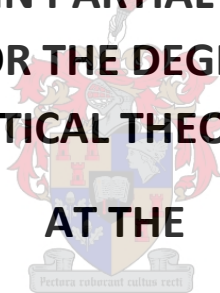


**THE AGENCY OF THE CHURCH IN HIV/AIDS AMONG
REFUGEES IN RELATION TO THE HOST COUNTRY**

KASONGO WA KUMUTOMBO DIDIER

**THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY**



**AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

STUDY LEADER: KAREL THOMAS AUGUST

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DEDICATION

I DEDICATE THIS

TO

MY WIFE, MADELEINE MWADI NTAMBO

TO

MY SON, GODANS KASONGO

FOR

THEIR LIMITLESS LOVE, ENCOURAGING COMPANIONSHIP THAT HAS SUSTAINED ME
THROUGH THE YEARS

TO

BOTH FAMILIES OF LATE KASONGO BWANGA AND KAMBABA NUMBI

TO

THE WITNESSING CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FOR MOULDING ME, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST INTO A SERVANT OF GOD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all I would like to thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for his grace has been sufficient to sustain my life day by day. Without his grace it was not possible for me to achieve any of my dreams in life. To Him be the glory, the honour and the power forever.

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To all friends and anyone who has supported me I say thank you.

To all God bless you.

KasongwaKumutombo Didier

February 2013

ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Action by Church Together
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
a.m.	Before Noon
ARV	Antiretroviral
CD4	Cluster of Differentiation
CTRC	Cape Town Refugee Centre
Deut	Deuteronomy
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
Ex	Exodus
Ez	Ezekiel
GN	Genesis
Heb	Hebrews
HI	Human Immunodeficiency
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ID	Identity
Jas	James
Jn	John
Jos	Joshua
Lev	Leviticus
Lk	Luke
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MK	Mark
Mt	Matthew

NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OUA	Organization of United Africa
1 Pt	1 Peter
R	Rand
RRO	Refugee Reception Officer
RSDO	Refugee Status Determination Officer
1 Sm	1 Samuel
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TB	Tuberculosis
1 Thes	1 Thessalonians
1 Tim	1 Timothy
TLC	Total Lymphocyte Count
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Education Fund
UNTD	United Nations Travel Document
US	United States
VAT	Value Added Tax
WCC	World Council of Churches

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Our world today is full of opportunities and challenges. There are many situations that call for human evaluation and re-evaluation. There are cases of sickness, poverty, natural catastrophe and wars, which need human attention. The situation of refugees has become a global issue needing this human attention for, "... the numbers of refugees and the regions of the world affected by them have multiplied" (Gordenker 1987: 14).

All over the world there are millions of desperate people who seek refuge in other countries and so these countries are all affected by the situations of refugees. These people we call "refugees" are human beings who leave their countries and cross borders to find a place to secure their lives. The realities of the refugees are at the same time global, regional or local. They are in fact treated differently depending on the policies of the countries of refuge though they might, to some extent, be treated in the same ways according to the UNHCR charter. Whilst they run for their lives, they face all other challenges of life that affect the globe and the countries of refuge. About refugees Gordenker writes,

Some national authorities, such as those in France and England, direct the newly settled to orientation programmes designed to ease them into their new lives. In other instances, as in the United States, the new arrivals immediately enter their new communities with support from local and national voluntary groups and receive the benefits of orientation before departure. In either case, some of the newcomers will require extended help because of difficulties in adjustment or the breakdown of anticipated arrangements, such as regular employment or appropriate education (1987: 144).

Whatever affects human beings globally or locally, will affect the refugees. There are cases of sicknesses and diseases that are either endemic or pandemic. Health policies towards refugees differ from one country to another. Health is and must be a right of

any human being. The health policies of a country may be tough or easy toward the refugees depending on the constitutions of the countries. Among different diseases that infect or affect us is HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS is and must be the concern of every one of the inhabitants of the globe. With this disease comes the issue of the anti-retroviral drugs and its effects on the patients. At this level each country has adopted its own policy for the administration of the drugs and the treatment of those who are sick.

The Republic of South Africa, being an independent and sovereign country, has adopted some policies as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned. People are encouraged to get tested and those who test positive can get free anti-retroviral drugs. Both the nationals and the refugees are entitled to free anti-retroviral drugs. But at the same time only South African citizens can have access to social grants and so this door is closed to refugees. All people who live with HIV/AIDS are vulnerable but refugees may be more vulnerable because of some realities they encounter in their everyday life. According to the UNHCR,

Most refugees take into exile only what they wear and carry, and are often totally dependent on others for survival. They may have no means of identification or proof of what they can do. They may be met with suspicion, hostility, pity or embarrassment. There are different types of refugees, some of whom are recognised officially, while others are not (1979: 1).

“The drugs HIV/AIDS patients get free of charge are very composed and strong that those who take them must eat good and properly” (Interviewee B.9 2011). It is one thing to provide the anti-retroviral and it is another thing to make sure that patients have enough food to eat. Some patients are working while others are not. Some patients have people to look after them and others do not. Some organizations can help with food for patients and others cannot. Some patients who are refugees have some kind of supports from friends, families or organizations, and others do not have any support. Without proper food, the taking of medications can worsen the situation of the patients. The real need of patients is to see that their health improves for the better. Speaking of the antiretroviral drugs Cornell says,

Taking ARVs is problematic. Some 30% of people suffer severe side-effects that include inflammation of pancreas and painful nerve damage. AZT (zidovudine; trade name: Retrovir) may also cause a depletion of red or white blood cells, especially when taken in the later stages of disease. Other common side-effects associated with protease inhibitors include nausea, diarrhoeas and other gastrointestinal symptoms. In addition, protease inhibitors can interact with other drugs, resulting in serious side-effects. ARVs should also be accompanied by good nutrition (2004: 128).

The focus of this study is on the situation of refugees living in South Africa, and who are on the anti-retroviral drugs treatment. The study will present the realities of refugees in South Africa and make a genuine call for support. At the same time, not only refugees experience the need for proper food support, but also some South African patients experience the same. This work is a call to see that the drugs which are freely given is accompanied by nutrition, and that the situation of the patients is assessed to find out if there is need of food support or not to avoid the worsening of their situation.

This research is also concerned about the role of the church. The church is called to be at the same time the light and the salt of the world (Mt 5:13, 14). The church has a great role to play in all issues affecting the universe and all of the creation. According to the words of Lohfink (1985: 146), “precisely because the church does not exist for itself, but completely and exclusively for the world, it is necessary that the church not become world, that it retain its own countenance”. Therefore the church has to care for those in need. Lohfink can point out that the church in its history was extending care above all to widows, orphans, the elderly and sick, those incapable of working and the unemployed, prisoners and exiles, Christians on a journey and all those members of the church who had fallen into special need. The presence of the church in the world is to affect the world to bring about changes whenever needs arise up. According to tradition, Eusebius quoted by Lohfink relates what Bishop Dionysius wrote, about the year 170, to the Roman Church as follow:

This has been your custom from the beginning, to do good in manifold ways to all Christians, and to send contributions to the many churches in every city,

in some places relieving the poverty of the needy, and ministering to the Christians in the mines, by the contribution which you have sent from the beginning, preserving the ancestral custom of the Romans, true Roman as you are. Your blessed bishop Soter has not only carried on this habit but has even increased it (Ibid: 156).

The care of the church for refugees is not new in the existence of the church. According to Loescher and Monahan (1989: 162, 165), “Throughout recorded history churches have ministered to refugees. The biblical injunction to care for the stranger in your midst has often inspired Christians to welcome and assist refugees”. They also give the example in Belgium and Switzerland where the churches traditionally worked with their governments to provide the necessary services to refugees who were resettled in those countries.

1.2 Problem Statement

“The first concrete step in the scientific research process is to clearly formulate the specific problem that needs to be examined. Such a problem does not arise in a vacuum” (Huysamen 1994: 2). The reason for this study is to investigate the socio-economic situation of the refugees in the host countries (in this case in South Africa) and its impact on the issues of HIV/AIDS. The investigation is to be established from the time refugees enter the countries up to the entire time of stay to find out how their realities have some impacts on the issue of HIV/AIDS and how help can come their way.

Another area of this investigation is the role of the church in assisting people in need in general and refugees in particular. The Christian aim is to both meet the material needs of the poor and to bless them (Bennett 1998: 145). Poor people should be considered as all those people in need, and refugees are people in need and particularly those who are on the antiretroviral.

A central question in this study is: Why engage with the study of the agency of the church among refugees? Other questions follow: What is the contribution of such a study in the practice of Christianity; how will the church be effective in addressing the

situations of refugees; how does the situation of refugees have negative impacts on the spread of HIV/AIDS; why is good nutrition important for people on the antiretroviral?

The reason for this research is the fact that most of the HIV/AIDS refugee patients who are on the anti-retroviral drugs cannot afford proper healthy meals and need to be supported towards better health as it is the case of South African citizens who are in the same situation. The study will assess in the first place refugees' realities and their impact on the issues of HIV/AIDS.

1.3 The research hypothesis

The hypothesis of this thesis is that refugees are classified among the vulnerable people and the church is to stand on their side. The church can use this thesis as a tool in fulfilling its mission. As a community of love, church can be effective in addressing the situations of refugees by embracing refugees and by ministering to those affected with HIV/AIDS. Also the church can plead their cause to individuals, organizations (World Bank, IMF, UNHCR...) and the South African government which can come on board to support the provision of proper feeding of the refugee patients who are on the antiretroviral.

The church can also play its advocacy role in urging the UNHCR and governments to help improve the conditions of the refugees because the situations of refugees can have negative impact on the spread of HIV/AIDS if they are not properly handled and they are exposed to many dangers including the spread of HIV/AIDS. For instance when there are not proper environments where newcomers can be assisted until they become self-dependents, the church can even on itself shelter them and come with initiatives and programmes to assist refugees, and also the church can help to create awareness of the issues of HIV/AIDS among refugees.

There are cases when refugee children of parents who die of HIV/AIDS are not assisted nor looked after. These children are exposed to many dangers including the spread of the virus of HIV. Most of the refugees who are HIV positive cannot afford proper food. Newcomer refugee women and children are the most vulnerable because

they are easily exploited just for the sake of survival. The attitude approach of the Department of the Refugee Home Affairs has also led to some kinds of misbehaviour among new comers. For them nothing can be done until they get official documents.

“Poor people are more vulnerable to HIV infection and people with AIDS live longer when they are better nourished... It is an argument for providing food parcels to poor people on ARVs (as happens in the Western Cape) – not an argument for providing food parcels only” says Nattrass as he is quoted by Cornell (Ibid: 129). This presents the danger that people with AIDS run if they cannot have proper food while taking the antiretroviral drugs as Cornell has pointed it out.

1.4 Research goal

This research is carried out to create an environment that will improve the lives of the refugees especially those living on antiretroviral drugs. Refugees share many realities that are common and there is still great need to improve their situations. As for the issues of HIV/AIDS, it is hoped that something will be done to assist and create conditions that will assist in both prevention and cure. Some of the realities of the refugees can contribute and are contributing to the spread of the virus of HIV.

Basic needs like food and shelters are a great concern of refugees who often find themselves trapped in a situation not by choice. Women and children are the most vulnerable groups in such situations. They may be sexually abused thus increasing the spread of the virus. At the same time those refugees who are already affected by the virus needs better conditions that help to improve their health. Upon arrival it is difficult for some to manage to get adequate food especially when they are taking the antiretroviral drugs.

The goal is also to see the church totally involved in the search for a better life of the refugees. The church should be the voice of the voiceless in the case of those who come to seek for refuge in foreign lands. In so doing the church will merely be fulfilling its duty and responsibility. According to James M. Childs (2000: 68-69), the preaching and praxis of the church in a community have three practices: stewardship, community involvement and advocacy. As stewards, Christians give money to the

church management and finances to sustain the church for its true mission. Christians also assist church activities. They are stewards as they foster the justice of a more sharing society through political, economic and social means. They directly participate in mission and they do not simply give to the mission.

As for community involvement, 'a powerful step toward a sharing society is to affirm the value of community by seeking to serve and build the community in which we live'. Christians must understand that they are led by their Christian faith and its commitment to justice. 'The goal is to witness to Christ in caring for the neighbours and to engender a community that lives the values of God's kingdom'. Advocacy calls for churches to have persons who are actively engaged at all levels of government and in dialogue with large corporations (Childs 2000: 69-72).

1.5 Research Methodology

Two methods of data collection have been selected for this study. The first is that of reading materials that includes books and internet. As for the books twelve which were selected for my exams have played a major role in inspiring the choice of the topic. Interviews will be conducted with selected refugees from one church, from the refugees' community, from two NPOs (Operation Give Ye Them to Eat and Cape Town Refugee Centre).

To achieve the objective of this thesis the four core tasks of practical theological interpretation of Osmer will be used. The first is the descriptive-empirical task that consists to gather information that helps to discern patterns and dynamic in particular episodes, situations or context. The second task is the interpretative task that consists to draw on theories of the arts and sciences to better understanding and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring. The third is the normative task that consists of using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or context, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and to learn from "good practice". The fourth is the pragmatic task that consists to determine strategies of actions that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and enter into a reflective conversation with the "talk back" that emerge when they are enacted (Osmer 2008: 4) .

Concerning interviews participants will be approached from targeted groups and asked if they can answer and share their realities with the researcher after he has clearly explained the aim of the research and their contributions will be to give their views, concerns and solutions to the issues raised. Participants will be approached at the church, at their homes or in the office. The researcher will either introduce himself or introduce himself and be introduced by the church leader to the participants.

During the interviews participants will be approached individually. After the interview the participants will have their say about their contribution being or not being part and parcel of the research. The participants will be asked to contact the researcher at any time they feel as withdrawing their contribution from the research as the research timetable will be plainly explained to them. Participants will be assured that the thesis will be submitted only to the University of Stellenbosch and that all that which will be recorded will be destroyed once the thesis is completed and accepted by the university. The questionnaire and the ethical clearance are annexed to this thesis.

Above all my own experiences as an asylum seeker in South Africa will be exploited in the understanding of the situation of the refugees. I have been in the country for the last seven years without obtaining the refugee status and I would like to explore the issue of the refugees from this inside perspective. I will also explore refugee-run churches in Cape Town and their impact on the refugee situations.

1.6 Literature Review

A great deal of research has been conducted into refugees. Menrah Arendt (1943)¹ in her article, *We refugees*, overturns the condition of refugee and person without a country-in which she herself was living –in order to propose this condition as the paradigm of a new historical consciousness. She also traces the origin of the phenomenon of refugee and the history of various High Commissions. Malkki (1995) in his book, *Purity and Exile*, explores how categories of identity such as “Hutu” and “Tutsi” are produced through violence and exile.

¹ We refugees, available online on the website: http://jft-newspaper.aub.edu.lb/reserve/data/soan201-agmben/Module7-g_Agamben-werefugees.pdf

Gibney (2004) in his book, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees*, exposes the conflict between the claim of refugees and those escaping desperate economic situations to a secure place of residence and the claim of citizens to act together to limit access to the territory and resources of their community. Milner (2009)² in his book, *Refugees, the State and the Politics of Asylum in Africa*, explains why in the late 1980s many African states became more reluctant to host refugees, contrary the policies of open-doors in the 1960s. Better and Loescher (2011) in their edition, *Refugees in International Relations*, discuss the significance of migration and refugees.

