

TANGAZA COLLEGE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
OF
EASTERN AFRICA

PASTORAL DEPARTMENT

DEPRIVED CHILDREN IN AN AFRICAN GHETTO:
"HEALING THE SICK WHO WALK"

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NAIROBI - KENYA

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- ∞ My love & prayer ∞ -

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for academic credit to any other Institution and that all sources are cited in full.

BOSCO

John Bosco Mulenga SDB

16th February, 2000

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INTRODUCTION

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. MY AIM: ADDRESSING "THE SICK WHO WALK"

In my attempt to elucidate the theme of my work it is well befitting for me to commence by skimming through the lines below:

*"We are guilty of many errors and many faults,
but our worst crime is abandoning the children,
neglecting the fountain of life.*

Many of the things we need can wait.

The child cannot.

*Right now is the time his bones are being formed,
his blood is being made and his senses being developed.*

To him we cannot answer Tomorrow

His name is Today".

(Gabriel Mistral - Nobel Prize-winning poet from Chile)¹

Within our ecosystem characterised by a diverse lot of religious, political, social, modern and technological cultures, it is not peculiar at all to hear of the imbalance, disorder and abnormality of life. A part of, if not, the entire ecosystem is sick. Notwithstanding, it calls for painstaking

¹ Mission Press, Women and Children First: Reflections on the Plight of Women and Children in Zambia, Ndola-Zambia: Mission Press, 1988, front page.

caution and attention for not only detecting the sickness, but also and especially, the cause of the sickness lest the masses be denied the treatment of their right.

Somebody may ask: "*who are the sick?*" When we talk of the sick today, a chain of categories is enumerated. In a conventional way and according to human standards, the sick are those in bed, wheelchairs and hospitals. They are the handicapped. They are the sick who do not move. They are the sick who do not even walk. Then, there should also be another category of the sick: those who are sick and yet walk. Hence Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo's phraseology: "*The Sick who Walk*"². Those belonging to neurotic and psychotic cases, though not confined to sick beds, are some of the sick who walk: they are mobile patients. Other mobile patients might be the bandits, drug addicts and street children. These, in many ways, are parasites and a nuisance to the ecosystem. There are others too, who are entangled in the maze of prostitution, contraception, abortion, lesbianism, homosexuality and child abuse. Even those who take no recourse to religion could also constitute a category of their own. They, too, are sick: they need help, treatment, prayer and healing.

The enumeration and classification of "*the sick who walk*" can go on infinitely. For my purpose, however, there is one more category to include, which is even the most harmful to society. Yet it is the most neglected and most forgotten. What is this category? This category is an embodiment of all the forces of social strife and injustice. It comprises various strata of society ranging from the smallest unit of a family set up to its acme in the gigantic structural unit of the state. I believe this is the most dangerous of all "*the sick who walk*". It is the most dangerous category because of its vicious scope of diffusion which leads to further deprivation and deprivatation.

² "*The Sick Who Walk*": is used by Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo to describe the category of the sick (people) who force themselves to go about their daily activities as though they are not sick. Milingo is from Zambia and is currently in Rome.

As the title suggests, my commitment in this paper is to look at the situation of children in the ghetto setting in view of stretching out the question of deprivation. For the sake of appropriation, I am compelled to analyse this question in relation to the cause, which I believe, lies in the unjust and oppressive structural environment. Both the question of deprivation and the oppressive environment belong to the same ecosystem because they influence each other and are closely linked. They are inseparable. Any strenuous effort towards the eradication or rather, the transformation of the slum-children's appalling life situation would be to no avail if the unjust and oppressive environment is not eradicated or even transformed. Any social transformation depends on the transformation of the contagious environment: the most dangerous "*sick who walk*."

Certainly, my task in this paper is not to offer a solution to the subhuman life-situation of the slum children. But rather, to suggest afresh that while it is good to roll up our sleeves in our meticulous care and concern for the deprived and depraved, it is even better to consider the environmental background of oppression as well.

"We do not propose solutions to the problem of the 'sick who walk', but rather to make us aware of such sick people who need attention, care and prayer".³

If I borrow Walbert Buhlmann's terminology, the problem of sin and injustice lies nowhere else than "*in the conflict-prone situation of which man is at one and the same time both the author*

and victim."⁴ In fact the author (the oppressive environment in this case) constitutes the real group of *"fanatics, imbecile and those who are generally abnormal."*⁵ And indeed, using Archbishop Milingo's expression:

*"What harms society more, is it the sick in bed or those who plan evil and execute it in society?"*⁶

Of course, the oppressive environment!

1.2. CLARIFICATION OF THE TERMS

Sometimes, the English language creates a lot of ambiguities. For this reason, therefore, allow me to clarify some of my vocabulary. In Kenya, particularly Nairobi City, the term used in reference to the most filthy and poorest dwelling place is '*slum*'. I, too, use it because that is how the public majority uses it. In fact, I found it already being used in this way. But to be more specific and in order to express my point, I prefer the word "*ghetto*" which might even sound too foreign both to and within the African context. And so, what does it mean?

In the Oxford American Dictionary, the word "*slum*" is defined as "*a dirty overcrowded district inhabited by very poor people*". Indeed, this is true for the appalling structures inhabited by the abject poor people, but it needs further qualification. A "*ghetto*" is defined as "*a part of a city or region in which members of a minority group lives as result of social or economic*

⁴ Okolo, Chukwodum, *"The Liberating Role of the Church in Africa Today"*, Eldoret: Gaba Publications, Spearhead 119, 1991, pg. 62.

⁵ Milingo, Emmanuel, *The Sick Who Walk*, Australia: Scripture Keys Ministries Australia, 1992, pg. 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*

discrimination". The same dictionary defines a '*deprived child*' as "*one who has been prevented from having a normal home life*". Deliberately and consciously, I have chosen the word '*ghetto*' instead of '*slum*' because the former qualifies the nature and sub-human condition in which the children in question are constantly swimming. As I am discussing the condition of the deprived children in Nairobi, it is the term '*ghetto*' that gives me the correct connotation. '*Ghetto*' qualifies their condition because they are not who they are out of their own accord and choice. Rather, they are who they are today because their rights and privileges have been denied. And why are these children '*a minority*'? It is not because they constitute a minute fraction of the population. But rather, it is because they fall under the class that has no power and authority, which in Nairobi, is based on money. In other words, they are physically handicapped and incapacitated.

1.3. METHODOLOGY: SEE - JUDGE - ACT APPROACH

What kind of framework am I going to maintain in this paper? In correspondence with the traditional mediations involved in pastoral work, my paper is divided into three main stages.

Firstly, my **description (socio-analytical mediation)** commences with the manifestation of my immediate level of contact with the devastating life situation of the deprived and deprived children. Blending my personal experience with my awareness of the universal human rights and other corresponding factual data, I will briefly state to what the denial of children's rights leads.

In the second stage, **the hermeneutical mediation**, my attempt is to make a presentation of some of the apparent causes of deprivation in relationship to the liberating God who, throughout the entire course of salvation history, walks with the poor and victimised. On the other hand, I am conscious of the evil forces at work through the unjust or oppressive environment. This will

help me to reflect on how God's plan for the liberation of the oppressed and deprived can be made present in such a world.

