and other communities that might be identified as suffering from poverty. Such a movement and practice would be exemplifying Jesus' hospitality which is the Gospel of God's grace and love - beyond walls of separation and exclusion... (Brandner 2013:99). Keum (2018:18) cites the World Council of Churches' affirmation on mission and evangelism which declares that God is the host that sends us... and we are all invited by the Spirit to participate with humility and mutuality in God's mission. Along the same line, Van Wyk (2017:3) cites Warren (1995) who pleads for an agency amongst churches to show action through deeds to accelerate the transformation process. Van Wyk further comments that the Churches' creeds must lead to deeds both creeds and deeds are needed to reflect God's Kingdom life effectively amongst the lost. However, deeds without righteous faith are dangerous as they promote self-righteousness. The actions of the church should resemble those of a noble man, because the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands (Isaiah 32:8). The Churches are therefore called upon to speak out against all evils that involve

increased corruption amongst political leaders in South Africa. Churches in unity can also play a pivotal role in supporting and advancing cultural diversity amongst communities and building relationships across racial barriers to transform modern society so that living in unity can also be adopted. At the very same time, during the adoption of the paradigmatic approach, the Churches must not forsake the mandate to preach the good news, make disciples, teach, and act in relevance in this secular world (Van Wyk 2017:3).

### 7.3.2 Unity in preaching and social commitment

Through supporting one another in preaching and evangelism, the Churches would help to reach out to the communities as development partners (Nieman in Swart *et al.* 2010:41). The mission of supporting one another is witnessed by Jesus who did not fulfil his mission alone but chose twelve fairly ordinary people to be with him so that he could send them to do what he had been doing (Mk 3:13-15; 6:12 cited in Myers 2011:73). In transforming the lives of those who suffer from poverty, it is highly recommended therefore that the churches need to engage in a holistic mission for the poor and preach the good news of the Kingdom of God which is where we all strive for eternal life. Christian transformation should be brought about through the gospel to release the oppressed just as Jesus fulfilled his mission (Lk 4:18-19). A comment by Gutierrez (1998:116) states that the poverty and suffering experienced by people can be compared to the suffering of Christ... It is for this reason that the oppressed should be freed from this suffering as Jesus had died for everyone. Coetzee (2001:486) further supports Gutierrez (1998) by stating that in Latin American countries and South Africa, Churches constituted important allies in the liberation struggles at the grassroots of socio-economic activities and at times political commitment towards alleviating world and human suffering. We need such commitment to prevail even presently to remedy the problem of poverty in South Africa. In Chapter 2 the church and the struggle for South Africa have been discussed and *The Kairos Document* was mentioned as serving a message of hope for the liberation struggle. According to Youn (2018:239), the church has reached a kairos moment to be missional. Congregations and followers of Christ

should aim at participating in Jesus' movement of the reign of God to embody God's rule in the world outside the church.

Another suggested approach is that the church people should be gatekeepers of God's mission of redeeming the world. They should therefore engage in the Holy task of leading the world into the path of righteousness, the path of love, the path of justice and the path of salvation (The New Dimension 2019:7). Local congregations and Christian development organisations are urged to unite and complement one another by focusing on their specialisations and strengths and concentrate on their positive relationships spiritually and socially as they map a way forward (Celesi and Nadine Bowers Du Toit 2019:7).

### 7.3.3 Recommended church teachings in the context of higher education in Africa

The teaching of the churches should be demonstrated through their ministry and service of quality theological education acquired by the leaders and their members. Karamaga (2013:xviii) stresses that theological education is central to the life of the living and growing church (see Mashabela 2017:5). There should be a change in the theological curriculum that has been and is being taught in higher education. According to Maimela (1983:55), there needs to be a collective effort for the liberation and transformation of free higher education in Africa so that the churches can openly denounce the injustices and oppressive structures of society and call for the existing structures to be in solidarity with God to instil liberation and freedom for African people. Parallel to this, Frank Chikane (1998:8) states that theological education has a pivotal role to consider what people want to promote justice, human rights, and dignity in Africa. Another emphasis is the need for theological colleges to contextualise the training of the students so that their training can be co-related to the needs and situations of the communities where they would be expected to go and serve (Mogoba 1980:30). The churches that are well equipped with products of contextualised training will be expected to challenge a negative impact on Africa's life such as economic injustice, racial and gender discrimination, corruption, unemployment, and abuse of human rights (Mashabela



2017:13). In that way, a dignified '*Ubuntu*' concept would be promoted in the African continent to live in an equal society that is free from oppression.

