

Terminology

Adventist Development Relief Agency: an independent humanitarian agency established in 1984 by the Adventist Church for the specific purpose of providing community development and disaster relief.

Asset Based Community Development: a *strategy* for sustainable community-driven development. Beyond the mobilisation of a particular community, ABCD is concerned with how to link micro-assets to the macro-environment.

An Adventist: A member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who believe in the second coming of Jesus. Advent means second coming.

Dorcas Society: In the Adventist church the Dorcas Society is a women's welfare unit found in the local congregation. Its primary function is the provision of social services to communities. However, they do relief work rather than developmental.

Eschatology: The doctrine of eschatology (last things) is strictly speaking, the study of events which are associated with the end of time, for example, the resurrection, second coming, judgement, and millennium.

Eschaton: The Greek word for "the end", namely the present world order.

Iconic womb: The use of the term "womb" to describe the socio-material character of Soweto is intended to depict the permanence of conditions that continuously "procreate" inequality and poverty in Soweto, especially

	in its households.
Location:	In essence, “locations” were primarily urban reservoirs for the provision of cheap black labour.
Missio Dei:	It is God’s mission.
Millennium:	One thousand-year.
Sabbath:	Sabbath means “rest”, and it is a divine command given to humankind to obey (Ex. 20:8-11) this day, which falls on every Saturday, the seventh-day of the week.
Sanctuary Doctrine:	The heavenly sanctuary is the primary dwelling place of God.
State of the dead:	Although people are born mortal, the Bible encourages them to seek immortality (Rom. 2:7).
Second Coming:	Also common to the second coming is the word “ <i>parousia</i> ” in Greek, which means “presence” or “coming.”
Soteriology:	Is the doctrine of salvation. Theology dealing with salvation especially as affected by Jesus Christ.

List of abbreviations


ABCD:	Asset Based Community Development
ADRA:	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AFM:	Apostolic Faith Mission
ECD:	Early Child Development
HCBC:	Home and Community Based Care
JCC:	Johannesburg City Council
LMPs:	Liberative mission Practitioners
SAC	Seventh-day Adventist Church
SAIRR:	The South African Institute of Race Relations.
Soweto:	South Western Townships
UNSC:	United Nations Security Council

Statement on originality

This serves as a declaration that the work contained in this study is my own work, which has never been submitted towards studies at any University. The views in this dissertation are those of the author and not of another individual or University.

Signed

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Date

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03 May 2019

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

As a minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I have spent some years in Soweto as a resident and visiting pastor. I have also participated in other programmes of ministry among the churches there even though I no longer provide a regular ministry to Soweto. In the almost ten years of my tenure in this human settlement, my theological understanding and practice of ministry and mission faced several societal challenges, the most glaring and problematic of which was poverty, even of members of the church. I have felt increasingly challenged by the condition of the poor in Soweto. This one social condition places a burden on traditional ways of doing ministry and mission in the urban context. Some of the evidence of this condition can be seen in the giving patterns of many members of the Adventist church in Soweto. These are sometimes sporadic and grossly uneven.

While Adventist congregations in Soweto have a strong mix of the financially able and not so financially able members, the gaps in giving patterns continue to grow in some congregations and they are narrowing in others. The influential factor is variations in educational literacy, which make it possible for some members to access jobs that pay decent salaries. There is also regular migration of some members, especially youth, who, after earning tertiary qualifications and decent work, move to suburban churches. This exodus recycles poverty in some of the churches by leaving them with members who either earn low income's or are unemployed.

This study arises out of an attempt to find a more realistic and redemptive approach to material destitution and its associated results. It is a concern focused on how the gospel of Jesus can be made a life-changing agent in the lives of the poor many of whom have no recourse to find relief from their plight. Currently, Adventists in Soweto conduct a relief ministry to the poor. This traditional approach lacks the intention and capacity to liberate the poor from their condition.

As I read the scriptures and reflected on the human context of the Adventist message, it gradually dawned on me that mission cannot be complete when people's social conditions of disadvantage are not addressed, improved or changed.

Christ's statement that he had come to give people life and life in abundance (Jn 10:10) immediately became a matter of regular concern in my ministry. According to *Adventists Believe* (2005:371), Adventist theology¹ centres on the judgment of saints and sinners and return of Christ to collect his faithful followers. This will be the beginning of the one thousand years of life in paradise (2005:403).

I have therefore found it necessary to seek, within Adventist theology, and from other theological sources, a theologically valid approach to engagement with poverty in Soweto. The theme of this project is "Towards the Millennium: A critical theological exploration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's engagement with the poor in Soweto." Embedded in this theme are two critical liberative strains:

A concern to deliver a millennial hope to people currently affected by poverty in a world in which some have enough to spend and to spare. A connection between liberative mission in the world and the final fulfilment of the hopes of the poor in an eternal life of perfect abundance and fulfilment. This is why the emphasis in the subject is on progressive revelation of God's concern for the poor, which begins in this world and culminates in the world to come.

1.2 Research problem

The research problem in this project is multifaceted. It is historical, eschatological, and missiological. The Adventist mission was trapped in colonial and apartheid ideology which tended to legitimate the *status quo*—and contributed to the creation of poverty in Soweto. Consequently, the Adventist mission to African people has remained in the model of a colonial society in which evangelism is recruitment rather than social transformation and liberation. The creation of Soweto as a reservoir of black cheap labour intended to supply the white suburbs of Johannesburg constituted an economic problem for Soweto.

¹ This Adventists traditional thought pattern has not only caused them to tip-toe into the world to come but also neglect pertinent social issues that daily threaten the lives of people. In essence, this is treating material challenges as inconsequential to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Second, the problem is eschatological. Traditional Adventist eschatology speaks of a new world in which the troubles of the present world will be no more. Consequently, they teach that as history moves towards the second coming of Christ, there will come a time when Adventists will be identified as a particular faith community that will, because of its emphasis on the Sabbath and a particular view of the state of the dead, be subjected to persecution and death. This apocalyptic self-understanding sets in motion a number of peculiar attitudes and behaviours, among which is the tendency to view temporal matters as insignificant in the scheme of mission and salvation.

The third aspect of the research problem is missiological. It refers to the nature of the Adventist mission to African people. This is where the poor in Soweto have become victims of Adventist neglect. Adventists in Soweto are primarily if not solely, motivated by evangelistic rather than comprehensive developmental and transformational motives to engage in poverty alleviation and related activities. It is the passion to evangelise and win souls to Christ (by implication, also to the church), that regulates the social welfare activities of Adventists in this place. This missiological motivation which is not informed by eschatological considerations problematises aspects of this welfare programme in that it tends to remain a mere technical activity lacking adequate conceptual analysis, grounding and far-reaching sustainability.

Finally, the aspect of “overexcitement” of the advent and “indifference” to social ministry. Bacchiocchi (1986:398) aptly states that “overexcitement” and “indifference” have been responsible for the failure by Adventists to engage in programmes of social ministry and development around the world (Bacchiocchi 1986: 398) The church in Soweto is therefore presently inadequate in its practice of mission in the context of urban poverty, primarily because they are thinking more about the second coming of Jesus Christ and less concern about social transformation.

1.3 Critical issues in the research problem

These are the contextual challenges of Soweto as an urban reality. The origins and historical development of Soweto are covered in chapter 2.

This study looks at Soweto as more than a human settlement, but also as an urban reality, the product of a history of several governments experimental settlement models. Further, the study sees Soweto as an initial site for a model of liberative mission for and with the poor in the Adventist church in South Africa.

1.4 How Adventism is challenged by the context of Soweto

1.4.1 Multigenerational population

The material deprivation of the Soweto community is historical and cross-generational. It cuts across all sectors of the population regardless of age and literacy levels. Any discourse on the church's role in liberating people from poverty must take into consideration issues of age and gender. One fact that is obvious to the keen observer is that young people are a highly visible sector of the Soweto population.

1.4.2 The complexity and diversity of South African families

The research of Amoateng, Richter, Makiwane and Rama (2004), has relevance in the context of this study. These authors succinctly state that a family that is extended to aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins and other relatives causes complex and diverse family forms that complicates the family structure even more. Soweto, as one of the South African townships, is not exempted from this reality. In my observation, complex family forms have not only resulted in irresponsible parenting but also in poverty. Amoateng et al (2004) further explicate that the South African family consists of complex family types that are multigenerational in nature.

This is caused by non-marital childbearing, separation and divorce, non-mature age mortality which is associated with the rise in single-parent families and a high number of young children who do not co-reside with their biological parents. Thus, the immediate family might be distributed over large geographical spaces.

Table 1 below, shows the level of co-residence of children between ages 0-9 with their biological parents.

Table 1: The level of co-residence of children between ages 0-9 with their parents in South Africa

Family type	No.	(%)
Both parents	583341	(37.64)
Father only	40674	(2.27)
Mother only	584963	(32.73)
Both parents absent	577893	(32.34)

Source: Calculations by Makiwane from the data sourced from Statistics South Africa (2011)

1.4.3 Multiclass population

Soweto is not a uniform residential settlement. It is a massive and growing conglomerate of communities with varying levels of social development and sophistication. It cannot be described based on a singular model of sociological analysis and description. Further, because of its complex nature, Soweto cannot be served with one model of mission. Thus, the poverty situation is also complex in its nature and effects. The irony in all these, however, is that Soweto is complicated by the fact that it has both urbanised and rural populations with high and unpredictable class mobility and undeclared inter-class notions. Soweto as part of the Greater Johannesburg metropolis is also a model of the dynamic and mobile interface between urban and rural lifestyles.

According to the survey of Alexander Peter, Claire Ceruti, Keke Motseke, Mosa Phadi and Kim Wale (2013: 144-145), class was defined largely in terms of consumption, but also generally by comparison. In other words, class identity in Soweto is based strongly on the comparison of the ability to consume. From my experience in life, people may not have the same affordability. There are people who can afford everything, while others can only afford to feed their families and those who are poor to a point of failing to feed their families. Unfortunately, those who can afford the 'luxuries' of life do not always understand why there are poor people.

Alexander et al in their final analysis concluded that working class identity operates in parallel with more directly consumption-based identities, but is also linked with the affordability conferred by having an income.

In the context of this study, the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will have to consider such dynamics in order for the church to respond relevantly to the challenges of poverty in Soweto. Interestingly, race did not feature in Sowetans' conception of their class identity when speaking about class in the township even while classes exist; but Manda (2009) found that when people are asked about class in their workplace, race enters into their definition of class identities. In some of the follow-up interviews, race featured when people spoke about greater Johannesburg, the city to which Soweto is attached. Further, Alexander et al (2013) in their survey developed combinations of broad identities, but reflected the raw identities that respondents provided. If they offered raw identities that fell within a single broad identity, there was no need to combine, and these were referred to as singular identities. Where they had two or more identities that fell outside a single broad identity, these produced multiple identities.

Two examples will help to illustrate this. If somebody said they were lower class and poor they were listed as 'singular lower class', but if they said they were lower class and middle class, they were recorded as 'multiple lower and middle classes'. Therefore, except where respondents rejected all class labels, they either had a singular or multiple identities. The results of these two processes are reflected in table 2

Table 2: How respondents identify their class

Would you call yourself	Yes (% of Sowetans)
Middle class?	66
Working class?	43
Second class?	40
Poor?	39
Lower class?	38
Third class?	33
Upper class, Top class?	13
A tycoon?	3
None of the above?	7

Source: Classifying Soweto survey 2006

Table 2 indicates that only thirty-eight per cent of Sowetans had a singular identity. In keeping with the raw identities, the most common was the singular middle class identity, at 21 per cent, while 13 per cent were recorded as singular lower class, which was considerably more than the singular upper, at 1 per cent. Importantly, whereas 43 per cent of Sowetans identified themselves as working class (raw identity), only 3 per cent were singular working class. In other words, overwhelmingly, people who considered themselves working class combined this identity with something else. It is necessarily the case that singular identities include fewer people than the raw identities with the same name; they are, one might say, more refined. For example, 66 per cent of the population regarded themselves as middle class, that is, had a raw middle class identity, but only 21 per cent could be regarded as singular middle class.

Table 3: Identity percentage of Sowetans

Identity	% of Sowetans
Singular Middle class	21
Multiple Lower and Middle class	15
Singular Lower class	13
Multiple working and Middle class	13
Multiple working, Lower and Middle class	10
No class Identity	7
Multiple working and Lower class	5
Multiple working, Middle and Upper class	4
Singular working class	3
All Identities	3
Multiple Middle and Upper classes	1
Singular Upper classes	1
Multiple working, Middle and Upper classes	1
Multiple working, Lower Upper classes	1
TOTAL	100

Source: Classifying survey 2006

1.5 Democratic experience

As an iconic region of South Africa's war of liberation against the apartheid system, people of Soweto have a strong political consciousness. Thus, any programme of liberative mission with regard to poverty alleviation or eradication must involve them in praxis and action. Here the prescriptive tendency of conservative Adventist mission cannot work. Rather, collective engagement and participation of the poor should be sought for and maintained.

1.5.1 Political melting pot

The long history of political activism for which Soweto has become known necessitates the involvement of structures of the people in marshalling a programme to deal with the conditions of the poor. Soweto residents, despite varying levels of

literacy, are sceptical of programmes that are brought to them without their input or participation. It is in a place such as Soweto where the Adventist church must learn participatory incarnational ministry and mission.

1.5.2 Specific challenge for Adventists

The challenge for Adventists is at two levels:

- **The magnitude of Soweto**

Soweto is big in three ways. It has an expanding territory. New housing developments occur on a regular basis. It has a burgeoning population that grows daily. Soweto is also big in the complexity and the multiplicity of its social challenges, some of which are of a criminal nature. These factors alone call for critical review of the traditional model of Adventist mission, which presupposes that communities in the 21st century are still as uniform and easily defined as they were in the past century.

- **The magnitude of economic imbalances**

However, over and above what has been said, is the complex reality of economic imbalances. The continuum between the affluent and the poor is widening daily and is a cause of growing communal discontent and anger. Hence, problems in service provision in the areas of electricity and water have become tinder for a destructive social revolt. Therefore, the church's concern for the plight of the poor should be as comprehensive and focused as possible.

1.6 Central research question

How Seventh-day Adventist social responsibility, rooted in a biblical millennial perspective, could develop a liberating urban mission practice that will assist the church to respond to the plight of the urban poor in Soweto?

1.7 Research objective

The main objective of this work is to develop and propose an urban Adventist missiology that is liberating, in response to poverty, in general, and to urban poverty in Soweto in particular.

Sub-objectives are:

- To influence Adventist churches in Soweto to broaden their understanding of mission in the context of people's material needs alongside their evangelistic activities.
- To influence Adventist churches in Soweto to adopt a liberative approach to and practice of social ministry.
- To propose a transformative model of Adventist action towards poverty and with the poor.

1.8 Research paradigm, methodology and design

Adventist theology needs to be done contextually. Adventists have grounds to act in more incarnational and eschatological ways to manifest God's love for the poor. Christianity to be authentic and relevant must continue God's incarnation in Jesus by being contextual. Padilla (1979:286) confirms this cardinal truth as follows: The incarnation makes clear God's approach to the revelation of Himself and of His purposes: God does not shout His message from the heavens; God becomes present as a man among men. The climax of God's revelation is Emmanuel. And Emmanuel is Jesus, a first century Jew! The incarnation unmistakably demonstrates God's intention to make Himself known from within the human situation. Because of the very nature of the gospel, we know this gospel only as a message contextualised in culture.

The challenge for the Adventist church is that it has not been a notable practitioner of social ministry in the history of the underprivileged communities in this land. This faith movement has been strong on theological and evangelistic proclamation but indecisive in the area of social uplift, especially the alleviation of poverty and its associated challenges such as illiteracy, ill health, etc. For the church to be relevant in the society as Padilla has explicated, it must speak to conditions of penury and general social disadvantage. More will be said about church involvement in chapter 5.

Adventism according to Bible Info (2016) is built on seven major core beliefs: Each begins with an “S”. These are Scripture, Salvation, Second coming, Sanctuary, State of the dead, Sabbath, and the Spirit of Prophecy. For the sake of this study and context I will consider only four. The first is the Second coming of Jesus. The second is the Sanctuary doctrine. Third, there is the Sabbath for which Adventists are largely known and identified with. The fourth is an understanding of the State of the dead. All other pertinent teachings of Adventism hang on these beliefs. The hope of the second coming of Christ and the entry of the millennium in human history lies in the origins of the Adventist church and its theology. This is the hope that has sustained Adventism in the past century and a half² (Folkenberg 1994:7-9).

Poor people exegete life on the basis of what benefits they gain in their immediate life. They have a short hermeneutic leash on life, and judge religious practice or engagement on whether it can change in their material situations. Adventist theology should, therefore, begin to address the millennium as a realised reality, not as one that will come only in the future. Jesus, while speaking of the future of the world, rooted its transformative power in the real-life world of the people of his time. He healed the sick of soul and body. He fed the hungry of soul and body. The platform of his ministry embraced the contemporary sufferings of his listeners. He came to make God known, not as a theological concept, but as a life-changing reality.

The sanctuary doctrine is about God’s judgment of the dead and the living. Adventists teach that the present epoch in human history is one of judgment in the courts of heaven; that a central consideration of whether Christians will be found righteous or not depends on how they have related to and treated other people. The judgment message is multicultural and multinational in its demographic scope (Rev. 14:6, 7).

It is embedded in the equal divine creation of all humanity and equal sinfulness, implying the imperative of equitable treatment of people despite their national identity, social condition, and rank. As a fair and errorless judge, God will reward

² In recent decades, this hope has deepened as world events point to an apocalyptic climax. More than 300 verses of Scripture speak of the return of Christ. The challenge in Adventism is to make the hope of this event a present transformative reality whose socio-spiritual and material effect can be realised by the poor while they hope to see the climactic millennium in the future.

work done in His name to all humans regardless of their social and economic status. The Adventist sanctuary message speaks to social equality across language and cultural barriers. The sanctuary doctrine implores Adventists to incarnate themselves in the plight of the people they serve, as they represent the priestly role of Christ to humanity. They should stand between a saving God and suffering humanity. All this must be understood and done with the poor in active participation, not as receivers of benevolence but as participants in their own relief. Christ, the High Priest of humanity, incarnated himself in order to reach humanity in its lowest condition of moral and social loss.

White (1898:25) says, Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by his righteousness, in which we had no share.

He suffered the death, which was ours, that we might receive the life, which was His. "With His stripes we are healed." This passage should drive Adventism towards liberative incarnational work for all humanity, especially the poor who lack the resources to redeem themselves from their condition and its consequences. The Sabbath is dealt with in chapter 4. It carries a mandate for contextual liberative theology in that it instructs us to observe the rights of employees to rest from labour to the same degree that their master's rest. The Sabbath, therefore teaches social equality and justice in human relations. Adventists should see the poor in Soweto as equal fellowmen/women who deserve God's rest from the pain and progressive destructiveness of poverty³.

In other words, all humans die from the original sin of Adam and Eve. In death there is no consciousness (Eccl. 6:9). The resurrection when Jesus returns will end the death of the saved as they rise to meet Him in the clouds (1 Cor.15:51-56). A liberative Adventist mission theology should focus energy on people's real contexts and experiences seriously. It should address the totality of the human condition and

³ The Sabbath should be kept with the poor and not away from them. They should be brought to places of worship to experience God's favour through fellowship, material favour and long-range efforts to relieve them of penury. Adventist churches should be wells of hope and restoration in addition to places of worship. The fourth pillar of Adventist theology is the state of the dead. Adventist theology teaches what is called 'soul sleep'.

present the gospel as a liberating agent of God's grace in all facets of life. The primary condition of a liberative Adventist mission theology is that humanity is in a fallen state and needs a multi-pronged solution to find redress and fulfilment.

In this study, I am making an attempt to find and do theology contextually as an Adventist, seeking for an urban Adventist missiology of liberation. The research design will retrieve principles of Adventist mission and bring it into conversation with scholars and practitioners of mission in the context of the poor. The purpose will be to articulate a liberative Adventist mission theology that engages the poor in their own liberation from poverty. A practical and contextual missiology asserts that even material realities of people are the concerns of God and the scriptures.

1.9 Contextual paradigms, critical scholarship and the poor

In order to develop a contextual approach to Adventist theology in relation to the urban poor, I engage and integrate the methodologies of South American educationist, Paulo Freire; Croatto's hermeneutic cycle; and the praxis cycle of Holland and Henriot. Freire's (1970: 56) action-reflection model practices pedagogy from below that conscientised the poor, to analyse and understand the source of their conditions and how they could experience relief or liberation from them. The pastoral or praxis cycle of Holland and Henriot (1983: 8) integrates the approaches of Freire and Croatto, suggesting four moments of theological engagement, i.e. Insertion, Social analysis, Theological reflection, Planning and Action. For these approaches to be meaningful and effective, God's Spirit must play an integral part in accomplishing practical transformational ministry in our communities. De Beer (1998:39) advanced an argument that a variety of sources should be brought together and reflected upon in order to discern practical decisions for contextual ministry in specific human situations. Such a practice broadens the scope of understanding and enriches a contextual methodology.

1.10 Freire's action- reflection method

Freire (1970:56) has been influenced by his work in the field of education. The action-reflection model may be defined as follows: Pedagogy, a very pivotal teaching method that frees people from the control of old ways of thinking and of acting, and

enables them to take charge of their own future (Linthicum 1991:61). The action-reflection method was devised by Paulo Freire, a native of Brazil (Khumalo 2001: 36). He developed this method in the context of the oppression of the poor. His aim was to liberate the poor from the dependency syndrome enforced by their oppressors (Nürnberg 1999: 232). Freire understood that the oppressed normally internalise oppression and even resist potential liberators, especially if help comes from outside the oppressed group. Then he developed his educational method against the backdrop of this risk. His aim, as Nürnberg (1999:234) puts it, is that the people should consider revolution to be necessary; revolution in the sense of renewing people's minds and they must be committed to it, they must take responsibility for its implementation. The people must think for themselves and act for themselves. They must analyse their situation by themselves.

The facilitators must refrain from imparting the contents of their consciousness, but together with the people, they must bring into the open and reflect upon ideas that are already present in the consciousness of the people. The first stage in Freire's method is to gather generative themes (Freire, 1970: 56). These themes cause discomfort and immediately result in a discussion, and when explaining the nature of such themes, Nürnberg (1999:235) says, "Generative themes always call up borderline situations', that is, situations that limit one's sphere of action. They pose a challenge of borderline actions." The themes are then coded, conceptualised or presented in a way that the people understand and subsequently decode by finding them in their own world of experience. This develops an interest in the people, which in turn leads to discussions and action. Underlying this method is the belief that when people act, their action affects the way they think about that action. Likewise, reflecting in a new way creates receptivity for further and more adventurous action⁴.

⁴ Action and reflection feed upon each other, with each action leading to deeper and more insightful reflection which in turn leads to more courageous action. Thus, a spiral is created, with action pushing towards reflection which results in a more decisive action which in turn causes deeper and more analytical reflection which leads to further action, and thus to reflection. So the spiral goes deeper and deeper (see Linthicum 1991:61)

1.11 Croatto's (1987) hermeneutic approach

This scholar has a widespread influence on the interpretation of biblical texts in churches and institutions. I will utilise him in the understanding of texts for this project. Croatto is a native of Latin America and an Old Testament scholar⁵. With this approach, several things become mandatory: Correct and faithful analysis of the context of the text. Proper reflection of how the researcher reflects on his own ministry towards action. Croatto recognises the church as a mediating agent in the ministration of the Word as a motivating factor behind mission and social development. The immediate implication here is that the Bible should be used as a transformative text of a liberated community (1987:54). Croatto's model involves the application of the pastoral cycle as the foundational positive action for the poor; a community that is in need of both spiritual satisfaction and transformational development. Croatto believes that the Bible is central to the action in the area of material deprivation and transformation. In other words, God's Word is central to human development and liberation from conditions of deprivation (1987: 66).

These models play an integral part in this study. They all emphasise the importance of the context in which ministry is done. The context has to be analysed and understood if ministry is to be effective; it cannot be ignored. Second, the text is very important. Theological reflection is done in order to read and interpret the text so that it yields a contextually relevant message. Croatto gives us the skills to interpret the text properly. A combination of these models constitutes a model of convergence which becomes a model⁶ of ministry in a community of the poor; a community that is in need of both spiritual satisfaction and transformational development. This model is called the pastoral cycle. The pastoral cycle locates the practitioner in the context during insertion. Then the practitioner reads the Bible in their context. The

⁵ Croatto concerns himself with issues of context and interpretation. His radical view is that the biblical text comes from a historical *milieu* that no longer exists. This therefore necessitates a re-interpretative approach to the application or utilisation of the Bible in given human situation (1987:5-34).

⁶ This model has three vitally important components. First there is the pastoral cycle, which becomes the basis of ministry. Then there is the action-reflection model, which is a model of development and can also be used in a church environment. It is extremely useful for the analysis of contexts and for reflection. It is also most helpful in motivating the poor to see their plight and act upon it. Last, Croatto's hermeneutic approach forms a good resource for the interpretation of the text, so that the congregation's interpretation of the Bible becomes the centre of the ministry.

interpretation of the text is informed by the context as experienced by the practitioner. Croatto in Speckman (1997:50) explains this: The interpreter is located in his or her present context, not in an ancient context. His or her capacity to comprehend is determined by the framework provided by the context.

1.12 The pastoral cycle

Holland and Henriot were first published in 1980 for *Social Analysis: linking faith and justice*. The book is relevant for the study of poverty in Soweto. One can use the pastoral cycle alone; however, there is a great benefit to include the two methodologies (Freire and Croatto). They demonstrate the richness and inner elements of the pastoral cycle, which is of great relevance to the context of my study. The pastoral cycle falls into four stages: insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning, with spirituality at the centre. This cycle depicts the ongoing association of the acts of reflection, analysis, planning and action. The centre point of the circle is formed by spirituality. The cycle is designed with a specific order discussed below.

A) Insertion

Insertion assists in identifying the traits or characteristics of our pastoral responses in the daily experiences of persons and communities in which they are members. Here close attention is critical in identifying the concerns and questions that arise from the community under study (De Santa Ana 1981:331-332). The cycle helps to expose the real concerns of the people and their experience of poverty and related challenges. The cycle requires the researcher to be a keen listener and observer. It calls for concerns such as 1. What are the social power relations that operate in the specific community? 2. How do the people describe their experiences of needs and disempowerment? 3. Do the questions that the people raise relate to any aspects of the large societal structure such as the political and economic systems? What, in particular, are the timely issues that are central to the specific community? (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:3).

The value and function of insertion is that it inserts theological concerns in the lives of the people and offers responses to the actual experiences and concerns of the people (Cochrane, de Gruchy & Petersen 1991:17). This is why it is crucial for the researcher to be in connection with the community of study so that he can be part of the journey from critical analysis to redemptive action. Incarnational mission, to be liberating, must involve actual participation in the reflective activity of local people. It cannot be an academic exercise done for research purposes only. It must be directed at transformative action that also empowers the community to sustain its movement from poverty to sustenance and self-determination. Concerned faith practitioners must be seen in the actual existential and thought space of the affected community to become transformational agents in the pastoral cycle.

B) Social analysis

Social analysis is an exercise in comprehending a given social condition and its consequences on the quality of life. Therefore, social analysis is the practice of examining a social problem, issue or trend, often with the aim of bringing changes in the situation being analysed. Cochrane et al (1991:13) advocate the association of ecclesial analysis in social analysis. Their argument is that the church as a practitioner of liberative mission requires the church's insight into the real conditions of people and its role in transformational action. If this is not done, the church may act in ways that are not consistent with its goals and the needs of a community.

It is very important for the church to review its own role so that it can be relevant to its immediate situation and thus construct its mission to respond realistically to the conditions of its target community. This will help it to minister in a way that responds to the needs of the community. As Cochrane et al (1991:19) argue there has to be "social-ecclesial analysis" by the church itself so that it can respond relevantly to the dynamics of its situation; for the church itself may be a hindrance to its own mission. He insists on the need for the church to be engaged in the process so that it understands its location and mission interests.

C) Theological reflection

Theological reflection is a critical action in the process of research through the pastoral cycle. The church should avoid working from a moral high ground and contextualise its thinking and action. Faith, to be liberating must be demonstrated in the actual life of the community of mission with all its conditions of underdevelopment and distortion. In De Beer (1998:49) the resources at the disposal of the church: the scriptures, church practice, its spirituality and social connection with the community assists in and is a part of the journey to transformation. Theological analysis empowers the church in its execution of mission. This form of action deals with and exposes those parts of the church's thought and life that may be a hindrance to human fulfilment. In the words of Gutierrez (1986:9), "Theological reflection offers a critical look at current economic, cultural and socio-political issues especially as they manifest themselves within the Christian community".

A theological analysis is shared engagement. The community of concern should do it. This approach helps the researcher to gather valid facts drawn from the reflection of the concerned community. It cannot be done without the participation of the suffering community. They must be empowered, through this analysis to acquire critical skills necessary to unbundle their own situation so that the recycling of similar conditions of disempowerment may not recur. The analysis is focused on the theological dynamics of the community's situation. Its concern is to discover insights based on the interaction of faith perspectives and real human situations. This calls for deliberate listening to the concerns and reflections of the particular community.

The next step is that of engagement with the insights that emerge from the reflections of the community. The researcher should avoid any tendency to presuppose what the community should think about or express. He plays a facilitating role and does reflective analysis during and after the community's exercise has been completed. The final stage of that of decision-making. This process should lead to action or an action design that speaks to the issues that have been raised in the collective reflection.

D) Pastoral planning

In pastoral planning, decisions are made. Specific relevant actions are taken. The design of the action plan should be informed by specific questions intended to create the best possible action plan.

The plan is also periodically revised and recrafted to respond to arising situations. It must be borne in mind that as action takes place, unexpected results may occur. This is why the cycle should be kept open for revisiting and re-enacting (Holland & Henriot 2000:9). The plan should be explicit in its intent and substance. Nothing should be left to speculation. Specific answers should be given to such questions. What must be done? Who should execute specific areas of the plan? Periods also come into the plan as well as necessary resources. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting should be tied to the whole programme of action. In this process, the study proposes the involvement of the church in Soweto.

The church, armed with conceptual and practical instruments of faith, must engage in the processes of this chapter with clear theological acumen to cover the technical aspects of the programme with divine purpose. The church should engage in the direction of the project with the members of the community participating. There should be collaboration between the church and the community under study. Here the practical issues around biblical mission appear. The church should understand that its specific context gives it the challenge to reshape its own self-understanding of mission. The church too must engage in a self-reflective discourse so that it also undergoes a mind change while it engages in transformative mission. It is only with this understanding that the church in that specific community was meant to be. The final goal is to make God's will real and redemptive in the life of the target community.

This project has been fashioned based on the participatory model of research. While consideration will be given to associated research methods, the participatory approach will be the key method of engagement with the target condition and its victims. The pastoral cycle of Holland and Henriot will be the approach used to embody a participatory action research process. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat

(2016: 212) aptly stated, “The participatory research method provides a framework in which people move from being *objects* of research to *subjects* and *co-researchers*. This goal is achieved by ensuring that the individuals who traditionally have been the object of the research process are given an active role in designing and conducting the research.”

1.13 Components of participatory research

In this approach, participants engage in the project based on personal willingness and intentionality (Wilson 2000:11). The method engages participants in the process of reflection and articulation (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:56). It provides an opportunity for people in a local community to study their own practices, their own understanding of their practices, and the situations in which they practice (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995: 6). The primary concern of the researcher is to learn from the action. He/she follows up his engaged observation with practice and action directed at transforming the reality or phenomenon that is being studied by the research method. It is in the transformation that the phenomenon is authenticated.

The participatory approach benefits people through its focus on real situational experience, observation and review, the development of valuable concepts and conclusions and the potential implications of the ideas that may be validated in new situations in which the methodology may be applied with similar and enriching results (Nightingale & O’Neil,1994: 101- 102).

The participatory model has its context in the community of study. Its goal is to effect notable structural change in that community that can be applied in other similar situations or communities (Bless & Higson- Smith 1995:6). A basic principle of justice comes into the participatory method. The one who does research and the community of concern engage as equals in the preparation and implementation of the project with the aim of establishing sustainable solutions to the problems or situations of focus (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:6). In Kemmis and McTaggart (1990:122), Eliot argues that participatory research is an engaging process that involves the researcher and research participants, and leads to their collective empowerment. This approach moves the community of study from mere objects to

participants. Here the leadership acumen of the researcher comes under serious challenge.

1.14 Gains from a participatory research design:

1.14.1 Accountability and social transformation

Accountability for the research process is due both for the researcher and participating communities (Philpott 1993:22). Accountability predicates that the researcher assumes responsibility for particular resolutions and actions that are associated with the study and possible consequences thereof.

Maluleke (1994:84) argues that the researcher is accountable to the community as he gives his focus group/s the opportunity to reflect on their condition and thus seek for solutions to their plight. Maluleke continues to say that this will also help the scientific community from the study. This approach also empowers and re-educates the researcher (1994:45).

Participatory research⁷ also empowers poor people in working for themselves to transform their conditions. This type of research is done with the approval and participation of the subjects of study. Thus, people can use it to engage in the analysis of their situation and fashion ways in which they can relieve themselves of material discomfort and disempowerment. The engagement of the poor in producing solutions to their plight develops their capacity to establish situational platforms of the discourse and solution of their conditions. By its very nature, this method is educational and empowering. In this experience of self-directed praxis, the researcher becomes a facilitator of personal and communal transformation.

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

⁷ The participatory method also fuses three components of this approach into a powerful unified methodology of social critique and transformation. The components are investigation, education and action (Philpott 1993:24).

1.14.2 The goal of participatory research

The knowledge and insights gained from the participatory method will be targeted at the formulation of a locally informed transformation process so that the knowledge generated from there should not serve theoretical academic purposes. It will in the practice of this knowledge that the research method will be validated. The knowledge must lead to a change in life status for the poor in Soweto. It is neither wise nor helpful for persons to implement the knowledge that has been borrowed from texts or from situations that are not relevant to them. Knowledge and reflection from the research method must be such as to become instruments of social and material transformation.

1.15 Fusion of four elements in this participatory approach

This project will fuse four dynamics in this approach. These dynamics are: theology, context, transformation and participation. The integration of these elements will be guided by theological concerns that are essential for the basis of holistic and creative action toward change. Theology is foundational to this project approach since it is instrumental in the grounding of a rationale for community action and transformation. Context provides the socio-historical and material landscape for the practice of theological analysis and redemptive mission. Context prescribes the factors that should be considered to effect a responsive and efficacious transformative mission project. The church is also part of the very context it treats in order to display God's love for humanity. Thus, the actions of the church must be designed based on a contextually informed community development approach.

Theology and context alone may not change a societal condition in the absence of intent to transform the conditions of a community. Mission that does not lead to or achieve social transformation is a mere intellectualised practice that cycles the social conditions it purposes to treat. This project will therefore embrace and utilise contextual reflection as an interpretive tool for social change. Consequently, the community under study must itself undergo hermeneutic shifts in its approach to its condition and be ready and willing to move to a different model of thinking and action towards its circumstances.

Finally, community participation is central to this approach. The dynamic of community participation promotes involvement in all aspects and processes of the change from a depressed to a fulfilled condition. It is also necessary for empowerment and sustainable development to engage the community in action for its own sustainability. This method allows people to take part in ministry and in the development processes in which the church is involved. Another value of participation is dual. It transforms intellectualism into productive activism.

In this work, the most important benefit of the participatory approach is that it will set the ground for a transformational model of Adventist mission, not only in Soweto, the immediate context of the project, but also across South Africa as a whole. Its seminal nature has very far-reaching effects since it is also the first such attempt at making Adventist mission relevant to a condition of our community that is caused by social conditions and a political theory that Adventists have been reluctant to address forthrightly in their evangelistic programmes.

Adventists will learn from this project – lessons of personal and collective insertion of the message of salvation to human conditions. The project will impact theological narrowness of sections of the church by demanding from them accountability in mission and the doing of things that will be both visible and measurable. Adventists should be helped to move from a systematic theology concerned with entrenching members in the church's belief system to one that will also impel them to manifest their faith and salvation experience in acts consistent with what Christ commands in the famous parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37).

1.16 Specific research methods

Following the pastoral cycle with congregants in Soweto, specific methods will be employed at every phase along the way. The way in which the methods are used and research findings gained from the fieldwork will be fully explained in chapters three and four. Here it will suffice to introduce the specific research methods and indicate how they have been implemented as part of the research process.

1.16.1 Focus groups

Adventists and non-Adventists groups will be selected for this study. The Adventist groups will be persons selected based on their interest in and practice of social ministry in the church and in the Soweto community. A congregational group from one of the less privileged parts of Soweto will be used. This will be the church in Zola Township. The group comprised adults from age 35 to 88 and young people between 16 and 34 years of age. The younger group comprised 65 percent of the participants. Both genders were fairly represented. This exercise took place in the church in Zola Township. The first Adventist group was interviewed on September 15, 2008 while the second Adventist group members were engaged between March 9 and May 28, 2009. The last Adventist group participated in a workshop in Zola Township on 15 January 2011. There is a yawning gap between 2008 and 2011, which was caused by my employers when they transferred me from Johannesburg to Kimberley (Northern Cape). Hence, my research with the research groups slowed down because of distance. A third group is composed of non-Adventist members who regularly do their shopping in Maponya Mall. These are community members who reside in Pimville. The Maponya Mall in Pimville has been selected for this exercise.

1.16.2 Interview

Target groups will be interviewed on the nature of poverty in Soweto and how this plight can be alleviated or eradicated. The researcher and assistant engaged their responses through the second part of the pastoral cycle (analysis). The groups were mainly composed of members of the church. The interviews in this project are an essential tool or method to achieve my goal. The procedures during interviews are to ask questions of people and structured interviews will be employed to obtain maximum information about my research question. Most of them are informal conversational interviews. In the natural flow of events, there is no pre-determination of questions, topics or working⁸ (Tuckmann 1994:374). I have experienced this

⁸The strength of this type of interview is that it increases the relevance of observations, and that the observations and interviews can also be matched to individuals and circumstances. There are however, also weaknesses or disadvantages that tend to produce a collection of different questions, which complicate data organisation and analysis (Tuckmann 1996:374).

difficulty or weakness during informal interviews with church members, local leaders, my colleagues and church officers.

1.16.3 Questionnaires

Church-based groups will be given sets of questions to answer. Thereafter expository discussions will follow to identify key issues in the research plan such as the nature of poverty; the causes thereof and possible ways of alleviation and/or eradication. The church groups will also introduce the way in which key Adventist doctrines may be used to articulate a methodology for redeeming the poor in Soweto from their plight. This activity will appear in chapter four.

1.17 Role of research assistant

In order to conduct relevant, effective research and provide focus on the issues associated with the topic of this study, I secured the services of Thula Nkosi. Thula's expertise in sociology and Zulu grammar has given focus on the crucial aspects of this study, especially explaining and simplifying technical and cultural terms to the group. In addition, because of his dedication as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, he has been instrumental in giving appropriate conceptual perspectives to aspects of this study.

1.18 Scope of the study

My theological and research approach has different dimensions and now I am going to discuss it briefly. Being contextual in this study is essential because it considers the contexts where ministry is happening. The context of insertion is very important and informs the other models. The other stages therefore respond to the specific dynamics of the context of insertion, so that the context of insertion informs practice. The pastoral cycle, which will embody participatory action research, and use specific methods, namely focus groups, will be a vehicle to achieve the goal of this study.

1.19 Brief theological reflection on poverty

Caring for the poor is a major concern of genuine Christian mission. It is also a biblical justice mandate, which calls for both sound theological reasoning and

redemptive action. The thesis of this work is that the poor in Soweto do not need charity but liberation that comes from capacitation for self-deliverance. In light of its prevalence and persistence, poverty has been a key concern of many scholars of urban mission and development studies. Its effects touch on economic stress, spiritual depression, material destitution and psychological worthlessness. It is for these reasons that poverty calls for both scholarly analysis and a pastoral cycle approach because human beings are fundamentally spiritual creatures.

