

**AWARENESS-BUILDING A STRATEGY FOR AN EFFECTIVE  
RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IN THE NKHOMA SYNOD**

**By**

**STEPHEN JAILOSI CHIKOTI**



**Assignment in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Theology Degree (Practical Theology - Community  
Development) at the University of Stellenbosch**

**Study Leader: Prof K.Th August**

**March 2011**

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this research paper is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety been submitted at any college or university for a degree.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would first like to thank our Mighty God through his love to make me go through this course. It was not easy because when I started the course my dear wife Etness had a stroke on 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 2005 and I had to care for my loving wife. I thank God that the condition of my wife has greatly improved.

I wish to express my appreciation to Prof. Karel August my study leader for encouraging, motivating and his insightful guidance through out my study programme. He was able to understand the problem I was facing because of my wife's sickness.

I am also appreciative and thankful to Dr D.X. Simon, Prof. J.H. Clilliers, Prof. H.J. Hendricks and Dr Ian Nell for their guidance and support,

A special Word of thanks to my wife Etness and children, Shadreck, Eveleti, Jane, and Hanna for their love, support and understanding as I sometimes spent many months studying at the University of Stellenbosch. May the love and blessings from our Mighty God shower on you.

I am also very thankful to my mother church (DRC) in Cape Town for the financial support that has enabled me to go through my studies.

Finally thanks go to my colleagues at the university especially those at Weidenhof House for their encouragement, prayers and support.

## **CONTENTS**

<b><i>Abstract</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><i>Acknowledgement</i></b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1. Research Problem	6
1.2. Hypothesis	6
1.3. Motivation, value and contribution	7
1.4. Methodology	8
<b>Chapter 2: The Church and Participation</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1. The meaning of Development	9
2.2. The role of the Church	10
2.3. The services of the Church	11
2.4. Participation	13
2.5. Participatory Action Research	14
<b>Chapter 3: Relief programme in Nkhoma Synod</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1. Background	17
3.2. The first projects	20
3.3. The new projects initiated by Malawian Church leaders	21
<b>Chapter 4: The church in development (conscientisation and self reliance)</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1. The Church and Mission	25
4.2. Self reliance	27
4.3. Training of Agents on their roles	29
4.3.1. Who is a Change Agent?	29
4.3.2. Why train Agents on their roles?	30
4.3.3. Who should be Change Agents?	30
4.3.4. What role should Change Agents play?	32
4.3.5. Content in training of Agents	34
4.3.6. Common weakness of Change Agents	36
4.3.7. Mentoring a self-reliant community	37
4.4. Community Training	38
<b>Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>42</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper presents a proposal of carrying out sustainable relief and development activities from the church perspective. With reference to the Nkhoma Synod Relief and Development Project, the paper suggests that awareness brings about self-reliance; and forms a concrete foundation for any community project.

The first chapter gives an introduction to the whole presentation. This includes research problem statement, hypothesis, motivation, and possible value of the study.

Chapter 2 looks at meaning of development and what role should the church take in order to empower and improve the life of the local community.

Chapter 3 analyses the relief programme initiated by Nkhoma Synod. The chapter looks at some problems that made the projects initiated by the church and government in Malawi not to work.

Chapter 4 looks at some steps of how the church of Nkhoma Synod can initiate her programmes in order to be successful.

The chapter first looks at the meaning of church and mission, then it goes to look at what do we mean when we talk of self-reliance of the local community. Eventually, chapter suggests how best can the church in Nkhoma Synod approach relief and development programme to bring about self-reliance. The chapter looks at the role of the change agents and the community.

The final part that is chapter 5 contains some concluding remarks. The paper concludes with remarks that the people themselves must see that coming together to work in small groups is not only to their own advantage but also leads to increase solidarity and strengthens the people as a group.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1:1. Research Problem

Relief and development project programmes in Nkhoma Synod started with so many obstacles, which made the project not to be successful. The introduction of free fertilizer by the government confused all those who took loan from the Synod project. They claimed that all they got from Synod was free since the government was giving free fertilizer and seeds to all local farmers. The poor rains, which also lasted for three years, contributed another problem to all those who were given loans by the Synod. The question of the researcher is: How can the synod of Nkhoma Synod initiate her projects in order to give self- reliance to the local Community.

This study also serves as a proposal in Nkhoma Synod with regards to affect methodology of doing relief and development in the church.

### 1:2. The Hypothesis

The Nkhoma synod has not done much in applying the principles of Transformational development. Relief and development programmes in Nkhoma Synod should be carried out after a wide awareness building has been done in order to educate the members of the importance of self-reliance. The strategies used by the early missionaries in Nkhoma Synod, in terms of holistic approach to ministry, can be applied effectively and successfully. The church should guide the local people in the villages into full participation in a holistic ministry. For the development to be successful the local people in the village should be empowered. They should be able

to understand that the projects introduced by the Synod are their own projects. Such empowerment will further enable the local people to take full control of their development projects.

### **1:3. Motivation Value and Contribution of the Study**

The background of the researcher is part of his motivation to undertake this research. The researcher is an ordained minister in the Synod of Nkhoma (DRC). He was born in a family where only his mother was a Christian. The family of a researcher lived in a small rural village far from a town. It was hard and difficult to attain formal education because the nearest primary school was very far. In such a condition, the researcher started primary school when he was about twelve years. It was not easy to finish primary school education due to distance. But through the grace of God the researcher was able to proceed up to secondary school. After the secondary school education the researcher was trained as a primary teacher. After four years of teaching a researcher was called by God to be trained as a church minister. After ordination in 1986 the researcher worked in four different rural congregations. Because of his interest in youth work and caring for the orphan children, the Nkhoma Synod appointed the researcher to be a youth minister and later a village father at a church-owned orphanage. He has worked among the youth and the needy children for almost ten years.