Also lot of literatures have been conducted in the field of HIV/AIDS especially in the 2000s. Togni (1997), in his book *AIDS in South Africa and on the African Continent*, presents AIDS as a challenge for the government, the public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations and every South African to have a joined struggle against it. Guest (2003) explores how the Aids crisis has devastated the world's poorest continent, and shows how families, charities and governments are responding to the next wave of the crisis – millions of orphans in his book *Children of AIDS: Africa's orphan crisis*. In 2005, Cameron addresses the taboo questions of race, sexual orientation, poverty and stigma in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic from a personal perspective in his book *Witness to AIDS*. In his book *The African AIDS Epidemic*, Iliffe (2006) explains the origin and the nature of the virus and the unique epidemic it has caused.

It may be argued that the field has been thoroughly exploited. Yet, there is still space on the subjects. Although considerable research has been conducted refugees and HIV/AIDS, this project explores a virtually untouched aspect: looking at the agency of the church in HIV/AIDS among refugees in relation to the host country with two main perspectives to see how the situations of refugees can have negative impact on the spread of HIV/AIDS and how the church can address these situations to improve them as a way for ward in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

² Book Reviews, available online on the website:
<http://afraf.oxordjournals.org/cotent/110/440/503.full.pdf+html>

1.7 Limitation of the study

This study is about the people of God as God's representative to carry on the duty of wellbeing of human beings (refugees). It goes from biblical early accounts on people running for their lives to the situations of refugees in our time. The study is about how the has to address the situations of refugees in the host country. The study is carried out to investigate the negative impact of the presence of refugees in the host country on the spread of HIV/AIDS. The study is to look at the situations of refugees in general and of those who are on the antiretroviral in particular. Above all South Africa is the host country of this study and Cape Town is the field of the investigation. About the common vision of wellbeing which is a major concern of the study, Nürnberger writes,

The vision of comprehensive wellbeing is not a system of thought which can be formulated once for all times and situations. It is like a shifting horizon: as we approach it, it retreats and lures us on to new vistas. It also grows in width and depth. This is what happened in biblical times and what still happens today (2004: 62).

1.8 The research conceptualisation

Some concepts need to be defined for a better understanding of what this study contains. To conceptualise is merely to attempt to provide guidelines that are subjective individual constructions of reality. The conceptualisation is introduced to facilitate understanding and avoid ambiguity (August, 1999: 10). In the following lines four concepts are to be defined: agency, church, refugee and HIV/AIDS.

“In philosophy and sociology, agency is the capacity of an agent (a person or other entity) to act in the world... In sociology an agent is an individual engaging with the social structure³”. In this thesis the agency should be understood as the capacity of the church to act in regard with the situation of refugees.

³ Agency (philosophy), available online on the website: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/agency_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/agency_(philosophy))

The church is the community of love founded by Jesus Christ (Noel 1980: 13). The church foundation is love and without what it loses its real meaning. For Küng, the origin and the name of the church carry with them an obligation to serve the cause of Jesus Christ (2001: 14). To serve the cause of Jesus should be in the light of Luke 4:18-19. The concept “church” should be understood in relational terms as Alan Knox writes,

The New Testament writers are constantly talking about the “church” in relational terms. Primarily, I divide these relationships into three types (although they are interrelated): 1) the relationships between God and his people, 2) the relationship among God’s people, and 3) the relationship between God’s people and others (i.e., those who are not God’s people⁴.

In this study the concept “refugee” should be given two meanings, the asylum seeker and the acknowledged refugee. Asylum seekers are people who have made an application for refugee status in the country and whose claims have not yet been finalised by the Department of Home Affairs⁵. On the other hand a refugee is someone whose application for refugee status has been approved by the Department of Home Affairs. I have opted to use the term refugee for both the asylum seekers and people with official refugee status.

The concept refugee is to be understood in two ways, it is either defined by the law or by its very nature. By its very nature, a refugee is any person who runs from his/her country for his/her life. According to the legal definition of the term a refugee is,

Any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution on account

⁴ Definition: Church (or Ekklesia), available online on the website: www.alanknox.net.

⁵ Refugee Rights Information Booklet, Information for refugees and Asylum seekers in Cape Town, available online on the website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/>

*of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion*⁶.

HIV stands for “Human Immunodeficiency Virus”. It is the virus that eventually leads to AIDS. It is the virus that damages a person’s immune system. AIDS stands for “Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome” (Dyk 2005: 3).

1.9 Motivation

It serves little purpose to select a topic with which the student cannot identify himself/herself or for which he/she lacks the necessary training and skills therefore the researcher must take into consideration his/her own preferences, training, skills and limitations (Huysamen 1994: 189).

This study has been motivated by the fact that the researcher comes from the community of refugees. He personally shares most of the realities of this community. The researcher has been in the country (South Africa) for more than seven years. The truth is that the researcher is still living as an asylum seeker with all the realities attached to it. Most of the realities that will be explored in this thesis are not foreign to the research but also reflect his personal experience. He has also worked as an interpreter at Home Affairs Refugees Reception Centre in Cape Town. The motivation comes from what the researcher has seen, heard and experienced on a daily basis.

1.10 Outline of the chapters

This study is subdivided into 6 chapters, each dealing with a specific topic. Chapter 2 is a presentation of the realities of refugees around the globe. It deals with the issues of refugees related to human, social, economic and political realities. In this same chapter I present the issues of refugees in both the Old and New Testaments to see the way they were handled by both communities. This chapter introduces the refugees in the world as a community with its own realities.

⁶ The ‘Lectric Law Library’s Lexicon Refugee, Legal Definition of Refugee, available online on the website: www.lectlaw.com/def2/q023.htm

Chapter 3 is the presentation of the realities of the refugees in South Africa. Though these realities are human, social, economic and political, they are interpreted differently from those of other parts of the globe. This chapter is to present the extent to which what is happening to the refugees living in South Africa might be different to what is happening to others living elsewhere in the world.

Chapter 4 is an overview of the issues of HIV/AIDS. This chapter presents a journey from getting the virus to becoming sick and all that happens to the sick. This chapter also deals with the church's response to the issues of HIV/AIDS in relation to refugees.

The chapter presents the needs of the HIV/AIDS patients. These needs are classified into two main groups, physical and the spiritual. These needs are those expressed or not expressed by the patient as he/she finds out the truth around his/her health. The role of the church in meeting these needs will be explored in this same chapter.

The chapter explores how people who can support the patients' needs.

This chapter identifies those who can effectively support the patient, individuals, family and friends, churches and NGOs, governments and international organizations which may all play a meaningful role. Also considered is the role of the South African government, on the issue of the "social grant". The role of the church to assist and plead the cause of the refugees to governments and other organizations is also considered in this chapter.

Chapter 4 is also a presentation of the medication called "anti-retroviral". Here the medication is presented with its composition and effects on the patient, including the affordability of the drug and the government policy of the free distribution of anti-retroviral drugs in South Africa.

Chapter 5 promotes the human rights of refugees who need the full support of the governments which have opened their doors to them. This chapter also makes a call for the church to be engaged in the situation of refugees and also explores the topic of God and human dignity.

Chapter 6 constitutes a call and plea for support of the refugees and those who are HIV/AIDS patients. It presents a better way of achieving this by assessing the particular situation of different refugees and the patients before intervening. The claim is founded on the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and his instruction to give them something to eat. The situations of refugees need to be improved and the refugee patients living with HIV/AIDS are in need of both anti-retroviral drugs and of proper food applied properly.

1.11 Conclusion

This first chapter has constituted the presentation and preparation of the thesis that is to be developed. Explanations have been provided just to pave the way to the exploration of our topic. Themes have been developed around terms like refugees, HIV/AIDS, antiretroviral drugs, the role of the church and that of the government and other organizations.

Refugee issues have become a global concern. Many countries are affected in one way or another. Governments, organizations and individuals are trying to do the best they can to help refugees. The reality of the refugee's community calls for a strong involvement of the church while it carries on with its mission in the world. The situation is at a point where there is great need to have on board people of compassion. Church members are called to be and live like their Master who was moved with compassion when he saw the crowd (Mt 9: 36).

Refugees are not spared from sicknesses, starvation and other difficulties that affect the host countries and the world. The main challenge that constitutes our investigation is HIV/AIDS and the use of the antiretroviral drugs. Many countries have opted for free antiretroviral drugs and South Africa is one of them. These drugs need to be accompanied with good nutrition. Some refugees who also get the drugs free of charge cannot afford this good nutrition and so need to be assisted.

The church is in the world with a mission. One of the church's responsibilities in mission is to respond to the needs that can go from local to international level. The church is to stand on the side of the needy and in our case the refugees. It has the

calling to both assist and plead the cause of refugees to competent parties in order to improve their situations. The policy of free drugs is to be encouraged and the appeal is to make sure that those who take the antiretroviral drugs also have good nutrition. Sauer is right when he says that,

As we meet practical needs of those who suffer, we demonstrate the message of the cross to them. When we keep company with those who suffer and provide their needs, we assure them, that God is with them and identifies with them in their misery and pain (2010: 117).

This research is to encourage and remind the church of its mission of compassion toward people in need. It is also a reminder that all people are equal and should be treated as human being because they all bear the image and likeness of their Creator (Gen. 1:26-27). It reminds us that refugees are not less human and that they deserve to enjoy all their human rights. The church is mainly called in here to stand on the side of the people who now are living on foreign lands and do something about their situations. The church should address all the issues concerning refugees and do whatever is in its capacity. The church should live by example to challenge governments and other organizations to improve the situations of refugees.

In the following chapter the focus will be on the different realities of refugees in general: human, social, economic and political and on the issues of the Bible and the phenomenon of refugees. The chapter finds its importance in facts that it introduces us into the world of refugees to get a glimpse of their lives and of everything that affect them. The chapter helps to get an overview of the phenomenon of refugees because they are the central object of our study.

CHAPTER 2

THE PHENOMENON OF REFUGEES/THE REALITIES IN GENERAL

2.1 Introduction

It will be a big mistake to overlook what affects refugees in a very particular way if we want to rightly handle their situations. Refugees share some characteristics that local people do not. There is need to have a certain good knowledge of their problems, struggles, feelings and how they understand and interpret their own situations. In this chapter I will try to point out who refugees are and what affect them at different domains of life, I will also look at the phenomenon of refugees in the light of the word of God.

The term “refugee” is most of the time connected with the thinking of foreignness both in the mind of the local people and of the refugees. In fact people are born with their citizenship though there are cases of naturalisation when some people are given a second nationality. On the contrary people are not born refugees but they become refugees. Malkki sees it in the same way by writing that people are classified as refugees (1995: 8). In the case of naturalisation one has the free will to make the choice, but none choose to have the identity of ‘refugee’. Therefore a ‘refugee identity’ is given to anyone who finds himself/herself under some condition where there is no other choice than to accept to bear the new identity of “refugee”.

It should be a concern to know if a child born of refugee parents is also a refugee or not. This question is only answered by the septic constitutional laws of different countries. In one country, a child born of any parents living in a foreign land is automatically a citizen as it is the case in USA (Interviewee A.12). This privilege includes even a child born of refugee parents. On the other hand, some other countries’ constitutions don’t grant citizenship to a child born of refugee parents. This concern is raised up because in the long run it will affect the children who may go through the same experience as their parents.

There are many causes that have been producing situations where people have to run from their countries to look for refuge in foreign countries across the globe. The main

reason that motivates people to run from their countries is no other than their concern for life. The concept 'refugees' is no more unfamiliar to many people worldwide. In this research the main concern is not to explore what causes people to move from their countries, but rather to assess the situation of those who already are living away from their original home countries. Nevertheless we need to know that there two main phases through which refugees go. The first is that of the run and the second is the settlement in the host countries. In the next chapter a point will focus on what refugees have to say about their stay in South Africa, but as for now let look at what some of them do face on their run for us to be introduced in the 'run phase'.

Every refugee has a specific story to tell. Here is the story of a refugee couple⁷ from Rwanda. The story is about what they experienced in 1996 in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the revolution led by the late president Laurent Desiré Kabila who was backed by the Rwandese army. This event took place in Kisangani in the Equatorial Forest in DRC. At the time they were running they had two children and the firstborn daughter. She was almost four years old at that time. On the eve of the attack, their daughter sung a song with the following words, "I will go to Jerusalem where 'the baby' (Jesus) is waiting for me". After the song the father realised that something has about to happen to them. The following day they were attacked and they had to run covering 40 km from Kisangani without any food carrying their children on their backs. During their attempted escape Congolese people were shouting to them: "you have killed many now it is your turn".

When the soldiers reached where they were they were told to lay down everything they had. After that soldiers started to shoot all-around and they laid down their faces against the ground. As soldiers were shooting they heard a woman praying and Interviewee B.20 asked the husband to recite the name of Jesus, what they did during the shooting. The incident went on for couple of minutes and at the end of the day soldiers said that it was enough with them and they ordered anyone who was left alive to raise and go into the forest. They rose up with their children on their backs and left towards the forest.

⁷ The couple is from Rwanda and is living in Cape Town. They belong to the Tutsi tribe. They lost their firstborn daughter during their escape in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The daughter was shot during a shooting at the refugees from Rwanda running for their lives from the pursuit of the Rwandan army (which was made of aTutsi majority and Hutu minority) in DRC.

After a certain distance in the forest their daughter told them that she was vomiting. When they tried to verify they noticed that she had been shot because there was blood running from her body. The parents told her that she was now going to Jesus and that they will follow her later. Surprisingly, their daughter did not cry nor scream but quietly she gave up her spirit and died. The parents had no choice but to wrap her in a cloth they had and laid her under a bush and that was the end of their daughter's life. The rest of the family had to carry on with their journey despite the death of one of them.

The death of the daughter changed the lives of both parents completely. After the event the wife, prayed for the first time in her life and she started to encourage her husband. "After the death of our daughter I prayed to God for the first time even though I was not yet born-again", she said. The couple realised after this tragic death that they were going to die any day and that they had to get prepared for whatever could happen to them. The wife asked her husband to forgive her and vice-versa. After the time of forgiving each other they carried on with their attempted to escape (Interviewee A.8 And B.20 2011).

A lot of things happen during the run phase and that can have negative impact in the life of refugees in the host country. If the death of the daughter changed the life of the couple positively, there may be other experiences during the run that change life negatively. During the run phase one can get raped just for a good example. Therefore there is a need to always assess the all process of becoming refugees by hearing to their stories. This need can only be addressed by showing love to the needy. The rights of refugees have been denied at some extend and they have been marginalised in a way that their peace and security have been violated in their country.

The experience of the couple stresses the importance of assisting refugees in theirs needs to be assisted as noted in the declaration of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 13, 1986 – "Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy". There is a need to have people and organizations who will be able to here the true meaning of this declaration,

...The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one's neighbour as oneself. Those who are marginalised and whose rights are denied have privileged claims if society is to provide justice for all... (Karris 1990: 15).