In this section, I shall reflect on and integrate the work of some of this scholarly analysis from theologians, local and overseas, and show how the pastoral cycle treats the condition of the poor in a most effective way. Andrew Kirk is a native of the United Kingdom and a world-known theologian and mission scholar. In *what is mission? Theological Explanations* Kirk (2000:24) highlights the fact that mission is a permanent feature of the Christian faith, and that mission is the irreversible central mandate of the church. Kirk continues to say that mission is the platform on which Jesus Christ displayed the limitlessness of God's love for humanity (2000:53).

Paul asserts that when Christ was in this world, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (1 Cor 5:19).

For this reason liberative mission to the poor, the homeless, the naked and illiterate, is an act of divine justice executed by the community of faith on behalf of God. The church must be the show house of God's love and care to the destitute.

In an earlier text, Kirk (2000:11) says, "There can be no theology without mission – or, to put it in another way, no theology which is not missionary". Elsewhere he asserts, "Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life. We are Christians because we have been called by God to work with him in the fulfilment of his purposes for humanity as a whole. Life has a purpose only to the extent that it has a missionary dimension". It is within this understanding that incarnational dialogue with the poor for their own empowerment and liberation is central to genuine theology, and should be so in Adventist theology in Soweto. Incarnation is thoroughly emphasised in chapter 5.

Speaking at a Conference on Strategies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality, David Adams, in a paper titled, “The role of the church in combating poverty and inequality in South Africa: a case study from Cape Town,” (2012:1) notes, When God selected people who would carry His name and play a central role in his purposes, he gladly picked poor slaves in Egypt. The pages of the Bible are full of stories of transformation, where God delights in taking those who are marginalised or disregarded by society and weaving them into His unfolding story of redemption. This is celebrated in Psalm 113: “Who is like the Lord our God, the one who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he sits them with princes of their people”. The biblical faith incorporates “a deep concern to alleviate poverty and counter inequality”. This point stands as a frontal challenge to Adventists in South Africa in general and especially in Soweto, because of their tradition of treating work for the poor as an addition, or even a nonbinding option, in the practice of mission. As noted in chapter five of this work, the Israelite economy was rooted in a strong social welfare system. There were detailed instructions on how the poor and indigent should be kept happy and fulfilled (Deut. 14:29; 26:12).

Nelson Mandela in a thanksgiving ceremony for Archbishop Desmond Tutu aptly said: “As the Churches in South Africa and abroad accompanied us in the struggle for justice and peace, so should they now accompany us in building a just and equitable society” (Polity 2016). In recent years, in light of the challenges presented by poverty, the equating of evangelism with mission must be challenged. Urban mission – especially mission to the poor – must be rethought as a total and comprehensive endeavour. This should be particularly imperative in Soweto since this human settlement arose as a product of formal and deliberate social engineering on the part of the colonial government. Soweto, in fact, is but one of many black residential areas that were designed to benefit the white community.

The discourse on urban mission and urban poverty should be cast within a social action and political justice dimension. The poor in Soweto have become an increasing permanent underclass with their own class perceptions and social theories about their life and fate in relation to those of their more affluent fellow

citizens. The biblical doctrine of man as a divinely created species is a constant reminder that individuals are the object of God's love and are to be treated with the utmost care and concern for their betterment. People really matter to God. The fundamental belief in the worth, dignity and destiny of each individual should be the subject of both homiletic and mission studies in local Adventist congregations. The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth is one of the first theologians in modern Christianity to articulate the understanding that God incarnates Himself in human history as an act of mission (Bosch 1991:389).

1.20 Literature survey

In this study scholars such as Freire, Holland & Henriot, and Croatto provide contextual models for liberative action for the poor. The model of Holland & Henriot integrates the two models by Freire and Croatto. This unified approach uses four stages in its application to provide a structural framework for this thesis. De Beer (1998:39) aptly states that a variety of resources should be brought together to bear witness on the practical decisions of contextual ministry in specific human situations. In the main, the intention of the study is to sharpen Seventh-day Adventist thought in Soweto and, in this way, to influence Adventists to employ principles of socio-moral thinking, social justice and equality in their own ecclesiological sphere and extend this influence outside their circles through selfless application of the same principles. This study calls for a balance between individual and social ethics, theology and ethics, eschatology and the present life, evangelistic proclamation and influence in the present world as well as the generation of hope for the promised millennium.

1.21 Organisation of work

This work is organised into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1

Contains the introduction which lays the conceptual groundwork for the project from the thesis statement to the research methodology.

Chapter 2

Presents a brief historical account of the Seventh-day Adventists, and urbanisation and poverty in Soweto, The nature and the causes of poverty in Soweto life.

Chapter 3

Presents field surveys and their results. This chapter also highlights the involvement of the group in gathering data and responding to questions pertaining to poverty in Soweto.

Chapter 4

Deals with the themes that constitute the core of Adventist theological thought and practice. The focus is placed on theological issues that undermine the biblical concern for poverty.

Chapter 5

Presents urban Adventist liberating missiology.

Chapter 6

This chapter presents the synthesis of this project and is the capstone of the project. The Liberative Adventist Theology of mission and the programme for meaningful and liberative Adventist social engagement is explicated. It is time that Adventist synchronises their message of hope for the second coming with their acts of mercy in the human sphere in the present age.

Chapter 7.

Towards the millennium: An Adventist liberating mission practice with the poor⁹. This chapter gives a summary of the organisation of this project from chapter 1 to the last chapter. We will realise our expectations regarding this project if we take the wise words of the Chinese philosopher Lou Tse (Dennis 1977:357) into consideration when he suggests the

⁹ The Adventist church in Soweto – while located in an urban setting – suffers from an identity crisis. The crisis is in the contradiction between its traditional model of doing mission and its physical location in a modern and post-modernising urban terrain, even while this terrain is plagued by material disparities. This is the point at which this study hopes to offer a workable and liberative model of Adventist urban mission for Soweto, and by implication, South Africa.

following about the importance of the participatory approach and praxis cycle: Go and meet your people, live and stay with them, love them, work with them. Begin with what they have, plan and develop from what they know, and in the end, when the work is over, they will say: we did it ourselves.

CHAPTER 2

ORIGINS OF ADVENTISM IN SOUTH AFRICA AND URBANISATION AND POVERTY IN SOWETO

2.1 Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was formally organised and incorporated in North America in May 1863 (Schwarz 1979:151). Schwarz continues to say that the church's first major outreach into Africa occurred in July 1887. In that year a small group of missionaries assigned by the church's leadership in Battle Creek, Michigan, landed in Cape Town to continue work that had been started by William Hunt, a mineral prospector who had come from the United States via Australia in 1878. Hunt had embraced Adventism in 1869 during an evangelistic programme conducted by John Loughborough in Healdsburg (Schwarz.1979:224).

Not long after this arrival in South Africa Hunt met Pieter Wessels and George van Druten, local businesspersons who had been linked to the Dutch Reformed Church in Kimberley. In their studies with Hunt, they then learned that there was an organised community of believers in the United States of America who taught the biblical Sabbath and other teachings that made them a distinct denominational formation. Hunt facilitated the writing of a letter to the church's international office requesting that the leadership should send missionaries to this country to consolidate the work he was doing and to establish an Adventist community in South Africa (Schwarz 1979:224-225).

Until 1894 Adventist mission work in South Africa was among white people. Schwarz (1979:224) notes that one of these missionaries, C. L. Boyd, made an attempt to evangelise African people but failed because of lack of support from other believers because of his "individualistic temperament." It was only in 1895, with the conversion of Richard Moko and his wife that Africans in South Africa began to enter the Adventist fold. Moko was later given a ministerial licence in 1897 and ordained in 1915. He had come to the diamond fields from the Eastern Cape (Ogouma, Yao Edmond, Kossi-Ekao Amouzou, Ndombeth 2017:47)

From 1897, the Adventist mission moved into the interior of South Africa until it reached African communities of the Limpopo Province in the north through the efforts of pastor Mack Mkasi and Brother Richard Mudziwa in the early 1950s. In the latter part of the 1950s, the whole of South Africa had an Adventist presence. In addition to this geographic coverage was Lesotho (1880s), Swaziland (1920) and Botswana (1923). The entry of Adventist missionaries in South Africa occurred twenty years after the discovery of diamonds and one year after the discovery of gold in Kimberley and Johannesburg, respectively. The church's membership growth followed the development of commercial and industrial evolution of modern South Africa. This growth took an urban trail very early in the 20th century, with the Cape Peninsula, Gauteng, Durban, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley areas taking the lead in mission and membership growth. One of the immediate implications of these membership concentrations was that the Adventist church evolved as an urban movement. This reality has more than stabilised in the past fifty years (Sokupa 2015:173).

However, while the above condition existed, the church's missiological mind-set did not assume an urban mission agenda. Two factors precipitated this condition.

The Adventist church's global mind-set made the church in South Africa blind to the realities of its immediate context. Major Adventist missional agendas and models have traditionally been designed centrally in the international office in North America. There has been a consistent absence of contextual models of mission in our region to tap into the dynamics of the lifestyles of our communities. Thus, the church here has failed to design and implement programmes of mission that deal with the basic realities of local communities.

The church was affected by the dilemmas associated with institutionalised colonisation during the British and Afrikaner political regimes. This condition influenced Adventist theological and social thought locally and evolved a church that would not bother itself with structural and social injustice since these were treated as the "things of this world" a biblical expression, which refers to the various manifestations of sin in the public eye. Consequently, the Adventist mission failed to

address the material challenges of the poor. The church has evolved and has been perceived by sections of the community as a faith movement of the aloof and elite. The result of the conditions described briefly above is that the agenda of the poor has never been a central concern of the Adventist mission in South Africa. The poor are treated as an unfortunate result of the human fall that will be removed by the return of Jesus.

2.2 World urbanisation in the global context

According to World Urbanisation Prospects: The 2018 Revision, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 55% of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2018. In 1950, 30% of the world's population was urban, and by 2050, 68% of the world's population is projected to be urban. Today, the most urbanised regions include Northern America (with 82%) of its population living in urban areas in 2018, Latin America and the Caribbean (81%), Europe (74%) and Oceania (68%). The level of urbanisation in Asia is now approximating 50%. In contrast, Africa remains mostly rural, with 43% of its population living in urban areas. Thus, the church faces a severe and urgent challenge to re-engage these continents with a gospel that speaks to the poor.

The rural population of the world has grown slowly since 1950 and is expected to reach its peak in a few years. The global rural population is now close to 3.4 billion and is expected to rise slightly and then decline to around 3.1 billion in 2050. Africa and Asia are home to nearly 90 % of the world's rural population. India has the largest rural population (893 million), followed by China (578 million). The urban population of the world has grown rapidly since 1950, having increased from 751 million to 4.2 billion in 2018. Asia, despite being less urbanised than most other regions today, is home to 54 % of the world's urban population, followed by Europe and Africa (13 % each).

Growth in the urban population is driven by overall population increase and by the upward shift in the percentage living in urban areas. Together, these two factors are projected to add 2.5 billion to the world's urban population by 2050, with almost 90 %

of this growth happening in Asia and Africa. World Urbanisation Prospect: 2018 Revisions [Key Facts]. Hove, Ngwerume and Muchemwa (2013) explicate that migration from rural areas on average accounts for 60 per cent of the urban population and exceptional cases, as much as 75 per cent (Todaro 2000).

Although rural to urban migration has many causes, two stand out. First, poverty in rural areas resulting from low agricultural productivity, aggravated by demographic growth, has been one of the strongest motivations for migration to urban centres. In some instances, prolonged drought or other natural disaster exacerbates rural poverty leading to mass migration from rural to urban areas. Further, Hove et al continued to state that in most Sub-Saharan African countries, rural areas are relatively under-served in terms of physical, financial, social and economic infrastructure. This neglect of rural areas is reflected in the inadequate allocation of resources for operational expenses and insufficient investment in rural infrastructure, agriculture, schools, and hospitals. The negative effects of this neglect are exacerbated by government policies, including state-controlled pricing and marketing of agricultural products, which push farmers and their families into the cities¹⁰.

2.3 The South African urban context

The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (2013) survey released in Johannesburg on the 23rd January 2013 reported that 2/3 of South Africa's population now lives in urban areas. The data in the survey comes from the World Bank. The Institute further stated that, "The proportion of people living in urban areas increased from 52 per cent in 1990 to 62 per cent in 2011." The share of those living in rural areas dropped from 48 per cent to 38 per cent over the same period. The SAIRR identified the major causes of the trend as the post-apartheid freer movement of people and higher economic growth in urban areas, attracting people searching for employment.

¹⁰ The factors just listed above often finds urgency in a period of social transition such as the one that South African has been going through since the demise of colonial rule. Histories of other nations have been marked by similar trends and developments. Urbanisation is therefore not a strange or new historical phenomenon. However, there is a need for new responses and innovations to deal with the challenges of urbanisation.

“The downsides, however, according to the survey, may be that urbanisation fuels crime and social tensions, creates greater environmental and health risks and poses challenges for government service provision”.

There is however, rapid growth that has taken place in South Africa’s smaller cities, mostly due to small initial populations and increasing economic activity. “Polokwane, Rustenburg, Vanderbijlpark, Nelspruit and Ekurhuleni [are] the five fastest growing urban areas, with average annual population growth rates of between 1.6 per cent and 2.9 per cent over the last decade, compared to Cape Town with a rate of 1.4 per cent”. It is expected that Africa’s rate of urbanisation will have overtaken Asia’s by 2030. South Africa’s population grew by 15, 5 per cent, or almost 7-million people, in the space of 10 years to reach a total of 51, 7-million in 2011, according to the country’s latest national census, conducted by Stats South Africa. Gauteng province, the country’s geographically smallest but economically busiest province has both the biggest and the fastest growing population, according to census 2011, with 12.2-million people counted in 2011 -- a 33.7 per cent increase over 2001, more than double the national average increase (South Africa Info 2013).

In a 2007 Morning Live programme, SABC2 presenter Vuyo Mbuli reported that there were between two and three million Zimbabweans in South Africa. This was in addition to countless other persons from other parts of the continent and Eastern Europe who were fleeing various conditions of political and economic instability in their countries. Thus, South Africa has become a microcosm of the African continent and of the rest of the modern world. The African family has re-converged in South Africa re-enacting the southward migration of local indigenous people that took place thousands of years ago from the River Niger Valley. This convergence, that many of us take lightly, is destined to be a permanent feature of the future and a unique challenge to Adventist ecclesiology and mission.

The fact that the Adventist church in South Africa has not developed a research orientation in its operations, the church will continually be overtaken by rapid social developments. As long as parts of Africa are marked by conflict and economic disorganisation, people will keep moving into this country in search of what the ANC

government calls, “a better life for all.” It is in this search for a better life that contemporary Adventist missiological thought must find its niche and base of operation. One fact that confronts indigenous South Africans of all national groups is this: We can no longer claim the monopoly over social, cultural, linguistic, service, settlement and economic space in the country. There is now a multiplicity of languages and musical forms that almost make one a stranger in the country of one’s birth. In South Africa today, it is possible to walk in the streets of our cities and not understand what people are talking about. The parochial ghetto in which we found and enjoyed exclusive occupational existence has collapsed. South Africa is a shared state in which racial colonies have lost preferential ground. This is an irreversible historical reality. Evidence of internal and external migration can already be seen in the multicultural composition of Adventist churches across the country both in rural and urban congregations.

In my regular travels around South Africa, I meet people whose origins are outside of South Africa and who aspire to make this country a permanent or semi-permanent home. We have become Africa’s labour house and a domain for settlement. It is time South Africans came to terms with the fact that in the ultimate scheme of things, nobody – cosmologically speaking – owns any land in this world. God made the world. Humans created countries, passports and visas. With the rapid urbanisation of South Africa, the church faces the challenge of capitalising on new opportunities for evangelism and ministry. Ongoing creative planning and action must ensure the presence of God’s grace in the lives of urban-based populations. Rural populations are losing intellectual capital as many of their young move to the cities in search of work and better living conditions. Thus, there is a new urban evangelistic imperative that the church must embrace and use for the advancement of God’s kingdom on earth.

2.4 Johannesburg: A representative urban reality

Johannesburg is among the metropolises that face relentless urbanisation in South Africa. The city and its constituent areas – townships and suburbs - have been the confluence of several cycles of rural-urban and urban-urban migration that have

been spawned by black people's loss of land owing to the effects of the Wars of Dispossession in the 19th century and the 1913 and 1936 Native Land Acts which changed fortunes in traditional rural-based communities (Bonner & Segal 1998:19). This city and its earliest modern settlements came into existence in 1886. The city is the progressive outgrowth of the discovery of gold reefs in the Highveld of South Africa during the 1880s. This city has become South Africa's most populous region. In 2011, 4, 4 million persons lived in Johannesburg.

According to language policy, at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg is the most linguistically diverse city in South Africa, which complicates decisions about language policy. At Wits University alone 76 home languages are spoken by students and staff. These languages make it difficult for the institution to choose a language to be developed and be spoken, as no choice will satisfy the needs of staff and its students. While Johannesburg is located in South Africa, it is no longer a South African city. It has not only become an African city but an international city as well (Wits 2015).

No other city in the world has been given as many appellations as Johannesburg has received from its black communities¹¹. A close look at some of these names by which Johannesburg is known will reveal interesting dynamics about the sociological and economic life that marks not only Johannesburg, but also cities in general. Except for *Gauteng*, which is Sesotho/Setswana for "the place of gold," all the other African/Africanised names of Johannesburg are of Nguni origin. This indicates the dominant numerical position that Nguni speaking people occupy in the demographic map of this area. Nguni speakers are speakers of isiBhaca, isiHlubi, isiNdebele, isiMpondo, siSwati, isiXhosa and isiZulu, with any other possible dialects or neo-dialects between two and/or among some of these languages. Even in the national population register, these language groups combined are preponderant over other language groups with the Zulu group outnumbering the rest. There are different names for Johannesburg. In the decades since 1886, the year of the discovery of gold in this region, these Nguni language groups have extended and entrenched

¹¹ This city is variously referred to as eGoli, EJozi, eJonasburg, eJozibele, eMshishi, Kwandongaziyaduma, eMjibha, Gauteng, Kwanyamakayipheli kuphelamaziny'endoda, eRhautini, and the latest, eMsawawa.

their linguistic territorial domains in Johannesburg and in the greater Gauteng region. Almost everybody in this region either speaks or understands a Nguni language. The locative prefixes (*iziqalo zendawo* in Zulu grammar) “e-“ and “kwa-“ used in the names under consideration are of Nguni extraction¹².

EGoli: This name means, “Place of gold.” EJozi, *eJozibele*, eJonasburg: All these names are innovations around the English name, Johannesburg. Such names are attempts by indigenous communities to declare a social or psychological claim on Johannesburg. Sociology teaches us that naming is part of reality creation and partial ownership of something. Adam had to name the fauna in the Garden of Eden in order to enhance his rule over the nonhuman creation. eMshishi: This name is descriptive of the sizzling noises made by industrial machines in the business areas of Johannesburg. These names denote the fact that Johannesburg and its immediate environs are places of intense industrial activities; places marked by noise pollution. This is a characteristic of urban life.

Another name is Kwandongaziyaduma: *The place where hills, valleys and walls thunder*. This name derives from the early presence of gold mines in and around Johannesburg. The name is broader in its geographic coverage touching on the larger areas known as the Witwatersrand in which Johannesburg sits at the centre. Kwamfaz’oshay’indoda: This name, which is, like the one in number 5, a phrasal construction, means, *the place where women beat men*. This is a name that denotes a violent breakdown in traditional relations between men and women. In traditional African society a woman will not molest a man. In the broadest sense this name implies that the nature or urban life is such as to insert people into a new societal value system in which disfigurement of normal interpersonal relations become a new normative, yet a problematic reality.

This name carries critical implications for urban life and urban mission in South Africa. The progressive unfolding of an unconventional or unorthodox value system,

¹² Township names such as Duduza, Thembelihle, Mzumbe, Zonk’izizwe, Kwa-Thema, Mandelaville, Thembisa, Dube, Jabavu, Mndeni, Zondi, Zola, etc., are often prefixed by an “e” or “kwa” – something that typifies the social dominance of a Ngunified sociology in the Witwatersrand.

one that is dynamic and sometimes confusing, marks life in Johannesburg and in all other cities in South Africa. In this urban village historical social systems have been challenged and subverted by new social thought and modernistic aspirations and lifestyles. The city is often the graveyard of rural social sociology, its normative institutions and practices. Further, this name connotes the underlying understanding of African society as a patriarchal social system in which men call the shots and direct the lives and destinies of women. The city subverts this patriarchy and establishes a gender egalitarian society. The name is therefore more than a description of a new social reality but is also a critique and protest against such reality.

Another interesting name is Kwanyamakayipheli kuphela maziny'endoda: This name means *the place where a man eats meat until his teeth are depleted*. This is in reference to the ubiquitous gluttony that marks city life. People in Johannesburg are ever chewing something. They never stop eating, and meat is in extreme abundance. The above reality makes cities places of concentrated illnesses and psychosomatic disorders. In South Africa and elsewhere in the world almost every city street has an eatery where people sit for some time to consume some food or beverage, making cities places of gross intemperance and sources of consumption-related misbehaviour alongside joblessness and deepening penury, wellness and disease, hope and social despair.

I want to now give a brief history of the origins of Soweto. Louis Rive in Bonner and Segal (1998:9) succinctly declares in an address given at the Annual General meeting of the National Development and Management Foundation, Johannesburg in November 1980, "It has been said that the path through Africa runs through Soweto; that Soweto is a microcosm, or the soul of South Africa; that Soweto is a shining example of neglect and exploitation: That Soweto means many things to many people." Walter Sisulu, in Bonner and Segal (1988:7) concurs with Rive when he postulates that the history of South Africa cannot be understood outside the history of Soweto. Certainly, the history of the township, and the trials and tribulations of its people are a microcosm of the history of this country.

Industrialisation, apartheid policies, and the struggles of South African people all find their expression in the place called Soweto. Soweto is an outgrowth of the city of Johannesburg. Johannesburg as a city and its numerous settlements came into existence between 1870 and 1886. It is the progressive outgrowth of the discovery of large gold reefs in the high-veldt region of South Africa in 1886. Today, the greater Johannesburg region is the most populated area of South Africa. Soweto is a township of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng, South Africa, bordering the city's mining belt in the south. Its name is an English syllabic abbreviation for South Western Townships. Formerly a separate municipality, but now incorporated in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, Suburb of Johannesburg.

The original intention of establishing Soweto was mainly to house migrant miners. However, Soweto has outgrown both this purpose and its original size by far.

Soweto covers an area of 65 square kilometres with a diametrical distance of 16 kilometres. For many decades, state legislation outlawed the creation of large business such as shopping centres and factories. Because it was developed as a temporary residential area, major civic buildings are scarce in Soweto. This vast human settlement was created by the English and Afrikaner settlement policies.

Soweto is located south-west of Johannesburg, between Johannesburg in the northeast and Roodepoort-Randfontein and Lenasia in the south-west. For the purpose of this research, we will refer to it as a "city within a city". Its birth year was 1905 and it was originally known as Klipspruit West, a name later changed to Pimville.

By the late 1950s, the spreading townships around Orlando, housed half a million people, but this township remained a city without a name. The authorities then simply referred to this area as the South Western Townships. Informally, the area came to be known as a "matchbox city" because of the row upon row of identical, little brick boxes that dotted the landscape (Bonner & Segal 1988:31). The major cause of the mass migration to this city was the 1923 Native Urban Areas Act, which stipulated that the essential purpose of the proximity of blacks to cities was the

service blacks have to render to white people and then depart to their places of permanent domicile when this had been done (Bonner & Segal 1988:15).

“Native Urban Areas”, according to this Act, were essentially the white man’s creation (Bonner & Segal 1988:15). Both the British government and the newly established Johannesburg City Council (JCC) were threatened by the mushrooming of the slum-yards, and the JCC’s Medical Officer of Health wrote a report for the Insanitary Area Commission of 1903, condemning the slum-yards. Both authorities objected to the slum-yards not only because they were breeding grounds for diseases, but also because they considered them areas of inter-racial mixing which they believed would dilute the white race and undermine the white regime. White officials and dignitaries wrote in fear about the promiscuous herding together of Indians, Malays, whites and “kaffir people” who lived on friendly terms (Bonner & Segal 1988:12-13).

Regarding the building sites and services and other housing schemes in Soweto, the government’s main purpose with these “match-boxes” that were built reveals a motive of control. Row upon row of identical dirty streets radiating from a central hub, line upon line of drab, cheap, uniform houses, a colourless- mind-numbing monotony (Bonner & Segal: 1988:34). Hence, Maluleke (1995:165) asserts, that the word “location” has a connotation of “people control”. He further said in a more explicit way, “Locations” were places where the natives were not only ‘located’ but could, if necessary, be “located” by the “long arm of the law.” In essence, “locations” were primarily urban reservoirs for the provision of cheap black labour.

Finally, in 1959, Mr Wilhelm Carr launched a competition to find a collective name for the council’s showpiece for its slum clearance. *Vergenoeg*, Black Birds Bunk, Darkies Suburban, *Khethololo* (segregation), *Thari eNtshu* (“the black nation”), these were among the many names that were selected by the council. One of the many reasons was that Europeans would find it too difficult to pronounce these African names. After years of heated debate and deliberations, the naming committee chose Soweto, an abbreviated version of “South Western Townships.”

The name was first used in April 1963 and publicised across South Africa by the now defunct *Rand Daily Mail*, a Johannesburg-based newspaper (Bonner & Segal 1998:31). West (1975:12) describes Soweto life as being “extremely determined, with most important determinants being – administrative and political limitations.” The “pass system” became the most potent tool in determining the movements of black people. This was to ensure that their stay involved no other reasons than the reason for which they came to the urban areas. Sepamla, quoted in Maluleke (1995:166), declares that people who lived in “locations” were “accidental” residents. “We grew up chasing after girls, we grew up going to the swimming pool and even going to school together.” Over time, this group graduated into a bunch of youngsters who began to look at themselves in terms of the territory within which they actually know people. Even someone like me was brought up by my uncle, the priest, and was well mannered, could not escape being associated with one gang or the other¹³.

One of the main targets of these gangs were schoolchildren who had to cross gang borders in order to go to school. Sexual intimidation and even rape seemed to be commonplace among these victims. Susan Shabangu in Bonner and Segal (1988:66) remembers, “If they met you in the morning, it meant that you were not going to school the whole day.” These gangsters spent a lot of their time fighting for women and children. Due to the lack of job opportunities and proper education, these potential future economic giants degenerated into aimless people that landed up in jail or even being killed. Before the advent of the taxi industry to Soweto, railway lines served as conveyor belts in Soweto, conveying workers into the city to earn wages and then conveying them back at least slightly enriched by their earnings. Railway carriages and the vicinity of railway stations were, therefore, the vital place for the gangs. It was here that they could lay their hands on money and other things they so earnestly desired and pickpocketing was usually prevalent on Fridays and at month ends.

¹³ Various groups of gangsters could be found in Soweto, namely, “The Hazels” in Mzimhlophe, “The Vikings” in Orlando, “The Kwaitos” in Phefeni and “The Dinotshi” (Bees) in Moletsane.

2.5 Criminality

The political upheaval of the 1980s and the lack of investor confidence in South Africa hampered the country's economic growth and this economic slowdown affected the Sowetans. Retrenchment and other job losses resulted. Sylvia Dlomo in Bonner and Segal (1988:137) commented, "People were stranded." They started to look for work in Soweto itself. Hawking in Soweto became commonplace and "Spaza shops" were situated on virtually every street corner. By 1990, only 20% of the new job seekers in Soweto were able to find work. School leavers were the main victims of the job crisis and 70% of the unemployed were under the age of thirty-five. This wave of economic decline in the country escalated the level of crime in Soweto. Neil Thobejane in Bonner and Segal: 1988:137) declares, "There were many crime syndicates in Soweto: Crime became far more organised and sophisticated." Bonner and Segal (1988:137) also reported that, "in the first three months of 1990 alone, there were 319 murders, 414 rapes, 1114 residential robberies and 760 armed robberies within the township, and many other crimes unreported¹⁴."

There are, however, people who view crime as a problem that occurs in white suburban areas only. Therefore, the prevailing assumption according to Maluleke (1995:167), is that crime involves something that blacks do to whites. This understanding of crime tends to be racist. For a long time, crime has been a significant variable in the township sub-culture. Therefore, township crime has preyed on the poor, helpless and defenceless black residents. Maluleke (1995:168) further explicates that wealthy people are more resourceful at insulating themselves against crime, than the poor. The poor have no choice but to walk the Jericho road daily. Not so with the wealthy, who have several "options" open to them. Crime, because of apartheid, has been part of South African life since the advent of town and cities. As a consequence of poverty, it has been manifested more in black areas than in white areas. As a consequence of human weakness, crime is found in all communities and places that constitute South Africa.

¹⁴ With an average of four murders a day, Soweto was consequently dubbed the murder capital of the world. Hence, some people still feel unsafe when in Soweto.

Despite the resilience of the people of Soweto and their resistance and struggles against colonial misrule, they have, sadly, been equally plagued by the criminality of various sorts and intensity. In fact, the intensity of poverty levels has often been complemented by bothersome levels of crime. Besides other factors of social life, there is no denying the fact that poverty and crime in Soweto are linked inextricably. Thus, it is not simply a matter of reducing poverty, but social welfare schemes in Soweto should also aim to reduce crime. As an organised syndicated phenomenon, crime is adding to the progressive pauperisation of people.

2.6 Soweto style

Despite the apartheid law governing influx control to prevent blacks from settling permanently in the urban areas, Soweto's population grew rapidly throughout the apartheid decades. The presence of labour migrants who were housed in hostel complexes brought a steady increase in the Soweto population. A new urban culture began to take shape among this growing second-generation population of Soweto. A new style could be seen in fashion, dress, social rituals, and furnishings and in music. Bonner and Segal (1988:58) stated that in 1964 a survey conducted by Phillip Mayer provided a fascinating glimpse into the Sowetans' self-perception.

According to Mayer, Soweto's population was then divided into four classes:

- Professionals and businesspersons constituted the elite of Soweto.
- A middle class of semi-skilled workers, drivers, police officers and clerks who adopted a western lifestyle.
- The ordinary working people, many of whom were children or grandchildren of immigrants. The latter group could be further sub-divided into the "respectable poor" and the dissolute, who were referred to as *abantu abaphakathi* (people who are in the middle).

While the mining industry was the initial motivation for the black influx into Johannesburg, over the last hundred years, pure commercial and other interests have led to further increases in the population. The natural result has been the birth of a new generation of young people who have had very little, if any, association with

life in rural communities. Soweto is thus a place where the progressive detribalisation and modernisation of African persons are eminently epitomised.

2.7 The significance of Soweto

There are large groupings in this area that represent various social perspectives and lifestyles within single or individual congregations. While Soweto Adventists¹⁵ uphold particular doctrinal tenets, they are part of a broad ecclesial sociology that characterises typically urban-based churches in South Africa. Adventist congregations in Soweto are in close proximity to one another. This inter-congregational proximity promotes strong bonds of institutional and social affinity and general-uniformity. This results in many of their young people entering into homorganic marriages. In some instances, these matrimonial bonds are even tied within the same congregation. Therefore, the gathering of information for this project was not a cumbersome and elaborate process.

This socio-ideological influence is reinforced by the fact that for many years these congregations have often been more financially well off than congregations elsewhere in South Africa. The Adventist church in Soweto is clearly challenged by societal contradictions that mark developing communities in the Third World.

On June 16, 1976, Soweto came to the world's attention with the Soweto Uprising, when mass protests erupted over the government's policy to enforce education in Afrikaans rather than English. Police officers opened fire in Orlando West on thousands of students marching from Naledi High School to Orlando Stadium. The rioting continued and twenty- three people, including two white people, died on the first day in Soweto. The first to be killed was Hector Pieteron, who was 12 years old, when the police began to open fire on the students.

Another killed was Dr Melville Edelstein, who had devoted his life to social welfare among blacks. The impact of the Soweto protests reverberated through the country

¹⁵ Adventists in Soweto are often in close touch with general and significant development trends in the church. In a very significant way, this condition has given these congregations a critical "political" advantage over congregations in other parts of the church north of the Orange River. Their collective voice has influenced the course of Adventists' history in this country.

and across the world. In their aftermath, economic and cultural sanctions were introduced from abroad. Political activists left the country to train for guerrilla resistance. Soweto and other townships became the stage for violent state repression. Until this day June 16 is commemorated in South Africa. In response, the apartheid state started providing electricity to more Soweto homes yet phased out financial support for building additional housing.

2.8 Soweto, an iconic womb of poverty/inequality

The following statement appears in, "The Remaking of Soweto", the 2006-2011 Report of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. "Soweto is a symbol of the New South Africa" caught between old squatter misery and new prosperity, squalor and an upbeat lifestyle; it's a vibrant city, which still openly bears the scars of the apartheid past and yet shows what is possible in the New South Africa.

The use of the term "womb" to describe the socio-material character of Soweto is intended to depict the permanence of conditions that continuously "procreate" inequality and poverty in Soweto, especially in its households. Soweto is the meeting point of black people who represent all indigenous communities in South Africa and others from parts of the African continent north of the Limpopo.

Thus, Soweto has become, over the decades, the confluence of all the evils of the apartheid system. It should become logical therefore for this large human settlement to be the source of revolutionary uprisings against political injustice in the country. Poverty in Soweto is fundamentally a societal condition rooted and manifest in families or households. This condition is a permanent legacy of the apartheid system, its legislative practices and political determinations in the face of a liberated socio-political dispensation.

Research conducted by Lekganyane-Maleka (2013:4-5), presents a graphic picture of the nature, complexity and perpetuity of poverty in Soweto. Her findings are outlined in a paper titled, "The measure of poverty and income inequality in the poor in Soweto." This study covered more than 952 households, which were divided into 208 blocks in which four households were sampled.

Lekganyane-Maleka (2013) notes that there is consensus among economic and political analysts that 40% of South Africans live in abject poverty “with the poorest 15% in a desperate struggle to survive.” Note is also made of the fact that the “main driver of inequality in South Africa is no longer the Black/White divide, but rather the group divide between rich Blacks and poor Blacks.”

Among the findings of the survey of Lekganyane-Maleka (2013:5), the following statistics and reflections were noteworthy.

- Total income of households: R6 181 261.00.
- Average income for a household: R6499.74 for 951 households.
- Per capita income: R1358.22 per month for 951 households.
- The lowest of the income groups spend their income on consumer goods, especially food and clothes.
- The state social grant system has stabilised many families, without which hundreds of thousands of the country’s poor would fall ill and die each year.
- Persons whose income rises to certain levels often leave Soweto and migrate to upper market housing complexes in parts of Gauteng.

The reflections and analysis of Lekganyane has clearly articulated how Soweto has suffered in the midst of urban affluence. Even in the light of the new democracy in South Africa, the clutches and legacy of apartheid are still demonising Sowetans. Now what is interesting is that the driver of inequality in South Africa is no longer the black/white divide as Lekganyane suggests, but rather the group divide between rich blacks and poor blacks. This means that the poor in Soweto and South Africa will continue to suffer if the Government does not drastically attend to this challenge.

2.9 Apartheid legislation and its effects on blacks and Soweto

2.9.1 Population Registration Act

While racial segregation in South Africa was introduced and practised by the English colonial government, the National Party, which took power in 1948, institutionalised racism into a strong legal system and political economy. The Population Registration Act of 1950 was the kingpin of the ideology and policies of racial separation and exclusion. It was

determination of specific areas of abode for the various ethnic and language groups. Some persons who knew themselves to be associated with particular ethnic groups were sometimes forcibly reclassified because of their looks or texture of hair to belong to groups in which they were alien. This was particularly the case with persons of mixed blood, known as Coloureds.

With this classification in place, people's places of residence were predetermined, their schools, churches, work opportunities and who they could or not marry were determined. It became illegal for educational institutions to admit learners and students of different racial classifications. Soweto was designated as a residential complex for black people who were beholden to white employers in the greater Johannesburg region. Associated with this Act was the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which allowed public premises, vehicles to be segregated by race, even if equal facilities were not made available to all racial groups. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Reservation_of_Separate_Amenities_Act,_1953

Group Areas Act

This Act, made in 1950, designated parts of the country for different racial groups. With respect to black people, the law created special residential areas for various language communities. This Act also led to massive forced displacement of black communities from places they had occupied for generations to other parts of the country that was usually far from major amenities. With respect to Soweto, new townships were created by the forced relocation of people from such places as Roodepoort, Sophiatown, New Clare and Alexandra, to name a few.

The removals caused people loss of land tenure in their original places of abode. Many persons who were landowners lost this right as they moved to new locations where they became renters of houses they could not own. Some who had owned cattle and other animals were to forfeit them. This caused thousands of black people to become impoverished. They had to seek for employment in nearby white-owned towns and businesses, where their wages could not sustain a meaningful livelihood. The 1950 Act was further consolidated in 1955 by the Promotion of the Group Areas Act (Quora). There was also the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, Act No 52 of

1951, which became a strong pillar of the apartheid system of racial segregation. This act authorised the forcible removal of squatting communities. It allowed eviction and destruction of homes of squatters by landowners, local authorities and government officials Muller (2011: 252-253).

2.9.2 Bantu Laws Amendment Act

This was one of the most pernicious laws. This act empowered the government to forcefully expel Africans from the suburbs or towns. A small number of blacks were allowed to work but their employment was not guaranteed. They could be sent home anytime if the “boss” was angry. The rest of the blacks, if found around town in search of work, would be arrested and sent to tribal homelands or Bantustans.

Natives Resettlement Act, Act No 19 of 1954, also was established to facilitate the removal of blacks from any area within and next to the magisterial district of Johannesburg by the South African government. This act was designed to remove blacks from Sophiatown to Soweto (SA History 2012).

2.9.3 Pass Laws

Every black male had to carry an identity document that could be demanded from him by a policeman anywhere the black person could be found. You could be in your home yard and be asked to produce the document. In this document were details of whether you were employed or searching for work. You could be arrested and taken to prison for any detail in the document deemed missing or incomplete. Millions of black males moved around the country hiding from police who would arrest them for various reasons. Pass laws prescribed domiciles and movement of blacks across the country. You would be summarily apprehended for being in what a police officer deemed to be a wrong place (SA history 2016).

2.9.4 Influx Control Laws

These laws were closely linked to the Pass Laws. Under these laws, no black person would move from a rural place to the urban area without valid documents indicating that some white person or corporate organisation had assured him a job in an urban area. The combined negative effect of apartheid legislation was that black people, in

their millions, became undeserved victims of social inequality, joblessness, poverty and crime. This condition prevailed especially in large human settlements, with Soweto being the cesspool of massive discriminatory legislative disasters (SA History). Initially, it appeared that the proximity of Soweto to Johannesburg would upscale the material conditions of black people since Johannesburg had a viable gold mining industry. This initial condition led to increasing migration of people from other parts of South Africa to Soweto and neighbouring black townships. In time, especially after the Second World War, the greater Johannesburg region became the major job paradise of South Africa and Southern Africa. Bonner and Segal (1998:19). My observation when reading about apartheid legislation is that the proponents of apartheid acted exactly like the Pharisees in the Bible. They added many oppressive laws.

According to Pippert (1979:67), "The Pharisees fanatically studied the law, and in doing so they built up a body of traditional interpretation and application. Eventually their tradition became as sacrosanct as the law itself." However, Jesus was concerned with God and wholly concerned with people. That is, "according to Jesus the human cause is God's cause. His lifestyle rose out of the simple truth of loving God, our neighbours and ourselves. His life was a constant celebration of the supreme value, dignity and preciousness of human life." Pippert (1979:70). South Africa and the world would have been the best place to live in had this principle been understood.