The researcher's interest in the field of practical theology and community development became clear from the following reasons: Firstly when the researcher became a youth minister he was asked to start youth projects to enable the youth who did not go further with education to be self reliant. This was a very challenging

post because a good number of the youth went into bad and dangerous life because of poverty. Secondly the researcher's interest came in when the government of Malawi started giving in free fertilizer and seeds to local farmers, people in the country became dependent because they were expecting the government to do everything for them. So this essay will serve as a proposal in Malawi in particular for Nkhoma Synod with regards to affect a methodology of doing relief and development in the church. The church is required to act as a vehicle of hope and transformation in order to help offer holistic solutions of development.

The end result of this research is expected to make an important contribution to the church in terms of its approach to diaconal issues. If the finding and suggestions from this research can be adapted and employed, many communities within Nkhoma Synod are of influence are likely to benefit. Since this involves a methodology in development, it might contribute a lasting transformation and sustainability of development initiated within the church setting.

#### **1.4 Research Methodology**

The methodology used in this research has been a combination of Observation and Literature review. Firstly, the observation made throughout the research was not a passive one. The researcher participated in the process of collecting data over many years in his daily encounters as a community person - a pastor. The second step was to study a wide range of literature in connection with church and development from a practical theological perspective. The libraries of University of Stellenbosch and

University of Malawi provided adequate resources to enable the researcher explore more in the field of study of practical theology and community development.

The researcher has also done critical analyses of written materials on Relief and Development Program in the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE CHURCH AND PARTICIPATION**

#### **2.1 The Meaning of Development**

Many people when they think of development they think of material change or having more things. But in defining development, Myers (2003:3) uses the term transformational development to reflect a concern for seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially and spiritually. True human development involves choices, setting aside which is not a life in our community and us, while actively seeking and supporting all that is for life (Myers 2003:3). True development must be understood holistically as it concerns the whole of human life.

In the same book of Myers: Bragg (2003: 95) calls for an understanding of development that goes beyond social welfare by including justice concerns such as life sustenance, justice within social relations, dignity and self-worth freedom, participation, reciprocity, cultural fit and ecological soundness. In the same Myers book Korten (2003:96) defines development as a process by which the members of the society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage

resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

Friedman in Myers (2003:99) defines development as a process that seeks the empowerment of the households and their individual members through their involvement in socially and politically relevant action and Chambers in Myers book (2003:105) says development is responsible well being for all and lastly Christian in the same book of Myers (2003:106) defines development as kingdom response to powerlessness, thus dealing with relational dimension of poverty by building covenant quality communities that are inclusive, dealing with forces which create powerlessness, challenging elements in the process of disempowerment and providing a prophetic alternative to the distortions.

In summary we can say development is a concern for seeking positive change in the whole of human life.

## **2:2. The Role of the Church**

Pieterse (2001:94) asks, “What role can the churches and more particularly their preaching play in offering inspiration and vision to the poor so as to empower them to improve their own situation and thus liberate themselves from poverty?” With this statement or question Pieterse tries to underline that the church has a very important role to play in improving the whole life of man. The church has been called to serve God and the world. The church has to minister to people in word and deed. The church should open projects for the people and work together with non-church organization in community development programmes. The Holy Bible indicates that

members of the first church worked together. The book of Acts of Apostles (4:32, 34-37 NIV) portrays, “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales, and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.”

### **2:3 The Services of the Church**

According to Pieterse (2001:85) Those who believe in God and live their lives according to values of his kingdom are willing not just to pursue worldly riches and glory but to observe the values of love, reconciliation, peace, justice, care and concern in their dealings with one another (Matthew 6:19-21). Christians do not lust for power over other people but are humble and meek (Matthew 5:5) as Jesus was (Matthew 11:29). The greatest people in this community are those who serve others humbly (Matthew 18:4).

In the sphere of God’s Kingdom, Christians have to serve one another and serve God (Matthew 20:25-27). In this regard Jesus set the example (Matthew 20:28, John 13:4-17). Nobody is superior to anyone else in the church but everyone ministers to everyone.

The church service to the community should give hope of the Kingdom of God. The church is called and sent in the world to represent the reign of God. It has a

missional identity. Guder (et al) (1998:109) writes “The calling of the church to be missional to be a sent community - leads the church to step beyond the given cultural forms that carry dubious assumptions about what the church is, what its public role should be, and what its voice should sound like.” The church as a vehicle of the Kingdom of God should be able to put into operation a holistic ministry in which its members play a very important role. The church should obediently seek to discern the will of God in the world. It has the missionary mandate from God who called and sent it into the world. Its transformative actions have to be an act of obedience to God. The church should guide the world into full participation in a holistic ministry. The church should be the first in the world to empower the local people to do their own developments in their local areas.

August (1999:33) points out,

“Being involved in (community development by) serving the poor is not an option in terms of Christian doctrine but it is a biblical injunction (compare Luke 4:18-19 with Matthew 25:42-45). For the followers of Jesus Christ to serve Him is to serve the poor. The nature of this commitment implies that the Christian way of life is not only a spiritual action that is unrelated to the service of humanity but a practical mandate for social consciousness and concern for humanity.”

