

**A Critique of Discrimination on the Basis of Poverty in the
Epistle of James: A Case study of the Church of the Brethren
Gavva Area**

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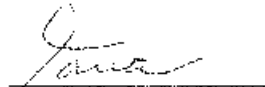
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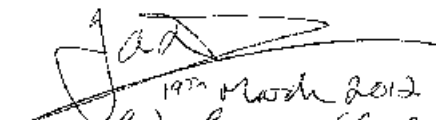
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Abstract

This thesis argues that the Epistle of James provides the resources that will address the problem of discrimination and exploitation in the Church of the Brethren in Gavva area. In order to argue this, I establish that Gavva area is a peasant society. I argue that the Epistle of James addresses the situation of the peasants in the first century Palestine. The peasants were discriminated against and exploited by the wealthy and the elites in James' time. This prompts James to condemn the wealthy landowners and the merchants for their attitude toward the peasants. I examine the Epistle against the model of the moral economy developed by Sahlins and modified by Moxnes in *The Economy of the Kingdom* (1988). They delineate three categories of reciprocity: *generalized*, *balanced* and *negative* reciprocity. These are used as the basis of analysis of James and then extended also to an analysis of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria.

Further empirical study reveals that the poor in Gavva area are living in poverty and are discriminated against because they did not have opportunity to receive early educational training that might have equipped them to hold positions in the church and society. The concepts of poverty of Klaus Nürnberger, Amartya Sen, Bryant Myer and Adarigho-Oriako have also assisted me in evaluating the problem of poverty of Gavva area. Since Gavva area is, like the community to which the Epistle of James is addressed, an analysis of peasants and their moral economy, clientage and patronage, honour and shame are vital to my research. In this respect, the work of James C. Scott in *Domination and Art of Resistance: the Hidden Transcript* (1990) has proved valuable in my analysis of the way the poor in Gavva area are dominated by the wealthy. The poor develop resistance to the church leadership and the wealthy in their "hidden transcript" developed "off stage."

In this research, I discovered that the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria has official documents on discrimination, poverty, the poor and how to take care of them, which should direct their economic policy. But the church leadership does not enforce the teachings in the documents because of contending socio-economic forces and personal interests. I also find that the problem originated in the circumstances of the merger¹ which was complicated by tribalism that is present

¹ I have explained what the merger means in chapter 5.

in the church. The major tribes seem to dominate every aspect of the church leadership and its programmes and institutions. As a possible contribution to addressing the problems of discrimination, exploitation and tribalism in the church, I published Bible study material from my research findings with an emphasis on the Epistle of James. The church will use the Bible study outline to conduct Bible study in all the Local Church Councils (LCC) throughout Nigeria. My hope is that the Bible study will bring the wealthy, the poor, the pastors/church leaders and the different tribes together so that church members will come together as one and pastors and church leaders will no longer give preferential treatment to the wealthy members but see themselves as members of one community and treating one another as equals. The pastors would not give preferential treatment to the wealthy and the wealthy would honour the poor.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the church in Gavva area and all those that are discriminated against in terms of poverty.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

- AJBS*: Africa Journal of Biblical Studies
- ACTS*: Africa Christian Textbooks
- BTS*: Bethany Theological Seminary
- COB*: Church of the Brethren
- CBN*: Church of the Brethren in Nigeria
- DCC*: District Church Council
- DNTT*: Dictionary of New Testament Theology
- EYN*: Ekklesiyar Yan' uwa a Nigeria
- GCC*: General Church Council
- HTS*: Hervomde Teologiese Studies
- ISPCCK*: International Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
- JBT*: Journal of Bible and Theology
- JETS*: Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
- JIAI*: Journal of International African Institute
- JSNT*: Journal for the Study of the New Testament
- JTSA*: Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
- JSNTSS*: Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
- KBC*: Kulp Bible College
- LCC*: Local Church Council
- NC*: No City
- ND*: No Date
- NIV*: New International Version
- NP*: No Publisher
- NTS*: New Testament Studies
- NTSSA*: New Testament Society of South Africa
- RCC*: Regional Church Council
- RDP*: Rural Development Programme

RHP: Rural Health Programme

SORAT: School of Religion and Theology

SPCK: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge

TCNN: Theological College of Northern Nigeria

TEE: Theological Education by Extension

UKZN: University of KwaZulu-Natal

WCC: World Council of Churches

Otherwise, all abbreviations are made in line with P. H. Alexander et al., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.

Chapter One

1.1 General Introduction

This research will study the Epistle of James as it addresses the problems of discrimination and exploitation occurring in his own community against the poor, either by members themselves or in collaboration with the wealthy landowners and the merchants. The problem of discrimination and exploitation is also found among the members of the Church of the Brethren Gavva area in Nigeria, which will serve as a context for the reception of the Epistle of James. I intend to show that while poverty in general has contributed to this problem, the history and development of the Church of the Brethren in Gavva area has exacerbated the situation, even though the text of James plays an important role in the Church of the Brethren polity. Important issues to be considered in this regard are the study of the moral economy of the Epistle of James, the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren and the merger between the Basel Mission and the Church of the Brethren, and the way in which the merger has influenced socio-economic changes in the composition of the church membership. The merger brought discrimination into the church in Gavva area because only a few people from a Basel Mission background have been assisted by the church to attain a good standard of (tertiary) education compared with those that came from the background of the Church of the Brethren. Those that were privileged to acquire education are the ones who hold privileged positions in the church and government in that area. This situation has given rise to discrimination within the Church of the Brethren. The ones that have not been privileged to acquire education are discriminated against because of their lack of opportunity and their poverty.² The structural changes have, perhaps unintentionally, resulted in discrimination in the training of its members since members from a particular background and from certain areas are favoured over others in the church as will be shown in chapters five and six.

Poverty is prevalent in Nigeria and there are many poor people in Nigeria that are discriminated against (as indicated under broader issues to be discussed in 1.4) but the focus of this research is on Gavva area where I live, which is a largely Christian area and where the Church of the Brethren is strong, and yet where the difference can be seen clearly between those in the church that are educated and those that are not. Gavva area is a peasant society, like Galilee in the first

² This is shown in chapter six with the field work report.

century, as many scholars studying the “historical Jesus” today have shown. Painter says “one of the aspects of James that offers some support for the view that the epistle has its context in Judaea and Galilee before the Jewish war is the focus on the exploitation of the poor by the rich...” (1997: 249). I argue that the author of the Epistle of James comes from Galilee and, based on his origin, is aware of the condition of the peasants and of the context of the recipients of the Epistle. The analysis of Galilee, where the peasants were discriminated against, exploited and oppressed, resonates with the situation in my context.

Therefore this research will study the Epistle of James arguing that it addresses issues in its own context which are similar to and will be of help in my own context, particularly since the Epistle of James is a key text in the life of the Church of the Brethren. By using the Epistle of James, I will adapt the model of moral economy of his community as I will explain under the theoretical framework and methodology of this research.

1.2 Research Background

In this research background I will provide a brief history of my church in the Gavva area. This is necessary for understanding the context of this research and how the Epistle of James provides appropriate resources for doing contextual biblical exegesis. The idea of working on discrimination on the basis of poverty came from my personal experience as a pastor of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria.

Understanding the background of the church in Gavva area helps to explain what I intend to do. Gavva area is now located in Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. Gavva area was not initially part of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria but it was part of Basel Mission in Northern Cameroon. The Basel Mission is a Christian missionary society that operates around the world. “Members of the society come from many different Protestant Denominations.”³ Basel Mission theology is based on the teachings of theological Fathers like Martin Luther and John Calvin, and is different from the Brethren understanding, since the Brethren Church is not a Reformed church but an Anabaptist Church in origin.

According to Brick, “The mission was founded as the German Missionary Society in 1815. The mission later changed its name to the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, and finally the Basel

³ www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Basel_Mission. Accessed 14/7/2008

Mission. The mission has worked in Cameroon since 1886”.⁴ One notable feature of the Basel Mission was that it was international and interdenominational from its onset. The establishment of the Basel Mission was part of a general trend in Europe towards the formation of mission societies among Protestants and the deployment of trained missionaries in foreign countries.

In the late 1950s, the Basel Mission had started work in what was then the Northern Cameroons United Nations Trust Territory, in the area of Gavva. The people were eager to hear the word of God. New congregations started to grow. In 1960 the people of the Cameroons voted to decide whether to join the country of Cameroon (newly independent that year from French rule) or Nigeria (newly independent that year from Great Britain). The Northern Cameroons decided to join Nigeria, and Gavva area happened to be part of the Northern Cameroons which joined Nigeria.

The boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria was closed and the newly formed Basel Mission congregations were cut off from their headquarters at Buece, Cameroon. In this situation, the Basel Mission asked the Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria whether it would be willing to accept the congregations in the area of Gavva into its fellowship and to cooperate with the Basel Mission. The Basel Mission started in 1959 in Gavva area and had made converts and planted Churches within a few years. “It has been in fellowship with the Church of the Brethren since 1963”⁵. The Basel Mission and the Church of the Brethren have different theological understandings, though there were great theological differences between the Basel Mission and the Brethren, they worked together. Although today only a few people from a Basel Mission background have been privileged to receive education and training in different fields. Because of the shift in church background, as there was no Church of the Brethren in Gavva area before the merger, discrimination has found its way into the church.⁶

The Basel Mission still closely cooperates with the Church of the Brethren and *Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria* (EYN) in Nigeria” (Schnyder 1992:6), and although Basel Mission sponsors

⁴ Brick, Caroline November 2002. “*Basel Mission Records*“. Mundus: Gateway to Missionary Collections in the United Kingdom. www.brethren.org/baselmission/Nigeria. Accessed 18/ 6/ 2008.

⁵ www.oikoumene.org/.../church-of-the-brethren-in-nigeria-eyn.html. Accessed 14/7/2008.

⁶ I am speaking from personal experience and I have substantiated this in the field research I conducted. The detail is presented in chapter six.

most of the programmes of EYN at the national level those who benefit are mainly from the Church of the Brethren. This is substantiated in chapter six, where I presented the field work research results and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren. Some of the programmes are Theological Education by Extension (TEE), the Literacy Programme and the Rural Development Programme (RDP).

Alexander Mack (born in 1679) was the founder of the Church of the Brethren (COB). He grew up in the Reformed church but later on had problems with the Reformed teachings and seven people withdrew together with him. He formed the COB in 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany. They rebaptized themselves as adults because they did not recognize their baptism as infants. From Germany they moved to Pennsylvania in America because the Reformed Church persecuted them for their new belief. The Great Commission was one of their central teachings. Many years later they sent a missionary to Nigeria by the name of Dr. Stover H. Kulp, who came in 1922 and formed the COB in Nigeria in 1923. “The first Brethren worship service in Nigeria was held on March 17, 1923, by Kulp and Helser under a tamarind tree in the village of Garkida” (Mambula 1998: 76).

In 1973 the church was given autonomy and it took the name Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN) (the Hausa language version of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). As the name implies, the church was founded on the basis of love, oneness, being brethren, the centrality of Jesus Christ, a sense of community as the body of Christ, a bond as the priesthood of all believers, sharing as a family etc. The foundation teachings of the Church are based on the moral economy of the church as a sharing community (*koinonia*). Moral economy⁷ in this case has to do with the social dynamics of rural life which embeds sharing as a social practice of gifting, common property, reciprocity and preferential treatment for the poor within the community or the Church. The Church of the Brethren was originally a peasant based church.⁸ Alexander Mack and his colleagues also came from a peasant background. This means that discrimination, oppression, and exploitation of the poor members are strongly against the teachings of the church.

Since the Gavva area came from a different denominational background into the Brethren background, the shift in denomination has resulted in discrimination and has led to discrepancies

⁷ I have explained what moral economy means under the Research methodology and methods.

⁸ This is substantiated in chapter five where I presented the History of the church.

in status within the same church set up. The church in the area of Gavva has become a minority within the Church of the Brethren. This has affected their status as there is not much recognition given to that area.

There is discrimination against and stigmatization of the poor in the life of the church especially at wedding and naming ceremonies, and meals, and over dress, and positions in the church. When the Nigerian Brethren church was founded in 1923 by Dr. Harry Stover Kulp, most of the members were peasants, depending only on their farm work or agriculture. Since most of them were farmers, they were of the same status, so discrimination on the basis of poverty was not a problem in the church. Subsequently, in the case of some members, there has been a shift in status from peasants to merchants, educated elite or wealthy persons. Some of the members became rich, others were trained and educated by the missionaries. This began happening in the late 1920s when the missionaries established schools and hospitals to train the first Church of the Brethren converts in Nigeria.

Members of the Church of the Brethren from other regions have continued to receive training and education from the church and have moved to work in the Gavva area where they are privileged to hold various positions in the church and government. Some of the people from the Church of the Brethren area have gone into business and trade, and their status has shifted. Others from both Gavva and Church of the Brethren area who lacked education or resources for business or who could not farm due to inflation, have been left in poverty. This group of people depends on the wealthy to hire them to do manual labour. As a result they have been exploited and discriminated against even by the rich or powerful in the church. This has created a serious gap within the Church of the Brethren. Recently the Moderator of the Church of the Brethren, on a visit to the Nigerian church, said:

I found a church faced by tremendous struggle with financial strain, including a large disparity between members who are wealthy and those in poverty. The church also is facing up to the task of overcoming tribalism--EYN includes members from a wide variety of ethnic groups--and issues related to the education and nurture of church leaders.⁹

⁹“COBNewsNewslne”<<http://www.mailto:cobnews%40brethren.org>>05Jun2008 Newslne: *Church of the Brethren News Service* -- June 5, 2008. Accessed 9/6/2008.

Tribalism is another factor linked with poverty. The major tribes¹⁰ in the church tend to be supportive of the ones coming from their tribe.

Because of their poverty, the poor accept any work to keep themselves alive.¹¹ Some of the poor are subsistence farmers but battle to survive and find that their only option is to get themselves hired as labourers on the farms of the wealthy members. The wealthy members either pay them very low wages or sometimes even withhold their wages. Some of the poor who cannot make a living from being hired go into petty trading. Since the poor cannot afford to buy goods for their business, they approach the wealthy members for loans. This definitely increases discrimination within the church. Once the poor are unable to repay the loans due to the failure of business, they have to accept whatever decisions the wealthy make in the church. The expectation is that, as members of the same church, the poor will find help within the church. When they work for their fellow members they do not expect to be exploited or oppressed.

If the poor are unable to find financial help in the church, their only alternative is to seek for assistance outside the church. For this reason they go to the Hausas to obtain financial help. Hausa is the major language spoken in Northern Nigeria. Most of the Hausas are Muslims and they have influenced the Northern part of Nigeria with their language and their way of life to the extent that most of the churches use Hausa as their language of worship even when there is no native Hausa person in the congregation. Most of the Hausas are good business people. “The Hausas can afford to give financial help, but this help comes at a price. If the poor cannot afford to pay back their debt, they are either forced to join the Islamic faith or forced to repay their loans by working on the farms or in the businesses of their creditors, who exploit and oppress them” (Hill 1972:216). The exploitation is not only done by the Hausas that are there but also by those that came to work in the area from the Church of the Brethren. That is done easily because most of the pastors or church leaders that work in the church in Gavva area are not from that area. When the church members are exploited in terms of not being paid their wages by the wealthy, the pastors seem to condone this attitude within the church as they do not confront the wealthy members that exploit the poor. This situation seems to resonate with the situation of the community(ies) to which the Epistle of James was written. James in the first century Palestine did not condone such an attitude by the wealthy to the poor. The details about this are presented in chapter six.

¹⁰I mentioned these tribes in chapter five.

¹¹ See the responses given by the respondents in chapter six where I gave details about this claim.

In order to address this situation I used the Epistle of James as the main text for my research. The Epistle of James addresses problems between the oppressed and oppressors, the poor and the wealthy, the labourers and the land owners. The problem of exploiting the poor was a common phenomenon in first century Palestine, and can be seen also in the Epistle of James. The study of the Epistle of James and of my community is appropriate because the Bible is the authoritative text of my community¹². The Bible (specifically the Epistle of James) provides resources to address the problem of discrimination in my context. In addressing the problem of discrimination and exploitation of the poor in the church, I will allude to the moral economy of James' community. Jesus preached his gospel in a predominantly rural context (as is documented in many studies of the early Jesus movement (e.g. Horsley 1987; Borg 1987; Crossan 1991). However James is writing in a context where urban and rural poverty are prevalent. The Church of the Brethren has congregations in both urban and rural areas because of the migration of some members to urban areas in search of food and money for necessary purchases and tax, as a result of the inability of the poorer section of the rural population to feed themselves because of insufficient land or other means of production. Land is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few who exploit the rural peasants. The Epistle of James is appropriate as it addresses the land owners who oppress the poor in a rural-urban setting. "The Epistle of James has as its central concern a deep sympathy for the poor and persecuted (2:1-9, 5:1-6). It advocates the rights of widows and orphans (1:27) while offering a stern critique of the rich merchants (4:13-17) and rich farmers (5:1-6)" (Painter 1997: 251). This is the centre of my research, as this also happens in the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria as shown below.

1.3 Research Problems and Objectives: Key Questions to be Asked

The incorporation of the Basel Mission into the Church of the Brethren has contributed to the emergence of socio-economic changes in the churches in the Gavva area. These structural changes have perhaps unintentionally resulted in the marginalization of the members who came from a Basel Mission background. Since those that joined COB from Basel Mission were few in number,

¹².Basic Beliefs within the Church of the Brethren. <http://www.cob-net.org/membership.htm>. Accessed on the 10-09-28.

they became a minority within the COB and were not privileged to have training, education, job or business opportunities as were those that were originally members of the COB. The members that were originally part of the Church of the Brethren and who relocated to the Gavva area had the privilege of being educated elite or wealthy persons, though they were also peasants when the church was founded. But those coming from the background of Basel Mission into COB have experienced little shift in status. Only a few of them have had the education to enable them hold positions or have resources to go into any business. Some of them cannot survive from subsistence farming due to inflation, and they are left in poverty. James was fighting against the kind of discrimination that was shown to the peasants who were exploited and oppressed by the rich or the merchants as argued in chapter four. The study of moral economy of James and the Church of the Brethren will be analysed in order to arrive at solutions to the problem of discrimination in Gavva area.

Therefore, the objectives of this research are:

1. To study the Epistle of James against a context of divisions and exploitation within the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. The Epistle of James highlights the problem of discrimination on the basis of wealth and poverty, and the honour and shame associated with financial status. The thesis argues that this situation is analogous to the situation in my church. Understanding the Epistle of James based on the moral economy of his community has the potential to help my area as I am going to link the moral economy of James' community and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren. In its teachings, the Church of the Brethren's moral economy is based on the scriptures, and the scriptures have resources for addressing the situation. When the context of my area is understood through a contextual reading of the Epistle of James, it will go a long way in creating understanding within my area. Therefore, in order to achieve this, the main problem I address is how to understand the Epistle of James in its context and how to contextualize and appropriate it in my area and specifically in my church in order to bring about change.

2. To show the role of the church in, and the implications of, the shift in status of the members: all were local peasants at the time the Church came to Nigeria in 1923, while now the congregations include some members that are wealthy and educated. There is need for me to understand the context of the peasant society of Galilee from where James, the author, originates, and the context

of his recipients who are the urban and rural poor. When this is compared with Gavva area which is also a peasant society comprised of urban and rural local churches I anticipate that there will be a point of appropriation, although I am aware of the two thousand years gap between the peasant society of Galilee and my present area. Also reading the Epistle of James and understanding the context of his community brings understanding to my research work as a person coming from a peasant background.

3. To show that the Church of the Brethren has shifted away from its heritage because of the problems in 1 and 2 above, and I use the text of James as a resource for transformation.

My hope is that this research work will bring understanding and will help to rebuild the church since both areas (Church of the Brethren and Gavva area of Basel Mission) have a common heritage of social justice for the poor and oppressed. To the best of my knowledge, this research has not been carried out by anyone in the Church of the Brethren.

1.4 Research Problems and Objectives: Broader Issues to be Investigated

Studying the issue of poverty, discrimination, oppression and exploitation in the Church of the Brethren cannot be done in isolation. The Church of the Brethren is part of the larger society. The other denominations - such as the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) and the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) - have had a great influence on the life of the Church of the Brethren. The Church of the Brethren has copied many things from these denominations: using clerical dress for the pastors, adopting their church structure or organization, and accepting posts in government and holding positions in traditional councils. Poverty, discrimination, exploitation and oppression are also part of the problem in Northern Nigeria as a whole. My church is predominantly located within Northern Nigeria. The North was highly influenced by Hausa language and culture. They are predominantly Muslim, so that the pockets of Christian people in the North, who are mostly from subordinate peoples, are mostly also outsiders to power and influence in these states. Most of the Hausa people are merchants; through this business they exploit and oppress the local traders or retailers by making them to be in debt (Hill 1972:218). Most of the Hausas also serve as middle-men in business. In serving as middle-men they exploit the poor, or local farmers or peasants. Because of this, they contribute to the peasants living lives of perpetual poverty.

The issue of poverty in the North has to do with the wider Nigerian situation. The exploitation of the nation's oil resources, and the management of oil windfalls, have dominated the progress and decline of Nigeria's economy over the past years, and have significantly influenced development and poverty. The economy is currently characterized by a large rural, mostly agricultural-based, traditional sector, which comprises about two-thirds of the poor, and by a smaller urban capital intensive sector, which has benefited most from the exploitation of the country's resources and from the provision of services that successive governments have provided. "The causes of Nigeria's poverty problem are well known to all Nigerians and to some extent the rest of the enlightened world as well. Nearly 70% of its citizens live in poverty" (Arenburg 2002:8).¹³ Also, the country has had a complex political history. Frequent changes in governments have led to sharp changes in economic and social policies, which have impacted adversely on the population and have worsened income distribution. The level of poverty in Nigeria is devastating, "70% of Nigerians live below the poverty line. Successively prolonged military and civilian corruption, poor policy design/prescription, and implementation have in no small measure contributed to the increase of poverty in Nigeria."¹⁴ Since independence, Nigeria's problem has been lack of good governance. There is corrupt leadership, where power is held by brutal leaders. The state is run like a personal treasury of the leadership. Often, in this kind of situation, the aim is to oppress and subjugate the citizenry, and there is usually little or no hope of realizing a major reduction in poverty. Apart from convincing evidence which suggests that the country belongs to the group of the lower-income countries, the incidence of poverty continues to rise with each passing day. "The causes, not necessarily in order, were colonialism, exploitative capitalism, corruption and the failure of Nigerian politicians who were often the local collaborators of multinational corporations".¹⁵

Poverty in Nigeria is a result of human factors; it is not due to any lack of resources. Nigeria suffers from high levels of poverty and rising inequality in spite of her enormous wealth of human

¹³ Every Nigerian knows that the Country has been blessed with natural resources but yet the poor are not enjoying it.

¹⁴ *Vanguard Nigeria Newspaper* online edition.mht, 06/04/2008.

¹⁵ From a *BBC* Correspondent 's report, broadcast on Saturday 21 July, 2007 at 1130 BST on BBC Radio 4.

and material resources. It is a “catalogue of woes, of lost opportunities, of wasted resources, of failed leadership, and the lamentations of a people desperately seeking relief from the suffocating tyranny of poverty, political oppression and underdevelopment”¹⁶

Religious and ethnic tensions continue to brew in different parts of Nigeria, “erupting into outbreaks of violence and continually leading to a situation of escalating poverty and malnutrition”.¹⁷ In 2006 this crisis was experienced in Maiduguri, my state capital, and in 2009 there was the crisis of “Boko Haram,” an Islamic sect that says western education is bad. Other causes include “economic mismanagement; other explanations have ranged from the continuation of ethno-regional politics by military means to the personal ambitions of officers”.¹⁸

Poverty without doubt is prevalent in Nigeria. In general, “poverty is an expression with broad implications that goes beyond the limitations of the amount of money or material possessions that the people have”.¹⁹ In a broader perspective the issues of poverty, discrimination, exploitation and oppression in Nigeria contribute to the problem of my research. They affected my research, whether directly or indirectly, since the church members belong to the Nigerian society. The Church of the Brethren could offer resistance to this dominant culture if it genuinely lived out the foundations of its faith i.e. if it implemented the moral economy to which it claims to aspire.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is provided by African Contextual Hermeneutics. In this framework, the African context supplies the horizon within which the text is read, supplies the questions which are addressed to the text and determines what constitutes answers. Following Hans-Georg Gadamer’s (1989) hermeneutics of “conversation”, Jonathan A. Draper’s tri-polar

¹⁶*Guardian Nigeria Newspaper online*, October 01, 2004.

¹⁷ www.ruralpovertyportal.org/regions/africa/nga/index.htm. Accessed 28/5/2008.

¹⁸ http://www.photius.com/countries/nigeria/government/nigeria_government_military_intervention_10020.html. Revised 27-Mar-05. Accessed 28/5/2008.

¹⁹ <http://www.geocities.com/nigeriansinsweden/article2.ctm>. Accessed 28/5/2008.

model of doing contextual Biblical exegesis will be followed: the three poles are “the pole of the biblical text, the pole of the African context and the pole of appropriation”. (2001:152). “We give priority to the context of the reader... we as readers and hearers of the word are predisposed by our own social, economic, political and cultural contexts to read in a certain way” (Draper 2002:16). According to Draper, there is no “objective” or “neutral readings”, but only “interested” and it is hoped also “interesting” readings. The reader either deliberately acknowledges his or her context and its influence on the process of reading, or is condemned to be influenced unaware. Accordingly, this thesis deliberately makes Africa the context and Africans the readers or subjects of the reading process. But the text represents another “subject” with whom the African subject enters a conversation. What emerges is a transformed reader (and a “transformed text”) who has appropriated the experience and understanding brought by the conversation. There is need for “accepting the meaning and implications of the text for myself and my community” (Draper 2001:152).

1.6 Research Methodology and Methods

My research deals with the problem of the poor, poverty and oppression specifically in the Epistle of James and the Church of the Brethren. For this reason, the appropriate methodology to follow appears to be a socio-historical one offering the tools for the critique of discrimination and enabling the socio-historical analysis of the Epistle of James. The authorship and recipients, the moral economy of James’ community and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren will be studied from this perspective as they are vital to my research. The shift in status and the shift in denomination are social distortions that have brought about discrimination. Since the problems are so tied in with context (both regional and church) I used the analytical tool of Stahlins as modified by Halvor Moxnes which he developed in order to understand the concept of the moral economy by categorizing it into generalized reciprocity, balanced reciprocity and negative reciprocity.

I am aware that there are many different theories in use in the field of poverty. In the field of poverty research there are about five theories in use as suggested by Bradshaw, “Poverty based on individual deficiencies, poverty based on cultural belief systems, poverty based on economic, political and social distortions or discrimination, poverty based on geographical disparities and poverty based on interdependencies”(2005:2). Among these theories the one that was relevant for my research context is “poverty based on economic, political and social distortions or

discrimination.” In understanding the issues of poverty deeply, I have studied the concepts of poverty by Klaus Nürnberger (1999), Bryant Meyer (1997) and Sen Amartya (1991).

For the research to be relevant to the Church of the Brethren socio-historical analysis of the Epistle of James will be done. Literary analysis will also be applied in some cases where relevant. If we are able to look at the context of James’ community and relate it to the Church of the Brethren situation, this will go a long way to make the church understand her position. In the use of the moral economy model, I have specifically adapted Stahlins’s study of the moral economy as modified by Halvor Moxnes (1988) in his book, *The Economy of the Kingdom*. The moral economy is an analytical tool in which the economy is seen as embedded in the moral world. In Moxnes’s work, he divided reciprocity into three categories: generalized, which means giving generously without expecting any favour in return; balanced reciprocity: giving to the community but with expectation of favour or honour in return, and negative reciprocity: this only takes but does not give anything in return. This is also practiced by the members of the community and by the outsiders. Within Moxnes’s moral economy, God is seen as the generous giver in which the community is expected to do likewise. God does not have negative reciprocity but the community members and outsiders do. I will use the same categories in my analysis of the Epistle of James in arriving at the moral economy of James’ community and the Church of the Brethren.

In the study of the moral economy of James’ community, I have explained more about these three categories namely: generalized reciprocity, balanced reciprocity and negative reciprocity. General reciprocity means that gifts are given with no expectation of an immediate return of a gift or any return at all. Moxnes says that “This is the solitary extreme. This form of exchange covers transactions that are altruistic; the ideal form is the pure gift” (1988:34). This is what is expected of the wealthy toward the poor. Balanced reciprocity between community members and others is when gifts are given with the explicit expectation of a return gift, but the gifts do not have to be of equivalent value in many cases. This also happens in patron and client relationships. Moxnes says, “This form for exchange attempts to reach near equivalence in goods and services. Within this form of exchange relationships between people can be disrupted if there is a failure to reciprocate for a gift received” (1988:34). Negative reciprocity means that one or more of the people in the community or from outside the community are attempting to exploit the other for individual profits. People that are engaged in negative reciprocity are motivated by personal profits rather than creating interpersonal ties with those that they live together in community or outside the

community. Moxnes adds that “This is the unsocial extreme. It designates attempts to get something for nothing, and the ways to get it may vary from nonviolent to violent” (1988:34).

A similar account shows that the moral economy encompasses rules or laws and feelings regarding the responsibilities and rights of individuals and institutions with respect to others in the community. These rules and feelings go beyond matters of justice and equality to conceptions of the good, for example, regarding needs and the ends of economic activity (Sayer 1995:234). The term “moral economy” has generally been practical to communities in which “there are few or no markets - hence no competition and law of value - and in which economic activity is governed by norms regarding what people’s work responsibilities are, what and how much they are allowed to consume, and who they are responsible for, beholden to and dependent on” (Sayer 1995:234). This model calls for conversation between text and context. Studying the context of James will enable me to consider how his context will enrich my own context. After analyzing the moral economy of James’ community, it will serve as a channel for my analysis of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria with emphasis on Gavva area. This will enable me to avoid imposing my context on James as there is a gap of two thousand years.

Also in following the tripolar theory by using the moral economy of James’ community, I look at my context. In my context, using questionnaires and interviews I did a detailed study of the results of the merger and of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. The responses from the questionnaires distributed to the church members and the church leaders and the interviews gave the relevant context. The questionnaires involved quantitative and qualitative research. The questionnaires I gave out were in two categories; the first questionnaire was distributed in congregations selected for the project, to those church members who could read and write. The participants were selected during Sunday services. The members were given autonomy to decide whether to fill in the questionnaire. I got their personal opinions concerning the issues raised in the questionnaire. The questionnaires were completed after the Sunday service to enable me collect them back. This questionnaire dealt with the life of members within and outside the church in relationship to discrimination, oppression and exploitation. It included their relationship with the church leaders and their expectations of the church leaders. It addressed the relationship between wealthy and poor members. The questionnaire also included the members’ relationship with the non-members, especially surrounding denominations and Muslims, since they are part of the community. The second category of the questionnaire was given to the church leaders and

pastors to complete. This addressed the relationship between church leaders and members, the pastors and the wealthy members, and the pastors and their tribal people.

Each interview I conducted took about thirty minutes and was geared mainly to the church members who cannot read or write, but who are strong members. Their opinions were important to this research work. The structure of the interview was based on the questionnaires given out to members. The interview was recorded using a micro-cassette player and video camera where necessary. This was done with the consent of the interviewees. The opinions of the interviewees were protected against anything that indicted them, since I am the only person that has access to the records, and their identities were protected. In addition, I interviewed four top leaders in the church.

For the questionnaires I selected three congregations: Two congregations were selected in the rural area of Gavva, since most of the members in this area cannot be compared to the ones in the main city in terms of education, wealth or experience; the third was selected from Maiduguri, which is an urban area and consists of well-placed members in the government, private organizations and businesses. From these three congregations I selected a total of fifty respondents all of whom can read and write, to fill in the questionnaires. From these congregations I selected a total of ten people to be interviewed who have knowledge and experience of the Church but who cannot read or write. I asked twenty church ministers within the area to complete the questionnaires as their information was useful to this research. I also interviewed the four top leaders of the Church: the President, Vice President, General Secretary and Secretary to Ministers' Council. This was a good representation of the Church.

This methodology was best for my research because it allowed the context of the research and my church to dialogue with each other. This dialogue led to appropriation for my context. The data collected was analyzed to test my hypothesis. I analyzed the data by classifying and grouping together similar responses, using tables. From the data I draw a table of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren from which it became clear that the teachings of the Church as presented in the church documents do not correspond with what is actually happening in the Church.

1.7 Conclusion

The Epistle of James is a necessary text for this research as it is a main book for addressing the socio-economic commitment of the Church of the Brethren. It is hoped that analysing the context

of the Epistle of James will proffer solutions to the problem of discrimination and exploitation in the Church of the Brethren. In order to achieve this, the moral economy of James' community and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren will be put into dialogue with each other. At the end recommendations will be given which will help the Church to move forward.

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

In chapter one, I will present the general introduction to the research. I will give a short description of the title, the background of my church, the theories and the theoretical framework, the research methodology that I have used for this research. This chapter is the basis of the whole research I have undertaken. This chapter is connected to chapter two where I reviewed literature to establish my arguments.

Chapter two contains the literature review of related works in the area of my research. I will review works on poverty. There are many works written in the field of poverty but most of the scholars have not addressed issues of poverty in the church. They have addressed general perspectives on poverty. In this chapter I will also study poverty as a general concept and how it relates to the Nigerian situation. I will explain in this chapter that there are various approaches to poverty. Poverty does not only depend on material resources or income, but there are other factors that contribute to poverty.

I have reviewed commentaries written on the Epistle of James, the key text for my research. The commentaries have addressed the issues of discrimination, partiality, exploitation of labourers by the wealthy, but none of the commentators has provided a way out. Moreover, they were only concerned with what happened in the time of James. Thus a gap has been created. Using the Epistle of James for my research has given me a biblical way of addressing the poor and the wealthy in the church and my area. My research has complemented the Epistle of James and dialogued with it from the specific African context of my Church. This helped me in understanding the dynamics of what happened in James' time and what happened in Gavva area and the Church of the Brethren. The books that I reviewed on James are different from the commentaries, as these authors used their life experience to describe what happened in the Epistle of James and their context. Although, like my research, it is contextual, these authors have failed to proffer a solution

to the problem of discrimination, partiality and exploitation of the poor by the wealthy. That is where my research attempts to fill in that gap.

Next I will review works on the poor and poverty in the Church of the Brethren. In the course of this research I will engage with the many written works on discrimination, poverty and the poor in the Church of the Brethren. Though these documents are there, discrimination has not ceased in the church. I will show that the members of the church are not even aware of these documents, and that the church leaders do not enforce them because it would affect the personal benefit they derive from the wealthy members of the church. My research is appropriate as it has discovered these documents and proffered the way forward for these documents to be observed by the leadership of the church. In this category, I will study the work of James C. Scott (1990) on *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: The Hidden Transcript*. Scott's work will help me to understand the protest of the peasants towards the wealthy is done offstage. This will enable me to see how the peasants resist domination in my context, while seeming to acquiesce. I will also review works on poverty and the poor by liberation theologians. The works do not address directly the issues of poverty and the poor in my area, but they give me insight of how they addressed their problems in Latin America. Using some of their ideas or their approach will provide me with some understanding of the crisis. Some of the scholars are radical in their approach. This is a strategy that will not work for my area. To address the issue of discrimination and exploitation in the church, one has to use a non-violent approach. This is always helpful in addressing problems in any area. I have reviewed a few works on the prosperity gospel because teaching on prosperity is gradually coming into Gavva area and the Church of the Brethren. Understanding their approach to wealth and poverty will give me insight into how to handle them. This is because the prosperity preachers tend to add to the poverty of people, rather than helping them. This cannot be achieved without looking at the issue of poverty and the poor in Palestine which is done in chapter three.

In chapter three, I will address the issue of poverty and the poor in Palestine. This exercise provides a primary understanding of the usage of the words "poor and poverty." This is necessary because my research is taken from the Epistle of James, who was a Jew from Galilee and Galilee was part of Palestine. Understanding poverty, discrimination and the poor in Palestine gives me the context of James. This shows to me how it is applicable to the Church in Gavva area. I have understood that there is gap between James and my time, but the scriptures always proffer

solutions to different situations. This is connected to chapter four which looks at the Epistle of James which advocates for the poor.

Chapter four is dedicated to the exegesis of the main texts of my research. The texts are James chapters 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6. In doing the exegesis of these texts, I will apply the tripolar theory of doing contextual biblical exegesis as set out by Draper. Draper (2001) presents three poles: distantiation, contextualization and appropriation. In order to achieve this I have adapted the methodological model of the moral economy of Stahlins (1972) as modified by Moxnes (1988) to arrive at the moral economy of James' community. This will help me to study the moral economy of James independently of my own context. This will also enable me to bring out what poverty, the poor, exploitation and discrimination meant to the community members of James. Having understood his context, I will be able to contextualize it in my own community by studying the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, and I will also appropriate it to dialogue with the dynamics in my area. I will argue that James was hard on the wealthy, because he had a heart for the poor as he was influenced by the suffering of his community. The exegesis of the Epistle of James will enable me appropriate to my context as I look at the historical background of my church in chapter five.

In chapter five I will present the background history of the Church of the Brethren and how it came to Nigeria in 1922 through a missionary called Dr. Kulp. I will also show how the Basel Mission came to Gavva area when it was still part of Cameroon. I will show why Gavva area was merged with the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. It was this merger that contributed to the problem in the church. In this chapter, I will also present detailed teachings of the Church of the Brethren on discrimination, exploitation, poverty and the poor. The church has extensive documents on these issues, but it has failed to use them to bring the two areas together as part of one church. The chapter presents the programmes and institutions of the church which have aimed to alleviate poverty and unite the church. Based on my research findings, I will argue that these programmes perpetuate poverty and discrimination instead of proffering solutions since only a section of the church benefits significantly from them. I will show that when these programmes are used in the right manner, they will go a long way to help the church overcome the challenge of discrimination. To arrive at this, chapter six deals with field work which will test the hypothesis argued for.

Chapter six will use fieldwork tools: analysis and interpretation. In this chapter I will also present the chart of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren and an interpretation of it. I conducted field research for about seven months in the area in order to substantiate the claims of this research. I provided questionnaires which were completed by the respondents and interviewed some of the respondents. I have followed the criteria of doing field research, so that no harm was caused to any of the participants. The data has been analyzed using a table for each question, and I have interpreted the data presented in each table. The questionnaires and interviews have addressed diverse issues in the church as relates to poverty, the poor, exploitation, oppression and discrimination. I have also presented the table of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren and its interpretation. This research has opened my eyes to see what is happening in the church, and the way of proffering solutions to help build the church together. The results of the fieldwork will be used for appropriation in chapter seven.

Chapter seven contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations. I will summarize the main work of the thesis and give conclusions. I will also present some recommendations to the church and give insights into further investigation or research to be done.

Chapter Two

2.1 Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature related to my field of research. I did extensive reading in this area and I saw that there were gaps that had not been covered. The gap is that the authors that I reviewed, Martin Dibelius (1976), for instance, did not do their analysis in today's context. They did not consider the context of the reader but stayed with the reconstruction of the historical context of the text. There are other authors that read James and move quickly to appropriation. These are pietistic readers as their names and positions are shown below. They do not ask questions about the context of James. For them, the text has a universal meaning which can be applied to anyone. But every text has its immediate context, as we have already argued. I also reviewed some liberation theologians who dealt with socio-economic aspects of poverty and the poor.

The literature review centres on poverty and the poor in the Church of the Brethren. I have used Brubaker's writing on the position of the Church of the Brethren on poverty and the poor. I have also reviewed works written on the Epistle of James dealing with discrimination and exploitation of the poor. First I have looked at those who did literary analysis of James, which helps to understand the text. The second group deals with the historical context of James; this also helps to understand the Epistle of James and what it means today. The third are those who read James without looking at the context and give the text a quick universal interpretation.

For the concepts of poverty I have used the work of Klaus Nürnberger, Amartya Sen, Bryant Myer and Adarigho-Oriako. I have also reviewed the work of James C. Scott (1990) on *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* and Alicia C. Batten (2008) in her important article, "God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?" The review is followed by commentaries and books written on the Epistle of James with specific emphasis on chapters 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6. The exegesis of the relevant passages in James is done in chapter four, looking at the moral economy of James' community. Next I have covered works on poverty and the poor in general. My intention at this level is to review briefly what the authors have written and give comments at the end of each section indicating where I agree and disagree with their position. The last section is on interpretation of James in liberation theology on oppression, the

poor and poverty. After the review I will present where the gaps are located and how my research is intended to fill the gaps in all the sections.

2.2 Position of the Church of the Brethren on Discrimination, the Poor and Poverty²⁰

In dealing with the position of the Church of the Brethren, I have looked at Brubaker's analysis because it presents the position of the Church of the Brethren regarding the poor and poverty. His presentation reflects the actual happenings in the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. Based on the teachings of the Church of the Brethren, I have compiled a table of the moral economy of the Church which I compared with the moral economy of James' community as shown below. The Church's documents address how the poor and the needy are to be treated in the Church. The documents emphasize equality of the members, so that preferential treatment must not be given to any individual or group. The Church documents only have generalized and balanced reciprocity; there is no negative reciprocity²¹ as the teachings are based on the generalized reciprocity found in the early Jesus movement and much of the New Testament (see e.g. Moxnes 1988). Therefore, I have concentrated on his writings that reflect the life of the poor. This is useful to my thesis because his position addresses the context of my church as will be argued below. But it does not mean that what he says is enough. The church has been aware of his writings, yet the poor still live in poverty. According to Brubaker:²²

The life of the poor is one of hardship and toil. They must rise early and work late simply to earn their daily bread. They do not concern themselves with investments and asset management, but rather with acquiring the necessities

²⁰ Detail of the Church of the Brethren position is given in chapter five, where I wrote on the background history of the church. I do not intend to give details in this part. And the gap that needs to be filled from the shortcoming of the documents of the Church of the Brethren regarding this is also presented in the same chapter. Therefore, see chapter five about the Brethren's position.

²¹This is shown in chapter six.

²² "Eric Brubaker is an ordained minister serving on the no salaried ministry team in the Middle Creek Church of the Brethren (Atlantic Northeast District). Eric is a drafter for Bollinger Builders, holds a M.Div. degree from the Evangelical School of Theology in Myerstown, PA, and is a member of the BRF Committee, He and his wife Linda live in Ephrata, PA." Eric Brubaker Editorial, Beliefs About Wealth and Poverty. January/February, 1998. Volume 33, Number 1.. <http://www.brfwitness.org/?p=693> Accessed 3/6/10.

of life. They do not see themselves as having unlimited resources of time, talent and opportunity, but often see themselves as being stuck in their poverty.²³

What Brubaker states above represents the daily experience of the poor in Gavva area as well as in the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. People leave their homes in the morning to seek for jobs or work in order to survive. I will go on to establish this claim by doing fieldwork. The issue of investment is not even mentioned because their toil is to get food for a particular day. How will people in such conditions think of investment? These people do not have anywhere to turn for help, since both the church and the government neglect them. They accept whatever is offered to them, not that they are content with it, but there is nothing they can do, as they are only concerned about survival. In such a situation, they will continue living in poverty and their children will not have any education. If the children are not educated, they do not have hope in life. Brubaker adds that the poor “may feel trapped in their poverty because the wealthy will not allow them to rise above it. As a result there has often been the problem of envy and strife, where the poor strive after the wealth and status of the rich and yet hate the rich for it.”²⁴ With what I have seen happening in Gavva area to the poor, I can say that Brubaker’s position is right. This assertion is confirmed in chapter six.

Unlike the poor, “The life of the wealthy on the other hand is quite a different matter. Theirs is a life of apparent ease and luxury. They have all the necessities of life and much more. They do not struggle with earning their daily bread; they worry about how to protect their assets. They do not work for money, they work with money. The often heard cry against the rich is that they have become so by exploiting the poor.”²⁵ This is precisely what happens in the church also: the wealthy are always on the defensive while the poor are on the offensive side. The poor know that they are being exploited daily; they know those that become wealthy through exploitation. The wealthy live luxurious lives, not thinking of how to help the poor that worship with them in the same church or congregation. The concern of the wealthy is to protect their wealth and make a

²³ Eric Brubaker Editorial, Beliefs About Wealth and Poverty. January/February, 1998. Volume 33, Number 1. <http://www.brfwitness.org/?p=693> Accessed 3/6/10.

²⁴ Eric Brubaker. Accessed 3/6/10.

²⁵ Eric Brubaker. Accessed 3/6/10.

name for themselves. They do not want to assist the poor but during public fundraisings they can give thousands to the church while their fellow brethren go without food for days. It is required by the Church that both the wealthy and the poor respect and support each other. The wealthy are to show consideration to the poor. The wealthy are to put themselves in the shoes of the poor and treat them as they would want to be treated.²⁶

What Brubaker is writing is the position of the Church of the Brethren. But it does not mean that the Church is living up to the standard as the documents stated. The wealthy are expected to take care of the poor among them this is what the Church documents also emphasize with regard to generalized and balanced reciprocity on the teachings of the Church. The church has a standard but it is not observed as I indicate in chapter six. He adds, “Wealth has a way of making us numb to the things of God and other people. Power, prestige and influence are often associated with wealth, but according to Christ, these things are to be renounced for the sake of the kingdom (Matt 20:25-28).”²⁷

This is another emphasis given by Brubaker which is also a teaching of the church. I am going to discuss and establish this in chapters five and six. I present it to show that Brethren have teachings on poverty. He says that:

Just as wealth can be a blessing for obedience, poverty can be a curse for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). There are also times when poverty can be the result of bad decisions or mismanagement of resources. We can often bear life-long consequences for financial decisions made in haste or with wrong motives. It would be a gross error to conclude that all, or even most, poverty situations are the result of divine judgment or personal negligence.²⁸

There are also direct teachings taken from the Bible and used by Brubaker which have also become part of the teachings of the Church of the Brethren on poverty. But then the problem remains that these documents or teachings have not been put into practice or they have not been emphasized by the leadership of the church.

²⁶ Eric Brubaker. Accessed 3/6/10.

²⁷ Eric Brubaker. Accessed 3/6/10.

²⁸ Eric Brubaker. Accessed 3/6/10.

The teachings on poverty and the poor in the Bible are too numerous to be covered. However, when some of them are observed by the church, they will help the church to trace back its heritage as the name implies. There are many teachings on wealth and poverty in the Bible which have become part of the Church of the Brethren document.

These biblical observations about wealth and poverty are certainly not exhaustive. Scripture addresses the subject many times and often at great length. God allows both wealth and poverty but reminds us that these conditions of life are only temporary. Truly wealthy are those who see this life against the backdrop of eternity and so govern their lives.²⁹

Brubaker has stated the position of the church. But stating the position of the church alone is not enough. There is a need to go the extra mile to enforce these statements. Brubaker is in the position to influence the leadership of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria to enforce the teachings since the poor are supposed to be protected in the teachings of the church. But keeping them in documents alone is not enough. There is need to put into practice the documents by the church leaders through bible studies, seminars, teachings and preachings. The leadership of the church does not want to do this, so that they do not offend the wealthy.

At this stage I look at the concepts of poverty of Klaus Nürnberger as he has a background in theology. I compare his work with Bryant Myer, Amartya Sen and Adarigho-Oriako. However, I focus more on Nürnberger. Studying the concepts of poverty of Klaus Nürnberger, Bryant Myer, Amartya Sen and Adarigho-Oriako gives insight to understanding poverty in Gavva area. They are relevant to my research as they deal with poverty in terms of economic theory with a background in theology, especially in the case of Nürnberger and Myer. Their concepts give light to the understanding of poverty as relating to both the poor and the wealthy, in urban and rural areas as well. And what they address contributes to understanding poverty in Northern Nigeria with emphasis on Gavva area.

²⁹ Brubaker 3/6/10.

2.3 Theological and Exegetical Concepts of Poverty

In this section I will explain the theological and exegetical concepts of poverty as used in this context.

2.3.1 Klaus Nürnberger's concept of poverty

Nürnberger has written extensively on poverty. But my focus is on his position on poverty from a socio-economic point of view. For him, the concept that he uses is the “centre-periphery” approach. “The centre is understood to be the place with a very powerful and mixed economy. Within this economic system, different types of professional companies acknowledge one another” (1999: 43). And this is what operates in economic theory in his understanding: the wealthy control the economy, and if they control the economy, it means that the poor are also subject to them. “It is natural that a privileged elite feels threatened by the socio-economic advance of impoverished masses” (1999: 439). This may not be different from the church as they have various programmes that are supposed to be at the centre in terms of alleviating the desperate conditions of her members. That does not happen; the power is in the hands of the few, they control the programmes, and it means that they are at the centre of affairs, controlling the economy of the church. This agrees with Scott (1990) that it is the elite that control the public transcript. The poor also have the hidden transcript which they practice offstage. Nurnberger says, “It is the poor who have to analyse their situation and take the initiative to improve it” (1999: 444). But it is not like that in the periphery. The thing that is obtainable in the periphery is subsistence farming, which is farming on a small scale. Those that practice subsistence farming are the peasants, they produce only what will sustain them. This is like the area of my research which is a peasant society depending mainly on agriculture. In peasant agriculture, no one assists them, they struggle to survive, and they are at the periphery.

The periphery offers very low income because the level of productive force is also very low on the economic side; the centre has a strong level of economic production because it has basic skills and modern expertise. In the periphery, there is little opportunity to explore economic initiatives (1999:45).

Nürnberger's concept shows that most of the farmers in rural areas operate at the periphery. “Between centre and periphery the abuse of power must be curtailed and countervailing processes must be institutionalized to neutralize structural mechanisms which benefit the centre at the

expense of the periphery” (1999:397). This means that the peasant would find it difficult to move out of poverty because they lack basic skills and techniques of modern agriculture, they lack opportunities that will change their economic conditions for the better. The peasants in this category have to contend continuously with low income and living perpetually in poverty.

2.3.2 Bryant Myer’s concept of poverty

Myer has a holistic understanding of poverty. He says that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational and spiritual. Poverty is relative because it depends on the environment where one comes from. A wealthy person in Gavva area may be considered as poor in Maiduguri. However, there is also spiritual poverty that people face, even though they may be wealthy in terms of material poverty. This is relevant to my research because the church faces both positions. However, my research is solely concerned with material poverty. First, poverty is lack, and deficit. There is a need to encourage programmes to help overcome this lack and deficit. For instance, in the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria there are programmes in the church that have been established in order to reduce poverty, but only a few people benefit from them.³⁰ Though Myer’s concept is relevant as there is spiritual and relational poverty, it cannot face the challenge of addressing the situation of poverty in Gavva area. As the poverty issue in Gavva area is not spiritual³¹ but economic, social and educational in which discrimination is the main factor that contributes to it. The issue is not only to emphasize that it is holistic. They need something that will alleviate the economic hardship being faced in the area. Klaus Nürnberger’s position is relevant because his concept of poverty emphasizes the economic aspect.

2.3.3 Amartya Sen’s concept of poverty

Sen’s concept of poverty looks at people as being poor because their capabilities are not explored. People face many problems, deprivation, destitution and oppression, hunger and famine. Sen sees poverty as deprivation of basic capabilities. Capability deprivation does not look at poverty in terms of material wealth. This concept means that people can be poor because they are

³⁰ See chapter six for details about this.

³¹ It can be spiritual only in the sense that those who turn their backs on the needy are spiritually poor.

deprived by things like lack of education, disability, age etc. and if people are able to overcome this, they may overcome poverty. But capability deprivation does not deny the reality of material poverty or the connection between material poverty and capability deprivation. It is a vicious cycle.

While poverty as capability deprivation stands in opposition to the standard criterion of poverty identification it does not deny the fact that low income is one of the major causes of poverty because lack of income can also be an authentic reason for individual's capability deprivation (Sen 1991:xi).

I know that people are deprived and it leads them to poverty, just like Gavva area that was deprived of early education compared to the Church of the Brethren area. Lack of education led to lack of opportunity and also lack of capacity in some instances, but within the area of Gavva there are those that are physically capable of handling job opportunities which are not given to them. They could handle their own businesses given the opportunity; they are not able to do that because they lack income.³² And the wealthy members do not give support to the poor to help them overcome the problem. Balanced reciprocity is lacking in the Church. Balanced reciprocity is not just showering money on the poor, but empowering them. At the heart of empowerment is education and training. Even running small businesses successfully involves some training in financial management, record keeping; costing etc. the poor also need these skills.