In response to the issue of challenging gender discrimination mentioned above, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, set an example when the first woman Presiding Bishop, Nomthandazo Purity Malinga was elected on May 17, 2019, in the first ballot after over 200 years of (Methodism) patriarchy experienced by women of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. It was with great interest and appreciation that the outgoing Presiding Bishop congratulated her recommending and stressing that men and women should work hand in hand and commended black women as leaders in their own democratic right. Presiding Bishop Malinga's election must be commended as an inspiration to all women in building their confidence as equally competent and capable of occupying leadership positions in the church. This is the history of transformation in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and any mainline denomination in Southern Africa to have the first woman to occupy such a challenging position (The New Dimension 2019:1-3). This is what should be demonstrated by churches through their theological education that caters for gender equality and capacity building for effective transformation. It should be noted that whilst the church is motivated to carry on with the expected mission, there are some critiques to be observed and taken into consideration.

## 7.4 A critique of the church's actions

In our critique of the church's actions, we will consider the fact that the church is a social institution as well as a community of faith. However, being a community of faith does not mean it exists on an island.

### 7.4.1 Neglecting the diaconal ministry

There is an argument that sometimes the church tends to extract power and concentrate on its growth and neglect the diaconal ministry. This then results in a disconnection of unity between the church and the community (Schwarz 1998:44-45). A call is for the church's actions to serve and cater for the physical as well as spiritual needs of the poor. This is the mission of the church that is called by God to change

people into a missional community that is summoned to love God and the neighbour (Hendriks 2010:1013). More emphasis is that in whatever way the church is directing its actions towards poverty alleviation, the church members should not use their poverty alleviation initiatives as an incentive for the poor to get converted. For example, in the present study, some members of the church mentioned that by starting with evangelism in the Amalinda Forest Community, one other agenda was to win souls. It should be noted that the actions should not lure the poor to Christ with social welfare initiatives but should develop the total welfare of the person which is demonstrating their ministry of Christ who was good to both those who accepted and those who rejected his message (Mathole 2005:259).

#### 7.4.2 Failing to be a body of Christ

Another matter of critical concern is that churches have failed at being the body of Christ. On this ground, Getz (1983) points out that no member of Christ's body should feel more important than another member of Christ's body. It is thus crucial that all members of the church should work together for transforming the lives of the poor. The members of the soup kitchen programme in this study, for example, mentioned a decline in cooperation by other members after some time. The emphasis is on humility, treating and listening to others as equals. Though one person may have a more responsible position, in God's sight even the person who may go unnoticed is just as important and necessary in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:22-23). In 1 Cor (12:26) Paul further reminds us that if one part suffers, all will suffer. This then means that if some members are infected, the whole church is affected (Getz 1983:10-11). In this regard, the people that are in positions in the church should give the youth a chance to be appointed to leadership positions as leaders of tomorrow rather than clinging to those positions for a long time promoting their self-importance without contributing to changes needed for the transformational development of those who suffer in the communities. A critique put forward by Meylahn (2017:82) is that poor performance in churches can be attributed to low-grade top leadership without knowledge or care and above all, abusing and misusing power. There is another challenge of great concern which is well living that includes well-becoming and well-dying.

### 7.4.3 Concentrating on being of this world

There is a tendency that the members of the church become competent in concentrating on being of this world. For example, it has become a norm in our South African communities to consider funerals as very special occasions of a high standard even for those who suffer from poverty. This puts pressure on the poor because the inability to cope means the inability to face life (Gasper 2004:6). Something strange enough is that the very church people expect every home they visit after one's death to cater equally for those who can afford it. A question arises here: How can we expect somebody who suffers to support his family to cater for the members of the congregation who come to visit the home after death? This is a challenge for the church to educate and support people to refrain from being involved in unnecessary expenses. They should take the lead by instead announcing and asking for assistance for those who suffer as it was in our historical background as Africans. The current practices that are taking place in our African societies were never practised before. For instance, there was no waiting period of some weeks before the burial and both the rich and the poor followed the same pattern. The three days time limit for burial that happened during the Covid 19 pandemic reminded us of such times. Consider the following case study:

#### **A Case study**

Yesterday we attended the funeral of a farmer on a farm in the Karoo. Arriving on the farm, we were struck by the simplicity of everything. There were no chairs, pulpit, minister, priest, or pastor. The farmers from the neighbourhood, the labourers from the farm, friends and family sat dressed in denim and other ordinary clothes, on bales of straw which stood uncovered in front of the house.

