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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR MOBILIZING
MINISTRY ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY
OF LILONGWE, MALAWI

by

Gladson Thumbalamoto

Adviser: Teresa Reeve

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR MOBILIZING MINISTRY ON
BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY OF LILONGWE, MALAWI

Name of the researcher: Gladson Thumbalamoto

Name and degree of the faculty adviser: Teresa Reeve, PhD

Date completed: October 2013

Statement of the Problem

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world with over half of the population living below the poverty line (Fekete et al., 2007). The country has had a Seventh-day Adventist presence for the last 100 years. Although the Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency (ADRA) is addressing hunger in Malawi, there is a need for church congregations to do something at a local level to combat poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger which are all rampant (Pembrey, 2010b). Lilongwe is the headquarters of many aid agencies but the worst symptoms of poverty exist within the city limits. The problems facing the country are replicated there and are worse because people from all

parts of the country migrate to this city (Kemp, Mann, Simwaka, Salaniponi, & Squire, 2007). However, Kawale, Area 25, and Likuni Seventh-day Adventist churches in this area are not addressing these needs in a holistic manner.

Method

The research method that I used was the Archival Document Analysis. This method analyzes the available data. The documents that were studied included the Adventist Mission Board Archives, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church Archives, church papers, National Statistical Census Reports, Lilongwe City Assembly Documents, Government of Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Government of Malawi Millennium Development Goals (MDG), International Monetary Fund Reports, Africa Development Bank Reports, and dissertations by some Malawian Adventist scholars.

All the above sources did not contain a comprehensive, holistic approach to fight poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger in Malawi, specifically in Lilongwe. Adventist sources that were available did not show how the Adventist church is ministering to the needs of its community in the city.

Expectations for the Project

This project may help to advance the kingdom of God in Malawi, for the project may serve as a model of a holistic ministry approach to evangelism and community development. The implementation of this ministry strategy has potential to transform the lives of people in the immediate areas of impact that surround the Kawale, Area 25, and Likuni Seventh-day Adventist congregations. The adoption and implementation of this

ministry strategy by all churches in Malawi may position the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an agent for change in society and the country. This project has the potential to transform the quality of life in various Malawian communities because the practical steps that are suggested in this project will help people to take charge of their own destiny and thus challenge poverty and other societal problems. On a personal level, this project will help me to develop my pastoral leadership skills. In a bigger picture, this project will encourage churches to address societal problems as a part of a holistic mission strategy.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR MOBILIZING
MINISTRY ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY
OF LILONGWE, MALAWI

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Gladson Thumbalamoto

October 2013

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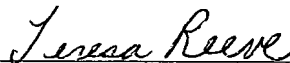
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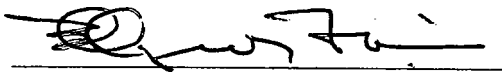
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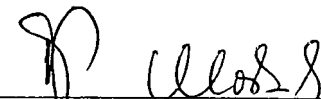
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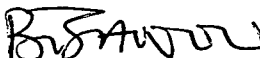
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Boubakar Sanou



Date approved

To Margret

Wife and companion in Ministry,

Martha, Isaac, and Jedidah beloved kids

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADMARC	Agriculture Development and Marketing Co-operation
ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Agency
AWY	Adventist Women and Adventist Youth
CCU	Chithangato Cha U Khristu
CMC	Central Malawi Conference
DFID	Department for International Development
GC	General Conference
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MANEB	Malawi Examination Board
MDG	Malawi Development Goals
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate Examination
MU	Malawi Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
ADVENTIST	Seventh-day Adventist Church
TO	Trainer of Trainers
UMCA	Universities Mission to Central Africa
VAC	Village AIDS Committee

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Personal History

Malawi is a landlocked country in southeast Africa that was formerly known as Nyasaland. It is bordered by Zambia to the northwest, Tanzania to the northeast, and Mozambique on the east, south, and west. The country is separated from Tanzania and Mozambique by Lake Malawi. Malawi is over 118,000 km² (45,560 mi²) with an estimated population of more than 13,900,000. Its capital is Lilongwe, which is also Malawi's largest city; the second largest is Blantyre with the third, Mzuzu. The name Malawi comes from *Maravi*, an old name of the Nyanja people that inhabit the area. The country is also nicknamed "The Warm Heart of Africa" (*Wikipedia*, 2013, s.v. Malawi).

Lilongwe started as a small administrative point on the banks of Lilongwe River in the colonial administration of Nyasaland. It was a strategic town centrally located on the four crossing points for traffic from northern Malawi to southern Malawi and from eastern Malawi to western Malawi

In 1975, Lilongwe became the capital city of Malawi. Since that time Lilongwe has grown to be a major city (*Wikipedia*, 2013, s.v. Lilongwe). This growth has had a negative impact on the residents of the city. The city is over-populated and the meager resources in the town are no longer enough to sustain the growing population. According

to Kulemeka (2012) “The population of the city was only 19,425 in 1966; this implies that it has grown by more than 34 times in the last 40 years to 674,448 in 2008” (2012, pp. 2, 3). The population explosion has brought with it numerous problems such as HIV/AIDS; the city is referred to as the hot spot for AIDS (Wilimedia Foundation, 2013). This pandemic, combined with hunger, disease, illiteracy, and many other issues, has stealthily held the city hostage and immersed in poverty.

I was born in the Mzimba district in Northern Malawi and attended school there. I have visited Lilongwe many times since 1984. In December 1987, I joined Lake View Seminary, which is approximately 50 miles south of Lilongwe, for a two-year ministerial diploma. During semester breaks as I traveled home, I would pass through Lilongwe. After my training at the Seminary, I was posted to work at Sangilo ADVENTIST Church in Northern Malawi. Each year during workers meetings, all pastors from the North Malawi Field would pass through Lilongwe when going to either Blantyre (Malawi Union Headquarters) or Malamulo, the oldest Adventist mission station in Malawi. It is during these visits that familiarization with the Adventist work in Lilongwe began. However, intense interaction with the Lilongwe community began in 2002 when I was elected as the Ministerial Secretary, Sabbath School Director, and Personal Ministries Director of the Malawi Union. It was my duty to arrange national meetings, camp meetings, seminars, and workshops for both pastors and laity. These meetings were meant to equip the attendees with skills for administration and spreading the gospel throughout the nation. Many of these meetings took place in Lilongwe because it was centrally located, making it easy for people from all directions to attend. I also conducted

many elders' meetings for the Lilongwe churches, which gave me an opportunity to learn some of the needs and challenges of the local community. It was during these meetings that I observed how the church was responding to the challenges of poverty, health, and economic empowerment.

The church has actively participated in soliciting goods such as clothing, food, and other items to distribute to the poor. Church members are expected to report their efforts at soliciting and providing these necessities to the poor every Sabbath morning during Sabbath School. This approach to aiding needy people with items they lack for daily living forms the bedrock of lay activities popularly known as *Chithangato cha u Khristu*, which simply means "the Christian help." Providing people with the things they need is good but it is temporary and short-term; it does not offer a long-term solution and does not empower people to fight poverty in their communities. Thus, developing a strategy to mobilize ministry on behalf of the community of Lilongwe came about as a quest to lead poor people to seize control of their destiny. Simply giving people things that they need eventually leads to a development of dependency. The healthier approach proposed in this study is to equip people with the skills necessary to become self-sustaining.

I have felt a heavy burden for executing a holistic ministry to empower the church and community, especially women and youth. During my study here at Andrews University, I have come to learn that it is possible to alleviate poverty through a holistic ministry, which focuses on well-designed and focused educational, health care, and economic programs, such as the ones proposed in this project.

In 2001, Lilongwe became the headquarters of the Central Malawi Mission Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which was organized as the Central Malawi Conference in 2004. The church has grown tremendously in most parts of Malawi, but the growth in numbers does not correspond to economic growth. The church is not self-sustaining; it is not able to carry out ministry and poverty alleviation programs efficiently because many church members are poor. Poverty levels in the church are reflective of the poverty levels in the community where the church is located.

Statement of the Problem

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world with over half of the population living below the poverty line (Fekete, et al., 2007). The country has had a Seventh-day Adventist presence for the last 100 years. Although the Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency (ADRA) is addressing hunger in Malawi, there is a need for church congregations to do something at a local level to combat poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger, which are all rampant (Pembrey, 2010b). Lilongwe is the headquarters of many aid agencies, but the worst symptoms of poverty exist within the city limits. The problems facing the country are replicated there and are worse because people from all parts of the country migrate to this city (Kemp, et al., 2007). However, Kawale, Area 25 and Likuni Seventh-day Adventist churches in this area are not addressing these needs in a holistic manner.

Statement of Task

The task of this project is to develop a strategy to mobilize Seventh-day Adventist churches in Lilongwe to enable them to empower their communities to address community-based problems such as poverty, pandemics (HIV/AIDs), diseases, and hunger in a holistic way.

Justification of the Project

The city of Lilongwe has many community problems, including but not limited to poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger. Additionally, the level of illiteracy is high; yet the local churches are not integrating these needs into a holistic mission strategy. By ignoring the needs of the community the local church is missing an evangelistic opportunity. The church as an agent for change in society has an advantage over non-governmental aid agencies, even ADRA, in that it has a weekly audience of people that if properly mobilized, could help the communities address their problems with possible solutions.

Expectations for the Project

This project may help to advance the kingdom of God in Malawi, for the project may serve as a model of a holistic ministry approach to evangelism and community development. The implementation of this ministry strategy has potential to transform the lives of people in the immediate areas of impact that surround the Kawale, Area 25, and Likuni Seventh-day Adventist congregations. The adoption and implementation of this ministry strategy by churches in Malawi may position the Seventh-day Adventist Church

as an agent for change in society and the country. This project has the potential to transform the quality of life in various Malawian communities because the practical steps that are suggested will help people to take charge of their own destiny and thus challenge poverty and other societal problems. On a personal level, this project will help me to develop my pastoral leadership skills. In a bigger picture, the project will encourage churches to address societal problems as a part of a holistic mission strategy.

Limitations

The research for this project was confined to data that was readily available; there was no ground research because of the limitation of time and money. The project is confined to the city of Lilongwe and communities of Kawale, Area 25, and Likuni.

Definition of Terms

Poverty is a term that recurs in this project over and over. It is important at this point to define the term as it is used in this project. According to Bartle (2007),

Poverty as a social problem is a deeply embedded wound that permeates every dimension of culture and society. It includes sustained low levels of income for members of a community. It includes a lack of access to services like education, markets, health care, lack of decision making ability, and lack of communal facilities like water, sanitation, roads, transportation, and communications. Furthermore, it is a “poverty of spirit,” that allows members of that community to believe in and share despair, hopelessness, apathy, and timidity.

Bartle defines what poverty is and shows that it is heavily imbedded in the social life of the community. The understanding of poverty as a lack of food or clothes is narrow and does not lead to liberation. There is a need to understand the scope of poverty; it is more than just a lack of money. Poverty alleviation should not only provide

needed things to the poor but equip people with skills to enable them to find the needed things on their own. People need to be involved to identify solutions to the problems that they face. If they take part in identifying the problems of their society, they may also be happy to find solutions to their own problems.

Community: *Dictionary.reference.com* defines community as “a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often has a common cultural and historical heritage.” The word community in this study will refer to both Adventist church members and non-Adventist church members who live in Lilongwe.

Holistic: The *Encarta online Dictionary* defines *holistic* as “taking into account all of somebody's physical, mental, and social conditions.” In this study holistic is not necessarily confined to the physical human body, but rather used to reference all of a person's components (spiritual, physical, mental, social, and economical) that make human life wholesome.

Mobilization: The *Encarta Online Dictionary* defines mobilization as the art “to organize people or resources in order to be ready for action or in order to take action, especially in a military or civil emergency, or to be organized for this purpose.” Mobilization will be used in this study to refer to organization of resources, skills, and people (church members and non-members) in the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger.

Among the many aspects of community mobilization, the definition by Marshall and Van Saanen comes close to capturing a fuller meaning, especially with the view of mobilizing communities to fight poverty. He says,

Except when they are stirred up, the vast majority of humans are on the side of moderation and toleration. What are needed most are leaders who can convey this historic vision, and who can mobilize people in the direction of reason and peace. (2007, p. 30)

When people work together against poverty, Marshall and Van Saanen feels that they can overcome tensions. The above definition does not paint a complete picture because it does not put God at the center of the community mobilization process. This study suggests that the theology of community mobilization as a part of holistic mission is rooted in the understanding that God is at the center of mobilization or organization of people from a common background to achieve a common (spiritual, social, and economic) goal in their community.

Alleviation is defined as, "To make something such as pain or hardship more bearable or less severe." *Wikipedia* defines poverty alleviation as "measures that raise, or are intended to raise, the material level of living." Simply put, one would say that poverty alleviation is a set of steps that an individual or community takes to lessen hardship due to poverty (lack of food, clothing, housing, education, healthcare, etc.).

Description of the Project Process

Theological reflection will focus on understanding the theology of community mobilization as a part of holistic mission. This study suggests that the community's response to poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger is best met by following biblical

principles. Current literature on strategies for community mobilization among churches and other non-governmental organizations (NGO) has been reviewed.

Kawale, Area 25, and Likuni Adventist Churches are the churches that will implement this project. A demographic study of Lilongwe has been completed, its population has been analyzed, the needs of the city have been identified, and possible solutions to poverty have been suggested.

A strategy for community mobilization in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Lilongwe that addresses societal problems in a holistic manner has been developed. Formative and summative evaluation of the project will be ongoing to ensure that the project meets the needs of its community.

Structure of the Project

Chapter one forms the introduction of the project; this chapter discusses the purpose, justification, limitations, definition of terms, and description and structure of the project.

Chapter two discusses the theology of community mobilization as a part of holistic mission strategy. The chapter seeks to form a theological foundation of the entire dissertation by discussing the concept of community mobilization in the Old Testament. Five examples have been studied: (a) the story of the exodus, (b) the construction of the tabernacle, (c) the conquest wars of Joshua, (d) the building of the temple in the times of Solomon, and (e) the rebuilding of the temple in the times of Ezra.

The study of community mobilization in the NT focuses on Jesus' example in community mobilization, compassion, hands on training, and community mobilization in

Acts and the epistles. The principles that are outlined in this chapter may guide the church in its warfare against poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, hunger, etc.

Chapter three is a review of literature that seeks to understand community mobilization in order to develop a holistic mission strategy on behalf of the community of Lilongwe. The reviewed literature looks at the poverty situation, causes of poverty, and solutions to poverty in Malawi. The literature that is reviewed seems to suggest that poverty may be reduced if a multi-approach solution is followed; a discussion on the role of the donor community and the policies of the Government of Malawi is included. It also considers the importance of the church and the role of an individual and community involvement in the fight against poverty.

Chapter four, "Methodology of Empowering Communities," begins by looking at a demographic study of Lilongwe (People, city government), a profile of Seventh-day Adventist churches and other Adventist institutions in Lilongwe, developing a holistic (Need First) urban community empowerment strategy for Seventh-day Adventist churches in Lilongwe, and mobilizing Seventh-day Adventist churches in Lilongwe. This chapter suggests that cultural methods of empowerment, leadership, evangelism, and mandate for fighting poverty, HIV/AIDS, diseases and hunger, and improving education, health care, and economic empowerment as some of the methods that may assist in mobilizing Lilongwe Seventh-day Adventist churches so that they are able to mobilize their communities.

Chapter five has three main sections: The first section is implementation of three key ministry areas; education, health care and economic empowerment. The second

section is further implementation steps, which covers the inspiration of leaders and members to act on their God-given duty to care for the poor, train and recruit volunteers, identify community needs, gather needed resources for the project, and how to work with chiefs and church leaders of other faiths in implementing the project. The third section is the evaluation of the project, which is both formative and summative. These three main sections are followed by a project summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGY OF COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AS A PART OF HOLISTIC MISSION

This chapter seeks to form a theological foundation for the entire project document. It is divided into two major sections - community mobilization as part of a holistic mission in the Old Testament (OT) and community mobilization as part of a holistic mission in the New Testament (NT). These two sections show that the theology of community mobilization revolves around Jesus; it is He who inspires and sustains the community mobilization movement.

Community Mobilization in the Old Testament

This section seeks to explore some of the principles in community mobilization as a holistic mission in the OT under the following headings: (a) Community mobilization in the Old Testament: God's ideal community, origin of suffering in the community, and God mobilized a faith community; (b) Old Testament examples of community mobilization: the story of the exodus, construction of tabernacle, conquest wars of Joshua 6-8, and rebuilding the temple in the times of Ezra; (c) lessons learned from the five examples of community mobilization; (d) community mobilization as a response to poverty; and (e) a community's call to fight poverty and oppression.

God's Ideal Community

The creation story in Genesis 1 depicts the ideal state of human beings; it shows the idyllic life of human beings, where every facet of human life was vibrant and the human race had a possibility of enjoying life eternally in its fullest. According to Sider,

God created shalom. He paused to look at his handiwork at various intervals in the process and "saw that it was good" (Genesis. 1:10; 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Shalom—wholeness in every area of life, where God's creature and creation enjoy harmonious relationships—defined existence. Shalom was, because God ruled the universe. And God charged humankind, made in his image, to steward shalom, to rule over it with care (Genesis. 1:26-31) as man and woman enjoyed God, each other, and all of creation (Genesis. 2:7-25). (2008, p. 53).

When God declared the land good he actually said this in reference to the holistic welfare of human beings, signifying that the land was able to support human life without any trace of harm. According to Holladay (2000), the Hebrew word *tob* (באֵי), which appears in Genesis 1:10 ("God called the dry ground 'land,' and the gathered waters he called 'seas.' And God saw that it was good") means more than just good; it means pleasant, agreeable, excellent, rich, valuable in estimation, better, glad, happy, prosperous, good understanding, kind, benign, right (ethical), prosperity, happiness, fair, precious, fine, wealth, beautiful, fairer, and favor (Bible Works, 8, s.v. *tob*).

It was God's design that human beings live a life of happiness and joy forever. Their relationship with each other was to be in harmony and peace. The environment was good to support humankind, and it gave them a chance to praise God their Creator. It is important that people know the ideal community that God had envisioned. If human beings had remained faithful to God, there would be no trace of suffering in this world.

Origin of Suffering in the Community

The creation story changes in Genesis 3 with the entrance of sin into the world, which opened a flood gate of evil. The peace and goodness that were central in Genesis 1 and 2 were lost; it was exchanged for pain and sorrow in Genesis 4, which resulted in violence and death. All suffering (poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger) in the world have their origin in Genesis 3 and also evidenced in Romans 6:23 which states, “the wages of sin is death.” Human beings were no longer destined for eternal life but for everlasting perdition. It is because of this situation that God unveiled the plan of redemption which ensured people’s salvation through the seed of the woman. “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring [a] and hers; he will crush [b] your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3: 15). Galatians 4:4, 5 says that “but when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.”

Today, perilous times are on the increase in our world. There is no peace because of sin which has resulted in an influx of poverty, HIV/AIDS, diseases, and hunger. With the above conditions it appears that the blessings spoken in Genesis 12:3 are far from being realized.

Ondari commenting on the severity of poverty says,

All over the world, disparities between the rich and the poor even in the wealthiest of nations are rising sharply. Fewer people are becoming increasingly “successful” and “wealthy” while a disproportionately large population is becoming even poorer. Ironically, all this is happening in a world that God has blessed with abundance, enough to allow every living soul on earth to have a decent and comfortable life. (2001, p. 2)

The level of suffering in many parts of the world is just unbearable; people wonder if ever there will be a solution to poverty and other social ills. *Share the World's Resources* (2011), is a web page that says,

More than 1.4 billion people live in poverty so extreme that they can barely survive, and around 25,000 people die from hunger each day whilst a new billionaire is created every second day. The call for a global safety net has never been so urgent - and compels the international community to transform economic priorities and guarantee the universal securing of basic human needs.

Some think that the world will be better if they address the poverty challenge. They say that only then will peace be everywhere. For example, Wigglesworth says that the world will not have peace unless the poverty problem is solved: "It becomes clear that world poverty is widely considered to be one of the major moral issues today. . . . The crisis through which international relations and the world economy are now passing presents great dangers, and they appear to be growing more serious" (1984, p. 162).

While poverty is one of the major causes that prevent peace to be a worldwide phenomenon, sin is the root problem, and poverty and other social ills are just byproducts. The idea that the removal of poverty without finding a solution to the sin problem guarantees world peace is an illusion. The real solution is curing the sin problem, then world peace will be possible. The sin problem will only be done away with at the second coming of Jesus Christ; it is at that time that the human race will be free from poverty and all other social ills (see Revelation 21:1-4).

Since the possibility of eradicating poverty and suffering in the world is remote, it will be achieved at the second coming of Jesus Christ, until then we have a mandate to

mobilize people to reduce poverty and other social problems of our time, thereby making the world a little better than what it is.

God Mobilized a Faith Community

God had his own strategy to mobilize his people for action. He chose Abraham to be a custodian of his salvation. In Genesis 12:1-3 it is recorded,

The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great [גִּבּוֹר—*gadol*] nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

God declared that Abraham will be called a father of all nations and through him all families of the earth will be blessed: “No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations” (Genesis 17: 5; Romans 4:17).

The scope of the blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants go beyond the Israelites; they encompass all people on earth. One of the meanings of the word “blessed” *barak* (בָּרַךְ) is to be filled with power. This may suggest that through Abraham people will be filled with power to prosper (Holladay, 2000, 1292). Proverbs 11:24, 25 says, “One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.” Deuteronomy 28:1, 2 says,

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.”

This prosperity is achieved through obedience to God. According to Deuteronomy 28:12-14,

The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

Some may question the wisdom of choosing one person to be the custodian of the blessings of God. God does not value numbers as we do but rather, he values faith. God decided to raise up one man who would be a repository of His message and His treasure.

Romans 4:16 says,

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

The efforts of one man will in the end develop or mobilize a community which will minister to the entire world. The principle here is that in the art of community mobilization as a holistic mission strategy, numbers do not matter. You may start with one person but through the power of God, the work of one can grow both in quantity and also in quality to impact many people.

According to the promise of God in Genesis 12:1-3, it is the descendants of Abraham who are mobilized to be a blessing to the entire world. In Gal 3:14 it is written, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." The Bible says in Galatians 3:28, 29 that "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." So the Adventist church members are descendants of Israel, which suggests, indirectly, that wherever these descendants are, they are blessed by God and their societies get blessed through their interaction with them, which implies that problems such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger will vanish away from their communities. Nwaoru says,

Poverty eradication, the antithesis of poverty, is a reversal of the fortune of individuals and communities from bad to good, and by cooperation of human beings. Poverty eradication is the empowering of the poor to participate actively in and contribute their quota to the society. It is making the poor have confidence in their own powers, to be productive. (2004, p. 42)

God intervenes on behalf of the poor people through the people that He has blessed. The OT has numerous examples of blessed people whom he moved to perform his purpose. In the end they became a blessing to their communities. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is blessed by God and it has a mission of carrying the gospel to all the world. Wherever the gospel is preached, the blessing of God needs to fall on the communities that the church serves. Poverty needs to be alleviated, diseases need to be healed, and economically as well as spiritually, members' lives need to be uplifted. It is only then that people will share in the Abrahamic blessings.

Old Testament Examples of Community Mobilization

The Bible contains many examples of communities that were mobilized to achieve certain goals. What is common in all occurrences is that God is at the center of their movement. In the biblical stories of the exodus, construction of the tabernacle, conquest wars of Joshua, the rebuilding of the temple in the times of Ezra, and the rebuilding of the city walls of Jerusalem in the times of Nehemiah, it is God who is at the center of these movements.

The Story of the Exodus

The story of the Exodus is a good example of community mobilization. It shows how the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites for a long period of time. The children of Israel kept on crying to God against their oppression but nothing happened until God acted by raising up Moses to mobilize them to come out of slavery and into freedom. According to Exodus 3:7-10

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

The mobilization of people to come out of slavery started with God. It is he who moved first after he chose people who he commissioned to finish what he had started.

The phrase 'I have come down' which in Hebrew is *yarad* (dr;y") signifies divine intervention. "I have come down" is a figure of speech signifying an extraordinary divine

intervention in human affairs. Here are some of the meanings of the word ‘come down’ *yarad*, “to go down, descend ... march down” (Bible Works, 8). It suggests that God mobilized his forces for a showdown. He marched down as in a military showdown. This shows how God is interested in the affairs of human beings; he will do everything in order to rescue his people from any situation that challenges them.

God does not tolerate pain and suffering forever but he moves on behalf of his people to eliminate suffering, in this case to eliminate slavery. He decided to deliver them from poverty and slavery, and to lead them to a place where there is plenty (see Gen 11:5, 7). “Flowing with milk and honey” is an expression denoting agricultural prosperity, which seems to have been proverbial in its application to Palestine.”¹ See also Gen 13:5; Num 13:27; Josh 5:6; Jer 11:5; 32:22; Ezek 20:6, 15.

God is the center of moving people to achieve his agenda. In this particular case, God was in the process of mobilizing people to move them out of slavery, yet he did not do this with the force of heaven, but he chose to work with people to achieve his goal.

According to Leviticus 19:9, 10, 15,

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God. Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

Farmers were prompted to leave edges of the farm harvest for the poor, widows, orphans, jobless, and the immigrant. If this was in the United States this may be compared to Social Security. It was God’s way of taking care of the poor in Israel. Today many things are valued in monetary terms. If this message is applied to us today it would

¹ See (A Land Flowing with Milk And Honey S. Douglas Waterhouse Ann Arbor, Michigan. P. 152)

mean that when we get a pay check we are not to use all of it; we are to share it with poor people near us. This may be the way of alleviating poverty by allowing individuals to do their part.

Leviticus 25:25-28 says, “If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold.” If no relative was found then that item was to be brought back to the owner at the year of Jubilee – the year at the end of seven cycles of shmita [Sabbatical years] (Wikipedia, 2013). This idea was instituted in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty. The Bible does not condone poverty; the year of Jubilee supports this view and it was instituted to prevent the loss of property or people. It was a way of preventing the entire generation of people from slipping into unending poverty.

Think about the debt burden that people carry today—foreclosures, education loans, medical bills, and many others. Would it not be easier if these principles were incorporated in the day-to-day transactions between people, and between nations? A concept of jubilee would help people/nations to come out of debt and thus reduce poverty in the community.