For Sen, poverty is not only about income but freedom, justice etc. Once people are not free to choose and do what they want to do to improve their livelihood they are deprived. "If the poor have basic education and health care they would have a better chance of defeating income poverty" (Sen 1991:90ff). There is also capability poverty: this is understood in terms of deprivation and injustice. "When people are deprived, they become poor. When their capability is increased they will live better and earn high income. There is need to improve capability of people; give them opportunity to attend school and this will reduce Poverty" (1991:90ff). Unemployment and capability deprivation contribute to an increase in poverty. This is a great

³² I am aware that without formal training one cannot "handle any job given to them". This is the poverty trap. Poverty means no education; education means lack of capacity; lack of capacity means poverty. There is the need to develop capacity surely, as well as the need for opportunities.

challenge today in Nigeria when retrenchment of workers contributes to unemployment and poverty increases.

If the poor had freedom of choice, and socio-economic, educational and cultural rights it would aid in emancipating them from poverty. When they are emancipated, their standard of living will improve because they will be able to have the necessities of life like good drinking water, health, food, security, shelter, education etc. to live as the wealthy. Sen's concept of poverty will encourage the poor to live the type life they value. Observing and using these concepts of poverty will not improve Gavva area alone but Northern Nigeria at large, since the region is characterized by poverty.

The scholars above have addressed the issue of poverty from different perspectives. In their presentations, they show that there are various reasons why people live in poverty but none of these scholars presented poverty from the perspective of the church as that is not their focus. They are dealing with general economic concepts of poverty. However, Nürnberger and Myer understand it better because their economic concept is influenced by their background in theology. The scholars especially Sen addressed the problem of oppression, discrimination and exploitation facing the poor in a way which is relevant and useful for my research. They presented different concepts of poverty, but poverty is always relative. Nigeria has many concepts of poverty and has even set up a poverty reduction programme called National Programme for Eradication of Poverty (NAPEP) but only a few people benefit from it.³³ The few are not even the poor, but the wealthy. This gap is not filled and that is where my research is necessary: to address the problem faced by the poor in the Church of the Brethren and Gavva area as they are being oppressed, discriminated against and exploited. The Church of the Brethren needs to set up poverty alleviation programmes in order to overcome this problem. When this is done, there is need to balance those that will be in charge of the programme so that they do not come from one section of the church.

³³ I can confirm this because I once had a chat with one of the NAPEP Directors who happens to come from one of our neighbouring Villages. I do not want to indicate his name because of his job security. Also in 2000, the Director General of NAPEP announced over Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) that the Federal Government was ready to alleviate poverty of secondary leavers by giving them N3000 (R150) monthly. The members of the House of Assembly (state parliament) were asked to compile the names of the secondary school leavers. Unfortunately, these honourable members compiled the names of their family members, relations and friends; the actual people that needed assistance were not included. I can confirm this because I was aware of when it happened. So, it is the same wealthy people that benefit from the programmes as the poor do not have access to poverty alleviation.

2.3.4 Adarigho-Oriako³⁴

Adarigho-Oriako also writes on poverty from the perspective of the church. She does not have a background in economic theory like Nürnberger, Myer and Sen. Poverty can be looked at as a physical and relative matter. Therefore, “poverty in its nature, form and manifestation is quite complex and diverse” (Adarigho-Oriako 2008: 19). When there is deficiency or lack in properties that are necessary for living, lack of income is poverty.

One is said to live a life of poverty when their income and resources are deficient or not enough to make them have a good standard of living though this is also relative. Standard of living depends on the income and the environment. In this case the poor need a little to improve their living condition. Poverty is simply a condition where one lacks basic necessities of life that are required for living. “The condition exists when people lack the means and power to satisfy the basic needs of life. The basic needs of life here refer to education, good health, food, and shelter, opportunity to express oneself and being oppressed or exploited” (Adarigho-Oriako 2008:22). The ones that are exploited or oppressed are the poor. When there are no basic necessities required for living, life itself will be unbearable. Adarigho-Oriako’s position above is relevant to the happenings in Nigeria where the poor live in abject poverty.

2.4 Types of Poverty³⁵

There are various types of poverty identified by Adarigho-Oriako. Some of which relate directly to the research I am doing.

2.4.1 Case poverty

This type of poverty could be seen both in urban and rural communities. It shows itself in individuals in families, surroundings and environment. Adarigho-Oriako says that this type of

³⁴ Adarigho-Oriako is a Nigerian; I use her understanding of poverty because she has the same context as me. But it does not mean that I agree with all that she presents in her book with regard to poverty issues.

³⁵ The types of poverty indicated are taken from Adarigho-Oriako in her book *God’s Concern for the Poor*, 2008. But I provided the explanations under each subtopic as it relates to Gavva area. Some of these issues are not to be argued about as they are reality. People have experienced these types of poverty. Moreover, one cannot find literature written about poverty and discrimination in Gavva area. It is this research that attempts to find out these happenings.

poverty is seen in “mental deficiency, bad health, inability to adapt to the discipline of modern economic life, excessive and uncontrolled procreation, alcohol, insufficient education, poor feeding habit, dirty environment or combination of several of these factors” (2008: 25). The things enumerated above are found in most urban and rural areas in Nigeria, including Gavva.

2.4.2 Insular poverty

Sometimes poverty shows itself as an island in a surrounding sea of affluence. This type of poverty only affects some specific areas and specific people because of certain happenings in the area. This type of poverty may not be the problem of an individual, or it does not mean that one is lazy. But it does happen because of the environment; as a result people are frustrated. The environment in Gavva area is poor, due to lack of maintenance and there is no capacity to do the maintenance as the people are poor and the government has neglected the area. Only few people can be regarded as wealthy which is also relative. Because a wealthy person in Gavva area may be a very poor person elsewhere.

2.4.3 Cyclical poverty

This type of poverty spreads widely throughout a population. But it is of a short duration. This happens as a result of natural disasters like wild fire, flood in Gavva area. Because of floods the farms and crops are destroyed, this leaves almost everyone hungry or short of food. It is a temporary poverty but with long term consequences. Sometimes religious crises that are also frequent in Gavva area can contribute to short term poverty. When people’s houses are burnt due to religious conflict between Christians and Muslims, the bread winners are killed; there will be no choice but for people in the area to face a crisis of poverty. Though they have been living a life of poverty, but the natural disasters, civil strife may also compound the problem.

2.4.4 Collective poverty

Unlike cyclical poverty, collective poverty is permanent insufficiency of means to secure basic needs. This type of poverty can be transmitted from generation to generation, parents passing it to their children if they are poor. I know many families in Gavva that are like that: whatever they do in life, they still remain in poverty. This comes from the background of the family, sometimes it is

difficult to change a situation or condition of poverty that runs in a family. But I am not advocating that they should not be helped, they need assistance from the church and government of the area. The church, at least, has the responsibility of encouraging such families to overcome this continuous fear that is instilled in them. Poverty is, is at least in part, something internalized.

2.4.5 Relative poverty

This type of poverty is comparative. It is measured in terms of material things. And this commonly happens in the developed countries, where one's income is compared to another. A person may be poor in that situation but when their wealth is compared to the developing countries, they will be regarded as a wealthy person. But then, even in local area like Gavva poverty can be relative. Not everyone is poor in the area. Within the area people can be regarded as wealthy or poor in their own context. Outside the area, they may be regarded as living in abject poverty. Therefore, relative poverty does not only refer to countries but even to individuals. During my field research in Gavva area I was considered among the wealthy as a pastor and a highly trained person, but outside Gavva area within my own State (Province) I would not even be included among the first million wealthy people when compared with others outside Gavva area.

2.4.6 Absolute poverty

This refers to a situation where people have absolute insufficiency to meet their basic needs. It is sometimes called abject poverty, where one is helpless. Most of our areas falls under this category, where people are not able to feed themselves, have no good roads, water, electricity, education, or health services. People are helpless. People only look up to God for help because no one cares or helps them. This is abject poverty. This can be seen in the responses given by the respondents in chapter six to show that they are living in abject poverty. The background of Gavva area as presented in chapter six also confirms that they are faced with abject poverty in comparison to other areas of the Church of the Brethren and Northern Nigeria in general.

2.4.7 Spiritual poverty

This type of poverty is not the same as others. This sees poverty as a result of sin that one commits. One is poor because they do not follow God's instructions or are not faithful. But this is

really problematic as there are people that follow God's instructions faithfully and are still poor. There are those that are not faithful to God and are not poor. This type of poverty is not physical but spiritual. And to overcome spiritual poverty people have to know Jesus Christ. It really does not belong in the same category as material poverty and it is misleading for Adarigho-Oriako to include it as an economic category. My research is not centred mainly on this type of poverty because this does not have anything to do with economic concepts of poverty but is based on theology alone. And this could be judgmental. But this is the conception of most people in the area. They see themselves living in poverty because they have sinned against God, but it is not absolute that they are poor because of sin. Sometimes this happens because the preachers or pastors instill fear in their members. This is also internalized oppression.

2.5 Causes of Poverty

It is not difficult to identify the causes of poverty in Northern Nigeria in which Gavva area is also part of it. Many factors have been given as causes of poverty.

Bad leadership and corruption lie at the heart of the problem: Both secular and church leaders are corrupt; they are only concerned about what they will get from the government or church treasury. They do not have the heart for the poor. "In Nigeria, where most of the leaders have access to the national treasury, rather than care for the poor masses, the leaders convert the public funds to their private use" (Adarigho-Oriako 2008: 30). Many church leaders divert church funds for their personal use. This happens always in the church, especially when the Church of the Brethren in America or Basel Mission sends funds for use to the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. The fund is diverted for something else.³⁶

Bad economic policies: Government sometimes does not consider policies that will benefit the poor. Instead of helping the poor, the policies become a burden on them. The church also does not develop policies that are geared toward helping the poor. The church needs to enforce her policies in terms of providing help to her members especially the poor ones.

Laziness: Sometimes, people do not want to work. They only want to receive from the government. Certainly there are lazy people, but such factors in an economic analysis are usually the accusation of the wealthy against the poor. This may be problematic too as the government

³⁶ I can substantiate this if I am challenged because I am also part of the Church of the Brethren leadership as a pastor. As a pastor, the church members may not exempt me from that too whether guilty or innocent of it.

does not take responsibility for her citizens. This is common among the Hausas; there is what is called *fadanci* (praise singing or clientage) (Hill 1972:160). They depend only on what will be given to them; they go on praising the wealthy or government officials to get money. This is balanced reciprocity: people give to get in exchange. It contributes to corruption in the church or government because the church or government officials want to maintain receiving praise from people. The leaders also contribute to the economic paralysis of a patronage system where people indulge in “praise singing” for economic benefit. This is the problem of patronage and clientage inside and outside the church.

Disability: This may be relative as disability is in different category. Because there are many people that live with disability but are hard working in Gavva area and in Northern Nigeria. Other ones that live with disability do not want to do any work. They prefer to go begging. In Nigeria today, they say “begging is a profession” because at the end of the day they make a lot of money from begging. This sometimes makes even those that do not have any disability pretend and go into begging. But there are people that live in poverty because they are disabled. Such people need to be empowered by the church to enable them to depend on themselves instead of depending on charity at all times.

Economic hardships: There is inflation, unemployment, retrenchment of workers, natural disasters all these bring about poverty. They make situation to be difficult and people are faced with hardships. This is not only peculiar to Gavva area or Northern Nigeria, but it is a universal problem, I am only concerned about my area in this research.

Oppressions and Injustice: poor people are being exploited and marginalized especially by the wealthy. But it does happen today. This is what prompted my research, it is because the poor are being oppressed, discriminated against and marginalized.

Preachers: There are also preachers that exploit the poor through their preaching. They deceive people and steal from them. They use the church in order to exploit the poor. And sometimes they even exploit the wealthy, deceiving them with sweet messages into giving up their wealth for the preacher or the pastor. This is also internalized oppression.

Adarigho-Oriako addressed the issues of poverty as seen in her area in which some of the issues are applicable to Gavva area. But she lacks the knowledge of economic theories in her presentations. She is using her common experience of her environment to address poverty issues. However, some of her concepts are useful for my research since we come from the same

background. Though, in the moral economy of James spiritual and physical poverty are weighed against each other. Both have affected the economic life of James' community but emphasis should not be put on spiritual poverty alone.

The word "poor" is a relative and comparative term. A person may be poor in certain aspects of life, but may not lack material things. The poor in this research are those that are discriminated against, marginalized and oppressed, the ones that are exploited, forgotten by everyone else; they lack honour and are maltreated. They only depend on what the wealthy say and what they are given to survive on. This means that "poverty implies social oppression which includes all the factors responsible for different types and levels of marginalization and exploitation expressed in economic and cultural forms" (Walker 1993: 47).

Many Nigerians live in poverty and are poor since they cannot afford three square meals a day, they cannot pay their school fees, they have poor education, they cannot afford to pay their medical bills and have poor sanitation and water. Their living conditions and shelter is poor. They only live at the mercy of the wealthy, whether they are exploited and oppressed or not. Therefore, the poverty or the poor being treated in this context refers to material poverty. In fact, the main cause of the under-developed countries remaining poor and under-developed is that they are caught up in the vicious circle of poverty. Poverty means that their per capita income is low and per capita income is low because the level of productivity per person is generally low in such countries because of poor education and training. Since productivity per person is low, naturally income per capita is low, which means poverty, the vicious circle is complete. Sometimes by the World Bank standard we categorize the poor if they cannot have one dollar a day or N150. 00 or R7.00 a day. A dollar equivalent which is N150.00 can only buy one square meal from a local food vendor by roadside. This tells how poor Nigerians are. The World Bank standard of one dollar is even higher in some cases. There are many people that do not earn one dollar a day in Nigeria especially in rural areas that depend on sale of agricultural or farm produce which is seasonal. Different explanations about poverty have been presented as it is seen from different perspectives.

According to Akao:

Poverty either as a social malaise or an economic scourge, is a well known global phenomenon which has consistently ravaged the face of the earth and created dividing barriers between nations and peoples. In the course of its devastating

exploits, it accords no preferential recognition to its victims in terms of race, colour or creed although it seems to have made its permanent home in the two-thirds world and Africa in particular where it continues to maintain an imposing presence (2000:41).

But poverty has an unstable definition; it has been interpreted or applied in different ways based on the background in which it is used in a given area or situation. “Different people are therefore prone to define poverty differently and what constitutes the base line of poverty in one society may be the demarcating line of the middle class in the other” (Akao 2000:42). In this context I am more concerned about economic poverty, in agreement with Akao: “When one is a victim of poverty he suffers some degree of economic oppression with the consequent loss of human dignity and the capacity for self expression as a social being. Poverty with the misery and dejection that commonly accompany it is seen as a scandal” (2000:42).

Poverty has been an African problem; it is not only peculiar to Nigeria. But I am concerned about Nigeria since it is my country. Whatever affects the country also affects Gavva area. “In Nigeria, about 91 million people live below poverty line. They live on less than a dollar a day” (Mbachirim 2006:243). There are problems relating to every aspect of the country; the problem is not only about a source of income, “The poverty problem in Nigeria goes beyond low income, savings and growth. It features high inequality which includes unequal income and assets, unequal access to basic infrastructure and unequal capabilities (education, health status etc.)” (Ojowu 2007: 9). Ojowu adds that “Inequality contributes to high levels of poverty in that for any given level of mean income, higher inequality implies higher poverty as smaller share of resources is obtained by those in the lowest deciles or quintiles of the population” (Ojowu 2007: 9). Most of the problems faced in Nigeria relating to poverty occur in the rural areas like Gavva, “Poverty in Nigeria is largely a rural phenomenon. The incidence of poverty as well as its depth and severity are higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas. More than half of rural households are absolutely poor while the proportion is much less in the urban areas. The high incidence of poverty in the rural areas is due to their dependence on low productivity agriculture, lack of access to opportunities and poor social and economic infrastructure” (Ojowu 2007: 8).

Gavva area is in Northern Nigeria and that is where poverty has a stronghold. “Poverty is high throughout the country, but consistently higher in the North. Access to services is lower in the North and outcomes are worse” (Ojowu 2007: 9). The social services are poor in the North; it is

only the wealthy that enjoy the social services because they can afford to settle the bills. This creates a gap between the wealthy and the poor. “Inequality is evident both in terms of access to services and in outcomes. The poor use social services much less than the wealthy” (Ojowu 2007: 9). It is no longer a secret that most Nigerians live in poverty. It is evident that based on the current exchange rate in March 2010 a dollar is equivalent to N150. 00 as shown earlier. “Nigeria had moved from being the 50th nation in the league of well-off nations to the current ranking of 176 out of 206 nations...today, the giant of Africa is officially classified as one of the 30 poorest nations on earth, with nearly 70 per cent of its citizens living in poverty” (Garland 2003:129). Just as in Gavva area, many Nigerians are peasant farmers. These peasant farmers produce crops that cannot even sustain them for a year. And when they sell their crops or farm produce they get little income. Most of these peasant farmers are also hired as labourers on wealthy people’s farms or businesses. The peasants that are hired are not paid the wages to which they are entitled and are exploited. This makes them live a life of perpetual poverty.

When one looks at the natural resources that Nigeria has, it is difficult to accept that its citizens live in poverty. There are natural resources in abundance but they are not tapped due to poor leadership. A few people that are in the upper class in the society enjoy the ones that are tapped. This happens because the leaders are corrupt and are not accountable to the poor peasants in the country. Poverty in Nigeria shows that the poor are not supposed to be poor given the wealth the nation has. But the poor are faced with the problems of social, economic, political and religious life experienced by the peasants. Like the first century Palestine, there is a large class gap in Nigeria. “Class contrast is so sharp in Nigeria that while some live on the streets and in the least developed parts of the country, others live in highly developed areas with all the needed infrastructures and this group turns to exploit the poor people” (Mbachirim 2006:245). The leaders and the upper class group are “selfish, corrupt and greedy” (2006:245). This shows that poverty will continue to remain in Nigeria because the poor do not have any say and do not have the resources to affect policy: “the poor do not have any savings, health insurance, jobs, money for school fees, social security, or social benefit for the unemployed” (2006:245). But the wealthy always benefit from the hard work done by the peasants, “the wealthy have monopolized education, dominated the work force, business sector, politics, and fight for policies that can only benefit their groups” (2006:245). But on the other hand, the poor have to pass through hardship to earn a living; “they are vulnerable and are ready to do anything to earn a living...with small

payment, the rich use them as organized thuggery, hired assassins, and militia to fight political, ethnic, and religious wars for their selfish interests” (2006:248). Ehusani says that because of poverty the poor are affected “physically, psychologically, socially and spiritually” (1996:13). In every aspect of poverty Nigeria is affected,”Nigeria is a society that is physically crushed, emotionally demented, and psychologically depressed” (1996:8). It can be summarized that “poverty in Nigeria is not just material poverty but of leadership, poverty of justice, poverty of vision and honesty and poverty of integrity. It is about poverty of patriotic zeal and sense of national duty on the part of leaders and the led” (Mbachirim 2006:243 footnote 53).

2.6 James C. Scott

Scott in his book (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* addresses what happens between the dominant and the subordinates in South-East Asia. He looked at the characteristics of the dominant who are the elite and the subordinates who happened to be the peasants. As far as economic justice is concerned, the peasants know that they have their rights and they would want to claim them through whatever means. The peasants blame their predicaments on the dominant as they see them as responsible for what they experience in life in terms of domination and exploitation of their resources. The dominant elite control the public transcript of the society while the subordinates also control the hidden transcript but this is done offstage. Scott uses public transcript “As a way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate” (1990:2). The issue of public transcript comes because of the disparity in power between the dominant and the subordinates “The greater the disparity in power between dominant and subordinate...the more the public transcript of subordinates will take on a stereotyped, ritualistic cast (1990:4). Though the dominant are at liberty to control the stage in the public transcript it is not an absolute control: “The dominant never control the stage absolutely, but their wishes normally prevail” (1990:4). The ruling groups would always want to be in control in the way they want it to be, it can be seen that “Another function of public transcript is to create the appearance of unanimity among the ruling groups and the appearance of consent among subordinates” (1990:55). Would the dominant always get the consent of the subordinates? The consent of the subordinates will not be absolute as they may not want to be dominated or exploited. Though they may give some consent but with a hidden transcript beneath it. Because the

subordinates could not play openly, it has to be offstage. The reason for the public transcript of the dominant, is to “intimidate the subordinates... and to put it crudely, it is the self portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen” (1990:67, 78). It is this intimidation by the dominant elites that makes the subordinates develop the hidden transcript which is played offstage. This forces the subordinates to resist and rebel against domination where they cannot be monitored and controlled by the powerful (“behind their backs”) but increases the intensity of the anger experienced by its suppression.

Scott uses hidden transcript “to characterize discourse that takes place off stage; beyond direct observation by power holders. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those off stage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript (1990: 4-5). The hidden transcript is played out by the subordinates in order to react to the domination by the elites. Unlike the public transcript, “The hidden transcript is produced for a different audience and under different constraints of power than the public transcript” (1990:5). The hidden transcript has its characteristics since it is played offstage. “Three characteristics of hidden transcript: the hidden transcript is specific to a given social site and to a particular set of actors, it does not contain only speech acts but a whole range of practices, includes tax evasion, pilfering, thugs but all kept off stage and unavowed” (1990:14). The hidden transcript arises as a result of domination by the elites. The subordinates would not want to be dominated but they do not have any alternative. The only way for them to react is to play offstage so that their motives would not be seen openly. By doing this, the subordinates resist and rebel against the dominant or the elites. “The hidden transcript is a social product and hence a result of power relations among subordinates... the hidden transcript has no reality as pure thought; it exists only to the extent it is practiced, articulated, enacted, and disseminated within these offstage social sites... the social spaces where the hidden transcript grows are themselves an achievement of resistance; they are won and defended in the teeth of power” (1990: 119). This is the only consolation that the subordinates have since they do not have the power to face the dominant elite openly.

The hidden transcript also serves as a security for the subordinates. It enables the subordinates to be able to share their thoughts and aspirations among themselves. It is necessary for the subordinates or the peasants to do this otherwise, “The practices of domination and exploitation typically generate the insults and slights to human dignity that in turn foster a hidden transcript of

indignation” (1990:7). The other side of hidden transcript results in “The social sites of the hidden transcript are those locations in which the unspoken riposte, stifled anger, and bitten tongues created by relations of domination find a vehement, full-throated expression” (1990: 120). Hidden transcript of the peasants or the subordinates comes as “Acts of desperation, revolt, and defiance can offer us something of a window on the hidden transcript, but short of crises, we are apt to see subordinate groups on their best behaviour” (1990:87). This operates in a way that the subordinates monitor their activities away from the dominants. They know that if they played it open there may be consequences that they may face. So the subordinates have their way of going about the hidden transcript. “The elaboration of hidden transcripts depends not only on the creation of relatively unmonitored physical locations and free time but also on active human agents who create and disseminate elites and subordinates” (1990: 123). How does hidden transcript emerge “The development of a thick and resilient hidden transcript is favoured by the existence of social and cultural barriers between dominant elites and subordinates” (1990: 132). Hidden transcript has a characteristic of rebellion. There is no way that rebellion would not be part of the hidden transcript. The subordinates have been suppressed and oppressed for a long time. They would not continue to tolerate being exploited by the dominants, hence the need for rebellion and resistance have to be played. “The collective hidden transcript of a subordinate group often bears the forms of negation that, if they were transposed to the context of domination, would represent an act of rebellion” (1990: 115). The subordinates have to meet secretly, while the dominants meet openly. “If the social location par excellence of the public transcends is to be found in the public assemblies of subordinates summoned by elites, it follows that the social location par excellence for the hidden transcript lies in the unauthorized and unmonitored secret assemblies of subordinates” (1990:121). Nevertheless, the powerful also discuss things “off stage”. They have their own hidden transcript. Not everything is said on the public stage, but discussed behind closed doors by the powerful!

The characteristics of the subordinates seen are not only peculiar to South-east Asia. Most of the peasant societies play the hidden transcript in order to resist domination. The peasants in the first century Palestine also played a hidden transcript just as the dominant played the public transcript. It was through the hidden transcript that they developed their moral economy, rebellion and resistance to domination. Scott’s work is applicable to the peasants in the time of James

because they were exploited by the wealthy merchants and the landlords of his time. The peasants in the first century also revolted, rebelled and resisted domination by the elites and the wealthy. They also had to do this through the hidden transcript or offstage.

2.7 Alicia C. Batten (2004) “God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?”

In her article, Batten argues that “God is not understood as a substitute patron in James, but as an ideal benefactor, on whom the audience must rely (2004: 257). She challenges the audience on their reliance on the rich instead of God. She adds that “God replaces worldly and human patron who could easily exploit his/her clients, with a divine patron, God, who provides generously and fairly with no trace of caprice (2004: 258).³⁷ Batten also argues that James wrote to criticize the behaviour of human patrons as they are required to behave like the divine patron, God. In this article, she argues as to whether patron and benefactor are the same. She writes that most scholars treat them as same though she has not mentioned the names of the schools. Batten sees benefactor as having desires for help without being repayed and he is seen as a father that does not have self interest. For her, patronage is associated with flattering as seen in James 2:1-13. She adds that “Biblical texts use the language of benefactor to describe God. The common word is εὐεργέτης” (2004: 261). God gives to His people without reproach, so “He is an ideal benefactor that provides in contrast to human patron that waits for honour from clients” (2004: 268-69). Batten concludes that God is more of a benefactor than a patron. Based on my analysis as argued below, God can be seen as both a patron and a benefactor. As patron because He wants His people to reciprocate what He is doing for them and as benefactor since He gives generously without expecting any reward from His people.

2.8 Studies on Poverty and the Poor in Palestine

Before reviewing materials on James, I reviewed materials on poor and poverty in Ancient Israel’s economy. This will give background to issues of poverty in the first century Palestine. In order to argue this I started with Leslie J. Hoppe (2004). *There shall be no Poor among You: Poverty in the Bible*. He discusses ancient Israel’s economy. According to Hoppe, “Ancient

³⁷ I have argued this position below in the table of moral economy of James in chapter four.

Israel's economy was based on agriculture...most Israelites were subsistence farmers who were able to grow just enough crops to feed their families and livestock, to provide seed grain for the next growing season..." (2004:8). As a result of this, the peasants always suffer since they could not have enough to take care of themselves and their families.

When peasants were forced to work on the projects of the state or serve in the military they were unable to work their land. Requiring peasants to hand over a portion of their harvest to the state also was a severe burden since, as subsistence farmers, they did not produce the type of surpluses that made the payment of taxes possible without causing severe hardships" (2004: 8-9).

Because of some situations, peasants were not able to pay their taxes. This made them to be debtors. They had to sell their land to pay the debt, and this reduced them to poverty. As a result "the Israelites were even more driven into the permanent underclass that the Bible terms 'the poor' and the 'oppressed'" (2004:12). God never supports oppression "The culture of the Ancient Near East is marked by a concern for the poor" (2004:24). Just like our local community also in the Jewish community "The poor are those who need economic support from others" (2004:31). A way that the poor face economic distress is when they take loans and are not able to pay, and when they are hired to work and their wages are held back and they cannot purchase food for family. It is the judiciary that should help them. "Unfortunately, people of means were often able to use their influence and power to subvert the legal process to their benefit" (2004:34). Hoppe also says that "the poor in James are the economically poor who depend upon the charity of others to survive" (2004: 162). The same could be said of Palestine "Palestine possessed enough natural wealth to support its native population well, but most Jews who lived there in the Roman period lived in poverty" (2004:166).

Another book in this category is Richard A. Horsley's (2009). *Covenant Economics: A Biblical Vision of Justice for All*. Horsley says that "The high civilization of the Ancient Near East (ANE) depended on an extensive agrarian economy. At the base of the economy of the great civilizations of antiquity was the agricultural and construction labour of the masses" (2009: 2). It means that ANE depended on agriculture for their livelihood. The wealthy practiced agriculture but the labourers were the local farmers or the peasants. These peasants depended on subsistence agriculture since they did not have high income to practice agriculture on a large scale. Horsley says that "The situation of Israelite peasants in the hill country of Palestine, both before and

during the monarchy, was like that of peasants everywhere. It was difficult to eke out a subsistence living” (2009: 35). The living standards for the peasants were difficult for them, but they were used as machines for hard labour and economic benefits of the Temple State by the rulers in the first century Palestine. But before the first century, “Peasants who constituted the economic base of temple and monarchy alike, were always vulnerable to the rulers’ ambitions and special projects, whether wars of conquest or elaborate building projects” (Horsley 2009: 9). Apart from peasants being used for hard labour, they were being exploited by the wealthy to the extent that they became indebted to them. As a result of the debt, they lost their land and did not have access and control over it. They were hired as labourers to work on their land, which is a pathetic situation. These poverty-stricken peasants who became debt-slaves or lost control of their land (which they sold for their debts) and their descendants must have provided the tenants renters on the lands that royal officers acquired by “foreclosing” on indebted peasants (Horsley 2009: 7).

The peasants were the ones providing food for survival of the wealthy through their hard labour, it was their responsibility to cater for the welfare of households while they themselves were not taken care of and were exploited. “The moral economy of peasants thus strives to keep each household intact in possession of the means of subsistence (its land), so that it does not become vulnerable to exploitation by outside power holders” (Horsley 2009: 37). Hoppe and Horsley present what was happening to the poor peasants in the Ancient Israel which is relevant to the first century Palestine.

2.9 Pietistic Approach to James

I now look at the pietistic approach and various commentators on the Epistle of James. The commentaries on James have been reviewed because their authors have addressed and contributed to the theme of this research though they have not tackled the issues in a specific context, but only in a general way. The authors have used different words like discrimination, favouritism, and partiality, respect of persons, oppression and exploitation in discussing James 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6. Some of these authors have devoted their time to do thorough exegesis before arriving at their conclusions on James 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6, while there are others who pass comments not from exegesis but from common life experience.

The books who adopt a pietistic approach are written from practical standpoints giving practical ways on how to avoid discrimination or favouritism. The books in this category do not

consider distantiation or contextualization; they go directly on to appropriation. The meaning of the texts is applicable to every situation for them. These authors are not restating the position of James but they are using their personal experiences with James 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 to support their arguments. They do not engage in distantiation as they are not concerned with the context of the text and that represents a limitation on their part. Nevertheless they are influential in the way many Christians read the Epistle and tend to undermine its value as an agent of social change and economic justice. In order to understand these authors better, I have presented their positions and given my comments at the end of each author's position. The other materials reviewed are books written on James. These books are not commentaries and their positions did not come from exegesis, but they are mostly comments related to life experiences among the wealthy and the poor. I have indicated what each author contributes to this research and where I agree or disagree with them and why.

This section contributes to my thesis because it presents how the pastors use the biblical texts applying it to the situation around them. The church leaders would not observe the positive comments in the Epistle of James that would build their relationship with their congregation. The authors reviewed in this category are: Homer A. Kent (1996), Spiros Zodhiates (1998), E.M. Sidebottom (1967), William Baker (2004), S. Kunhiyop (2001), J. Ndyabahika (2001), J. Muthengi (1992), and Paul Kisau (2000).

In this category, I start with Homer A. Kent (1986), in his book, *Faith that Works: Studies in the Epistle of James* says that dishonouring of the poor is inconsistent with God's character. He says that "the wealthy have been oppressing the Christians" (1986:78). He is hard on the wealthy people in his approach. This work gives an alternative approach to the topic, and it tells the researcher that there are those that have a violent approach in addressing the discrimination going on between the rich and the poor. Though James was hard on the rich, he did not suggest violent attacks on the rich. I also do not agree with this approach for addressing the problem of discrimination in the church as violent resistance does not always help.

Spiros Zodhiates (1998) writes in his book, *Work of Faith*, "James condemns those that judge people by their appearance" (1998:165). James scolds believers in love, he admonishes in love, he corrects in affection. Another writer is E.M. Sidebottom (1967), writing on James, Jude and 2 Peter. He is concerned by the fact that followers of Jesus did not stop showing partiality. This is a good observation but he has not proffered any solution on how to avoid partiality. While William

Baker, in his book on James and 1 and 2 Peter says that James greatly dislikes favouritism and prejudice and he cannot stand the mistreatment of the poor but the poor are most times discriminated against. Christians, who are blessed by the royal law and the law of freedom or liberty, must not defile their freedom in Christ and must never “show partiality.” This is what James emphasizes as there is need to take care of the poor. God has preferential option for the poor.

Kunhiyop (2001) wrote on *Poverty: Good News for Africa*. He calls for the development of a theology on poverty and riches. He says that the church in Africa is living in abject poverty today. The church should be the salt and the light in bringing good news to the poor. He says that God cares for the poor. Although poverty entered the world because of sin, it does not mean that every person that is poor is a sinner. He emphasizes that the person that oppresses the poor shows contempt for God. The rich person is condemned not because of his riches, but because he disregarded the poor, and maltreated the poor. Kunhiyop calls for the respect of human dignity. Kunhiyop tends to be spiritual in his approach to the issue of poverty and oppression to the poor like Adarigho-Oriako. However, that is what people understand in the church today, that poverty comes as a result of sin. Kunhiyop makes it a matter of personal morality while I am insisiting on a structural social analysis of the structures of oppression.

Ndyabahika’s (2001) concentrates in his article on “The Attitude of the Historical Churches to Poverty and Wealth: A Challenge for African Christianity”. He starts by saying that money is important in life, but it is not the first thing. It is good to have the right amount of money and at the right time. In most cases, the wealthy see the poor as lazy or unfortunate and are not willing to render assistance to them. The poor believe that the rich accumulated wealth because of covetousness and greed. He says that there are many people in our churches living in poverty. To him, poverty is unsatisfied want or not having sufficient access to resources or lack of necessary materials to meet the basic needs. He further says that “the poor can be perceived as powerless, hopeless, lacking participation in decision making at the grass roots level all of which lead to defeatism” (Ndyabahika 2001: 200). Ndyabahika fails to take account of the structural aspects of wealth and poverty.

He concludes that the church has not done its work. The church should encourage the poor and teach them skills to support them. The church should also deal with those squandering

government funds. But Ndyabahika does not present what the church should do to the wealthy who exploit the poor. The poor know that some of the wealthy people exploited them before becoming rich, since they worship in the same congregation. They know that other wealthy members that are privileged to hold political positions or work in the government steal tax payers' money. But the church is happy to receive whatever donations they make and the church cannot be hard on them because of what they contribute to the church and the pastor, as seen in the case of the Church of the Brethren in chapter six.

Muthengi (1992) writes on "The Culture of Poverty: Implications for Urban Church Ministry". Muthengi analyzes the causes of poverty and concept of culture of poverty in order to support strategies for effective ministry among the poor. He says that poverty involves more than lack of material goods and finances. It includes powerlessness, social and political oppression, lack of education, unemployment, underemployment, and lack of representation in the political arena (Muthengi 1992: 90). He concluded that the poor are excluded from participation in the major institutions of the society. The poor would want to participate in the police force, armed forces, property ownership and other aspects of public arena but are marginalized. Muthengi's position agrees with Sen's capability deprivation which states that poverty is not judged in terms of income alone. But when the poor lack education, employment etc. their capability is deprived. And this means that the poor do not have any decision to make because only the wealthy dictate the public transcript, as proposed by Scott (1990). Muthengi also fails to take account of structural problems. Kisau (2000) in his writing *The Sharing of Goods with the Poor is an Imperative* talks of the prevalence of the poor and the need to help them by generous contributions. He says that the Christian church should not depend on generous foundations to help the poor, for she has a mandate. He looked at Acts 20:35, where it relates to sharing of goods with the poor. He says that there is room to give our goods to relieve the need of others, for this we gain eternal value. Kisau tends to go in the perspective of spiritual poverty.

2.10 Classical and Socio-Historical Position on James

These commentators have addressed the issue of poverty, discrimination and exploitation from different perspectives as they see it from the Epistle of James. Dibelius (1976), Davids (1983 and 1995), Motyer (1985), Mitton (1966), Laws (1980), Moo (2000), Kistemaker (1986), Adamson (1976), and Martin (1988), Maynard-Reid (1987), Tamez (1992), David H. Edgar (2001) and

Martin (1988) have all devoted a number of pages to address the issue. They all emphasize the position of James that discrimination, exploitation and oppression should not be condoned in the church since it is inconsistent with the glory of Christ. But none of these scholars has presented how the problem would be overcome. I present their positions and what they contribute to my research and where we do not agree and why. I present their individual positions.

My point of departure is Dibelius (1976). He is a historical critical form critic that sees the Epistle of James as having no cohesion. According to him, “The Epistle of James is a collection of different teachings put together. If that is the case, there cannot be cohesion in James” (1976:5-6). Most scholars, like Davids, disagree with Dibelius on that position. Dibelius says that “James is directed against unjust favoritism” (1976:126-127). Though he does not support partiality, he says that partiality will always exist so long as poor and rich live beside one another and have dealings with one another. This is a defeatist position which justifies the rich. James certainly speaks against the rich in 1:9-11, 2:5-12, 5:1-6, but he also speaks for the poor, as Dibelius notes, “James based his animosity toward the rich on unpleasant experiences which not he himself, but apparently the Christian communities had had with the rich” (1976:39). James uses a threatening tone in prophesying punishment of the rich in his time. All the rich appear to be guilty and will be destroyed. “The rich had estranged the people from God, so it must be the poor to whom the divine favor belonged” (1976:39). Dibelius adds that “the rich had proven themselves to be the enemies of the Christian” (1976: 44). He concludes by saying that the rich oppress the poor socially, which is contrary to the Christian teaching. I agree that the poor and the rich will continue to live side by side, but that does not mean that they cannot respect one another as members of the same church. Not everyone will be rich, but every person is entitled to dignity. Moreover, in the church people should be treated as equals. The weakness of Dibelius’ work is that it does not consider the reader’s context and his own context. The context of the reader is vital in presenting an argument. He only concentrated on the analysis of James without considering the context.

Davids (1983) is also classical scholar like Dibelius, I reviewed his work under this category to show how his position differs from that of Dibelius. Davids considers the readers’ context in his writing. The readers here refer to those to whom James is writing, and he argues that context is useful in conveying his message to his audience. And the same applies to other scholars in this

category. Davids like Dibelius, does a thorough exegesis of the Greek words (πτῶχος, καταδυναστεύω, προσωποληψία, διακρίνω). But Dibelius did not want to consider the context of James' readers' situation in the Epistle of James. Although James did not present a clear historical situation, it did not mean that he has not addressed situations happening in Palestine. Davids says that "the rich were members of the church or tolerant of the church" (1983:30). Davids presents James as saying that "God does not show favouritism and those that serve under the authority of God should not be found guilty of discrimination" (1983: 203). Davids emphasizes that true faith does not have room for the social distinctions of the world. In his exegesis Davids concludes that one must honour the poor and also share with them. According to him, the poor are neglected, while the church does not want to offend the rich (1983:208). It means that if there is discrimination, God's perspective on impartiality is ignored. Davids' position in explaining what James means is fascinating. James in his community was concerned about lack of unity, love, and charity within the church with regard to the poor. Davids agrees with James that the poor are always neglected. However, although Davids' position is strong, it is not targeted toward a particular audience as my research is. He also does not proffer any solution as to how the problem should be overcome by the church. If according to Davids, the church does not want to offend the rich, should the church be allowed to continue in that way? That does not mean that the rich are not part of the church.

According to Motyer "faith is the leading idea in obedience to Christ and discrimination is a departure from the way of obedience" (1985:84). Motyer says, judging from his experience, the rich look important and the poor are not seen as having any significance. According to Motyer, James says that "Christian values, priorities and activities must ever be governed by the true glory displayed in the person, conduct and the work of Jesus Christ" (1985:87). If Christian community members were able to accept what Motyer says in recognizing the glory of Christ, it would help in checking discrimination. The issue of honour and shame would not be a cause of discrimination in the community because all members would see Christ's glory in each other and they would treat one another with respect. To get rid of discrimination James also says Christians should think of Jesus as the true glory. Motyer understands this to mean that "it is not wrong to recognize a person's position, but it is wrong to be swayed by the position or wealth of the rich" (1985:89). Motyer does not put much emphasis on how the wealthy exploit the poor. But he indicates that in

the time of James, the wealthy merchants had the upper hand. But even today, the rich have the upper hand in the church, since they dictate what is to be done by the church leaders and the church leaders stick to it. Once the rich are recognized, it means that the poor are not recognized.

Mitton's (1966) position is close to Motyer's as Mitton says that "Christian people are instructed to show no partiality, discrimination or favouritism. Showing a greater degree of consideration for one who stands high in the social scale than for one that is socially unimportant is discrimination" (1966:82). Mitton concludes that when there is equality in the treatment of the rich and the poor, discrimination will give way. I agree with Mitton's position that there should be equality between the members of the church. But he does not present or show how the church should bring that equality to work in the church. The rich and the poor should be treated equally in any programmes of the church.

Maynard-Reid (1987) in his book *Poverty and Wealth in James* discusses the issue of social stratification in the first century. He says that this provides a good background to understanding the situation of the poor in the time of James. He also discusses the poor and the rich in Judeo-Christian literature. Maynard-Reid, in dealing with the issue of poverty and wealth in James, uses a socio-historical analysis of the passages in James that are relevant to the theme of poverty. He therefore reads James with a concern for the marginalised, exploited and the oppressed. Maynard-Reid's position contributes to my research as he presented what was happening in Palestine in the first century. This gave background to my research as I look at Epistle of James and James as a person coming from Palestine. His work, gives me insight to what James faced in his time as he addressed the wealthy.

Laws (1980) talks about discrimination like the other scholars but her point of departure with the others is that she does not see the rich as problem of the church. I do not agree with this position as I have explained. Laws starts by saying that the profession of Christian faith is inconsistent, indeed incompatible, with attitudes towards other people that discriminate against some in favour of others. For her, it is unthinkable to hold the faith and exercise discrimination between people. According to Laws, James says that the rich person is not an enemy; he is not saying that they should not receive the rich, and confine their membership to the poor. Laws concludes by saying that "to discriminate in favour of one is to discriminate against the other, to give special treatment to the rich is to deny it to the poor" (1980: 104). Laws' position is clear that she sees James as saying that the rich are not the problem. They are not the problem but James

was hard on the rich because he knows that the behaviour of the rich is not to be condoned in the church. If that is the case, it shows that the rich discriminate against the poor members in the same church and withhold their wages.

Kistemaker (1986) attempts to explain his position “it is better to be rich in faith than in material wealth” (1986:72). He also says that before God we cannot boast of our possessions or an achievement for God has given to us all we have. He concludes by saying that “God does not show partiality; if God sets the example we must follow in his steps” (1986:74). I agree that with Kistemaker that it is better to be rich in faith as God honours that. But that alone is inadequate; the poor also need material wealth to sustain them in life. When one lacks shelter, food, education, security, it is not easy for that person to have that faith. Adamson (1976) says that there should be social compassion and social cohesion. He says that “the proper relationship between the rich and the poor in Christian society and the congregation should be promoted” (1976:112). For him “partiality and despising the poor are a denial of Christian brotherhood (sic)” (1976:114). This position is good toward understanding this research work; the issue is to establish a better relationship between the rich and the poor. When this is done discrimination would not find place to stay in the congregation. The researcher sees this as helpful in building a better congregation and society. But Adamson does not give a hint as to how to achieve building relationships between the rich and the poor. One way that this can be achieved in the Church of the Brethren in Gavva area is through the love feast of the church which is observed during the Holy Communion. The church should bring the rich and the poor together to share from the same meal or dish as it is done in Northern Nigeria. This will give them the opportunity to discuss with one another.

Martin (1988) did a critical analysis of the Greek words to obtain a better understanding of the position of James on partiality. He says that “in the divine kingdom a litmus test of character is the way Christians treat one another” (1988:73). According to Martin, James says that “the poor have only God to look at as their protector and friend” (1988:74). James’ sympathy is on the side of the oppressed and socially marginalized because he sees God is on their side as well. Although I agree with this, Martin did not present his position in regard to how the poor are treated by the wealthy in the church. It is not enough only to emphasise the position of James, but there is need to proffer a solution that will help the Church.

In his important book, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor? The Social Setting of the Epistle of James*, Edgar (2001) argues that, “Special attention is given in this connection to the audience’s

treatment of the socially marginal members of the movement, specifically the ‘weak in the church’ to whom, the designation ‘the poor’ in James 2:1–13 refers.”³⁸ James’ concern is about the marginalization of the poor members in his time. He is concerned about their life situation and how they are exploited. The reasons why James is hard on the wealthy are made vividly apparent in writing his letter. This is the approach that the church leaders or pastors are supposed to adopt in protecting their members from being marginalized. He also writes that:

Among the more helpful and original of these is the use of a patronage model to illuminate James’ characteristic hostility toward ‘the rich.’ The implied audience is depicted as potential clients who must choose between God and ‘the rich’ as two competing patrons.³⁹

The issue of patronage was a common practice in Palestinian community from which James comes. James wants his community members to look up to God as their own patron, and not to a human patron. Edgar emphasizes that, “A central aim of the author is to effect an ‘undivided commitment to God’ as ‘the supreme benefactor’ on the part of the community and the relentless denunciation of ‘the rich’ is a key element of his strategy.”⁴⁰ Edgar also emphasizes James’ position that God is the supreme patron that the poor should depend on. This is what is required also for the poor in Gavva area not to be depending on any human patron because the human patrons always exploit them instead of giving them the protection they need.

These commentators are significant dialogue partners in this thesis. Common to them all is the insistence that, according to James, showing partiality, oppression and exploitation is inconsistent with Christian faith. For the author of James, partiality, oppression and exploitation should not be found in the church since it is inconsistent with the glory of Christ. However, socio-historical commentators tend to limit the application of the text to the historical community of its production. They emphasize the position of James that is required, but in this thesis we seek to go

³⁸ David Hutchinson Edgar’s book was accessed electronically at <http://www.bookreviews.org/subscribe.asp>. Accessed 3/6/2010.

³⁹ Edgar. Accessed 3/6/2010.

⁴⁰ Edgar. Accessed 3/6/2010.

further to engage with the text on how to overcome similar problems in our contemporary situation as a community of faith. To be able to address this, there should be an audience that it is directed to. However, some of the authors have something unique: Dibelius and Davids did thorough exegesis in their works. Moo tends to imply that the wealthy see the poor as their neighbour, but this does not seem to apply in the interaction between the poor and the wealthy. Kistemaker emphasizes being rich in faith, but that alone is not enough as we focus on material poverty. The wealthy use that to exploit the poor. The wealthy should also be rich in faith and forget about material wealth. Edgar is the only author that talks about God as the supreme benefactor; this is crucial to my thesis as the issue of patron-client has been a serious challenge to Gavva area. My research will achieve this because it is addressed to a specific audience so that it will have impact on them.

2.11 Position of Liberation Theologians

Liberation theology is concerned with the economic context of the poor. They want to be sure that the poor are treated with dignity and honour, and that the poor are liberated from oppression and exploitation by the wealthy. Their work is in line with the Epistle of James as he also wants the poor to be liberated from the hands of their oppressors. James advocates for the respect of the poor and the oppressed of his community. The limitation of these liberation theologians which is also a gap in their work is that they collapse distantiation and appropriation together as one thing. And they focus more on one on one dialogue to mean appropriation for them. But dialogue is not the same as appropriation. Since they are concerned with the liberation of the poor from exploitation in Latin America, their works will contribute to my research as I am concerned with discrimination and exploitation in Gavva area. These authors are: Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff (1978), Gustavo Gutierrez (1973), Elsa Tamez (1992), and Ikenga K.E. Oraegbunam (2002). The researcher begins with Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff who give a concise history of liberation theology in their book, *Introducing Liberation Theology*. The history of liberation theology gives a good background to what discrimination, oppression and exploitation mean. This serves as background to understanding my research. The approach given by the liberation theologians may shed light on, or give insight to, this research in terms of its approach to the poor and poverty. Although the context of Latin America and Gavva area are not the same.

Leonardo Boff (1978), *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for our time*. His chief concern has been to develop a Christology for Latin American liberation theology. The Christology approach used by Boff is applicable to the African church once there is concern for the poor and the oppressed as seen in Christ. Boff suggests criteria for constructing a suitable Christology. He said it should focus on human need rather than ecclesiastical dogma and structure and its orientation should be toward the future, asking what Christ has done for the oppressed. It should stress the social dimension of the liberating work of Christ, with special attention given to liberation for the poor and oppressed that have no voice in determining their future. This is relevant to James in terms of focusing on the liberation of the oppressed. Though James does not use the word “liberation” he speaks out strongly against the wealthy that exploit the poor in his community.

Gustavo Gutierrez wrote *A Theology of Liberation* (1973). Gutierrez experienced the pangs of discrimination in his early years, an experience that prompted him to become a political activist. He suffered daily which made him have concern for the oppressed. For him, unless theology is for the poor and oppressed it does not make sense. He emphasized that Christian faith should focus on freeing of the oppressed from their inhuman living conditions. Gutierrez is a person who is seeking in his own way to listen to and answer the cries of the poor and powerless. His work is illuminating to this research because he has written out of experience of being poor, and was also discriminated against. His concern for the life of the poor is something worth following. This work has given an approach on fighting for the poor in a nonviolent manner, which should be followed in order to deal with the problem of discrimination, oppression and exploitation. His emphasis on Christian faith agrees with James that when one holds the faith of Jesus Christ, they will not show discrimination. Instead, the members of community will see the need of helping each other especially the poor.

In her book *The Scandalous Message of James: Faith without Works is Dead*, Elsa Tamez (1992), who is closer to our interests than many of the other commenators, notes that while the Epistle of James shows solidarity with the poor and oppressed, and condemns their rich oppressors, James has often been read and interpreted by the rich and the powerful. Tamez deals with how the radical message of James has been “intercepted” by the powerful and robbed of its provocative voice. She says, “If the letter of James were sent out to the Christian communities of certain countries that suffer from violence and exploitation, it would very possibly be intercepted

by government security agencies” (1992:118). This could easily happen because it “vehemently denounces the exploitation by landowners (5:1-6) and the carefree life of merchants (4:13-17),” (1992: 118) and James emphasizes care for the widows and orphans (1:27). Since for James orphans and widows represent all those who are vulnerable to exploitation, and particularly economic exploitation, there was need to fight on their behalf. Tamez continues to view the texts of James through the eyes of those who have been oppressed, giving a voice back to the voiceless poor. She seeks to counter the “spiritualized” interpretation of James rendered by wealthy Christians who miss James’ radical message of God’s favourable disposition toward the poor (1992:120). She says that “James calls the poor to a very militant kind of patience, by employing Greek military terms for patience (ὑπομονή and μακροθυμία). In recapturing the Greek meaning of the words often translated as ‘patience,’”⁴¹ Tamez frees the letter of James from the interpretations offered by the rich and powerful, reminding us that while James does indeed call on the poor to endure with patience, that patience does not justify exploitation but works against it.

This means that “James clearly identifies a preferential option for the poor within the Christian community. But it is clear that his community is struggling with this issue. The scandal is that the wealthy are being treated better than the poor, even though they are the ones who are persecuting this community!”⁴² It can also be said that “The hope James offers is in the form of blessings from God on the poor, and the coming judgment of the rich. The poor and oppressed can be hopeful because the kingdom of God is theirs. The rich have the opportunity to turn away from the world, and toward the way of God to find their humble place in Christian community.”⁴³

Ikenga K.E. Oraegbunam (2002) in his paper, “Doing Liberation Theology in Nigeria Today in the Light of Octogesima Adveniens,” opens the way to this research because he is concerned with developing a liberation theology for Nigeria. He says that “Nigeria is richly endowed but still facing problems of bribery, corruption, political instability, poor infrastructure, poverty etc.” (2002:46). There is the need for Nigerians to be liberated from these problems. He says that “the solution to liberation is prophetic: to speak against and highlight the evils of the society with

⁴¹ <http://sandalstraps.blogspot.com/2006/04/elsa-tamez-on-james.html>. Accessed 4/8/2008.

⁴² <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/james/Background/WordStudies.html#poor>. Accessed 4/8/2008.