After the run phase comes immediately that of settlement. There are two main approaches of opening the country's doors to refugees. One is that of integration or settlement and the other is that of putting refugees in camps⁸. In South Africa refugees are not kept in camps but they are directly integrated in the communities. This approach will be discussed further in chapter 3. The second approach of dealing with refugees as to their stay in the country is that which was later opted by the Tanzanian government. Before 1990, the Tanzanian government's strategy was that of settlement as we read,

In the initial stage, refugees were not put in camps but rather were spontaneously settled within the local community and were provided with land to build and cultivate as they waited for the situation to stabilise in their countries of origin so that they could go back. For better management, the government started placing them in settlements where they were separated from the local villagers and allocated ample land for erecting houses and for cultivation and were also provided with seeds and farm implements, as well as extension services to enable them to undertake sound agricultural and other handcraft activities.⁹

2.2 Human Realities

Refugees are human beings and need to be treated properly. They all have rights to the provision of basic human needs: sheltered, good sanitation, food and education. In countries where refugees are kept in camps, these basic needs are provided directly within camps after the newcomers have been registered. In other countries, refugees

⁸ FMO Thematic Guide: Camps Versus Settlements, available online on the website: www.forcedmigration.org/research-resources/expert-guides/camps-versus-settlements/fmo021.pdf

⁹ About Refugees Services Department, Available online on the website: www.moha.go.tz/index.php?view

are integrated in the community and have to “fly using their own wings”. In the case of health, the UNHCR has the following policy,

On arrival, the first task is to carry out an assessment to identify the main problem... The information gained from the assessment should give health workers a wide perspective (1979: 44).

This policy of the UNHCR of assessment to gain information about the asylum seekers' health can also be exploited to gather the general information of asylum seekers who arrive in the country. This will definitely help to identify the different needs of people and bring some kind of understanding their real situations. Listening to asylum seekers opens doors to knowing them because they have not to remain unknown. Because we know them, we can engage ourselves to help them.

As human beings, refugees form a community of individuals who should be treated differently, to some extent, just because they represent different realities. People who run for their lives carry with them whatever is connected with their most individualistic characteristic, which is their emotions, their behaviour, their experiences, their feelings and their beliefs. At the same time they all come from different backgrounds. All these will accompany them wherever they go. Each refugee has individual characteristics and needs to be treated as a unique person.

A refugee who runs because the family was targeted and some family members were arrested or killed for whatever reason is different from him/her that runs just because there was war in their country. Anyone who runs from persecution because of his/her belief is different from him/her that runs because he/she feels antagonism/hostility for being homosexual. Those who run just because of whatever act they committed against the expectation of their community share realities which are different from all others.

Anyone who has been raped before or while running for her life needs special attention in the host country. A check-up is very necessary to reveal the health of the client who is applying for asylum in any country. This practice will enable both the client and the host country to know in which ways to get help and to help. In case one

is diagnosed with HIV, the check-up will help both to implement strategies of caring and prevention in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In case of any other sickness and disease the same policy is of a great advantage.

2.3 Social Realities

People who run for their lives face all the social realities of host countries. The first problem that people face is that of integration. After leaving their societies, people have to get accommodated in the new society. The so-called refugees are integrating in new societies which have their own realities. Some refugees come freshly from lives under their parents' roofs and have then to cope with being fully responsible for their own lives. Some refugees find it difficult to cope while others do. Refugees also experience other realities as all foreigners do. They may be blamed for the ills of the society or may simply be exploited because of their conditions.

Like all people, foreigners are alienated from themselves. It's even harder, for them to escape their own inner conditions because they are distanced from the background of family, culture and religion. They more than others experience difficulties living in a society which is not their own. This only complicates our relationship with them which then risks turning into a relationship based on power. Foreigners can easily become scapegoats, blamed for all the ills of society. Because of their minority position and their often-difficult living conditions, there is a great temptation to dominate and ill-treat them¹⁰.

Each society has its own realities. A society can have cultural realities that are totally different from those of the refugees'. At the same time some communities can be living in extreme poverty while others are not. The situation can lead to conflicts or to acceptance. In the case of poor communities, the local populations should get some assistance from international institutions and governments to ease their lives and allow a better integration of refugees. Here is one way Betts, as quoted by Kibread (1990: 88), describes the functions of United Nations (hereafter UNHCR),

¹⁰ Aliens, Strangers and Gospel, available online on the website: www.intervarsity.org/ism/article/439

One of the major functions of UNHCR is to “assist Governments of countries of asylum in the task of making refugees self-supporting as rapidly as possible. To attain self-sufficiency, UNHCR reinforces the already existing local infrastructures – hospitals, schools, roads and provides agricultural; inputs such as seeds and implements in the case of assisted spontaneous settlement and it provides the funds for the setting up and initial operational cost of basic physical and social infrastructure services in the case of organised settlements”.

Refugees should necessarily be integrated into the new community that is the host country. This integration in the new community can be either permanent or not. They should, at some extent, have the feeling of belonging to the new community as they participate in the daily activities of life. As it was the case of the *gēr* who was living in Israel Rendtorff writes that the *gēr* was taken to be permanent in the context of the society to which the law codes were addressed. He was both accepted and integrated in the rules of the daily life of the community though he was different from the Israelites at the same time (Brett 2002: 81).

2.4 Economical Realities

The majority of refugees worldwide come from countries where there are wars¹¹. This reality should lead to the fair treatment of refugees. People who run from war-torn countries will take with them only what they can find while starting off because they are not prepared to run. However when war comes there is no other choice than to run first for life and the rest is secondary. This is one of the saddest experiences one can go through, and it is not an easy task to leave his/her own country to go to live in an unknown country. As a refugee, one is uprooted from his/her economic system just to find a new one without any kind of preparation.

Economically, refugees (as strangers) people are vulnerable to the point that some local employers take advantage to use them for cheap labour as it was the case of

¹¹ Where do most refugees come from today? available online on the website: www.wiki.answers.com/Qwhere_do_most_refugees_come_from_today?

strangers living in Israel¹². All this can be explained by the fact that these people are without proper means to support themselves. For them the principle is to rather have something than nothing. They find themselves in situations where they have no choice, but to get whatever can make their life better. At the same time doing so will have a negative impact on the life of locals who stand for their rights of fair wages. Here is the situation of foreigners living in Israel,

*Since all of the land property belonged to the Israelites (cf. Lev. 25:23-24), the **gērîm** were largely day labourers and artisans (Deut. 24: 14-15; cf. 29:10). Both the Book of the Covenant which classed them among those who were dependent (Ex. 23:12) and the Decalogue which referred to them as “your stranger” (**gerkha**; Ex. 20:10; cf. Deut. 5:14) attest their inferiority position in Israelite society. While a few required wealth (cf. Lev. 25:47), most of them were poor and were treated as the impoverished natives...¹³*

Refugees cannot only be seen and used as cheap labour for the interests of employers. It is clear that refugees are playing a certain role in the economic life of both the host countries and their countries of origins. There are cases of refugees who on a monthly basis send money to their relatives in their countries in foreign currency, especially in US dollars. In the host countries, these refugees are employed and work regardless the fairness of their wages and that has an impact on the economic life of the countries.

When refugees come to a country, offices are established, jobs are offered and money is poured in especially from UNHCR (Interviewee A.14 2011). Local people get employed at reception centres and at other different organizations dealing with refugees' issues. “The Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC) is a South African non-profitable organization that works with vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in the Western Cape.” According to Mrs Henda, a key spokesperson of the organization, there are 12 staff members and the sponsorship comes from the Development of Social and UNHCR (Interviewee B.5 2011).

¹² Aliens, Strangers and the Gospel, available online on the website: www.intervarsity.org/ism/article/439

¹³ Strangers and Gentiles, available online on the website: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0019_0_19250.htm

The Cape Town Refugee Centre is just one of the many organizations dealing with refugees operating in South Africa. This implies that when there will be no refugees in the country, some people will lose their jobs to the point of affecting the economic life of the country.

Because refugees are weak financially, there are two classes which are the most vulnerable and can easily be agents of the spread of HIV/AIDS while others could be open for abuses. These two classes are women and children. They both can be exploited by others who want to make some kind of gain in one way or another. Women can be used and abused sexually in their quest of a better life. Some parents can find it simple to use their children to be breadwinners with all the consequences attached to it.

Now what can be said about children from parents who die of HIV? The scenario is almost the same. These children are very vulnerable, and some do not have direct relatives on whom to rely for their survival. They therefore are exposed to many abuses and especially they can be seen as agents of the spread of HIV. These children are living far from their homes and sometime there is no one there for them. Some are too young to bear the responsibility of being breadwinners. For them, home is too far away and where they are now often nobody cares about them. This vulnerability makes it all the more important that the government of the host countries care for them. According to the UNHCR constitution,

Whatever the nature of the disaster that causes people to become refugees, the primary responsibility of caring for its victims rests with the government where these victims are, whether or not they are nationals of that country (UNHCR 1979: 8).

Once people recognised as refugees, governments of host countries become responsible of taking care of them. As governments engage to minister to refugees doors become open know them and to have contribute in return to whole life of the country. It is true that among refugees there potentials that need to be used for the good of the host country. Therefore refugees receive the government's care just to

give back their contributions to the host country. Their contributions can either be positive or negative depending on what one has.

People who are forced to leave their countries and go to seek asylum in other parts of the world do not go empty-handed as human beings. They always bring with them skills, initiatives and other forms of capacities that can be usefully utilised by host countries if they can be identified and acknowledged. In some cases refugees have to some extent contributed to the economic life of the host countries. In this research an exploration of the contribution of refugees to the South African economy is pointed out in chapter 3 which deals with the realities of refugees in South Africa.

2.5 Political Realities

Every country has its own way of dealing with the refugees and that works according to the country's constitution. Meanwhile the understanding of the concept "refugee" is universal and is to be defined in the same manner. Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike give the following definition according to the United Nations:

The United Nations defines refugee as a person who, owing to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear is unwilling ... to return to it. This definition was expanded by the OUA I 1969 "to include people who have been compelled to seek refuge outside their own country due to external aggression, foreign occupation, foreign domination, or event seriously disturbing the public order." (1999: 172).

The phenomenon of refugee is directly connected to fear to return to his/her own country. But Better and Loescher give a broader definition of the concept "refugee" as we will see it below. The concept is no more only applied to people with genuine fear of persecution but to anyone with concern for his/her life. People become refugees because they want to find a place for a better life. The main concern of refugees is to have their life out of any kind of danger. Therefore the host country's duty towards refugees is to protect them and to make provision for them. Better and Loescher write,

Within policy circles, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s mandate has expanded to address a boarder range of 'people of concern. This has involved a broadening to include people fleeing human rights violation not subsumed under persecution, notably survival migrants fleeing environment disaster... (2011: 2).

People who run for their lives will find themselves in situations whereby their political voices are silenced (Interviewee B.14 2011). They cannot raise any concern about the political issues of both their countries of origin and the host countries. In reality, even those who were politically active can no more play their political role as before. Their lives value more than the life of the entire nation because all they need now is to save their lives. Being a refugee secures one's own life to the detriment of that of the nation. In refuge, one becomes more concerned about his/her life and the realities do not allow him/her to get much involved in the political life of the nation. Refugees are politically silenced voices. The question will be to find out if there will ever be ways in which refugees can be able to raise their political concern about their nations of origin.

As refugees, people do not only lose their goods and properties, they also lose most of their political rights. Most of the refugees cannot participate in the electoral process, and their voices, about people who are to run the countries' affairs, cannot be heard in their own countries. It seems to me that countries of origin care little about the right of their people who are living as refugees in foreign countries. Refugees are passive in the determining of the political future of their countries and of the host country. Arendt sees the situation in the way that until the process of the dissolution of the nation-state and its sovereignty comes to its end, the refugee stays 'the category in which it is impossible today to perceive the forms and limits of a political community to come'¹⁴.

There are cases when some refugees try to return to their countries, just to find themselves under new threat. This explains the genuineness of the host country to keep and protect refugees. Though refugees cannot play a major role in determining

¹⁴ We refugees, available online on the website: http://jft-newspaper.aub.edu.lb/reserve/data/soan201-agamben/Mdule7-G_Agamben-WeRefugees.pdf

neither the politics of their countries nor the politics of the host country, their safety in the host country is what matters most. In this regard the experience of the couple from Rwanda can bring more light.

They were repatriated from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Rwanda (their country of origin). It came to pass that while they were in Rwanda, there were threats born out from suspicion of the husband whose parents and brothers were already killed. In the process of time the husband was arrested and jailed for more than a year. When the husband was released from prison the threats continued and the only resolution left for their safety was to flee from Rwanda to Kenya and from there they journeyed to South Africa. After their return to Rwanda they felt obliged to run again and now they do not feel safe to return there for the sake of protecting their lives (Interviewee B.20 2011).

The host country has double responsibility, as representative of communities of the citizens it has the moral obligation to make policies that privilege the interests of its members; and it can bring contributions “to the making of refugees through actions that are not usually seen as negligent because they involve consequences that are both unintended and difficult to foresee (Gibney 2004: 23, 52). According to the description of Gibney about the role of the host country toward both its people and the refugees, there is need to have balanced actions towards the two communities to avoid some kind of conflict like what happened during the xenophobic attack in 2008 in South Africa.

2.6 The Bible and the Phenomenon of Refugees

One of the four approaches to the bible as benchmark of the truth of Nürnberger is that it is our standard that helps us to scrutinise the different assumptions of faith. The bible is therefore ‘the original testimony of God’s revelation, the bible is the only common yardstick we have’ (2004: 58, 59). I am looking now into the bible to point out some truth about the phenomenon of refugees to help me fulfil the aim of the thesis.

When reading the Bible we come across amazing stories about God's people running for their lives to foreign lands. Here there will be a presentation of some cases involving people running for their lives in both the Old Testament and the New Testament and an attempt to explain the different ways in which people responded or had to respond to the presence of strangers in the lands. All the characters that will be mentioned in this point have been selected by the researcher in a random way for a better understanding of the issues of refugees in the Bible.

The choice of these characters in this thesis is to find in them something that they have in common with the refugees. These characters are not living in foreigners' lands and they have something in connection of their lives as refugees do. Even though some can not be seen directly as refugees, but still they share some of the characteristics of the refugees. It is important to note that before they become refugees, people are first of all strangers/foreigners. Whatever is said of strangers/foreigners concerns refugees as well.

About Abraham and Sarah, Wright¹⁵, as quoted by Birch (1991: 108-09) writes,

In Genesis 12:1 Abram and Sarai are asked to become landless, without place, in trust that God has a place for them. It is important to note that the "I will show you" is not named initially. The promise of land has less to do with a specific piece of territory that with that the resources necessary for secure physical life and place in the world that provides those resources come as the light of God.