Jesus’ sermon in Luke 4:16 was a recap of the year of jubilee—a time when debts were cancelled and slaves were granted freedom from their servitude. Although he was saying this in regard to the forgiveness of sins, jubilee in this context referred to freedom from both economic as well as spiritual debt.

The human partnership with divinity is a common element to all communities that were blessed and moved by the Lord to achieve his specified goal.

As His representatives among men, Christ does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took upon Himself humanity, that He might reach humanity. Divinity needed humanity, for it required both the divine and the human to bring salvation to the world. Divinity needed humanity that humanity might afford a channel of communication between God and man. (White, 1940, p. 296)

Any successful community mobilization or organization that does not partner with God may not be able to meet God's standards of mobilizing people. God is to be the force behind community mobilization which is intended to bring people out of the slavery of poverty and to freedom. When God is at the center of community mobilization great things get accomplished; the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus is a good example.

Construction of Tabernacle

The construction of the tabernacle shows that God is the originator of the project, and he is the one who mobilizes people. According to Exodus 25:1-9 the Lord says,

Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece. Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

Although God is the creator of heaven and earth and while he lacks nothing, yet he mobilizes his people to be co-laborers with him. There is divinity and humanity working together. The Lord does not force his people to give to his projects because he loves a cheerful giver. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

People gave things of value to the construction and services of the temple. The materials given had value and were used in the day-to-day business transactions at that time. God wants us to do the same; community mobilization is voluntary; people need not to be forced to do church projects, but rather they need to be inspired. The Lord wants us to give a free-will offering to his cause.

Soon after the project was initiated, Moses mobilized personnel and resources. All people who were willing participated in fundraising for the project. According to Exodus 35:4-25,

And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it.

The Exodus experience in giving items for the building of the tabernacle shows us that people gave materials freely and liberally, and that while gifts were still coming Moses had to stand up and tell people to stop giving because they had given more than enough (see Exodus 36:6). Mobilizing people for action requires involving everyone whether rich or poor. When will the church experience this kind of generosity? The members will know when the conference president sends out a memo advising church members to stop giving tithe and offerings because the church has more than they need? This type of giving would show that this type of mobilization and generosity on the project had divine origins.

In similar circumstances, just like Moses, David mobilized resources. First Chronicles 29:1-22 delineates what is perhaps a very unique experience in which the leaders, starting with the king, were the first to give; they set an example and people followed. According to 1 Chr 29:9, “The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.” Solomon also followed the same pattern; he mobilized personnel and resources. In 2 Chr 2:1-3 it is recorded,

And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them. And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, “as thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me.

In the above examples, two things stand out. First, it is God who initiates the project and he is the one who inspires and equips his people to take action. On the other hand, people do not just stay idle and wait upon the Lord to do the work, but they plan and solicit help as if its success depended on their strength. Those who respond first have a responsibility to share their experience with the community so that the community also may catch the vision. Second, all people are expected to get involved, starting with the leaders as well as the followers. I have heard it said in some circles where church leaders say in *Tumbuka*, “*ntchito ya Chiuta yikwenda yekha*,” which is translated to mean that “*The work of God is self-propelling, thus it does not need human hand*,” implying that there is no need of people to work; the work will go on its own. They just sit as spectators watching God accomplish his work. According to White,

We are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself. (2003, p. 409)

What they forget is that God wants his people to be involved so that they may develop a Christ-like character.

And we are permitted to unite with Him in the great work of redemption and to be sharers with Him in the riches which His death and suffering have won. The apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? for ye are our glory and joy." 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20. This is the treasure for which Christ bids us labor. Character is the great harvest of life. And every word or deed that through the grace of Christ shall kindle in one soul an impulse that reaches heavenward, every effort that tends to the formation of a Christ like character, is laying up treasure in heaven. (White, 1956, p. 89, 90)

It is important, however, to realize that God himself has already moved to give guidance and guidelines on how to mobilize people and how to address their needs. Just like in the Exodus experience where the Lord involved all people to participate in his project, the church today may benefit if it involved everyone in its effort to fight poverty. In all this it is the cooperation of humanity and divinity in solving complex human dilemma that has stood the test of time. The fall of Jericho and other conquest wars in the book of Joshua are some inspiring examples.

Conquest Wars of Joshua 6–8

During the time of Israelites' travelling to the Promised Land, they did not only travel through friendly nations; some were hostile and this forced the children of Israel to fight battles. When the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land they displaced the local people, which meant they fought numerous battles to survive. In all instances, not all men

went to fight wars. Fighting men were enlisted, mobilized, and were deployed to war as needed. Even here they were careful to plan the battle and execute it accordingly. All the battles of conquest that were won had God as the invisible commander. Soldiers had to obey their human commanders but much more than that, they had to obey the invisible commander. In Joshua 6:1-27, Jericho fell because God fought for them and the soldiers obeyed the Lord, but a different outcome is recorded in Joshua 7 and 8; the Israelites were defeated at the battle for Ai because they disobeyed the Lord (the invisible commander).

The lesson that we may learn here is that in community mobilization there is order; people need to know the chain of command to prevent chaos. They need to follow rules and guidelines to ensure that the project they are working on will be implemented as planned. In the battle for Jericho and Ai, individuals had a part to play and their input affected the whole community. As a church we may not be fighting the wars as in the times of Joshua but the church should be fighting the wars against poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger. James 1:27 says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (see also Isaiah 58).

The book of Exodus shows that Moses mobilized people, resources, skills, and then he implemented the project. Today, the above three steps appear to be common in community projects. Exodus 35:25-35 says that every person took part in working on the project, women brought what they had spun, the blue and scarlet linen; rulers brought

onyx, ephod, and breast plate. People contributed the means, while some like Bezaleel and Hur received special skills from God to work on gold and silver.

From Exodus 35: 25-35 we learn that there is no room for a one-person show. God did not give one person all necessary skills to do everything. Moses had a unique relationship with God, yet God chose Bezaleel to be in charge of the building of the tabernacle and God gave him all the skills that he needed. There was division of labor and everyone did what he was able to do while leaders like Moses were there just to guide the movement. It is when people who are stirred by the Lord respond to the needs of the poor that mobilization becomes a complete process.

Building the Temple in the Times of Ezra and Nehemiah

In Ezra 1:1 it is written, “In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing.”

This proclamation was in regard to the building of the temple in Jerusalem. The major point that we see here, as in many scriptural passages that deal with community mobilization in the OT, is that God is the one who moves people to action. He does not come down in a show of force but works with people who are willing to obey him.

In the book of Ezra, God is the initiator. He moved the heart of Cyrus to issue a decree to rebuild the temple, the Hebrew word for stirred up is *ur* (~r'y[im") (Holladay, 2000, p. 195), which means to rouse, wake up, disturb, stir up, and set in motion. If we take the way this word is used in Isa 41:2, where *stirred* refers to set in motion (Bible

Works, 8, s.v. *tob*), then this suggests that the process of rebuilding the temple was entirely in the hands of God. What followed on the part of human beings was an automatic response to work on his project. This process is repeated over and over; humanity must partner with divinity in order to mobilize, develop, and transform communities. God is the one who worked on the political, social, economic, and spiritual systems of the day to move and mobilize people to go back and rebuild the temple. Similarly, in our time we need to recognize the need of the hand of God in all community mobilization movements that are set up to free people from oppression and poverty.

While projects were complicated, yet the Lord equipped his people with extraordinary skills to accomplish them. The secret is that people were filled with the Holy Spirit. That means they were empowered to work on these projects. People did their part; they worked hard as if success was in their hands, and the result was that the Lord did what they could not do and there was great success.

In Nehemiah 2:17-20, the building project at this time had an additional component, which is situational study or analysis, before Nehemiah embarked on the project. He did a thorough study—he went to the site and checked on the walls. Today this process would be similar to the planning of the project, which is later followed by mobilizing people to gather building materials, and then followed by the actual building process.

In Nehemiah 5, his community was faced with a different problem. It was not construction but social. People became poor because some sold their sons and daughters into slavery while others sold their farms and property in order to find money to earn a

living. The situation got so bad that there was crying in the community. Nehemiah did not waste time; he did not just sit by and hope the situation would get better on its own. He got involved; he became a change agent who went in with full force just to fight for the poor. He intervened in the challenges that the community faced. While his example is good, as a church it is essential to watch out that force is not used as a means of mobilizing the community. People need to be motivated by love and the benefits that come from working for the poor. No one needs to be forced or threatened to do the Lord's work.

While communities have different challenges, a holistic approach to solving them requires getting the whole picture, the height, width, depth, and breadth of the problem. The guidelines from Scripture to meet these challenges may guarantee success. The approach of Nehemiah, to analyze the situation before commencing with the building of the city walls, may also apply to a project that deals with fighting poverty in our time.

Lessons Learned From the Five Examples of Community Mobilization in Old Testament

There are many lessons that we may draw from the above examples but for the purpose of this study we will look at three examples: the church to lead out in the fight against poverty, community mobilization as a response to poverty and the community's call to fight poverty.

The Church to Lead out in the Fight Against Poverty

Today, the church's programs that provide care for the sick, poor, and strangers are handicapped because most churches have not mobilized enough resources to meet this

urgent need. On the other hand, charity organizations which have mobilized enough resources and taken up the burden of taking care of the poor but do not have a divine mandate to address these problems face significant limitations to mobilize a strong volunteer force compared to the church, which meets its members once a week. The high poverty levels in most communities today suggest that the time has come for the church to lead out in fighting poverty. This can be achieved if the church can mobilize people, skills, and resources to aid poor people to fight poverty on their own.

The church may work with some charity organization like ADRA to get the technical skills and training to mobilize communities to holistically alleviate poverty in their communities. It is the church that is better qualified to take care of the needy because of its belief in the Scripture. The church ministers to all people without partiality. The church may fulfill the OT teaching of taking care of the poor by following scriptural guidelines on the subjects discussed above. The Bible shows that God is interested in the welfare of the poor. According Kuhn,

The many laws and regulations provided by God in the Old Testament were intended to relieve the children of God from harsh realities of fallen world. Mostly they have to do with social welfare and proper use of money, health, diet, justice to the oppressed and vulnerable, help to the poor, widow and orphans. . . . Notwithstanding it is the poor, orphans, widows, weak, sick, alien, and the oppressed who receive the most attention in the Old Testament account. (2005, p. 20)

The church needs to follow the example that is set forth in the Scriptures. Local churches need to develop many programs that respond to the needs of the poor. Sporadic responses to poverty at a church level will not make a big impact in society. The church

needs to have an organized system that responds to poverty in the community and empowers people to fight poverty holistically.

Community Mobilization as a Response to Poverty

The scriptural model that serves as a guide in the battle against poverty is where we see God working with and through his people to improve the holistic (spiritual, physical, mental, economical, and social) well-being of humanity. Today, the biblical process of community mobilization is also seen as a response to societal challenges of the day such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger. The biblical strategy of coping with natural disasters or other challenges lies at the base of community mobilization. The Bible shows that the Lord mobilizes people based on the principles that he had already given them in Scripture. For example, on dealing with poverty, God had already provided guidelines on how to take care of the poor.

The Bible passages discussed earlier indicate that if time is taken to mobilize the community to take care of poor people, individually as well as corporately, then blessings will be received. There would be no one who would live in perpetual poverty. Working for poor people has its blessings; therefore it is important that we empower church members as well as the community to fight poverty and oppression in the community.

Community's Call to Fight Poverty and Oppression

In the plan of God there was to be no one lacking in the community. Every person was to live without pain because God had already made provisions for them in his law; but things did not work out that way, because those who were entrusted with these

responsibilities and riches sometimes failed to help poor people (see Isaiah 58). In situations like this, when the well-to-do people neglected the poor God sent messengers to awaken them from their neglect of duty; prophets came on stage to fight for the poor, weak, foreigner, sick, hopeless, and others. The Lord wanted his whole community to be whole, and to be vibrant.

In Isaiah 58:6-11, God spells out benefits people receive if they respond to the call of taking care of the poor and help those who are in need. Maybe this explains why those individuals, organizations, and governments that emphasize help to the poor continue to prosper. God mobilizes his servants to fight for the poor; he appears as if he is physically doing it. Sider (2006) says,

The Psalmist celebrates Yahweh as both the creator and defender of the oppressed people (Psalms 146:6-9 the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—the LORD, who remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, and the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. (2006, p. 139)

According to Jeremiah 22:13-16, the Lord favors those who defend the less fortunate, for example, the orphans, widows, aliens, etc.

Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor. He says, "I will build myself a great palace with spacious upper rooms." So he makes large windows in it, panels it with cedar and decorates it in red. Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me? Declares the LORD.

A similar thought is expressed in Amos 1:7; 5:10, 11. To know the Lord is to defend the cause of the poor and the less fortunate, to reduce pains from their daily living

as they struggle to break the bondage of poverty. James 1:19 says that “religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” The books of Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Amos are some of the manuals that were used to mobilize people to do holistic ministry on behalf of the poor in the Old Testament. Prophets provided checks and balances to ensure that there was no oppression of the poor.

Community mobilization as a holistic mission strategy has God as a source of inspiration. It is he who calls and inspires his people to do his work. In the OT this is seen in the exodus movement, the construction of the tabernacle, temple, and rebuilding of the temple. The same principles for social mobilization and the care for the poor as recorded in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos still apply. In our time, in order for holistic community mobilization to be effective it needs to put God at the center of the mobilization process.

The New Testament Concept of Community Mobilization

Community mobilization in New Testament times is different because people were mobilized behind a vision, idea, mission, or plan. There were neither building projects nor conquest wars to fight, yet community mobilization took place. Community mobilization revolved around the man Jesus Christ and around his mission of preaching the gospel to the poor.

Jesus in the NT identifies himself with the poor by birth, mission and salvation. He was born to poor parents

Men first beheld Christ as a babe, as a child. His parents were very poor, and He had nothing in this earth save that which the poor had. He passed through all the trials that the poor and lowly pass through from babyhood to childhood, from youth to manhood. (White, 1964, p. 26.3)

The apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” White explains,

Although Christ was rich in the heavenly courts, yet He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Jesus honored the poor by sharing their humble condition. From the history of His life we are to learn how to treat the poor. Some carry the duty of beneficence to extremes and really hurt the needy by doing too much for them. The poor do not always exert themselves as they should. While they are not to be neglected and left to suffer, they must be taught to help themselves. (White, 1948, vol. 4, p. 550)

According to Mouw, “In Jesus God takes human poverty and helplessness upon himself, in order to stand helpless before the political, economic, and cultural structures of society”².

Jesus did not only identify with poor people, but he had a mission for them. According to Luke 4:18, 19, Jesus says: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Jesus did not just end by announcing the good news, but he prepared a kingdom for the poor people. The announcing of the kingdom is a starting point of salvation for the poor. At the end of time he will usher them into the kingdom of glory. According to Luke

6:20, "Looking at his disciples, he said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.'" In Matthew 25:34 it is recorded: "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'" These words are spoken to those people who spent time to alleviate the suffering of the poor. The kind deeds to the suffering are highlighted to be of significance, letting the doers to enter the kingdom of God. At the end of time, it is these words that will be spoken to church members who have worked tirelessly to uplift the needy, the poor, and the suffering.

The apostles faced challenges, especially in regards to taking care of the needy among the believers, but this was resolved by appointing faithful people to take care of them (see Acts 6:1-6). When the needy people were taken care of, the church experienced rapid growth. This suggests that any church that prioritizes meeting the needs of the poor will experience rapid growth.

Jesus identified with the poor in birth, mission, and salvation. The above texts show the value of poor people to Jesus Christ. It is because of the infinite value that he placed on them that he came to announce his kingdom and to empower his people to go and mobilize his people to preach the everlasting gospel.

The promise to believers to go and preach the gospel to the entire world is the focal point of community mobilization in the New Testament. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus said,

²See <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.cc.andrews.edu/ehost> accessed on October 5, 2012

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Believers embraced the gospel command of Matthew 28:18-20; they preached the gospel to all the people they came in contact with during house-to-house visitation, worship service at the temple, and business errands. The result was dramatic growth of the church. According to Sider,

The resurrection of Jesus Christ gave the disciples reason to hope again as long as Jesus lived, the community of disciples could see once again the possibility of the reign of God in their midst. Furthermore, his resurrection gave ultimate meaning to his crucifixion. What humanity meant for evil – crucifying the trouble making prophet – God transformed into good, raising him from the dead so that all may choose life (2008b, p. 55).

In the above perspective, the disciples mobilized believers through the exaltation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As they looked at him and reflected on the one who gave up his life for them, the one who was dead and who now lives and the one who is coming again, people automatically responded by dedicating their lives to continue to preach the gospel to unbelievers. It was part of the preaching of the gospel to take care of the poor people in their community. According to Acts 4:34, 35 it is recorded that “there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.” The above quote shows poor people were there but the preaching of the gospel enabled the church to take care of them.

Similarly, today people may find reason to get mobilized to do ministry if pastors and church leaders can follow the example of Jesus in preaching a holistic gospel.

Jesus' Example in Mobilizing Community

Jesus set the model of mobilizing and empowering people. He chose to be with his people, mingle with sinners, walk with them, eat with them, and sleep in their homes. Matthew 1:23 says, “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, ‘God with us.’” Matthew 28:20 says, “and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In both verses it shows Jesus’ ministry was enriched by his involvement in the community life of the people that he served.

The prophecy of the first advent was rooted in the fact that he would be present, because he would be among his people. Similarly, any community organizational principles that might prove to be effective are those that have the mobilizer present to live among the people he wants to serve. Just as Jesus mingled with the people he served, so also community workers need to follow his example by mingling with the people that they serve by joining them in the daily routine of activities such as funerals, weddings, community events, etc. According to White,

Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the 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 Me.” There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. (1942, p.143)

It is through following the example of Jesus Christ as outlined above that the church may make connection that will help it to ascertain community needs and thereby

help the church to develop a ministry that may meet those needs and in the end this may be a way of finding an avenue of reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the General Conference Session in Indianapolis, Indiana (1990) it was said that the church will do well to follow Jesus' example. "In effecting Christ's ministry today, we must do as He did, and not only preach the gospel to the poor, but heal the sick, feed the hungry, and raise the downcast (see Luke 4:18, 19; Matt. 14:14)." In Jesus' inaugural address (sermon in Nazareth), he highlighted that his ministry will uplift the poor. This he did by identifying with them, healing the sick, and feeding the hungry.

If the church is actively involved in the life of its community it is fulfilling the words of Matthew (Matt 1:21), who called Jesus 'Emanuel', which means "God with Us," and that he would be present among his people. The presence spoken about is not just the presence of a church building but church members involved in community activities such as parent-teacher meetings, community self-help projects, and AIDS prevention days.

The church is one of the most reliable and dependable organizations in the world and it has transformed communities in many parts of the world. The church has grass root organizations that reach the common person in the village. There is a growing realization that no meaningful development may ever take place unless the faith community is actively participating in the fight against poverty. According to Hipple, he says that,

UNFPA's (United Nations Population Fund) leaders are deeply committed to increasing the mobilization of faith leaders in support of the MDGs. "Given these quantitative and qualitative realities and the critical personal and community-based connection between the people and the faith-based organization centers providing services, we realized that to become strategic and sustainable, we needed to engage these critical service providers," Thoraya Ahmed Obaid,

UNFPA's executive director, noted at a policy roundtable in New York on August 3, 2009. Similar observations have been expressed in other multilateral and international agencies. (2010, p. 369)

The presence of the church is unique; it is a powerful force in the community.

Although some may overlook its potential, yet it is strong. Its members come every week and are highly motivated. They have high sustainability as volunteers, and as such it is a force that may transform communities. Hipple (2010) continues to say,

In March 2010, UNAIDS co-hosted a summit in the Netherlands on Religious Leadership in Response to HIV. UNAIDS aimed to encourage religious leaders to generate more positive and sustainable dialogue around ending HIV and its stigma. The conference agenda recognized the full gamut of religious leaders' reach: from the smallest villages to the most influential politicians' offices. Using the pulpit, religious leaders can change their communities' behaviors to prevent the disease, as well as discourage prejudice toward infected people. (2010, p. 369)

It is encouraging to see the United Nations moving forward to fight poverty in partnership with church-based organizations. This is the approach that has been long delayed, which may have realized great results. According to Hipple, he says that,

Other bilateral and multilateral donor agencies are encouraging faith-based organizations working on development issues, and provide support for programs, research and advocacy in this area. The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) financed a ground-breaking interfaith program against malaria in Mozambique (Duff 2007), and the World Bank's Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics unit supports and conducts significant research into the intersection of faith and development (2010, p. 369)

The correct understanding of theology of community mobilization as part of a holistic strategy may impact peoples' lives because it will inspire them to raise holistic communities which have a holistic approach to fight poverty.

The participation of the church in community activities is critical if it intends to make inroads into the society. Even without support from donors the church is already in

action in the fight against poverty, diseases, HIV/AIDS, and other related social ills, but most churches lack resources to fight poverty effectively. If the church had more resources it would do much better. The presence of the church in the community is the game changer; it brings hope to the hapless communities. No wonder the United Nations Organization and developed countries have realized the importance of faith-based communities in the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS and diseases, especially in the developing countries. If the church can capitalize on this momentum by soliciting financial help to support community activities in their societies, its witness and ministry of compassion to the poor may be strengthened.

Compassion

Jesus Christ was compassionate to people's sufferings. Wherever he met someone who was in need of help, he was ready to help. He did not leave people to fend for themselves; He always had a passion to do something to alleviate suffering. Today that responsibility is in the hands of the church. The church must show compassion to people's suffering by mobilizing its members to do holistic ministry and help people who are poor, sick, and hungry. The gospel of Matthew 9:33, 36 says:

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region. . . . Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Other examples can be found in Matt 14:13-21; 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-44; 6:4. The testimony of one person generates intense publicity which eventually attracts people to Jesus. It is important therefore to hear testimonies of compassion because they can strengthen the process of community mobilization.

Lack of compassion is expressed in people's attitude towards the suffering. Even in the most industrialized countries, which have significant resources that could eliminate poverty completely, poverty still abounds. Why is this the case? It is because of a lack of compassion; people are concerned with personal pursuit and they neglect the needy. The church needs to show the world that it is possible to help poor people and completely transform their lives. The church may demonstrate that it is full of compassion to people who are suffering by meeting their needs.

The GC (1990) Statement on Homelessness says that "the claims upon the Christian's compassion are not ill-founded. They do not spring from any legal or even social contract theory, but from the clear teaching of scripture: 'He has showed you, O man, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'" (Micah7:8 RSV). The GC positional statement (1990) continues by saying,

The fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah is precious to Seventh-day Adventists. We see our responsibility in this chapter as those raised up to be "The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in" (verse 12). The call is to restore and "to loose the bands of wickedness . . . to deal thy bread to the hungry . . . bring the poor that are cast out to thy house . . . when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him" (verses 6, 7). So as repairers of the breach, we are to restore and care for the poor. If we carry out the principles of the law of God in acts of mercy and love, we will represent the character of God to the world. (July 5 1990)

The church is in the world today as the agent of compassion; its mission is to mobilize people to meet the needs of humanity. Jesus did not just speak about compassion but he lived and demonstrated it to his disciples with hands-on training.

Hands on Training

There are many people who prefer to teach theory but neglect practice. Jesus' model utilized both methods: He taught them to search the Scripture; this is theory. Jesus called his disciples to join him on his mission to minister to the needs of sinners after they observed what he did: He sent them out two by two to do likewise; this is practice (hands-on training). In most churches there are countless hours spent on training and equipping people but they yield very poor results. People today do not need only to hear the gospel; rather, they need to see the gospel in action. Many Christians spend time theorizing and ignore practical work for the salvation of sinners.

Mark 3:14 says that "He appointed twelve- designating them apostles that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach." The word apostle *apostolos* (avpo,stoloj) means messenger, the one who is sent; *delegate, envoy, messenger*, Luke 11:49; John 13:16; 2 Corinthians 8:23; Ephesians 3:5; Philippians 2:25; Hebrews 3:1; Revelation 2:2; 18:20.—2. *Apostle* (Bible Works, 2009). Jesus spent time with his disciples to train them. On-the-job training is a model that appears in Scripture many times.

Holistic empowerment of communities to enable them to live a better life is an integral aspect of community mobilization. This may be achieved through both formal (theoretical) or informal (practical) learning. The combination of both methods is very

important to community mobilization. The book of Acts and the epistles have many examples in this regard.

The Concept of Community Mobilization in the Acts and Epistles

In Acts the church is seen in the context of community; it has a mission of reaching out to unbelievers through house meetings, eating together, and assisting the needy. The methods in the NT varied, but door-to-door ministry was their main focus and was complemented by public meetings for the masses. In any case the message was the same—to exalt Jesus Christ and his crucifixion, resurrection and soon return. According to Myers,

The cross teaches that salvation does not come from right thinking or right teaching but by divine action making right what we cannot make right ourselves. We are told that the “foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength” (1 Corinthians. 1:25). The foolishness and weakness being referred to is the message of the cross, “the power of God.” (1 Corinthians.1:18) (1999, p. 93)

The community rallied around the message of the cross. They exalted Jesus Christ in all that they did. This approach led to mass conversions and the gospel spread like fire in dry grass. A component that was central to apostolic preaching was that the church met the needs of people, especially the poor, orphans, and widows. The Church, which is engaged in the community mobilization process, needs to put Jesus at the center of the movement.

Paul followed the same principle of mobilizing people within the vision of preaching the cross (gospel). In 2 Corinthians 2:1, 2, Paul said, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” When people understood that

his goal was to exalt Jesus Christ, they responded by accepting Jesus as their Savior and at the same time they were willing to be empowered to propagate the gospel.

Paul had only one goal to exalt Jesus Christ, his crucifixion, resurrection, and coming again. He empowered and mobilized people to follow Jesus. It was the selfless life of Jesus Christ that was an example of his missionary experience. Today the church may do the same to empower its members with skills and programs that emulate the example of Jesus Christ. The benefit of following Jesus is the promise of everlasting life which he will give to the faithful people at the end of time.