2.10 Demographic composition

A large human grouping such as that found in Soweto invariably comprises a mixture of inter-linguistic and intercultural groups that represent the demography of Southern Africa. While the apartheid system made its attempts to keep the language groups separate in their physical location and in schools, its success was minimal in preventing cross-lingual association for political, commercial social and religious purposes.

Many Sowetans are inter-tribally married. They have language competencies that are only equalled by other similar settlements in Gauteng Province. This cultural-linguistic mix can even be found in religious organisations.

This makes Soweto a community marked by an intricate mixture of indigenous and cosmopolitan thinking and class behaviours impacted by global trends, sociologically speaking, Soweto is a place of stark contrast where different lifestyles coexist without any tension. Except for those with English and Afrikaans names, most of these townships have names that represent the indigenous language of what linguistic and historians refer to as Bantu speakers.

2.11 Who are the poor and where are the poor?

Governments are interested in measuring poverty for several reasons: To know its prevalence in the population, to track whether it is rising or falling, to know its percentage among different groups and, perhaps most importantly, to provide a direction for developing poverty reduction strategies. Several definitions commonly used by the World Bank were considered in this study. According to the World Bank, a person is considered poor if his or her consumption or income level falls below the minimum level necessary to meet his/her basic needs. This minimum level is called the poverty line. Because basic needs vary across time and societies, poverty lines vary in time and place. Each country uses a line that is appropriate to its level of development, and its societal norms and values. Information on consumption and income is obtained through sample surveys of households conducted regularly in most countries (World Bank Development, 2008).

2.12 Extreme poverty according to the World Bank

According to the World Bank, extreme poverty is the situation where even the selected minimum consumption requirements are not met. The UN has defined extreme poverty as a “condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on the access to services.” When people are deprived of basic needs they become morally vulnerable and anarchy sets in. Uprisings and disorder in society become the order of the day.

2.12.1 New poverty lines

The World Bank has released new poverty lines in 2017 to curb extreme poverty. The new standards are set at \$3.20 a day for people in “lower-middle-income” countries, such as Egypt or India, and \$5.50 a day for “upper-middle-income” countries, such as Jamaica or South Africa (Business insider 2017). However, to people who have suffered under extreme intergenerational poverty, these standards are not enough yet to ameliorate this hurtful condition.

2.12.2 Human poverty index definition

The United Nations Development Programme defines an index composed of four factors: the likelihood of a child not surviving to age 60, the functional illiteracy rate, long-term unemployment, and the population living on less than 50% of the median national income.

2.12.3 Definitions in terms of where the poor live

The village poor are found in thousands of villages in Africa, Asia and elsewhere where little is grown and few industries exist. The rural poor live in small communities that have become depressed because of drought or industry abandonment and where few job opportunities exist. In addition, the urban poor is where people live in relative poverty, in the worst cases in crowded and dirty slums.

2.13 Where do the poor live?

According to Kotler and Lee (2009:8-10), over 90% of the extreme poor live in three regions of the world: Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and South Asia. Looking at extreme poverty in different countries, table 4 shows the percentage of the world's poor who live in each of these countries, with “poor” defined as living below the global poverty line of \$1 per day. As indicated, ten countries represent 84.24% of the world's poor and almost two-thirds (63%) live in India and China.

Table 4: The top ten countries representing 84.24% of the world's poor

(Below \$1 per day).

Rank	Country	Percentage of the World's Poor
1	India	41.01%
2	China	22.12%
3	Nigeria	8.03%
4	Pakistan	3.86%
5	Bangladesh	3.49%
6	Brazil	1.82%
7	Ethiopia	1.82%
8	Indonesia	1.49%
9	Mexico	1.43%
10	Russia	99%

Source: Nation Master (2008).

To understand how “poor” a country is, however, it is more relevant to consider what proportion of its population lives in extreme poverty. Table 5 shows statistics for all countries with 50% or more people living below the poverty line. The vast majority (70%) of these countries are on the continent of Africa.

Table 5: Countries with 50% or more of their people living below the poverty line

Rank	Country	Percentage of the population living below the poverty line
1	Liberia: (Africa)	80%
2	Gaza Strip:(Middle East)	80%
3	Haiti: (Central America)	80%
4	Zimbabwe: (Africa)	80%
5	Chad (Africa)	80%
6	Sierra Leon: (Africa)	70.20%
7	Suriname: (South	70%

	America)	
8	Mozambique: (Africa)	70%
9	Angola: (Africa)	70%
10	Nigeria:(Africa)	70%
11	Swaziland: (Africa)	69%
12	Burundi:(Africa)	68%
13	Tajikistan: (Asia)	60%
14	Bolivia: (South America)	60%
15	Rwanda:(Africa)	60%
16	Comoros: (Africa)	60%
17	Guatemala: (Central America)	56.20%
18	Malawi: (Africa)	55%
19	Senegal: (Africa)	54%
20	Saotome and Principe: (Africa)	54%
21	Afghanistan: (Asia)	53%
22	Honduras: (Central America)	50.70%
23	Kenya: (Africa)	50%
24	Namibia: (Africa)	50%
25	Ethiopia: (Africa)	50%
26	Madagascar: (Africa)	50%
27	Eritrea: (Africa)	50%
28	South Africa: (Africa)	50%

Source: Nation Master, 2009

2.14 Why are they poor?

There are ongoing debates about the causes of poverty. Many factors cited as contributing to poverty, however, are related to a few major categories: health, environment, the economy, infrastructures, education, social factors, and family planning. According to Kotler and Lee (2009:12) the following examples are

pertinent; Poor health that may be caused by lack of access to affordable health care, inadequate nutrition, low levels of physical activity, chronic diseases, clinical depression, substance abuse, lack of immunisations, and or the spread of AIDS, malaria, and TB.

Adverse environmental factors, including erosion leading to soil infertility, overgrazing, overplanting, deforestation, natural disasters, drought, water contamination and climate change. Lack of basic infrastructures and services such as roads, sewage treatment, water supply and electricity¹⁶.

2.15 The nature of poverty

Gutierrez (1973:162-287) analyses three meanings of poverty that will not allow us an escape, but which involve us at a deeper and higher level than ever imagined. He points out that “poverty” is an equivocal term. In Catholic circles, poverty is one of the “evangelical counsels” alongside chastity and obedience for those who make a profession in a religious order. Certain strains of Christian spirituality have also exalted poverty in ways that neutralise the need to challenge or remove it. In order to overcome such misunderstandings Gutierrez (1973:163-288) analyses the three meanings of poverty as follows, material poverty is the, “lack of economic goods necessary for a life worthy of the name,” a subhuman condition that must always be opposed. Even so, many conventional Christians want to make a virtue out of poverty for others. Those who are victims of this condition are less and less willing to accept their situation as a disguised blessing. Spiritual poverty is often understood as “an interior attitude of un-attachment to the good of the world.” Gutierrez (1973:286) points out that the third understanding leads “to comforting tranquillising conclusions.”

In terms of this understanding, one can possess many material goods as long as one is not “over attached” to them. The thinking here is that material goods threaten to

¹⁶ Poor access to education or families keeping children from attending school because the children are needed to work on the farm or family business. Strong social factors including crime, domestic violence, wealth distribution, war, discrimination. Gender inequities, and individual beliefs, action and choices. Lack of family planning, sometimes reflecting lack of access to counselling and related services and sometimes a result of religious or long held cultural beliefs.

dominate the lives of those who possess them in abundance, resulting in social insensitivity. This scholar further argues that there is a biblical understanding of poverty as well and there are two major ways of understanding it. On the one hand, poverty contradicts the meaning of Mosaic religion, which entailed giving people dignity, the mandate of Genesis, which was to provide fulfilling work and the sacredness of the human being who is to know God by acting justly towards other human persons.

On the other hand, the Bible understands poverty as a “spiritual childhood,” an attitude opposed to pride or self-sufficiency; a condition that is synonymous with faith and trust in the Lord. So when the gospel says that the poor are “blessed,” it is not condoning poverty on the grounds that all injustices will someday be overcome in the kingdom of God.

Rather, the elimination of the exploitation and poverty that prevents the poor from being fully human has begun; a kingdom of justice that goes even beyond what they could have hoped for has begun. They are blessed because the coming of the kingdom will put an end to their poverty-creating world of fellowship¹⁷ (Gutierrez 1973:298). This project argues that in South Africa current poverty levels are a consequence of a history of colonial rule and legislated material underdevelopment and dishonour, especially of indigenous communities. Consequently, the new government, and the post-apartheid state, face a tremendous challenge in the area of poverty alleviation, not only in Soweto, but in many other parts of South Africa as well. This challenge has been heightened by the advent of Africans from other parts of the continent, and some Euro-western immigrants who have escaped war and other conditions in their countries.

According to Myers (1999:27), the fall of man in the Garden of Eden affected the building blocks of human relationships and human activity. These effects of the fall are manifested in the economic, social, religious, and political systems that humans

¹⁷The above-noted biblical notions, according to Gutierrez, of material poverty as a scandalous condition and spiritual poverty as an “attitude of openness to God,” converge in a third understanding of poverty as a commitment of solidarity and protest. This is a true biblical understanding. Christians should not idealise poverty but should oppose it, Gutierrez continues to say, “Christian poverty, as an expression of love, is solidarity with the poor and is a protest against poverty,” (1973:300,301).

have created throughout history. Thus, politicians have passed laws that institutionalise slavery and racial discrimination and shareholders have allowed their companies to pollute the environment. Then society is left to pay for the after-effects of such ills through its courts, prisons and health and welfare system. It must be understood, however, poverty and misfortune as such do not in themselves cause crime; and therefore cannot provide a justifiable excuse for criminality. Conditions or the experience of poverty can also precipitate incessant labour conflicts, as we find in South Africa today, and in extreme cases, political instability and social uprisings. Indeed when the claims of compassion are denied and undermined, discouragement, and even resentment are likely to follow. Poverty has been defined in various ways and with increasing sophistication. It is therefore important for me to articulate my view of poverty because this will influence what I think transformational development is and how I should go about it.

I would like to concur with Myers in his explicit description of poverty. Myers (2011:113) describes poverty as:

- A deficit.
- An entanglement.
- A lack of access to social power.
- Disempowerment.
- A web of lies.

Each of these descriptions is discussed briefly below.

2.16 Poverty as a deficiency

Myers (1999:27-57) defines poverty relationally. He states that poverty is made up of broken relationships. Myers further highlights these four categories of broken relationships: those that exist between an individual and God, an individual and other human beings, an individual and himself or herself, an individual and the rest of God's creation. This brokenness causes a deficit, a lack. Poor people lack basic human necessities. They do not have enough to eat and, enough place to sleep, they do not have enough land or they have no land at all. They have no clean water or water for irrigation. Roads are inadequate, and there are no schools for their

children. Even if there are schools, there are no skills provided there. If there are no schools, households are financially disadvantaged.

In addition, this is the case in Soweto. According to the social survey conducted by Barbara Piazza-Georgi in 1999 in Soweto, <https://wits.academia.edu/BarbaraPiazzaGeorgi> about one in ten Soweto adults had no formal education and about a quarter had a maximum of standard four (Grade 6). Women were more likely to have had no formal schooling, but a similar proportion of the males and females had post-matric education. That indicates older female residents were less likely to have gone to school, but the younger generation has had equal educational opportunities. The 1996 census found that 34.3% of the African population above the age of 20 had no education and a further 27, 8% had received some primary schooling. In 1997, 8, 5% of Soweto's adult population had a post-matric qualification. Furthermore, when Barbara Piazza-Georgia (1999) conducted a study on human and social capital in Soweto in 1999, the study revealed the following about household expenditure on education:

Some 31% of households reported having no education or schooling expenditure, 45% spent R1000, 00 per year or less on education and training, 20% spent between R1000, 00 and R5000, 00, and 3% between R5000, 00 and R10 000, 00 per year on education and training. Sowetans will not or cannot get out of this rut of poverty. Information was elicited concerning people's plans and attitudes regarding further education or training in the future. Some 58% of the adult population felt they needed additional training. Amongst these, 71% actually planned to do so, while among the 29% who did not plan to receive training, almost half said that courses were too expensive and a third said that they had no time. The remainder found the available courses inconvenient or of poor quality or gave other reasons.

The social survey conducted by Piazza-Georgi reflects how the poor education system affected the lives of the people in Soweto. In fact, she painfully states that Sowetans will not or cannot get out of this rut. The poor education system has aggravated poverty in Soweto to such an extent that people do not value their lives. They eat from hand to mouth because of meagre salaries. According to education expert Graeme Bloch, apartheid's legacy in education lives on, and the poor are still

getting a poorer education. He continues to say after 22 years of democracy, blacks and coloured in South Africa are still left under-resourced.

2.17 Poverty as a “cluster of disadvantages”

Chambers (in Myers 2003:66-68), using this understanding as his point of departure, describes the poor as living in a “cluster of disadvantages.” The household is poor, physically weak, isolated, vulnerable, and powerless. Chambers describes these dimensions of poverty as an interactive system that he calls the “poverty trap” (p 3).

2.17.1 Material poverty

The households have few assets; their housing and sanitation are inadequate. They have no land, livestock or wealth.

2.17.2 Physical weakness

Members are weak. They lack strength because of poor health and inadequate nutrition. Many in the households are women, the very young, and the very old.

2.17.3 Isolation

There is a lack of access to services and information. The household is often remote from main roads, water lines, and even electricity. There is a lack of access to markets, capital and credit.

2.17.4 Vulnerability

Households lack choices and options. The members cannot save money and they are vulnerable to cultural demands, such as dowry and feast days, that use up their savings.

2.17.5 Powerlessness

The household lacks the ability and the knowledge to influence the life around it. Authorities always exploit it.

2.17.6 Spiritual poverty

The household suffers from spiritual oppression – fear of spirits, demons and ancestors. The members lack hope and are unable to believe that change is possible. They may not understand the transforming power of the gospel. These six

elements of poverty-entrapment, according to Chambers, are interconnected, hence; each is linked to and reinforces the others. A problem in one-area means problems in another, and it is easy to see how the result can be greater and greater poverty.

2.18 Poverty as lack of access to social power

Similar to Chambers, Friedman (in Myers 2011:118) begins with the household as the social unit of the poor and sees it embedded within four overlapping domains of social practice: state, political community, civil society, and corporate economy. Friedman describes poverty by focusing on powerlessness as the lack of access to social power. Friedman advocates and argues that the social system reinforces the powerlessness of the poor by exclusion and exploitation. He therefore, stresses the fact that a spiritual dimension is needed to account for the fact that social institutions frequently frustrate even the best and most noble intentions of the people who inhabit and manage them. However, he points out that there is no means to account for the destructive behaviours and poor choices of both the poor and the non-poor, nor the fact that the poor often exploit each other.

2.18.1 Poverty as disempowerment

Jayakumar in Myers (2011:168) views but adds the spiritual dimension of poverty. Christian sees the poor household as being embedded in a complex framework of interacting systems. Similar to Chambers and Friedman, Christian advocates that these systems include a personal system, which includes psychology, a social system, a spiritual/religious system, which is both personal and social and a cultural system that includes the worldview. Poor people find themselves trapped within some interacting systems that eventually render them vulnerable and disempowered. Christian refers to this type of disempowerment as captivity to good-complexes of the non-poor, and deception by the principalities and powers, inadequacies in worldview and suffering from a marred identity. Christian also argues the fact that the non-poor regard themselves as superior and anointed to rule. They are tempted to play god in the lives of the poor, using religious and social systems, the mass media and law and government policies to suppress the freedom of the “have-nots.” Structures that are created to justify and rationalise the position of the privileged ones.

Furthermore, the poor become captive to the god-complexes of the non-poor. According to Christian, the non-poor justify their position by, seeking to absolutise themselves in the lives of the poor. Citing the “eternal yesterday” as the justification for influencing the “eternal tomorrow” of the poor. “It has always been this way.” Claiming immutability for their power over the poor, always expressing, and advocating the fact that power sharing is not idealistic. This systemic captivity is usually expressed at micro and macro levels. The local police, landowners and religious leaders form the micro or the lowest level of this disempowering system. In turn, the micro level is linked to business, political, and judicial leaders at regional and national levels. This is the macro level of the god-complexes.

2.18.2 Poverty as a web of lies

A “web of lies”, according to Christian, is another trap that distorts the identity of the poor in ways far stronger and insidious than physical bonds or material limitations – Christian (1994: 264), these lies are the result of god-complexes, inadequacies in their worldviews and deception by principalities and powers. Sider (1997: 119) states categorically that there is no single cause of poverty. According to Sider, the conservatives blame the poor for their misery, whereas, the liberals reject this view as hard-hearted and misguided. Instead of blaming the victims of poverty, liberals, strongly feel that the blame lies squarely with the structures that create poverty.

Sider further explicates that if we think poverty results from laziness when, in fact, inadequate tools and unfair systems are major factors, our best efforts will fail. Furthermore, if we think unjust structures are the only causes of poverty when, in fact, personal choices play a role, we will also fail. The causes of poverty according to Sider are therefore very complex and I cannot agree more. Sider (1997: 121-132) has therefore stated the causes of poverty comprehensively as follows: sinful personal choices, unbiblical worldviews, disasters, lack of technology, great inequalities, of power, local, national, global, and western colonialism. I will briefly, hereunder, explicate each cause of poverty.

2.18.3 Wrong personal choices

Sider (1997:121) states that laziness and wrong choices result in poverty. Solomon in (Proverb 6:6, 23:21) confirms this truth when he says, “lazy people should learn a lesson from the way ants live ... Drunkards and gluttons will be reduced to poverty.” Choosing to misuse drugs, alcohol, and sex contributes to poverty. However, Sider states that our choices are not made in a vacuum. Illiteracy, unemployment, racism and neglect in childhood provide a setting in which sinful choices find a fertile ground and good choices not made. The only solution for such sinful choices is spiritual transformation.

2.18.4 Unbiblical Worldviews

Second, Sider (1997:122) states that cultural values play a major role both in fostering poverty and in creating wealth. Those who think, as animists do, that the rivers and trees are living spirits, will not dam rivers to create hydroelectric power, or cut forests to manufacture paper. Those who think, as some Eastern monists do, that the material world is an illusion to be escaped, will not waste much time creating material abundance. Furthermore, those who think, as modern materialists do, that nothing exists except the material world, will search ever more frantically for meaning and joy in ever-increasing material possessions – ever if the result is environmental destruction and neglect of the poor.

The unbiblical worldview such as Hinduism’s complex theology and practice with regard to the caste system is another major cause of poverty in India, where more than 200 million “untouchables” live in agonising poverty while the upper castes feel little obligation to change things. The Hindu worldview teaches that people in the higher castes are there because of good choices in previous incarnations, and those in the lowest castes are there because of evil choices in previous incarnations. If the untouchables accept their condition, the reigning theology explains, they will do better in the next incarnation. This worldview nurtures fatalism among the poor and complacency among the powerful. Such a theology undermines the fact that in the face of God, all men are equal and all created in His image and that history is God’s story and God sides with the poor. An authentic biblical view of persons, history and

the material world is what we need. If that is the case, we will treasure material possessions without worshipping them.

2.18.5 Disasters

Tsunamis and hurricanes cause widespread devastation that result in extreme suffering and instant poverty for an untold number of people. Furthermore, earthquakes, floods, and drought produce starvation. These are conditions beyond the sphere of human power and technology. God sometimes, uses such conditions to bring repentance to his wayward people. In addition, Sider (1997:123) speaks also of ethnic conflicts and religious and tribal wars today that leave millions homeless. The result of course, is hunger and starvation. Last, the first and second world-wars brought about a total collapse to the world economy. Burundi and other African states have become victims of such atrocities.

2.18.6 Lack of modern technology

The lack of technology is another major cause of poverty according to Sider (1997:124). He asserts that if people lack the proper tools and knowledge regardless of how eager they are to work, they will fail without these implements. Knowledge and skills are needed to produce goods to exchange for food. Without these essential skills, people suffer and die from malnutrition. The black substance we know as crude oil was useless until someone discovered how to use it to propel cars, aeroplanes, and electrical generators. Accordingly, applying knowledge to nature produces astonishing new products. If the poor can be helped to acquire the appropriate technology, this can be a solution to relieve their state of poverty.

2.18.7 Inequality of power

The British thinker, Lord Acton, declared, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Because of the fall, sinful people regularly use power to oppress those who are powerless. This unequal balance of power is a social sin, which, in turn results, in unfair social, economic, and political systems that produce poverty.

Many hungry poor people suffer because a few people who are in power neglect the powerless. In essence, those in power create structures that benefit the “haves” against the “have-nots.”

2.18.8 Material imbalances

In many nations, a few people own vast amounts of land. In South Africa alone 83% is still in the hands of the minority while the majority of South Africans languish in the remaining percent. Hence, poverty has impoverished many in this country. Even when the poor do own land, they often do not have access to the resources needed to make it productive. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 1.3% of all landowners in Latin America used to own 71.6% of the land. Poor farmers had to suffer at the hands of unscrupulous moneylenders when borrowing money to purchase seed and fertilisers (World Bank Development 2003:3). Sider (1997:126) further contends that wealthy and large landowners and multinational companies dominate many poor nations. For instance, in the Philippines, almost half (45%) of the people live on less than two dollars a day. Most of the land in the Philippines is in the hands of the elites. In Brazil, 15 million Brazilians in 2000 lived on less than one dollar a day and over 43 million, more than one-quarter of the population – on less than a dollar a day.

It is important to note that two-thirds of the extremely poor live in rural areas where the richest 1% of the landowners own 44% of the arable land and more than 50% of the farmers must toil on less than 3% of the land (Bread for the World Institute, 1995: 10-15). Angola is the second-largest Sub-Saharan oil producer and the fourth-largest producer of diamonds in the world, but 78 % of the rural population live in poverty. One of three children dies before the age of five (FAO, UN 2002: 31).

To demonstrate how wealthy nations dominate poor nations, Sider (1997:128) in his book shows the distribution of income or consumption in a variety of nations. For example, in the United States (U.S), the richest 20 per cent receive 46, 4%, and the poorest percentage is only 5.2%. This simply reveals that there are enormous differences in power that profoundly shape the lives of people in every nation. Sider

(1997:127) states categorically that the most influential and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (U.S., Russia, Britain, France, and China) have the veto power and they use that power for their own national advantage. He further, states that, with only 5% of the world's population, the U.S. controls 17% of the votes in the World Bank and 18 % in the IMF. Seven Nations (U.S., Japan, Great Britain, France, Germany, Canada, and Italy) have only 12 % of the world's people, but their annual summit is regarded as the most influential global economic institution.

2.18.9 Colonialism

European colonialism is one major reason for poverty in the world. Since the 16th century, white Europeans have had the most military power according to Sider (1997:129). More guns were produced in Europe than in, Asia, Africa, and Native America combined. Under the power of the Europeans, the inhabitants of these countries were killed, decimated, enslaved and divided up. The most renowned development economist at the World Bank, states that, "the basic reasons for inequality between, the presently developed and developing nations lie fairly deep in their history.

In most parts of the Third World, centuries of colonial rule have left their legacy of dependency" (World Development Report, 2004: Making services work for the poor people. Washington DC: International Bank for Reconciliation and Development). How shocking and ironic that the civilisations Europe "discovered" in Asia, Africa and the Americas were not "Christian," but the Europeans who were Christians were colonisers. Furthermore, according to Sider (1997:130), these countries being "civilised" by Europe lacked modern military technology expertise. Therefore, they were ultimately powerless and dependent on their "mother" European countries. Preoccupied with the status of the mother country, colonisers seldom exhibited much regard for the economic, social, and cultural conditions of the indigenous peoples. No wonder that today the underdevelopment of our countries in Africa roots in the history of military conquests.

2.19 Conclusion

The choice of Soweto as a site for the investigation of how Adventists respond to poverty is significant in that, as an iconic human settlement whose history of anti-colonial struggle is known globally, makes this study a model that the church can use to construct its theological and missional practice in the area of social ministry. It is the hope of the researcher that this study, which is the first of its kind within South African Adventism, will assist the church to grow in its understanding and application of the biblical message to societies undergoing material and social deprivation in our land.

CHAPTER 3

ASSESSING ADVENTIST INVOLVEMENT IN SOWETO

3.1 Introduction

In the light of what has been presented in the preceding chapters, in this chapter I report on how Adventists themselves assess their involvement or lack of it in the alleviation of poverty among the poor in Soweto. Interviews and group discussions reported below were meant to ascertain the thinking of people about poverty and its causes, and what the church in this large human settlement can do to “suffer” with the poor by redeeming them from their plight.

3.2 Four survey groups

There are four survey groups in this report. One consisted of non-Adventists, who were interviewed in the Maponya Mall. The other three groups comprise of people who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The researcher and the research assistant, Nkosi, mentioned in chapter 1, engaged the people in all these groups.

3.2.1 Maponya Mall Group Groups - the non-Adventists (non-Christians)

This group comprised a random sample of twenty persons. Researcher and Nkosi (assistant) interviewed this group in April 2009. Their ages varied widely. All of them were shoppers that we found in different parts of the mall. We did not assemble them into a group for fear of causing unnecessary attention and caution from security personnel in the mall. The purpose of the interviews conducted with these persons was to find out what they, as Sowetans, think of the issues of employment/unemployment in relation to poverty. We also desired to see if these persons had any critical opinions about the presence of a structure of commercial affluence in the midst of largely poor communities.

3.2.2 The Adventist groups

Researcher and Nkosi identified all three groups. Both of us conducted the interviews. The groups comprised of different types of people: The first Adventist group was interviewed on September 15, 2008, while the second Adventist group members were engaged between March 9 and May 28, 2009.

The last Adventist group participated in a workshop in Zola Township on 15 January 2011. The purpose was to establish (1) the reality or absence of community ministry consciousness among Adventists in Soweto; (2) their awareness of the high incidence of poverty in the area; (3) what they, as individuals, were doing to respond to the plight of the poor, and (4) what they thought the church should do to confront the issue of poverty among the people.

A) Adventist Group 1

This was a special group that was composed of local church leaders of the Dorcas Society Federation in Soweto. Part of this group involved persons who were in local church projects working for the poor. The group also included two persons who worked in the church's regional office for social welfare in Orange Grove. The interaction with this group is described in table 6.

B) Adventist Group 2

This group was made up of selected Adventists gathered from various occupations. The interaction with this group is described in table 7.

C) Adventist Group 3

The fourth group was interviewed through a written questionnaire reflected in table 8. It comprised of the Adventist congregation in Zola Township. In the history of Soweto, Zola has been known to be crime-infested and that parts of this township are poverty-stricken. Even the congregation itself has high levels of youth and adult unemployment. My research assistant happens to be a member of this congregation. This is why it was easy for us to poll their opinions on poverty in Soweto. I myself pastored this church for three years. Most of its members are in the middle level of the lower rung of economic sustainability. In recent years, this church has assimilated persons from other countries in the SADC region that have also added to the level of unemployment and poverty. The interview in this church was carried out on January 15, 2011. This was on a Sabbath (Saturday) afternoon. Forty-three persons comprising of adults and youth participated in the survey. The relevant sections of this chapter give a fuller account of their participation in the research.

3.3 Results of the interviews

3.3.1 Maponya Mall

Question1

How does a mall such as the Maponya Mall benefit the community?

Response

The essential response to this question was that the mall reduces transport costs, saves time and brings essential commodities within easy reach of the people, thus cushioning them from unnecessary travel to commercial centres outside of or far from Soweto which would be more costly because of distance and transport. In addition, these malls also create employment and convenience for the residents. And the traffic generated by the malls has benefitted small businesses. Hence, there are vendors that have positioned themselves outside the malls. Should a consumer forget what he/she needed from the mall, he/she ends up buying from the vendors.

With regard to the residential property market, Zondi (2011:101) has highlighted the fact that residential property price and value has increased since the establishment of the malls. It became clear that malls are seen as structures of convenience for local communities.

Question 2:

- To what extent is the mall seen as creating employment and thus affecting positively on poverty in Soweto?

Response

The impression gathered from answers to this question was that while the mall provides a needed commercial service, it has limited capacity for economic and social transformation since the large majority of many of the shops in the mall were not owned locally. The mall was seen as a generator of income that does not necessarily remain in the local community for projects of development and social relief. The people also noted the fact that a number of shops in the mall closed down because of high rental costs. A number of these were those that were primarily

owned by black people. Both the researcher and assistant researcher have seen the evidence of shops that were closed down.

According to Zondi (2011:104), contrary to popular belief and perception, the negative effect on Soweto existing businesses is not that alarming. While businesses such as Spaza shops are adversely affected by the existence of shopping malls, street vending and shebeens are benefiting. General dealers and businesses located in old shopping centres reported positive and negative effects, with positive effects outweighing negative effects. It could be that they have found coping mechanisms to deal with the competition stimulated by the shopping malls. Retailers, especially anchor retailers located in the old shopping centres, are the same as those located at Maponya Mall and Jabulani Mall. They may differ in size, but they stock almost the same products and sell them at centrally determined prices.

In light of the responses of the people in the malls, it is clear that some have a positive attitude and some have a negative attitude towards the opening of the malls. Whatever the views of the consumers, what is important is the economic status of each consumer. Everyone must survive at the end of the day and that depends upon their buying patterns.

Hence, according to the iResearch Services, consumer patterns are influenced by the decisions and actions of the consumer. The study of consumer behaviour does not only help to understand the past but even predict the future.

The iResearch Services, therefore, clearly articulate five factors pertaining to the tendencies, attitudes and priorities of people that must be given due importance for understanding their buying patterns:

➤ **Marketing Campaigns**

What influences consumers to buy a certain brand on a regular basis is the marketing campaign that is done regularly. In most of our informal retail shops in the township, there is mostly no organised or systematic marketing and advertising campaigns. Hence, the emergence of both Maponya Mall and Jabulani Mall altered the buying patterns and behaviour of Sowetans. The malls with their incessant organised marketing and advertising campaigns have influenced Sowetans to

divert some of their retail spending from the existing businesses to the shopping malls.

➤ Economic Conditions

The economic climate prevailing in the market always influences the pattern of a consumer. A positive economic environment is known to make consumers more confident to purchase anything they want irrespective of their financial liabilities.

➤ Personal Preferences

Consumer behaviour is influenced by various shades of likes, dislikes, morals, and values. Since a consumer has the total prerogative in buying what he or she likes, shopkeepers must understand the psychology of their clientele. Marketing and advertisement may play a role but the personal consumer likes and dislikes exert greater influence on the end purchase of the consumer.

➤ Group Influence

Any consumer is likely to buy if family members advise him to. The relatives and neighbours have a great influence on the purchasing decisions of the consumer.

➤ Purchasing Power

The purchasing power of the consumer plays an important role in influencing consumer behaviour. Most of the time consumers want to purchase what they like but fail because of purchasing ability. The Marketing Department that has understood the behaviour of a consumer will retain their position successfully in the market place. Factors such as convenience, time, and entertainment have influenced the people of Soweto to buy from these two malls. Buying in the mall has not only brought opportunities to some, but has deepened the condition of poverty to the poverty-stricken ones who compete with those that have buying ability. <https://www.iresearchservices.com/5-common-factors-influencing-consumer-behavior/>

Question 3:

- Do you know of any business, organisation or structure that is committed to lowering poverty levels in Soweto?

The respondents did not know of any such businesses.

3.3.2 Adventist Group 1

Group 1 was asked the following question:

Question:

- What are Adventists doing in Soweto in terms of social involvement and the alleviation of poverty?

Responses:

- Adventists run a handful of social responsibility programmes and projects in Soweto. These are primarily of two kinds, namely, food distribution services such as soup kitchens, and early childhood development projects.
- Each of these endeavours is directed by some board, committee or council sanctioned by a local congregation. The projects are also registered under Section 21 of the Companies Act, or the NPO Act. There are other activities or projects that are run by individual Adventists on an independent basis. The table below gives the basic facts about the projects.

Table 6 ADVENTIST CHURCH PROJECTS

Church	Nature of Project	Activities
Orlando East Church	Soup kitchen	Target: local people Frequency: once a week
Orlando West Church	Soup Kitchen Food distribution	Target: local people Target: Vlakfontein informal settlement south of Soweto
Pimville Church	Soup kitchen	Target: local people Frequency: once a week
Meadowlands Zone 3	Early Childhood Development Centre	
Zondi Church	Soup kitchen	Target: local people Frequency: once a week
Meadowlands Zone 7	Soup kitchen	Target: local people Frequency: once a week

All these projects are church-based, i.e., they are run from the church precincts and have accountability to local church administrative structures. Most of these projects are associated with and funded by the local congregations and /or the regional office of the church's welfare organisation, ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) in Orange Grove, Johannesburg.

There is a positive and less positive impact of information from Adventist group:

a. Positive impact

The church in Meadowlands Zone 3 has been running a successful pre-school project for more than fifteen years. It caters for children from various parts of Soweto. It has its own structures built within the precincts of the

church. Its name is Motswedi Day Care Centre. The name “Motswedi” is Sotho/Tswana for “fountain”.

b. **Less positive impact**

Based on the interviews and comments made by the survey group, the researcher and research assistant concluded that the following challenges are obvious:

- **Poor vision of social development:** The Adventist church in Soweto lacks a clear vision of social development because of several factors, among which the following can be listed:
- **Lack of a scientific or comprehensive approach to social responsibility.** It is good to talk about poverty; however, talk remains a passion unless it is backed by valid information and a broad understanding of root causes and consequences. Poverty is both a consequence and a cause of certain unpleasant social conditions that are multifarious in their impact on the sanity of social life.
- **Lack of a broad and informed rational approach to poverty** results in short-term endeavours that are fundamentally of relief rather than a developmental nature. There is nothing morally wrong with giving people food and clothing; however, there is something fundamentally wrong when such actions constitute the sole features of a social responsibility programme of a denomination.
- **Lack of intellectual grasp of poverty.** Poverty is seen as a material misfortune, an accident caused by a combination of social mishaps and prejudices leading to alcoholism and other acts of intemperance. Poverty is not seen as a legacy of the previous colonial regime that displaced large black population to places of underdevelopment and from opportunities for personal and communal progress.
- **No formal discourse on social needs.** Local Dorcas Societies are not seen as agencies of serious intellectual discussion, knowledge production and articulation. They are generally perceived as simple women welfare groups that supplement evangelistic programmes of the church. In themselves, they are not agents for change. However, the quality of their service to children

and the poor, if not far-reaching enough, is still making an input into people's lives and are appreciated¹⁸.

- **Narrow social responsibility action.** Poverty is closely linked to such conditions as low functional literacy, lack of the capacity to access meaningful work opportunities.

In the light of these six challenges above, we need to understand that the church cannot faithfully minister to people if the needs of the people are not fully understood. The gospel becomes complete when we follow Christ's divine similitude and His method. When we do what Christ did, the gospel will become relevant to our communities. Christ's method will be fully explicated in chapter 5. Gaspar Colon (1997: 103) cuts to the crux of the matter when he says:

As we are talking about change, it comes to my mind that we have tried over and over again to solve our problems, and maybe focus our mission, by changing structure incrementally to meet the challenge of problems and obstacles that we see. The problem with such an approach is that we end up focusing on the volcano, on results, on peripherals, on the symptoms and not what is deep down inside. What we need is to start looking very carefully at the changing context of our world; begin to look at our mission as a people, to look at the mandates that we have in that mission and then change our mentality and our strategy in recognition of those changing contexts. Incremental change of structure is not going to solve our problem. We need to become sensitive to whatever paradigm our vision is taking us to. (p.103).

The effective necessary change can never be experienced if the church remains a fortress church. A fortress church is a church that views the world as evil and dangerous and as a result, it must not have anything to do with the world. Therefore, we protect and huddle ourselves in our Christian cocoons and never get involved. We pray for the world but never engage in a meaningful relationship. Eric Swanson

¹⁸ The theological challenges of the urban process today are those which have confronted Christians whenever the faith has been taken into unfamiliar patterns of social life. What are Christians called to be and do in a context so different from any which they have encountered before? What ministries and communities are Christians called to bring into being? In what ways can the human city be shaped to reflect the priorities and values of the kingdom of God? In the urban community, the simple question 'Who is my neighbour?' demands a new answer (see Davey 2001:8).

corroborates this important factor when he states, “While the church is called to be separate in lifestyle it has never been called to be isolated from the people it seeks to influence.”

3.3.3 Adventist Group 2

This was a select group of Adventists who were interviewed and engaged in some discourse on the church’s work among the poor in Soweto. They were five in number and came from different backgrounds. The exercise took place on Sunday, 9 March 2008. The discussion centred on two questions noted in the table below.

Table 7 POVERTY – CAUSES AND RESPONSES

What are the Causes of poverty in Soweto?	What can the SDA Church do to alleviate poverty in Soweto?
<p>Respondent A (Young woman lawyer and a business woman aged between 25 and 30)</p> <p>1. Lack of exposure to developing opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate resources 2. Legacy of poor education 3. Social self-depreciation 	<p>Skills development Need for new socialisation of children/youth Promotion of development programme over relief activities</p>
<p>Respondent B (Young aged 24, SABC International)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological self-depreciation 2. Wishful thinking 3. Laziness and lack of initiative 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme of skills development. 2. Food gardens. 3. Creation of small businesses.
<p>Respondent C (Professional nurse, Retired lecturer at</p>	<p>1. Identified inconsistency in church leadership as a major</p>

What are the Causes of poverty in Soweto?	What can the SDA Church do to alleviate poverty in Soweto?
<p>Chris Hani Baragwanath Nursing College and former leader of SDA Welfare Federation in Soweto aged 60+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not discuss the causes of poverty in Soweto 	<p>cause of the lack of concrete programmes of social responsibility.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Changes in approach to social needs. 3. Adoption of a project-based approach, e.g. the establishment by the church of a social ministry centre. <p>Asked if the Soweto SDA Welfare Federation ever discussed poverty in any serious manner, she said that discussion had not been serious and lacked a commitment to long-range action.</p> <p>Wishes to see a comprehensive plan of social responsibility from the church.</p>
<p>Respondent D</p> <p>(Nonprofessional woman in her 40s and leader of Soweto SDA Welfare Federation)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sees unemployment as a major cause of poverty 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of food gardens 2. Food distribution
<p>Respondent E</p> <p>(Retired female nursing matron aged 60+)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unemployment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skills development 2. Provisions of bursaries for academically gifted children

What are the Causes of poverty in Soweto?	What can the SDA Church do to alleviate poverty in Soweto?
2. Lack of skilled labour 3. Inadequate resources	

3.3.4 Adventist Group 3

January 15th 2011 was a Saturday, a day of worship in the Adventist community. The researcher and Nkosi (assistant) engaged forty-three members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who worship in Zola, one of the poor areas of Soweto.

Members of this church formed the focus group of this study. Apart from one elderly male who lives in an old age home, the rest came from the following ten townships:

- Braamfischerville
- Dobsonville
- Emndeni
- Green Village
- Moletsane
- Molapo
- Naledi
- Protea Glen Extension
- Tladi
- Zola

The intention was to ascertain the perceptions of Adventists on poverty in Soweto as well as proposals for the creation of the church's response thereto. The group comprised of adults from age 35 to 88 and young people between 16 and 34 years of age. The younger group comprised 65 percent of the participants. Both genders were fairly represented. This exercise took place in the church in Zola Township. Some of the persons involved in the survey are originally from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. An explanation of this exercise, its intents and objectives were given to participants. I also told them how they should handle the research questions. Since a

number of these persons were adults who had not received sufficient school education the questions were written in English and IsiZulu since most of these persons spoke, read and wrote these languages.

3.4 Survey Process

The survey required participants to answer five questions. They were given a question sheet with spaces in which to record their responses. The questions were presented in the sequence shown below. Each question asked in English was accompanied by a translation in isiZulu, a common African language among Soweto people. Some of the responses were even written in this language.