At a few minutes past eleven, a grandson of the deceased stood up from a straw bale with a Bible in his hands. Calmly he welcomed everyone, referred in two or three sentences to the wisdom of his late grandfather and read from the wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiastes 3 and did a short prayer. A family friend thanked the people who assisted the family, and another said a few words as a tribute. He closed his short tribute with a short prayer, closing by asking the Lord to say to the deceased's late wife, and his two late sons, that their family and friends miss them. Spontaneously two of the farm workers, a gentleman and a lady came forward. He encouraged his family and friends. Then the lady emotionally but strongly, explained that the death of the farmer was such a great loss for everyone on the farm because they all lived together as one family.

Everybody walked about 40 meters to the graveyard where a short prayer was said, and the coffin was put in the grave. People took pieces of lavender and threw them on

the coffin. After a spontaneous time of silence, people went to the house where refreshments were enjoyed.

Like the rest of the whole ceremony, the refreshments were very simple. There was a small table with *roosterkoeke*, margarine and 4 bottles with jam, a sharp knife to cut the *roosterkoeke*, another for the margarine and a teaspoon for the jam. Other basic refreshments like sandwiches, soup, boiled eggs and cake were prepared by family, friends and the wives of the farmers in the neighbourhood.

While everybody helped themselves with refreshments, soup, coffee, or tea, they mixed spontaneously and in between sympathized with the family. On our way back, accompanied by two relatives of the farm workers, we expressed our admiration for the low cost and simplicity of the whole funeral. Nothing was done to impress people and was appropriate to the deceased ([G.E. Dames, *Karoo Funeral*], adopted from a trusted source and adapted for this study).

The case study of the Karoo funeral is a case in point. It is time that African churches should present Jesus as a liberator from oppressive dehumanising systems. Jesus is the one who died as He fought against injustices, oppression, and dehumanisation. Therefore, Africans should also participate in Christ's liberating mission (Gathogo 2015:3). The South African churches also need to engage in such teachings to people including the poor even during periods of death.

#### 7.4.4 A captured church

There is a call for the church to refrain from being a captured church. Some criticisms concerning the practices of the church were put forward by Rev. Dr Frank Chikane in his eighth annual Peter Storey lecture on 10 May 2019. He remarked that the church has moved away from what the Lord died for but instead has contributed to the brokenness of society more than what the Lord expected after sacrificing his son to die for all. A call is therefore the revival of the Church of Christ that is not captured and be keen to make a difference in the existing world that is full of crisis. In that same lecture, the Methodists were also made aware of the error of focusing too much on the divinity of Christ and neglecting his humanity. The church is thus reminded to be amongst the people as an incarnational child-centred child with Christ among the people in every society (The New Dimension 2019: 6;13). Supporting the above statements, Madjera (1992:2) comments that a church should unfold its performance within society and must

not fail to address the needs of those in need so that it can exist between heaven and earth with reference or meaning to one or the other.

In striving to strengthen their involvement in transformational development the unity of churches as has been suggested, should form a base for further unity with the government departments and other stakeholders. Transforming the lives of the poor is not an easy task and therefore it needs the involvement of the state at large. This then implies that there should be a move from church unity to collaboration.

## 7.5 Collaboration

Collaboration is aimed at promoting good relationships amongst the participants as stated in the theoretical framework for transformational development in Chapter 3 of this study. Government departments, community stakeholders and businesses need to pool resources together to strive for common objectives. Through collaboration, the lack of capacity and skills can be dealt with by teaming up and empowering one another for mutually agreed outcomes. It is argued that learning from one another and sharing experiences lead to empowering all those involved (Swart *et al.* 2010: 263). In the same vein, Ogonnaya (2016:10) states that African Christian leaders jointly must be involved in the reconstruction of Africa by patterning with various African governments and non-governmental organisations towards promoting democracy and governance to uplift African standards of living.