Eternal Ideals

Jesus gave us an example that his mission was to minister to the needs of the poor, oppressed, and sick. Matthew 10:6-8 says, "But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal *the* sick, raise *the* dead, cleanse *the* lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, and freely give." According to White,

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," that He might minister to every need of humanity, Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character. (1942, 17.1)

Jesus started a movement that had one mission—the salvation of people from their sins. To achieve this goal, Jesus mobilized people whom he empowered to propagate his kingdom in the entire world. His kingdom's values were unique because he promoted love to God and love to humankind, unlike earthly kingdoms. His kingdom is

powerful yet without an army to defend its borders. It is a caring kingdom yet without the minister of social services. It is a kingdom which has perfect peace. Describing this kingdom Kuhn writes,

Jesus also wanted the good news of his kingdom (of God) to transform his church from inside out. The established character was not to be a political or abusive structure, it had been entrusted by God to be “the light of the world,” to be witness to the world both in word and deed. The kingdom of God in Christ was to be manifested itself as love and compassion to all. (2005, p. 26)

In mobilizing the community to fight against poverty it is the small acts of mercy that may go a long way in reducing poverty. The Church has a responsibility to live by example in helping the sick and poor in their community. All people can take part in giving something to alleviate the poor because no one is too poor to give. The church needs to come up with a strategy to mobilize all people. It could start by just mobilizing one person at a time. The call comes to all. Let us join hands in providing the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothes, shelter, education, medicines, etc., knowing that our actions are not just charity work but a means of salvation for sinners.

The Role of the Gospel in the Fight Against Poverty

The gospel gives guidance on how communities can wage war against poverty. Jesus included the concept of the kingdom of God as a way of calling people to join it so that in the end they may completely escape the struggle against poverty and suffering. The disciples heard and saw Jesus proclaim the gospel in Mark 1:14, “After John was put in prison; Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” According to Luke 4:16-18, Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because

he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.”

The gospel is transformative; it changes individuals as well as communities to love God and to love one another. This was a guiding principle and a central force of his movement which, after his resurrection from the dead was embraced by his disciples, transformed the world. Today, many see the gospel just as lip service, yet the disciples saw it as a force of total transformation. Sider says:

Mortimer Arias’s groundbreaking work announcing the Reign of God claims that the contemporary narrow view of evangelism, which focuses on personal salvation and individual conversion, stems from an eclipse of the kingdom of God not just in language but in substance, The early church may have shifted its language from the kingdom of God to the person of Christ, but it did not lose sight of the broad scope of salvation that the kingdom demanded—personal and social transformation. Because justice and reconciliation held a central place in the kingdom, they found concrete expression in the holistic mission of the early church. (2008a, pp. 58-59)

Here we see that the gospel is the force behind the transformation of communities wherever it is preached. Today the gospel has the same potential to transform communities not just on spiritual terms but holistically. Communities will be transformed not primarily because of good strategy but because of the community of believers who have joined together to move the agenda of Jesus Christ. It is when each person is involved in holistic outreach that real transformation may be seen in the society. Sider, reflecting on the early church, says that the church was there for each member. Those who had possessions worked to ensure that those who did not have should not suffer. The unfortunate situation of draught and poverty in Jerusalem made Christians, wherever they

were, join hands to alleviate the suffering of the poor Christians in Jerusalem (2008, pp. 48-49).

The gospel is, in essence, the antidote for poverty because the gospel of Jesus has the welfare of the poor at heart. Jesus made his ministry to the poor a top priority in his inaugural sermon in Luke 4:18-19. The gospel has eternal principles which are foundational in the fight against poverty because the gospel stands for justice, mercy, and reconciliation. The gospel is against any form of oppression or exploitation, so if people would embrace it, communities will be transformed and the poor will be ministered to.

Conclusion

The theology of community mobilization as part of holistic mission, in both the OT and NT, centers on God because it is he who moves people to act, whether it be in building the temple, preaching the gospel, or alleviating poverty. God has a holistic welfare of his people at his heart. He wants his people to enjoy life but at the same time he wants them to be saved to enjoy life eternally. The best approach is a holistic community mobilization which will consider the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and economical aspects of humanity.

The theology of community mobilization as part of holistic strategy means that God moves his people to do his work, and his people respond by getting involved in doing his work by meeting the needs of their communities. The success of the whole process depends on the cooperation of humanity and divinity, people must obey the will of God in taking care of the needy in their communities. Others may think that the success will be measured by completely eradicating poverty in the community but this is

not possible in the meantime, for the Bible says, “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land” (Deuteronomy 15:11; see also Matt 26:11; Mark 14:6-8; John 12:7-9). It is at the second coming of Jesus that complete poverty eradication will be achieved. Until that time the church needs to do its part in helping the poor in its communities.

The fight against poverty has dominated the world stage for many decades now; yet, poverty is still as rampant as ever. The United Nations and other organizations have realized that the church and other faith-based organizations may play a big role in the fight against poverty. They are now exploring ways, means, and methods on how they can work with the church and other faith-based organizations in alleviating poverty; however, the example of Jesus is probably the best example in mobilizing people to fight poverty. His methods alone will give true success. He got involved in community functions such as weddings, funerals, and worship. He had genuine compassion on people’s suffering. He always moved to help, and his actions set standards of how to mobilize people and resources to minister to the needs of poor people, because caring for poor people has eternal consequences.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Poverty is one of the primary challenges facing Malawi and is at the root of all of Malawi's other social ills, including HIV/AIDS, disease, hunger, and illiteracy. The battle against poverty is crucial, but it has not gone well because many fight the symptoms of poverty, while ignoring the cause. Any solution to Malawi's challenges that does not address poverty is just ignoring the source of the problem.

There is a lot of skepticism about the methods of fighting poverty, likely due to the enormity of the problem. The fight against poverty is mostly dependent on the government and non-governmental organizations (NGO). This approach has led people to expect the government to do things for them while they remain on the sidelines. If any progress in the fight against poverty is to be made it will require the involvement of everyone.

The poverty level in the country is so high that it leaves one wondering if a solution will ever be found for this dilemma. High levels of poverty are observed everywhere in the country, but there is evidence that the severity of urban poverty is increasing much faster than rural poverty. Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, is not spared from this trend. Many people have migrated to Lilongwe in search of a better life

but the result has been overcrowding in the city and escalating poverty because resources are inadequate to support the growing population.

It is imperative that some solutions be found to alleviate the suffering of the poor in this city, but it must involve all people, regardless of social class or ethnicity. The church has a high potential to change things by offering lasting solutions such as empowering people to work hard in their various vocations (farming, small business, mines, trading government jobs, etc.). It is Christian principles and values that help Christians live a corruption-free life if they are in positions of power. This lifestyle will result in proper use of the meager resources in the country, thereby benefitting everyone, even the weakest in the community. The church can help people to learn biblical principles of generating wealth and managing it properly by following biblical stewardship principles that are environmentally friendly. The challenges that poverty poses are an opportunity for ministry. With proper organization a great deal can happen on this front. A study of the current situation on what the church is doing to reduce poverty in its community is important to enable it to more fully understand its own environment and be able to offer quality service to its community.

Literature cited in this project is divided into seven sections: (a) the poverty situation, (b) the connection between poverty and diseases, (c) causes of poverty, (d) solutions to poverty, (e) the importance of the church in the fight against poverty, (f) the role of an individual in the fight against poverty, and (g) community involvement in the fight against poverty. Surprisingly, there is a vacuum with regard to specific

literature that shows the role of churches or local communities in the fight against poverty in Malawi.

Poverty Situation in Malawi

The *Second Integrated Household Survey 2005: An Extract of Findings* by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, National Statistical Office, and the World Bank is one of available pieces of literature that gives a correct view of the poverty situation in Malawi. According to this report,

52.4 percent of the population in Malawi is poor. More than this, 22 percent of the population is ultra-poor. That is, about one in every five people lives in dire poverty such that they cannot even afford to meet the minimum standard for daily-recommended food requirement. (2006, p. 94)

The above report says a person is considered poor if he earns MK (Malawi kwacha) 16,165 in a year, which is equivalent to about US\$104 on the current exchange rate, and a person is ultra-poor if he earns MK10,029 a year, which is equivalent to about US\$65.

In Malawian cities, including Lilongwe, food and housing are scarce. Many live in slums which do not have enough clean water, resulting in epidemics. According to Mukherjee, the country has a population of approximately 13 million with about 25% living in urban areas while 75% live in rural areas. Half the population is living below the poverty line, the infrastructure is poor, and there is no meaningful development (2003, pp. 339-358).

A grim picture of poverty in Malawi appeared in the *FCSD/Analytical Services Division Scottish Executive Journal*, which says that “on PPP terms, GDP is over \$7bn

and income per capita around \$600 per year. However, on either measure, Malawi remains desperately poor, one of the ten poorest countries in the world, despite the efforts of government and civil society” (2005, p. 2).

FCSD/Analytical Services Division Scottish Executive Journal (2005) indicates that most Malawians live below \$160 a year. It continues to say,

In actual prices, Malawi’s GDP was only \$1.8bn in 2003 – little more than one percent of that of Scotland, notwithstanding that its population is more than twice as large as Scotland’s. Around 60% of the population lives below the poverty line. The average income is only \$160 per year: the average Scot’s income is over 170 times greater. The situation appears slightly better if purchasing-power parities (PPP) figures are used, which take the cheaper cost of living in Malawi into account when comparing national income levels. On PPP terms, GDP is over \$7bn and income per capita around \$600 per year. However, on either measure, Malawi remains desperately poor, one of the ten poorest countries in the world, despite the efforts of government and civil society. Malawi is classified a heavily indebted poor country (HIPC), rendering it eligible for conditional debt relief. (2005, p. 2)

Poverty in Malawi is severe. Millions are affected and most of the people do not know how to come out of it. Even if they knew the way out of it, many may not have the capacity to change their course of action. Poverty transfuses into other sectors of life like education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. The above description of poverty may appear like a mirage, yet it is real. Chome, in commenting on urban poverty, has observed that “in Malawian cities, 1,860,000 urban Malawians live under slum conditions; the rate of slum growth is four percent which is synonymous with urban growth which is at 4.8 percent.” He has observed that “inappropriate or nonexistent policy responses, poor access to basic urban services including land and housing, weak local economies to generate jobs and weak local government capacity to be at the root of slum condition” (2007, p. 4).

The concentration of poverty in the city is worse due to many factors, such as population explosion and inappropriate or nonexistent policies, leading to the widespread development of slums. Poverty has a big impact on the lives of people living in Lilongwe due to migration; many people are leaving rural areas hoping to make a living in the cities, yet, due to fewer jobs, many become trapped in the city with no job at all. By all standards the situation in Lilongwe is dire because the city has more people than it can support.

Connection Between Poverty and Disease

There is a direct relationship between poverty and disease. Available literature that describes the connection between poverty and disease in Malawi include the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Country Report No. 7/55, “Is HIV/AIDS Epidemic Outcome of Poverty in Sub-Sahara Africa?” “Social Exclusion and Inclusion: Challenges to Orphan Care in Malawi,” and “Can Malawi Poor Afford Free Tuberculosis Services and Household Costs with Tuberculosis Diagnosis in Lilongwe?” According to the International Monetary Fund (2007),

Malawi like many other Sub-Saharan African countries has been severely affected by HIV and AIDS. Its impact remains devastating and the country’s efforts are inadequate given the pace of the spread of HIV and AIDS. Poverty and HIV and AIDS are reciprocally influenced. The national adult HIV prevalence in the reproductive age group of 15-49 years has slightly declined from 14.4 percent in 2003 to 14.0 percent in 2005. The country still faces a number of challenges in containing the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS on development. Key constraints in containing the HIV and AIDS scourge are: hunger and poverty which make individuals more vulnerable to infection; inadequate supply of Anti-retrovirals (ARVs) and access to nutritious diets. (2007, pp. xvii, xviii)

The work of shows that there is a close connection between the AIDS epidemic and poverty. He concludes that poverty is a source of AIDS. He says,

HIV infection is mostly confined to the poorest, who constitute the most of those infected in Africa. It is not simply that information, education, and counseling activities are unlikely to reach the poor, but that such messages are often irrelevant and inoperable given the reality of their lives. Even if the poor understand what they are being urged to do, it is rarely the case that they have either the incentive or the resources to adopt the recommended behaviors. (2007, p. 605)

He continues to link poverty to HIV/AIDS by stating that

among all these factors poverty as a leading cause of suffering is featured highly in most African countries. Commercial sexual exploitation of women and trafficking are two elements of the more pervasive problem of sexual abuse that originates from poverty. (Mbirimtenegerenji, 2007, p. 607)

His views are shared by Chirwa, who shows that the impact of AIDS on Malawi is worse due to the rampant poverty which has torn down the local social safety nets with regard to orphan care. He says,

Social exclusion thus goes “beyond static descriptions of situations of derivation, and focuses on the causes and mechanisms that lead to these situations” (De Haan, 1998: 10; see also Kabeer, 2000). It is a useful concept to use in the analysis of the plight of orphans, not just because of the degree of these people’s deprivation, but more so because of the multi-dimensional character of the process of orphanhood, and the causes and effects of the situation. Orphans are most likely to fall into both situational and structural poverty; to have their rights violated in various ways, and, consequently, to less participate in the society in which they live. (2002, p. 95)

Chirwa sees that orphans have increased in number and many of them are in serious trouble due to poverty. While he sees that the response to the pandemic is developing coping skills, no one would doubt that the traditional coping systems have been over stretched because of poverty.

Chirwa continues to write:

These figures suggest that as the number of people dying of AIDS increases, the number of orphaned children will also rise (Cook, Ali and Munthali, 1999:5). The linkage between the progression of HIV/AIDS and the increase in the number of orphans means that even if the problem of AIDS were to go in the foreseeable future, the orphan problem will still be there long afterwards (Kalemba, 2000: 2). The social consequences are obvious: The selective deaths of young adults are leading to an alarming increase in the number of orphaned children and destitute old people which threaten to overwhelm the usual societal coping mechanisms. The health care services are over-stretched as epidemics of previously controlled diseases such as tuberculosis have soared. The improvements in social indicators gained during the [previous] decades are threatened by AIDS. (2002, p. 94)

Kemp et al. expand this point by showing that previous controlled diseases like tuberculosis is now a major concern in Lilongwe, for he says that Lilongwe is one of the cities in Malawi that has the highest number of TB cases. Kemp, et al. cite the study which they did in Lilongwe, which has shown that Lilongwe has the highest number of TB cases, thereby showing a relationship between disease and poverty.

MDG 6 addresses the need to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other priority communicable diseases, including TB, with World Health Assembly 2005 targets to detect 70% of smear-positive TB cases and to successfully treat 85% of such cases. It has become clear that the case detection target is unlikely to be met without accelerated action. However, the link between poverty and TB is profound. Globally the highest burden of TB is found in poor countries, and within countries the prevalence of TB is higher among the poor. Deprivation associated with poverty, including malnutrition and overcrowding, increases the risks of TB infection and disease. Achieving MDG targets for TB therefore requires the identification of effective ways to reach poor populations. (2007, p. 580)

The point in this study is that poor people are hard hit with diseases—in this case, TB. Poor people spend more money on TB treatment than the rich people do. Kemp et al. further write, “The poor spent 244% of their total monthly income on TB diagnosis, compared with 129% for the non-poor. It is estimated that the poor must work for 2.5 months to recover the costs of seeking a TB diagnosis” (p. 580).

The literature that has been cited above suggests that there is a connection between disease and poverty, which may suggest that, if significant progress is to be made in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases, the subject of poverty needs to be addressed and should be treated as complex with no one single solution. It is the multi-approach system that acknowledges the connection between disease and poverty that may significantly address poverty in the communities of Lilongwe.

Causes of Poverty in Malawi

In the fight against poverty it is crucial to have a correct understanding of the causes of poverty in order to find lasting solutions. Literature that was studied which outlines the causes of poverty in Malawi includes: *Mission As Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* by Samuel and Sugden, *The Analytical Services Division Finance and Central Services Department Scottish Executive Journal*, *Drivers of Change in Malawi* by Booth, et al., *The Village in the City and the City in the Village* by Englund, and *Journal of Southern Africa Studies*. According to Samuel and Sugden,

the causes of poverty are many and complex. They include the evil that people do to each other, to themselves, to their environment, cultural attitudes, corruption, actions taken by social, economic, political and religious institutions that either devalue or waste resources, that erect barriers to economic production, or that fails to reward work fairly. Furthermore, the forces that cause and perpetuate poverty operate at global, national, local and personal levels. (1999, p. 335)

All the above forces are present in the country, thus addressing poverty in the country requires a multi-approach system.

According to the *Analytical Services Division Finance and Central Services*

Department Scottish Executive Journal, in trying to answer the question as to why

Malawi is poor, wrote:

Why is Malawi so poor? Malawi's poverty is a result of a variety of factors: underdeveloped institutions; poor physical infrastructure – such as transport links – reflecting low savings and investment; corruption; low human capital investment – reflecting limited educational provision; undiversified exports; difficult climatic conditions; an adverse geographical position – restricting access to international markets; and relatively few natural resources. (2005, p. 2)

In addition to the above mentioned causes Englund sees that city life is also a cause of poverty. He sees that poverty has a migratory trend. He writes, “The locus of poverty is moving to cities – cities will become the predominant sites of poverty.” He also observes that “malnutrition, hunger, and disease are becoming more prevalent in slums” (Englund, 2007). He points out that people who come to the city are unable to meet the basic costs, so they tend to live in slums which become centers of poverty.

Poverty is also caused by government policy which does not support the needs of the people. For example, Agriculture and Development Cooperation (ADMARC) was a non-profit company which used to buy farm produce from small holder farmers at a profit. The goal was to empower farmers economically, yet the politicians decided to sell the company not to profit the Malawian community but themselves.

Booth et al. make the following point:

Key policies have been adopted simply to facilitate the granting of patronage. For instance, policy for the communications sector (regulation of cell phones and internet services, privatization of communications enterprises) was molded by the acquisitiveness of successive Ministers of Information. Policy formulation, the passage of laws and the implementation of policy were constantly delayed to permit wealth and power to be acquired by UDF Party people. Abuse of laws and state resources served the same purpose. Unlike Banda, Muluzi never articulated a real

vision – except poverty alleviation, which was soon mocked as ‘politicians’ poverty alleviation’. (Consequently, we can say that ‘policy has often followed patronage.’) (2006, p. 12)

These types of policies have increased poverty levels in the country, causing many people to slip deeper into poverty because politicians are concerned with their own egos and have abandoned the cause of the poor.

Booth et al. add that among the many causes of poverty in Malawi is overpopulation. They write concerning the population explosion:

In the 30 years after Independence the population more than doubled from nearly 4 million to about ten million people. Over this period, the average population growth rate was 3.3% – significantly higher than the sub-Saharan African average. The population now stands at 12 million or so. While the uptake of contraception is improving, and HIV/AIDS is decimating certain age groups, some predict the population will double again in 20-25 years. Although urbanization is accelerating, the bulk of the population still lives off the land, and the land base within the national boundaries is severely limited. (2006, p. 6)

Thus, the causes of poverty in Lilongwe are many; they include low income, HIV/AIDS, diseases, cultural attitudes, environmental degradation, population explosion, lack of adequate basic services such as education and healthcare, lack of communal facilities like portable water supply, poor climate, undiversified exports, etc. An understanding of the above causes of poverty by the church and the community may eventually lead to a lasting solution. This cannot come automatically but by constantly working on solutions to the above causes of poverty. The church needs to develop a strategy that will lead out in the process of identifying solutions to poverty in Lilongwe.

Solution to Poverty in Malawi

This section is divided into three major subsections: The role of international donors, Malawi government, and local communities.

The International Community

The international community (donor countries) fights poverty in developing countries through the IMF and World Bank. These institutions develop policy guidelines which guide the fight against poverty in developing countries. According to Chinsinga (2003), the IMF and World Bank provide policy guidelines to poor countries on how to combat poverty. These policies come in the form of poverty alleviation programs (2003, pp. 129, 130).

Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation programs are tools used by the IMF and World Bank to move poor countries out of poverty to prosperity. Poverty alleviation programs emphasize three main areas: (a) decentralization, (b) poverty reduction strategies, and (c) structural adjustment programs. The goal of these programs is to reduce poverty in developing countries. These programs came about because developing countries continued to be poor many years after their independence.

Leaders of poor countries were advised to change the way they were running their countries. One of those changes was to embrace the concept of decentralization.

Wikipedia defines decentralization as “the process of dispersing decision-making governance closer to the people and/or citizens. It includes the dispersal of administration

or governance in sectors or areas like engineering, management science, political science, political economy, sociology and economics.” According to Homme, “Decentralization therefore defines a system in which the share, role, power, discretion, of sub-national governments is relatively large, relative to the central government and to its deconcentrated bodies or agents” (2010, p. 3).

Chinsinga (2003) says that the IMF and World Bank argued that decentralization is better than centralized government because centralized governments, with their bureaucratic systems, prevented aid from reaching the most vulnerable groups. According to Prud’homme, decentralization has two objectives:

One is *economic*: to improve the delivery of public services in the country, thereby increasing economic and social welfare. The other is *political*: to further the involvement of citizens in local decision-making, thereby spreading and deepening citizen participation in policies and politics and improving governance. (2010, p. 3)

Chinsinga, says that decentralization enables donors to make sure that vulnerable groups have access to the benefits of the projects that they fund (2003, p. 135).

The whole process of decentralization envisions bringing the following benefits: efficient service delivery to the communities, participation of community members in decision making which will help them choose what type of projects they need, and ownership of community projects. Thus, they will ensure that funds are properly utilized and that the project benefits their communities (2003, p. 135). Chinsinga continues to say that, in participatory planning and implementation of development projects poor people are involved at all stages, which will mean that they own the project and ensure that it is well utilized (2003, p. 140).

Makuwira sees decentralization as one way of empowering the community because, in “transformative” participation, “people find ways to make decisions and take action, without outside involvement and on their own terms” (2004, p. 114), and this form of participation is highly empowering as decisions stem from the actual recipients.

According to the *International Monetary Fund* report, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS) paper, the two main objectives of decentralization are to develop institutional capacity for local governance and to transfer functions, resources and planning to districts (2005, p. 83). Ssewankambo and Nyondo state, “The overall goal of the program is to empower local communities through local governance and development management for poverty reduction” (2004, p. 89).

Although Chinsinga says that decentralization envisioned reinvigorating rural development efforts because the community will be involved in its planning and implementation (2003, p. 129), he acknowledges that critics see that decentralization may not bring the intended results because they argue that the program is imposed from the outside. Chinsinga says,

The professed commitment to participatory local planning, as a hallmark of contemporary grassroots development intervention, is largely rhetorical. The exogenous nature of the drives to reform forces developing countries to pretend they are committed to the reforms merely to appease the West. These reforms can only be genuine and sustained if the will to do so springs from within developing countries with external stakeholders playing simply a facilitatory role. The recognition of the voices, aspirations and fears of the poor in development efforts requires a pre-existing democratic structure and policymakers who are sympathetic to the basic interests of the rural poor. (2003, p. 130)

On participation by the local community, the DFID (2007) website says that “people suffer when governments do not allow participation in political life, provide

access to justice, deliver adequate public services or control corruption.” Inasmuch as participation is good, if people feel pushed the result will not be good. The government may present its case to donors and portray that there is decentralization, yet if there is no tangible efforts to ensure that local people participate in the day-to-day activities of the projects in their communities, then decentralization is rhetorical.

External stakeholders (IMF, World Bank, and developed nations) should use their expertise in equipping poor communities with needed skills in management and leadership in order to ensure smooth running of projects. Decentralization without governance skills will do nothing to help poor communities. The point here is to help local communities run their own development agenda. The community must be challenged to be innovative in initiating projects that will affect them. A spirit of hard work and self-help should be promoted in order to reduce the effects of poverty in their communities. Former U. S. President, John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address had this powerful phrase, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country” (*Wikipedia, n.d.*). Poor people have a part in fighting poverty in their communities. In the case of Lilongwe, the community needs to take steps, like organizing themselves into small groups to access loans from banks, organize a campaign against AIDS, support community schools, etc. All these efforts will aid the fight against poverty. External help needs to complement existing local initiatives.

Structural Adjustment Programs

Structural adjustment programs of the IMF and the World Bank (the Bretton Woods Institutions) set guidelines on how countries would get new loans. According to

Easterly (2001b), “If countries were not willing to follow the guidelines provided by the IMF and World Bank then those countries would not qualify for new loans or adjustment to the existing loan” (2001b, p. 3).

The overall goal of these programs was to reduce poverty in developing countries. Structural adjustment programs, among other things, emphasized privatization, which was the selling of public corporations. The privatization of public corporations did not work to serve the public interest, as later it was observed that the goal of the new owners of public corporations was to make profit at the expense of poor people. In addition to this, there were massive layoffs and many people became jobless. Easterly (2001b) says that structural adjustments made the situation worse, because currently more nations are deep in poverty because of these policies. At first, when these policies were implemented, the idea was that the pain that poor nations would face was necessary and would be for a short time, yet decades later the situation is worse. Easterly (2001a) says,

When the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank arrive in southern countries, corporate profits go up, but so do poverty and suffering. Decades of promises that just a little more ‘short-term’ pain will bring long-term gain have exposed the IMF and World Bank as false prophets whose mission is to protect those who already control too much wealth and power. (2001a, p. 3)

Easterly says that there is much debate as to whether the international community is really solving poverty in developing countries, because many see that the IMF and World Bank programs (structural adjustment programs) do not work .

For example: the Asian currency crisis and its aftershocks in other countries generated intense concern about how the poor were faring under structural adjustment programs supported by the Bank and the IMF. The poverty issue is so red-hot that IMF and World Bank staff began to feel every action inside these organizations, from reviewing public expenditure to vacuuming the office carpet, should be justified by its effect on poverty reduction. . . . At the same time, there has been a long-standing

criticism from the left of World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs as disproportionately hurting the poor. (2001a, pp. 361, 362)

Many developing countries suffered . . . sustained increases in prosperity, accompanied by dramatic increases in inequality and child poverty . . . under the auspices of IMF and World Bank adjustment programmes. In country after country, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) have reversed the development successes of the 1960s and 1970s, with . . . millions sliding into poverty every year. Even the World Bank has had to accept that SAPs have failed the poor, with a special burden falling on women and children. Yet with all this the IMF still demands that developing countries persist with SAPs. (2001a, pp. 361, 362)

Chinsinga (2003) says,

In the greater part of the developing world, the recent deepening of poverty levels cannot be understood in isolation from structural adjustment programs. They have constituted an overarching policy framework for a vast majority of developing countries since the beginning of the early 1980s, following their persistently disappointing economic performance. However, despite the zeal and commitment on the part of the adjusting countries, their economic situation has substantially deteriorated and, in most instances, shows little or no prospects of recovery. Unemployment and the price of essential commodities have soared and expenditure on social services, especially health and education, have progressively declined. (2003, p. 131)

The above quotes show that the solution to poverty that the World Bank and IMF put forward, the “structural adjustment program,” has not worked because the level of poverty in developing countries has become worse.