The bible is not only filled with wonderful stories of people running for their lives but there are instructions to take care of them. God instructed the Israelites to take care of strangers who were living in their midst. The Israelites have to respect the rights of strangers and show them love. They have to treat them well. Refugees are part and parcel of the community of strangers/foreigners and whatever is said of

¹⁵ Wright, *An Eye for Eye*, pp. 46-62, Uses land as the central focus of Israel's concern for economic ethics. Wright treats the social dimensions under the theme of Israel as a people. He does bring out well the broad meaning of land beyond mere physical geography.

strangers/foreigners concerns them as well. Therefore the care of strangers/foreigners is the care of foreigners.

As a nation Israel had to respect the rights of aliens living in her midst. As individuals, the Israelites had to go further. The command to love your neighbour (Lev 19:18) was extended to the foreigner: 'When an alien lives with you in your land, do not ill-treat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt' (Lev 19:33-34 cf 10:19)¹⁶.

The Israelites had something in common with foreigners because they once were also foreigners in Egypt. This is also a good reminder to all who claim to be Christians because they also have been foreigners to God but now are welcomed in his family (Col 1:21). No one can claim to have done something to make God accept him/her, but it is all about God's grace. If we truly acknowledge who we were before we will also know how to respond to the cries of outsiders. The main point to be made here is mainly about acceptance of others because one cannot assist or help if one does not truly accept the needy. We have been accepted to accept others (strangers/foreigners). It is also true that one cannot accept without loving. Therefore because we love, we accept, and because we accept, we help/assist those who are not acquainted to us.

2.6.1 Strangers and Foreigners

The introduction of the point is to bring more light in the understanding of the ways both the Old Testament and the New Testament deal with the situation of people living in foreign lands. It is easier to understand the situations of refugees when we come to grasp the treatments of strangers/foreigners within the biblical context. There are scriptures that point to the treatments of strangers/foreigners which show clearly God's concern of them (Deut 10: 17-18; 24: 19-20; 26: 11-12, Lv 19:10; 23:22, Mt 25: 35). In these passages God shows either his love or his care for strangers because these are people who really are in need.

¹⁶ Aliens, Strangers and the Gospel Available online on the website: www.intervarsity.org/ism/article/439

A stranger is defined as someone you have never met, seen or talked to. A foreigner is someone from another country¹⁷. For the reasons of our research, I prefer to give the same meaning to both words “stranger” and “foreigner”. A foreigner/stranger is, therefore, someone you have never met, seen or talked to and who is from another country. The concept “stranger/foreigner” is not new to the Israelites who were themselves reminded of by their own history; they themselves were slaves in Egypt (Ex 23:9).

The Mosaic Law frequently associates aliens and strangers with widows, orphans, the poor and Levites. This emphasizes that a foreigner’s life is not an easy one. His work is often hard and poorly paid, and he may not be able to afford good housing. In addition to any material difficulties he may face, they are emotional challenges: he is an uprooted person, deprived of the comfort of his native language, family and friend. In short, he is alone. This loneliness is all the more painful because it is seldom a personal choice, hence the tendency for foreigners to stick together. They attempt thereby to recreate their home environment¹⁸.

The life of the stranger (*gēr*) who lived in Israel was defined in relation to the land. Strangers could or not own lands as far as the law granted it or not to them. About Abraham, Rontorff writes, “...the *gēr* does not possess the land, but that there could be friendly relationship between him and the owner of the land and that he could even buy a certain piece of land”, but in the book of Ezekiel there is mention of the future division of the land when the “*gērîm*” living among the Israelites and who have begotten children shall be like a native (*’ezrāh*) and receive allotment (Ez 47:22) (Brett 2002: 78, 79).

God has a great concern of the strangers because of their defencelessness. In the Old Testament strangers were not to be molested (Ex. 22: 21-23) or abused (Deut. 24:14) and were to receive equal treatment before the law (Deut. 1:16). The Israelites had to treat strangers as they treated their fellow Israelites because there was no difference in

¹⁷ Strangers and Foreigners, available online on the website: www.woodwarden.com/strangers-vs-foreigners

¹⁸ Ibid

what strangers were going through and what they went through in Egypt as strangers. Only one standard was required for stranger and citizen alike (Lev. 24:22). The concern of strangers is also expressed in the New Testament.

In his well-known prophetic description of the last judgement in Matthew 26, Jesus, by associating the foreigners with the hungry and thirsty, the naked, the sick and the prisoners, draws our attention to the precarious living conditions of foreigners. Jesus is not preaching salvation by works in this text, but he clearly shows us that true belief in him necessarily manifests its self in acts of solidarity towards those most in need, including foreigners: 'I was a stranger and you invited me in'¹⁹.

The church should be very careful in regard of the way strangers (refugees) are treated. As Christians become visibly engaged to assist and defend the cause of refugees, for instance, they demonstrate their belief in Jesus who identifies himself with them. Here is the call to see Jesus in the refugees and an opportunity to minister to Jesus by ministering to refugees. If the church is to serve the Lord Jesus then it has the duty to serve refugees who simply are also strangers.

2.6.2 The Old Testament and the Phenomenon of Refugees

2.6.2.1 Cain

The concept 'refugee' can be applied in the book of Genesis after the fall of humankind. After Cain has killed his brother Abel, he is driven away from the land where they were living; he was also driven from the face of God. Here the first true meaning of moving from one's land is provoked by sin. Cain was not only driven from the land, but mainly from the presence of God, resulting in creating a fearful life. "Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me" (Gn 4: 14). Cain runs because he is driven from the land, and that state creates fear for him.

¹⁹ Ibid

To consider Cain as a kind of refugee is made on basis of his fear for life that he expresses after God has driven him out of the garden and the fact itself of being uprooted from his home land (Gn 4: 14). In the definition of a refugee that will be given later in this chapter, the concept “fear” is underlined for one to be qualified as a refugee. Cain did not only have fear to be killed on his way, but also he feared to return to where he was before because he was driven out.

According to the expanded definition of “refugee” by the OUA in 1969, ‘people who have been compelled to seek refuge outside their own country due to external aggression, foreign occupation, foreign domination, or event seriously disturbing the public order’ can also be consider as refugees (United Nations 1999: 172). Here again Cain is a refugee because he had disturbed the public order by killing his brother and he is now forced to run. As he was running he was also looking for a place to get refugee or in other words a place for his safety.

Cain recognized the danger of being out of the presence of God who is the true refuge. Being driven out of the presence of God made Cain’s life miserable and it will make any human life the same. Once Cain is put out of God’s presence, he was no more established or settled. He was put out of God’s lordship and had to depend upon himself. There was no security therefore little hope of life for him. The church which is the representation of God on earth should work to create conditions of hope in the life of all the people of the earth and in particular in the life of refugees. Johnson is right in writing that,

Throughout the Old Testament, the Heavenly Father showed care for His people. He led them and guided them; He sheltered and provided for them... From early times, the people of God learned that when God guides, He also provides. All that God the Father was to his people in the Old Testament continues in the New Testament... (1995: 10).

As sin made Cain to be moved from the presence of God and he became a refugee as was the case of Adam and Eve after their fall (Gn 3:21-24), people are being forced to run from their countries because of the increase of wickedness. Greed, Hate, selfishness and all the likes are roots of conflicts and other situations making people

to become refugees. In the Bible individuals and communities were forced to become refugees due to some circumstances with sin as the main root cause. Now we will be looking at the community of Israel.

2.6.2.2 Israel in Egypt

If Israel was not a refugee as the definition stipulates it, as far as life is concerned there was fear to remain in Canaan. The first move of Jacob's sons to Egypt was motivated by a search to survive, '...and buy for us from there; that we may live, and not die' (Gn 42: 3). God also allowed the move of Israel and promised the return to his own land (Gn 46: 3-4). In Egypt these strangers sought asylum to Pharaoh who granted it to them who first investigated who they were as if he wants to know what they can contribute with to the host country (Gn 47: 3-4).

Egypt was not only a country where the people of God (Israel) later experienced bondage and slavery, but it was in the first place a country where they found economical refuge. As Jacob and all his family moved to Egypt, the main reason of that move was to find better conditions for life. One of them (Joseph) was already occupying a strategic position in the country (Gn. 41: 39-45). Already Abraham had had that experience (Gn 12:10-11). They therefore were able to stay in the land of their choice, the best of the land (Gn 47: 5-6). Goshen was the land that Joseph chose for his father and family to dwell because they were shepherds.

If God used Joseph to intervene in the situation of Israel as refugees in the land of Egypt, the church should, in our time and in times to come, play a similar role. The church is already established in the world and it can now bring its help to the people in need in the world. The church can bring its assistance to people living within or without its community as long as that takes place in the world.

The situation of famine in the land of Canaan pushed Jacob and all his family to migrate to Egypt. Though they came for food in Egypt, they offered to their new land their expertise. They were shepherds and preferred to maintain their occupation (Gn 47:3-4). From this angle one can easily say that Jacob and his family could contribute to the economy of the Egypt from their occupation as shepherds. It came to pass, as

the history of the Israelites unfolds, that the presence of the foreigners became a threat to the king of Egypt and his people. They started to mistreat the Israelites by enslaving them, and Israel contributed to the construction of Egypt (Ex 1: 7-11). Israel was both a blessing and a threat to Egypt depending on the way the king of Egypt and his people interpreted the presence of these foreigners in the land.

2.6.2.3 Moses

Moses had all the king's privileges as long as he was living in the palace. He was considered as the king's grandson. His life got into trouble when he tried to avenge his fellow Israelite before an Egyptian. Moses fled for his life to Median where he became a shepherd of his father-in-law. The main reason for Moses' flight was to secure his life that was in danger. He had to stay in Median for forty years until God's time came to commission him to go back to Egypt to liberate the Israelites. It was still in Median where God came to Moses to instruct him to return to Egypt because all his enemies were no more. Exodus 4:19-20 states,

Now the Lord had said to Moses in Median, "Go to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead. So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.

It was on his own initiative that Moses fled from Egypt to Median. In Median, he found favour before Jethro who became his father-in-law. He stayed in Median till the proper time when God gave him a specific mission indeed with information about his security. God assured Moses that all his enemies were dead and that nothing could threaten his life anymore in the land of Egypt. Moses true security was in obedience to the instructions of God. God's concern for Moses' life is demonstrated by his concern about Moses' safety as he told him to go back to Egypt only when there was no more threat upon his life.

In Median, Moses was not rejected on the basis of foreignness, but rather he received the care of the people whom he helped to draw water for their sheep. Here a refugee is of considerable help to the shepherds of Median. As we will see it later in this research, refugees are not only a burden to the host nation, but can still bring their

contributions to the welfare of it. The church as well can also be blessed by the different gifts the refugees bring with them if they can be accepted and integrated in all of the church's life. People who need help can help as well if they are given opportunities.

2.6.2.4 Cities of Refuge

At the time Israel was about to take possession of the Promised Land, God gave Moses instructions regarding "cities of refuge". These cities were to play a major role in protecting the life of people who were in danger. By establishing these cities God was showing his main concern for the life of his people. In doing, so God was providing means of justice for people who were morally innocent of real crimes. The runner was just doing it to protect his/her life from being taken away by those who were after vengeance. The security of the victim was only in the obedience of God's instruction; he/she had to run toward one of the cities of refuge. There was all the provision for the runner in the city of refuge. This is a good example for the church in mission in the world. The church should be a place of provision for the refugees. The church should provide hope for the desperate people. Joshua 1:1-3 states,

Then the Lord said to Joshua: "Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood."

The provision of the cities of refuge by God reveals God's concern about human life. This also helps us to understand why there are people in the world who run for their lives. They actually run from their countries where they do not feel safe or in security to find a place where they may be safe from any threat. It is in the light of this reality that one should comprehend the role of the host country in caring for the refugees. The cities of refuge were playing a very important role in preserving the life of the fugitive who was running for his/her life. The church of the host country on the other hand, has to play its role to help the Government fulfil its mandate.

2.6.2.5 David

The “man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22), King David, was chosen by God when he was still young. His choice attracted conflict with the ruling king at that time, King Saul. In the process of time King Saul became determined to take David’s life because he was seen as a threat rival to him. This situation made David run for his life in the land of the Philistines. There in, David was given Ziklag as a dwelling place for him and his men. He rendered good services to the Kingdom of Achish. 1 Samuel 27:1 notes,

But David thought to himself, “One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand”.

The presence of David and his men did not only benefit them, but they also contributed to the peace of the land. Their services were well rewarded by the king. David and his men were running for their lives and they offered their services for the good of the land where they became established. Even in our days, refugees are people who should be treated well and valued for what they have to offer to the host countries. According to Birch (1991: 214), “He (David) gathers a band of men who themselves are refugees from legal society, the impoverished, the marginalised, the outlawed”. They may come empty-handed, but they can still have something that needs to be made use of. 1 Samuel 29:6, 9 reads,

So Achish called David and said, “As surely as the Lord lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve me in the army...I know that you have been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God...”

If only refugees are accepted and fully integrated in the life of the host countries, it will be possible to use their talents and gifts for the good of the land where they are now living. These do have much potential and what is needed is to give them opportunities to feel accepted and valued by the host country’s population.

As God valued the life of Cain who was running from his land, Israel found economic refuge in Egypt, Moses found refuge in Median, Joshua built cities of refuge and David found refuge in the land of the Philistine, the church should work to value the lives of refugees and it should be a place of refuge or work to see that people who come in the country find true refuge. The church should make sure that all the issues affecting refugees are addressed properly. After looking into the Old Testament, let us turn to the New Testament to see how the phenomenon of refugees is addressed.

2.6.3 The New Testament and the Phenomenon of Refugees

The phenomenon of refugees is not a new concept to the New Testament. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are painted with stories of people who run for their lives whom we call now refugees. In the New Testament this concept is dealt with in both direct and indirect ways as we will see it later. Above all the New Testament tells the story of Jesus Christ, Mary and Joseph finding their refuge in Egypt by God's instruction.

2.6.3.1 Jesus

In the New Testament, the concept "refugee" is directly connected with the fear for one's life resulting in running for life. One runs from the land because there is some kind of threat upon his/her life. The New Testament is all about the Lord Jesus. At the time when his life was threatened, God told Joseph to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus' life. Egypt is seen here as a place of security for the baby Jesus. Matthew 2:13-14 notes,

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him. So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod.

The refuge in Egypt took the time it took till the death of the persecutor (Herod). There was no defined time limit for the refuge to take place; but the refuge was conditioned by the presence and absence of the king who was determined to kill the

young baby. The end of any refuge was and should be determined by the safety of the runner who willingly accepts the need to return because there will no danger be attached to it. Matthew 2:19-21 tells us,

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead". So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

In the case of protecting the life of the young child Jesus, the meaning of refuge is in Joseph's obedience to God's instructions. As long as Joseph followed exactly what he was instructed to do to protect the life of the young child, everything went right. The true refuge for all human beings is to be found only in obedience to God. Life is nowhere else but in God who so loves the world and gave us his word, and it calls for our obedience. Supporting the cause of refugees should be a result of the church obeying God's commands and that brings hope both in the life of the church community and in that of refugees.

