

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AS AN ASPECT OF THE *MISSIO DEI* PARADIGM: THE CASE OF THE BASARWA



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Abstract

The history of the Basarwa people of Southern Africa, particularly those in Botswana, is punctuated by poverty-related suffering. This study has established, among others, that a multiplicity of complex historical developments that occurred over a period of several centuries led to the present poverty conditions of these people.

For this study, however, the ways in which the Basarwa were perceived and the subsequent treatment that was meted out to them have emerged as the key contributory factors to their poverty conditions. It is thus the position of this study that the Basarwa's poverty was man-made and is primarily a result of broken and dysfunctional human relations. It is also a result of the many years of dispossession and alienation from the many social and cultural formations that are pertinent to their worldviews.

Given the forgone situation, the study has explored the biblical and theological situation of the Basarwa and has come to the conclusion that poverty is in contradiction to the *missio Dei* or the will of God for his creation. In the light of these biblical and theological reflections, the study proposes a mission paradigm that is based on the Trinitarian understanding of mission, with God's unconditional love, the grace of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit as an answer, albeit partially, to the poverty conditions that are faced by the Basarwa. The only lasting solution to the poverty of the Basarwa is lying in the healing of human relations.

Introduction

The background to this study is the poverty condition of the Basarwa people. These people have been trapped in poverty over a prolonged period in history. From the very earliest encounter with the other population groups they have been treated in ways that have impoverished them in many ways. In Botswana, the government has been concerned with the poverty of these people for quite some time now. In the 1970s, the government devised the Basarwa Development Programme which was later renamed the Remote Area Development Programme. The aim of this intervention has always been to ensure that the Basarwa benefit from the post-independence economic development programmes. The development that has been envisioned and pursued by government since independence has been of an infrastructural nature; in other words, in the building of roads, schools and clinics. For this to happen, the Basarwa had to be relocated from their scattered family- and clan-based small communities to Tswana-type villages, presided over by a chief and such other village-level structures.

It is now a well-known fact that the Basarwa Development Programme and its successors have not been able to realise the improvement of these people's quality of life that the government had anticipated. While many Basarwa children have had the opportunity to attend school to secondary and even tertiary level, and most of the new settlements in which they live either have a clinic or are within a 15 kilometer radius of one, there are still many challenges that face these people that require research. Other than the government, many international and local non-governmental organisations have also made an effort to address the poverty and other social ills that are facing the Basarwa communities. In some areas, like Ghanzi, the church has been actively involved in several projects that are aimed at improving the quality of life of these people. It is, however, not clear if the church has ever stopped and reflected consciously on the mission basis behind its involvement among the Basarwa. This study seeks to explore a mission understanding for the church's mission involvement among the Basarwa.

In this respect, the study has decided to explore possible factors behind the current poverty conditions of these people, for example what transpired in their encounter

with the other population groups. The study has particularly explored the ways in which the Basarwa were perceived and treated, and came to the conclusion that these must have been some of the major contributory factors to their current state of poverty. Having established this, the study has examined the concept of *missio Dei*, which is central to the contemporary understanding of Christian mission. In the process, it has become evident that the poverty negates the will of God for dignified, peaceful human existence on God's earth. The study therefore proposes a mission strategy that is based on the Trinity as the source of God's mission in the world. It is the conclusion of this study that those who are sent by God into the world are sent in unconditional love. They are therefore under a new commandment to love others as God loves them. A mission of love will help in providing an answer to the hate, disrespect and disparaging attitudes of the past. Similarly, the study has reached the conclusion that all those who have benefitted from God's saving grace in the past know that this was not based on any merit on their part. In their outreach into the world in God's mission, they are therefore supposed to be shaped and informed by the same attitude towards the world that was in Christ.

Finally, the study has reached the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is at work in God's world, recreating and forming a new fellowship, based on love and grace, amongst the people of God. While we cannot be conclusive about the nature and characteristics of such a fellowship, it is, among others, inclusive, in other words it incorporates people of all identities, cultures, languages, social statuses and ethnic groups without discrimination. The Holy Spirit is at work in history, empowering the church to transcend the huddles and barriers of the past and to reach a new mission threshold.

Dedication

I dedicate this study to the memory of my late father, Mr. Isaac Hambira (Mosikaraphuti), for his loving care and, particularly, for the unique way in which he led me to faith in Christ, and supported and encouraged my decision to join the ordained ministry of the church.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination at any university.

Key words: *Missio Dei*; Poverty alleviation; Mission; Paradigm; Basarwa

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	4
1.1 Formulating the problem.....	4
1.1.1 Background.....	4
1.1.2 Problem statement.....	9
1.2 Central research question.....	9
1.3 Aims and objectives.....	9
1.4 Central theoretical argument.....	10
1.5 Methodology.....	10
1.6 Study limitation.....	10
CHAPTER 2	12
2.1 Theological introduction.....	12
2.2 Background of the Basarwa.....	13
2.2.3 Disparaging attitudes	15
2.2.4 'Bushman'.....	15
2.2.5 The term 'San'.....	17
2.2.6 Basarwa.....	18
2.2.7 'Remote Area Dwellers'	19
2.3 Failure to recognise Basarwa knowledge and skills.....	20
2.4 Failure to recognise the Basarwa modes of production.....	21
2.5 Territoriality.....	22
2.6 Possession and ownership of private property.....	22
2.7 Leadership	23
2.8 Those that must be removed in order to have access to services	24
2.9 Conclusion.....	25
CHAPTER 3	28
3.1 Introduction.....	28
3.2 Landlessness.....	29

3.3 Loss of cultural identity.....	35
3.4 Relocation for development	37
3.4.1 Education strategy	38
3.4.2 Agriculture	39
3.4.3 Provision of water	40
3.4.4 Health	41
3.4.5 Housing.....	42
3.4.6 Monetary policies.....	42
3.5 Leadership	44
3.6 Conclusion.....	46
CHAPTER 4	47
4.1 Introduction	47
4.2 Description of <i>missio Dei</i> in light of the Basarwa's poverty.....	47
4.3 The historical context out of which <i>missio Dei</i> has emerged	47
4.4 God the Father as the initiator of <i>missio Dei</i>	51
4.4.1 Creation as part of <i>missio Dei</i>	52
4.4.2 Exodus as a practical example of the <i>missio Dei</i> on behalf of the poor.....	55
4.4.3 The principle of gleaning as a practical dimension of <i>missio Dei</i>	57
4.4.4 The observance of the Sabbath as a social aspect of <i>missio Dei</i>	58
4.4.5 The triennial tithe as a religious dimension of <i>missio Dei</i>	60
4.4.6 Forbidding interest on loans as an economic aspect of <i>missio Dei</i>	60
4.5 God the Son as Incarnation of <i>missio Dei</i>	61
4.5.1 God's concern for the poor in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, KJV)	62
4.5.2 Jesus' teachings on the kingdom of God	62
4.5.2.1 "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10a).....	62
4.5.2.2 "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10b).....	64
4.5.2.3 "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).....	67
4.6 God the Holy Spirit as the empowering of <i>missio Dei</i>	69
4.6.1 The role of the Holy Spirit in <i>missio Dei</i>	69
4.6.2 Mission work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament	69
4.6.3 Mission work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.....	71
CHAPTER 5	73

5.1 Introduction	73
5.2 The unconditional love of the Father as a response to poverty.....	76
5.2.1 The Father's unconditional love and the Basarwa's loss.....	79
5.3 The grace of God the Son as a response to the Basarwa poverty	81
5.3.1 God's grace as an answer to the Basarwa poverty	84
5.3.2 God's grace as a response to disparaging attitudes	85
5.3.3 God's grace as a response to failure in recognising the Basarwa's way of life	86
5.3.4 God's grace as an answer to pride and arrogance	87
5.4 The fellowship of God the Holy Spirit as response to the Basarwa poverty	88
5.4.1 Repentance and public confession	89
5.4.2 Call to fellowship (<i>Koinonia</i>)	90
5.4.3 Solidarity with the Basarwa as a response to poverty	92
5.5 Conclusion.....	92
CHAPTER 6	94
6.1 Summary	94
6.2 Recommendations.....	96
REFERENCES.....	97

CHAPTER 1

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AS AN ASPECT OF THE MISSIO DEI PARADIGM: THE CASE OF THE BASARWA

1.1 Formulating the problem

1.1.1 Background

Since independence in 1966, Botswana has done very well in economic development, particularly in ensuring that people have access to essential basic services and infrastructure, for instance health facilities, water and roads. The country is renowned for having done equally well in the area of democracy, good governance and its human rights record. Due to the realisation of these efforts, Botswana has recently been reclassified from poor to upper middle-income nation. The Botswana government has also made great strides in addressing the problem of poverty.

In this regard, the 1985/86 and 1993/94 Household Income and Expenditure Survey shows that between 1985/86 and 1993/94, the national poverty rate had declined from 59% to 47% of the population (that is, 623 100 people) (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning [MFDP], 1998:3). During the same period, the national poverty rate declined from 49% to 38% at household level (that is, 109 503 people). It is, however, worth noting that poverty is still a serious challenge in Botswana, as the poverty study shows that poverty was higher and more severe in rural areas and to some extent in urban villages, where about 55% of the population lived below the poverty datum line¹, compared to 46% in urban villages² and 29% in urban areas (MFDP, 1998:4).

Along the same line, the report shows that female-headed households generally experienced greater poverty than male-headed households. Studies show that about 50% of people in female-headed households lived below the poverty datum line, compared to 44% in male-headed households in 1993/94. According to the Study of Poverty and Poverty Alleviation, poverty was found to be severest in the Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Western Kweneng³ and Southern District, where an estimated 71% of the population lived below the poverty datum line, with 59% in the very poor category. The report furthermore states that these most adversely affected areas are home to most of Botswana's remote area dwellers. The majority of Botswana remote area dwellers are

¹ The poverty datum line represents a theoretical 'consumption basket'. The content of the basket is intended to correspond to the minimum amount of goods and services that is required by Botswana households to maintain an acceptable minimum standard of living.

² 'Urban villages' refer to traditional villages that have acquired modern facilities and infrastructure, such that they are urban centres in their own right.

³ Ghanzi, Kgalagadi and Kweneng are some of the administrative districts in western Botswana where many of the settlements of the ethnic San are based.

the ethnic Basarwa people who, due to a lack of income, human capabilities and participation in the decision-making processes, have been trapped in hereditary poverty that goes back many generations⁴.

The church in Botswana, particularly the mission-founded churches, starting from the missionary period, has always been involved with issues of community empowerment through the provision of services such as education, health care and the introduction of Botswana to Western commercial enterprises. Evidence is, however, lacking as to whether such responses were based more on the normal Western philanthropic disposition than on mission concerns; in other words, one finds it difficult to ascertain whether there was any thinking about mission behind these acts of kindness that were undertaken by the church. The educational services and health care, in particular, seem to have been used for the purpose of conversion, in that those who had access to such services seem to have been expected to turn to the church out of gratitude. The role of the church among the Basarwa during the early period is thus not very clear. However, in the period since independence, the church, particularly through its ecumenical arm, has been involved in the Basarwa communities through the provision of services such as early childhood education, adult literacy programmes, the drilling of boreholes, and the building of clinics and health posts (Amanze, 2002:69). In recent years, it has been involved in the advocacy of and lobbying for human rights and political issues.

In light of the foregoing, this study attempts to examine the historical context of the poverty conditions of the Basarwa people, given the fact that the contact between the Basarwa and other population groups covers an extensive historical period and that such contact may have (though only partially) contributed to the poverty conditions of the said population group. The study recognises that factors that led to the poverty of the Basarwa are many, multi-faceted and, in some cases, very complex, such that one study will not be able to address all of them exhaustively.

Prior to the 20th century, there was general agreement among Protestants that the aim of mission was to evangelise the world. Therefore, the world-wide missionary movement before the 20th century was able to bring together missionaries from a variety of traditions, working alongside one another with little difficulty, despite certain confessional differences (Corrie, 2012:1). This seemingly harmonious situation is, however, reported to have changed drastically after World War II. In the post-war period, serious tensions developed between theological liberals and conservatives, while in the world prior to World War II, there was general consensus that the mission theology was primarily about issues such as sin, salvation, the cross, the person and the work of Christ. In the post-war period, differences began to emerge on the nature and content of

⁴ Several reasons could be given for the extreme poverty conditions that are experienced by the Basarwa people of Southern Africa. Some of the reasons are their different world views and traditional lifestyle as nomadic people who wander around as hunters and gatherers, and therefore do not necessarily fit into the modern, capitalistic, globally driven economic systems.

mission. These new developments in mission theology began to divide the missionary enterprise. As a result of these developments, many evangelicals seem to withdrew, not wanting to have anything to do with the liberal Protestants. The first few decades of the twentieth century, therefore, witnessed deepening divisions and mutual suspicions which troubled the church in many ways (Corrie, 2010:1).

It seems as if the post-war period was also marked by an explosion of mission traditions and theologies. There were far-reaching changes in the existing mission traditions of the older churches like the Roman Catholic and the Western Protestant tradition, particularly after the formation of the World Council of Churches and the Second Vatican Council. Other hitherto unknown traditions, such as the Evangelicals and the African Independent Churches, began to emerge in the mission field. For the purposes of this study and with respect to the mission challenges facing Botswana, as well as the plight of the Basarwa, it suffices to concentrate on two mission perspectives, namely those of the Evangelical and Ecumenical movements. These two seem to occupy the most extreme, as well as the most antagonistic, positions on the nature and content of mission.

Corrie (2010:2) summarises the Evangelicals' mission theology best as that which was devoted to evangelism, discipleship and church planting, refusing any cooperation with liberals, which in their view would be tantamount to compromise and even betrayal of the gospel. The Evangelicals perceived the mission theologies and practices of the liberals, in this case those persons who were associated with the World Council of Churches, as tantamount to denial or even betrayal of the gospel. Bosch (1981:220) argues that the view that Christians should be concerned with social issues of life was perceived negatively by some Christians, right from the birth of the church.

There were always Christians who despised the world and perceived it as temporal, perishing and a passing structure that must, therefore, not be allowed to preoccupy and even obscure the mission agenda of the church. In this tradition, Christians should be concerned with the salvation, rather than the renewal, of the world. From this conviction stemmed the belief of the Evangelicals that the changing of social structures is, if anything, of secondary importance. Social changes were perceived as irrelevant for the mission calling of the church. At least in the early period, Evangelicals felt that the practices of the liberals betrayed the gospel by bringing about the unwanted or uncalled-for shift from the legitimate to the illegitimate (Bosch, 1981:66). Bosch further argues that, in this early period, evangelical mission theology was marked by insistence on the incomparable importance of the purity of the Christian doctrine. The most important guarantee for redemption seemed to have been the acceptance in faith of the salvific facts concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The salvation events are either located in the remote past (biblical history) or in the future (the coming of the millennium), or they are internalised (redemption takes place in the person's heart). The present age, however, remains empty. It is the task of the church to treasure and preserve the traditions of the past and to safeguard them against adulteration (Bosch, 1981:205). It is, however, necessary to show that

there have been some shifts in the Evangelical theology over time, vying more closely for the linking of witness and service (Bosch, 1981:204; Corrie, 2010:3).

In the post-war period, the Ecumenical approach to mission changed drastically. Whereas in its early stages, its chief intention (like that of the Evangelical traditions considered above) was the conversion of the heathen, a major shift occurred in the post-war period and the following new emphasis emerged (Corrie, 2010:4):

First, the world is the locus of God's saving activity. Ecumenical mission theology emphasises creation rather than redemption. Salvation is seen in terms of the recreation of the world rather than the atonement for individual sin. God's primary concern is for the world which He created and the relationship He really seeks to restore is therefore primarily with the world before it is with the church and with individuals.

Secondly, the kingdom of God is seen as a new social order. The point here is that the kingdom comes wherever justice is restored and reconciliation is achieved. This view is certainly more about this world than the next.

Thirdly, sin is corporate as much as it is individual. The point here is that the great sins are injustice, poverty, greed and oppression, and all their institutionalised manifestations.

Fourthly, salvation involves humanisation. An important dimension of this notion is that salvation is distinct from and more important than the saving of souls for eternal life. The idea is that, in Jesus, God perfects humanity and sets us free to be fully human. Conversion is therefore conversion to the world, not out of the world, and is discussed in terms of discipleship and responsibility rather than a personal relationship with God. The search is for wholeness and *shalom* in this life, so that the totality of life is transformed into the new humanity.

Fifthly, reconciliation will ultimately be cosmic. The point here is that a world community will be established in which God's purposes are fulfilled in love, justice and peace. Unity means the unity of all things and peoples in Christ, and that is the goal towards which we work.

Lastly (and an important aspect for this paper), Ecumenical mission theology contends that social action is at least as important as evangelism. The understanding of evangelism as the straightforward proclamation of the gospel is far from enough. Rather, if one of the core beliefs of the Christian faith is that God is working to save this world, Christians must cooperate with him to restore it to wholeness. It involves social action and political commitment to work for the changing of unjust structures. This is the conviction behind the Ecumenical commitment to support political movements for radical change. Similarly, issues of poverty, human rights, the environment, women, minorities, human sexuality and all forms of oppression come to the forefront of the Ecumenical mission theology.

In concluding this section, it is worth noting that there has been some movement in both traditions toward a confluence. Recent developments in Evangelical mission theology, particularly the Micah Declaration of 2001 (an Evangelical campaign that is aimed at mobilising Christians globally against poverty), recognise the value of social responsibility in the mission of God. In this regard, integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is essential to underscore the fact that Evangelical mission theology has made a significant shift to the point where the Evangelicals now affirm that it is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other; rather, in integral mission, Christians' proclamation has social consequences, as they call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. Their social involvement has evangelistic consequences too, as they bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If Christians ignore the world, they betray God's word which sends them out to serve the world. If they ignore the word of God, they have nothing to bring to the world.

The change of heart in Evangelical mission theology could, among others, be attributed to the fact that it did not take long for some people within the Evangelical movement to feel uncomfortable about the inward looking attitude of Evangelism. The influence of the many radical movements of the 1960s may also have played a part in impelling some Evangelicals to look afresh at the teaching on social issues. Evangelicals, particularly those from the Third World, needed a response to the Marxist critique of Christianity and in so doing, discovered a critique of pietistic Evangelical attitudes. As a result of these and many other factors, in the words of Chester (2004:1), there has been a remarkable shift in the Evangelical attitude towards social concern, with a rediscovery of the social involvement that characterised evangelism prior to the 20th century. Chester (2004:1) describes that which has happened in the Evangelical social thinking as integrated or transformational understanding of mission.

According to Bosch (1981:188,189), the reasons for this shift in mission thinking of the church are that "the Christian church in general and the Christian mission in particular are today confronted with issues they have never even dreamt of, which are crying out for responses that are both relevant to the times and in harmony with the essence of the Christian faith". For him, the new situation challenges the church across the board to an appropriate response. "No longer dare we, as we have often done, respond only piecemeal and ad hoc to single issues as they confront us. The present world challenges us to practice a transformational hermeneutics, a theological response which transforms us first before we involve ourselves in mission to the world. It is in the light of these that mission anywhere in the world can no longer be business as usual or an exclusive or spiritual agenda of the church, but rather gains credibility from responding to the felt needs of real communities." The mission among the Basarwa of present-day Botswana is no exception in this regard.

1.1.2 Problem statement

With various efforts over the years, different agencies have tried to solve the problem of poverty amongst the Basarwa, with very little or no success. This study examines ways in which the church with a mission paradigm, based on the *missio Dei*, can contribute to solve the problem of poverty among the Basarwa.

1.2 Central research question

The central research question is the following: What difference will the church with a mission paradigm, based on the *missio Dei*, make in alleviating poverty among the Basarwa in Botswana?

The following questions arise from the problem stated above:

- a. What historical, political and theological attitudes have led to the poverty conditions of the Basarwa in Botswana? (A historical overview.)
- b. What historical practices and perceptions of the Basarwa by other population groups have led to poverty among the Basarwa in Botswana?
- c. What is the calling of the church in dealing with poverty and injustice among the Basarwa?
- d. What difference can the church with a mission paradigm, based on the *missio Dei*, make in the alleviation of enduring poverty among the Basarwa?

1.3 Aims and objectives

The study will examine issues such as the way the Basarwa were perceived and treated by the other population groups and the church, and how attitudes of other groups and practical treatment of the Basarwa might have contributed to their poverty. The study will further explore whether or not the alleviation of poverty among the Basarwa is part of the mission of God and, finally, what difference the church with a mission paradigm, based on *missio Dei*, can make in addressing the question of poverty among the Basarwa.

In an attempt to reach the above aim, the following objectives should be attained:

- a. To understand the role of perception by other population groups in the historical poverty of the Basarwa.
- b. To study the contribution of treatment by the church and other role players in the poverty of the Basarwa.

- c. To study the concept of the *missio Dei* from a Trinitarian perspective and explore ways in which poverty is in contradiction to the *missio Dei*.
- d. To examine how a Trinitarian response that is based on the principle of the love of God the Father, the grace of God the Son and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit can be an answer to the poverty situation that is facing the Basarwa.

1.4 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that God's concern for the poor, as is evident in the Bible and Christian theology, is the basis for a poverty alleviation strategy that is based on the *missio Dei* paradigm.

1.5 Methodology

This missiological study in the Reformed tradition seeks to develop a preliminary mission paradigm, based on the *missio Dei*, for addressing the problem of poverty among the Basarwa. In this regard, scholarly works in the form of books, journals and internet-based sources will be consulted. The study seeks to find mission strategies or the church's own understanding of its mission role in relation to poverty alleviation among the Basarwa. Since government and civil society organisations have done a number of studies on the question of the living conditions of the remote area dwellers, particularly the ethnic Basarwa, this study will do a comparative literature analysis of the available literature to form a mission paradigm for the alleviation of poverty among the Basarwa.

1.6 Study limitation

The scope of the study does not provide adequate room for an in-depth analysis of the poverty situation of population groups other than the Basarwa for broader comparative analysis. The context of this study is therefore Botswana, where the study examines the particular context of the poverty conditions that are endured by the Basarwa people in the period since their earliest encounter with the other population groups like the Bantu. There are a number of important developments, particularly from the side of the government, to address the challenge of poverty. These will not be studied in detail, but will only be referred to with respect to their impact or otherwise on the livelihoods of the Basarwa. Similarly, it is pertinent on the one hand to examine how the church could have played its priestly and prophetic role alongside the government and other role players during the period under review, and on the other hand, what mission and service opportunities the church has lost over the same period, due either to its failure to be

involved or by using mission paradigms that are not based on the *missio Dei*. It is hoped that this study will lay an important foundation in the understanding of issues in poverty alleviation among the Basarwa from a Christian missiological perspective and that it will lay informed bases for future study, given the fact that the problem of poverty and efforts to alleviate it requires long-term and ongoing study and research.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS BY OTHER POPULATION GROUPS IN THE ENDURING POVERTY OF THE BASARWA

2.1 Theological introduction

The Bible has a particular view of what it means to be human. Christians generally agree that all human beings are created in the image of God, but Scripture does not spell out what 'being made in the image of God' exactly means. It is not the intention of this study to discuss the concept in any great detail. For the purposes of the study, it suffices to observe that theologians throughout the ages have made attempts to specify the meaning. Grudem (2010:443) points out that some have suggested that the image of God consists in man's intellectual ability, his power to make moral decisions and willing choices, his original moral purity, his creation as male and female, or his dominion over the earth. For Grudem, giving such a list does not do justice to the subject. For him, it suffices to say that "every way in which man is like God is part of his being in the image and likeness of God".

There are many principles around the Christian or biblical views of humanity. For the purposes of this study, we will confine our consideration to the relational aspects of the Christian view of humanity. Guthrie (1994) suggests that the attempts of humans to understand the concept of 'being made in the image of God' by analysing themselves and identifying this or that capacity, quality or endowment are exercises in futility. For him, the reason is that when humans analyse themselves, they do not find the human beings that God created them to be, but rather the sinful human beings for whom rationality, spirituality, moral consciousness, power or other characteristics of the human species become instruments for their self-contradictory, self-destructive refusal and inability to be what God created them to be. He suggests that it would be better if humans, "instead of interpreting what Scripture says about our creation in the image of God to confirm the self-understanding we already have, rather re-read the Bible with the view to gaining a new self-understanding of what a genuinely biblical understanding of human life in the image of God would look like" (Guthrie, 1994:197).

From the foregoing, it seems as if traditional Christian theology has looked for the meaning of being made in the image of God in the wrong places. The only way that Christians can understand what it means is by looking at Jesus Christ. We learn from the life of Jesus that being created in the image of God is not only recognisable in human intellectual, moral or spiritual capacity. It is rather recognisable in relationship, life in community and fellowship with God and others outside ourselves. "Only as we discover the meaning of our existence in relatedness to God and fellow human beings can we truly be human." (Guthrie, 1994:198.) In the Setswana language, there is an old adage, "Motho ke Motho ka Batho ba Bangwe"; in other words, a person is a person through others, or one cannot be human alone.

The place to learn what it means to be in the image of God, therefore, is the community, the family or one's relations and interactions with others. Scriptures say that God created people in his own image; He created them male and female. The fact that people were created with differences, like male and female, black and white, and with different intellectual acumen, as well as different views of what is or is not morally acceptable, does not mean that they are unequal and should not be construed to imply that differences in endowments show degrees of either superiority or inferiority. The Epistle to the Ephesians clearly states that "in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2:14, NRSV). Similarly, the Epistle to the Galatians states that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, NIV). The example of Jesus Christ, therefore, demonstrates that while being created in the image of God and possessing outstanding characteristics of intellectual, moral and spiritual nature, such attributes are meant to be used by one in promoting service to God and fellow human beings and not to despise, ridicule, denigrate and discriminate against those who are different from oneself.