In the last stage, **the practical mediation**: the operation in the sphere of action, I will discuss and propose the courses of action that need to be followed in an attempt to combat oppression in accordance with God's redemptive plan. Indeed, this would not consist in putting forward the already made solution, but rather, in a new way of stimulating and invigorating the mind and heart towards the race and struggle for social transformation. In a synopsis, the framework of my paper will follow the **SEE - JUDGE - ACT** methodology as spaced out below:

STAGE 1: Socio-analytical Mediation - SEE

(an operation in the sphere of the world of the oppressed)

STAGE 2: Hermeneutical Mediation - JUDGE

(an operation in the sphere of God's world)

STAGE 3: Practical Mediation - ACT

(an operation in the sphere of action)

SECTION I: STAGE 1 - SEE

2. SECTION I: STAGE 1 - SEE

2.1. MY INSERTION AND LEVEL OF CONTACT

Just as the English saying goes: "*charity begins at home*", allow me to offer another well-known saying:

*"If not now, never,
If not here, nowhere;
If not us, no one."*⁷

God has created a very beautiful earth for me. In order for me to contribute towards the preservation and improvement of this beauty I, in my own way, must be committed to God's purpose of creation. Within my reach and limit, I have the task and obligation to cherish whatever is beautiful. On the other hand, I have to shun and fight any diabolic force of destruction. In so doing, therefore, I live as a human being endowed with the image of God. And indeed, it is because of this image of God in me that I am called to be a co-creator with God. When this is done, God's image in me is complete and nurtured. Nevertheless, this happens not in a vacuum, but within a concrete and particular environment. This is the way to being not only a co-creator, but also a co-creator in practice. Brian Hearne attests to this truth as he asserts:

⁷ Hearne, Brian, "*Struggling For A New World*", Eldoret: AMECEA, Gaba Publications, Spearhead 129, 1983, pg. 9.

“So the situation you are in is where you are called to be co-creator with God. Not somewhere else or some other time or with some other people, but here and now.”⁸

Being a Salesian of Don Bosco, I automatically find myself in the environmental insertion and world of the young people, especially the poorest of the poor. Fraught with conviction, Don Bosco used to tell the Italian boys of his time: *“For you I study, for you I work, for you I live; for you I am even ready to give my life”*. The appalling 19th century milieu of child deprivation and depravation influenced Don Bosco and enabled him to embrace an educative methodology, which today, is renowned far and wide as the *“preventive system”*. It was with this very methodology that he responded to the calling of being a co-creator with God and so helped transform the environment and world of the poor, neglected, deprived and depraved children. The fruit of his methodology in the 20th century is seen and experienced through the presence of his followers, the Salesians. The Salesians strain their efforts in being co-creators by spreading an apostolate of developing God’s image in the most deprived and depraved child the world over.

Because of my Theological studies at Tangaza College, my insertion and level of contact with the deprived children is confined to sporadic and week-end pastoral work. Within the course of my three years stay in Nairobi, my pastoral commitment and influence of activity have been in Dagoretti Approved School, Kabete Remand Home, Gatwikira and Line Saba. What are these places?

⁸ Ibid.

Dagoretti Approved School is situated a couple of kilometres the Nairobi-Kikuyu Road. It is separated from the Kikuyu suburbs by a small stream and in close proximity to the Kikuyu Campus of the University of Nairobi. The Approved School comprises boys between the ages of ten and fifteen and accommodates about two hundred in number. How and why do the boys end up there? Some boys, after having landed in the hands of the police, are dumped there in order to rid the streets of insurmountable crime and stench. Other boys have lost the sense of school education. For this reason they are dumped at the same Approved School by parents or guardians. Others too, whose parents are unable to support them, are also dumped at there. What a dumping area! In this case, the Approved School no longer serves its intended purpose. By its nature, the Approved School is meant for the rehabilitation of the juvenile and delinquent criminals. To my surprise, boys who are not supposed to be there are practically forced to enter the Approved School. Certainly, boys suffering abject poverty and loss of parents cannot be classified as delinquent criminals. Certainly, this is an abuse and is happening in the Approved School. For the boys themselves, whoever is admitted to the Approved School is automatically considered a delinquent criminal. In order to avoid the danger of favouritism, the teachers too, are compelled to treat the boys on the same level of status. According to most of the boys, this place is nothing, but a '*mere foretaste*' of hell. Why? Because the boys feel that they have been robbed of their freedom they have had on the streets.

Unlike Dagoretti Approved School, **Kabete Remand Home** comprises both girls and boys. It is located in Lower Kabete adjacent to Kabete Campus of Nairobi University. Under the guise of combating crime and keeping the streets clean, the children from a diverse lot of background and age, are overly packed into this place, awaiting court sentences. This place is awful: barely does it have a conducive environment for human habitation. For most of these children, the only

possible dream of their life is getting out this terrible place: *"Brother, when will I ever get out of here?"*

Gatwikira and **Line Saba** are parts of the Kibera chain of slums sandwiched between Ngong and Langata Roads, some of the major inlets into the Nairobi City. A child's best dinner would be like the worst Lenten breakfast meal served on the table of my religious house in Karen. Indeed, the children's minds are mainly mesmerised by the question of survival. The children are not living at all, but only surviving. In an attempt to earn a few Shillings for a loaf of bread or drug, they rush into the city. Within the city, the most unfortunate children only end up entangled amidst the uncompromising hands of the police. For the police, the only alternative is to dump these children into the already overcrowded police custody and remand homes.

These appalling sub-human situations have raised penetrating questions to challenge the credibility of my pastoral commitment. What is the purpose of my presence to and among these children? Am I really needed, anyway? What have I done to transform these situations, which are foretastes of hell, into foretastes of heaven? As a religious, I am playing the role of the *"master"* or *"padrone"* as it is referred to in the Italian language. I am a master: exercising my charity. Notwithstanding, the package of sweets and biscuits, dished out to them, are merely able to satisfy on a temporary and short-term basis. Moreover, it only tends to hoodwink the children into the malaise of apparent comfort, while the awful situation remains untouched and unaddressed. My charitable venture, no matter how sincere or challenging, has only been an opium to the children. Hence a venture against justice. In my pastoral work, I claim to be committed to the cause of justice and liberation. But what has my pastoral commitment transformed so far? How have I been a co-creator? And how have I helped to restore God's

image in the context of these children? Let me continue stretching out these questions as I look at the actual forms of deprivation.

2.2. ACTUAL FORMS OF DEPRIVATION

Children constitute a special group that needs care and protection. They are a special group because they are the ones who are most vulnerable and have special growth and developmental needs. To grow up normally, children are entitled to certain defined rights. These are the basic needs which every child, whosoever, expects by right. Moreover, they are inalienable and cannot be compromised, whatsoever. Let me provide a few examples:

- *A right to live.*
- *A right to have a name and nationality.*
- *A right to enjoy parental care: to be born to parents, a father and mother.*
- *A right to proper food and medical care.*
- *A right to education.*
- *A right to be protected from all kinds of harm.*
- *A right to moral upbringing.*
- *A right to culture.⁹*

In order to have a complete, healthy and conducive environment for normal child development and growth, basic human needs must be fulfilled. When these needs are not met, the children are practically prevented from having a normal life and therefore are stigmatised as "*Deprived*"

⁹ Onyango, Philista, "*Keynote Address, Child Abuse and Neglect*", *Child Abuse and Neglect: Selected Papers from the 4th Scientific Seminar of the Kenya Medical Association of Women's Association*, Nairobi: Initiatives Publishers, March 1989, pg. 13.

Children". This occurs both actively and passively. On one hand, any person or condition preventing children from realising their rights and basic needs contributes to their deprivation. On the other hand, anyone who remains silent and does nothing to enable children to grow and develop, becomes a perpetrator of "*Child Deprivation*".

2.2.1. In the Ghetto

In my pastoral commitment, I have seen "child deprivation" at its peak. Instead of 'living', most of the children in **Line Saba** and **Gatwikira** are simply surviving. While in my Salesian community I have three delicious meals, children in these places barely have one balanced meal a day. Some of them do not even have access to proper education. They have to be in the city scouting for food. The sanitary conditions, too, are pathetic and beyond human habitation. The uncovered sewage waste meanders through and across the ghetto, thus posing health hazards not only to children, but to the entire community. The shelters, which they call houses, hardly protect the over-crowded family members from the cold and rainy seasons. Moreover, the shelters which are merely demarcated by curtain or bed sheets, pose further moral danger especially to children. The privacy which the wife and husband need is not always feasible. Crowded on the same floor, children's safety is put at risk. Some relatives can easily abuse the nieces or cousins sexually. In this way, the right of children to be protected from all kinds of harm as well as the right to moral upbringing are violated right at home.