⁴³ <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/james/Background/WordStudies.html#poor>. Accessed 4/8/2008.

appropriate approach” (2002:48). He emphasized that theology should mould the society. This is a great contribution, if there is no one raising prophetic voices against discrimination, evil will continue in the church and society. James speaks against the wealthy merchants and landowners as they withheld the wages of the poor and exploited them. In order for the poor to be liberated someone has to speak to the wealthy and the corrupt leaders as James did.

The liberation theologians emphasize the freedom of the oppressed. The oppressed are the poor in their own community. This has links with the Epistle of James as he is also against discrimination and exploitation of the poor. Disparity should not be seen between the wealthy and the poor in Christian community.

2.12 Conclusion

The researcher has reviewed literature written on poverty and the poor, commentaries and books written on the letter of James, documents written by the Church of the Brethren, and books written by liberation theologians on the poor. All the authors on James emphasized the fact that discrimination, partiality or favouritism is inconsistent with Christian faith. But that is not enough, the issue is how we deal with the problem of discrimination; this is a gap that still needs to be filled by the researcher. The gap is the specific context of the Church in Gavva area and the context of oppression and exploitation. The historical critical scholars concentrated only on distantiation not on contextualization or appropriation. While reviewing the official documents of the Church of the Brethren, it became clear that the church is against showing discrimination of any sort. But it seems to the researcher that these documents are not being observed by the church, and the members are not aware of these documents. It calls for proper research to find out the reason why the problem still persists. When this is done a proper way of addressing the problem will be proffered when compared with the exegesis of James 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 done in chapter four of this research.

On the aspect of preachers that deceive members, the researcher observed that the emphasis on wealth has really affected the church and to larger extent Nigerian society. There is need for proper biblical teaching on the issue of the prosperity gospel. When our congregation receives the right teaching, the problem of clamouring for prosperity that also leads to embezzlement of Church and Government funds may reduce drastically and the poor may have access to some of the funds, education, shelter, food, health and security. This will reduce the level of poverty

especially in Gavva area. Having also reviewed the position of the Liberation Theologians it is obvious that their context as the oppressed has influenced them in their various approaches to the problem of oppression, poverty and discrimination. But the researcher finds their work helpful, as their approach to the problem was peaceful in the sense that they did not revolt or rebel or resort to physical attack on their perpetrators. This will be useful in addressing the problem of discrimination in the church and society today. Finally, the researcher observes that there is still work to be done if the problem of oppression, poverty, emphasis on prosperity and discrimination of any kind is to be minimized in Gavva area and, to a larger extent, Northern Nigeria which is also characterized by poverty.

Chapter Three

Poverty and the Poor in Palestine

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on poverty and the poor in Palestine in the first century. My research also touches on the situation in Palestine in the time of Christ and how the Epistle of James might also have been influenced by the same socio-economic and political conditions in the area of Palestine. This cannot be done without looking at Palestine before the first century. The position of Palestine on the main trade routes from Egypt to the north and east meant that Israelite independence was always precarious and contested by the great empires (Stanbaugh 1986:20). The frequent regional conflicts had a negative impact on the peasants, especially in the period of Roman occupation. I have also looked at the issue of the peasant society in the first century Palestine, honour and shame, and patronage and clientage, as they serve as background to the study of the peasant community in the time of James.⁴⁴

3.2 Poverty and the Poor in Palestine

What happened in first century Palestine can be traced to its immediate background. The period 167-63 B.C.E. was a good one as far as the history of the Jews was concerned. That period saw the Maccabean revolt break out when Antiochus Epiphanes defiled the temple in 167 B.C.E.. The ancient sacrificial worship in the temple was restored in 164 B.C.E. after the revolt. The Maccabean rule was successful politically but it had its problems too. The desire of the Maccabean rulers for power came in conflict with the religious goals of those that supported them. “Both the pharisaic and essene movements came into existence during this period largely as a protest against the political and secular direction of the upper classes and sharp conflicts broke out among them...” (Pilgrim 1981:39-40). Because of the above conflicts, the main Jewish leaders invited Roman soldiers under Pompey to restore peace and order. Instead of keeping peace, the Roman soldiers destroyed the city, violated the holy Temple and took over the control of Palestine

⁴⁴ I do not put emphasis on the moral economy of James’ community in this chapter since I have done this in chapter four.

fully. Later on, “the reign of Herod the Great, though hated by most Jews and especially by the pious, actually brought about fairly stable conditions in Palestine” (Pilgrim 1981:40). During Herod’s reign, he was able to restore peace; there was prosperity economically in the land. “But poverty and other socio-political tensions were never far away...” (Pilgrim 1981:40). When Herod the Great died, things changed for the worst as economic exploitation came in and the poor were the ones exploited while the wealthy were in control of the public transcript. Maynard-Reid corroborates this when he says, “...the economic situation of the ordinary people became increasingly worse. Besides, the same... technology that was used to improve the economic situation was used for economic exploitation and aggravated the accompanying poverty” (1987:18). This poverty created tensions between the upper and lower classes. The lower classes were the ones living in poverty while the upper classes oppressed the poor. “It was an intolerable situation in which impoverishment and chronic insecurity were the lot of the members of the lower class, these conditions being brought on by small group of financiers who dispossessed and oppressed them” (1987:18). The exploitation and oppression of the lower classes by the upper classes came about because of the influence of the Hellenistic culture on the Jews of Palestine. Most of the noble class in Palestine adopted a Hellenistic way of life as Stanbaugh says that “the seductiveness of Hellenistic culture was apparent to the Jews of Palestine. Some of them, chiefly the upper class nobility in Jerusalem, were tempted to assimilate, to adopt Greek ways and accept the social and economic benefits of Greek society” (1986:21). This has created disparity between the wealthy and the poor in Palestine.

It is obvious that “Even a puppet ruler in poor Palestine found power as an easy access to wealth” (Pilgrim, 1981:41). The poor in Palestine lived in abject poverty as they only depended on subsistence agriculture. The subsistence agriculture was only able to sustain the poor for a short time. “The vast majority of the people...lived in appalling poverty” (Maynard-Reid 1987:18). At that period, the wealthy came from the royal court of Herod the Great. “These were the merchants, large landowners, tax-farmers, bankers and families of inherited means who belonged to the wealthy class” (Pilgrim 1981:42). Among the wealthy were also the high priestly families that got their wealth from the temple tax which the Jews were required to pay. In the lower class were the poor, “the poor belonged essentially to two groups: those who sought to earn their own livelihood, and those who lived off subsidy” (Pilgrim 1981:44). To be included among the poor are those that lived on the poverty line “the people of the land” “either as small landowners or as tenants for

large landowners” (Pilgrim 1981:43). The other categories of the poor are the “sick, blind, lame, lepers and the destitute” (Pilgrim 1981:44). There is another group of the poor in the first century “the fatherless and widows, the victims of ill fortune, who needed social care and regularly received it” (Pilgrim 1981:44). It is to the widows and orphans that James emphasizes care for them as true religion (1:27). This means that the extremes of wealth and poverty between the rich and the poor which are indicated in James’ Epistle were characteristic of conditions in Palestine in general. As Stambaugh points out, “The members of upper classes were relatively few, but they were conspicuous because they controlled the wealth and political power” (Stambaugh 1986: 112). Their power also meant that they controlled what could or could not be said publicly, so that the dissatisfaction of the poor was banished from the public space. This is what Scott (1990) means by saying that it is the wealthy or the elite that control the public transcript.

James might have seen the poverty of the poor and their exploitation by the wealthy few in first century Palestine. “The force of James’s words grows from his understanding that he and the people he addresses are the poor. They lack the resources, the influence, the power to challenge the great men who control lands and market places” (Warden 2000: 4). Though the Didache was not written in Palestine but in Antioch, it emphasizes sharing as community members. It was this type of condition that made the peasants to set up their alternative communities as Draper has shown in his writing about the moral economy of the Didache.⁴⁵ The moral economy of the Didache emphasises sharing with one another in the community, as they expect the community members to be treated in the way that one would treat themselves. The poor in Palestine did not only stop at sharing with each other in the community but they developed resistance and rebelled against the wealthy. Though the poor rebelled against their domination by the wealthy or the elite, it was done offstage. Thus, Scott (1990) says, the poor dictate the hidden transcript.

As indicated in the next chapter which is an exegesis of the Epistle of James, “We cannot fail to notice that James is on the side of the poor people whom he addresses. His sympathy lies with

⁴⁵Jonathan A. Draper (2011) “The Moral Economy of the Didache”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67(1), Art. #907, 10 pages. DOI: 10.4102/hts.v67i1.907. Accessed electronically.

them” (Warden 2000:4). James addresses the issue of humiliation experienced by his community members and he stood up to the wealthy members that exploited the poor. Being a Galilean, James was aware of what was happening in Palestine in his time. He knew that the wealthy oppressed the poor by holding their wages and taking over their lands, “As far as James is concerned, the rich are those who not only turn their backs on Christians, but who oppress them” (2000:4). It could be seen that there was great disparity between the poor and the wealthy in James time. Because of that “it is not difficult to imagine the resultant exacerbation of social-economic divisions within Palestinian Jewish society. The Galilee portrayed in the gospels is a society of the very rich and the very poor” (Maynard-Reid 1987:13). Because of the experience faced by the poor and the oppressed, “James is on the side of the poor. He is more concerned that the labourers in the field receive their wage than in defending an abstract principle of free enterprise economics” (Warden 2000:7). James was also aware that the wealthy accumulated all the landed property and other materials for themselves by means of exploitation. It was the wealthy that controlled most of the resources, “the material wealth of the Greco-Roman world was distributed very unevenly. A tiny fraction of the population owned a vast proportion of the land and resources, and the mass of men and women had to make do with moderate means or scrape by on very little” (Stanbaugh 1986: 65). The poor majority did not control sufficient resources to enable them to make a living.

3.3 The Poor

In this section I give an explanation as to what “poor” means in both the Old and New Testament. The word “poor” is a key word in my research as I deal with issues of poverty. But in order to understand the meaning of the poor and poverty in the New Testament one has to start with the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, different words are used to explain the term “poor” which in Greek is *πτωχός* and sometimes *πένης*. In Hebrew, these are words frequently used: *ani*, *dal*, and *ebyon*. “*ani* denotes a dependent because of his inferior position of answering to the one who demands the answer” (Kanagaraj 1997:41). In referring to the economic position, *ani* is used together with *dal* or *ebyon*. Also “*ani* refers to a person who is dependent in an economic sense - to one who is poor, needy, oppressed, humiliated, dispossessed, afflicted, and in a state of lowliness and distress” (Maynard-Reid 1987:25). When *πτωχός* is used to translate *dal* then it refers to physical weakness and to low and insignificant social status. The Hebrew “*ebyon* indicates the one who seeks alms, the beggar, and generally the poor man, it also refers to the very

poor, those with no roof over their heads” (Kanagaraj1997:41). Also the poor are seen by their economic distress this comes as a result of exploitation and oppression by the wealthy “God’s people were recognized as poor owing to their extreme economic distress, which was often caused by oppression, and in this connection ‘poor’ can mean ‘lowly’ or ‘humble’” (Carson 1989: 17). The poor in this sense do not have personality, as they do not earn any respect in the community. During the monarchy, the poor were oppressed by the wealthy. The prophets as members of the community did not condone the attitude of the wealthy against the poor. They stood against the wealthy in telling them the doom that would face them. Maynard-Reid says “these prophets took up the cause of the poor and proclaimed that one of Israel’s chief sins was the oppression and exploitation of the poor due to the merciless desire of some to increase their wealth” (1987:27). The wisdom literature is not different on the poor as it also sees the poor in socio-economic perspective “...the poor in wisdom literature is seen in socio-economic sense. Poverty in the wisdom books is closely associated with one’s moral character: laziness, pleasure seeking, drunkenness and gluttony” (Kanagaraj 1997:42).

In first century Judaism the term “poor” is not used strictly in the sense of the economic status of a person but “the rich and the poor marked the extremes of the social body in terms of elite and non-elite status, in a moral context ‘rich’ referred to those powerful due to greed, avarice and exploitation and ‘poor’ referred to those who were weak and unable to maintain their honour and dignity in society” (Malina 1987: 354-67). And in Palestine, the wealthy acquired their wealth through oppressive means and they justified their attitude since the poor did not have power to face them. “The rich agriculturalists, commercial farmers, merchants, and large landowners...justify their attitude to wealth and the wealthy used oppressive means both to obtain their wealth and to keep it” (Maynard-Reid1987:30). The poor in Palestine suffered a lot from the hands of the wealthy and the elite “we have noticed that the poor in Palestine suffered greatly in the first century” (1987:31). In order to show the intensity of how the poor were oppressed by the wealthy Horsley says that “the peasantry in subject societies have typically experienced some degree of dispossession of land, destruction of the economic unity of the family, a disruption of traditional custom which regulated local socio-economic relationships” (1987:11). Because of the oppression and exploitation, the poor became landless in their own community as they have been dispossessed of their lands by the wealthy.

Among the wealthy in the first century were the high priestly families, they also oppressed the lower class. “The rich people in the first-century Judaism were: the observant Jewish leaders, such as high priestly families who, in practice, oppressed the lower clergy; the land owners who abused their tenants and hired labourers (cf. James 5:1-6); the merchants who controlled much of the economic life of the country...” (Davids 1992: 701-2). The poor did not find it easy in the first-century as they were marginalized “they lived on the edge of existence even in the best of times, for to be in an agricultural economy without owning sufficient productive land to provide security is to be economically marginal” (1992: 703). The living condition of the poor was not improving as they continued to be exploited by the wealthy. Maynard-Reid says “the economic situation of the ordinary people became increasingly worse...the economic situation was used for economic exploitation and aggravated the accompanying poverty” (1987:18). This increased the rate of the poor and poverty in the first century Palestine.

I have chosen to look at the writings of Josephus in order to understand how the words “poor” and “poverty” are used and what they meant in his time to give me insight in the way James used it. I do not intend to go in depth on Josephus, but to look briefly at the words. I have looked at few instances where the words are used in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities*; I searched for references to poverty and poor. The Greek words he used are πένης and πτωχός in different forms. James does not use πένης, instead he uses πτωχός In *Jewish Antiquities* 4:46 Josephus used the term πένιαν to show how God does not discriminate and deny justice to the poor:

Come, I say, O Lord of the whole world, and that as such a judge and a witness to me as cannot be bribed, and show how I never admitted any gift against justice from any of the Hebrews, and have never condemned a poor man who ought to have been acquitted, on account of one that was rich, and have never attempted to harm this common wealth.

This is similar to James 2:1 where God does not show partiality or discriminate. And James uses πτωχός to refer to poor in his community or first century Palestine. In *Jewish Antiquities* 4:288 Josephus indicates how the wages of the poor πένητος should not be denied them:

After the same manner as in these trusts, it is to be, if anyone defraud those that undergo bodily labour for him. And let it be always remembered that we are not to defraud a poor man of his wages; as being sensible that God has

allotted these wages to him instead of land and other possessions; nay, this payment is not at all to be delayed, but to be made that very day, since God is not willing to deprive the labourer of the immediate use of what he has laboured for.

This is similar to James 5:1-6. Where the wealthy were condemned because they withheld the wages of the poor. James might have been influenced by the writings of Josephus and some Old Testament teachings since he was also a Jew. Another interesting writing by Josephus is *Jewish Antiquities* 4:269:

And if he that gave the pledge is rich, let the creditor retain it till what he lent be paid him again; but if he be poor, let him that takes it return it before the going down of the sun, especially if the pledge be a garment, that the debtor may have it for a covering in his sleep, God himself naturally showing mercy to the poor.

This is parallel to James 2:5, 13 where it is shown that God has chosen the poor of this world as against the wealthy. And that the one who shows mercy will obtain mercy. God himself shows mercy to the poor. The definition of the word poor and poverty in Josephus and the usage are the same with what is obtainable in the Old and the New Testaments.

Are the poor seen in different perspective in the New Testament? The Greek words used in the New Testament as seen in the Epistle of James are *πτωχός*, “the word *πτωχός* is related to *πτώσσω*, meaning to ‘cringe’ or ‘crawl’” (Esler 1987: 180). The other Greek words are *πένης* or *ἐνδεής* to describe some one who was poor without being destitute” (1987: 180), and the verb *πτωχεύω*. “There are several passages which use ‘poor’ of people who are lowly in social status, the hungry, beggars, the politically powerless, and who have to depend on others’ mercy and help to survive e.g. James 2:3-6” (Kanagaraj 1997:45). It was obvious that “James warned the rich so harshly because they had hoarded wealth and refused to pay their workers (5:2-6)” (Gwamna 2008: 96). In Gwamna’s words the poor person is “one who is in need, one whose sustenance depends on others, one who lacks the minimum satisfaction necessary for subsistence, and therefore cannot attain fully the basic necessities in life towards human fulfilment.

The poor are simply dehumanized. They are the unheard voices, the burden bearers in all human experience and aspirations” (2008:17). *πτωχός* for James is one that is poor and cannot take care

of him/herself. They are always at the mercy of others. That was why they were discriminated against and exploited by the wealthy. The wealthy πλούσιοι dictated the public transcript in the time of James, and no one challenged them, but James came out to denounce them because of their attitudes toward the πτωχός. James did not use the other forms of the word poor: πένης or ἐνδεής these words also refer to the poor but their destitution is not on a par with that of the πτωχός. The πένης still has hope that things will change for him, unlike the πτωχός who apart from living in abject poverty, appears filthy or dirty, ῥυπαρός, while the wealthy are shiny, bright or radiant, λαμπρός, as James indicated. The poor for James are the ones that are trampled under the wealthy's foot stool, ὑπόπόδιον. It is a sign that the poor are oppressed, exploited and discriminated against. When James uses the word πτωχός he is referring to the physical poverty that his community members faced. And the majority of James' community members were peasants.

3.4 Peasants

I am looking at the peasants especially in Palestine. According to some scholars, “peasants are agriculturalists who control most of the land they work, produce for the market, and who have obligations to other social classes, while for others, they are farmers who lack control over the land, labour, and capital they need to produce crops.”⁴⁶ The peasants were always underrated and not honoured because of their situation in the community “Peasant communities are sometimes looked down upon by other social sectors who regard them as not only poor, ignorant, and subservient, but also backward, parochial, and closed.”⁴⁷ The peasant had little say in society; it was the wealthy that controlled the agenda. Malina and Pilch say, “In the first century, large landowners shaped the agenda of daily life for society at large. This sort of arrangement in which the majority of the people lived on the land, controlled by great landowners, is called a ruralised society” (2006:339). This agrees with James as he addresses the land owners and the merchants of his time who controlled the land by exploiting the poor. They add that “In the first century *civitas*

⁴⁶<http://science.jrank.org/pages/10621/Peasants-Peasantry-Defining-Modern-Peasantry.html>>Peasants and Peasantry - Defining The Modern Peasantry. Accessed 8/6/2010.

⁴⁷<http://science.jrank.org/pages/10621/Peasants-Peasantry-Defining-Modern-Peasantry.html>>Peasants and Peasantry - Defining The Modern Peasantry. Accessed 8/6/2010.

or *polis* was really a large, ruralised central place in which properly pedigreed ‘gentlemen/farmers, ranchers’ displayed and employed their unbelievable wealth in competitions for honour among each other” (2006:339). The peasants’ major work was to maintain the land; they have inherited this from their ancestors. It was a known fact that “peasants worked the land as their ancestors had always done; their lives were spent in small villages where kinship and loyalty were primary values” (Stanbaugh 1986:91). This means that in Palestine peasants were not free like the elites. Borg says that “the elites got their wealth from the peasants...peasants who were small landholders easily acquired debt and often lost their land to the elites to whom they were indebted” (1994: 102). But it was the peasants that decided on what to cultivate. “Populations that are existentially involved in cultivation and make autonomous decisions regarding the processes of cultivation are peasant” (Wolf 1969: xiv). “Peasant” –mean those who own their land and make decisions about what to grow and to those who work the lands of the rich.

Wolf’s analysis of peasant societies is of importance in showing that what James was addressing was actually happening in Palestine in his time. He tells us that peasants, to survive, have got to meet some specific needs of their own that are very crucial for their daily living. “In the lands they plough, they need to produce enough to meet needs like replacement funds, ceremonial funds and other related funds. Replacement fund is the fund that the peasant needs to replace his crops, to exchange for other crops he/she does not produce in his/her field and yet needed as food for the family, he/she needs to exchange some to be able to buy clothes for the whole family, and also to get some new tools for his/her work” (Wolf 1966:6). The ceremonial fund would include things like the marriages of own children, funerals of relatives and observing religious ritual of various kinds. Funds for these ceremonies and other feasts need to be covered by what he/she can produce from the field. There is also, what is called the rent fund which was supposed to cover the renting of the field from the landlord. “Peasant societies are forced by the ruling class to produce a surplus, which supports the ruling class and its retainers and soldiers in the cities” (Draper 1994:29-42). All of these needs are met from the surplus of the peasants and there is no other income. If the rent exceeds their surplus, it will obviously eat into their replacement and ceremonial fund, and then they will be forced to borrow from those very landlords and thus get deeper and deeper into debt until they lose their land and even the tools they work with. Draper says, “The economic pressure on the peasantry placed by the aristocracy was in turn exploited by the aristocracy, who loaned out money to desperate peasants and eventually

obtained their land and their persons in debt-slavery. Land deprivation and debt meant desperation for peasants” (1994:29-42).

According to Draper, “Peasants simply were not free to assemble at will, act at will or speak their minds at will. Their activity, movements and language are patrolled by the ruling elite, for whom not only acts which challenge the system are a threat, but even appearances are important in the maintenance of control” (1995:185 citing Scott 1990: 14-15). Moxnes says that “a typical element in peasant economy thus is the limited amount of power available to control one’s situation. Not only power, but all other resources were in limited supply” (1998: 76). Peasant life is so difficult that “if one is a peasant and belongs to a village, there are certain social obligations within this community, and a failure to meet them may result in a loss of status and honour” (1998: 82).

Lenski, writes, “The burden of supporting the state and privileged classes fell on the shoulders of the common people and especially on the peasant farmers who constituted a substantial majority of the population...taxes levied on the more prosperous segments of the population were usually shifted to the peasants and urban artisans by one means or another” (1966:267). Wolf’s analysis helps realize that the rich would create a system by which the poor would borrow money and other necessities from them, and thus creating a vicious cycle of debt by the poor to the rich. Because the poor would never be able to repay the debt, the rich would take them to court and probably through bribery and other similar means, they would use courts as a legal way of expropriating the peasants’ land, hence creating a corrupt system of dependency and cheap labour. Poor people are usually not familiar with the functioning of the legal system. It does not matter to them as long as they have their basic needs satisfied and land tenure was the sole guarantee for them to function normally. To drag them into court is to take them into a world in which they cannot win. Thus, it would always benefit the rich to drag the poor to court, especially knowing that they have no means of repaying whatsoever debt no matter how small. That was why the prophets were against the wealthy in the Old Testament: “the great biblical prophets had invoked divine judgment against kings as well as against royal officials for exploiting the peasantry and especially for bringing into debt and forcing them off the land (e.g. Amos 5:10-12, Micah 3:1-4)” (Horsley 1987:247). The rich knew that by lending whatever the poor needed, they were in fact gaining access to the land they needed for their unscrupulous gains and false profit. If the land of the peasant is not taken

from him/her by means of paying a debt, it would still be taken by means of a given rich person deciding through the legal system to establish jurisdiction over them, forcing them to pay dues that are determined by him/her. Lenski observes that “on many occasions, conditions became so oppressive that it was impossible to eke out a livelihood and the peasants were forced to flee the land which in most cases was their own” (1966:271). This means that either way the poor would be on the losing side, because for them land is a natural possession for which they would never think of registering in order to secure a permanent tenure without interference. It is worth noting that even in these modern days, it is usually the rich that will take the poor to court, because they are the ones who can afford to pay the best lawyers, and get the judges on their side. The poor are still not well versed on court subjects, they hardly think of a court, and whenever they do, court procedures and expenses get in their way and in the process; they always stay on the losing end. In peasant societies, as Horsley (1985) has argued, such a crushing control of the poor by the elite landowners results in social banditry. The disaffected and disinherited peasants take to the mountains and forests to rob the rich and engage in a kind of forcible redistribution of wealth (cf. Draper 1994: 29-42). In Palestine exploitation extends even to the synagogue “the wealthy exploited synagogue members legally through the court system, here they defraud illegally, outside the courts, evidently simply because they are powerful enough to get away with it.”⁴⁸ If the peasants do not rebel or resist the domination by the wealthy, they lose everything they depend on for their livelihood.

The problem of the peasants is not only peculiar to Palestine but it is also practiced in Nigeria. Gavva which is the area of my study is a peasant society. The local people engage in subsistence farming and that is what keeps them for a year. In Nigeria, there are two seasons: the rainy and the dry seasons. It is during the rainy season that the peasants cultivate their crops. What does happen is that when the peasants cultivate and harvest their crops, they take it to local markets to sell. And in these local markets what they produce is bought by the wealthy at a lower price. This means that the peasants do not gain anything but always lose. The wealthy that bought the farm produce will keep it until the price goes up. When the price goes up, the peasant will still come to buy it at a higher price because they need food to eat. That is how the wealthy exploit the peasants in the local area. And still during the rainy season, the wealthy operate large farms; most of the farming

⁴⁸ <http://www.nazerene.org>. Accessed 30/3/2010

in Nigeria is not mechanized like in South Africa. It is the hired peasants that till the land however large and in the end, they are paid a meagre amount. This is a form of exploitation that the peasants face sometimes by their fellow Christian brethren. Apart from being hired they also pay taxes on their farm produce, on the animals that they rear. This makes the peasants live a perpetual life of poverty.⁴⁹ In this type of situation, it is difficult for the peasants to cultivate enough crops for themselves and the growing population. Another factor the peasants face is lack of fertilizer and the land has already become infertile. The land needs fertilizer to be able to be cultivated but the fertilizer is controlled by the wealthy, who buy it at a subsidized price from the government and sell at an exorbitant price to the local peasants. Some of the peasants have to buy the fertilizer on credit, and this makes them to be debtors to the wealthy, when they are not able to pay their debts their land is seized by the wealthy. Because of this, the peasants find it difficult to have good harvests and take care of their needs. They always take blame for what they are not responsible and no one stands up for them. The community and society should change their attitude toward the poor.

Therefore, there are many problems militating against the peasants' life. What is happening today in Gavva area is not different from what the peasants experienced in the first century in Palestine though there is a gap of two thousand years. Because of these factors facing the peasants, they become gangs, thugs, and militants etc. in order to face or terrorize the wealthy and government officials. And many go into kidnapping the wealthy in order to get ransom paid to them to be able to earn a living. The peasants behave like the bandits in the first century Palestine. It means that they become indebted to the wealthy against their wishes. And hence, the peasants do not have honour in the society as they are powerless.

3.5 Honour and shame

James in his epistle was hard on the wealthy because of the way they were accepted in the church. The wealthy were given a place that was splendid or appropriate, *καλῶς* because they are honoured, while the poor were despised and discriminated against (cf. 2:1-3). The wealthy are

⁴⁹ <http://www.nazerene.org>. Accessed 30/3/2010

given the place of honour by the ushers while the poor are given the seat of shame. James as a Jew knows what he is confronting as he writes to his community members.

The Greek word for honour is *τίμη, τιμάω*; these words mean esteem and recognition. “Honour is fundamentally the public recognition of one’s social standing” (Moxnes in Rohrbaugh 1996: 20). There is an ascribed honour which is inherited from the family and acquired honour which is conferred on the basis of virtuous deeds. “When someone’s claim to honour is recognized by the group, honour is confirmed, and the result is a new social status” (Moxnes 1996: 20). The Greek words for causing shame is *ἀίσχρός* and for dishonour, *ἀτιμία*.

Honour was a limited good - related to control of scarce resources including land, crops, livestock, political clout, and female sexuality. Being a limited good, honour gained was always honour taken from another. Legitimate honour that was publicly recognized opened doors to patrons; honour withheld cut off access to the resources patron (sic) could bestow... (Malina and Pilch 2006:369).

Those that are accorded honour in the society are the ones that control the public transcript. Honour is something that is displayed publicly and shame is not something that is required to be public. It is also seen that “Fame and honour are a most precarious possession, tossed about on the reckless tempers and flighty words of careless men” (Malina and Pilch 2006:368 citing Esler 1995). Since honour earns public prestige, that makes the wealthy and the elite seek for it in whatever way they can. The wealthy did that because at that time, “Honour was public reputation. It was name or place. It was one’s status or standing in the community together with the public recognition that was all important” (Malina and Pilch 2006:368). That is why the wealthy want to be honoured by any means. “To claim honour that was not publicly recognized was to play the fool. To grasp more honour than the public would allow was to be a greedy thief. To hang on to what honour is, one had to be essential to life itself” (Malina and Pilch 2006:368). Honour could also mean the way one is looked up to or looked down upon. “Honour means the extent to which a person is looked up to or looked down on, regarded as a sort of person to be admired or emulated or, on the other hand, treated with contempt” (1985: 140). Honour and shame always go together. “Honour and shame were forms of social evaluation in which both men and women were

constantly compelled to assess their own conduct and that of their own fellows in relation to each other” (Malina and Pilch 2006:369). But do the poor have anything to evaluate? They do not have that privilege as they are not left with anything.

In Gavva area, the poor do not have honour, no one respects them; they are despised and relegated to the background in the society. Most of the peasants in the area are poor, they are only exploited. They always live a life of shame because of the maltreatment they receive from the wealthy. This happens because they live in poverty. Whatever the poor need they have to run to the wealthy members in the community to get. When one depends for his source of life on another person, there is no way such a person will be honoured. On any occasion or social gathering that takes place in the area, the ones that are honoured can be seen in the way they are treated, the seats they are given, the type of food and drink they are served, the respect they gain. In fact, even in the worship service, once a wealthy person comes in, a special seat or place is given to such a person whether male or female. This confirms what Malina and Pilch say, the poor eat only with the poor; they sit with the poor, chat with the poor because of their status. The poor do not eat with the wealthy or chat with the wealthy. Remember, we are dealing with the Church of the Brethren where these things are not supposed to happen because of our heritage or church tradition. Every person deserves to be honoured, the wealthy or the poor. But the poor always live a life of shame in the society. I have seen this happen in Gavva area; this can also be confirmed in chapter six where I have data analysis and presentation of the facts from the field research I conducted.

3.6 Patronage and Clientage

The issue of the patron-client relationship is a widespread phenomenon in the Mediterranean world and can certainly be dated even before the Epistle of James was written. The world in which the church of James existed was highly stratified⁵⁰ and it consisted of five separate groups. “The

⁵⁰ Gavva area is a peasant society, like Galilee in the first century, as many scholars studying the “historical Jesus” today have shown (e.g. Horsley, Crossan, Borg etc.). The analysis of Galilee, where the peasants were discriminated against, exploited and oppressed, resonates with the situation in my context. I argue that the author of the Epistle of James comes from Galilee and, based on his origin, is aware of the condition of the peasants and of the context of the recipients of the Epistle. Therefore this research will study the Epistle of James arguing that it addresses issues in its own context which are similar to and will be of help in my own context, particularly since the Epistle of James is a key text in the life of the Church of the Brethren .

lowest groups were the slaves, the landless people that survived on local jobs when they found them. Then the tenant farmers who once owned land, but were forced to sell to the wealthy land owners. There were also the merchants and traders. At the top, were the large land owners, including the priestly class who owned large farms worked by the tenant farmers. Each of these social and economic classes was part of the church and this social reality created certain problems” (Gorman 2004:5).⁵¹ While Gorman is probably correct that the church attracted members from each of these groups, it seems to have consisted mostly of the poor urban underclasses and peasants. Those who worked the land were slaves, hired laborers, tenants, or small land owners living in poverty, never more than a step from financial ruin. There is also this classification which is similar to the one above starting from the highest class: “Senators, Equestrians, Commons, Freed people and lastly Slaves.”⁵² A new modified chart of Lenski (1966) in Tamez classifies it this way from the top: Emperor (Ruling and Urban Elite classes), merchants and shopkeepers, artisans, day labourers and slaves. Below the slaves are the impure and degraded (Tamez 2009:115). The reader of James can deduce that most of the members in the church consisted of the oppressed people. Those who oppressed were prone to emulate those outside the church by trying to obtain power and authority within the church. This could be seen in chapters 1, 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 which deal with the poor and the rich, the oppressed and the oppressors. This struggle for power created schisms because poorer members tried to gain favour with wealthy members and to hold back on their economic support for more needy members. And the merchants in Palestine who exploited the peasants were just like the wealthy that exploit or oppress the peasants in our society today notwithstanding the 2000 years gap between our time and the first century Palestine, though of course the social and cultural conditions are different. Draper, speaking of economic conditions in modern Africa describes it well when he says “The weight of poverty is creating despair and apathy in most of us, while the small elite of the wealthy and often corrupt leaders gets very wealthy” (2003:80). In this situation of unequal power relations, the elite is in a position to use its control of economic relations to become brokers between the poor and the system to their further economic advantage. That is why the issue of

⁵¹ The Greco-Roman Banquet as a Social Institution by Dennis E. Smith www.philipharland.com/meals/2003 (accessed 25/8/2009) and Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the crucified Lord: a theological introduction to Paul and His Letters* (2004).

⁵² <http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/socialclass.html>. Accessed on the 7/9/2009.

patronage was a common practice in Palestine. That was why James was against any worldly patron. For James, God is the supreme patron to the poor and the oppressed and they are His clients.⁵³ Though God is seen as a Patron⁵⁴ in James, he is not like the human patron who exploits the poor. God as the supreme Patron provides for his people generously and that is why James expects his community to also give generously to the poor, orphans and widows but not to exploit them as seen in the moral economy of his community. According to Malina and Pilch:⁵⁵

Patron-client systems are socially fixed relations of generalized reciprocity between social unequals in which a lower-status person in need (called a client) has his or her needs met by having recourse for favours to a higher-status, well situated person (called a patron). By being granted the favour, the client implicitly promises to pay back the patron whenever and however the patron determines. By granting the favour, the patron, in turn, implicitly promises to be open for further requests at unspecified later times (2006:382-383).

It is obvious that the patron is seen as superior while the client as inferior but it is not supposed to be so in the generalized reciprocity. This happens in the balanced reciprocity where the patron expects something in return from the client. “By entering a patron-client arrangement, the client relates to his patron as to a superior and more powerful kinsman, while the patron sees to his client as to his dependents” (2006:383). In a patron-client relationship, loyalty and commitment are expected from the client. This type of relationship is also characterized by roles and powers belonging to the patron. Elliot emphasizes that “a patron is one who uses his or her influence to protect and assist some other person who becomes the patron’s client. In return, this client provides to the patron certain valued services” (1996: 148-149). This is balanced reciprocity

⁵³ The position of James is dealt with in chapter four as part of exegesis.

⁵⁴ But Alicia Batten (2004: 257-272) in ‘God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?’ sees God much more as benefactor than a patron. She argues that benefactor has desires for help not repayment; a benefactor is a father without self interest. She further stressed that a patron waits for honour from his clients. Most scholars do not see difference between a patron and a benefactor especially when the term patron is referred to God.

⁵⁵ This links up with the article by Draper on the moral economy of the *Didache* alluded to in chapter four.

where patron and client are involved and benefit from one another though not at an equal level. It means that in this type of relationship the client becomes subject to the patron for life as the client also enjoys other privileges. “The client in this relationship remains under the power *potestas* and within the *familia* of the patron for life. He or she owes the patron a variety of services and is obligated to enhance the prestige, reputation, and honour of his or her patron in public and private life” (Elliott 1996: 149). Then this will lead to honour for the patron. “In this reciprocal relationship a strong element of solidarity linked to personal honour and obligations is informed by the values of friendship, loyalty, and fidelity” (Elliott 1996: 149). Though patronage seems to be voluntary, it goes with exploitation of the client. This then could not be a reciprocal relationship as the patron benefits more and the client only gains a little from it. The gain by the client is mainly in terms of protection and support. These patrons lived in cities or towns and would be patrons of some given rural areas where peasants laboured and lived. In this way, even if there was no dependency in terms of land ownership which was rare at that time, there would still be the relations of patron-client to feed, and peasants are always the ones that make the provision. They have got to give to the patron whatever they can to be sure of his/her protection. This is also what happens in the moral economy in James’ community where the rich serve as patrons to the poor in their community but in turn they exploit the poor.

The issue of patron and client still exists in our context in Nigeria in every aspect of life. And it is always true that the client is below the patron. This is also confirmed by Mbamalu (2011:59-67), although her analysis is of patron-clientage in the socio-economic relations of Yoruba culture, it applies equally to Gavva culture. Because the client depends on the patron for livelihood and protection in the society, he or she has to be answerable to the patron. In our context we normally refer to the patron as the “god-father.” When one needs anything in the society and one is poor he/she has to rely on the god-father in order to get what they want. This happens even in the church, the poor has to find protection from their god-father. On the other hand, the client also works for the god-father in order to find the protection for him or their family.

But the practice of patronage is commonly found today in Gavva area, where especially the Hausas want to be treated as the patrons, and any other tribe as the client. “Muslim Hausa⁵⁶ social

⁵⁶ Hausa is the major tribe in Northern Nigeria. And the language Hausa is commonly spoken among the minority tribes. Though Gavva area has its own language but because of the domineering attitude of Hausa people, they made the area to speak Hausa and worship in the church is also conducted in Hausa.

organization is characterized by a complex system of stratification, based on occupation, wealth, birth, and a patron-client relationship” (1947: 193). This is what is said about Gavva area “when we examine the domains of language choice, speakers from the villages of Gavva and Bubayagwa say they use some Hausa in the fields and with some friends of the same age. In Gavva, one can even hear Hausa in the home” (Hamm 2004:17). It is evident among the Hausas that:

Occupational specialties are ranked and tend to be hereditary to the extent that the first son is expected to follow his father’s occupation. Wealth gives its possessor a certain amount of prestige and power, especially in forming ties of patronage. One’s status is also determined by the status of one’s family. Finally, all Hausa men are caught up in a network of patron-client ties that permeates the society. Patron-client ties are used as means of access to favours and power” (Greenberg 1947: 193).

And most of the peasants in Gavva area are clients of one person or the other. They do not have any choices to make, because they do not have power to do that. Whatever the patron says, that is what they do. This could be seen as I have elaborated it in the moral economy of James and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren. The issue of patron and client is not only peculiar to the first century Palestine, but it is a common practice today. “Patronage-clientage is one of the gem components of Hausa-Fulani culture. In fact, it drives the practice of authority at all levels of life private and public in Hausa-Fulani culture. Amongst them, patronage-clientage is normative and proper. So is autocracy in the practice of authority. The problem is that neither autocratic authority patterns, nor patronage-clientage is the right or proper staple of democratic statecraft” (Ejiogu 2010). The Hausas take pride in the patron-client system of life. But the minority tribes under their domination see it as an exploitative relationship.

3.7 Conclusion

We have seen what poverty and the poor mean in the first century Palestine, and what is happening in Nigeria and Gavva area in particular. It is also clear that the treatment the poor or the peasants receive is similar. The issue of honour and shame, patronage and clientage is also a practice that is common today in Gavva area. This is because the wealthy are always honoured while the poor are always put to shame. It is not difficult to recognize the wealthy person from the poor. From the invitations, the wealthy receive for attending church programmes one can decipher what is happening. The church does not check the source of wealth of the wealthy; all they are

interested in is to get the material resources from the wealthy. Some of the wealthy members stole from government treasury, but they are honoured and given positions in the church because of what they offer to the church and the pastor. The pastors are supposed to stand like James in addressing this menace in the church, but they are not able to do that. Rather the wealthy are given better places to sit in the church. This is confirmed in the study of the moral economy of James and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren with emphasis to Gavva area.

Chapter four

4.1 Background to the Epistle of James

The Epistle of James is appropriate for this research as it is concerned with social justice and the life of the rural poor. We cannot fail to notice that James is on the side of the poor people whom he addresses. His sympathy lies with them. Who are these poor? They are the hard-working people of the land. They are referred to as ὁ ταπεινός and ὁ πλούσιος as explained below. At this stage I will look at the authorship, date and the recipients of the Epistle of James as it relates to the life of the urban poor and the moral economy of James' community.

Authorship has to be the first priority. Even if the first verse is an "interpolation" (Davids 1983:6), "James, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ" must provide the starting point for discussion. Some scholars agree that the author of the work is James, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ (Moo 1985: 19; Hartin 1988:319; Maynard-Reid 1987:7; Davids 1983:38; Tamez 1992:22). Their argument is based on the premises that the author must be a prominent figure and this fits with James the brother of Jesus. Other scholars like Kümmel and Dibelius do not accept that the author was James, the Lord's brother (1965:290; 1976:17). The author did not give information about himself. But if he was not well known or had his authority not been generally recognized, it is unlikely that his views would have been committed to writing, preserved or deemed worthy of further development for publication. If James, the brother of Jesus, is the author, this means that the origin of the letter is firmly within a Jerusalem setting and that the letter could have been written anytime in the twenty years or so preceding the martyrdom of James in the city in 62 C.E. (Josephus, *Ant.* XX.9.1). Moo also agrees that James died in 62 C.E. after he was stoned by the scribes and Pharisees because he did not renounce his allegiance to Christ (1985:20).

Some scholars are of the view that the epistle was originally anonymous, and later attributed to James. Not only does this suffer from the same criticisms as the pseudonymous view receives, but it also has the additional problem of a late start in life: that is to say, it starts out as anonymous, then becomes pseudonymous. Authorship by James is questioned mainly on the ground that James, presumably an uneducated Galilean, could not have the ready command of the Greek language which the letter displays (it is regarded as one of the most outstanding examples of Greek in the New Testament). Williams claims that the members of the "carpenter's family" could

conceivably have left literary relics, although he is sceptical - "But is it really probable?" (Williams 1965:94). In addition, it is pointed out that, "Old Testament references are from the Greek Septuagint rather than from the Masoretic Text and familiarity with Greek idioms, philosophy and literary style (rhetoric/diatribes)." (Martin 1988:xxi) suggests that the author was one whose mother tongue was Hellenistic Greek, although, again, one needs to recognize the difficulty of such a knowledge of Greek in rural Galilee. However, it is not unlikely that the position of Galilee on the main north-south trade routes would have resulted in considerable familiarity with Greek or even bi-lingualism among the Jewish people in this region, as I would argue. In addition, the author makes no mention of any relationship with Jesus as his own brother. On the other hand, James was a prominent figure and would not need such a kinship link with Jesus for him to be accepted as an authority. Regarding dating, possibilities range from 63 C.E. to 130 C.E.. Various scholars have tabulated similarities with the Gospels, particularly of Matthew, "which is regarded as having been written in Antioch (Syria) around 66-68 C.E." (Hiebert 1975:16). But if James the brother of Jesus died before 62 C.E., then I tend to go with the scholars who indicate that the Epistle should be dated before 62 C.E. not between 63-130 C.E. as indicated above. "It would seem appropriate to date the book prior to the Jerusalem conference of 50 C.E.. A date of around 48 would seem reasonable."⁵⁷ This letter is addressed to the "twelve tribes in the diaspora." *διασπορά* comes from the verb *διασπείρω* and refers to the twelve tribes (cf. Matt 19:28; Acts 26:7) scattered abroad. It indicates most naturally, in my opinion, Jewish Christians of the Diaspora, those who were living outside Palestine (Hiebert 1975:32-34. Cf. Martin 1988:8-11). James knew nothing of the ten so-called "lost tribes;" he regarded Israel in its unity and completeness as consisting of twelve tribes. The twelve tribes mentioned above scattered because of persecution of the early followers of Jesus, so that the use of the title is metaphorical. These people were faced with poverty and were exploited by the wealthy, and James needed to encourage them amidst their suffering as argued below.

James, like Jesus probably lived a good part of his life in the rural environs of Nazareth. While there is nothing to indicate that he left Jerusalem after the establishment of the church there, he is known to have communicated with those outside the city. "James' views could also have been disseminated to followers of Jesus throughout Palestine, who had not migrated to the city and it is

⁵⁷ <http://www.datingthenewtestament.com/James.htm>. Accessed on the 17/9/2009.

further suggested that his homilies could have been written down for visitors to Jerusalem who wished to take his words back to their home churches” (Davids 1983:17). The historical situation revealed in the letter reflects both urban and rural situations, because of James’ concern for the various situations Christians found themselves in and which he addresses in his letter. Merchants were active in the former setting. They were the “materialist core of the contemporary bourgeois prosperity” (Adamson 1976:178). Although Jerusalem itself was not a trade centre, the “Temple trade” was lucrative and many merchants could afford to live in Jerusalem part of the time” (Martin 1988:lxvi). In agreement with Martin, Draper also says, “There were large royal estates owned by absentee Herodian nobility, many of whom would be living in Jerusalem” (1994:29-42). From the knowledge of his environment comes the graphic detail of the exploitation of landless labourers and debt-bound, tenant farmers, forced to sell their land to grasping landlords (5:4). The denunciation of the landowners would further disturb the Sadducean “establishment” at Jerusalem, which was comprised of “both landowners and entrepreneurs in the world of commerce, trade and agriculture” (Martin 1988:lxvi).

This overall picture of dire poverty and oppression is attested by the collections Paul made for relief of the poor in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30, Rom 15:25f, 1 Cor 16:1ff). Those oppressed were the most likely recruiting ground of the dissident movement. “We have found it to be the frequent lot of James’ readers to be in economic hardship, even poverty because of persecution” (Stulac 1993:90). There is preferential treatment of the wealthy in James’ community. “The possibility of preferential treatment toward the rich was a realistic issue for James to address” (1993:90). The Zealot movement which precipitated the wars of the 60s, which eventually led to the fall in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., gained adherents from this class and from the lower clergy in Jerusalem itself. Martin suggests that one of the main excuses for the death of James was the threat his “popular image” posed to the Sadducean party led by Ananus (1988:lxv). Though James was a peasant from Galilee, he seemed to challenge the elite of his time. The elite would not want non-elite like James to be popular. This shows that the peasants must have a way of defending themselves in the society. Draper argues that “social-religious movements among the peasants are key to the defence and mobilization of this moral economy” and cites Scott as saying: “This symbolic refuge is not simply a source of solace, an escape. It represents an alternative moral universe in embryo—a dissident sub-culture, which helps unite its members as a human community” (Draper 2011:1).

James would have been aware of such a movement, but his words make clear his detestation of violence whether physical, verbal or by oath, which became a main feature of the Zealot movement (e.g. James 2:6f, 3:6, 4:1f, 5:6, 12). The exact reasons for his death cannot be ascertained, but it is possible that his “withering and scornful reproach” of merchants struck a chord in the conscience of such men, for they exemplified the kind of religion that James denounces throughout the Epistle - especially if any were “connected to the Sadducean ruling elite who had a vested political interest in quelling popular protest or unrest” (Martin 1988:lxvi). Martin states that this frankness was not without risk and that James paid the price. “Ananus II reacted violently to James’ eschatological denunciations of the rich and influential...and had him killed” (1988:lxix). Dual Jerusalem-Galilean life settings would therefore seem the most appropriate for this letter, in that James was aware of the dynamics of both situations and writes to Christians in both contexts to give them advice in their affliction. These pieces of information do appear to form a coherent picture of the life and times of the Epistle. The critique of discrimination in the church by James in his Epistle is relevant to the life and time of my church. Discrimination occurs today in both the urban and rural churches, as was the case in the Jerusalem-Palestinian life setting of the Epistle of James.

4.2 Introduction

James is an apostle that who wants to bring change in his community. He has a heart for the poor that made him unwilling to conform to the social system that enhanced discrimination in his time. Moxnes says, “In all societies there have been inequalities in the distribution of wealth, power, and privilege” (1988:26), but this is particularly true in a peasant society dominated by patron-client relations. The peasants were exploited in James’ time, they lacked justice. The peasants see this in terms of moral economy. The moral economy in this context means the communal and profitable standards of a disadvantaged group of people who understood themselves as community members. Moxnes adds, “It is their notion of economic justice and their working definitions of exploitation-their view of which claims on their product were tolerable and which intolerable” (1988:80). The peasants in James’ time also had a common goal and put themselves together as a community that had a common value. This could also be alluded to as the moral economy. It could also be added that “The cooperative arrangements of sharing resources, mutual aid, and the spreading of risk among the communities in agricultural societies have been

called ‘the moral economy of the peasant’” (Horsley 2009:36, drawing on the work of Scott 1976; 1985; 1990). This was what made them to have their community; the economy is moral in that economic relations are embedded in social relations legitimated by the cultural system of the Old Testament. In theory, all the families in the community are guaranteed an economic subsistence, but it works only so long as the community themselves still control the resources to make it possible. Though Draper speaks about the community of the *Didache*, what he says is relevant to James’ community, “Peasant village communities, on the other hand, are notoriously closed and cautious about outsiders. This is not to say that there are no elite representatives or outsiders in such rural peasant villages, but that those that are there remain outsiders, no matter how long they live there.”⁵⁸ Draper explains that, “The elite were more concerned with status and expansion of land holdings than accumulation of capital, while the peasants were concerned with survival and the maintenance of the social and moral order.”⁵⁹ But James shows that while God does not exploit or discriminate as He is impartial, human patrons are not perfect; they discriminate and exploit the poor. The teachings of the *Didache* in 4:3-4; 3:9 are parallel to James’ teaching on how God is impartial and generous and requires His people to be the same (1:17 and 2:1). This was clear in James’ approach to those that show oppression to the poor. The poor are the oppressed and the rich are their oppressors. James’ accusation and judgment against the wealthy as seen in chapters 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 will be explored.

James emphasizes God’s concern for the poor and for that reason, they must not be exploited, and the wealthy should not obtain their riches from exploitation and oppression of the poor in the community. “The moral economy of the peasants thus strives to keep community intact, in possession of the means of subsistence, so that it does not become vulnerable to exploitation by outside power holders” (Horsley 2009: 37). This holds true with the moral economy in James as indicated in the table below.

⁵⁸ Jonathan A. Draper (2011) “The Moral Economy of the Didache”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67(1), Art. #907, 10 pages. DOI: 10.4102/hts.v67i1.907.

⁵⁹ Jonathan A. Draper (2011).

James indicates clearly that the God of Hosts is a God of justice and does not show discrimination. For that reason, James shows in 5:1-6 how God will punish the wealthy by destruction following them. He shows how the wealthy will cry, their wealth will rust and be moth-eaten (cf. ὀλολύζω, σητόβρωτος, and κατιόω) as argued below. He is using these terms figuratively to present what the wealthy will face if they discriminate against the poor, withhold their wages and oppress them.

James sides with the poor, as he is against the privileges that the wealthy enjoyed (2:1-13), and he also shows how the poor suffer humiliation, exploitation καταδυναστεύω and being dragged (ἔλκω) to court (2:6-7). The text was clear on how the social and economic system of his time operates as there was unjust treatment to the poor by the wealthy. James' concern was to address this vice that was going on in his community.

4.3 Background to the Main Texts

Before undertaking my main exegesis, I have looked at some important verses in chapter one that provide the background to the texts I have exegeted. These verses are the basis for the moral economy in the Epistle of James as they explain about the generous nature of God to His own people. I begin with 1:5 which shows a general trait of God. God gives to everyone generously. Generously could mean single-mindedly in contrast to the double-minded in 1:7 a person that is an antithesis of all that God is and wants. God gives without reproof to anyone that asks. And 1:6-8 emphasises that one should never doubt God when asking. The double-minded never please God and cut themselves off from God's help. 1:9-11 This section introduces James' contrast of the terms ὁ ταπεινός and ὁ πλούσιος and shows that those that are humble can rejoice now that God will lift them up. But those who define themselves by their wealth rather than by their relationship to God can rejoice in their humiliation (this could be present or eschatological). Believers can trust God to right the wrongs that the oppression wreaks in this world. 1:13-18 indicates that God shows his intention toward His people. God is not to blame for one's temptations. Every good gift comes from God above, and so God's community should not be confused. James shows God's unchanging nature as a generous giver. Verse 16 shows that God is the source of various things underscored by his duplication of πάς· πάντα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον. James manages both to highlight the completeness of God's

giving with the double use of *πας* and to highlight the gift nature by the synonyms *δόσις* and *δώρημα*. This is not the same as the outcome of endurance in 1:12 (the “crown of life”) but the sum total of every good aspect of life that cannot be earned, such as wisdom (1:5) and redemption (1:18). The community members of James are called to imitate God’s character. 1:27 shows God’s action to human response and what God expects from them: to visit orphans and widows and to be pure. Purity includes: good speech, economics, prayer and wisdom in contrast to double-minded (*δίψυχος*). This is God’s character. The verse also commands human generosity by visiting the poor and helpless. The humble will be lifted up by doing this, when the wealthy identify themselves with the poor.