Table 8 QUESTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

ENGLISH VERSION	ISIZULU VERSION
What is poverty?	Buyini ubumpofu?
What are the causes of poverty?	Ziyini izimbangela zobumpofu?
How can Adventists respond to poverty in Soweto?	Bangenzani abaLindi (AmaSabatha) ukuhlangabezana nobumpofu emphakathini waseSoweto?
What does your local church do to help the poor in Soweto?	Ikhona yini into eyenziwa ibandla okulo ngodaba lwabampofu?
Is there something that you personally do for the poor?	Ikhona yini into wena oyenzela abantu abahluphekile?
What do people think of witchcraft regarding poverty in Soweto? Does witchcraft cause poverty?	Bathini abantu ngobuloyi mayelana nobuhlwempu babantu eSowethu? Kungabe ukweswela kubangelwa ubuthakathi?

Table 9 RESPONSES FROM PARTICIPANTS

What is poverty?
<p>Broad consensus emerged in response to this question. Answers provided included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• poverty is a condition of material need• poverty is hunger/starvation• poverty is nakedness• poverty is psychological distress• poverty is the lack of intelligent thinking• poverty is lack of skills and resources
What are the causes of poverty?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• answers to this question varied significantly from one person to another• poverty can be caused by poor family inheritance• poverty can be caused by the lack of people to advise and guide youth• poverty can be caused by laziness• early loss of parents through death can cause poverty• illiteracy can be a predisposing cause of poverty• another cause could be selfishness and refusal to network with other people• failure to budget can cause poverty• lack of a spirit of giving can cause poverty• unemployment is a cause of poverty• poverty can be caused by lack of information about where you can find help• planning without action can cause poverty• poverty can be a result of evil deeds such as immorality, crime and witchcraft• poverty can be caused by the use of money on non-essentials

- neglect of education in practical skills
- abuse of resources can cause poverty
- poverty can be caused by self-despise
- lack of self-motivation can be a cause of poverty
- oppression by the apartheid government

How can Adventists respond to poverty in Soweto?

A number of practical suggestions were made.

- skills development programmes that will reduce the practice of giving relief to give relief to the needy the church can give more
- the church should establish technical schools
- people can be invited to Jesus Christ who will solve their problems
- the needy can be adopted by the church/members
- the church should advise the government to introduce skills programmes in primary schools
- the church should teach people proper management of money
- the church should teach entrepreneurship skills to people

What does your local church do to help the poor in Soweto?

Answers to this question were shamefully few and inconsequential. Some people did not even answer this question. Most participants simply made reference to the church's welfare organisation, the Dorcas Society. The DS is a women's welfare wing of the church. Much of the work of this society involves serving food, giving clothes, cleaning people's yards/homes and bathing the aged and the sick.

Is there something that you, as an individual, can do for the poor?

The large majority did not respond to this question. A few persons quoted things they do on a sporadic basis. These involve giving food/clothing, money and emotional support to poor or needy persons.

Table 10 EVALUATION OF RESPONSES

EVALUATION OF RESPONSES AND IMPLICATIONS	EVALUATION BY RESEARCHER, WITH HELP FROM RESEARCH ASSISTANT
1. What is poverty?	<p>A. The six answers given were found to be common understandings and descriptions of poverty. They covered both material and psychological conditions of life. These responses imply that the participants see poverty as a holistic experience that impacts on the totality of a person’s life, covering areas such as material well-being, psychological welfare and spiritual development. Any theological approach would therefore need to deal with the totality of human life and a full response to the human condition of poverty.</p>
2. What are the causes of poverty?	<p>A. Answers to this question deal with a wide range of Factors – social, personal, behavioural, psychological, financial, and educational and others, that are market related.</p> <p>B. These responses predicate the need for a theology that addresses both spiritual and material needs of life as equal concerns of the gospel.</p>
3. How can Adventists respond to poverty in Soweto?	<p>A. The responses were found to be wise and practical. They emphasise the key role of empowerment and skilling as the basis of sustainable development.</p> <p>B. While these responses are valid they strike at</p>

EVALUATION OF RESPONSES AND IMPLICATIONS	EVALUATION BY RESEARCHER, WITH HELP FROM RESEARCH ASSISTANT
	<p>the Adventist obsession with doctrinal and theoretical concepts in the absence of practical ministry. The practicalisation of the gospel stands as a serious challenge to the lack of viable ministry for the poor and other related disadvantaged people in black communities. There is an urgent need for Adventists to upgrade their thinking around human needs and translate their biblical understanding to action programmes of relief and development.</p> <p>Responses to this question reveal several realities:</p> <p>A. Adventists in Soweto see action through the structures of the church. While they have an awareness of conditions of poverty in the community, they, as members of local congregations, see no need to go beyond what the church does as an organisation. The church's Dorcas Society is used as a cop-out or façade to hide inaction in the area of social ministry.</p> <p>B. The centralisation of the Adventist organisation around pastoral leadership and associated policy-based structures tend to undermine local initiatives and creativity in the area of mission. Innovation from the periphery is often viewed with suspicion, thus restricting independent ministries in the area of social action. A new paradigm is needed to break the frontiers of organisational prescriptions and restrictions.</p>

EVALUATION OF RESPONSES AND IMPLICATIONS	EVALUATION BY RESEARCHER, WITH HELP FROM RESEARCH ASSISTANT
5. Is there something you can do as a person to help the poor?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The general failure to respond to this question is consistent with responses to Question 4. 2. In reality, by and large, members as individuals, do nothing to help the poor. It is unlikely that they can do something better as a collective, that is, as congregations. Very few Adventists engage in social ministry as individuals and as collectives. This underscores the necessity of a re-visitation of the content and comprehensive of the evangelistic mandate of Matthew 28:18-20.

Further reflections of researcher and research assistant on notable observations from the group'. People's reflections on poverty: Causes, Effects and Proposals for Action

A) Punishment or curse from God

Observations and Proposals:

- There is a need to unpack the phenomenon of sin and how it has given birth to multiple consequences of negativity and destruction of people and things.
- It should be made clear that God is not malevolent by nature, but loving and caring. The poverty that surrounds us is part of the ecology of evil in the human condition.

B) Will of God

Observations and Proposals:

- In addition to the point raised above, it should be made clear to the people that poverty is but one of the consequences of human fall. It is rooted in greed, social dishonour, racial inequality, etc.
- Because of the intensity, prevalence and debilitating results of poverty, some of the believers have embraced fatalistic logic and/or justification of poverty, that it is part of God's will that some people will be poor while others are rich.

This reasoning cements their life to desperation and hopelessness, making some of them read God's invisible hand in the disparities between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

- In addition, this semi-theological explanation for the continuity of poverty provides psychological cushioning against the shocks associated with destitution. This limiting micro-religious notion further implicates people in self-underdevelopment.

C) Result of laziness and lack of creative thinking

Observations and Proposals:

- It is the view of this project that a large portion of the poor people in Soweto is in this condition because of a lack of self-discipline and self-determination. There are many people who have the brains and physical energy to change their lives but they will not because they lack diligence and the spirit of self-reliance and the determination to change things.
- Motivation programmes attached to skills provision should form part of the large agenda of poverty alleviation in South Africa.

D) Lack of opportunities

Observations and Proposals:

- It is true that many people who live in Soweto did not have opportunities necessary for what the government calls, "a better life for all."
- As a community of social and economic contrasts, the levels of educational literacy vary for a number of reasons:

- The migration of people from rural areas to Soweto adds to the number of persons whose educational literacy is socially and economically meaningless.
- Society has itself been the hive of human underdevelopment because of the political theory that gave birth to townships across South Africa.
- There has also been the hostel system that brought thousands of illiterate and semi-illiterate adult males from the countryside to the city for work opportunities. Historically, single-sex hostels have been perceived as places of people with little or no education at all.
- Attempts should be made to create mechanisms for job opportunities in Soweto.

E) Low educational literacy

Observations and Proposals:

- Here lies one of the most fundamental challenges facing poor people in Soweto. Despite the fact that there are many schools in this place, it is also true that levels of literacy are not appreciable. Literacy levels are not high enough to sustain self-reliance and independence.
- Discussion minimally took place on the inner workings of the education system since a number of the adult members comprise persons with little education.

F) Lack of marketable skills

Observations and Proposals:

- The lack of skills that people need for work opportunities impacts negatively on persons and families alike. There is also the fact that the large majority of black South Africans who were schooled were not educated for employment. Thus, the long wait for external employment exacerbates the condition for penury and personal despair. Suicides related to failure to sustain one's life and family are not uncommon in Soweto.
- In light of this condition, it is necessary that skills provision be done in the following areas as a means towards poverty alleviation.
 - practical arts and/or trades
 - computer skills for internet and office practice

- business creation and marketing
- small-scale manufacturing
- as a core feature of poverty alleviation efforts.

G) Results of racism under apartheid system

Observations and Proposals:

- The apartheid colonial system has set the stage for long-range negative effects on human and material development in this country. The country is not about to see the end of the legacy of the centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid.
- In any programme of poverty alleviation, there will be a need to address the psychological and sociological effects of oppression on the people of Soweto.
- People need to be impressed with facts about the political causes of their condition. But beyond this, they must realise the need for community action for economic and cultural redress and development.
- However, specific programme-oriented action tended to be overshadowed by analysis. The disparities must be addressed through, among other processes, the formation of self-help schemes, co-operative businesses in which work and profits are shared among participating members. Collective ownership or management of the means of production will go a long way in addressing the needs of the poor in Soweto.
- A strong programme of seminars and workshops has not been forthcoming in adequate amounts for many years. However, there is a recent awakening from church leadership towards the provision of special training for pastors and lay people in counselling and healing. Therapeutic practices have been restricted to the church's health centres, which are also not numerically adequate. A workshop was conducted in Bloemfontein in 2013 to empower pastors and selected lay people to engage in therapeutic practice in the field of mental illness and HIV/AIDS.

H) Consequences of unemployment

Observations and Proposals:



- Unemployment has direct and indirect consequences. Among the direct results, the following can be listed:
 - Low means of sustenance
 - Poor nutrition
 - Lack of sufficient clothes
 - Lowered physical immunity to disease
 - Psychological distress
 - Spiritual confusion, despair, and reference to the influence of witchcraft
 - Progressive indebtedness
- Programmes of empowerment, job creation and proper financial management are necessary to address this condition. In addition, there should be a broad and continuing programmes of Adult Basic Education and Training Education which will involve market skills for sustainable livelihood
- It is also important to train people to develop a banking culture. Most black people are unbanked and therefore have no reserves to lean on when trouble strikes.

I) Poverty and a belief in witchcraft

Observations and Proposals:

- Some people regard witchcraft as a causative factor in their poverty. They believe that they are targets and victims of social ill-will from some known, suspected or unknown persons. Because this is a popular and emotionally gratifying option, it is not easy to deal with it positively without appealing to a spiritual solution or some rational procedures.
- Further, when witchcraft is seen as a predisposing cause of poverty, other associated practices emerge in the life of a person or family. One such behaviour is the consultation of occult practitioners and traditional healers who almost invariably offer unscientific solutions and procedures. Meanwhile, even that meagre money that a person has gets finished in the process of finding solutions from occult practitioners.
- They often read this condition as one of ill-luck or misfortune emanating from some infractions of ancestral beliefs and practices.
- In the face of this and deeply entrenched way of thinking, only the gospel of

Jesus Christ can be invoked to deliver people from misconceptions and their condition of material destitution.

- Since Adventists have been stuck in relief-focused social ministry they have not engaged in analysing the whole range of factors that have plunged people, including the church's own, membership, in poverty. In addition, because of a primarily Euro-western corporeal spirituality and concern for denominational peculiarity, the struggles against nonphysical forces that Paul (Eph. 6:11-13) addresses have not been prominent in Adventist pastoral and congregational ministry. Thus, salvation from sin has been directed largely to behavioural infractions almost to the neglect of emancipating people from the presence of demons in their lives.

J) Consequences of the capitalist economy with its entrenched inequalities

- Lack of land ownership by many for agricultural practice.
- Dishonesty and corruption on the part of politicians – nepotism, cronyism, special favours and bribery. These problems were understood to be the consequences of the underlying sin condition that follows humanity in all societal contexts.
- Survival economy: Small businesses (*Spaza* shops, small supermarkets, street vending, taverns/*shebeens*, transportation, taxi business, and other small businesses).
- Critical reflection was not done in this area. However, no consideration was taken on what would happen to survival mechanisms if fortunes changed and the poor saw themselves benefiting generously from the economy.
- Grant dependence: While grants are seen as short-term means to sustain people, they are also seen as creating a state/grant-dependant nation.
- Loans from credit or loan companies which tend to recycle indebtedness and poverty

K) Local economy/survival economy

Small businesses (*Spaza* shops, small supermarkets, street vending, taverns/*shebeens*, transportation, taxi business, other small businesses).

- Clubs, Societies: These are sustenance mechanisms to keep cash flow unabated for basic family and other needs.

- Funeral Schemes: These have been established to alleviate the high costs of burials.
- Subsistence farming: There is a lot of visible subsistence farming in Soweto. This is both agricultural and pastoral. Vegetable gardens can be found in homesteads and in schools or on land for community projects.

L) Destructive survival mechanisms

Street begging, this practice, while is initially rooted in poverty, hunger and homelessness, has become an industry in which some people use others less privileged than they to hire their time out to beg for money for some bosses who are the handlers of the beggars. There are oral reports, especially in the greater Johannesburg region, that some of the women who carry babies or little children at road intersections are not the biological mothers of these infants. The infants are hired at a fee and used to arouse the pity of motorists and passers-by. The tragedy of begging is that it has become such an entrenched practice that it is public knowledge that some people who beg earn more from their adventures than people in the formal work economy. Some of these beggars have been seen depositing large sums of money in local banks in the afternoons.

In the light of the above, beggars have informally transformed begging into a science in which the rationale includes such considerations as the need for freedom from formal employment; freedom from family ties and responsibilities; freedom from national concerns; from the pressures that bear on homemaking and parenting; freedom from the embarrassment associated with competing with others in a normal society; the very pleasure of submitting oneself to defeatism and nihilism and the gratification of making society guilty for the conditions of the less able and underprivileged in society, and the very joy of being an object of welfare attention. In the light of what I have said above, the phenomenon of begging calls for independent study and analysis before it becomes a supporting activity of a decadent economic class. Marital infidelity for financial reasons. Some people engage in extramarital relations in order to jack up their finances and resources. Prostitution, this practice was merely noted without any extensive discussion. Sugar-

daddy for school fees and material needs. Although this practice becomes an addiction in the course of time, its primary motivation is self-sustainability.

It is also possible that some of the youth who engage in this practice do so merely to have an abundance of means and to satisfy the need to gratify greed. There could also be causes such as

- Negative family conditions such as fatherlessness
- Lack of proper family upbringing
- A sense of homelessness caused by a person's orphan status
- A need to feel loved and appreciated by a senior person

Criminality, crime was attributed to people's lack of means. It was noted, however, that criminality does become a lifestyle, especially where immediate arrest does not take place and where the gains of crime bring considerable satisfaction and a change in social status.

3.5 A theological assessment of responses

The researcher observed that the non-Adventists (non-Christian) groups did not associate the challenge of poverty with spiritual considerations. They saw poverty as a purely socio-political phenomenon, which called for measures linked to material solutions. While the church groups had a spiritual perspective on poverty, they did not display any serious association of this condition with matters of faith and mission. While they know that poverty is one of the consequences of sin, they cannot grapple with poverty from a theological perspective. The understanding exposed in this project is that poverty, like many other negative human conditions in this world, is part of the evils that have ravaged humanity. Thus, there is a need for theological rooting of the church's understanding of poverty in Soweto. This should precede any attempt to respond to the realities presented by poverty in this human settlement. The church's narrow view of the link between material conditions of life and matters of salvation as well as the need for mission to embrace the totality of the human condition in Soweto is specifically responsible for the low theological reflection of the church groups on the plight of the poor.

The following comment by Hector Luis Diaz (1997:14) during the 1997 Adventist Development & Relief Agency Symposium on Mission and Social Action, illustrates what has been said above,

It seems to me that historically the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in spite of the activities of its founders, has ignored issues of social justice and social action since the 1920s. It seems to me that historically we have given a lot of importance to education, health and evangelism. This organisational attitude has a lot to do without theology regarding the kingdom of God. It seems that many of us have believed that we are not citizens of this world, but rather that we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven; and that God's kingdom is completely in heaven and completely in the future. So since I am only a pilgrim here and I am not a citizen of this world but rather of the heavenly kingdom, why bother with social problems? Everything will pass. But there are others of us that believe that God's kingdom begins here and now and projects itself into the future. The impression that I have is that believing that I don't belong to this world and God's kingdom is completely in the future has something to do with our attitude towards issues of social justice and social action. (ADRA Symposium, 1997).

3.6 Conclusion

The interaction done with the church and public groups that participated in this project has revealed the diverse understanding of the causative and related dynamics in the whole discourse on poverty in Soweto. These observations have a bearing on the challenges facing community development and service provision in the wider South African community. It is notable that while the persons polled came from a different age, and gender groups, and denominational orientations, they have common experiences of poverty that has made their contribution to the research meaningful and valid. The groups also dealt with the specific questions asked. It does not appear, however, that perceptions of poverty are necessarily age, gender and faith-based in their impact on society. The inclusion of age groups simply added validation of specific aspects of the project.

Responses to research questions have been helpful in providing part of the plan of action for a methodology of poverty alleviation and/or eradication. The chapter also dealt with the broad effects of poverty on the Soweto community, and how individuals in the community respond to the cruel dynamics of poverty. Persons who are victims of poverty do not treat this condition as a simple matter for futile intellectual reflection. For them, it is a real condition of discomfort that implicates many of them in survival mechanisms, some of which are morally questionable. In light of what has been noted above, there is an obvious imperative for the liberative use of the Bible in addressing the material conditions of humanity among which poverty is a severe challenge. The next chapter will focus on how the salient themes in Adventist theology can be re-interpreted to bring about a liberative, transformational ministry in Soweto and other poverty-stricken communities.

CHAPTER 4

MISSIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON SALIENT THEMES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to achieve two objectives, namely, the harvesting of critical thinking about three church doctrines from the minds of a representative sample of lay persons in Soweto; and to use the reflections of this group in building a conceptual platform for the application of the doctrines of the Sabbath, Stewardship and the second coming of Jesus as pillars of an Adventist liberative mission theology for the poor. It is the hope of the researcher that this aspect of the project will influence traditional Adventist welfare practitioners to reconsider the narrow focus and constructiveness of the church's conventional social ministry in poor communities.

As noted in previous sections in this work, the greatest challenge and shortcoming facing Adventist social ministry in disadvantaged communities is the restriction of the church's theology to salvific matters only, to the neglect of broader issues of human life that, in themselves also hinder people's understanding and experience of God as a being who loves justice and mercy. It is therefore necessary for the church in this region to take a second look at the relevance of its doctrines to the social experiences of people, and refocus its gospel to specific societal needs and challenges.

This chapter reports on a group discussion on key Adventist beliefs in relation to social ministry in the area of poverty. The group comprised forty-three persons with varied educational and social backgrounds. They were divided into three topic sub-groups. The purpose of this exercise was to identify aspects of key Adventist teachings that inhibit action in the area of social ministry, and others that may be used to respond to the condition of the poor. The researcher outlined in brief detail the content of three key Adventist doctrines selected for this exercise. These were the Sabbath, Stewardship and the Second Coming of Jesus. There was no need for the researcher to give long statements on these doctrines since the group was well informed on the church's beliefs.

Besides, some in the group were congregational leaders who were teachers of doctrine in their own right. What I added was a comment on what social ministry involves so that all participants may work from the same conceptual understanding of the direction the discussions should take. In my thinking, the whole exercise would also provide the participants with an enlightening educational experience as well.

4.2 Group discussions of Adventist theological doctrines

4.2.1 Initial introduction to participants in all group discussions

I held the workshop with the participants on the 14th of August 2011. After welcoming the group of 43 persons (these were ladies from the Dorcas group, and young people in the Community service department and stewardship) people and stating the purpose of the discussion, the researcher made the following guiding comments. We, Adventists, are known for certain beliefs and practices. These beliefs define who we are and what our mission is in the world. In this meeting, each of you will be asked to join a small group. Each group will be given a specific belief of the Adventist church to discuss and to analyse. For instance, Group 1 will discuss our belief in the Sabbath. They will look at the spiritual value and the practical relevance of the Sabbath in human life. In what way does our understanding of the Sabbath affect our ministry to the disadvantaged, especially the poor in Soweto, and also how the Sabbath can be used to display God's love to humanity and especially to people who suffer from poverty? This pattern that I have mentioned for Group 1 applies to Groups 2 and 3. For the purpose of this exercise, Group 1 will discuss the Sabbath; Group 2 will discuss Stewardship and Group 3 will discuss the Second Coming of Christ. I will stop the group sessions after forty minutes. After that, a scribe or secretary from each group will present a statement of the reflections of the group on its specific doctrine.

4.2.2 Group 1 Focus doctrine: The Sabbath

The most notable fact about us Adventists is our recognition of the biblical Sabbath, commonly referred to as Saturday, as a day of worship. This doctrine is linked to the creation of the world and the creation of humanity. There is therefore a relationship between man and worship, which is informed by the understanding that God created

humanity for his pleasure. We go to church on the Sabbath to give recognition of our creature status and the recognition of God as a Creator and Saviour of our lives. The Sabbath is a powerful testimony to the sovereignty of God. Only God can create, and only God can make something holy. This is the reason why Adventists object so strongly to the change of the Sabbath.

The group confirmed the fact that as a celebration of God's creative act, the Sabbath day is a time when God refreshes and sanctifies us. During the week people work hard and sweat for their money and livelihoods, but when the Sabbath comes all this comes to a stop. The Sabbath is therefore a chance for us to reconnect with God and with other believers. The Sabbath is a message of our common origin and as human beings. In other words, problems like tribalism and xenophobia should not be known among genuine Sabbath observers. The Sabbath is not a private instruction for a select group of people. It is for all humanity.

Christ loved and served people on the Sabbath. The Sabbath should be used for acts of mercy, care and reconciliation. People who are sick may be healed on the Sabbath. People who are poor may be fed or clothed on the Sabbath. The hungry and poor should be invited to lunches or dinners on the Sabbath. Prisons and homes for the destitute and orphans may be visited on the Sabbath. One or two Sabbaths in a year may be set aside for festivals of compassion during which the poor, can be treated to special compassion and care. Apart from a sumptuous meal, such a programme can be dedicated to a total ministry to the poor through sermons, short talks on health, parenting, emotional problems, and any other human challenges.

4.2.3 Group 2 Focus doctrine: Stewardship

One of the major teachings of the Bible is that each person is a keeper of their brother/sister. God's universal fatherhood has an axiomatic feature, the universal brother/sisterhood of humanity. This principle was taught to Cain, the belligerent, callous son of Adam (Gen. 4:4-9). Tragically, his defiant question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" has run like a miraculous thread through the millennia. Cain's implicit

theory – “I am not my brother’s keeper,” has been the foundation of all systems of greed, robbery and dehumanisation known to humankind.

It functions not only as the guiding rule of major economic and development systems in the world today; it is also the hinge around which much of the narrow heavenly – minded spirituality that characterises religious people rotates. The challenge facing Adventism in Soweto and in other parts of the world is not so much the absence of welfare programmes to sustain and improve the lives of the poor, but a constricted view of social welfare dictated by a narrow theological definition of Christian mission. The common denominator that drives the stewardship ministry is that ‘man’ is a sinner in his/her very being untouched by considerations of culture, economics, politics, language or race. We have a natural slant towards restricting evil to the personal dimension.

Before our group began its work, we engaged in a serious season of prayer as the weight of the subject given to us weighed heavily on some of the members. After the prayer, we broke into two groups so that our contribution to the discussion would be intense and rich. What we report here is the combined input of these groups. The report covered two well-known Bible stories, the conversation between God and Cain and the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

We then discussed our understanding of stewardship. Since God created humans to work as stewards or managers over nature, it is important for us to extend this sacred responsibility to other human beings, especially people who are less blessed than we are. In this regard, we discussed the interactions between the brothers Cain and Abel, and the ensuing conversation between God and Cain. In Genesis 4:9; God says to Cain: “Where is your brother Abel?” And Cain responded: “I do not know, am I my brother’s keeper?” Here God asked Cain, “where is your brother?” and Cain responded: “Am I my brother’s keeper”? Both God and Cain concentrated on the term, brother that is common between the questions that both of them have to each other. God initiates the conversation and defines Abel as a brother to Cain.

On the other side – out of the full knowledge of the evil he has committed, Cain makes a statement that he is not a keeper of his brother, essentially saying that he is

not a part of the God's mandate for humanity to be stewards. While, on the one side, Cain is a story of horror, denial, irresponsibility and insensitivity; on the other side, the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), presents a story of compassion, responsibility, acceptance and healing. This, both sub-groups felt, are the two poles that exist in the Adventist humanity in Soweto. The "Cain group" knows that everybody else is a brother/sister but turns a blind eye to the needs of others. This act is tantamount to the murder of Abel.

The "Samaritan group", on the other hand, represents a minority that walks in the streets of Soweto with eyes open to detect those attacked and injured by the "robbers" of joblessness, poor education, poverty, and disease. Cain represents godlessness and recklessness and the Good Samaritan represents Godlike responsibility. The group resolved that something must be done – based on the stewardship doctrine – to display God's love and care for the poor in Soweto. Our consciences cannot rest while we have so many neighbours who, because of material dishonour, must remain forever tortured by the painful futility of poverty, lack of bread and protection from the harsh elements of nature and illness. The group then suggested that this doctrine impels us to engage in a multi-pronged social ministry programme.

Proposals from this group include:

- Baptismal candidates should receive instruction on the importance and mandatory nature of social ministry.
- Church members should participate in some church programme directed at the alleviation of the needs of the poor in a local community.
- Adventist churches in Soweto should establish social ministry funds directed at the poor.
- Family Fun Days should be organised once in a year to relieve the poor of their emotional stress and material needs. On those days, the poor should be favoured with goods and food.

4.2.4 Group 3 Focus doctrine: the Second Coming of Jesus

Third, we Adventists are known for preaching the second coming of Jesus. To cover this doctrine I will use statements from the 1997 General Conference symposium on mission and social ministry.

One of the participants was Dr David Syme (1997:3) who made the following remarks:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is both a world church and a growing church. There are only twelve countries where we have no church presence at all. We can, and do, thank God for that great achievement. As Adventists, we are by definition a people who look upwards for the second advent of Jesus Christ when he will come to establish His kingdom in all its fullness. But in that great hope and expectation there lies an inherent danger to us as a people. This danger is essentially that we might become so preoccupied with preparation for and witness to that great future reality that we fail to see or comprehend that His kingdom in part already exists, and that we are part of it here and now. Righteousness is both spiritual and social in character. We cannot live our lives atop a spiritual cloud, detached and distant from life as it is now. We cannot simply tune out from the society in which we presently live and witness. Surely the gospel of our Lord is more than a pie in the sky.

The group noted that some people use the Second Coming of Christ as a convenient excuse to escape the challenges of the poor and helpless in the present world. On the contrary, the consensus of this group is that the second coming of Christ should be the strongest motivation for ministry to the poor. The return of Christ is the hope of millions who suffer from want and disease in the world today. This teaching entails humanity's hopes against the ravages of sin, hunger joblessness, destitution and despair. It is in this very teaching that the millennial hope of men and women across the centuries has been established. The Second Advent can be utilised to design "Hope Projects" that takes care of people with illness, unemployment, low education or illiteracy, hunger and nakedness and homelessness. Skills programmes fit into

this understanding. Counselling services are also needed for the poor since many of them do not know how to cope with the challenges of life. In the section that follows the project will look at how the doctrines of the Sabbath, Stewardship and the Second Coming can speak to and function as pointers towards a liberative mission theology for Adventists with regard to the poor. Each doctrine will be discoursed from a liberative perspective.

4.3 Retrieving salient themes of Adventist mission theology: liberative aspects

Any valid and liberative Adventist mission theology must be rooted in God's Word and guided by the Holy Spirit in the mission of the church to the world. Adventists cannot be persuaded to operate meaningfully in responding to the millennial hopes of the poor outside of formal recognition of the sufficiency of scripture to address human problems. In light of this fundamental consideration, an Adventist model of liberative mission theology must, as a first act, take into consideration the restoration of humanity and the perfection of a new Eden. This stance will be consistent with Christ's mission statement in Luke 4:18, 19 where he defines his mission as primarily holistic, inclusive, integrative and liberative. Correspondingly the gospel commission in Matthew 28:18-20 must find its meaningful and effective practical way in acts of mission and ministry that liberate people from the broad spectrum of the consequences of the fall.

In the following pages, specific focus is given to how the Sabbath, Stewardship and the Second Coming may, in a re-interpretation of the traditional understanding of these doctrines, function as liberative themes in Adventist theology. In his argument for hermeneutic action directed at establishing a socially liberative Adventist mission, Plantak (1998:212) makes the following important statement:

Seventh-day Adventists need to explore further their methods of interpreting the Bible. Adventist hermeneutics is still in its infancy, especially in relation to social ethics. Too often a literalistic approach has overshadowed question of the historical, grammatical, syntactical literary and sociological context. Also, aspects of cultural conditioning must be taken into account as well the progressive revelation of God embodied in Adventism in the adopted phrase, "the present truth."

More emphasis on hermeneutics is paramount if the right adaptation of the revelation of God is applied to the contemporary understanding of Christian attitudes towards human rights.

Colvin (1986:40) has already commented, "Adventism needs to do its homework. If it does not, its actions and statements will be incoherent, irrelevant, and frivolously modish at best; at worst; they will be dangerous or actively harmful to the church, its members, and the general society." In resonance with Colvin, Johnson (1981:13) states, "We must not keep to ourselves, becoming vocal only when our self-interest is threatened."

4.3.1 A liberating mission - theological focus on the doctrine of the Sabbath

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2005:16).

Seventh-day Adventists are theistic creationists. They prefer to call themselves *special creationists*. They believe that God created the universe in six 24-hour literal days; and that the weekly cycle has remained constant. Further, they believe that the earth is about six thousand years old. Consequently, they reject all naturalistic interpretations of origins that locate the existence of the universe across a long span of time covering billions of years. The evolutionary explanation of origins would logically tamper with the validity, consistency and continuity of the Sabbath.

In general, Adventists have become known globally for attending church on Saturday. While other people argue that the Sabbath is an old Jewish practice or an institution annulled at the cross, Adventists insist that the Sabbath has both earthly and post-planetary continuity (see Is. 66). Further, Adventists teach that in the not so distant future the Sabbath will become a definitive mark of distinction between persons who love God and those who are on the side of God's archenemy. Especially, Adventists believe and teach that, among other reasons, as the return of Jesus draws near, they and millions of other Christians will be persecuted for Sabbath observance.

The foremost Adventist writer, Ellen G. White (1911:433), has written extensively on the battle over the validity of the Sabbath and the coming persecution associated with it in her ground-breaking publication, *The Great Controversy between God and Satan* (1911). It is also this entrenched understanding of the crisis around the Sabbath that has made Adventists to treat social ministry as a peripheral aspect of the gospel.

This project sustains the central views of Adventism on the Sabbath. However, the study also advocates the position that Adventists must explore the broader message and meaning of the Sabbath. Adventists should see in the Sabbath doctrine God's intention to keep humanity whole, fulfilled and restful. As a re-interpretation of the traditional, legalistic understanding of the doctrine of the Sabbath, the model proposed in this project locates the Sabbath at the centre of a radically liberative mission to the poor. It argues that rest, as the mark of wholeness, must be realised in those aspects of human life that the Sabbath addresses. With this understanding in place, the Adventist recognition of the centrality of the Sabbath in creation and redemption can be utilised in shaping a liberative mission theology for societies ravaged by destitution.

Adventists must use this central doctrine in responding to the multi-disciplinary challenges of the poor. The following are critical questions that Adventists must ask and for which they should provide answers:

- What has caused Adventists to fail to understand the sufficiency of the Sabbath in addressing the needs of the poor?
- How have Adventists limited the potency of the Sabbath as a time of deliverance or liberation of people from the social, emotional, political and material consequences of sin?
- In what way can the Sabbath be revisited by Adventists to discover its broad restorative and liberative meaning, purpose and function in sustainable human development?
- How can Adventists themselves be liberated from faulty and inadequate ways of observing the Sabbath?
- How can Adventists transfer the meaning, spirit and blessings of the Sabbath to society, especially the restless poor in Soweto?
- How can the Sabbath become a platform for the manifestation of God's preparation of humanity for the final millennial Sabbath?

The group confirmed the fact that as a celebration of God's creative act, the Sabbath day is a time when God refreshes and sanctifies us. During the week people work hard and sweat for their money and livelihoods, but when the Sabbath comes all this comes to a stop. The Sabbath is therefore a chance for us to reconnect with God and with other believers. The Sabbath is a message of our common origin and as human beings. In other words, problems like tribalism and xenophobia should not be known among genuine Sabbath observers. The Sabbath is not a private instruction for a select group of people. It is for all humanity. A major milestone event occurred in the creation programme of Genesis chapter one. God instituted a rest period, a full day of twenty-four hours historically referred to as the "Sabbath."

(A The universality of the Sabbath

In this section, the researcher wishes to go beyond the traditional theoretical understanding and observance of the Sabbath as a time interval for the worship of God once in the week. This chapter will present the practical and liberative value of the Sabbath to humanity and to the poor in particular. There is a social-liberative value in the Sabbath which makes it a platform, first, for the *affirmation of people's divine humanity* and second, for *relief from conditions of psychological and material*

destitution. The Sabbath should be a time for restorative capacitating of the poor to continue in their search for fulfilment and freedom from want. In formulating a liberative mission perspective on the Sabbath, I am especially indebted to concepts expressed by Plantak, Strand, and Kubo. Plantak presents important aspects of the Sabbath that are articulated in the three points presented below:

The first important fact about the Sabbath is its universality. As an interval in time, it exposes humanity to the rest that God intended all humanity to experience once a week. This 24-hour period cannot be restricted to a place or condition of society.

It arrives once a week and embraces all created life, thus subjecting all human beings to the same blessings regardless of the place of residence, social class and variations in material well-being. The universality of the Sabbath implicates humanity in the omnipresence of God in creation. The Sabbath has no specific or limited geographic application. The Sabbath is a global blessing to all humanity. It should therefore not be seen as and restricted to a given faith community or cultural group. As Finley (2017:37) aptly states, “The Sabbath was given at Creation for all people as a day to worship the Creator and praise Him for the gift of life itself. It was set aside at Creation as an eternal symbol of God’s creative power for His people in every age. The Sabbath¹⁹ cannot be monopolised or privatised.”

B) The Sabbath: time for release from labour

In discussing this aspect of the Sabbath, Strand (1982:215-228) makes the following crucial comment, “

The fourth commandment encompasses both the six days of Israel’s work and the seventh day of rest and thus the weekly rhythm of working and resting is intimately connected.” Quoting Bacchiocchi Strand says, “The six working days find their meaning in the seventh day of rest, and the seventh day finds its meaning in God’s presence among His people, the meaning of all human time is found in communion with God” (Bacchiocchi 1980:104). Strand then quotes Davidson (1988:101) as saying, “Even in the busiest time of year God

¹⁹ True Sabbath keeping touches the whole of life. The Sabbath sanctifies the week. One cannot be dishonest on Monday and truly keep the Sabbath, because Sabbath keeping is essentially a posture toward God that is not a one-day-in-seven kind of activity (Provonsha 1993:86).

rescues us from the tyranny of toil. No secular business is so important as to rob us of fellowship with Him.”

www.discipletree.com/05Courses/ChurchGrowth/.../Sabbath%20and%20Discipleship...

We may safely state that when labour robs us of fellowship with God it becomes slavery and idolatry. Labour without meaningful rest corrupts and degrades humanity.

Strand further argues,

The community of Israel was to nurture and demonstrate its weekly devotion to God. The Sabbath was to be one of the important means God would use to sanctify them (cf. Ex. 31:13-17) thus making them a holy witness to the nations. The remembrance of a definite holy time, grounded in the original creation week would provide an ongoing reminder that it was God who had both made and redeemed them. In the same way, the busyness of modern life which tends to overwhelm the time needed to find communion with God and fellowship with one another is counteracted by the remembrance of the holiness of the Sabbath, which separates the sacred from common time.

As such, this sharp distinction between the sacred and common time is not shared with some recent writings on the Sabbath which have a more philosophical than biblical basis.

If Strand is right, then it should follow that the Sabbath was not meant to be a mere doctrine but a cosmic stage for the restoration of godliness to humanity. The Sabbath is an opportunity for humanity to experience divinity.

C) The Sabbath: a time for liberation

On the Sabbath, we are freed from the shackles of drudgery and toil. We enter into a redemptive encounter with divinity and the rest of creation. We become reconciled with humanity as liberated persons. The Bible associates the Sabbath with God's power and authority to deliver us from the cares of life and makes it possible for us to be recreated through sanctification (Ez. 20:10-12, 20). The broad time span within which the Sabbath was located in the Old Testament was the jubilee system. The

jubilee system was marked by seven-year periods that culminated in the 50th year of the system.

The fiftieth year was greeted with communal glee as it symbolised God's favour on all those who were poor, indebted and enslaved. Thus each seventh-day in the cycle was a miniature jubilee in which the Sabbath rest symbolised God's release of his people from moral indebtedness and all forms of material discomfiture and disablement. For the Jews, the Sabbath was enveloped in the 50-year cycle of broad-based social justice and the equalisation of social privilege and humanity.

The jubilee period and Sabbath year traditions found in Leviticus 25 point to God as the only true and eternal owner of the land. We are like tenants, managers whose task is to 'lease' the land for not more than a half century. Thus, woven through this tradition are themes of caring for the land, for the poor and destitute. The seven- and forty-nine-year cycles were meant to give recognition of the sovereignty of God over the human and nonhuman creation. Jubilee is further discussed in chapter 5.

Exodus 23:9-13 we see the marriage of Sabbath keeping with the seventh year rest for the land and for people who were rendered poor and landless for various reasons and causes. The understanding of the Sabbath that is presented above has serious implications for the Adventist church in South Africa and elsewhere in the world where there have been systems of oppression and slavery. The church's assimilation of the discriminatory practices of the apartheid state compromised the sanctity and liberation that are embedded in the Sabbath. Sabbath teachings and laws, by echoing the jubilee traditions, go to the heart of the biblical emphases on justice and compassion. Sabbath becomes an enduring sign of hope that the poor will see justice and the distraught find peace. Thus the Sabbath must remain to be observed even in the millennial period. Kubo (1978:46) presents the following graphic concerns about the Sabbath. "Sabbath observance has integral social and humanitarian aspects that we dare not forget. The Sabbath as a sign of redemption points in two directions – to our own redemption and to that of the oppressed. We must bring rest to those who live in servitude."

D) The Sabbath: A time to embrace justice and mercy

The Sabbath highlights how in the very fabric of Hebrew society justice and mercy worked together in favour of the less privileged in society. The OT mentions three Sabbaths which reflect justice and mercy:

- Instructions to keep the seventh-day Sabbath included providing equal opportunity for everyone to rest, including servants, animals, and foreigners.
- In every seven years, the Sabbath was a time for cancelling debts, for showing concern for the poor and freeing slaves. Interestingly, God instructed the people to include the animals in the benefit of the Sabbath year (see Levi. 25:6-7).
- Jubilee that came on the fiftieth year after seven Sabbath years, instructed that property that was sold was restored to the original owner; debts were forgiven and prisoners and slaves were freed. Jubilee was an equaliser of society, a time to give everyone a new beginning. White (1941:185) also confirms this truth when she states, it was a “safeguard...against the extremes of either wealth or want.”