Being created in the image of God is about relationship, the common good of all in society and the enhancing of fellowship. Human life best reflects the image of God in relatedness, and in sharing and caring for one another and the wider creation. This is at the core of *mission Dei*, which is God's outreach in his love and mercy to his creation (Bosch, 1981). In this sense, being created in the image of God is a constant reminder to those so created to emulate the relationship of the Trinity, both in relationship to God and to fellow human beings. The call to this Trinitarian relationship is in essence the mission of God; this is the Christian, theological view of being human. In this chapter, the immediate concern is to understand how the Basarwa as a people have been perceived in history by other people, including Christians. Erickson's three prevalent images of how people have been perceived throughout history are very helpful in this discussion: The first image is that of humans who are treated as machines; they are perceived solely in terms of what they are able to do. In this approach, persons are basically regarded as things, as means to an end rather than as ends in themselves. They have value as long as they are useful. The dominant interests here are their strength, energy, skills and capabilities. In a number of ways, the Basarwa have been perceived in this way. The second image is that of humans as animals, where there is no qualitative difference between humans and animals. The only difference is one of degree. The third image is that of humans who are viewed as pawns of the universe, at the mercy of forces in the world which control their destiny, but have no real concern for them (Erickson, 2001:164-165).

In Chapter 3, the study will examine the implications of being created in the image of God in the way that people ought to treat each other.

2.2 Background of the Basarwa

According to Schapera (1930:26), it is generally agreed that the Basarwa, also known by other names such as the 'Bushmen' and the 'San', were long regarded as the earliest inhabitants of

Southern Africa and have occupied the country from the time of remote antiquity. More recently, Tlou and Campbell (1984), Hermans (1980) and Keema (2010) have attested to this view. Furthermore, there is evidence that these people have been interacting with other population groups like the Bantu, the Dutch Settlers, the missionaries and traders for many centuries (Sales, 1971).

Botswana is one of the countries of Southern Africa where missionary and government records show that the Basarwa are the original or the oldest human inhabitants of these areas. Historians (Tlou and Campbell, 1984) believe that the Basarwa have probably lived in Botswana for 20 000 to 30 000 years. The Basarwa differ physically, linguistically and ethnically from the other population groups in Botswana (Hermans, 1980:1). It is difficult to determine the size of the Basarwa population in Botswana today, because the national census process no longer identifies people on the basis of either ethnicity or language.

Since independence in 1966, the government of Botswana has settled the Basarwa in Tswana-like village settlements. There are 64 such settlements, spreading across seven administrative districts and the majority of the people in these settlements are Basarwa. It is also worthy to mention that their interactions with other population groups have impacted on the way that the Basarwa live, though most of the impact is negative, as will be demonstrated later. The primary concern of this chapter is to explore the attitudes or perceptions of these new invaders⁵ on the original inhabitants of the subcontinent. It is difficult to address this topic with any amount of certainty, due to insufficient records, more particularly due to the lack of any record written from the perspective of the Basarwa. As Mazonde (2002:57) rightly observes, it is important to note that "perceptions are one of the most important aspects of social or man-centred development, particularly with respect to indigenous people. Perceptions have played a crucial role in the life of the Basarwa, because the plight of these people is to a large extent attitudinal in nature: it hinges on the way they are perceived and treated by the mainstream or dominant non-San communities, most of whom are the 'Blacks'". Some aspects of the perceptions of the newcomers are perceptible in their disparaging attitudes and the general discrimination to which they subject the Basarwa. The dominant population fails to recognise the indigenous people's knowledge systems. Similarly, they fail to recognise their modes of production, modes of leadership, concept of territoriality and ownership of private property. The Basarwa have a totally different understanding of private property ownership, where people own the things that they have made with their own hands, like clothes and tools, while that which God or nature has provided, remains to be shared by all. These themes will be explored in more detail in the following sections.

⁵ This is the term used by earlier historians like Omer Cooper and Stow for the Non Khoisan people that came to live in Southern Africa.

2.2.3 Disparaging attitudes

The idea of giving names to the conquered seems to be a general feature all around the world. Names like pygmies, gypsies, aboriginals and American Indians are all examples of this practice. On the one hand, it is uncertain whether those who are given such names are comfortable with them. On the other hand, it seems as if the ultimate meaning of such names does not rest with those who were given such names, but with those who give such names to others. The situation where one group gives a name to another seems to happen where poverty and powerlessness are present. In giving names to the original inhabitants of Southern Africa, the newcomers were categorically declaring their perception of them as those who lack the capacity to identify themselves. The following observation by Kiema (2010:71) concerning externally imposed identity is helpful in this regard: "The names imposed on us have resulted in self-condemnation, self-estrangement, submission, powerlessness, apathy, dependence, land loss and erosion of our identity. Our self-esteem, potential for self-actualisation and dignity has been ironed out of us."

There is abundant evidence that the invaders had negative, but also deprecating, attitudes toward the Basarwa people that they found in Southern Africa. One of the aspects in which this bias is clearly traceable is in the tendency to give names to these people. The invaders tended to give names to them instead of taking time to learn from them what their true identity was. Some of these names show a judgemental or derogatory attitude towards the Basarwa, as will be demonstrated in the following examples:

2.2.4 'Bushmen'

'Bushmen' is probably the name that has been used longer than any other in literature with reference to this population group. Records show that this word was first coined in 1682 by the Dutch settlers in Cape Town. Hermans (1980:4) contends that the Dutch considered them to be 'little people', living in the bushes. In one sense, when one considers the average physical size of a Dutch adult in contradistinction to that of a Mosarwa adult, the physical size would be the most striking sense that comes to mind in the light of the above statement. It could, however, well be that 'little people' was used metaphorically to refer to the socialisation of these people in the human evolutionary process, that they were people who had not yet developed full human status. It is therefore a generally agreed position that this word was coined by the newcomers, more particularly the Dutch, in reference to the original inhabitants of the Southern tip of the African continent.

Kiema (2010:68) argues that inference was made to the fact that these were "people without their own land [...] who wandered around the bush, looking for food [...] with no emotional attachment to any land". Several issues are important here. For Kiema (2010:68), the Basarwa, as perceived by the white settlers, were people whose livelihoods were dependent upon animals and wild fruits. Since their lives were spent by pursuing animals and fruit, they had no land, because they were regularly moving around, searching for animals which are in one place today and in another the next. He further observes that Bushmen, as perceived by the white settlers, were people with no sense of landownership, such that in every situation where the Bushmen and

animals were found in the same vicinity, the former came in pursuit of the latter, but that these people had no sense of the ownership of that land whatsoever.

Kiema (2010:68) also takes issue with a definition of 'Bushmen' that was given by two of Botswana's renowned historians, Tlou and Campbell, who, according to Kiema, perceive Bushmen as people who occupy an unoccupied land⁶. For Kiema, this is a very strange definition in that the occupation of a piece of land by the 'so-called Bushmen' is not seen as occupation, or at least not seen as an occupation that serves as prove of ownership of some kind. The point that is derived from this argument is that right from the early contacts up to the post-independent Botswana: land that was occupied by the Basarwa has been perceived as unoccupied and could still be grabbed. This attitude will be explored further in Chapter 3 when dealing with the way that these people have been treated in history due to this particular perception.

However, the point here is that in relation to the occupation of space, the word 'Bushmen' shows the perception that these people were seen as those who do not own or need land. As a consequence of this, the dominant groups have refused over centuries to both recognise and respect any claim that has been made by the Basarwa in this regard.

Boko (2002:98) argues insightfully that "non-recognition of the unique land tenurial system practiced by these forager communities as vesting any land rights in the Basarwa amounts to a declaration that Basarwa land was uninhabited and, therefore, *terrae nullius*⁷. To the extent that no rights were seen to exist, none could be seen to have been violated." The word 'Bushmen', in as far as it is a description of landlessness, therefore serves to justify the land-grabbing and general dispossessing practices of the dominant groups. It further represents the unfavourable perception that these people have been subjected to for many centuries by the mainstream populations, namely as those who do not have a place in the community, whose place is in the bush, who do not have to be consulted about issues that affect them directly and whose land can wantonly be taken over, demarcated, privatised and be apportioned by others. This name indicates that from the very early times, these people were perceived as those who live outside society or at least on the margins of society. It could well be that the word 'Bushmen' was used to denote the distance that these people were from the main centres of power like Cape Town or, for that matter, a Tswana village like Serowe.

Given the above cited reasons, Kiema rightly rejects the use of the name 'Bushmen' with reference to his people, because it conveys layers of negative perceptions that other people have had of his people over many centuries. Being perceived as those who either lack the concept of landownership or have no need thereof could be the main reason why the church did not see any

⁶ These particular words are borrowed from Kiema understanding of the Non-Basarwa's attitude towards land that belongs to Basarwa.

⁷ Vacant or waste land

offense in the grabbing of Basarwa land and the need to protect the latter. Not only that, but the church did not even see the need to preach the gospel to these people until 1968, as evident from the work of Crafford (1982:294), who write about the situation in Ghanzi. Erickson's image of humans who are perceived as animals, cited above, may be applicable in this situation.

2.2.5 The term 'San'

The other name that is used in relation to these people is the word 'San'. According to Kiema (2010:69), "the word *Saa* is a Nama-Damara verb, meaning 'to pick up from the ground or out of a dustbin because of poverty'". Kiema (2010) argues that this name is not suitable, as it links the identity of his people with a particular socio-economic situation that is prevailing at a given time that his people are subjected to. For him, the Basarwa are not the only people that subsist through this mode, "there are many people who pick up food from the ground, dustbins and other filthy places for daily survival, more especially in the urban areas, and all these poorest of the poor are not called Saan (San)". In this sense, he argues that children from other population groups who gather food from unusual places like rubbish bins can also qualify as San. Kiema is aware of the fact that the word 'San' has gained popularity among those who are struggling to help with the improvement of the conditions of his people and in some academic circles where it is considered the most neutral and unifying name for all the first inhabitants of Southern Africa.

He further asserts that the huge sums of donor money that are attached to the term 'San' have compelled many to promote develop and legitimise it. It is clear that Kiema and probably some of his people are uncomfortable with the use of this name in reference to them.

In terms of perceptions, the word 'San' denoted a misunderstanding of a particular mode of subsistence that does not fall within the mainstream production systems. The fact that these people depended on this particular way of subsistence was based on clear knowledge of the ecosystem in which they found themselves. The San chose this particular mode of subsistence because they knew that the area in which they lived was semi-arid and severely lacking in surface water, except for short periods during the rainy season. They knew that the rainfall was generally low, often highly localised and irregular in amounts, and that droughts were frequent. The San way of life, contrary to the perceptions of the newcomers, was informed by the knowledge that the environment in which they found themselves was not conducive to a sedentary mode of existence. The San's knowledge of the environment in which they lived therefore shaped the distinct economic adaptation, social organisation and tenurial concepts of their communities (Saugestad, 2001:85).

Despite the fact that their mode of production was so different from the methods that were followed by the dominant groups, Lee and Gunther (1993:59) shows that a study on the nutritional value of the Kung San group diet has indicated that their diet was well balanced in terms of vitamins and minerals, and with an adequate calorie level. A total average intake of 2

355 calories per person per day was estimated to include 690 calories from meat, 1 365 calories from mongorongoro nuts and 300 from other vegetables. It is therefore clear that, despite their mode of subsistence, these people had a well-balanced and healthy diet. Again, there is clear evidence that the word 'San' was based on misconceptions and the scornful tendency on the part of the newcomers towards anything that they either did not understand or that was different from the way they did or saw things.

2.2.6 Basarwa

The word 'Mosarwa' (singular) or 'Basarwa' (plural) has also been used by the Tswana speakers for a very long time in reference to this population group. The word also represents a particular way in which this population is perceived, in this case by their Sotho-Tswana-speaking neighbours, though there is the likelihood that it could have equivalents in other Bantu languages. Kiema (2010:68) argues that the word originally meant *basarua*⁸, in other words 'those with nothing': 'no tribal territory, no livestock, no culture, no property, no rights, no language, no ethnic identity, no human dignity, even no thief'. It is, however, noteworthy that Kiema provides no evidence to support this claim. The only reason for citing him here is the fact that Kiema himself is a member of the said population group and therefore possibly speaks out of the historically stockpiled collective experience of the population. This makes it difficult to dismiss his claim outright. Kiema's claim may be informed by the treatment that has been meted out to them and the way in which they are perceived by the non-'San' ethnic groups. Boko (2002:96) concurs with Kiema that the word 'Basarwa' has become something of a derogatory reference. It is used by the Tswana-speaking population to mean 'a servant'. However, Boko, like Kiema, makes no effort to substantiate his claim on this matter, which makes it difficult to support this claim.

Tagart (1931:5) admits that the origins of the name 'Masarwa' is obscure. He alludes to the suggestion that it is connected with the Sesuto word 'sirwa'⁹ and that it means 'the people of the south.' The same understanding is corroborated by Maphakela Lekalake¹⁰ at the London Missionary Society conference that was held in Serowe in 1935. He observes that the Masarwa are called 'Barwa'¹¹ by the Batlhaping¹². In this use, the same Sotho-Tswana origin of the word

⁸Those who do not keep livestock

⁹Sirwa should more appropriately be spelled 'Serwa', which may refer to the culture, language, mannerisms, customs, taboos, practices and even geographical location of the people, as indeed shown by Tagart.

¹⁰Maphakela was the first African person south of the equator to be ordained to the Christian ministry. He served his entire life as a minister among the Batlhaping in Kuruman, though he was originally from Botswana. He is speaking at this conference from his experience about the relationship between the Basarwa and the Batlhaping, another Tswana group in South Africa.

¹¹The People of the South.

is demonstrated. This shows that, despite the historically acquired negative connotations that it has acquired in history, conveying both pejorative and derogatory connotations, this word, in its etymological sense, meant 'natives of the southernmost tip of Africa'. When looking at both the Tagart Report of 1931 and the London Missionary Society Report of 1935, there is no doubt that the name 'Basarwa' was not meant to be derogatory. However, one cannot deny the fact that in the way that it has been used in history it has acquired depreciatory undertones. The word 'Basarwa' therefore more appropriately refers to the people of the South and their cultures, traditions, customs and even civilisations. In this sense, the study contends that this is the more suitable name for these people and therefore the preferred one for the study.

2.2.7 'Remote Area Dwellers'

In Botswana, 'Remote Area Dwellers' is the latest name by which the sections of the population that have over the years been relocated to certain settlements, inclusive of the Basarwa, are called. It is the nomenclature that is used in official documents in reference to the population groups among whom the Basarwa group is the majority. The term 'Remote Area Dwellers' was first introduced in 1978, signifying a change in government policy from the identification of the target population by ethnic origin to the geographic targeting¹³ of people who are living in remote areas (Revised Remote Area Development Programme [RADP], 2009:1). There is, however, some discomfort with the use of this term, both among the Basarwa and in academic circles.

Kiema's (2010:69) discomfort with this name is two-fold: In one sense, it refers to distance, in that 'Remote Area Dwellers' are perceived to be from the developed urban Botswana, from sources, power, influence and wealth. In another sense, the word conveys the fact that these people are perceived as those who are in deep darkness, a long way from civilisation¹⁴. He particularly uses the Setswana translation 'tengnyanateng'¹⁵, to reach his conclusion.

Saugestad (2001:30) also points out that this term is deeply resented by those whom it refers to. The term has been described as "a non-ethnic bureaucratic term that is consistent with the Government's painstaking, almost compulsive concern about not appearing to single out, favour or disfavour one or another of the country's ethnic groups". Here again, we see that the term 'Remote Area Dwellers' has created a deep-seated resentment among those who are called by

¹²A Tswana-speaking group among whom the missionary Robert Moffat settled in the Kuruman area.

¹³Terms as used in the Revised Remote Area Development Programme

¹⁴An attempt to define the Tswana word for people who live in the remotest parts of the country the majority of whom are ethnic Basarwa.

¹⁵This is a difficult word to define; it describes extreme remoteness.

that name and may not be the best term to use in reference to this population group. The problem with this term seems to be that, like others, it perceives and describes these people in terms of a government programme that targets them. This means that, in the event of a change in government policy or the target population's geographical location, their identity will also have to change: in other words, if a Mosarwa person who lives in a remote area is called a 'Remote Area Dweller', what is the name of a Mosarwa who lives elsewhere in Botswana? It could be that the name more accurately describes these people as perceived by policy makers, namely as those who have no place in the urban and more developed Botswana. This name shows that government's interventions among the Basarwa come at the cost of trading their ethnic identity with an identity that is linked to a geographic location to which they have been relocated. On top of that, there is still a lot of uneasiness regarding the processes of the relocation of the Basarwa and the way in which they were handled. It is therefore, though probably inadvertently, one of the names given to the Basarwa that they find most difficult to accept, as it continues the age-old tradition and tendency of the dominant groups to give names to other people that often express their own prejudiced and ill-informed perceptions.

It is with this understanding in mind that the paper will prefer the word 'Mosarwa' or 'Basarwa' to all other terms. Words like 'San', 'Bushmen' and 'Remote Area Dwellers' will only be used in cases of direct quotations.

2.3 Failure to recognise Basarwa knowledge and skills

The Basarwa as a people are widely acknowledged as being very knowledgeable and skilled. Some of the areas in which these people have demonstrated their expert knowledge over the centuries include traditional medicine, arts and crafts, tracking and tracing, and their paintings in many parts of Southern Africa that have served as some kind of footprint of their earlier occupation of such places. There is, for example, plenty of evidence that the Basarwa have an extensive knowledge of plant life, which is a strong indication that they have lived in the same environment for an extensive period of time and that they have adapted to a hostile climate with considerable skill (Hermans, 1980:9). Apart from this, it has been shown that the Basarwa people's way of life has been shaped by their understanding of the harsh environmental conditions of Botswana. Despite the beliefs of the Bantu people to the contrary, there is evidence that the Basarwa were once involved in both cattle farming (Mazonde, 2002:58) and long-distance trade with Tswana middlemen (Bennet, 2002:6). Despite this knowledge, the dominant groups have always perceived the Basarwa as backward, ignorant people who are almost on the same level as the game that lived next to them in the land. Hermans (1980:16) observes that one feature that has been common among all the people who have been dealing with the Basarwa throughout history is the lack of sensitivity towards them. The practical implication of such insensitivity to the Basarwa's way of life will be explored further in Chapter 3.

2.4 Failure to recognise the Basarwa modes of production

To some extent, the failure to recognise non-conventional modes of production or the modes of production of minority groups like the Basarwa has been raised before. The Basarwa are foragers; in other words, they use hunting and gathering as a mode of providing for their basic needs. According to Saugestad (2001:86), the basic difference between hunting and gathering on the one hand, and farming and herding on the other hand, is that farmers and herders mould nature to make it reproduce the way they prefer, while foragers live more or less with nature as it is given. The point here is that this mode of production is not a problem for the Basarwa; it is rather a problem for the newcomers. There are no historical records showing that the Basarwa have ever faced problems of food shortage due to the particular mode of production that they pursue. The foreigners, however, perceived these people as lacking a mode of production. The fact that they do not have a specific marked-out, fenced and paddocked area for which each person or family holds a particular title deed, causes people from outside this community to think that they do not have or need an area for their foraging activities. However, the problem in this case is with the newcomers who think that their way of subsistence is the only one; in other words, anybody who subsists differently either does not have a mode of production or uses what is considered a backward or primitive mode of production. It is doubtful whether the Basarwa in their traditional setting have ever perceived themselves as poor or whether this was the perception of the outsiders, or their economic and political systems.

Lee (1981:15), on the contrary, argues that, despite a variety of ideologies of landownership, all hunters have developed elaborate rules for reciprocal access to resources. After analysing a number of differences between the foragers and the more sedentary farming communities, Lee (1981:16) concludes by refuting the assumption that foragers do not own land and argues that land is divided into territories or tracts that are used primarily, but not exclusively, by a band or camp from whom outsiders must seek permission to use the resources of a given tract. The perception that the Basarwa and other forager communities do not have a mode of production or do not need land for their mode of production could well be one of the root causes of their dispossession and loss of land rights. There is indisputable evidence that the Basarwa had a mode of production that is proportional to their family or band size and was responsive to their environmental realities. The practical implication of the misplaced perception that the Basarwa do not have a well-defined mode of production and therefore, by implication, have no need for land to be used for this purpose will be explored further in Chapter 3.

2.5 Territoriality

As mentioned in 2.2, the Basarwa were perceived by the other groups as having no concept of territory. In other words, they were seen as those who did not have well marked-out and demarcated territories that belonged to the various bands or family groups. Saugstad (1998:89) argues that the stereotype that Bushmen lack a concept of landownership and territoriality was expressed in 1978 by a litigation consultant for the Attorney General's Chambers in the following statement: "As far as I have been able to ascertain, the Masarwa have always been true nomads [...] (who can have no rights of any kind other than hunting)." The point is that the concept of landownership that a particular group adopts is determined by the use to which such land is put and the knowledge of the climatological features of the region or area.

Out of their extensive knowledge of the region of their residence and their unique ability to adapt to the ever-changing environmental conditions, the Basarwa adopted a mode of production that is better suited to their environment. Saugstad (1998:89) argues insightfully that the misconception of the Basarwa concept of territoriality and the language that has been used in reference to these people, like nomadic disposition, reflected unwillingness on behalf of the planners to recognise foraging as an economic system, different from, but comparable to, other systems of production. Failure to recognise the Basarwa people's concept of territories and the shared use of such territories for the common good of the wider society on the part of the dominant groups is responsible for the following: first, for the doling out of the land that belonged to the Basarwa; secondly, for the assumption that the land that was occupied by Basarwa communities was *terra nullis* (vacant or waste land); and thirdly, that any land that was not occupied by the Bantu groups was considered vacant land. This misconception has disadvantaged the Basarwa distinctly in many ways and could be one of the root causes of their poverty conditions. The practical implications of failure to recognise the Basarwa's understanding of territoriality and the unique way of using shared land will be further explored in Chapter 3.

2.6 Possession and ownership of private property

Like the question of territoriality and the related question of the Basarwa mode of production, these people were also perceived as lacking a concept of private property ownership. This has been dealt with in sections 2.5 and 2.6 in passing. Here it is only essential to say that the Basarwa concept of property ownership was different from that of the dominant groups in that it was shaped by the distinct economic and social organisational arrangements in which they lived. Lee (1981:16), again, vehemently refutes the assumption that the Basarwa do not have concepts of property ownership. For him, these people are different from the farming communities in that the latter are driven by the values of saving or husbandry of resources, while the Basarwa

communities are driven by a different set of values, like sharing and generalised reciprocity, which is central to their way of life. The following words from Lee (1981:15) seem to represent the general mind-set of the Basarwa towards ownership of property and perishable goods in general:

It is in the distribution and consumption of resources that the collective character of the foraging mode of production clearly emerges. Food is never consumed alone by a family; it is always shared by members of a living group or 'band' of up to 30 or more members. Even though only a fraction of the able-bodied foragers go out each day, the day's returns of meat and gathered food are divided in such a way that every member of the group receives an equitable share. The hunting band or camp is a unit of sharing, and if sharing breaks down, it ceases to be a camp. This principle of generalized reciprocity within the camp has been reported for hunter/gathers on every continent and every kind of environment.

From the above statement, we can surmise that a poor person in these communities would be the one who refuses to participate in the life of the family band and share with others basics like food that are needed to sustain a life of dignity. There is no doubt that this position is very close to the biblical idea of fellowship. The moral lesson that is conveyed by the concept of the Holy Communion, at least as held within the Reformed tradition, seems to be that food is meant to be distributed and shared among all. Lee concludes that, while in these communities land and its resources are always collectively owned and utilised, this does not mean that these communities do not have a concept of private or individual ownership. He argues, for example, that tools and other belongings are very much the property of the individual owner. Non-perishable goods are dealt with very differently from food (Lee, 1979:23).

It is clear that the notion that the Basarwa do not have a concept of private property ownership is based on a misunderstanding of their way of life and worldviews. The practical implications of the failure by the other groups to recognise different, yet well-established forms of property ownership among the Basarwa will be further explored in Chapter 3.

2.7 Leadership

The leadership style of the forager communities is one of the contentious issues in their interaction with the outsiders. According to Saugestad (2001:91), "the fluid composition of Bushmen bands and leadership based on consensus has made it difficult for outsiders to identify positions of leadership. Especially in contrast to Bantu neighbours, and the extremely well organized hierarchy of positions of chiefs and headmen that mark the Tswana system, leadership among Bushmen appeared weak". Leadership in the Basarwa community was recognised differently from the way it was in the Tswana

society. For example, Saugestad argues that a leader was a person who was able to give permission, leave or licence on behalf of the band to non-members who were wishing to have access to water and other resources of the territory; in other words, leadership in this community was about the stewardship and care for the communal resources instead of a status or standing in society that is above the others.

It is further noteworthy that decision making was a group and not an individual matter, such that the decision-making processes were consensus driven instead of individual authority that was based on a birth right, military or intellectual prowess. The inability or refusal by the newcomers to recognise the leadership formations in these communities does not mean that they lacked such leadership. That it was different from those of the Tswana groups is indisputable, but the claim of non-existence of any form of leadership among the Basarwa is unreasonable and preposterous. Closely related to the perception of leadership is the perception that the Basarwa had no concept of self-government. The fact that the Basarwa were considered as people who have no sense of self-government resulted in leaders from other tribal groupings being imposed on the Basarwa for many centuries.