The blame may not be squarely on the IMF and World Bank; African leaders share part of the blame, especially when it comes to corruption. Corrupt practices in most African countries have made a few people very rich with millions left in the pit of poverty. There is a lack of seriousness on the part of most African leaders because it appears that some of them have developed an aid dependency syndrome, whereby they think that rich nations will continue to help them, so much so that they have stopped being innovative in initiating programs that will reduce poverty in their countries.

The IMF and World Bank need to focus on playing a supporting role. Teams of experts in these organizations need to provide technical support or skills to help poor countries like Malawi move out of poverty, using their own local initiatives, skills or strategies.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

“Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” is a document which poor countries use as a guide in the fight against poverty. The IMF and World Bank developed this document as a way of reducing poverty of developing countries, which continued to get worse, even after implementing the structural adjustment programs. The IMF and World Bank urged countries to adopt poverty reduction strategies which would guide them out of poverty. Those countries which adopted this document had a privilege of getting new loans or having their old loans forgiven, depending on need. On the other hand those countries which did not develop a poverty reduction strategy were not permitted to get new loans nor have the previous loans serviced.

Bwalya (2004), commenting on the importance of the “Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper,” writes,

In 1999 the Bretton Woods institutions introduced PRSPs as a condition for eligibility to the debt relief resources under the HIPC Initiative (Birdsall, Williamson et al. 2002). PRSPs were seen as vehicles for creating national commitment to poverty reduction so as to preclude disbursement of HIPC funds without a reasonable guarantee that they would be used appropriately. This new conditionality was justified in terms of the greater good of poverty reduction. (2004, p. 3)

Cromwell, Shepherd, and Wiggins (2005) say,

Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) were introduced by the Bretton Woods institutions in 1999 as a new form of conditionality for accessing debt relief and

concessional loans. Since then, PRSPs have evolved into wider policy tools, adopted and transformed by the governments of developing countries worldwide. (p. v)

The benefit of following a PRSP document is that developing countries have a guide which they can use to come out of poverty. In addition, communities of the developing countries have an opportunity to participate in programs that are designed to end poverty in their area. This approach fosters participation and ownership of the project by the local community.

Although the document appears to be good, it does not translate to ending poverty because it has challenges. First, it can work well if the government is committed to the agenda of ending poverty. Second, this document requires total transparency, which is currently not available in most African countries. Chinsinga says that while there is debate on the success of the PSRP, it is clear that poor countries may pretend to be following this document because they fear they may lose aid or loans which are badly needed for the running of their governments (2003, p. 129).

The document, if followed to the letter, might be able to transform poor communities. Currently, the participation of local people in community projects is limited because of lack of expertise, skills, and education, which means local people may not explicitly express their opinions on a given subject; they will continue to rely on others to interpret their ideas, which may jeopardize community projects.

The communities in Lilongwe need to take advantage of the situation because international stakeholders and the Malawi government all agree that participation of local communities in the fight against poverty is crucial if poverty alleviation is going to

succeed. Local communities with proper organization and planning can easily tap these resources to fund community poverty alleviation programs.

Malawi Government

The IMF (2007) says that the Malawi government has adopted the World Bank document (“Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper”), but has modified it to suit its own needs. The document is known as the “Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” (MPRSP). In addition to this document, there is another document which is known as “Malawi Growth Development Strategy Paper” (MGDSP). Both documents aim at eliminating poverty; the difference is that the MGDSP has long term development goals, while the MPRSP is short term and is tied to the national budget and is reviewed annually (International, 2005).

According to the International Monetary Fund (2007),

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) represents a detailed articulation by the Government of Malawi of the strategy it intends to follow in achieving the goal set for us by His Excellency the State President, Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika of transforming Malawi from relative poverty into being a middle income industrial nation. It also represents an essential tool for the Government to assist in turning his vision into reality.

The philosophy that underlies the MGDS is one of permanent poverty reduction through sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development. The key to translating that philosophy into a strategy that will deliver success is effective prioritization in the allocation of effort and resources. The process of developing this strategy involved all key stakeholders in Malawi. These include the three arms of Government: the Executive, Parliament, and Judiciary and also involved the Private sector, Civil Society Organizations, Donors and Co-operating partners and the general public. (2007, p. iii)

The government has all strategies put on paper and must turn this document into real poverty reduction steps. The donor community is standing by to help Malawi come

out of poverty. The Department for International Development says that “the aim of the first Millennium Development Goal is to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty by half” (Measuring Poverty in Malawi, 2007). This organization has provided support to the Malawi government and is on record that “DFID has provided Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) to the Government of Malawi (GoM) since 2001” (2007, p. 1) .

The approach that is taken by the Department for International Development (DFID) is better because it funds programs that have been locally identified. If the government can come up with robust programs that make a big impact on reducing poverty, then the country will make significant progress in the fight against poverty.

There are three major challenges: (a) These documents are written with the sole purpose of attracting donor aid, (b) they also work as incentives to get loans from the IMF and World Bank, and (c) there is a possibility of just satisfying the need of donors rather than implementing the document to the letter. Malawi governments need to show dedication and commitment to reducing poverty in the local communities. While donor funds are critical to most poverty alleviation programs, the government must not put a lot of energy into securing these funds, but rather spend time developing realistic programs that will have a direct impact on reducing poverty in poor communities.

The government has a responsibility to make sure that the proceeds of the loans it takes are used to improve the life of poor communities, not to satisfy politicians’ personal ambitions. The management of these loans is critical because if they are not properly managed the nation can sink deeper into debt and thus exacerbate the poverty situation.

If the government will borrow money from the IMF, the World Bank, or any other organization, it must put priorities in place so that the needed funds are channeled to specific projects. If the country chooses to borrow, let it borrow to support education for its young people, agriculture inputs, infrastructure projects such as road networks, bridges, power generation, building of hospitals, HIV/AIDS programs, schools, etc. Poor countries should stop borrowing to buy weapons, because weapons cannot reduce poverty.

Transportation

Transport costs, local as well as international, have a direct bearing on the poor people; therefore, all forms of transport need to be upgraded to ensure smooth transportation of people and goods.

Malawi is a land-locked country which relies on neighboring countries to transport its goods (imports and exports) out of and into the country. An efficient transport system is crucial to ensure that goods reach intended destinations in a timely manner and that costs are minimal. The country needs to develop multiple railway inlet networks to allow free inflow of goods from outside the country. For example, the government needs to have a rail connection between northern Malawi and the southern part of the republic of Tanzania. There is need of a connection between the Indian Ocean and Nkhata Bay. The government must finalize the inland waterway port at the Nsanje to connect southern Malawi to northern Mozambique to allow access of goods from the Indian Ocean through the Zambezi River to Nsanje. The above inlets will allow goods to come into the country at a reasonable cost. The savings on transportation will result in

people helping people buy commodities (fuel, fertilizer, and other imports) at affordable prices.

The Malawi road network is poor. There is a need to upgrade all the roads to be tarmacked in the cities as well as rural areas. A good road network will enable people to transport their commodities from the villages to the cities without many difficulties. A good road network will make food prices go down in the cities; thus poor people in Lilongwe and other urban centers will be able to afford it.

Trade

The country will need to diversify trade commodities, which must include mining products, farming, tourism, etc. The goal should be to develop a viable international and domestic trade, which should be supported by well-developed agriculture and manufacturing industries. The country cannot keep on importing materials without exporting. Agricultural produce must not only depend on tobacco but rather diversified crops (such as cotton, sugar cane, soybeans, ground nuts, etc.).

The World Bank website says that “we can reduce poverty and hunger by investing in agriculture, creating jobs, expanding social safety nets, expanding nutrition programs that target children under two years of age, universalizing education, promoting gender equality and protecting vulnerable countries during crises” (World Bank, 2011).

Community Empowerment

Unless all efforts of the international community, through poverty alleviation programs or the effort of the Malawi government through PRSPs, meet the needs of the

common man, they are in vain. Empowering the community is the most important aspect of fighting poverty. But what is community empowerment? Page and Czuba say that

it is a process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important. (Empowerment: What Is It? 2010)

While Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) say,

Community empowerment is most consistently viewed in literature as a process in the form of direct continuum, involving personal empowerment, the development of small mutual groups, community organizations partnership and social political action. The potential of community empowerment is gradually maximized as people progress from individual to collective action along this continuum (2001, p. 179).

Community empowerment is the process of making communities take control of the issues pertaining to the wellbeing of their societies. This responsibility is fully realized through community participation. The empowerment of the citizenry is very crucial and the government cannot afford to overlook it. If citizens of the country are empowered it will be easy to fight poverty. The government should not place the burden of empowering people only on non-governmental organizations, because it is the government that will benefit at the end and it is the government that develops policies to govern communities.

Education Empowerment

One of the most effective ways of empowering communities is through education, both formal and informal. Education is a major vehicle for transforming communities and moving them from poverty to prosperity. Sakwa (2003) says education is the tool that

fights poverty. "Education can also be looked at as a necessary strategy in poverty alleviation but only if it leads to employment or income generating possibilities for the poor" (p. 45). Sakwa continues to say that education was conceptualized as providing the necessary skills and knowledge for the poor to escape from poverty. In the present world, it is necessary and important that the poor are integrated into society. Education provides such an avenue. The skills and knowledge obtained through education would enable the poor to be worthy participants in the society as employees or employers. The government embarked on providing basic education for all, but this has not gone very well because of the lack of qualified teachers and learning equipment such as books, chalk boards, desks, science equipment, etc., which makes learning very difficult.

Education needs to help people earn a living, regardless of the level achieved. What is needed here is to equip people with job creation techniques, even to eighth grade children, so that if they drop out of school they can still create their own jobs or be employed. Continuous education needs to take place for both young and old people. Young people must be encouraged to go on with formal schooling, while older folks, through informal education, must be equipped with simple skills which will help them run small businesses. All need to embrace the concept that education will help them live a better life.

Health Empowerment

A sick nation cannot fight poverty. There is a famous saying that "prevention is better than cure." This approach in healthcare promotes educating people to take care of themselves by following health principles. Health education is a better tool to prevent

people from getting sick and going to the hospital due to preventable diseases. If people have knowledge of good nutrition, exercise, use of potable water in and outside their bodies, and disease prevention, their hospital bills will go down and hospital visitation time will be drastically reduced. Thus they will be able to spend more time in productive endeavors.

There is a need for concentrated efforts to teach people to live a healthy life. All this will result in more time to be engaged in productive work. Prevention of most diseases requires things like frequent hand washing, drinking clean water, and having good nutrition, which would reduce many contagious epidemics like cholera. The health principles that have been highlighted above are local and free, yet they have tremendous dividends.

Sick people are a burden to their families, communities, employers, etc. An aggressive healthcare campaign that helps people take control of their lives will result in a disease-free life, which is a benefit to the family and entire community.

Fight HIV/AIDS Pandemic

HIV/AIDS is ravaging families in villages and towns. The fight against this pandemic needs to be taken seriously because it is most severe among people between the ages of 15 and 49. This age group is the most productive. It is the work force of the nation; it is the future of the nation; it is the bread winner. If this group is left to be consumed by AIDS, then a whole generation will be destroyed (Malawi PVA Draft 2006).

HIV/AIDS infection is high in Lilongwe. A World Bank report (2006) says:

A qualitative study of the relationship between food insecurity and HIV/AIDS showed that women in villages near Lilongwe city were 'forced' into exchanging food for sexual relations due to the pressure of hunger, lack of employment opportunities, and poverty in general (Bryceson and Fonseca 2005). Another element of poverty is migratory labor, which is also associated with higher risk for HIV infection. Obare (2006) showed that respondents of MDICP3 survey whose partners usually stayed outside the village were significantly more likely to be HIV positive than those whose partners usually resided in the village. (2006, p. 118)

The World Bank report says that the GDP will fall because of AIDS, and thus there is a reduction of economic welfare. It also says,

Taking a slightly different approach, Jamison et al. (2001) developed a definition of economic welfare which includes both the value of life (from increased years and quality of life) and a conventional definition of income (GDP per capita). This study concluded that increased mortality due to HIV/AIDS caused a reduction in economic welfare of 5.3 percent between 1985 and 2000 in Malawi. (Bank, 2006, p. 132)

Because HIV/AIDS kills the productive age group (15-49) of Malawi's population and will thus cause a reduction of economic welfare in the country, it is only proper to fight the pandemic before things get worse. The success in the fight against HIV/AIDS will translate to a reduction of poverty in Malawi.

Economic Empowerment

Gondwe, a resident of Lilongwe for many years who now lives in South Bend, Indiana, says that small businesses for women had a big impact in transforming women's lives in Lilongwe. There is a Bank known as Finca which used to lend money to women to enable them to start small businesses. Women were organized into small groups, then they were loaned money as a group. Each person had to choose a business that she was comfortable to run. Every Friday each person had to go to make payment at the bank. Many women have become successful business persons through this approach. (J.

Gondwe, personal communication, October 12, 2010). The above example is the one which we must replicate if we are going to win the battle against poverty in Lilongwe. It is easier for banks to lend to a group than it is for them to lend to an individual. The group also helps with issues of accountability. If one person, because of unforeseen circumstances, is not able to make payment, the other members contribute to bail out their partner. It is these small economic programs that will help many people come out of poverty.

Population

Population has a direct bearing on the life of families, cities, and countries. Lilongwe is overpopulated, meaning that the city assembly is not able to provide basic services for all its residents

On population, Malenga (a former resident of Blantyre, now living in South Bend, Indiana) says that many families have more children than they can support. If poverty is to be reduced there is a need of deliberate effort to promote family planning. People need to be educated and supported in the process of having smaller families which they can support and sustain (Malenga, personal communication, November 6, 2010). In Malawi there is a tendency to regard children as “wealth.” The local saying is that “*Ana ndi chuma*,” meaning that children are wealth; the more children you have the wealthier you become. While this tendency was acceptable during the pre-colonial era when money was not the major means of trade, today the situation has changed because everything is measured in monetary terms. Food, clothing, and housing all must be bought. This means that the more money you have the easier it will be for you to look after your children

because children need education, quality healthcare, good nutrition, and much more.

Unless this trend is addressed, there will be no breakthrough in the fight against poverty.

There is no single solution to poverty. It is a series of solutions from different sources that will help to alleviate poverty in Malawi. International donors (IMF, World Bank, and developed countries), the Malawi government, and local communities all have a part to play in reducing poverty in the country. International donors need to develop policies that directly benefit local communities. Aid should not just come in the form of money, but in the form of developing the skills of the local people so that they are able to stand on their own even after donations have stopped.

The Malawi government needs to show a commitment to the fight against poverty. It should be on the forefront in creating policies and opportunities for its people to be part and parcel on the fight against poverty. Local communities must be encouraged to stand up and fight against poverty. International donors and the Malawi government need to develop plans for empowering communities through education, healthcare, and economic empowerment so that they can see the importance of participating in the fight against poverty.

The church is well positioned to empower people and its potential has not been tapped by donor agencies such as ADRA. NGOs struggle to find volunteers with which to work. They are not as successful in maintaining well-motivated volunteers as is the church. It is a fact that church members come to church week after week to participate in the worship experience of each Sabbath day. There is a need to redirect this potential to

empowering communities to meet the challenges posed by poverty. If properly trained, church members will be that needed link that will help to transform communities.

Some fear that supporting churches in the fight against poverty will be seen as imposing religion on society, but this argument does not hold water because a Christian is first a community member. And furthermore, Christianity ideally does not choose who to help; it looks at whoever is in need. Pure Christianity has no room for favoritism. More will be discussed on this topic in later chapters.

The Importance of the Church in Fighting Poverty

Churches have a role in transforming communities spiritually, economically, and socially. According to Ammerman,

Congregations influence in varied ways both the individuals who belong to them and the communities in which they are present. They have rightly been described as generators of “social capital.” They provide critical opportunities for gathering, community’s friendship and mutual support, spaces in which people can give voice to their discontents and through which they can mobilize for action. (p. 8)

The above quote highlights the importance of congregations in the society, because they have power to influence change, and this change, if properly managed, is key to mobilizing the community so as to address its own problems. Ammerman continues:

But some have especially emphasized the importance of the community in scripture read and taught, as signs of God’s presence in the world. Christian historian Martin Marty asserts, “While efforts to establish an essential form of communal life for Christians everywhere may be futile and may limit imagination, something like the local assembly will remain fundamental. . . . [Congregations] will take on varied colorings in different times or cultures, but in every case they serve to perpetuate embodiment which is essential in the whole church. (p. 8)

The work of Ammerman is similar to the writing of Wallis (1997), who highlights the fact that religious communities can do more to fight poverty than many other organizations. He shows how civil protests led to change in the legislative structure in the United States. He feels the church has the same influence today and believes that this will require a change of strategy, meaning the church needs to work from the inside out. It needs to form a movement operating outside of the government, yet so powerful that it can influence legislative decisions in favor of the poor.

Some people object to having the church involved in the legislative process because they see governments as worldly and the church as having a heavenly mission so that the two cannot move together. But Wallis sees it differently.

But even without adequate resources, religious and other community organizations have been serving poor people and successful at fighting poverty in many areas. People across the political spectrum believe it is time to expand both the role of the nonprofit sector and the resources available to get the job done. At this moment of crisis and transition, the religious community especially could play a crucial leadership role to rally the larger society to its responsibility for our poorest citizens. (Wallis, 1997, p. 8)

On the same topic, Wallis says,

WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE, including the government and the business community—this is our *religious* message, one with strong biblical foundations. We will tell elected officials that religious and other nonprofits will not just “clean up the mess” created by bad social policy. Rather, we want to help formulate that policy in states, counties, and cities. Church leaders and community activists should be knocking on the doors of state and local officials until they have a place at the policy formation table. Churches and nonprofit organizations could be the catalysts and conveners of new partnerships for real solutions to poverty. We need new approaches beyond relying either on government programs alone or hoping that churches and charities can, by themselves, take care of the problem. Religious communities and other nonprofits must enter into public-private collaborations with both government and business to find the answers that work. (1997, p. 5)

These remarks, though spoken to an American audience, are meaningful to communities in Lilongwe. The Adventist Church in Malawi has made some progress in the areas of education (especially through Malamulo, Matandani and Lunjika Mission schools) and healthcare (through the activities of Malamulo and Blantyre Hospitals) circles; however, there is plenty to be done in the area of fighting poverty. The church needs to be visibly active in fighting poverty in Lilongwe as well as all other communities in which it has its presence. It is time that the church in Lilongwe builds its ministry on behalf of the suffering community, thereby bringing hope to struggling families and hopeless communities.

According to the General Conference Statement on Poverty,

working to reduce poverty and hunger means more than showing sympathy for the poor. It means advocating for public policy that offers justice and fairness to the poor, for their empowerment and human rights. It means sponsoring and participating in programs that address the causes of poverty and hunger, helping people to build sustainable lives. This commitment to justice is an act of love (Micah 6:8). Seventh-day Adventists believe it is also a call to live lives of simplicity and modesty that witness against materialism and a culture of affluence. (GC Statement on Poverty, 2010)

The above statement is a guide not only to the church in America, but to the worldwide church. The paradox of wealth and poverty in America is quite amazing. It is the richest country in the world, yet there are many desperately poor people. In contrast, the country of Malawi is the most poverty-stricken country with most inhabitants living under the poverty line, yet there are some people who are very rich.

Probably the most important thing to understand is that the fight against poverty does not necessarily need money. It needs more than that; it needs people who can stand

with the poor whether it is in America or Malawi, and the church is the only organization already well-positioned to do this.

The church must stand up and encourage the government to enact legislation that is pro-poor. If the church could have that one agenda then the government would be forced to establish laws that will alleviate poverty. Sider has views which are similar to Wallis. He thinks that the church should be actively involved. If political leaders are messing up, the church should stand up and never be quiet. Jesus stood by what He preached. He stood by the oppressed and did all He could to demonstrate that He was concerned about their welfare and delivered justice.

Commenting on origins of poverty Samuel and Sugden says that

poverty was not part of God's original creation, nor will poverty be part of God's restored creation when Christ returns. Involuntary poverty in all its forms and manifestations is a result of the fall and its consequences. Today one of every five human beings lives in poverty so extreme that their survival is daily in doubt. We believe this is offensive and heart breaking to God. (1999, p. 335)

The above quotation leaves the church with but one option, and that is to fight poverty in all its forms. The church needs to be aggressive in fighting poverty in the same way it takes the gospel commission seriously, for the two cannot be separated. Sider (2008) writes:

If government and other sectors of society fail to uphold justice, God's people are to hold them accountable. The prophets confronted political leaders who oppressed the poor and failed to protect the vulnerable. Isaiah 10:1-2, for example, warns against rulers who use crooked laws to "make the orphans your prey" (see also Jeremiah 5:26-28, 22:13-17, Ezekiel 22:23-30, Micah 7:3). The prophets also confronted business leaders engaged in immoral and exploitative practices that hurt poor families (see Nehemiah 5:1-13, Jeremiah 22:13, Hosea 12:7-8, Amos 8:4-6, and Micah 2:1-2, 6:10-12). Jesus likewise spoke out against respected religious leaders who kept the letter of the law but neglected justice and mercy, and who out of greed would "devour widow's houses" (Matthew 23:23, Luke 20:46-47). Promoting justice means

protecting the vulnerable from those who abuse political, economic or religious power, as well as bringing victims of injustice to the attention of those with the power to defend their cause.

Though some may doubt the influence of a congregation, it plays a crucial role in the community fabric. This is due to the fact that congregations are able to understand the needs of the community, for they are part of the community. Congregations are able to cope with the changing times and fit very well in all cultures. In addition, it is the church that has an understanding of poverty that goes beyond the humanitarian approach. It has the biblical approach which has the potential to alleviate poverty and thereby transform people's lives. If a person looks at the church, he or she finds that it is a well-organized group and that it has a predictable structure which can help fight against poverty.

Ammerman has observed that the "relationship between congregations and communities has received increasing attention in the past decade" (1998, p. 75). The above observation suggests that the church has to act now to strengthen ties with the community in the hope of establishing links which will enable the church to minister holistically to its community.

The importance of congregations in the fight against poverty is crucial because the church forms the first line of support in most communities. There is a need to cultivate this response so that churches are made to be more ready and effective in fighting poverty in their communities. Most churches lack resources, yet NGOs have the resources. Why not give the church these resources? The church's influence could be harnessed so that it is able to help more efficiently the communities within the neighborhood. The church may also influence lawmakers to enact laws that are pro-poor.

It is because of such conditions that the church can be a catalyst for making a difference in people's lives. The church cannot be aloof and hope that things will get better; instead, the church should work hand in hand with its communities to improve the situation. This type of partnership that improves people's lives strengthens the gospel witness, and thereby may increase the number of converts.

The strength that the church has cannot be compared to any organization; its members meet regularly every Sabbath and have a high level of commitment. If properly motivated and trained, church members will be the missing link that will revitalize the battle against poverty. This is where the church will do better because of the fact that its motivation is propelled by the love of Jesus Christ towards the poor. The church will help people by ministering to their needs and will extend to them the invitation to learn about the gospel as presented in the Bible. Zachariah et al. (2006, p. 174) state, "We believe the primary pillar that motivates volunteers in our setting is the religious commitment to their activities. Along with church groups we have so far managed to maintain the motivation of volunteers and have not yet had dropouts from the volunteer pool" (p. 174). This is a good testimony in favor of the church and a source of encouragement for us to learn the importance of the church in the fight against poverty. Many churches would take part in this fight against poverty if they could only have a glimpse of the scope of their work in alleviating the suffering of poor people.

The Role of an Individual in the Fight Against Poverty

While it is true that a church group has a big role in the fight against poverty, the church is composed of individual members who are the key players in the day-to-day running of the church. Each person can contribute to make this world a better place to live. Tying poverty to the availability of goods or things is a limited and non-comprehensive definition. Such a limited definition of poverty make it seems like the answer is that those who have should give out their possessions and those who do not have should be mere recipients. The Didache 4.5-8 says,

Do not be one who stretches out hands to receive but shuts them when it comes to giving. Of whatever you have gained by your hands you shall give a ransom for your sins. You shall not hesitate to give nor shall you grumble when you give, for you shall know who the good paymaster of the reward is. You shall not turn away the needy (endeomenos) but shall share everything with your sibling; and shall not say it is your own, for if you are sharers in the imperishable, how much more in the things which perish? (Holman, 2008, p. 44)

Some people think that it is only the rich that ought to give while poor people simply receive. People need to know that everyone has a capacity to give, so each person can be a donor, and thus has the responsibility to do something in the fight against poverty. To conquer poverty each individual needs to be involved. The church is an organization that promotes giving to the needy. It is not only monetary gifts that are needed, but also physical, mental, and spiritual gifts which can be given to people in order to alleviate poverty. Unlike NGOs, the church, which has its guiding principles in the fight against poverty drawn from the Bible, is different because it ministers holistically. In ancient times the Hammurabi code put much value on property. Dybdahl (1994) states that:

Hammurabi's code and other ancient Near Eastern codes have almost no concern for the disadvantaged in society. Non-Israelite laws for the most part safeguard the interests of the upper class—the land-owner and slave master. Human life is cheap, and property is highly valued. Many offenses involving only property impose the death penalty on violators. Israel's laws care for the disadvantaged and value human life over possessions (1994, p. 202).

It is the concept that God cares for the poor that makes the church a strong tool in the fight against poverty. The holistic approach to fighting poverty is the approach that is missing in most poverty-fighting organizations, and it is very important to our society in our time. Kuhn (2005) says,

Following the pattern of the Pentateuch, the poor, the widow, the stranger, and the fatherless have a special place in the Historical Books, notably and mostly in the books of Psalms and the Prophets. Theologian John R. W. Stott comments that "God is represented as coming to them [poor, oppressed, orphan, widow, sick, stranger, and so on] and making their cause his own, in keeping with his characteristic that 'he raises the poor from the dust.'" (p. 11)

It is this approach that has been guiding churches in the fight against poverty. It is an approach that is not just based on human models, but follows a biblical model based on divine sanction. Thus, it is imperative for the church to keep fighting poverty regardless of its form and nature. Kuhn further quotes Neh 8:10: "Then he said to them, 'Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'"

If after the people studied what is written in the book of the law they wept (because among the things that the law required was taking care of poor people in their society), it is likely they saw their obligation to the poor which they had not fulfilled.

Kuhn also points to Job 29:12-17:

Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, And I made the widow's heart sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind, And feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, And I investigated the case which I did not know. I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger. And I broke the jaws of the wicked, And snatched the prey from his teeth.