E) The Sabbath: An all-inclusive mission

The Sabbath should be a time when Adventists move from their exclusiveness to open worship and communion with God and humanity. The Sabbath should not be seen as private property or a monopoly of the Adventist community. The Adventist church should learn to be true to scripture when Jesus says, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mk 2:27). Therefore, the Sabbath is a platform for the doing of good acts and administration of justice in an unjust world. Adventists, therefore, should be known as people who are sensitive to issues of injustice and deprivation, especially, in the context of Soweto. The Sabbath is, to use a common expression, a time for “levelling the playing fields” between those who have the blessings of life and others who lack means of sustenance. The Sabbath does not manipulate and exploits the poor but seeks to redress the undesirable conditions that continue to plague the image of God.

Thus, Claassens in her article (2011:75) explicates as follows, “In our globalized world it seems that work has become increasingly fragmented and depersonalized; employees being able to expect little humaneness or loyalty from their employers.

The Sabbath commandment thus serves as an imperative to counter the ugly face of capitalism's relentless surge for profit, as well as globalization that affects us all, but in particular exploits the poor and vulnerable in countries far away."

What amazes one repeatedly is the inclusiveness of Jesus' mission. It embraces both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressor, both the sinners and the devout. His mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of hostility, of crossing boundaries between individuals and groups. As God forgives us graciously, we are to forgive those who wrong us up to seventy times seven, which, in fact, means limitless, more often than we are able to count (StuhlmueLLer 1983:148). LapidE (1986:91), an Orthodox Jew, confirmed this attitude of loving one's enemies²⁰ as "an innovation introduced by Jesus". The disciples would be reviled, interrogated, ostracised, and threatened like sheep among wolves, yet they were to continue offering their message of peace and love to the very people who treated them unjustly. Even the persistent rejection of their message did not cause them to give up (Bosch 1991:28).

Jesus addressed those who are "evil" (Mt.5:11), the enemies of the message of Jesus, but God has not turned his back upon them. He still makes the sun to rise even on them (Mt. 5:44). In keeping with God's magnanimity, the followers of Jesus do not define their identity in terms of opposition to outsiders. They remind themselves of Jesus' words: "If you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (Mt. 5:46 f). God is the father of all humanity. No father will give his son a stone instead of bread, or a snake if he asks for fish? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him." (Mt. 7:11).

²⁰ The injunction to love enemies has rightly been described as the most characteristic saying of Jesus (StuhlmueLLer 1983:159).

F) The Sabbath: God's domination free order

If the Sabbath is a time for liberation it is also an opportunity for us to remove from worship, church order and mission practice all practices that entrench inequality and unequal access to the blessings of life. The function of the Sabbath as a time for liberation implies that there is equal access to God as our leader. Thus, freedom from dominion is antithetical to the spirit of the Sabbath and cannot be consistent with true worship since there is only one who must be worshipped. The Sabbath should therefore, teach Adventists to be humble towards one another and towards other people. It is a day that should remove all forms of discriminatory practices from the church.

The Sabbath: God's domination free order

If the Sabbath is a time for liberation it is also an opportunity for us to remove from worship, church order, mission practice and all practices that entrench inequality and unequal access to the blessings of life. This text presupposes that Jesus Christ regards domination free order as an indictment to a domination system. In fact, His sermons and teachings were demonstrative of this truth and ever rebuking the domination system.

Luke in his gospel writes,

A dispute...arose among [the disciples] as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But [Jesus] said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table But I am among you as one who serves (Lk. 22:24-27).

Kgatlle (2015:113) in his doctoral thesis, "Servant leadership in Mark 10:35-45 applied to the African Pentecostal Christianity", corroborates this injunction of God's domination free order when he states,

Jesus is asking His disciples to be different from the worldly system of leadership. The disciples should not lead like Gentile leaders. Jesus

introduces another style different from what the disciples know as a norm. In contrast to exercising authority and leadership, they should minister and serve others. Jesus repeats this teaching for the second time, because they did not understand him the first time. In Mark 9:30-50 Jesus taught the disciples humility and servant hood, but this teaching is disorientating for them as they already take leadership as authority and lordship.

Christ's rejection of domination hierarchies was received with great astonishment each time he taught. The following passages illustrate this fact:

When you *give* a banquet, Jesus suggests to the wealthy with a straight face, don't invite your friends, because they will just reciprocate, but invite instead the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. If another invites you to a feast, don't sit down in a place of honour, but in the last place (Lk. 14:7-14). Don't be like the religious leaders, who make their prayers shawls ornate and their robes fashionable, and who covet salutations in the market place and the best seats in the synagogues, and places of honour at the feasts and make long, pretentious prayers (Mk. 12:38-40).

Wink (1992:112) aptly states that, "the words and deeds of Jesus reveal that he is not a minor reformer but an egalitarian prophet who repudiated the very premises of the Dominion System: the right of some to lord it over others by means of power, wealth, shaming or titles. In his beatitudes, his healing, and his table fellowship with outcasts and sinners, Jesus²¹ declared God's special concern for the oppressed." The followers of Christ are not to take titles: "But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father- the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor" (Mt. 23:8-10). His followers are to maintain domination free

²¹ Jesus' actions embody His words. According to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus washes the disciples' feet, a task considered so degrading that a master could not order a Jewish slave to perform it (Jn. 13:1-20). Consistent with all that he has said and done, Jesus enters Jerusalem farcically, on a donkey. The human being who has no place to lay his head (Lk. 9:57-58) is the same "king" who owns nothing and must borrow – not even a horse – but an ass!

relationships in a discipleship of equals that includes women. They must do away with the hierarchical relationships of master and slave, teacher and student.

“I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends” (Jn. 15:15).

Jesus and economic equity, the gospel of Jesus is founded on economic equity, because economic inequities are based on domination.

Statuses, and domination hierarchies, are largely built on power provided by accumulated wealth. Status consciousness and articulation in the church undermines equality, equity and social cohesion. Sadly, Adventists in South Africa have not discussed or confronted these dynamics of human life. There remains a void in the social critique of practical Adventism in this country. This project therefore advocates a new discussion on these matters, which would also influence the church's labour practices. In the larger social context, breaking ranks with domination means ending the economic exploitation of the many by the few.

According to Wink (1992: 114), “Since the powerful are not likely to abdicate their wealth, the poor must find ways of transcending the Domination Epoch while still in it.”

So Jesus challenges creditors not only to forgo interest but ask no repayment whatsoever (Lk. 6:34). To those who wish to follow him, He counsels selling everything and warns the rich that they have no access whatever to the new society coming. To the religionist's dream of being able to be “spiritual” and still amass wealth within an unjust system, Jesus pronounces **an** unconditional NO: You cannot serve God and wealth” (Mt. 6:24), “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Mk. 10:25). His followers were to begin living in the present as if the new order had already come. Jesus and his disciples lived from a common purse. He sent them out preaching the new order without food or money or extra clothes, relying on God's providence through the generosity of hearers. They “had all things in common; and they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:44-45).

They were not to give special status to the rich among them. Jesus condemns those that exploit the poor. Christ categorically states “Whosoever believes may come...” (Jn. 3:16). The word “whosoever” includes also the poor. Hence, Wink (1992: 115) aptly states that God elects and blesses the poor; the meek and the broken hearted and the despised who will inherit God’s coming reign on earth. It is the merciful, not the mighty, the peacemakers, not the warriors, the persecuted, not the aristocrats, who will enter into the joy of God (Mt. 5:3-12). In parable after parable, Jesus speaks of the “reigning of God” using images drawn from farming and women’s work, not warfare and the palaces of kings.

It is not described as coming from on high down to earth; it rises quietly and imperceptibly out of the land. It is established, not by armies and military might, but by an ineluctable process of growth from below, among the common people. He is, in sum, not looking for a kingdom for himself or anyone elsewhere God imposes the divine will on the world. Rather, he is inaugurating God’s dominion-free society.

With regard to women, As far as the gospels go, Jesus went contrary to the Jewish traditions, their status and roles in society. His approach to women had no parallel in “civilised” societies since the rise of patriarchy approximately three thousand years before his birth (Wink 1992:129). Traditionally, respectable Jewish men were not allowed to converse with women in public; Jesus freely conversed with women. A woman was to touch no man but her spouse; Jesus was touched by women, and he touched them.

Graphically, Wink (1992:129-130) states how Jesus healed a woman with a spinal disease for eighteen years on the Sabbath day, By healing her on the Sabbath, Jesus restored the Sabbath to its original meaning of release from bondage. By touching her, Jesus revoked the holiness code with its male scruples about menstrual uncleanness and sexual enticements. By speaking to her publicly, Jesus jettisoned male restraints on the freedom of women, born of the female sexuality. By placing her in the midst of the synagogue, Jesus challenged the male monopoly on the means of grace and access to God. By asserting that her illness was not divine punishment for sin, but satanic oppression, Jesus liberated her from the domination system, whose driving spirit is Satan. In freeing this woman from Satan’s power,

Jesus simultaneously released her from the encompassing network of patriarchy, male religious elitism and the taboos fashioned to disadvantage some in order to preserve the advantage of others. Her physical ailment was symbolic of a system that literally bent women over. For her to stand erect in male religious space represents far more than healing. It reveals the dawn of a whole new world order. Here is the awesome power of God unleashed before their very eyes. Some see it (“the entire crowd was rejoicing”), others see only a threat to everything they hold dear. (Lk. 13:10-17).

Jesus disciples illustrate the new domination- free order. His loose band of followers is scandalously mixed, including prostitutes like the one who washed his feet with her tears, women such as Mary Magdalene who was freed from demons, and aristocratic women like Joanna, wife of Herod’s chamberlain, “ and many women, who provided for them out of their resources” (Lk 8:1-3). When the rich young man asked to follow Him, Jesus told him to sell all, give it to the poor – not to Jesus’ group of followers – and follow Him, destitute (Mt 10:17-22). The women, however, he puts in the place of patrons and benefactors. The first shall be last, and the last first, as a necessary reversal of roles on the path to full partnership in God.

Women in that world had little veracity as witnesses. How odd of God, then to choose women as witnesses of Jesus Resurrection (Mt 28:9-10 cf Jn 20:1-18). Women received the Holy Spirit at the founding event of the church (Acts 1:14; 2:1) and were co-equal with men in receiving prophetic gifts.

They headed house churches, opened new fields of evangelism (Philippians’ 4:2-3), and were Paul’s co-workers. They were persecuted and jailed like the men (Acts 8:3; Romans 16:7) were named apostles (Romans 16:7), disciples (Acts 9:36-42), and deacons (Luke 8:3; Mark 15:41), led churches (Philemon 1-2) and even in one case, acted as Paul’s patron (Romans 16:2). Now it becomes clear that Jesus treated women as he did, not because he was “nice”, but because the restoration of women to their full humanity in partnerships with men is integral to the coming of God’s kingdom.

Schmidt (2001:98) notes not only the contribution of Christianity to the redeemed status of women but its special place in contrast to the way other cultures treated women, Schmidt continues to say,

The high and honourable marital ethic set forth in Ephesians, which stems forth Christ's interactions with women, cannot be found in the pagan literature of the Greco-Romans or in the cultures of other societies. The civil and human behaviour that is expected between husband and wife today, even by secularly-minded people, reflects the sea change effect Christ has had on the lives of women and on marriage, especially in the West (2001:98)" Quoting another scholar, Schmidt says that "the conversion of the Roman world to Christianity brought a change in women's status." He continues, "Another has expressed it more succinctly, - "The birth of Jesus was the turning point in the history of women" (2001: 98) what has been presented above illustrates this terse statement

G) The Sabbath as Jesus' Third Way: nonviolent engagement of the powers

Wink (1992:175) aptly states, "Human evolution has provided the species with two deeply instinctual responses to violence: flight or fight". Jesus offers a third way: Nonviolent direct action, Nonviolent direct action stems from the classic text of Matthew 5:38-42: You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you." (cf Lk 6:29-30).

Wink acknowledges that Christians have on the whole, simply ignored this teaching. This teaching has seemed impractical, masochistic, suicidal- an invitation to bullies and spouse-batterers to wipe up the floor with their supine Christian victims.

Some who have tried to follow Jesus' words have understood it to mean non-resistance: Let the oppressor perpetrate evil unopposed. Even scholars have swallowed the eat-humble-pie reading of this text, "It is better to surrender everything and go through life naked than to insist on one's legal rights," to cite only one of the

scores of these commentators from Augustine right up to the present (Schweizer 1976:130). Interpreted thus, the passage has become the basis for systematic training in cowardice as Christians are taught to acquiesce in evil. Cowardice cannot be associated with Jesus. Either he failed to make Himself clear, or we have misunderstood Him. There is plenty of cause to believe the latter. These sayings of Jesus (“If anyone strikes you...wants to sue you...force you to go a mile...”) were addressed to listeners who were subjected to these very indignities, forced to stifle outrage at their dehumanising treatment by the hierarchical system of class, race, gender, age and status, and as the result of imperial occupation.

Christ, by counselling these already humiliated people to turn the other cheek, wanted them to learn the nonviolent direct action of Jesus’ third way. The person who turns the other cheek is saying, in effect, “Try again. Your first blow failed to achieve its intended effect. I deny you the power to humiliate me. I am a human being just like you. Your status does not alter that fact, you cannot demean me” (Wink, 1992:176).

The logic of Jesus’ examples in (Matthew 5:39b-42) goes beyond both inaction and overreaction, capitulation and murderous counter violence, to a new response, fired in a crucible of love, that promises to liberate the oppressed from evil even as it frees the oppressor from sin.

“Do not react violently to evil, do not counter evil in kind, do not let evil dictate the terms of your opposition, do not let violence draw you into mimetic rivalry” – this is the revolutionary principle, recognised from earliest times, that Jesus articulates as the basis for non-violently engaging the powers (Lambert 1960:101).

Jesus’ third way did not arise out of a vacuum. It was a logical development that Israel has an idealised concept of the holy war. One line of Israel’s development can be seen as the movement from submission to holy war, to prophetic peace-making. War is not the means used to subdue the cosmos, as it is argued in the Babylonian *EnumaElish* narrative. This expression was created by Walter Wink as part of a discourse on modern culture and its legitimisation of oppressive power structures. Contrary to this notion, the scriptures present peace and order as the norms of the cosmos from its beginning. “Holy war” enters the narratives as God’s sovereign act

of liberating the Hebrew slaves from Egypt without their striking a blow. God and God alone fought on their behalf.

God would drive out the inhabitants of Canaan by means of hornets, terror, panic, or pestilence, not the sword (Ecc 23:28; Deut 7:20; Josh 24:12). Jericho's walls collapsed after the ritual, not military action (though the mopping-up operation was carried out by the Hebrew warriors Joshua 6), and God overcame the Midianites by means of three hundred men armed only with torches and trumpets (Jud 7, cf Wink 1992:188). With its defection to monarchy, however, Israel began waging political wars that the false prophets tried to legitimate as holy. Israel came to trust in military might rather than God (Hos. 10:13); yet God continued to offer to save the people, but not "by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horse, or by horsemen." (Hos. 1:7; see also Zech 4:6). The unique contribution of the true prophets was their refusal to turn a holy war into a political war. This led them at times to declare that God was waging a holy war against faithless Israel (Is 10:5-6; 22:1-8; 28:1-22; 29:1-4; 30:8-17; Amos 3:1-2; 5:18-20).

Out of the heart of that prophetic tradition, Jesus engaged the domination system in both its outer and spiritual manifestations. His teaching on nonviolence forms the charter for a way of being in the world that breaks the spiral of violence.

Jesus here reveals a way to fight evil with all our power without being transformed into the very evil we fight. It is the only way possible – of not becoming what we hate. In summary, Wink presents alternatives, which could be adopted by the church for social transformation, and socially engaging the domination system. The following are components of Jesus' third way. They are premised on the fact that poverty is a moral form of violence, which may be caused by people or social structures. There comes a time in the process of responding to the needs or conditions of the poor that structures of power should be confronted for relief or redress. In seeking the application of the Sabbath as a liberating experience, the church should seek solutions that are free from violence. It should work from the conviction that human beings are endowed with God-given dignity and thus deserve just treatment and unconditional access to the opportunities, which are within their right to access. It should also work towards breaking the cycle of humiliation from which the poor suffer. Finally, the poor should be made to understand that they too have moral

power over their decisions and choices. They should be made accountable for changing their situation.

H) The Sabbath: Missionary by its very nature

The church should be willing to go into the physical and moral condition of the poor in order to bring them into the scope of God's grace. The church should preach a gospel that embraces the poor as God's children equal in standing before Him with the rich. The poor should be cared for as people who need, not only material things but also the grace of God in their lives, for some of them are in this condition because of their own actions. This will help them to live with the understanding that while systems of this world create conditions that cause social inequalities, satanic evil is also a factor in causing people to suffer conditions of want and that in the ultimate end it is God who can change the hearts of men and women to care for the poor. The poor themselves should also take responsibility to change their situation where possible.

Charles Van Engen (1996:37) defines *missio Dei* as God's mission. *Missio Dei*²² is God's mission. Yet the *missio Dei* happens in specific places and times in our contexts. Its content, validity, and meaning are derived from scripture, yet its action, significance, and transforming power happen in our midst. According to Bosch (1991:390), *missio Dei* was understood as being derived from the very nature of God. *Missio Dei* was put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. Bosch quoting Moltmann (1977: 64) further said, "It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church."

The church exists because mission exists. Dybdahl (1999:17) corroborates this truth when he succinctly wrote, "Mission is central to our identity. Jesus did not create a church and then give it mission as one of its tasks. The divine sending plan comes prior to the church. Mission gives birth to the church and is its mother. The very

²² The *missio-Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate. Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission (Aagaard 1973: 13).

essence or nature of the church is mission.” All these definitions argue for one thing only “God is a missionary God” (Aagaard 1973: 11-15). The mission of God therefore is God making Himself known to His created order with the intention of redeeming and restoring everything to His right behaviour and relationship.

Mission belongs to God, not to any church, denomination or any man. In Mathew 28:20 Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go...” The church has no authority. Authority is given only to Jesus. The church acts on the basis of the command Christ has given. Kgatele (2018:5) in his article, “Globalisation of missions: An exegesis on Great commission (Mt.28:18-20) has also aptly explicated when he says, “The Great Commission is timeless and infinite, because it is to be valid until the end of the ages. It is a commission beyond human history.” The validation of the commission is therefore divine and in the hands of the eternal Creator, Jesus Christ who bids us go and share this great salvation to those that have not known Him yet. This commission is not only for exclusive nations like the Jews, but it transcends human ethnic groups because it is a universal commission. It is a commission to all people regardless of race, religion, colour and class. It includes all the geographic and cultural contexts of the world (Kgatele 2018:4).

He says, “Go.” When Christ commands us to go He empowers us. On our own we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5). Wright (2010:24) sums it all when he says “Mission is not ours; mission is God’s. Certainly, the mission of God is the prior reality out of which flows any mission that we get involved in. Alternatively, as has been nicely put, it is not so much the case that God has a mission for His Church in the world but that God has a church for His mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission—God’s mission.” Christ loved and served people on the Sabbath. The Sabbath should be used for acts of mercy, care and reconciliation. People who are sick may be healed on the Sabbath. People who are poor may be fed or clothed on the Sabbath. The hungry and poor should be invited to lunches or dinners on the Sabbath. Prisons and homes for the destitute and orphans may be visited on the Sabbath. One or two Sabbaths in a year may be set

aside for festivals of compassion during which the poor, can be treated to special compassion and care.

Apart from a sumptuous meal, such a programme can be dedicated to a total ministry to the poor through sermons, short talks on health, parenting, emotional problems, and any other human challenges. Wade (2006:48) succinctly writes, “In nearly every false religion, including false Christianity, worship is a matter of *doing*. Only in the Bible are we instructed to worship by leaving off our own doing, laying aside our effort and struggles, to cease our labour and rest in the serene confidence that the work on our behalf is all done. The fourth commandment declares: “The Seventh day is a Sabbath.” The word “Sabbath” literally means “rest.” The seventh day is the rest appointed by God Himself. It is the day in which He invites us to join Him in His rest—“in it you shall not do any work” (2006:48).

However, the Sabbath is not the day of neglecting that could possibly be done on the Sabbath day. Sabbath is the commandment of mercy. Christ has explicitly demonstrated this aspect in His ministry on earth.

He confronted the Jewish legalistic nature of His day regarding Sabbath keeping by doing works of mercy. He thus left an example for us today. The church must not be concerned only with people’s spiritual condition; it should pair this concern with a focus on equitable living in which fulfilment of material needs is seen as consistent with redeemed humanity. A gospel that focuses solely on evangelism for personal conversion and ignores the socio-moral challenges of the people is not consistent with biblical ethics. Incarnational mission should embrace issues of equality and justice as parts of its concerns. Evangelism that focuses primarily on moving people from their primary faiths or denominations, without addressing their material conditions, cannot contribute to changes in people’s material conditions.

It is mainly a transfer of allegiance from one set of beliefs to another, from one church community to another. Social inequality is perpetually relocated from the community to the church. With each programme of evangelism, the poor move into the church with their challenges. Hence, the church is continually confronted by dual allegiance from newly baptised members. A critical reality about the church, while it

is busy with the work of God, saving those that are not of this fold, the church has its own share of the poor and vulnerable in the membership. Thus, it is also ironic for the church to hope to deal with the poverty of the society while it harbours this class of humans within its fold. Jesus started His mission in Jerusalem, among His Jewish people (Lk 4:16-23). The church must mingle with its own first and alleviate moral material conditions within its fold. When total membership of the Adventist church is involved in caring, loving, giving, praying, and reading scriptures together, especially in the context of Soweto, the community will know that we have been with God. This was seen in the early church during Pentecost after they have received the Holy Spirit. The Bible account says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were saved." (Acts 2:42-47).

White (1941:43) confirms this truth when she says,

There is a need for coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time was spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counselled. We must weep with those that weep and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not cannot, be without fruit. The Sabbath is central to our worship of God. The memorial of Creation, it reveals the reason God is worshipped: He is the Creator, and we are His creatures.

4.3.2 A missiological focus on the doctrine of stewardship

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 2005:16).

Stewardship is humanity's foundational mandate (Gen. 1:26). The mandate to govern the created order precedes the entry of sin in the world. It precedes the evangelistic mandate (Mt. 28:20-18) by four millennia. The first thing Jesus did before he entered his ministry was to work in his father's furniture industry. He did this as part of his own development, apart from the financial benefit this brought to the family. Work is therefore both divine in the mandate and necessary for human development. Stewardship can be connected to the practical and empowerment-oriented involvement with the poor. It involves the productive use of resources.

It also challenges us to deal with the human condition from its triple dimensional nature: *the physical, spiritual and mental*. There has to be a holistic focus and approach in order to effect total liberation. The first dynamic of stewardship is responsibility. A responsible person is a working person. Thus, Frazer Watts in the article of Claassen (2011:75) aptly states, "To be able to work can be linked to one's self worth and dignity, particularly as it relates to one's ability to fulfil your basic needs of housing, sustenance and clothing, as well as the ability to provide educational opportunities for oneself and for your children."

Here follows the tasks of stewardship:

1) Task One: Education

Hill (2008:18) says "responsibility is a natural outgrowth of stewardship. Responsibility is as natural to proper stewardship as oxygen is to air." Nobody can

prosper without taking responsibility for his/her life. Thus, in this project, the poor will be treated or accommodated as responsible agents of their liberation rather than entrapped recipients of welfare action and disabling benevolence. Stewardship therefore is not a concept but a transformational programme of total self-management and the creation of opportunities for others to manage themselves.

The understanding advanced in this project is that more than the Sabbath and the second coming, stewardship as a central feature in man's creation (Gen. 1:26), functions as a revolutionary antidote against all ideologies, actions and programmes that undermine human dignity and compromise humanity's right and opportunity for self-agency. Stewardship should be seen as a development practice rather than a welfare gimmick.

Responsibility is an act of liberation. Liberation involves the responsibility to create and define one's parameters as against life forces that reduce a person to a recipient who lives at the mercy of the giver. This is where government programmes usually fail as they consistently produce and sustain a recipient populace who engage in protest when the giver fails to deliver on promises. Stewardship calls on Adventists to educate the poor for self-agency rather than for charity.

Welfare programmes should be re-examined for their capacity to develop self-agency in the poor. Self-agency builds self-respect and the capacity for sustainable development. The poor must also be empowered to understand that they too are stewards, not receivers; that the doctrine of receiving undercuts their capacity to conquer their condition. Perpetual receivership promotes unfulfilled livelihood and undercuts the power of the gospel to redeem people from the misfortunes of life. They should be made aware of the enormous debt they owe to humanity and God for their natural talents and opportunities that may occasionally come their way for self-improvement and service to society.

Another approach that may be used to drive poor people beyond their assumed points of final destination are examples of similar communities that have embraced the possibilities available to them for self-development and self-reliance. The immediate implication here is that Adventists in Soweto must themselves undergo a shift in their theory of social ministry and stop acting as providers of endless favours

when they should be helping people to help themselves. In the ultimate sense, people are in a quest for self-determination and not perpetual bondage to handouts. Hill (2008:18-19) has this to say about the relationship of humanity to the importance of stewardship. "The concept of stewardship is built on a higher view of man. We are more than merely higher life forms. We are created in the "image of God." Animals can be satisfied with food and maybe a place to live. But we human beings can never be satisfied with just our material needs met. We are three-dimensional. We have three different aspects of our lives: spiritual, mental, and physical (including the material). Proper stewardship demands the development of all three dimensions....Stewardship becomes a call to responsibility."

2) Task Two: Education in asset identification and management

The poor must be helped to identify their own assets so that they see and use these as instruments to better their lives instead of living in self-pity and possible criminality. The first asset they have is life. The second asset is time. The third asset is an opportunity to use their time in useful self-development and/or labour. The church should identify opportunities that the poor can explore with minimal resources to improve their lives. The poor should be liberated from the passion for money that they receive without creative and labour. Quick-fix solutions to poverty thrive because many who are poor think that money is the source of happiness.

3) Task three: Skills education

The poor need special programmes on education more than pity and charity. They need to know that labour produces happiness and wealth and that they, like anybody else in this world, are accountable to God for the choices they make in this life.

White (1942:338) has this to say on the poor and society's responsibility to them:

Real charity helps men to help themselves. If one comes to our door and asks for food, we should not turn him away hungry. His poverty may be the result of misfortune. But true beneficence means more than mere gifts. Those who are taught to earn what they receive will more readily learn to make the most of it. And in learning to be self-reliant, they are acquiring that which will not only make them self-sustaining but will enable them to help others.

4.3.3 A Missiological focus on the doctrine of the Second Coming

The following is the Adventist official statement on the second coming of Christ.

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfilment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 2005:8)

While the statement above remains true to the Bible, it still however lacks the fundamental element of mission as the church waits for its Saviour to deliver it from the presence and results of sin in this world. It does not address what the righteous live or dead should do while waiting for Christ to return. Its focus is the *Parousia* without defining how preparation for the second coming is made. Thus mission, let alone liberative mission, is left to social agencies while the believer holds to the hope of the coming and the subsequent destruction of the sinful world.

This is the eschatological crisis in Adventist mission. It is the believer's passion for flight and eternal gratification in heaven. The position of the researcher is that the doctrine of the second coming is a fundamental reason for liberative mission. Thus while the Adventist finds hope in the second advent of Christ, s/he must also be willing to see the contemporary implications of this hope. The implications are missional in nature. We do not prepare for His coming by intellectual activity or engaging in theological discourse about the second coming, but by liberating people from what prevents them from realising the coming of Jesus. Knowing the factuality and validity of the second coming does not meet the terms of liberative preparatory mission in a fallen world.

While Rice (1985:46), quoted by Plantak (1998:202) argues that, "the hope in the second coming sees the future in direct relation to the present, to the point of the future actually impinging on the present, threatening to break in at any time, Kubo

went beyond this understanding in suggesting that the future actually determines the present and the past." Thus, the hope of the second coming of Jesus becomes the matrix of modern Adventism. The belief in the return of Christ is responsible for the institutional presence of Adventism and its rapid spread in many countries. Unfortunately, this doctrine has been misused to stifle a concern for the state of humanity. It has become a substitute for responsible social action to remove the conditions that make it difficult for some people to appreciate God's love and justice in the world.

In expressing concern over this point, Plantak (1998:39), an Adventist himself says,

This belief in the imminence of the physical and universally visible second coming of Jesus unavoidably influenced Adventist attitudes towards an interest in social matters. Human rights were not thought to be a believer's concern at a time when Christ's return was so near that they had to think about ultimate salvation from this corrupt and sinful world. Expectation of the very near second coming of Jesus Christ made evangelism and self-examination immediate and dominant priorities.

The dominant Adventist view has been that since the world is sinful and destined for destruction, working for a change in its structures and institutions is less urgent than evangelism and personal piety. With this notion in mind, social action has suffered neglect.

In this subsection, the argument is advanced that, contrary to traditional thinking, the second coming of Christ is the very reason for Adventists to engage in social justice issues. When we pray, "Thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," (Mt. 6: 10) we declare the truth that the God we worship whose unconditional interest in the human condition led to the death of His Son, desires of us the practice of the principles of his kingdom in the human sphere. Bacchiocchi (1986:399) makes graphic remarks when he states, "Some Christians today view the present world as a sinking ship, and so they see no value in setting the course, polishing the brass or mending the sails. Rather than working on the ship, they spend their time on lifeboats, warning from a distance the passengers on the ship of

its impending doom. They regard any attempt to improve social conditions as futile and unnecessary, since Christ, at his coming will destroy the present sinful world order.

4.3.4 Berkouwer and Adventist liberative mission

This section of the chapter presents what the researcher regards as the central biblical understanding of the interface between theology and mission as advocated by Berkouwer and other scholars. The expression, “interface between theology and mission” postulates an understanding of theology as a foundational perspective and discipline for the definition of God’s relationship with fallen humanity. The expression also presupposes the practical way of doing theology in mission, and that mission is a description of the insertion of God’s will in the human realm. Mission is theology at work. Further, this understanding has entailed the role of theology as a definer of the nature of mission for specific human conditions.

Theology can only be liberative when its essence and truth are acted upon in real life situations. Rodor (1986:257) aptly states that the prophetic and apostolic message of the Bible certainly demands that the truth be acted upon, that the believer walks in truth. Since Christian (Adventist) truth is always truth to be lived out and not merely truth to be intellectually known, there should be, in effect, no dichotomy between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, word and deed. Therefore the Greek vision of theory as self-sufficient contemplation, which exerted great influence on western thought, is hardly applicable to Christian theology (Lobkwics1973: 3; 160-179).

It also compromises the authenticity of Adventism as a mission-driven faith. If God’s Word has a practical purpose (2 Tim 3:16), the purpose of the Sabbath, Stewardship and the Second Coming cannot be any less practical. Furthermore, since theology has to do with salvation as already realised in Christ, its purpose is the mediation of this salvation in past history and the millennial hope. Therefore, its proper task is not to operate in the rarefied atmosphere of thinking. Instead, it must be a fundamentally practical and progressive science.

In his introduction to the symposium, “*At the Edge of Hope: Christian Laity in Paradox,*” (Butt 1978:6-7) insists that “transcendent hope immanent hope must

cohere in order to intersect and overcome despair. The loss of expectation for God's eternal kingdom and the expectation for the improvement of the world transcendent expectation and immanent expectation from one complete Christian hope. The first says; turn to God because the human prospect is so bleak; the second says, the human prospect can be changed because of God."

When the question of social concern is related to God's salvation, it may be formulated thus: "Does the Christian faith call us away from the world or does it push us into it? (Butt 1978:189). The gospel testimony is too strong to allow complete unconcern. The image of him who was ready to stop, to see and care for the blind, the deaf, the sinner and the publican, the poor and sick, the shepherd, to be moved to compassion – the image of such a concerned One is too sharp to excuse indifference" (Butt 1978: 190). Taking into account both our Lord's concern for people and His proclamation of God's Word, Berkouwer²³ emphasises that a scale of priorities is contrary to the gospel (Butt 1978: 191).

The doctrines of the Sabbath, stewardship and the second coming, to quote doctrines under the spotlight in this chapter, should be treated as equal components of one whole, a spirituality that in its totality and comprehensiveness point to mission as a product of and consistent with the salvific elements in these doctrines. The church's doctrinal system should not be understood as articulating a staggered or multi-stage experience of salvation but as a unitary reality, one in which all these doctrines point to one centre and goal which is mission. The prioritisation of doctrines as if they are separate and independent from mission has been the bane of traditional Adventist theological and instructional practice. In addition to priorities, the associated challenge is the habit of treating doctrine as immediate and salvific while liberation is optional and secular. Doctrines are seen as the gospel, addressing the eternal to the exclusion of the temporal.

It is necessary to understand ...how the words, "time" and "eternity" function in the gospel...They are not placed in a context in which they make us dizzy in the face of

²³ Berkouwer advocates a progressive unified articulation of biblical doctrines, not one that presents doctrines in a hierarchy of importance (1977: 324,325).

an unapproachable 'eternity' (Butt 1978: 150). In its proclamation of gracious salvation, the gospel never minimises the significance of the church's responsibility towards the world in service. Regarding the antithesis between God's believing people and the unbelieving world, Berkouwer (1977: 324,325,327) writes,

The constant warning of the Word of God is not that we must speak no more of the reality of the antithesis but that the antithesis must be correctly understood as being legitimate only by virtue of the grace of election. In the antithesis we are confronted with a truly unique contrast. This uniqueness finds its origin in God's mercy, and that is the reason why it finds its true expression not in isolation from the world, but in turning to the world. This by no means implies a weakening of the distinction between good and evil, faith and unbelief. Rather the church because of the seriousness of this antithesis goes out into the world to witness. She does not do so despairing that the world cannot be saved, for then she would forget her own former lost condition as well as the sovereign election of God which called her from darkness to this marvellous light. Every trace of profound and legalistic antithesis is absent here. It is replaced by an apostolic fervour, which knows itself compelled by the love of Christ. While these passages from Divine Election do not refer directly to social concern, their relevance to this discussion is clear and implicit.

Berkouwer's rejection of the competition motif with respect to divine authority and human activity, time and eternity, and salvation and service is of great significance for his development of a constructive theology of social concern, which, in essence, is missiologically liberative. Discussing the earthly horizon, he insists that human activity cannot be reduced in priority to a secondary issue; as though it is often less important to whatever is given top priority. He maintains that the gospel we believe is far removed from the picture of a future without a bearing on the present, a heavenly hope without concern for the neighbour and his world.

He emphasises that we are not dealing with a synthesis between religion and morality – but with divine concern for life within our human horizon. He contends that the Christian is called to a life of involvement in the deep philanthropy that has once

for all appeared in history. Faith refuses to let our full obedience become a tension between primary and secondary accents (Berkouwer 1977: 190, 214; 191, 195).

A theology, which emphasises one aspect of truth to the exclusion of another, is reflected in a life, which fails to live in accordance with the fullness of the truth. The appeal to the Christian church and to Adventism is to allow both its theology and its mission to be informed and guided by the wholeness of God's truth. Any theology which claims to be a biblical theology must link its understanding of the gospel to social concern. A truly biblical theology of social concerns seeks to hear and heed all that scripture has to say on the matter. We need to listen to the gospel, which stands over against both the tendency to conform to the mood and moment and the tendency to ignore the social problems of the day.

Thus, a truly biblical theology of social concern must seek to overcome the following inadequacies:

- A theology which is chiefly man's justification for positions taken on quite independent social rather than biblical grounds;
- A theology which suggests that mere proclamation of God's justification of believing sinners does, by itself, presuppose that social injustice is logically overcome.

Throughout Berkouwer's theology, there is an intensely practical emphasis. The practical character of his theology is observable in every doctrinal discussion. The practical value of his discussion of social concern is derived not merely from the practical character of the subject but from the practical character of every theological statement. *Humanity cannot speak of God rightly without being practically involved.*

Berkouwer's biblical theology of social concern is developed from his exegesis of significant biblical passages drawn from both Testaments. He draws attention to the inseparability of love for God and concern for our neighbours. Commenting on the Old Testament understanding of the relationship between the love for God, and concern for our neighbours, he writes, "It is ridiculous to suppose that the Old Testament is guilty of being too heavenly accented and horizontal dimension of life, as though love for God might somehow get short-changed by it. The service of God

of Israel and total concern for life within our horizon are inseparable ...His people can truly give all their attention to without being lured away from their neighbours.” Berkouwer (1977: 193).

This interpretation of the Old Testament is based on his exegesis of significant passages drawn from the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Prophets (Berkouwer 1977: 192, 193). In the Pentateuch, the poor and needy are to be the concern for Israel, God’s redeemed people (Ex 23:1-9). In the Psalms, there is no competition between God’s praise and man’s need (Psalm 146). In the prophets, there is a call for worldly concern that does not reject the transcendent messages (Amos 5).

Berkouwer continues the concentration on both God and man in his exegesis of significant New Testament passages that point to the practical way of truth in the social sphere. The gospel demands that neither man nor the love of God is to be neglected since man’s relationship with God may not be isolated from his relationship with his fellowmen (Lk 11:42; Mt. 5:23, 24). In the Epistles, concern for man is not regarded as a secondary matter since there is radical unity between the love of God and His concern for man (Rom. 1.3:8-10; 1 John 3:17)

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, an endeavour has been made to extract and demonstrate features of liberative mission in three nodal Adventist doctrines, namely, the Sabbath, Stewardship and the Second Coming of Jesus. The chapter has presented this doctrinal triad as a basis for the re-articulating and rekindling of hope for a better life as well as a future of millennial joy in a world made new and free of the struggles of earthly existence. The chapter has also indicated the fact that it is not the doctrines themselves that are the challenge or hindrance to liberative social mission, but traditional Adventist hermeneutical orientation which restricts the capacity of these doctrines to deal with the real challenges of the poor and their possibilities in a world that is generally hostile to the poor.

CHAPTER 5

ADVENTIST URBAN LIBERATING MISSION THEOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Missiologist Oosterwal (1987:8) says, “As Adventism seeks to take the old, old message to the entire world, it faces increasingly a radically new world – the world of the city. Urbanism is a way of life, with attitudes and values that often differ drastically from those attitudes and values of the bygone rural and agrarian age.” Echoing the words of Oosterwal I would like to add that the world is fast becoming urban. As I have alluded in chapter 2, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 55 percent of the world’s population residing in urban areas in 2018 (World Urbanisation Prospects 2018). Saunders (2010:1) also concurs when he states: “What will be remembered about the twenty-first century is the great, and final, shift of human populations out of rural, agricultural life and into cities. We will end this century as a wholly urban species.”

I have always been fascinated by the Bible’s description of Abraham as a pilgrim, “looking forward to a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10).” Abraham assumes the stature of a larger-than-life metaphor for persons and faith communities in search of something definitive and transcendental. Abraham’s life provides purpose, focus and permanence in a world awash with transience and impermanence. In Abraham’s case, however, the city is also a place for spiritual certainty and cosmic stability in which God is not only the Mayor but also the designer and constructor of dwellings; a place with “foundations,” – symbols of physical stability and inflexibility against which the gates of hell will not prevail. According to Ellen White (2012:12), Abraham was not only looking forward to the eternal city but was touched by the sinfulness of these worldly cities. In her well written book “Ministry to Cities” she says,

Love for perishing souls inspired Abraham’s prayer. While he loathed the sins of that corrupt city, he desired that the sinners might be saved. His deep interest for Sodom shows the anxiety that we should feel for the impenitent. We should cherish hatred of sin, but pity and love for the sinner. All around us are souls going down to ruin as hopeless, as terrible, as that which befell

Sodom. Every day the probation of some is closing. Every hour some are passing beyond the reach of mercy. And where are the voices of warning and entreaty to bid the sinner flee from this fearful doom? Where are the hands stretched out to draw him back from death? Where are those who with humility and persevering faith are pleading with God for him?

God has placed every Christian, like Abraham, in our cities to be light bearers; to mediate for the waywardness of His people. It is not in the plan of God that man should perish but that man should live.