This is still the case in independent Botswana, where many Basarwa settlements are ruled by Dikgosi¹⁶, who are non-Basarwa, and this has been found to be a source of disquiet in some of these communities. In Chapter 3, the study will give more attention to the practical implications of refusal by the invaders to recognise the Basarwa modes of leadership.

2.8 Those that must be removed in order to have access to services

In the post-independence era, the generally negative perceptions of the Basarwa by the dominant groups persisted in Botswana. As a result, many Basarwa were relocated or removed by the government from what they deem as their ancestral land to the present Tswana-like village settlements. According to the Revised Remote Area Development Programme (2009:1), the rationale for the relocation of the Basarwa was the recognition of a lack of development in the predominantly Basarwa-inhabited areas, despite the Accelerated Rural Development Programme. In this case, the Basarwa were those who were perceived as needing assistance to adapt to the fast evolving economy of Botswana. This goal would, among others, be achieved through the provision of amenities such as schools, health facilities, roads, settlement leadership structures, as well as introduction to Tswana-type pastoral and arable agriculture. In this context, development was inextricably linked to assimilation, in other words for Basarwa to be developed meant being made to adopt the Tswana way of life, community structures, leadership patterns, socialisation of children and youth, and modes of subsistence.

¹⁶Tswana word for a chief or ruler.

Literature, however, shows that the concerned communities were increasingly dissatisfied with the social and economic consequences of the relocation. In some cases, like the relocation from the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve, the Basarwa resisted being relocated. Much of the resistance of the relocation policies is due to the fact that these policies are fraught with injustices, deprivation and marginalisation. The Basarwa thought that "the new settlements with social amenities were not suitable for their livelihood and the exercise of their culture". The Basarwa community's distrust of being moved to modernity is based on the fact that social, economic and demographic policies behind such removals have been formulated from a monolithic perspective, a one size fits all, which completely overlooks the importance of diversity and differences (Nthomang & Monaka, 2006:142).

It is equally important to note that while traditionally, poverty situations have been perceived mainly in terms of income and capability levels, it has "emerged from recent consultations that lack of participation constitutes yet another critical dimension of poverty which needs to be incorporated in the analysis of the nature and extent of poverty in Botswana. This view, with particular reference to Basarwa, was taken against the background that the Basarwa have virtually been excluded from all decision-making processes due to the negative perception and general disrespect that is displayed towards them. In their case, therefore, poverty cannot just be attributed to lack of incomes and human capabilities, but also as exclusion from decision making that affects their lives" (National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, 2003:3). The practical implication of the post-independence era's concept of development that is pursued by the Botswana government will be explored further in Chapter 3.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been established that the Basarwa were generally viewed in a negative and demeaning way by the Batswana, the Tswana chiefs and the missionaries. Though not much is available on the attitude of the Colonial Administration towards the Basarwa, the following outburst from a certain Charles Rey, a Resident Commissioner in Serowe before independence, may explicate this point. He is reported to have complained about the uselessness of preserving a decadent and dying race which is perfectly useless from any point of view (Bennett 2002:9). As a result of these negative and derogatory perceptions, the Basarwa of Bechuanaland, and later the independent Republic of Botswana, were ignored, excluded and, in some cases, wronged and dispossessed intentionally, and even turned into serfs by the dominant groups with the help of the church, which endorsed the then prevailing conditions. The London Missionary Society (LMS) condoned the notion that the Basarwa, due to their developmental station, did not have sufficient capacity to make decisions for themselves and that their condition at the particular time in development was just a stage that all other people and nations have already gone through in the evolutionary process, from the hunter-gatherer stage to that of farming, thus justifying others making decisions for and on their behalf, which notion persists in Botswana to the present day.

It is also noteworthy to underscore the fact that the LMS advocated openly and unashamedly the assimilation of the Basarwa into mainstream Tswana communities (LMS Report 1935). The attempt to assimilate Basarwa into mainstream Tswana societies seems to be the root cause of the present difficult relationship between the government and the Basarwa people. It is equally important to note that the church also advocated the need for the Basarwa to observe Tswana cultural norms and to be subject to the rule of Tswana chiefs and their representatives in the Basarwa areas as a condition for being allowed to continue to reside in such areas. It is not certain at this stage whether the LMS was aware of the long-term consequences of such an assimilation strategy. Attempts at assimilation by the Botswana government and the resistance of the Basarwa who fear the loss of socio-cultural and linguistic rights, as well as ancestral land, is one of the main issues of contention that remains unresolved in the politics of Botswana today, and carries the potential of reversing the gains that have been made by Botswana as a shining example of democracy and good governance.

While the Basarwa may initially have been indifferent about the way they were perceived, the names that had been imposed on them and such other tendencies on the part of the dominant groups are now being questioned and, in some cases, vehemently rejected. This bears testimony to the fact that perceptions are not cast in stone, but evolve over time. The way in which the Basarwa perceive themselves and their relations to the other groups has changed, as shown by the work of Kiema (2010). They reject identities that are imposed on them from the outside and demand certain inalienable human and political rights. The government's response to these new attitudinal changes among the Basarwa has often been a conspiracy theory, namely blaming some outsiders like tourists, Western civil society organisations or the media for influencing the Basarwa in this direction.

However, these theories do not help in resolving the new demand of the Basarwa to be recognised as people in their own right. The reality seems to be that the Basarwa reject the externally constructed identities, the historical serfdom and the resultant poverty conditions to which they have been subjected over time.

It is likely that there is a link between the negative and contemptuous perceptions that are shown by the dominant groups and the way that the Basarwa have been treated since their early encounters with the other population groups. The negative perceptions must have contributed towards or precipitated the deterioration of the already precarious living conditions of the Basarwa.

This chapter is concluded by observing that there seems to be a general problem that cuts across human society everywhere, namely that humans are generally unable to deal with differences or diversity. It could be part of the survivalist instinct that drives human life, but this feature is evident in many situations of contact and interaction between different population groups. Due to this inherent inability, various population groups often regard the differences in modes of production, leadership styles, property and landownership, marriage patterns, religious

observance and others as a measure of either how advanced or how primitive a particular group is. Since these groups vary in a number of ways, like population size, technological advancement, political organisation and modes of subsistence, the smaller and in some ways differently arranged groups become disadvantaged. From the foregoing discussion, it seems that, despite the fact that the Christian view of humanity is very positive and attractive in theory, in practice it is rather narrow, suspicious and fearful and, to some extent, exclusivist. In this regard, the Christian view has not always been helpful in resolving some of the challenges that have harmed human society. If anything, the very theological traditions have been used to justify, for example, segregation on the basis of race and class.

CHAPTER 3

THE TREATMENT OF BASARWA BY THE CHURCH AND OTHER ROLE PLAYERS AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE POVERTY OF THE BASARWA

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, it has been established that the Basarwa were perceived negatively and disparagingly by the London Missionary Society and the other stakeholders in the persons of the chiefs, their representatives and some colonial administrators. In this chapter, the practical implications of such negative perceptions on the lives of the Basarwa will be explored in more detail.

For Tolle (2006:10), the fundamental problem that causes negative perceptions of each other and the ill-treatment that faces humanity is generally seated in human nature itself. As a result, he observes correctly that “humans suffered more at the hands of each other than through natural disasters”. He argues that destructive and cruel wars, motivated by fear, greed and the desire for power, had been common occurrences throughout human history, as had slavery, torture and widespread violence, inflicted for religious and ideological reasons. Tolle (2006:8) argues that human society has been characterised throughout history by a sense of dysfunctionality or even madness, and that the function of the world’s major religions is to find a solution to this collective mental illness. In Hinduism, it is called the Maya, the veil of delusion. For the Buddhists, it is called the dukkha, in other words, the human mind that generates suffering, unsatisfactoriness or pure misery. In the Christian tradition, this same condition is called original sin. ‘To sin’ means ‘to miss the mark’, as the archers who miss the target, so ‘to sin’ also means ‘to miss the point’. It means to live unskillfully, blindly, and thus to suffer and cause suffering.

Most world religious traditions therefore agree that the state of the human mind is marred by a fundamental defect and that the solution to this defect that causes dysfunctionality lies in the transformation of human consciousness. The Hindus call it enlightenment; the Buddhists call it the end of suffering or liberation, while in the teachings of Jesus it is called salvation. This is the way in which this problem can be resolved according to the various religious traditions. It is, however, a well-known fact that the involvement of religions in human history has not always had positive outcomes. Religious traditions themselves have in some cases served to amplify the problem instead of dissipating it. (Tolle, 2006:9.)

Given this historical experience and the fact that the study seeks to address the problem of poverty among the Basarwa from a Christian missiological perspective, it is essential to clarify from the beginning that this study advocates a particular way of practising mission. The

understanding is the involvement of the church in human history as participation in the *missio Dei*. According to Bosch (1991:402), this understanding means that “mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is the fountain of sending love. [...] There is mission because God loves people.” The basis or driving force behind Christian mission is therefore the love of God for humanity; in other words, mission gets its purpose, direction and even justification from God’s unconditional love for all his people. Christian mission involvement can thus rightly be called work in the service of love.

This concept of God’s mission that is driven by love will be explored further in Chapter 4. In this chapter, it suffices to observe that ideally, all mission engagements are supposed to be driven by this persuasion. The chapter will demonstrate that, although the church has a divine origin and mandate, it is an institution that uses human beings and that is, therefore, trapped in human dysfunctionality, madness or sin that have been characteristic of human history. The church, in partnership with other historical sources, has often been involved in ventures that have caused landlessness, erosion of people’s identity and culture, destruction of indigenous leadership styles, as well as imposing development models on communities that are insensitive to their way of life, and therefore wasteful and unproductive in the end. The endeavours have often impoverished, displaced and alienated the target populations. In this sense, the concept of the *missio Dei* serves as a form of re-alignment of the understanding of the church’s mission involvement.

3.2 Landlessness

In the previous chapter, it has been shown that the Basarwa were generally perceived by both the church and other role players as people who had no concept of landownership or territoriality. The land that was occupied by the Basarwa was, therefore, perceived as empty, unoccupied land. The Basarwa were almost perceived as being on the same level as the game that lived next to them in the land (Hermans, 1980:12). This is precisely the point that is made by Erickson, as has been discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, namely that there are situations in history where human beings are perceived as things or tools and where human value is equated to utility in the sight of the dominant members of society.

In a number of ways, the Basarwa have been perceived in this manner and have suffered this fate. It has also been demonstrated that taking over such land was not seen as a violation of any kind by the invaders. In this regard, the anthropologist Isaac Schapera studied the living conditions of the Basarwa of Southern Africa and reached the following conclusion:

everywhere else, the Bushmen have been either exterminated, expelled, or incorporated racially by later invaders, although stray individuals may still be seen occasionally in the northwest districts of the Cape and sporadically in Orange Free State and the Transvaal. It is only in the Kalahari Desert and the South Eastern parts of South West Africa that they still retain to any degree their original mode of life and organization (Schapera, 1930:30; Omer-Cooper, 1978:10).

A lot more and worse than what Schapera saw in the 1930s happened to these people. Loss of land is often accompanied by more heavy losses, both at a personal and group level. This must have been the case for the Basarwa too. Stow (1905:156) gives the earliest account of the unfortunate fate that was suffered by these people in the following words:

Suffice it here to say that the bushmen were pursued and destroyed with a relentless and almost savage ferocity, clan after clan being annihilated: the men were shot down without mercy, and the surviving women and children were dragged into a state worse than slavery.

Sales (1971:21) makes the following observation about the situation of these people in the Cape, just a few decades after their encounter with the Dutch settlers: "Whereas in 1700 the extent of the settled area was within the radius of fifty miles from Cape Town, by 1750 the radius was at least two hundred miles from Cape Town; and by 1795 the extent was more than two hundred miles north and more than four hundred miles east." As a result of this settler expansion, Sales (1971:26) further notes:

By the end of the rule of the Company, the people with whom the Dutch had met first on their arrival, the Hottentots had disappeared as a separate people, at least in the area within two hundred miles of Cape Town. The loss of their land to the Dutch farmers, most of their cattle through trade with the whites, and many of their lives through the smallpox epidemic that came from the east on the company ships – because of these calamities, the Hottentots became a detribalised, landless proletariat.

Though the books of Southern Africa's history hardly mention the suffering of the Basarwa at the hands of the invaders in any detail, it seems that the loss of land, cattle, lives and identity as a separate people was a widespread phenomenon throughout Southern Africa. In this regard, Stow reports of the experiences of a certain Harris who found a site around present-day Bloemfontein that was besprinkled with the mouldy bones of Bushmen; a few years ago there were numerous spots in the Free State which told the same melancholy tale. The following statistics that have been extracted from official records show that the random slaughtering of these people was a common practice of this early period: "Between 1786 and 1795, Two Thousand Five Hundred and Three (2 503) Bushmen were killed, and Six Hundred and Sixty Nine (669) were taken as prisoners." (Hermans 1980:12). While these events occurred outside present-day Botswana, it is important to note that they are cited here, first because they seem to represent a general trend of the period with respect to the Basarwa population and secondly, because they come from a time before the present geographical boundaries between the Republics of South Africa and Botswana were drawn up.

Although there is no record of these gruesome atrocities in Botswana, this does not mean that such atrocities did not occur, or that the Tswana and the Bantu in general were in any way different from the rest of the other invaders in the way that they treated the Basarwa. The reason is simply that, as Hermans (1997:55) observes, written records have only been available for some 95 years and it is difficult to determine how the Bushmen were treated before 1885. Hermans

limits his review of government policy on the treatment of the Basarwa to that which appears in written and mainly colonial records, as records of tribal policy prior to 1885 are not readily available. As the old adage goes, 'there is no smoke without fire'; there is evidence that there were some serious concerns about the treatment of the Basarwa in the Colonial period. The gravity of this matter is demonstrated in the fact that two inquiries were made into the living conditions of the Basarwa in the period between 1931 and 1935 by the government and the London Missionary Society, respectively.

In 1931, the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration appointed a one-man commission to investigate the following:

... the conditions under which the "Masarwa" are employed by the Bamagwato tribe; the nature, extent and system of their remuneration, if any, the extent to which they are free to engage in any occupation or transfer their services from one employer to another, or remove from one place to another, and able to exercise such freedom; their general conditions of life including their status in regard to rights of persons and property and the conditions which have led to the present subject position of these people. (Tagart, 1931:A2.)

Schapera (1930:30) gives an equally somber description of the plight of these original inhabitants as a result of the encroachment of the various invaders that displaced them from the more favourable areas:

First, the Hottentots, advancing south along the west coast, drove them from the fertile plains to the mountain vastness of the interior. Then the Bantu, pressing down the eastern coast, overcame the fierce resistance of the little people upon whose hunting grounds they trespassed. Other Bantu tribes traversing the interior of the country came into conflict with the Bushmen in the arid plains north and south of the Orange River and the Vaal River in the rugged mountains to the east. The European Settler, in his turn, pushing north and east and seeking fresh pastures for his growing herds, waged an equally relentless war against them. Before each successive invader, the Bushmen, where they were not forcibly exterminated, had eventually to seek refuge in more unfavourable and inaccessible parts.

In the case of Botswana, the expulsion, or what in some government papers later came to be referred to as relocation¹⁷, is nothing new; it seems to date back right to the earliest contacts between the Tswana and Basarwa. It is more appropriate to say that it seems as if the Tswana had always eyed the land of the Basarwa as well as their labour for their own economic activities and advancement. The following quotation from Chief Tshekedi Khama describes how the process that led to the subject conditions of the Basarwa began:

We go back to how the cattle got into the hands of Masarwa. I said Khama made the suggestion. It was not the case of the Masarwa being brought to where the cattle were being herded. The cattle were taken and driven to where the Masarwa were. Though the Masarwa used to go up and

¹⁷ A word used for the removal of Basarwa from their ancestral land to Tswana type villages.

down the country, they had their own habitat and never left the area in which they were born, remaining within an area, more or less defined, of say 60 miles diameter. The Bamangwato knew that if they got the Masarwa to go to another place they would not stay, so the cattle were taken to where the Masarwa were. (LMS Report, 1935:6.)

In his submission to the LMS Committee, the chief did not hide the fact that, before the cattle of the Bamangwato could occupy the habitat of the Basarwa, several things happened. In the contacts made during the hunting escapades, the Bamangwato introduced the Basarwa to "dagga (hemp) and later tobacco and sometimes beads". In one sense, the exchange of these gifts assisted in breaking down some of the barriers between the two groups and ensuring the emergence of a cordial relationship. In another sense, the Bamangwato clearly used tranquilisers (though mild ones) to condition the Basarwa psychologically into accepting the Bamangwato's primacy and the Basarwa's dependence upon them, as well as accepting the handouts that they brought. Secondly, and rather importantly, the Bamangwato coaxed the Basarwa into hunting for them, and gave them guns and ammunition, as well as horses and dogs to accomplish this task. In return, the Bamangwato received skins and meat of the game during their stay with the Masarwa (LMS Report, 1935:4). Whether it was on purpose or just inadvertently due to the use of new hunting technologies and probably because the scale of the game on which the Basarwa depended for their subsistence was depleted, in due cause, the land was made available for the Bamangwato's cattle farming industry.

This is the same land about which the church, as shown in the previous chapter, said that the Basarwa who did not want to herd the Bamangwato cattle should live in line with the custom which was also the practice in the Union of South Africa. This is the same land in which the church recommended that the Basarwa who lived in it should comply to the tribal requirements of ploughing for the chief's representative once a year (LMS Report 1935). It is to these people who, even upon the admission of the chief, never left the area in which they were born, who were followed by the Ngwato cattle to this ancestral land, that the church recommended that they should be assimilated into the Ngwato tribal life in order to benefit from the fruits of the country in which they lived. All these requirements and stipulations were skewed to the disadvantage of the Basarwa. Tshekedi was blatant and unapologetic in his justification of the Ngwato domination of the Basarwa and the following quotation will demonstrate this point:

Now I am going back to the question of how Masarwa became subservient to us. It is a process which has been at work in other nations and countries and not only ours. In this world, we see that when strong people come into the country of a people who are not so strong, if there is not actual conquest by war, the contact is begun by saying "Let us all live at peace together". And for a time it is so. But by and by the strong people begin to assume more power than was originally intended, and we also see this where white people are concerned. Such a consideration may be welcome or unwelcome, but we must face the truth. I say this, I who am a member of a weaker people who have come into contact with a stronger people, for in the beginning it was said in our case also, "We live on equal terms". But we cannot now say we live on equal terms as before. If

in times past the Bamangwato became stronger than the Masarwa and assumed more power over them, it is the same thing that has happened to us. (LMS Report, 1935:6.)

In other words, Tshekedi was saying to the church, which at that stage was predominantly led by missionaries of British descent, that the Bamangwato were doing to the Basarwa what the British themselves were doing to the Bamangwato. For him, this was a normal outcome of the contact between any two unequal groups. It is important in this respect to underscore the fact that by the time of Botswana's independence, the Basarwa had virtually lost a larger portion of their ancestral land to their Tswana-speaking neighbours.

The Basarwa continued to lose land, even in the post-independence period. As was stated earlier, Basarwa all over the country were relocated from their traditional home areas into Tswana-like village settlements. There are currently 64 such settlements in Botswana in which the Basarwa were settled upon removal from their ancestral land. Good (2011:114), for example, shows that in the Ghanzi District, "the move to enclose and allocate individual grazing properties on what were tribal or communal lands developed incrementally between 1966 and 1975. The original Ghanzi freehold farms had proved highly profitable, they were expanded in in the 1950s and Batswana purchased vacant properties after 1966".

Good (2011:114) argues that, between 1968 and 1973, government had developed programmes to assist cattle owners to acquire fenced and watered ranches. Adjacent "Sandveld" land was officially deemed empty by the planners, ignoring the Bakgalagadi settlements and San communities in the area. Good also faults the development of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP)¹⁸, developed in 1975, which (according to him) compounded the plight of the Basarwa further by privatising communal resources, like the land, into the hands of a few financially able individuals. A few years after the establishment of the TGLP, about 51 000 square kilometres of land was zoned as commercial and between 700 and 1 000 ranches were established. Similarly, in the 1980s, a further 19 000 square kilometres of land was zoned as commercial and allocated to about 250 individuals and syndicates, leaving the remote area people, who at that point were about 5 000 – which was half the population of the district – on about 2 800 square kilometres of land for their use and survival. Those who were removed from these areas were crowded into small settlements of 20 kilometres by 20 kilometres. Most of the earlier relocations were uneventful, except for the last one, where the Basarwa who had lived in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve were relocated to the village of Kaudwane in the Kweneng District and a settlement called New !Xade in the Ghanzi District. These Basarwa resisted the relocation, citing too many and complex reasons for the scope of this paper.

The following issues were, however, pertinent: The position of the government was that people were moved out of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve voluntarily, while the position of the Basarwa who brought the complaint to court was that they were relocated involuntarily; some

¹⁸ A Botswana government policy of fencing agricultural land starting in the early '70's.

Basarwa claimed that they were not compensated for the loss of property and livestock: some even claimed that, while they were initially provided with livestock, the animals either died quickly or were hunted by predators.

According to *The Indigenous World* (2005:504), the Basarwa also complained that they were prevented from, or even arrested for, going back to their former homes in the reserve to visit the graves of their ancestors or to bury people who had stayed behind and have since died. The main catalyst that precipitated the standoff between the two parties seems to have been the closure of some boreholes in the reserve and the withdrawal or refusal of temporary hunting permits.

It is further essential to say that the land from which the Basarwa were removed (except for the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, where some diamond mining activities are underway currently) was officially deemed empty and turned into state-assisted fenced and watered freehold or leased private and individualised properties. The Basarwa people have, therefore, always been moved to give way to tourism, cattle farming and mining interests. Government and the dominant groups have failed to find ways of peaceful co-existence between the Basarwa and these activities in the land that the Basarwa feel is closely linked to their identity and culture.

The truth of the matter seems to be that no real efforts are made to find ways in which the needs of the Basarwa communities may be compatible with, for example, tourism. Since those responsible for policy formulation and implementation have a very low regard for these people in the first place and do not find the need to consult them, decisions that impact negatively on them are taken on their behalf under the mendacity that such decisions are in their best interest. The poverty conditions that are experienced by the Basarwa are therefore man-made. These are the results of a deliberate and systematic dispossession of the land, which for the Basarwa was the primary means of their foraging mode of subsistence and survival.

The fact that the Basarwa people lost most of their land in the process of their interaction with other population groups over the years has been evident throughout this study. It is further evident that landlessness has always been the root cause of their poverty. One of the RADP's strategies was to make land accessible to the so-called Remote Area Dwellers. The report argues that failure to recognise some traditional land uses, like hunting and gathering, has led to a situation where the land that was originally in the hands of the Basarwa has been passed on to outsiders. The policy, therefore, sought to redress this situation. The National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (2003:12) recognises the centrality of land as a resource in poverty reduction. The report contends that land as a primary factor of production underlies almost all livelihood activities, especially in the rural areas. In this strategy, the government continues to review the existing policies that are related to land to ensure security of tenure, access to adequate land and its productive use by the poor.

The Presidential Task Force (April, 2010) reports that during their consultations in the various settlements, it was apparent that "land shortage was a serious impediment, stifling development

and sustainable livelihoods of the people living in the remote area settlements". There are many land-related issues that face the 'Remote Area Dwellers'. These range from differences in the attitudes of the Basarwa and mainstream Batswana regarding occupation, ownership and use. While for the Tswana, ownership and use always imply demarcation and fencing off for exclusive use, this does not apply in the case of the Basarwa. The land policy that is aimed at the empowering of the Basarwa must incorporate the insights of these beneficiaries. In Chapter 4, the study will explore the implications of landlessness for *mission Dei*.

3.3 Loss of cultural identity

Among the losses that the Basarwa suffered from the encounter with other population groups is their cultural identity. In Chapter 2, it has been discussed that they were being pressurised by both the church and the chiefs into assimilating into the major population groups. The study has also highlighted that the Basarwa were perceived by others as those who need to be assimilated in order to benefit from civilisation, learn the art of self-government and enjoy the benefits of the then emerging Christian era. The London Missionary Society, in particular, found the assimilation of Basarwa into the dominant groups as the most appropriate way of ensuring their participation in the Christian tradition, which at that point was beginning to impact and influence the Tswana community.

In this section, the actual attempts that were made to assimilate these people into the dominant populations, both during the Colonial era and later in independent Botswana, will be examined and the possible impact of such efforts on the Basarwa way of life will be assessed. Developments such as the change of programme from the Basarwa Development Programme to the Rural Development Programme, the villagisation¹⁹ of the Basarwa into settlements and provision of education in a non-mother tongue will be explored, among others.

Sources show that in the implementation of the National Development Plan in the early to mid-70s, a Basarwa Development Plan was introduced. In 1978, the initial Basarwa Development Programme was changed and renamed to the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP, 2009:1). The justification for this change was that the programme should shift from ethnic identification of beneficiaries to geographic identification. The programme was expanded to cover all people who live in the remote areas. The basic assumption of this programme was that the primary constraint to remote area development and poverty reduction was geographic location and inadequate access to basic services. The programme was thus meant to be inclusive and non-discriminatory. Some scholars, however, feel that such a shift has disadvantaged the Basarwa in the process.

¹⁹ The process of organising Basarwa into Tswana-like villages, also called settlements.