2.2.2. In the Approved School

At **Dagoretti Approved School**, the boys are under the guidance of professional teachers. However, these teachers cannot substitute the tender caring heart of a parent.

Though without a balanced diet, the boys have at least food to fill their bellies thrice a day, which, some of them would not have enjoyed on the streets or at home. Though there is an infirmary, the nurse cannot manage to combat the problem of scabies. The insurmountable spread of lice also contributes to the spread of other diseases. Worse still, their nights are spent in cold dormitories fraught with bad stench from blankets and adjacent toilets. The boys sleep on iron beds that have no mattresses on them. Since there is no way out, the boys have to get acclimatised to these adverse and inhuman conditions.

2.2.3. In the Remand Home

At **Kabete Remand Home**, the boys and girls are there awaiting Juvenile Court sentences. Most of the time they are locked up in the dormitories lest they escape. This place is filthier and the children more confined than Dagoretti Approved School. Like the Approved School, they are crowded on iron beds without mattresses. In most cases, a bed is shared among five children; three facing one end and two the other. In this environment, the spread of disease and lice is rampant. I cannot even doubt the young ones' susceptibility to abuses by the older ones. Moreover, deprivation leads to depravation. The weaker deprived child is depraved by the stronger one. On the contrary, my experience on its own has no basis and support. Therefore let me now refer to the significance of human rights in a more global spectrum.

2.3. SUPPORTIVE REFERENCE TO THE GLOBAL SPECTRUM

2.3.1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (1948)

The year 1998 marked the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As its fundamental premise, the Universal Declaration affirms that the recognition of the innate dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of liberty, justice and peace in the world. Furthermore:

"It acknowledges that no one can legitimately deprive another person, whoever they may be, of these rights, since this would do violence to their nature.... These rights apply to every stage of life..."¹⁰

For my purpose, let me present some of the Universal Declaration's fundamental points:

Article 3: *Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.*

Article 25:

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.¹¹

¹⁰ John Paul II, "Respect for Human Rights: Foundation of True Peace", CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL, February 1999, pg. 62.

¹¹ Ibid.

Article 26: Everyone has the right to education.¹²

2.3.2. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(1976)

In **Article 10, no. 3**, this Covenant asserts that special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation.¹³

2.3.3. The Church's Social Doctrine

The conscience and expression of the Church's responsibility in society is called its "*Social Doctrine*."¹⁴ Through her social doctrine, the Church through the centuries has committed herself to applying the ideas of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. She has done so in a "*continuous and growing process*."¹⁵

In 1963 **Pope John XXIII**, in his Encyclical Letter "**Pacem in Terris**", had publicly acknowledged the fundamental value of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights.¹⁶

On 2nd October 1979, Pope John Paul II, in his speech at the United Nations in New York said that the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was one of "*the instruments endeavouring to create general awareness of the dignity of the human being*."¹⁷ In his

¹² Ibid., pg. 67.

¹³ Ibid., pg. 84.

¹⁴ Carrier, Herve, The Social Doctrine of the Church Revised, Vatican City: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 1990, pg. 44.

¹⁵ Ibid., pg.36.

¹⁶ Ibid., pg. 35.

¹⁷ Ibid.

message for the World Day of Peace for the year 1999, John Paul referred to the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He re-affirmed that "*respect for human rights is a condition for lasting peace*". Moreover, the Pope insisted on the "*universality and indivisibility*" of human rights and warned of the danger of neglecting them.¹⁸

2.3.4. Statement of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines

(1/12/99)

This Pastoral Letter was issued to mark the 50th anniversary Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After considering how "poverty" has hindered thousands of children from obtaining basic needs and inhibited their proper development,¹⁹ the Bishops invited the world to pursue the task of defending and promoting human rights. Below are some of the convictions re-affirmed by the Bishops:

- *Human rights are universal and indivisible: they are based on the inviolable transcendental dignity of the human being.*
- *Human rights are God-given and therefore must be defended and protected.*
- *Women's and children's rights together with those of the unborn, need to be recognised and promoted²⁰.*

¹⁸ John Paul II, "*Respect for Human Rights: Foundation of True Peace*", CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL, February, 1999, pg. 62.

¹⁹ Ibid., pg. 86.

²⁰ Ibid.

2.3.5. Psychological reinforcement: Maslow's Pyramid of Human Needs

Abraham Maslow devoted his life to studying the conditions under which human beings develop their capacities to the fullest degree. He said that "*the key to human development and growth is the gratification and actualisation of basic needs.*"²¹ He designed a theoretical pyramid of human needs that included, from bottom to top, the basic physiological needs, safety and security needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs, cognitive needs, aesthetic needs and the Need for self-actualisation.²² Maslow believed that human beings, children included of course, must meet the demands of their lower needs before those of the higher level can emerge.²³ The overleaf is Maslow's pyramidal illustration and hierarchy of human needs.

²¹ Jourard, Sidney, M., Healthy Personality, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974, pg. 23.

²² Weiten, wayne, Psychology: Themes and Variations, California: Books/Cole Publishing Company, 1992, pg. 344.

²³ Jourard, Sidney, M., Healthy Personality, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974, pg. 23.

2.3.5.1. Maslow's pyramidal illustration and hierarchy of humans needs

According to Maslow, human needs are arranged in a hierarchy, and people must satisfy their basic needs before they can satisfy higher needs. Hence Maslow's conceptual summary: "What a man can be, he must be." In the diagram, higher levels in the pyramid represent progressively less basic needs. Individuals progress upward in the hierarchy when lower needs are satisfied reasonably well, but they may regress back to lower levels if basic needs are no longer satisfied.²⁴



²⁴ Weiten, Wayne, *Psychology: Themes and Variations*, California: Books/Cole Publishing Company, 1992, pg.344.

Maslow was aware of some people getting stuck on just one set of needs. Millions of them will live out their lives at the bottom of the pyramid and therefore will barely keep themselves and their families alive. Hence they will make no efforts to actualise the potentialities they were born with.²⁵ Lack of this actualisation is nothing but an impediment to their full human development.

2.3.6. The Constitution of Kenya (Revised in 1992)

This Constitution which was revised in 1998, dedicates Chapter Five of its provisions to the "Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual". For my purpose, let me just scan through a few of them below:

Section 70: *Every person in Kenya is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual whatever his race, tribe, place of origin or residence.*

Section 71 (1): *No person shall be deprived of his life.*

Section 74: *No person shall be subject to inhuman or degrading treatment.*²⁶

2.3.7. The 3rd African Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

This Conference was held at Stanley Hotel in Nairobi from 13th to 17th September, 1999. Speaking at the opening of the Conference, Vice-president George Saitoti, re-affirmed the reality and existence of deprived children saying:

"Millions of children live in difficult circumstances and are denied access to food, shelter, education, medical care and security."²⁷

²⁵ McNeil, Elton, B., The Psychology of Being Human, U.S.A.: Canfield Press, 1974., pg. 195.

²⁶ Government Printer, The Constitution of Kenya, Revised Edition, Nairobi: G.P., 1998, pgs. 42-45.

²⁷ Ogodu, Ochieng, "Children Neglected - V.P", East African Standard, Tuesday, September 14, 1999, pg. 5.