Throughout history, people have often moved to cities as part of a search for opportunities, stable lifestyles and economic viability. Cities and towns are centres of social, industrial and political life. Cities are also centres of faith life. They are not strange to Bible history and the history of Christian mission. The Bible abounds with cities. Even while humans were created and placed in a garden, the destination of the saints is a Holy City that John describes as, “coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (Rev. 21:2, NIV). The city has always been a place of social dynamism, artistic variety and multi-construct lifestyles. It is a place where men and women seek opportunities for fulfilment that the rural landscape does not normally provide.

5.2 The city as a place of class contrasts and social inequalities

Despite what the city may represent in modern physical infrastructure, resource abundance, work opportunities, communication systems and ease of mobility, a city is also a place of acute disparities; a place where social inequalities exist in sharp relief, leading to environmental decay and cultural disintegration and crime. It is in the South African city that the contradictions created by a colonial system of governance reproduce inequalities associated with imbalances in education, housing, health and various forms of material well-being. This condition, which has intensified in the post-apartheid period, makes the city a logical context for a liberative mission for the poor.

Since Johannesburg has attracted the largest populations in the post-apartheid period, it is one of the country's relevant sites for a liberative mission to the poor. As has been established in earlier chapters, Soweto, the largest historically black

settlement in Johannesburg, has grown to be the most fitting sites for contracts between the affluent and the poor a study of which should provide a model for how Adventists can approach liberative mission to the poor in the whole country. Addressing the historical failure of Adventist mission beyond proclamation and membership recruitment, Jones (*Ministry* journal, May 2004) says the following;

A biblical theology of urban mission is a reflection on the nature and attributes of God, the biblical text being its point of departure. In seeking to understand God and God's ways, it ponders such great themes as God's love, mercy, justice, sovereignty, and power. Were God not the centrifugal force of theology, the God-talk would not be theology, only pretentious chatter. In the context of the city such talk would be sociology, cultural anthropology, urbanisation, and economics, but not theology. Again, for a biblical theology of urban mission to be appropriate, it must commence, continue, and be consummated in God.

The statement by Jones implies the following realisations that must form part of the church's thought and practice among the poor in Soweto:

- An understanding by the church that God and the poor are central concerns of biblical theology in urban areas.
- The church must not bring ideas that undermine God's interest in the poor.
- The Bible should be read in its broadness, that its contents treat the poor as equal to the sinful who need salvation.
- Any consideration of the poor in the church must be centred on the Bible and not on human disciplines; otherwise such mission cannot be liberative; it would merely be humanistic benevolence lacking transformative effect.
- Mission to the poor begins with God and ends with Him. It is executed for Him.

5.3 Ellen G. White and Urban Mission

Among the major concerns in White's understanding of the comprehensiveness of Christian mission was her concern for the poor and destitute in the urban setting. In her understanding mission would not be complete if it concerned itself only with

proclamation without relief and development. Some Adventist Christians have promoted a rural lifestyle more than urban lifestyle because Ellen White has counselled that Christians should live in rural areas. However, Sahlin (1999:12) carefully examined the 107 periodical articles on city work written by Ellen White. He found that of that number, 24 advocates establishing institutions and living outside city limits, while 75 encourage living within the city in order to win its people for Christ. The remaining eight analyse the negative conditions found in the city but stop short of saying whether or not Adventists should live there.

George Knight (2001:25-29) has amply demonstrated the need for Adventists to take another look at urban mission based on a rereading of Ellen G. White. Knight contends, after a balanced and thoughtful analysis of all that White wrote on the subject, that she spoke about the establishment of schools in both idealistic and practical terms, allowing that while the ideal was the country school, the fact that many city children were unable to commute to schools in the country made city schools a necessity. In addition, while White did promote an outpost model for city institutional work, she never condemned living and working in the city at the local church level. In fact, she commended those who, bucking the trend of the late nineteenth century had moved into the city to evangelise it from within²⁴.

During White's time, the city of New York was to be a fitting site for the development of an Adventist mission to cities. Arguing that this concern was a salient feature of Christian witness to contemporary society, she gave the Adventist church some of her most effectual advice on urban mission. The body of quotations below provides Adventists with motivation for mission in urban areas.

I begin with one of the most famous statements by Ellen White²⁵. The mission of God is building broken relationships. In the beginning human beings started out in a

²⁴ Thus, based on a representative survey of Ellen White's statements on urban community, it is reasonable to conclude that she spoke more about living and working in the city than against it. Obviously, she was convinced that the best way to bring the city to Christ was by penetrating and living in it.

²⁵ Therefore, Ellen White gave the Adventist Church some of her most effectual advice on reaching broken people. Hence, "Christ Method" alone became the most effective model for healing all these areas of brokenness through incarnational ministry. "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow"

perfect relationship with God (Gen.1:2). Tragically, chapter 3 of Genesis records how sin broke that relationship enjoyed between man and God. McNeal (2011:623) cuts to the crux of the matter when he says, “The mission of God is a redemptive mission. Everything that sin broke is being addressed and restored through God’s mission. This includes not just the ruptured relationship between God and humanity, but also the relationship of humans with themselves with one another, and with the rest of creation.”

5.3.1 Christ mingled with the people to whom He ministered

Adventists should go beyond seeing the people in this world as a social and economic oddity, a sight for pity, or a market for membership recruitment. Therefore, mission to the destitute in the world should be people-centred while it remains Christ-driven mandated and church-driven. Identification of the needs of the poor cannot happen from mere detached observation. The poor in Soweto need an incarnational presence in order to embrace external intervention. Jesus taught His followers to pray daily, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Mat. 6:10). The second sentence explains the first. Jesus’ messianic kingdom arrives when God’s will is done on earth. That is why, when John the Baptist sent messengers to ask if Jesus was the expected Messiah, Jesus replied, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them” (Mat. 11:4-5).

Ellen White (1896:38) when commenting on (Mat. 5:13) from, ‘Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing’, “Ye are the salt of the earth;” She aptly states, “salt must be mingled with the substance to which it is added; it must penetrate and infuse in order to preserve. So, it is through personal contact and association that men are reached by the saving power of the gospel. They are not saved in masses but as individuals. Personal influence is power. We must come close to those we desire to benefit.” Saymaan (1990:36) concurs, “When the salt is mingled with the food, in a sense it loses itself. In doing its work, it dissolves and vanishes. The eater’s senses detect only the food and not the salt. In the same way, we must not promote self in any

way, but unobtrusively focus both on Christ and on whom we are witnessing to.”The Adventist church²⁶ is known to be producing great preachers and evangelists.

Be that as it may, the Adventist church in itself has become part of the challenge to urban mission. This universalistic view of humanity has prevented the church from engaging in the serious contextual understanding of the plight of the poor in our communities. Further, Adventists in general depend, to a large extent, on models of mission designed in the higher structures of the church. This has disabled the church from confronting the societal challenges that make it difficult for the poor to appreciate the love of God in their lives because they are always concerned about the pain of persistent joblessness, poverty, hunger, and illness. Alongside, these challenges are the condition of low literacy or none at all. The church must therefore, begin a process of honest self-examination before it can venture into any programme of liberative mission among the poor.

Evangelism that focuses primarily on moving people from their primary faiths or denominations, without addressing their material conditions, cannot contribute to changes in people’s material conditions. It is mainly a transfer of allegiance from one set of beliefs to another, from one church community to another. Social inequality is perpetually relocated from the community to the church. With each programme of evangelism, the poor move into the church with their challenges. Hence, the church is continually confronted by dual allegiance from newly baptised members. A critical reality about the church, while it is busy with the work of God, saving those that are not of this fold, the church has its own share of the poor and vulnerable in the membership. Thus, it is also ironic for the church to hope to deal with the poverty of the society while it harbours this class of humans within its fold. Jesus started His mission in Jerusalem, among His Jewish people (Lk. 4:16-23).

The church must mingle with its own first and alleviate moral material conditions within its fold. When total membership of the church is involved in caring, loving, giving, praying, and reading scriptures together, the world will know that we have

²⁶ The Church has generally failed to successfully minister to people with their specific material circumstances because of lack of engaging in social analysis and self- critique. The Church engages in evangelism from the traditional understanding that all humanity has sinned (Rom. 6:23) and needs the gospel to free people from a sinful moral condition.

been with Jesus (Acts 2:42-47). White (1941:139-144) aptly stated, there is a need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonising, and more time spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. Christ had an interest in the poor to whom he ministered. He identified with them. He put aside his own interests in order to embrace the people as co-participants in their relief. It was not his interests, but theirs, which were paramount in His association with them.

The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counselled. We must weep with those that weep and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit.

5.3.2 Christ Showed His sympathy

“Christ alone will give true success in reaching people” this first sentence simply means that there is no better method except Christ’s method. Therefore, having initially mingled with men as Christ did, we need to take the second step, which is showing his sympathy or compassion. Christ did not conceal His humanity behind his divinity in His association with the poor. He narrowed the existential distance between the Godhead and humanity by displaying even emotional sensitivity towards their plight. In response to the news of the death of Lazarus, for instance, he is recorded to have even wept (Jn. 11:34). No matter how the church engages in a preaching and teaching activity, if we do not practice what we preach or teach, all that we do will fail. We bring many through one door, but they leave through another door.

Love must be in action, not in word only. Jesus Christ, after his preaching to five thousand, he fed them. Acts of benevolence suggest that we have understood the only strategy of Jesus Christ who ministered to their needs. The word “minister” according to Sahlin (2007:7) has a connotation of being a servant in the New Testament. In the original language, servant means, a slave. Therefore, this means that servants of God are hands-on as they provide services that meet not only physical needs but also spiritual and mental needs. The New Testament gives no

suggestion that one could possibly be a Christian without at the same time being called to some ministry within the church. The Christian is called to serve the cities. The apostle Paul at his conversion heard God's voice saying, "Rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness" (Acts 26:16). Christ did not live for Himself; He lived for others (Phil. 2:5-7).

He came down from being God to be a Man (v. 8). Hebrews 2:14 says that Christ had to become like us: In order to die for us, to be our example, and to identify with us. This is the mind we must inculcate as we become ministers in His vineyard. We are to prefer one another (Rom. 12:10). Edify one another (1Thess. 5:11). And bear each other's burden (Gal. 6:2). We cannot faithfully minister to people if we are not humble. The gospel becomes complete when we follow after Christ's divine likeness. When we do what Christ did, the gospel will become relevant to our communities.

Charles van Engen (1996:93) cuts to the crux of the matter when he says,

For the church of Jesus Christ, life and ministry in the city involves profound tensions. The Church is not a social agency—but is of social significance in the city. The Church is not city government—but is called to announce and live out the kingdom of God in all its political significance. The Church is not a bank—but is an economic force in the city and is to seek the economic welfare of the city. The Church is not a school—but is called to educate the people of the city concerning the gospel of love, justice, and social transformation. The Church is not a family—but is the family of God, called to be a neighbor to all of those whom God loves. The Church is not a building—but needs buildings and owns buildings to carry out its ministry. The Church is not exclusive, not unique—but is specially called by God to be different in the way it serves the city. The Church is not an institution—but needs institutional structures to effect changes in the lives of people and society. The Church is not community development organization—but the development of community is essential to the Church's nature²⁷.

²⁷ This quote emphatically suggests that the Church is the cornerstone of society. As ambassadors on earth we need to demonstrate the spirit of true service to the destitute, and those that lack basic needs.

Engen with this dynamic quotation reminds us that as instruments in God's hands, we need to understand that our calling is not myopic; however, we need to search for a theology of mission that will broaden our vision by bringing transformation in our communities, especially my area of study, Soweto.

5.3.3 Christ Won Their confidence

To "win the confidence" is verb number three. It is very difficult to win the confidence of other people if we do not mingle, show compassion and minister to the needs of our communities in the city. This is the first struggle the Adventist church will have to win in Soweto, especially among the poor.

Trust cannot be coerced but earned. Adventists should compensate for the decades of social neglect and aloofness they have displayed towards matters of social and material imbalances caused by colonial practices in the recent past. The church cannot dangle one carrot in the air for the people we minister to and hope to win their confidence. Sahlin (2007:7) suggests that it is inappropriate and unchrist to attempt to communicate the Gospel message prior to winning the confidence of individuals or groups in an unreached community.

The church must earn this confidence by following all the previous steps: mingling, showing compassion and ministering to their needs. "Then" means that Christ waited until certain conditions prevailed, in the understanding of Ellen White, and at that time the Saviour felt free to begin to talk about spiritual things. This means then that restraint must be exercised when dealing with the context of urban ministry. People must understand and interpret the gospel in their own culture or worldview. Only then can the world be convinced of our divine calling in serving and 'saving' them for His kingdom. Spiritual things cannot be truly understood by the recipients unless social issues are addressed first. Working for a transformational mission needs time and patience.

5.3.4 Then he bade them follow me

"Bade" according to Sahlin (2007:7) third paragraph, is the old-fashioned past tense of "bid." In today's English, the word "bid" is used primarily to describe a business

practice in which providers of various products and services present proposals to a prospective customer. So, Ellen White suggests here that the place to begin in presenting the Gospel is to propose that the unbeliever accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and dedicate their lives to following Him.

The church's ministry more often than not is characterised by a passion for winning souls, to the neglect of proposing the unbeliever for a transformative or liberating mission, so that people thus reached by the gospel, should also experience release from material destitution. This then is a concrete and holistic strategy for winning many to the kingdom of God. Then and only then can you bid them "follow me, as you follow Jesus." What is notable in this sub-heading is that the decision to follow Jesus Christ is not at the beginning but at the end of Ellen White's model of social transformation.

It seems this decision must come after an extensive active personal witness of Christ's values rather than the logic of texts and arguments. The winsome character of Jesus Christ motivated people to follow Him. It is not so much the activity or programmes we are involved in but the revelation of Christ's character. "The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ" White (1942:143). It is easy for us to say "follow me" if the life of Christ is exemplified in our lives. Even as much as we are passionate about winning souls to the cause of God, if we neglect His method of evangelisation our ministry will not cause the people to follow us. Men and women, who are reached by a holistic gospel, quickly respond to the call "follow me." The reason they do so is because of the character of Jesus Christ. Hence, Ellen White (1940:254-255) says,

Had it not been for the sweet, sympathetic spirit that shone out in every look and word, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did. The afflicted ones who came to Him felt that He linked His interest with theirs as a faithful and tender friend, and they desired to know more of the truths He taught. Heaven was brought near. They longed to abide in His presence that the comfort of His love might be with them continually.

This approach still stands as Ellen White paradigmatic understanding of the methodology to be utilised in urban mission, and if it is thoroughly implemented, it will not only transform Adventists but impact our townships that are poverty-stricken. Soweto, though one of our greatest township in South Africa, is not exempted from

the sting of poverty. Our many prayers for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power will not be answered until we utilise Ellen White's vision for urban mission.

This vision aptly indicates that Jesus calls His disciples to both gospel messaging (calling people to repent and believe the gospel and to gospel neighbouring (through dedication and sacrifice meeting the felt-needs of people regardless of their backgrounds. In the light of Ellen White's effective model for healing brokenness through incarnational ministry, Adventist liberating mission theology should revolve around the following foci: redemption, restoration, relief, refuge, relevance and resistance within urban contexts.

Redemption

- God's primary mission and disposition towards humans, creatures of His greatest regard, is to redeem them. Christ declared, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10). Since the cities are where the largest concentration of people can be found on the earth it is also there that God's endeavours to save humanity are focused. Accordingly, the greatest efforts and expenses of the Adventist Church should be directed towards the cities. At Pentecost God unleashed supernatural power and produced extraordinary results because Jews and proselytes from the diaspora were gathered to celebrate the Passover (Acts 2:5-11). In urban settings where there are migrants from every nation tribe, tongue, and people, God is pleased to demonstrate His power again. It is urban contexts that many mighty signs and wonders and manifestations occur. The cities therefore constitute in the sight of heaven centres for intense redemptive activities, for it is there, more than anywhere else, that the densest concentration of lost humans can be found.

Restoration

- At creation humanity was vested with the image and likeness to its Creator: the entrance of sin quickly effaced that nature, generations later God was grieved at what humans had become (Gen 6:5-7). The Adventist Church is to cooperate with God in His ministry of restoration and reconciliation. Programs

needed must be holistic, embracing the physical, mental, spiritual, and psychological.

Restoration centres are desperately needed in all cities around the world due to the level of brokenness, suffering, poverty, privation, and pain prevalent there. As the church works to restore the dignity of humans and the image of God in them it shall be truly representing Christ who sought to heal and show compassion to everyone He met (Mat 9:36; 14:14). The Church therefore should establish platforms to attend to health and medical, addiction recovery programs, support and counselling programs.

Relief

- In urban areas, there should be centres of relief activities. In feeding the multitudes Jesus brought physical relief to people (Jn 4:6). Also, during the Apostolic age when there was a famine in Jerusalem relief offerings were collected and passed through Paul and Barnabas (Act 11:27-30). The colossal need for relief assistance in the cities can be overwhelming, nevertheless, the Church should be the vanguard for providing relief for the poor and needy, and support for those who experience disaster or loss. In the Good Samaritan story, Jesus provided a blueprint for the church's relief mission in urban settings (Lk 10:25-37). The first hospitals in existence were organized by Christian churches. If Christians are to be good neighbours they need to be present in the street corners, neighbourhoods, alleys, and no-sign districts where the poor, suffering live. The incarnational component is also important when we do relief work to cities. Sider, Olson and Unruh (2002:90) state, "People need food, clothing, shelter, transportation, skills, legal counsel, a living wage, clean air and water. But giving aid is no substitute for making ourselves available to broken persons, because Christ lives in us, and Christ's love flows through us."

Refuge

- In ancient Israel, the divine habitation design of the nation in the Promised Land included cities of refuge (Num 35:5; Josh 20:1-2). These asylum cities

were designated areas where fugitives, foreigners and sojourners could find abode until such a time as their status was determined (Num 35:6-15).

The care, concern, and welfare of foreigners, immigrants, and refugees were also an issue God instructed the Israelites about. God actually required His people to love the foreigner/stranger/immigrant as they loved themselves (Lev 19:34; Deut 10:19). Seventh-day Adventist mission to the cities should focus upon providing refuge, shelter and support for immigrants and refugees. Such persons God has brought close so that they could hear about His love through His people witness love in action. In the cities, there is never a dearth of people in need of refuge from life's storms. Perhaps, more intentionally than ever before Adventist missions to the cities should seek to provide the necessary social support and refuge needed for these strangers. God wants to incorporate into His kingdom even the strangers. His kingdom is for everyone.

Relevance

- Theology, for it to be meaningful must be relevant. Similarly, a theology for an Adventist mission to the cities needs constantly to seek relevance—to the needs of the people, and for preparing them to be citizens of God's kingdom. God has not only made Himself known, Kgatle (2018:5) has explicitly stated that "The Great Commission, with the task of proclaiming the gospel and making, baptising and teaching the disciples along with serving the needy, cannot be separated from the power and the presence of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ." Biblical history reveals that each time God revealed Himself to humanity it was in forms identifiable to their contexts and consonant with their needs. Therefore, Adventist mission programs in the cities should be designed with double-pronged objective—to meet the needs of city dwellers, and serve the purpose of the kingdom of God. Wherever the needs are, that is where the church should be found fulfilling its purpose as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mat 5:13-16). Ultimately God's people shall be identified by those who cared for the poor, needy, oppressed and downtrodden (Mat 25:31-46).

Resistance

- The Scriptures present cities as being the battleground for the conflict of ages between God and Satan. Timothy Keller (2018:4) sees in every city two kingdoms contending for control—the city of Baal and the city of God. Both kingdoms exist in opposition to each other. As the Adventist Church seeks to reach the cities and establish there the kingdom of God it will encounter opposition in various forms, and from diverse quarters (McAuliffe and McAuliffe 2017:105-110). Christ (Mk 3:24-27) and Paul faced opposition in their urban missions (Acts 19). For this reason, a theology of resistance is imperative; one that is countercultural and impervious to the challenges and attacks of the enemy, whatever guise they may assume.

A theology that recognizes the cities as the playground of the great controversy between God and Satan, light and darkness should keep the church in a mode of resistance. Spiritual interventions and programs which counteract the forces of evil are therefore expedient as strongholds of the cities. These interventions will break down the forces of evil and recapture for the Lord those that suffer daily as a result of this sin-sick evil world.

5.4 *Missio Dei* from creation to recreation

God has reasons for getting involved in His mission (*missio Dei*) to save man. Wright in his preface argues that “All the great sections of the canon of Scripture, all the great episodes of the Bible story, all the great doctrines of the biblical faith, cohere around the Bible’s central character—the living God and His grand plan and purpose of the whole creation. The mission of God is what unifies the Bible from creation to recreation” (Wright 2010:17). The *missio Dei* makes sense only in the understanding that something went wrong in man. In saving man, from creation to recreation, God has introduced processes that introduced church life in the areas of mental, physical, social, and spiritual. Because of sin these areas deteriorated from its original status. That is, the image of God was defaced. *Missio Dei* deals with issues of restoration.

The researcher will speak more about restoration under the sub-topic (The reasons and purpose of *missio Dei*) hereunder²⁸.

5.4.1 The incarnation of *Missio Dei*

According to Van Engen and Tiersma (1994:9), incarnation is used to mean presence, related to Jesus Christ who came to the world to be with us so as to save us. Incarnation is the theological term expressed best in John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." It is about God identifying with humanity and becoming one of us. Padilla (1985:83) notes, "The incarnation unmistakably demonstrates God's intention to make himself known from within the human situation." God has not only made Himself known, Kgatle (2018:5) has explicitly stated that "The Great commission, with the task of proclaiming the gospel and making, baptising and teaching the disciples along with serving the needy, cannot be separated from the power and the presence of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ." God, who has spoken through the prophets, makes Himself known through His son (Heb 1:2) who empties Himself (*kenosis*), to be nothing; taking the form of a servant and being revealed in human flesh (Phil 2:5-8).

Elsewhere, the Apostle Paul wrote that, "Our Lord Jesus Christ became poor, so that by his poverty we might become rich" (2 Cor.8:9). The above texts indicate that in Jesus Christ, God became part of history, identifying with its most humble expression and suffering its deepest pain. In contrast to deism, through incarnation, God enters the world to perform salvific acts of creating and recreating. No one can limit God in His sovereignty and divine authority. He is both transcendent and immanent. God uses His word to create while He remains outside creation because of His transcendence. In His immanence, God condescends and identifies Himself with fallen humanity.

A Psalmist in 47:2 calls Him, "the great King over all the earth" and "His kingdom rules over all" (Ps. 103:19).

²⁸ In the process of saving man, God plays a significant role, while man must do his. This section will present the following sub-themes: The incarnation of *missio-Dei*, the reason and purpose of *missio-Dei*, the primary purpose of *missiones* and *ecclesiae*, and *missio-Dei* versus the worship of God: the goal of mission.

Unlike the gods that have no power to create, and the earthly kings who rule over specific locations, the God of the Bible has the power that rules over all creation without any limit (Jer. 10:10-12). The incarnation of God does not however mean that he is equal with the world like pantheism suggests. God as Creator He transcends the created universe; He is not part of it. God did not create the world out of His essence but through His spoken word.

Creation out of nothing denies the validity of pantheism. The created universe is not permeated by the divine. In other words, the divinity of God is not spread through the universe and present in every part of God's creation. God, the Creator²⁹, cannot be circumscribed by that which He created (Rodriguez 2013:13). Hence, Solomon aptly stated, "But will God really dwell on the earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you" (1Ki. 8:27). Otherwise, God remains the Transcendent One.

5.4.2 The reason and the purpose of *missio Dei*

Ellen White in her book, *The Story of Redemption*, succinctly states that, "The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains were adorned with plants and flowers and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger and much more beautiful than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God" (White 1947:20). This means that,

The Garden of Eden was a representation of what God desired the whole earth to become" White (1903:8). Adam and Eve were consonant with their environment. There was ecological equilibrium between them and nonhuman creation. However, it is inconceivable to imagine that a perfect earth, from the divine hands of God, now finds itself in a sinful state like it is today. The Bible states that sin is the intruder and it has unsettled the divine intention about God's creation and divine plan. The divine plan of God is a state in which God

²⁹ Although God transcends the universe, His transcendence does not exclude immanence. God in His love and care chose to enter the world He created for preservation and harmony of His creation. This harmony of creation speaks of God's infinite wisdom and knowledge. God's immanence does not deny His transcendence either. God condescends to enter into His creation, making it clear that He has not abandoned it (Rodriguez 2013:14).

and man live in harmony and in peace. The independent decision of Lucifer to dishonour God's law and Adam and Eve to disobey God's instructions brought disruption into the world and this has grossly affected God's harmonious created order. Apostle Paul also confirmed in the epistle to the Romans when he said, "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now." (Rom. 8:22). This rebellious spirit is manifested in the world and in Christendom. Further, because of this disruption of God's creation, the image of God in humanity was also grossly affected. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

What is encouraging though as Ellen White succinctly states, is that the image of God is not totally blotted out,(White 1956:1078) but, "traces" of it still "remain upon every soul" (White 1941:163) Otherwise we will not be able to respond to His gracious calling if His image in humanity was totally blotted out. It was for this reason that God through the sacrificial life of Christ extended His love to reconcile us back to Him. Wright (2010:108-109) emphatically continues stating that in both the Old and New Testaments, redemption was not just a historical fact of the past, nor just a personal experience to be enjoyed in the present, but a status that was to be lived out in ethical response. Learning from the sacrificial and missional life of Jesus Christ, redemption was never meant to be hoarded but to be passed on to our families, neighbours, and the world. Hence, Wright (151) cuts to the crux of the matter when he says,

The thing about all biblical experience of God is that it never stays merely "intransitive" (something that happens to you and stays there). It always has a "transitive" dynamic (it has to affect somebody or something else). We have seen this in some of our earlier chapters. If God blesses you, it is so you can bless others. If God redeems you, it is so you can demonstrate redemptive grace to others. If God loves you, feeds and clothes you, then you should go and do likewise for others. If God brings you into the light of salvation, it is so you can shine with a light that attracts others to the same place. If you enjoy God's forgiveness, then make sure you forgive others. And so on. In this sense, all our biblical theology is, or should be, missional. Biblical theology is, by definition, "theology for life."

John's statement, "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:7, 8), is one of the most important descriptions of the nature of God in scripture. The apostle made that statement in the context of Christ's sacrificial death. According to him, the work of Christ reveals the very essence of God: "He is love." This love is self-giving and very and absolutely unselfish (e.g. Jn. 3:16). There is nothing outside God that could move or force Him to love. In fact, there is no need for any external motivation because it is God's very nature to love.

It was this understanding of God's love that led Paul to say, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). God is love means that every one of His actions originates and is motivated by love. Election is based on His love (Deut. 7:7, 8) as well as redemption (Is. 43:4; 63:9). He loves not only His people (Deut. 33:3), but also the alien (10:18). Nygren (1958:77) says when he speaks about God's love,

The revelation of God's love reaches its deepest dimension of meaning in the incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. His love for sinners is not motivated by the misery of their sinful condition, but by the fact that God is love and it is this great fact that moves Him to love sinners in spite of their sin."

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). The redemption brought by God through Jesus does not only liberates humanity but also His natural world which was also affected by sin. This is the essence and purpose of the *missio Dei*, to reconcile His created order to Himself. Said differently, His creation that was marred by sin is recreated by the voluntary sacrificial life of Jesus Christ.

Thus, Wright (2010:103) aptly wrote that the, "Cross, as the supreme moment of redemption, was God's victory over all that opposes Him and enslaves His creation." Although God in His omniscience can redeem the world without the mission of the church, He has however, in His graciousness called into existence a people to participate in the accomplishment of His mission. As the researcher has alluded earlier in this study, mission was not made for the church; the church was made for

the mission of God. To participate appropriately, God's people must know what He requires of them.

"This is life eternal that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Jn. 17:3). To know what God requires of them, they must sit at the feet of Jesus like Mary and learn of Him. (Lk. 10: 39). Verse forty says Mary's sister, Martha, instead of sitting at the feet of Jesus like her sister; she was "distracted with all her preparations..." She was "bothered by many things" (v. 41). Goheen has aptly stated that the essence of being His people is not "a matter of going, or telling, or even doing something. Mission is fundamentally about being. It's an Identity issue" (2011:25). Mary understood the essence of being a child of God. She sat at the feet of Jesus and learns of Him. But Martha was busy doing many things instead of worshipping. Flemming concurs when he says, the character of God's people, "as recipients of the gracious presence and blessing of God; [will] attract outsiders rather than by what they do or say" (2013:30). God's chosen people for His mission must always recognise the fact that they are not primarily called or chosen to do something but to be a nation that knows God, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people," (1Pet. 2:9) that are chosen to spread the good news of salvation. Hence, in Ezekiel 5:5 God says, "I have set [Jerusalem] in the centre of the nations, with countries all around her."

Israel was to be a spectacle of God's blessings. Like flowers that attract honeybees, Israel was to model the distinct lifestyle that attracts others to Him. Quality rather than quantity is preferred in God's kingdom. God's people are called to live out His character in this sinful world. Further, Flemming continues to expound that God's character is identified by two marks of distinctiveness: First, God's presence among His people (Deut. 4:7; Lev. 26:11-13). God's nearness to Israel comes to public expression in the nation's everyday way of life (2013:32). In other words, the nations will not believe Israel's claims that God is with them if they act contrary to His principles of godliness or if they do exactly what the other nations are doing. Goheen (2011:42) therefore aptly states, "Injustice and disobedience to the Torah amounts to an abandonment of Israel's missional identity." Second, God's righteous laws (Deut. 4:8). The obedience of God's people to His laws reveals who God is and what He

requires of them. The essence of the law as a requirement to God is spelt out in (Deut. 10:12-13): Fear the Lord your God Walk in all His ways Love Him serve God with all your heart Keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes for your good. These two marks of distinctiveness are inextricably intertwined.”

5.4.3 The primary purpose of *Missiones Ecclesiae*

Bosch cuts to the crux of the matter when he says, “The primary purpose of the saving of souls; rather, it has to be service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany” (1991:391). The children of Israel were chosen for service and not for national pride. God is not concerned with the purity of descent, the vastness of territory or cultural superiority but divine election. Divine election is not a privilege but a responsibility. God has called His church, as an instrument in His hand, for the purpose of salvation. The church can only be authentic in its mission when it reflects *missio Dei*. Mission is a matter of being loyal to the uniqueness of God – revealed as Yahweh in the Old Testament and walking among us in the incarnate life of Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament (Wright 2010:31). The *missio Dei* is larger than the church, even to the point of suggesting that it excluded the church’s involvement. “The church serves the *missio Dei* in the world when it points to God at work in world history and names Him there” (Bosch 1991: 392).

Therefore, the church has no business in articulating God. (Ibid.1991:392) aptly states that *missio Dei* means that God articulates Himself without any need of assisting Him through our missionary efforts. Hence, the mission of the church has to start and finish with a commitment to the *missio Dei*. God's mission flows from God to Christ to the Holy Spirit, who empowers the church, who carries on the mission to the world" (Van Rheen 2014:70). In the mission of the church, individual Christians embody God's mission and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to convey it to the world.

5.4.4 *Missio Dei* versus the Worship of God: The Goal of Mission

John Piper (2003:17) aptly states that,

Mission is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. Mission is the consequence of our fall from dominion status and practice. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship is, therefore, the fuel and the goal of missions. There is no better way than the way John Piper has defined the true meaning of worship versus mission.

Piper convincingly argues that, "Mission exists because worship doesn't" because the ultimate reason for the church's existence is to glorify God by worshipping and enjoying Him for all eternity.

Wright concurs when he said, "The goal of all our mission is the worship and glory of the one true living God. That is because the goal of all human life is to love, worship, glorify and enjoy God. That is where our own deepest fulfilment and flourishing lie" (2010:244). As we are made in His image, we find ultimate human satisfaction and true human potential through worshipping and glorifying God.

Piper further states, "But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You cannot commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out, "Let the nations be glad!" who cannot say from the heart, "I rejoice in the Lord...I will be glad and exult in thee, I will sing praise to thy name, O Most High" (Ps. 104:34, 9:2). Mission begins and ends in worship (Piper 2003:17). God cannot be worshipped passionately if we are not actively involved in praising Him. Preaching on our pulpits must be motivated by lifting up God and not self-gratification and pomposity.

Hence Piper (2003:18) truly says, if the pursuit of God's glory is not ordered above the pursuit of man's good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the truth, man will not be well served, and God will not be duly honoured. I am not pleading for the diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God. When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worth, the light of missions will shine for the darkest peoples on earth. Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak.

Churches that are not centred on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to “declare his glory among the nations (Ps. 96:3).” Piper consequently, worship does not abrogate mission; mission still remains a significant part of our lives. The main reason why mission still remains a significant part of our lives is that the world is still full of people who are not worshipping and enjoying the privilege of being God’s children. The aim of salvation is that all must come to the understanding of God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Piper (2003:17) has rightfully stated that in his quotation I referred to earlier that mission is a “temporary necessity.” Mission continues to serve as a divine dynamic instrument of love that God uses to seek the ultimate well-being and blessing of human beings.

5.5 Can a nonparticipant in a context do contextual theology?

Emerson quoted by Bevans (1998:13-14) wrote this thought provoking sentence: “If, therefore, a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not.” Emerson highlights the fact that a person who does not fully share one’s reasonable experience is not to be trusted to speak of God in that person’s context. Stated differently, how can a person who does not share the full experience of another culture do authentic theology within that culture? Kgatle (2018) (quoting Johnson & Ross 2009:104) aptly confirms Emerson when he states,

Before mission is globalised there is need to localise it. Mission cannot be globally powerful if it is not locally relevant. The subsequent globalisation of the image of western Christianity poses a problem for non-western Christianity. Although we talk about a post-Christian West and a post-western Christianity, the prevailing forms of Christianity in most parts of the non-western world are still dominated by western influences. This is wrong, because Christian mission is not about promotion of culture, but the extension of the global kingdom of God.

In other words, for mission to be relevant participants must speak of God in that person’s context. For the Adventists to be understood by the people in Soweto, they

must first understand the worldview of Sowetans. This includes, among other things: knowing their historical, political, social, and economic struggles. It is also imperative to speak the various languages that are spoken in Soweto. One of the major reasons for the slow growth of Adventism in South Africa is that Adventists are wrapped up in a foreign spirituality and churchmanship. Adventism in South Africa is like an aircraft which has taken off but has not found a landing strip. It is flying in the hermeneutical space of the Euro-western world. It carries and purports to deliver a theological cargo which has no realistic pertinence to the dynamics of the South African milieu. And until it comes into grips with the specific peculiarities of its people, it remains an enslaved theological messenger boy of the academic high priests of Euro-western world. The Adventist church needs to design and articulate an anthropological affirmation rooted in an identity consciousness and self-understanding similar to, but not as ethnically exclusive and socially introverted as, that which marked Judaist communities of biblical times. The church must experience God and salvation as Africans, not as shadow beings of Eurocentric Adventism. The critical challenge for the Adventist mission in our communities is to go beyond the promise of mansions in an everlasting kingdom. People want a religion that can deliver a roof when they are homeless, food when they are hungry, harmony where there is racism, yes, and liberation where there is oppression. In the experiences of material want, disease, deprivation and joblessness without which the Adventist church cannot realise wholeness and humanness.

5.6 Towards an integration of eschatology and soteriology in Adventist theology

The purpose of this section is to lay the conceptual framework for Adventist liberative mission in Soweto with theological tools from within Adventism and from other practitioners of faith. The researcher proposes a reversal of the Adventist theological crisis presented in the statement of problem in chapter 1 by advocating collaboration between eschatology and soteriology in which eschatology predicates the specific temporal existential role of soteriology in human history.

The crisis in Adventism in South Africa is that eschatology has been an escape wagon from liberative mission, or at best, an optional, even disposable aspect of the

gospel. This attitude undermines the passage in the Lord's Prayer that states, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt. 6:10). Jones aptly confirms the Lord's Prayer when he says, of necessity, a theology of urban mission must be thought out and crafted in the urban community. No urban theology far removed from the challenging complexities of urban factors will be tenable or relevant. That is not to say that systematic theology cannot contribute to the formation of a functional urban theology. Yet for it to do so it must be done in the heart of the city, consciously and intentionally connecting all God-talk to the urban context. Only as it speaks to the particularity of the city will its integrity and authority go unchallenged. Grounded in the urban community, such a theology will be more practical and applied than systematic.

Such understanding expands and frees the scope of eschatology that is not concerned solely with the end times. Without this understanding of a missional eschatology Adventist mission will be a mere ethical reformation lacking transformative potency in the believer's present life and the poor who is his/her constant reminder that we live in a world of pain and sorrow. The question that we must now face is: How should Adventists utilise their understanding of eschatology in shaping liberative mission for the people of Soweto? The argument advanced here is that as a Biblicist faith movement, Adventists may use their doctrinal tenets as building blocks of liberative mission in general and for the poor in Soweto.

The poor in Soweto are a community of hope, of anticipation; a condition which is their eschatological reality. It was this hope that engaged them in the struggle for liberation against white domination. The world can attest to this reality. The liberation struggle was itself an eschatological project, pointing to a time in which racism, oppression, illiteracy and poverty will be no more.

While eschatology has been a divisive item of belief between Adventists and other Christians, it is one of the most uniting factors in Adventism. Because of this reality, it should be necessary for Adventists in Soweto to use an eschatological approach both to soteriology and liberative mission. The researcher advocates the view that eschatology is a broad overarching scheme of truths and events in salvation history way into the future. Millennial expectancy should be the basis for the generation of hope in communities of the poor as they collaborate with the church in crafting ways

to free themselves from their hopeless condition. While the poor need salvation from the presence and consequences of sin in their lives, they should be helped to embrace a hope stronger than their pain in order for them to realise present millennial fulfilment as they anticipate the return of Jesus Christ.

The Adventist church in Soweto must take its theology of the second coming seriously and generate an ongoing eschatological expectancy in the lives of the poor by transforming their material conditions in current history as they move to the anticipated culmination of human history. Yes, the researcher Canale (2009) explains that eschatology and salvation are essentially connected in line with the scriptures. Regarding eschatology, the extensive prophecies in the book of Daniel include God's central acts of salvation.

The cross, (chapter 9), the investigative judgment (chapter 8) and the second coming (chapter 2). Concerning salvation, historically, God provides salvation within the flow of created human time. Salvation embraces God's redemptive acts from predestination to creation. Clearly, biblical eschatology involves more than the consummation of Christ's atonement (classical Christianity) or the anticipation of the last historical events on planet earth (dispensationalism). Eschatology predicts the continuation of Christ's work of salvation in human and cosmic history. Consequently, we cannot separate eschatology from salvation without distorting the meaning of both.

Salient themes of the Adventist church: the Sabbath, sanctuary, spiritual gifts, stewardship and the Second Advent, should be understood and interpreted within the context of the eschatological approach of soteriology. Accordingly, soteriology should develop in the light of eschatology. In *eschatology: an excuse or inspiration*, Nderitu (2000:62, 63) provides a more complete understanding of eschatology. He sees eschatology as a view of things to come that alters the view of the present in a radical way. This simply means that the future is begun in the present time and therefore there is no detachment between the present and the future.

Nderitu further explains that if eschatology is viewed from a futuristic viewpoint (as is the case with Adventists) as one that sees everything in the future with no connection to the present, then it becomes easy for someone to shun his/her social,

political and cultural responsibilities. Brunt in Plantak (1998:182) observes, “eschatology can (and often has) become an excuse to shun ethical, social and political responsibility.” Further, Plantak (1998:173-174), observes that there has been some development in Adventist eschatology since E.G. White expressed her theological position. For her, the kingdom of glory is the one that is still in the future and will be established when Jesus comes a second time and sits on the throne. She notes that the kingdom of grace was ‘instituted immediately after the fall of man when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race’, though the establishment was not until the death of Jesus.

This is an understanding of her writings that accommodates the future and the present views of the kingdom of God. Gutierrez (1971:298), a Catholic theologian and a great proponent of socially and politically sound eschatology, observes that an understanding of eschatology that does not assert the present, and future realities, is deficient.