The view that Kuhn shares with us is the one that is central to biblical teaching in regard to taking care of the needy, unfortunate and poor. The principles that are set forth are to make a difference to those who give service and to those who are recipients of those services. We are to make a difference in the life of the community; we are to be exemplary in all that we do and “in the same way, let [our] light shine before others, that they may see [our] good deeds and glorify [our] Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

White (1905) echoes this call for holistic ministry:

Real charity helps men to help themselves. If one comes to you 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. It means a genuine interest in the welfare of others. We should seek to understand the needs of the poor and distressed, and to give them the help that will benefit them the most. To give thought and time and personal effort costs far more than merely to give money but it is the truest charity. (p. 195)

Kuhn's analysis comes close to Sider's view on poverty. He points out that God Himself identifies with the poor; any insult that is done to them is as if it is done to God.

Sider and Unruh (2007) write:

God intervenes to uphold the cause of those who are impoverished and mistreated, as promised in 1 Samuel 28 He raises up the poor from the dust, he lifts the needy from the ash heap. The Bible also teaches that God sometimes judges and tears down the rich. Mary's Magnificat highlights the social reversal associated with Jesus' incarnation. God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. (Luke 1:53)

The church has a mandate to fight poverty and this fight is being fought at the corporate level, but at the same time it is an individual battle. Each church member has a part to play in the fight against poverty. If each person is involved, those individual efforts will translate into a big force which will result in making the whole church active in reducing poverty.

Community Involvement in the Fight Against Poverty

The process of getting the community involved in the daily activities of the community is both empowering and equipping to the community. Bartle (2007) says:

The empowerment of communities, the promotion of community participation, the mobilization cycle, the stimulation of self-help, social change towards more self-reliance, the fight to eliminate poverty--all these form a related set of interventions. The agent of these can be variously called animator, facilitator, mobilizer, community development officer, change agent or activist. (p. 14)

The concept of community involvement is essential in ministry because church members own programs that they have been involved in creating. It is time for the church to be fully involved in mobilizing ministry that is relevant to its community. The philosophy of many organizations appears to favor community sourced programs which have come about due to a wide range of consultation with the community. Zachariah et al. (2006) state that

project conception was undertaken in close collaboration with community representatives. Close dialogue, joint decision-making, and feedback from the planning stage through to implementation gave all stakeholders the possibility of active participation in decisions and in orienting the overall community health strategy. (p. 169)

This scenario highlights the significance of the community in the implementation and management of the project. Zachariah et al. (2006) say,

Thyolo community is contributing in the fight against HIV/AIDS and TB. Worthy of particular note are a number of activities. First, Malawi is desperately trying to scale-up HIV/AIDS--and TB--related activities within districts. Community members are playing a major role in the scaling-up process by providing VCT at 12 of the 14 VCT sites in Thyolo and having conducted close to half of all HIV testing done in the district in the 2-year study period. (p. 173)

It is encouraging to note that the Thyolo community is contributing to the fight against AIDS. The community is not just a recipient, but is a partner in the battle against TB and HIV/AIDS. It is this kind of partnership that can be an opening wedge in the proclamation of the gospel. The community partnership with the church will give the gospel power to transform its communities. Collins et al. (2006) write:

Our experiences suggest that even if paid outreach workers are used in larger numbers at the start, the program should move towards community volunteers as the mainstay of case-finding as soon as possible. In longer-term programming a primarily volunteer system is often feasible from the outset. The system for active case-finding through outreach workers and/or volunteers can also serve to follow up absentees and defaulters from OTP and SFP program. This strategy has been tried successfully in several CTC program. (p. 28)

Collins et al. have a high view of community involvement. They see it as the only way in which community projects can be implemented in a successful way. Their writings will be a source of encouragement to those who are involved in community work. It would be beneficial if the church would help its members to value the importance of community participation in their work. It is the aspect of involvement that will enhance the mission of the church.

The participation of the community in its developmental activities is far-reaching in getting good results. Ansell and Young (2004) point out that in "Southern Africa,

governments tend to favor local communities as a good way of taking care of orphans who come about due to the AIDS Pandemic” (2004, p. 4). Ansell and Young (2004) continue:

Significantly, ‘family’ is usually allied with ‘community’, and policies concerning orphans (e.g. Zimbabwe’s National Policy on the Care and Protection of Orphans [UNAIDS/UNICEF, 1999], Lesotho’s National AIDS Strategic Plan [Government of Lesotho, 2000] and Malawi’s draft National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (Republic of Malawi, 2001]) stress the necessity of ‘community-based care.’ UNICEF’s report on programming for families and children affected by HIV/AIDS in Lesotho declares that “it is assumed that community based approaches are the only viable and sustainable alternative for providing care and protection for children made vulnerable by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. (2004, p. 4)

The involvement of the community in sharing solutions to reduce poverty is crucial for any sustainability. Communities that have been affected need to be part of the solution. In broader terms, it appears that Africa, as a whole, is in a similar situation because the community’s involvement has produced results in many African countries. It is due to this development that the church can play a role in helping communities identify their own problems and find their own solutions. Ansell and Young declare, “UNICEF’s report on programming for families and children affected by HIV/AIDS in Lesotho declares that ‘it is assumed that community based approaches are the only viable and sustainable alternative for providing care and protection for children made vulnerable by the HIV/AIDS epidemic’ (UNICEF, 1999).” (2004, p. 4)

Those who will come in to help will do much better if they find out that the communities are already organized for service. Nesson points out an important component which indicates that churches or congregations are established to be centers of the mission to carry out the gospel to their communities (1986, p. 7). On the same note, Ansell and Young(2004) state:

Committees (National ‘Community-based care’) is an ambiguous term, used in several senses, including: care in the community (i.e., not in institutions); care organized at the community level for example, coordination of service provision through Community AIDS Committees (National Task Force on Orphans in Malawi, 1996)); and care by the community (mobilization of individuals/groups to donate time and money to supporting orphans). In all these senses it is assumed that there is a readily identifiable static community to which orphaned children and their guardians belong. (2004, p. 8)

The availability of the readily identifiable community to which orphans belong suggests that the church could easily link up with these communities to deliver holistic help to the plight of orphans and the poor. This, then, points out the need for churches in Lilongwe to develop strategies that will enable it to infiltrate their communities with the gospel of Jesus, which will bring social, economic, and spiritual transformation to their communities.

The above view could also indicate that the church has an opportunity to serve its community in Lilongwe. It is the job of the church to fight poverty in whatever form it may exist. Sider and Unruh say that if the church would get the message from the 210 verses in the NT which talk about poverty, it will have a lasting impact on the poor, especially children (2007, p. 19). It means that the church will be working with people in their community; it means that the church becomes an integral part of the community and therefore will be able to effect change easily in its own community.

Pembrey (2010b) has observed that fighting poverty as well as AIDS is an interconnected activity which means that fighters must work as a chain—when one link breaks then the whole thing collapses. As an example, there are medications known as ARVs. For these medications to work there should be nurses to dispense the medications.

At the same time patients need to have food to eat for these medications to work.

However, as Pembrey (2010a) points out:

Access to treatment is particularly limited in rural areas, as problems such as a lack of transportation prevent many people from reaching health services. These areas have been heavily affected by food shortages in recent years. Malnutrition is now endemic, meaning that even in cases where treatment is available, lack of food means the drugs are not as effective. People have been known to stop taking ARVs because they do not have enough food to eat alongside them. (2010a, p. 8)

The description of poverty and its related problems in Malawi is so grim that one can easily lose hope. Yet, there is great potential to alleviate these problems. The church can do much more to improve the welfare of the people. It can be a tool to affect change in society and that change can go a long way. Since the church draws its teachings from the Bible, it appears to Baker that the four biblical law collections have significant material on wealth and poverty. Baker observes that these appear in the Decalogue, the book of the covenant, the code of holiness, and the Deuteronomic code. The church has a special mandate to address these social ills in whatever way possible. Thus, pastors have an extra mandate to mobilize church members so that they in turn can be tools to minister to their communities holistically (2009, p. 6).

If the church takes the Bible seriously, then the church must be on the frontline in this fight against poverty. In biblical times, it was the king's responsibility to ensure that the poor were not oppressed and justice was performed without partiality, especially to vulnerable groups (poor, orphans, widows, etc.). Who can do this job in our time? Is it the NGOs? Is it the government? Or are Christians the people who must fight for the poor?

Poverty and the factors that contribute to it are social problems and they need solutions. Bartle describes poverty as a problem which needs social intervention. His views are important because they allow people who are receiving help to take part in the intervention process. Those who suffer have an opportunity to find solutions to their own problems. Social programs that have been identified on the grassroots level stand a higher chance of success than those which have been imposed by government or other NGOs. This is why it is important for the church to work as a catalyst in the community to develop strategies that will help the church become integrated in the life of the community, and to be first responders to the chronic challenges of poverty. On this point, Bartle (2007) shows that successful programs are those that have come about due to community participation (the mobilization intervention). The participation that is being spoken about here does not come about by accident; people must work at it.

In searching for solutions, Doss, in his dissertation, expresses frustration at the gap of poverty between Western Adventists and those from Africa, especially Malawi (2006, p. 5). He comes up with different terms in order to define poverty accurately. The truth of the matter is that Malawians are living in “absolute or extreme poverty.” He indicates that many Malawians go without enough food, especially during the rainy season. During this time finding food is a battle. It is true that many Malawian Adventist communities are looking for Western Christians to help them get out of poverty (2006, p. 16).

The way forward on this subject is that Malawian Adventists need to forge ahead to develop strategies that will offer practical solutions to problems of poverty in their

communities by identifying community needs such as HIV/AIDS and empowering the community with information on how to fight the pandemic. Adventist members are better prepared to fight poverty compared to non-Adventist communities, for they look at things with a spiritual eye. Their biblical worldview helps them to be an oasis of hope in the desert of poverty. Their perception and resolve will help in ministering and offering solutions to poverty. The church ought to develop strategies to mobilize her members in order to come up with a ministry that offers solutions to social ills.

Gottert (2005) retells an experience from Madagascar, where the community was organized so that it participated in community programs. The lessons learned were encouraging and the success of the program was so high that the model has been tried in hundreds of locations and has been successful. In Malawi the church could learn from this approach and be able to impact change in her communities. Also, the Malawian church does not need money as much as it needs people who are dedicated to carry out the development agenda. Major developments in the community that have helped people to cope with poverty do not come from without, but from within the community. The outside help is there just as a complement, so it is important for the church to mobilize its faithful members and offer hope and solutions to the community's problems.

Kadiyala declares:

Scaling-up HIV/AIDS Intervention Through Expanded Partnerships (STEPS) is now active in four districts and aims to expand to two more by 2005 to cover 15 percent of Malawi's population. Through partnerships and by training, other NGOs/CBOs in Community mobilization model. STEPs and similar models are envisioned to cover 75 percent of Malawi's population by 2005. (2004, p. iii)

The above quote shows that the community mobilization method is working. This STEP organization has a mobilization model which could be used in the church; therefore, the church would do well to borrow this model and implement it so that it can be efficient in fighting poverty and other social ills. Commenting on the success of the program in Namwera, Kadiyala (2004) pronounces:

Based on the positive experience in Namwera, the program changed its initial strategy to that of an external change agent, assisting communities with community mobilization and capacity building so that communities became empowered to act collectively to address their problems. Village AIDS committees (VACs) first identify the vulnerable, then VACs plan responses on the basis of the nature and magnitude of vulnerability within the villages. They respond in accordance to the needs of the vulnerable and the capacity within the villages. The committees also monitor activities and mobilize resources. As the needs of the most affected communities are intertwined, the program has become truly diverse with activities along the continuum of prevention, care, support, and mitigation. STEPs has also been influencing national policies related to HIV/AIDS and children (2004, p. ii).

The point that comes up now and again is the effectiveness of the community when it is involved in the fight against AIDS. It may also follow the same pattern, but community participation is a sure way of waging a winning war against poverty and HIV/AIDS. Ng'ombe and Kasiya (2007a) support this, especially following the results of the Care International Program in Ntchisi (2007a, p. 76).

Community involvement is essential in the fight against HIV/AIDS, poverty, and other forms of social ills. Transformational development will not take root unless the local communities are involved. It is because of this that many organizations are tapping the pool of community volunteers to make their work effective. It is generally agreed that the participation of volunteers will get far better results in the fight against poverty.

The church will greatly benefit if it diversifies its effort in community outreach with a specific aim of executing a holistic ministry. The church pool of volunteers has not been fully tapped in many church communities and, as a result, the ministry is feeble and weak. The church has an opportunity to develop a ministry that will be transformational and holistic if it recognizes the importance of community participation. For things to change there is a need for a catalyst to affect change and it is here that I see an opportunity for the church to affect change by developing a holistic community ministry that changes people's lives for the better.

Conclusion

The literature that has been reviewed on poverty in Malawi is divided into seven sections: a) poverty situation, b) connection between poverty and diseases, c) causes of poverty, d) solution to poverty, e) importance of church in the fight against poverty, f) role of an individual in the fight against poverty, and g) community involvement in the fight against poverty.

The poverty situation in Malawi is dire because over 50% of the population lives below the poverty level. Many of the people do not have enough food; each day is a struggle to them. There is a connection between disease and poverty because many of the

poor people are most affected with diseases and HIV/AIDS. In Lilongwe, just as it is in most urban centers, the concentration of poverty is high because many migrate to cities in search of work which is almost non-existent. There is an agreement among scholars that poverty is the source of many social ills including HIV/AIDS. There is a trend in which poverty, disease, and AIDS intertwine.

Causes of poverty in Malawi are many and complex, and they include geographical location, government policies, donor policies, cultural practices, corruption, population explosion, environmental degradation, lack of basic services such as healthcare and education, and many more. A solution to poverty in Malawi needs to follow a multifaceted approach with all stakeholders taking part.

The church can develop a strategy that is able to move people out of poverty and this may be achieved by involving poverty-stricken communities in identifying the problems and solutions to their problem. The dominant thought on poverty and its solution is that no single organization can tackle this problem. There is a need for networking various stakeholders, including the church. In this case the church may act as a catalyst.

The Church is the only organization which has the potential to reduce poverty. The church members are able to be mobilized easily as they meet every Sabbath in big numbers. So the Church needs to develop a strategy to mobilize its church members so that they can effectively work with their communities to reduce poverty. Lasting solutions to poverty and related challenges will come with the involvement of the church in partnership with its local community. It is the role of the church to mobilize a ministry

that is holistic and able to minister to the needs of its society. The challenges of poverty to the people of Lilongwe are actually opportunities for the church to grow the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY OF EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Introduction

This chapter looks at a methodology for empowering communities so that they are able to aggressively fight poverty, HIV/AIDS, diseases, and hunger in the short- and long term. The approach will look at methodologies in the area of, education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. The project will be implemented by Adventist women and youth because women and youth are the most marginalized segments in the social and economic development of Malawi. Women and youth in Lilongwe are also the biggest population block in the city. They form the largest segment of ADVENTIST church membership and are the most active and well organized.

The IMF said the following,

Despite past efforts, women in Malawi remain marginalized compared to men. Women have less access to education, credit, land, and property. In addition, they have less access to employment opportunities both in the public and private sectors, technology, and other key market information to support their business activities. Unemployment among the youth has worsened over the last 20 years. Increasingly, the youth are completing their education with very little prospect of securing a job, or engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Due to lack of experience, very few employers are willing to recruit and train them on the job. (2007, p. 40)

The Africa Development Bank Group adds, “Malawi is off track on three MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) namely universal primary education, and gender equality and women empowerment” (2011, p. 8). It is apparent, therefore, that women

and youth face difficulty in meeting the day-to-day needs of their lives. It is only proper to empower them so that they may map their own destiny. These groups know what it is to be poor and would appreciate any efforts to make them part of the solution to fight poverty in their communities. It is a holistic approach of empowerment that may uplift their lives from poverty.

A Demographic Study of Lilongwe

The 2008 “Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report” shows that the city of Lilongwe is 456 km², has a population of 669,021 and a population density of 1,467 people per square km (2008, p. 10). However, the city assembly 2007 report indicated that the population of Lilongwe is at 744,436. The city has an annual growth rate of 4.3%. The report also shows that almost half of the population of Lilongwe is below 18 years of age (2008, p. 5).

The same report of 2008 shows that there are more men in Lilongwe than women, which is strange, especially when it is compared to the national population, which has more women than men. This could be due to the fact that most men leave their wives back home in the village and come to the city to seek employment and provide for their families. However, women are still a big population block in the city, and many of them are poor because they do not work or own businesses. They are simply housewives. These housewives are the untapped human resources who could be engaged in creative ministry that may help families become engaged in gainful employment and thereby provide for their family needs.

People

Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, is a heterogeneous city with people from all 28 districts of the country. People of different cultures, tribes, and languages are in Lilongwe. There are quite a number of expatriates from the West and other parts of the world. Indians and Chinese are among the most popular businessmen. Chichewa, the national language of Malawi, is spoken almost everywhere in the country; however, English is the official language of transacting local and international business contracts.

City Government

The head of the city assembly is the mayor. The Lilongwe City profile report (2011) says that “Lilongwe City operates within the Local Government Act of 1998, which entitles citizens to elect councilors directly, then the elected councilors elect a mayor amongst themselves (2011, p. 8). The commonwealth network website declares, “Assemblies are made up of a political arm, which comprises community representatives that are democratically elected and called Councilors, and a technical arm, made up of the employees that carry out the day-to-day work of the assemblies.” Lilongwe city council has eight departments which coordinate the daily operations of the city (see Appendix 1 [for Figure 4]). According to the Lilongwe urban profile, “Lilongwe lacks the necessary financial resources to implement significant development plans and provide the required basic infrastructure and urban services needed for economic development to take place” (2011, p. 8).

Profile of Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Lilongwe

The General Conference of the Seventh day Adventist Church Archives (2012) shows that the Adventist churches in Lilongwe are part of the Adventist churches organized into the Central Malawi Conference (CMC) of Adventist churches. According to the GC, the CMC, with its head office in Lilongwe, had a remarkable growth over the past 10 years. Currently, the CMC has a membership of 55,952. In 2010 it experienced 8,600 baptisms, which represented a 3.75% growth rate.

Pastor Juwa, the executive secretary of CMC, says that Lilongwe City has a membership of 21,320 (see Fig. 1). The above memberships of Lilongwe churches represent 3.0461% of the population of the city. It means that out of every 33 people in Lilongwe there is one Seventh-day Adventist.

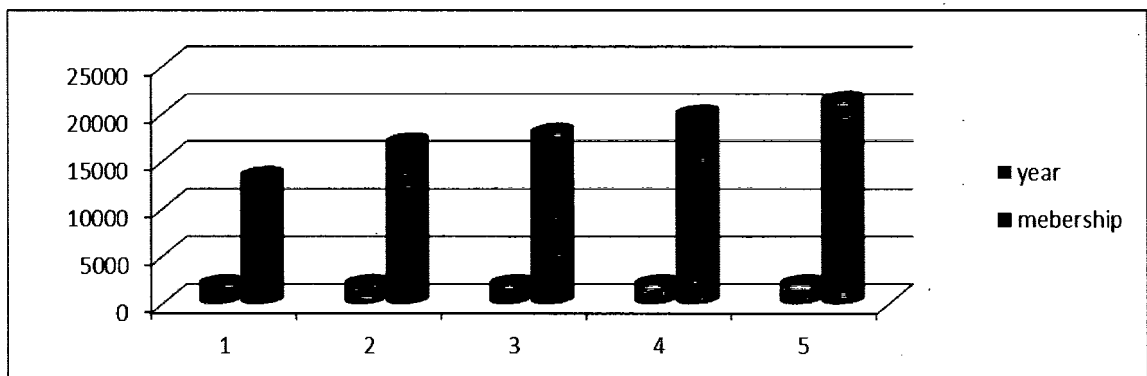


Figure 1. Lilongwe city church membership from 2007 to 2011.

The examples of the Kawale and Area 25 city churches in Lilongwe show some growth, which indicates that the church is on the move in the city. Figure 2 indicates growth of the church during the years of 2000, 2004, and 2008).

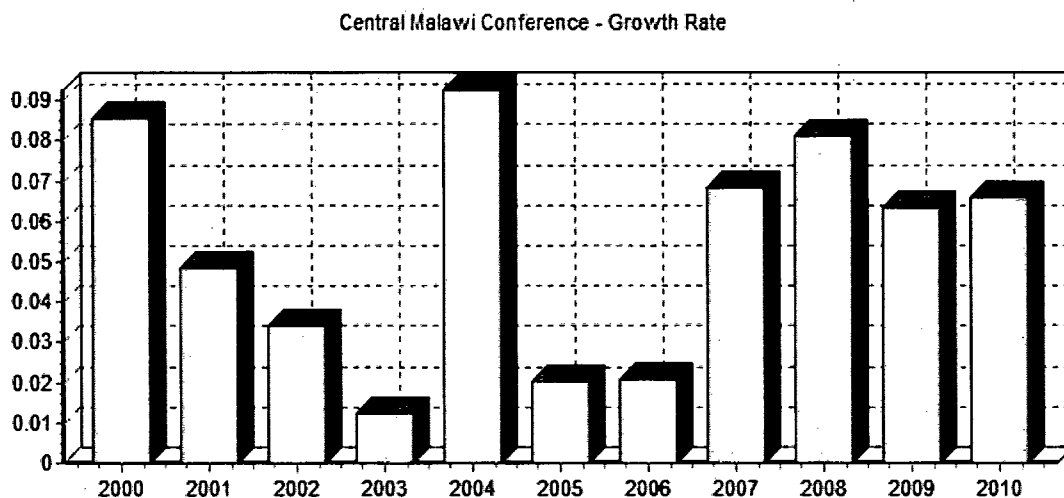


Figure 2. Adventist church membership in Lilongwe.

While the conference is enjoying growth, the loss of members through death is rising. This development is worrisome and could likely be due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. If this is so, then it just strengthens the resolve to intensify the battle against poverty, HIV/AIDS, and disease.

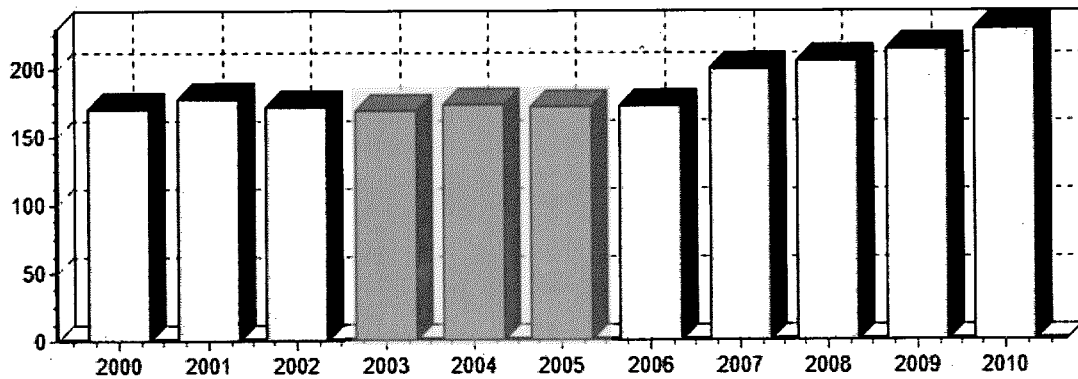


Figure 3. Death rate.

Other Adventist Institutions in Lilongwe

Currently there are three church institutions in Lilongwe: Lilongwe Adventist Health Clinic, Bwatalika Mission (Primary school, secondary school, and health clinic), and Kawale Primary School. These institutions are meeting the needs of Lilongwe residents with Seventh day Adventist Christian education and healthcare. They are indirectly enabling people to know Jesus Christ through their services. These three institutions have acted as bridges to connect the church to the community and are doing a commendable job of linking up with the community, but this link may be strengthened by involving church members who live in the community to be ambassadors of the Adventist Church. Church members may help to meet the needs of the community by informing the church of the needs in their communities and suggesting methods of meeting those needs.

Developing a Holistic (Need First) Urban Community Empowerment Strategy for Adventist Churches in Lilongwe

The objective of this research is to develop a strategy to mobilize Seventh-day Adventist churches in Lilongwe to enable communities to address community-based challenges such as poverty, pandemics (HIV/AIDS), diseases, and hunger.

The research method that I used was the Archival Document Analysis. This method analyzes the available data. The documents that were studied included the Adventist Mission Board Archives, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church Archives, church papers, National Statistical Census Reports, Lilongwe City Assembly Documents, Government of Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Government of Malawi Millennium Development Goals (MDG), International Monetary Fund Reports, Africa Development Bank Reports, and dissertations by some Malawian Adventists scholars.

All above sources did not contain a comprehensive, holistic approach to fight poverty, HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger in Malawi, specifically in Lilongwe. Adventist sources that were available did not show how the ADVENTIST church is ministering to the needs of its community in the city.

To develop a strategy for community empowerment, the current study builds on the inadequate approaches of ministering to the population in Lilongwe, historical missionary methods of the various churches in Malawi, the cultural structure of communities of people, the government and the NGOs that are currently working to alleviate poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS, and diseases in the country. While most efforts by

these organizations have done much good in the “healing acts,” most of the efforts and resources were reactive and not preventive. The needs of the people did not drive the methods. Ideas of missionary work were pre-eminent over the needs of the population. This study proposes a “holistic” strategy that builds on the knowledge of predecessors, but addresses the needs of the people first, rather than prescribing solutions without identifying causes to prevent a future recurrence of problems.

The city has many challenges, but poverty is one of the biggest challenges. “Lilongwe Urban Profile” says that “rapid urbanization and inadequate employment opportunities have resulted in high poverty rates in the urban areas, which currently stand at 25 percent of the city population, with 9 percent being ultra-poor” (2011, p. 14). The strategy to end poverty will need to involve all stakeholders. Kaphaizi, Principal Secretary for Local Government and Rural Development (2011), has stated,

The goal of ensuring sustainable urban development and poverty reduction cannot be achieved by the efforts of central government and the city councils alone. More importantly, it will need the concerted efforts of all stakeholders involved in the development of Lilongwe including the private sector, civil society, political and community leaders, development partners, and city residents. (2011, p. 6)

This document agrees with Kaphaizi in that there is a need for a concerted effort of all stakeholders to fight against poverty in Lilongwe. The situation is dire; the church cannot stand by and watch the situation get worse. It has to act by empowering people to fight poverty holistically. This study proposes to first mobilize ADVENTIST church members who, after being empowered, will in turn mobilize their communities.