4.3.1 Dealing with the texts (2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6)

In this section I will do the exegesis of the texts 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 . I will start with my own translation of each of the texts.

4.3.2. James 2:1-13⁶⁰

1 My brethren, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, do not show partiality. ² For if a man with gold ring comes into your meeting in clean clothing and a poor man in dirty clothing also comes in, ³ and if you look up to the one wearing the clean clothing and you say to him, ‘You sit here in a good seat’ and if you say to the poor man ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit here under my foot stool’, ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brethren: did God not choose the poor of the world to be rich in faith and inheritors of the kingdom which he promised to the ones loving Him? ⁶ But you dishonoured the poor man. Are the rich ones not oppressing you and dragging you into courts? ⁷ Are they not the ones blaspheming the good name invoked over you? ⁸ If you indeed fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, ‘You will love your neighbour as yourself’, you are doing well ⁹ But if you show partiality, you commit sin,

⁶⁰ The following is my personal translation of 2:1-13. I translated it as literally as possible.

and are being convicted by the law as transgressors¹⁰ For whoever should keep the whole law but fails at one point has become guilty of all. ¹¹ For the one who said, ‘You should not commit adultery’, also said, ‘You should not murder’, and if you do not commit adultery but you murder, you have become a transgressor of law. ¹² So speak and so act, as those that are to be judged through the law of freedom. ¹³ For judgment without mercy will be shown to the one that has not shown mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

In doing the exegesis, I have followed the three main texts 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 according to the verses. This enables me to analyze the words used by James in addressing the community.

4.3.3 Introduction to James 2:1-13

The happenings in this pericope deal more with James’ community not the outsiders. Felder, writing on this pericope suggests that “the discourse on acts of class discrimination provides a basis for considering James 2:1-13 as a unit” (1990:120). Also, Edgar says that “2:1-13 deals with the attitudes and judgments of the addressees” (2001:167). It is shown that “throughout the whole 2:1-11, James is concerned about their attitude toward others, referred to in the prepositional phrase ἐν προσωπολημψίαις”⁶¹ (George 2001: 62). James introduces the idea of class discrimination in 2:1 and returns to it in 2:9. “James 2 seeks to dissuade his community members from showing discrimination...” (Watson in Webb and Kloppenborg 2007: 102). James shows that “The reception of the rich man and the poor man in 2:1-13 by the church is an example of discrimination” (2007:103). While James 2:1-13 constitutes a unified body of thought, this pericope appears to be arranged into two large subdivisions: verses 1-7 and 8-13, each with possibility of further subdivision. The first unit considers acts of social class discrimination among those who profess Christian faith. The second unit continues to discuss discrimination, but now in direct relation to royal law.

In this pericope, James deals more directly with the issue that affects the poor. Maynard-Reid notes that “unlike the other passages where the emphasis is on the condemnation of the rich, James 2:1-13 protests the actions of those who lack sensitivity to the poor and, in fact, pictures a

⁶¹ This also shows how God evaluates human beings without considering their positions in this world as human beings do.

display of prejudice on the part of some in favour of the rich” (1987:48). This seems to be addressed to the leaders of the Christian community to which James would have belonged. Only leaders⁶² in the community would have the tendency of choosing and discriminating against the poor and in favour of the rich, because they would be the first ones to benefit from the wealth of those rich people even if the poor would not in any way. That is why it is the wealthy that control the economy. Because of this, the poor always have to look for favour from the wealthy. They do this by becoming clients of the wealthy and the wealthy serve as patrons to them. Moxnes says, “Interaction between patron and client is based on simultaneous exchange of different types of resources. A patron has instrumental, economic, and political resources and can therefore give support and protection. A client, in return, can give promises and expressions of solidarity and loyalty” (Moxnes 1988:42). The client does not have any alternatives than to accept whatever the patron decides: “patron-client relations are based on a very strong element of inequality and difference in power. A patron has a monopoly on certain positions and resources that are of vital importance for his client” (1988:42). This is what normally happens in the balanced reciprocity by the community members as seen in the moral economy of James. That is why James sees God as the supreme patron because He does not treat his clients in the same way as a human patron would. God as a patron treats His people without partiality and He expects His followers to do same to the members of their community.

There are three main texts in James which deal with the presence of wealthy members in the community (1:10, 2:1-6 but 5:1-6 refers more to outsiders than insiders do). Hartin is of the opinion that “one can presume that right from the outset there were some rich members numbered among the Christian community (tax collectors...)” (1988:323). The vast majority of the community, however, are poor. Yet these few wealthy people who do belong to the community show that they are in danger of leaving their Christian calling owing to the overwhelming attraction of the world (4:4). The wealthy are seen in the role of those who are responsible for the hardships within the community “Is it not the rich who oppress you, is it not they who drag you into court?” (2:6). Hartin contends that “the rich referred to here are not to be seen as members of

⁶² It is also possible that poorer people might also join in making a fuss of a rich man who entered their meeting, but this is not the focus in this text.

the community, but they are non Christian outsiders, probably Jews” (1988:323). His argument seems to be because “the oppressions and persecutions of the early Christians came from the hand of the Jewish leaders, particularly the wealthy Sadducees. They were the ones who arrested Peter and John in Acts 4:1-3” (1988:323). But one could not draw that conclusion as such because; the exploitation is not only done by the wealthy outsiders but also by the wealthy insiders. So this may be ambivalent as it could refer to insiders or outsiders as James is not explicit on this.

4.3.4 The Exegesis of James 2:1-13

2:1 The key word for my research in this verse is *προσωπολημψία*⁶³ Lohse points out that “from the Hebraism *λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον* the noun *προσωπολημψία* was formed (Rom 2:11, Eph 6:9, Col 3:25, James 2:1)” (1968:780). This is found for the first time in the New Testament but was probably in use already in Hellenistic Judaism. “*προσωπολημψία* is often used with reference to God’s judgment before which there is no respect of persons. Hence Jews and Gentiles are judged in the same way, (Rom 2:11)” (Lohse in TDNT 1968: 780). This could be seen in the generalized reciprocity as it relates to God who gives generously not only to members of James community but to all, and who judges negatively those who do not do the same. That is why James wants his community to behave like God in terms of generalized or balanced reciprocity in the moral economy. Maynard-Reid corroborates the fact that “the term *προσωπολημπτέω* and its cognates have been found only in Christian sources” (1987:49). He notes that James may have had in mind texts like Lev 19:15 “you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great”; Exod 23:3 “nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his suit,” when he used the term. He suggests that “James utilizes the phrase *ἐν προσωπολημψιαίς* to express the idea ‘with actions of discrimination’, that is ‘showing favouritism with respect of persons’” (1978:50). In the LXX *πρόσωπον λαμβάνω* is rendered as *nasar panim* in Hebrew, which literally means ‘receive the face.’ “The compound verb is *προσωπολημπτέω* found only in

⁶³ The origins of the metaphor *προσωπολημψία* refer to either a context of supplication or to the examination of slaves in a slave market since it is a Christian coined word but I could not reach a firm conclusion despite investigating the sources.

James 2:9, the adjective in Acts 10:34, and the adverb, with negative prefix, in 1 Peter 1:17” (Laws 1980:93). James uses the noun in the plural; this may be because he begins with a general condemnation of all forms of discrimination before giving a specific example, or even because it is felt that the exercise of discrimination is not a single exercise, “to discriminate in favour of one is to discriminate against another, to give special treatment to the rich is to deny it to the poor” (Laws 1980:93).

God does not single out Jews. As God has no regard to persons, so there should be no *προσωπολημψία* in the Christian community, so that discrimination is not compatible with their newfound faith in Christ (Buffel 2007:103-104). One cannot believe in Christ and at the same time show discrimination; instead community members are required to do good works which benefit the poor (cf. Buffel 2007:103). How this may happen is shown by the example of the despising of the poor man and the favouring of the rich. Edgar says that “this prohibition of partiality or bias for those who hold commitment or loyalty to the authority-figure of Jesus implies the accusation that such incompatible behaviour exists” (2001:114). And the church most times identifies itself with the wealthy as it benefits from them, but in doing so place themselves in opposition to God, since the poor will “inherit the earth.” As Davids (1982:34) observes, “It is often the case that an oppressed group takes on the characteristics of its oppressors”. Christians are instructed to show no discrimination, as they are expected not to show preferential treatment to the wealthy members of the community. Indeed, according to Laws, “the profession of Christian faith is inconsistent, indeed, incompatible with an attitude towards other people that discriminates against some and in favour of others” (1980:93). It is unthinkable to hold faith and exercise discrimination against the poor, since this is condemned even in the Old Testament where the poor are the special objects of God’s concern (Lev 19:15, Mal 2:9; cf. Ropes 2004:185) and their oppression is wholly uncharacteristic of God (Job 34:19).

Verse 1 also contains the second of the two clear references to Jesus in the whole epistle, for the faith with which discrimination is incompatible is faith in “the Lord of glory.” Ropes observes that, “The whole sentence is extremely awkward; being a string of genitives of which the last, *τῆς δόξης*, reads like an appendage without any clear connection with what precedes it” (2004:184-187). It has been suggested, therefore, as with 1:1, that the reference to Jesus Christ is an interpolation to Christianize the document, and that originally the definition of faith was that of

the Jew in “the Lord of glory”, Yahweh (cf. “the Lord of glory” in Acts 7:2). The text implies that it is self-evident that discrimination between people is foreign to His nature, and it is therefore intolerable in those who profess faith in him. This fits the context well and there is no textual reason for omitting the reference to Jesus. The title “Lord of glory” is not in any case so common a title for God in Judaism as to argue for its being the natural original reading for the verse. It seems best, Laws argues, then, to retain the phrase in full as an original part of the epistle, and to attempt to explain the connection of τῆς δόξης with what precedes it. It is important to note that “those who have the Lord Jesus Christ as their glory cannot have discrimination in their brotherhood (sic)” (Motyer 1985:83). The final phrase may be seen as adjectival, qualifying one of the preceding nouns: “the glorious Lord” but this would be to disrupt the self contained phrase “our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ropes sees it as “qualifying the whole, ‘our Lord Jesus Christ, but for that one would expect a different word order, with τῆς δόξης intervening between the first noun and the article” (2004:187). It can be deduced from the above that James 2:1 mentions Christian faith with a strongly negative view on acts of discrimination: “do not show discrimination as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” In this verse, James does not say what it is that constitutes acts of partiality or discrimination. James clearly believes that the poor have a very important place in the church because of the teaching of the Christian gospel:

True faith has no place for the social distinctions of the world. In fact, if a Christian church worship service should so much as consider these distinctions; it becomes act of evil and which means that they are siding with the wealthy outsiders that persecute Christians (Davids 1982:105).

2:2-3 According to Laws, the gold ring may signify more than just ordinary wealth. The use of the adjective χρυσοδακτύλιος suggests official social status, “for the gold ring was part of the insignia of the equestrian order, the second level of the Roman aristocracy” (1980:98). The gold ring also shows position of honour and one that is noble in the society. Manton says that “the gold ring was a badge of honour and nobility” (1998:187). It was mainly the wealthy that could afford to put on gold rings. “Gold Rings were the symbols of status for the aristocracy; it is the archetypal element of status and wealth. It literally means you carry your financial portfolio with you to show others up.”⁶⁴ Those that have the gold rings in their fingers could be seen as the

⁶⁴ Dr. Richard J. Krejcir 2004, *Into Thy Word Ministries*, www.intothyword.org. Accessed 29 August 2009.

dominant elite that dictate the public transcript in the community. This depiction of the wealthy man, notes Tamez, refers to his “power and wealth, whether or not he is a Roman official” (1990:28). Laws also suggests that James may be picturing a figure whose clothes have a gleam of colour or texture, or one whose spotless clean robes contrast forcibly with the πτωχός or ῥυπαρός. The expression in “clean clothes” seems to have been the customary term to indicate very expensive clothing, because the adjective λαμπρός literally means bright or shining. “λαμπρός refers either to glittering colour or ornaments, and in this case to the elegant clothes worn by the wealthy. In the description of the poor man, the adjective ῥυπαρός ‘filthy’ is better rendered ‘shabby’ since the focus is on the social status of the man as a beggar and therefore destitute, not upon a neglect of hygiene” (George 2001: 64). The word πτωχός in classical usage denotes a beggar or utterly destitute person, as distinct from a πενήτης, a man who had not property and therefore had to earn his own living. “The suggestion is that James is using πτωχός here in its full force” (1980:99). Davids’ observation is relevant here, namely that “while the noun πτωχός is used for the poor person, the term πλούσιος is not used for the wealthy one” (1982:108). Felder is of the opinion that if one could demonstrate that James portrays the two characters of his example as members of the community in question, perhaps we would have a clear sense of their identities or circumstances. What needs to be stressed here is the fact that James is strongly addressing the issue of partiality or discrimination against the poor in his community but he used the word Synagogue. This synagogue refers to the church worship service not a general court setting.

Constable agrees with this as he says that the term “synagogue meant a public worship service in early Christian literature, . . . in its early days the Church was predominantly poor and humble; and therefore if a rich man was converted, and did come to the Christian fellowship, there must have been a very real temptation to make a fuss of him, and to treat him as a special trophy for Christ.”⁶⁵ Synagogue as place of worship conveys precisely what my research intends. I agree with the scholars that the incident between the gold-fingered (rich) with the shabby (poor) took

⁶⁵ <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/James.pdf>. Constable cites William Barclay. Accessed 25/8/2009.

place in a church worship service. This is because I have established earlier in the chapter that the problem of discrimination took place in the church assembly. It is church assembly because James addresses his community members as “brothers.” He would not have addressed outsiders as “brothers.” It may be however, that the primary reference is to admission of the new members of the community. But here, both the wealthy man and the poor were not visitors; they could be part of the community coming together. Even in the same community when two people of different status come in, they would be given different treatment.

2:4 This verse deals with the community members that are expected to have balanced reciprocity. Those who practice favouritism are discriminatory in their thinking. Their minds are divided in that they do not consciously acknowledge what their own faith teaches them about right judgment and the inherent dignity and equality of all people. They are making distinctions among themselves solely on the basis of external appearance. They have turned their attention from the “glorious” Lord (2:1) to the material splendour of fine clothes and a gold ring. The community members have set themselves up as judges to determine who is most important and worthy of honour. The problem is that they have evil motives. We are moved to honour the rich over the poor because we know the poor cannot contribute anything to our material and social well-being. There may be personal gain to be realized from the wealthy, but not from the poor.

But scholars seem to agree that the unjust and discriminatory judges mentioned here have association with the Old Testament use of the idea. They suggest some link with Leviticus 19:15, “where injustice in judging is grossly condemned. In Lev 19:18 some form of a norm of conduct is provided and James picks it up in V.8” (cf Davids 1982:110; Laws 1980:102). Stulac says that “James could simply be using the term judge (κριτής) as a figure, drawing upon the primary message in the verb discriminated (διεκρίθητε) which is directed more broadly to the community of Christians: you have discriminated among yourselves.” (Stulac 1993: 91). The judge here is used figuratively to convey the attitude of the community members. The argument goes on to say that to love a neighbour is to treat him/her without discrimination, and to discriminate is to break the law of love. Laws points out that James’ emphases are on the reception of the poor person. The condemnation of discrimination is not equally of toadying to the rich and disparaging

the poor, but to stress that you have insulted⁶⁶ the poor man. In her view, “these people have ceased to be simply figures in a parable, and are seen as typical of groups with whom James’ community have to do” (1980:103). The poor are always in the position of shame, no one honours them.

2:5-6 James shows that God has chosen the poor of this world. “Those chosen by God are designated by three conjoined terms: they are poor by the world’s standards πτωχοὶ τῷ κόσμῳ, rich in faith πλούσιοι ἐν πίστει, and inheritors of the kingdom which he promised to those who love him κληρονόμους τῆς βασιλείας ἧς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτὸν (Edgars 2001:112). According to Wachob the poor in James refer to the economically poor: “The poor in James are not the ‘religious’ poor, they are also economically and socially disadvantaged as τῷ κόσμῳ suggests it.” (2000: 82). The poor in James were faced with material poverty because of exploitation of them by the wealthy “for James the poverty of the poor cannot be limited to the religious dimension.”(2000: 83). Giving honour to the poor is the drastic change of standards already present in the Christian community (2:1-9). James uses the Greek word καταδυναστεύω for oppression. Oppression in this context could be seen as exploitation of the poor by the wealthy both within and outside the community of James. “The rich abuse their power against the poor, or usurp a power over the poor which was never given to the rich” (Manton 1998:200). This word is frequently used in the Septuagint and signifies oppression, exploitation by the abuse of power. The subjects of these verbs are the rich and powerful, and the objects are the poor and weak.⁶⁷ This oppression by the rich is done to the community members. “In this case, the oppressed are those of the Christian community of James, made up primarily of the poor. The rich oblige the poor to appear in court to extract taxes from them and legally to force them to pay their debts” (Tamez 1990:29). According to some scholars,

⁶⁶ These are what the respondents have to say when I conducted field research in my church to show that the poor are always insulted “the wealthy members are given more attention than the poor, the rich are recognized and given good positions, the pastors silence the wrongs of the rich and disclose the wrongs of the poor, in decision making, and the pastor has to support the rich.”

⁶⁷ During my field research, in fact 26 of the 30 respondents said that they felt exploited when they were hired. Only 4 respondents felt that they were not exploited. Some of the respondents said that “they have worked and they were not paid their wages.” Another one said, “I supervised a fish/animal farm but I was exploited.”

as Esser indicates, “God’s impartiality is shown through his choosing the poor of this world to be rich in faith (2:5). On this basis, God demands equal esteem for the poor. It is important to note that poverty is not implicitly advantageous in God’s kingdom, but that God is no respecter of persons and therefore his people should not be” (Esser 1975:820-21).

Verse 6 shows a switch of topic from God’s treatment of the poor seen in verse 5 to how the wealthy treat them. The action of the wealthy is wrong because it is the opposite of God’s standard. “Instead of favouring Christians James reminded his community that the characteristic response of the rich to them had been to oppress them.”⁶⁸ The wealthy dishonour and insult the poor; to convey this message James uses the word ἀτιμάζω. Roman courts always favoured the rich, who could initiate lawsuits against social inferiors, although social inferiors could not initiate lawsuits against them. “In theory, Jewish courts sought to avoid this discrimination, but as in most cultures people of means naturally had legal advantages: they were able to argue their cases more articulately or to hire others to do so for them.”⁶⁹

2.7 This verse is a link between verses 1-6 and 8-13. The wealthy are rejected by James in this sense because they dishonor the poor and blaspheme the name for which they are called. “The wealthy not only typically oppose Christians; they also typically speak against Christ βλασφημέω. The wealthy in this case could refer to both the community members and outsiders. This was true in James’ world as it is in ours. It is inconsistent to give special honour to those who despise the Lord whom believers love and serve.”⁷⁰ The wealthy continued by blaspheming or speaking evil against Jesus Christ. βλασφημοῦσιν τό καλόν ὄνομα... “This indicates bitter religious hostility on the part of the rich, who were probably wealthy Christ-rejecting Jews” (George 2001: 67). The good name is surely “Jesus” since it is obvious from 2:1 that the community members are Christians. Moo cited by George says “how incongruous that those who blaspheme that ‘honourable name’ should be accorded preferential treatment in the church” (2001: 67).

⁶⁸ Constable <http://www.soniclight.com/> 2008 Edition p.25. Accessed 25/8/2009 and revised on the 15/1/2010.

⁶⁹ Keener, Craig S.(1997) *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press). in *The Essential IVP Reference Collection* Version 1.1. The Complete Electronic Bible Study Resource. (2001) Leicester: IVP.

⁷⁰ Constable <http://www.soniclight.com/> 2008 Edition p.25. Accessed 25/8/2009 and revised on the 15/1/2010.

2:8 In this verse James emphasizes that a person that shows preferential treatment to the wealthy and forgetting about the poor is showing discrimination against the poor of this world that God chooses. The poor should be loved as members of the community. Constable says that “James did not mean Christians should avoid honouring the rich but that we should love everyone and treat every individual as we would treat ourselves (Matt 7:12; cf. Lev 19:18).”⁷¹ When there is love for both the wealthy and the poor, it is what the royal law requires. God has a special love or at least a special care for the poor and downtrodden (e.g. the widows and orphans and strangers? i.e. what is often called God’s “preferential option for the poor.” Jesus seems to show the same special love for the poor and oppressed. That is why God also warns the rich of judgment. It is a question of the restoration of economic balance in the whole community. Constable while citing Motyer adds “The ‘royal’ βασιλικός law is royal in that it is the law of the King who heads the kingdom (βασιλεία that believers will inherit (v. 5)” (Motyer 1985: 96-97).⁷² A “royal” law, i.e., an imperial edict, was higher than the justice of the aristocracy, and because Judaism universally acknowledged God to be the supreme King, his law could be described in these terms. “Christians could naturally apply it especially to Jesus’ teaching; like some other Jewish teachers, Jesus used this passage in Leviticus 19:18 to epitomize the law (cf. Mark 12:29–34).”⁷³ The νόμος in James is not only the Mosaic Law to which James still holds his community accountable. “It is also royal in that it is primary; it governs all other laws dealing with human relationships (Matt 22:39; cf. Lev. 19:18).”⁷⁴ Edgar adds that “it is in connection with the reward which the community of James themselves would receive for endurance in loyalty to God in 1:12” (2001: 127). And it means that when one keeps the ‘royal law’ which is the law of God then discrimination will not be an option. James “ethicizes” the law, transforming it from one concerned with rituals and boundary markers into one that “refers to acts of compassion for the poor and defenseless who are exploited by the world.

⁷¹ Constable <http://www.soniclight.com/> 2008 Edition p.25. Accessed 25/8/2009.

⁷² Constable <http://www.soniclight.com/> James 2008 Edition p.25. Accessed 25/8/2009.

⁷³ Keener, Craig S.(1997) *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* , (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press). in The Essential IVP Reference Collection Version 1.1. The Complete Electronic Bible Study Resource. (2001) Leicester: IVP.

⁷⁴ Constable <http://www.soniclight.com/> James 2008 Edition p.25. Accessed 25/8/2009.

2:9 James emphasizes προσωπολημπτεῖτε in this verse to show that “such conduct is sin, directly forbidden by the law, and hence cannot be excused as a fulfillment of the royal law” (Edgars 2004: 199). Whenever some people are seen as inferior and others as superior, it is already a breach of the law of love. This leads to preferential treatment which James is against in his community. Constable says “The type of preferential treatment James dealt with in this pericope (2:1-13) violates the royal law because it treats some as inferior and others as sources of special favour (cf. Acts 10:34). It also violates specific commands found in God’s Word that reveal God’s will in interpersonal dealings (Matt 7:12; cf. Lev 19:15).”⁷⁵ Any form of preferential treatment leads to breaking of the law. One should either choose to show preferential treatment or not. But God “take sides” for the poor in James’ analysis. The rich are faced with judgment and the poor promised blessing. God shows a preferential option for the poor, in the language of the struggle for economic justice. Then it means that “When the law is essentially expressed through this one command, then it is either kept or broken... (2001:129). Stulac is not different from Edgars as he emphasizes that “The passage calls us to consistent love, not just polite ushering. People of low income are to be fully welcomed into the life of the church. The passage calls us to be open minded to economic differences in how we offer our ministries. God calls us to care particularly for the poor and outcast and downtrodden, as Jesus did? If this is not the case, then the kind of pastors who favour the rich will hide behind being “even handed.” The poor person is as worthy of our discipling and pastoral care and love as the person who has the means to rescue our church from its budget crisis” (Stulac 1993: 93). Stulac’s words always a concern to be “even handed” in the treatment of the rich and poor, which signals that he is really from the elite class himself and his interpretation of James is skewed by that. God is not “evenhanded” in this sense but “takes the side of the poor”! “Blessed are you poor” “Woe to you rich” in Luke’s report of Jesus’ Sermon! James’ words seem to echo the same sentiment surely. And the words of Jesus and James are what the Christian community is expected to follow. Therefore James used προσωπολημπτεῖτε again here in verse 9 to show that “the strength of the expression is intended to remind his readers that, it is willful conscious sin of persons on account of their wealth” (*Expositors* 1983: 440). The detailed explanation on προσωπολημπτεῖτε is seen above in verse 2: 1.

⁷⁵ Constable. Accessed 25/8/2009.

2:10 James has it at the back of his mind that those to read his words might feel that showing discrimination to others was not something to be practiced. James shows that showing discrimination for others was totally a breach against the law of God. What James is saying is clear that we have violated the law of God many times and we cannot claim to be righteous we are all guilty ἔνοχος. It is certain that:

Our obedience to God's will cannot be on a selective basis; we cannot choose that part that is to our liking and disregard the rest. God's will is not fragmentary; the entire law is the expression of His will for His people; it constitutes a grand unity. To break out one corner of a window pane is to become guilty of breaking the whole pane. He who crosses a forbidden boundary at one point or another is guilty of having crossed the boundary (Hiebert 1979: 148).

2:11 In this verse James shows two examples of how one can be involved in a serious violation of God's law by using the words μοιχεύω and φονεύω. The expectation is that James' community members should not be found guilty of any of the two examples shown above. "This divine character of the standard for the ordering of human activity is expressed explicitly by the attribution of these commands to God as their giver" (2001: 129). Edgar further says that "There is no reason to see the citation of these two commands from the Decalogue as anything other than an example which will be easily appreciated, drawing, as it does, on one of the centre pieces of the Torah" (2001: 129-130). Jewish tradition sometimes compared oppression of the poor with murder (cf. also 5:6).

2:12 The law of liberty is not the same as the mosaic law. "The standard of judgment by which one's place in or outside God's order is to be established is designated as the law of freedom" (Edgars 2001: 130). Constable says that "the law of liberty (1:25) is the law of God that liberates us now.

2:13 The last verse in this pericope shows that "The community members are thus warned to act accordingly in showing mercy, in correspondence with the standard of God's order and God's judgment" (2001: 132-133). This is because lack of mercy to one another "involves a breach of the law of mercy, and that has as its consequence unmerciful punishment" (Ropes 2004: 201). For James if one wants to show that they love their neighbours or community members, it must be

indicated that “a concrete instance of love of neighbour is an act of mercy toward the poor neighbour. The opposite is showing partiality to the wealthy and dishonouring the poor...whoever is guilty of showing partiality is guilty of not showing mercy” (Wachob 2000: 110). The issues that James addresses here are in fact what happen on the ground. The natural tendency of human beings is to be inclined towards the well off, the well to do. Those who have possessions are usually the ones who receive a lot of attention and are well looked after. When we go to a church meeting or service, as we could observe, the pastor will often tend to listen to the advice of the rich people as against the opinions of the poor. This can only make the church to be the church of the rich, because they are the ones who run the show at the church. This happens because human nature is geared towards money and pastors’ well being depends on the giving of the rich. This agrees with what Draper says and I corroborate it “The ruling elite control what may be said and done in public: they write the public transcript to which both the dominant group and the subordinate group are required to conform” (1995: 186). In the same way, the peasants did have control but they work offstage. As Draper says, “Peasants simply were not free to assemble at will, act at will or speak their minds at will. Their activity, movements and language are patrolled by the ruling elite, for whom not only acts which challenge the system are a threat...” (1995: 185). Therefore, there is natural tendency to show partiality toward the rich. But it is also a fact that poor people internalize their own oppression. They have been conditioned to this kind of behaviour because, often they will also show preference to the rich against themselves until such a time that someone will conscientize them otherwise. What James 2:1-13 is saying is that there is an urgent need to eradicate this vicious cycle by eliminating discrimination against the poor, and treating everybody equally. Whether wealthy or poor they should be treated equally without any discrimination. But as long as the rich continue in unjust economic relations they remain under the judgement of God--those who show no mercy receive no mercy (they are under judgment), those who show *prosopolempsia* against the poor can be sure that God will show *προσοπολημπσία* against them (they are under judgement). God takes the side of the poor against the rich as long as the rich continue in an unjust system of economic relations which oppresses the poor and the oppressed.

This explains to some extent the meaning of James’ accusation that the wealthy oppress and drag them into court. It is not always the case that these wealthy converts are specially wicked; it

is the system which makes them oppressors. It is thus the system which James refuses to accept in a Christian community. Tamez writes that “the oppressed in the Epistle of James are mainly the poor” (1992:18). Various studies have already been published relating poverty with oppression. “The poor are poor generally because they are oppressed and exploited; the oppressed are impoverished” (1992:18). It is not surprising then that James speaks against a preferential treatment of the rich in the Christian community, because that amounts to bringing secular behaviour into the Christian community for which he sees no reason because every single Christian has been baptized in the name of Jesus and in this case Jesus is the sole patron of this new community. If the wealthy people want to join this new community, they should do so as equal members of the community with no special privileges. And the wealthy need to change their attitude towards their wealth. Neither should the leaders of this new community accept positions of patronage. It could be seen that this section of the Epistle of James cannot be spiritualized because it focuses on real issues in a real world. For him poverty is the result of disgraceful acts of oppression. Poor people have always been ignored, never taken seriously, as if to say that one is poor because one is stupid and cannot think. For James, it is high time we stopped this sort of behaviour, and started taking everyone seriously. And it is time we also started seeking to change our economic relations. The burden is on some of us who claim to be from the poor communities to be aware of these facts, and then make poor people aware of their situation and the reasons why it is like that, and what can be done to change the way things are.

4.4 James 4:13-17⁷⁶

¹³ Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into this city and we will do one year there, and we will carry on business, and we shall make profit.” ¹⁴ You do not understand what will happen the next day, what is your life. For you are a vapour that appears for a short while, and then it disappears. ¹⁵ Instead, you are to say, “If the Lord wishes, we shall live and shall do this or that.” ¹⁶ And now, you are boasting in your pride: all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ Therefore, whoever knows what is good to do and does not do it, it is sin to him.

⁷⁶ The following is my personal translation of 4:13-17 I translated it as literally as possible.

4.4.1 The Exegesis of James 4:13-17

4:13-17 reveal an arrogance that is not in keeping with what the changed economic relations called for: “James’ intent is to affect the actions of the merchants by warning them that presumption is evil and will not be rewarded by God” (George 2001:127). The merchants are singled out because of their role in the system of wealth creation and unequal redistribution in the ancient world. They are busy in the trade of luxury goods on behalf of the elite or else they are involved in the bulk shipping of grain on behalf of the elite who used it to buy patronage and protect their elite status (bread and circuses). It is rather like many rich countries sending mass aid to poor countries while leaving the playing field uneven and the oppressive international monetary structures intact. The international economic system continues to impoverish them and the gifts of aid are simply palliative. It is the same at the local level, where the rich patrons and intermediaries take the produce of the poor and market it on, even though the poor may be starving--in my own situation the Hausa landlord/patrons syphon off the products of the poor peasant producers and market it on at a much higher price. For James sees the relation between this patronage/ landlord system and the whole imperial system. They make it clear that it is incompatible with the kingdom of God.

4:13 In this verse James started by confronting his community members just like the Old Testament prophets used to do. He begins by a rhetorical summon, “Come now” ἄγε νῦν. James may be referring to a merchant, as Jewish merchants were common during his time and some of them were Christians. The plan of travelling that the merchant undertook was not a problem in itself. But they were only concerned about carrying out their business (ἐμπορεύομαι) without God in their plan, “The elaborate plans proposed by these people reflect assurance and self-confidence with no thought of impediment” (2001: 128). It is not only about their plan but their attitude of lack of justice to the poor. Maynard-Reid adds “if we are to believe that James’ message is addressed to and has meaning in a Palestinian milieu, then some or all of the merchants referred to in 4:13-17 must be those in Palestine in the first century” (1987:75). But it does not necessarily mean that they are members of the community as our table above has shown though it is ambivalent.

4:14 This verse indicates that the merchant did not depend on God for his plans but he was depending on himself. And how the whole merchantile system screws the poor was the problem. “It is bad enough to have such a self-important and God-denying attitude to life, it is even worse that they cannot keep quiet about it” (Townsend 1994:88).

4:15 The merchant should have made his plan depending on God. The wealthy merchants trust in their wealth rather than God. They see their wealth as source of security for them. As members of James’ community it is expected that they know the power of God and hence trust Him with their plans. Even if they are outsiders, they may be Jewish merchants. As Jews, they also know the place of God in their business, but they chose to depend on themselves. They refuse to recognize the justice and mercy of God which demands that the needs of the widows, orphans and aliens are taken care of, that the poor receive justice.

4:16 James uses the word boast *καυχάομαι* to show how the wealthy merchants felt about themselves. On this verse Constable notes that “James rebuked those of his community members who were living with this attitude. They derived joy from feeling that they controlled their own destiny.”⁷⁷ He adds “James presented four arguments that show the foolishness of ignoring God’s will: the complexity of life (v. 13), the uncertainty of life (v. 14a), the brevity of life (v. 14b), and the frailty of man (v. 16).”⁷⁸ If the merchants recognized the place of God in their plans, they would not have thought of exploitating the poor members of their community.

4:17 In this concluding verse James wants to show that the person is guilty because he did not consider the position of God in all his plans. James is reminding his community members that they should not be over confident or trust themselves in what they plan to do. But he wants them to humble themselves and put their trust in God. “James does not rebuke them with the finality of judgment that he uses toward the rich in chapter 5; rather, he is here warning all the believers of the danger of the attitude of presumptuously making plans without considering God” (George

⁷⁷ Constable <http://www.soniclight.com/James> p.53. Accessed 25/8/2009 and revised on the 15/1/2010.

⁷⁸ Constable <http://www.soniclight.com/James> p.27.

2001: 128). Though James talks about God's plan but he also emphasizes that the merchants do not show justice to the poor. It is not about piety alone but economic justice to the poor.

The merchants could afford to travel and spend a year trading in different towns. They had at their disposal all the resources they required. This made them arrogant and boastful of their position. As they always boast, they take their destinies in their hands. This was their characteristic in the first century as most of them wanted to be honoured. In the course of seeking honour, they exploited the poor ones that could not afford anything. The merchants had the power to control wealth and even land. They did not want to share their wealth in order to maintain their social status in the society. They only want to exploit the poor and that is negative reciprocity according to the moral economy of James' community. It is an exploitative *system* which is the target, and the individuals who participate in the unjust system of economic relations and benefit from it are under God's judgment.

James is referring to *systems* of economic exploitation not individual piety. The word which joins 4:17 and 5:1 (or separates) the two sections is $\nu\nu\nu$, which does not necessary signal a new group of addressees, if it is intended rhetorically. The meaning of εἶδοτε οὐν καλὸν ποιεῖν refers to doing economic justice, not to saying their prayers before they go off to make money at the expense of the poor peasants whose produce they are marketing? The merchants are a particular component of the "rich" class attached by James in terms of unjust economic relations. Or at least they are a central component of the unjust economic system of exploitation of the poor, which is why they are singled out by James here.

4.5 James 5:1-6⁷⁹

1 Come now, you rich ones, weep howling on the miseries that are coming upon you. ² Your wealth has rotted, and your clothes have become moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and silver have rusted. And their rust will witness against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. ⁴ See! The wages of your labourers who mowed your lands, which you kept

⁷⁹ The following is my personal translation of 5:1-6. I translated it as literally as possible.

back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have gone into the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵ You have lived in luxury on earth and you lived for pleasure. You fed your hearts in the day of slaughter. ⁶ You condemned and murdered the innocent ones, who were not opposing you.

4.5.1 The Exegesis of James 5:1-6

Having addressed the merchants in 4:13-17 James moves to address the landholders who exploit and oppress their labourers. Davids says that “James moves from addressing the merchant class within his community to castigating the landholding class whom he suggests are not members of James’ community” (1982:174). The landlords are pagans while the merchants are Christians. It is for this reason that James addressed the Christian community more particularly the leadership of the congregation who control the movements of the believers in the congregation. The accumulation of wealth as stated in 5:3 is the principal characteristic and motivation of oppression, as frequently described in the Hebrew Bible. Jesus is also against hoarding, for this is always done at the expense of the oppressed. “Such accumulated wealth is created at the expense of the wages of the peasants and the labourers that harvest the fields. While they are not paid, their wages enrich the already rich, and in some cases the accumulated wages do not get to the hands of the poor” (Tamez 1990:29). Because of this, the peasants are faced with predicaments that make them blame the wealthy. “The peasants judge others as morally responsible for their predicament and act to claim their rights when they are violated” (Horsley 2006:144). And Horsley adds that “Recognition of this moral economy among peasantries leads to a different approach to the occurrence of revolts and resistance movements” (2006:145). While the rich of 4:13 plan to work and trade to earn their wealth in a selfish way, “today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and get gain,” the rich in 5:5 indulge in the easy life, “you have lived on earth in luxury and in pleasure” making others work for them to maintain their luxuries and pleasures. The oppressors as in 5:6 are murderers, for they condemn to death the just person, the innocent person, the one who has done no wrong, the person that has no strength to resist. The landlords are called to weep, to cry for the impending disaster that is to befall them in a not too distant future. “The weeping is defined as crying out ὀλολύζοντες an onomatopoeic word used only here in the New Testament. It recalls or

resounds to the admonitions of the prophets” (Davids 1982:175 cf. Maynard-Reid 1987:82).⁸⁰ It describes vividly the howls of rage and pain of the damned, as it did in the woe oracles of the prophets. It is clear that James presents the rich as committing two main crimes, the first one being luxurious living and the second one being oppression. Warden says that:

The message of James is at least this: Christians are to be a people whose sympathies and influence are to be for economic and social justice for the working poor, for the uneducated, for the disenfranchised of the societies where they live. Christians ought to favour public policy that allows people who labour to have some reasonable share in the goods and services their labour produces. James is on the side of the poor. He is more concerned that the labourers in the field receive their wage than in defending an abstract principle of free enterprise economics (2000: 251).

Verse 1: James starts by denouncing the rich or the wealthy that are oppressing the poor. By doing this, he is encouraging the poor that their oppressors will be judged some day and warning them to avoid becoming materialistic or envious of the rich. James says that the rich should weep *κλαύσατε* this conveys the idea of “sobbing aloud and was used of mourning for the dead” (Edgar 2001: 136). *κλαύσατε* was followed by a participle *ὀλολύζοντες* which means crying aloud. “This call to lament is based on the prospect of upcoming calamities upon the rich” (2001: 137). This lament could be eschatological where there will be a great reversal of position between the wealthy and the poor.

Verses 2-3 speak of the luxury with which these rich people are living, the expensive clothes and golden rings. In fact, the wearing of expensive clothes is only possible for people who have an economic surplus over and above their basic needs, and yet have no concern for the desperate conditions of the poor. But the wealth is worthless as James says *ὁ πλοῦτος ὑμῶν σέσηπεν* “your wealth has rotted”. “The verb *σέσηπεν* is in the perfect

⁸⁰ It is interesting that these commentators seem happy to condemn the landlords more than the merchants, though both participate in and benefit from the unjust economic system. This probably reflects the social location of the commentators.

tense, which refers to an action that has been completed and has a lasting effect” (2001: 137). Edgar puts it rightly when he points to “the folly and falsity of the acquisition of possessions by the rich; these are the last days, and God’s judgment and the final establishment of his eschatological order are imminent” (2001: 201). Their surplus is spent on expensive luxuries, to the detriment of the poor who cannot afford even the cheapest thing in the market: “...their wrongly accumulated wealth bears witness against the rich” (2001:202). James shows them that wealth is only earthly, because their wealth is rotten, their clothes moth-eaten *σητόβρωτα γέγονεν* and their gold and silver covered with rust (*κατιόω*). It is not common for gold and silver, the most treasured metals in the world, to rust. James is using a figurative language to convey his message on how the wealthy and their wealth would be destroyed. The wealthy hoard their wealth without sharing it with the poor, and they themselves would not enjoy the wealth as it would rust. That is why James in the moral economy of his community wants the wealthy to behave like God in terms of generalized reciprocity by giving to the poor without expecting honour or anything from them as worldly patrons do. Townsend says that, “the corrosion of gold and silver would be evidence against the rich” (1994:91). Because the rich will be found guilty, their flesh as well will be consumed by rust like fire. “James’ conviction is that to concentrate on material things is not only to concentrate on a decaying delusion; it is to concentrate on self produced destruction” (Barclay 1976: 116).

4-6 The lack of payment of wages of the labourers has to do with the cries of the oppressed which have reached the ears of the Lord *ὁ μίσθος των εργατων...κραζει. κραζει* is personified, this figure of speech is commonly used in the Old Testament e.g. Genesis 4: 10 “the blood of Abel cries...”. Maynard-Reid points out that with v.4 “See! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you have withheld, cry aloud, and the cries of those who reaped have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts” (1987:84), James takes up the cause of the poor, oppressed, and exploited agricultural labourers, a class that is the most exploited of people. Ropes says that “this is an example of the way in which the rich have been treasuring up fire for themselves, James specifies injustice to farm labourers, a conspicuous form of oppression...” (2004: 288). For James the oppression of this class could be the ultimate crime the rich could commit. So grievous is their fraudulent treatment of the labourers that James states that the cries of the oppressed have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts “*σαβαώθ*” (Maynard-Reid 1987:84).

Both the greedily-held wages and the oppressed workers cry out against them for vengeance from God, and his designation of God as the κυρίου σαβαώθ who hears the cries of the helpless reveals the danger in which the greedy stand. Mitton says "... it is the same God, who created the sun, moon and stars, and who orders their courses, who is also deeply concerned about the just treatment of the poor and insignificant, ready to defend them from injustice and punish the wrong doers" (1966:180). Reyes corroborates Maynard-Reid as he says that, "In James' eyes, only the Lord of Hosts holds power that the work of the poor is not to be exploited, that wealth is not to be derived from that exploitation, and that injustice will never go unpunished. James, it follows, is obviously advocating a revolutionary social and economic utopia" (1995:63-68).

Although James attacks the wealthy in strong words, he leaves the punishment to be God's prerogative. Maynard-Reid suggests that "it is widely held that James, along with the earliest Christians, believed in the imminence of the παρουσία, at which time Christ would bring judgment upon the wicked" (1987:95). This is to say that the wealthy force people living under starvation margins to forfeit even the minimum, they have to surrender food they could well use for their sustenance. The rich often exploit people they do not even want to see. Wolf said that "in the course of cultural evolution the rulers, that is the rich, have settled in special centres which have often becomes cities, or in some cases they lived around religious centres to which produce was brought by the peasants" (1966:10). The luxury of the rich is at the expense of the poor, who are forced often to live in appalling conditions very often in extreme poverty sometimes without shelter. "This was already addressed by the prophets in Ancient Israel but became acute when the large estates (latifundia) emerged under the Herodians and Romans often using slave labour" (Draper 1991:126).

These labourers are in most cases the previous owners of the land or fields in which they perform their daily obligations. They no longer own them because they would have been dispossessed by the rich with the support of the legal system which only served the rich and the powerful.

Individual success and failure, however, tend toward its concentration in the hands of a few. A farmer after a bad year of illness or crop destruction by animals, or after the bursting of his irrigation ditches in a spring flood, borrows at usurious rates, and he and his

family are soon obliged to sell out and become tenants or sharecroppers (Draper 1991:127).

The peasants have become labourers on their own land and because they have no power and there is no one to defend their interests, their wages are withheld by the rich to feed their own luxuries. In most cases, when the peasants try to complain about the ill treatment of which they are victims, there is the likelihood that death is around the corner. “The increasing wealth of the aristocracy was invested in buying land and so forcing peasants off the land, so that the land owners could move towards the Roman latifundia mode of agriculture based on slavery” (Draper 2003: 88). Peasants are aware of this fact and they will try to keep quiet before the rich people. They keep quiet publicly but they act offstage. This leads the peasants to revolt, rebel and resist the wealthy. It means that the rich depicted in this passage could be referred to as “being selfish and exploitative for their earthly satisfaction, in contrast to the lasting satisfaction of God’s eschatological order, and to the perishing of their wealth depicted in 5:2-3” (Edgar 2001:202). This makes the peasants to establish among them how to share with one another. “Peasants developed principles of reciprocity, mechanisms of redistribution, and other social arrangements to assure subsistence to the community members (Horsley 2006: 144-45).

James 5:1-6 is a text that handles real issues of the real world. It strongly condemns luxurious living to the detriment of the poor. It attacks the oppression and exploitation to which the poor are subjected by the wealthy. This exploitation is meant to maintain or improve the luxurious living of the rich. And Ropes conveys James’ message to the wealthy in this way, “Your luxurious life on this earth is nothing in which you can take satisfaction, it is but the preliminary to a day of punishment” (2004:289). These conditions have prevailed in human history and probably they have worsened. James’ attack on the luxurious living of the rich is a reality that we still can identify with, because in Gavva we live in it every single day, and no one accepts the concept of sharing, which is so crucial for the condition of the poor. At the end in 5:6 James says “by your oppression you are guilty of the blood of just men...” (2004:291). When 5:1-6 is compared to the responses in chapter six its clear that the business men (women) we have in Gavva area referred to as the wealthy hire labourers or workers and exploit them. The wages of the labourers are not paid on time, and even when paid the employers withhold some of the wages. Some of the business men even went to the extent of jailing their labourers because of the loans that they were not able to repay. So the members of the same church as the poor are guilty of this oppression and

exploitation. For this reason, James calls his community members to act or behave like God without preferential treatment, exploitation and oppression of the poor.

4.6 Moral Economy in James

As discussed in the introduction, I have undertaken to do a study of the moral economy of James. As there was a large disparity between the wealthy and the poor of his community, James stood against such disparity. But the moral economy is centred on James' call to his community to be generous to one another as God is generous to all without preferential treatment. James wants his community to be a sharing one. For this reason from Sahlins's model as modified by Moxnes I adapted the three categories of reciprocity: Generalized, Balanced and Negative.

Generalized Reciprocity

In ancient society, the wealthy were expected to show generosity to the poor as a mark of their leadership. They did not anticipate any gift in return. James wants his community to give generously as God does. It means that in this category, gifts are given with no expectation of immediate return of a gift. This is what is expected of the wealthy toward the poor.

Balanced Reciprocity

This is done with the explicit expectation of a return gift. But the gifts do not have to be of equivalent value in many cases. This is done based on balanced reciprocity by the community members to one another within the community. This also happens between patron and client.

Negative Reciprocity

In this, one or both of the groups involved would want to exploit the other for individual profits without giving anything in exchange. People engaged in negative reciprocity are motivated by personal profits rather than creating interpersonal ties with those that they are trading with. If they are outsiders, they do not practice the generalized or balanced reciprocity.

Table 1: Moral Economy in James

<u>Generalized Reciprocity</u>	<u>Balanced Reciprocity</u>	<u>Negative Reciprocity</u>
<p>God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All generous and perfect gifts come from God and He does not change his mind based on mood or situation (1:17). -God takes care of the oppressed: widows, orphans (1:27). -God is impartial, so believers should be impartial like God (2:1). 	<p>God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -God freely provides wisdom to those that lack (1:4-5), but in return they must ask in faith (1:6-8). -God gives the crown of life to one that endures (1:12). -God chose the poor in the eyes of the world, for their faith and love to Him (2:5). - God will convict those who show partiality, if they do not show partiality they will not be convicted (2:9). -Those that do not show mercy will face judgment, because they do not show mercy, but those that show mercy will not face judgment (2:13). - God opposes the proud, the proud will be humiliated, and the humble will have grace (4:5 ff). 	<p>God</p>
<p>Community members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Community members care for the oppressed: widows, orphans (1:27). -The wealthy not to consider what they get in return. -When the community members keep the royal law of loving their 	<p>Community members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -When the rich become proud, they are humiliated. The rich should take pride in his low position (1:10-11). - The community members show partiality to the rich, in the hope of receiving (2:1-4). 	<p>Community members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Community members despise the poor (2:1-4). -The rich oppress the poor (2:6). -The rich drag the poor to court (2:6). - Faith must go with works in helping one

<p>neighbour, they do well (2:8).</p> <p>-The community members must not show partiality as it is breaking of the law of wealth (2:9-12).</p> <p>God warns those who do not practise Generalized Reciprocity that they stand under His judgment (2:13).</p> <p>-Faith needs action The poor brother or sister must be fed and clothed, and not fobbed off with words (2:17).</p> <p>-Impartiality and sincerity are expected from members (3:17).</p>	<p>-The rich person's wealth is seen as means of survival, the rich are favoured because of their wealth (2:2-4). James disapproves of this.</p> <p>-When the wealthy come near to God, He will also come near to them (4:8).</p>	<p>another (2:14-17). In other words, they won't give because they do not expect that they will receive anything in return.</p> <p>- Community members with selfish ambition and jealousy destroy communal life (3:16).</p> <p>-Community members desire and covet what they do not rightly own and resort to force (4:1-2).</p> <p>-Community members spend beyond their means on earthly pleasures (4:3).</p> <p>- The rich are enemies of God because they make friends with the world (4:4).</p> <p>-The cry of the poor reaches God; it works against the wealthy (5:4).</p> <p>- The rich oppress, exploit and withhold wages of poor (5:1-6).</p>
<p>Outsiders</p>	<p>Outsiders</p> <p>-There will be a reversal of positions between the poor and the rich after life (1:9-11).</p> <p>-The wealthy oppressor faces judgment without mercy since he has not shown mercy (2:13).</p>	<p>Outsiders</p> <p>-Community members pursue their own interest to get wealthy through trade without consideration for God's will (4:13-17).</p> <p>- Money hoarded by the rich is accumulated at the expense of the poor (5:1-</p>

		<p>6).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Negative economic behaviour results in misery for those who hoard money and defraud the workers (5:1). -Negative unjust economic behaviour by the rich can lead to violence against who criticize and warn them (5:3). - The rich condemned and murdered those that opposed them (5:6).
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4.6.1 Interpretation of the table⁸¹

In this section I will give the interpretation of the table under God who has the generalized and balanced reciprocity, the community having generalized, balanced and negative reciprocity and lastly the outsiders that practice the negative reciprocity.

God (Generalized and Balanced Reciprocity)

James replaces the worldly and wealthy human patron, who could easily exploit his or her clients, with a divine patron, God, who provides generously and fairly, with no trace of partiality. The difficulty with patronage, at least from the client’s perspective, was that because it involved participants of unequal social and economic levels, it resulted in exploitation. In the moral economy of James, God is generous to His people. His initiatory activity in calling and redeeming, God’s work in righting oppression, and His ultimate role as judge are seen. God provides for both the rich and the poor. He takes care of the widows and the orphans without expecting something from them in return. But in some instances, God’s role is ambivalent. God provides freely as He

⁸¹ I have given detailed interpretation from 4.3 where I analyzed the texts carefully.

does not show partiality, He also wants believers to give freely. God gives wisdom generously when His people ask in faith. He also gives the crown of life but only to those that have persevered or endured temptation. While the poor are being exploited God chooses them in this world, but He requires their faith. God also does not have favoured clients, to whom alone He gives His gifts. He does not only give to those that could give Him something in return. Otherwise, the widows and the orphans would not receive any gifts from God. He also judges justly as the rich both inside and outside the community face judgment. God expects the community members to give generously as He does without looking at the status of members of the community.

Community Members (Generalized, Balanced and Negative Reciprocity).

Since God gives generously without partiality, community members are also expected to do so to one another. Apart from doing it to the community members, they should also extend it to outsiders who behave with negative reciprocity against them (James 1:17). This is generalized reciprocity. Members are required to give freely with God as their goal of giving, but giving first to the community members. In earthly patronage, patrons who had their own clients often had a patron themselves. If Christians are clients of God, they are also patrons of the less fortunate, the widows and orphans of 1:27. James 2.1–13 begins with the issue of not showing partiality, followed by a situation in which a rich man with fine clothing and gold rings and a poor man in filthy clothing enter the church worship service; the wealthy man is treated well, while the poor one is ordered around (2.2–3). James sees this as making distinctions among the community members, and they become judges with evil thoughts. For this reason, James 2 scolds the community members for dishonouring the poor man despite the fact that it is the rich who oppress them, drag them into court, and blaspheme the honourable name invoked over them (Jas 2.6–7). James goes on to say that when they show partiality it violates the love commandment among the community members (Jas 2.8–9).