Thus, according to Myers (2003:127), The work of the church in community development is to be a servant and a source of encouragement and to work side by side with the community towards a better social order by applying the creative energies released in Christ towards the stewardship of creation and the bringing of fallen structures closer to God’s original purpose. The church has to follow the Master Jesus Christ who became a slave in order to save mankind. This was great love that God through His son united the sinful man to Himself.

## **2:4 Participation**

De Vos (1998:408) defines participatory as where people are involved in the situation being carried out, people are enabled to become actively involved in collective efforts to address and solve their social problems.

According to August (1999:24), participation is defined as an active process in which the participants take initiative and take action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control. Furthermore, participation is defined as means of empowering people by developing their skills and abilities to enable them to negotiate with the development delivery system and or to equip themselves to make their own decisions in terms of their development needs and reality.

And according to Burkey (1993:50) “human growth entails the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility and co-operation,” which in turn leads people to take charge of their lives by solving their own problems.

In this essay as a proposal to the Synod of Nkhoma participation should be viewed as one of the ways, which can enable the local people in the country to take all the projects initiated by the church and government of Malawi as their own projects. When people are empowered to plan their own projects they will be able even to find sources of running their projects.

Burkey (1993:50) is of the opinion that you cannot make people self-reliant; people become self-reliant. It is more a question of attitudes than money and materials.

Too much money and materials from external sources can easily prevent the emergence of self-reliance. People must feel and believe that it is their own efforts that are driving the development process. They must feel that they themselves are contributing the maximum of their own human, financial and material resources and that assistance from outside is only for what they cannot yet manage themselves. Correct attitudes must be encouraged from the very start. Field staff must be instilled with the idea that they are not to do things for the people; that their job is to help people to do things for themselves. Self-reliance is doing things for one's self, maintaining one's own self-confidence, making independent decisions, either as an individual or within the context of a collective group to which each member has voluntarily allied himself or herself. People must have confidence in their own knowledge and skills, in their ability to identify problems and find solutions in order to make improvement in their own lives.

## **2:5 Participatory Action Research**

Hendricks (2004:219-221) writes, "Participatory action research, however, aims at developing local sustainable communities by empowering people to take responsibility for their situation and future." He recommends such a methodology as ideal to be used in faith communities. He continues to outline important features of participatory Action Research:

-In participatory Action Research, the researcher must act as a facilitator or agent for change, as a team-builder and a fellow learner. The purpose of the research is not

firstly to accumulate knowledge, but to participate in God's mission in making His Kingdom visible.

-The local community should be regarded as an equal partner in this challenging journey towards sustainable community life.

-The Researcher or Facilitators must love and care for the local community. Humility and an attitude of serving will always be vital. The Facilitator cannot enforce or make the outcome happen in a functional or mechanical way. The local people own the process and they must see the light and adopt the vision.

-Participatory action research is a movement away from the dependency model, where the white missionary or educated facilitator/researcher (with superior knowledge) does everything for the community. The principle of self-development, where people learn to organize themselves, is a key to the process. Participatory action research or assistance is a community empowerment model in which the community receives the added value in such a way that they have the power and choice to accept, adapt and apply it within their own cultural framework.

-The goal of this type of research is to facilitate a process where local faith communities can discern God's will and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to discover creatively new ways of dealing with broken reality of pain and suffering.

The outcome should be a transformed reality that implies social transformation, liberation, reconstruction and sustainable communities that have positive effect on the whole of society. On a similar note Burkey (1993:60) uses the words of an Indian farmer, "The people do know their problems. After all they are their problems; they

live with them. How can it be that they do not know them? If they do not express their views openly it is because they have no power of an organization behind them. They know they are weak and their frankness will mean further exploitation”

The first step in involving poor people in participation in their own development is what is most often called Participatory Action Research or PAR, which is a process of conscientisation. The preliminary objective of PAR should be: (1) To increase the development worker's understanding of the local situation and (2) to increase the insight of the local people especially the poor into what factors and relationships are the root causes of and contributing factors to their poverty. Participatory action research however starts from the principle that it is not possible to separate facts from values and social relationships. Instead of looking at human beings in the abstract, it tries to see them in social and historical context. It upholds the view that human intelligence is active, selective and creative. In additional social research, values do not form part of the sciences, but of the ideology of the investigator. For participatory action research, science is a social activity in which the investigator becomes part of the reality being investigated.

Participatory action research takes place in time as part of the analysis action-reflection process where the people are both the subject and object of the research; where the investigator not only shares this reality, but also participates in it as an agent of change. Participatory action research is thus an active research with a clearly defined purpose of creating knowledge to be shared by both the people and

the investigator, knowledge that leads to action and through reflection, to new knowledge and new action. Participatory action research emphasizes this obligation to return knowledge to the people and encourage the people themselves to preserve this knowledge in forms available to other poor people. (Burkey 1993:60-62)

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RELIEF PROGRAMME IN NKHOMA SYNOD**

#### **3:1 Background**

Relief programme in Nkhoma Synod is not a new development. The missionaries who came to introduce a Christian faith in 1889 from the Dutch Reformed Church from Cape Town in South Africa not only taught Christian faith but also community development. They introduced schools, hospitals and new methods of Agriculture.

In all mission stations they built a church, a primary school, a hospital and opened a small farm where local people came to learn new methods of farming. The missionaries worked hand in hand with the government in all areas of development.

In mission centers like Mvera, Nkhoma, Mchinji, Mlanda, Mphunzi, Chinthembwe, Kongwe, Chilanga, Malingunde, they opened lay training schools where local people came to be trained in different fields to enable them develop their areas. In all these centers there were women and girls lay schools where cookery, knitting and hand crafts was trained. Those women and girls who were trained went to their local (churches) and trained their fellow women and girls in the skills they learned from mission centers.