Boko (2002:106), for example, argues: "As shown in the preceding discussion, the RADP focused on the Basarwa at its inception. The change to a socio-economic as opposed to an ethnically defined target group undermined the programme's initial focus on the upliftment of the Basarwa." He argues that the reason for this is that in the new programme, the intended beneficiaries of the programme are lumped together in a manner that ignores the particular problems that the Basarwa face as an ethnic group. It could also be that the title of the programme was changed because, as Saugestad (2001) suggests, "characterizing San as an indigenous minority introduces a terminology that is seen as irrelevant or potentially divisive by many in influential quarters in Botswana, and cumbersome by many bureaucrats". In this regard, the word 'Basarwa' on the programme was probably perceived as politically incorrect for the direction in which government development was geared. There are a number of reasons to believe that the generalisation of the programme focus has disadvantaged the original target group:

The first reason is that the different groups have ended up in their current poverty conditions through different routes. In the case of the Basarwa, their poverty conditions seem to be man-made and a product of many years of ill-treatment and abuse. It is, therefore, reasonable to argue that the eradication of poverty in this population will need special, very specific, focused and deliberate strategies on the long, medium and short term, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

The second reason is that, while it is true that many people in the remote communities have been subjected to the same harsh realities to which the Basarwa have been subjected, the Basarwa will still edge out as the poorest of the poor. It is thus only sensible to argue that people in this category need to be targeted in a unique way in order to escape the poverty trap.

The third reason is that it is a well-known fact in Botswana that there is as yet no consensus between the government and the Basarwa on the best way to address the problem of poverty as it is experienced by this group. There has been some form of resistance to some of the government's interventions such as agriculture and education as means of addressing the poverty problem. The Basarwa, therefore, need a programme that, apart from being focused on them, will take time to go on a journey with them. It is doubtful as to whether the Basarwa can do well in any programme that is based on competition for limited resources with the rest of the population, like formal employment.

The assimilation of the Basarwa was pursued through the process of villagisation. For the purposes of this study, villagisation refers to the systematic process through which the Basarwa were removed from their natural habitats and organised into Tswana-like settlements. The settlements are normally divided into wards, where each ward is headed by a headman, with a chief as head of each village. Boko (2002:103,104) raises a number of concerns regarding the villagisation of the Basarwa: first, that it removes the Basarwa from their ancestral lands and places them under imposed and unfriendly administrative structures; secondly, that the new

settlements, though they have modern facilities, unlike the places from where these people have been removed, are still strange and inhospitable for the Basarwa, who are not used to being bundled together in large villages where neighbours are complete strangers.

For the Basarwa, the enforcement of villagisation has been structured around a strictly sedentary way of life²⁰, where each family occupies a clearly demarcated piece of land permanently. While this is the only acceptable way of life for the Tswana-speaking ethnic groups, it is a largely unfamiliar lifestyle for the Basarwa (Boko, 2002:108). In other words, just the removal through some of these assimilative strategies from places that are linked to their identity and their generic settlement patterns is a disadvantage to the Basarwa and estrange them from their true identity and way of life and subsistence. Programmes that have been set up to assist and empower the Basarwa, therefore, have ended up displacing them further, as well as denigrating and undermining their identity, their separate existence as a people and their value system.

It is equally important that by being removed from their proximity to wild life and being prohibited from hunting, the Basarwa lose essential skills, like the use of their traditional tools, for example bows and arrows, their knowledge of animal life and breeding patterns, as well as hunting and tracking skills. The villagisation process, particularly the restriction of movement that comes from being relocated from certain areas, means that the Basarwa only participate in limited gathering, resulting in the loss of their knowledge of various plants that are used for food, medicine, herbs and the like. It is therefore doubtful as to whether the Basarwa will be able to pass on any meaningful aspect of the way their forebears used to organise and live their lives. In Chapter 4, the study will explore some of the implications of the loss of cultural identity for the *missio Dei*.

3.4 Relocation for development

Various government reports show that the reason behind the post-independence relocation of the Basarwa was the recognition that they were not benefitting adequately from the rural development programmes. Government realised that previous rural development endeavors, such as the Accelerated Rural Development Programme, excluded a sizeable proportion of the rural population, in this case those residing in the remote area communities, the majority of whom were the ethnic Basarwa. The Ministry of Local Government Task Force Report (2010) shows that the advent of the Tribal Grazing Policy, which replaced most marginal sections of the rural areas by rapid livestock farming, only served to aggravate the situation. The Basarwa were therefore relocated under the guise²¹ of being developed or to benefit from government

²⁰ A human settlement pattern that is used by the more centrally organized groups as against the rather loosely arranged pattern of the Basarwa and such other indigenous groups.

²¹ Guise in this sense means excuse and refers to the fact that the removal of these people from certain areas is at times driven by ulterior motives

developmental strategies. In the following section, the study will survey some of these development strategies and the impact they have had on the livelihood of the Basarwa.

3.4.1 Education strategy

Right from the early beginnings of the RADP, it was felt that education and training would play a major role in promoting self-reliance and equal opportunities for the Remote Area Communities and the mainstream Batswana. The Basarwa were therefore relocated so that their children could have access to formal education. The RADP provided support to Remote Area Dweller (RAD) school-going children in the form of school fees, uniforms, pot fees, transport, daily school-based feeding and others (RADP, 2009:15). Despite these efforts, the academic performance of the remote area schools is generally reported to be poor and the level of children dropping out of school still very high (BDPA, 2001; GOB/UNICEF, 2006 as quoted in RADP, 2009). On the question of school drop-outs, Mazonde (2002:65) quotes a Botswana Government Report of 1994, according to which "88% of so-called missing children live in rural areas. Within this subgroup, non-enrolment, drop out, repetition and substandard academic performance are highest among the RAD dwellers, especially among the non-Setswana speaking, ethnic RADs of the Western and North-western districts, for whom access to basic education has been limited due to poverty, distance from schools, cultural values and negative public attitudes."

Other reasons given for the poor performance of these schools are that many children still live far from the schools in smaller areas, like cattle posts and farms. In an effort to address this problem, government has built hostels in some of the settlements. The school hostel accommodation has, however, resulted in new problems. The National Development Plan 7 notes that "prevailing hostel conditions and modes of operation often make RAD parents reluctant to enroll their children in primary school and often contribute to student drop-out" (Mazonde, 2002:66).

Mazonde (2002:66) further notes that the attitudes and insensitivity of the non-San teachers often make it difficult for the Basarwa children to learn. In this regard, he remarks that the Basarwa children often complain about being ill-treated, beaten and berated for not learning. They are also reported to have rivalry that results in fights among themselves at times, due, among others, to overcrowded circumstances where they are bundled together in large groups, which is contrary to their way of community organisation. This slows down their progress and causes turbulence in the hostels. It could be due to the fact that these are people who normally live in closely knit, small family groups who find it difficult to adjust to life in large groups, as is the case in these hostels.

The issue of language is also cited as one of the main obstacles in the educational progress of the Basarwa children. Le Roux (as quoted in Mazonde, 2002:77) reports that wherever they attend school, most Basarwa children begin their formal education in a foreign language, which they often begin to learn on their first day in class only. However, before they have fully mastered this

language, the tuition changes to English. Le Roux argues that the San children, due to insufficient parental support, are greatly disadvantaged by the use of a non-mother tongue in Botswana's educational system.

Many children, particularly in settlements, thus start school from a disadvantaged position, as they have to learn one or two new languages at the same time. In addition, their mother tongue is relegated to the margins as a language of backwardness that cannot be used in the school compound or for educational purposes. Due to these challenges, the educational sector will not be able to contribute to poverty eradication as much as it would like to. These challenges affect the already vulnerable Basarwa children more unfavourably than the rest of the population. There is no doubt that providing education only in certain languages could have been very well intentioned at the beginning, but it has disadvantaged the learners in these very vulnerable communities.

The development of an education strategy where it is assumed that one size fits all is problematic. What works in one community may not necessarily work in another community, depending on the development stage of each community. In this case, the education that is provided for the Basarwa children serves the purpose of assimilating the children into a Tswana way of life (instead of empowering them and promoting self-reliance and equal opportunities), thereby alienating the learners. Bruwer (2001:12) suggests that in any situation where things from outside are imposed on the poor, they turn to use their veto power and go for an alternative; they "do their own thing" which, among others, translates into resisting the education that is provided by the authorities and preferring alternative education where the peer is the teacher and the street the school. In this kind of situation, the curriculum is determined by the prevailing situation. Education that removes the learners at a very tender age from their language and culture cannot serve any purpose other than that of assimilation.

3.4.2 Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the activities that have been identified to help ameliorate the poverty conditions of the 'Remote Area Dwellers'. The RADP Report states that the performance of the agricultural sector in the settlements is bound to be limited due to the poor soil conditions²² which are sandy, infertile and unsuitable for good crop production. Pastoral agriculture has a better potential in these areas, but it also faces its own challenges, like the fact that the Basarwa people seem to be resisting the rearing of livestock generally. At times, the efforts of the Basarwa in pastoral agriculture are also affected negatively by the fierce competition between the settlement dwellers and the Batswana farmers from outside the settlements for pastures and watering points, a competition in which the Basarwa are always the losers. The livestock sector in the settlements also faces challenges, like the outbreak of epidemics, as well as poor

²² Soils not suitable arable agriculture.

veterinary services in the settlements; for example, in the frequent events of the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, the District Councils often remove livestock beneficiaries quickly from benefiting under destitution and other social safety nets. Botswana is generally a country that is prone to drought conditions and this often affects this sector adversely. There is also concern that some 'Remote Area Dwellers' fail to care for their livestock due to alcohol consumption and the fact that this sector, which is very labour intensive, is not in keeping with the Basarwa way of life.

The National Strategy on Poverty Eradication (2003:10) observes that, although the agricultural sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product was less than 3% for the 2001/2002 financial year (according to the 2003 Annual Economic Report), the sector still remains an important player in the effort to reduce poverty. It further notes that many rural Batswana, particularly the poor, derive a significant part of their income from agriculture-related activities. Existing technological possibilities make agriculture a potential source of pro-poor growth. On the basis of this, the government commits itself to supporting agricultural activities with a potential for high returns, such as horticulture and small stock farming as anti-poverty pursuits.

These new initiatives create some hope that the sector's contribution to poverty alleviation may be enhanced. It is, however, doubtful as to whether the Basarwa as a group may be reached by such general policies that are aimed at the whole population. It could be that the best way to reach this population is deliberately focused and targeted strategies that take into consideration the people's way of life, as well as the environmental and climatic conditions in which they live and work. The particular Tswana or Bantu way of agricultural development may therefore not be suitable for poverty alleviation among the Basarwa.

3.4.3 Provision of water

One of the goals of the RADP was to provide the communities with water. Reliable sources of water are essential for development and economic activities. Most of the settlements in which the Basarwa live, however, face serious water shortages. In most of Botswana, including the remote area settlements, water is provided from ground sources which often face problems like the failing yields of boreholes, breakdown of equipment and high salinity in most of the remote area settlements. These problems create serious water shortages as well as making water in some of the settlements unsuitable for human consumption. A number of settlements depend therefore on bowsed²³ water from the respective district councils. This situation hinders a number of commercial activities that the people aspire to participate in (RADP, 2009). A recent Presidential Task Force, assessing the impact of the RADP on the remote area communities, was informed that, "given the fact that adequate supply of potable water is an important milestone in the betterment of the standard of living, sustainable livelihoods in the settlements cannot be achieved

²³ A technical term used in Botswana for transporting water in truck from source to point of use.

while the current situation of inadequate water supply persists” (RADP, 2009). The success of interventions like health, education, income generation and agricultural projects thus depends on access to potable water.

3.4.4 Health

Access to modern health facilities and services was one of the strategies behind the RADP. The 2009 RADP Report shows that some Remote Area Communities are far from modern health facilities such as clinics and hospitals. Most of these communities have access to health posts which are built in recognised settlements, but even these facilities are often in short supply of medicines, equipment, qualified personnel and resources like ambulances. One of the major health concerns in Botswana and the whole of the Sub-Saharan Africa is HIV/AIDS. The Report of the Ghanzi (which has a high Basarwa population) Development Committee, for example, shows that “the district has been hit hard by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Although the sentinel surveillance among pregnant women of 2002 showed a prevalence of 18.8%, it is estimated that the general population prevalence rate is 40%. This is high for a population consisting mainly of children, who are now left as orphans, as evidenced by the highly increasing figures registered since 2001²⁴”.

The National Poverty Eradication Strategy acknowledges HIV/AIDS as the number one impediment in the efforts to fight poverty. Some of the reasons that are given to support this position include that it leaves many orphans and other dependents without breadwinners. It also manifests itself in declining labour productivity, escalating health costs, increased government welfare spending and diversion of family labour away from livelihood activities to caring for the terminally ill.

In the light of the above, government’s efforts continue mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into development programmes, as the implementation of ongoing programmes will have a positive impact on poverty reduction. It is generally agreed that the health of the population plays a major role in its economic development. It is, however, essential in designing health strategies to be sensitive to the unique conditions of the Remote Area Settlements; for example, the reluctance among some public servants to work in these communities, which are far from urban Botswana and where there are few opportunities for advancement, will have negative health consequences. As highlighted above, the settlements have serious problems with alcohol abuse and any strategy aimed at improving livelihoods must take this phenomenon into consideration. It is also likely that there is a clash between the traditional medical practice and modern Western medicine. Failure to recognise the Basarwa traditional medicine and healing practices is one way of disempowering them and depriving their future generations of this life-saving skill.

²⁴ The District Development Committee is a District level structure that is responsible for the planning and oversight of development projects

3.4.5 Housing

The RADP Report (2009:20) advocates a strategy in which the Remote Area Communities (RACs) should benefit from the existing national housing schemes like the Self Help Housing Agency (SHHA). It recommends that efforts should be made to assist RACs to access the housing scheme under national strategy for poverty reduction and similar programmes to improve the standards of housing of RACs. It is, however, noteworthy that a number of settlements still face the problem of “lack of shelter for a large number of people. Many people in the settlements do not have houses and the few situations where people have houses, such houses are in a poor state. It is recommended that the housing for settlement dwellers could be made a part of the national housing strategies. The reality, however, is that in practice these initiatives have not been implemented. The housing condition in the settlements is therefore far from the ideal situation. The poor state of housing was found to adversely affect the general health, welfare and productivity of the residents” (Ministry of Local Government, 2010).

The Presidential Task Force also learnt that the housing situation has a negative impact on the education of the children. The learning and school attendance of Basarwa children may be disturbed by things like books or school uniforms getting wet from the leaks in the roof of the house or hut. The children may absent themselves from school, or even permanently abscond from school, fearing to be beaten or scolded by the teacher for externalities beyond their control that are related to poor housing. Bruwer (2001) observes that, in providing housing for them, it should be taken into consideration that “these people also prefer their own solutions to the housing crisis by providing informal housing to keep their families together instead of going for building loans that are acquired through building societies for modern building and having to observe the building restrictions. It is also important that among the poor, the need for survival determines the law such that the formal processes of justice have little influence in the lives of the poor”.

A decent housing scheme that takes the closely linked Basarwa family patterns into consideration in the allocation of plots and determining the housing type may be a step forward in promoting a sense of homeownership and decent shelter among the Basarwa.

3.4.6 Monetary policies

The National Strategy on Poverty Eradication also discusses a number of monetary policies that the government either seeks to develop or strengthen in order to protect the poor. One such strategy is ensuring price stability²⁵. The strategy contends that, given the fact that price inflation tends to hurt the poor relatively more than the non-poor, government will continue to endeavour

²⁵ Ensuring that the cost of goods and services does not change to frequently of unproportionally.

to keep inflation low to protect the poor who spend relatively more of their income on food, shelter and clothing. Along the same line, the government pledges to ensure and maintain efficient financial systems, price stability and efficient financial systems as a means of making the poor less vulnerable to economic fluctuations. The strategy further notes that Botswana has maintained its reputation for sound fiscal policy. Maintenance of appropriate levels of foreign exchange reserves has helped in stabilising the economy, which is one of the prerequisites for sustainable poverty reduction. It is, however, worth noting that this policy assumes situations where there are employment opportunities and regular income. It is doubtful if such a policy could benefit those who are left out of the modern monetary system like the ethnic Basarwa.

The National Vision 2016 is another crucial strategy in poverty eradication. One of the pillars of the vision is to promote economic growth and diversification, which are expected to result in Botswana being a "Prosperous, Productive and Innovative Nation" (Vision 2016, 1996). It is a well-known fact that, historically, Botswana has achieved very impressive economic growth since independence. It is equally important to note that Botswana's ranking in international business scales has been improving progressively due to good governance and the fostering of a good investment climate.

There are, however, some concerns in this area, like the fact that Botswana has not attracted as much direct foreign investment as was expected, such that both growth and investment are below targets; the economy has also not diversified as planned. These factors may be accounted for in terms of structural and other issues such as the smallness of the market, a small population growing at less than 1%, insufficient skilled human resources, a land-locked country and the high cost of utilities. It is thus unlikely that this sector will help Botswana to address the question of poverty meaningfully in the short term, even more so with respect to the Basarwa who, at times, operate outside or below the standards of the monetary economy. To that extent, it is doubtful whether this strategy can help address the problem of poverty among the Basarwa. Similarly, it is unlikely that development strategies based on, or rather shaped by, the above-cited monetary policy can effectively address the development challenges that are faced by the Basarwa people.

The idea of development among the Basarwa in Botswana raises several concerns: First, it is a top-down approach; in other words, the development programmes are government driven and national resources are deployed in this direction. Secondly, there is no evidence that those people who are targeted by the development strategies are properly consulted on the processes. Thirdly, this development approach does not give room for people to take control of their lives and destiny, and find solutions to the problems and challenges that they face. It is seriously flawed in that it does not empower the poor to take responsibility; it rather creates an unhealthy dependence upon the state, which makes this model simply unsustainable, as it is entirely dependent on government's ability to provide the resources for development and does not take local resources and ideas into consideration.

Development efforts among vulnerable groups such as the Basarwa should always be driven by the goal of sustainability, which is “finding solutions for today’s needs without creating problems for future generations” (Chipike & Malaba, 2012:4). In this regard, Bruwer (2001) rightly observes that in a situation where a developmental agenda is imposed from the outside, “the language of poverty is silence”. The veto is a silent way of resistance. All those who desire to make breakthroughs in their work among the poor must for that reason take the following into consideration: The poor must be respected as their starting point; they cannot change the poor unless they are at the same time prepared to be changed by the poor; the poor may receive help, but may not apply or use such help; classes and clubs may be organised, but not attended; work may be organised, but not taken up; and advice may be given, but not followed up. Bruwer (2001) offers a helpful insight when he observes that the poor often protest against impositions of the powerful by refusing to participate in the formal economy, preferring the informal, because it involves less trouble and bureaucracy.

3.5 Leadership

Leadership is one of the thorny issues in the Remote Area Communities. The Presidential Task Force reports that in all the settlements that had been consulted, it was observed that while it was a commendable thing that leadership structures like the Kgotla²⁶, the Village Development Committee (VDC) and the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) were in place in most settlements, the Basarwa were still disgruntled. Some settlements are led by non-Basarwa dikgosi²⁷ who do not understand or appreciate the cultures and values of the Basarwa people. In some cases, it is claimed that leadership was passed on to people from outside the settlements, because the Basarwa were not yet ready to take up these roles. The same was also reported with respect to political representatives, like councillors, some of whom (apart from being non-Basarwa) lived in the major villages outside the settlements, depriving the Basarwa of self-political representation and thereby diminishing their chances of participating in the decision making processes further.

The Basarwa are of the view that when the settlements were established, they were promised full authority over their own affairs. To them, this authority, among others, includes a degree of autonomy, determination of their local leaders and probably representation of their own people in the local and national decision-making leadership. This is a source of conflict in some settlements which impedes development initiatives. In the efforts to alleviate poverty among the Remote Area Dwellers, own leadership at grass-roots level will be an essential component in the process of empowering the Basarwa.

²⁶ The Kgotla is the village assembly in the Tswana system, presided over by the village chief. It serves both as a consultation forum and a customary court.

²⁷ Dikgosi is plural for Kgosi, which means a ‘village chief’.

While on paper, the process of villagisation seems to be based on good intentions such as bringing services closer to these people and thereby empowering them, the reality seems to be that the government strategies have by and large served to disempower instead of empower the Basarwa. In the Basarwa community, power lies in the hands of the hunting band, the gathering party, the family group or the clan, but not in the hands of individuals. The only power that really exists in these communities is the power to share ideas, resources, food and territory for the good of all; the power is in the hunting party that goes out to hunt for the benefit of all. In this sense, the power in the community lies in the ability to serve. Anyone who is willing and able to expend themselves in the service of the community derives power from that very process. The Basarwa communities seem to have a concept of leadership that is called 'servant leadership' in other sources, as this leadership is primarily seen in functional terms. Leadership authority is derived from participation in the life and service of the community. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

The villagisation process, in contrast, concentrates power in the hands of one person, who is in this case the village chief. The chief has power, either because he was born in a particular family or because he was voted into the leadership position. This power includes power to whip those that are deemed to be behaving in ways that are unacceptable according to the Tswana custom. As shown previously, this is compounded by the fact that in most settlements, this role is often given to a total outsider under the pretext that the Basarwa are not ready for such roles yet. At one level, the process of villagisation has therefore taken power away from the group and has concentrated it in the hands of one individual. At another level, villagisation has obliterated the fact that power in the Basarwa communities seems to have been perceived and used for service to the clan or group and has never been a status symbol of one who is better or higher than the rest. Similarly, the villagisation process is also supposed to empower the children of the Basarwa through education, which creates opportunities for enhanced participation of these people in the general public and economic affairs of the nation. It has, however, been demonstrated that the Basarwa children are disadvantaged by the fact that this education is provided in a language that is not their mother tongue; it therefore alienates and disadvantages them instead of empowering them. To them, 'school' means parting with their mother tongue at a very tender age and being introduced to two foreign languages, in this case English and Setswana. Parting with language or not using a language regularly may have several implications. In an important way, language serves as a medium for communicating the cultural wisdom, skills and heritage of a particular people. Language, more than any other feature, distinguishes a particular group from the rest. People learn better and faster in a language they know than in a foreign language. Education always involves some form of competition, because students are vying for limited space available in the school system at secondary and tertiary levels. The Basarwa and other minority group children who face the mammoth task of learning two foreign languages are at an obvious disadvantage in this respect.

3.6 Conclusion

There is no simple answer to the problem of human attitudes towards one another, particularly towards those who are perceived as different due to race, colour, language or way of life. In this chapter, it has been observed that these disparaging attitudes have often translated very easily into abuse and ill-treatment. The ill-treatment has, in its turn, resulted in impoverishment, dispossession and subjugation of the weaker or smaller groups. It has further been observed that the mission involvement of the church has, in some cases, not made a positive difference in human history. As indicated above, the concept of the *missio Dei* will receive fuller attention in the next chapter. For now, it suffices to state that it is the contention of this study that a mission model that is based on and driven by the love of God for his creation and his justice for all will help resolve man-made historical ills like the poverty that has been suffered by the Basarwa, as well as the injustice and ill-treatment that they have been subjected to.

CHAPTER 4

POVERTY IN CONTRADICTION TO THE *MISSIO DEI*

4.1 Introduction

The central theme of this study is the concept of *missio Dei*, and a proper understanding and application of this concept may make a positive difference in the effort to address the problem of poverty among particular population and ethnic groupings like the Basarwa. A description of the concept of *missio Dei* with a focus on poverty, as well as the historical context out of which it emerged, will be given later in this chapter. For now, it suffices to state that *missio Dei* literally means 'the mission of God'.

4.2 Description of *missio Dei* in light of the Basarwa's poverty

Generally, *missio Dei* describes the shift in mission theology thinking through which mission is now essentially perceived as the work of God for the sake of the world (Bosch, 1991:402). In this new thinking, the church is neither the owner nor the initiator of mission: it is rather invited and given the special privilege to participate with God in God's mission in the world. It is equally important to note that this new mission thinking places a high premium on the love of God as the basis and rationale for mission involvement in the world. Those who are called and sent out into the world are therefore those who have first experienced the love of God; in turn, they are sent out to live and share that love with others in the world. The *missio Dei* in this sense is embedded and initiated in the love of God, modelled after the incarnational example of the life of Christ and propelled by the power of the Holy Spirit. This understanding of mission is particularly appropriate for groups like the Basarwa who have been subjected to hatred, disregard, contempt and disdain over the years. Mission that is based on God's love will correct the ills of the past and restore the God-given dignity of these people.

4.3 The historical context out of which *missio Dei* has emerged

The concept of *missio Dei* does not seem to be an academic invention from the comfortable positions of chairs of faculties in ivory tower institutions, but rather an urgent response on the part of the church to the fast-changing world at the turn of the last century. Haapiainen (2012:46) describes the actual circumstances that led to the emergence of *mission Dei* as follows:

Vicedom adopted *missio Dei* theology during a remarkable paradigm shift in mission theology, mission praxis and global politics. In the 20th century, Vicedom's home country of Germany - like the rest of the Western world - had lived through drastic changes and catastrophes that had grave consequences for missions: two world wars and their effects on infrastructure and the

economy, political liability, division between Western and Eastern Germany, the collapse of colonialism and other phenomena had led Germany and German missions to a new era. Most of these factors led to the crisis of mission and eventually to a paradigm shift in mission praxis and mission theology.

The origins of the concept of *missio Dei* “in the Protestant missiological discourse surfaced clearly in the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952 –although the term itself was not used in the conference. The term *missio Dei* only came into use in some documents that were published soon after the conference” (Haapiainen, 2012:45).

Bosch (1991:399), who also writes extensively about the situation of the world in which this term has emerged, argues that previously, ‘mission’ was understood in various ways, ranging from the soteriology, ecclesiology nexus to other considerations, like availing the benefits of Western civilisation to the people in the mission fields and even eschatological notions by which the world would be transformed into the kingdom of God. However, these notions of mission for God were no longer plausible in the light of the challenges that the new world presented. In the light of the above, a number of mission conferences were convened, one such being the Willingen Conference of 1952 at which Barth, though not using the actual word, is reputed for having articulated that mission as such is an activity of God himself.