At the same Conference, the nominated MP Josephine Sinyo, who is blind, said:

"The children are discriminated against in the right to life, protection by law, property rights, access to public service, standards of living and education."²⁸

With particular concern for the girl-child, especially the disabled, the MP accused the government of ignoring the plight of the handicapped.²⁹ On the second day of the conference, the conference chairperson, Mr. Sammy Ole Kwallah, reproached the Attorney-General and noted that, unlike many other countries, Kenya has not yet adopted the United Nation's Children's Bill of Rights. During the official closing of the Conference, the Attorney-General, therefore, responded to the reproach and assured the participants that the Bill would be adopted before the end of the year 1999 and ***"once adopted, the Bill"*** will enhance the ***"protection and promotion of children's rights and welfare in Kenya."***³⁰

2.4. THE RESULTS OF DEPRIVATION

From the above prevalent insistence on the rights of children and human needs, it is clear that deprivation is rampant. This is further attested to by the far-reaching ramifications manifested in a vicious circle of social and moral strife among the children. In fact, deprivation leads to another evil, which is depravation. Because of unfulfilled basic needs, children are compelled to seek refuge in what is perceived abnormal in society. In one way or another, children need to

²⁸ Gakuo, Hannah, ***"Handicapped ignored - MP"***, Daily Nation, Friday, September 17, 1999, pg. 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ _____, ***"Children's Bill due this year"***, Daily Nation, Saturday, September 18, 1999, pg. 28.

survive. Since society has failed to care for them, children are forced to find their own alternative means of meeting their survival needs. Below are some of the results of deprivation.

2.4.1. Drug Abuse and Addiction

Some children try to deal with the pain of deprivation by anaesthetising themselves with drugs. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, a drug is defined as a chemical agent that affects the functions of a living thing. It is used in diagnosing and preventing diseases. Drug-abuse occurs when the drug is used for purposes that are not therapeutic. In the same way, drug addiction occurs when attachment to drug-abuse becomes an inevitable and impossible habit to break. The response and attachment to addiction only postpone the inevitable pain of deprivation, but without solving it. Among the children, the most prevalent and commonly abused drugs are petrol and glue or gum.

2.4.1.1. Petrol

Petrol is inhaled and sponge-sniffed. For the children on the streets, it is inhaled from the cars that have improper fuel caps on. In some cases, with a few Shillings they save from pick pocketing and begging, they easily make alliances with workers at filling stations who become their private and constant suppliers. Because of its quick ecstatic stimulation, the children easily get swept away by its gratifying influence.

2.4.1.2. Glue or Gum

Like petrol, glue is inhaled and sniffed. It is commonly available from shoe-repairers, vendors and hawkers. Glue is commonly preferred because it makes the children "*feel high*" within a short time and with a few coins and little effort. Therefore addiction to it is rampant.

2.4.2. Street Children

Because of insatiable basic needs, children are compelled to flock to the streets that serve as their last resort for survival. On these streets, children earn a few Shillings for bread and especially for gum. In fact, most of the children would rather ask for money than food. Money enhances their easier access to drugs. If, however, they are blessed with food, they would by all means exchange it for gum or other drug or sell it to get money for the same purpose.

2.4.3. Juvenile Delinquency

If any form of begging on the street becomes too unbearable and too hard to make ends meet, then their addictive appetites plunge children into other modes of combat for their survival, for example, pick-pocketing. Hence, most of them get entangled within the jungles of police custody, juvenile courts, remand homes and approved schools. In this case, children end up being branded "**delinquent children.**"

"The delinquent child is defined as one out of parental or guardian control and one in need of protection and discipline.... A delinquent child is one found begging or receiving alms."³¹

Children under this brand are exposed to bad associations, moral and physical danger and are kept in overcrowded, unsanitary and dangerous premises.

2.4.4. Sexual Promiscuity and Solicitation

Because of the influence of drug-abuse and the need to gratify immediate survival needs, rape indictments, sexual promiscuity and solicitation become common phenomena even among children. These activities lead to unpredictable pregnancies, which in the end, result in "*single-mother*" and "*Child-mother*" phenomena. Sometimes, such pregnancies lead to abortions. Because of the impact of drug-abuse and addiction on children, health precautions are no longer followed and therefore they constantly become victims of contagious and dangerous diseases. Venereal diseases and AIDS are the most prevalent examples. And because of their weakened and broken immunity system, the child mortality rate is gradually shooting up.

2.4.5. Children's Homes and NGOs

The problem of deprivation and depravation has aroused a diverse lot of individuals and communities to devote their strenuous efforts to the meritorious care for the delinquent children. In Nairobi, this is manifested in the rapid mushrooming of Homes, Non-

³¹ Muthoga, Lee, G., "*The Rights of a Child*", Child Abuse and Neglect: Selected Papers from the 4th Scientific Seminar of the Kenya Medical Association of Women's Association, Nairobi: Initiatives Publishers, March 1989, pg. 100.

Governmental Organisations, Religious and charitable organisations. For this purpose these organisations are concerned about the restoration of human dignity that has been deformed and darkened, in children, by deprivation and depravation. Below are a few examples of these in Nairobi, which are directly inserted into this kind of ministry:

- **Nyumbani Hospice:** for HIV-positive children.
- **Cottolengo Centre:** for HIV-positive children.
- **Kabete Children's Home:** for abandoned children.
- **Don Bosco Kariua:** for street children.
- **Don Bosco Kuwinda:** for rehabilitation of street boys.
- **Brothers of Charity:** for handicapped children.
- **Sisters of Charity:** for abandoned and handicapped children.

With their strenuous and dedicated effort, these organisations and many others, are directly involved in the provision of basic human needs and rights to children. But the question is: "*how far is the cause of the problem addressed?*" The "*bed-ridden sick*" are cared for. What of the "*sick who walk*": the cause?

SECTION II: STAGE 2 - JUDGE

3.

SECTION II: STAGE 2 - JUDGE

I believe I have adequately dwelled on the question of deprivation. I have talked about the smoke as it diffuses in the sky. As the famous saying goes: "*There is no smoke without fire*" my attempt in this section is to state the causes of deprivation. Why present the results before the causes? I have done this for a purpose. Whenever there is fire across the hills, what the people see first is the outcome: the smoke. Only then would they exclaim, '*there is fire!*' In the same way, when deprivation hits society, people first experience the results. People experience the filthy environment of the ghettos. People encounter the abnormal behaviours of the children. Only then do they start to question the root cause. Why the ghettos? Why the rampant growth of street children? Why drug-abuse? Why sexual promiscuity and solicitation?

After discussing some of the causes of deprivation, I will show how the liberating God responds to the forces of evil, oppression and social injustice. Blending the prophetic tradition with Jesus' ministry of liberation, I will then present some of the contemporary figures that have been dissident voices in their challenge to the utopian mode of thought.

3.1. THE CAUSES OF DEPRIVATION

(Socio - Political Analysis)

The kernel of Chinua Achebe's novel, *No Longer at Ease*, is the society of individuals who are completely permeated by corruption:

*"The African is corrupt through and through."*³²

Just as I mentioned in my introduction that there are oppression and injustice from the smallest unit of the family set-up to the structural unit of the state, Achebe too, poses a challenge to his readers. The causes of deprivation embody all the strata of the ecosystem. Hence a vicious circle of deprivation. Below are some of the causes.

3.1.1. The AIDS Epidemic

In Kenya, especially in the urban areas, the AIDS epidemic has traumatised many people's lives. Many children too, have innocently become victims of the epidemic. Children, who by right are entitled to have not only parents but also parental care, have lost both. While others have lost parents, some children have to watch their parents die slowly. Left at the mercy of the extended family, some children find it too hard to find their feet in the already overcrowded family. In order to meet their basic needs these children get entangled in the maze of street life. On the streets, children are always in danger of a diverse lot of human hazards. Some children are born with the disease and find themselves in the care of AIDS homes, like Nyumbani and Cottolengo in Karen.

³² Achebe, Chinua, *No Longer At Ease*, Nairobi: East African Education Publishers Ltd., 1992, pg. 3.