2.6.3.2 Jesus' teachings and deeds

Jesus did not mention directly the concept of refugees. But some of his teachings and deeds demonstrate to some extent his concern about them. He treated all people equally. Rich and poor all received a very warm welcome. Both the sick and healthy were all accepted by him. Rejected and privileged people had their place in the heart of the Saviour of the world. This therefore indicates that Jesus also had a great concern for refugees. The church has to walk in the footsteps of its master, so should have a great concern for refugees. The church's concern for people in need is well expressed by Johnson that,

God concerns Himself with people, and the church is made up of people who have confessed Him as Lord (see Mt 16:16-18). The church house (worship centre, sanctuary, and auditorium) is only a tool to be used for the glory of God and reaching people. Jesus came to express God's love for the world and for His church. The entire ministry of Jesus serves as a model of ministry for

the church today. The way Christ loved, taught, preached, and served gives the church a pattern to follow (1995: 12).

Refugees are strangers who are identified as such because of the situations which have made them run from their countries. Welcoming strangers therefore includes welcoming refugees and welcoming a stranger is welcoming Jesus Christ. "...I was a stranger, and you took me in" (Mt 25: 35).

2.6.3.3 The Church in Jerusalem

Believers in the early church did not only share in "fellowship", but they also were very concerned about the well-being of those in need. They were ready to sacrifice their own belongings in order to meet the needs of others. The willingness to share and supply towards the needs of others in need is well expressed in their personnel and collective actions. Acts 4:32, 34-35 tell us how the church was able to assess the situation of each member to see how one was to be assisted to ease the burden of all its members:

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.

A good understanding of the above situation is that members were treated equally regardless of their background or origins. What was most important for the believers was to sustain those in need to make sure that everyone enjoyed their God given life. The Bible does not specify the categories of the needy people within the church community, but only speaks in a general way, and this allows for the inclusion of refugees in the group of needy members. If a member was a refugee, he/she was treated as any other member of the community. The point was to assess his/her situation and see how he/she was to be assisted. Lötter understands the situation as follows,

The way the congregation in Jerusalem dealt with riches and poverty is often presented as the ideal of Christian sharing or socialism... The sense of unity in faith and mutual obligation that members of this community experienced were expressed in their sharing of belongings. The Christian believers did not view their belongings as their own and they shared everything they had with their fellow believers in need (2008: 158).

The unity of the early church was seen in their sharing of belongings and the church should be a church of sharing with people who come from foreign countries as Lötter has pointed it out. Church members can avail their time, means and skills to share them with refugees and address their situations. The church should learn from the teachings and deeds of Jesus to identify itself with the refugees. Whatever affects refugees should be affecting the church and it has to address their needs.

Preliminary Conclusion

The chapter examined the realities of refugees in a general manner as people of the globe. In our world there are realities which refugees face and they have been classed into four main categories. These may be human, social, economic or political. People do not cease to be human by being refugees; they experience the same realities that all the rest of the people of the world experience as humans.

In the economic life of the host countries refugees play certain roles which need our attention. Refugees can constitute a threat to the local people economically when the focus is simply shifted from local people to the strangers. Local people can therefore get frustrated by the presence of refugees leading to hating them. At the same time it can be proven that refugees can bring their contributions to the economic life of the host country. At the same time refugees can contribute in one way or other to the economies of their countries of origin.

Refugees come from their societies and their countries' political life to new realities which are totally different from their own. As they move from one society to another people have to be accommodated within the norms of the new societies. Politically refugees lose their political rights both in host counties and in their countries of origin

though they can still have some indirect influence on their countries of origin or the host countries. Refugees their issues have been explained in the light of both the New and the Old Testament from Cain, the first fugitive, to the church in Jerusalem.

These stories remind all Christians that they have to take seriously the situations of refugees. The church is charged not to step back and become an observer, but to engage in assisting refugees. What Christians need is a better understanding of what God is saying about Christians and refugees in our time. After looking at the four main realities of refugees in a general the next chapter will investigate the situation of refugees in South Africa in particular.

CHAPTER 3

REFUGEES' REALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

South Africa is committed to the protection of refugees by signing the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention as well as the 1969 Organization of African Unity Refugee Convention. South Africa's Refugee Act 130 of 1998 came into operation in 2000²⁰. This shows that South Africa is a welcoming country of asylum seekers. Therefore refugees living in South Africa are entitled to receive protection from the South African government which is to comply, as a signatory, with the UNHCR Charter.

The situation of the influx of refugees in the country is one of the major challenges of the South African government. On the celebration of the international day of refugees this year, it was declared that South Africa hosts more refugees than the whole of Europe. In other words there are more refugees in South Africa than there are in Europe (all European countries together).

South Africa is a country in Africa with a very particular history. The country went through a long period of fight against a race based system called apartheid. As we land in this particular part of the world, we must bear in mind the realities that are mostly connected to the history of the people of the country. As refugees come to South Africa, they will face some of the consequences of the history of South Africans. Many black South Africans have been drained in deep poverty by the apartheid system²¹; therefore it may be very difficult for some South Africans to bear to see foreigners enjoying the fruits of their struggles just because they still are struggling to make their livings. Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike are correct to write,

²⁰ Refugee Rights Information Booklet, Available online on the website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/>

²¹ Poverty and Inequality after Apartheid, available online on the website: www.yale.edu/macmillan/apartheid/seekingsp2.pdf

In certain cases help brought to refugees often overlooks the fact that refugees cannot be helped without taking into account the problems and needs of the host community, economic and health needs of the displaced often overlooks the fact that the host community has similar needs, and when these are overlooked, one gets feelings and reactions of envy and jealousy (1999: 177-8).

The realities of the refugees who come to South Africa, and those of the people of South Africa have a common point, “search for a better life”. Though refugees run for their safety, they are looking for a better life as well. Some South Africans are still hoping for a better life that has been promised to all by democracy as Cameron (2005: 152) sees it. At the same time the multitude of foreigners who settle in the country are to live in the limits of all the different opportunities that are offered by the South African Government. This new situation can and has created conflicts between the two groups.

In this chapter the focus will be on what is taking place in South Africa as far as refugees are concerned. Chapter two has given us the realities of refugees worldwide as a general case, but chapter 3 is to deal with specific cases of these realities. The chapter will reflect on the realities of refugees as applied to South Africa and is more specific compared to the precedent. The chapter can be used as a case study of the realities of refugees in relation to the host country. It is at the same time obvious that these realities may differ from other host countries, but they will help us to achieve the objective of this research.

3.2 Human Realities

It is very important to remember that people who come to seek asylum in South Africa are not kept in camps but they are directly integrated in the communities. The understanding of this policy is a key element in the understanding of human realities of refugees living in South Africa. When people come in the country (South Africa), they are entitled to find their own shelters and start their new life from their own initiatives as Interviewee B.13 has expressed it. The first thing that will follow is to get registered as asylum seekers according to the established mechanism of the Home

Affairs where they are received and attended to by the officials. About the South African policy of integration of refugees Garderen²² writes,

When parliament adopted the Refugees Act just more than a decade ago, it was a progressive and modern approach to protect people fleeing persecution and civil strife. South Africa broke from the traditional African approach of accommodating refugees in large rural-based camps. Parliament has also thus far resisted the European and Australian examples of detaining asylum seekers for extended periods in reception centres²³.

Upon arrival in the country, one must find somewhere to stay or someone who is already settled and is willing to help. From there comes in the issue of finding means to survive, a job or to have initiative to start some kind of small business. About accommodation there is an organization that keeps newcomers (refugee women) for couple of months to help them find a place to stay in Cape town. The organization is called “Bonne Esperance” and it is located in Philippi. Even with this organization, the demand is too high to be met. The issue of accommodation has very negative impacts on women who can easily be preys of men who can take advantage to satisfy their sexual desires.

3.3 Social Realities

People can be marginalised just on the basis of their origins. This situation was experienced even in the time of the Old and New Testament. People like Galileans and Samaritans were marginalised by their contemporary Jews (Karris 1990: 54-72). Our own experience is not different from the above mentioned. In South Africa, as it may be elsewhere, foreigners are treated in the same way. One can only recall what happened in the country in 2008 with the issue of xenophobia. Non South Africans black people were called “Makwirikwiri”²⁴ and were not accepted to live within some South African communities. At this point one should remember that most of those

²² Jacob van Garderen is the National Director of Lawyers for Human rights.

²³ From Integration to Containment – Worrying Trends for Refugees in SA (Pretoria News), available online on the website: www.lhr.org.za/News

²⁴ Makwirikwiri is a name used to distinguish other African foreign people from South African citizens.

black foreigners might be refugees or simply that refugees were part and parcel of the targeted group.

In all communities, people long for the sense of belonging to. One is a member of a community because he/she belongs to that community. To belong to the community is not to be confused with the staying within the community. Because we belong to the community that implies that we are accepted by the community as being one of them. In fact to belong to the community is to share common realities, and especially the same history. The fact of belonging to a community gives a sense of security and a feeling of being welcomed. Shutte (2001: 8-9) describes the African conception of belonging to the community as people becoming themselves when 'persons depend on persons'.

With Shutte's description in mind, South Africans are reminded of the need of refugees to be made parts of the community. Refugees should depend on the South Africans and vice-versa. After refugees have lost their own communities because of what happened they can still be enabled to become what they really are by being accepted and welcomed within the South African society. Now let us take a look at these realities as we apply them to the situation of refugees.

The first concern should be to know if refugees are either members of the different communities where they are living or not. As long as these refugees do not share the same history with the communities' members; they cannot be considered as belonging to the respective communities. This sense of belonging or not to the community is felt by both the refugees and the members of the communities. Deep within themselves, refugees know that they are different from the local community members. Their social security cannot be experienced totally as long as they know they are not living at home.

The other concern is to know if those refugees living in their communities are either totally integrated or not. Refugees who come to South Africa are given free choice to stay in whatever community they find suitable for them. The integration policy can be understood as an introduction into the new community to become part of it. The problem with integration is that some communities need to be prepared to live with

foreigners, which is not a simple matter. Refugees will experience some kind of resistance as they try to integrate in some new communities that can be hostile to the presence of strangers. Describing the refugees' situation vis-à-vis local people Kibread (1990: 92) writes,

Owing to the conditions of poverty and underdevelopment prevalent in African asylum countries, the overwhelming majority of the population live in state of abject poverty. Unless the strain caused by the refugees on the slender social services is eased by external assistance such the UNHCR and other voluntary agencies, the presence of the refugees may, for obvious reasons, be perceived as an intolerable burden by the local population and can lead to serious conflict and hostility – thence obstructing local integration.

Governments are to respond responsibly to the basic needs of their people to facilitate the integration of refugees in different local communities. External assistance is needed to enable government to respond to both the needs of refugees and those of the local people. Refugees should not only be treated as consumers but also as producers. They can also play an economic role in the host countries if they are given chance as we are going to see it in the following point.

3.4 Economical Realities

Economically, refugees face many challenges as they enter in an unknown region. They are supposed to have nothing on them to start their live from. The economic situation of refugees is first to be understood from the fact that these people are not prepared and are to start from scratch to make their living possible. Refugees entering South Africa are not kept in camps, as it is the case in other countries, where they can get assistance from the UNHCR in collaboration with the local governments as Betts (in Kibread 1990: 88) has described the role of the UNHCR. They have to find ways to survive. According to Pinsky quoted by Kibread,

After crossing the border refugees settle among local population who have to bear much of the responsibility of providing emergency aids (food, shelter, etc.) When the local population is linked by ties of kinship, religion and ethnic

affiliation, this kind of settlement occurs without too much difficulty and offers social and psychological advantages (Ibid: 67).

On the economic side, the realities of refugees in South Africa can be exploited to find out the contributions of refugees to the host country. Let us consider the city of Cape Town in the Western Cape in South Africa for instance. Across the city of Cape Town we see people, on different streets, supervising parking to make sure that drivers pay money. Most of these officials are foreigners or simply refugees. This is a kind of job some citizens would not find worthy of them. The money that is collected do not directly go in the pockets of the officials but into the banks and the country economy is therefore boosted at the same time because day by day money goes in the banks and someone is there to collect it.

Some refugees have come up with their own initiatives by creating their own small businesses. These people's money is also put into banks helping them to have liquidities. As people do their own businesses, some employ citizens and non citizens contributing to the fight against unemployment and its consequences. People have also to pay for the different places they use for business and as usual VAT is taken out of the money for the government. VAT is also taken whenever refugees purchase stuffs from shops. Speaking on the contribution of refugees from the Refugee Act that was adopted by the South African parliament Garderen²⁵ writes,

...the Act is based on the principle of local integration and voluntary return. It allows refugees to settle and integrate into South African society and extends the constitutional rights and freedom, such as freedom of movement and access to health and social services, to refugees and asylum seekers. The logic of the local integration approach is to enable refugees to live meaningful lives while in exile and, further, to make real contributions to the host country until it's safe for them to return home. Once returned, the local integration approach should also benefit the country of origin in the sense that the returnees would have accrued skills, experience and resources to be able to play a meaningful role in a post conflict society. South Africa also benefits

²⁵ Jacob van Garderen is the National Director of Lawyers for Human Rights.

from the local integration policy, since refugees can be productive participants in the economy (if given the opportunity), and not simply charges of the state; as in the camps or detention centres approach²⁶.

There might be some economical implications when the situations of refugees are not taken seriously. First, when banks refuse to allow refugees to open bank accounts the situation will result in people keeping their cash affecting the liquidity of banks. This situation is not good for both the countries and the refugees. Second, refugees can lose their jobs because they cannot be paid without a bank account. There is therefore need for something to be done (Interviewee B.17 2011). The loss of the job will always have negative impact on the behaviour of the refugees including irresponsible sexual behaviour with its consequences.

Refugees do not only play a role in the economy of the host countries, but they also constitute an invisible economic backing hand to their respective countries. Many refugees send money to their relatives and that brings a kind of boost to the economy of the countries. The money that is sent is mainly made in foreign currencies especially in US dollars. Some families in countries of origin are supported by those who are outside among whom we find refugees.

3.5 Political Realities

“Politics deals with the manner in which communities organise to make decisions and utilise (distribute) power” (Birch 1991: 214). How South Africans organize to make decisions and utilise power as far as refugees are concerned is the main focus of this point. To have a better understanding of this point, the South African constitution is to play the major role. It is the constitution by which all living in this country must abide. In short all refugees coming in South Africa are to abide by the South African constitution.

²⁶ From Integration to Containment – Worrying Trends for Refugees in SA (Pretoria News), available online on the website: www.lhr.org.za/News

How to Apply for Asylum in South Africa

People who come to South Africa to seek for asylum are supposed to go and apply as soon as possible at any refugee reception centre. After completing the application form, the Refugee Reception Officer (RRO) will provide with an asylum seeker permit (Section 22 permit) to legalise the stay in the country until the final decision is made on the refugee's claim. According to the South Africa's Refugees Act 130 of 1998, an interview with the Refugee Status Determination Officer (RSDO) should take place. The asylum process is supposed to be completed within 180 days. Sections 22 Permit allows one to study, work and have access to medical facilities and others²⁷.