In response to the above-mentioned suggestions, the churches can collaborate with the government departments in a correct way of consultation to eradicate poverty. The Amalinda Methodists made a significant difference in the lives of the poor, but because of the high level of poverty, there is still a long way to go. They made a meaningful contribution at a local church level through their local church-driven soup kitchen programme and it was recommended that they should merge with other neighbouring churches. It is further suggested and recommended that all the leaders starting from those in leadership positions in different departments need to accompany and journey with the crucified people (the poor) as they struggle for their liberation (Buffel 2015:361).

The new democratic dispensation in South Africa has introduced freedom that has not yet arrived unless the needs of the poor are addressed. Dames (2014:3) points out that the South African government has failed to alleviate the poverty of the poor as a result, the divide between rich and poor has increased. This is a challenge for the state and all those who are in leadership in all social institutions including the church. They should take an initiative and be active in all endeavours directed towards the transformational development of the poor in South Africa.

#### 7.5.1 What should be addressed during the collaboration process?

There is an urgent need to support the poor for development including the youth. Extreme poverty in communities is a result of high levels of unemployment (see Swart 2008:114). The government departments should provide short-term programmes of skills development in the communities as a solution to deal with poverty and support those who in their capacity as individuals have managed to start projects on their own (Kgatle 2017:3). In this case, for example, the Department of Agriculture can assist those who started the garden project and provide them with guidelines for tilling the soil and preparing it for planting different kinds of vegetables. Guidance for the use of the available resources including those found in the environment, for instance, the trees, should be given. In the present study, the young men in that poor community indicated that they could make sticks from the trees in the bush below their community to sell. The Department of Forestry (Nature Reserve) can assist in how the unemployed young men can use those trees at certain times and in a manner that would not destroy nature for future use. Agbiji (2015:9) states that the value of community has to be monitored not to give rise to the reckless utilisation of non-human creation. Through collaboration with individuals and stakeholders, sustainability in the earth community could be promoted and maintained.

#### 7.5.2 Collaboration with the local government

The problem of service delivery to alleviate poverty in South Africa has been mentioned in the very first Chapter of this study. It is then apparent that the task of community transformational development cannot proceed without involving and supporting the local

government. The church has the challenge to work together with the local government leaders to address the needs of the community. Community organising is needed in this regard. This process involves people taking charge of their situation and identifying their problems and needs. The church as a community would be expected to support the community in that process of action and bring all that needs to be addressed to the attention of the local government. Kretzschmar (2014:8) comments that the church can motivate those of its members who are government employees to implement existing government policies that can significantly reduce poverty. This can easily be effective if those members could support the management and administration of the local government when meetings are organised for the development of the community. Reaching out to the community as planned for community participation in the organised development programme could be of great contribution to the crisis of service delivery experienced by the poor in South Africa.

The present study has revealed that there was a lack of communication and scarce visits by the ward councillor in the Amalinda Forest Community. The church was struggling on its own to manage and support the process of the soup kitchen programme. There is an outcry that South Africa has failed to implement its policies as evidenced by the failure of the National “Development Plan”. A further argument is that even the commission that was tasked to monitor the plan was frustrated by the lack of government support (Quartz Africa 2017:2). A plan recommended for the church to work in collaboration with the local government would assist to avoid such failure of service delivery by the local government.

### 7.5.3 Collaboration with the department of education

The churches in every community have the challenge to work together with the Department of Education for further development in transforming the lives of the poor. In this regard, what is noted is that there are schools in every community including primary and secondary schools. The churches on the other hand have Sunday school teachers and youth organisations. Both in school and church, therefore, the leaders should be able to identify the children from disadvantaged backgrounds that need assistance. This

could be in the form of bursaries offered by the government. For the youth in the church and those in the community, some skills development programmes could be organised. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa for example has a communication unit with a Director. One of the duties of the Director is to direct and manage the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's communication strategy which includes *inter alia*, public relations, media, marketing, information and education strategies and programmes (MCSA 2016: 90-91). In this regard, the churches have the challenge to work together with the department of education and refer to the past where at school from the primary level there was the inclusion of Religious education in the curriculum. Some passages in the Bible were recited to instil different understandings and interpretations of the message from the Bible that would mould children's behaviour and responsibility from an early age. Presently, the churches should continue educating their members to be productive and responsible citizens for awareness of justice and human rights that promote dignity (Phiri 2009:114). It is therefore highly recommended that working in collaboration with the department of education and private institutions should be considered.