Challenged by the fast sweep of the epidemic, the media and state continue to advocate not a cure, but a preventive rubber protection, the condom. Yet the epidemic continues to spread at an unbeatable pace. What is the Church's response? No sex outside the wedlock! No rubber protection! What happens? The epidemic continues to plunder. Therefore the cause is not addressed.

3.1.2. Lack of Education and Security

Lack of proper and adequate education also intensifies deprivation. Already traumatised by the sub-human conditions in the ghetto, married couples are usually unable to observe family planning precautions. Lack of security especially among women also worsens the condition. Under the fatigue of hard labour with little pay, men reach their homes under the influence of alcohol and often put their wives at risk. Since the Church forbids contraceptives, unplanned for pregnancies and babies often emerge. In the end the couples are overcrowded with a chain of children whom they cannot afford to feed, educate, clothe and care for.

3.1.3. Poverty

Poverty, not the perennial aspect of evangelical life, is dehumanising and evil. Poverty unleashes the powers of death. Therefore, it is contrary to God's will and must be fought against and overcome. No one desires to be poor. Everyone wants to get out of poverty. But what is the condition in the ghettos? It is that of perpetual entanglement within the poverty trap. People who fall into this severely disadvantaged social situation have few chances to extricate themselves from it. Within a situation like this, people never grow fully or express their full human potential. What is their alternative? It is to send their

little children to the streets where they, unfortunately, get absorbed into the maze of fast money like car washing, begging, sexual promiscuity and solicitation.

3.1.4. Unjust Social Structures

Kenya is one of the countries in Africa where the unjust conditions and structures have bred poverty, dependence, powerlessness, disease and death to the millions of people. As I have mentioned in my introduction, Walbert Buhlman attests to the truth of this statement when says:

*"Sin is not only in individuals, but is incarnated in structures; in political and social injustice. Sin is incarnated in the conflict-prone situation of which man is at one and the same time both the author and the victim."*³³

Within the same line of argument Bishop Patrick Kalilombe of Malawi says:

*"The poor are all those individuals and groups who, in one way or another, are deprived of what makes for a decent and happy human life. The poor are those who have lost power and control over their destiny. Other people have taken over this power so that the poor are typically a dependent lot."*³⁴

³³ Okolo, Chukwudum, B., *"The Liberating Role of the Church in Africa Today"*, Eldoret: Gaba Publications, Spearhead 119, 1991, pg. 62.

³⁴ Ibid.

Certainly, this picture fits the situation in Kenya. The unjust structures have intensified the deprivation of children in the following ways below.

3.1.4.1. The Rural-Urban Drift

In Kenya the major towns like Nairobi and Mombasa have widely grown in scope and population. In comparison to the rural areas, Nairobi has become the wheel and hub of Kenya. It is the commercial, tourist and gambling centre. Though smaller towns like Kisumu and Nakuru are slowly shooting up, one would never doubt the disproportional distribution of investment and capital pumped into the bigger cities like Nairobi. As such a centre, Nairobi has attracted the vast majority of people from the rural populace. It is in the city where adults can find work. It is in the same city where the progressive young people can really feel young. Indeed, young people have to move with modern trends. "*Ushago*" as they refer to the rural areas is slowly sinking into oblivion for the young people. Rural areas are slowly becoming places for the "*wazee*": the old people and retrogressive minds.

Some of the young people who have flocked to the city have been lucky to get a job in the factories. Though with dehumansing conditions, the young people are happy to stay because they get a few Shillings to support themselves and their families too. For them, it is really "better a half a loaf than none at all". With too little a wage to afford a decent house, the young people are forced to rent or build a shelter to protect themselves from the cold and rain. Therefore, an observer can no longer doubt the root-cause and fast growth of the ghetto phenomenon. Nevertheless, the most unfortunate young people who fail to find work have to meet their needs in one way or another. What do they do? They get absorbed within the maze of fast money. Stealing, gambling, pick pocketing,

begging, vending and hawking attract especially the boys. Throwing themselves at the mercy of sexual promiscuity and solicitation is the easiest alternative for girls. Where do they spend their nights? The lucky ones scout for relatives and friends in the ghettos to add congestion to the already overpopulated shelters. Like smoke in the sky, the situation continues to diffuse and so do the ghettos in scope.

3.1.4.2. Ethnic Clashes

The government of Kenya has the power to combat any form of evil that unleashes the bondage of suffering on its citizens. This should be the concern of the government, at least. As experience shows, the government has played the "divide and rule tactic." The government has played a very passive role concerning certain social issues in the country. In order to deviate international attention from the political arena, the government has silently paved way to the ethnic clashes Kenya has had. Losing their wealth and homes, the vast majority of the Kenyan people especially from the Rift Valley has been displaced into the city by the ethnic clashes. Hence the people have become refugees, nomads and migrants in their own country. What happens to them in the city? Already deprived of their privileges of what a home could be, the displaced people become catalysts to the problem of deprivation in the city. Flocking into the city only intensifies the already vicious circle of powerlessness and dehumanisation.

3.1.4.3. The Insatiable Greed for Power

In my religious community, whenever the Kenyan president, '*Baba Moi*' as he is generally referred to, appears on television he is utterly deplored by the majority of the viewers with curses. For instance,

'He is too greedy for power. He thinks he is the only one. He speaks much but does nothing about the sub-human conditions in the slums. Though things cannot improve overnight, we want change. We want to see another man.'

Corruption, bribery, greed for money and power become the suitable characteristics of the Kenyan political regime. Within the set up only the most powerful survive. Authority and money are the basis of power. The poor, who cannot climb the ladder of power remain stuck in the mud of deprivation, powerlessness, suffering, disease and death. Such goes the vicious circle.

3.1.4.4. The Permanent State of Powerlessness

Ensnared within this permanent state of powerlessness, the suffering poor people become more and more bitter toward the political regime which never listens to their cry. Not only are the poor stuck in 'man-made' poverty, but also they are powerless because they have no voice. They have no voice to empower them to unite themselves against the powerful regime. The poor feel that they have reached the point of no return. They are too afraid to speak because they have no power that is based on money. According to Bishop Patrick Kalilombe's phraseology:

*"The poor are those who have lost their power and control over their destiny. Other people have taken over this power so that the poor are typically a dependent lot."*³⁵

³⁵ Ibid.

This is the strategy of the political regime: to make the poor poorer. What can the poor do? Nothing! The poor are only stuck in the physiological stage. They have no aspirations other than satisfying their survival needs. Indeed, the situation like this attests to the truth of Maslow's analysis:

*"Human beings must meet the demands of their lower needs before those of the higher level can emerge."*³⁶

The state of powerlessness, therefore, intensifies deprivation.

3.2. JESUS' MINISTRY

(Scriptural Analysis)

Before discussing Jesus' ministry of liberation it is worth considering the foundational background. Taking its root in the Father's creative plan and a recourse to the prophetic tradition, Jesus' ministry was nothing else, but the voice of the voiceless and powerless in the oppressed and unjust world.

3.2.1. Our God: Creator and Liberator

Our God is a Creator. Everyone is not simply God's creation, but a reflection of the divine image. Everyone is the glory, the manifestation of God. Nobody has come into being by accident. Everyone, whosoever, is endowed with God's blessing. Everyone has to share in God's creative blessing. Indeed:

³⁶ Jourard, Sidney, M., Healthy Personality, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974, pg. 23.