But he warns against spiritualising the present away, “If by ‘present life’ one understands only “present spiritual life,” one does not have an accurate understanding of eschatology. Its presence is an intra-historical reality” Adventists should have a great measure of eschatological motivation that propels them to have a concern for the poor neighbour, one that is motivated by God’s generosity and promise of a coming kingdom of glory. This eschatological motivation should energise Adventists to be at the forefront of the struggle against racism, apartheid, colonialism and other socially and politically engineered ills. It is Adventists who are equipped as they claim, with this eschatological motivation that provokes a commitment to the principles of the kingdom of God. This activation of the principles of God must bear fruits that are consistent with the coming kingdom of glory. Those who have this eschatological motivation will engage in a lifestyle that makes the captive free, the blind to see, and proclaim the favourable year of the Lord. There are peculiar challenges for Adventists. The grave challenge for Adventist eschatology is having interests that are found in the “other world,” in a place where God will solve all social and economic problems of humanity. This perception has caused Adventists to long for the imminent coming of Jesus and His kingdom rather than living out the principles of the coming kingdom in the present age (Plantak 1998:86-87).

In his challenge regarding the Adventist views of “immediacy and occupying,” Knight (1993:327-342) states, “doing good and working for reformed social structures in the name of Christ are excellent in themselves but they need to be seen and appreciated within Adventism’s pre-millennial perspective.” Knight further argues that if the church is divorced from the continuum, such good works and excellent perspectives could evolve into a form of post-millennialism in which Adventism’s primary focus falls on improving this world rather than proclaiming the Second Advent (Ibid.1993:327-342).

Knight’s use of the expression, “immediacy and occupying” implies the function of the gospel as a vehicle for incarnational evangelism, which must be carried out in full consciousness of the present, future or end-time events. Quoting Rice, Nderitu (2000:5) advocates that the Adventist church needs to recognise the need to advocate and agitate for social change as an absolute necessity.

This agitation for the advancement of humanity is a critical aspect of the gospel and is a way of scratching where it itches. Furthermore, it is a way of meeting humanity at the point where life is challenged in a way that is prophetically timely. It is also the way of stooping low for the sake of the poverty-stricken, the disenfranchised, the dehumanised and the disempowered and oppressed people of God (Rice 1985:279). Moreover, it is a way of contemporising and post-contemporising the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) in our time. The other factor that poses a problem for the Adventist Christianity is what Nderitu (2000:22) terms “remnant theology.” Rice explicitly states that the Adventist church sees itself as a remnant church with a unique message in the guiding light of the three angels’ message (Rev. 14:1-6) and as the one offering social services in its institutions in a responsible manner (Rice 1985:230-231). The message of the three angels of Revelation 14 informs the content and urgency of the Adventist mission and eschatology. Hence, the proclamation of this message and the world events surrounding them is seen as a prelude to the second coming of Jesus.

A particular problem of the traditional Adventist view on the biblical millennium is the notion that because the world is evil and the Bible promises a better world than the present world, it is not absolutely necessary to spend time and means in the correcting the pains suffered by the poor. This can hinder Adventist mission thought from confronting the material issues that bother even some of its own members. The

only mission practice possible with this understanding in place is relief rather than liberation; a model of ministry that deals with consequences and not root problems. In its worst form this attitude consists in theological cowardice. The next subsection argues for departure from this lame theological view of poverty and how the church should respond to it. The project finds the basis of liberative action towards and with the poor from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy.

5.7 A Deuteronomist Model of social justice: Towards the Millennium

This subsection presents what should be a model for the redemptive Adventist model of liberative theology of mission. The rationale behind this approach is that as Bible-rooted Christians, Adventists in Soweto need to be convinced that a theology of liberative mission is informed by the inspired text.

In the absence of this assurance, any programme intended to liberate the poor by a nonbiblical hermeneutic will be rejected. In presenting this model, the book of Deuteronomy will be used as the primary text of reference. Linthicum (2003:26) in his book, "Transforming Power: Biblical strategies for Making a difference in Your Community" succinctly states that the book of Deuteronomy is the clearest statement in the Bible of the world as God intended it to be. The word *Deuteronomy* means "the second telling of the law"; this book presents a summation or retelling of the law, a systematic presentation of what is otherwise somewhat haphazardly fashioned throughout Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus. Deuteronomy is the closest Israel ever came to the development of a constitution, laying out what one nation under God ought to be.

Hence, the researcher has chosen the book of Deuteronomy as the foundational tool or framework for Adventist liberative theology of mission. When King Josiah heard the book of Deuteronomy read and how Israel as a nation has departed from the ways of God, he was moved and brought unprecedented historic reforms in Israel (2 Ki. 22-23). Hence, the author of (2 Ki. 23:25) says, because of his faithfulness, "...before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him." Three noteworthy principles in this text that elevated King Josiah above other kings: 'He turned to the Lord with all his heart; with all his soul;

and with all his might.' He became not only an obedient king but also walked in all the (good) ways of his father David (2 Ki. 22:2).

Consequently, Linthicum (2003:26) explicates that Deuteronomy formed the foundation for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the reformulation of the corporate life of Israel under Nehemiah. Deuteronomy formed the template for the nation against which the prophets measured Israel. Deuteronomy, along with the book of Isaiah, was most used by Jesus to call Israel to accountability. And Deuteronomy formed the basis for John's vision of the New Jerusalem. Linthicum (2003:27) celebrates the fact that Deuteronomy presents God's design for the way the political, economic and religious systems of Israel are meant to operate.

In my experience, if the political, economic and religious systems are in place in any nation, then a true transformational model will result. Following is a summary of this description.

5.7.1 A religion of relationship.

The central theme in the book of Deuteronomy is declared in chapter 6:4, 5.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and though shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Jesus has echoed this truth in the New Testament as the "first commandment" of the law (Mk. 12:29, 30). Even the lawyer in his summary of the law (Lk. 10:27-28), reiterated the love of God as the fundamental principle of the relationship between God and man. This command is paired with the command to love your neighbour (Lev. 19:18). Jesus commended the lawyer when he understood that the "love of God and man" constitutes a perfect life, Christ said in return, "do this and you will live" (Lk. 10:27-28). Belief in only one God was a distinctive feature of Hebrew religion.

Since Israel was to enter the land whose people believed in many gods, they were not to depart from an understanding of serving one God. Their God is the God of their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who rules the entire universe.

He alone is a true God who is both transcendent and immanent. The reason behind loving God alone is because He is, "God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God,

mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt” (Deut. 10:17-20).

The second thing that will move the church to love God is that, “God is love” (1Jn. 4:8). Love, according to the Bible, is the essence of God. Rodriguez (2013:15) confirms this fact when he states that, “There is nothing outside God that could move or force Him to love. In fact, there is no need for any external motivation, because it is God’s very nature to love.”

Baker (1988:399) also concurs when he says that this love is “neither based on a felt need in the loving person nor on a desire called forth by some attractive feature(s) in the loved one.” It was this understanding of God’s love that led the Apostle Paul to say, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

Linthicum (2003:28) further states that Israel had a *relational culture*. A relational culture is one in which power is shared through the people’s participation both in the formation and in the ongoing functioning of their societies political, economic and religious (value-sustaining) systems. Relational power—or people power—seeks to distribute power, with public life built around the relationships people have with one another, including those in authority. This culture carried with it a principle of a win-win situation. A relationship with God had both a public dimension and a private (or personal) dimension. Nothing is as important as our individual and our societal relationship with God and with each other. The author is not interested in the nation or its people simply holding the right beliefs about God, embracing the right doctrines or celebrating right liturgies. What Deuteronomy wants is an active, dynamic relationship with God on the part of the nation—of its entire people and of each person. In the final analysis, Israel’s capacity to be the kind of society God desires and calls it to be depended upon the Israelites’ capacity to respond to God’s love with like love.

5.7.2 A politics of justice

Linthicum (2003:30) further celebrates the fact that the two systems for ordering the political life of Israel in Deuteronomy had to follow the instruction of God as stated hereunder: “You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you” (Deut. 16:19-20). According to this injunction, the judicial system is to mete out justice³⁰ according to the law. Judges must not be influenced by the status or position of the person when judgement is in process; they must not be corrupted by accepting bribes or ‘kickbacks.’

Earthly kings in this world have absolute and despotic powers but the kings chosen by God for the leadership of His people must be under God and not hoard everything to themselves. (Deut.17:14-20). Even in adjudicating the rule of law they are depended upon God. They are not their own voice. This is why all the kings in Israel that assumed absolute and despotic powers could not last in their leadership. And to most of them, the Bible repeatedly says, “They did evil in the eyes of God.” Israelite kingship, as defined by Deuteronomy, was profoundly different. The king was to be a commoner, an ordinary person whom God would select to be a monarch. His reign could not be passed on to his heirs. Rather, each new monarch would be chosen from the people. The reward of the Israelite king for wisely ruling his nation was not to accumulate wealth for himself or his family or tribe. He was to live frugally. He was not to have a harem or many wives.

He was not to enslave his subjects or sell them into slavery to another king. Finally, he was to keep a copy of the book of the law before him and have a portion of it read each day to him in order remind himself of his obligations as a king (not his privileges). Kingship, as described in Deuteronomy, was unlike any monarchy existing anywhere else in the East. Deuteronomy communicated to those in the

³⁰ For justice to be guaranteed, the services of the higher court were put in place. In other words, people have a right to appeal the case (Deut. 17:8-13). To ensure that transparency prevails, cases that have been sent to a higher court were adjudicated by Levitical priests who believed in God (Deut. 17:12). The Adventist church is placed in South Africa to see to it that justice prevails. Yes, they are paraphrased.

political system that the system exists to dispense justice. The judiciary is clearly ordered and is separated from the authority of the king. For the monarch, justice is the inevitable result of the rule that exists to serve the people, and he is not to perceive the nation as his personal property for him to further his own ends or to increase his wealth. A nation and culture built on a relationship with God and each other requires a government that will seek justice in all it does.

5.7.3 An economics of equality

The theological basis of tithing in the Bible is that God is the Creator. According to Rodriguez (2013:45), the Hebrew word translated “Creator” comes from a קנא³¹ root that means “to acquire, possess (stressing possessing).” All that human beings can lay their hands on belongs to God because He created it. Hence, the book of Deuteronomy declares that Palestine existed, with all its wealth and power, before they were born and before they entered the land (Deut.6:10). God chose the Israelites out of love not because of any status. The basic reason for Israel to be elected by God was for the salvation of the nations. This privilege has not been extended to Israel that she might become infatuated by it, but that she might recognise it as a commission. Their main duty was to reveal the glory and the Lordship of God on earth and to the ends of the world.

They were to recognise the fact that it was God who took them out of Egypt, it was God who rescued them from slavery, it was God who protected them in the desert for forty years and built them into a mighty nation, and it was God who brought them to the promised land and enriched them (Deut.6:10-11). Israel cannot claim anything for themselves except thanking God for His great and free gift. Therefore, all that they have become and possess belonged to God. God might as well say as Linthicum (2003:31) succinctly puts it, “[You live, Israel, in] fine, large cities that you did not build, houses that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant” (Deut.6:11).

³¹ This word in this discourse seems to express the idea of creation and possession. God as Creator, He possesses everything in heaven and on earth.

Interestingly, according to the book of Deuteronomy, God did not choose them because they're a great nation but because they were a minority (Deut.7:7-13).

They were in a vulnerable state in Egypt. The Adventist church, like the Israelites, need to recognise the fact that they were chosen by God not because of anything they possessed but because of His love. The church therefore exists to demonstrate the love of God to the disposed and marginalised people in Soweto. The material wealth that the church has in its possession must not be hoarded but shared because it was freely given, so they must freely give (Deut.8:18). Paraphrased Linthicum (2003:32) aptly corroborates this fact when he says that what the Israelites possess they must: Perceive it not as a private wealth to be owned but as a common wealth that God has invested in them so they can be good trustees or stewards of it. The nation must keep before them the recognition that all that they have is a gift. Since it belongs to God and is only temporarily invested in God's people, they are to use it for the common good by being wise trustees or stewards of it.

God has chosen humanity to have dominion over the world. Thus, He gives humans power and authority: "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and do" (White 1903:21). Therefore, as stewards, human beings were given power and wealth to fulfil the principle of sharing and benevolence so that no poor people can be found "among you" (Deut. 15:4-5). The early church in the book of Acts had the same experience when they allowed the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts. Acts 2:44 says, they had "everything in common." They sold their properties and commonly shared among themselves. The spirit of brotherliness and frugality prevailed among them. This is the same spirit that God wants to see in His church, especially among the poor of in Soweto.

5.7.4 The jubilee economy

In the Old Testament, jubilee was the culmination of the Sabbath years. Just as every six days there was to be a day of rest, so every six years there was to be a rest throughout the land. Jubilee year occurred every forty-nine years, or in other words, every six Sabbath years. It included, in addition to all the regular sanctions of

the Sabbath year, the restoration of all property to the original owners, the remission of all debts and the release of all slaves (Costas 1979:70). The year of jubilee was to bring hope to the poor, marginalised and disenfranchised. It was a year in which love would triumph over greed, light over darkness, freedom over enslavement and hope over despair (1979:70, par 2). Jubilee brought relief to three groups of people: the poor, the blind and the captives and oppressed. These groups of people were socially, economically and politically marginalised and disenfranchised.

To God, this was an injustice because God hated any form of marginalisation.

With God, every man is important because is created in His image. Hence, God in Deuteronomy 15:4 instructed Israel that they make sure that poverty is eradicated amongst them. In Deuteronomy 15:11, He gave them a solution when He said, "I ...command you 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land.'" Why? Because "there will always be poor people in your land" (v.11). Everyone in the nation is to work for the eradication of poverty by the way the people and the systems manage their wealth. The elimination of poverty in the nation is to be the primary agenda both of the systems and of each individual Israelite. Linthicum (2003:32-33) states three instructions from God that will eliminate poverty from the Israelites: the sabbatical year, giving of loans and remitting tithes. One such way is to observe *the sabbatical year*: "Every seventh year you grant a remission of debts. And this is the manner of the remission:

Every creditor shall release what he has loaned to his neighbour; he shall not exact it of his neighbour and his brother, because the Lord's remission has been proclaimed". (Deut.15:1-2). Every seven years, all debts of all Israelites were to be forgiven (Deut.15:1-11). Therefore every seven years, when all debts were forgiven, wealth was inevitably redistributed. In essence, those who through misfortune, war, indebtedness or even poor management had sunk into poverty over that seven-year period would, through the cancellation of their debts, receive a transfer of wealth in order that they could begin all over again. Slaves were set free (Deut.15:12-18). Intriguingly Deuteronomy is quite specific in stating that these regulations applied to female as well as male slaves.

The final regulation of the sabbatical year does not appear in Deuteronomy but in Exodus and later became associated with the sabbatical year: the land was to lie

fallow so that it could renew itself (Ex. 23:10-11). With no fertilisers except animal dung to renew the earth, it had to “rest” in order to be able to continue to provide sufficient crops for the Israelites. A second way to redistribute income was through *loans*. Loans were to be given between the sabbatical years and the primary stipulation on such loans is that they are to *be given without interest* (Deut. 23:19-20). The purpose of giving a loan was not to make money but to help your neighbour in need.

So to charge interest on a loan would take advantage of the vulnerability of your neighbour, who would not have requested a loan if he or she were not already in trouble. Such loans were not only to be interest free; they were automatically to be forgiven on the sabbatical year, *no matter how little had been paid back* or how late in the sabbatical cycle they were granted (Deut. 15:7-11). There was to be no making of money on the misfortune of other Jews.

A third-way income was to be redistributed through *the tithe*. Each Israelite was expected to give a tithe of his or her wealth annually to the king and judiciary, a second tithe to the Levites and religious leaders (because they were not permitted to hold land) and a third tithe to the poor (Deut. 14:22-29; 16:1-17). One tithe was to be given at each of the three festivals every Jew was required to attend annually: the Passover, the Festival of First Fruits and the Festival of Booths. These three ways are a demonstration of Israel’s commitment to *compensatory economic justice*, for all the instructions are designed to bring to reality the assertion that “there will... be no one poor among you.”

5.7.5 The *Shalom* Community

Linthicum (2003:36-37) vividly portrays the Deuteronomic vision of the *shalom* community. God has always intended that Israel must function according to His divine blueprint. The Hebrew word *shalom* comprehensively captures this Deuteronomic vision. And I would call the kind of society that seeks to live out God’s intention a “*shalom* community.” *Shalom* is most often translated into English as “peace.” But the English word peace doesn’t begin to capture the nuances of *shalom*. Peace simply means there is no hostility occurring right now—no fighting warfare or conflict. But the Hebrew word *shalom* means much more than the simple

cessation of hostilities. *Shalom* is an exceedingly right concept, a comprehensive word dealing with and covering all the relationships of daily life, expressing the ideal state of life in Israel and, indeed, the entire world.

The fundamental meaning of *shalom* is captured by such English words as “totality,” “wholeness,” “well-being” and “harmony.”

It is a comprehensive word that includes in it

- Bodily health (for example, Ps. 38:3)
- Security and strength (Jud. 6:23; Dan. 10:19)
- A long life ending in a natural death (Gen. 15:15)
- Prosperity and abundance (Job 5:18-26; Ps. 37:11; Lam.3:16-17; Zech. 8:12)
- Successful completion of an enterprise (Jud. 18:5; 1Sam. 1:17)
- Victory in war (Jud. 8:4-9). (Note that *shalom* does not necessarily mean a cessation of conflict; it is victory for Israel’s troops.

Thus when Jews wish each other “*shalom*,” they are wishing each other health, security, long life, prosperity, successful completion of an enterprise, victory in war. In other words, they are wishing God’s best for the entirety of a person’s life, for all her relationship with others, for all he sets his hand to do. And they are wishing for such fullness both for that person’s life and for the Jewish community throughout the world. *Shalom* is therefore a political word, an economic word and a religious word that is meant to be corporate and society-wide as well as personal, individual and family-wide. There is simply no word richer or more meaningful than *shalom*. Hence, this Hebraic concept of Shalom according to Bradshaw (1994:18), the redemption of all spheres of life towards God’s, “intended harmony,” is the antithesis to poverty and injustice. Shalom envisions a world of just and peaceful relationships—with God, self, and others, including between men and women. This idea of Shalom is based in the *imago Dei*: all people are created in the image of God with equal and infinite value and, importantly, creative potential.

The dream of *shalom* community is a golden thread woven through the entirety of scripture. Various biblical writers and leaders call it by different names: the peaceable kingdom, a new heaven and a new earth, the kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem. But in each of these, the same essential vision is being presented of life together in a God based society. *Shalom* community is the biblical vision of the world

as God intended it to be—society as it should be. It should therefore give God's people direction, mission and focus for our work and witness in the world.

It is this vision that the Adventist church and the church in general should be about. In as much as we are called to evangelise and win people to God's, kingdom, as a church, we are to focus on working for the realisation of *shalom* community, especially in an urban community such as Soweto.

5.8 Conclusion

For Adventist urban theology of mission to be relevant, it must be incarnational. The church must understand that incarnation as a basis of missionary activity is rooted first of all in the character of God who was incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5-8). Both the models of Ellen White and Deuteronomy in this chapter demonstrate how, with God's love in word and deeds, Adventists can reach out to the marginalised and disenfranchised in Soweto and in the world. Therefore, for incarnational mission to be realised, the interplay between incarnation and contextual theology has to happen. The implication is that for theology to be redemptive it must be understood and actualised in the context of ministry.

Hence, millennial expectancy should be the basis for the generation of hope in communities of the poor as they collaborate with the church in crafting ways to free themselves from their hopeless condition. Chapter 6, as a culmination of this study, will demonstrate how in practical terms the church will engage itself with the poor in Soweto.

CHAPTER 6

TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM: A PROGRAMME OF ACTION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is the capstone of the project, Towards the Millennium: A Critical Theological Exploration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Engagement with the Poor in Soweto. The chapter is not an analytic review of the situation of the poor in Soweto but an approach to their condition with the intention of providing the Adventist community in this part of South Africa with a theologically and socially meaningful programme for poverty alleviation/eradication. The programme will include conceptual and practical features outlined below. As such, this is my contribution to the transformation of the Seventh-day Adventist missiology and to the field of missiology as a whole. While it is a mission-theological contribution, it is also a practical guide towards the mission praxis- the practical mission work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

6.2 Rationale for a synthesis

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, the term "synthesis" refers to the composition or combination of parts or elements so as to form a whole. It is an act or process of bringing separate ideas, objects or operations into a single unit. The purpose is to achieve synergy, that is, uniformity and equality in the operation of components of a particular entity. There is a need for a synthesis of ideas and intentions in the articulation of a more responsible and imaginative social ministry to the poor in Soweto on the part of Adventists. Further, it is time that Adventists synchronised their message of hope for the Second Coming with their acts of mercy in the human sphere so that the second coming should not just be something that occurs at the end of time, but an ongoing experience of the coming of Christ into the lives and circumstances of the poor. It is time Adventists in Soweto demonstrated God's love for humanity as more than a mere psychological feeling or ideological statement, but as a practical, redemptive and liberative presence in the real world of the poor.

Adventist concern for the poor should be a continuation of the incarnation that began with Christ in the first century. Thus, they must take it upon themselves to reveal God in history, through service more than mere verbal proclamation. The poor, the orphaned, the homeless, the stranger are present-day platforms for the display of God's affection and concern for humanity. Thus Bosch (1991:18) is right when he says, "When the people of Israel renew their covenant with Yahweh, they recognise that they are renewing their obligations to the victims of society."

6.3 Theoretical framework for a liberative mission theology

A socially engaged and liberative Seventh-day Adventist mission theology that may form the basis for improved and socially meaningful ministry presupposes radical changes in the communal mind-set of Adventists in Soweto. Alongside the above understanding is the necessity for psychological and spiritual transformation of Adventists as individuals (Rom 12:2). There is a need for this to happen before Adventists can even hope to respond realistically and redemptively to the condition of the poor in Soweto. This transformation requires that the church in this place become aware of its own poverty, even if this poverty is mainly conceptual.

Adventists must understand that Jesus Christ was a master of social action. He was sensitive, compassionate and people-orientated. Christ fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty ones, clothed and cared for the downtrodden. As a result, He commanded His followers through the parable of the Good Samaritan, "to go and do like-wise." He was critical to those who undermined the principle of social action and failed to follow His example (Mat. 25:31-46). The church cannot afford to be hearers and not doers of what they profess as James admonishes. The church here should see itself as a co-agent with the poor in their emancipation from destitution.

6.4 Power precedes programme

Linthicum (2003:151) deplores the tendency practised by Christians to programme absolutely everything. Committees, boards, and task forces are examples of how the church has built its life and ministry around programmes. According to Linthicum, organising operates on an entirely different biblical rationale.

Organising works on the premise that the way to bring about significant change is not to build a programme but to build power. This critical method allows people to work together to empower each other, not by developing a programme that only strengthens their dependency. In my experience as a pastor, I have observed how true this is. Most of the time few individuals brainstorm and draw a programme that must be adopted by the majority of people. More often than not, the rest of the people would have little or no clue at all about the objectives of the programme, except those that were involved in drawing the programme. Hence, members must be encouraged to “do for themselves.”

Linthicum (2003:152) insists that Jesus did not launch a programme, create a committee or develop a project. Instead, He invested Himself in his disciples. He spent time with them, listened to them, affirmed them, and challenged them.

Christ encouraged His followers to “do for themselves.” Saymaan (1990:34) corroborates this principle when he categorically stated that, Christ’s programme was first and foremost people. He did not start His ministry by publicising all sorts of activities and meetings geared to reach the world, but He chose what the Jewish leaders described as “uneducated, common men” (Acts 4:13) to reach the world. He invested His time, ideas, and efforts in them, equipping them to do His work. And eventually, His personality so moulded them that even their critics, who accused them of being ignorant, “recognised that they had been with Jesus”.

This then presupposes that power cannot be built through a programme but through an organisation that is woven together and that intentionally seeks to build together. Once an organisation is properly built, it will form a power base that will address people’s concerns in significant ways. White (1941:147) in her book *Ministry of Healing* cautions, “Everywhere there is a tendency to substitute the work of organisations for individual effort. Human wisdom tends to consolidation, to centralisation, to the building up of great churches and institutions.” Then she adds that as a result many “excuse themselves from contact with the world, and their hearts grow cold. They become self-absorbed and unimpressible. Love for God and man dies out of the soul” (1941:147).

Similarly, McDill in Saymaan (1990:36) argue, “What good are plans and programs devoid of meaningful relationships? People are not machines, gadgetry to be used, or objects to fit into our evangelistic schemes. They know if we genuinely love them or not. God does not view them as objects to manipulate, but as His precious children whom He loves supremely, and in whom He invested the life of His Son.” The essence of McDill’s argument is that power is built upon meaningful relationships rather than programmed people. In fact, what brings transformation is not sophisticated programmes as alluded to earlier but humble people that work together and are filled by the life of Jesus Christ. Coleman (1980:113-114) confirms this argument when he says, this is the new evangelism we need. It is not better methods, but better men—men who know their Redeemer from something more than hearsay—men who see His vision and feel His passion for the world—men who are willing to be nothing in order that He might be everything—men who want only for Christ to produce His life in and through them according to His own good pleasure.”

6.5 Building relationships that bring transformation in our communities

Transformation can be easily realised if our primary focus is on building relationships, not on completing tasks. Creating and maintaining strong relationships with the community (like in Soweto) will truly bring a transformational change. According to Linthicum (2003:34), relationships that build power can be maintained if a significant investment of time and energy is considered. These relationships are built through intentionally selecting the people with whom you wish to build relationships and then invest time and energy in those people. Jesus’ relationships with his disciples and friends were intentional, demanding and called for commitment. One-on-one or relational meetings are imperative for building lasting relationships.

6.6 Objective of building relationships

We must begin by being with the people, and looking to see where God is at work in their midst. Building relationships takes time; therefore, we must be patient in this process of knowing our people in our community. Our main task, according to

participatory methodology mentioned in chapter 1, is not to set an agenda for them but to learn from their agenda—their concerns, suffering, problems, needs, joys and aspirations. Bonhoeffer (1976:97-99) underscores this fact when he says,

The first service that one owes to others...consists in listening to them...Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians; because these Christians are talking when they should be listening...Christians have forgotten that He who is Himself the great listener and whose work they would share has committed the ministry of listening to them. We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God.

In this age of media and technology, we no longer have time to listen. Communication is often interrupted by answering a call, chatting or tweeting while a conversation is on. In such conditions, it is very difficult to listen to what the other person says. Sometimes we are distracted by our environment and possessions.

For Adventist to understand the poor in Soweto, and to minister meaningfully, we need to listen more and minimise talking. This skill is still relevant and more needed in the twenty-first century. McDill (1979:61-62), considers five listening skills as follows:

- The first one is “an attitude of genuine interest.” According to McDill, we listen because we want to, not because we have to. And we listen not primarily for our sake, but for that of the other person.
- The second listening skill is “eye contact.” Where are our eyes focused when we are trying to listen? Are they absorbed in what is being said, or are they bored and searching for something more interesting?
- The third skill is “facial expressions.” Our eyes might be on the person we are talking to, but facial expressions can easily betray where our mind really is. Do they show that we are affected by what we hear? Such expressions can reveal whether we are sympathetic or unfeeling, engaged or distracted.
- The fourth skill involves being aware of “gestures” such as the movements of the head, hands, and the whole body. Such gestures, even though we may not be conscious of them at the time, nevertheless give subtle clues to the other person and convey a message of their own.

- Finally, the “responses” we give, such as a laugh, a smile, asking a point of the flow for clarification, and nod, etc., demonstrates whether we are directly in the flow of the conversation.

These listening skills diagnose whether we care about the people we seek to minister to or not. If we follow after Christ and His method of ministry, we will indeed succeed in mission. “Christ method alone...” as Ellen White (1941:143) in chapter 5 postulates, is the only antidote that will bring apt objective of relationships in the Adventist church. Rock in his article “Church and Society” also emphatically acknowledges that the ministry of Jesus Christ as a guide for societal conscience is more pronounced than that of any of the OT Prophets. Quoting Luke’s account of Christ’s vivid societal activity he says: “Christ’s emphasis and concern for the captives, the blind, and the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19), the poor and the hungry (6:20-21), the sick and infirm (7:22-23), the despised Gentile (7:1-10), economic oppression and excess wealth (18:18-28); 16:5), and charity for the needy (12:32-34; 10:30-37), defines His service on earth in terms of society’s victims in ways yet unappreciated by a great percentage of His followers.

Christ not only straightened their limbs and filled their stomachs; He lifted their hopes and freed their spirits from the psychological yokes that an insensitive society had levied upon them. “Rock continues to explicate that corrective measures regarding government—itsself—are more subtle but they are seen in His: response to the question about tribute by relegating to Caesar a place subordinate to and critiqued by God (Mk 12:17), reference to Herod Antipas as “that fox” (Lk 13:32), refusal to satisfy the depraved curiosity of that same Herod at the time of His trial (Lk 23:9), bold reminder to Pilate that his vaunted authority was both subordinate and temporary (Jn 19:11), repeated focus on the kingdom of grace as the higher and ultimate source of legal and social ethics (Mt 5), emphasis of the freedom of the soul from all coercion as a superior good (Mt 10:28), counsel on how to assert one’s freedom and one’s dignity by voluntarily doubling the oppressor’s requirements (Mt 5:39-40), and elimination of the fear of death through the power of the resurrection (Jn 6:39-40).

Christ never directly confronted the Roman system, but by His words and deeds, He planted capsules of social freedom which, under more favourable conditions in later generations, burst forth in overt, active demands for equity. And this is how the church should vindicate the ministry and life of Jesus Christ. An organic model of ministry also calls for a partnership between the mission and the church. We need to decentralise our structures and build flexibility into our programmes and avoid building large bureaucratic organisations. Based on his extensive experience, (Batten 1972:56), formulates what he considers to be the general principles underlying good relationships and development work between the church and the community³².

These principles can be relevant tools for the church. For, whatever else a church that enters a development field may be, it is an agency working for community development. A direct application of the relevant principles to the work of the church is made by rephrasing them to read:

- The church must establish friendly and trustful relationships with the people whom it hopes to influence.
- The church must reach an agreement with the people on what the changes should be.
- The church must be interested in working with the groups.

6.7 The necessity of Empowerment

Linthicum (1991:21-30), an urban ministry expert proposes three kinds of churches. As God's people, we need to choose a church that is incarnational in nature. They are as follows:

- The church in the City/Community: This refers only to location because the church members are not from the community.

³² Batten further maintains that no church can apply these principles effectively unless it is keenly interested in every aspect of community life. It is not enough to study the people's material needs. Such studies only suggest what is theoretically desirable, and in practice many other factors must be taken into account. The intrinsic merits of any proposed change may account for little in the face of doubt about the church's real purpose, fear of the unknown and local enmities and rivalries. Many useful innovations have been rejected solely on emotional grounds (1972:57).

- The church here has little or no involvement in the community; it is “in” but not “of” its community. This church is symbolised by “salt shaker” in a loaf of banana bread. (2) The church to the City/ Community: This church has a keen sense of responsibility to evangelise the community. However, its challenge is in its perception that the church knows what the community needs. In other words, the church decides to unilaterally what the community needs and invites the community to participate. The church develops many programmes to assist the community. But the community does not trust the diagnosis the church has made.
- The church with the City/Community: This church sees mission to the community as a partnership.

It incarnates itself in that community, discovers from the community the burning issues, brings the ministry of the church out into the community, and nurtures personal relationships with individuals in the community. This kind of church sees the value of connecting with the local leadership of the community surrounding the church. The unique needs of the community help mould the avenues through which this church will conduct its heaven-sent mission. Therefore, with these three approaches the church can ignore the city and the needs of the people around it, or it can unilaterally provide social services and do good works for the people in the city without scratching where it is itching, or last it can join in the community’s struggle to determine for themselves what kind of community they want to have, a community with justice for all.

It is of paramount importance to empower church members with regard to social responsibility, because according to the New Testament (Jn 3:16 and 11 Cor 5:19) God’s primary relationship is to the world He loves and desires to reconcile to Himself, It is not the church or to the world through the church. Consequently, Christians will discover God is already at work in places previously unoccupied by the church. God is, in fact, active in every part of the universe. His kingdom embraces all aspects of His relationship with men and the cosmos (Eph 5:1). In the context of this study, the church with the community is more incarnational and more relational and relevant to the needs of the community. Hence, Linthicum (2003:153)

in confirming this principle aptly states “Biblical relational power cannot be built except upon the foundation of people sharing their deepest concerns.” For Adventists to be relevant in Soweto they need to practice what they preach.

6.8 Utilising Nehemiah’s practical Strategy of Empowerment

The book of Nehemiah illustrates how a practical relational strategy can bring about social transformation in a community such as Soweto. The group felt that Nehemiah’s strategy, like other development strategies stated in this study, can be the best possible tool for Adventists to use for poverty alleviation in Soweto. This strategy consists of twelve steps that must be followed to achieve a desired solution for social transformation. According to Linthicum (2003:93-107), these are: Begin by building relationships, Internalise the pain, Pray for the people, Consider your resources, Understand the value of timing, Build first actions on relationships, Assess the situation yourself, Publicly identify with the people, Publicly articulate the problem, Turning the problem into an issue, The people determine the issue, The people carry out the action, and the people celebrate their victory.

We need to build relationships. When Israel was helpless during the time of vulnerability in exile, Nehemiah used relationships. He started asking questions about the conditions in Jerusalem. According to Linthicum (2003:94), “When Cyrus overthrew the Babylonian empire, he allowed the captive elite to return to their countries on the condition that they would function under the authority of the Persian crown. A significant number of Israelite captives thus returned home to Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem. Nehemiah was asking about the descendants of these captives, as well as those who remained behind in Jerusalem.” In verse 2 of chapter 4 he said, “I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.” Asking questions³³ is the best policy of relating to someone.

³³ Questions assist you when it comes to issues of relevance. Relationships are easily built in this way because you do not assume but you allow people to express themselves the best way they possibly can. This strategy can assist the church when building rapport with the poor in Soweto.

We need to internalise the pain. When Nehemiah “heard these things,” the text tells us that he “sat down and wept, and mourned for days” (Neh. 1:4). His concerns about the state of affairs in exile and Jerusalem indicate how much he was related to people. After the full horrendous story was told, he was moved and deeply felt the pain. Nehemiah was not only sympathetic or empathic but he was compassionate. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, “Compassion is the broader word: it refers to both an understanding of another’s pain and the desire to somehow mitigate that pain.” It is not only enough for the church to hear about how our communities are suffering because of poverty, but we must stand and do something about it. Our frustrations must drive us to action.

We need to pray for the people. After his mourning and crying, the text tells us that Nehemiah “fasted and prayed before the God of heaven” (Neh. 1:4-11). Linthicum (2003:96) concurs when he says, “Prayer was a strategic part of the process by which Nehemiah prepared both himself and the Jewish people for the great work of liberation God would do through them. The work of developing people from their point of need is spiritual. We cannot embark on doing this work without God on our side. Forces of darkness have caused “these evil things.” As Christ prayed, so must we. Consider your resources, Nehemiah, even at that time, understood the principles of ABCD model. The fundamental question here is not, “Where shall we get money or resources to serve the poor, but what existing capacities and assets do the poor have to attend to their condition?” Nehemiah proudly said, “At the time, I was cupbearer to the king” (Neh. 1:11). Nehemiah knew that the only way is to use everyone’s resources to save the situation. Everyone must be involved. ABCD draws out strengths and successes in a community's shared history as its starting point for change³⁴.

We need to understand the value of timing. Solomon in the book of Proverb 15:23 says, “A person finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word!” Nehemiah understood the value of good timing. The text tells us that “in the month of

³⁴ Among all the assets that exist in the community, ABCD pays particular attention to the assets inherent in social relationships, as evident in formal and informal associations and networks (See 6.10 in this chapter). Adventists can learn a great deal from this principle instead of always expecting the head office to sponsor developmental social endeavours.

Chislev in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes” (Neh. 1:1). Further, in (Neh. 2:1) he says, “in the month of Nisan in the twentieth year.” Linthicum (2003:98) says between these two months it was an incubation period—of meeting with people, listening to their stories, reflecting on their pain, praying over the situation, considering the available resources and building relationships.

For six months Nehemiah worked “behind the scenes”—building relationships. He silently consulted people. He knew that relationships must be given time and be nurtured. Consultation is key to building a relationship before any major action is taken. Nehemiah’s first action was to inform the king so he can get permission to access the resources he needs. The relationships he built with the king for many years afforded him an advantage to accomplish his goal. He requested the following from the king (Neh. 2:1-8):

- Permission to go to Jerusalem to investigate and assess the situation,
- That he be authorised to organise people to rebuild their walls,
- That the king grant him safe passage to Jerusalem,
- That the king supply materials for building.

These steps granted him full authority from the king and key governmental officials. And this assisted him and protected him from the dangers of Sanballat and Tobiah who were opposed to Nehemiah. The church will do well if, before any social action is taken, consultation with the government authorities be considered first. We need to assess the situation ourselves, Nehemiah’s apt research and thorough assessment of the situation and consultations with the king government officials convinced him that time was ripe for him to act. We also need to publicly identify with the people. Then Nehemiah³⁵ calls for a general public meeting. Again, with his policy of consultation, he invited the dignitaries, politicians, government officials, and all Jews young and old, educated and illiterate (Neh. 2:16). Then he addressed them as follows, you see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come; let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer

³⁵ Nehemiah, as he addressed the people, he also included himself. He was one with the people. How from time to time leaders fail to recognise this principle. Everybody was included in this project. It was not a project for the elite but a people’s action.

disgrace.” I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. Then they said, “Let us start building!” So they committed themselves to the common good.” (Neh. 2:17-18).

We need to publicly articulate the problem. Nehemiah did not mince his words, he publicly stated the problem: “Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned” (Neh. 2:17). Even though the problem was clearly stated, Israel could not understand because of their loss of spiritual and cultural identity. However, Nehemiah knowing their perceived issues, he started again consulting them—through the continuing process of action and reflection, the people finally understood their spiritual problem. In addition, once they perceived their problem, they undertook solutions far more radical than Nehemiah would have recommended (Linthicum 2003:101). Christ has correctly stated, “Without me, ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Without Christ, we can fail to understand even the well pronounced problem before us. King Saul and Israel ran away from a clearly conspicuous Goliath until David came and beat him. David relied upon the Lord, not in their armoury.

We must turn the problem into a solution. Nehemiah says, “Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace” (Neh. 2:17). Nehemiah believes that even if the problem before them seems insurmountable if God is on their side and they believe in themselves, they will conquer. A small problem becomes big if God is not on your side but a big problem becomes small if God is on your side. The people determine the issue. All along, Nehemiah was the organiser of the people. Now the role radically changes as the people assume the full ownership and leadership of the organising process: “Then they said, ‘Let us start building!’ So they committed themselves to the common good” (Neh. 2:18). People undertake to solve their own problem. It is important to train the poor to sustain themselves and thus free themselves from their condition. A projects approach in which they too participate as planners, leaders and functionaries will go a long way in reducing their misery and consolidating their hold on life and passing the same philosophy and strategy to other communities with similar challenges. Such an integrated approach would also have a generational ripple effect. The poor need to be made agents of their own recovery and restoration, not perpetual recipients of aid. The latter

condition creates community marked by endless cycles of dependency, a condition which, in turn, re-creates poverty and other social ills that are associated with destitution.

White (1952:194) argues, instead of encouraging the poor to think that they can have their eating and drinking provided free or nearly so, we should place them where they can help themselves. We should endeavour to provide them with work, and if necessary, teach them how to work. Let the members of poor households be taught how to cook, how to mend and make their own clothing, how to properly take care of their homes. Let boys and girls be thoroughly taught some useful trade or occupation. We are to educate the poor to become self-reliant. This will be helpful, for it will not only make them self-sustaining but to help others.