Mobilizing Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Lilongwe

This study will start empowering people at a small scale with Adventist women and youth as the initial groups that will implement this project, since they are well organized, zealous, and active in the Seventh day Adventist churches in Lilongwe. The project will equip them with community outreach skills which may help link them to fellow women and youth in the community. Through the church boards, 10 volunteers (five women and five youth) from each of the three churches (Kawale, Likuni, and Area 25) will be enlisted and trained to form the core group of volunteers for the project (see Appendix 1, Implementation Pyramid, Figure 5).

The empowerment of women and youth will include a number of steps like self-reliance. They need to develop high self-esteem and willingness to want to be economically independent. They need to be positive that even though things are tough, life will get better. Women and young people need to learn principles of industry and hard work. Laziness should not be condoned at all; otherwise all the efforts put forward to help them will be in vain. They need to defy the norm of the day; they need to think outside the box to come up with new ways of fighting poverty. By learning cultural methods of empowerment, Adventist women and youth may learn valuable lessons that may be helpful in the fight against poverty.

Cultural Methods of Empowerment

Traditionally, community empowerment took place on four levels: a) traditional chiefs, b) village headmen, c) family heads, and d) parents. At each level of

empowerment, there were specific things which were accomplished. The traditional chief was responsible for a wider area; this meant that he would only deal with issues that concerned people at his level. The village headman was only responsible for issues that concerned his village, while family heads and parents were concerned with issues that pertained to their families.

Traditionally, Malawi is a hierarchical society, which means that for any information to be effective, it has to flow either way (from the chief to his subjects or subjects to the chief) through the chain of command. For example, in the event that the chief has some things which he wanted his subjects to take care of, he would call all village headmen under his jurisdiction to a designated meeting place where he, or his appointee, would take the time to explain what programs he wanted to be implemented in his area. The chief passes information to the village headmen, who in turn pass the information to family heads until the information finally reached the last member of the family.

The flow of information was critical during communal projects like the construction of schools, clinics, bridges, or during health campaigns such as vaccinations and immunizations. All people paid attention to what the chief said and to what roles they were going to play; this was especially true when it came to construction projects. It is the hierarchical setting which helped missionaries to target and convince chiefs, and then they were sure that the people would follow the chief's position.

Before the advent of missionaries, Malawi was an oral culture. Much of what is valuable to future generations was transmitted orally. There is a saying, "Mulala ni

buku,” meaning an old person acts as a historical book. The older a person was in the family or village, the bigger the responsibility to ensure that he passed down the tradition of the village or tribe to the next generation. This was done by empowering younger people to ensure that they would continue to pass information to the next generation. Empowerment took place as people talked to each other, or as they shared their strategies with one another.

In the Ngoni villages in the Mzimba district, elders had discussions on a daily basis at a place which was near a cattle kraal (cattle pen: a pen or other enclosure for livestock, especially cattle) known as *sangweni* or *mphala* which would literally be translated as “open place” or the “court yard.” It was in this place that they usually gave instructions to young people on important subjects like marriage—how to find a good wife, how to provide for one’s family, and how to live with one another in peace. It is also a place where they learned new skills such as building houses, hunting, and fishing. They also learned trade skills, which included making axes, spears, and bows that were used as weapons for self-defense from hostile people or animals. Economically, they also learned new skills for making money, which included the making and selling of mats, baskets, wooden cooking spoons/sticks, houses, barns, etc. All these trades were learned at the village kraal. All were welcome whether one lived in the village or just a visitor. If you were clever, you would learn all these skills which would enable you to earn a living. It was only after you had demonstrated that you were capable of living by yourself and supporting your family that you would be allowed to marry.

Many trades and skills were learned by observing what the elders did. Many times, elders would guide young people and help them do things right. When they became experts, then they could also help others know the skills.

Today, things have changed because of the development of big cities. Many young people have gone to town in search of employment, where the village elders are not present to instruct them. This leads to a serious cultural vacuum. To counteract this challenge, many parents try to teach their children as much as they can, so that by the time these young people leave the village to go to various cities, they are able to live well with others and live a productive life. There are times now, even after parents have done their best to instruct their children before they go into the city, that there is still a void in their lives.

In the major cities today, the community has elected village headmen to fill this void. The city administration recognizes their importance; as such they work with them in all the social and economic development of their townships. This shows that many Malawian cities cannot go on with life without chiefs; thus the church needs to recognize the cultural aspects as it plans community programs.

Young men were also taught the value of self-help. They were encouraged to work hard in providing for their families and community. In some cases, they would be prompted to seek work in the cities or go outside the country to look for jobs, so that they could provide a decent life for their families. There was also a community approach to projects, such as building temporal bridges, clinics, or school blocks. The village

headman encouraged his people to help in building school blocks by providing bricks, skills, labor, or helping to haul sand from the streams to be used at the construction site.

The empowerment of girls was different. They spent most of their time with their mothers. They were taught special skills of motherhood such as cooking, sewing/knitting, pot making, and baking. They learned to be diligent and work hard so that they could become good wives. At a tender age they learned how to take care of babies; in every aspect they did the work of a mother. This explains why many girls today have the burden of taking care of their siblings in the event of a loss of parents. This has reached a crisis point, due to HIV/AIDS, where many kids have lost their parents and are struggling to make ends meet.

The above is a cultural perspective of how communities were traditionally empowering their young people. Today some things have changed, yet the principles involved may be very similar. Every person who volunteers to work on implementing this study will be reminded of the importance of the traditional authorities in regard to their role in empowering their communities. The church just needs to recognize the presence of this system and employ some of its appropriate leadership styles to effectively minister to the needs of its community. See Appendix 1, Fig. 6 titled Cultural Level of Empowerment.

Leadership

Leadership is crucial to empowering communities. Bad leadership destroys the community. On the other hand sound leadership builds the community. The church leadership during the missionary period appeared to be doing fine, but soon after the

missionaries left, church work, especially in areas of education, healthcare, and industry declined because it was left in the hands of people who were not prepared to take over leadership of the missionary work in the country. The colonial church did not prepare the indigenous people to assume leadership of the church at some point in the future. When the sudden change came, the local people were not ready for the task.

For this project to take off well, it will rely on sound church leadership. I, as a pastor, will dedicate my life and service to inspiring church members to adopt principles of servant leadership, which seeks to affirm that every person has the ability to lead. Each church member has potential to serve his/her church and community.

In the implementation of this strategy there will be servant leadership training sessions for both the church and community, conducted regularly so that the church and community are fully equipped with leadership skills that will help them lead out in the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS, and diseases. Leadership empowerment is part and parcel of community empowerment and the key to the fight against poverty. Bates has written on innovation.

Previously Companies . . . could not cost cut their way to growth and success, companies turned their focus on to innovation as a way to organic growth. As a result the field of innovation has exploded, and there are now dozens of methods that are highly effective in addressing different aspects of the innovation process. There are three key parts of innovation – identifying the unmet needs of the people (investigation), creating a clever, breakthrough solution to meet those needs (ideation); and making those solutions happen (implementation). (2012, p. xvii)

With respect to leadership as a way of empowering communities, it is important for church members to be encouraged to be innovative so the church can meet the empowerment needs of the church and the community.

Evangelism

The driving force for the missionary endeavors of David Livingstone and other missionaries to Malawi was the desire to preach the gospel to the heathen. These missionaries were following the gospel commission in Matt 28:18-20, which says,

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

While the overall goal was to preach the gospel, missionaries did not confine themselves to one initiative, but rather they used several initiatives such as education, healthcare, industry, and trade in proclaiming a holistic gospel of Jesus Christ. They understood that they needed to meet the everyday needs of the community, and then preach the gospel to them.

For example, slave trade was a major problem in Nyasaland because it disrupted the way people lived and the reception of the gospel. It was imperative therefore, to free people from slave trade before missionary work could be effective. It was because of this reason that David Livingstone appealed to his home people to come and end the slave trade by replacing it with legitimate trade. Today, the church is not faced with slave trade, but it is faced with challenges of poverty, HIV/AIDS, diseases, and hunger. The church cannot effectively preach the gospel if it ignores addressing the above challenges. Of all the organizations that fight poverty it is only the church that has divine mandate to fight poverty, (Deut 15:1-4), HIV/AIDS, disease, and hunger.

Mandate for Fighting Poverty, HIV/AIDS, Disease, and Hunger

The Bible has guidelines on how the Church can take care of the needy in society; as such we do not need to be in darkness. The Church has a responsibility to confront poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS, disease, and any form of suffering so that people may live a better life. The Bible mandates us to take a stand with the suffering and afflicted. Psalms 82:35 says: “Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.”

The concept of community empowerment in fighting poverty and disease must be addressed in the context of divine mandate. The government has a mandate from the people who voted it into power to provide basic needs to its people. Failure to do that may lead the government to be voted out of power. On the other hand, the church has no external force from its members to mandate it to provide basic needs to its community; yet, the Church has a divine mandate to fight poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS, disease, and any form of social ills in society. The church’s mandate is not by an act of parliament; it comes from the Author of life, who is the sovereign Lord, and as such this mandate needs to be taken seriously. Empowering people to fight poverty requires the church to mobilize all its members to be involved in providing for the needs of its community. Church members need to know that they are involved in divine work.

The Church

The church in a community is one of the best tools that could empower women and young people to fight poverty. This empowerment would result in the transformation of societies if properly done. Samuel and Sugden say that,

we recognize that across the generations local churches have been the vehicle for the transmission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that their primary, though not their only, role is a threefold ministry: the worship and praise of God, the proclamation in word and deed of the Gospel of the grace of God, and the nurture, instruction, and discipleship of those who have received Jesus Christ into their lives. In this way transformation takes place in the lives of Christian individuals, families, and communities; through their words and deeds they demonstrate both the need and reality of ethical, moral, and social transformation. (1999, p. 271)

Since the church has been the source of transformation, it is important to continue to make the church to be the center of empowerment, not only spiritually but holistically. The approach to make the church as a center of empowerment would make the church have a prominent role in the community to fight poverty, HIV/AIDs, diseases, and hunger in society. The church has a pool of volunteers who are willing to put their resources, and man-power together to impact society. Groody declares,

But it does mean that only when the issue of those others explicitly or implicitly thought of as nonpersons takes priority will even the problem of the nonbeliever receive new thought. This means that within Christian theology, as within the Christian churches, the option for the poor should be at the heart of every serious Christian theology today. (2007, p. 119)

The mission of the church could be accomplished much faster if the church could take time to consider the plight of the poor and empower them with skills so that they are able to live a better life. The poor are all people who lack food, shelter, clothes, affordable healthcare, and those who have HIV/AIDs. The church cannot address one of the above problems and think that it has done enough; it should address all these

problems holistically. The local church needs to empower poor people, so that they may take control of their lives. It is such empowerment that may help communities to break the cycle of poverty.

What is most needed is visionary leadership, which has the poor at heart. The example of Bishop Peter Kitula of the diocese of Mara and Ukerewe in Tanzania is so inspiring. He wanted to make a difference in ministering to the needs of the poor in his diocese. The community tried to write proposals to get funding for educational projects, but nothing worked because they did not know how to write proposals. Later, they consulted Tear Fund, an organization which helped them write a good proposal. Funding was identified and people were able to meet their needs. Kitula (Chester, 2002) writes,

The results have been very encouraging in a number of ways. Physical transformation has taken place. At Lagata the community has built two classrooms and four houses for teachers at the local primary school. Before the program both the administrators of the school and the community were waiting passively for the government to do the work.

They tried new approaches and succeeded. The early missionaries' approach to evangelism, though not fully developed, was the best model because they introduced a holistic concept of the gospel. Their abrupt departure, due to Pan-Africanism, made the church lose the holistic approach to evangelism. The holistic method has been lost. As a result most churches today only handle the spiritual empowerment and have nothing to do with the economic and social empowerment. It is this trend that has probably increased the level of poverty in the country. This tradition that the church should only be concerned with the spiritual development of church members while ignoring the social and economic development is wrong because human beings are interconnected.

All aspects of human life are interconnected. If the social aspect of a church member is undeveloped, then, the whole person will not be well. It is this interconnectedness that must be highlighted so the church can develop programs that may develop the whole person. It is the holistic approach to the challenges of poverty, HIV/AIDS, and diseases that may transform the church and the community in Lilongwe.

Steps for Lilongwe Seventh-day Adventist Churches to Mobilize Their Communities

The activities that alleviate poverty in the community are known locally as “*Chithangato cha Ukristu*” (CCU), literally translated to mean “the Christian Help.” It is a term that describes a range of activities which are done by church members in their communities to alleviate poverty and suffering. These activities include sharing food with the hungry, visiting the sick, visiting those who are in prison, distributing literature, caring for the elderly, and public works such as street cleaning, making temporary bridges, and hospital cleaning. While this approach of providing the necessities to the poor is helpful, it makes people to be dependent on the church. Probably the best approach is to give people skills which would help them to find the necessities that they need rather than to give them the things that they need. This project suggests introducing teaching skills that may help them to be self-sufficient.

Education

Empowering the community through education will flow out of an accurate understanding in four areas: the Malawi education system, the missionaries’ approach,

Lilongwe City Assembly's approach, and current Adventist approach. From these understandings a viable approach will then be suggested.

In Malawi, education is divided into five levels; a) pre-primary (0-5 years), b) primary, c) secondary, d) tertiary, and e) technical education (Malawi education, 2010). All these levels have serious challenges in regard to the delivery of knowledge and skills to the various age groups, but for the purposes of this dissertation, the focus is on youth and women. We are going to look briefly at the tertiary education level as an example of how education affects youth and women. The Development of Educational Report of Malawi reports that

the current vision for the education sector in Malawi, as outlined in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) 2008-2017 is to be a catalyst for social economic development, Industrial growth, and instrument for empowering the poor, the weak, and the voiceless. Its mission is to provide quality and relevant education to Malawi Nation to enable people acquire relevant knowledge, skill, expertise, and competencies to perform effectively as citizens, work force and leaders of Malawi, thereby reduce poverty among the people of Malawi. (2008, p. 7)

The above quotation shows what education can achieve in an ideal situation; it would be a means of attaining social and economic prosperity, eventually reducing poverty. According to Sachs, "Expanded vocational training for the students could teach them the skills of modern farming, computer literacy, basic infrastructure maintenance and carpentry." These skills may empower students to earn money, thus being in a position to meet their family's financial needs.

Most colleges in Malawi recruit students that have passed the MSCE, which in the United States is like the GED or passing high school. Few students are selected to go to colleges or universities because there are not enough colleges or universities to

accommodate all who pass the MSCE examination. Suffice it to say that in the 2010 school year, 68,642 sat for MSCE exams and, 36,621 students qualified for the award of the MSCE certificate, but only 2,088 were selected to go to universities, 2,353 were selected to go to primary teacher training colleges, and 980 students were selected to go to technical colleges (EMIS, 2011). The question is where are the other 31,201 students going for post high school education? It is because of this short fall that the church may come in to empower those who do not qualify for a college education with skills such as carpentry, building, and business, so that they may earn a living with the skills gained.

The Missionaries' Approach

The history of Malawi, from the time of the first missionaries in 1875 to the time when the Seventh day Adventist church work started in 1902, shows that education was core to empowering communities. The church started because of people who were inspired by education to go for mission service. For example, the first Adventist missionary to come to Malawi was George James from England. He was a graduate of Battle Creek College in Michigan. His college education influenced him to come to Malawi to see the land of David Livingstone and contribute to evangelism. Similarly, the first group of missionaries from the Church of England to Malawi; Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) came as result of education. They came to Malawi as a group of students from universities in the United Kingdom, who responded to a plea from Dr. David Livingstone, which he made at the University of Cambridge in 1857. Masoka (2006) says that "in 1857 while back home, he made a passionate appeal for evangelization of Africa." The result of Dr. David Livingstone's speech was the

formation of the UMCA which left for Malawi in 1861. In 1875, Dr. Robert Laws led another group of missionaries who later established a mission in memory of Dr. David Livingstone, in 1894 at Livingstonia, in the Rumphi district in Northern Malawi, which is still an educational institution today.

Mtike, commenting on Livingstonia Mission, says that “the church’s main goals were to preach the gospel to the indigenous people and to provide them with new skills such as reading and writing, carpentry, Agriculture, and black smithing” (1999, p. 20). Education made the Church to interact with its community. The fact that school enrollment was higher than church membership signifies interaction between the church and community. All early missionaries made education a core element of their mission expansion. The main emphasis of their education was to help people read, write, and do arithmetic. Their approach did not take into consideration the cultural needs of the people, nor did they take time to find out the type of education that was available locally. Local people did not participate in the delivery and administration of education. Seemingly, their education appears to have been imposed on them. As result many did not appreciate and benefit from this kind of education.

Lilongwe City Assembly’s Approach

The Lilongwe City Assembly sees education as one of the means of alleviating poverty, according to Makandawire (2007) “In Lilongwe Urban, education plays an important role in poverty reduction; it is agreed that only an educated populace can exploit Malawi’s rich natural resources” (p. 7). Lilongwe City Assembly’s Mission Statement says,

Lilongwe Urban Education District will strive to accomplish its vision through advocacy and lobbying government and the donors, as well as encouraging community participation and support to complement government efforts in implementing the education plan. This is aimed at ensuring that people acquire relevant knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to perform effectively as citizens, workforce and as leaders of Malawi, thereby reduce illiteracy and poverty amongst the people of Malawi. (2007, p. 7)

The city assembly sees education as one of the means of ending illiteracy, poverty, and as a means of fostering community participation, but this approach is idealistic because the efforts that the city council is doing have not materialized to reduce poverty.

Adventist Church's Approach

The church has some schools which date back to the missionary period, which are owned by the Union, Conference, or Fields. Very few schools have been opened in the recent past. Currently, educational values have no prominence in the Adventist churches in Malawi. The church is doing very little to support schools or students in the neighborhood. When one talks about Christian education in the Adventist Church; people often think of the Union or Field owned schools. They do not think of the school nearby the church. Most churches do not have plans even to operate a day care center. The church may still influence the activities of the local school if it can contribute to solving some of the problems that schools face in the neighborhood. There are many retired Adventist teachers, some with experience in teaching science, math, and some have knowledge in teaching technical subjects. These could start day tutorials, helping students who struggle in math and science, some could teach technical skills which could train MSCE certificate holders and put them to productive work. This approach may be

beneficial in establishing link which if properly nurtured may lead them to accept Jesus Christ.

Society's View of Education

People's attitudes towards education slowly changed because the colonial and later the federal government started hiring mission-educated people into various teaching and clerical jobs. Since that time education has been seen as a way of getting good positions. Today people have the same attitude. They think that if you get educated, then automatically you get a good job, but things have changed because there are fewer jobs. As a result there are many holders of MSCE certificates, undergraduate and even post graduate degrees that do not have jobs. In the past (1970s and early 1980s) companies used to hire people while they were still in high school. Currently there are many people holding degrees and certificates, but they are not employed, and each year the situation is getting worse.

For example, the 2010 Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) (2010) released the Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE) results. The press release said that

the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has released the 2010 Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examination results. Of the 68,642 candidates who sat for this examination in at least six subjects including English, 36,621 have qualified for the award of the MSCE representing a 53.35% pass rate.

There were 68,642 people who sat for the examination but only 36,621 passed. In that same year the University of Malawi selected students to attend its colleges. The University Press Release (2010) said,

In 2010, a total of 9700 candidates wrote the University Entrance Examinations (UEE) and of these 6924 were males and 2776 were females representing 71% and 29% respectively. Out of the above, 7878 candidates passed (i.e. reached a combined aggregate of UEE and MSCE pass mark of 50% and above), representing 81% pass rate. Of the candidates that passed 5846 were males and 2032 were females. From those that passed the 2010 UEE, 2088 candidates have been selected to continue their studies at the University of Malawi. Of these, 1123 are males and 965 are females representing 54% and 46% respectively.

Out of 9,700 candidates only 2,088 were selected to attend the University of Malawi. In the 2011/2012 school year the situation did not change much. Majamanda (2011) writing in *Malawi To-day Newspaper*, has written,

MANEB has released the 2011 Malawi Schools Certificate of Examinations results after several weeks delay attributed to the changed schools calendar. 102,691 candidates sat for the examinations and 54.8 percent of them passed. That is 56, 273 candidates have passed. This year's pass rate is slightly better than last year by at least one percent. Last year 53.3 percent of the candidates passed.

Out of the 102,691 candidates that wrote MSCE examinations, 56,273 passed. There were 7,791 candidates who wrote the University Entrance Examination. The University of Malawi Press Release (2011) stated,

In 2011, a total of 7791 candidates wrote the University Entrance Examination (UEE) and of these, 2407 were females and 5384 were males representing 31% and 69% respectively. 6615 candidates passed the 2011 UEE (i.e. reached a combined aggregate of UEE and MSCE pass mark of 50% and above), representing 85% pass rate. Of the candidates that passed, 1837 were females and 4778 males. From these, a total of 2379 candidates have been selected to continue their studies at the University of Malawi.

From the above figures one sees a slight improvement in the number of people selected to go to the university in 2011 which increased to 2,379. However, there are many young people who do not continue with their education at the university level. There are not many jobs to absorb all who have finished MSCE. As result many school certificate holders are unemployed.

The church can come in to help these young people by equipping them with skills to find or create their own jobs so that they can become economically independent. Most churches in Lilongwe have some members who have technical skills that they could share with these young people and help them to acquire these skills which may eventually help them to live a better life. The general weakness of education in Malawi is that it is chasing excellence at the expense of imparting job creation skills. This is seen through comparing the number of technical colleges with universities. According to the education statistics (2011), there are eight technical colleges with a total year one enrollment of 598, while there are 14 universities with a year one enrollment of 3,596 (2011, p. 89). Technical colleges are affordable to most people, but the problem is that there are few to accommodate many students as seen from the above example.

The education system needs to change, and it ought to prepare young people to earn a living regardless of the level of education that they attain. The church needs to orient its members and the community to encourage their children to get the best from the academic pursuit, but at the same time, should they not succeed to get a high school, college, or university education they need not despair but rather they need to re-tool and engage in economic productivity by using the relevant skills that they have learned during the time they were in school.

The missionaries' approach to education was to help people read, write, and do arithmetic. When one achieved the above goals then he was considered educated. The city assembly's view on education is idealistic; it will help to alleviate poverty, but poverty levels are still high in Lilongwe. The ADVENTIST church's view of education

in Malawi is rooted in sustaining the mission schools which are now owned by the Union, Field, or Conference. But the core of the ADVENTIST understanding of education is that it is as important as the work of salvation. Education empowers people to live a productive life in this world and for the life to come. But the church cannot achieve this goal if it only sustains the mission schools. Each church needs to be involved in the delivery of education.

The Viable Approach

This section looks at four methods that may revamp the education initiative in the communities of Lilongwe to make it meet the needs of the people—a) community participation, b) provision of school supplies, c) provision of skills and knowledge, and d) connection between universities/colleges and mission fields.

Community Participation

The National Statistical Office (2008) shows that almost half of the population of Lilongwe is below 18 years of age, meaning that it is a school attending population. The church can capitalize on this demographic by supporting its educational needs, thereby building friendships which may result in preaching the gospel. These needs may only be known if there is interaction between the church and community, and education may serve as the bridge between them. It is when the church supports community programs like education that may enable it to infiltrate its community with the gospel in the end.

Education Fairs and Classes

The church will set up a community education week (fair) where church members and the community will come together to get acquainted with the church's education programs. The church will hold these fairs at least twice a year. The fair will be one way of displaying to the community what the church is doing to impact women and youth in the community. The church will display church programs that show that education creates an environment where an individual may be empowered to do new things, create new theories, jobs, and challenge the status quo, thereby transforming the community.

As a way of increasing community participation, the education fair will introduce adult literacy classes to encourage those who have not gone to school or have not gone far with formal education to learn how to read and write. This education fair will promote technical and formal education as an empowerment tool to help women and youth acquire industrial skills to help them learn new ways of doing things such as business operation, city farming, building, carpentry and joinery, tailoring, and welding.

Provision of School Supplies and Sponsorships

To achieve the goal of community interaction the church can also devise a plan to involve the community through the provision of school materials. In the short term, it may appear not to be viable, but with the passing of time the investment may pay for itself. Churches can raise money for school supplies such as pencils, books, chalkboards, dusters, desks, and science equipment. These school supplies will be distributed to schools in the area as needed. Churches need to consider setting some money aside in their annual budget to be used for sponsorship of needy students (youth and women) in

the community to get a college education or a vocational skill which may help them earn a living and therefore become economically independent.

Connection Between Universities/Colleges and Mission Fields

One graduate of Helderberg College, class of 1929, wrote, "I am planning to go to North Nyasaland to take charge of the work at Luwazi Mission, a new station about ten miles from the western shore of the lake" (Adventist Archives, 1910). These words were spoken at the graduation ceremony in Helderberg College in South Africa. Community empowerment programs must involve women and young people in colleges and seminaries so that they learn to develop connections with the community they want to serve. There is a need to connect the mission field to women and youth in institutions of higher learning. It is this symbiotic existence that needs to be strengthened.

The work of education is the same as redemption, so the works of education needs to be regarded highly. White wrote,

The youth are to be encouraged to attend our schools, which should become more and more like the schools of the prophets. Our schools have been established by the Lord; and if they are conducted in harmony with His purpose, the youth sent to them will quickly be prepared to engage in various branches of missionary work. Some will be trained to enter the field as missionary nurses, some as canvassers, some as evangelists, some as teachers, and some as gospel ministers. (1977, p. 489)

Education in the hands of the missionaries was designed to teach people how to read and write. The system promoted the "three Rs" (reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic) so that people would be able to carry out simple day-to-day transactions and read the Bible in their language. The result was many people got a chance to know and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Education and Community Empowerment (A Summary) for Health care

Seventh-day Adventist churches in Lilongwe would do well if they could consider offering education to their community, either by supplying school materials, opening up schools or sponsoring needy women and youth to various colleges. The goal must be to empower people so that they are able to fight poverty holistically. Education is probably the most effective liberating force that can pull out women and youth from poverty. Thus, as the term “pedagogy” illustrates, education is inherently directive and must always be transformative (Freire, 2005). According to Freire (2005),

In fact, those who, in learning to read and write, come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves, often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation. Education is once again a subversive force. (2005, p. 30)

The revolutionary nature of education that has a transformative effect on the community is holistic. According to White,

Manual training is deserving of far more attention than it has received. Schools should be established that, in addition to the highest mental and moral culture, shall provide the best possible facilities for physical development and industrial training. Instruction should be given in agriculture, manufactures,--covering as many as possible of the most useful trades,--also in household economy, healthful cookery, sewing, hygienic dressmaking, the treatment of the sick, and kindred lines. Gardens, workshops, and treatment rooms should be provided, and the work in every line should be under the direction of skilled instructors. (2002, p. 218)

Healthcare

Empowering the community through healthcare will involve the following activities:
community health education, supply of health equipment (mosquito nets, gloves, blood

pressure machines, and thermometers), emergency response skills and community ambulances. The main point in this section is that the prevention of diseases is better than cure. This is the principle of community nursing which, according to Mosby (2009), is

a field of nursing that is a blend of primary health care and nursing practice with public health nursing. The community health nurse conducts a continuing and comprehensive practice that is preventive, curative, and rehabilitative. The philosophy of care is based on the belief that care directed to the individual, the family, and the group contributes to the health care of the population as a whole.