The Missionaries together with the government opened small markets where local people brought their produce for sell. Crops like maize, groundnuts, Irish potatoes and vegetables were sold in these local markets. The government in conjunction with the missionaries trained both school inspectors and agriculture instructors to help local people in their schools and fields. Each year the government and church selected the best farmer in each area as a model, this helped as an encouragement to the community.

One of the people who was interviewed said the first missionaries together with government introduced a community field in each village where all the people came to work and the harvest from that field was kept at the chief's house to help the people in times of famine

During the Centenary celebrations, Nkhoma Synod published a special small booklet titled '*CCAP Nkhoma Synod 1889-1989*'. In this booklet (pages 16-20), there is a summary of some skills that the first Dutch Reformed Church introduced in the Synod of Nkhoma. Some of these skills were; carpentry and joinery, bricklaying, mat making, welding, shoe sewing these were for men and for women and girls, the following skills were introduced; Cookery, knitting, sewing using hand machine.

Msangaambe (2004:25) has established that when a small missionary settlement was created at Mvera, the surrounding villages looked to the white missionaries to supply them with most of their basic needs. So the missionaries thought of a way of supplementing the people's income by giving them basic skills in weaving and

agriculture. A few of the early converts were identified and trained to become trainers themselves. Soon weaving and agriculture skills were so well developed and production became so high that the white missionaries had to look for a foreign market to sell the produce. Pauw (1980:193) indicates,

“Many hundreds of persons were trained to make a variety of wicker and cane chairs and other furniture, as well as all sorts of small articles from palm leaf. Apart from those directly employed, many more benefited from supplying the vain materials required, thus creating an economic chain reaction.”

The vision of empowering church members is not new in Nkhoma Synod, but what is needed is that the Synod, should once again vigorously pursue these principles and implement them in order to address the contextual problems and challenges the church faces.

Before the Dutch Missionaries handed over the leadership to local Malawians, they had already built a Lay Training centre, which is now known as Namoni Katengeza Lay Training centre. Labuschagne (2002:110) writes; “ In the beginning those who came for training had to sleep on the floor, but the students never complained. They were too pleased to have an opportunity to be mentally and spiritually equipped for task as witnesses for Christ in their villages.” This Lay Training centre was started to train and equip the saints for the work of services.

In summary, the vision of development in Nkhoma Synod has a good background because the missionaries had a vision of a holistic approach of the gospel. They started with what people had and empowered them to develop the skills and production.

### 3.2. The first projects

The white missionaries initiated the first development projects in Nkhoma Synod. They divided the projects according to different climate of different areas. In conjunction with the government, the church opened farms in districts like Kasungu, Mchinji, Lilongwe and Dowa where Flue cured tobacco, maize and groundnuts were grown. In the Lakeshore districts of Salima and Nkhota-kota, they opened Rice schemes where rice was produce. And districts like Dedza, Ntcheu and Ntchisi where the weather is cool they opened gardens, of vegetables, fruits and wheat. In each district they employed workers who constructed clinics, roads and primary schools. Either government or church funded all these projects.

In 1964 when Malawi received an independent of self-rule both the whites in government and churches left for their homes. The same year the whites left all the projects stopped because no one funded the projects. The local people took the projects as not their own projects. When the government and the church initiated the projects, they did not empower the local people to take the projects as their own projects. According to Burkey (1993 -74:75) the work of initiators on development projects is to act as enablers or facilitators, helping to make it possible for them to do something they have decided to do on their own. Agency staff should not encourage people to do something they probably would not do on their own initiative. Initiators should not try to organize people, but wait for people to decide to organize themselves and then assist them in this process. Bringing them together for informal

discussions can be the first step in this process. Initiators should not implement projects, but should assist groups of people in carrying out their own projects.

When people are empowered to do their own projects they will be able to take care of them. Max-Neef (1991:62) states, “ Empowerment must therefore enable people to express and assert what development means to them, otherwise, social development in terms of manipulation of resources can not take place.” This becomes a notion of sustainability. When local people do not own a project, it becomes difficult for the project to sustain.

### **3.3. The New Projects initiated by Malawian church leaders**

Early 1980's the church leadership of Nkhoma Synod put as a proposal to the Synodical General Assembly to start development projects in all its churches. The General Assembly approved and the committee was formed to run the department of relief and development. The first coordinator was a retired primary teacher. After two years nothing was done and the Synod decided to put a church minister as coordinator. This time the coordinator and committee initiated different projects; they gave loans to local people to start small business; gave farmers fertilizer and seeds of maize and groundnuts as loan and also gave fishing nets to those along the lakeshore.

The same year that the church gave loans to small farmers, the government of Malawi gave free fertilizer and seeds to the same people. When time came to pay back the

loan, very few paid part of the loan but many never paid back the loan. People refused to pay back their loan because they said the government gave them free fertilizer and seeds and the church should also give what they gave as loan freely.