People celebrate their victory. So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem; for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. (Neh. 6:15-16) This victory gave Israel self –assurance and power. Nehemiah found them dispirited, helpless and marginalised. With his skill of organisation and consultation, he rekindled their pride and dignity as a nation. However, what was more important is the knowledge that God prevailed on their behalf. Israel became victorious because they created a strategy, they determined it, and they brought their human and physical resources together. This is unlike churches and agencies that do ministry to the city. David could not fight in the armour of King Saul. It was so heavy for him that he could not walk. However, when he used his sling he was able to conquer Goliath. The lesson is clear. ‘Fight in your own armour!’

6.9 Focus on a holistic Gospel

Science and Christian Scholar Hiebert (1997:133) aptly stated that we need to incorporate the concept of a ‘whole gospel’ at every level and in every dimension of our activities. This counters our modern tendency to specialise, and assign problems to different experts.

It goes against our professional training—against the doctor saying, “I will heal people, and get someone else to evangelise them,” or, “I will preach to them and let doctors heal them.” It requires that we go back to biblical categories, which are not supernatural versus natural categories, but with the Creator and creation. The scripture begins with God, the Creator, and speaks of His creation.

Notice the difference when we speak of the creation—it carries not only the sense of dependency on God, but also of the oneness of creation. Angels are part of this creation and so are, animals, plants, atmosphere and nature. Body and soul are one and exist in community. ‘Miracles’ and ‘natural events’ are indistinguishable. This shift to a God-centred view of the world restores wholeness to creation. We need to minister to the body, soul and community together and sense the reality that God is a part of our everyday lives. He is here, now. We can draw on the natural and social sciences for insights and aid, but if we leave God out of our explanations, we fail. This return of the awareness of God must be more than an occasional experience of a miracle. We need to sense His guidance, and hear Him in prayer.

Finally, we need to develop a holistic model for analysing and dealing with the human dilemma. In the social sciences we are increasingly turning to a ‘system of systems’ approach. Our problem is also the way we look at people. We examine them in slices. The medical doctor sees them as biological creatures, the psychologist as psychological beings, the sociologist as social humans and the anthropologist as participants in culture, and theologians as spiritual beings. The way to integrate these is not a reductionism in which we reduce all these dimensions to one basic explanation—too often this is biological and the solution is drugs. Nor is the solution a stratigraphic approach in which we allocate them to different specialists who do not share the same views of humans. Integration requires that we understand each of these human systems, but also recognise that they are part of a larger ‘system of systems’—the whole human. Psychological problems have spiritual and physical consequences, just as spiritual illnesses have physical and social symptoms.

The following crucial question must be asked: “How do we deal with a mechanistic view of the world that governs our understanding of life”? Science and Christian scholar, Hiebert (1997), provides part of the answer:

In physics I was taught that the foundation of all things is particles, and if we understand them, we could understand and predict the world. So we looked for the fundamental particles that make up the universe. Schilling now says that we have no reason to believe there is the smallest particle. That shakes us up, because we can no longer build up our world from the bottom. The Bible starts not with fundamental particles, but with God, a living being. If we start with a being, we live in an organic world in which beings and relationships are central. In our ministries we must keep our focus and priority on people, rather than programs. People are what we are about, not programs, not so many patients treated and so many people fed. We are dealing with whole persons. Jesus summarized our task as loving God and loving our neighbour. We understand the need to worship God, but who is our neighbour? (p.134).

Generally, we see our neighbour as our kind of people, those of our class and ethnicity. Others are not neighbours, nor really fully human. However, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ challenges us to say that all humans are our neighbours. As humans, despite racial differences, class differences, and gender differences there is only ‘us.’ Jesus goes further and commands: “Love your enemies.” In one sweeping statement He reduces everyone to ‘us.’ There are no ‘others.’ If we look at anyone as other—as not us, there will always be a wall between us. We will never truly get together except in casual integration.

Kgatlle (2017:8) quoting (Mathole 2005:259) in his article, “Practical theological approach to the challenge of poverty in post-1994 South Africa: Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) as a case study” Confirms this cardinal notion of focusing on a holistic gospel when he says, the social involvement of the AFM should not be separated from their witness. It is not a matter of choosing between evangelism and social responsibility. These two are inseparable in the witness of AFM. They should not use their poverty alleviation initiatives as an incentive for the poor to get converted. They

should not lure the poor to Christ with these social welfare initiatives. They should be interested in the total person. They should model their ministry on Christ. Jesus was good to those who accepted and those who rejected His message.

If we start with the common humanity of all humans, we can get together as fallen people in need of God's salvation. And we can get together in the church as one body. It is not easy to learn to see others as us, but this is what we must learn as Christians.

The approach of Jesus to affect change was not like that of the Zealots, the Essenes, the Herodian's and Sadducees, and finally the Pharisees of His day. The Zealots used force as a means to bring about change. The Essenes will physically withdraw from society in order to get right with God. For the Herodian's and Sadducees, they will maintain the status quo and preserve self-interest and their positions of privilege. For the Pharisees, devotion to God was the answer but divorces themselves from a concern for humankind. These approaches are also prevalent in our time. I have observed in my ministry how these approaches have placed people into compartments within the churches. Because of these approaches, people are lonely in the midst of other members. For Jesus, the best option to affect change is compassion. Love to God manifested in genuine concern for humankind, not divorced from reality, but essentially dealing with the issues that confront the community.

6.10 Theoretical orientation of the group about the ABCD

Before explaining what informs Asset Based Community Development I think it is essential to explain what ABCD method is.

6.10.1 What is Asset Based Community Development?

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is a *strategy* authored by John Kretzmann and John McKnight *for* sustainable community-driven development. Beyond the mobilisation of a particular community, ABCD is concerned with how to link micro-assets to the macro-environment. The appeal of ABCD lies in its premise that communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilising existing, but often unrecognised assets, and thereby responding to and creating local economic opportunity.

ABCD builds on the assets that are already found in the community and mobilises individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to build on their assets-- not concentrate on their needs.

Emery, M., Gutierrez-Montes, I. And Fernandez-Baca (2013:107) underscores the importance of Asset-based Community Development when they say, “every community, however rural, isolated, or poor, has resources within it. When those resources, or assets, are invested to create new resources, they become capital.”

An extensive period of time is spent in identifying the assets of individuals, associations, and then institutions before they are mobilised to work together to build on the identified assets of all involved. Then the identified assets from an individual are matched with people or groups who have an interest or need in that asset. The key is to begin to use what is already in the community. In the past when a person had a need they went to their neighbourhood for assistance. But this has shifted today to the belief that the neighbour does not have the skills to help them, therefore we must go to a professional for assistance. The welfare system today works in such a way that professionals have made clients and recipients of the poor, robbing them of the support from their neighbours who now think that they are not skilled enough to help. This leads to the isolation of the individuals. The poor begin to see themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders, but this can be changed through the ABCD process.

The second power of ABCD is found in the local associations who should drive the community development process and leverage additional support and entitlements. These associations are the vehicles through which all a community's assets can be identified and then connected to another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness. Users of the ABCD approach are deliberate in their intentions to lead by stepping back. Existing associations and networks (whether formal or informal) are assumed to be the source of constructive energy in the community. Community-driven development is done rather than development driven by external agencies. ABCD draws out strengths and successes in a community's shared history as its starting point for change. In the context of this study (Soweto), ABCD will serve as a relevant tool for poverty alleviation.

Among all the assets that exist in the community, ABCD pays particular attention to the assets inherent in social relationships, as evident in formal and informal associations and networks³⁶.

6.10.2 Guiding

Most communities address social and economic problems with only a small amount of their total capacity. Much of the community capacity is not used and is needed! This is the challenge and opportunity for community engagement. Everyone in a community has something to offer. There is no one we do not need.

- Everyone Has Gifts with rare exception; people can contribute and want to contribute. Gifts must be discovered.
- Relationships Build a Community—see, them, make them, and utilise them. An intentional effort to build and nourish relationships is the core of ABCD and of all community building.
- Citizens at the Centre, it is essential to engage the wider community as actors (citizens) not just as recipients of services (clients).
- Leaders Involve Others as Active Members of the community. Leaders from the wider community of voluntary associations, congregations, neighbourhoods, and local business can engage others from their sector. This “following” is based on trust, influence, and relationship.
- People Care About something agencies and neighbourhood groups often complain about apathy. Apathy is a sign of bad listening. People in communities are motivated to act. The challenge is to discover what their motivation is.
- Motivation to Act must be identified.
- People act on certain themes they feel strongly about, such as; concerns to address, dreams to realise, and personal talents to contribute. Every community is filled with invisible “motivation for action”. Listen for it.

³⁶ ABCD's community-driven approach is in keeping with the principles and practice of participatory approaches development, where active participation and empowerment (and the prevention of disempowerment) are the basis of practice. It is a strategy directed towards sustainable, economic development that is community-driven.

- Listening Conversation – one-on-one dialogue or small group conversations are ways of discovering motivation and invite participation. Forms, surveys and asset maps can be useful to guide intentional listening and relationship building.
- Ask, Ask, Ask – asking and inviting are key community building actions. “Join us. We need you.” This is the song of community.
- Asking Questions Rather Than Giving Answers Invites Stronger Participation. People in communities are usually asked to follow outside expert’s answers for their community problems. A more powerful way to engage people is to invite communities to address ‘questions’ and finding their own answer-- with agencies following up to help.
- A Citizen-Centred “Inside Out” Organisation is the Key to community Engagement a “citizen-centred” organisation is one where local people control the organisation and set the organisation’s agenda.
- Institutions Have Reached Their Limits in Problem-Solving all institutions such as government, non-profits, and businesses are stretched thin in their ability to solve community problems. They cannot be successful without engaging the rest of the community in solutions.
- Institutions as Servants: People are better than programmes in engaging the wider community. Leaders in institutions have an essential role in community building as they lead by “stepping back,” creating opportunities for citizenship, care, and real democracy.

The ABCD approach to community development is informed by the realisation that the reality of poverty is not a condition of absolute material emptiness and powerlessness. The ABCD approach works on the fact that the poor have God-given capacities, ideas and acquired skills that they use to free themselves from their plight. These assets form the basis of a plan of action that is driven by a needs and assets identification and the involvement of the poor in their emancipation and continued development. The poor must be treated as able human beings who should not be subjected to endless pity and charity. They must be seen and empowered as agents of their own development.

Hence, Campling, J., and Ledwith, M. (2005:50-51) explicate,

Community development is a mutual process. It begins in everyday lives, understanding histories, cultures, and values, and listening to hopes and concerns. Any research into people's lives locates the voices of those people expressing their own experience at its core, as the beginning of a process of empowerment and change ... The community profile offers a strategy to gather this information together in a systematic way in partnership with the community. The critical connections that weave together through the profile provide a foundation for developing critical consciousness and practical projects. This is the basis of a critical approach to community development that weaves action and reflection, theory and practice, into a unity of praxis.

A New Testament example of the ABCD model is found in Acts 2:41-46 in which the first Christians shared their material blessings with one another on the basis of needs and existing assets. The fundamental question here is not, "Where shall we get money to serve the poor, but what existing capacities and assets do the poor have to attend to their condition?" People are more able and ready to use what they have than to seek for what they lack. There are three kinds of assets in a neighbourhood, namely, *individuals* (their skills, gifts, and financial resources), *associations* (the resources represented by churches, and local organisations), and *institutions* (libraries, schools and police stations).

For Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:9), the task of a community builder is to map these assets, and to seek ways to build relationships among and between them, so as to strengthen the community's own capacity to enhance its well-being. These comprise the three simple, interrelated characteristics of the approach are that it is asset based, in the sense that any development strategy starts with what is present rather than with what is absent in the community; internally focused, with its stress upon "the primacy of local definition; investment, creativity, hope and control" and relationship driven, in that the challenge faced by community builders is constantly built and rebuild the networks within the asset-base of the community.

In a context such as Soweto, this approach would require an initial step on the part of the church to conduct assets audits of participating persons and social responsibility practitioners. Synchronisation and aligning of related assets to effect focused action in response to specific societal needs. The creation of an asset development process (ADP) to sustain the social responsibility projects. Ensure community participation in designing community development strategies and initiatives. The ABCD approach in essence, claims to sponsor a shift from the social service model, which is in line with traditional notions of patronage and charity, to a community building model, in which productive interaction and capacity-building exercises spawn a sense of ownership and secure sustainability. The diagram below articulates what this shift entails.

SOCIAL SERVICE MODEL	COMMUNITY BUILDING MODEL
Focus on Needs	Focus on Assets
Responds to Problems	Builds from Opportunity
Charity Orientation	Investment Orientation
Emphasis on Agencies	Emphasis on Association
Focus on Individuals	Focus on Community
Goal is Service	Goal is Empowerment
Power comes from Credentials	Power comes from Relationships
Programmes are the Answer	People are the answer
People are Clients	People are Citizens

Kretzmann, John P. 2009. Class Lecture. "The ABCD Approach & Temporary Volunteer Projects." North Western University, Chicago, IL. June 2009.

Steve de Gruchy (2003:21) concurs with Kretzmann when he writes that the Christian concern for development must be rooted in the 'vocation of the poor'; rather than in the compassion of the non-poor. De Gruchy (2003:21) mentions two pertinent questions that hide a key set of issues facing the church in Africa as it seeks to be engaged in social development, namely, "Whose faith and whose works are we talking about?"

The assumption underlying much of our theologising about development is that Christians must do good things for the poor, less privileged, marginalised or helpless. We, who truly believe, need to roll up our sleeves, practice what we preach, and be involved in poverty alleviation.

Maluleke (2002:22) argues that the poor are able to do things for themselves. The poor can change their situation as Freire (1993: 25) advocates if they recognise the fact that they are human and they have a 'word'. Further, he promotes humanisation as the good to which society should struggle, indeed as "the people's vocation"

For the poor to move out of this rut of dehumanisation, Freire (1993:69) suggests dialogue as an existential necessity. Freire further defines dehumanisation as a process in which people are treated as "things" and as 'objects' in other people's world. People are stripped of their word, censored; they are denied the opportunity to communicate and never allowed to dialogue.

For Freire (1993:111), it is crucial that the insights, perspectives, rituals symbols of the poor contribute to the very vision of the future that is being sought. Action and theory thus find expression in the liberating praxis: "It is when the majorities are denied their right to participate in history as Subjects that they become dominated and alienated. Thus to supersede their condition as objects by the status of Subjects the objective of any true revolutions – requires that the people act, as well as reflect upon the reality to be transformed."

6.10.3 Practical model of ABCD

The group reflected on Luke 4:18, 19 to establish its understanding of a realistic model of the ABCD approach. "The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Is. 61:1-2). In the Bible, repeatedly, God describes Himself as God of the poor, Friend of the weak, Father of the fatherless, Defender of widows, Judge of the oppressed, and Protector of the strangers.

If our God is so much compassionate, so should the church be! We have to care for the poor and the powerless as He did. In fact, God restores us for a reason. Isaiah 61:4 explicates the reason as follows, “They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.” The church is restored for spiritual and physical development in the society it finds itself.

TABLE TASKS AND ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH

TASK	SPIRITUAL	PHYSICAL
To preach the gospel to the poor	Tell the Story of Jesus	Live out the story by helping the needy
Proclaim release to the captives	Teach that sin’s bondage is over	Fight for freedom for all
Recovery of sight to the blind	Help remove ignorance of God	Provide medical help for the sick
Set free those who are bound and oppressed	Remove people from sin’s grasp	Help remove injustice from the world
Proclaim the year of the Lord	Instil hope in the spiritually dead	Work so humans everywhere may thrive

“To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

This fifth sub-unit in Christ’s mission statement points the poor away from the dynamics of the temporal realm to the reality of a millennial experience, God’s final jubilee for His people. The statement also implies that the poor deserve, not only a better life in this world but one without cares and wants in a future world. The millennium begins with the poor grasping the hope of a life that is better than one found in the present world. The point, however, is that life must be tasted or experienced in this world.

This last statement by Christ underwrites all the actions that appear above. It answers the question:” “Why do we preach to, serve, instruct and comfort the poor?” All these actions are directed at making the poor for the real and lasting liberation from the presence of dishonour, marginalisation and dehumanisation that come with

the condition of destitution. The true gospel cannot be complete without giving people hope beyond their present conditions.

6.11 Areas of social responsibility

Early Childhood Development which entails:

A) Training practitioners

Influence Early Childhood Development (ECD) training practitioners to link their skills with the provisions of the country's National Qualifications Framework so that ECD may be executed as a social responsibility of first choice.

B) The setting up of sites for the programme.

These should be organised with provisions of the relevant legislation and resource base.

C) Home and Community Based Care Support Programme

The Home and Community Based Care Support Programme (HCBC) is the provision of comprehensive quality health and social services by primary and community caregivers in the home and community in order to promote restore and maintain a person's high level of social functionality and wellness. This programme will enable individuals, families and communities to access holistic and comprehensive services nearest to their homes.

This will encourage participation by people. It will also respond to the needs of people, while consolidating sound community life. Services that may be rendered through this programme include the following:

- Identification of children, adults and families in need of care and support
- Psychosocial support to children, individuals and their families
- Addressing capacity and asset development needs of families
- Assist families and children with important documentation, especially women and youth

D) Primary nursing services

Disease prevention, education and awareness

E) School nutrition programme

The high rate of unemployment and poverty in South Africa makes it difficult for many parents to provide adequate nutrition for their school-going children.

The rising price of food also affects the meagre resources of the majority of South African homes. There is therefore a need for a scheme that takes care of the nutritional needs of children.

6.12 Skills education

The best approach to the alleviation and/or eradication of poverty is the implementation of a skills development programme. Adventists have what they regard as inspired motivation for the development of humanity through skills provision. Among the Jews: Every father was required to teach his sons some useful trade. The greatest men in Israel were trained to industrial pursuits. Knowledge of the duties was regarded as an honour of the highest vocation. Various industries were taught in the schools of the prophets, and many of the students sustained themselves by manual labour.

6.12.1 A sample skills catalogue

- Business creation and development
- Cooking and baking
- Housekeeping
- Personal and family financial management
- Basic woodwork
- Basic motor mechanics
- House maintenance
- Health and nutrition
- Natural remedies
- Plant cultivation: vegetable and fruit garden

6.12.2 Administrative Instrument for Implementing the ABCD strategy

Stage 1 TRAINING COURSE

- Identification and description of training course: Service Evangelism. An integrative approach.

Stage 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING

The following components of the strategy should be compiled into an operational manual.

- Establish background, purpose and focus of programmes
- Needs analysis and outcomes definition
- Asset audit and register
- Target community profile
- Budgeting and time frames
- Promotion of programme for community participation
- Integration of programme objectives
- Implementation of the programme
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Review and Re-articulation

6.13 Researcher's reflection

The exercises in this chapter have helped the researcher to come to the following realisations:

- While the Bible is the core of Adventist belief and practice, it has not been exegeted adequately to broaden the content, and scope of, and give effect to mission to disadvantaged communities
- Pastors in training should be oriented to understand that the pulpit is not the sole platform of redemptive mission in today's South Africa
- The Bible should be used for the skilling of church members to apply its principles in their mundane affairs
- Adventist mission cannot be authentic and redemptive until it addresses the very areas of life that alienate the poor from God's love. It must become incarnational in its approach to the needy and suffering.

6.14 Embrace the principle of equal involvement and management of mission to the poor

Adventists in Soweto should participate purposefully and openly in social ministry as equals with their target communities. They should desist from the notion that they are doing the poor a service, a favour. They should see their ministry to the poor as a concomitant feature of the gospel, not an addition or embellishment thereof. Adventists should understand that for the programme to function redemptively, decisions associated with the programme should be “taken by the people who are most affected by that decision” (Vanek, 1975, quoted by Hope & Timmel, 1984:118). No taint of bureaucratic thinking or practice must be seen in the way that Adventists engage with the poor. Throughout the processes of conceptualisation and delivery, the principle of collectivity must be maintained.

The management of the programme should be shared. This will ensure communal ownership of the process towards liberative and liberated living. When people co-own administrative processes, they stop being spectators in their own emancipation. This, in addition, shortens the time of their detention in poverty and removes the beggar instinct from their thinking and social fabric. Adventists need to learn participatory engagement, not only in service provision but also in management practice. The goal should be total or sustainable liberation of people from their condition. The programme should not lengthen the service presence of the church among the poor. What should stay with them is the presence of God and not the benevolence of the church. Only with this realisation, can the poor understand and embrace the redemptive mission of the church in their lives.

Adventists should practically develop programmes that will alleviate the plight of the poor just like the AFM. The AFM has started a project called *Umephi*. This project deals with the distressed, sexually abused, abandoned, and pregnant unmarried children. They also run a programme called ‘AIDS Orphans.’ Kgatle (2017:5). Such programmes will relevantly and practically speak to the needs of the poverty-stricken ones.

6.15 Core attitudes and behaviours

The development scholars, Aaker and Schumaker (1996), Chamber (1997), and Keough (1998) *Community Development Journal*, Volume 33, Issue 3, 1 July 1998, Pages 187–196, outline seven core attitudes and behaviours that determine community practitioners' relationships with grassroots groups. They list these as follows:

- **Believe in the people**
Participatory change starts with a rock-solid belief that people living low wealth or marginalised communities have the right and the responsibility to direct their own development. The people living in those communities know best what their community needs and how to provide it, and they have the skills, wisdom, vision, and capacity to create fundamental social transformation.
- **It comes from the people**
The direction and pace of participatory change comes from members of grassroots groups, rather than community practitioners; group members control decisions, plans, programmes and actions.
- **When practitioners give their input it is given and received as one voice among many; practitioners stay out of decision-making roles.**
- **Not 'clients,' but people.**
Group members are seen not as clients or service recipients who receive a predetermined programme, but as agents of actors – as people who are the driving creative force behind significant and long-lasting change.
- **Draw out people's wisdom**
Participatory change gained and built from the knowledge and wisdom that people have gained from their experiences – the main job for the community practitioner is to draw from people's wisdom, knowledge and skills.
- **Ask questions**
Asking good questions, continually and in different ways, is the key to the wisdom that people have gained from their experiences.

- Listen

Listening to grassroots leaders – deeply, fully and actively – is a key behaviour in participatory change; this means asking a question, staying quiet, and working hard to hear what the person you are talking with is trying to say.

6.15.1 Participatory tools and techniques

Community practitioners use participatory methodologies to help members learn from their experiences, develop an analysis of society, plan for collective action, and take action to improve their community.

- Build confidence

Building the individual and collective self-confidence of grassroots leaders and grassroots groups – by constantly encouraging people, highlighting their strengths and recognising their accomplishments – helps people come to understand that they can truly realise their vision for change.

- Build friendships

Participatory change is built on relationships, friendships, trust and sincere interest in the lives of the concerns of grassroots leaders. Chatting, laughing, hanging out, and telling stories are the foundation upon which social change is built.

- Mutual learning

As community practitioners, we learn as much from grassroots leaders as grassroots leaders learn from us; *we listen more than we talk, learn more than we teach, and always believe in the ability of the people.*

The community practice methodology outlined above is built upon practice theory (e.g., the ten steps in the methodology); and values, attitudes, and behaviours that community practitioners can return to repeatedly when working with grassroots groups. At its core, participatory change is a community practice methodology that is based on the belief that marginalised people best understand the challenges they face and how to address them. The work of the community practitioner is to draw forth the vision and plans of people living in low wealth and marginalised

communities, and then support them as they create participatory and democratic grassroots structures that give them the resources and power to do what they already know needs to be done.

6.15.2 Dynamics of liberative administrative practice

Hope and Hammel (1990:122) list five key dynamics of liberative administrative practice and ethos creation. These are:

- Self-reliance of people
- High participation of people
- Self-motivation
- Self-management
- Decreasing dependency

6.15.3 The goal of liberative administrative practice

Liberative administrative practice should achieve the development of an ethic of social power and self-determination among the poor.

It should grow the poor beyond mere reception of services to the design and management of programmes of continued provision of services to other less privileged persons. In other words, the poor should be assisted to serve and determine their own destiny. Hope and Hammel (1990:126) argue for self-determination in the following lines, If people have been submissive, passive and dominated for generations, their ability to welcome change and even to imagine that it can happen will be slow and hesitant... Participation includes the power to take one's destiny in one's own hands, which means making decisions. Through an enabling management style, we can foster people's ability to change their situation.

6.15.4 Co-ordination as final involvement

The final status of the church to the poor must move from co-participation as providers of relief or service to that of co-ordination of resources and services. Co-ordination involves consultation, referrals and collective delegated decision-making. Freire in (Hope & Hammel 1990:115) is correct when he states, "We need to help

people to read their reality and write their own history” The statement by Freire is revolutionary in its insistence on self-determination.

6.15.5 Purposeful and goal-focused empowerment

There must be intentional thinking and action in this programme. The goal should be the empowerment of the poor for sustainable and continuous emancipation. The church in Soweto should learn to act with disinterest, that is, with no concern for congratulation or rewards. It should also value the conceptual and other assets of the poor, and create space for the utilisation of these assets towards poverty reduction or eradication.

6.15.6 Programme of action

There exists a disparity between the Adventist congregational presence and the mission presence. While there is a high congregational presence of Adventists in Soweto, this presence is not felt in the area of sustainable social ministry. Soweto is a residential conglomerate of twenty-nine townships, the largest in the country. The number of Adventist congregations is also twenty-five. This is the highest concentration of Adventist congregations in a single region of South Africa. Of these congregations, seventeen have church buildings. Some of them have sites that still await structural development.

Despite this notable presence, the Adventist mission in Soweto is primarily limited to proclamation. The welfare activities of the Dorcas Society are primarily of a relief type, that is, the distribution of food and clothes to the needy. Dorcas activity in Soweto comes nowhere near the theoretical criteria that has been discussed above. It also lacks a broad theological rationale that would influence the setting up of a programme of liberative mission for the poor. It exists and functions because of traditional moral concern and suasion that is in the domain of conventional Christian practice. There is thus a necessity for a radical rethink and reformulation of an Adventist mission to the poor in Soweto.

6.16 Necessity for a radical programme of action

A radical programme of mission to the poor would call for sincere and courageous community surveys, data analysis and focused planning. This would necessitate the clear involvement of local district structures in the area. Soweto is not a homogenous human settlement. With regard to housing regimes, there are four distinct types, the old apartheid-designs duplex houses, the new RDP houses developed by the current state, the up-market bank-funded houses and informal structures commonly referred to as shacks. The societal variations that exist in Soweto go beyond physical structures; they are rooted in variant social perspectives, aspirations and lifestyles. Consequently, the poor in Soweto do not necessarily hold the same worldview as the poor in the rural countryside.

There are different levels of social sophistication here that also call for an adequate understanding of the various political persuasions and orientations of the people. Political organisations have made massive ideological investments in Soweto. Thus, programmes of social ministry are subjected to overt and covert scrutiny for their origins and intended goals. Apart from considerations noted in earlier subsections of this chapter, it is also for this reason that programmes of poverty relief and eradication should be executed after open negotiations with target communities and existing stakeholder bodies. This ensures their acceptance and sustainability.

Soweto residents are broadly group conscious and affiliated. Programmes of social welfare that may work in one part of this human settlement may be questioned and rejected in another part.

With the conceptual changes envisaged in this project, it should be made clear to the Adventist community in Soweto that mission is never complete in the absence of an integrated approach to human needs. The very doctrine of man that Adventists believe and teach implicates them in a strategic redesign of mission programmes. Human beings are tripartite beings. They live lives in which the physical, mental and spiritual are inextricably linked in one body. They cannot be evangelised redemptively outside of a ministry that lacks holistic treatment of the human condition. The Dorcas Societies and Adventist Men's Ministry groups should be

brought together into one unit so that they can be formally inducted into an awareness of the enormous challenge posed by poverty in Soweto. The purpose should be to launch orientation and training workshops intended for a deliberate overhaul of the mission focus in Soweto. The population of Soweto has been growing phenomenally in the past twenty years.

6.17 Identifying and training of liberative mission practitioners (LMPs)

Social ministry calls for the engagement of a particular brand of Christian practitioners whose orientation goes beyond conventional thinking and practice.

The training of LMPs should consider the following competencies:

- Literacy levels: literacy levels vary markedly in Soweto. This must be kept in mind in order to allow the programme to impact effectively on people.
- Language capacity: Soweto is a multilingual settlement. Language capacity is crucial for effective community impact.
- Human relations competence: The pressures of life place stress on many people in Soweto. Some have the legacy of apartheid confronting them on a daily basis. The ability to handle people at different levels of social and emotional maturity becomes non-negotiable. The best programme of mission can be derailed or stalled by poor human relations on the part of practitioners.
- Project management skills: Since this project argues for a change in the conceptual and operational nature of Adventist social ministry, there is a logical imperative for the provision of project management skills for LMPs.

There should also be a programme strategy and methodology. Such a programme would entail a number of elements.

- **Multidisciplinary focus**

The social and material needs of the poor cover the whole range of human needs and development challenges. Thus, the programme should deal with wellness management, job skills, educational programmes, e.g. adult literacy, parenting education programmes, small-scale gardening and money management.

- **Resourcing**

This includes financial and material resources. A programme that focuses on the freeing of people from material bondage necessarily implies the provision of regular financial and related resources. The church in Soweto must realise that social ministry is not an optional religious hobby to be added to the oral delivery of the Word.

➤ Branding

Branding will involve the designing of a programme that is specifically Adventist in orientation and delivery. Current Dorcas-initiated activities lack the uniqueness and memorability that should characterise a well-designed programme of social action. This process should include merits from current social welfare activities and innovations that will create a more impressive and mission-focused programme. Branding will require the study of what social mission means in the Adventist church and how policy regulations affect field work.

6.18 Implementation

Since Adventists have not practised social ministry beyond traditional relief action, it will be necessary for a programme such as is proposed here to receive serious attention from a broad spectrum of participants, for this is where the rubber will meet the road. Several actions are proposed hereunder to effect meaningful delivery of the intended programme. The following steps are proposed:

- A local pastoral consultation should be convened to conduct a thorough review of current Adventists social ministry activities in Soweto and to provide a new orientation for social ministry.
- A series of similar consultations should be held with welfare ministry leaders from local congregations. These consultations should produce an action plan informed by surveys of the location of the poor and the nature of services they will require.
- Churches should also be conscientised on the new trend towards a liberative programme of social ministry to the poor. This should be coupled with the identification or selection of a handful of Adventist church buildings as training centres for the target communities. Training should be provided for local

leaders of these target communities so that empowerment may facilitate the sustainability of the programme.

After the whole plan has been completed, local municipal officials, responsible for welfare work, should be informed and engaged to facilitate state funding or other types of support for the programme. Periodic assessment and review of the ministry should be done to ensure relevant corrective measures and consolidation of successes.

6.19 Self-reliance:

Since the major goals of the programme will be self-reliance and self-liberation, the programme will be two-fold. The programme will involve the re-education of a select group of Adventist members for liberative mission to the poor. This group will be given conceptual and instrumental resources to raise their own understanding of the liberative mission and relevant action to realise this for both themselves and others in the community. The Adventist group should comprise persons the majority of whom would identify with the condition of the poor from actual personal experience. This type of re-education should free Adventists and the target group from the notion that working for the poor is mere social benevolence, but real liberation from material bondage. The fundamental principle here is that the church cannot free the poor in the world when it has not freed the poor in its own ranks.

The curriculum should consist of:

- A biblical understanding of mission to the poor
- Food production (e.g. gardening, small-scale farming)
- Nutritional education and food preparation
- Wellness management and disease prevention through natural remedies
- Business creation and practice. This should include money management
- Occupational skills
- Personal and Home Management

In the training of the church-based group, members with relevant knowledge and skills should be used as instructors. In Proverbs 13:23 Solomon makes the following statement, much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for

want of judgment. The text implies that the best form of development is self-development with the natural resources given to humanity by God. While the verse is cast within an agrarian economy, its message is that self-development is the best form of self-sustenance, and to neglect this indicates lack of proper wisdom in the life of a person or community. The programme will engage the poor in in-depth self-analysis, self-awareness and capacitation for self-release from their plight. They should be made aware of the fact that it is God's desire for them to live a better and fulfilling life for themselves and their offspring. The programme should educate them for personal or group leadership in saving themselves from the perpetuation of poverty in their personal and communal lives.

6.20 Community identification and description

The strategy for the community programme should be as follows:

- Identification of the target community
- Engagement with local community leaders
- Identification of a specific manageable section
- Taking of a census with specifics such as number of adult males/females; youth – these could be sectorialised on the basis of age); literacy levels; social and associated needs
- Compilation of a report
- Presentation and discussion of the report with the local church and the target community
- Resolutions on programme implementation
- Funding for the programme

The curriculum should consist of:

- Orientation for literacy education, for persons who need education, for those who have sufficient literacy to be instructed in other skills and personal development
- The necessity of self-reliance. This should be a running theme throughout the programme
- Literacy education

- Health, Nutrition and Environmental care. This would entail proper resource usage water conservation
- Substance abuse
- Parenting and Child Care
- Sexuality education
- Business creation and Income generation

Accounting skills and banking will assist the church to understand that an endeavour as significant and as demanding as this one is, will require a lot of forward and backward reflection for regular review and re-articulation. While the programme may look good on paper its implementation may lead to situations and conditions that are not predictable. In addition, it must be made clear to the target community that the church and its programme facilitators will not lord over the lives of programme beneficiaries; that a time will come when the community will stand on its own and become the benefactors of other similar communities. According to Schumacher (1975:140), successful programmes of human relief do not begin with material objects but with people, their needs, social organisation and discipline. In articulating a strategy to grow members of the church there is a need for organised instruction for self-affirmation and reliance. There is a disparity between the Adventist congregational presence and the mission presence. While there is a high congregational presence of Adventists in Soweto, this presence is not felt in the area of sustainable social ministry

6.21 Conclusion

The poor want to see that what the church preaches it lives in acts of mercy and justice to those with little power and opportunities for a meaningful life. The words by Christ (Matt. 25: 40-43) in his social ministry parable should ring true for the Adventist church in South Africa:

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: And

the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

The basis for improved and socially meaningful ministry presupposes a radical change in the communal mind-set of Adventists in Soweto. Alongside the above understanding is the necessity of psychological and spiritual transformation of Adventists as individuals. There is a need for this to happen before Adventists can even hope to respond realistically and redemptively to the condition of the poor in Soweto. This transformation will necessitate a realisation of the church in this place of its own poverty, albeit conceptual in nature. It is time that Adventists stopped seeing themselves as the centre of mission, instead of Christ. The church here should see itself as a co-agent with the poor in their emancipation from destitution.

CHAPTER 7

TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM - AN ADVENTIST LIBERATING MISSION

A SUMMARY

The aim of this research was an attempt to find a more realistic and redemptive approach to material destitution and its associated results. It is a concern focused on how the gospel of Jesus can be made a life-changing agent in the lives of the poor many of whom have no recourse to find relief from their plight. Writing from within the Adventist tradition, my central research question dealt with how Adventists could develop a liberating urban mission practice with the urban poor of Soweto. Currently, Adventists in Soweto conduct relief ministry to the poor. As I read the scriptures and reflected on the human context of the Adventist message, it dawned on me that mission cannot be complete when people's social conditions of disadvantage are not addressed, improved or changed. The tendency in traditional Adventist thought has been to look beyond this world into the world to come. This hermeneutic flight into the bliss of eternity carries the danger of social neglect and the treatment of people's material challenges as inconsequential to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mission that does not lead to or achieve social transformation is mere intellectualised practice that recycles the social conditions it purposes to treat. Throughout this project I have tried to embrace and utilised contextual reflection as an interpretive tool for social change. Consequently, the community under study must itself undergo hermeneutic shifts in its approach to its condition and be ready and willing to move to a different model of thinking and action towards its circumstances. The organisation of my work shows how this work is structured from the beginning. In *chapter one*, I have introduced the conceptual groundwork for the project from the thesis statement to the research methodology. The most important thing in this project was the interaction of the three models of Freire, Croatto and Holland and Henriot, integrated into one research approach and the use of the praxis cycle. These were fully explored under the sub-topic: "Contextual paradigms, critical scholarship and the poor."

All these models emphasise the importance of the context in which ministry is done, as well as the hermeneutical approach towards the context. The context has to be analysed and understood if ministry is to be effective; it cannot be ignored.

In *chapter two*, I presented a brief historical account of the Adventist church in South Africa. The historical urban conditions that existed then did not affect the church's missiological mind-set or cause the church to assume an urban mission agenda due to the following reasons: The Adventist church's mind-set deeply shaped and influenced by North American theology and practice has made the church in South Africa. The church was also deeply affected by institutionalised colonisation during the British and Afrikaner political regime. This condition influenced Adventist theological and social thought locally and evolved a church that would not bother itself with structural and social injustice since these were treated as the "the things of this world" a biblical expression which refers to the various manifestations of sin in the public eye. The end result of the conditions described above is that the agenda of the poor has never been a central concern of the Adventist mission in South Africa. The poor are treated as an unfortunate result of the human fall that will be removed by the return of Jesus Christ.

In *chapter three*, I presented the field surveys and their results. This chapter also highlights the involvement of the groups in gathering data and responding to the questions pertaining to poverty in Soweto. I observed from the fieldwork that the church's narrow view of the link between material conditions of life and matters of the human condition in Soweto is specifically responsible for the limited theological reflection of the church on the plight of the poor. In *chapter four*, I dealt with the salient themes which constitute the core of Adventist theological thought and practice. The focus was placed on theological issues that undermine the biblical concern for poverty. In this chapter, an endeavour has been made to extract and demonstrate features of liberative mission in three nodal Adventist doctrines, namely, the Sabbath, Stewardship and the Second Coming of Jesus.

The chapter has presented this doctrinal triad as a basis for the re-articulating and rekindling of hope for a better life as well as a future of millennial joy in a world made new and free of the struggles of earthly existence.

The chapter has also indicated the fact that it is not the doctrines themselves that are the challenge or hindrance to liberative social mission, but traditional Adventist hermeneutical orientation which restricts the capacity of these doctrines to deal with the real challenges of the poor and their possibilities in a world that is generally hostile to the poor. In *chapter five*, I have presented urban Adventist liberating missiology. I have found it necessary to seek, within Adventist theology, and from other sources, an Adventist urban mission theology that could be a valid approach to the condition of the poor which is both consistent with scripture and efficient in giving the poor hope both for their life in this world and in the world to come. Hence chapter 4 introduces salient themes and chapter 5 integrates these themes into a new Adventist liberative mission theology that is urban in approach.

In *chapter six*, I presented the synthesis of this project as the capstone of the project. The Liberative Adventist Theology of mission and the programme for meaningful and liberative Adventist social engagement is explicated. It is time that Adventists understand that the church is part of the world. The fact that the church is in the world and of the world lies at the heart of the church's mission and its engagement in social ministry. My argument therefore, is that action in the world for social justice is not secondary to preaching the gospel, or even optional for the church. However, it is an integral part of the gospel. What is interesting is that the scripture reveals to us a God who first seeks social justice before religious observance. This is demonstrated in Isaiah 58:6 and this proof that God is on the side of the poor and works for the liberation of the disenfranchised and the poverty-stricken.

Finally, the intention of the research is to sharpen Seventh-day Adventist social thought and, in this way, hopefully to influence Adventists to employ principles of social justice and equality in their own ecclesiological sphere and extend this influence outside their own circles through a selfless application of the same principles. Pippert (1979:76) aptly stated that, "Jesus summed up life in terms of a love relationship to God, to our neighbour and to ourselves. Before any religious activity our lives are to bear the stamp of profound love." We must not repeat the sin of the priest who was so religious but not so loving. When he saw that wounded Samaritan, he thought more of programmes in the church than saving a soul.

His sociology reflected his theology. This study calls for a balance between what we do and what we profess, theology and ethics, eschatology and soteriology, proclamation and influence in the present world. Christian mission is not what we do but it is a way of life.

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