If the asylum claim is accepted, the client receives or can apply for the following documents: a status document which is a formal recognition of refugee status (Form BI-1693), also known as section 24 document is issued. Then one applies for refugee identity document. These two first documents are valid for a period of two years. Then one can apply for the United Nations Travel Document (UNTD) known as Refugee Passport for an approximately fee of R115. After 5 years of continuous residence in South Africa, one may apply for a permanent residence²⁸.

The asylum claim can also be rejected by the Home Affairs. In this case the client has the right to appeal the decision within 30 days. The appeal is to be in front of the Refugee Appeal Board which is an independent tribunal that offers rejected asylum seekers a second chance to prove their refugee claim. This process is to take 90 days. In case the claim is accepted, one gets a formal recognition of the refugee status (Form B1-1693) from the Department of Home Affairs. But in case of a second rejection, there is no more right to appeal the decision, but the appeal rejection can be reviewed by the High Court²⁹.

²⁷ Refugee Rights Information Booklet, Available online on the website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/>

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Refugee Rights Information Booklet, Available online on the website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/>

3.6 Refugees' Life in South Africa

Refugees who come to South Africa are to live within the South African communities upon arrival. One is supposed to have people to tell him/her where to go and how to go in order to seek for asylum. Like in Cape Town the only reception centre is located in Maitland and every refugee is supposed to go there. At the centre there are different groupings of people that follow different queues according to their cases. When I arrived in the city in 2003, things were done in a way that women and men were put on the same line, thank God because recently something has happened. Now women have their own queues and they are to be attended before men.

After obtaining the proper document to stay in the country, one is entitled to both work and study according to the constitution of the country as it is stipulated on the Asylum Seeker Permit. There is no restriction when it comes to living anywhere in South Africa. The rights of refugees are not without some resistances and it all depends on different people in different places or organisations. For example to open a bank account will depend not only on the bank one is dealing with but also on the branch or the person who attends to you. As for a better example, I have a bank account at Standard Bank and at the same time other people were refused and are refused to open a bank account with the same bank.

Even though refugees may be denied the right to open bank accounts, UCT Law Clinic always comes on board to assist. Even if all banks cannot always accept refugees to open bank accounts, the truth is that with the assistance of UCT Law Clinic it has always been possible. In other cases when refugees are told to withdraw their cash from the banks because their documents do not allow them to have bank accounts. In this case one has to defend himself/herself or simply seek legal representation, and here again UCT Law Clinic plays a major role.

“After being told by the bank that I have to draw all my money because of the document I have, I asked them to give me a letter justifying before the police that I am allowed to keep my money at home, they changed their mind” (Interviewee A.25 2012). We see here the power of knowledge without which this refugee could have

seen his bank account closed. People need to know in order to claim what belong to them in every situation they face.

Refugees have different views about their experiences in South Africa. These views go beyond the experiences in the country to the fact of being a refugee. Though views are different there are still common grounds of something positive or negative of these experiences. Many refugees will agree that being a refugee or being in South Africa for instance is positive as long as one is out of danger and out of any threats to life. At the same time many refugees will agree that being a refugee or being in South Africa has a negative side because one cannot fully enjoy his humanity. Again there are as many views as there are refugees.

It is very important to emphasis that all the views that are quoted here are those of the people who were targeted for the interview. To genuinely help or assist any one in need, the first stage is to carefully listen to what he/she has to say about himself/herself. When Christians give their time to listen to what these wonderful people have to say about themselves it opens great opportunities to minister to them. “We must know how to listen to foreigners (refugees), and try to understand them, so that what we say will have meaning for them and speak to their concerns and questions”.³⁰ Therefore let us listen to what these refugees have to say about their lives in South Africa.

Every human should be free wherever he/she goes. This refugee woman says that she is a blessing to South Africans by teaching them skills to use their hands in order to become self-sufficient. Refugees have learnt to use their hands even if they have educational background. Refugees do not enjoy total freedom and one good example is that of difficulty to open a bank account. At the same time refugees are enjoying some free services as any South African citizen does. Refugees are contributing to the welfare of the country by planting churches all over the city though some are registered and others are not (Interviewee B.6 2011). For this interviewee, refugees are not only receivers but they also have something to contribute in the host country in one way or another.

³⁰ Aliens, Strangers and the Gospel, available online on the website: www.intervarsity.org/ism/article/439

Refugees are not totally free people. “We are not free and we are always concerned about our safety. In township where we live local people greet us in their language and when we fail to answer properly we become their targets. Though everyone can be robbed, foreigners are the most victims. Whenever there is a crime in the township, the first suspects are foreigners. There was a tragic death of a 3 years boy in Gugulethu³¹ and the first suspect was a Zimbabwean and people were planning to burn the house he was renting. After investigation it was found that the crime was committed by a South African. The word “Makwirikwiri” we hear as we walk on the streets reminds us of the threat of xenophobia”, (Interviewee A.11 2011).

About the situations of refugees there is lack of implementation of the law. It is unreasonable to have a paper that makes him feel rejected by some people because they say they don't know what kind of document it is. He is on a long waiting of the result from the Appeal Board since 2006. For him the way claims are treated is an open door to corruption. He cannot get a good job because of the Asylum Seeker Permit. He realises that refugees are weakened in the country by not having the right knowledge of their rights (Interviewee A.20 2011).

Though refugees receive information of their rights, there is still need for something to be done about it. There are many issues that refugees living in South Africa about which have wrong knowledge of. One illustration is about children born in the country from refugees parents. Many refugees believe that these children are titled to get the South African nationality. Refugees do discuss this issue from time to time and only him/her who has the right information can intervene sometimes without any success to convince.

This is the experience of a refugee family. They ran from the DRC to South Africa in 2004. The second interview took place later in 2007 and their claim was rejected. The husband went to UCT Law Clinic for assistance but the lady who attended to him gave him a letter and asked him to go back to Home Affairs and make the same claim he made first. The lady told him she had many clients and could not go to represent him. After making the same claim he was rejected for the second time.

³¹ Gugulethu is a location in Cape Town.

When the husband went back to the UCT Law Clinic for assistance, he was advised to sell all that they had and pack everything to return to DRC. In the process, he went to a private lawyer who told him that it is better to go to private lawyers than to those of UCT Law Clinic once one is rejected for the first time. The matter was taken to the High Court and latter he was given a letter by the lawyer to be presented to Home Affairs where he was given 3 months Asylum Seeker Permit, and latter 6 months which were not extended because Home Affairs wanted the matter sorted out during the 9 months.

For more than 2 years the family had to live without any documents. This situation impacted on the education of his children who had to stay at home. Later in 2011, He was again given a letter to bring to Home Affairs and was given 6 months Asylum Seeker Permit. When this permit expired, he went again to Home Affairs and it was extend for 6 months going up to 2012. His kids are now back to school and the family is waiting for the High Court judgement. For the husband it is very expensive to afford the private lawyers for refugees who do not have good jobs that pay good money (Interviewee A.7 and B.2 2011).

The UCT Law Clinic is doing a good job but there is still something that needs to be done. Most of the refugees they assist do not come to get the promises they make when rendering services. All people on appeal are either rejected or simply on a long journey of waiting results. This organization seems to be an extension of the Home Affairs Refugee Reception Centre. Whenever a claim is rejected the client is told to go to UCT Law Clinic to make the lawyers have something to do. If the UCT Law Clinic wants to really help refugees it should be an organization of refugees or simply should have the representation of refugees who can consider seriously the causes of refugees (Interviewee A.5 2011).

The South African policy of integration is has both good and bad sides. With this policy people are welcomed but abandoned by lack of proper means to survive (Interviewee A.10 2011). The interviewee is appreciating the fact that people who come are free to stay wherever they want but the concern is to have some kind of direct assistance to meet some of the basic needs.

South Africans prefer to protect the interests of citizens, only then come those of others. The policy of integration in itself is good but what matters is the implementation. Even the A4 documents refugees receive from Home Affairs are good as long as they are acknowledged and accepted by all to whom they are presented (Interviewee A.13 2011). To this reality Gibney (2004: 23) responded by attributing to the state the responsibility to privilege the interest of its members. This position does not exclude assisting refugees as well.

There is not much to complain about the refugees' situations in South Africa. As people live in a foreign land, the challenges of life they face day by day help to be more creative to be self sufficient. People have learnt to work hard in order to survive. South Africa is a country of opportunities and refugees are part of the big plan of the government policies. As long as refugees can study and work that is enough for them. Even if refugees cannot get good jobs, they are free to create their own businesses. Most of Somali refugees are doing their own businesses and are making their lives much better (Interviewee B.13 2011).

Life in the Country is tough compared to that in country of origin. Some South Africans do not accept refugees especially black South Africans. Beside the entire difficulties refugees encounter in the country, one enjoys his stay in South Africa as long as he is given the Refugee Status allowing him to live in the country; he has no dream to go back to his country (Interviewee A.24 2011).

Here is a newcomer who is in the country for less than 3 months. For him the experience is not that bad because upon arrival he was given Asylum Seeker Permit to stay in country for 6 months and he was fortunate to stay with his cousin who is living in the country for couple of years. Being a mechanic, he already has started to enjoy the freedom to work (Interviewee A.22 2011).

Life is not that easy in the country and the most concern of refugees is accommodation because the rent is too high. But in general, there is not much to complain about the stay in South Africa where many services are for free and opportunities are offered to all (Interviewee B.10 2011).

Here is a refugee who is concerned of the second interview that takes too long. Refugees are not allowed to sign leases for accommodation especially those who have the Asylum Seeker Permit. The distance people cover to go to the Refugee Reception Centre is too long and there is need to create sub centres to reduce it. Home Affairs can be a nightmare because one can go there and come back without renewing the paper after missing the shift from his/her job. As days go on fines may be paid when the paper is not renewed after its expiration (Interviewee A.25 2011).

The A4 documents refugees get from Home Affairs are discriminating them from the rest of the local people. Whenever one is asked to produce the identification document, the permits are sometimes rejected or simply ignored. Some South Africans get amazed to see the papers and they ask questions to find out what they really are. To the refugees it is sometimes shameful to produce the document in the midst of others who produce small document they keep in their wallets (Interviewee A.15 2011)

Being an asylum seeker is like being in a prison, and you have no freedom. People do not look at the conditions that they are given to stay in the country but only enjoy receiving the asylum papers. One can live in the country for many years on permit and that does not allow him or her to move. Staying in the country for a long time makes one build his or her life in that country. People start from scratch in the country to build up their lives while even sleeping outside. The country should give chance to people who can at some time desire to visit their countries and give them free choice to either go back to their countries of origin or go and come back to the country. Some people who are not genuine refugees can get and are getting refugee status by sticking to their lies just because they hope to get the different privileges attached to the papers. There is need to seriously consider the giving of the first paper. Because people have to go back to renew their papers from time to time, the situation opens doors to corruption (Interviewee B.19 2011).

For Interviewee B.13 the reaction here is mixed. Though refugees have to complain, they still have some thing to appreciate their stay in South Africa and refugees do also contribute to the life of the country in one way or other. For Interviewee A.11, some refugees, especially those living in townships, are still concerned about their security.

This concern for safety can be founded or unfounded and only research can prove it. The concern of A.20 is that of mistreatment of refugees and the lack of right knowledge of their rights. Interviewee A.24 and A.22 are satisfied with the fact that the first is accepted to live as refugee in South Africa and the second has not struggled neither to get his paper nor a place to stay. We should always be reminded that there are people who do not have where to stay upon their arrival.

The main concern of Interviewee A.7 and B.2 is to get assistance in the struggle to get right documents to live in the country. This story demonstrates that there are still great possibilities for refugees to get assistance and the UCT Law Clinic is just one of those who can assist refugees in their legal struggle. The contribution of this interviewee A.5 is to see the UCT Law Clinic doing its valuable job by having refugees on board. To my knowledge the problem of getting the results for appeals is due to influx of cases at the Appeal Board.

Interviewee A.10 is mainly concerns about accommodation that is not affordable because it is too high. A.13's concern is to see a good implementation of the integration policy and that all refugee documents are accepted by all. A.25 is concerned about the time that the process of getting documents and that of renewing papers at some times. He also suggests the creations of sub centres for the work to be handled properly. A.15 feels uncomfortable to have the documents that issued at Home Affairs. B.19 is concerned about the restriction of moving. She also sees open doors to fraud and corruption in the advantages that the documents offer in the situations they are got.

Any of these refugees' concerns may have negative impact on their situations to the extent of opening doors to the spread of HIV/AIDS. One thing that is needed is to hear the voices of these people in order and to see that their concerns are addressed in proper ways. The church can therefore be the best listener among many listeners to discern the will of God for the people in need. Addressing the concerns of refugees is also one way of contributing to the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

3.7 Comparison of Interviewees' Views

After the different interviews that have been conducted with refugees, it is time to look at what refugees have said especially from what is quoted in this research. The community of refugees has many concerns that are from individuals to common. The point is that all of these concerns should be taken seriously by the church if there is any will to assist them improve their conditions.

Most of refugees are concerned with their rights, which are either violated by those who are supposed to implement them or simply are not known to them. It is a main concern that refugees should be told their rights for them to claim and stand for them. Refugees do not have any place where they can get informed because even at an institution like UCT Law Clinic that is supposed to assist refugees there is not a single document to be handed to refugees informing them about their rights.

About the concern of refugees about their rights, the explanation can be found in the fact that they are organizations who offer such services but ignorance keep refugees in their complains. Adonis Musati Project is one of the organizations that provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in Cape Town. The Project provides lay counselling, advice and referral to clients, welfare/food support... "They also educate clients on their rights as asylum seekers or refugees in South Africa, and advise them on how to access proper documentation"³².

For other refugees their dignity is not respected. Some still are living with the fear of being attacked by local people especially those who are living in townships. Many refugees do complain about the elasticity of the processes of considering their claims. For some refugees they enjoy freedom in the country, but for others their freedom is only partial. Some refugees complain for the size of the papers that they are given at Home Affairs. Some refugees are satisfied by the services rendered at both the Home Affairs and at the UCT Law Clinic, and others still are complaining.

³² Adonis Musati Project, available online on the website:
<http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/node/354>

Though there are different views about the UCT Law Clinic, every thing depends on each individual experience. What all will agree on is that the UCT Law Clinic is rendering valuable legal services to many refugees in Cape Town. May be what is needed is to have some other organizations which can assist because there are many cases that need to be handled and sorted out.

Many refugees do appreciate the integration policy of the country though few people are still complaining. There is a thumb up for all the free services offered to refugees though few people complain. Many recognise South Africa as a country of opportunities. Some refugees are very concerned about corruption at Home Affairs Refugees Centre and also about the hygienic conditions of the same centre.

3.8 Experiences from my Life in South Africa

Here I am speaking from my personal experience though things can look differently. When I went to the reception centre in 2003, which was at that time in Cape Town, I was given a form to fill and later on my fingerprints and photo were taken and I had to wait for hours. Later I was called and given a paper with my photo on it. I was then told that that was the paper for my identification in South Africa for nine months and that I had to come back before it expires to renew it or to get an interview. After nine months I went back, the document was extended and the story repeated itself in the same way.