The understanding of mission as *missio Dei* represented a major shift from the previously held notions of mission; the understanding was thus “put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The Trinitarian formula behind this new conception of mission was that of God the Father sending the Son and God the Father and Son sending the Spirit, expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world” (Bosch, 1991:399).

In general, one can assume that the concept of *missio Dei* was well received by most of the Christian traditions.

Ahonen (2000:43) argues that the “discovery of the concept of *Missio Dei* meant a considerable step forward in missiology. It made it possible to analyse mission in relation to Trinitarian thinking and to set it primarily as God’s own work for which He himself is responsible”. For Ahonen, there are two further ways in which *missio Dei* was an important way out of the historical crisis that the church faced in the post-war world, first being that *missio Dei* united the broad line of God’s actions and salvation history from creation, revelation, the incarnation, the atonement and the resurrection until the final appearance of the reign of God. Thus it could be shown that mission is based ultimately on the very nature of God, who is love and whose love is directed towards the world. God’s love is thus the starting and rallying point of mission. The reason for sending God’s people out and the power and goal of mission is love, and bringing people to share in it.

With regard to the role of the church in mission, Ahonen (2000:43) is of the opinion that, from the point of view of *missio Dei*, the life and mission of the church and of Christians is participation in God's mission of love. The church is not the goal of mission, but its consequences and fruit. The church exists because there is mission and not vice versa.

The concept of *missio Dei* refers to the reign of God, which is wider than the church. The church is the principal and essential instrument of mission, but the ultimate goal is the reign of God.

Bosch (1991) raises six major factors that may have precipitated the rethinking of the mission and theology of the church at the beginning of the last century. These points are paraphrased as follows:

- i. The advance of science and technology and the world-wide process of secularisation made faith in God redundant. There is no doubt that the developments in science and technology posed very serious challenges to many previously well-entrenched worldviews.
- ii. "The movement of the center of Christianity from the West to the South made it necessary to rethink the future of doing mission work in the world." (Bosch, 1991:3.) The fact that the church in the West was losing members regularly meant, among others, that they were losing the capacity to raise both the human and financial resources to continue with mission work in the traditional way.
- iii. "The multiple migrations of people of many faiths made the world religiously plural. Such Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and adherents of many faiths rub shoulders daily." (Bosch, 1991:3.) This proximity and probably their relatedness due to intermarriage, business and social connections forced Christians to re-examine their traditional stereotyped views about people of other religions.
- iv. The history of subjugation and exploitation made the West and Western Christians to suffer from an acute sense of guilt, often debilitating them from giving account of the hope they have in Christ. This particular aspect is also relevant today with respect to the relationship between groups like the Basarwa and Christians from dominant groups, whose attitude and actions are in part responsible for the plight of the Basarwa.

In agreement with Bosch, Ahonen (2000:17) argues that "after the Second World War, a third crisis phase in Christianity began, almost as deep and traumatic as the shift from Jewish to Hellenistic Christianity. This new crisis phase was associated with the end of colonialism. Christianity is shedding its western stamp and becoming global, as Christians of other continents seek their own genuine cultural model of faith".

"More than ever before, the world today is divided—apparently irreversible— between the rich and the poor, and by and large the rich are those who consider themselves (or are

considered by the poor) to be Christians. In addition, and according to most indicators, the rich are still getting richer and the poor poorer. This circumstance creates, on the one hand, anger and frustration among the poor and on the other, reluctance among affluent Christians to share their faith." (Bosch, 1991:4.) This particular point is important in a number of ways: While one cannot argue that Christianity is responsible for the skewed economic relations, the church has benefitted from this arrangement over time. Knoetze (2013:1) argues trenchantly that if the mainline missionary churches (MMCs) want to talk about youth ministry in the African context, they must be prepared to move out of their comfort zones. The churches from the Western world as well as some privileged mainline churches in Africa will have to realise that they (the members of the churches) are part of the richest 20% of the world population and that there is a huge gap between them and the rest of Africa.

The problem of wealth differentials is therefore a long-time challenge or obstacle of some kind for both individual Christians and their churches and institutions who are sharing the good news with their less fortunate counterparts.

- vi. While Western theology and Western ecclesiastical ways and practices were normative and undisputed for centuries, also in the mission fields, the situation is fundamentally different today. The younger churches refuse to be dictated to and are placing a high premium on their autonomy. In addition, Western theology is suspect in many parts of the world today. It is often regarded as irrelevant, speculative and a product of ivory tower institutions. In many parts of the world, it is being replaced by Third World theologies like liberation theology, black theology, contextual theology, minjung theology, African theology and Asian theology.

This same point is echoed by Mosala and Tlhagale (1986:75), who contends that "when the missionaries came to preach the gospel in Africa, they brought along a whole range of western values. They appeared determined to instil in their converts these western values and distaste, especially for the traditional religious values and African culture, which were considered inferior and primitive. African converts were expected to adopt a new identity, based on the western Christian order." Ngubane, however, observes that while many Christians embraced the church, they were not fully loyal to it, because they were not convinced about the inferiority of their cultural and religious values. No wonder that at the earliest opportunity, African people protested against mission-founded denomination and the related missionary domination to form denominations that placed a high premium on the importance of their own cultural and religious values.

The concept of *missio Dei* was helpful in a number of ways; for example, it emphasised the radical activity of God in history and challenged liberals' and conservatives' pietistic and good-works ideals of mission. Christian mission was to be understood in the new dispensation, not as the work of the deeply committed or the well-meaning, but rather as the activity of God. The six

points that have been mentioned, have demonstrated the problem of the widening gap between the rich and the poor. While for Bosch, this is a situation about the relationship between the rich Christians in the West and many poor people in the mission fields, in Botswana it is the situation between the Christians in the mainline churches and the Basarwa. The point of the many years of subjugation and exploitation also applies to the relationship between the Christians from the dominant groups and the Basarwa.

In this respect, though Batswana Christians may not yet feel the same degree of guilt in sharing the gospel that is felt by Western Christians, this same situation will apply in the course of time.

Missio Dei became a way of criticising the whole missionary enterprise as it was understood in the churches at that time. It ushered in a new understanding, namely that God had been working in the world all the time and in all places, creating and redeeming, as well as liberating and saving, whether the churches in the West realised this or not. God's work in all the cultures was seen to be part of salvation history, something that challenged all human institutions and provoked crisis in the church and its mission.

It is, however, noteworthy that there were some people who were not very comfortable with the use of this concept: they argued, for example, that while *missio Dei* in an important way made it possible to link mission closely with the holistic nature and grounds of faith, it also left many important questions unanswered (Ahonen, 2000:48).

Others also argued that the concept is open to various interpretations: in the 1950s, for example, a new interpretation of *missio Dei* appeared, giving the impression that God does not need the medium of the church to be involved in the world. For some people, this posed the danger of relegating the church to a secondary place in God's mission scheme (Ahonen, 2000:45).

There are also those who hold the opinion that "the adoption of *Missio Dei* took place without a thorough-going theological work. Instead of a genuinely Trinitarian model, from the beginning it was more or less a reactive and incoherent concept. Flett argues convincingly that the beginning of the story of *Missio Dei* in missiological discourse was more reactive than constructive" (Haapiainen, 2012:47).

4.4 God the Father as the initiator of *missio Dei*

It is with this particular understanding of *missio Dei* in mind that the unique poverty-related challenges that are faced by the Basarwa are explored with the view to understand how a mission strategy that is owned and initiated by God can make a difference. Biblical teachings that show God's concern for the poor, as well the various interventions that God put in place to ameliorate the suffering of the poor, will be examined.

In the previous two chapters, it has been demonstrated that the poverty of the Basarwa is, to some extent, a product of bad relations, namely the perception and treatment that they suffered at the hands of others. In this sense, this chapter will first show that God has always been concerned with the plight of the poor. Secondly, it will demonstrate that God has always initiated measures to reduce the impact of poverty. The chapter will set the scene for Chapter 5, in which it will be explored how the church may be involved or may play a significant role in resolving the unique poverty conditions that are facing the Basarwa.

This study is premised on the understanding that since God is deeply concerned with the plight of the poor, He is not indifferent to their suffering. As poverty conditions raise compassion in the heart of God, it is reasonable to suppose that this situation propels God into initiating action, which, in the context of this study, is the *missio Dei*. The following example of God's actions in history will be explored, albeit briefly, to show that God has always been involved in history to deliver the poor from poverty. These acts of God in history are based on his love for his creation.

4.4.1 Creation as part of *missio Dei*

The study of the creation theme as found in Genesis 1 demonstrates first that God initiated creation at the beginning and secondly that God has been at work in the world and in human history right from the very beginning. Several important lessons can be drawn from God's role in creation: First, the fact that God acclaims creation as good gives us an impression of what God's intention was and still is for creation. Furthermore, it points out that human suffering (including poverty) is, at least in part, a later development and a human creation, and that mission is a restorative measure that is taken to undo the ills of history and development in general. The Micah Network (2012:1) states the following:

The affirmation in Genesis that God viewed all of creation as "good" reminds us that the whole world is the subject of the loving purposes of God. The creation of animals and the desire on God's part to find a suitable partner for Adam, the first human, suggests it was God's original intention that humans should flourish in all respects. The fruitful garden given as a home to humankind further implies that the original intention was that the needs of all humans should be provided for.

Moreover, the Micah Network acknowledges that "the original creation was marred by the entry of sin" which, according to them, resulted in "violence, idolatry and exploitation". Poverty is another manifestation of sin, as it frustrates the possibility for humans to flourish as God intended. Similarly, Pretorius *et al.* (1996:12) argue that the fact that "God created the universe and all who dwell in it is basis for the mission of the church in the world". That God cares greatly about the created order and its well-being is, in other words, the basis of the principle that the church cannot be indifferent in the world.

The conditions of poverty and the resultant social ills that they produce are unacceptable, as they are not part of the plan of God from the beginning. Secondly, they destroy the purpose of God and decimate the beauty that God created. Ramachandra (2003:1) rightly observes that "the world is created rich in diversity. The Creator blesses living beings with semi-autonomy, the capacity to procreate (Genesis 1:22). Creatureliness, individuality, diversity and change are all pronounced good by the Creator. He takes delight in what He brings into being and builds into them potentialities for development". This being the case, one can surmise that since creation was good in its origin, anything that spoils it is not only wrong, but a violation of the original intentions of the Creator. As highlighted above, poverty is not only a manifestation of human sin, but also a repudiation of the original plan of God for his creation. Sin and other ills like poverty are against God's will with respect to human beings in that they destroy or at least taint the image of God in which humans were created.

It is important for the church who is participating in the *missio Dei* to recognise and be sensitive to the fact that people such as the Basarwa, who have lost so much in history, may have also lost their sense of rights, justice and other inalienable entitlements. In the first two chapters, it has been demonstrated that the ethnic Basarwa are in this situation in many cases, and that *missio Dei* among them will therefore, among others, involve enhancing their true identity, dignity and self-esteem, thereby strengthening and empowering them for change.

Mission among the poor, based on the creation concept, should involve the restoration of the image of God that has been tainted by sin, injustice and violation of God-given rights. "Being made in the image of God is the basis for confidence." (Van Groningen, 2005:50.) The author observes that people are often judged according to their social status or their occupations. However, the Bible affirms that the true value of human beings lies not in such things, but rather in the fact that they have been made in the image of God, who loves all people unconditionally. According to Van Groningen, this self-understanding is a great source of encouragement for those who have been marginalised in societies. Working with poor communities to bring them to the realisation that being created in the image of God (nothing else, either material or social) is an important mark of human identity, could serve as a source of inspiration in helping the poor to take responsibility for their lives and welfare.

"Being made in the image of God is the basis for living in communities of respect and peace." (Van Groningen, 2005:50.) He argues that it is important for the church not to lose sight of the fact that not only we, but also our neighbours and even our enemies and those who harm us, are made in the image of God; we must therefore treat them with respect and dignity. We must also seek their well-being and renewal. "This understanding of mission is a helpful guide in ensuring that diaconal ministries and developmental strategies among the poor are based on respect for their human dignity, instead of hatred, racism, vengeance, stereotyping and violence." This same understanding could also serve in helping the church to initiate poverty alleviation ministries that

are based on justice and respect for the poor as God's image bearers. Respecting the poor would, among others, imply giving room to their views and opinions in finding solutions to their problems. Properly understood, creation and being God's image bearers convey important values, like God's concern for the proper keeping and caring for creation, human dignity, justice, confidence building and human rights. Understanding that we participate in the *missio Dei* can also serve to motivate the church in its efforts to seek justice for the poor and to protect their rights. Respect and appreciation always serve as a precondition for protection and diaconal service.

The conviction that God is concerned with the conditions of the poor is therefore based on the fact that poverty as such goes against the mandate of Genesis (1:26; 2:15), because humankind is created in the image and likeness of God and is destined to dominate the earth. For Gutiérrez (1971:168), the exploitation and injustice implicit in poverty make work into something servile and dehumanising. Work that is alienated from God enslaves people even more than liberate them. It is on the basis of this understanding, according to Gutiérrez, that whenever just treatment is demanded for the poor, the slaves and the aliens, it is recalled that Israel was also alien and enslaved in Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:19).

As demonstrated in the earlier chapters, one of the root causes of the Basarwa poverty is the alienation from their ancestral land and its resources and the new, exclusive and privatised uses to which such land is put. The land that has been seized from the Basarwa is often demarcated, fenced off and paddocked, making it inaccessible, except to those who hold its title, thus alienating the original owners from these essential resources as well as leaving them landless. This process also leads to the depletion of natural resources of the areas due to problems like over-grazing, resulting from overstocking due to a lack of understanding of the climatological features of the given area. In the case of Botswana, mission work among the Basarwa will necessarily involve the question of the restoration of land rights, which is in line with the purpose of God in creation. Mission among the poor that is understood from the perspective of creation will essentially entail education for both the rich and the poor on the imperative of sharing the God-given space and the resources that it provides. In this sense, mission will fundamentally be about the reversal of the more wide-spread mentality of conquest, namely "to the victor, the spoils".

The clarion call of the creation story is that God's space is essentially meant to be shared by all. While human history has been punctuated by hatred, animosity, conflict and rivalry, we know that this was not the purpose and mission of God from the beginning. He had always intended to bring people into the sphere of blessing as part of his people.

Wright (2010:71) argues that the Abrahamic covenant is the origin of biblical mission in its redemptive sense. In the context of the divided and antagonistic forces at work in the world, the

church is called to its covenant responsibility that is displayed through love of the neighbour and thereby being a blessing. Briggs (1996:44) observes that covenant responsibility is essentially a responsibility of love. The new covenant lays on all Christ's people the obligation to love one another as He loves them. Love in its deepest, truest sense has always been at the heart of the covenant. It was out of his love for Israel that God rescued the slaves from Egypt and then laid on them the duty to love him with all their power, and their neighbours as they love themselves. The new covenant is no different: It is because He loves his own, and loves them to the end, that Jesus inaugurated his covenant with them and gave them his new commandment that same evening.

The church is in the world to declare the universal purpose of God, namely that, like ancient Israel, the church is called into existence for God's universal purpose of being a blessing to all people and all nations. The purpose of God and the goal of mission are not to whisk off individuals to heaven, but to create a new covenant community on earth that will be a blessing to the nations. The mission responsibility of the church is to create a community of people from different ethnicities, cultures, languages and social statuses that will worship, work and witness together in the fellowship of the church for the building up of the Body of Christ and the manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth (John 10:16). This is, according to Wright (2006:75), God's answer to human predicament. The mission to which the church is called is therefore to bear witness to the fact that a new and different society, based on covenant love instead of rivalry, is possible. The church is also called to live out the practical implications of such a community in its own life, thereby witnessing to the kingdom of God in concrete historical situations.

4.4.2 Exodus as a practical example of the *missio Dei* on behalf of the poor

Generations of people of faith have looked to the Exodus-story model for God's role or intervention on behalf of the poor in society. The Exodus model demonstrates a number of ways in which God is concerned with the plight of the poor. According to Wright (2010:100), Exodus portrays four dimensions of bondage that Israel suffered in Egypt – political, economic, social and spiritual. It further shows how God intervened and redeemed his people at every level; in other words, God is the driving force in the liberation of the Jewish slaves from Egyptian slavery. The political bondage of Israel began when an immigrant minority group went to a large imperial state as famine refugees. As the result of a change of government, policy and leadership, they soon became victims of political hatred and unfounded fears, which turned their economic asylum into a political prison. In the case of this political oppression, God intervened on behalf of the enslaved minority, confronted the state power of the empire and brought political enslavement to an end.

Similarly, there was a social dimension in the bondage that was suffered by Israel. Socially, the oppression took the form of state-sponsored genocide or extermination of all male Hebrew babies. In the first two chapters, it has been demonstrated that the Basarwa suffered different forms of oppression. Lack of political freedom and endurance of economic oppression are thus compounded by a vicious invasion of normal family life and the denial of fundamental human rights. In this sense, God's redemption of his people from the evil of oppression always requires the newly found state to ensure that respect for human life, culture, identity and leadership patterns are embedded as the essential foundation on which nationhood is built. Social abuse of people often results in fear, self-denial and self-shame. People who are abused in this sense often have to hide their true identity. The Exodus story bears testimony to the fact that God intervened to stop this abuse.

On a spiritual level, it must be noted that one aspect of Israel's slavery to Pharaoh was a massive hindrance to their worship of the God of their fathers. Israel's bondage had a spiritual dimension; it was not merely political, economic or social. Wright (2010:101) raises a few important aspects of the spiritual nature of the redemption of Israel: First, that the goal of the liberation was that the saved slaves should worship their God; thus the victory over the Pharaoh was not only socio-economic or political, it was spiritual and God's judgement over the gods of Egypt. Secondly, when God redeemed Israel out of the several layers of bondage, the freedom was to enter into a covenant relationship with God. Wright (2010:101) therefore argues that "the problem was not just that the Hebrew were slaves, but that they were slaves to the wrong master and needed to be transferred into the service of the living God. Spiritually therefore the exodus was not a movement from slavery to freedom, but from slavery to covenant. Redemption was for relationship with the redeemer to serve his interests and purposes in the world".

The church often plays a pivotal role in people's struggle for liberation, but once such freedom has been obtained, it is not certain what the new role of the church is. The Exodus story points to the reality that spirituality is an indispensable part of the liberated identity; in other words, the mission role of the church among the freed is to continue to guide society to a covenantal relationship with God without which no other relations can hold.

In this regard, Exodus bears testimony to the fact that God does not tolerate any form of political enslavement. Those people whose land has been invaded and who have been displaced internally by much more powerful and numerous groups have always been God's concern. While political bondage is not limited to people being subjected to imperially imposed leadership or the killing and exiling of the local leadership, removal of the authentic leadership is a precondition for political bondage in most cases. The genuine leadership is often replaced by taskmasters and others who use coercion instead of a shared vision, common goal, goodwill and persuasion to achieve the desired outcomes. Exodus bears clear testimony to the fact that God is against domination and people being subjected to the rule of those people who have been imposed upon

them from the outside; in other words, God is against people being subjected to the rule of leaders who do not have their interest at heart. He is against people being subjected to leaders who see them as machines which are only needed for production purpose (Erickson, 2001:164). In the eyes of God, a human being is not only to be seen as a source of labour that is needed for the tasks that need to be done. Whenever people cry out from such situations of abuse, the God of the Exodus intervenes on their behalf as a redeemer to set them free.

The enslavement of Israel also had an economic dimension. Wright (2010:10) contends that the sharpest pain of the oppression was economic. The Israelites were being exploited as slave labour on land that was not their own, for the economic benefit of the host nation in its agricultural and construction projects. The Exodus story shows that God hears the outcry of his people and sets in motion interventions to redeem them. For Wright (2010:101), it was not enough to get Israel out of Egypt into some kind of tenuous freedom in the wilderness. The objective of their redemption was to give them land of their own – along with an economic system that was intended to outlaw such oppression within Israel itself. It was particularly in the economic realm that the Israelites were to live redemptively in response to what God had done for them. Redemption was strongly economic in content.

4.4.3 The principle of gleaning as a practical dimension of *missio Dei*

In the Holiness code of the Old Testament, the following words are found:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22, NRSV.)

Gleaning required from the Israelites that during the harvest, “what remains in the fields after the harvest and the gathering of olives and grapes should not be collected; it is for the alien, the orphan and the widow (Deuteronomy 24:19-21; Leviticus 19:9-10). Even more, the fields should not be harvested to the very edge so that something remains for the poor and the alien” (De Santa Ana, 1981:6). It is not clear how widespread this practice was or how, when and why it was ended in Israel. The practice, however, is a testimony of how Israel, as God’s people, who had just been redeemed from slavery, addressed the problem of poverty pragmatically. The practice shows that the people of Israel did not take the problem of poverty for granted or with a sense of capitulation, but rather took positive steps at regular intervals to ensure that the poor were not driven into destitution.

The fact that this practice is found in the Holiness code bears testimony to the fact that it was religiously instituted; in other words, God always showed concern with the plight of the poor and made it part of his mission to ensure that the situation of the poor was addressed. This is a

strategy that can inform as well as shape contemporary mission traditions in poverty alleviation meaningfully. It could possibly work on several levels, like the church advocating for corporate social responsibility policies to ensure that those who do business and profit in areas like tourism and mining, particularly those in close proximity to the Basarwa, are obliged to plough back a percentage of their profits into the community in areas such as health, education, housing, sport, social development and recreation to better the livelihoods of communities.

In the final analysis, the principle of gleaning represents three biblical teachings: first, that the produce of God's earth is to be shared among all God's people; secondly, that since God cares intimately for the poor, by that same virtue, society and the church have a mission obligation to put measures in place to mitigate the impact of poverty; thirdly, that the principle of gleaning bears testimony to the fact that God restores the dignity of the poor and needy of society by ensuring that provisions are made to ensure that they share in the annual harvest.

4.4.4 The observance of the Sabbath as a social aspect of *missio Dei*

It is important to note that in ancient Israel, the Sabbath had a social significance. For De Santa Ana (1981:6), the Sabbath was a day of rest for the slave and the alien (Exodus 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:14). When viewed superficially, it is not clear how being granted time to rest may serve to alleviate poverty. However, the Deuteronomy text ends with the words, "so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do" (Deuteronomy 5:14, NIV). According to Levy-Lyons (2012:1), both Karl Marx and Joshua Heschel shared the "insight that time is the ultimate form of human wealth on this earth. Without time, all other forms of wealth are meaningless". It is this insight about time – patently obvious, but frequently forgotten – that makes the keeping of a Sabbath day both spiritually profound and politically radical: To reclaim time is to be rich.

In this sense, the Sabbath promoted egalitarianism²⁸ among God's people, as it was a right that was enjoyed by all. Slaves and owners of capital, captains of industry and the workforce, women and men, as well as Israelites and aliens were all equal in this rest that God provided. In one sense, the Sabbath can be seen in the light of the concept of the kingdom of God and particularly the concept of the day of the Lord. From that perspective, the Sabbath portrayed or represented a foretaste of the rest that God will grant to all in his eternal kingdom. The Sabbath can thus be perceived eschatologically, in other words, being about the end of time. However, that end of time is not just in the distant future at the end of history as we know it; it comes every day when God's people take action to change the living conditions of the poor in partnership with God, and out of their understanding of the nature of God and God's concern for the poor, the *missio Dei*. The future comes every time that God's people take action to ensure that the original, God-given

²⁸ Equality, classlessness

rest of all God's people is restored and that the poor are allowed to live more restful lives, free from hustle.

Viewed from this perspective, the free time, or at least time away from work that the Sabbath affords the poor, represents the importance of freedom from hustling, the need to be allowed space to recuperate, rest, reflect and be empowered to find new ways of addressing the problems and challenges that are faced in life. The Sabbath communicates the need to rest, not just because one is tired, but because God initiated rest as an essential aspect of human life, right from the beginning. The Sabbath, therefore, is an important way of representing rest from production-driven greed, both physically and psychologically. It is exactly in this sense that the church can learn from the Basarwa. In another sense, the Sabbath may convey the taste of what life was prior to the fall, what God had intended for humanity had it not been for sin. The Sabbath thus conveys a sense of what life is in situations where God rules. In their total dependence on God's providence in nature, the Basarwa might help the church to have a better understanding of the Sabbath.

The observance of the Sabbath provided a divinely initiated and ordered sacred space for all God's people to get away from the chores of everyday life and have their own time. The assertion here is, however, much more fundamental in that it claims that having time of one's own is the primary form of wealth. Being free from living for and devoting oneself to production and profits for the rich or from being driven by greed and instead concentrating on values, like having time to fulfil your spiritual needs in worship, having time with one's loved ones and having time to rest and reflect, are in themselves a form of wealth, though of a different, non-material kind.

In this regard, the Basarwa, in their traditional lifestyle, must be viewed as some of the richest people on earth.

Peel (2002:284) reminds us that "in a busy and time-kept society, the Sabbath reminds us that everyone needs rest and it becomes a focus for having it. It also helps us in directing our attention away from ourselves and our activities in order to pay attention to God. It provides us, further, with an opportunity to attend public worship and become mindful of others". Giving people time to rest, to do their own things and to engage in social and leisure-based activities is in itself part of the fight against poverty. The Sabbath has a divine origin and in this regard shows God's effort to restore the dignity of humanity through rest and worship. The Sabbath is all-important with respect to the question of the poverty of the Basarwa. Today, many of them work in farm situations where there is no Saturday or Sunday, no public or religious holiday and, in some cases, no annual leave. In this situation, the Sabbath bears witness in an important way to the fact that granting people rest has always been a part of God's plan and God's way of restoring human strength and vitality.