In this study much of the primary healthcare will be done by volunteers who will be trained in simple methods of teaching education in the community.

Disease Prevention Through Observing Eight Holistic Principles of Health

Community health education will focus on disease prevention through observing principles of health, immunization, vaccination, and antenatal and postnatal clinics.

Currently the community learns about health principle at hospitals (outpatient), clinics, health centers, and dispensaries. The city of Lilongwe has a number of hospitals and health centers which provide the teaching of health principle. The Lilongwe Urban

Profile Report (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2011) says that,

Lilongwe has four major hospitals; Kamuzu Central (Area 33), Bwaila/Bottom (Area 1), Likuni Mission (Area 57), and Daye Yong hospital (Area 27). There are 33 public and private health centers and clinics run by the government, Lilongwe City Council, the private sector, and churches. The main challenges facing the health sector include high cases of malaria, high HIV/ AIDS prevalence rates, high shortage of equipment and health facilities, shortage of qualified medical staff in the hospitals and clinics, limited capacity, and poor sanitation and hygiene. Malaria is still the biggest health challenge with over 206,830 cases reported in 2008 in the city. Most of the malaria cases were reported in the low-income areas and the informal settlements. (2011, p. 14)

The number of these hospitals is not enough to meet the needs of the city. Their staff cannot reach out to all people to teach them health principle. This suggests that working with volunteers as a way of teaching people principles of healthful living before they get admitted to the hospital may be the better way of fighting diseases.

The early missionaries' approach to health was through treatment of diseases; when one got sick, he was given medicine. This approach led to the establishment of dispensaries (a place where medicines are dispensed) in many parts of the country. Although this approach worked it did not root out the source of diseases. It is this approach to healthcare that is still posing a problem today, because people are not interested in the prevention of diseases, but the cure. Sachs suggests, "A village clinic with one doctor and nurse for 5,000 residents would provide free anti-malarial bed nets, effective anti-malarial medicines and treatments for HIV/AIDS opportunistic infections" (2005, p. 42). While the provision of doctors and health personnel is important, prevention is better because it is cheap and anyone can afford it, while the cure, on the other hand, is not affordable because many people cannot afford it due to lack of money. If the above suggestion of having a clinic with one nurse and one doctor for 5,000 people was adopted it would mean that Lilongwe alone will need not less than 140 doctors and nurses which does not seem possible right now.

Since there are not many well-established church community programs that target the delivery of healthcare to the community, this study will deploy trained Adventist volunteers in the community to carry out community health education. These volunteers will be assigned to blocks so that they carry out periodic home visitation to teach people

about the principles of health. Health education does not need to be complicated; it will be simplified so that people can easily follow its principles.

AIDS prevention seminars need to increase among the church members and also in the communities. This is the only way to fight diseases, but if some catch the disease then the team will also teach a better way of taking care of such patients so as to minimize the spread of the disease.

Health education will emphasize eight holistic principles—a) nutrition, b) exercise, c) water, d) sunlight, e) temperance, f) air, g) rest, and h) trust in divine power (NEWSTART). Nutrition will focus on eating wholesome food which gives nourishment to the body. People will learn the types of food that are good for the body and how they can find and prepare it. Cooking classes will be organized on a weekly basis to enable women to learn various skills of preparing nutritious meals.

Exercise is important for the body. Consequently I will organize soccer, net ball, walking, jogging, basketball, volleyball, and cross-country teams. The focus is to keep the body active and strong, at the same time increasing social interaction between the church members and the community.

Use of safe drinking water is one way of preventing waterborne diseases. This study seeks to advise people to drink water more than juices and other sugary drinks. Water is important inside the body and it is also true that it is important for external use such as bathing, cleaning clothes, and cleaning dishes.

Sunlight is a good source of vitamin D and it also kills some bacteria. Because of this, it is good to expose our bodies, clothes, and bedding to sunlight. I will emphasize

temperance as an important concept of healthful living. Church members as well as community members will learn the dangers of smoking, drinking alcohol, and drug abuse. Clean air is good for our lungs and the whole body; therefore I will recommend that people go outdoors and breathe clean air. I will also teach people about the dangers of air pollution and how they can avoid getting sick.

People will be encouraged to work hard but also find time to rest. The body needs some rest. Every effort should be expended to rest from daily toils. It is God's desire that his people will rest from the daily and weekly activities, thus the reason why he created day and night. The Sabbath follows the same concept. Each and every person needs to lay aside the activities of the week and spend time contemplating God's mercies. Trust in divine power is as important as any other health principle. People need to trust in God because He is the one who created human beings and their various body systems, and He is the one who sustains them and heals their diseases.

Good health for expectant mothers may also be promoted by prompting them to attend antenatal and postnatal clinics. Health educators will promote the advantages of vaccination and immunization as a means of preventing diseases.

Provision of Healthcare Supplies

This study attempts to encourage the church to participate in securing and distributing mosquito nets, which has proved to significantly reduce the rate of people catching malaria, a deadly disease. These mosquito nets will be given to needy people. The other equipment that may be sourced and distributed could be in the form of gloves to use for taking care of sick people, gowns, goggles, blood pressure machines, and

weighing scales. These simple machines could help people know the condition of their body and thereby know when to seek medical help

Emergency Response Skills/Community Ambulances

As a way of providing quality healthcare, the project intends to introduce first aid and CPR training to church members, schools, and the community. Nurses will help to provide first aid and CPR training for their communities. The trained people may be able to assist the community during the time of emergencies or sudden sicknesses. Many times the community fails to respond to accidents and sudden sicknesses due to a lack of trained responders, emergency kits, and transportation to the clinic or hospital.

Apart from introducing CPR and first aid, this project intends to introduce two community ambulances. The goal of these ambulances is to assist in emergencies and quickly transport people from the scene of the accident or sudden sickness to the hospital, health center or clinic, and thereby saving lives.

Health Fair

Twice a year there will be a health fair where the church will lead out in showcasing health initiatives to its community. Health fairs will promote healthful living, and during the health week, simple procedures and treatments will be performed on people such as taking vital signs (blood pressure, temperatures, etc.), and simple treatments of diseases. This approach of setting aside a week of displaying health initiatives that are taking place in the community are meant to create awareness of health

risks that people face on a daily basis. This may be the missing component to sound health in the community.

Churches can be creative in delivering the health message to the community by distributing mosquito nets to needy people and carrying out the HIV/AIDS prevention campaign. New initiatives that are more effective will be promoted. Constant evaluation will take place so that the project becomes a success. There should come a time in Malawi when most deaths coming from preventable causes are prevented.

Economic Empowerment

The goal of the universities' mission to central Africa was not only preaching the gospel or providing more Eurocentric education, but the fulfillment of the vision which was cast by David Livingstone, who said there was a need of establishing legitimate trade to replace slave trade which had disrupted communal life in Nyasaland. The aim was to equip people with trade and industrial skills that could help them make money and to be able to supply their daily needs. The trade envisioned would make people live better lives, thus the gospel would be lived in the community.

The *Review and Herald* (1909), commenting on the mission work at Malamulo, says, "Soon after the church had started its work at a mission it opened up local industries; bakeries, publishing, farming (rubber and cotton) to help local people earn a living" (1909, p. 36). While times and living conditions have changed, the principle method of developing industrial/trade ministry may still be effective and can be employed to meet community needs today.

One of the major reasons for the scarcity of jobs and business opportunities is due to the high population growth rate. Kalipen says,

However, population growth rates of the larger cities are still high in comparison to their economic growth rates. There is therefore need to not only curb urban growth but to provide a viable strategy for industrialization in the hopes of creating a productive urban base. Focus should be on both the formal sector and the microentrepreneurs of the informal sector in the urban economy (1997, p. 62).

As suggested above under “Education,” this project aims at equipping women and youth with micro-entrepreneurial skills, which may help them to run small businesses like mechanical shops, tin-smiths, shoe repair shops, bicycle repair shops, tailoring and bakeries, just to mention a few. In this way, we may help members to earn a little more money, which may be used to meet some family needs like food, healthcare costs, and school fees, and also will enable them to support the church’s gospel mission. Equipping church members with micro-entrepreneurial skills is one of the best ways of empowering the community to reduce poverty.

Investment Opportunities for the Poor

This project will seek to encourage creativity on the part of the church and community to reduce poverty by using local resources such as opening up economic empowerment avenues. Outside help should complement the already existing poverty alleviation programs. For example, the Millennium villages in Lilongwe have found a way of empowering women, training them as village sales representatives. This group has partnered with the Unilever Company to let women become sales representatives. According to www.blog.millenniumpromise.org,

Laundry soap, margarine, cooking oil, skin moisturizer: all these are products shoppers in developed countries drop into their carts without a second thought. In Mwandama, a remote village in Malawi with no supermarket and limited internet, the community was falling right through the meshes of the consumer grid. But a group of enterprising women has achieved nothing less than a small revolution by effectively turning themselves into sales representatives for the world's second-largest consumer goods company.

They buy company products at a reduced rate and sell these commodities at a profit to their communities. The result is that people are making some money and are now living a better life. This type of initiative is the one that is needed. The church may develop a network that may explore new viable economic programs in which church members and the community may engage, so that they are able to earn money and provide for their families.

The church is not only to empower members spiritually and socially but also economically. Another example is of Marissa Perry Saints, who is the founder of Dsenyo, a women's social enterprise (<http://www.dsenyo.com/about>) which buys African fabrics and other goods from women. This group is there to provide women with entrepreneurial skills which help these women have a constant market for their goods. This approach makes women able to buy and sell their products because they have a ready market of their products. While some of these products are made in the USA, the organization now plans to make some of their products in Malawi.

This study does not advocate for a church as a body to operate industries or businesses, but rather sees the church as an equipper where its members are equipped with the skills necessary for opening up industries or creating jobs. Church leadership

may ask ADRA to help organize seminars or schools to equip people to acquire the needed skills in trade, investment and industry.

Identification of Markets

The crucial element in economic empowerment is the identification products and markets. Once the above items are identified the next step is to identify people, and then equip them with the necessary skills to run these businesses. There are many local products such as fish, groundnuts, beans, and cotton which, if they could find access to local, regional, and international markets, may fetch a lot of money. The money will eventually be used to support kids' education and pay for health costs.

Identification of Loan-Granting Organizations

The church can be encouraged to find ways of having church and community members get connected to banks and other money lending institutions, so that they are able to access loans to start-up businesses, invest, and buy shares. These small businesses, if properly administered, may offer many opportunities to the church and community to move women and young people out of poverty. The church may facilitate the training of small groups of people on how they can do business with prudence, honesty, and dedication. Micro-lending may benefit people a lot if they work in teams or small groups with the aim of accessing loans from lending firms. It is easy for well-organized groups which have a good business plan to access loans for their businesses.

A revolving fund will be created out of the profits that members will be making. This revolving fund will be used as seed money to enable new participants to access

loans for new programs or it may be used to help any member who has an emergency or for some reason may not be able to pay the loan back in a timely manner.

Conclusion

The methodology of empowering communities in Lilongwe will focus on three main strategies: a) education, b) healthcare, and c) economic empowerment. A holistic empowerment strategy that has a clear preventative focus in its approach will look at the needs of its community and develop a plan to meet them.

Traditionally, empowerment took place when there was interaction between people. Community empowerment was a never-ending principle; it was just a way of life. Young people were empowered by the elderly people; the lessons they learned guided them throughout their lives. The methods of empowerment do not bypass culture, but rather use culture as a vehicle/channel to communicate and deliver solutions to problems based on the challenges or needs that people face.

Missionaries used education as a tool to evangelize people. They emphasized reading, writing, and arithmetic. The benefit of this education was that people were able to learn to read and carry out simple mathematical calculations which would help them solve day-to-day problems. The reading helped them read the Bible and teach it to others; however, the education strategy that they used did not integrate with the needs of the people because the local people did not contribute to the management and delivery of education. As a result its impact on people's lives was minimal.

Education today is chasing excellence at the expense of equipping young people with the skills to find employment or create new jobs. The result is that there is a high

unemployment rate, which has translated into high levels of poverty. In Malawi today, most communities have young people with the right qualifications but no jobs or businesses. This situation calls the church to act by coming up with creative ways of developing holistic skills for empowering young people and women to become productive in their communities.

The missionaries' approach to healthcare focused on healing and not prevention. It was this prescriptive approach that made people depend on medication as a means of treatment. Many go to the hospital in order to be treated of their ailment, but most these hospital visits could be prevented if people followed the holistic health principles suggested in this study.

Economic empowerment was one of the tools used by missionaries to evangelize people in foreign lands, but it was pushed aside. They concentrated on spiritual empowerment at the neglect of economic empowerment, which has resulted in an increase of poverty in most communities. The church may be more beneficial if it considers the economic empowerment of people to be as important as spiritual empowerment. It is the holistic approach that may transform communities in Lilongwe.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

According to the findings which have been fully outlined in Chapter 3, poverty is a big challenge to the church and communities in Malawi. A methodology of what can be done to counteract its ills has been developed in chapter four. This chapter recommends implementation steps of the above findings. It is divided into three main sections: the first section outlines the implementation of three key ministry areas—education, health care, and economic empowerment. The second section further describes the implementation steps. It covers the following topics: inspiring leaders and members to act on their God-given duty to care for the poor, training and recruiting volunteers, identifying community needs, gathering needed resources for the project, and working with chiefs and church leaders of other faiths in implementing the project. The third section is an evaluation of the project which is both formative and summative.

Section 1: Three Key Ministry Areas

This study recommends the implementation of three key ministry areas: education, health care, and economic empowerment. These ministry areas will be implemented in three phases (see Table 1) by 60 volunteers (Adventist women and Adventist youth [AWY]) from the Kawale, Area 25, and Likuni churches, who will in

turn lead out in empowering other women and youth in the community. The implementation plan first gives an overview of the whole implementation process which is later followed with a detailed phase implementation plan (Table 1).

Implementation Through Education

The study recommends:

1. Providing school supplies/materials to schools and needy students in the area. These materials will include pencils, notebooks, desks, school uniforms, sports equipment, and many more.

2. Introducing adult literacy classes. Those who do not know how to read or write will be encouraged to join free adult literacy classes that will be offered. Students will learn reading and writing skills. These skills will enable them to run small businesses with little outside help. Adult literacy classes will be designed to meet the student's schedules.

3. Organizing education fairs. This will be an opportunity for the church to display to the community its educational plans, such as teacher appreciation, student appreciation, and adult literacy programs. The pastor will do two things to kick start the week during the worship service on Sabbath morning. He will (a) recognize teachers in the schools surrounding the church by pointing out their importance in the community. The pastor may give awards to teachers as incentives to make them know that they are valued and encourage them to continue to work hard with dedication, and (b) recognize those students who have done well and encourage them by giving them some incentives that would inspire them to work hard and excel in their studies. For those who have not

done so well, he will encourage them not to give up but continue to work hard until they succeed.

4. Sponsor 15 needy, qualified women and youth to attend universities and colleges in the country. This will be a way of empowering and equipping them to live a productive life in the community. This may be another way of preparing them for leadership responsibilities in the community.

Implementation Through Healthcare

This study recommends that healthcare programs need to emphasize campaigns against the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, as well as for the development of emergency response skills and provision of health care equipment to the community. The early missionary model of healthcare was the treatment of diseases. That is why the need of opening up dispensaries (places where people would get medicines to treat different kinds of ailments) is stressed. But this study recommends equipping people with knowledge and skills to prevent diseases. Here is a step-by-step implementation through healthcare.

1. Promote campaigns against the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases by promoting good nutrition, hygiene skills, and vaccinations and immunizations in the community.

2. Mobilize the church to gather healthcare supplies (mosquito nets, gloves, food, etc.) to be distributed to people who are needy, have family members with prolonged sickness, and/or have young children.

3. Deploy volunteers into the community block by block to teach people principles of health such as nutrition, hygiene skills, etc.
4. Equip members with emergency response skills such as first-aid and CPR.
5. Introduce two community ambulances to ease transportation problems during disasters, sudden sicknesses, and emergencies. In Malawi many people die because of failure to access medical help on time due to lack of reliable and efficient transportation to hospitals or health centers.

Implementation Through Economic Empowerment

This study recommends that the church needs to take deliberate effort to ensure that its members are economically sound. Church leaders often carry out visitations to check on the spiritual condition of their members, but they ignore the economic condition. Why not address both? The Church needs to check the economic progress of its own flock. In holistic empowerment the economic state of church members is as important as the spiritual state because human beings are interconnected. Here is a step-by-step implementation through economic empowerment:

1. Promote a spirit of hard work. The church needs to denounce indolence in any form. Those who work hard need to be congratulated visibly so that they continue to set a good example to the community
2. Promote a spirit of innovation—to find economic empowerment methods that work.

3. Organize church members as well as community members into small groups in order to equip them with business, trade and marketing skills to help them run small businesses.

4. Explore economic empowerment opportunities that exist in the area so that church members and as community members may take advantage of them

The above is an overall picture of the implementation of three key ministry areas. This project will be implemented in three phases. The first phase is the most crucial because it lays the foundation upon which phases 2 and 3 are built. Each phase is distinct yet interconnected. The resources that are needed and approximate cost have been outlined (see Table 1). The implementation process has Trainer of Others (TOs) which are responsible for all project training needs and Adventist women and youth who are responsible for ground operation. Adventist Women and Youth (AWY) are divided into implementation teams (see Appendix 2) falling under education, healthcare, and economic empowerment ministries. Table 1 shows a detailed phase-by-phase implementation, persons responsible for implementation, needed resources and approximate cost of the needed resources.

Table 1

*Phase 1 Implementation***Phase 1**

Ministry Area	Implementation Item	Person(s) responsible for implementation*	Resources needed, approximate cost
Education	a. To provide school supplies/ materials to needy students in the area. These supplies/materials would be in the form of pencils, note books, desks, school uniforms, sports equipment and many more.	Education supplies team	3000 pencils, 3000 note books, 3000 ball points, 300 school uniforms, 30 soccer balls, 30 net balls, 10 volley ball, 3 volley ball nets etc. Cost = \$12,000.00
	b. To introduce adult literacy classes; those who do not know how to read or write will be encouraged to join free adult literacy classes that will be offered. Students will learn skills of reading and writing. These skills may benefit them whenever they engage in small businesses. Adult literacy classes will be designed to meet student's schedules.	Adult literacy team	Text books, chalk, chalk board, workshops and seminars Cost = \$900
Health Care	a. Promote campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS and disease by promoting good nutrition, hygiene skills and vaccination and immunization campaigns in the community.	HIV/AIDS and disease prevention teams	workshops and seminars Cost = \$900
	b. Mobilize the church to donate health care supplies (mosquito nets, gloves, food etc.) to be distributed to people who are needy, have family members with prolonged sickness and have young children.	Health supplies team	Books, note books, ball points, pencils Mosquito nets, disposable gloves, blood pressures machines, scale, etc. Cost = \$6300

Table 1 Cont'd.

Economic Empowerment	a. Promote a spirit of hard work in the church and community. The church needs to denounce laziness in any form. Those who work hard need to be congratulated visibly so that they continue to be motivated and \exert a good example to the community.	Self-support team	Seminars and workshops Cost = \$900
	b. Promote a spirit of innovation - to find economic empowerment methods that meet the needs of the people.	Innovation team	Seminars and workshops Cost is \$900

Phase 2

Ministry Area	Implementation Item	Person responsible for implementation	Needed resource, approximate cost
Education	a. To organize education fair. This will be an opportunity for the church to display to the community its educational plans	Education fair team	Chairs, PA system, pavilions, etc. Cost = \$1700
	b. To organize teacher appreciation, student appreciation and adult literacy programs days.	Teacher, and student appreciation teams	Seminars and workshops Cost = \$900
Healthcare	a. Deploy volunteers into the community block-by-block to teach people principles of health such as nutrition, hygiene skills, etc.	HIV/AIDS and disease prevention teams	Seminars and workshops Cost = \$900
	b. Equip members with emergency response skills such as first-aid and CPR.	Emergency response teams	Seminars and workshops Cost = \$900
Economic empowerment	Organize church members as well as community members into small groups so as to equip them with business, trade, and marketing skills to help them run small businesses.	Economic opportunities and investment teams	Seminars and workshops Cost = \$900

Table 1 Cont'd.

Phase 3

Ministry Area	Implementation Item	Person Responsible for implementation	Needed resources, approximate cost
Education	Sponsor 15 needy qualified women and youth to universities and colleges in the country	Sponsorship team	Scholarship funds to sponsor 15 students Cost = \$40,500
Healthcare	Introduce two community ambulances to ease transportation problems during disasters, sudden sicknesses and emergencies.	Emergency response team	2 Ambulances Cost = \$30,000 Seminars/workshops Cost = \$900
Economic empowerment	Explore economic empowerments opportunities that exist in the area so that church members and community members may take advantage of them.	Economic opportunities and investment teams	Seminars and workshops Cost = \$900

*See Appendix 2: Job Description of Volunteers, for a description of each of the teams listed in this column.

Section 2: Further Implementation Steps

Inspire Leaders and Members to act on Their God-Given
Duty to Care for the Poor

This project will have a management team composed of 13 professionals—four educational professionals, four health professionals, four economic empowerment professionals and 1 community organizational professional whose job will be the general operation of the project. The team will work closely with TOs and AWY volunteers.

The project seeks to motivate church members to get involved and get united in the fight against poverty in their communities by developing a dedicated church leadership team that fears God and appreciates its Christian obligation to alleviate poverty in its community. This may be initiated by organizing a weekend revival seminar for church leaders which will be followed by a week of revival for the entire church. The focus will be to sensitize the church to recognize that ministering to the needs of the poor,

regardless of what their religious affiliation, gender or class is. Their God-given responsibility cannot be overlooked; each member has a part to play. The OT as well as the NT show that God has a high regard for ministry to his poor people (see Chapter 2 for more details). While some people may think that the church should provide poor people with the things they need (food, clothes, and shelter), which is good, these seminars will teach the advisability of empowering people so they are able to find the things they need on their own. This approach restores dignity in the people that the church serves. The message of this revival week will be based on biblical passages such as Isa 58:6-11, Jer 22:13-16 and Luke 4:18, 19. These are some of the passages that form a biblical foundation for the church's obligation to take care of poor people.

Recruit and Train Volunteers

This project needs many volunteers for it to be smoothly implemented, but it will initially start with 73 volunteers. These volunteers will be divided into three groups: (a) management team (MT), 13 members, responsible for management issues, (b) trainer of others (TO), 12 members, responsible for training issues, and (c) Adventist Women and Youth (AWY), 60 members, responsible for ground operation. The first two groups will strictly be composed of professionals: nurses, teachers, medical assistants, health educators, medical doctors, community organizers, and bankers (see Table 2).

Table 2

Trainer of Others (TOs)

Ministry Area	Volunteer type	No. of TOs
Education	Teachers, city officials, community organizers	4
Healthcare	Doctors, nurses, medical assistants, community organizers	4
Economic empowerments	Bankers, mechanics, community organizers,	4

The second group of volunteers, 60 AWY, will come from the Kawale, Likuni, and Area 25 churches. For evaluation purposes the project will keep careful records of the activities of AWY and the whole progress of the project. These records, together with a record of random interviews with AWYs to assess the impact of the project on their lives, will establish baseline data which will later be used for summative evaluation. Adventist Women and Youth volunteers will undergo a thorough training by TOs on how they are going to empower women and youth in the community.

During training sessions city assembly officials will be invited to speak to volunteers to offer them guidelines on how to work in the city and train volunteers to have a basic understanding of how city government operates so that they will be timely in seeking help from the city if needed. It is important to establish a cordial relationship with the city assembly before, during, and after the project because city officials may have access to many tools which they may not be using, such as projectors, mobile black boards, papers, and in some cases, cars for transport; these may be donated or lent to us because we will be doing good work that will benefit city residents. If security concerns

or any other concern in the area that we are working in arise, it will be easy for them to support or defend us. It is the city officials that may give guidance as on how to go about fundraising or gathering materials locally for community programs. In addition, this may be an opportunity for these officials to become acquainted with what the ADVENTIST church is contributing to the community in the city.

The basis of AWY volunteer training is love for God and love for fellow human beings. All volunteers will be given a written job description which will outline the activities that they will do in the community (see appendix 2). Adventist Women and Youth volunteers will be equipped with materials (pens, notebooks, etc.) to help them record events as they happen. They will be encouraged to be learners, always observing and jotting down complex situations that may need special study or intervention.

Adventist Women and Youth volunteers will learn simple clues of mobilizing the community for action, such as making friends in the community. One of the most effective ways of developing friendships is to make yourself available in times of need, such as funerals, weddings, anniversaries, etc. Each volunteer will be encouraged to develop such friendships. The method of training volunteers will be comprised of class work and field (practical) work. It is after successful completion of the scheduled training that they will be able to be deployed into the community.

Identify Community Needs

Although this study has already unveiled most of community needs in the area, yet it will still be necessary for AWY volunteers to visit the area that they are going to

work on so that they can get acquainted with people and their needs so that they are able to position themselves to meet specific needs of the community.