"To believe that everyone is a chosen child of the eternal God brings a transformation into our way of looking at things, the world and others."³⁷

In the celebrated expression of Ireneaus, Bishop of Lyons, ***"the glory of God is the fully living person."***³⁸ Therefore God is glorified only when people are fully alive. I believe this glorification does not simply consist in the spoon feeding of the powerless through meticulous charity. Neither is it simply:

"A matter of hymns and reciting of prayers. But much more, it is the matter of enabling people (the powerless) to grow and express their full human potential to live life to the full in the way that God wants them to."³⁹

As a Liberator, our God always walks with poor and the oppressed. Nevertheless by so doing, our God never neglects ***"the sick who walk"***, the oppressors. God not only heals the sick: the oppressed. Rather, God admonishes and reproaches the root cause of the sickness. While taking care of the deprived, I believe God would not spare the unjust cause in the present environment. He is not simply the God who calls Moses to lead the people to the Promised Land, but He is also the God who addresses the unjust cause and the oppressor:

"I have heard the cry of the poor, ... Let my people go" (Ex. 8:1).

³⁷ Hearne, Brian, *"Struggling for A New World"*, Eldoret: AMECEA, Gaba Publications, Spearhead 129, 1993, pg. 4.

³⁸ Ibid., pg. 2.

³⁹ Ibid.

3.2.2. The Prophetic Tradition

One thing I admire of our God is His unfailing and persevering heart. He is always a faithful God who fights against the forces of injustice and slavery. His are the voices, which permeate all strata of society. The prophets too have done just this. They have protected the rights of the oppressed. Moreover they have directly rebuked the oppressors. As God's instruments of justice and liberation, the prophets' function in the unjust situation has been twofold: to protect the oppressed as well as to admonish the oppressors. For instance, when King David takes Uriah's life in order to get his wife, Bathsheba, God does not remain silent. God sends His instrument Nathan, who becomes an excellent model for social justice (2 Sam. 12:1-27). Through many other instruments, who are committed to the cause of justice and the poor, the year of the Lord's favour continues to reverberate:

"The spirit of Lord is on me, because he has anointed and sent me to liberate the poor, broken-hearted, captives and prisoners"
(Is. 61: 2).

3.2.3. Jesus' Ministry of Liberation

Almost in word to word citation of Isaiah 61: 2, Luke depicts the person of Jesus as the disciple in the foot steps of God the liberator. Jesus is the liberator in practice. He is the liberator here and now. Indeed, Jesus transforms the "Utopia"⁴⁰ into the "Topia".⁴¹

⁴⁰ "Utopia": used here to mean an imaginary place or state of things where everything is perfect. As a title of a book by Sir Thomas More (1516), it means "Nowhere" (Refer to Oxford Paperback Dictionary).

⁴¹ "Topia": taken from a Greek word "Topos" meaning a place or situation that is inhabited (Refer to Greek-English Lexicon).

"The spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has sent me to liberate the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour ... Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4: 18 – 21).

Jesus' ministry of liberation is nothing but an exemplary commitment to the cause of justice. To be committed to this cause is to be committed to God's mission and creative plan. God's creative plan is nothing but the participation of everyone in the blessings of creation. Commitment to this is commitment to the Gospel. This is the Good News. This is the "kerygma".

Like the Father, Jesus never neglects "*the sick who walk.*" While caring for the oppressed, Jesus admonishes the oppressors as well. In His ministry for instance, Jesus did not only feed the four thousand (the hungry), but equally, He rebukes the Pharisees and Sadducees (*the authority*) (Mt. 15: 29-39 and 16: 1-4, respectively). Neither does He only heal "*the handicapped sick*", for instance, the leper and paralytic (Lk. 5: 12, 18, respectively). But He also challenges "*the sick who walk*", for example, through the 'six woes' to the Pharisees and teachers of the Law (Lk. 11: 37-54). It is for His ministry of liberation that Jesus is unjustly condemned to death on the cross.

In answering the question "*what did Jesus give His life for*", Joachim Jeremias, the German scholar says:

“Jesus lived for the value of universal table fellowship and it was this that challenged the values and institutions of His society. It was this challenge that led him to an early grave.”⁴²

Yet the blood of Jesus' death is still fresh. The voice of His ministry of liberation is active and alive in the voices of contemporary prophets. Nevertheless, as experience has shown that to be a prophet is to enter the realm of risk.

3.2.4. Contemporary Prophets

In the present age, men and women have rolled up their sleeves and courageously put their lives at risk for Jesus' ministry. These people, in their own way, were dissident voices who challenged the '*utopian*', formal and adamant traditional modes of thought both in and outside the Church. Below are some of the examples.

3.2.4.1. Rev. Martin Luther King

In the cause of human rights Rev. Martin Luther King led the struggle of many people in the United States of America who had been deprived of their basic rights and had been reduced to the level of inferior and despised people. At a great risk to himself, Martin Luther helped to mobilise and empower the black people. His ultimate objective and dream was for the children of both the slave-owners and slaves to sit down at the table together. It was for this dream that he gave his life. Shortly before addressing the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Upsala in 1968, Luther was shot down by a sniper's bullet.⁴³

⁴² Hearne, Brian, "*Struggling For A New World*" Eldoret: AMECEA, Gaba Publications, Spearhead 129, 1993, pg. 24.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pg. 20.

3.2.4.2. Archbishop Oscar Romero

Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador in El Salvador, was born on 15th August 1919.⁴⁴ Romero had been a conservative man, remote from being an instrument of change. Notwithstanding, his operation in the world of the poor led him to a drastic change of mind. He underwent a real '*metanoia*' and became the 'voice of the voiceless': the 'voice of the downtrodden.' Romero's fiery words against the oppressors of his people finally brought him to a bloody death while at the Eucharistic Celebration in San Salvador on 24th March 1980.⁴⁵

3.2.4.3. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Leaving the Loreto Sisters, Mother Teresa started a new congregation of her own called the Missionaries of Charity. Taking a special vow of charity for the poor, she initiated the work for the abandoned and poorest of the poor in the slums. In her lifelong commitment to the cause of the poor, Mother Teresa became the epitome of selfless love the world over. It was this radical commitment that amplified her 'voice' in the world deafened by deprivation and social injustice. Only with this commitment for the cause of the poor did she give a challenge to the world. On 5th September 1997, the world had a reason to grieve her death.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Romero, Oscar, Voice of the Voiceless, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990, pg. 1.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Spink, Kathryn, Mother Teresa: An Authorised Biography, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg. 23.

3.2.4.4. Archbishop Dom Helder Camara

Dom Helder Pessoa Camara was the Archbishop of Olinda and Recife in Brazil. His radical commitment to the cause of the poor in the world of institutionalised deprivation and suffering put his status at risk with the Church.

*"When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint; but when I ask why the people are poor, I am called a subversive."*⁴⁷

While it important to give help to the needy, as people Mother Teresa of Calcutta did, Helder Camara made a leap forward. He believed that it was

*"Even more important to stand up against the structures and institutions of society that keep huge numbers of human beings in abject poverty for the sake of the few who have enormous wealth and power."*⁴⁸

As an Archbishop emeritus Helder Camara died at the age of 90 on 27th August, 1999. His voice, however, is still speaking, not only in Brazil.

⁴⁷ Hearne, Brian, *"Struggling For A New World"*, Eldoret: AMECEA, Gaba Publications, Spearhead 129, 1993, pg.21.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

3.2.5. The Cost of the Jesus' Ministry

The call to Christianity is a call to Jesus' ministry of liberation. It is a call to a radical commitment to a daily struggle against the forces of injustice and destruction. It is an invitation to join the struggle for a New World. As I have mentioned above, our god is the God of liberation from enslavement and injustice. As a Christian, I am invited and challenged through my covenant with God to fight against the forces of evil and destruction in society. Christ is my role model. He is my exemplary model to the ministry of a lifelong and radical commitment. Why my model? It is because his ministry was:

"To proclaim the year of God's favour; the new age of compassion and pardon; the time of grace. A liberation of the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed" (Is. 61: 2 and Lk. 4: 18 – 21).

As Joachim Jeremias puts it, I too, have to live and die for "*the value of the universal table fellowship.*"⁴⁹ This is what Jesus did.