After a period of time, in June 2006 I was given an appointment for the interview. After the interview I was asked to come back in one week time for the result. To my great surprise I was give a paper to sign and was told that my claim was rejected because it was not founded. I was therefore given 30 days to stay in South Africa. Within these 30 days I had either to leave the country or appeal against the rejection. The same woman who gave me the result told me to go and find a lawyer if I wanted to make any kind of appeal. I was very shocked and disturbed in my mind that day, but there was nothing I could do. From that day my journey had started up to today.

After getting the document that was handed over to me I discovered that there was something I never declared but was in the document supporting the rejection of my

claim. I was advised to go to UCT Law Clinic to get a lawyer to help me. As I went there the lawyer gave me a letter to be handed over to the reception centre for me to get an appointment for the appeal. I went at the reception centre and handed over the letter. On this occasion my permit was extended, a date set up for the appeal, and a 'yellow paper', as they call it, was given to me to be handed over to the lawyer.

I took the 'yellow paper' to the lawyer and a date was set up for an interview. I got an appointment and was interviewed about my claim by the lawyer. After the interview I was asked to bring my wife with me because we both shared the same file. I was asked to come on that day for my wife's interview with the lawyer about her claim because she was never interviewed.

The day of the appointment I went with my wife to UCT Law Clinic for her to be interviewed. The interview went well and the lawyer took us to the police station for an oath. My wife who was supposed to take the oath was handed over a document to sign and then we were dismissed and went home. Before we left the lawyer told us he was going to call us to confirm us about the date of appointment with the Refugee Appeal Board. In the mean time I went to renew my permit as usual.

Days went on and one day I received a call from the lawyer, Mr Justin, that a date was set up for the appointment. The lawyer instructed me to go alone and that my wife was not supposed to go with me. At the reception centre I met the lawyer and we both entered the office where there was someone who was supposed to have come from Pretoria. This man only asked me few questions and then engaged with the lawyer for a couple of minutes. Later on the man dismissed us promising to go and study the claim and give the result in due time.

I remember the lawyer telling me as we got out of the office, "Don't worry you will get your status, it will be alright". It was on these promises that I left the reception centre and went to my place. At this time the reception centre was located in Nyanga³³. Consequently I entered a new situation when I have to go and check if

³³ Nyanga is one of the locations of Cape Town in the Western Cape South Africa.

there is any result to state my claim or simply to extend both my permit and my wife's.

I was then experiencing new realities of going after couple of months to both check the result and at the same time renew the permit with all the consequences attached to these realities. Here one should bear in mind that many factors are involved in this situation, money, time, job... because one does not only have to go to the reception centre, but he/she will spend money to travel, spend couple of hours waiting, not working on that day...

The rejection and the appeal of my claim both took place in 2006 and 2007. After almost two years without any result I decided to step forward to get the result at all cost. I then decided to go to the Legal Resources Centre for assistance. There I was attended by a woman whose name is Charlene May who interviewed me. After I told her straightforward that I needed to know my result because it has taken that long. She finally told me that the result will be sent either to them or straight to me. She also promised to send me a copy of my claim and that of the letter she will send to the Refugee Appeal Board and so she did.

Three months later I received a letter from Charlene May stating that they had received an acknowledgement letter from the Refugee Appeal Board dated the 25 August 2008 and that in case of a result they were going to inform me. This also constitutes another experience because I am still waiting for the result. I have been going through waiting without any result. This situation led me to stepping once more forward because I was and am very concerned about knowing the result because I have to renew my permit every three or six months.

I did not fold my arms and just wait for the result. After a considerable time of waiting and patience I again last year, decided to make another move. This time I decided to go back to UCT Law Clinic and enquire if they can still assist me to get my result. As I went there I presented to the lawyer who received me the letters from the Legal Resource Centre and I presented what my case was. Mr. James asked me why I did not come to them instead of going to Legal Resource Centre. I answered him that it was because of the simple fact that the result had taken a long time.

Then the lawyer told me that the issue was already taken to court and that I could let anyone with the same situation come to them. He told me that this concern was made about all those who have appealed and are still waiting for results for more than two years. He took all the documents I had and made copies which he said he will use to support my case. He thereafter dismissed me and promised me for actions and that he will let me know in case the situation is sorted out.

I remember going back to the Legal Resource Centre for a follow up of my result. I went together with my friend John who has the same case as me. At the centre, we were told that Charlene was not there and a certain woman who attended to us advised us just to accept to live under these conditions as long as we can live in South Africa. She then asked us if we were ready to face any result from the Appeal Board, and we told her that we were prepared. She took the phone and made calls to enquire from Pretoria and at the end she told us that there was nothing ready for us. We left after she had made copies of our permit and promised to send us notes of our claims. Ever since we have been waiting for her and nothing has happened.

Once again from last year up to now I am still one of those many people waiting for results for their appeal. After the entire long journey I have taken to get the result of my claim, nothing has changed and I am always told that there is no result and that I can only extend my permit. This situation has made me live by hope. My family and I are only hoping for the result. After all I have done something about my situation but without any immediate success. I am very sure that many other people are still waiting for results even if they have not initiated any single move to get their results.

Preliminary Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, it is necessary to state briefly that, the chapter plays the role of a sample of the realities that have been developed in chapter two about the realities of refugees in the world. The picture helps to give a much clearer picture of what refugees go through in host countries. The realities are collected from South Africa and more particularly in the City of Cape Town where the researcher resides. The chapter is a glimpse of the precedent chapter to make it much clearer.

The four areas that have been exploited in chapter two are the main focus of the chapter but precisely in the host country of South Africa. The chapter stands to represent and expose the human, social, political and economic realities of refugees in South Africa. Some of these realities are the same as those experienced in other host countries, but others are particular to South Africa. This can be explicated by the fact that South Africa is an independent and sovereign country with its own constitution, people and realities. Some of the realities that refugees encounter in South Africa should be understood only in connection with the history of South Africa.

One gets the right to stay or live in South Africa once he or she gets the right paper from the refugee reception centres anywhere in the country. There is a process that is to be followed for one to be qualified or disqualified as a refugee according to the South African Constitution. There are different experiences even at this level as everyone has a story to tell. It is also true that these processes can take time because there are many clients in the country. About this one should bear in mind what was stated on the Refugee Day that there are more refugees in South Africa than in the whole of Europe.

In the next chapter the research will focus on HIV/AIDS, the virus, the patient and the drugs in relation to the situations of refugees. The first reason of the next chapter is to find out the extent to which the situation of refugees can have impacts on the spread of the virus of HI. The second reason of the chapter is to present the different needs of refugees and refugee patients of HIV/AIDS in order to apply them to their situations. The chapter will also address specifically the needs of refugees who are HIV positive and are taking the antiretroviral drugs.

CHAPTER 4

HIV/AIDS THE, THE PATIENT AND THE DRUGS AMONG REFUGEES

4.1 Introduction

The sub-Saharan Africa is more heavily affected by HIV and AIDS than any other region of the world. It is estimated that 22.9 million people are living with HIV in the region – around two third of the global. Around 1.2 million people died from AIDS and 1.9 million became infected with HIV in 2010³⁴. In Africa the infection of HIV has a high rate in the Southern Africa as the estimation was made in 2007 with South Africa having the highest rate;

HIV/AIDS in South Africa is a prominent concern; South Africa is believed to have more people with HIV/AIDS than any other country in the world... The Human Sciences Research Council, a South African institution, estimates 10.9% of all South Africans have HIV/AIDS. Additionally, the Central Intelligence Agency estimates that 310,000 individuals died in South Africa from HIV/AIDS in the year 2009³⁵.

As we look at the estimated figure of HIV/AIDS infection rate we can realise the need for a common effort to contribute to reduce the spread of HIV. The figures demonstrate how African countries are struggling with HIV/AIDS and South Africa is not spared. People run from their country to another just to face the realities of the host country. Africans are very exposed to the spread of HIV if there are not good strategies especially with the increase of refugees in the world. But in this chapter the focus is mainly put on pointing out general information of HIV/AIDS to help reach the objective of the study.

Refugees face all the challenges of the world today. Refugees are first of all human beings who have to deal with whatever affects human bodies. They may get hungry,

³⁴ HIV and AIDS in Africa, available online on the website: <http://www.avert.org-aids-africa.htm>

³⁵ HIV/AIDS in South Africa, available online on the website:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_South_Africa

feel comfortable or uncomfortable, feel healthy or sick; in short they can feel as any living person does. As humans they can be exposed to diseases and above all to the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. It is in this regard that this chapter stands to exploit some issues around the HIV/AIDS epidemic which is one of the major concerns of all the people of the world. The main focus of this chapter is on the virus, the patient and the antiretroviral drugs.

4.2 HIV/AIDS

“HIV/AIDS was not one epidemic but four: first the virus, then the disease, next death, and finally societal decomposition, each superimposed upon its predecessors. The timing varied with distance from the western equatorial epicentre and from the initial focus of infection in each region, but the sequence was the same everywhere” (Ilfie 2006: 112). This consideration of HIV/AIDS by Ilfif shows how damaging is the epidemic and therefore it puts forward a challenge to all of us who are willing to fight against the decomposition of our societies. People may be affected by the virus infection (HIV), or by the disease (AIDS), or by death leading to the decomposition of the society.

According to Kretzschmar, Bentley & Nierkerk (2009: 296), HIV/AIDS is the biggest health challenge in Africa today. It is considered as a development problem because it has become more than a health challenge. Government, donor agencies and policy makers have recognised the contribution of the church in addressing the challenge of HIV/AIDS. Few institutions in society have the track record of voluntary caring and compassionate work that the churches have. There is a wide spread and elaborate infrastructure of the churches that also make it possible for the church to make a major contribution to the prevention, treatment and care aspects of how to address the challenge of HIV/AIDS.

As the church engages to contribute to the prevention, treatment and care aspects of how to address the challenge of HIV/AIDS, let us bring some lights on both concepts of HIV and AIDS. Togni gives the following description of HIV/AIDS,

The acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS disease as it is commonly called, is the result of infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The virus severely damages the immune system of the body, which normally protects it from any number of viral and other attacks. A person infected with HIV may develop full-blown AIDS, thus making the individual susceptible to a wide range of other infections and diseases (1997: 11).

Togni (1997:11), also gives three ways through which the spread of HIV is done, ‘unprotected vaginal or anal sexual intercourse with someone who is HIV positive’; ‘sharing injection needles and syringes with someone who HIV positive’; transmission of the HIV virus from an infected mother to her unborn child or during breast-feeding.

Because there are serious damages that result with the infection of the virus of HI, and due to the vulnerability of the patients, someone is supposed to intervene to assist the infected on one hand, and prevent the spread of the disease for a better life for all on the other hand. This situation becomes even worse with people who are infected and are either ignorant of their status or are not infected and who are forced to move as it is the case of refugees. According to the “Lives of Survival”, the situation can be presented as follows,

The mobility of patients poses a challenge when it comes to the treating the chronic illness, including HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, which many of them face. Antiretroviral treatment for HIV as well as tuberculosis care require that patients stay nearby for some period of time in order to access regular follow-up visits to clinics to get their medicines and to have their medicines and to have their condition assessed by medical workers. When people with HIV and tuberculosis are constantly on the move it becomes extremely difficult if not impossible for them to remain adherence to treatment, especially when they are initiated in other country and they carry no records with them when crossing borders³⁶.

³⁶ Lives of Survival – Migrants and refugees in South Africa, Available online on the website: www.zimbabwedemocracynow.com/

A certain refugee, whose name cannot be disclosed here, ran from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to South Africa. After entering the country, he got his refugee status, and got employed as security guard. This refugee was also a Christian. When he fell sick he was tested HIV positive and did not want people to know about his HIV status. After the second incident of falling sick, he was accompanied by his young brother to the hospital and his status was now disclosed to his brother. He was suspecting being infected from a nurse who was his girlfriend. As the situation worsened his brother felt obliged to tell his friends about his status. Later his brother asked him to go back to DRC where he went and his health improved. Years later he passed away in DRC (Interviewee A.16 2011). Now the question is whether he lived a responsible life in DRC or was he simply an agent of the spread of the virus.

Another Congolese who was living with a South African woman was tested later with HIV. He disclosed his HIV status to his friend who was staying with him. He was a refugee and was not a Christian. After knowing his status he was determined to have sex without using the prophylactics and he was going to taverns and night clubs to drink and get his victims. Other victims he could get from anywhere as occasions were favourable to him. As he was able to travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo it was supposed that he was carrying on with his sexual life (Interviewee A.16 2011). The consequences are too high with such people whose intentions in having sex are wrong. One finds comfort by having others infected by the virus, because at least he/she is not the only victim.

When speaking about HIV/AIDS one should bear in mind that HIV is the name of the virus and AIDS stands for the disease. In other words the disease called AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV. However there are four elements that sustained that AIDS is not caused by HIV according to Whiteside and Sunter (2000:3); it is incorrect to say that 'HIV has never been isolated and identified'. AIDS is a new name of old diseases due to other factors³⁷ different to a new virus. AIDS can occur without HIV³⁸. Some HIV-positive individuals do not develop AIDS³⁹. This opinion is debatable and our position still is that HIV is what causes AIDS.

³⁷ Factors such as drug use and malnutrition (Whitesider & Sunter 2000: 3).

³⁸ It is true there have been cases of immunodeficiency similar to AIDS without HIV being present. However, the documented cases are minute (Ibid).

Cameron⁴⁰ gives three central propositions of the conventional scientific and medical wisdom about AIDS:

First, it is an infectious agent that causes AIDS. A pathogen, which scientists named the human immunodeficiency virus, passes from one human to another, lodging in the body fabric of each. Over time it is the activity of this virus that causes the immune breakdown that eventually leads to death from AIDS. Second, the virus is transmitted from one human to another in a small number of well-established ways, the most important of which is sexual intercourse. Third, the catastrophic effects of HIV infection in its late stages can be prevented and even reversed by administering antiretroviral drugs that bring the activity of the virus that causes AIDS to a halt within the human body (2005: 93).

Among refugees, women and children are more vulnerable compare to men as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned. In the case of the South African policy towards refugees, people who come to the country have to start from scratch as they are integrated immediately in the community. It is much easier for men to get ways to survive upon arrival than it is for women and children. The situation leads to a situation whereby everyone is supposed to be self-supporting. If one cannot be self supporting then he/she is exposed to accept whatever offer will be set on the table before her/him. About this situation Kanyandago, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike (1999: 174), writes,

Not all refugees are affected in the same way. Women and children, who are often the majority of these displaced people, are more exposed and vulnerable. When one finds oneself in a situation of dire need and vulnerability, then one is likely to be abused or to be exploited. Hence there is a need to protect vulnerable groups which are exposed to all kinds of danger, including economic exploitation and sexual abuse.

³⁹ The fact is that the average period from infection to develop AIDS is eight to 10 years in the absence of treatment (Ibid).

⁴⁰ It is as a campaigner in the HIV/AIDS pandemic that Edwin has been most readily recognisable as a public figure in recent years and, as someone living with AIDS himself, his witness and activism has shown the hallmarks of great bravery and principle that I have long associated with his name (Nelson Mandela February 2005).