#### 7.5.4 Collaboration with the department of social development

The church is an institution with many members from different departments of the state. When engaged in programmes of transforming the lives of the poor, it would be easy for those who are social workers to identify those in need of assistance. It will be required that through the correct channel, they bring that need of assistance to the attention of the Department of Social Department so that their homes could be visited by social workers and be assisted with counselling and registering for social grants. This also needs the church Minister's pastoral care as a mission to visit those in need. We witness in the Bible that Jesus' ministry involved caring for the sick, the oppressed and even prisoners (John 4:46-50; Matthews 25:36). In support, the conference of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa directed that Ministers with prisons within their circuit boundaries should ensure that Methodist Spiritual Workers are appointed to such prisons (MCSA 2016: 76). It is also suggested that the social workers and the church ministers could come together and draw up a programme to visit old age homes, schools of special needs (people with disabilities) to give social and spiritual support. In



this way, they would be strengthening those in need of support as stressed in (Isaiah 41:10; Jeremiah 33:6; John 14:12; and Matthew 11:28-30).

#### 7.5.5 Collaboration with the department of justice

The church is cited as an institution that should be the voice of the voiceless for justice of all (Van Wyk 2017:5). The partnership with the Department of Justice can be effective for community-based crime prevention programmes. The police department and the correctional services need to be also incorporated into working together with the church. The Chaplains and the Ministers of religion from different congregations can work in unity to visit community policing forums and even the prisons. The aim should be to prepare young offenders to be good citizens after being released back to their communities. It is also highly recommended that social workers be involved in such visits for counselling and for release preparation in diversion programmes. Mazantsana (2002:30) states that rehabilitation is achieved through planned interventions by skilled professionals. Whilst collaboration with the departments is recommended, it should be noted that the church cannot collaborate with all the departments at the same time. The decision about collaborating with any department will depend on when it is deemed necessary to do so at a particular given moment.

The proposal of working in collaboration with all the government departments mentioned above is a great challenge for leadership that would cater for the poor in a very positive attitude. In this sense, love, trust, morals, and justice can be mentioned.

#### 7.5.6 Promoting love, trust, morals, and justice through leadership

Leadership, especially servant leadership, has been cited as a vital prerequisite for transformational development in this study. Loving the poor toward recognition during the process of transformational development is recommended as one of the keys to effective transformation. The expression of brotherly love by the leaders and serving one another in love leads to peace, trust, kindness, and self-control (Gal. 5: 22-23). It is therefore essential that the poor should experience the foresaid '*Ubuntu*' as members of one family. This should be brought about by the leaders during the process of

transformational development. With all these rights, the poor's deepest needs can be met in just and peaceful relationships with others as well as the leaders of transformational development. This is satisfying and it is true freedom (Getz 1983: 73-74). The leaders should therefore be accountable for effective change that is not self-centered but which caters for those who are suffering.

## 7.6 A critical analysis of leadership in South Africa

A critical analysis of '*Ubuntu*' in leadership calls for practical theology to mould the actions of the leaders to engender a new philosophy, epistemology, and ontology of reactivated service delivery in South Africa (Okambawa 2013 in Dames 2017:4). This is a call for accountability in the leadership of every government department. A suggestion in Kretzschmar (2014:10) is that government efforts to reduce poverty in South Africa cannot succeed without the cooperation and moral accountability of its officials and society as a whole. Thus, Christians in these sectors also have an important part to play. This then means that we need a collective effort to succeed in fighting poverty in this country.

A critique once voiced by Hellen Zille of the opposition Democratic Alliance pointed out that the state is falling very short in terms of the implementation of its tasks. The problems that she highlighted in 2012 included:

- Political appointments at municipal and other levels of government with appointees who did not have the competence or qualifications to perform their tasks. This led to high levels of corruption and a lack of service delivery.
- Insufficient skills to implement infrastructural development and there was no effective provision of primary, secondary and tertiary education (see Kretzschmar 2014:7).

The final report as far as service delivery is concerned can be summed up by stating that in South Africa, the implementation of poverty reduction has been hampered and retarded by corruption and lack of capacity and inefficiency (Kgatle 2017:3). That is why

the institutions including the church, the community, non-governmental organisations and the business stakeholders need to join hands and not be silent when the poor are suffering. We need a Christopraxis approach that will liberate the poor from poverty (Botman 2000:212).

This leads us to draw a summary and a conclusion of our study.