3.3. MODERN EVANGELISATION AND MINISTRY TO THE DEPRIVED

(Pastoral Analysis)

Concerned about the problem of deprivation especially among the young, many organisations, secular and religious alike have responded. Their responses to the problem of deprivation can be felt in the present mushrooming of homes, NGOs and apostolates in support of the deprived

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Introductory page.

children. These groups have responded because they want to restore God's image in the children which, by the denial of their basic rights, has been shattered and tarnished. In so doing, these various groups are trying to be co-creators with God. Indeed, as far as charity is concerned, these groups are doing a good job. Involved in the rehabilitation process for the deprived, these groups are aware of God's creative plan that each person is created in His image and so is entitled to participate in His blessings. In the preceding section, I have already mentioned some of the groups operating in the field of rehabilitation. Notwithstanding, their level of commitment in the context of the deprived children must not pass without critical questioning and analysis. Although both the NGOs and religious organisations are really doing a commendable job, one should question the attention they offer towards the eradication of deprivation. What role are the NGOs playing in the fight against deprivation? How much has the Church lessened or alleviated the adverse and sub-human conditions in the ghettos?

The number of organisations committed to the process of rehabilitation has tremendously increased. Why? Perhaps, it is because the number of deprived children has also shot up at an unbeatable pace. My belief is that as long as these organisations restrict their level of activity to the results only, they will only be beating away the smoke instead of putting out the fire. Without the consideration of the cause, deprivation will even double its impact. As simply a charitable venture, the present mentality or methodology in pastoral ministry and commitment in the world of the deprived remains a mere perpetuation and prolongation of deprivation. Our God is not simply a loving God; He is a God who is committed to the ministry of liberation and justice. Without a "voice" for the deprived, the present pastoral ministry will be nothing, but a mere perpetuation of deprivation. In fact, it would be a charitable venture against justice.

3.3.1. Ministry as a Perpetuation of Deprivation

As a meticulous exercise of charity, my level of operation in the sphere of the deprived bears no fruit if my agenda does not include my fight against the cause of the problem. The more I get stuck in helping the deprived without addressing the unjust cause, the more I allow the problem to infiltrate the strata of my surrounding environment. For the time being I can help alleviate the pain, but after a short while the pain of deprivation continues. My charitable apostolate in this case, only becomes a utopian kind of exercise hoodwinking the deprived children into a temporary satisfaction of unmet need. I only cover, but do not heal the wound. Without treating it, I only prolong, even perpetuate, the pain. By so doing I could even be guilty of silent conspiracy by neglecting the unjust cause. The more I keep silent, the more I allow the enemy to spread the poison.

3.3.2. Ministry as an Act Against Justice

Our God, the liberator, always fights against any structure that unleashes suffering, poverty and death on His children. In His ministry of liberation, Jesus too, makes sure that the bondage of evil never prevents God's children from being what God has meant them to be. In this case, if my pastoral commitment does not empower and help the deprived children get out of their suffering, then there is something wrong. Therefore my commitment has reason to be questioned. If my pastoral ministry remains at the level of charitable service I have reason to be guilty of the sin of omission. The option for the poor means being a voice for them. If I remain silent it means that I am happy about whatever blocks the glory of God. When I keep quiet and restrict myself to works of charity only, I am directly in support of the status quo. The glory of God is the human person really alive. In my pastoral commitment I have to be careful that I do not get

stuck in the meritorious glorification of my effort. I have to be committed to the cause of justice.

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SECTION III: STAGE 3 - ACT

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The opening sentence of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, in the paraphrased form is:

“The joys and the hopes, the fears and the sorrows of people everywhere today are also the joys and the hopes, the fears and the sorrows, of the followers of Christ” (GS 1).

As a committed follower of Christ, I would not be at peace when I see my fellow brother and sister in the bondage of deprivation. I can share the same Eucharistic Bread with them, even giving them my food and drink. Nevertheless, if I do nothing to help them get out of their bondage my apparent solidarity with them remains incomplete and superficial. In this sense my solidarity remains a mere euphemism for my passive perpetration of deprivation. My claim of solidarity remains a mere conspiracy of silence which only anaesthetises the deprived children to their pain and suffering.

At length, I have already elucidated my displeasure with the subhuman and adverse conditions into which my pastoral commitment has plunged me. My pastoral care ministry has proved futile in the context of the deprived. Therefore what do I do about it? Both my Description (Stage I) and Analysis (Stage II) in the preceding sections, would be incomplete and fruitless without asserting and reaffirming my sphere of implementation and course of action. Below are my contentions for the plan of action.

4.1. HOW TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM?

Certainly there are no ready-made answers to the problem of deprived children in the ghettos. However, this is not a reason to sit back, fold the arms and watch. In the preceding Sections I have mentioned some prophetic voices who, in their own context, have responded to the problem of evil and suffering in the world. These "Voices" have traced out a way for me to traverse. I do not have only to admire their exemplary and powerful spirituality. I have to imbibe and emulate their spirit. How do I do this? First, I have to start by challenging and questioning my own spirituality. Thereafter, challenging and questioning my own small Religious community. In most cases, I tend to point fingers at others and the structures outside myself rather than at myself. I am sick and yet I am only concerned about healing others.

4.2. MY CHALLENGE: A CHALLENGE FOR ALL

Far back in 1968, the Latin American Bishops at Medellin, asserted that "preferential option for the poor" was not simply "a choice", but "an obligation." Everyone speaks against corruption and injustice. In this case, who is the culprit? Everyday parents traumatise their children with unimaginable abuses. In religious houses, while claiming to share the one and same Eucharistic Jesus on the same table, there is in actual life, a perpetuation of the enslaving commandment of "Animal Farm":

*"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."*⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Orwell, George, Animal Farm, England: Penguin Books, 1989, pg. 90.

There is a contradiction in the way we treat each other in community. Often in the home community there is unequal respect and attention given to the needs of senior and junior members. We often refuse to see this, but focus on structures outside ourselves, like those of the government where corruption and embezzlement of the public funds are the order of the day.

If my conscience is still '2000 compliant', responding to the problem of deprivation is my challenge. If everyone desires to live in a New World, then it is everyone's challenge to react. To be committed to a liberating God means nothing but a commitment to "the cause" and "spirituality of Justice." As Joachim Jeremias puts it, my challenge too, is not only to live, but also to live for the "value of the universal table fellowship." This is what Jesus lived and died for. It is the same value which is a source of empowerment for me, a follower, to challenge whatever is unbecoming.

4.3. PASTORAL CARE AND REHABILITATION

On one hand, a diverse lot of organisations involved in pastoral care ministry and rehabilitation have allowed a lot of children to enjoy the basic needs, which otherwise, they would have not received. In so doing, these organisations have generously helped to channel the children's energies and exuberance into constructive purposes and uses. But, on the other hand, the mode of pastoral care ministry and rehabilitation process has been a mere touch on the tip of an iceberg. Many children on the streets and in the ghettos are still entrapped.

My contention is that for pastoral care ministry and the rehabilitation process to be effective, the carers must not simply confine their efforts to small groups. They must expand their sphere of operation. Instead of simply dealing within the set limits, pastoral carers must embark on the struggle for social and structural change. In so doing pastoral carers would actively be

responding to the Church's invitation to participate in the liberation struggle in order to create a new order. This new order, Pope Paul VI's liberating phrase, is nothing but:

"The promotion of the good of every person and of the whole person...this is integral development, full enhancement and a vocation to self-fulfilment."⁵¹

Using the expression of Paulo Freire, creating the just order, is to help the poor help themselves. Mere charity or handouts are nothing, but:

"False generosity which begets more poverty, dependence and powerlessness."⁵²

4.4. HOLISTIC HEALING

Holistic means seeing something as a whole rather than as bits. Holistic thinking means that individuals must not be isolated from their context in action.⁵³ According to Archbishop Milingo's expression, healing means releasing someone from a stumbling block to human fulfilment.