Gather Needed Resources to Implement the Project

This project will need many resources for it to run smoothly. These resources will be solicited from church members, Central Malawi Conference (CMC), Malawi Union (MU), ADRA Malawi, community, city assembly, and other well-wishers (see Table 3). In addition to the above methods of funding, a funding proposal has been written (see Appendix 2) to be submitted to ADRA. These needed resources have been arranged or grouped under various ministries (see Table 3, the first column is ministry area, the second column is needed resources and the third column is provider of the needed items). For quantities of needed resources and approximate cost please refer to Table 3

Table 3

Ministry Needs

Ministry Area	Needed Resources	Provider
Education	Notebooks, books, ball points, pencils, chalk, chalkboards, sports equipment such as balls (soccer, volleyball, net balls) uniforms, chairs, desks, etc.	Church members, Community, City Assembly CMC, MU, ADRA, etc.
Health Care	Mosquito nets, disposable gloves, blood pressures machines, scales, ambulances	Church members, Community, City Assembly CMC, MU, ADRA, etc.

Table 3 Cont'd.

Economic empowerment	Books, note books, ball points, pencils	Church members, Community, City Assembly CMC, MU, ADRA, etc.
General Project Management	Funds, 3 laptops, 3 projectors, 1 copy printer, 3 Public address systems, markers, vehicles, 100 chairs, etc.	Church members, Community, City Assembly CMC, MU, ADRA, etc.

Work With Chiefs and Church Leaders of Other Faiths in Implementing the Project

Adventist Women and Youth volunteers will be trained to work with chiefs and church leaders of other faiths in the community. They will need to spend time with them, explaining the benefits of this project to them. Adventist Women and Youth volunteers will invite them to attend the launching ceremony; they may ask them to do some simple tasks like offer a prayer during the launching service. It is important to inform and update these leaders on the progress of the project because they are a people with authority and influence in the community. Culturally if you approach them you acknowledge their leadership and importance. A holistic ministry project like this one does not necessarily need the participation of only Adventists members; it requires the participation of all people. Chiefs and church leaders of other faiths may be an essential link to the community when it comes to implementing a holistic ministry. If they are not involved it is easy for them to discourage members from the community from participating in the project.

Section 3: Evaluation Plan

Project evaluation will consist of two different evaluative strategies—formative and summative. Formative evaluation is primarily qualitative in nature. The formative evaluation will be conducted through interviews and open-ended questionnaires.

Volunteers will be asked about the day-to-day operation of the project, the topics covered in the volunteer training program, the attractiveness of the training materials, and other questions to provide feedback for the ongoing improvement of the operation of the project. Evaluation sessions will be conducted to meet regularly (quarterly), with volunteers sharing their findings from the formative evaluation effort. Periodic reports will be prepared that identify the major findings of the formative evaluation and how they have been used to improve project operation.

Summative Evaluation—primarily quantitative in nature, the summative evaluation will begin with the establishment of baseline data at the beginning of the project (using a random sample of women and youth to assess their improvements) and then be conducted at six-month intervals (just prior to each group of volunteers completing their first half of project service). Data for the summative evaluation will focus on the ministry areas of education, healthcare and economic empowerment.

This chapter has attempted to outline recommendations for implementing the methodology of Chapter 4. Three main sections have been discussed: the first section is implementation of three key ministry areas—education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. The second section is further implementation steps, which covered inspiring leaders and members to act on their God-given duty to care for the poor,

training and recruiting volunteers, identifying community needs, gathering needed resources for the project, and learning how to work with the chiefs and church leaders of other faiths in implementing the project. The third section is evaluation of the project, which is both formative and summative. If the above implementation steps have been followed as described in this chapter, it is the hope of this project that communities in Lilongwe will be empowered and transformed. The pangs of poverty will be loosened and once again hapless people will find a reason to hope again.

Project Summary and Conclusions

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the Sub-Saharan African region with almost half of the population below the poverty line. There is no city, district, or region that is not affected by poverty. In order for people to alleviate poverty in their homes many migrate to cities to find jobs which can enable them to sustain their families. However, the economic gleam of hope in the cities turns into a nightmare because there are few jobs. The influxes of people to cities that do not have enough jobs for everyone have caused overcrowding and have made poverty become worse.

In this situation the church cannot just stand by and hope that things will automatically get better. This study has suggested that the church can play a role in fighting poverty in its community by empowering and mobilizing its members to minister to the needs of its community in a holistic mission strategy. This project has attempted to develop a strategy that would mobilize Adventist church members to enable them to mobilize their communities to address community based challenges such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, diseases, and hunger.

Developing such a holistic strategy that empowers church members to empower its community requires a firm theological foundation. The Bible has many guidelines on how a church can empower and mobilize its community to fight poverty (see Chapter 2).

To recap, let us look at two OT examples:

1. The exodus; according to Exod 3:7, 8, God moved first to deliver his people from slavery in Egypt. The Lord said,

I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

The process of liberating the children of Israel from the Egyptian bondage started with God. It is he who chose Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land. God called out Moses as a leader. He accepted the call but he did not act alone; he and the elders went together to stand before Pharaoh.

2. On caring for the poor; according to Deuteronomy 15:7 God said, “If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need.” On the same subject, according to Isaiah 58:7-9, the Bible says that,

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.”

Both examples show that the process of liberation from slavery or poverty originates with God. Human beings merely respond to God's call. Thus the church's approach to empower and mobilize church members to fight against poverty in the communities in Malawi need to start with God. The focal point in the fight against poverty is God. It is He who uniquely qualifies the church to lead out in poverty alleviation in the community. The most compelling theological reason for the church to get involved in working for the poor is that you work on behalf of God to alleviate the suffering of his poor people. In addition to this any person who gets involved in working to uplift the lives of poor people gets a blessing.

In the NT there were neither conquest wars nor building projects, but community mobilization took place. It revolved around the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not commission one individual to preach the gospel to the entire world, but a group of believers (see Matt 28:18 -20). This gospel was not just reading the scripture but living the scripture. According to Acts 2:42-45, the Bible says that

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

The gospel was holistic, and as a result it was transformative. In the NT the church mobilized people by focusing its attention on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, yet the needs of poor people were met. This may be a lesson for the church in our time; let the church put the ministry of helping poor people in the grand framework of proclaiming Jesus Christ's love for the perishing world.

Probably the most outstanding theological discovery in this study is that empowering and mobilizing church members to fight poverty in the community requires God to be at the center of the movement. It was God who moved first to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage. It was God who moved the hearts of people to give generously to the construction projects of the tabernacle in the wilderness, the temple in the time of Solomon, and the rebuilding of the temple in the time of Ezra. It was God who moved the hearts of the people to respond willingly to God's call. In the NT it was the Holy Spirit that empowered people to preach a holistic gospel. Cooperation between divinity and humanity is an aspect of holistic community mobilization that runs through both the OT and NT. Similarly, Adventist churches need to make God the center of community mobilization and empowerment. Unless God is at the center of church poverty alleviation programs, all their effort is in vain.

The literature reviewed in this study shows that the poverty level in Malawi is too high to sustain any meaningful development, and its causes are many. Some of the causes include geographical location of the country, government policies, donor policies, cultural practices, corruption, population explosion, environmental degradation, lack of basic services such as healthcare, education, and economic empowerment, etc. The problem of poverty is complex; thus, many see that there is no single solution which would alleviate it. Poverty alleviation in Malawi calls for a multi-approach solution which includes collaboration of all stakeholders. These stakeholders have been fully identified, and described in Chapters 3 and 4. One of the dormant forces in the fight against poverty is the church, which has tremendous resources and. According to the

literature that has been reviewed, the church has a role in the fight against poverty. This study has suggested that the church needs to get involved to fight poverty. It cannot stand by and watch families get tormented by poverty. It must act!

The ADVENTIST Church in Malawi has done a commendable job. It has mobilized and empowered the church to preach the gospel to its constituency, but this work is one-sided. It has only emphasized the spiritual empowerment of members, ignoring education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. This approach is not holistic. This study suggests that the mobilization and empowerment of believers needs to be done in a holistic way. Thus the methodology of empowering the church so that it effectively mobilizes its members to preach a holistic gospel must include the fight against poverty. Such an approach will include an understanding of the role of culture, evangelism, education, healthcare and economic empowerment ministries. The methodology that has been presented in this study suggests that it is the needs of the community that must shape the methods, and these methods do not need to be reactive, but rather preventive, and must be delivered within the cultural framework through education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. Just as the church conducts evangelistic campaigns to gain new members, the church also needs to put the same amount of energy into education, healthcare, and economic empowerment, so that church and community members may experience holistic empowerment.

The church may be the most significant organization to alleviate poverty because it has a divine mandate to fight poverty in the community. The church is motivated by love for God and love for humanity in performing its duties. Its volunteers may be easily

empowered to meet the needs of the poor. These volunteers meet weekly. This gives them more time to implement and evaluate its programs and adjust accordingly.

The study recommends that the church needs to implement a holistic ministry, which has three key ministry areas—education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. These ministry areas present probably the most transformative approach to empower the church and its community. A step-by-step implementation of the key ministry areas has been developed above. It is the hope of this project that when it is fully implemented the lives of women and youth will be transformed, thus making the lives of the people in Lilongwe better than how it was previously. It is the hope of this study that its approach may inspire many people who will read and try to adopt the recommendations of this study.

Further Recommendations

Due to the limitation of time and money I did not cover the topics outlined below.

I therefore recommend that further study be carried out to find:

1. The impact of HIV/AIDS on the poor communities of Lilongwe
2. The impact of education on poverty reduction in the community
3. Economic empowerment in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

APPENDIX 1

FIGURES

Department	Sector
Administration	Local governance and city Management
Finance	Finance management
Internal audit	Financial accountability
Health and social service	Health and social service delivery
Public works	Infrastructure provision
Agriculture, environmental affairs and natural resources	Public and open spaces and general environmental protection
Planning and development	Urban planning, development, control, housing, & land administration services
Commerce & development	City marketing & managing city markets, bus stations
Education and Youth	Education, service, delivery & youth development. & Managing sports infrastructure

Figure 4. Lilongwe City Assembly Departments

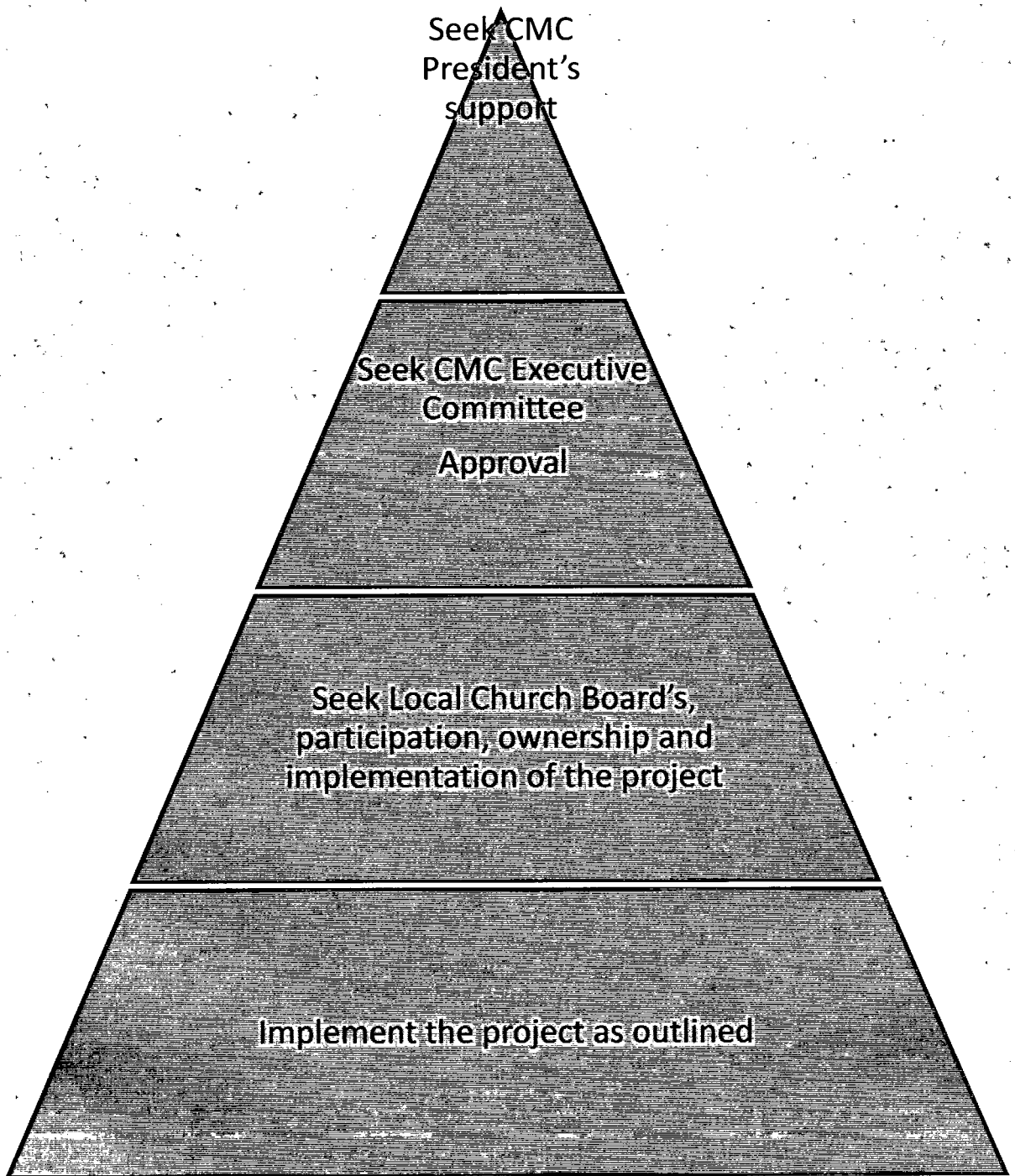


Figure 5. Implementation Pyramid

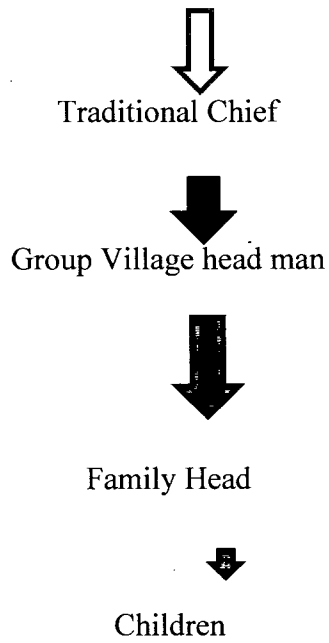


Figure 6. Cultural Level of Empowerment

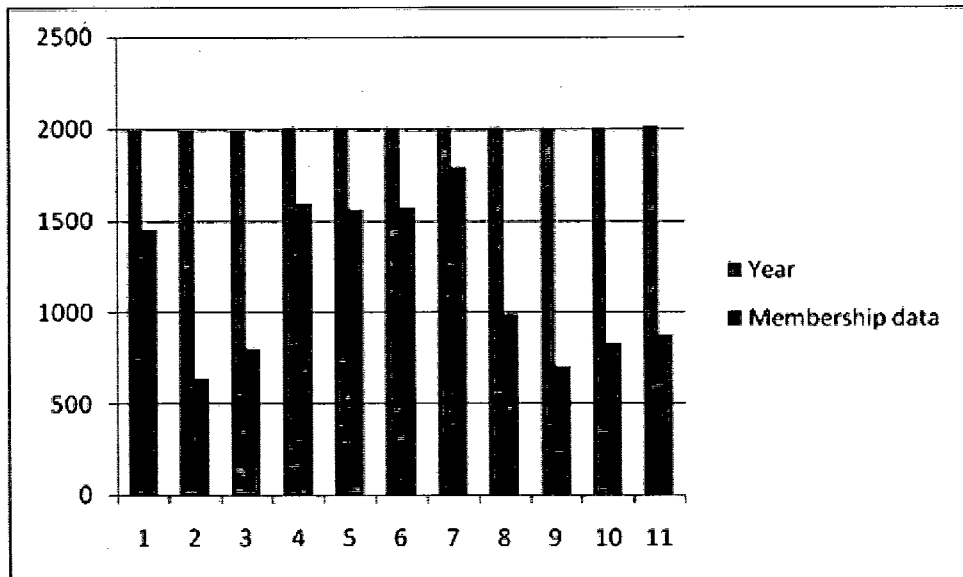


Figure 7. Area 25 Church Membership

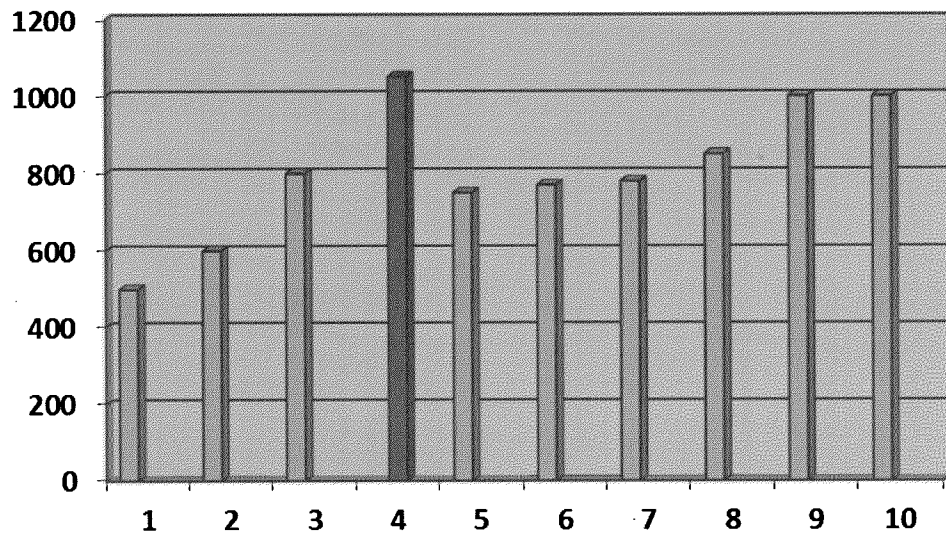


Figure 8. Kawale ADVENTIST Church Membership

APPENDIX 2

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (Manual)

Job Description of Volunteers

Lilongwe Community Empowerment Ministry Groups

Education Ministry Group

This ministry group will have 6 teams composed of 3 members in each team. At least one member will be a teacher or an educational professional.

- a) Adult Literacy Team – Will be responsible for developing curriculum for adult literacy ministry to help students read and write up to an 8th grade level. It will also recruit students. There will be one class session to begin with. This class will take place in the afternoon. Should there be many students, this team may consider adding more classes as needed.
- b) School supplies team - This team will solicit school supplies such as pens, pencils, notebooks, sports equipment, etc. This team will develop methods of identifying needy schools or students and determine what supplies/items that are needed in those schools.
- c) Teacher appreciation team - The goal of this team is to develop methods of appreciating teachers so that they continue to work with love and dedication to students.
- d) Student Appreciation Team - This ministry will develop ways of engaging students to work hard in their studies and come up with incentives for rewarding hard work.

- e) Scholarship team - This team will be responsible for raising scholarship money and selecting qualified students for college education.
- f) Education fair team - This team will be responsible for organizing an education fair.

Health Care Ministry Group

This group will be composed of 6 teams of 3 members each. Each team will have at least one nurse or health professional.

- a) HIV/AIDS prevention team - This team will promote HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns. This will be done through public meetings and house-to-house methods.
- b) Disease prevention team - This team will put its effort into preventing diseases through the eight holistic principles of chapter 4 and other prevention methods.
- c) Vaccination/immunization team - The aim of this team is to encourage vaccination and immunization in the community.
- d) Nutrition team - This team will work hard to teach people to eat healthy foods. It will teach people how to find and prepare food.
- e) Health supplies team - This team will work to gather health supplies for the project and distribute them to people in the community as needed.
- f) Emergency response team - Training people on how to respond in times of disasters and emergencies.

Economic empowerment Group

This ministry group will be composed of 5 teams of 3 members each. One member in each team must be an accountant or business professional.

- a) Self-support team - The goal of this team will be to empower people to strive for self-support in their daily operation of their families.
- b) Skills Training Team – This team will be responsible for training women and youth to acquire skills that will help them become economically independent.
- c) Innovation team - This team will look at new ways and ideas of doing things differently. The goal is to find out new methods of economic empowerment that meet the needs of people based on the available resources.
- d) Economic opportunities team - This team will be the eyes and ears of the project. Their job is to be on the outlook to identify places where economic opportunities are. They will look at new companies in the areas that are hiring and prompt people to apply for jobs in those companies.
- e) Investment team - This will mostly deal with how people can invest money for their families. This will deal with retirement, banking and other means.

Recruitment Course Outline

General qualifications of volunteers

- a. Christian Maturity – Love for God and man
- b. Be able to write fluently in English
- c. Have positive outlook on life
- d. Be willing to visit homes in the community

Lesson outline

1. Understanding God's Community
2. Causes of poverty
3. Impact of poverty on city families
4. Solutions to poverty
5. Empowering AWY
6. How to identify poor families
7. Working with city officials
8. Working with Chiefs and pastors of non-Adventist Churches

According to the Africa Development Bank Group (2011),

The country is on track to meeting the MDG (Millennium development Goals) on child mortality and has managed to reverse the trend on HIV/AIDS. However, Malawi is off track on three MDGs namely universal primary education, maternal health and gender equality and women empowerment. Net primary school enrollment rate in 2008 stood at 91%. Maternal mortality remains high at 807 per 100 000 in 2008 from 984 in 2005(Annex 4). An HDI value of 0.385 in 2010 (Figure 5) gives Malawi a rank of 153 among 169 countries.

Vulnerable groups need to be involved in the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS, diseases and hunger. These groups know what it is to be poor and would appreciate any efforts to make them part of the solution.

Background Information

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, with over half of the population living below the poverty line (Fekete, et al., 2007). Although ADRA is doing things in Malawi to address hunger, there is a need for local congregations to do something at a local level to address the ills of society - HIV/AIDS, diseases and pandemics which are rampant (Pembrey, 2010b). Lilongwe is located in the central region of the country and is the capital city of Malawi. Lilongwe is the headquarters of many aid agencies, but the worst symptoms of poverty exist within the city limits. The same problems facing the country are replicated there and are worse, since people from all parts of the country migrate to this city (Kemp, et al., 2007). However, the Seventh-day Adventist churches in this area are not addressing these needs in a holistic mission strategy.

Project Details

Goals and Objectives

There are three main goals for the LHCMEP - to empower women and youth through education, to empower women and youth through healthcare and to empower women and youth through economic empowerment. Each of the above goals has specific objectives within each of the goals. This project will empower the women and youth of Lilongwe¹.

Education

Goal #1 - to empower women and youth through the provision of education.

Objective #1.1 - to provide school supplies to needy students in community schools.

Objective #1.2 - to sponsor women and youth to get college or university education.

Objective #1.3 - to provide adult literacy classes to those who do not know how to read or write.

Healthcare

Goal #2 - to empower women and youth through healthcare.

Objective #2.1 - to carry out community health education in order to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and diseases.

Objective #2.2 - to provide health supplies such as mosquito nets and gloves to the community.

Objective #2.3 - to carry out and create awareness of immunization and vaccination campaigns in the community.

Objective #2.4 - to establish emergency response skills such as first aid and CPR and introduce community ambulance services.

Economic empowerment

Goal #3 - to economically empower women and youth through the following objectives:

Objective # 3.1 - to provide entrepreneurship training.

Objective # 3.2 - to connect women and youth to loan-granting organizations so that they get small loans to start up businesses.

Objective # 3.3 - to provide vocational training such as tailoring, tinsmith, bakery, carpentry, etc.

Objective # 3.4 to open domestic, regional and international trade for women and youth.

Methods

The primary methods for achieving the above goals and objectives of the project are:

- The creation of LHMEP, which will become a focal point for providing information, education and training for women and youth through workshops and seminars.
- The development of a recruitment/training program and supervised practicum for women and youth volunteers that will be launched as a pilot project in three churches - Kawale, Area 25 and Likuni.
- Documentation/dissemination plan will be developed by MT and TOs to guarantee the systematic collection of information about the operation of the project.

- Leadership: the project intends to run periodic leadership training sessions in various aspects to help women and youth succeed in their various vocations.

Project Administration

The project will run on a volunteer basis. There will be no salaried staff. The author of the proposal will work with ADRA to provide the technicalities of running this project. He will be on a stipend of \$500 per month.

Available Resources

1. The project seeks to use one of the rooms at the Central Malawi Conference headquarters as its office.
2. Church members will be a source of manpower

Needed Resources

1. Technical support (stipend and other administrative cost) - \$12,000
2. One hundred (100) Chairs and tables for a large classroom/community meeting room, chalkboard/dry board, desktop computer, drafting table - \$2950.
3. Supplies - stationary, pencils, chalk, duplicating supplies, and materials preparation -\$1000.
4. Video recorder and television monitor (for recording project activities, documenting change, etc.) - \$2000.
5. Large printer (for preparation of informational educational materials) - \$1300.
6. Voice recorder (for recording interviews, dictating reports, etc.) - \$200
7. Public address system for outdoor meetings - \$3500.

8. Generators for backup power - \$1800
9. Projectors - \$1800
10. Lamps - \$350
11. 3 laptop computers/monitor/printer (for general project support) - \$3500
12. Health supplies - \$15000
13. School supplies (exercise books, textbooks, pencils, dusters, chalkboard) - \$12000
14. Seminars - \$3600
15. Large tent for outdoor meetings

Budget

Phase 1 - Development of LHCMEP, which includes the training of the first group of AWYs. In as much as a panoramic view of the implementation of the project has been presented, the budget submitted below is only for phase 1. After the successful implementation of phase 1, then the funding request for phase 2 will be presented.

1. Seminars	03600.00
2. School supplies	12000.00
3. Health supplies	15000.00
4. Advertising	01800.00
5. Evaluation	02500.00
6. Transportation	04500.00
7. Needed resources	20400.00
8. Custom/handling	15000.00
9. Miscellaneous	03000.00

Phase 1 Total cost = \$77800.00

Evaluation Plan

Project evaluation will be the responsibility of the Project Evaluator and consist of two different evaluative strategies - formative and summative. Formative Evaluation - Primarily qualitative in nature, the formative evaluation will be conducted through interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Women and youth volunteers will be asked about the day-to-day operation of the project, the topics covered in the volunteer training program, the attractiveness of the training materials and other questions to provide feedback for the ongoing improvement of the operation of the project. The Project Evaluator will meet regularly with TOs and AWY volunteers to share findings from the formative evaluation effort. Periodic reports will be prepared that identify the major findings of the formative evaluation and how they have been used to improve project operation.

Summative Evaluation - Primarily quantitative in nature, the summative evaluation will begin with the establishment of baseline data at the beginning of the project (using a random sample of AWY volunteers to assess their improvements) and then be conducted at 6 month intervals (just prior to each group of volunteers completing first half of their project service).

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