When the researcher interviewed some members who took loan from the Synod, people gave different reasons why they were unable to pay back the loan. Some said the year that loan was given to them, there was poor rains that made the harvest of their crops very low. Some said the fertilizer and seeds, which were given to them they sold to other people because what they wanted was money not fertilizer or seeds; they wanted money to buy food and clothes. Some said they got the fertilizer and seeds but they did not have enough land to plant their crops, so they just sold the fertilizer and seeds to those people who had enough land. When the researcher tried to find out from the Synod office whether plans were put in place to start the projects, the researcher discovered that the loan was given to people without any awareness. No agents to facilitate the programmes and no training of any kind. Again the projects given to the people were not what they wanted. The relief committee of the Synod did not do any research to find out what the people wanted. According to Burkey (1993:74), the most important role of change agents is to initiate a process of critical awareness building (conscientisation) among the rural poor. They should set in motion a dialogue on the realities of local situation and so enable the people to identify their own needs and problems and express what kind of changes they want, how they would like to see them come about. Change agents should not impose their own ideas on the people. The process of identifying problems and finding solutions is extremely important, and the people, not the change agents, must determine the

pace and direction of this process. From the “Diaconal Development Report” of 2005/06 of Nkhoma Synod relief programme the following were reported (by CRWRC and CIDA) as challenges: “There has not been adequate monitoring of activities due to lack of adequate transport and poor health of the Diaconal development care taker due to the vehicle accident that involved him, inability of Diaconal committee to payback their loans due to drought; irregular sensitisation and training due to transport problems.” This report by CRWRC and CIDA as donors of the relief and development programme in Nkhoma Synod shows us that the programmes are run with no clear vision. Programmes are not planned in advance because from the above report by CRWRC and CIDA that monitoring and training could not take place because one man had an accident and no transport, this indicates that there is no empowerment and participation, only one person runs the whole programme.

According to Burkey (1993:50) field staff must be instilled with the idea that they are not to do things for the people that their job is to help people to do things for themselves. People need to learn how to form and manage their own organizations. They need to learn how to use their organizations to gain access to resources and services and to prevent exploitation. They need to learn how to acquire and adapt new knowledge and technologies for improved agriculture and other income generating activities. They need to learn how to establish and manage these activities. People must have confidence in their own knowledge and skills, in their ability to identify problems and find solutions in order to make improvements in their own lives. This can best be done starting with small groups and small problems. As

their self-confidence increases, they can move on to bigger and more complex activities. Self-reliance is doing things for one's self, maintaining one's own self-confidence, making independent decisions.

When people are motivated to do things for themselves they can also monitor programmes. Initiators or donors of projects should put trust in people themselves. It is once again emphasized by Burkey (1993:131) that if you put trust in people they start becoming responsible for their thoughts and actions. When the people feel that they have the freedom to think, act and relate each other they take on a lot of responsibility. He (Burkey 1993:41) also points out that the problems of rural poor in the final instance cannot be solved by anyone but the poor themselves. Therefore all solidarity efforts must be aimed at strengthening their own capacity for independent action.

In conclusion, this chapter has shown the importance of the people's place in initiating and sustaining any development project. It has sited a brief example from the historical point of view of Nkhoma Synod Relief and Development Department. The bottom line is that in any development project for the poor people, the poor themselves should be involved right from the initial stages. They should propose what they need in their own view of their poverty. People first! In view of this, the following chapter will explain the role of the church in the whole process of development.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CHURCH IN DEVELOPMENT: (CONSCIENTISATION AND SELF RELIANCE)

#### 4:1 The Church and Mission

In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), Jesus mandated all believers to go into the world; teach the nation the commands of God. From this great commission given to all believers the church can be reviewed as an institution, as mystical body of Christ, as Herald or servant of God. The church is missionary and it exists in being sent and building itself for the sake of its mission. Since God is a missionary God all believers then are missionary people.

According to August (1999:30-31) the church's identity lies in it being "the people called" and therefore it is the one branch of Judean-Christian movement that continues to deliver its sense of being and purpose from the vision of God's unceasing dedication to the healing of creation and reconciliation of the entire human family (community) amongst its diverse members and with God. The church community is not new community or an accidental product of recent social or historical developments. The church community today is rather the descendants of a four thousand-year history of God's seeking to form with humans an abiding and blessed relationship. According to Bosch (1991:373) "the church is essentially missional and mission is essentially ecclesial

Because church and mission belong together from the beginning. The church is not the kingdom of God. The church is on earth the seed and beginning of that kingdom," "the sign and instrument of the reign of God that is to come. And the sacrament for

the world only when it displays to humanity a glimmer of God's imminent reign a kingdom of reconciliation, peace and new life. The church is missionary involvement suggests more than calling individuals into the church as a waiting room for the hereafter. Those being evangelised with other human beings are subject to social, economic and political condition in this world. The church should always have the spirit of serving the society (Bosch 1991:377). August (2005:24) the church is a public in so far as it appeals to warrant available to any intelligent, reasonable person, the church understands religion as fundamentally a public communal activity, not a matter of individual's experience, it effectively addresses political and social issues.

Jesus Christ himself as the Master of Christian church, did not preach a private religion, he proclaimed the kingdom of God. This entails that the church of Christ is and will always remain a public church because her Lord and saviour is always a public figure. The ministry of the church, all her preaching and social responsibilities need to remain public in nature.

The church has a very important role to play on earth as a God's messenger. Bosch (1991:517) the church is not the world, because God's reign is already present in it. So the unity between church and world can only be recognized practiced dialectically in hope that is in the light of God's reign. But also the church is not God's reign. It has no monopoly on God's reign, may not claim it for itself, and may not present itself as the realized kingdom of God over against the world. The kingdom will never be fully present in the church. Still it is in the church that the renewal of the human community begins.

In summary the primary purpose of the church is that, it has to be of service to the mission, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up God the Godchild before the eyes of the world. This is done through, carrying the good news across all borders and into the entire world. It is an essential part of the kingdom message that Jesus brought and embodied. Jesus himself selected and prepared the twelve disciples as pre-figuration of the people of God, the continuation and extension of Israel as God witness to the nations.