4.4.5 The triennial tithe as a religious dimension of *missio Dei*

Another poverty alleviation strategy that is found in the Old Testament is that of the triennial tithe. According to De Santa Ana (1981:6), this tithe was not for temple use, but was rather meant for the benefit of the alien, the orphan and the widow (Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 26:12). In this regard, the Bible advocates an organised support system of addressing the problem of poverty. God told his people to use their tithe every third year for those who were helpless, hungry or poor. These regulations were designed to keep the country from sinking under crushing poverty and oppression. The regulations served further to make it evident that “it was everyone’s responsibility to care for those less fortunate. Families were to help other family members, and towns were to help members of their community”.

National laws protected the rights of the poor, but helping the poor was also a part of religious life. In this regard, the Bible placed a moral obligation on all those who had the means to ensure that they give material resources for the support of the less fortunate. The point is that giving to the poor was not just a marginal concern in the Hebrew community; it was rather a religiously ordered and prescribed obligation. Quite a sizeable amount of the resources of the communities was demanded for the support of the poor. It is further noteworthy that this kind of giving to the poor was intentional and planned, instead of reactionary and haphazard. The triennial tithe was in this sense an ample demonstration of God’s pragmatic concern for the poor of society. The practice bears testimony to the fact that the Holiness code set out measures to ensure that the dignity of the poor was restored. It also bears testimony to the fact that the faith community did not only look to the state to care for the poor; religion-based resources, like tithes, were used to relief suffering and poverty. In the same way, the contemporary church should use its own resources to relief the suffering of groups like the Basarwa and thus show obedience to God.

4.4.6 Forbidding interest on loans as an economic aspect of *missio Dei*

Another strategy that demonstrates God’s concern for overcoming poverty was to forbid interest on loans (Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35-37; Deuteronomy 23:20). This shows that the Hebrew law code is noted for its fairness and social responsibility towards the poor.

Emphasis is laid on the importance of treating the poor and powerless well and giving them a chance to restore their fortunes. Leviticus 25:35-37 shows *inter alia* that neglecting the poor was a sin and that permanent poverty was not allowed in Israel. The religious community was encouraged to help the poor, aliens and temporary residents among them, so that they could continue to live among them. The assistance that should be given was in the form of interest-free loans and selling food to the needy without making any profit from it. Doing these things was,

among others, a sign of the fear of God among the people of Israel as well as recognition that God was the Lord who brought Israel out of Egypt and gave them the land of Canaan. Forbidding interest on loans could have been one strategy to ensure that the people were not forced by economic conditions to sell or attach their land.

The above-captioned themes like the Sabbath, tithing and the jubilee all teach, among others, that through the faith of the people of Israel, God cared about the plight of the poor. By extension, therefore, the people of God were to respond pragmatically and creatively to the challenge of poverty instead of being resigned and indifferent to it. Because God cares about the poor and always intervenes on their behalf to liberate them or ameliorate their suffering, the people of God have a duty to emulate God in this respect. It was the responsibility of the faith community to ensure that poverty did not take root in society. The community of faith, through the observance of various festivals like the jubilee, ensured that it created hope among the poor so that they should always look forward to a better day when poverty would be overcome. The initiatives and interventions that the faith community puts in place to respond to the problem of poverty are not just acts of charity, but rather the mission that was initiated by God the Father, modelled in the Incarnation of God the Son and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit in human history.

4.5 God the Son as Incarnation of *missio Dei*

God's concern for the poor is also clearly evident in the Incarnation of Christ. The following account of his self-emptying act elucidates this point (Philippians 2:5-8, NIV):

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!

He did this to set the Basarwa and all humanity free from all that enslave and subjugate them. The teaching parables of Jesus, his healing and feeding miracles, and his life of solidarity with the poor are but a few examples that corroborate this conviction. Jesus presents himself in several incidents as One who is on a mission to do the will of his father, who is also referred to as the One who sent him. Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God and the prayer that He taught his disciples are among the most poignant expressions of the mission on which He was sent to the world. In the following section, a few examples will be given to validate the claim that concern for the poor was central to the mission that the Son was sent to perform by the Father. This will also confirm the fact that there is congruence in both Testaments on God's concern for the poor and Christians' responsibility in encountering poverty.

4.5.1 God's concern for the poor in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, KJV)

Since we usually pray about the things closest to our hearts, it is proper to look at the Lord's Prayer to get some understanding of what was closest to Jesus' heart. The Lord's Prayer is the one passage in the New Testament that shows the mission that Jesus was sent to perform among, for and with the poor and for the sake of justice in general. In this study, due to limited space, reflection will be confined to only three petitions, namely "thy kingdom come"; "thy will be done"; and "give us this day our daily bread".

4.5.2 Jesus' teachings on the kingdom of God

4.5.2.1 "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10a)

The concept of 'the kingdom of God' was central to the teaching of Jesus Christ. According to Crossan (2008:1), "references to 'Kingdom of God' are found more than one hundred times in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), and so our ability to understand who Jesus is and the origins of his historical mission is intimately linked to his understanding of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom that is disclosed to us today in the enigmatic twists and turns of his recorded parables". Crossan notes that it is essential to keep in mind the fact that the audience of Jesus consisted of people who, after centuries of subjugation to various empires, wanted to know: If God is just and the world belongs to God, why is the world so unjust? There is no doubt that this is the question that many poor and excluded people, like the Basarwa, are asking today. The Jewish community seems to have held the view that "God will overcome, someday [...]. What ancient people waited for with eager faith was an end, not to earth or world, but to evil, violence, and oppression. What they expected was not a transfer from earth to heaven, but a transfer of heaven to earth" (Crossan, 2008:2).

Around the time of Jesus' birth, the Jewish vision of a utopian social transformation was the following:

The earth will belong equally to all, undivided by walls or fences. It will then bear more abundant fruits spontaneously. Lives will be in common and wealth will have no division. For there will be no poor man there, no rich, and no tyrant, no slave. Further, no one will be either great or small anymore. No kings, no leaders. All will be on a par together. (Sibylline Oracles, 2:319-324.)

The concept of the kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus "indicates a longing for God's new creation of an ideal world, a perfect world to replace this imperfect one" (Crossan, 2008:2).

The following are some of the ideas that Jesus had about the kingdom of God:

First, he claimed that the kingdom of God, a standard term for the Great Divine Clean-Up of Earth, was not just imminent, but already here; it was not just coming soon, but had already

started. This was a difficult claim to make. What may have been expected as an instant of blinding divine transformation was now proclaimed to be a process in time, an event with a beginning, a continuation and an end. Crossan (2008:3) therefore raises a fresh understanding of what Jesus may have meant with the words "thy kingdom come." This understanding is a radical departure from what Christians are brought up with or what Sunday schools and confirmation classes tend to instil in young people and new converts as they join the church. For Crossan, the kingdom of God is primarily about the end of evil and the establishment of a more just world. Secondly and closely related to the foregoing, is the idea that the kingdom of God belongs equally to all God's people.

The coming of the kingdom of God implies therefore, among others, the breaking down of all the structures of injustice that divide God's people on the basis of race, wealth, class, nationality and the geographical location in which they reside. This is where the missional role of the church, or the *missio Dei*, is imperative, in that the coming of this kingdom requires active participation of the church in the lives of people (especially the poor). People are, in this sense, active participants in ensuring the coming of the kingdom of God. The very oppressed and subjugated poor of Israel became the agents and ushers of the kingdom of God. Similarly, faced with the questions of historical abuse, ill-treatment and the many losses that the Basarwa have suffered in history, part of the mission involvement of the church could be to teach and disciple them so that they could take responsibility for their destiny and become the agents of the change that they want.

The sustainability of the teaching of Jesus about the kingdom of God lies, among others, in the fact that He enticed his audiences very effectively to go out and replicate what they saw him doing and saying. The church is not a passive, helpless spectator that sits back helplessly and waits passively; its participation aims at bringing about an order that is not dominated by kings, queens, and aristocracies. The kingdom manifests itself every time and in all places and situations where the people of God rise to resist all that destroys life in the world. Similarly, the kingdom of God becomes visible or is served in all situations where the people of God reject systems and structures that force human beings to live like animals and make the poor work like beasts. Christian mission is in the service of the kingdom of God every time and in every way it prepares the poor, like the Basarwa, to end the violence of the political structures as well as the political, educational and economic systems that serve to denigrate their cultures, languages and identities in the name of development and progress.

The kingdom of God is always and in every sense an alternative to the kingdoms of this world. The kingdom that the Son of God was sent to proclaim unequivocally declares that the kingdoms of this world, and the powerful and rich of society, do not have a final say in the affairs of humans and in the direction of human history. The belief in the kingdom of God bears testimony to the fact that another and better world is not only desirable, but possible. Van Groningen (2006:40) observes rightly that in the teaching of Jesus, the concept of salvation is closely linked to the kingdom of God. In this regard, accepting the teaching of Jesus and following him means

that one will be saved, while those who reject him are lost. Along the same lines, following Jesus always results in changed values and healed relationships. A mission strategy among the Basarwa that is based on the love of God, modelled after the incarnational life of Christ, who emptied himself to become a human being, will change the values of the church who was sent to do mission and will help in healing the wrongs from the past in the relations between the Basarwa and Christians from the dominant groups.

Jesus used a number of parables to explain to his audience what He meant by 'the kingdom of God'. One is impelled to agree with Crossan that the meaning of 'the kingdom of God' in the teaching of Jesus is, among others, "what the world would look like if God³ was running the show. [...] The fact that much of our current language on the Kingdom of God is no longer dissonant or paradoxical only shows us how we have domesticated it over the last few thousand years. Given that the Kingdom of God is primarily about what the world and humans and other relations would look like if God were in charge, one can reasonably extrapolate from the above that the mission role of the church in the world is to help the world to become that".

It is not possible to give comprehensive attention to what a situation may look like where God is in charge. For this section, it suffices to say that it is a situation where the will of God is done.

This, again, may mean several things, but with reference to the problem of poverty, it is adequate to say that it is a situation where the burdens and benefits of human labour and innovation are distributed equally among all God's children. With specific reference to the plight of the Basarwa, a situation where God is in charge may simply mean to accept that there is nothing wrong with these people the way they are and that they do not have to change in order to become part of the kingdom of God or of our societies; the Basarwa (and what remains of them as a distinct population group) is not from an archaic era, but rather a resemblance of the image of God. This is not a justification of their poverty condition; it will be demonstrated in the next chapter that this condition has been created by humans and is therefore foreign to the identity of these people.

4.5.2.2 "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10b)

This is one of the central petitions of the prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) that Jesus taught his disciples. The petition is clearly related to "thy Kingdom come" in 4.2 and it is likely that the message of his petition is a continuation of it. In this regard, it is difficult to make a distinction between these two petitions. It seems as if Jesus is saying more or less the same thing in two different ways.

"Thy kingdom come" is a statement of contrast. Jesus is contrasting the kingdom that He is preaching about with another, in this case the Roman Empire. Similarly, in saying "thy will be done", the will of God is contrasted with another will, namely that of the Emperor of Rome in particular and those in similar positions of power throughout human history. It seems as if Jesus

had perceived something very important about the relationship between the kingdom and the will. Empires are not neutral forces, they are power blocks. In this regard, the interests of the empire are driven by the will of the empire, as represented by the emperor. In this case, the kingdom and the will that drives it are inseparable. It is further noteworthy that emperors, particularly Roman Emperors, often claimed divinity such that the will of the empire could be considered divine.

It is out of this context that Jesus made these simple petitions that are found in the Lord's Prayer. Belham (2008:1-2) makes an important observation about this petition; he is of the opinion it can be assumed from the petition that "in heaven our Father's will is done 'gladly, willingly, completely and joyfully'" and that this petition "is a prayer with both an active and a passive side. Actively, we are called to pray for God's overruling hand on the affairs of this world, that his will may be done. Actively, we are challenged to pursue all that is in accordance with his will in our own lives and in the lives of those for whom we are responsible. Passively, we are called to accept what his will is, even when it is to our own personal discomfort or even anguish".

Belham's view, though sounding attractive and in line with traditional religiosity, remains apologetic. The use of concepts like 'foretaste' in the interpretation of this petition, apart from giving too little and not everything, simply lacks biblical or textual justification. This, however, is the theological interpretation to which the poor have been subjected throughout the centuries. The interpretation is misleading, as it keeps people hoping that someday in the future, what is now only available in part will then be realised in full. This seems to be a gross misrepresentation of what Jesus may have intended in this prayer and his example of selfless sharing of life-sustaining resources. In the Lord's Prayer, which, is part of a larger cluster of literature in Matthew's gospel, known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is concerned about the here and the now. In this section of Scriptures, He seems to be contrasting what has been with what is now breaking forth; the Sermon on the Mount in particular seems to be in contrast with what people have always been told about that which He is proposing.

In Matthew's gospel, the Lord's Prayer is part of the Beatitudes, which are often prefaced by the words, "you have been told, but I say unto you"; in other words, Jesus is comparing what the people have always been told or made to believe with the new message that He is preaching. To this extent, He may be saying to his audiences that they do not have to be glued to the reality as it has been perceived in the past—things do not have to remain the way they have always been indefinitely. He could possibly be saying that the Empire of Rome is not the kingdom of God and that the will of the Emperor is not the will of God. He may further be saying that the will of the powerful of society is not necessarily always right or the will of God. The will of the powerful of society serves as a means of social and even political control at times and represents evil, oppression and retrogression, not progress and development as they would like the poor to believe.

Belham (2008:1-2), for example, uses the concept of 'foretaste' to describe Christians' experience of the kingdom of God in this life. 'Foretaste' points to heaven, meaning that the kingdom of God is the kingdom of the future that people will enter beyond this life when they get to heaven.

The position of this study is that Jesus is concerned about the human situation in the here and now. Instead of people waiting to enter the kingdom of God when they get to heaven, Jesus' new reality is that it is the kingdom that comes to the people in their present earthly realities. The petition, "thy will be done", is one that seeks the unfolding of the will of God in the here and now and not in the distant future. In this petition, Jesus introduces a radical departure from the tendencies among the powerful of society to delay the joy, peace and gratification of the weak and marginalised to the future, beyond this life. Jesus rather seems to be raising the immediacy of the need for justice and liberation for the poor. He seems to be saying that the concerns of the poor and needy of the world are part of his agenda; they are part of the business that must be attended to here and now and not in some distant future when everything else has been done. Christ's way is the communal way, an inclusive way of inviting everyone unconditionally to enjoy the fullness of life and to be part of the family or the kingdom of God.

The way of the Roman Empire, on the other hand, was that of patronage²⁹, an establishment of the wise, the powerful, those of noble birth, a given class, race, language or some other exclusive category. The way of Rome is therefore in its very nature divisive. The lifestyle that is prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount and this prayer is a new way of looking at the law or the way people interact and relate to each other in society. It could equally be said to be a new way in which governance structures should be arranged. This seems to be a general trend throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ. The people that follow him and become his disciples do so upon his invitation. Some accept the invitation (Matthew 9:9) and follow, while others often refuse (Mark 10:17-31), preferring other options available to them, including the subjugation of others.

While it is indisputable that progress and development that come with modernity must benefit all people, the subjugated and their interests are often invisible in the planning and implementation of such strategies. Development, in this case development that is in line with what Jesus calls 'the will of God', must always begin with and be guided by the needs of the intended beneficiaries. A situation where development is imposed on people causes the development to define such people. It superimposes what those promoting it hold as values over and against the values that the poor like the Basarwa, hold, namely those values which modelled and shaped their lives throughout their history. This type of development that lacks local ownership is a perpetuation of foreign domination, the equivalent of Rome in Jesus' time, which Jesus rejects in the petition "thy will be done." The position of this study is that development, including that

²⁹ Having the favour, support or backing of the Emperor.

which is spearheaded by Christian mission agencies, has not always been good, as it has not necessarily served the need of the poor.

At times, it has rather served the interests of the rich and the powerful, and thus served as a weapon of oppression instead of liberation. Development that is done in this way is an affront to the will of God for his people. Development or poverty alleviation among the Basarwa that can qualify to be in line with the will of God should not only be driven by economic standards, but should also take people's value systems into account, as well as their perception of themselves and those things that are important to them. Poverty alleviation strategies that seek to know and address the poverty conditions of the people, but show no interest in knowing and understanding the people themselves, are untenable and based on prejudicially conceived and imaginary needs.

4.5.2.3 “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11)

It has been recorded in the gospel that Jesus instructed his disciples to petition God and say “give us this day our daily bread” whenever they prayed. There seem to be five keys in this prayer:

- i. Each of God's children has bread in God's scheme of providence.
- ii. Biblically, bread is a synonym for food (cf. Genesis 31:54; Job 42:11; Psalms 147:9; Mark 3:20; Matthew 15:2; Luke 14:1; John 13:18); it is the modest but sufficient means and measure for a respectable human form of life. In the broader spectrum, bread also includes clothing and shelter (Opus Sanctorum Angelorum, 1999:1). ‘Daily bread’ may mean different things to different people or cultures. The daily bread in this context represents the essential resources that people need in order to have a decent human existence. First of all, we are asking for bread as the basic food for nourishment of the body. The petition, “give us this day our daily bread”, is communal rather than individual. The one making this petition does so on behalf of the wider community and for the needs of the group, rather than just for narrow, individual concerns. It is in this regard that some have fittingly argued that “since I ask for ‘us’, I am not entitled to keep it simply for ‘me’. Who is ‘us’? Who is my neighbor? Ask the Good Samaritan, he knows” (Opus Sanctorum Angelorum, 1999:2). The daily bread that is sought in this prayer is not meant to be greedily hoarded by a few at the expense or to the exclusion of many. It is always intentioned for the welfare or the common good of all God's people.
- iii. Having daily bread is not just a physical human need it is also a matter of good governance. Belham (2008:1) observes poignantly: “As the English Reformers spoke of ‘daily bread’, they said something rather surprising. They said, ‘When you pray for daily bread, pray first for the government.’ Surprising but right, for on our governments and their policies and God's good hand upon them, will depend whether we have wealth or poverty; enough or too little bread.” In this regard, government policy often plays a role as to whether people are rich or poor and whether they have enough or too little. Good governance is therefore essential in ensuring that people have access to essential life-

sustaining resources and services. Whether or not people are rich or poor, whether or not they have access to services and programmes is essentially a matter of governance. The situation of the Basarwa fits very well into this argument in that their poverty was caused by the attitudes and treatment that they were subjected to by others (as shown in the last two chapters).

- iv. There is a link between having daily bread and freedom; this we have also seen from the Exodus account. Belham (2008:2) argues: "Pray that our government may be able to defend us from those who would bring us into subjection, for a subject people are rarely free from poverty." To this extent, there is an inextricable link between a lack of freedom or political self-determination and access to food and other basic necessities. Freedom, which also means to be governed by leaders of one's own choice, leaders who represent the interests of those they rule, is essential in ensuring that people have access to basics like decent food and shelter.
- v. The concern for daily bread is a matter of justice. Belham (2008:3) argues further: "Pray, too, that they may be able to maintain justice within our society, for if our goods are constantly being stolen or if we are often defrauded, then we shall very soon be anxious about daily bread." There is no doubt that a great deal of the poverty, injustice and suffering in the world result from injustice, greed and insensitivity on the part of those who have been placed in roles of leadership and responsibility. The definition of 'justice' often covers broad areas such as economic, remedial and distributive justice. The concept of 'justice' that is of concern in this context is distributive justice. This form of justice primarily "focuses on fair outcomes. It is concerned with relative fairness – that all people within a society actually possess a certain portion of that society's 'benefits and burdens,' that is, how a society should be structured to assure a fair distribution of burdens and benefits among its citizens" (Monsma 2008:1). Failure to ensure fairness in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of society leads to poverty on the part of some and opulence on the part of others. Situations where the benefits that were meant for the greater good of all are regularly stolen and defrauded by a few lead to unrest and anxiety instead of stability and peace.

What is important for consideration is that in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches the disciples that the way society's economic systems are ordered and run is critical in ensuring access to essential goods and services. The long-term peace and stability of any society depends on these systems. Injustice in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of society inadvertently plants the seeds of discord, strife and turbulence in the life of the society.

The most important lesson that this petition, "give us this day our daily bread", conveys, seems to be that "God our heavenly Father cares about our stomachs. He cares about the things we need

day by day; cares about these basic practical details" (Belham, 2008:2). In this case, God does not just care about the needs of some, but of all. Jesus did not only pray about daily bread, He also gave bread to 5 000 men, as well as women and children (Matt 14:15-21). The poor and needy, those with the greatest needs, would in such a situation be the most deserving of such care. It is only logical that people whose need is greatest will be those that God is most concerned about. This petition underscores the age-old Christian perception that God is not an aloof despot, but rather one who has a personal relationship of love, care and compassion with his creation, particularly the poor.

4.6 God the Holy Spirit as the empowering of *missio Dei*

At this early stage, it is essential to state that this is not a detailed study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; it is, rather, a quick survey of the role of the Holy Spirit in giving life to the *missio Dei* in human history. The concept of *missio Dei* helps us to understand that all the divine Persons are involved in mission (Ahonen, 2000:47). Ahonen continues by saying that, particularly with respect to the question of poverty, the Holy Trinity or God is active in the world to, among others, establish justice. In this respect, mission is defined as the continuous salvific acts of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The premise of this study is therefore that "according to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is the presence and work of the living God here and now in our individual lives, in the church and in the world" (Guthrie, 1994:292).

4.6.1 The role of the Holy Spirit in *missio Dei*

It is not the intention of this study to give a comprehensive view of the work of the Holy Spirit in Scripture, because, as Ahonen (2000:49) rightly observes, "the outwardly directed works of the Trinity are indivisible. Although each person of the Trinity has his own selfhood and tasks, the whole Trinity is present in both creation and salvation. It is therefore as unnecessary as it is futile to try to distinguish the works of the Trinity and assign particular manifestations of such work to the various Persons of the Trinity. God is one and works as a community of Beings". It is with this background that a brief survey of the work of the Holy Spirit will be explored in both the Old and New Testament.

4.6.2 Mission work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The Old Testament gives one the impression that right from the very beginning, at creation, the Holy Spirit has always been at work, creating, sustaining and preserving the lives of both humans and the non-human creation (Genesis 1:2; 2:7; Psalm 104:30). Guthrie [1994:292] opines that in both the Old and New Testaments, the Spirit is literally portrayed as the wind we breathe in and out to stay alive; for him, the Spirit simply means life. From this we can deduce that the Spirit in the Bible is the life-giving force of God (Ezekiel 37:1-10). Caution must,

however, be exercised that one should not think of the Spirit as some magical force, but rather a divine presence that gives life. The Holy Spirit is the life-giving person of the Holy Trinity.

When this is viewed with specific reference to groups like the Basarwa, who have over many centuries been dispossessed, impoverished, displaced and driven off the land which is the primary source of their livelihood, the mission of the Holy Spirit (*missio Dei*) among these people and those called to do mission among them is to ensure that their lives are respected, preserved and defended. The authenticity of the fact that the mission that is done among the poor is embedded in the *missio Dei* and that it is the outward work of the Holy Spirit is recognisable in God's commitment to justice and his defence of life in general.

The Old Testament also portrays the Holy Spirit as the source of all human culture, art, creativity and wisdom (Exodus 31:1-6; 35:31; Job 32:8; Daniel 1:17). Apart from showing the fact that God or the Holy Trinity has always been at work in all history, civilisation and culture, even beyond the confines of religious institutions, this shows the inextricable link between mission and respect for people's culture, identities, languages and community organisations.

In a more direct sense, the Old Testament gives the impression that what has traditionally been perceived as secular and even pagan is part of the work of the Holy Spirit in human history. This is particularly important as one thinks of the shift from the traditional understanding and practices of mission where, for example, conversion was coterminous with embracing Western culture, values and lifestyle which were considered advanced, Christian and superior. Mission as the work of the Holy Spirit, particularly viewed from the perspective of *missio Dei* in contradistinction to this traditional view, communicates that God accepts and affirms people like the Basarwa just as they are; in other words, a mission perspective that is embedded in *missio Dei* will affirm people like the Basarwa in their cultures, languages and identities, as well as works of art and creativity, without any need on their part to compromise anything in order to obtain salvation or the kingdom of God, notwithstanding the fact that salvation is only obtained by coming to Christ in faith and that all those who have come to faith ultimately change in line with the will of God for their life. The difference is that such change is not dictated by the powerful of society, but rather by the desire to be more like Christ according to Scripture (1John 3:2).

To conclude, it is worth noting that the Holy Spirit is always represented in the Old Testament as being on the side of all believers, especially those who are helpless, poor, wretched and oppressed, because they have been forgotten and excluded by the rich and powerful (Psalm 103:6; Psalm 146). For the purposes of this study, it suffices to say that the Holy Spirit has always been at work among all people, including the poor; helping, restoring and liberating them is enough prove that God has always been concerned with the conditions of poverty and the poor. Secondly and related to this is the fact that God's concern with poverty is not a later addition to what is known as the mission of God in the world.

4.6.3 Mission work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament is described in much the same way as in the Old Testament. Here, too, the Holy Spirit is the 'wind'. In John's gospel (John 3:8, NIV), it is mentioned that "the wind blows wherever it pleases". From this, Guthrie (1998:293) concludes that the Holy Spirit is and has always been present in the world beyond the confines of the church. For him, the Holy Spirit is present in every situation in life where there is wisdom, beauty and creativity, and wherever justice is done for the sake of the poor and oppressed; in other words, the Holy Spirit is the energy, the power and the wisdom behind all that is good, everywhere in life, even where such activities are undertaken by people who are not necessarily part of the institutional church or agents of a mission organisation. To expound this point further, he argues that "the Holy Spirit does not belong to Christians and is not trapped in our heart or in our church. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God who is Creator, Preserver and defender of life of all God's creation and all God's creatures" (Guthrie, 1994:294).