## 7.7 Summary and conclusion

This study has set out to explore the role of the church in the transformational development of the poor in the small Forest Community in East London. The research conducted resulted in findings that need a commitment from the church in its mission of caring and loving for the poor as people created in the image of God. This does not end there, but a more extended role is desperately needed. As an integrated whole, the problem of poverty and the challenge faced by the poor as indicated in the present study need all those involved in the transformational development of the poor to pull together towards the attainment of the ultimate goal of the well-being of the poor. This includes their physical, moral, psychological, mental, and spiritual development needs. To acquire all this, there is a need for the enhancement of servant leadership to reconstruct pervasive poor living conditions by providing essential services to African communities to improve their quality of life (Adhiambo 2012: 158). Dames points out that religious communities and leadership practices should adapt to a holistic integrative and interdisciplinary approach to tackle social, economic, political, psychological and spiritual issues simultaneously (Dames 2017:5). In supporting the above statement, Gibbs (2001: 26-29) speaks of a local church in search of excellence. Such a church will use the following principles and qualities as a blueprint towards church growth and transformation:

- Setting a vision which involves striving for a vision of what one wants to accomplish. In the present study, we can witness that vision as was set by the Amalinda Methodist Church.

- Providing staff and leaders with the training needed to do their jobs well. Regarding this principle and quality, it emerged that in this study there was a need for an improvement in the performance of the leadership roles in one way or other to maintain good interpersonal relationships for the attainment of the common goal. However, the engagement of all the members of Amalinda Methodist Church in the programme was aimed at a growing success despite some hiccups identified.
  
- Listening to participants and valuing their input. Concerning this fact, we need to consider participation by the community members as well as people whose lives are being transformed.

An interesting and motivating part of this study is that despite the challenges faced by the Amalinda Methodist Church of Southern Africa concerning the lack of funds for the sustainability of the soup kitchen programme, they did not give up. They strived to keep on helping the needy until they were disturbed by Covid-19 to continue with their mission. Their efforts need to be commended given the conditions under which they were battling to carry on with their vision. We also need to commend the prophetic preaching of the late Reverend (Bishop) M. Matyumza which conscientised the minds of the Amalinda Methodist Church congregation to work towards a significant role in alleviating poverty to transform the lives of the poor. This is what is needed as one of the roles of Ministers, Preachers, and other members in church leadership. One Minister of religion in a study similar to this one in Cape Town once commented that one can preach till blue in the face but if that is not backed up relationally, people don't get it. This simply means that for each preaching, theology and scriptural framework should be given, thus, motivating people through teaching moments (Bowers du Toit 2017:5). All in all, prophetic preaching is the key and an essential tool to develop.

In conclusion, we can point out and emphasise that the role played by the Amalinda Methodist Church in trying to transform the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest Community cannot be underestimated. Their dedication to mission work deserves

recommendation to other churches as well. The suggestions and recommendations given in this study should serve as guidance for future research. Future researchers are therefore encouraged to focus more on the empowerment and participation of the poor in the programmes. This would lead to the promotion of the identity of the poor which would lead to them being independent and ultimately managing their community projects. However, the support visits by the Church after the adoption of the project would serve as a pillar of their support.

The church needs to do the work as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13). This should be done by sensitising all those concerned about developing a new generation of leaders in Africa and the World. As Ngara (2004) puts it, this enormous and essential task can be done if we can see the church, government, community organisations, business and social institutions working together for a common goal (Ngara 2004:35-36). Supporting Ngara, Hankela et al. (2022) point out that churches are not perfect, but instead, could do more by being active in their social context. Their close relationships with all the stakeholders and providing material help and concrete services to the neighbouring communities would lead to a broader impact on society (Hankela et al. 2022:12-13).

At this juncture, we are reminded that we are all accountable to God to practice and show love to everyone as brothers and sisters (John 15:17). We need to be dedicated to God's will here on earth. Let us be motivated by the words of Paul in Acts (20:24) when he states that he considers his life worth nothing to him, if only he may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given him — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. In this sense, practical theology is first and foremost wisdom-seeking for all Christians (Cahalan 2005:93).

The suggestions and recommendations made in this study are the weapons to be used by future researchers including prospective researchers in Amalinda Methodist Church and other Churches in Africa, including the whole of Southern Africa. We can therefore

now all sing together the last two verses of hymn number '314' in the Methodist Church Xhosa version hymn book as follows:

*Nazo izixhobo*

*Makrot'akwaThixo;*

*Thandazani ningaphezi*

*Hlalani kuMoya.*

There are the weapons

Warriors of God;

Do not cease to pray

Stay in the Holy Spirit.