#### **4:2 Self Reliance**

Burkey (1993:206), mentions that self-reliant participatory development is a methodology for assisting the rural poor, which is very much based on a particular development philosophy. This philosophy has been formulated in the following points:

- The ultimate goal of development is the growth and development of the individual within the context of his or her own collective fellowship e.g. the family, the group, the community and nation. The measure of the development is its effect on the individual and the collective fellowship.
- Development should lead to the de-alienation of the individual. He or she should feel at home with the process of development in which he or she becomes the subject as well as the object.
- Development should strengthen the feeling of a collective personality in which men and women find within this fellowship their richest expressions as individuals.

- Participation is the true form of democracy and the only way in which the individual can become truly integrated with the collective fellowship.
- Self-reliance is the expression of the individual's faith in his or her own abilities and foundation on which genuine development can proceed.

Self-reliant participatory development is an educational and empowering process in which people in partnership with each other and with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, mobilize resources, and assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon.

According to Burkey (2000:57), self-reliance was not only to be seen as an economic concept, but also had to be applied to the whole of a society and culture. It relates to the collective cultural psyche of a people and to their liberation from the cultural imperialism imposed on them by political, economic and technological (western) structures and powers of domination consistent with the denial of autarchy or self-sufficiency as a viable strategic option, self-reliance implies a strategy of development which “would not eliminate all vertical dependencies,” it would rather seek to minimize these vertical dependencies as far as possible. The ecumenical understanding would relate here to a meaning expressed in the 1974 Cocoyoc Declaration, whereby a self-reliant development means a new affirmation of people's self-confidence; of reliance primarily on their own resources, human and natural, and on their capacity for autonomous goal-setting and decision-making. It excludes dependence on outside influences and powers that can be converted into political

pressure. Self-reliance, in the ecumenical understanding, was all about affirming a local people's self-respect and dignity. Formulated differently, it can be said that development strategy of self-reliance indicates a fundamental reorientation from below. It denotes the structural and policy regulation to ensure the authentic participation of a local people. As this carries an explicit social and cultural meaning, it means that the process of development would evolve into an indigenous movement for development. It opts, on the broad social economic level, for grassroots initiative and innovation yielding results compatible with local conditions, tasks and culture.

#### **4:3 Training of Agents on their role**

The role of agents in any development venture is vital to the expected outcome of any project. There is need for change agents to know their roles and serve the people within those roles.

##### **4:3:1 *Who is a change agent?***

According to Burkey (1993:76-77) a change agent is person who initiates a process of change. Change in itself can be either good or bad. The direction, which this change will take, should be decided through interaction with the people, with whom the change agent is working, rather than unilaterally by the change agent acting alone or on behalf of outside interests.

The term is open to endless discussions. Many different designations are presently being used for the village level development worker. Organizations using a

“directive” approach to development often use such words as extentionist or instructor. Some agencies use more neutral designations like rural development worker or community development coordinator. It is more common for participatory organizations to use terms such as animator, motivator, action researcher, mobilizer, and facilitator or change agent.

Although some may associate the word agent with shadowy figures spying on innocent people, the term change agent is not only short, but also precise and accurate.

#### **4:3:2 *Why train Agents on their roles?***

According to Scripture (Proverbs 29:18, NIV) “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law”. Revelation comes to people mainly through education, even in the times of old Israel; there were prophets and priests who revealed to people the laws of God. First the prophets had a vision from God and through that they learnt from God what to teach people. For any development to work well; people have to be trained on how to run their projects. Change agents as initiators or monitors of development projects they need to be trained on their role before they become initiators.

#### **4:3:3 *Who should be a change agent?***

Burkey (1993:81-82) Change agents must listen more than talk, learn more than teach and facilitate more than lead. Change agents should have respect for in the people

with whom they are working. They should believe in the potential power and age-old wisdom of the people. A faith in people should be their guiding force.

-They should go to the people as learners and not as teachers. They should be ready to be criticized and corrected and also be willing to change themselves.

-Change agents should be humble, honest, dedicated and sensitive. Their lifestyle should be simple and reasonable. Their dress, material possessions and their language should not be too different from that of the people. If they are assigned a motorcycle or a motorcar they should minimize its use. Cars and even motorcycles tend to alienate change agents from the people. The use of automated forms of transport gives them a different sense of time and space, and this can create gaps instead of bridges.

-They try to know the people, their socio-economic, political and cultural situations and problems.

-They should also have an idea of the macro-issues and structures in order to be able to see the local problems in the correct perspective. Ignorance about larger political and economic issues could result in the long run, in working against people.

-They should not minimize the importance of theory because just as theory without practice is lame, practice without theory is blind.

-Change agents should be well acquainted with the management of conflict, since their work might lead to conflict situations that might arise so that conflicts maybe anticipated and properly handled.

-Change agents should have the capacity and humility to withdraw as soon as the people are ready to manage their own affairs.

And with regard to skills, a change agent needs the ability to communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, and to analyse and diagnose the context of his or her work with rural poor. Groups of change agents should be composed of young men and women between the ages of 25-45. They must speak the language of people with whom they will be working and preferably belong to the same ethnic group or at the least, be familiar with the culture. And preferably be from rural background.