James 2.14–16 expresses the emphasis upon integrity, which demands the unification of faith and works. The text continued with how to show respect and care for the poor. James 2.15–17 plainly addresses the predicament of the brother in filthy clothes. James insists on caring for such people. Although God is a good and generous giver, he makes it clear that such good behaviour must be completed among community members as well. God's concern for the poor is something

that needs to take flesh, the power of work must not be exploited, and wealth must not come from exploitation or selfish gathering of wealth. Apart from the community members engaging a generalized and balanced reciprocity, the wealthy in the community also exploit the poor that are among them and this is negative reciprocity within the community.

Outsiders (Negative Reciprocity)⁸²

In this case there is no generalized or balanced reciprocity. This has to do with negative reciprocity where the outsiders exploit the community members. The outsiders in this case have been Jews who knew the Old Testament very well as I will argue this in 4.2. They knew the teachings about social justice to the poor, orphans and the widows. But they neglected these teachings by exploiting them as James has shown.

It was these wealthy Jews that slander the name of the Lord, and boast in their arrogance. This was foolishness on the side of the wealthy. This foolishness of the wealthy is shown in their hoarding of wealth. James develops the judgment of the wealthy oppressors as resulting from a denial of this teaching, and the facts brought against them is the rust of the unused wealth. James then presents a horrifying metaphor showing punishment applicable to the misdeed: in the same way that rust eats away at metal, so too will it eat away at their flesh. Hoarding of wealth is the first indictment against the wealthy landowners.

They have hoarded their wealth in the last days. It was common for labourers to be denied their wages without any option for appeal. And in describing the cries of the harvesters as having reached the ears of the κυρίου Σαβαώθ (Lord of Hosts), it points to the coming judgment. The actions of the wealthy landowners have resulted in the death of the innocent. James implies that the rich have sat in judgment on the poor, condemning them to death. James declares that the hoarding of wealth by the wealthy is completely fruitless. Besides, the fruit of their oppression of the poor is the judgment exacted by the magnificent and inspiring God who avenges injustice. However, while addressing the ungodly rich outside of the community, this

⁸² The comments here may be ambivalent as it could also apply to the community members not necessarily outsiders. Because the wealthy in the community also exploit the members of the community that is why it is ambivalent. As the table has shown exploitation of the poor are found both within and outside the community by the wealthy.

prophetic scolding is effectively seen to be for the purpose of encouraging the community members by declaring a coming end to their oppression and the certain downfall of their oppressors. James continuously encouraged his community members toward patient endurance of their hardships in light of the certain judgment of God.

4.7 Conclusion

Having completed our interpretation, taking into consideration the moral economy in the Epistle of James, it became obvious that the poor in the time of James were exploited and discriminated against. By several classes of people who benefited from their oppression. In particular, we have seen that landholders and merchants were in collusion in a system which took away the surplus production of the poor and sold it on to increase their wealth, ignoring the impact this had on the lives of the poor and destitute. This prompted James to speak out against the rich and the merchants in Palestine at his time. The poor are always at loss while the rich gain because of the recognition given to them in and by the society. James had to approach his community in that manner because he wanted them to learn from God who does not show partiality. God treats his entire people equally giving generously to them. In return, James wants the community members to practice impartiality and take care of the widows and orphans among them without discrimination. If they do not, God warns them that he will judge them! James extended this challenge to outsiders also not to exploit or discriminate against the poor. He also challenged his community members not to behave like the outsiders who discriminate and do not honour God but blaspheme against His name. By doing this the moral economy would be alluded to by the church. What was happening to the poor at the time of James is not different from what is happening in Gavva area and the Church of the Brethren today as we shall see in the responses to the questionnaires and the interview reports in chapter six. From the responses, one could deduce that within the community of the Church of the Brethren in Gavva area, there is exploitation by the landowners and merchants. There is also exploitation from the outsiders. The field research I have conducted which is shown in chapter six will confirm this. When I looked at the life of the peasants in Palestine as presented by some scholars, it is comparable with the life of the peasants in Gavva area notwithstanding the two thousand years gap between Gavva area and Palestine. This suggests that the poor are always faced with difficulties of exploitation, discrimination and oppression by the rich.

Chapter Five

5.1 Background and Teachings of the Church of the Brethren

5.1.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief historical background to the Church of the Brethren and its teachings/beliefs and practices. I include this because the Church of the Brethren has extensive teachings and written documents that deal with the issues of discrimination, poverty, exploitation, justice and care for the poor. And it could be seen that the teachings of the Church of the Brethren has generalized and balanced reciprocity in the moral economy of the Church without negative reciprocity. This has been expanded in chapter six with the table of moral economy of the Church of the Brethren and fieldwork results. But today the church is shifting away from her main teachings, beliefs and practices and this has contributed to the problem of discrimination between the wealthy and the poor, educated and uneducated etc⁸³. The issues of Love (Agape) Feast, Foot Washing and the Communion of cup and bread are vital to the teachings of the Church. But unfortunately, some members (the poor) feel that they are discriminated against during these practices of the church. This chapter shows that discrimination, exploitation and oppression were not part of the teachings of the Church of the Brethren. The church based her teachings on the Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Before discussing the issue of poverty and the poor in the Church of the Brethren, I will give a brief historical background to the church.

5.1.2 Background History of the Church of the Brethren

Giving a brief historical background of the Church of the Brethren is helpful to me because the context of my thesis falls within the church in Gavva area. This would enable us to know the heritage of the church and how it came to Nigeria. “The Church of the Brethren began in the year 1708. The Brethren began in that area of Europe which is today the country of Germany” (Hackman 1991:8). When the Church of the Brethren was first established in 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany, there was no difference between the leaders and the members of the church like what is experienced in the Church in Nigeria today. The church continued to grow and

⁸³ This is what I gathered from the field research I conducted between October 2008 and January 2009.

expand in America, and even in America, the Brethren at first lived a modest and simple life which made it difficult to differentiate between the members of the church. Each member is treated on an equal basis with any other person in the Church. At first sight this may seem to confirm that there is a *balanced reciprocity* in the Church, but Ron Sider, a major thinker, exegete and campaigner for economic justice in the USA, finds American evangelicals guilty of failing it. The Church of the Brethren does not seem to differ much in this respect from other evangelical churches in America. The circumstances of the original baptism of the founder of the church, Alexander Mack, certainly shows that the first Brethren did not discriminate against one another. This should have set the standard to be kept by the Nigerian Church of the Brethren. Even though Alexander Mack was still the church leader then, the early missionaries of the Church of the Brethren certainly did not instruct their converts in the foundational emphasis on social justice in the foundational moment of the church, epitomized by the baptism of Alexander Mack so that all COB members could be treated as equals without any discrimination on the grounds of race, social status or wealth. In any event, this is not the case today as there is preferential treatment given to some members. Indeed there is instead a *negative reciprocity* in terms of the attitude of the Church members. If all members were to be treated as equals in the church as the early Brethren Church did to each other, discrimination against members would not have been an issue in the church today. Nevertheless, to their credit, the early missionaries of the Church of the Brethren did have a strong moral basis to their preaching of the gospel, not like some missionaries that came with British imperial interests or business in mind⁸⁴ and attached the gospel to it as a way of having access to the area. The early missionaries wanted to be sure that they helped the local people in the areas to which they went. When these missionaries arrived and settled they went into: preaching, teaching and healing as most missionaries did.

No evangelism had been conducted in the Gavva area, before the Basel Missionaries arrived, but it had already been long established in the area of the Church of the Brethren⁸⁵. This early exposure to preaching meant that the people in the COB areas converted first and it gave them the

⁸⁴One of the missionaries that came to Nigeria with Dr. Kulp in 1922 was Dr. Helser who was business oriented (see page 4 of the Introduction to the thesis). They had to part ways with Dr. Kulp because he was oriented towards rural ministry. Dr. Kulp was the first Missionary of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. He established the COB in 1922.

⁸⁵ This was the Bura, Margi and Higgi (Kamwe) areas. It is quite a distance from Gavva area.

opportunity to be educated. Preaching and teaching opened the minds of the people in that area and it changed their world view. Once their world view changed, they were ready to accept other things that the missionaries intended to do. This gave the Church of the Brethren area an advantage over Gavva area which was only later incorporated into the COB. The teaching was another aspect that helped the area initially evangelized by the Church of the Brethren (COB). The area became enlightened because they were taught by the missionaries. This made it possible for schools to be opened in the COB area. When one observes this, it could be seen that education came to the COB area much earlier than the area of the Basel Mission. The Basel Mission was an organization set up in Switzerland by different church denominations in order to spread the gospel in Africa and other continents. Basel Mission later sent missionaries to Gavva area.⁸⁶ When Basel missionaries arrived in 1959, there was no single school was established in the area either by the government or by the Basel Mission. The early education provided great opportunities to those in the area evangelized by the COB; when we talk of Gavva area as backward in education it was because education came there late. The foundation set by the COB missionaries in the area the first arrived (not Gavva area as Gavva is Basel Mission) helped them a lot. Most of the people trained by the COB missionaries at that time came to be at the helm of affairs even in the government. And the early training gave them opportunity to work in the church. Many schools were established in the area. Apart from teaching, the missionaries also were concerned about the health of the area.

Many people were converted to the Christian faith because of the mission work through the hospitals they built. When the missionaries built the hospital, they also trained local people in the area as hospital attendants and nurses. This also was part of educational training which gave advantage to the area. Even today, there are many doctors and nurses that came from the area. Most of the medical personnel that work in Gavva area today come from the COB area, until recently some few people have been trained in the area of Gavva. Apart from the class room education, there were also teachings in Sunday school, mainly for children. By training the children the future of the area was built, and the promotion of reading and writing was the beginning of education in the Church of the Brethren area. This helped in giving enlightenment to

⁸⁶ I do not repeat my sources here as I have given the background of Basel Mission in chapter one. In that chapter I have talked about how they came to Gavva area and the work they did.

the people, which was not enjoyed by the Basel Mission area until some years later. Because of the education or the early training they received, some Nigerians became teachers, health-workers, and others evangelists.”The trained Nigerian teachers soon took over the work in the mission schools. Also health workers were trained, to help in the area of health work. After their baptism, others were trained as evangelists” (Schnyder 1992:105). The trained Nigerians referred to in the above quotation did not include those in Gavva area which were soon to be evangelized by the missionaries from Basel.

5.2 Basel Mission

Basel Mission did not start early in Nigeria “Basel Mission had started missionary work in the Cameroons already in the year 1886” (Schnyder 1992: 102). After independence of Nigeria from British colonial rule in 1960, this part of Cameroon decided by plebiscite in 1961 to belong to Nigeria. It was called Sardauna province. Basel Mission together with the Presbyterian Church leaders in the Cameroons had planned to extend its work to the then Northern Cameroons before World War 1 (1914-1918). “But the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914 prevented Basel Mission from doing so. Again, plans to extend the Mission’s work to the North were made before World War II (1939-1945), but unfortunately could not be executed because of the war. Plans to continue the work had to be postponed until after the end of World War II” (Schyett 2008:17). Before the coming of Basel Mission to Nigeria and specifically to Gavva area, the church in COB area has already spent 37 years in other parts of Nigeria. The gap of 37 years is wide enough to show that the COB area was far ahead of Gavva area in terms of Christianity, education, teaching and trained personnel.

When the Basel Mission was ready they eventually in 1957 sent a fact finding group to examine the possibility of entering into the new area, and to view the situation and visit the then Northern Cameroons. They were told by resident officer of the Gwoza area to go to Gavva, where no missionaries had ever been placed before. “At that time, many tribal and clan fights and wars took place in the area. In fact, the plot of land where the missionary station was planned to be built was known as the battlefield of the villages in Gavva area”(Schyett 2008:18). This tells us that the area did not have any schools, hospitals and government presence. The talks with the representatives of the government, still under British colonial rule, took place. “From the

responsible officer it is said that how can there be peace if no peace initiative is being taken like proclaiming the gospel “ (2008:20). As a result Basel Mission got permission to start missionary work at Gavva in the so-called unsettled region and closed area. As a condition to start missionary work there, it was agreed upon that Basel Mission start doing medical work and open primary schools to educate the children. This is what brought understanding to the area and changed the world view of the people. The Basel Mission did that by opening the first General Hospital in Gavva area and two primary schools. But before these primary schools were opened, there was already secondary schools in the COB area, referred to as Waka⁸⁷ schools. Most of the top government officials were trained in Waka schools. Most of the teachers that worked in Gavva area after the merger came from Waka schools, because there were at that time no trained indigenes in Gavva area, since the primary schools had just been established by Basel Mission. This means that right from the beginning of the work of Basel Mission in Gavva area, the people from the Church of the Brethren area had the advantage of coming to work in the area. It made them to dominate the schools, the hospitals and the local churches. Mission work was not something new to the Basel Mission. From its beginning, Basel Mission has been an ecumenical venture of Christians from a Lutheran and Reformed background. Its mission philosophy was similar to that of the Church of the Brethren in sponsoring indigenous church life. However, its mission goal with Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN, which is the Hausa term for the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) was the training of leadership for the indigenous church through taking a major lead in Theological Education by Extension (TEE).

As an extension of its work in Northern Cameroon, Basel Mission began working in Gavva in 1959, on the border of Nigeria and Cameroon. “When Nigeria and Cameroon held elections in 1961, Gavva became part of Nigeria by plebiscite” (Schyett 2008:18). Gavva is in the north-east part of Nigeria now. This part of the country is poor. When Gavva area became part of Nigeria, the Basel Mission missionaries working in Cameroon felt that it would not be easy for them to have access to Nigeria. Because of this, Basel Mission looked for a Nigerian church with which to affiliate the new church and members that they had founded in Gavva area. The Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) was approached, but declined the offer. Therefore, Basel Mission asked the

⁸⁷ Waka is a settlement close to Biu where the Brethren Missionaries first came and were sent to Garkida by the emir of Biu.

Church of the Brethren to accept them, which they did in March 1963. Schyett says that the merger had to be done because “in difficult times trustworthy friends and experienced Christian brothers were needed to strengthen the young Christians in Gavva area” (2008:15). The Nigerian Church of the Brethren agreed to receive into full fellowship those people sent by Basel Mission.⁸⁸ However, agreement had to be reached between the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria and the Church of Christ in Nigeria. “COCIN agreed that Basel Mission personnel in Nigeria should work with the Nigerian Church of the Brethren and that members from the Basel Mission area would become members of EYN when they are merged. This was done to settle COCIN fears of EYN intrusion into its mission areas.”⁸⁹

5.3 The Coming of the First Missionaries of Basel Mission to Gavva

The first missionaries from Basel Mission to work in Nigeria⁹⁰ were Rev. Schoeni and Rev. Scheytt and their families. One year after the beginning of missionary work at Gavva in March, 1960, Werner Schoeni reported to Basel Mission Home Board about the progress of the work on buildings as well as about medical work and evangelism. Already in mid-January of 1960, all missionary staff could leave the round huts where they lived since they had arrived at Gavva. They moved into the first permanent Mission house at Gavva which had been built. “Work to build roads in Gavva area had begun as well. Also the permanent building for the poly-clinic was soon to be erected. Since 27th of October, 1959, there was water from a small stream running down

⁸⁸ In fact, if it were today the merger would not have taken place because Gavva area would not have consented to that. But at the time of the merger, there was no single person in the area that was trained or educated. In August 2009 we have celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the coming of Basel Mission to Gavva area and I was the main speaker of the occasion. I was discussing with one of the missionaries on the same day, he told me that if they knew that Christianity would grow in Gavva area as it is today, they would not have merged us with the Church of the Brethren. Their fear at that time was that there were few Christians and there was no one to lead them, since the other established churches were far away from Gavva area.

⁸⁹ When the missionaries came to Northern Nigeria from different church traditions they made an association called TEKAN in Hausa (Fellowship of the Churches of Christ in Nigeria). They demarcated the TEKAN area to different denominations. The eastern district was demarcated to the Church of the Brethren Mission and North Central to the SUM which was predominantly COCIN area. It was agreed that COCIN would not intrude into CBM area and vice versa. So when the Basel Mission area was handed down to CBM, COCIN had the fear that the CBM would intrude into their area. But CBM did not. Today that agreement is not functioning again as all the TEKAN Churches are found in all the areas. In the eastern district where it should be the CBM, there are different denominations today.

⁹⁰ In 1959, Gavva area was still in Cameroon.

from the hill through a water pipeline, supplying the mission station with water collected in a water tank flowing down from there to the houses on the station and to the public water tap outside and inside the station through water pipes. “⁹¹ This quotation is important because it is not only giving the history of the area, but it shows that the government neglected the area completely. There were no good roads, no schools, no water, and no hospitals before the coming of the missionaries. The people were just local peasants, practising local farming enough to feed them for a year until the coming of Basel Missionaries. This indicates that many missionaries have worked in Gavva area for us to reach the level we are today. The work of the Missionaries could be seen as a generalized reciprocity. They have contributed to Gavva area without expecting something in return, although as the Missionaries continued their work, the local people accepted Christianity as their religion. These missionaries came from different backgrounds but they worked together without discrimination. There was no record of quarrel written against the missionaries that worked in Gavva area. This has been of great help to the people of the area since they are all peasants, until the merger and people from COB started coming to the area and taking over jobs and positions in Gavva area. And the area still remains in poverty today as attention is not given to it. It is further disadvantaged since it is part of Northern Nigeria which, as a whole, is characterized by poverty. It is also dominated by Islam and that Muslims and Christians are divided largely along tribal and economic lines.

This is what one of the missionaries from Basel taking care of the EYN rural programme writes:

The north-eastern region of Nigeria is one of the poorest regions in the country. The main roads have dilapidated and the road density is very low. Transport companies charge extra fees and prices of certain inputs are therefore higher. Reliable communication systems are still not available, though the coverage has most recently significantly improved. There are large regions which are only accessible by bicycle, motorcycle or by trekking.

⁹¹ When one visits Gavva today, the roads built by the missionaries in the 1960s are still the ones being used. The pipe water running from the hills provided by the missionaries is still the one used by the people in that area with the exception of few wells that were dug by the Well-Digging project of the Church. This tells how the area has been neglected by both the Church and the Government.

Communities are unable to transport their produce to markets because the transport fare is high. Due to the distressed economic situation in Nigeria, the market in rural areas for farm produce and other locally produced products is very limited (Bachmann 2007: 22).

The roads and pipe borne water that are used today in 2010 in Gavva were the ones built by the missionaries in early 1960s. It means that even today, the presence of the church and government are not much felt in the area. The Basel Missionaries made sure that they settled well in Gavva area to enable them spread the gospel and train the people of the area. Just like the COB they set targets of preaching, teaching and healing but this does not mean that they connived together to use the same approach. They did this independently.

On healing, in his small book “Gavva” Schyett writes:

Seeing victims of bacterial diseases or malaria patients recover or poisoned people leave the hospital alive, seeing enfeebled children become again full of life and happy, or notice the immense alleviation after the healing of a tropical ulcer, which had already corroded the underlying bone, is a great blessing (1965:48).

One of the most immediate and pressing needs of Nigerians during the time of Brethren missions was health care. As Brethren missionaries went into the “bush” or rural areas, they discovered souls that were trapped by both spiritual and physical sicknesses. The missionaries found that Nigerians suffered health problems and high mother/infant mortality rates caused by ignorance of preventive measures against disease. Poverty and a lack of knowledge about a balanced diet caused malnutrition, and high death rates of children under age five.

The missionaries also discovered that the people suffered from all kinds of intestinal parasites and bacterial diseases. Traditional or tribal taboos and superstitious beliefs had prevented people from finding ways to free themselves from such conditions. The Church of the Brethren had the answer. Missionaries, sometimes even before unpacking their luggage, immediately attended to the health needs of the people around them. They provided a Christian response to the health care problems of the Nigerian people. They cleaned and dressed chronic tropical ulcers. They treated malaria, and all other kinds of sickness. This was indeed the true Good News to Nigerians. It was then, as people began to crowd around them, that they were unable to have time for rest. The

Church of the Brethren mission to Nigeria was also unique in pioneering development of a primary health care system based upon village health workers. Under the village health post scheme, both male and female health workers were chosen by and for each participating village. The workers were trained at Garkida for three months, with more training in preventive health care than in curative care. Medical assistants were also assigned to visit the health posts to give antenatal immunization and conduct under-five clinics. It is important to note that, for Nigerians, healing and religion goes hand in hand. Faith must bring healing and health. Because of this, the medical programme has developed the Church of the Brethren into a healing community with a faith relevant to health.

The problem of malnutrition and poor living caused by lack of quality food and ignorance of a balanced diet was not the only problem solved through the Church of the Brethren. The church also worked on rural development and an agricultural programme to help Nigerian society produce good food and have a better life.

And the Lord God planted a Garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the Garden."⁹²

This quotation was the basis for the Brethren development and agricultural programme. They felt that they were doing the will of God, because the Garden of Eden was one of the first things God made for the benefit of the human race. Also, Brethren felt that it was not enough just to tell hungry people of a man, Jesus who years ago provided food for the hungry. Brethren felt that helping people to feed themselves was an integral part of the witness of the church. The Brethren planted fruit trees, developed orchards, and taught people how to take care of the orchards. The missionaries also helped in raising animals and domestic birds. The rural development and agriculture programme took off fully in 1984, when the church realized the necessity of the

⁹² Gen 2:8-9, 15-16.

program. The missionaries wanted to extend it to all people in rural Nigeria. Together with EYN, the Church of the Brethren began to look solicit funds for program expansion. The missionaries wrote letters home asking the church to help with money and personnel to work together with Nigerians. In 1984 a group of American agriculturalists and rural sociologists came and joined with the EYN rural development committee and the Brethren mission. They began experimenting with new varieties of plants, distributed seeds and imported milk goats, and improved rabbits and poultry. Native livestock were also selected for the agricultural experiment programme. Then the missionaries introduced a better farming method, oxen-power cultivation, which was fully used instead of the native hoe. Along with crop rotation, the use of fertilizers and the prevention of soil erosion were introduced, as well as the planting of fruit trees and trees for fire wood.

5.4 The programmes of EYN⁹³

When Kulp Bible School was established in 1960, agricultural development was made a basic part of the training of church workers.⁹⁴ Oxen and plows were loaned to graduates to help introduce the farming methods among their community. The mixed farming approach with the oxen plow produced improved varieties of food, including peanuts, rice, garden vegetables, and the Irish potato. Gradually the economic standard of the people increased, a considerable improvement in the local diet was achieved, and better health was achieved. The Church agricultural programme produced a higher standard of living and an increase in the number of healthy babies.

The missionaries and their followers saw rural development programme as a continuation of Christ's, service on earth. Not only did it care for the immediate physical and developmental needs of the Nigerian church, it also provided Nigerians with a sound healthy mind, long-term self reliance, educational development and medical training. In the next section we will explore how

⁹³ The expectation is that these programmes would be of great help and bring the church together as well as provide job opportunity for the church members. Unfortunately only a few people benefit from this as seen in chapter six.

⁹⁴ The programmes of the Church treated in this section are actually supposed to be in terms of generalized reciprocity from the Church to its members, but this does not happen as only few wealthy are benefitting from it as I have shown in chapter six. In theory, they are generalized reciprocity because they are Church's contribution to its members, but in practice it is on the balanced reciprocity for the wealthy members and the poor members see it as negative reciprocity.

the long-term self reliance developed through the educational program. When the first Brethren missionaries came to Nigeria in 1923, they told the Governor General that their purpose in coming to Nigeria was to give moral education, though their primary mission was to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, Brethren indeed provided the best moral education to the Nigerians. Though the missionaries did well but they may not lack their weaknesses as in 1973 the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria had to be autonomous. The church needed to be autonomous because the missionaries dictated all that was to be done in the church. The early church leaders saw that as a continuation of colonization. There are still missionaries that work with the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria but as fraternal workers only. They are not the decision makers for the Nigerian church now.

5.4.1 Kulp Bible College (KBC)⁹⁵

This is the primary training institution for EYN leadership. Since the first class graduated in 1962, KBC has graduated classes almost every year. Over 80 percent of EYN's pastors have studied at KBC. The College now offers three levels of training: Basic (for training evangelists) and Advanced Studies (for training pastors) and the Diploma in Christian Ministry (for training pastors and teachers). Today there is also a Bible school in Gavva area, but the school only trains lay leaders at the lowest level of education. However, it still offers opportunity for local people in the area to be trained and be educated at that level. This enables them to work in the local churches within Gavva area only, unlike the KBC that trains leaders for the church at national level. There are few from Gavva area that attended KBC, my father was one of the pastors trained there. KBC is intended to be a place of training for every member of the church that wants to go into pastoral ministry, but what happens is that only a few people from certain areas are enjoying and monopolizing the institution in terms of studies and leadership of the institution.

5.4.2 Rural Development Programme (RDP)

This is a ministry which works at developing the rural areas of EYN. RDP has agriculture, tree-planting, veterinarian and well-digging programmes. It is committed to raising the standard of living for the people of Nigeria. This programme is helpful to the church in alleviating poverty

⁹⁵ I have also taught some modules on Brethren Beliefs and Practices at the Kulp Bible College (KBC) when I was teaching full time at the Church of the Brethren that is EYN Comprehensive Secondary School between July 1998-April 2000.

and in employment generation. But the problem still remains that only some areas of the church benefit from the programme and are employed.

But this is what the leader of the programme of EYN says:

The EYN Integrated Community Based Development Programme is a faith-based development organisation... The organisation is aiming at the empowerment of rural communities in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. The focus of the empowerment activities lies on strengthening the capacity of self-governance and poverty alleviation. The organisation consequently applies a community based and people centred development approach. Community felt needs are the focal point of any activity and therefore the initiative, responsibility and the resources originate to a large extent from within the community. The organisation takes the role of facilitating the development process. The organisation works on interdisciplinary basis with specialists on primary health care, sustainable agriculture, water engineering and generalists for the community mobilisation process (2007:17).

If the programme is able to achieve what has been written above based on the comments of the leader, there would not have been complaints of marginalizing some areas of the same church. But this does not mean that the programme has not done its best. The programme did its best for some areas while others were neglected. And the neglected area continues to live in poverty. These allegations⁹⁶ have already been confirmed by the field research that I conducted between October 2008 and May 2009. The responses given by the respondents about the programme is indicated in chapter six where I did the data analysis and presentation.

5.4.3 Theological Education by Extension (TEE)

TEE reaches people in local churches with training in Bible and related topics. Over 1,300 students in 175 classes take courses each year through the use of study material and by meeting

⁹⁶ All the allegations I indicated under the programmes of EYN are confirmed by the field research. Apart from that I have also been part of the leadership of the church, if experience counts, then I am aware of the happenings. But I confirmed these through interviews and questionnaires I gave out for the purpose of this research. In the summary of this part I will indicate why these things happen.

together in classes. TEE presently offers four levels of training: Basic (for all students) and Advanced Level (for training evangelists); Post-Advanced for further studies, and Diploma in Theology for students with good performance in English language. This programme helps also in training church leaders that are not able to attend bible school on a full time basis. TEE is the only programme that broke the barrier of discrimination though it was also introduced to Gavva area only recently. This is a programme done by extension, the students study at home using study materials. The students meet fortnightly for discussions under a seminar leader⁹⁷. Since it is a distance learning programme, there is not much interaction that will warrant discrimination.

5.4.4 Rural Health Programme (RHP)

RHP works at raising the health standard for the people of Nigeria. RHP maintains 12 dispensaries which treat over 100,000 people each year throughout the EYN area. Under the dispensaries are more than 70 village health posts. The Programme trains dispensary aides and village health care workers. The village workers take the principles of good health into the rural areas and teach the people. The issue of health is vital to everyone. However, in Gavva area there is only one⁹⁸ dispensary run by the church unlike some areas that have a concentration of these dispensaries. Even in terms of employment and training, there is no single person trained in Gavva area that is working in any of the dispensaries. The dispensaries were built by the Church of the Brethren in their original area. The one dispensary in Gavva area was built by Basel Mission in the early sixties. The COB did not build any dispensary in Gavva area.

5.4.5 Technical School and Shop

The Technical school is working at training persons in a wide variety of mechanical skills. The shop maintains EYN's mechanical equipment and fleet of motors, while the school trains future mechanics. The school today runs secretarial studies, and computer operation. This institution is supposed to provide skills for most of the members of the church especially empowering the

⁹⁷ I have been a seminar leader of TEE since 2006; I have a class meeting in my house every two weeks. When I am not home, my wife leads the seminar class since she also has a Master of Theology degree. And she has written her Thesis on EYN TEE.

⁹⁸ Gavva area was not originally part of the Church of the Brethren as mentioned earlier.

youth. But it is not different from what is happening with the other institutions. This is confirmed from the responses made by the respondents on the significance of the church institutions. Only some selected areas benefit a lot from the programme.

5.4.6 Literacy Programme⁹⁹

Literacy programme is dedicated to teaching persons to read and write. About 40 of every 100 men and 60 of every 100 women in Nigeria cannot read or write. The Literacy programme offers a five-year course. The first two years the students learn to read and write. The remaining courses are concerned with Basic English, Maths and Christian Religious Knowledge. The graduation in EYN Literacy Programme is equivalent to that of six years Primary School. This programme provides basic education to Gavva area and there are branches opened in other areas of the church. It means that the programme is not only meant for the area of Gavva but for EYN at large. In fact, the main leader of the programme does not come from Gavva area but from another part of EYN. But then the programme was opened by the Basel Mission and is being sponsored by the Basel Mission. The benefit of the Headquarters being in Gavva area is that it provides employment opportunity to the local people. But the local people only work at the lower level, e.g. being labourers and cleaners in the programme.

These programmes help the church in one way or the other despite the way they are run by some few people from certain areas. They provide training, education and employment to the members of the church. The discrimination in accepting students or workers in these programmes is created by tribalism. My field research confirmed, as did all those that I interviewed and all those who filled in the questionnaire, that there is tribalism in the church. All the heads of the programmes or institutions come from the Church of the Brethren¹⁰⁰ area, as they had received earlier education and training from their missionaries. Since they are the ones in charge of the programmes, they accept or employ people from their areas. It is only the programmes that are directly controlled by the headquarters that people are employed or posted from both the areas.

⁹⁹ Among the educational institutions belonging to the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, only the Literacy Programme has its Headquarters in Gavva and this is an adult education. The main office is at Gavva because it is funded by the Basel Mission and there are facilities for the programme at the Basel Mission Compound in Gavva.

¹⁰⁰ The major tribes in the Church of the Brethren area are the Bura, Higgi (Kamwe) and Margi. They are the ones that hold these main positions. In the Basel Mission area the tribes are: Glavda, Yautada (Buha), Dughwade and Mandara.

Especially when it has to do with the posting of pastors to local churches. Even with that some specific people are posted to urban areas while others to rural areas. Tribalism¹⁰¹ is not part of the teachings of the church but it operates in the church. And that is why I have indicated that since the Church of the Brethren has advantage of early education they have also dominated Gavva area because of the merger. And this has caused discrimination within the area, as most of the workers come from outside the area.

5.5 Brethren Beliefs and Practices

I include this part in my research to show that the Church of the Brethren believe solely in the authority of the scriptures. I indicated in my research proposal that the scriptures have resources for addressing the situation of discrimination, exploitation and oppression in my church. It seems necessary to look at these beliefs and practices to indicate that the church is drifting away from her main teachings which were supposed to bring the church members together; both the wealthy and the poor. Hackman says, “Brethren believe that clergy and laity are equal” (1993:88). Baptism and Holy Communion are among the main sacraments of the Church of the Brethren. The celebration of Holy Communion is one of the ordinances of the Brethren meant to signify the remembrance of the events in the life of Jesus. This ordinance is central to the belief of the Brethren community, as it is with all Christians. This celebration keeps the whole family of believers in unity with Christ, and the community of believers. Holy Communion encourages sharing with one another whether the wealthy or the poor, the pastor or a member. In EYN the Holy Communion has three parts which are: foot washing, love feast or the Lord’s Supper and communion of cup and bread. The foot washing signifies the act of cleansing, purity, and service to humanity by each participant, the wealthy and the poor. On foot washing Martin says “our besetting sin is often an undue desire for status, and because each of us is inclined to feel he (sic) is above others, we need a service that will bring us together on a common level” (1989:48).

Another explanation given by Martin is that Christians are expected to help one another. This is balanced reciprocity:

God calls all Christians to a life of service. When another person is in need, the Christian should be the first one to help that person. When we wash one

¹⁰¹ I have described the different tribes am referring to in chapter six. Also see footnote 101.

another's feet, we are saying to the person that whenever they need help in life, if it is possible for us, we are willing to help them. If a flood destroys their house, we will be there to help rebuild it. If injured in an accident, we will nurse their wounds. If one is sick in bed, we will be there to care for them. These, and many other ways, are how we put into practice what we teach through the feet washing service (1993:65).

Apart from the foot washing, the love feast or the Lord's Supper is central part of the communion. The common meal, which Brethren as members of the same family share together, signifies fellowship with each other and with Christ, and also our acceptance of each other. In this way, the members assume the responsibility of feeding each other. If you can feed a person, it shows that you cannot discriminate against them. But it does not always happen in that way in the church. It is expected that the supper will bring all members together without any discrimination against one another. "The supper is a symbol of brotherhood (sic) and peace. Eating together has always been an act of friendliness and the Lord's Table pictures the doctrine of Christian love" (Martin 1989:50). But unfortunately today the love feast has become a problem in the church because the poor are not given the opportunity to share with the wealthy members within the same congregation.

The last part of Holy Communion is the breaking of bread and sharing of cup. This signifies our thanksgiving to God for the salvation God sent through Jesus. And it is expected that every member will want their fellow Brethren to have salvation, but the members still discriminate against one another. The communion of the cup and bread is also observed after the foot washing and love feast. These practices are still observed today by the church. Since these practices will continue, there is need of making the church members to respect the status of each other whether the wealthy or the poor. When this is done, the issue of discrimination will be minimized in the church, which will also help the larger society. The Nigerian church should learn from her missionaries; when the missionaries knelt to wash feet it was seen as a favour from God by the locals. When the missionaries did that it was seen as God coming down from heaven to wash the people's feet. A lot has been learned from the missionaries on how to respect one another whether one is poor or wealthy. This means that the Holy Communion should truly picture the brotherhood and sisterhood in God's family. It shows the dignified humility of Christianity and could also heal Nigerian anger against one another.

Another point worth considering to this research is that Brethren believe in the priesthood of all believers. From the time of baptism, a member is believed to be ordained into the priesthood of all believers within the community of faith. All members are expected to live a life that is an example of the priesthood and to share in the ministry of the church. The congregational system used by EYN seems to impress many Nigerian churches today. This happens because many churches assume that EYN does not have problem of discrimination since major decisions of the church are taken by the General Church Council (GCC). The GCC comprises the church members and church leaders or pastors. However, this system has its own implications. The priesthood of all believers is an ideal in EYN and not a total reality, because leadership of the church is not balanced with a sense of shared responsibility, particularly as regards to the less privileged or the poor in the church. The wealthy are dominant in leadership roles; they happened to make major decisions right from the local church. So, where does the church place the congregational system? It means that the system functions only on paper but it is not practiced. This happens because the leadership of the church wants to take control, instead of the members.

5.6 Church of the Brethren's Position on Discrimination, Poverty and the Poor

There are documents of the Church of the Brethren that deal with caring for the poor, discrimination and poverty. They include the Annual Conference Statements of the COB, the Constitution, Beliefs and Practices etc. The documents of the Church also address the moral economy. The documents are seen in terms of generalized and balanced reciprocity as the Church gives to its members generously, but in some instances requires something in return from the members. But the Church documents do not have negative reciprocity towards the members. The 1983 Constitution of the Incorporated Trustees of the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria as amended 2002) is the supreme document of the Church of the Brethren apart from the Bible itself. It describes how members should live and interact with each other. The Constitution states clearly that Brethren should support one another without any discrimination. The Constitution also states that "it is the responsibility of the Local, District and the General Church Council to take care of the less privileged, the fatherless, the disabled, the poor and the needy in the church" (1983:13).

In every Annual General Meeting of the Church statements designed to aid in the growth of the church are made and adopted by the General Board. A statement adopted in 1977, Church of the Brethren, Annual Conference Statement on Ethics, Law, and Order, states clearly that “the church must demonstrate social concern. It must not only seek the salvation of fellow human beings, but also show genuine concern for their total well being. The church recognizes her responsibility to victims of poverty, prejudice, injustice, and other forms of human suffering” (1977:9). The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference always encourages the need for the care for the poor and those living in poverty in the church. The church emphasizes this in every annual conference.

The Church’s conference statement emphasizes that Brethren should love one another, take care of the poor and the oppressed. The Church of the Brethren states in the Annual Conference Statement that:

Out of love toward victims of poverty, oppression, and violence, the church is called to earlier, more profound, and more lasting efforts to address the conditions that gives rise to violence. The Church of the Brethren should press for more effective preventive diplomacy to defuse rising tensions before they erupt into war, more serious economic development to avert desperate conditions, and more concerted peace building to weave new strong social fabrics that cross boundaries of race, class, religion, ethnicity, and nationality. She has abundant though underused evidence that where socio-economic cooperation occurs, former adversaries study war no more. We believe our church, should focus on such measures to achieve equity and justice (1996:12).

Church of the Brethren, Annual Conference Statement on Justice and Nonviolence is a document adopted by the church in 1998. This document stresses the need for justice and fight against discrimination in the Church.

The church agrees that indicating social concern also involves raising its voice against injustice and discrimination. The church stands against discrimination, slavery and injustice, insisting that equal rights be granted to everyone. It advocates fairness in the work place, in the courts, in all other settings, and seeks the end of any discrimination based on poverty, race, nation, economic, or social differences (1998:5).

Hackman, talking on justice, also says that:

By 'justice' we have reference to the Bible's concern that the oppressed and unfortunate people of the world are treated fairly by their neighbours. Every culture that has ever existed has exalted certain people and lowered others. Sometimes the lower classes are oppressed by the upper classes. In any culture, one can find unjust and unfair ways of treating certain people in the society (1993:129).

There are different ways in which oppression occurs. "Oppression comes in many forms. Sometimes governments are responsible for directly oppressing their people, as often happens under dictatorship. They do this by singling out certain groups of people and denying them basic human rights..." (1993:130).

The Manual for the Church of the Brethren published and adopted for use in 1993, states that:

The Church recognizes the principle that she has a specific responsibility to defend and respond to the rights and needs of the poor, the disadvantaged, and those with insufficient power to assure their rights, and the principle that no person is created for poverty, but all are born for a full place at the table of human family (1993:3).

The manual has its origins in discussions within the Parish Ministries Commission in March 1988. A direct quotation from the manual shows that the church has a strong document in support of her members. This document has been in the Church for a long time.

In order to help the poor and the needy, the church acknowledging the inequalities of our market economy that frequently give employers greater bargaining power than the employees, thereby pressing the employees into a choice between inadequate wage and no wage at all: recognizing that the provision of wages and other benefits sufficient to support individuals and families in dignity is a basic necessity to prevent the exploitation of workers, and the dignity of workers also requires adequate health care, security for old age or against disability, unemployment compensation, healthful working conditions, weekly rest, periodic holidays for recreation and leisure, and reasonable security against arbitrary dismissing and recognizing that in view of the rapidly changing economic conditions the church resolved to reaffirm

its commitment to stand with and support the poor and needy in their plight of meeting basic needs, the struggle for the right to decent living and increasing the level of participation by all members of the society in the economic life of the church work for changes in the social, economic, and political structures that deny workers rights and seek to maintain conditions that led to deprivation and degradation of human life (1993: 4-5).

The church is to be sure that living conditions of every member are improved and to discourage those who look down on the ones that are poor and needy. This is what the Epistle of James advocates for to have concern for the poor and the needy and to guard against oppression and exploitation of the community members by the wealthy and outsiders.

It can be clearly seen that the Church of the Brethren has good teachings, fundamentally based on the Epistle of James, that would enable the poor, widows, orphans and the destitute to feel free and feel that they also have a place. The documents reveal no negative reciprocity in the Church of the Brethren, but the practice on ground is different. Whenever I read these documents, it makes me proud that the church has such teachings. Unfortunately, the church does not take care of this category of people. When I served as one of the Church's regional Secretaries between 2000 and 2002, I had to establish a relief committee that looked after the poor and the needy in the whole region. In the region then we had seven districts and 77 local church councils. It was a large region. It was out of the concern for the poor and the needy in the Church that I emphasized the need for helping the disadvantaged. This is indicated as shown:

The principle that the church has specific responsibility to defend and respond to the rights and needs of the poor, the disadvantaged, and those with insufficient power to assure their rights, and the principle that no person is created for poverty, but all are born for a full place at the table of the human family (*Conference Statement on Justice and Non-Violence* 1998:16).

The relief committee gathered some materials from local churches and individuals in order to give to the poor members. That was done twice a year by the region. It has been a programme that had concern for the less privileged members. Doing that also helped us to implant in the members the spirit of caring for one another, whether the wealthy or the poor. Apart from the regional level, each district has its relief committee as well as each of the 77 local church councils. It worked out well for us. I left the region in mid 2002 to teach in the seminary and to further my education.

Later in the year, the system of the church administration changed: the 7 regions were scrapped, and the church returned to the use of District Church Councils (DCC). When new people came in, the relief committee was not part of their priority and it died out. Because of that, there is no programme that brings the poor and the wealthy close together again. There is an emphasis in the Church's document for the need to collaborate with others in order to assist the poor members of the Church.

The church calls upon all members and other persons of good will to join with the Church of the Brethren to reverse the widening of the gap between rich and poor. In order to conserve energy, food, and other resources needed by the poor, we must re-examine our patterns of consumption. Poverty is therefore not an 'out-there' problem, but an 'everywhere' problem (1998:8).

Martin¹⁰² has served as an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren for more than thirty-five years. He has been part of the preaching team of the church. He has also served for number of years as a member of the Standing Committee of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference and has been a member of the General Board. He has authored a book titled "Brethren Beliefs and Practices (1989)" out of his rich experience of the church. He says that the church recognizes that the poor will always be in the church, and the church cannot ignore their plight; the Bible clearly states the obligation to those living in poverty. But there are many others, whether they are poor or not, whose situation requires aid. "They include persons in prison, immigrants, widows, orphans, the unborn, and the people with disabilities, the homeless, the elderly and victims of abuse" (Martin 1989:156).

The Report of the EYN 50th Annual General Church Council held in RCC Gwoza, Mubi: EYN, adopted in 2001, affirmed that every local church and the District Church Councils should set up a Relief Committee in order to take care of those in need. "Drawing from its vital rural heritage, the Church of the Brethren has made a significant impact on food security and the alleviation of poverty in specific settings" (2006:6).

¹⁰² Martin has served on different committees of the Church of the Brethren. He has written a lot about the teachings of the Church. I have used his book *Brethren Beliefs and Practices* because his documents say much about the church.

5.7 Conclusion

The teachings of the Church of the Brethren have a lot to offer to the church when the traditions and the heritage are observed by the members, the pastors and church leaders. One can see that the documents addressed general concepts of discrimination, exploitation and oppression. It is clear that the church has teachings on how the poor and the wealthy or the church members are to treat one another. Despite the written documents, there is discrimination, exploitation or oppression against the poor members which ought not to be so. I have noted that some of these problems persist because most of the members are not aware of these documents and some of the pastors/church leaders are not taking their responsibilities of teaching the members on the need to respect one another whether one is poor or wealthy. The church leadership has the capacity and mechanisms to make sure that these documents are implemented.

Chapter Six

6.1 Fieldwork: Tools, Analysis and Interpretation

6.1.1 Background of Gavva Area

This chapter deals with fieldwork tools, analysis and interpretation. The results collected refer to Gavva area. In this chapter I present a table of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren documents with its interpretation and the table of the moral economy from the field research. Gavva area is rural comprising of peasant farmers. As indicated in chapter five, most of the few social amenities in the area were provided by the missionaries. That was what the early Basel Missionaries did to help Gavva area at that time. But the government did not augment the missionaries' efforts as the people have poor living conditions. Because of the poor living condition in Gavva, the villagers complained to the State Governor in the following terms, "We are in a critical condition due to lack of motor able road, the problem has negatively affected our socio-economic activities, because we are finding it difficult to convey sick persons and pregnant women on labour to hospital due to inadequate commercial vehicles. Our wives don't attend anti-natal care, secondly we can't convey our farm produce to markets, and government should please save our lives (sic)." ¹⁰³

The villagers stated that they had presented their problems to Gwoza local government, but were told that the council lacked financial capacity to execute the project, "We are calling on the state government to realize that we are suffering and the situation supposed is not to be so since we are aware that other parts of the state have benefited a lot from developmental projects." ¹⁰⁴ When one visits Gavva today, the roads built by the Basel missionaries in the 1960s are still the ones being used. The pipe water running from the hills provided by the missionaries is still the one used by the people in that area with the exception of a few wells that were dug by the Well-Digging project of the Church. This tells how the area has been neglected by both the Church and the Government. ¹⁰⁵ If our missionaries from Basel had not constructed the road and

¹⁰³ Sunday, 30 August 2009 Gavva villagers appeal to Sheriff Sunday Trust magazine - Kanem Trust.

¹⁰⁴ Sunday, 30 August 2009 Gavva villagers appeal to Sheriff Sunday Trust magazine - Kanem Trust

¹⁰⁵ Gavva is a small area in Nigeria. One cannot compare the activities of government in Gavva area and other areas of Nigeria.

provided water for us, the community would have suffered severely. The government has completely neglected the area. It was good that the missionaries came at that time to save our people from dying. Today, our people still enjoy the hospital built by the missionaries though it has been taken over by the Government. If the hospital were still with the missionaries I believe that it would be more than it is. Because of this neglect by the government the villagers are living a life of poverty. Poverty does not bring development to a community but destroys it. The youth have not gone to school; it means that they are still backward in terms of western education. If they are not educated it will be difficult for jobs to be offered to them except the few that have had their early education in the schools opened by the Basel Mission in the area.¹⁰⁶ Gavva area is characterized by a life of poverty as it is stated, “Though the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is much higher in the rural areas than in the urban centres, the urban slum dwellers form one of the more deprived groups.”¹⁰⁷ The response given by Pindar¹⁰⁸ indicates that, the Governor’s claims

¹⁰⁶ This is what I personally wrote to the State Government about Gavva, “I appeal to the Governor of Borno State, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, to complete work on the electricity project that he initiated in Gavva...I also appeal to him to do the road network to the village” (Gava, 2007:17). But nothing has been done up till now.

¹⁰⁷ Urban poverty in Nigeria: a Case study of Agege area of Lagos State, Nigeria. August 2003.p.2. I cited Agege area because; it explains what is happening in Gavva area, as there is no direct written document on poverty in Gavva. There are documents on Northern Nigeria and Borno State but they are politicized. The government presents its document as if there is no poverty in the area or the state. This is what is presented by the Borno State on Governor Sheriff’s two years anniversary, but they are not true: “**NA: Yet, you must be aware that the United Nations has classified Borno State as the poorest state in the world in terms of human development indices.** *Sheriff:* I want the UN to return to Borno State to reassess the situation. The criteria it uses to measure development indices and economic growth are based on many factors, including the state of infrastructure as well as the health and hygiene of the people. We did not have, before now, adequate sanitation and drainage and these shortcomings caused many preventable diseases. To address the problem, over the last two years we have constructed boreholes and provided piped water for many more people. Our first year in office was spent largely in court in litigation, but in the second and third years we have provided much more clean water for the state, up from two million gallons a day when we started to over six million gallons today. Clean water and improved sanitation have helped us in eliminating disease. We have also increased the number of hospitals in the state and undertaken a comprehensive programme of social and infrastructural development that has improved the quality of life of our people. I am confident that when the UN returns to Borno State, they will review their figures.

NA: If you are doing so much, why are you not publicising the positive changes that have taken place?

Sheriff: I am not publicising our achievements because what we do here is for the benefit of the people of Borno State, and it is for them to judge. I welcome the opposition using the newspapers to express their point of view, but when the media gives the opposition a platform, it is only right that they should see for themselves the situation on the ground, and write balanced, objective reports. **NA: How is your poverty alleviation plan working?**

Sheriff: We have been working hard on poverty reduction. All along, this has been the goal of our social development efforts. We have tried to empower our people, especially the women and the poor. Just recently, we organised the people in Local Government Areas into co-operatives, and government funds were provided through the banks, at times directly, for the people to borrow and use to improve their economic situation. We are providing extension services, and our trained officers provide support and advice to cottage industries and

were not true. The United Nations rated Borno State as one of the poorest States in the Nigeria. But the Governor does not agree with that as he claims that he brought developmental changes in the State. When one visits Borno, there are no developmental changes as claimed by the Governor. And Pindar, one of the main figures in the State countered what the Governor said because they are not real, they are political propaganda. The details are provided in footnote 112 and 113.

The life of poverty in Gavva area is not different from what is happening in the country as a whole, “The most pathetic feature of Nigerian society today is that a majority of its members are living in a state of destitution while the remaining relatively small minority is living in affluence.”¹⁰⁹

The analysis of the results from the questionnaires will show that Gavva area is poor as most of the inhabitants are peasant farmers. Only a few have been educated and reached certain levels either in the church or government cycle.

6.1.2 Methodology for Distribution and Collection of the Questionnaires and Interviews

The questionnaires were given out to some selected church members and Pastors/leaders in Maiduguri and Gavva area. The same questionnaires specifically designed for church leaders/pastors were given to the key officials of the Church of the Brethren since they are also

individuals in selfemployment. http://www.africasia.com/uploads/orno_state_october_2006_new_african.pdf. Accessed 8/7/2010.

¹⁰⁸ Pindar is one of the public commentators and Governorship aspirant in Borno State. This is what Pindar says about Borno State; and his statements counteract the Governor’s claim about development in the State. “Most importantly, for the first time, I think there is a serious challenge for somebody from southern Borno to be the head in Borno State. What are these changes you are bringing in? The cosmetics development that we have on ground is alarming. Go there and see what is happening, the roads have gone bad in the last two years, the houses have been overgrown by weeds, there is no water supply, the hospitals are shadows of themselves, there is really nothing to show for it. There are no doctors, no nurses, no hospital equipment. There have been outbreaks of malaria and cholera all over the place. Yet the government has not provided help to the people. And they say there have been development, what development? Buildings, 1000 or 2000 houses? Is that development? The children are not getting scholarship, there is no investment in education, there is no investment in agriculture, all the agricultural equipment that were bought in 2003/2004, are yet to be distributed. This is not development, distributing motorcycles to youngsters is not development” Pindar: I will Reposition Borno State Fri, 26th Mar 2010 Source: Leadership Nigeria accessed 24/9/2010.

¹⁰⁹ Urban poverty in Nigeria: a Case study of Agege area of Lagos State, Nigeria. August 2003.p.3.

Pastors. In order to distribute the questionnaires I personally went and gave out the questionnaires to selected pastors and members in Gavva area. In Maiduguri local church Councils I myself also gave out the questionnaires to the two District Church Council (DCC) Secretaries and the pastors. The questionnaires for the church leaders/pastors were given out from October 2008 and were all collected by me in January 2009. But I gave out the ones for the church members after the Sunday church services of each local church and collected them when they completed the questionnaires. For the interviews, I used my voice recorder and I also used my digital camera to have pictures of each of them as they were interested in participation. The interviews were conducted between May to Mid-June 2009. I was able to interview the key leaders of the church and a few members of the church that filled the questionnaires earlier. Informed consent forms were completed and signed by each person interviewed in accordance with the ethics policy of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

6.2 Those who filled in the Questionnaires and Interviewed

For the purpose of this research I designed some questionnaires. The questionnaires have been designed in two categories: the first category was designed for church members to fill in while the second category was designed for church leaders/pastors. Each of the questionnaires contains 15 questions and these questions have been analyzed individually so as to get qualitative responses from the respondents. Apart from the questionnaires given out, I conducted interviews with some of the ones that were given the questionnaires.