"Healing means taking away from a person a disturbance in life which deprives him of being himself, which he considers an unwanted parasite."⁵⁴

⁵¹ Okolo, Chukwudum, B., *"The Liberating Role of the Church in Africa Today"*, Eldoret: Gaba Publications, Spearhead 119, 1991, pg. 63 (Refer to: Pope Paul VI, On the Development of Peoples, Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1966, pg. 35).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Pattison, Stephen, A Critique of Pastoral Care, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1993, pg. 89.

⁵⁴ Ibid. (Refer to: Freire, Paulo, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, N.Y.: The Seabury, 1973, pg. 29).

Holistic healing is the healing of the entire ecosystem, starting from the individual's inner healing up to society as whole. This, in concrete terms, is the meaning of total liberation. While concerned about the uplifting of the deprived children from the mire of unmet needs, a pastoral carer must also be committed to the wider elevation of society from the forces of injustice.

4.5. ADDRESSING THE OPPRESSIVE ENVIRONMENT

It is not enough to simply associate pastoral care ministry with a generous exercise of charity. Pastoral care ministry that loses sight of the unjust cause, remains a trauma to the already traumatised lives.

It is encouraging that the Church has tried to address and challenge some of the causes of deprivation that I have mentioned in my Analysis Section. In the spectrum of morality, for instance, the Church has been sensitising people in areas of AIDS awareness, sex education and family planning. In the political arena the Church is involved in the Constitutional review process. However, against her traditional spirituality of submission, resignation, and martyrdom, the Church must critically sensitise and support her members in becoming instruments of social justice and change. Mother earth is our "oikos", our home. Since the Church is part of this home, she has the reason to cherish the efforts and foster the initiatives that enhance the sharing of God's blessings by all. In the same way, the Church has a reason to fight against the powers that block one's way from God's blessings.

4.6. MY SPECIFIC AND URGENT LINES OF ACTION

4.6.1. An Urgent Need for "A Witness of Life"

In order for pastoral care ministry to help replenish God's image in the deprived children in the Kenyan context, let me propose, reaffirm and delineate some of the specific and sensitive fields which need the most urgent attention.

4.6.1.1. Teaching by Example

Pastoral carers, with myself included, must first practise the Gospel and moral values before preaching to others. Nowadays, it is nearly common-place to hear of the insurmountable abuses done by pastoral carers themselves. For instance, the media has recently and frequently been reporting to the public on pastoral carers and ministers who are indicted on charges of rape, child abuse and sexual immorality. How could the public faithful respond to Gospel and moral values when their own custodians become figures of contradiction and betrayal?

4.6.1.2. Corruption and Good Salaries

As long as the salaries and wages remain unfavourable the public servants will remain entrapped within the maze of corruption and bribery. How can the pastoral ministers condemn the corrupt system if they continue to tally the wages of their workers in correspondence with the standard wage of the corrupt system? In the first place the pastoral organisations must support good salaries by example. Otherwise Baba Moi's contention will ever remain valid and sensible: *"The Church must first solve its insurmountable conflicts and problems before it condemns us."*

4.6.2. Participation in Group-oriented Opportunities

Pastoral ministry must encourage people to partake in public functions viz. healing prayer sessions and interdenominational gatherings. People who are politico-phobic must also be encouraged and helped. Public functions could be therapeutic. They could also broaden people's vision to social issues. Constructive gatherings are foundation stones to a life of hope, solidarity, healing and empowerment in the world of despair.

4.6.3. Decentralisation Network and Job Opportunities

Pastoral ministers must make it their obligation to foster infrastructural policies that decentralise development. Commercial centres and industries must be spaced out in rural regions accessible to raw materials other than simply in the capital city. Therefore capital and energy must be invested in good roads and a transportation network system. This attempt might reduce transport costs thus cutting down the cost of finished products. This would help the graduates to leave the capital because of job opportunities and modern trends that are available in other regions. Religious organisations and NGOs must also foster a decentralisation of their operations. This would also multiply job opportunities.

4.6.4. Integrated Apostolates

Both religious organisations and NGOs must be open to integrate their efforts, charisms and initiatives. Working together would effect more lasting results and so help combat the fast moving problem of deprivation. Mutual sharing and responsibility would help counteract the political "*divide and rule*" mentality. Indeed, this attempt would even be an exemplary trend against ethnic conflict, differences and pride.

4.6.5. Rehabilitation and Training

Rehabilitation and training do not consist in turning the deprived into beggars. Neither do they mean producing chefs and chauffeurs. Therefore common sense not only money, is needed in locating sites conducive to self-supporting and longer lasting results.

4.6.6. Civic Education and Community-based Projects

Despite the corrupt system people must be taught that it is their duty and responsibility to fend for themselves. In family care education people must be taught not to simply look at the value of children but also at their responsibility to bring children up with dignity and with God's untarnished image in them.

4.6.7. Multimedia and Communication

Certainly it is costly to run and maintain the media. Notwithstanding, instead of overspending and exhausting resources on mere charitable ventures, pastoral carers must take risks by entering the world of communication for a more global infiltration to the public majority. It is costly, yet "*Born again*" and "*Protestant*" friends are doing a commendable ministry on radio and television.

4.6.8. The Gospel in the context of the deprived

Pastoral ministers must enter the world of hermeneutics. In order to allow the message to speak to the people, a minister must also show them that God does not favour deprivation. Therefore a minister must make use of the pulpit to address the unjust infrastructure and so conscientise the people.

4.6.9. Leading by example

Just as a personal sin leads to social sin, in the same way a virtue done would develop into a good for all. Therefore the time for implementation of the suggestions I have proposed and reaffirmed is here and now. I do not have to simply choose a line of action but I have to move with determination into action. Within the context of my apostolate, for instance, it is only after I experience the power of a public function that I encourage the youth to go for their own "*come and see*" encounter.

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

While it is a meticulous and generous venture, a commitment to works of charity, in most cases, loses sight of *"the sick who walk."* While busy feeding and tending the deprived children, pastoral care ministry pays no attention to the group that needs the most care. The more pastoral ministry keeps quiet the more it supports and conspires with the unjust cause.

In this **Jubilee Year**: the Year 2000, is there room for the ministry of liberation? Of course! Without the ministry of liberation, the Jubilee Year would be devoid of meaning. The entire salvation history has been characterised by the celebration of the Jubilee Year. In **Leviticus 25: 10** we are reminded of this year of Grace:

"Consecrate the 50th year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan."

In the same manner the prophet **Isaiah** in chapter **61: 1-2** and **Luke 4: 18 –19** proclaims:

"The spirit of the Lord ...has anointed me...to proclaim the Year of the Lord's favour."

The **Year 2000** for the Christians, is a great year of favour. It is a Jubilee Year: **a time of Grace**. It is for this reason that on 9th January 2000, the Bishops of Kenya joined the Christian faithful to celebrate the launching of the Jubilee Year 2000 at Uhuru Park in Nairobi. Elsewhere, the world over, I believe various institutions in the Church held similar functions, though at their own time and places of convenience.

In this **Year of Grace**, we do not close our eyes, sit back, fold our arms and watch. It is not a time for simply doing meticulous works of charity. Rather a year of grace is a time for **ACTION**. This is the time to say no to social injustice. The international world is speaking of the cancellation of international debts in support of the Third World. As Christians, we are empowered and anointed by the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore, it is our vocation to reach out and proclaim the Year of Grace. We do this by empowering and invigorating the powerless with the same Spirit from the Lord. As Christians in the time of Grace, it is not simply "**our choice**" but "**our obligation.**" Our claim of solidarity with the powerless is only felt when we put our hands together against what makes them powerless. I believe this is healing.

May this Jubilee Year 2000 be a time of Grace and Blessing!

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