#### ***4:3:4. What role should change agents play?***

Change agents have two main roles: The first is as facilitators of human development or conscientisation and once this process of awareness building has begun a group of rural poor, then the role changes to one of being an organizational and rural business consultant. Burkey (1993:79) A group of people and well experienced change agents in Asia worked out the following elaboration of these basic roles;

1. Change agents should work with the people and not for them because people have to be the subjects and not the objects or targets of change. To work with people, change agents should be able to identify with the people but to do this is a difficult process, which requires tenacity dedication and sensitivity.
2. Initiate a process of critical awareness building among the rural poor. They should set in motion a dialogue on the realities of the local situation and so enable the changes they want, how they would like to see them come about. Change agents should not impose their own ideas on the people. The process of identifying problems and finding solutions is extremely important and the

- people, and not the change agents, must determine the pace and direction of this process.
3. Change agents should promote to broadest possible participation through the emergence of numerous and varied small groups based on the interest of their members. Groups sharing similar objectives can be encouraged to work together as people's organizations. Agents should ensure that no disadvantaged groups are left out conscientisation process.
  4. Change agents should assist groups during their establishment phase to analyse and make decisions regarding their rules and objectives, decision-making, leadership and financial control.
  5. Change agents should encourage development of leadership skills among as many group members as possible, so that they may withdraw after some time without fear of the movement or process collapsing.
  6. Change agents should also assist and encourage groups and communities to establish external linkages between themselves and development agencies government departments and institutions, commercial enterprises, banks and credit institutions. Here again, it must be the people who decide whether or not they want outside help, and in what quantity and on which conditions they are ready to accept it.
  7. Change agents should also constantly review and assess their own role, behaviour, relationships with others and performance as change agents. Change agent can play their role effectively only if they have adequate

knowledge and understanding about the community with which they are going to work.

**4:3:5. Content in the training of change agents.**

Training of change agents takes time as is and on-going process. It is essentially a personal experience depending on the commitment and participation of each trainee. There is no training course, no syllabus, and no textbook. The only essential equipment or teaching aids are pencils, field journals, flip-overs and blackboards. The initial intensive e training experience should last at least three months and preferably six months. (Burkey 1993:89)

Most existing training programmes for extension workers or for development worker tend to have the following:

1. Change agents should acquire a clear understanding of their role as change agents working in a community.
2. They should develop their social and human skills in communicating and working with poor people.
3. They should develop their understanding of group dynamics, and the importance of analysis-action-reflection in the self-reliant participatory development process.
4. They should develop their ability to criticize others constructively and sympathetically, and to handle criticism of themselves.
5. They should develop their skills in identifying and analysing the issues and problems that confront them as change agents working with poor people.

6. They should increase their understanding of the connections between local community structures and problems (micro-analysis) and national international policies and structures (macro-analysis) (Burkey 1993:90)

The most important and valuable aspect of this training is the participatory aspect. And the methodology of participatory training consists essentially of two things; group discussions in which the primary role of the training coordinator is to ask questions and field studies carried out by small teams of trainees and forming the basis for the next round of group discussions. The training should be conducted so that maximum use is made of situations and experiences as learning opportunities. And the programme should take the local community, as its frame of reference and not be dependent on imported theories.

Change agents are expected to initiate a process of participatory development. They are expected to help people to lead to self-directed and self-determined action change. The training process should therefore equip them for such a role. Change agents therefore need to acquire skills in areas such as awareness building, promotion of participation analysis of local situations and group dynamics. They need to develop a sensitivity to local needs, customs and habits, limitations and opportunities. If they fail in this they will become alienated from the people and end up being barriers rather than catalysts participatory development ( Burkey 1993:91).

#### ***4:3:6. Common weakness of change agents.***

Change agents need to be extra careful when they are initiating development projects. As already stated in this chapter that their main role is to work as facilitator of human development and later as a consultant. In many projects in Africa many initiators or donors come from outside Africa. And many times they forget why they are initiating the projects, and who are the beneficiaries of the projects.

-Sometimes change agents tend to be very paternalistic in their approach. They consider the village people to be like children who do not have a comprehension of issues and solutions. As a result of this they become authoritarian and directive. They impose their own ideas on people. Such change agents fail to develop the leadership potential of the people. Many times the development workers do all the talking while the village people just sit and nod their heads.

-Some change agents start doing everything themselves. They become like over-protective parents who do not trust their children to do anything. This may also be due to the unconscious desire of change agents to become indispensable, to remain forever important for the community.

-Most change agents tend to emphasize projects more than long-term programmes. Development of people and strengthening of genuine people's organization often remains a secondary concern. Quantifiable material development becomes more important. There are many people who call themselves social workers, but who in fact, harm the people. Their main fault is that their approach does not instil in the people a quest for social justices.

-Many change agents have an inadequate understanding of macro-issues and of the different political forces at work. Their analysis of the problems at times is superficial because of which they fail to attack real issues.

-Often change agents do not know about the activities of other change agents thus they cannot learn from the experience of others and fail to coordinate and cooperate with them.

-Some people start doling out material goods to people, thereby creating further dependencies. These are the worst kind of do-gooders. Because of their own impatience as well as the external pressure from their agencies and the people who fund them, many change agents exhibit one or more of these weaknesses, which collectively might be, designated the cardinal sin of development work. Doing things for people rather than helping people to do things for themselves (Burkey 1993:83).

#### ***4:3:7. Mentoring a self-reliant Community.***

According to August (1999:19) a community is composed of individuals or groups living in the same geographical area with different and often opposing interests. Communities are therefore not homogeneous entities. Burkey (1996:40) makes it clear that the harmony model of community, which was adopted in the past, was done without much analysis. And Bosch (1999:166) defines a Christian community as very special because they are called saints, the elect, and those called, loved and known by God. They have to conduct themselves according to what they are in Christ. This manifests itself in the mutual relationships, they are to admonish those who threaten harmony in the community and display a practical concern for the material needs of

fellow-members. This concern has to be extended far beyond the borders of the local community. Hospitality therefore has to be offered to fellow-believers from other regions as well, and Paul urges the Christians in Rome to contribute to the needs of saints and practice hospitality (Romans 12:13).