There were 50 questionnaires printed out for both the church leaders/pastors and for the church members. Specifically 30 questionnaires were distributed to the church members and 20 to church leaders/pastors. Out of the 30 questionnaires that I gave the church members 10 were completed by women and 20 by men. The age range of the men is between 30-65 while for the 10 women it is between 30-50. The 20 questionnaires for the church leaders were all completed by men as the church is yet to ordain women and give them local church leadership. The church leaders/pastors received their pastoral trainings at Kulp Bible College (KBC) and Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) Bukuru. Seven pastors had their education at Certificate in Christian Ministry (CCM) level and their annual income is between N500-600,000.00 equivalent to R25-30,

000.00, five have a Diploma in Christian Ministry (DCM) with an annual income of between N600-700, 000.00 equivalent to R30-35,000.00, and eight are graduates from TCNN and their annual income is between N700-1 Million equivalent to R35, 000- 50, 000.00. The income for these pastors depends on the salary structure designed by the church Headquarters. Because the salary is meagre most of the local churches use their discretion to top up the salary of their pastor. This depends also on the income of the local church. The pastors want to be transferred to the LCC that has higher income and wealthy members. But most of the church members whose income is low see all pastors as wealthy or having a high income because most of the pastors/leaders have a good relationship with high income members or the wealthy. This will be seen in the responses to the questionnaires given out to the members and the pastors/leaders. I gave out the questionnaires to the church leaders on an individual basis as they are not in one place or local church. Out of the 20 questionnaires given out to the church leaders 20 were returned. All 30 of the questionnaires distributed to church members were returned.

As I have indicated above out of the 30 questionnaires I gave out to church members 10 were filled by women. Among these 10 women only 2 are graduates and working. The other 8 are secondary school certificate holders. They were not able to further their education because only a few families trained their female children then but the trend is changing now. It means that the 10 women were not assisted in filling in the questionnaires; they filled them in on their own. Most of the 20 male members fall into the category of low income earners based on their annual income. Only about 6 of them may be perhaps be regarded as high income earners,¹¹⁰ based on the income of the area. The combined annual income of the three local churches in Gavva area is very low (in 2002 it was N2.9 Million).¹¹¹ This is equivalent to R154, 000.00. This income is not equivalent to the monthly income of an urban church, especially that of EYN Maiduguri. In 2008 the churches

¹¹⁰ I use the terms 'high income and low income earners' to describe the wealthy and the poor. I still put the terms 'wealthy and poor' in parenthesis to convey what I mean because the 'low and high income' do not convey precisely the condition of the members in the Local Churches. The responses in the statistics in each of the questions may not be the same because of the variation of responses given by the respondents based on the question they are responding to. However, I did the analysis based on the responses I gathered from the questionnaires and the interviews. Those that filled in the questionnaires and were interviewed have signed the informed consent form.

¹¹¹ From the Taron Majalisar RCC of 2002.

were able to realize N3.5 Million¹¹² equivalent to R325, 000.00. This amount is too small for the running of these churches annually. When I tallied the total annual income of the 30 respondents that filled the questionnaire I saw that it amounted to a little over N.7.5 Million equivalent to R625,000.00. In fact only 2 respondents have an income that reaches N1 Million annually, but the rest are lower than that. Based on the income of the area those that have an income of up to N500, 000.00 per annum could be classified as high income earners.¹¹³ This shows the type of membership that is there in these local churches. All the 20 pastors/leaders at least do not earn less than N500, 000.00 annually; this is why they are classified with the high income earners (wealthy). My analysis is done in a qualitative way by giving what the respondents have written based on the questionnaires that have been returned. The views of the majority as well as the minority have been analyzed and presented. For the interviews conducted, I have also grouped similar responses together. As I am dealing with the Epistle of James the questions reflected the socio-economic status of the members as well as the pastors/church leaders. The responses gathered from the questionnaires and the ones from the interviews I conducted are analysed together. I did this in order to compare the responses from the questionnaires and that of the interviews.

6.3 Questions for the church members

All quotes are reproduced exactly and I have not indicated specifically where the respondents have made language errors.

1. Are you a communicant member?

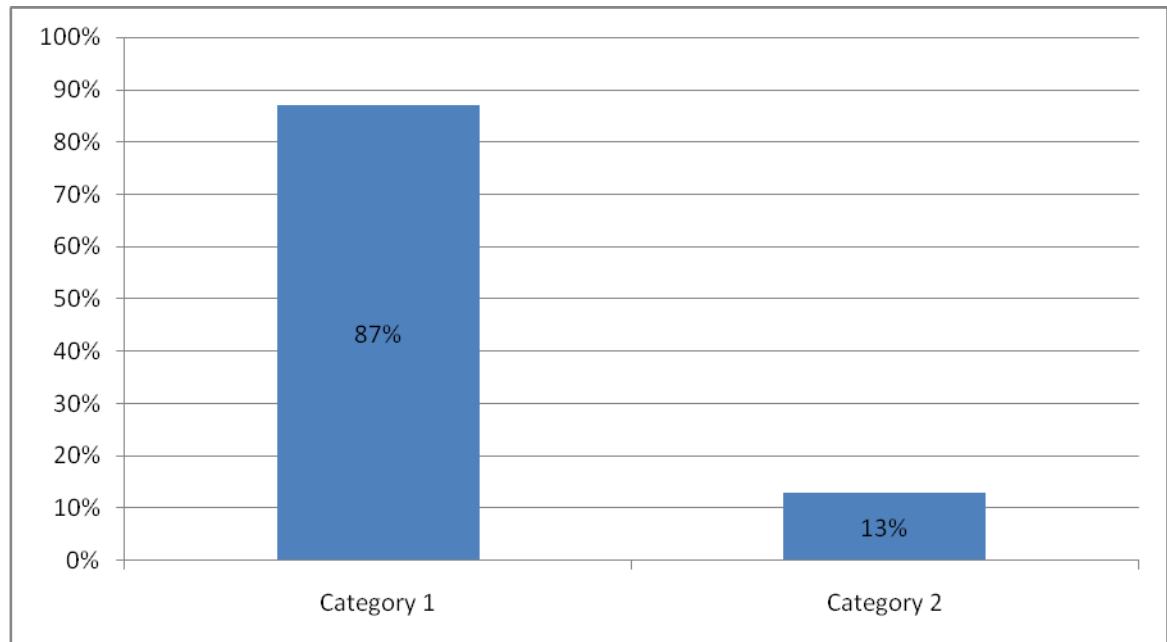
All the respondents are communicant members of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria making 100%. In COB “communicant members” refers to those that have been baptized and are taking Holy Communion. The COB does not practice infant baptism but adult (believers) baptism. It means that the members referred to in this research are all adults.

¹¹² From the Taron Majalisa Report of 2009 giving report of the income of 2008.

¹¹³ I indicated this here to avoid repetitive showing of the annual income in each question.

2. As a communicant member, have you experienced any discrimination in terms of foot washing or fellowship meal?

Table 2:



In table 2 the category 1 indicates those that have experienced discrimination and category 2 are those that have not experienced discrimination.

For this question, of the 30 questionnaires returned, 26 respondents (87%) indicated that they have experienced discrimination. This 87% is comprised of low income earners (poor) in the church, based on what they have indicated as their total income per year. Only 13% indicated that they have not experienced any discrimination. The 13% reflects those that can be referred to as the high income earners based on their annual income as indicated on the questionnaire. The responses reflect the status of the respondents in terms of referring to them as low income or high income earners. Some of the comments are as follows: “wealthy members or high class members mostly stay in one group. The poor stay away from them. Others, because of their bad culture,¹¹⁴ they do

¹¹⁴ The bad culture here refers to disagreement or conflict within the same dominant tribe but different clans as we have them in Gavva area. The clans worship in the same church but they may not be best of friends. Sometimes people hesitate to wash the feet of those that do not come from their clan and vice versa. The

not want to associate with the poor in terms of foot washing and fellowship meal.” From these responses, one can see the issue of honour and shame coming up. The wealthy are always honoured and they occupy positions of honour. It seems that the wealthy stay together and fellowship with one another while the poor also occupy their position of shame and express their anger to others in the same position of discrimination “off stage”, as described by the “hidden transcript model of James Scott (1990). The problem of discrimination is seen openly in this context.

Another responded, “There is discrimination in the sense that the elders do not wash the foot of young ones or women in general.” Another response is similar: “In foot washing I have not experienced any discrimination, but in fellowship meal I had experienced it. As a young man there was a day I went for the fellowship meal among the elders and I was told that I did not belong to their group.” This however does not have anything to do with the merger. It has to do with the way the elderly treat the younger ones. Some of the elderly assume that the young ones are not supposed to be with them, and forget that all of them are equal members of the church. A respondent also said, “When it comes to foot washing the same thing happens. The pastors go together with the church committee¹¹⁵, the rich go with their friends and the poor also do the same. Is it not possible to mix together and wash one another’s foot without looking at one’s background if we say that we are all equal? This is not different from how the rich treat the poor in James.” The fact that this respondent cites James indicates that he is aware of the teachings of the Church of the Brethren. I have indicated elsewhere that James is the main text of the Church. Some of the respondents are aware that the Epistle of James is against the discrimination between the wealthy and the poor members. Another responded about the fellowship meal, “When it comes to the meal the pastor and the church committee eats together, the rich together and the poor

misunderstanding may not be necessarily because one clan is wealthy and the other is poor, but it is on the issue of control or majority in the Local Church Council (LCC). The ones in the majority may control how the church goes.

¹¹⁵ Based on the EYN Constitution there are 11 committee members (elders) in every LCC. The committee is elected by the church members. But before the election is done, those to be on the committee are nominated by the committee that their tenure finishes. This is where the pastor has influence on the ones to be nominated. Certainly, most of the pastors/leaders nominate those that they fill would support them. When the high income earners are elected on the committee, they would support the church financially and the pastor/leader benefits also from that. So, ones one is on the committee the members see him/her as wealthy.

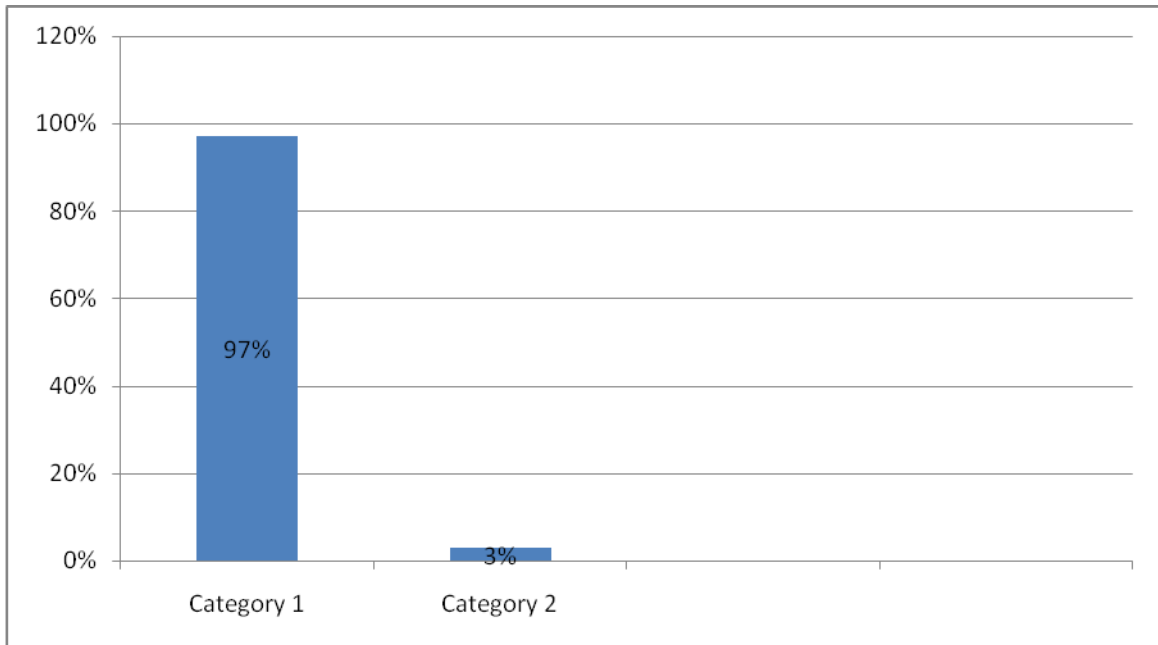
together. Some could afford to come with only biscuits while others could not afford anything.” If a common meal were prepared by the church such things would not happen. The division between the high income earners and the low income earners would be minimized if everyone had the same dish. Even if the high income earners felt superior, they would not have a different meal from the others.

I had a similar experience to that of these respondents. As I indicated in my research background this is what prompted me into doing this research.¹¹⁶ This is what the low income earners experience in the church today as shown by the responses given by the respondents. In fact, recently after the field research it happened that a Holy Communion with the Love feast was administered in one of our churches. As the Holy Communion was officiated and the dishes were being shared for the love feast, it was done according to the members’ status and class. As the dishes were given or shared out the seating arrangements changed automatically based on class and status. The best dishes were given to the pastor, church committee members and the wealthy since they sat in the same place. After the meals, the members observed how they were discriminated against in terms of eating together. If the stated aims of social justice found in the documents of the church are to be implemented, this issue will have to be addressed by the leadership and local pastors of the congregations. I have studied the moral economy of the community of James and have seen how the wealthy and the poor interact with one another. The poor in his community were exploited by the wealthy within and outside their community, and this resonates with the experiences emerging from this fieldwork study. In the community in Gavva area as seen above there is discrimination when the poor and the wealthy come to eat together even in the church worship service.

3. Have you noticed preferential treatment of wealthy members in terms of meals, seating arrangements during occasions like weddings, naming and child dedication, and ordination services?

¹¹⁶ See chapter one for details about this claim.

Table 3:



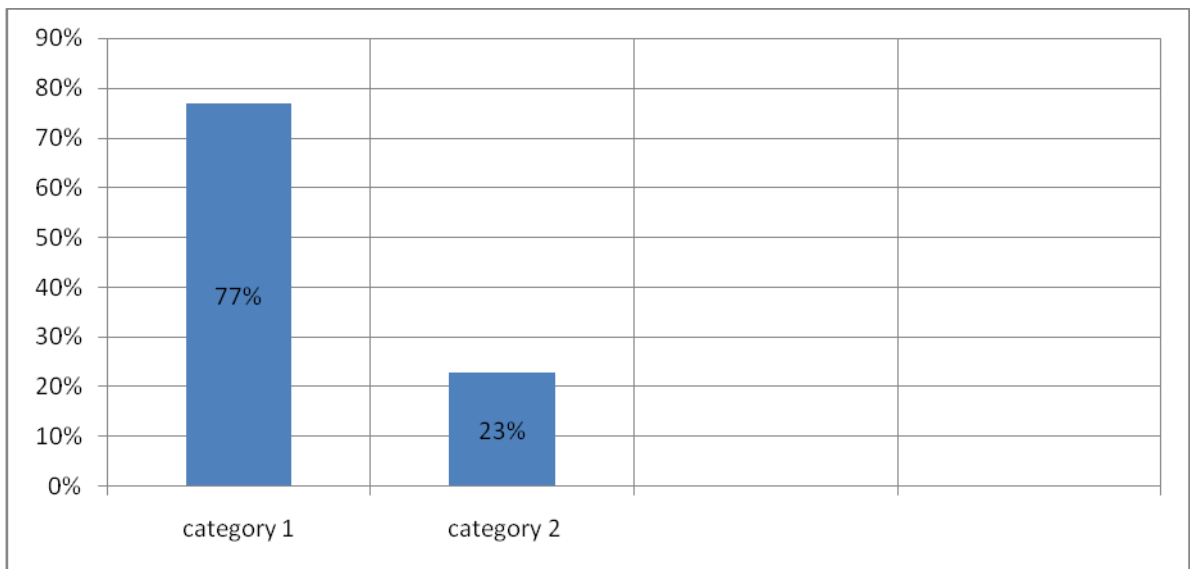
In table 3 category 1 shows those who indicated that there is preferential treatment for the wealthy. While those in category 2 say that there is no preferential treatment.

In fact out of the 30 questionnaires analyzed 29 of the respondents (97%) answered 'yes' to this question. What baffles me is that among the 97% there are those that can be referred to as high income earners based on their annual income. Only one respondent answered that "there was no preferential treatment for high income earners," and this person was a low income earner but may likely have had his personal reasons for this response. These are some of the comments of the respondents that said 'yes': "Yes, because during these programmes or occasions, a wealthy member will be given more attention, while the poor will stand far away without anybody considering him." Another respondent said, "I noticed that pastors recognize the wealthy members and their fellow pastors in terms of weddings and fundraisings where money is the major concern." A respondent also said, "Yes, because wealthy members are honoured to take the position of the high table during such occasions and they are given more regard than the poor." Another respondent said, "Whenever there was fellowship meal and Holy Communion, the seating arrangements differs based on position, class and status, but is it not what James is against. Such thing is happening right in the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria." This respondent realizes

that James is against such divisions in the church but they see it happening in the Church of the Brethren where equality of members is always emphasized. Someone also said, “The wealthy are given good food while the poor are given traditional food.” Another one said, “Yes, I have noticed this on many occasions especially during weddings special treatment is always given to the wealthy members. In some places special seats are reserved for them even when they are to come late. When others drink coca-cola, the wealthy are given malt or maltonic drinks.” Interestingly another respondent said, “The issue of high table and VIP treatment is there in our churches today because we cannot dispute that fact. In fact some local churches have permanent seats for particular individuals whom spiritually are dead or weak but because of their financial contributions to the church they are the ones to decide what to do and where to do in the church. This shows some “offstage” resistance. But for those that are spiritually wealthy but materially poor their opinions will not be considered.” This agrees with what Scott (1990) says that it is the elite who control the public transcript. This appears to be happening in the church, according to the field work findings, and the wealthy serve as the elite in the church, whatever they decide the church leadership observes it.

4. Did your family join this church after the merger between the Basel Mission and the Church of the Brethren? Yes/No if your answer is ‘No’ from which background does your family come?

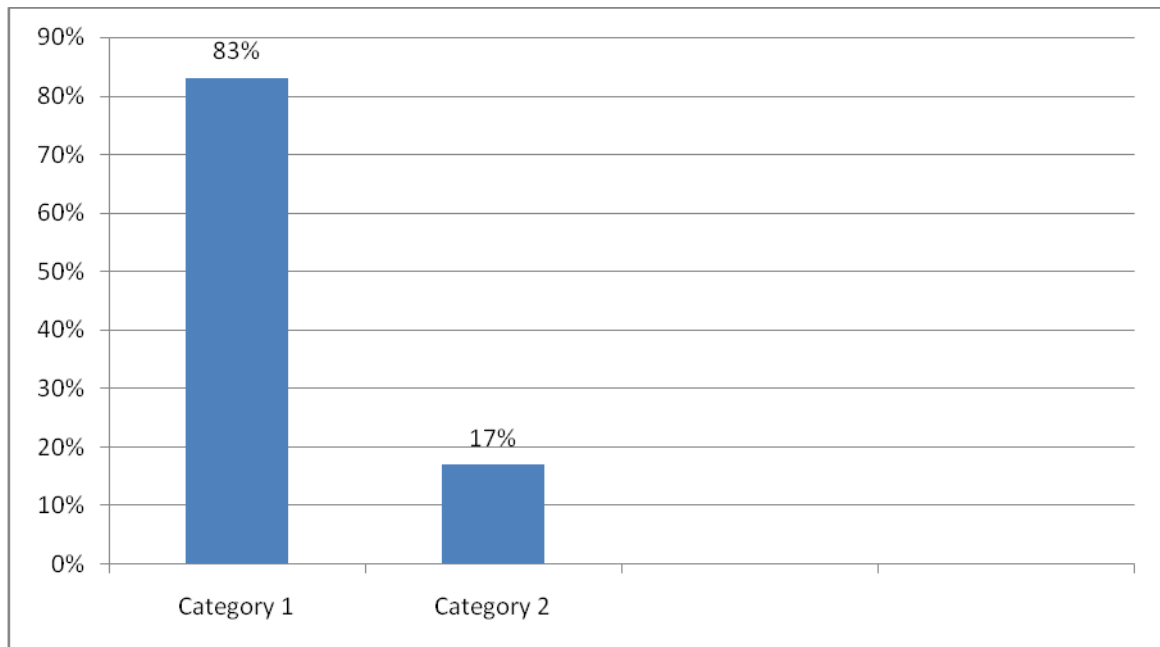
Table 4:



Out of the 30 questionnaires distributed, 23 or 77% of the respondents answered ‘yes’ that their family joined the church after the merger. While 7 which is 23% answered ‘No’. The 23% were part of the Church of the Brethren from the inception. This shows that majority of the members had come from the Basel Mission Gavva area though they are members of the Church of the Brethren. However, the ones that were not part¹¹⁷ of Basel Mission from the beginning took over most of the works (jobs) in the area of Gavva. This was because of the advantage they had from the Church of the Brethren in terms of education and training.

5. How do the rich and the poor relate in the church?

Table 5:



In table 5 category 1 indicates unfavourable views on relationships between rich and poor in the church. While those in category 2 have favourable views about the relationship.

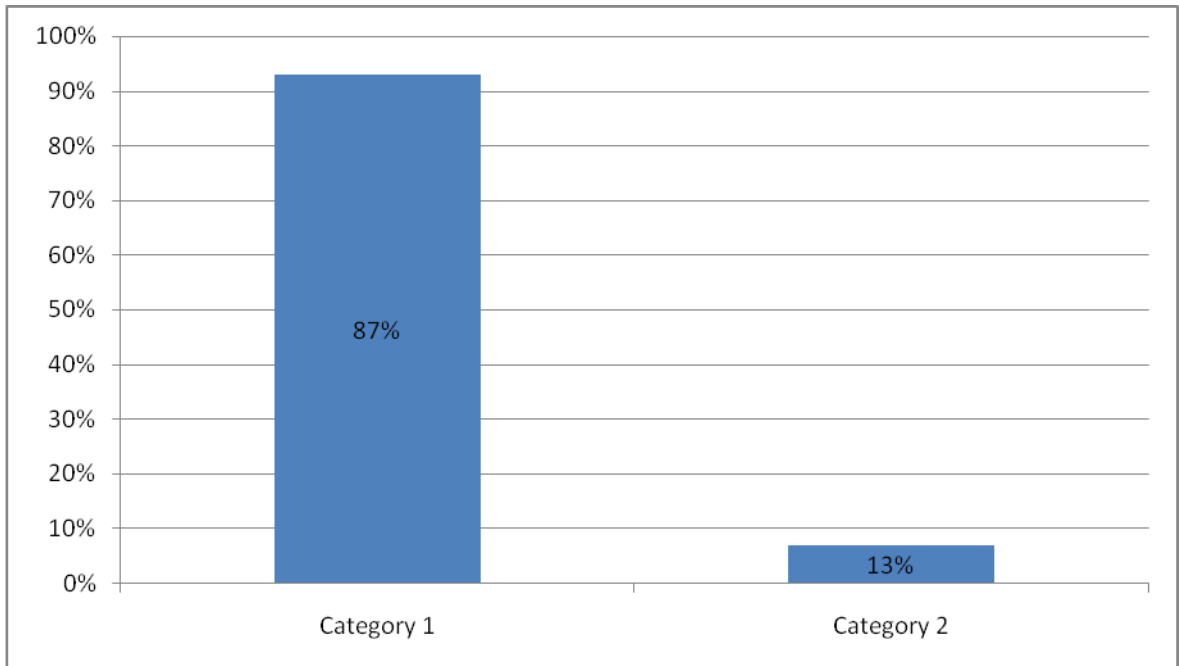
¹¹⁷ These people were not originally part of Basel Mission but Church of the Brethren area. They are members of the Church of the Brethren; they are part of the research.

From the 30 questionnaires returned, 5 of the respondents (17%) said as indicated by one of them that “they relate as one family.” While 25 or 83% of the respondents answered that they did not relate well. The 83% represent the low income earners in the church. The responses given by the poor reflect their socio-economic status. This is what a respondent said, “The rich people have a saying in the church while the poor are humiliated.” This also agrees with Scott (1990) that it is the wealthy that dictate the public transcript. Another one said, “Despite Church of the Brethren seems to be brotherly and humble congregation but yet some pastors do create that room for discrimination.” A respondent also said, “The rich contribute materially while the poor use their energy, and the relationship is weak, the rich are given more consideration in terms of suggestions and decision making in the church and more regards given to them.” A poor respondent indicated, “And sometimes the wealthy lead the church in discussion and when they are in the church committee they almost carry up the church activities and the pastors are living at the expenses¹¹⁸ of this group of church committee and the wealthy members.” Another respondent said, “When in the church, they relate as brothers but they cannot work together because of the difference in status.” Another responded, “The poor feel inferior while the rich feel superior over others and the way the rich are treated by pastors.”

6. Do the wealthy give support to the poor and how?

¹¹⁸ I indicated earlier that the church has its salary structure, but the salary is too meagre. Every LCC uses its discretion to top the pastors’ salary.

Table 6:

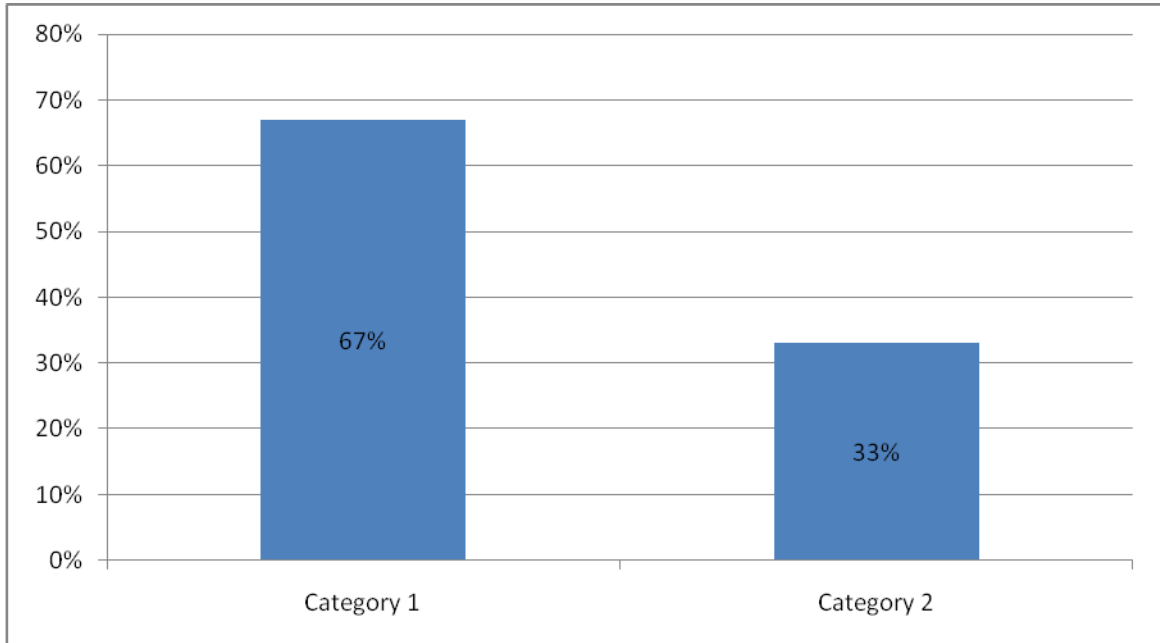


From the 30 questionnaires given out 26 respondents (87%) said that the relationship between the high and low income earners (wealthy and the poor members) in terms of support is not cordial. This means that 4 respondents (13%) acknowledged that the high income earners give support to the poor. The 13% are some of the high income earners in the church and they would always want to protect their position. There are various comments given by the respondents for this question. These are some of the representative answers: a respondent said, “The rich help the poor when they have weddings or naming ceremonies, they buy food stuffs and clothes and give pastors to distribute to the poor.” Another said, “The rich help but only when the poor serve them, and some of the rich only help when the poor request help for food, finance or jobs, it is only few rich that help.” The wealthy were also seen to have opportunities, both for themselves and their children. The rural rich achieve a good quality of life by having successful businesses and owning land and property. They are able to educate their children privately, who then in turn become successful. Even with this opportunity, the rich do not help the poor. In rural areas opportunity presents itself in terms of ownership of land and productive capital inputs such as fertiliser, and access to markets. In rural areas like Gavva, the poor struggle to meet their basic needs and educate their

children. Their housing might be of poor quality or not owned by them and their diet might not be well-balanced. The powerlessness of the rural poor was widely perceived to be manifested in their dependence on others for alms and support, their dependence on God and their extreme vulnerability to changes in their environment. This makes the rural poor depend on God as the supreme patron who provides generously. The poor had to depend on God alone because they are powerless. They do not have the resources to challenge the wealthy and the church leaders. But then sometimes the poor church members may refuse to help the church in terms of physical work. They may decide not to give their contributions to the church financially, though it does not change anything. In the rural area of Gavva, since it is an agrarian community, most members have only a small portion of land for cultivation. Every year, it is expected that the church members should go and plant, cultivate and harvest crop on the pastor's or church leader's land. By way of revolt the poor members may decide not to go out to work on the pastor's land throughout the year. When this happens the land will remain unused as no one will cultivate it and there will be no harvest for the pastor. Sometimes they do it to the wealthy members, the poor refuse to work for them for a certain period, and it is a way of getting at the wealthy. When the poor decide to do that it affects the wealthy, the wealthy have the money but they could not get labourers to work for them. The poor do this both to the wealthy community members and outsiders. This is the way that the poor rebel against the church leadership when they are asked to work on the pastor's farm or the wealthy when they hire them. The poor do this offstage as shown by Scott (1990) when he talks about the hidden transcript. It means that the poor form resistance to the action of the church and the wealthy. They form a way of resisting the domination by the wealthy. But the poor do not act openly in this manner because they know the consequences that would befall them.

7a. State the relationship of the pastor to the poor members.

Table 7:



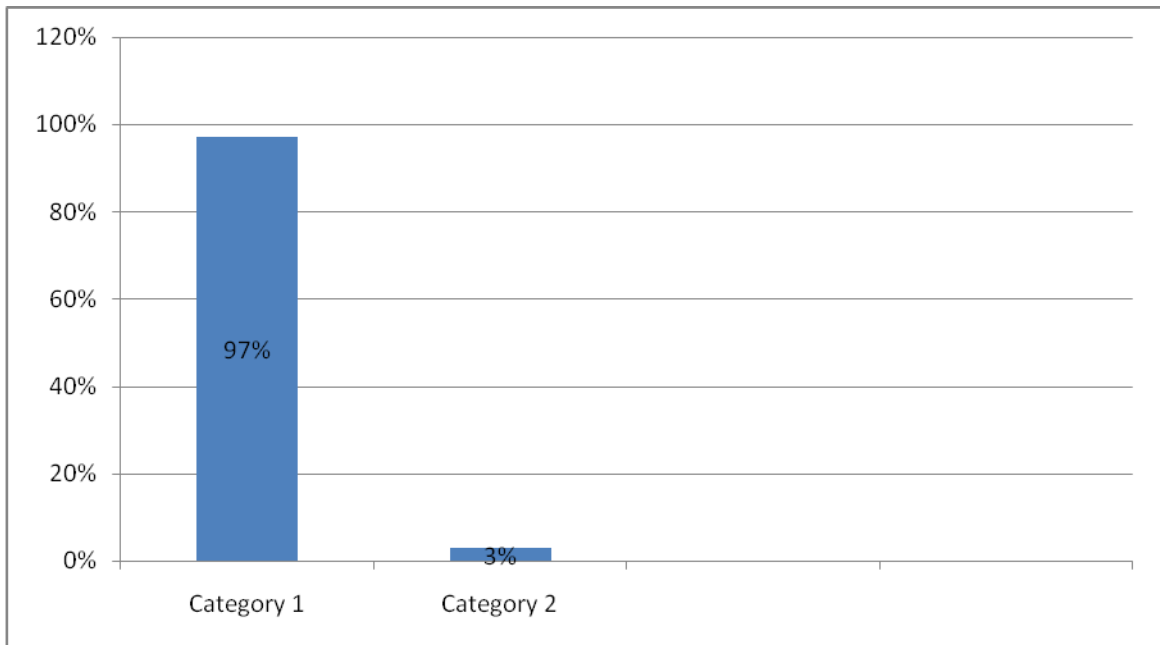
In table 7 category 1 shows that there is no cordial relationship between the poor and the pastors. While category 2 indicates that there is cordial relationship.

Out of the 30 questionnaires analyzed 20 respondents (67%) said that the relationship is not cordial. The 67% shows those that are not high income earners. While 10 respondents (33%) agreed that there is a cordial relationship between the pastor and low income earners. And the 33% are actually the high income earners and a couple of low income earners based on what they have indicated on the questionnaires. The interviews I conducted also show that most of the low income earners have the view that there is cordial relationship between the high income earners and the pastors. One respondent said “The pastor would like the poor to be visiting him so as to work for him, the pastors do not care for the poor members because the poor do not have anything to give them, the pastors visit the rich people more.” Another one said, “There is fair relationship with the poor not as strong as that of the rich, the pastors do not have full time for the poor, because the rich take much of their time.” However about a third of those questioned had a more

positive view of the relationship between pastors and the poor. Only one respondent said, “Some pastors do consider the poor; they help and visit the poor.”

7b. State the relationship of the pastor to the wealthy members?

Table 8:



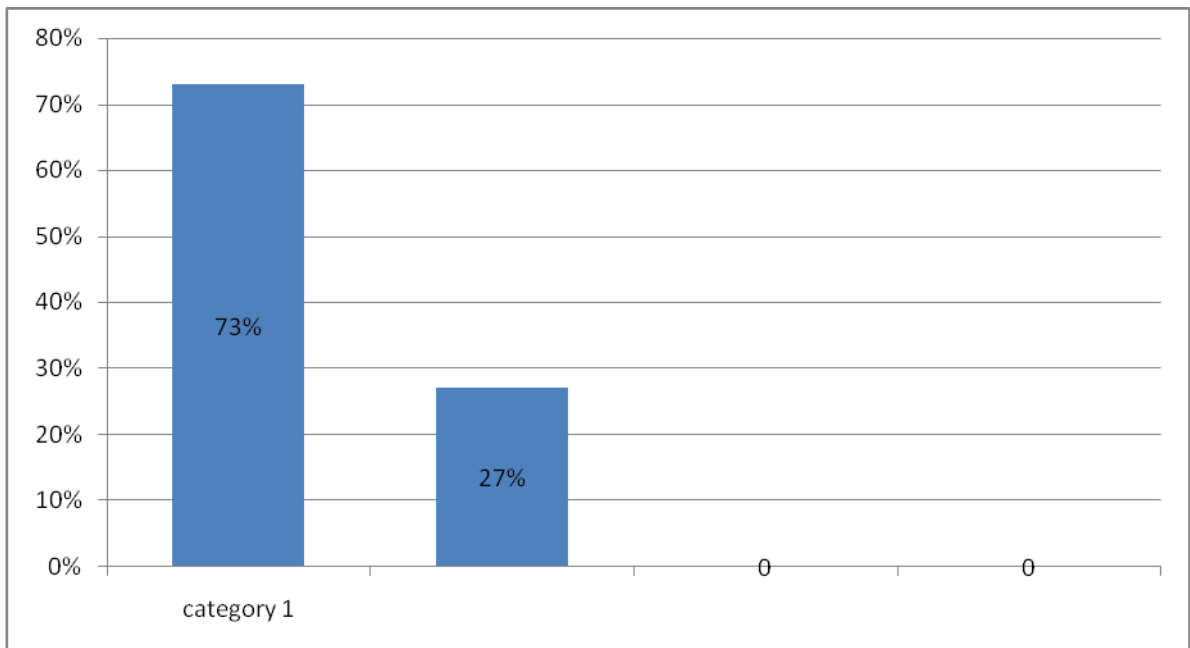
In table 8 category 1 indicates that there is cordial relationship between the wealthy and the pastors, while category 2 indicates otherwise.

In fact out of the 30 questionnaires returned 29 respondents (97%) said that the relationship between the rich and the pastor is cordial. And it is clear that the 97% are not confined to the high income earners of the church. So they tend to indicate that the pastor only relates well with the high income earners. Only one respondent thinks otherwise. And during the interviews I conducted, the high income earners also confirmed that they have a cordial relationship with the pastors. This is indicated by a wealthy respondent, “The church would rather listen to us because of what we have given to the church and also, because of the wealth we are giving to the church, we feel that we should be given the power to control the church.” As far as the wealthy are concerned it has to be that way because they contribute a lot to the progress of the church. When the poor observe this in the church they develop resistance to the pastor and the wealthy. In fact

even the General Secretary of the church confirmed this to me, indicating that “they have cordial relationship with the wealthy but not that they give them preferential treatment as such.” Respondents also said, “The rich are given elective positions in the church, the pastors visit the rich regularly, so they are intimate, the pastors are concerned more about the rich, the wealthy have more voice in driving the church affairs.” and, “The pastors do not rebuke the rich because of their relationship and financial benefits they derive from the rich, some pastors do not want the mistakes of the wealthy to be pointed out.” In fact only one respondent said that “there is fair relationship between the rich and the pastor.”

8. Do you think that there is preferential treatment to the wealthy members in the church?

Table 9:



In table 9 category 1 shows that there is preferential treatment given to the wealthy. While category 2 says that there is no preferential treatment.

From the 30 questionnaires analyzed 22 respondents (73%) said that there is preferential treatment given to the high income earners. The 73% happened not to be the high income earners of the church as they have indicated in their annual income. The 8 respondents representing 27% think

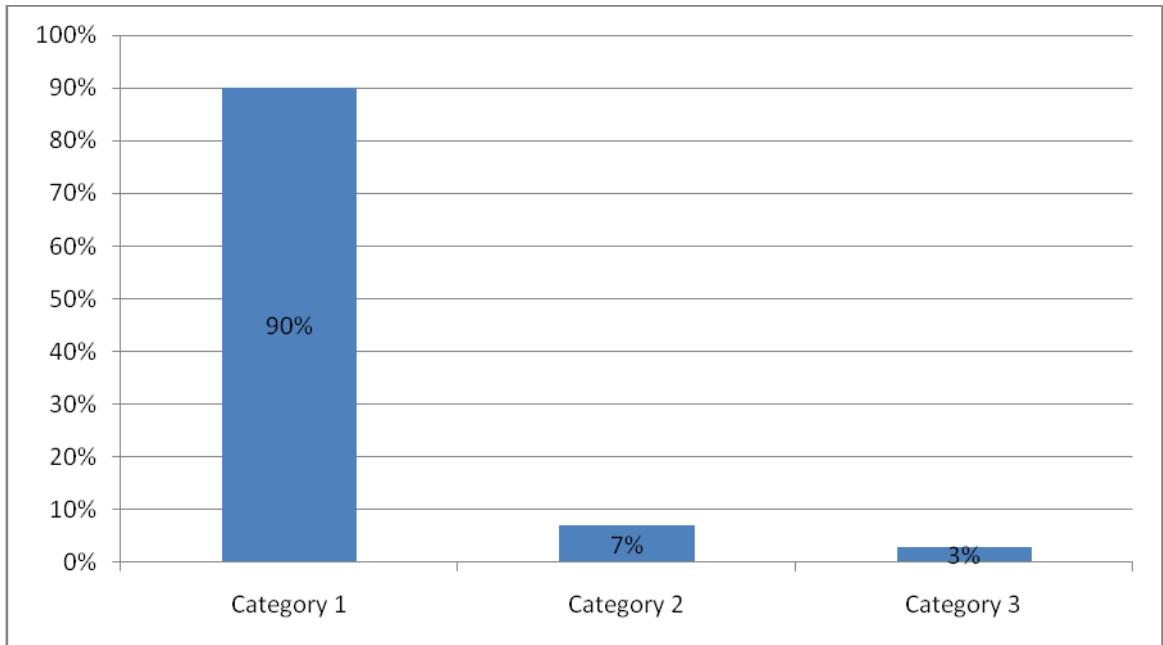
that there is no preferential treatment given to the high income earners. Now the 27% happened to be those that can be referred to as the high income earners in the church. A respondent said, “The wealthy members are given more attention than the poor, the rich are recognized and given good positions, the pastors silence the wrongs of the rich and disclose the wrongs of the poor, in decision making, and the pastor has to support the rich.” I can see that the responses coming from the respondents are determined by their status either as ‘rich’ or ‘poor.’ But during the interviews a few rich members had indicated that there is preferential treatment given to them. I am sure that some of them had forgotten what their responses were to the questionnaires.¹¹⁹ Another comment made during an interview with a member was that “within the membership, there are members that are regarded as superior and higher because of the income they provide to the church. The problem of segregation exists not only among the church leaders but among the members. This is deep-seated; for example, those members that are well to do or rich who could offer fat offerings in the church are more recognized and respected in the church. And those that are not able to give financial support to the church are regarded as less Christian and their position is treated in a different way. There is confusion between wealth and spirituality. And when it comes to service, the church provides service with urgency, with respect and dignity to those who are supporting the church with money. This means that those that are not wealthy among the members are not given services even when it is urgent.” This is confirmed by the following response: “The church is not keen at providing the necessary service for those who cannot support the church with money because of their economic position. Sometimes because it becomes necessary they just do it to fulfill righteousness. And this is a problem within the church. The members realized by themselves that they are not equal again. There are ‘bigger’ members and the ‘smaller’ members.”

¹¹⁹ I am not sure what this suggests but I may likely find out as I continue to follow up.

9. Have you ever been hired by a wealthy member to work for him/her on the farm, run business or any work? If so, state how it went?

Among the high income earners there are those that earn more than others, since their level of wealth is not the same. Normally among the wealthy members themselves, they can hire one another for their business as they inter-relate. In the category 1 there are two wealthy people who indicated that they were hired by their colleagues. I have seen wealthy members within the church hiring their fellow class members; this happens because they want their wealth to remain within their own families especially when it has to do with special business interests. These people may not be related but because they have the same business interest, it is almost as if they are related. This is also another way of showing discrimination against the poor. A wealthy respondent who was hired by his colleague says “I have to work for a colleague because it serves our business interest. And my colleague cannot exploit me because we know the secrets of each other. We work successfully.” This happens because there are some works that the wealthy consider cannot be handled by the poor, but must be done by the wealthy themselves. The wealthy handle business that has to do with huge amounts of money. The wealthy feel that the poor could not handle such a work. The poor come into it when it has to do with hard labour, not handling of money for business. So, out of the 30 questionnaires analyzed 27 respondents representing 90% of the respondents indicated that they have been hired to work by a wealthy member. Only 2 respondents (7%) indicated that they have not been hired. And one respondent (3%) indicated that it went well for him as he said “for me, it went well because I got some money for my wedding.” This person was hired but in his own case, he did not encounter any problems. 90% of the respondents would have agreed with the person who said, “I worked more than what I was paid but it was the only work available for me, yes especially while working on their farms they forget your church relationship and capitalize on your need to over work you.” This question shows that 90% of the respondents have worked for the wealthy in one way or the other. Those that have worked indicated that they have been exploited by the wealthy. It is also clear in these responses that the wages of the poor were withheld by the wealthy. The poor do not have a choice other than to accept whatever payment is made to them.

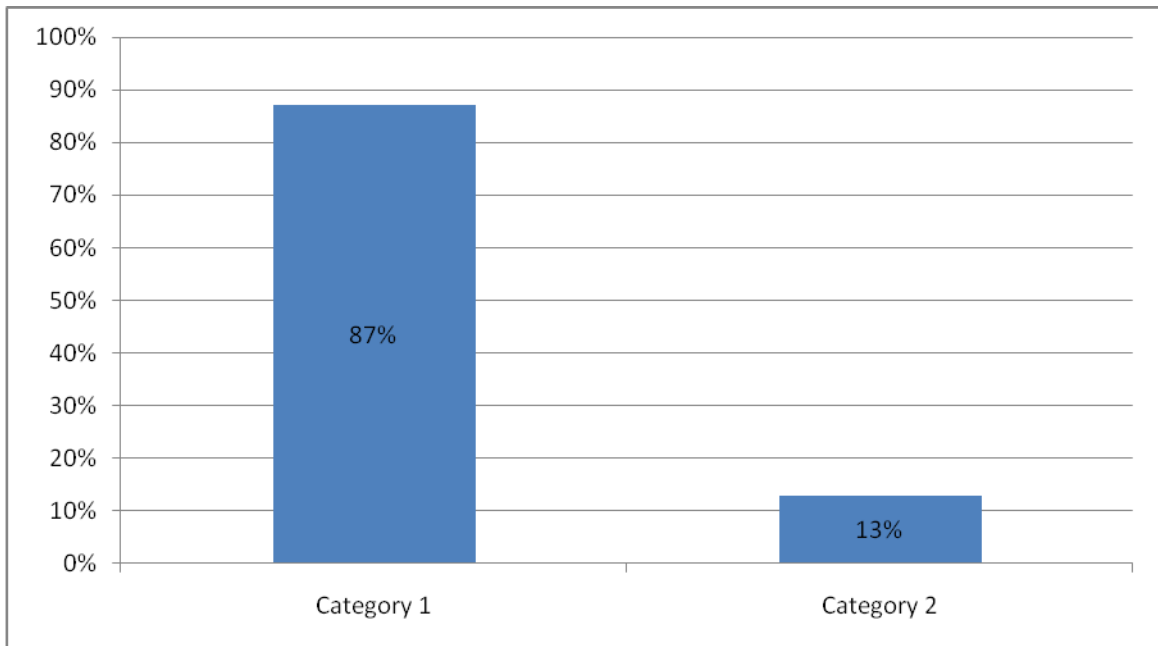
Table 10:



In table 10 category 1 indicated that they were hired, category 2 showed that they were not hired while category 3 indicated that he was hired but did not encounter any problems because he was paid.

10. Did you feel exploited when hired to work for a fellow member? Describe your experience.

Table 11:

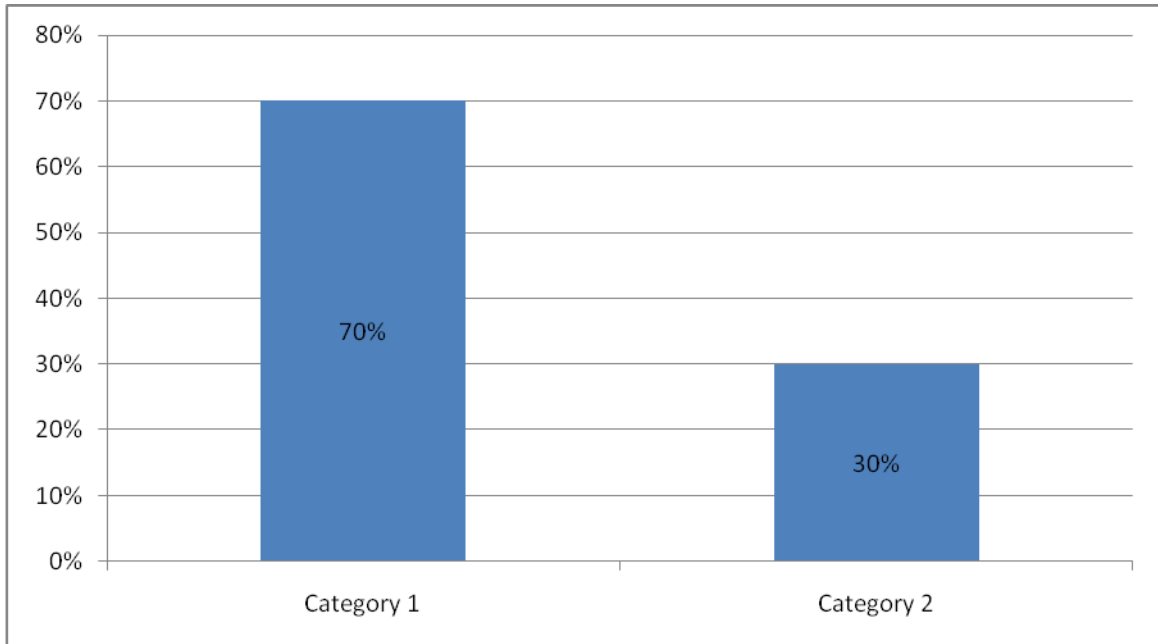


In table 11 category 1 indicates the ones exploited. While category 2 are the ones that were not exploited.

In fact 26 of the respondents out of 30 (87%) responded by saying that they felt exploited when they were hired. The ones exploited are the low income earners of the church. Only 4 respondents (13%) felt that they were not exploited but this does not mean that the 2 out the 4 people have never been hired. It only means that, the 2 out of the 4 were not exploited. And the 4 respondents can be regarded as the high income earners. Some of the respondents said that they had worked and they were not paid their wages. A respondent said, “I supervised a fish/animal farm but I was exploited.” Exploitation of poor members by the rich is something that happens on a regular basis, especially during the rainy season where members are hired to work on their farms by the high income earners. Some of the low income earners have to abandon work on their farm in order to work for the high income earners to enable them to get some money to buy food stuff and to buy fertilizer for their farms. In this way the high income earners exploit the low income earners.

11. Have you been hired to work for a non-member? Compare working for a non-member and a member.

Table 12:



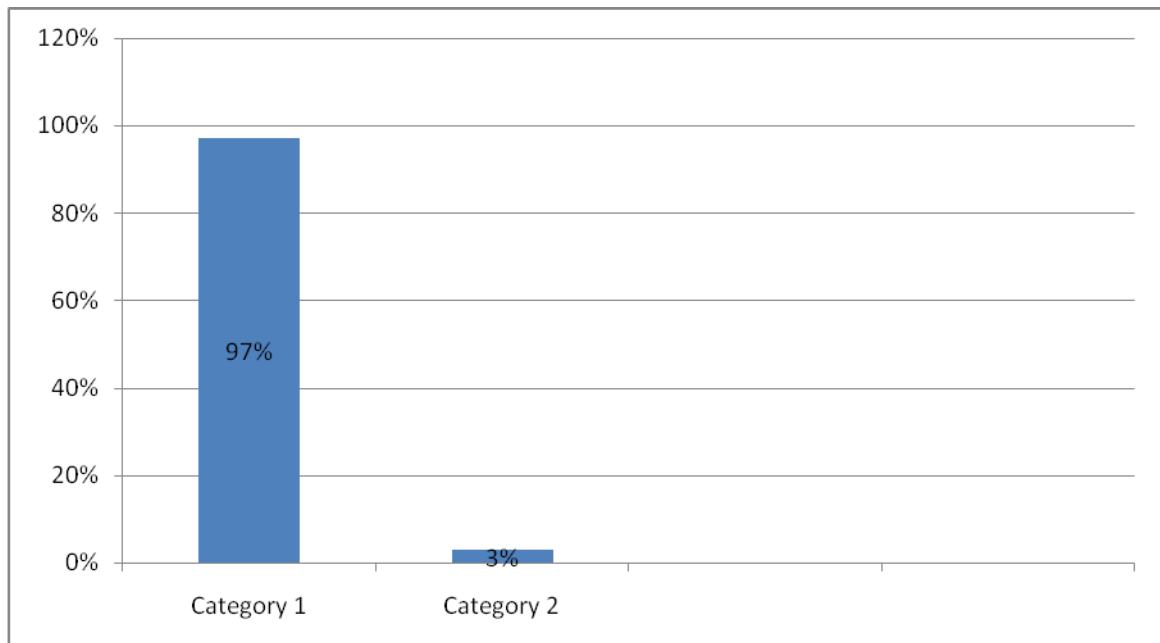
In table 12 category 1 shows that they have not worked for non-members (Christians of other denominations), while category 2 shows those that worked for non-members.

21 of the 30 respondents (70 %) indicated that they have not worked for a non-member. Some of the non-members referred to here are Christians of different denominations not COB members. Among the 9 respondents (30%) that worked for a non-member one of them said, “I have worked for a non-member and I was treated badly, while another one even helped me.” Another respondent said, “I have worked with no overtime and I was paid promptly.” While one said, “It is better to work for a non-member, on so many occasions; working for a non-member was such a wonderful one because before you start the work it would be under a certified agreement of the two parties involved. I did the work whole heartedly without being cheated. But in the case of the same member we can be dragging the cost of labour¹²⁰ that happened so many times. I always worked with grudges and murmuring which is not supposed to be so. Finally instead of

¹²⁰ Dragging the cost of labour means to negotiate the price of the job to be done.

complaining you just have to work because he is your fellow member.” The poor perceive their situation as powerless and do not find justice in the church. It also shows that the poor follow whatever the wealthy decide. The wealthy in the church serve as patrons to the poor. What happens is that when one is hired by a non-member he/she can boldly charge what he/she feels is right for the work to be done. But when one is dealing with a member there is tendency that the charges would be on the lower side because of familiarity with one another. It is always true that the non-members pay the charges well. In Gavva area there is no specific rate of pay for hired labourers or workers. The workers negotiate the wages with the ones hiring them. Sometimes when a worker sees that there is no other work for him/her to do they accept any wages given by the high income earner. Their only other option is to withhold their labour altogether, something which is done deliberately at times. However, it is also true that desperation and lack of alternative employment usually force people to work willingly or unwillingly for the wealthy. Members might approach church leaders asking for job to do, ready to receive any amount given to them because they were desperate, but it seems that some members feel that it is better to work for non-members because they can express themselves the way they want it.¹² Have you worked under a person of different faith? Compare that with working under a person of the same faith as you.