*Lowo woyisayo,*

*Ndomhlalisa nami,*

*Nje ngoko nam ndoyisayo,*

*Ndahlala noBawo.*

*Amen.*

The one who conquers,

Will stay with Me,

As I also conquered,

And stayed with my Father.

Amen.

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# Appendix: A1

No 37 Bramleigh Road  
Summerpride  
East London  
5247

28 September 2018

The Superintendent  
East London Methodist Church  
Circuit 313

Dear Superintendent

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at Amalinda Methodist Church

I, Mandah Khuthaza Mazantsana, am currently doing research under professor G. Dames in the Department of Philosophy, Practical Theology and Systematic Theology; towards a Post-graduate qualification in Practical Theology at the University of South Africa.

The aim of the study is to investigate how the Amalinda Methodist church congregants respond to transformation.

Your church has been selected because of the vast difference in the quality of living as compared to 12 years back when the researcher was residing in Amalinda; as well as the role that the Amalinda church members have pledged concerning the provision of a soup kitchen program to the poor of the Amalinda Forest Community.

This study will entail exploring to what extent the congregants are involved in the transformational development of the poor in Amalinda Forest Community through their soup kitchen programme. The procedure to be followed in gathering information will be conducting interviews with the church members involved in the soup kitchen program

and some members of the Amalinda Forest Community will also be selected as respondents.

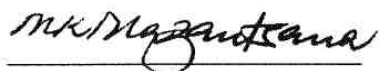
The benefits of this study are that more church members might be motivated to be servants of God in alleviating the poverty of the poor. This study might draw the attention of the Church leaders and the Buffalo City Municipality management to consider making contributions towards transforming the lives of the poor in that community. The poor members of the Amalinda Forest Community will be expected to voice out their priorities and needs for better living and identity as people created in the image of God. The need for empowerment of that community will be brought forward with the ultimate aim of promoting the people's use of God-given talents, skills and potential.

The potential risk of this project will be that of raising high expectations, for example, sponsorship or incentives of some kind. This will be addressed by clarifying the goals of the study to all respondents.

The feedback procedure will entail giving a summary of the research findings to all the participants and the Church.

I hope that this request will receive your immediate and positive response.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M.K. Mazantsana", is written over a horizontal line.

M.K. Mazantsana

Researcher

# Appendix: A2

## THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



EAST LONDON CIRCUIT 313  
EAST COAST SECTION  
TEL: 043 – 733 2942  
FAX: 043 – 733 5114

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12 February 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

MADAM

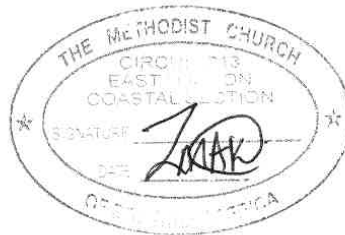
RE: RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST

I, Rev Z.M. Makula, have no objection to grant you permission to conduct the research you have asked for. I hope and promise you that the support and co-operation you would need in this time of research will be given to you.

May you be blessed

Christ's Servant

REV Z.M. MAKULA  
SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER





# Appendix: B1



No 37 Bramleigh Road

Summerpride

East London

04 April 2019

The Resident Minister and Stewards

Amalinda Methodist Church Society

Circuit 313

East London

Dear Rev. Matthews and Stewards

I hereby request permission to utilize the Amalinda Methodist Church Hall as my research venue. The said research is all about how the Amalinda Methodist Church society engages in the transformational development of the poor in Amalinda Forest community through their soup-kitchen programme (this being part of Christian ministry).

The period scheduled for the research process is from 23 April to 28 June 2019, depending on the availability of the hall within this period.

Kindly be advised that permission to conduct the research has already been obtained from the Superintendent (copy of his letter of approval is available on request).

I hope that my request will receive your positive response.

Yours Sincerely

Dr M K Mazantsana (Researcher)



# Appendix B2

## The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

### AMALINDA SOCIETY

Rev B C Matthews  
Resident Minister

144 Main Road  
PO Box 12820  
AMALINDA  
5252

Tel: 043 741-2353 (Tuesday and Thursday mornings – 08h30 – 13h00)  
Fax: 086 6222 432 (All hours)  
E-mail: amchurch@telkomsa.net

7<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Dear Dr Mazantsana

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> April regarding the use of the hall for your research.