According to Guthrie (1998:296), the work of the Holy Spirit in Scripture can be summed up in one word, namely "new"; the gift of new life (1 Corinthians 12-14) and the new truth (John 14:26; 16:13):

- The Holy Spirit gives new creaturely life that is stronger than sickness and even death itself.
- The Holy Spirit gives new beginnings to people who seem to be at a dead end, bringing new wisdom and guidance from God.
- The Holy Spirit calls, holds together and sends out a new reconciled and reconciling community, called the church.
- The Holy Spirit works in the world to create a whole new community and a whole new creation.
- When the Spirit breaks in, old ways of thinking and living are left behind and new ways of thinking and living take over.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit transforms the old, boring and dead social structures into exciting, new, liberating ones.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit always brings with it the hope or dawning of a new day for a new and different future, and the hope and courage to move towards it.

In conclusion: In this section on the Holy Spirit, it has been demonstrated that the Spirit is primarily a life-giving force. The pregnancy of Mary is a case in point in this regard (Luke 1:35), giving new life to the creation of God and giving an opportunity for a fresh start for those that

are at the dead ends of their life. The Holy Spirit also builds a new community through reconciliation and sends that community out into the world to be an example and agent of the work of community building by God through the Spirit. The community building includes, where necessary, the dismantling of old ways of thinking, acting, living and believing that do not support the common life of the people of God in community and their common good. It also comprises the building of new structures, ways of living and acting that make human dignity possible, as well as peaceful coexistence, the restoration of lost dignity, identities, languages, land, leadership and many other concerns that the poor have to live with. The coming of the Spirit in Acts 2:1 is a good example of this.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS A TRINITARIAN RESPONSE TO ALLEVIATION OF THE BASARWA'S POVERTY

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, it has been demonstrated that mission belongs to God rather than the church, as has traditionally been perceived and practised. This chapter, therefore, starts from the premise that “neither the church nor any other human agent can ever be considered the author or bearer of mission. Mission is primarily and ultimately the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate” (Bosch, 1991:402).

It is even more important and more specific to the argument of this chapter to concur with Bosch (1991:402) that “mission has its origins in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people”.

Bosch (1991) convincingly argues that mission of God flows from the very nature of God, which is mutual love. Mission is founded on the unity of the Three-in-one God. The mission of God flows from the very nature of God, which is mutual love. We experience God as three in one: Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, but in total harmony and in perfect relationship. It is from this vision that mission arises. Mission is holistic, that is, many and varied but also one, because God, it seems to us, experiences difference and yet also unity within God self.

This same point is argued more eloquently in the report of the London Missiology Consultation of the World Council of Churches (WCC), which states: “The confession of faith continues to be essential, but truth in Christ is grasped as love, and the core of Christian identity is love. This suggests a relational way of being the church. Mission is the incarnation of this love in the world, offering Christianity a community identity that is open to others” (WCC, 2002:2).

However, one needs to be cautious and should not lose sight of the fact that it has also been stated in Chapter 4 that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit sent the church into the world to perform the *missio Dei* in the world; in other words, the church, though by special invitation, is an active participant in the mission of God in the world.

It is from this understanding of mission that the chapter will seek ways in which Christian mission (or, more appropriately, the *missio Dei*), in which Christians are privileged to participate, can respond to the problem of the Basarwa poverty. This chapter is not primarily

concerned with the 'how?' question of mission, which is what most of the literature on this subject seems to be concerned about. The concern in this chapter is rather over the theological basis of mission. In this regard, the study will explore three broad themes, namely the unconditional love of God the Father, the grace of God the Son and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit as the three theological building blocks of a mission theology that is aimed at addressing the poverty conditions of the Basarwa, embedded in the grand narrative of *missio Dei*.

As a result of their historical past can best be described as those who have "in the past experienced and continue to experience the circumscription of their lives through ideologies, cultural practices, and economic, social and political structures that hinder their partaking in the abundant life". In Chapters 2 and 3, the historical conditions that led to the present poverty conditions of these people have been described in great detail. Here it suffices to state that the poverty that the Basarwa experience is man-made; in other words, the Basarwa are poor because of the way they were treated, or rather ill-treated, by other population groups. The type of poverty that they suffer is more than mere material poverty (as has been demonstrated previously) and cannot, therefore, be resolved through material means alone. Their poverty, in their own words, expresses itself in terms of loss of their spirituality, language and culture as a distinct people. They also see the colonially drawn national boundaries of the modern sovereign states as a contributory factor to their poverty, in that boundaries fragment and interfere with their way of life.

The Basarwa and other indigenous communities hardly ever see their poverty in material terms. From the ground that has been covered in the background to this study, it can reasonably be argued that the Basarwa are not poor, but impoverished. The argument of impoverishment is based on the fact that their condition is by and large an imposed and man-made one. It is a result of ill-conceived and, in some ways, greed-driven policies and programmes, priorities, worldviews, attitudes and politics. These are the root causes of the poverty that is suffered by the Basarwa. From this, one can postulate that the solution to their poverty lies ultimately in addressing its root causes. In this regard, it is essential to underscore the fact that at the level of the wider society, poverty eradication will always imply the need for the restructuring of the structures of society that are responsible for perpetuating the culture of poverty and such other social ills in societies (Bruwer, 2008:63).

At the level of the church, there is an equal urgency to address the issue of relationship; there is, namely, an urgent need for transformation in the church's understanding of the basis of mission as an activity that is driven by love, grace and the need for relationship building at personal, community and other levels. From this perspective, it seems meaningful that poverty eradication necessarily requires a shift in planning and the general mentalities of those who are driving any schemes that are aimed at improving the livelihoods of the poor. A shift in how these people are governed and who governs them also seems an important ingredient, as demonstrated in the

previous chapters. From a specific mission perspective, though, there is need for the church to transform its understanding of mission, its role in mission and the basis of mission.

It is a given fact that the Basarwa were not only impoverished materially, but that their poverty also had social, political and human rights dimensions; their voices, for example, were vehemently suppressed over a long historical period. In other words, the perspectives of the Basarwa are absent on the historical stage, even with respect to things that affect them most directly, like their poverty. For contemporary mission, however, particularly a mission paradigm that is based on *missio Dei*, the voices of those who are targeted by a given mission strategy are indispensable in planning the interventions. Bruwer (2001:65) offers a helpful hint to the church in this regard; for him, the church must learn to listen to the poor, in this case the Basarwa, because the answer to the problem of poverty lies hidden within the poor themselves.

At a special meeting of the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) in 2011, the indigenous people, among whom the Basarwa are numbered, raised concern over the way in which the Western North Atlantic churches conducted evangelisation, which, for them, has made these churches accomplices and allies of the colonial domination, for they imposed their Western values on these people, excluding and condemning the indigenous spirituality, which were considered evil and idolatrous. In this way, their life journey through the centuries has been one of struggle, resistance and reappraisal of their beliefs and deep ancestral spirituality.

In general, mission work among the indigenous people must start by addressing the history of colonial forms of missionary outreach in a very serious, sincere and critical way in order to decolonise the current forms of mission and evangelism. For the indigenous people, mission will require honest dialogue; genuine mission is not possible without the words and voices of the indigenous people themselves. They insist that authentic mission will always require a contextual and all-inclusive approach that incorporates elements and principles of their indigenous life. Indigenous leaders go as far as to demand that mission among them should be envisaged as including both the biblical tradition and their indigenous wisdom in order to praise God, and encompassing indigenous beliefs of the Creator as being around us in all times and places (CWME, 2011:2).

It is with this background in mind that the chapter will attempt to explore how a mission understanding that is based on the love of God, the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit may help in answering these long-standing controversies today.

5.2 The unconditional love of the Father as a response to poverty

The Love of God is the central theme in the Bible. Apart from that, it underpins every motif or principle that we find in Scripture (1John 4:7-8). This section seeks to demonstrate that God loves his creation, particularly humanity, unconditionally and that God's involvement in human history or affairs has always been driven by love.

In Chapter 4, it has been demonstrated that God acclaimed his creation as very good; in other words, He was happy with creation the way it was created. Creation reflected the will of God or was in line with God's mission. The same chapter has further demonstrated that when the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt and were complaining about the harsh living and working conditions, God heard their cry and out of his love, "came down" and liberated them (Exodus 3:7-8). In the later life of Israel, in the Promised Land as liberated people, God's Holiness code was instituted to mitigate the impact of poverty and to ensure that it does not take root in society. All these examples and many others bear testimony to God's unconditional love for his people. This is what Wright (2010:112) calls "redemptive living of God's people", which he explains as "being moved by compassion, justice and generosity in a world of cruelty, exploitation and greed".

Balswick and Balswick (1989:24) argue:

The biblical account of the relationship between God and the children of Israel can best be understood by pointing to the analogy of an unconditional parental commitment to a child. A reading of Old Testament Scriptures reveals the cycle of Israel's turning away from the true God and getting into difficulty, God's reaching out and forgiving them, Israel's being reconciled into the intended parent/child relationship, and Israel's being blessed and renewed in their relationship to God.

In this respect, the Old Testament record shows that it should not be assumed that God loved the children of Israel because they were righteous or sinless. The Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 1:1-5, ESV) gives the following graphic description of the relationship of God and Israel:

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

God loved and reached out to the children of Israel despite their regular sin, rebellion, corruption and wayward ways; in other words, the relationship of God and Israel is one of unconditional love despite the sinful nature of the children of Israel. There are two very important factors in the consideration of the principle of the love of God:

The first factor is that the love of God for humanity does not depend on human behaviour, success or failure. God's love does not change when human conditions, situations and allegiances change, it remains unchanging. In two verses in the same chapter (1 Corinthians 13, NIV), Paul raises this aspect of the love of God. In verse 8, he says that "love never fails" and in verse 13, that "three (things) remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love". The nature and the extent of God's love are mentioned in many verses in the Old Testament, for example:

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. (Psalm 36:5, ESV.)

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him [...]. (Psalm 103:11, ESV.)

The LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. (Jeremiah 31:3, ESV.)

The concept of God's love, particularly in the Psalms and the prophetic books, is clearly developed. As evident from these cited Scriptures, God's love is described in a number of ways that include, but are not limited to, its unchanging nature (that it extends to the heavens, which may simply mean that it is immeasurable), its steadfastness and its everlastingness.

The second factor is that it seems as if God always initiates the love relationship between him and humanity.

In terms of the New Testament, Chapter 4 has cited aspects of the Lord's Prayer, for example the petition, "thy kingdom come", which (for the purposes of this study) speaks of the inclusive nature of the love of God. Unlike other kingdoms, where membership is based on birth, social status or even patronage, the kingdom of God is all-inclusive. From the petition, "thy will be done", it has been demonstrated that the will of God, in contradistinction to those of the rulers of this world, place a high premium on the common good or the welfare of all. From the petition, "give us this day our daily bread", it has been pointed out that all God's children need to have access to life-sustaining resources. Balswick and Balswick (1990:24) claim the following:

The life of Jesus is the supreme expression of unconditional love. It is noteworthy that Jesus told the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15) in response to the Pharisees' and Scribes' criticism of His

welcoming and sitting with the sinners. Just as the father in the story welcomed his wayward son home with open arms, Jesus was also demonstrating unconditional love to people who had rejected His Father.

There is no doubt at all that the love of God for his creation is more clearly developed in the New Testament than it is in the Old Testament. With respect to the fact that God is the initiator of the love relationship with humanity, for example, 1 John 4:19 (NIV) says: "We love because He first loved us." Similarly, 1 John 4:10 (NIV) says: "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us."

The most well-known New Testament Scripture in the world is probably John 3:16 (ESV): "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life". This is important in that it clearly points to God's love as the force behind the incarnation of Jesus in human history, as well the possibility of salvation for those who believe in God through him. In this sense, God's plan of salvation is driven by love.

in 1 John 4:9-12 (ESV), we find similar words:

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

The only addition to the above observation could be that those who have experienced the love of God in their lives are required to reciprocate the same love in their dealing with other people. This idea is expressed clearly in 1 John 4:7 (ESV): "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God." It is, however, important to note that for John, God does not only act in or out of love, God is love and whoever abides in God, therefore, abides in love (1 John 4:16). The requirement of loving one another is not an easy-going, do-as-you-please proposition. According to John 15:12 (ESV), it is a commandment of the Lord that "you love one another as I have loved you". The fact that this same commandment is also stated in John 13:34, where it is called a "new commandment", can only bear witness to the fact that love for "one another" in the way that Jesus loved was a very important aspect of how He understood the mission that God sent him to perform in the world.

Paul raises the issue of the unchanging nature of this love and that "neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39, ESV). Love seems to be such an important subject for Paul that he urges his audience as follows (Romans 13:8-10, ESV):

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet", and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

It is thus clear from the above-mentioned Scriptures that God loves us and wants to live in a relationship with us. The love of God is not a faraway love, but expects *koinonia*. This is the reason why, in this study, the theme of 'love' is considered to be very important in the attempts to find *missio Dei*-embedded solutions to the problem of the Basarwa's poverty. In the following section, possible mission responses to the many ills that the Basarwa have suffered will be explored, based on unconditional love.

3.2.1 The Father's unconditional love and the Basarwa's loss

One word that aptly summarises the situation of the Basarwa since their encounter with other population groups, as demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 3, is 'loss'. The Basarwa have lost their land, identity, language, modes of subsistence and many other features of life that were unique to them as a distinct people. Part of their loss includes their indigenous knowledge systems. In a special report to the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC, 2006:2), the indigenous people describe their situation as follows: "Our rich cultures and our invaluable lands are being slowly eroded by the onslaught of Western mono-culture and by economic globalization through neo-liberalism."

Some of the possible responses from the theological perspective that is based on God's unconditional love could be the following: First, from the biblical texts that are cited above, it is clear that Christians are required to love all people, regardless of race, class, creed, nationality, language or any other classification. Secondly, in loving other persons, Christians are imitating God or are like God. Wright (2010:269) observes that "to trash someone else's property is incompatible with any claim to love that other person".

Therefore, the dispossession of the Basarwa, which started with their first encounter with the other populations and is still continuing to the present day, was and still is wrong. It is against the will of God for the Basarwa and all others who are involved in such activities; it is also a clear sign of loveless human relations. The involvement of the church in the past has not been very helpful. The reason for this could be that the mission of the church was primarily to plant new churches or to convert as many people as possible.

A mission strategy that is based on God's love will, instead of dispossessing some people, promote values like sharing and caring. It is particularly clear from the New Testament texts that have been cited above that God loved the world so that those He so loved may not perish, but have eternal life. Christian mission that is based on love will not support any plan or strategy that contradicts God's plan of people having life. It will, therefore, oppose anything that poses a threat to the lives and well-being of people like the Basarwa.

Another important consideration on the question of how a mission response, based on unconditional love, may provide an answer to the problem of poverty among the Basarwa is that, for as long as they can remember, these people have only known hatred, disrespect, abuse and ill-treatment from those from the dominant groups, including Christians; a new approach to mission which will be guided by principles like respect and a willingness to listen to those among whom such mission is undertaken, will (apart from being different from previous approaches) result in better relationships among people at personal and community levels.

This new approach will also help the Christian mission to serve as a contradiction to the many unhealthy competitions and general rivalry in the societies. A mission strategy, based on love, will help the churches to begin to deal with the difficult relations that are also noticeable among themselves in the mission field. Clearly, love begets love and so it is expected that those who are shown the love of God, as well as his people who are involved in mission, will ultimately reciprocate this same love, regardless of how long it takes. It can be assumed that those who have experienced the love of God have at the same time experienced the blessing of God. Showing love and living love among those who are called to mission is being a blessing to those among whom one is sent, so those who bring a message of love to the poor like the Basarwa will be a blessing to them, in order that they, in turn, can be a blessing to others.

A mission strategy, based on the unconditional love of God the Father, is an answer to the mission challenges that are facing the church today, because it will help to correct a lot of ills from the past that were caused by hatred, a lack of respect, greed and competition that resulted in some being poor and dispossessed like the Basarwa. Quite apart from the foregoing, such a mission strategy is in line with the *missio Dei*. It is what God wants and has always wanted, and is in line with how God wants our relationships to be ordered at personal and other levels.

A mission paradigm that is based on God's unconditional love will help the church to overcome an understanding of mission, as shown in the WCC Report from the Missiology Consultation (2002:1) in which mission is perceived in terms of:

[...] two main forces in the world: the centrifugal force that constructs identity over and against the 'Other', the idea that 'unless we hate that which we are not we cannot love what we are'; and the centripetal force of assimilating any element of life into oneself and calling it one's own. Both forces represent a universal metanarrative which claims primacy over all other stories and

experiences. They are undergirded conceptually by the denial of historical particularity, binary thinking, the creation of impenetrable boundaries and the silencing and exclusion of those who are different.

This type of thinking, as shown earlier, is one of the root causes of the Basarwa poverty. A mission that is based on love, the common good, inclusion and willingness to listen and understand the other will go a long way in overcoming some of the historical challenges that are facing mission today.

A new mission approach will also place a premium on solidarity with the poor. This could, among others, be the realisation that we are one human family, regardless of our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences. Any policy, programme or scheme that discriminates, disadvantages or even excludes some on the basis of the above is not based on love and is therefore a negation of the will of God for such people and the creation of loving, caring, inclusive communities that seek to replicate what God has initiated.

It is the candid position of this study that God the Father has always been involved in history, seeking to restore human dignity, not through programmes and projects, but primarily through unconditional love and relationships. *Missio Dei* challenges the church and all others who seek to participate in mission to shift from old programmes and project perceptions of mission to giving attention to the love of God the Father and the work He is doing in history through relationships and *koinonia*.

5.3 The grace of God the Son as a response to the Basarwa poverty

It is not possible to give a comprehensive definition of the concept of 'grace' in the scope of this study. It suffices to state that in the first place, grace is about God's favour towards human beings. This favour, like God's love, is first unconditional, and secondly given undeservedly to those who receive and benefit from it; in other words, they have not earned it or done anything that directs God's favour towards them. In this regard, grace is God's upfront gift—it is not something that humans either earn or deserve. Bosch (1981:50) captures this aptly in these words: "In the Old Testament, God reveals himself as the One who, among other characteristics, has compassion on the poor, the oppressed, the weak and the outcast. Israel's election is to be attributed to this divine compassion, not to any good qualities Israel might have possessed." Similarly, from his reading of the Old Testament prophets, he observes: "Time and again, the prophets reminded the people of Israel that their election could not be attributed to their own extraordinary character, but solely to God's compassion."

From a Christian perspective, it is thus clear that salvation is not possible without the gift of grace. In the light of the connection between the two, Bosch (1991:402) argues that for Christians, the conviction that God has decisively wrought salvation for all in and through Jesus

Christ stands at the very centre of their lives. After all, the very name Jesus means “Saviour”. In the Bible, the idea of ‘grace’ is very closely linked to the idea of ‘salvation through Christ’. It is important in this regard to note that salvation is the work of grace; in other words, humans do nothing to deserve their salvation, it is a free gift of God or the work of God’s grace.

In the second place, bringing salvation through Christ to the world is the work and initiative of God through his Son. With regard to the importance and relevance of the salvation-grace nexus for Christian understanding of mission, Bosch (1991:402) observes that salvation has motivated the Christian missionary movement throughout history, such that the desire to mediate salvation has been a very high priority for mission. It has been “the throbbing heart of missiology; since it concerns the deepest and most fundamental question of humanity”. Bosch is of the opinion that the theme of salvation is important for both one’s understanding of theology and mission, and often one’s understanding of salvation will determine one’s scope of mission. Given the fact that the central purpose of Christian mission has, since the earliest times, been to mediate salvation, such salvation, regardless of how one defines it, is only possible in Christian thinking through the grace of the Son of God. Scherer (1987:88), in agreement with the general view of grace as discussed under this heading, raises the following aspects of the gift of grace in the mission of God in the world:

- i. God is a God who lovingly condescends in Christ to meet us in our human condition, and whose infinite capacity for grace precedes any merit or moral improvement on our part.
- ii. God stops to stoop to our weakness, because that is God’s nature and because He desires, out of compassion, to seek and save the lost.
- iii. Through the external word of the gospel proclamation, we hear the good news of salvation addressed to us and by grace, through faith, we are enabled by the Spirit to lay hold of the gospel promises.
- iv. As this occurs, God makes us new creatures. We become witnesses to the new creation in Christ Jesus.

The point that Bosch and those of his age seem to have overlooked is that grace plays a critical role in the working out of God’s plan of salvation in history; in other words, not enough emphasis have been placed on the concept of ‘grace’ at the centre of the mission of God. Without any fear of deviation, it can be stated that salvation is not possible without the grace of God. Grace is the divinely provided channel through which God saves the lost people of the world through Christ. It seems as if the Lutheran community have begun to give more attention to the concept of grace in the contemporary missiological discourse than the rest of the other traditions. For the Lutherans, the concepts of “word and sacrament, which they also call the means of grace, is part of a theological and doctrinal discourse that helps them to reflect upon and conceptualize how it is that humans are drawn into a relationship with God” (Schattauer, 2011:322).

The following are some of the findings that flow from a reflection on the means of grace:

- a. Christians become rooted in the gospel of Christ through Word and Sacrament, which they call the means of grace.
- b. In the contemporary period, Christians are coming to a clearer understanding of how these means of grace are the indispensable starting point for God's mission (*missio Dei*) to redeem and restore the whole world in Jesus Christ.
- c. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Word and Sacrament create faith in believers, gather the church as a community of fellowship (*koinonia*) in faith and direct its witness (*marturia*) and service (*diakonia*) in the world; Word and Sacrament encompass the life-giving purpose of God for the whole world.
- d. The practice of Word and Sacrament at the heart of the worshipping assembly of Christians is the orienting centre of God's mission as it unfolds in the course of human life and history.

In summarising this point, it seems as if Schattauer (1994:323) is saying that without the grace of the Son of God, it is impossible for humans to get rooted in the word of God, to have a starting point in God's mission plan for the redemption and restoration of the world, to be gathered into the community or fellowship of the children of God, or to have a sense of direction for their witness and service in the world. Without the means of grace, it is not possible to see the work of God in history. It is from these insights among the Lutherans that Schattauer concludes:

Here is the deep connection between worship in word and sacrament and God's mission: Jesus Christ, the crucified one, who draws all people, all things to himself (John 12:32-33), stands at the center of the Christian assembly and directs us outward to the whole world as the object of God's life-giving purpose. Jesus Christ himself is the connection of worship and mission – inside out.

The New Testament's worldview is that at the beginning, God created heaven and earth, all things visible and invisible in and through the Word, God's Son, Jesus Christ. Everything was created out of the love of God and of his Son. Since love is eternal and unconditional, it has not changed over the years, despite the precariousness of the human condition to the contrary. Due to the arrival of sin in human history, the relationship between God and his creation was affected and spoiled. God the Son therefore seeks, through his grace, to bring humanity into a relationship with God. Through his incarnation, life work, death and resurrection, He forgives the sins of humanity and the world graciously and unconditionally. In this sense, grace is that special disposition on the part of God the Son to set the guilty party free without paying any penalty for sin, due to love. God the Son, through his incarnation in human history, is at work, recreating humanity and the whole creation so that He may put everything under his authority. The recreation of the world is done out of grace and love and in and through God the Son.

The following are some of the mission implications of this type of understanding of the mission of God (Bosch, 1981:51):

- a) God expects those who have experienced his mercy to reciprocate the same mercy in their relationship towards others.
- b) The purpose of the election of Israel in biblical times and, by extension, the invitation of the church to participate in the *missio Dei* is service and where this was withheld, election or the invitation to participate alongside God in the *missio Dei* lost its meaning.
- c) The election primarily conveyed neither privilege nor favouritism, but rather responsibility. Israel, who had been a stranger in Egypt, had to have compassion on the stranger in her midst. The constitutive element here was neither the ethnic, nor the biological or cultural; the stranger who lived in Israel had to be accepted completely and without reserve.
- d) Bosch's (1981:54) radical reading of the book of Jonah is such that the morale of the story is not the conversion of Nineveh, but rather a call to Israel to allow themselves to be converted to a compassion that is comparable to that of Yahweh.
- e) The real basis of mission in Jesus' ministry is found in his boundless compassion and this is what distinguished him from his contemporaries like the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots and Essenes.
- f) Unlike others of similar standing, Jesus' distinguishing characteristics were not that He recruited followers and taught them the Torah, but rather that he questioned the traditional Jewish values at critical points by turning to the outcasts of society and proclaiming to them the message of God's compassion. Also noteworthy is the ways in which He radicalised the ethical demand of the Torah by focusing on the demand to love, especially to love the enemy.

Having observed the above general characteristics of the mission of God and particularly the way in which it was manifested in the incarnation and life of God the Son, Bosch (1981:51) concludes insightfully: "God reveals himself as the one who has compassion on the less privileged, the marginal figures and outcasts. He is the God of grace [...]. A religion in which compassion occupies so central a position cannot be but a missionary religion."

For this study, therefore, the mission of God is a process through which God seeks to restore relations among humans at both personal and corporate level through compassion and grace in and through God's only Son, Jesus Christ.

5.3.1 God's grace as an answer to the Basarwa poverty

It is with this broad understanding of the concept of grace and the almost mandatory demand of grace being reciprocated by those who have experienced and benefitted from it that the basis of this concept as a mission strategy among the poor is explored. The church is the community of people that have experienced God's saving grace; it consists of people who know that nothing, or rather no merit on their part, has earned their new relationship that they have with God and that there were no preconditions that they had to meet in order to qualify. Similarly, in her dealings

with the Basarwa, or rather her mission outreach to the Basarwa, the church should be careful not to impose preconditions, either for being accepted as members of the fellowship or of the wider kingdom of God.