Table 13:

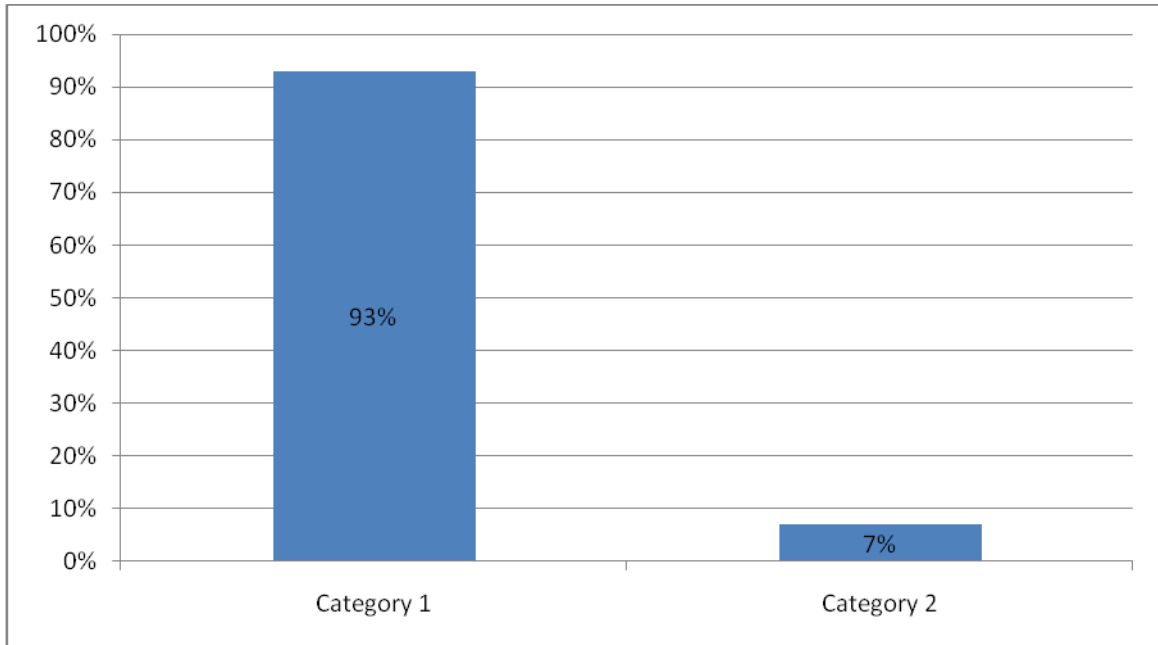


In table 13 category 1 shows those that have worked for persons of different faith (Muslims), while category 2 indicates one person who has not.

Out of the 30 respondents 29 (97%) indicated that they had worked under a person of different faith and they were not treated well. The different faith here refers to working for Muslims that are within the area. The Muslims that are wealthy do hire Christians to work for them either on the farm or in business. And in the same manner Christians that are wealthy do hire Muslims to work for them. Only 1 respondent indicated that it worked well for him. Their comments were that they were either exploited or their faith was abused. Only one respondent showed that he was treated well by a person of different faith. But in terms of comparison as I stated elsewhere, the poor would still prefer to work for an outsider than a community member. This is because they could bargain with the outsider what to be paid. The community members take advantage of the poor because they come from the same church. With the recent violence between Christians and Muslims (outsiders), it would be difficult now to work for the outsiders, community members would be preferred even though they would exploit the poor.

13. Have you collected any loan from a wealthy member? If yes, did you repay the loan? If you did not repay the loan what happened?

Table 14:



In table 14 category 1 are those that did not collect any loan, while category 2 are those that took out a loan.

28 of the respondents (93%) indicated that they had not collected any loan. Collecting a loan means going to a wealthy member or non-member to borrow some money. When a member does not lend them money, they have to go to a non-member to borrow. This is on an individual basis. When poor people are not able to repay the loan they have to face the consequences or they are oppressed or exploited in other ways. The one giving the loan may decide to ask them to do some jobs for him/her in order to repay the loan. The work to be given to poor could double the amount collected as loan but they do not have any alternative than to do the job if they cannot repay the loan. One of the 2 respondents who borrowed money said, “Yes, I have collected the loan but I did not pay because of that I am always under pressure.” Another one also said that “I have collected the loan but because I was not able to pay I was reported to a police by the same member of my church.” What the poor experience in this case makes them to lose their assets in the form of land or their local house. When they are not able to repay the loan, they have to sell some of

their valuables to repay the loan. If they do not have anything to sell to repay the loan, their lands are seized by the wealthy. This is not different to what the peasants experienced in the first century Palestine. In COB as well, people have lost their landed property because they took a loan from the wealthy members of the church but were not able to repay. When the poor members lose their land, they also lose their means of livelihood. This is because in a rural area like Gavva people depend on agriculture for food and their source of income. This is where Sen is also relevant as he talks about capability deprivation of a person. When the land of the poor are seized, their income capability is deprived and they will continue to live in poverty. "Poverty is described as 'capability deprivation' that limits an individual's realm of achievable functionings and combinations" (Sen, 1999:2). Sen adds that "poverty can also be seen as a lack of entitlements of the poor. These include the entitlement to basic goods, for instance by earning a good income; the entitlement to land, and to public provisions for health and education; and the entitlement to make free use of the services of nature like water" (1999:18). The poor miss these entitlements when their capability is deprived.

14. What do you think is the cause of discrimination and exploitation within the church?

All the 30 respondents have the view that it is tribalism, because each tribe wants their tribal person to be in the position whether they are qualified for the job or not. Others indicated that greed and selfishness contribute to the problem: the pastors that are after material things favour the wealthy. Nepotism, politics, lack of good leaders and poverty and unemployment are also contributory factors. Tribalism is one of the major problems in the church.¹²¹ Even the dominant tribe(s) agrees that there is tribalism. In Gavva area there are three major clans, but there are also other tribes that work in the area. In Gavva area the tribes are Yautada Buha, Glavda¹²² and Dughede. These were part of the Basel Mission before and after the merger. The major tribes come originally from the COB. The major tribes in the church acknowledged that there is tribalism in the church. The nature of the tribes is like this: from the main Church of the Brethren area are these tribes, Bura, Margi, Higgi (Kamwe). There are other tribes like Chibok, Kilba, and Fali also formed the Church of the Brethren but they are not the majority. These tribes all make up the

¹²¹ http://www.amanaonline.com/Articles/article_2009002.htm. Accessed on the 2/10/2009.

¹²² I made reference to this in footnote 101 and 102.

Church of the Brethren today. But the tribes from the originally Basel Mission make up the minority in the church. This is the reason why even in Gavva area, after the merger the major tribes still control the church offices since they make up the majority and are well trained.

In fact, they acknowledged that tribalism needs to be taken care of as it is a major threat to the church. The Moderator of COB said “In Nigeria, Beckwith found a church faced by ‘tremendous struggle with financial strain,’ including a large disparity between members who are wealthy and those in poverty. The church also is facing up to the task of overcoming tribalism--EYN includes members from a wide variety of ethnic groups--and issues related to the education and nurture of church leaders.”¹²³ So, tribalism in the church is not a hidden problem.

15. Is tribalism an issue in the church? Yes/No if yes, why?

In answering this question 100% of the respondents said that tribalism is an issue in the church. One respondent explained that it was “because leaders especially pastors are full of tribalism and it is showing all over their faces. This affects the members because they copy from the pastors.” Another person said. “Every tribe wants to dominate the church; others feel that once the pastor is from their tribe they would be given responsibilities in the church. Some members also feel that it is the political ambitions of the wealthy members that bring tribalism into the church.” Therefore, tribalism is a big threat to the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria.

6.4 The Questionnaire Answered by Pastors/leaders

1. Define poverty, using your own words and drawing from your experiences as a Pastor?

From the 20 questionnaires given out, all 20 respondents understood what poverty is.¹²⁴ This means that all the church leaders/pastors have an idea of or have experienced poverty. Here is one of the comments made by the respondents, “Poverty is inability to take care of yourself

¹²³ <http://www.wfn.org/2008/06/msg00024.html> Newline: Church of the Brethren News Service -- June 5, 2008.

¹²⁴ All of them signed Informed Consent Forms as per the Ethical Clearance requirement of UKZN.

financially, it is a condition of being poor, it is inability to give your family 3 square meals of balanced diet per day, it is lack of good education, drinking water, clothing, shelter, health, so it is lack of basic necessity for sustaining life.” The pastors know what poverty is as some of them have experienced it. Most of the pastors grew up in the rural areas.

2. According to your experience, what are the criteria for determining whether an individual, a family or a group of people is living in poverty?

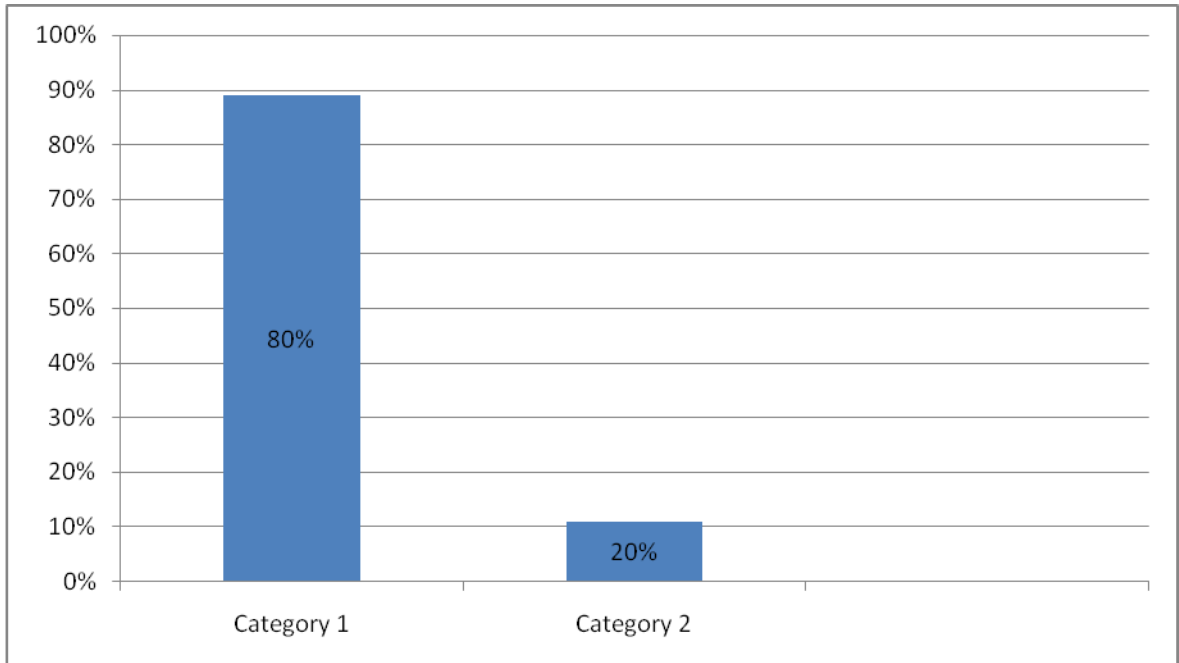
Out of the 20 questionnaires returned, it is clear that all the 20 respondents have their own criteria for determining whether an individual, a family or a group of people is living in poverty. The respondents mentioned the following criteria: inability to train children in school, the orphans are not taken care of by the church, the widows live or survive without any assistance, inability to pay medical, water, electricity bills etc., there are those that rely on others through begging for alms, lower income for the family or individual, unemployment, hunger, starvation, living miserably in poor living conditions. All these factors indicate that one is living in poverty. And when one goes round to see the members of the church, it can be seen that most of the members pass through one or most of the factors listed above.

3. Describe one or two programs run by the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria that address poverty. These may include schools, hospitals, food services, agriculture, well digging projects, etc.

16 respondents out of the 20 (80%) are of the view that the EYN Integrated Community Based Development Programme is the best for helping the members (The ICBDP is the one comprising the agriculture, health and well digging programmes of EYN). While 4 respondents (20%) are of the view that EYN Mason Technical School and Health Programme should be improved by the church to help the church members in vocational training and look after their health as most rural members cannot afford their medical bills. One respondent said, “Agriculture is the programme that helps peasant farmers to improve their skills and well digging helps the rural people from scarcity of water.” Another person said, “Mason Technical School helps because the poor learn business, automobile engineering and other vocational skills that will help them.” The church needs to improve these programmes in order to help her members. So when these programmes are equipped with facilities, they will go a long way to help the church members in skills acquisition.

But not all the members have the privilege of attending the institution. In these church programmes only a few benefit from it. Most of the ones that benefit from it come from the church's major tribes as I indicated in chapter 5 (cf. notes 101, 102 and 103). This happens because the institutions are sited in their areas but they were established and supported by Basel Mission. Examinations and interviews are conducted before the selection, but the reality is that 'where one comes from' or 'whose child one is' plays a great role in the selection into these institutions. Not all areas have benefitted from the well digging that is done by the church; it depends on whether the area has influence or not. The church has the programmes but who benefits from them is another issue.

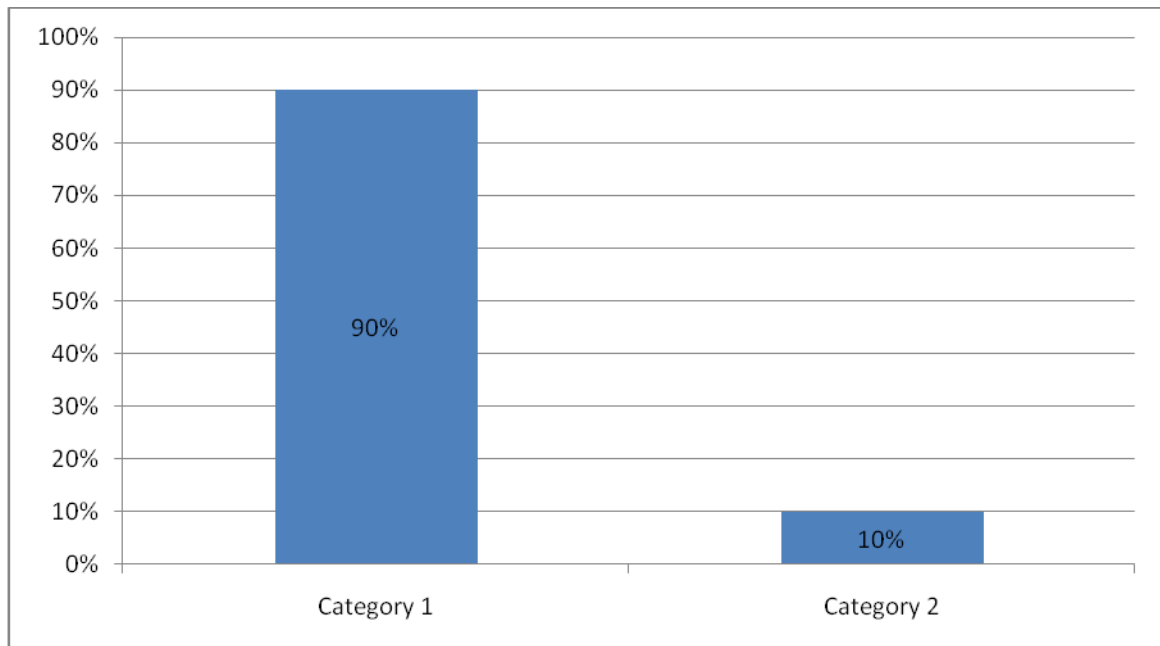
Table 15:



In table 15 category 1 shows that the members prefer ICBDP, while category 2 prefers Technical school and Rural Health Programme.

4. Which of the programmes listed in question 3 should be the priorities for the Church in developing its programme for poverty eradication?

Table 16:



In table 16 category 1 prefers Agriculture, well digging and health programme. While category 2 indicates schools and EYN Literacy programmes

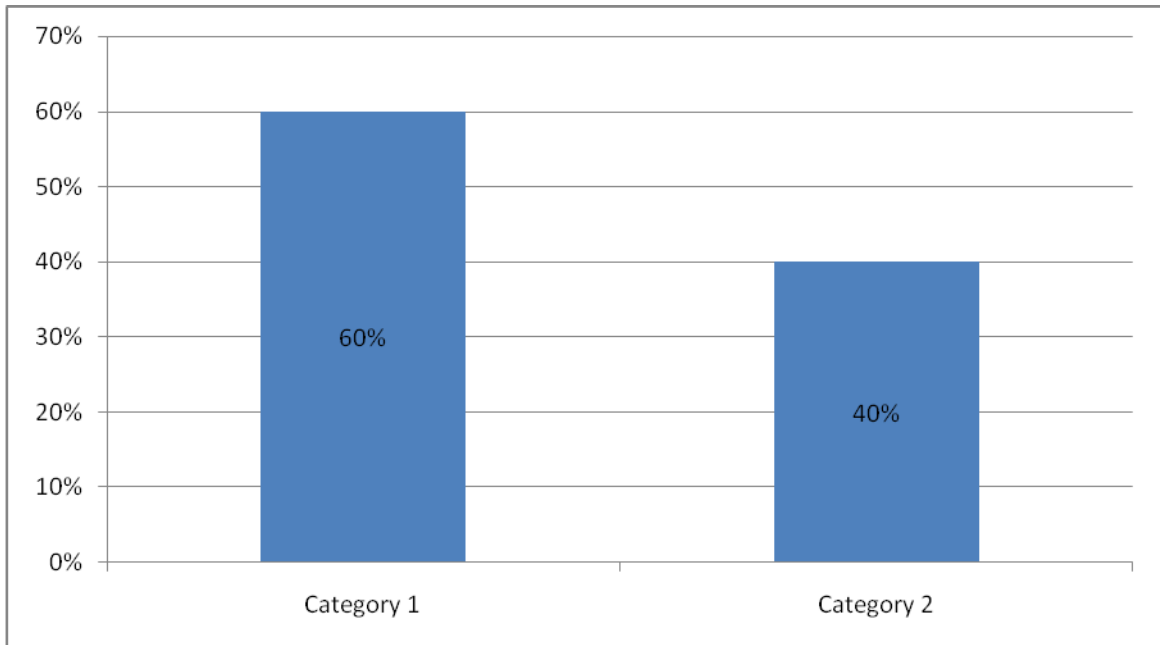
Out of the 20 questionnaires given out, 18 respondents (90%) indicated that Agriculture, well digging and health programmes are the best to eradicate poverty in EYN. While 2 respondents (10%) argued that schools like EYN Mason Technical School, Kulp Bible College and Literacy Programme are the best for EYN in eradicating poverty. All of these programmes are actually helpful for the church members when they are given the opportunity to be accepted. The major tribes make sure that their families dominate all the programmes of the church. This is similar to what Nürnberger says about centre and periphery. The major tribes are at the centre controlling and dominating these institutions while the minority tribes like Gavva area are at the periphery, they do not have access to these institutions. This means that the minority tribes will continue to live in poverty, practising their subsistence agriculture.

5. Based on your experience as a Pastor what are the things that can inspire the church to fight against poverty?

All the 20 respondents indicated that seminars, workshops, training, educational enlightenment, and teachings to the Local Church Councils would inspire the church to fight against poverty. I agree with this. But at present, the church leadership does not emphasize training or seminars for her church workers as well as the members. The church leadership is more concerned about gathering money than equipping her members both physically and spiritually. The Local Churches concentrate more on how to raise money.

6. How can the Church cooperate with the government or other NGO's working towards alleviating poverty?

Table 17:



In table 17 category 1 indicates those who think that the church should help the government in fighting corruption and injustice, while category 2 represents the views of those who think that the church should take part in training her members to acquire skills, without depending on the government and NGOs.

12 out of the 20 respondents (60%) were of the view that the church should help the government in fighting corruption and injustice, and should liaise with the NGOs and the government to identify the problems of the poor and create a joint project that would address the needs of the poor. The remaining 8 respondents (40%) indicated that the church should take part in training members to acquire skills for different works that would help them. Also, the government and the NGOs should find a way of providing soft, interest free loans to the members that are ready to be trained for a vocation. There is a need for the church to collaborate with the NGOs and the government to give education to members. The COB does little in terms of getting the NGOs to collaborate with the government to help the church. It is only the Department of Agriculture of the church that receives some grant from the NGOs. The church was fortunate to produce a Governor and a Deputy Governor on two different occasions in Adamawa State where the Headquarters of the church is located but the church does not consult them to support her programmes.

7. As a Pastor do you know some of the members living in poverty in your Church?

All the 20 respondents know of some of their members that are living in poverty. One commented, “Yes, so many of the members live in poverty, sure there are widows and orphans and those that have poor farm land in our local church.” Another said, “Many in their thousands are living in poverty, we used to visit some members that live in poverty, for sure there are many members who are poor, and they are in the majority.” Another respondent said, “In my church 70% of the members are poor living below 2 dollars per day.” As a pastor of a local church, they definitely know the members that are wealthy and the ones that are poor.

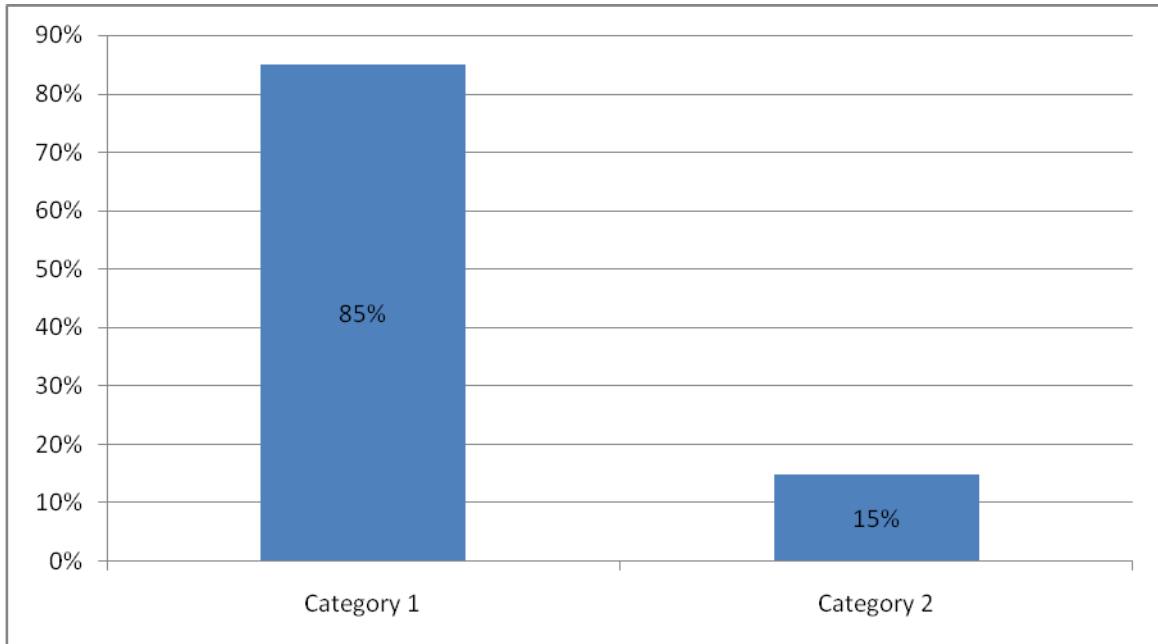
8. Identify the main differences between poverty in rural and urban churches in COB.

All the 20 respondents acknowledged that poverty is more prevalent in the rural churches than in the urban churches. One said, “The urban areas have access for jobs, poverty in rural areas is higher due to poor yield on the farms, lands, and people do not have enough to eat.” Someone added, “In the rural church most of the members are peasant farmers and the ones in urban areas are workers, civil servants, business men so they can take care of themselves, the poor in the rural areas are not educated, and the only source of income in the rural areas is through farming.”

The members in the urban areas know how to look after their church leaders and they have the resources. But the ones in rural churches do not contribute much.

9. If you have served as a Pastor in other Congregations is poverty more prevalent in a particular local church? What factors contributed to this prevalence?

Table 18:

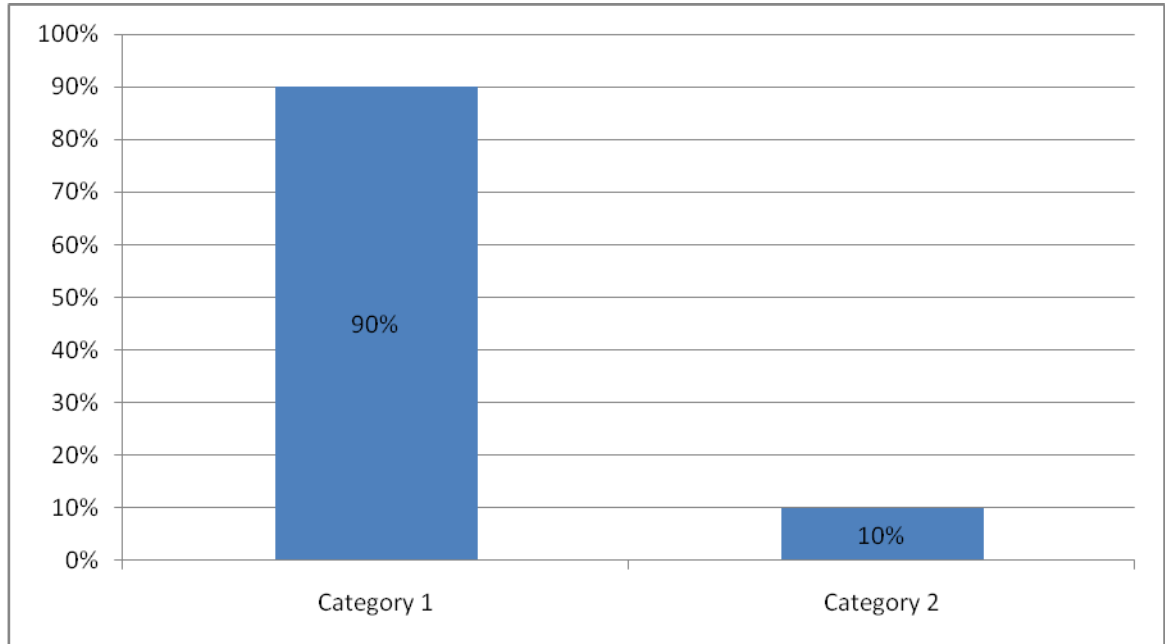


In table 18 category 1 shows that poverty is more prevalent in the rural areas (churches), while category 2 indicates that both urban and rural areas are affected.

Out of the 20 respondents 17 (85%) are of the view that poverty is more prevalent in the rural areas, while 3 respondents (15%) are of the view that both rural and urban areas are affected. One of the respondents commented, “This depends on the area, lack of education on modern way of farming and business contributes to the prevalence of poverty, some members have I don’t care attitude, poverty is more prevalent in the rural areas now because the traditional system of income is depreciating while modern infrastructure is not forthcoming.” There is poverty on both sides but at different levels. The levels of poverty in the rural local churches are higher than that of the urban local churches.

10. As a Pastor do you give preferential treatment to the wealthy members in your local church?

Table 19:



In table 19 category 1 indicated that they do not give preferential treatment to the wealthy members, while category 2 have different opinions.

From the 20 respondents, 18 (90%) responded that they do not give preferential treatment to the wealthy members, while 2 respondents (10%) have a different opinion. One of the respondents specifically said, “No, I do not give preferential treatment to the wealthy members.” The other respondent has this to say, “Yes, sometimes I give them because of their concern and contribution to the church, but on spiritual matters I do not give them preferential treatment.” The other comment from category 1 is that “Sometimes it happens without full conscious but I tried to be conscious that each members of Christ’s body must be treated accordingly with respect, dignity, and important as any part, on some occasions this is unavoidable. But generally, I do not treat the wealthy different from the subjects in the church especially regarding their spiritual being.” During an interview I conducted a pastor said, “Preferential treatment in the local church between the rich and the poor are all the problems of the pastors. The pastor should not create a forum to

listen to the rich alone. Pastors listen to the rich because of personal benefits that they gain from the rich.” During the interview another respondent said, “It is quite true that in our church the leadership treats members differently. We should all be reminded of our responsibility. If a pastor treats everyone equally, there would be no problem. When a pastor visits a poor person only when there is problem, but visits the rich regularly then we cannot run away from discrimination in the church. There is need for humility from the pastors and the rich to the poor. When that is done the poor will not feel inferior and humiliated and the rich will not feel superior.” This agrees with the responses given in the questionnaire by the 2 respondents.

This response from a pastor confirms that there is preferential treatment given to the rich or the wealthy members. But in the questionnaire most of the pastors indicated that they do not show preferential treatment to the wealthy members. Apart from that, the responses by the low income earners in the congregations show a great disparity between what the pastors say and how they are perceived as behaving.

11. From your experience, describe how political instability has affected poor people’s lives in your local church.

All twenty of the respondents agreed that political instability affects people’s lives in their various local churches. The political instability here refers to both the church and the government. The church members are also part of the larger Nigerian society. Since the political leaders are not helping the society but only concentrate on their personal gain, it affects the church directly. In the church, there is sometimes a clamour for power and honour in order to retain some key positions. This affects the members directly as the leaders do not concentrate on what would make the church grow both physically and spiritually. All the programmes of the church are politicised as happens in the government. The church is not stable and the government is not stable. This directly affects the membership of the church as the members do not get what they require to sustain them for livelihood. And in Gavva area, there are always political and religious crises that affect the church members. It happened many times that members are deprived of their property because of the political and religious crises. In February 2006¹²⁵ because of political instability

¹²⁵ In 2006 I was in Maiduguri during the crisis. I visited some of the churches that were burnt. I was also invited by our main church in Maiduguri to have a revival programme for a whole week in May to encourage the church members. Also in the Newspapers Sun News Publishing Feb 18, 2006.

and religious crisis about 56 churches were burnt and these included 6 of COB local churches. And in July 2009¹²⁶ because of the religious crisis 2 of our churches were burnt and many of our members lost their lives. The government does not do anything about it as the State is controlled by Muslims. These crises are religious as well as political. They affect the church directly. Members were not able to afford food, shelter, medical bills, electricity bills, fertilizer for farming and so on. This instability contributes a lot in making the members to live in poverty. One of the respondents said, “Farmers are not assisted, salaries and benefits are not being paid or they are denied, the poor are not elected for any particular post in the church. The poor do not have a say also in the church, the poor are totally discriminated against in the church, and the politicians give the poor money in order to deceive them.” Another respondent said, “Unwillingness to change, selfishness and lack of respect, there is low creation of job; it causes conflict and violence leading to destruction of property and means of livelihood. It creates party interest and political discrimination both in distribution of resources.” Another one also said, “Some members lost their jobs and businesses, this cause economic instability.”

12. As a Pastor, what do you think serves as discrimination, oppression or exploitation in your local church?

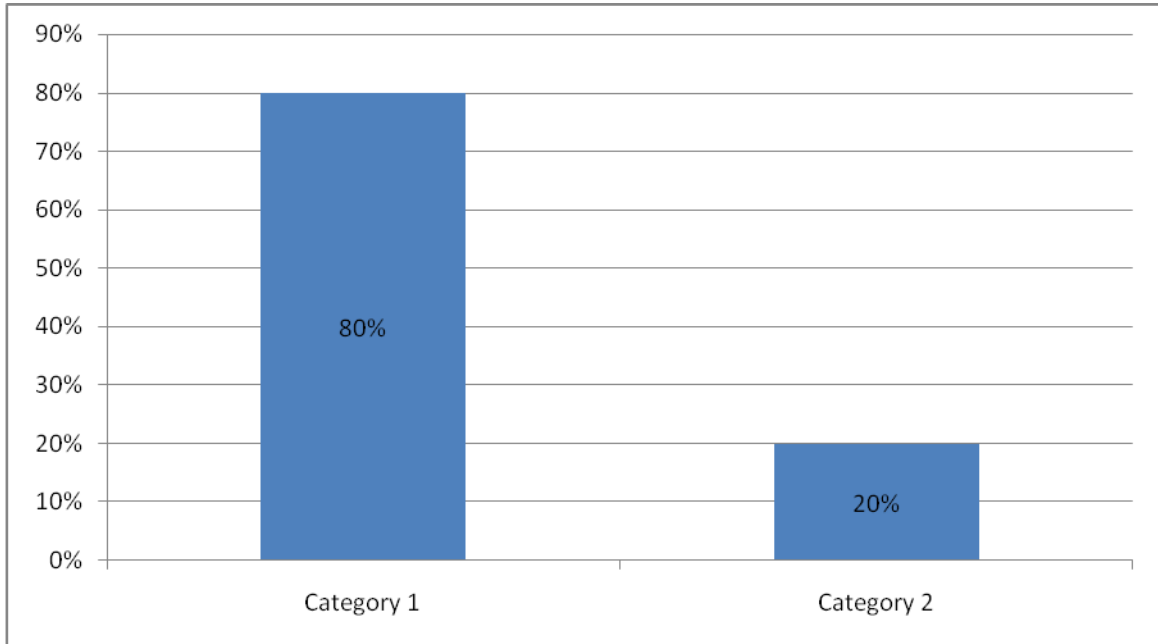
The respondents presented their views, showing that they understand the things that cause discrimination, oppression or exploitation in the local church. They have stated it in different ways. Among the points raised are tribal differences, and oppression and exploitation of the poor by the rich. Sometimes exploitation comes from the church leaders themselves. Also, class difference results in the rich exploiting the poor and when the rich and the highly placed members of the congregation are given more recognition and treatment than the poor and lowly members; oppression and discrimination come when too many demands are placed on members for the sake of church projects. This demand may be in terms of financial requirements neglecting the spiritual and physical being of the members. Some rich members do not interact with the poor; they do not even eat with them; the rich are involved in most activities of the church while the poor are not

¹²⁶ This crisis erupted again on the 28th July 2009 where our largest church was burnt. It was one of the churches in which I conducted my field research. I took the photographs of the church that was burnt. Also the news was carried in many Nigerian dailies and Televisions and this site http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/News/National/5439210-146/Hundreds__die_in_Maiduguri_crisis.csp.

contacted. The issue of Holy Communion, elections, dragging the poor to law courts by the rich bring exploitation and discrimination in the church.

13. If applicable, describe how natural disasters have affected poor people’s lives in your local church.

Table 20:



In table 20 category 1 shows members affected by natural disasters, while those in category 2 did not indicate a specific disaster.

Out of the 20 respondents, 16 of them (80%) indicated clearly that some of the poor members of their local churches have been affected by natural disasters. The 4 respondents (20%) did not indicate whether the poor have been affected by natural disasters or not. These are some of the causes of the natural disaster mentioned by the respondents: drought, and too much rainfall in some areas, fire disaster after harvest has destroyed the livelihood of the members, destruction of crops by the pests and storms that affect the church members.

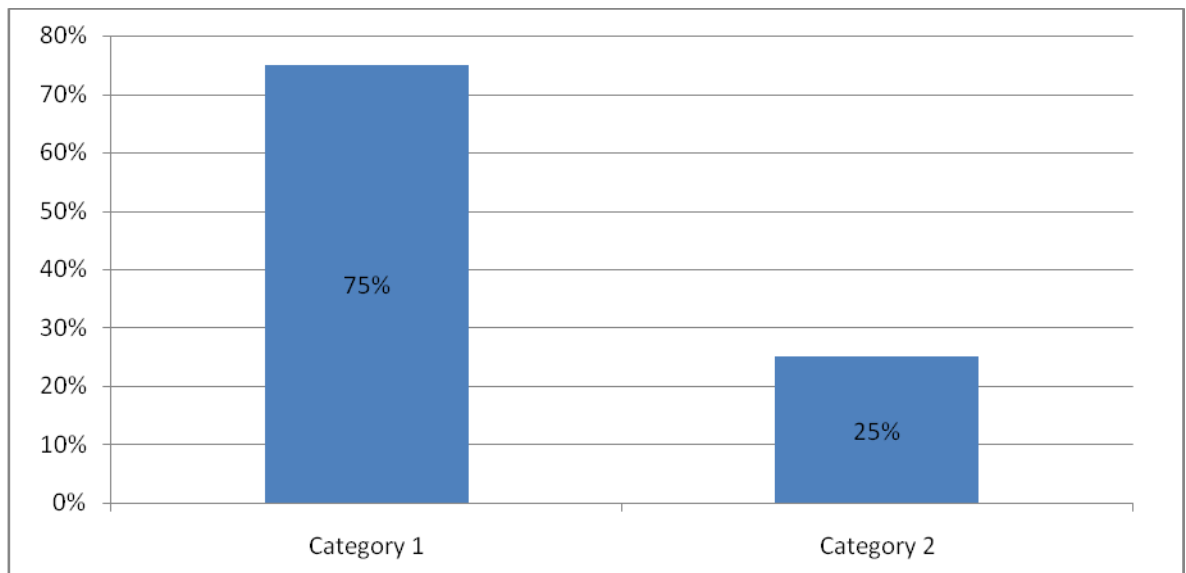
14. What are the main links between poverty and exploitation or discrimination?

It is clear that all the 20 respondents have shown the main links between poverty and exploitation or discrimination. These are some of their views: They both bring setback to the

development and progress of the church; the poor are often used for cheap labour. They do more work but they are paid a meagre amount and they have no choice. The poor are also given dirty jobs, they have poor living condition in their houses as they lack basic amenities; the poor are exploited by the use of money or power.

15. Does the issue of discrimination and exploitation against the members in the local church affect your family life?

Table 21:



In table 21 category 1 indicates that the issue of discrimination and exploitation against members affects their life, while those in category 2 did not give their opinion.

Discrimination and exploitation have to do with how the church members relate to one another. What happens is that within the membership there are those that give support to the pastors both morally and financially. There are also those that do not support the pastor. When the membership is divided the pastor's work and his family will definitely be affected because he will not be able to do his job effectively. This happens especially when the low income earners observe that the pastor sides with the high income earners to discriminate against them. And in some local churches, the poor feel exploited because when there is any work to be done for the pastor they will be the ones to do it against their wishes. This makes the pastor/leader not to be comfortable,

and when the pastor/leader is not comfortable his work and family will be affected. For this question, 15 out of the 20 respondents (75%) indicated that the issue of discrimination and exploitation against the members in the local church affect their family lives. The remaining 5 respondents (25%) did not give their opinion as to whether they are affected or not. These are the comments: A respondent said, “The issue of discrimination and exploitation directly affect us seriously, it does touch our family lives. Indirectly yes, it psychologically challenges the genuineness of our faith, and our children associate with the members and such inescapable interdependence influences our family in many ways.” This shows that the issue of discrimination and exploitation in the church affect the pastors/leaders either directly or indirectly.

In conclusion, the church leaders and the pastors always want to be in control because in rural areas the members leave their farms or secular work for the church. They work on the church farm or the pastors’ farm as part of their loyalty. This was done even though the members had little to feed their own family. The members also bring whatever they had as offering to the church, and it goes to the pastors. This makes the church members poor and dependent like beggars. Some church leaders or pastors take advantage of this to accumulate wealth for themselves. And this makes the poor members to categorize the pastors with the wealthy. This does not happen in rural areas alone, but in the urban areas too. Since there are no farms in the urban areas, the members conduct offerings three times a year and call it “pastors’ farm.” Whatever is collected goes to the pastor or the church leader. In both rural and urban areas some families barely get enough to feed themselves, but the church expects them to give all their time and their little material wealth for the church and the pastor. But it is time for the church to practice its heritage. Both the poor and the wealthy should have a say in the decision making of the church. The congregation should have the final decision. The Church of the Brethren must place itself clearly on the side of the poor and the oppressed:

It is good to resolve to act so that those who know extreme poverty and hunger might enter more fully into the abundance of God’s love. The Christian faith teaches that all persons are entitled to a humane standard of living (*Annual Conference Statement on Ethics, Law and Order* 1977:11).

When this is adhered to, discrimination will not be shown to members whether wealthy or poor.

6.5 An Analysis of the Church of the Brethren Documents

In this section, I will analyze the documents of the Church of the Brethren and deduce what the Church has on the moral economy from their writings. I have looked at what Brubaker has written about the Church of the Brethren on poverty, the poor and exploitation. Eric Brubaker is an ordained minister serving on the no salaried ministry team in the Middle Creek Church of the Brethren (Atlantic Northeast District). The Manual of the Church of the Brethren has also addressed similar issues. Another document used in this section is the work of Martin (1989) on poverty and the poor as this relates to the Brethren Beliefs and Practices. Martin¹²⁷ has served as an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren for more than thirty-five years. He has been part of the preaching team of the church. He has also served for number of years as a member of the Standing Committee of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference and has been a member of the General Board. The other documents used are the Conference Statements of the Church of the Brethren. The Conference Statements are part of the Brethren beliefs and practices as they have been accepted as documents of the church. The analysis concentrates mainly on the aspects of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren. But what happens is that once the conference is over the issues are also over. No one takes time to make follow ups, this makes the annual conference statements to be a routine that the church always observes. I have divided this analysis into two categories. First is the analysis of the Church's documents and second is the analysis of the field research document, which obtains practical responses from the Church members and leaders or pastors.

If these documents are emphasized in the church by the pastors or church leaders, there is no doubt that the problem of discrimination will be minimized. Sometimes the pastors also contribute to the problem because some of the pastors feel that it will affect their relationship with the wealthy members of the congregation. The wealthy sometimes contribute to the development of the congregation and some pastors also benefit personally from the wealthy. In such a situation the pastor may not want to emphasize the contents of the documents so as not to offend the wealthy and lose his personal benefits such as gifts or donations. I am quite certain that if these statements were implemented there would be a drastic change in the relationship of the church members. The

¹²⁷ Most of the Church of the Brethren missionaries indicated have stayed in Nigeria. This gives them experience of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria.

church leaders and pastors are the ones that are given the responsibility of implementing the annual statements. They do not emphasize the statements because of the benefits they derive from the wealthy members. They do not want to emphasize what will offend the wealthy members as they are the ones that contribute a lot to the running of the local churches. That is why during the field research, the poor indicated that the wealthy members have good relationship with the church leaders and the pastors. They also indicated that the pastors give preferential treatment to the wealthy members. The pastors and church leaders feel that once the documents are emphasized the church will not get much support from the wealthy members. The spiritual aspect of the members is not given attention. When the Church leaders and the wealthy recognize this, it would help the church members in observing the teachings of the church and hence operate the generalized and balanced reciprocity as shown in James' community.

6.5.1 Moral Economy of the Church of the Brethren

Table 22 Moral Economy in COB Documents

<u>Generalized reciprocity</u>	<u>Balanced reciprocity</u>	<u>Negative reciprocity</u>
<p>Church Documents God wants the poor to be treated justly, although poverty is a reality that cannot be denied, but Scripture gives several accounts of how God cares for the welfare of the poor James says that we show our faith by caring for the material needs of the poor (James 2:14-17) (Brubaker 1998).</p> <p>- The documents are against any kinds of oppression among members as it provokes God and He hears the moans of the people (James 5:4) (Brubaker 1998).</p>	<p>Church Documents -God specially promised economic blessings if His people would obey. But it does not mean that all wealth is a blessing for submission to God. (Deuteronomy 8:12-13) (Brubaker 1998).</p> <p>-God warns against giving exceptional favours to the wealthy and powerful, and also prohibits giving preferential treatment to the poor. Leviticus 19:15 says, 'Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly" (NIV) (Conference</p>	<p>Church Documents</p>

<p>-God is concerned about the needs of the poor, as He has preferential option for the poor but God is not prejudiced against the wealthy (Exodus 23:3) (Conference 1998:16).</p> <p>-The primary emphasis for the church of the Brethren is to be on spiritual care for their members (Constitution 1983:13).</p> <p>-For the church to equip its members there is need for social and economic reforms from time to time, the reforms have to be done with the poor members in mind in order to help the members. (Conference 1998:8).</p> <p>-We are to show concern and genuine help to one another (Manual 1993:4-5).</p> <p>-The wealthy are to show consideration to the poor (Martin 1998:9).</p>	<p>1977:9).</p> <p>-The person who is motivated by his own selfishness will work hard and produce more, and consequently benefit all society (Hackman, 1993: 129).</p> <p>-The wealthy are to put themselves in the place of the poor and treat them as they would want to be treated (Deuteronomy 15:7-8) (Brubaker 1998).</p>	
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6.5.2 Interpretation of the table of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren

The Church Documents: Generalized and Balanced Reciprocity

The Church of the Brethren teachings are based on the biblical injunctions from both the Old and the New Testaments toward helping the poor, widow and orphan. The Church emphasizes that there shall be no discrimination and exploitation of the church members.

In terms of generalized reciprocity the church documents are clear on the need for it to provide for the church members not in anticipation of something from the members in return. The church organized programmes are aimed at alleviating poverty of the poor in the church without discrimination. For this reason, the church warns against giving exceptional favours to the wealthy and powerful members. And it also warns against preferential treatment and injustice to the poor. For balanced reciprocity there are economic blessings from the church to its members but the church also expects obedience and commitment from the members. The church is against any forms of oppression and provoking of its members, in return the members are to be submissive to God and the church. There is no negative reciprocity from the church documents in terms of the way its members should be treated.

6.5.3 The Community Members: Generalized, Balanced and Negative Reciprocity

Table 23 Moral Economy from Field Research

<u>Generalized reciprocity</u>	<u>Balanced reciprocity</u>	<u>Negative reciprocity</u>
<p>-The church provides services to its members:</p> <p>-Primary, secondary and tertiary church schools are built by the church in order to educate its members where the government does not provide.</p> <p>-The Church built hospitals and clinics for health care of the members.</p> <p>-The Church has well digging project for provision of water for its members.</p>	<p>-The wealthy contribute financially while the poor use their energy for church activities (chapter six, 151).</p> <p>-The wealthy help the poor, but require service from the poor in return (Chapter six, 153).</p> <p>-The pastors do not rebuke the wealthy because the wealthy contribute to the church as the pastors salaries is paid by the Local Church Council not from the National Headquarters (Chapter six, 157).</p>	<p>-Only the wealthy can afford to send their children to the church schools, as the church does not give bursaries to the poor.</p> <p>-Poverty is caused by exploitation, when the wealthy are favoured and the poor without support (Conference, 1996:12).</p> <p>-The hospital treatment is not free and the poor members cannot afford it.</p> <p>-The well digging is concentrated only in some areas of the Church where the major tribes are</p>

<p>-The Church has Agricultural Development Programme as the members are mostly rural dwellers.</p>		<p>located.</p> <p>-The Agricultural Development Programme does not reach the poor as they cannot afford to buy things to use and they are not given for free to members.</p> <p>-The wealthy are always honoured and they occupy good positions in the church (Chapter six, 167).</p> <p>-The wealthy do not associate with the poor in the church (Chapter six, 165).</p> <p>-The wealthy feel superior over the poor in the church (Chapter six, 177).</p> <p>-The wealthy are honoured in church decision making (Chapter six, 172).</p> <p>-The poor are deprived of pastoral care by the pastors as they visit more regularly the rich and benefit from it, since they would not get anything for visiting the poor (Chapter six, 174).</p> <p>-The wealthy hire poor members and exploit them by not paying their wages adequately (Chapter six,</p>
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		<p>158).</p> <p>-Seating arrangements are based on status. The poor are at a lower table while the wealthy are at a higher table (Chapter six, 159).</p> <p>-The wealthy drag the poor to court or to the police station because they cannot repay loans they took from the wealthy (Chapter six, 175).</p> <p>-The church takes offerings, tithes, fundraisings from the church members but do not give anything in return (Chapter six, 167).</p> <p>-The wealthy benefit from the church programmes, the church leaders also get money from it (Chapter six, 163).</p>
		<p><u>Outsiders</u></p> <p>-They hire the poor and exploit them--especially the Muslims in the area and other Christians not from the COB¹²⁸ (Chapter six, 173-174).</p> <p>-The poor cry for justice</p>

¹²⁸ Some members find that those from other churches treated them better than members of their own church.

		but justice as there is no one to fight on their behalf (Chapter six, 182).
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6.5.4 The Interpretation

Under the heading of generalized reciprocity, it is clear that the community members are required by the church regulations and policy documents to give spiritual care for one another. The members are to show and give genuine help to one another, and when they show genuine help, they will overcome poverty. By overcoming poverty they will not exploit one another or show preferential treatment to the wealthy. As community members the wealthy are to show or give consideration to the poor and treat them in the way the wealthy want to be treated especially where there are Church schools, hospitals and clinics, well digging projects and agricultural offices.

In terms of balanced reciprocity of the community members in the church there is need to appreciate each member. Both the wealthy and the poor members contribute to the church and one another in their own way. The wealthy members contribute to the church financially while the poor members use their physical strength or energy to work for the church. As the wealthy are honoured and occupy good positions in the church, they need to help the poor, the poor in turn will give them honour they require. The pastors do not rebuke the wealthy when they go wrong because they contribute to the church. The church gives service to its members but they require the members to contribute through their church offerings, tithes and fundraisings. Though some of the things under balanced reciprocity are ambiguous, as the wealthy may claim that they are doing their obligation to the church as required through their contribution but the poor see it as their way of gaining control or domination of the church. It is difficult to separate which one is a genuine contribution from the false one. But here I base my conclusions on the results of the field research as this is what I have to use. The church poor members do not benefit from the schools, hospitals and clinics, well digging project and the Agricultural Development Programme as they cannot afford to settle the bills and there are no bursaries for the poor. This is negative reciprocity of the community members. The wealthy do not associate with the poor and they feel superior to the poor

as they contribute financially. They have no regard for the contribution of the poor who use their strength to assist. The pastors or church leaders more regularly visit the wealthy as they derive their personal benefits from them, while the poor are not visited because they have nothing to offer. The wealthy exploit the poor members when they hire them to work for them. They also drag the poor to police stations or courts when they are not able to repay the loans they took from the wealthy. The church leaders or pastors honour the wealthy by giving them preferential seats while the poor sit wherever they can in the church on church occasions like child dedications, fundraisings, naming ceremonies and weddings.

6.5.5 The Outsiders: Negative Reciprocity

The outsiders do not exhibit generalized and balanced reciprocity but only negative reciprocity. The outsiders oppress and exploit the community members by not paying their wages when they hire them to work on their land or in their business. The outsiders refer to non-Church of the Brethren members and the Muslim Hausa and non Hausa in the area.¹²⁹ When the insiders take loans from the outsiders and are not able to pay, they also drag them to the police station or court. This is not peculiar only to the outsiders as we have already seen the same thing happening within the community members under negative reciprocity. The difference is that the community members also practice generalized and balanced reciprocity while the outsiders do not. They are only there for their personal benefit.

From the table of the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren it is evident that the documents of the Church show that an ideal of generalized and balanced reciprocity toward its members. There is no negative reciprocity as it is based on the biblical teachings towards the poor and the needy. But when it comes to the community members there are generalized and balanced reciprocity but there is negative reciprocity, where does it come from? It shows that the church members are not keeping the teachings of the church as found in the documents. It shows that the analysis of the church document in terms of moral economy and the actual practice of the members are not the same. The actual practice has negative reciprocity both from the community members and the outsiders. But the community members are not expected to behave like the outsiders who exploit and oppress the poor. That is why it is necessary for the church to follow the type moral

¹²⁹ There are only a few that are better employers than COB members.

economy outlined by James to his community. James' blueprint for moral economy is what to live by when the church wants its members to treat one another without preferential treatment, and the pastors or church leaders to treat all members as their own, the whether poor or the wealthy.