We also acknowledge your conversation with Mrs Mayeza regarding the days and times being Tuesday and Friday evenings from 5pm.

We wish you well with your research.

Regards

  
**Rev B C Matthews**  
Rev BC Matthews  
Resident Minister

# Appendix C1

## Consent form of the interviewees

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname: ..... (please print)

Participant Signature: ..... Date: .....

Researcher's Name & Surname: ..... (please print)

Researcher's Signature: ..... Date: .....

# Appendix: C2

## **Interview schedule for the Women's Manyano**

Question 1: Could you confirm if you are a member of Amalinda Methodist Church Women's Manyano?

Question 2: Can you relate what was in your mind when you first participated in the soup kitchen programme?

Question 3: Just tell me about the first time you visited the Amalinda Forest community to serve soup.

Question 4: How often do you serve soup in that community?

Question 5: What challenges can you identify that need to be addressed in this soup kitchen programme?

Question 6: Is there anything else you might add to give an idea of how you are transforming the lives of the poor in the Amalinda Forest community?

Question 7: Tell something about the role of the community members in this programme.

## Appendix: C3

### **Interview schedule for the Young Men's Guild (YMG)**

Question 1: Can you tell me about your role as a member of the Amalinda Methodist Church YMG in the soup kitchen programme?

Question 2: Just give the picture of the venue where you deliver the soup in that community.

Question 3: What can you say about the community members who came to be served soup?

Question 4: What challenges need to be addressed in this programme?

# Appendix: C4

## **Interview schedule for the church leaders**

Question 1: I wonder if you can tell me about what happened when the vision of the soup kitchen was brought to the church leadership by the initiators.

Question 2: Just elaborate on how you have been engaged in this programme.

Question 3: Can you explain how the soup kitchen program is operating in rendering services to the poor in that community?

Question 4: Could you relate how the church is devising means for the sustainability of this programme?

# Appendix: D1

## **Interview schedule for the Soup-Kitchen Initiators Focus Group**

Question 1: Could you just relate to how you started the soup kitchen programme?

Question 2: Just tell about the challenges you experienced on your first visit to deliver and serve the soup to that community.

Question 3: Could you tell me something about the participation of the community in this programme?

Question 4: What challenges did the church face in transforming the lives of the poor in that community?

Question 5: What vision could be shared for the sustainability of this programme?

## Appendix: D2

### Interview schedule for the Amalinda Forest Focus Group

- Question 1: *Ingaba ningabahlali apha eAmalinda Foresti?*  
“Can you confirm to be residents of Amalinda Forest?”
- Question 2: *Ningatsho ukuba neva njani mhla naqala ukufumana isuphu?*  
“Can you relate how you felt on the first day when the soup was served to you?”
- Question 3: *Ningachaza ukuba iqhuba njani le soup-kitchen?*  
“What would you say about how this church soup-kitchen programme is operating?”
- Question 4: *Ingaba nani ningamalungu ebandla lamaMethodi?*  
“I wonder if you are also members of the Methodist Church?”
- Question 5: *Ikhona into eningayibalisayo oko yaqala le nkqubo yale suphu apha ekuhlaleni?*  
“Is there something you can relate to since this programme started in your community?”
- Question 6: *Yintoni eningayicebisayo ukuphucula le nkqubo yale suphu?*  
“What would you suggest to improve this programme?”
- Question 7: *Yeyiphi indima eniyidlalayo kule nkqubo yale suphu?*  
“What role are you presently playing in this soup-kitchen program?”
- Question 8: *Ingaba zeziphi ezinye izinto eningathanda ukuba ziqwalaselwe*



*kule ndawo nihlala kuyo?*

*“What other challenges would you like to be addressed in your community?”*

## Appendix: E1



The Methodist Church Of Southern Africa  
Buffalo City Central Mission Circuit 313  
Amalinda Society

## Appendix: E2



Entrance road to Amalinda Forest Community

## Appendix: E3



The researcher entering the yard of a shack

## Appendix: E4



The researcher organising interviews with the shack's owner

## Appendix: E5



Leaking tap next to the open space

## Appendix: E6



Open space where soup was served

## Appendix: E7



Illegal electricity connections '*Izinyoka*'. *Izinyoka* is an isiZulu word meaning 'snakes', which is used to refer to electricity thieves. (SA News 20 October 2010)