According to Hughes (1998:73) the term *ecclesia* has a strong communal element rooted firmly in the Old Testament. It implies that it is God's intention to assemble together from the generality of the world's population a special people who would be devoted to Him in a unique way. Communal devotion is expressed in different ways. There is a cultic or ritual dimension. In the Old Testament God's special gathered together at the central Shrine to offer sacrifices and to rejoice together before the Lord. There were also special times when they came together to listen to the word of God, or to renew their commitment to Him. In the New Testament the followers of Jesus gathered together to pray to listen to the apostles teaching and to break bread. The New Testament community loved to learn together, to pray together and to eat together. This shows there were one people though with different problems.

#### **4.4. Community Training.**

As we have seen on the training of change agents there is no special training causes for the community because it is an on going process. Their training is mainly through participation in all development activities taking place in their area. But before any formal training is given the following should be done:

1. Formation of a group. The process starts when a number of individuals are motivated to form a group and agree to undertake concerted or collective activity which will further their interests. Here individual interest is enmeshed with group interest. Agreement on the formation of a group is a big leap forward. Formation of a group thus signifies a change from a state of resignation to a state of awakening. A process of self-awareness has already begun.
2. Motivation. The people must be motivated to come together to work for their own common good. This motivation must not be imposed from outside. Because if it is from outside the group will fail. The people themselves must see that coming together to work in small groups is not only to their own advantage, but also leads to increase solidarity and strengthens the people as group.
3. Voluntary membership. Voluntary membership is the key principle of group formation. No one should be forced to join a group against their wishes. Membership will not be in the interest of either the group or the individual unless there is individual motivation to join the group. Members of groups must have the right to resign their membership at any time. Of course there will be peer pressure on individuals to join groups, but this must be conceived by the individual as a positive pressure. On the other hand, groups must have the right to accept or reject new members as they wish. A group that is forced to accept unwanted members will seldom develop the necessary trust and cohesiveness needed to succeed.

4. Common interest. A group must share a common interest. A group where members have different interests will not go further, the group will be divided according to different interest and this is very dangerous to development of the community (Burkey 1993:135-137).

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In the problem statement the paper is looking at how best can the church of Nkhoma Synod approach relief and development programme to bring self-reliance. The paper argues that the Nkhoma Synod has not done much in applying the principles of transformational development. From the research that the writer of this paper did in Nkhoma Synod, the researcher discovered that all the projects that the Synod initiated started with no proper training of both agents and the community. Due to lack of training the projects faced many obstacles and nearly all the projects failed to continue.

The paper argues that relief and development in Nkhoma Synod should be carried out after a wide awareness building has been made in order to educate the members of the importance of self-reliance. The church should guide the community into full participation in a holistic Ministry. The Local community should be empowered so that they can take charge of their projects. The paper to argue that the diaconal responsibilities of the church must be engaged in realistic approaches benefiting the grassroots in any given community. The church as the called out sent by God to be a

partner in the mission of God owes much to the communities in as far as transformational development is concerned. The transformation that the church is called into is transformation of both individuals and social structures that allows people to move toward increasing harmony with God and fellow human beings. The church Service to the community should give hope of the Kingdom of God. The paper continues to argue that participation should be viewed as one of the ways, which can enable the local people in Nkhoma Synod to take all the projects initiated by both the church and government as their own projects. When people are empowered to plan their own projects they will be able even to find sources of running their projects. Finally, the people themselves must see that coming together to work in small groups is not only their own individual advantage, but also leads to increase solidarity and strengthens the people as a group, which in turn ensures sustainability.

## Bibliography

- August K.T. 1999: *Community Development in Practical Theology*: University of Stellenbosh (un published MTh Thesis)
- August K.T. 2005: *The quest for being public church*; R.S.A. The Moravian Printing Works.
- Bosch D.J.1991 *Transforming Mission; Paradigm shift in Theology of Mission*; Mary K nell; orbis
- Burkey S. 1996: *People First*; London Zed books
- Des Vos A.S. 1998: *Research at Grassroots* Pretoria JL Van Schalk publishers.
- Diaconal Development Report of 2005/06 by CRWRC and CIDA* Nkhoma Press
- Guder D (et al), 1998: *Missional church; A vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, William B Eerdmans publishing Company.
- Hendricks H.J. 2004: *Studying Congregations in Africa*, Weelington; LUX Verbi.
- Huges and Benneth 1998: *God of the poor: A Biblical Vision of God's present rule*, U.K. OM Publishing Company
- Labuschagne A. 2002: *The Missionary Bloemfontein, Druforma*
- Max-Neef M.A. 1991: *Human Scale Development-Conception, Application, and Further Reflrection*, New York, The Apex Press.
- Msangaambe, Chatha E.J. 2004; *The Role of congregation in empowering the laity in the Malawian Church*, university of Stellenbosch (un published MTh Thesis)
- Myers B.L. 2003: *Walking with the poor*; New York; orbis Books
- Nkhoma Synod, 1989: *CCAP Nkhoma Synod 1889-1989 Booklet*. Nkhoma Press.
- Pieterse H.J. 2001; *Preaching in a context of poverty*, Pretoria Unisa.