5.3.2 God's grace as a response to disparaging attitudes

The focus will here be on the perceptions and treatment that have impoverished the Basarwa. In Chapters 2 and 3, it has been identified that the Basarwa have been subjected to a long history of disparaging attitudes which are evident in the names that they have been called, like Bushmen, San, Basarwa and Remote Area Dwellers. Quite apart from being a sign of the refusal on the part of the dominant groups to give space to this people and learn from them who they are, this attitude bears testimony to the refusal to know and be known on the part of the so-called dominant groups. In this sense, it is a refusal to adhere to God's requirement of love. The problem of refusal to allow space for this process of knowing and being known exposes weakness on the part of the powerful, not the Basarwa. It is possible that the powerful had a lot to hide about their identity or past and did not want to be known.

In this section, the mission role of the church is the main concern. There are several ways to respond to this challenge. It is important to suggest, by way of background, that one of the things that made it difficult for the church to bear witness or show compassion and grace to the Basarwa in the face of the harsh treatment that they were subject to, could be that the church's understanding of mission was that they should spread Christendom.

The notion held in the church, particularly the Western church, had been that there was something like a Christian culture. Schattauer (1994:325), however, rightly observes that "the demise of Christendom and with it the social support for a Christian culture have invigorated the question of the Christian engagement with the contemporary cultural environment"; in other words, the Christian faith should graciously acknowledge all cultures and recognise them equally as God's gifts for the ordering of human society and the welfare of all. With this in mind, Christian mission should acknowledge the need of giving as well as receiving something from all cultures. This means that the Christian mission should shape as well as allow itself to be shaped by the cultures in which it is called to do mission work, including previously disregarded cultures of groups like the Basarwa.

For Schattauer, the Christian faith should accept the fact that "there is no Christian language, no Christian music, art and architecture. There is only a distinctive use of these things for the purpose of translating the gospel message in ways that communicate the gospel in each and every cultural context". A mission strategy that is based on the notion of grace can therefore answer and correct some of the ills from the historical past by abandoning the ill-perceived notions of the superiority of one culture, language and such other cultural features, and accept all people and their ways of life as a gift of God. The mission of grace requires that the church seeks

ways in which the gospel is translatable into all cultures and experiences. Grace requires sitting where the poor sit, listening to them, learning from them and developing a capacity in the process of presenting the gospel to these people in a language and cultural idiom that they understand best.

5.3.3 God's grace as a response to failure in recognising the Basarwa's way of life

The Basarwa's way of life is very complex. The following, however, deserves special consideration: In Chapters 2 and 3, it has been shown that part of the reason for the Basarwa poverty was the failure to recognise their way of life, for instance their mode of subsistence, territoriality, private property ownership and leadership style. There is no simple answer to this problem, but it seems a plausible proposition to say that since these factors contributed to their current condition of poverty, addressing them is probably an important dimension of addressing the overall poverty conditions that are faced by these people.

The response that has been given in 5.3.2 also applies to this situation. There is no Christian way of subsistence, no Christian mode of food production and preservation, and no Christian property ownership or leadership style. All of these, even those which came to be known as Christian over the years, are cultural and time-bound constructs. This is probably one situation in which Paul's admonition (Galatians 3:28, NLT) is most applicable: "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus." God, who sends the church into mission, does not regard any one culture, leadership style or land tenure system over and above others. He wants all cultures to serve human needs. In this respect, cultures that have normally been regarded as primitive and backwards seem to be closer to the will of God regarding the welfare of all than the so-called more advanced cultures that place a high premium on individualism and are privatistic.

Mission that is based on grace should accept the mistakes of the past humbly, offer repentance, seek the forgiveness of those who have been wronged and find new ways of supporting the Basarwa's way of life and leadership with the view to building more loving, caring and peaceful human relations in future. A mission strategy that is based on grace calls humanity to unite in the body of Christ; it calls them to *koinonia* with God and with each other. As Paul puts it, "there is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6, NASB). God calls us all to a new identity that is based on the one faith, one baptism and common childhood of the same God and Father of all. Anything to the contrary is a negation of the gospel of Christ. A mission that is based on grace must help both the Basarwa and other groups to transcend the false illusion that, for example, the land belongs to one group or the other and affirm the biblical truth that in essence, "the earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers" (Ps 24:1-2, NASB).

Ultimately, humans must come to the realisation that the earth does not belong to one person or group. It belongs to God and is meant to serve the needs of all his children. Claiming to own either God's creation or any part thereof exclusively is misleading and a characteristic of fallen humanity's greed. Neither the Basarwa nor the dominant groups own God's earth and with the current challenges of population explosion and other environmental challenges, it will become more imperative in future for all to accept that the earth and its resources were meant for everybody on the basis of sharing. God has put the land in the hands of people to be guardians and those land rights are even underpinned in the Ten Commandments.

The study does not dispute the fact that populations can claim right to lands that their forebears have inhabited and utilised in the past. The position of this study, however, remains that the land belongs to God alone. Unbiblical misconceptions of claims of landownership have led to a lot of avoidable conflicts, wars and loss of precious resources and lives. Similarly, they have led to the abuse and degradation of the environment, which factors are responsible for both human and environmental suffering in the world. It is the candid position of this study that *missio Dei* challenges the church in its proclamation, through its liturgy and its practical life example to declare anew that ultimately, the land belongs to God and its use and resources must be shared for the benefit of all.

5.3.4 God's grace as an answer to pride and arrogance

The Mission enterprise of the last 200 years or more has, among other things, been characterised by pride, arrogance or a feeling of superiority, namely that those who brought the mission were representative of advanced or Christian cultures. Along the same line, conversion of tribes and whole nations seems to have been viewed as a conquest of some kind, such that those who were the 'conquerors' felt triumphant. Conversion of this kind was packaged in such a way that it was not merely the conversion to the faith, but also to the cultures, lifestyles and values of the advanced cultures. This is why, in the case of the Basarwa, the question of assimilating them into the cultures of their advanced Tswana neighbours was viewed as part of the process that is necessary to help them benefit from the new developments. The understanding of mission as the work of grace contradicts any notion that people could achieve salvation due to their birth, race, skin colour, the civilisation or kingdom they represent et cetera.

Salvation, which still remains at the heart of Christian mission, is the work of the Trinitarian God through grace. The pride and arrogance that are based on social status, wealth, intelligence or any other such qualities have no place in God's saving work of grace. Salvation through Christ is a free gift of grace and must humble those who are saved, instead of making them arrogant. From the perspective that mission is based on the grace of the Son of God, the Basarwa do not have to change to and adopt the cultures of any other group in order to be Christians. The mission of God that is based on grace contradicts the arrogance that has characterised the missionary enterprise

of the past with its humility and in that, albeit partially, it becomes part of the solution to the problems that were facing mission in the past.

An understanding of mission that is based on grace equally humbles the church by bearing witness to the fact that mission and the saving grace does not belong to the church, but to God. Mission as grace causes those who are involved in mission to point the world to God and his Son, Jesus Christ, for salvation instead of to the witnesses themselves or to their denominations and mission agencies (John 1:29-30). Addressing the problem of pride and arrogance seriously and ensuring that they do not stand in the way of God's grace will help those who are targeted by the missionaries to see God at work in history beyond the individuals who are at work in the mission field. Emphasising the place of grace will let the poor realise that they are no more or less than anybody else and will let them claim their rightful place in history. The primary solution to the Basarwa poverty is to undo the negative things that they have suffered in the past and to help restore their full dignity as people who have been created in the image of God.

5.4 The fellowship of God the Holy Spirit as response to the Basarwa poverty

In Chapter 4, it has been demonstrated that Christians believe that God the Holy Spirit has been at work in history since creation. Reading the New Testament, particularly the Acts of the Apostles, one cannot avoid the impression that this book could just as well have been called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit led the disciples of Jesus and the early church into various mission contexts and cultural settings in ways that often left them shocked. He often led these early disciples, most of whom were Jews, into new insights of mission that challenged many of their pre-existing ideas, perceptions and attitudes about God and God's work in history. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles shows the many ways in which the Holy Spirit led the disciples to cross cultural, geographical and ethnic boundaries in the service of *missio Dei*. It is the opinion of this study that the Holy Spirit is still at work in history, initiating, calling and directing the unfolding of the *missio Dei*, just as He was working in the life of the early church.

In this section, the function of the Holy Spirit will be explored, particularly as the Person of the Holy Trinity who gathers and creates a community/fellowship (*koinonia*) of God's people, and sends and directs them to replicate the same activity as has previously been done in history. In order to do this, these activities will be juxtaposed with the approach of the Botswana government to the underdevelopment of the Basarwa since independence in 1966.

As shown in Chapter 3, the government of Botswana embarked, among others, on removing the Basarwa from places that were considered as very remote and scattered habitats to Tswana villages, like settlements. The purpose of this arrangement was to ensure that the Basarwa have access to modern amenities, like schools, health facilities, portable water, roads and access to job markets. Through this same arrangement, the Basarwa were also introduced to both pastoral and arable agriculture as a means of new Tswana-like means of subsistence. Some were even

introduced to other modern commercial activities. In their own right, these are very commendable efforts. One cannot deny the fact that some of the Basarwa may have benefited from such schemes. The conclusion to Chapter 3 is, however, that these schemes are unable to resolve the problem of the Basarwa poverty.

The solution to the Basarwa problem must be sought in that which went wrong. It must be sought in what initially caused the current situation and not in the comfort zone of the government and its structures. In this respect, one is bound to concur with Van der Walt (2007:122) that "poverty in Africa is a result of failed development project. The problem of the Basarwa poverty falls clearly into this category and the solution to this problem must be sought, at least initially, in the healing and restoration of human relations. The starting point of addressing the Basarwa poverty is the healing of the antagonism or alienation in human relations since the time that the Basarwa had encountered the other population groups. Problems of human relations cannot be resolved simply in or through infrastructural development. No amount of money, programmes or projects will suffice in this situation; the secret lies in the face-to-face encounter of the descendants' of the Basarwa and the more dominant groups to confront the ills of the past and to address them.

The Basarwa poverty is virtually a problem of human relations that have gone bad. It is a result of the clash of worldviews and cultures. In this case, failure, particularly on the part of the powerful invaders, to take time to understand the Basarwa in terms of who they are, their concepts of land tenure, territoriality, subsistence, food husbandry and leadership styles has led to the present conditions of poverty. Failure to learn from the Basarwa about the ecological conditions of the particular geographical areas in which their forebears had lived and subsisted for millions of years, for example, has resulted in the many environmental predicaments that Southern Africa finds herself in today. It must also be noted that human greed, which manifests itself in private ownership (even where it is not necessary), and refusal to share the space that God has provided for all, thereby relocating or driving the weak into arid and other conditions in which it is hard to survive, are at the root of the poverty crisis that is suffered by the Basarwa. This is the particular context of the Basarwa poverty in which the Holy Spirit is at work, calling the church to repentance and public confession, the practising of *koinonia* and solidarity with the Basarwa.

5.4.1 Repentance and public confession

The starting point of the church's involvement in poverty alleviation among the poor should be a public confession of her role in the past. On the one hand, this role may be the active involvement in the subjugation, ill-treatment, assimilation and dispossession of the Basarwa, which have resulted in their current poverty situation. On the other hand, it may also be its indifference and silence in the face of gross injustice that was done to these people. Repentance for past evils has always been the starting point for Christians to deal with the past, whether in

their individual private life or as corporate bodies. Confessions like the Barmen Declaration and the Confession by the Dutch Reformed Church that Apartheid was a sin are all in this spirit.

There is, therefore, no reason why the church in Botswana and other parts of Southern Africa where the Basarwa have been subjected to varying degrees of evil should not start with this precedence which the church has set in history. Confession of the sins of the past will result in the mutual forgiveness and healing of relationships. Though only in part, healing the ills from the past is the answer to the Basarwa poverty. This will clear the way for a new focus on the work of the Holy Spirit to give new direction for mission and service of the church among the Basarwa.

5.4.2 Call to fellowship (*Koinonia*)

The participation of the church in the world is to witness to the fellowship or community which exists amongst different people under the reign of God and with God. This is often rightly referred to as *koinonia*. Here, however, it is important to stress the point that the building of community in question is the work of God and is therefore anchored in God's unconditional love. People are part of the fellowship, because God loves them unconditionally. For such a fellowship, there is no other ground of membership than God's unconditional love. The membership of the community that the Holy Spirit is building and to which the church is invited to participate in is the 'newly' found redemption in Christ for all creation.

The church believes that all human beings are equally created by God in his own image and that God's image is clearly visible in all humanity, despite their diversity of languages, identities, cultures and social statuses. The church is therefore called to exemplify this community of God's love in its life, work and witness – it must be an all-inclusive community that is based on God's unconditional love. The basic requirement of this love of God is expressed in the commandment to love your neighbour as you love yourself. 'Loving yourself' is the basic principle or starting point of God's love relationship with humanity and among human beings themselves. The experience to love and be loved is the experience of God. When people love, they experience God and when they are loved, they also experience God, for God is love (1 John 4:7,8). To love and be loved is to abide in God and is also God abiding in us. Human failure to love and respond to others in loving ways is, therefore, primarily a result of humans' refusal to accept that God loves them, as well as a sign of the fact that they are unable to love themselves as God loves them. These are the grounds for the hatred, divisions and animosity in human history. Often, they give many excuses, like race, class, age or gender to justify their attitudes. Unfortunately for them, in commanding humans to love their neighbours, God's love does not give them the option to choose their neighbours, nor their behaviour, language, race or even the needs and challenges that they are facing. The most loving disposition towards neighbours is therefore to accept that the basis of their relations and interaction is predetermined. The reference point for this relationship is the unconditional love of God. The mission task of those who are privileged to participate with God in building relationships is to take the neighbours and their needs seriously

and allow themselves in a kenosis-type, grace-driven humility to see their needs from their perspective.

While God's love is unconditional, all human beings come into the relationship with God and their neighbours with their own conditions, such that loving a neighbour necessarily implies loving them regardless of their conditions. Instead of imposing new conditions, which may be the Christians' own conditions, they are called to love unconditionally. If the church perceives itself as a community that is based on God's love, and living and acting in loving ways towards the Basarwa, it will serve the purpose of overcoming the hate-driven poverty that they have suffered in history.

The membership of the *koinonia* that the church is called to is based on the grace of the Lord: in other words, believers become part of the family or community of God out of God's grace, through faith alone. Nothing that they are or have done qualifies them to become members of this fellowship. This means that they are to accept all others on the same basis. The grace of the Lord compels them to accept the membership of all others in the family or fellowship of God's unconditional love in the unconditional and humble way. The principle of grace therefore challenges the church to transcend all the prejudices and disparaging attitudes of the past and embrace all God's people unconditionally.

Participation in the *missio Dei* calls the church to a mission of healing and reconciling of human relationships at various levels (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). In this sense, the Holy Spirit is involved in the mission of God, creating loving and caring communities. Sharing and caring for each other was central to the ministry and mission of Christ and the first church in Jerusalem (Acts 2,4). Examples of this abound throughout the New Testament, for example the feeding of the 5 000 men, as well as women and children (Matthew 14:13-21). Even the fact that the first Holy Communion was instituted as a shared meal bears witness to this aspect of Jesus' ministry (John 13).

It is, however, important, particularly with reference to the question of Basarwa poverty, to analyse the concept of 'sharing'. Here, sharing could be understood slightly differently: Sharing in the situation of these strained human relations must begin with the sharing of who people are; in other words, the sharing of their God-given identity, languages, cultures, community organisation and leadership style, as well as worldviews and value systems. The proper understanding, appreciation and protection of what is valuable to each person are the beginning of being in the creational fellowship of God. People cannot share what they have in term of material goods if they cannot share and appreciate who they are. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit calls them to share their newly created heritage as human beings who are loved unconditionally by God, saved by the grace of the Lord and called to God and one another by the Spirit. There is nothing wrong with sharing as such and in the way it has been done. The point here is that sharing, based on the *missio Dei*, must be based on the understanding of God's unconditional love, which those in mission are called to replicate, namely the grace of God that

calls them to humility out of the realisation that none of them deserve to be saved and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that calls people primarily to share who they are, that is, created in the image of God and loved unconditionally by God.

4.3 Solidarity with the Basarwa as a response to poverty

Realising the mistakes which have occurred in the past and conscious of the fact that the church itself has been an accomplice in these, a mission strategy that is based on the *missio Dei* could provide an answer to the Basarwa's poverty through *koinonia*. *Koinonia* here simply means commitment to the Basarwa and solidarity with their issues, whether they are issues about their diminishing identity, language and culture, or their claim that they have lost everything to others. Solidarity means that the church understands and takes the plight of the Basarwa seriously. This could, among others, mean advocating on behalf of and lobbying with the Basarwa. The participation in the *missio Dei* is taking place out of one's faith conviction of God's unconditional love to reconcile all people and to correct the wrongs of the past.

Solidarity as a form of mission involvement does not require money or material resources. It is something that is within the capacity of all human beings and is basically about putting oneself in the position of others, and seeing the world and historical developments from their perspective. This is a God-given capacity that is inherent in all human beings. The church could, in its proclamation of the gospel (*kerugma*), implore and teach its membership regularly and consistently about the gospel imperative of solidarity with the poor and disadvantaged. Similarly, the church could, through its weekly liturgical cycle, make its members conscious of the importance of solidarity with the poor and to go out into society to live and work in ways that are mindful of the plight of the poor.

5.5 Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it may be necessary to observe that one of the solutions to the Basarwa poverty could be for the church to call for reparations on their behalf. One is aware that this word has mainly been used with reference to compensation for war. This study prefers a more general use, where reparations simply refer to any action that is taken to make up for a wrong that has occurred in history.

The Basarwa may not have either the legal and financial resources to engage in this type of procedure; they may not have the academic acumen to engage in the discourse that normally surrounds issues of reparation in the secular world. Even if they had such resources, they may not have the platform to voice them. Worse still, even if they had a platform, perhaps no one might listen to them or take them seriously. However, one fact that is undeniable with respect to the Basarwa's situation is that these people have been grossly wronged and violated in history. They have not only been wronged by Botswana and the Batswana, but also by the world and

humanity, as they have suffered various forms and degrees of injustice at the hands of many different people and organisations.

First, it is important for the Basarwa to understand that God knows their plight and that He sees them and the many ways in which they have been disadvantaged, as well as excluded from societal life and affairs. God also sees the treatment that has been meted out to the Basarwa over many centuries and continues to be meted out right in the present by those who think they own and control them. In this respect, the mission calling of the church could, among others, be to assist the Basarwa to know that God sees their situation, is concerned about their suffering, shares their suffering and that, despite all the negative things that others have said about them, they are worthy in the eyes of God. They must also know that it is God's will to end this suffering and that He loves them so dearly that he has sent his Son into the world to save them. In this way, the church will lead the Basarwa to see God, or at least the God of the Christian faith, in a different light.

Secondly, the author is of the opinion that it is within the mission mandate of the church to let the world hear about the hurt and pain that these people have suffered. The circumstances that have led to their current conditions must be heard from the perspective of the Basarwa themselves. The church, out of its understanding of God's love for the Basarwa, and the need to rid the present and the future from the ills of the past, could facilitate such a process as an essential aspect of its mission calling among the Basarwa. Out of such a process, a global response and answers could be sought and found to the problems of the poverty that is faced by the Basarwa.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to prescribe how exactly the Basarwa could be compensated for the damages that they have suffered, it suffices to state the mission role of the church to advocate the story of the Basarwa so that it could be told and heard. Since all humanity, though to different degrees, has contributed to the current situation of the Basarwa and other indigenous people, the solution to their current situation needs a global response.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

In this study, it has become clear that human groups' perceptions of each other in terms of who they are, their cultures, modes of subsistence, concepts of land and property ownership and styles of leadership will determine how the two or more groups will relate in the long term. Even if it were not necessarily the case in every situation of human encounter with reference to the case of the Basarwa, the way in which they have been perceived was and still is to a large extent one of the root causes of their poverty.

Another important finding of this study is that a group's negative perceptions of the other group always seem to result in or lead to the ill-treatment of the group that is perceived in this way. Although this has not been the case in every situation with respect to the Basarwa, the study has demonstrated that it has been the case most of the time. The study has also found that the ill-treatment of the Basarwa has been complex, multi-dimensional and prolonged.

Given the foregoing, it is the conclusion of this study that there are no simple solutions to the problem of the Basarwa poverty and that finding a solution to this problem will require commitment and meticulous efforts on the part of all the parties involved. In this respect, it is essential to point out that it is the finding of this study that the problem of the Basarwa poverty is primarily a problem of the failure of human relations and that the restoration of these relations is the primary area in which the ultimate solution should be sought.

As part of the effort to find answers to the Basarwa poverty, based on Christian mission involvement in the world, the study suggests the understanding of mission as *missio Dei*. A careful study of the concept of *missio Dei* has demonstrated that God has always been involved and working in human history, right from the creation, that He loves his creation and that He wants those whom He has created in his own image to live in dignity in a peaceful and just environment.

A reflection on the Exodus story has shown that God has always been concerned with any situation in which his children are enslaved or made to bear man-made hardships. In such situations, God intervenes and sets in motion efforts to liberate and save those who are oppressed. From a study of some aspects of Israel's Holiness code, it has been demonstrated that God has always initiated strategies such as the principle of gleaning, the observance of the Sabbath, the distribution of the triennial tithe and an interdiction on interests for loans to ensure

that the poor were taken care of and provided for. These also served to ensure that poverty, which is in contradiction to God's will for his creation, would be averted. In the face of this, the faith community cannot be indifferent or resigned; it is part of the mission to which God is calling the church to make deliberate efforts to ensure that poverty is alleviated and, where possible, eradicated.

A survey of the New Testament, particularly some aspects of the Lord's Prayer, has elucidated that God's reign, implicit in the petition, "thy Kingdom come", is one where there is place for all his children; it is an all-inclusive, all-embracing reign. Similarly, the petition, "thy will be done", speaks of the will of God which includes the welfare and common good of all God's people (as seen in creation, the exodus and the Holiness code). From the petition, "give us this day our daily bread", we see that it is God's will that each one of his children should have access to the basic, life-sustaining resources and that such resources should be shared so that each person has something, unlike the many situations where some people have too much, while others, like the Basarwa, have nothing.

Given the fact that our human history is one that is permeated by hatred, antagonism, and race- and class-related differences, it is the position of this study that a Trinitarian approach to poverty alleviation will provide an answer to this problem, because such an approach is based on the unconditional love of God the Father, the grace of God the Son and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit. To some extent, a lot of what has gone wrong in history, particularly in the relationship between the Basarwa and other groups, are a result of lovelessness, which results in failure to respect and listen to the opinions or views of the Basarwa. This is the starting point of mission work among these people. The church must learn the meaning of God's unconditional love again and find ways, shaped and informed by that love, of participating in the mission among the Basarwa.

Along the same lines, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit sent the church to do the *missio Dei* in the world. This is a task that, to a large extent, calls people to faith in Christ. It is assumed that the people who are involved in this mission are people who have found salvation through faith in Christ. It is, however, essential to underscore the fact that finding saving faith in Christ is the work of the grace of God the Son. No person ever obtains salvation on merit, as it is God's gracious gift through his Son. There is therefore no justification or need for pride or arrogance on the part of anyone who is involved in the mission of God in the world. It has been shown that a great deal of the pain, suffering and dispossession of some people that led to their poverty conditions have something to do with arrogance and pride that are based on race, nationality, ethnicity and such other aspects of human identity. The church that has freely received and benefitted from the grace of God the Son is sent out into the world to ensure that others, and in this case as many as possible, regardless of their social status, political affiliation, ethnicity or economic status, are not denied the benefits of God's grace.

God the Holy Spirit has been at work in history, restoring broken human relations at various levels. We have in this respect demonstrated that the Holy Spirit plays an important role in the performance of the *missio Dei*. First, the study concurs with those who have echoed in the past the finding that the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be confined to the institutional church, but that He is also involved in all situations where the good and welfare of humanity are given priority. The presence of the Holy Spirit is particularly noticeable in situations where justice is done or sought for the poor. In this respect, the Holy Spirit empowers the church in the *missio Dei* to minister in ways that bring healing and reconciliation to broken and very often hurting human relations. The *missio Dei* provides an answer to the problem of Basarwa poverty by empowering the church through the unconditional love of God the Father to confront and overcome the hatred that has harmed human relations.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit empowers the church in the *missio Dei* to confront the various forms of pride and arrogance with the grace of God the Son, who gives a place to all people in God's plan of salvation. The power of the Holy Spirit helps those who are called to mission work to dismantle old ways of thinking, living, acting and old attitudes towards each other, and to allow God's unconditional love to take over and reign in the process of the *missio Dei*. This same power of the Holy Spirit also empowers and directs the church in the *missio Dei* to build new structures and new ways of acting and living that are based on God's unconditional love and the unconditional acceptance of all, based, informed and shaped by the understanding of grace.

6.2 Recommendations

- a) Basarwa poverty needs to be studied further and reflected upon from the perspective of *missio Dei*.
- b) The ministry of poverty alleviation among Basarwa, must be embedded in the *missio Dei* and must give priority to the issues of the restoration of broken human relations.
- c) The ministry of poverty alleviation among Basarwa must assist them to find their unique identity in the Triune God and the context of Botswana. Such a ministry must initiate and facilitate a process of reconciliation for the healing of relationships with other population groups.
- d) The church that is sent into the world as part of the *missio Dei* must be shaped by God's unconditional love, grace and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to be a blessing to the nations.

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