The profile of the Church of the Brethren reflected in our analysis of its "moral economy" shows that Gavva area is caught up in a changing world economic order. Of course it is not an isolated community and is subject to the socio-economic dynamics of Nigeria as a whole. The world economic order separates ethics and morality from the economy, but we have noted that the separation of economic activities from ethics is not helpful. It makes economic relationships unequal and precarious for the poor. It also makes economic practice autonomous and above critique. Backer says that:

It is becoming ever so clear that the development of the world economy has also to do with the development of the world community and with the universal family of man (sic), and that the development of the spiritual powers of mankind (sic) is essential in the development of the world community. These spiritual powers are themselves a factor in the economy: the market rules function only when a moral consensus exists and sustains them.¹³⁰

Good regulation of economic processes requires positive moral ethics because an undisciplined economy will surely collapse. The separation of moral ethics from economy has certainly led to exploitation, oppression and marginalization of disadvantaged communities like those in the Gavva area.

6.6 Conclusion

I have analyzed and presented the views of the respondents almost verbatim. I did this because I want their views to be independent of my own bias as a person coming from the area. I am quite certain that the members would classify me among the high income earners based on my educational level, socio-economic status, and descent from a royal family and on my role as a pastor. During the analysis for respondents I also considered their socio-economic status, tribe, clan, education and gender as indicated on their questionnaires and the interviews I conducted. I

¹³⁰Backer, Lar ry Catá. Values in Global Economy: The Relationship between Morals, Religion and the Economic Order. <http://www.peaceethics.org/uploads/ValuesInGlobalEconomicsWorkingPaper2009.pdf> . Accessed 17/3/2011.

have indicated the annual income of the churches in Gavva area which shows that there is poverty in the area. Having conducted the analysis of the questionnaires and linked it with the responses given by the respondents during the interviews, I have realized that the responses given by the low income earners are different from that of the high income earners. The responses given by the church leaders are similar to those of the high income earners. Based on my observation it seems that the high income earners are protecting themselves and the poor ones also do the same as I explained earlier. The church leaders/pastors are also protecting their interest. It means that the responses given by each category are aligned with their interest. As far as the low income earners are concerned, the pastors and leaders are classified together with the high income earners. I have shown the reason for this that the annual income of the pastors/leaders is grouped with the high income earners. This makes them to have the same status and class. Apart from that, most of the high income earners are educated just as all the pastors/leaders that responded are also educated at different levels. The responses are in line with the socio-economic status of the members. The low income earners linked their responses to their background or tribe. However, one thing that cuts across class is tribalism. All of the categories acknowledged that there is tribalism in the church which is a serious threat to the unity of the church.

On a general note it could be seen that there is discrimination, exploitation and tribalism in the church. These issues cause most of the problems in the church because the ways in which the low income earners and the high income earners are treated are not the same. This has created a gap between the laity and the clergy. There are economic problems but the church focuses more on money than the spiritual life of her members. Also when it comes to meetings, the congregation is treated based on their rank or position instead of each member being seen as equal.

In the introductory section I indicated the annual income of the local churches. The annual income shows that the local rural churches are poor compared to the urban churches that have high income. The questionnaires show that most of the members in the area are low income earners and have a low educational level.

I observed that only a few benefit from the church programmes (institutions). They are the high income earners because they are the ones that can afford to pay the charges of the institutions. The low income earners cannot afford to send their children to the institutions since there are no bursaries given by the church to alleviate poverty. Apart from the response given by the respondents I corroborate that from my own experience because I taught in EYN Comprehensive

Secondary School from 1998-2000. I know the calibre of parents/guardians that were able to send their wards to the school. It means that the programmes perpetuate poverty instead of alleviating it.

From the interviews I conducted, I gathered without doubt that discrimination has eaten deep into the fabric of the Church of the Brethren. In fact some of the responses came directly from the top church leaders themselves. The church leadership may likely implement the recommendations of this research because they are anticipating that I will at the end give them the result of my findings and perhaps find a way forward. They also expect that at the end of this research with their assistance I will publish a bible study booklet from the Epistle of James for the whole church. In our reading, James is a peasant from Galilee. Many scholars argue that the parallels between James and Hellenistic wisdom traditions make it unlikely that it was written by a peasant from Galilee. But I have followed those scholars who have continued to argue for the authorship of James even though he was a peasant. Bible study from the Epistle of James will benefit the church. We can actually minimize the economic segregation which has developed and begin to live out the egalitarian teaching of the church, which I have outlined, as well as teaching the members that we should not treat each other differently because of economic status, tribe or financial contribution to the church. The moral economy table of the Church of the Brethren has also shown the need for the Community members to take care of one another without preferential treatment. The results under the generalized, balanced and negative reciprocity of the community members and outsiders show that there is an economic problem in the church. James draws an evident opposition between the wealthy and those who remain dejected, unprotected and dishonoured.

Therefore, I will attempt to initiate a dialogue between the COB and the manifesto of James as seen in the moral economy of his community. The way he addresses the problems in his own community may help the leadership of the COB to address their own situation in order to help the church. The exegesis of James 1,2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 that I did and the analysis of the moral economy of the community of James and of the COB will serve as a manifesto to the church together with the recommendations I will give in chapter seven which is the last chapter.

Chapter seven

7.1 Summary, Conclusions and Research findings

This chapter presents a summary of the whole thesis and the findings as they relate to the Church of the Brethren Gavva area. I present the way forward for the church in combating poverty, discrimination and the exploitation that is going on in the church and society. The researcher's hypothesis was that the Epistle of James has the resources to address the problems arising from the merger between Basel Mission in Gavva area and the area of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria that aggravated the problem in Gavva area. I indicated that the merger has put Gavva in a disadvantaged position as only a few of the people from the area were trained and educated, whereas the ones from the Church of the Brethren area had the advantage of early training by the missionaries. The problem was also compounded by tribalism as discovered from the field research. In order to achieve this, I have used the moral economy as analysed in James' community as a means of establishing a dialogue with the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria Gavva area.

7.2 Summary

There are seven chapters in this research. Each chapter addresses a specific issue concerning the title. Chapter one serves as the general introduction to the whole thesis. I presented the hypothesis and the theories used in this chapter. Chapter two presents a review of the works on poverty, exploitation and discrimination. Positions of different scholars have been presented, indicating that although their works have given me insights into my research, there are still gaps that they have not addressed. Among these scholars there is none that has used the moral economy of James' community as a way of analyzing and addressing the problem of poverty and exploitation of the poor. This is where my research is relevant as it addresses the problems of poverty, preferential treatment and exploitation of the poor in relation to the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. Chapter three discusses the problem of poverty and the poor in Palestine appropriating it in my own context of Gavva in Northern Nigeria. I also discuss peasant society, patronage and clientage, honour and shame in Palestine and Gavva area. The fourth chapter presents an exegesis of James 1, 2:1-13, 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 and an analysis of the moral economy of his community. I have used the moral economy of James' community to do the analysis of the

moral economy of the Church of the Brethren in chapter six. In the moral economy of James' community I discussed generalized, balanced and negative reciprocity in relation to God, the community members and outsiders. It was clear from the presentation that God does not practise negative reciprocity, whereas the community members do. The outsiders do not have generalized and balanced reciprocity; they only have negative reciprocity, at least in relation to the members of the COB. Chapter five provides the background to the Church of the Brethren and her teachings on poverty, the poor, discrimination and exploitation. I discovered that the church has many written documents in this regard but they are not observed. We have seen the reasons as to why this happens. Chapter six deals with Gavva area and the field research I conducted. The chapter presents fieldwork tools: analysis and interpretations. And it also presents the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren and an interpretation of this. In the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren, the documents do not have negative reciprocity. The outsiders do not display generalized and balanced reciprocity, except for a few outsiders who treat the workers well. I presented the charts and tables of the research conducted. Chapter seven presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the whole thesis.

7.3 Conclusions

The kind of society portrayed in the Epistle of James is one in which on the one hand we have the elite, the landlords and merchants who are the oppressors; on the other hand we have the peasants, the despised and the oppressed, the labourers whose wages are withheld. It is clear that James wrote to a community where disparity between members of the same church reflected and promoted an underlying social condition of oppression, discrimination and exploitation deriving from the wider society. This type of situation creates a high level of dependency on the part of the poor or peasants. This is seen in detail when dealing with the moral economy of James community in chapter four and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren in chapter six. Those people are not necessarily wicked by nature, but the present state of affairs in the church prompts everyone to strive for survival. The merchants, oppressors and the powerful should be concerned not to discriminate or oppress and exploit the peasants. They should be concerned with the wellbeing of one another because the Bible is an authoritative text in my community, especially the Epistle of James. There is need for a response against the oppression, exploitation, and discrimination that has found its way into the new Christian community. If the Christian

community could be free from these problems, the freedom would inevitably spill over to secular society.

Also from my research, I saw that James focused more on justice for the poor. James is a peasant from Galilee, he knows what the poor face in his community. The moral economy of their community arose as a response to the discrimination shown to the peasants in first century Palestine. The way the peasants were treated by the wealthy landowners and the merchants made them develop resistance. For this reason, the wealthy and the elite are the ones that dictate the public transcript and occupy the positions of honour while the poor are put to shame. The poor also have a hidden transcript which is practiced offstage in resisting the domination by the wealthy. James' letter is an example of resistance as he emphasizes that there will be a great reversal between the wealthy and the poor. James emphasizes that God is the supreme patron who does not discriminate like the human patrons--indeed; he turns traditional patron-client relations on their head. The moral economy of James' community confirms that God is a generous giver to his people without discrimination and, because of this, James emphasizes God's justice as a standard for his community. He wants the community members to treat one another with generalized reciprocity. He does not want them to behave like the wealthy insiders and outsiders that oppress and exploit the poor. The moral economy of James' community challenges the Church of the Brethren to do the same in terms of seeing each member as equals and not to have negative reciprocity.

My research confirms that the experience of the peasants in James' time is also similar to what the peasants in Gavva area face despite the gap of 2000 years. Gavva area is a peasant society. My research confirms that the poor in Gavva area are exploited and marginalized by the wealthy in both the church and the community. For the poor in the area to survive, they have to depend on the wealthy who serve as patrons to them. They are exploited by the wealthy members both within and outside the community. The study on the moral economy of James and the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren has shown this clearly. It has shown the nature of the relationship between the community members, and that of the relationship between the community members and outsiders. The responses given by the poor in chapter six confirm this. This situation causes the poor to live in perpetual poverty. The poor have been marginalized, living at the periphery of the society. The programmes of the church that are supposed to alleviate poverty rather than perpetuate it. The programmes have been dominated by the majority tribes in the Church of the

Brethren in Nigeria. This makes Gavva area and the minority tribes in the church to be marginalized. The merger of Basel Mission area of Gavva and the Church of the Brethren area did not solve the problem but rather it has aggravated it. This is because the cultural and social values of these areas are not the same, considering that Gavva area was part of the Cameroons before the merger as I established. There is a danger that the marginalized area will continue to live in poverty because they are dominated by the majority tribes that are privileged to have had early education and training. The major tribes continue to hold the main positions in the church and the church programmes and institutions. Another factor compounding the problem is the relationship of the pastors/leaders with the wealthy members. The church leadership often sides with the wealthy and is often pressured into giving them preferential treatment. To overcome this, the church leadership could benefit from revisiting the Church of the Brethren heritage and documents, with its emphasis on the Epistle of James, and re-appropriating that rich tradition.

I am convinced that this research will be of great benefit to the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. While a doctoral thesis will inevitably have a limited readership, I am going to publish bible study material on the Epistle of James from this research for the church. The church leadership has agreed to this. The bible study material will seek to address the problems and challenges of poverty, discrimination, exploitation and tribalism. Tribalism happens to compound the problem of the merger. The problems faced by the church which I address in the bible study material will, I hope, be overcome when the church uses the material. When the church leadership, the wealthy and the poor members come to discuss these issues in the course of the bible study, I trust that understanding will develop and increase between these classes of people in the church. If this happens, the problems deriving from the merger of the Church of the Brethren and Basel Mission of Gavva area may be addressed and overcome. Discrimination will cease to be a stumbling block as the church members will see themselves as one community.

The seven chapters of this thesis have addressed issues that affect the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria directly and it is hoped that the thesis will be useful not only to the church but to the government of Northern Nigeria where poverty is so prominent. It was evident from this research that human status is often judged on the basis of external things, such as the clothes one wears. Clothes that one wears sometimes deceive and segregate or discriminate; when a person appears gorgeously dressed s/he will be treated with all respect (προσωποληψία), while the one that

appears shabby (ῥυπαρα) is neglected. The gospel, and not physical appearance, should be the measuring stick for judging the status of people. Physical appearance was important in Palestine, as Wachob says that “If we accept what cultural anthropologists tell us about the patron-client system that permeated the Greco-Roman world during that period, and then the incident envisioned looks typical rather than unusual. The issue of favouring the wealthy over the poor in the church worship service is in fact, a conventional subject in ancient sources” (2000:76).

Wealth is glorified to the detriment of the poor. The person that has accumulated wealth even from a bad source will normally be the talk of the town. Whether he is a genuine follower or not, he will be given responsibility in the church. In the Nigerian church today when a highly placed person comes into a church, they are given a special seat and will be asked to read a lesson from the scriptures. The poor are not recognized, and whether they are in the church or not, does not matter. That is why the poor normally sit outside in special gatherings of the church. The wealthy usually take advantage of the poor and do not help them. Such behaviour is not supposed to happen in the church. It is clear that in some instances the rich maltreat the poor just because the wealthy assume that the poor do not have anything to present or offer to the church or to the pastor but we have seen that the poor offer their labour as part of their contribution. The wealthy are normally not condemned. Not all the wealthy are godly; such ones should be shown the godly way. Discrimination persists due to the fact that the real message has not reached the people concerned. Since the pressures of obtaining the resources as pastors for the material well-being of the church and our own and our family’s well-being has subverted our commitment to the social and economic justice to which the COB is committed in its history, tradition and official documents. We have not done our work.

7.4 Recommendations to the church

The issue of poverty in Nigeria is severe in the rural areas like Gavva. The urban areas are also affected by poverty but they have more access to resources. Most of the households live in abject poverty. This happens in rural areas because they depend mainly on agriculture and there is always low productivity, there are few opportunities for them. It is no secret that more than 90 per cent of the population in Northern Nigeria is living at abject poverty. This is evident in lack of social services and infrastructure in the region. The government does not pay attention to health, education and water supply in the rural areas. For example in Gavva area the electricity project

that was started in 2003 has been abandoned, the clinic built by the government lacks medicines and there are no staff employed, and the water project has long been a forgotten issue. The poor do not have any say in the society, and cannot influence any changes in decision making. They live at the mercy of the decisions of the wealthy that control the public transcript according to Scott (1990).

The rural areas lack basic social amenities that will help them. Nigeria is endowed with natural resources which when tapped will alleviate poverty. In his description of Galilee, Flavius Josephus, in describing Galilee, points to its natural resources: “The land is so rich in soil and pastorage and produces such a variety of trees that even the most indolent are tempted by these facilities to devote themselves to agriculture.”¹³¹ This is true of Nigeria, but most of the citizens are poor. “Poverty is unacceptably high in Nigeria but the alarming and persisting level of poverty in Nigeria is a phenomenon in the North. The poverty level in some states in the North is rated as high as 95 per cent of the population.”¹³² The poverty problem results not from lack of income but from inequality of distribution of infrastructure between the urban and rural areas. Education and health services in the rural areas are poorly organized. This gives birth to high levels of poverty in the rural areas. The church needs to create a relief committee that will care for the needs of the poor members at the national level. The church should not depend on the local churches to handle it alone. An office should be created in the headquarters and a person should be assigned to be in charge of the relief programme. But at present, there is no such office in the headquarters. That office once established will not only deal with the church but will also liaise with the poverty programme of the government in order to help the church. The government can contribute its quota to the church if the office is there. It is the responsibility of the top EYN church officials to see that this is done.

The rural people like Gavva area depend on the rainy season for cultivation of land. During the dry season, they lack any work, and the crops they produce during the rainy season cannot even sustain them until the next season. If the government builds dams or creates irrigation facilities in

¹³¹ BJ 3.42–3.

¹³² Poverty in Northern Nigeria Full Disclosure – [www. The Village Square.mht/](http://www.TheVillageSquare.mht/). North’s vicious circle of Poverty. Accessed 24/6/2010.

the rural areas, it will alleviate poverty because there will be dry season farming. Often, since there is no dry season farming, the local farmers go to other places to seek for jobs. Whatever kind of job they get, they hold on to it, and the wealthy that hire them exploit them. The Epistle of James addresses the same of the Church of the Brethren. The elite take advantage of the poor and exploit them by withholding their wages or paying them lower wages for a major work done.

I have argued that lack of education in the church gives birth to poverty and discrimination. But even today, the poor cannot afford to send their children to school because of the high fees charged in both private church and public schools. In fact, private church schools are reserved purposely for the children of the wealthy because the poor could not afford to pay. The private schools belong to individual wealthy people not the government, the facilities are better than the public schools but they are too expensive. If the poor cannot educate their children, it means that they will continue to live in poverty. Apart from the public schools, the poor cannot even send their children to church schools because they are not affordable. The children of the wealthy occupy the schools. A clear example is the EYN Comprehensive Secondary School where I taught before. The school was meant for the EYN members at all levels, but today only the wealthy send their children because the fees are so high and there are no bursaries given. The institution where I am lecturing as at the time of this research has primary and secondary schools for the children of staff members, but most of the staff send their children to public schools because they cannot afford to pay, and wealthy outsiders bring their children to the school. These are clear examples of what the poor face because of poverty. If the church wants the poor to be included according to the Brethren tradition, there is need for each local church council to set up a relief committee to interact with the less privileged people in the Church of the Brethren schools. When the poor feel that the church has concern for them, it will reduce the problem of discrimination and tribalism. There is need for the church to develop bible study material especially from the Epistle of James to encourage church members to discuss the relationship between the poor and the wealthy, and to explore how to overcome the problem of preferential treatment. In this bible study material, the church should emphasize the Brethren heritage as it relates to the poor and the wealthy. I intend to publish an outline for the bible study from my research work which will help the church achieve this. In terms of methodology I will use the open ended, inductive, discovery method pioneered by the Ujamaa Centre at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and formulated in Gerald West's writings.

In each area, the church should emphasize teachings on the relationships between members and their pastors or church leaders. This will be achieved through bible study as I indicated above. Based on my research I have discovered that the poor group the wealthy and pastors or church leaders in the same category. The poor assume that all the pastors are wealthy and they work hand in hand with the wealthy members in the church. Another thing I discovered in my research of importance to the church is that the church does not interact much with the local, state and the federal governments' programmes. There is a need for the church to liaise with government departments around issues of poverty alleviation. This will support the church and will enable them to care for the poor members that are in the church.

The church has the capability to provide solutions on how to overcome poverty and discrimination against the poor. But the church is not doing that because the leadership is not thinking about the poor and they do not have plans on how to overcome it. Education is the bedrock of every society. When the people are not educated, they will always live in poverty. This is the case with Gavva area today since only a few people have had the privilege of being educated at a higher level. When the people are educated, they can have secure employment and take care of themselves. Being poor is a disease. When people are not educated, they will live in darkness because they will lack knowledge.

The poor are those who have come to doubt the inherent value of their humanity, those who have been systematically broken in every aspect of their being (and not merely deprived of income), to the extent that they truly believe being poor is being cursed or punished by the gods.¹³³ Gutierrez, says:

The poverty to which I refer encompasses economic, social, and political dimensions, but it certainly is more than all that. In the final analysis, poverty means death: unjust death, the premature death of the poor, physical death... cultural death. . . 1993:120).

He adds that "So what do we mean by 'poor'? I do not think there is any good definition, but we come close to it by saying that the poor are non-persons, the insignificant, those who do not

¹³³ www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/poverty.html. Accessed 22/6/2010

count in society and all too often in Christian churches” (1993:121). The church should be the voice of the poor. The church has a say in society and government respects the voice of the church.

Poverty relief should be a cooperative effort between the government and the church. Government can provide solutions to exploitation and oppression by passing and enforcing just laws. It can also provide solutions to economic misfortune through various spending programmes. But it cannot solve the problems of poverty by addressing injustice and misfortune alone. Looking at the present economic capacity and the politics of tribalism, the future of the church could be hopeless. When assigning responsibility apart from giving the roles to the wealthy, it should also not to be done based on tribal lines. When this is done, members will always be discriminated against, marginalized and exploited.

Poverty is as much a psychological and spiritual problem as it is an economic problem, and it is in this realm that the church can be most effective. Most secular social programmes do not place much emphasis on these needs and thus miss an important element in the solution to poverty.¹³⁴ People are poor because they are poor. An individual who grows up in a culture of poverty is destined for a life of poverty unless something rather dramatic takes place. “Poor nutrition, poor education, poor work habits, and poor family relationships can easily condemn an individual to perpetual poverty.”¹³⁵ Today, economic depression affects the church. Without a solid economic base the mission of the church can be crippled. The economic structure of EYN is weak; the church depends on the help of missionaries. If the church does not have the resources to improve the present economic depression, then there is a problem. The church should not continue to be primary consumer and keep depending solely on the offering of her poor members. The members themselves have economic hardships. What will be helpful is for the church to make her members to begin to see the way the economic system impacts them without their knowing it.

The leadership of the EYN church should know that church growth and development start with the welfare of the members. The present church leadership has to do something to develop each

¹³⁴ www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/poverty.html. Accessed 22/6/2010

¹³⁵ www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/poverty.html. Accessed 22/6/2010

member, not only spiritually and educationally, but also materially. If the members are poor and have nothing, they will be fragile and the wealthy will take advantage of them as the Hausas do to the poor when they hire them to work on their farms or run their businesses while they exploit and hold their wages. The church should be responsible for caring for the poor and the needy. “Christians are supposed to use their gifts and abilities to help those caught in the web of poverty. Doctors can provide health care. Educators can provide literacy and remedial reading programmes. Business people can impart job skills. “¹³⁶

It means that there is need for the church and government to reconsider their plans for her members and its citizens. When there is better infrastructure and education is subsidized, the poor can afford to train their children, and this will emancipate them from being oppressed and exploited by the wealthy.

According to Scott:

Christian people have a sounder basis for serving their fellow human beings than this. It is not because of what they may become in the speculative future development of the race, but because of what they are by divine creation. Indeed many words ‘like poverty alleviation’ and ‘poverty reduction’ have been used in defining programmes and policy objectives on behalf of the poor. But the poor do not benefit from it, instead the wealthy make themselves richer (1984:86).

The Epistle of James blames the greed and exploitation of the local elite by the wealthy.

The poor and the wealthy could be in a symbiotic relationship: the wealthy providing material support and the poor provide support based on their ability, not necessarily financial. The wealthy have an important communal role and social obligations; wealth per se is morally neutral and can be an instrument of good.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/poverty.html. Accessed 22/6/2010

¹³⁷ www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/poverty.html. Accessed 22/6/2010

7.5 Research findings

In using the scriptures to dialogue with my area I used the concept of a moral economy to analyse James' community and the Church of the Brethren. Understanding the Epistle of James and the moral economy of his community enables me to know how to address my context. Situating the problem in a specific context using the moral economy of James community and Church of the Brethren provided the best ground for my research. The context of Palestine where James came from and the context of Gavva area have been brought into dialogue with one another with one another in this research as proposed by Draper in his tripolar model of doing exegesis. It remains to reflect on the appropriation of meaning for the Gavva context from this dialogue.

Using the methodology of the moral economy, as applied to James community and to the Gavva community provides a new vantage point for the interpretation of both. It has helped me to review works written on James by other authors some of whom have contributed to my research. My research differs in its use of all the three poles of Draper's tripolar theory, where most interpretations are bi-polar, such as the concepts of poverty of Klaus Nürnberger, Amartya Sen, Bryant Myer and Adarigho-Oriako. This opens up new possibilities for addressing the issue of discrimination, oppression and exploitation in Gavva area and the Church of the Brethren in Gavva area. It brings out the message that the Epistle of James conveys to his audience in his time as he has concern for the poor. I also noted how the context of the Epistle of James resonated with my own context in Gavva area. This has provided scope for appropriation as James' context and the Gavva context dialogue with one other in my reading.

In order to link the moral economy of James' community with the moral economy of the Church of the Brethren I did field research. The field research I conducted was based on the questions of poverty, discrimination and exploitation, with the Epistle of James as a background. The field research has provided some insights into what is happening in the church with specific reference to Gavva area. The field research gave opportunity to ordinary members of the church, both men and women, young and old, educated and illiterate, wealthy and poor, pastors and church leaders, and top church officials to contribute their voices to this research. The field research enabled me to interact with these categories of people in the church. Linking the field research and the Epistle of James I ascertained that there is discrimination in the church against the less privileged or the poor in this context which runs contrary to the teaching of the Epistle which is revered in the COB.

The purpose of this research has been to understand the problem and my theoretical framework and methodology called for a *dialogue* between the biblical text in its own context and the reader in the reader's context. It does not claim to "proffer solutions", but to close the process with an *appropriation* which may be equated with praxis, i.e. a changed way of seeing, being and doing. When this is done, the problems that have arisen from the merger will begin to be overcome. The challenge for this research is how many people are going to read this dissertation? How many people will understand it in the church? Is it going to be like other dissertations that are kept on a shelf in the church? I have indicated in this research that the Church of the Brethren has many written documents on poverty, discrimination and exploitation in the church. But the members are not aware of these documents and the church leaders/pastors do not enforce these documents.

Adopting the moral economy of James' community for this research is appropriate as it brought out the main issues in the Epistle of James and that of Gavva area. And it has provided a way of raising consciousness and exploring alternative ways of addressing the perennial problems of the church as far as discrimination, poverty, oppression and tribalism in the church is concerned. Where the other authors have their limitations or gaps, the tripolar theory assists me to fill those gaps in this in my findings. Filling these gaps provides solution to both Gavva area and the Church of the Brethren. This will enable the two areas to be able to come together, dialogue with one another to see where the differences are as a result of the merger. The differences can be treated or handled where there is appropriation as each area will learn from one another. This will help build the church together as one, and they will continue as Brethren observing their heritage and teachings. When this is done the purpose of this research will be achieved. One area that still needs to be addressed in the church apart from discrimination against the poor is the challenge of tribalism which can easily divide the church.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Non-violence and Humanitarian Intervention 1996 annual Conference Statement

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War and the spread of violent conflicts present the Church of the Brethren with difficult challenges--to understand the causes of war more fully, to provide more effective antidotes to them, and to help victims of violence. Although we welcome the end of half a century of US-Soviet ideological conflict and military rivalry, no sooner have old fears faded from view than new dangers loom on the horizon:

- The easing of nuclear threats between Moscow and Washington has given way to growing fears that nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction may spread to additional countries.
- The gap between the world's rich and poor has now widened to the largest extent ever in history.
- Environmental problems spurred by over consumption, resource shortages, pollution, and burgeoning populations threaten unprecedented violence to God's creation and stimulate selfish, warring rivalries among those created in God's image.
- Ethnic, national, and religious prejudices, inflamed by political leaders seeking power through inciting citizens to hate and fear others, spark violent conflicts and fragment civil societies throughout the world.

In this context, the Church of the Brethren faces difficult questions as national governments and the United Nations use military power to administer humanitarian aid in societies where no domestic order prevails, to rescue civilians threatened with repression and genocide, and to enforce existing international laws prohibiting aggression. Although the church has affirmed its commitment to non-violence, reconciliation, and humanitarian assistance in official statements and numerous peace and service programs, we have not directly addressed issues related to the use of military force in support of humanitarian assistance or United Nations peacekeeping activities. These issues, expressed in the following questions, are dealt with in this statement:

- Should the church support the use of military force by the UN or national governments in pursuit of humanitarian goals?
- How can the church best relate to international peacemaking initiatives, provide humanitarian aid, and implement the peaceful norms with which it agrees?
- How can the church best encourage ethically responsible forms of resolving domestic and international conflicts?

SEEKING A BIBLICAL BASIS

Can Violence Be Justified?

The dominant rationale used to justify resort to violence focuses on concern for victims. The most common question posed to Christians with a commitment to nonviolence is “What would you do if someone attacked your family?” Such a possible threat is seen as having its international counterpart. The Allied cause in both world wars found strong impetus in fear of the Germans evoked by reports of German atrocities. For decades the related question was “But what about the Russians?” The assumed answer was that the United States and its allies needed sufficient military might to deter the Soviets from doing the terrible things they would otherwise do. In the media children and adults see countless scenes in which a hero uses violence to rescue victims from sinister assault or valiant warriors vanquish evil subhuman enemies.

In the period since the end of the Cold War this rationale for violence has undergone some recasting. The plight of victims in Kuwait, Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti, Sudan, and other strife-torn areas is brought into view. Many citizens see the United States as a sort of humanitarian world policeman engaging in military interventions or wars whenever the plight of victims makes these actions seem necessary. The continued funding of the immense U.S. military establishment at near Cold War levels, even when there is no superpower rival, finds its most appealing rationale in the assumed need to be prepared to do such “peacekeeping;” In a secondary way many citizens see the United Nations as taking a comparable role. From this perspective the underlying question is: How can military force be used to stop inhumanities such as genocide and bring about peace? But for Brethren the central question is: How can we express God’s love faithfully through nonviolent efforts to prevent violence before it begins, to stop it after it erupts, and to heal wounds after it ends?

A Biblical Response.

Concern for victims, whether of overt violence or of unjust social and economic structures, is a key element in biblical faith. On that there is common ground with the dominant contemporary justification of resort to violence. But throughout the biblical revelation that concern is addressed in a very different way.

In the Hebrew understanding, God hears the cries of those who are victims, feels their anguish, and acts to help them. Out of the burning bush Yahweh said to Moses: (Exod. 3:7-8) “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians”.¹

Throughout the Old Testament story God again and again heard the cries of those being violated by rich elites or, alien invaders. Most often pictured was God’s concern for the people of Israel. But that sovereign empathy embraced other nations as well (for example, Deut. 10:18-19; Isa. 19:18-25; 42:1-9; Jon. 3:10-11).

“God rose up to establish judgment, to save all the oppressed of the earth.” (Psa. 76:9)

The prophets felt with God and voiced God’s response to the cries and deeds of human beings. Much in the prophetic writings has to do with the plight of the Hebrews and

other peoples suffering under oppression and the ravages of war. That plight is often seen as judgment upon sin, but then too God weeps with those who weep. In a description of the judgment coming upon a rival nation, God said:

“Therefore I wail for Moab; I cry out for all Moab; for the people of Kir-heres I mourn.”
(Jer. 48:31)

As in the Exodus story, God is the one who finds ways to deliver victims from the destructive power of their enemies. The prophets called people to turn from reliance on military capabilities and alliances, put their trust in God, and align themselves with God’s acting (for example, Isa. 30:15-18; 31:1-5; Jer. 21:1-12; Hos. 14:1-3).

A skepticism about the claims and pretensions of rulers finds strong expression in the prophets, the words of Jesus, and the book of Revelation (for an example; Ezek. 28:1-19; Matt. 10:16-18; Mark 10:42-45; John 19:8-11 Rev. 13, 18) In a time when those who govern have unprecedented means to persuade the population that whatever they do is necessary and good (thus that any military intervention is humanitarian), biblical people do well to draw from that skepticism.

Throughout the Old Testament is the warning that evil comes upon those who do evil. This result is seen as God’s judgment, and God is often depicted as wiping out armies or destroying cities with their inhabitants. Many such passages seem to indicate that certain groups and nations are outside the compassion of God.

If Christians view this Old Testament outlook through the lens of God’s central revelation in Jesus Christ; questions remain but some conclusions stand out. God’s judgment upon sin is to be taken into account with utmost seriousness. There is with regard to doing evil a dark sowing and reaping (Jer. 6:19; Hos. 8:7; Gal. 6:7-8). Those who live by violence are brought down by what they do (Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10; 16:6). But Christians must not presumptuously try to become God’s agents executing terrible judgment upon wrongdoers (Luke 9:51-56; Rom. 12:19-21). Jesus himself did not do that (John 7:53-8:11; Matt. 26:53-54). Most of all in going to the cross, he made clear that God’s gracious love embraces every human being and every ethnic group. That love seeks out every rebel sinner--thus each one of us.

How Jesus Came to the Aid of Victims.

Jews at the time Of Jesus’ earthly ministry were longing for a messiah who would deliver them from oppression. The dilemma confronting Jesus was in essence quite similar to contemporary situations that are widely seen as necessitating a military “solution.” Many contemporaries of Jesus thought that only a violent uprising would throw off the Roman yoke. Jesus was tempted to move in that direction (Matt. 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-8). He felt the distress of his people under the Roman occupation But he refused to become a military messiah. He rejected the popular pressure to become a king who would lead his people against the Roman forces (John 6:15). He saw resort to violence as totally contrary to God’s will for him and as madness that would bring destruction on the Jewish nation (John 18:33-37; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24).

Jesus cast his lot with the poor and oppressed. He moved among the masses. He stood with those that were suffering and reached out to them (Matt. 9:35-36; Mark 1:32-34;

Luke 6:20-26). His approach was not that of seizing political power by violence in order to set things right. Rather, he drew together a community of disciples committed to living out God's intentions for humanity. Their life together was to be preserving salt, illuminating light, and permeating leaven for the world (Matt. 5:13-14; 13:33). He taught them to love enemies, to meet cursing with blessing and evil with good (Matt.5:38-48; Luke 6:27-29; 23:34).

Jesus' concern for victims is vividly expressed in Matthew 25:31-46. He so much identifies with those who are hungry, thirsty, uprooted, without clothing, sick and in prison that he can say, "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (v.40).

The sufferings mentioned in the passage are often a result of armed conflict. Jesus, stands in the midst of every population smitten by violence and with all the poor of the earth. He calls all human beings to join him in accompanying victims and healing their wounds.

In the conflict with adversaries who were determined to do away with him, Jesus lived out what he taught. For instance, when the authorities came to arrest Jesus, Peter drew his sword to defend him. But Jesus told Peter, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). He rejected the use of violence even in the best possible cause and became the supreme victim of the human readiness to kill for what are seen as good reasons (John 11:47-50; 19:7,12). Jesus' willingness to die at the hands of enemies rather than to kill brought redemption for all humanity (Matt. 26:26-28; Rom. 5:6-11; Rev. 5:6-10).

God's revelation in Jesus Christ provides a very different sort of answer to the perennial questions intended to justify violence on behalf of victims. Yes, disciples are to care deeply about victims and act on their behalf. But what they do should be in accord with the teachings and spirit of Jesus. Moving against the life of another human being is never in harmony with what God has revealed in Jesus. In faithfulness to the Lord, disciples do not have guns to use against an attacker. Even when terrible inhumanities are being threatened or perpetrated, disciples refuse to become agents or advocates of violence. They cry out with victims. They intercede and pray against the powers of destruction. They may be called into actual accompaniment of victims, sharing their jeopardy, working at mediation, and joining with them in nonviolent resistance to those who victimize them. They seek the Spirit's guidance into creative initiatives that can show the judging love of God to those who move against others.

The obvious objection is that for many situations responses in the spirit of Jesus are not adequate to deal with the threatened or actual violence. To this it can be said that when Jesus refused to become a military messiah, he held back from trying to provide a quick and full solution to things wrong in the world around him. He lived out, and called others to live out; God's way of overcoming the world's evil with good. Like the Master, disciples do not claim to have a swift remedy for every deplorable conflict. But they believe that this Lord calls them and all humanity to live out God's amazing love toward enemies. Although God's way often does not seem to win out in the short term, God's people are sustained by Jesus' promise that it will win out in the long term. In the surrounding society many do not recognize Jesus as Lord, and many who claim to, fail

to see the issue of resort to violence as being under his Lordship. God's intent proclaimed in the Gospel is that all human beings, individually and corporately, give themselves to Jesus Christ and his way. Disciples should strive to make that intent manifest in their lives and witness. They must not, therefore, give their support and blessing to governmental policies and actions that are in stark opposition to the way of Jesus. They seek to propose and promote policies and actions by government that do have some congruence with his way.

In 1989 Annual Conference declared: "The state is *under God* and is to be 'God's servant' to order the interrelationships of human beings, to restrain evil, and to promote good (Rom. 13:3-4). Even when there is little or no recognition of God's sovereignty, the state in all that it does is still accountable to God and what God requires."² What God requires has been revealed most clearly in Jesus Christ. Christian response to issues related to humanitarian intervention should be grounded in this revelation.

Appendix B

A Call to Reduce Global Poverty and Hunger 2006

To all who are concerned with making known to a suffering world the teachings and compassion of Jesus Christ, now is a critical time for addressing the crisis of extreme poverty and widespread hunger. While the number of persons living in a continuous state of hunger remains staggering, for the first time in history it is believed that humankind has the prospect of resolving this suffering within a generation. Response to hunger and human need is not a new calling for Christians. The churches have a long history of such ministry in their communities and around the world.

Through the serving of meals in local soup kitchens and by providing shelter for the homeless, congregations live out the biblical mandate to “share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house” (Isa. 58:7). Through the Global Food Crisis Fund and other generous giving to many ministry areas for the poor and hungry, the Church of the Brethren continues to build on its history of developing programs and opportunities for Brethren to fulfill the call of Christ to feed the hungry and clothe the naked (Matt. 25:36).

For generations, Brethren have sought to live out that call among sisters and brothers around the world as evidenced in the pioneering ministries introduced in India, Nigeria, and Ecuador in health services, wells, and agricultural training; in the founding of such far-reaching efforts as Heifer International and SERRV; in helping to establish CROP and Church World Service; in continuing to place mission and service personnel in community development assignments; in conducting agricultural exchanges and disaster services irrespective of ideological differences; and in promoting and monitoring socially responsible investment. Drawing from its vital rural heritage, the Church of the Brethren has made a significant impact on food security and the alleviation of poverty in specific settings.

The call to the Church of the Brethren in these early years of the 21st century is to join our voice with many sisters and brothers who are also speaking with renewed vigor about a global response to the poor and the hungry. The collective voices of the churches, as well as people of other faiths, have focused on a series of broad goals to bring health and wholeness to communities around the world. Crafted through a United Nations process, these goals are grounded in the same moral directives and high regard for all humankind to which Christians have committed themselves. In summary, these goals are to:

- 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger,
- 2) achieve universal primary education,
- 3) promote gender equality and empower women,
- 4) Reduce child mortality,

- 5) Improve maternal health,
- 6) combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases,
- 7) Ensure environmental stability, and
- 8) Develop a global partnership.

Together, these have been called the Millennium Development Goals. These global objectives set forth tangible and measurable steps for building a healthier, safer, and more just world by 2015. The United States signed and committed to achieve the Millennium Declaration along with 188 other countries at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. Faith-based groups, non-governmental organizations, corporations, and individuals are urged to join together with the efforts of governments in attaining these outcomes.

The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference is encouraged by this swelling global voice to redress critical human want on a broader scale. We recommit ourselves to follow the teachings of Jesus that prompt our loving response to the poor and hungry. We recommend that congregations, agencies, and members revisit the 2000 Annual Conference Statement on Caring for the Poor, using this and other study materials to prayerfully engage the questions of hunger and poverty. We call on all levels and structures of the denomination to identify with and pursue the Millennium Development Goals, joining others in advocacy and action and building upon decades of experience locally and globally. “Draw out your soul to the hungry,” states one version of Isaiah 58:10. “In a world where injustice and inequities are the cause of so much suffering, misery, and death, the church cannot be silent. The church, as Christ’s body, must place itself clearly on the side of the poor and the oppressed” (Statement on World Mission Philosophy and Program, 1981 Annual Conference).

Through prayer, study, and concrete action, let us resolve to act so that those who know extreme poverty and hunger might enter more fully into the abundance of God’s love. Action of the General Board: At its October 2005 meeting the General Board approved the statement and endorsed the Millennium Development Goals. The General Board recommends adoption of the statement by the 2006 Annual Conference.

Appendix C

Church of the Brethren Policy on Poverty and Hunger. The Church of the Brethren has many statements on issues related to hunger and poverty as well as other issues addressed by the Millennium Development Goals. The following are selected portions from statements of the church since 1973. The most recent document is the 2000 Annual Conference paper, *Caring for the Poor*. Specific recommendations for the church from this paper are listed at the end.

“The Christian faith teaches that all persons are entitled to a humane standard of living. The Church of the Brethren has recognized this right to a humane standard of living throughout its history in its frequent calls for practical help for those in misfortunes or with serious, unmet needs. . . . Although we have made great achievements as a nation, we have yet to live up to our potential and responsibility in caring and providing for those persons among us who are still deprived of the basic necessities that make for a humane standard of living.” Annual Conference 1973 “The Church of the Brethren is committed to feeding the hungry, helping the impoverished, healing the broken and promoting freedom, justice, and reconciliation Among all men. . . . Our bread is a material concern; our brother’s bread is a spiritual Concern.”

“The global crisis of hunger is primarily a challenge potentially generating hope and new commitment. The crisis gives us an opportunity to participate more energetically in the radical transformation of human values, social realities and distribution systems. If the world is to change, we Western Christians must change, for we control the resources that must be invoked to set humankind on a new course.” Annual Conference 1975 “The Church of the Brethren seeks to shape its own programs and to influence other institutions in order to encourage the United States to: acknowledge that food is a human right and to make this right a guiding principle in deciding economic policies . . . channel its foreign economic aid through multilateral agencies in which the poor nations enjoy equitable representation.”

“The Church of the Brethren recognizes the principle that the church has specific responsibility to defend and respond to the rights and needs of the poor, the disadvantaged, and those with insufficient power to assure their rights, and the principle that no person is created for poverty, but all are born for a full place at the table of the human family.” “Hunger, poverty, war, and broken relationships are evidences of sin working in human structures. These point up the need for repentance and restitution for the restoration of justice in the earth.” “Economic institutions should promote the capacity, willingness, and likelihood of peoples to embrace economic equity at the expense of material self-aggrandizement; to substitute for selfish competition, cooperation to meet the needs of one another; to implement justice toward other classes, nationalities, and ‘enemies’ by sharing wealth and power in practical ways and to build community, nurtured by local roots and encompassing all humanity. We call upon all

Christians and other persons of good will to join with the Church of the Brethren to reverse the widening of the gap between rich and poor. In order to conserve energy, food, and other resources needed by the poor, we must re-examine our patterns of consumption.” Annual Conference 1977, Statement on Justice and Non-violence

“We support new government measures to provide emergency food and shelter to the homeless and housing policies that will make available to each person affordable, decent housing.” Annual Conference 1989 “Poverty is therefore not an ‘out-there’ problem, but an ‘everywhere’ problem.” Annual Conference 2000, Caring for the Poor Caring for the Poor.

Appendix D

Recommendations of the 2000 Annual Conference Statement:

1. In the firm belief that experience helps beget mission, we recommend that each congregation develop at least one direct, hands-on ministry with the poor or develop one new activity that will undergird the congregation's commitment in ministry with the poor.
2. We recommend that congregational study experiences be used to discover and explore our faith basis for ministry with the poor. Bible studies and our denominational heritage provide strong motivation for an active, caring ministry with the poor.
3. We recommend that congregations use their experience in ministry with the poor to inform themselves of the legislative and political issues having impact on the poor and speak to those issues with their legislators at local, state, and national levels. The biblical witness and our own experiences as a community of faith suggest that there is a corporate or societal responsibility to deal with the problems of the poor, such as the Year of Jubilee. This extends beyond personal, hands-on responses and includes advocacy on behalf of the poor.
4. Congregations are encouraged to partner with urban/ethnic congregations of the Church of the Brethren in shared ministries, including fellowship, finances, and joint programs. Congregations may also find meaningful relationships with congregations of other denominations strategically placed in their own communities that will create strengthened shared ministries with the poor. These partnerships may be especially helpful as congregations begin their ministries with the poor.
5. Congregations are encouraged to contact their local social service agency office. What gaps in service or absence of resources do they see as persons prepare to enter the workforce? Can they link the congregation with organizations they can partner with in specific ministries with the poor?
6. The committee recommends that each District Conference annually include at least one insight-sharing session in which congregations can share their experiences in ministry with the poor. This forum would provide opportunity to share examples, concerns, resources, and encouragement and truly build up the body of Christ.
7. We recommend that three to five slots be reserved annually in the Ministry Summer Service Program for participants to serve in urban/ethnic congregations and that adequate financial resource be appropriated to accomplish this. These opportunities would increase the awareness of the problems of the poor in individuals considering a

career calling in ministry. Such firsthand knowledge is essential as we develop our ministries with the poor.

8. We recommend the development of anti-racism training on a regular basis for boards and field staff reportable to Annual Conference. This training could then become a part of each new employee's standard orientation. This recommendation recognizes racism as one enduring structural factor related to poverty in the United States and seeks a method to increase staff capacity to respond. Other areas of concern might also be highlighted, e.g., rural isolation and poverty.

9. We recommend that the Cross Cultural Ministries Team be authorized to provide counsel and advice to our district executives and congregational life team leaders as these goals are implemented over the next five years and to prepare a progress report to be presented to the 2005 Annual Conference.

10. Congregations need support as they begin or expand their ministry with the poor. We recommend that the Church of the Brethren develop a "magazine" of resources, one that includes examples of what has worked well for different congregations, descriptions of programs and activities, and sources for congregational exploration as churches develop ministries with the poor. We recommend that this responsibility be assigned to the Congregational Life Team program and that support be provided that will enable this resource to be updated routinely and be reflective of ministries appropriate to all congregational sizes and settings. This resource might become a routine part of the In Our Midst—Congregational Resources.

Action of the 2006 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted the recommendation of Standing Committee that the resolution entitled "A Call to Reduce Global Poverty and Hunger" be adopted. http://www.cobannualconference.org/ac_statements/2006GlobalPovertyHunger.pdf. Accessed 8/10/2010.

Appendix E

School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus,
Private Bag X01 Scottsville, Republic of South Africa.

Questionnaire for Church Member

Dauda Gava Andrawus is very grateful for your time and the responses that you will provide to this questionnaire. Your input will be carefully read and used to write a research on the topic “Discrimination on the basis of poverty in James: A Case study of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria Gavva Area”. It will also help us understand your main concerns in this area and design a Poverty Program capable of meeting your needs and the mission and vision of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria.

Please use the lines provided below to answer each of the questions. If you have more information that you would like to share with me, please attach additional sheets.

Do not hesitate to contact Dauda Gava Andrawus at gavakanadi@yahoo.com, Cellphone +2348065660010, with any questions or comments. Please submit the questionnaire directly to me.

Thank you for your collaboration!

Personal Data

Name

(optional) _____

Congregation _____

Age _____

Sex _____

Level _____ of
education _____

Qualification _____

Did the church assist in funding your education?

Profession _____

Level of Education: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary

Family income per year

1. Are you a communicant member? If yes, when did you become a communicant member?

2. As a Communicant member have you experienced any discrimination in terms of foot washing or the fellowship meal?

3. Have you noticed preferential treatment of wealthy members in terms of meals, seating arrangements during occasions like weddings, naming and child dedication, and ordination services?_____

4. Did your family join this church after the merger between the Basel Mission and the Church of the Brethren? Yes/No_____If your answer is “No” from which background does your family come?

5. How do the rich and the poor relate in the church

6. Do the wealthy members give support to the poor members and how?

7.1 State the relationship of the Pastor to the poor members.

7.2 State the relationship of the Pastor to the wealthy members.

8. Do you think that there is preferential treatment of the wealthy members in the Church?

9. Have you ever been hired by a wealthy member to work for him/her on the farm, run business or any work? If so, state how it went.

10. Did you feel exploited when hired to work for a fellow member? Describe your experience.

11. Have you been hired to work for a non-member? Compare working for a non-member and a member of the church.

12. Have you worked under a person of different faith? Compare that with working under a person of the same faith as you

13. Have you collected any loan from a wealthy member?

If yes, did you repay the loan or not

If you did not repay the loan, describe what happened

14, what do you think is the cause of discrimination and exploitation within the Church?

15. Is tribalism an issue in the Church? Yes/No_____

If yes, why?

**School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus,
Private Bag X01 Scottsville, Republic of South Africa.**

Questionnaire for Church leader/pastor

Dauda Gava Andrawus is very grateful for your time and the responses that you will provide to this questionnaire. Your input will be carefully read and used to write a research on the topic “Discrimination on the basis of poverty in James: A Case study of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria Gavva Area”. It will also help us understand your main concerns in this area and design a Poverty Program capable of meeting your needs and the mission and vision of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria.

Please use the lines provided below to answer each of the questions. If you have more information that you would like to share with me, please attach additional sheets.

Do not hesitate to contact Dauda Gava Andrawus at gavakanadi@yahoo.com , Cellphone +2348065660010, with any questions or comments. Please submit the questionnaire directly to me.

Thank you for your collaboration!

Personal Data

Name (optional) _____

Congregation _____

Age _____

Sex _____

Qualification _____

Profession _____

Level of Education: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary

Family income per year

1. Define poverty, using your own words and drawing from your experiences as a Pastor.

2. According to your experience, what are the criteria for determining whether an individual, a family or a group of people is living in poverty?

3. Describe one or two programs run by the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria that address poverty. These may include schools, hospitals, food services, agriculture, well digging projects, etc.

4. Which of the programmes listed in question 3 should be the priorities for the Church in developing its program for poverty eradication?

5. Based on your experience as a Pastor what are the things that can inspire the church to fight against poverty?

6. How can the Church cooperate with the government or other NGO's working towards alleviating poverty?

7. As a Pastor do you know some of the members living in poverty in your Church?

8. Identify the main differences between poverty in rural and urban church in COB?

9. If you have served as a Pastor in other Congregations is poverty more prevalent in a particular local church? What factors contributed to this prevalence?

10. As a Pastor do you give preferential treatment to the wealthy members in your local church?

11. From your experience, describe how political instability has affected poor people's lives in your local church.

12. As a Pastor what do you think serve as discrimination, oppression or exploitation in your local church? _____

13. If applicable, describe how natural disasters have affected poor people's lives in your local church.

14. What are the main links between poverty and exploitation or discrimination?

15. Does the issue of discrimination and exploitation against the members in the local church affect your family life

Appendix F

School of Religion and Theology (SORAT)
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus,
Private Bag X01 Scottsville 3209,
South Africa.

Dear Sir/Madam

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

I am doing a Doctoral Research in Biblical Studies (New Testament). I need to gather information that will help me in my research. I am going to give out a questionnaire and conduct interviews where applicable. I hope that you will be able to provide me with useful information but I need your consent to do this. I promise that any information given will be treated as confidential and that either your identity will be protected or you will have the choice to remain anonymous. The interview and filling in of the questionnaire is voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any time you wish.

The working title of the research project is: A Critique of Discrimination on the Basis of Poverty in the Letter of James: A Case study of the Church of the Brethren Gavva Area. This title was chosen based on my experience when I served as the Regional Church Council Secretary of Gwoza Region from 2000-2001. As I had opportunity to travel widely to the Local Church Councils I observed that there was discrimination in the Church in terms of Holy Communion. As a member or a leader in the Church you know that we have three parts to the communion service: foot washing, the fellowship meal and communion of wine and bread. During wedding occasions, child dedication and naming ceremonies, ordination services the wealthy seem to be regarded more highly than the poor. These are hypotheses that I want to investigate with the help of information provided by you.

I need your help in giving me time for you to be interviewed or to fill a questionnaire. For the interview a single meeting lasting between 20 to 30 minutes ought to be sufficient, unless there is

a need for a follow up. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The forms provided are to be completed by you, but in the case of interview I will use a micro cassette player to record the conversation and a video camera where applicable. I will dispose of the data when I analysed them by deleting them from my computer system and shredding the forms.

Participating in this research will benefit you. If the church is able to accept the outcome of the research and make use of the document, you will be proud to have been part of it. As a member or a leader in the Church of the Brethren, discrimination is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. The work will be of benefit to the whole Church in helping to understand the causes of the problem and how to overcome them.

My contact details and those of my Supervisors are given below in case you want to confirm the above information or find out anything from them.

Rev. Dauda Gava Andrawus

Email: gavakanadi@yahoo.com, 207505916@ukzn.ac.za

Cellphone: +2348060489491, +2348036718051, +27846023220

Residence: Senior Staff Quarters House NO. RH 21, TCNN, Bukuru- Jos, Nigeria.

Supervisors: Professor Jonathan A. Draper email: draper@ukzn.ac.za and Patricia F. Bruce email: brucep@ukzn.ac.za

If you agree to fill in the questionnaire or to be interviewed, please sign the consent form agreement below.

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....