4.2.1 HIV/AIDS and Women

According to documented researchers the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS is a result of several factors. Among these factors that contribute to the high rate of infection among women are: feminised poverty, the social disempowerment of women, social economic issues and physiology (Kretzschmar, Bentley & Niekerk 2009: 202).

Refugee women get exposed to the spread of HIV/AIDS in some situations where life puts pressure on them. These are situations of not having to make any choice but to go for what is offered. In other cases women are simply exposed to satisfy sexual obsessed men. Here is the case of the guma guma gangs in Musina (South Africa). Many of the sexual violence survivors (both males and females) and the guma guma gangs are already HIV-positive. There is a cycle of HIV spreading as different people in the guma guma gangs often rape the same women several times and the fellow travellers are also forced to rape those same women⁴¹.

In the case of guma guma gangs not only women are victims but also men who are travelling with the women victims. This story is unfolding what is happening to people who enter South Africa for multiple reasons. Most of these people are those who come to seek asylum in South Africa. It is to be reminded that people use all means available for them to get to their destination. This situation can expose women to HIV infection. About the same reality concerning women Lotter writes,

Poor women are often trapped in abusive relationships where they endure violence because they depend on the abusive male for money, food and shelter. Many women see no way out of abusive relationships, as they have nowhere to go (2008: 26).

⁴¹ Lives of Survival – Migrants and Refugees in South Africa, Available online on the website: www.zimbabwedemocracynow.com/

According to the International Federation of Social Workers, “more than half of refugees are women and children”⁴². This is mostly correct with people who run from war torn countries where men are mainly involved in warfare. When women move they mostly do it without proper financial supports. They therefore are exposed to many risks among which sexual abuses. It is much preferable to have women in camps where they are directly assisted than in situations where they are supposed to start from scratch in a foreign land. Some women are engaged in prostitution not because they have chosen to do so, but may be only because they are in a situation where they feel forced to do it to survive.

When dealing with the issue of HIV/AIDS and the situation of refugees; one cannot consider the infection of the refugees in the host countries without considering the infection of local citizens from the presence of refugees. There are some people among the refugees who are infected by the HI virus from their own countries. When people who are HIV positive move they bring with them the virus to the host countries. Most of time men who run and leave behind their families and those who are still singles will not all abstain from sexual activities. Upon arrival, some people sleep around with women with all the consequences including the spread of the HI virus. This situation can also be said about refugee women.

The current refugee problem is a massive human tragedy and challenge, which by 1996 affected over eighteen million refugees worldwide. Refugees are found in every region of the globe, although the distribution is uneven. The problem falls disproportionately on some countries, many of whom are ill equipped in terms of resources, to shoulder the burden. Furthermore, there is nearly a transitory population of 14 million who are at present recognised as refugees crossing borders with little or no access to protection or humanitarian assistance. More than half of refugees are women and children. Women refugees may be abused by the calamity from which they seek to escape, they may also be abused by fellow male refugees, and sometimes even by the service providers in the host countries. There are also differences between countries in that some are mainly involved in the settlement or

⁴² International Federation of Social Workers, Available online on the website: <http://www.ifsw.org/p38000216.html>

*resettlement of refugees, whilst others are primarily countries of temporary or indefinite asylum*⁴³.

The point that one can make about what is said above is that people who come to be hosted as refugees can at the same time be agents of the spread of the HI virus if the situation is not well handled. What lacks and is needed is to have institutions that can deal with these issues. What can be suggested is that people be tested upon arrival in host countries because many who come from African countries do not know their HIV status and can constitute a danger if they cannot contain to have responsible sexual activities. In any case the victims may mostly be women due to economic realities.

There are cases when some women have to come to join their husbands in the host countries. Some husbands who do not have a responsible sexual behaviour may have been infected by HIV. In this case the wives will come, without the right knowledge of the husbands' status, and get infected as they live together. Some women may only discover their new status during pregnancy test that they are HIV positives.

In other cases their status can be unveiled when their partners pass away or after they have gone for test because they are too sick. Many women are victims of HIV infection from their partners who first got infected and live without knowing their status. This situation can also happen in the opposite direction. In this case it is the woman who comes and who is already infected by the virus. But what is common is the case where women are victims.

Looking at the seriousness of the situation mentioned above something needs to be done. The question is to know what should be done to control the infection of the virus in these complicated situations. There should be HIV/AIDS tests done to women before they leave their countries to join their partners, and at the same time men who are living in host countries should have the same done to them. Results should be communicated to both parties before moving ahead with the joining process. When some one decides to return to his or her country, HIV/AIDS tests should be

⁴³ International Federation of Social Workers, Available online on the website: <http://www.ifsw.org/p38000216.html>

encouraged from both sides, i.e. where one comes from and where he/she goes to (Interviewee B.15 2011).

There are also instances when men who discover their HIV status decide to go back to their countries because they think there is no hope to stay in the host countries. These men can constitute a danger to health life of their own people as they return in their countries. These men can help spread the virus by sleeping around without responsible sexual life behaviour. Some knowing that they are but to die, wish to spread the virus so that they are not the only victims of HIV/AIDS. In this situation women are the most vulnerable as the infected person will like to move from one woman to another because he is furious of being infected by the virus and is not able to accept the new status. Now let us move to the case of children.

4.2.2 HIV/AIDS and Children

The issues of the focus of this section are the children of refugee parents in relation to HIV infection. “Some children struggle on alone in their parents’ house. These child-headed households are a new phenomenon. If there’re lucky a neighbour may check that they are eating. If nobody cares, they may end up on the streets” (Guest 2003: 11). This statement is made for children whose parents pass away because of HIV/AIDS. In our case I would like to remind readers that we are mainly dealing with refugees, therefore the parents are refugees. As these parents die and leave behind them children, some are still too young to look after themselves and after their siblings. In the absence of parents, these children will struggle to survive. About this situation Guest writes,

More children will be abused, because they lack shelter and protection or take greater sexual risks or find themselves in abusive relationships in adulthood... Orphan girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse because they’ve assumed adult responsibilities, such as caring for their dying parents or raising siblings, without the maturity to understand quite what happened to them... Crime will escalate as more children steal to survive and join gangs in search of a surrogate family. More will abuse drugs and alcohol to numb their

pain. Some will suffer permanent brain damage from sniffing glue or other intoxicants (2003: 158).

Once both parents pass away or in some cases when the only responsible parents pass away, the children have to rely on family members in the first plan. But in many cases refugees are without any close relative in the same country. In other cases even the relatives who can be in the same country are not able or are not just willing to look after the orphans. Beside the parents' relatives come friends and neighbours who can bring their assistance to the orphans. Again for either friends or neighbours, there must be the sense of love and readiness to help or assist.

The neighbour is not to be the persons who live next door only. According to the teaching of Jesus Christ a neighbour is anyone who is ready to help or assist anyone who is in need (Lk 10: 36-37). The victim and the Good Samaritan do not share the same nationality but still Jesus calls him "neighbour". The only one thing that moved the Samaritan to act was the compassion he has for the victim. Orphan children are also HIV/AIDS victims and they need some people who can take care of them. If the families fail them or cannot come with needed supports, then "Samaritans" are challenged to offer their help by becoming Good Samaritans.

Children are not only affected by the loss of parents but they may also be infected by the virus of HI from their parents. There are instances when children are born HIV-positive. For the UNICEF⁴⁴, "...those children born with an HIV infection, or orphaned by the loss of their parents to AIDS, childhood is far too short and far too painful" (Van der Vliet 1996: 106).

In the cases of orphan children the failure to come to their help will lead to disastrous consequences on the life of the whole community. Because if they are not given proper assistance, they will go on the streets and end up forming the class of street kids and later become street people or criminals opening doors to the spread of HIV. At this level, one will support the saying that "prevention is better than cure". Where

⁴⁴ UNICEF 1993a:1

there are people for the orphan children, there is possibility to fight the increase of people on the streets. About this situation Guest argues,

Africa's AIDS orphans could grow up to become vulnerable and volatile adults. Some will learn to survive through theft or prostitution, numbing their pain perhaps by sniffing glue. African countries face a stark choice. If they do not find ways to care for the growing multitude of AIDS orphans, they could soon find their streets crowded with angry, intoxicated adolescents. Beside being a human tragedy, this could aggravate the continent's already high level of crime (2003: 12).

When we can bring under control the people on the street, we can also bring a hand of contribution to the fight of the infection of HIV. It is obvious that when people are on the streets it becomes difficult to educate them, and some become addicted to alcohol or drugs. Others will be making their living from prostitution. It is much easier to assist people while they are still at their parents' houses than when they have shifted from their former lives to that of street people and homeless. With the effects of drugs and alcohol it becomes more complicated to reach out to them and educate them about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Gues argues that,

Street children live close to the edge. They find hard to keep clean, healthy or clothed. Many people despise and distrust them, kick them and shout at them. The drugs and alcohol they use to make their life bearable make them more vulnerable. Shelters such as Fountain of Hope⁴⁵ have a tough job coping with the emergencies, let alone reintegrating street-hardened children into ordinary families and schools. Some are beyond help. Glue-sniffing has irreparably damaged their brain or they've stumbled into the path of a car. Too many have been allowed to fall through the net (Ibid: 144-5).

AIDS leaves behind orphans and some are not even mature to look after themselves. In some cases immature children have to look after their siblings when there is none to be there for them. The situation is very tough especially when this happens in a

⁴⁵ Fountain of Hope was started in 1996. That year, a United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) report estimated that there were about 75,000 street children in Zambia, up from 35,000 in 1991.

foreign land where people are living as refugees. In such circumstances, these children will have no choice than to be on the streets and try whatever will work for them. Actually it is much better if the situation happens in their countries of origin because there the extended family can come on board. In most of times grandparents step in to look after their grandchildren.

4.3 The Patient's Needs and Support

“There are only two types of people in the world today, those infected and those affected by HIV. HIV affects me because my dad is infected by the HI virus” says Brenda⁴⁶ (Brand 2005:77). HIV/AIDS is to be the concern of all. If we are not affected directly like Brenda, we are affected indirectly because our community is affected. There is need of support both for the infected and for the affected. Something is to be done. As for now the main concern of this work is about the needs of the infected person. Caroline⁴⁷, as quoted by Brand (2005: 13), writes,

The AIDS virus has and will affect the lives of millions of people throughout this planet. AIDS is not a challenge to our health systems; it's a challenge to our humanity. The crises that are facing us as a planetary family would be met with very different reactions if we could all begin thinking of ourselves as united in our efforts to help heal these problems – it is our environment which is polluted; it is all of us who share these crises – and every one of these crises challenges the way in which we see ourselves in relationship to our world and our participation in this world as members of the same family.

The time one becomes aware of his/her HIV status, life changes as one emotionally, psychological, physically, spiritually and materially gets in need of someone or something to help him/her. Cameron gives his experience on the day he was told he was HIV positive for us to grasp the realities around HIV/AIDS:

But on that day in late October 1997 I couldn't. Each step seemed an insuperable effort. My energy seemed to have drained from my legs. I was

⁴⁶ Brenda is a second-year student at the Hotel School in Johannesburg.

⁴⁷ AIDS: Passageway to Transformation, page 89.

perspiring grey exhaustion. My lungs felt waterlogged. My mouth rough and dry. No pain. Just overwhelming wearing weariness. And fear. After twenty steps I paused on the midway landing to lean my forehead against the wall. The stairwell was quiet. I could hear myself panting. I grimaced. The thought – that thought – could no longer be postponed. I would have to see my doctor. This afternoon. But already I knew what he would say. It was what somehow I had been waiting for – fearing, dreading, denying, as it encircled me, closing in, for twelve years. My mouth and lungs told me what I didn't want to know, I didn't need to be told. I had AIDS (2005: 9).

Different people who are diagnosed with HIV experience different responses and needs (Interviewee B.18 2011). What is true is that the infected person has specific needs that are to be met. Some need to have someone on their side for encouragement. The first need of any person who goes for test is that of going through counselling phase to get prepared to face whatever result will come out of it. At this level someone is to be available for the job. One is not ill after the diagnosis but rather before and the diagnosis is just a way to expose what is hidden in the sick body. The job of counselling calls for people of love and compassion to prepare people to face the unwanted of their life.

About patient's support, five groups of support are identified: the medical team, the family and friends, the neighbour and the community, the church and organizations and governments. Not only one support group is needed but what is needed is the complementation of all of these. Because HIV/AIDS is a common challenge, we need the collaboration of all the support groups to be engaged for the good of all when the medicating patients need coordination and backup which will encourage them and empower them for action.

All medicating patients – rich and poor, African and non-African – need information, training, encouragement and support. They all deserve it, as well as the medications that make this backup necessary. Through Africa, people needing antiretroviral treatment are demonstrating that they can save their lives through daily action (Cameron 2005: 200).

The different support groups of the patients can be exploited and classified into five. Here the focus is on the patient who is already taking the antiretroviral drugs and his needs. Cameron has classified these needs in four groups: information, training, encouragement and support. The fourth need is expanded by the need of support groups. The first three needs can either be met by all the support groups or by one or two or three support groups.

In a more detailed way the patient's needs are to be met by support groups as follow: The needs of information and encouragement can be provided by all the five support groups. The need of training can be provided by the medical team, the church and the organizations and governments. The need of support is what the five support groups offer to the patient. The point is that we have on one hand the patient with all his needs and on the other hand people who can constitute the patient's support groups. Support is also about different needs that the patient has to keep both body and soul together. The patient needs food, clothing, and clean water and shelters as well. About nutrition Saunders⁴⁸, as quoted by Dyk (2005: 301), argues:

There is a strong correlation between malnutrition and immune depression. Research findings suggest that a healthy diet and mineral supplementation and defensive eating may enhance the immune response to HIV infection and enhance resistance to appropriate infections.

4.3.1 The medical team

The medical team is to provide with conditions that are convenient with the dealing and treatments of people. As people go to medical centres to get tested everything is to be conducive to a state of trust and confidentiality. First of all people need to be educated in order to know the importance of getting tested. The medical team should explain why knowing one's HIV status is for the benefice of the client. Everything starts with them because it is from here that one is declared HIV positive and prepared

⁴⁸ Saunders, L. 1994 Nutrition in Aids. Paper Presented at the South African Nutritional Congress, Durban.

to face the new challenge. The team is to provide with counselling to prepare people to getting tested and to accepting the result. About counselling Cameron⁴⁹ argues,

No person, professionally qualified or not, ill-intentioned or well-meaning, for instrumental or intrinsic purposes, has the right to grasp that knowledge without at least first consulting and preparing the person it most concern. That is more especially the case when the result reveals a relived disease exposing the patient to dread reactions; and when the medical diagnosis can offer no present hope and intervention to the patient diagnosed (2005: 50).

Counselling plays a critical role when dealing with the issues of HIV/AIDS. It is to be provided to the patient before testing and carried on as long as the patients need it. Not anyone can be a counsellor but the best quality of a counsellor is compassion for others. According to Johnson⁵⁰, as quoted by Dyk (2005: 174),

The single most important requirement to the HIV/AIDS counsellor, is to have compassion for another person's struggle to live beyond the confines of a disease, and the willingness and commitment to walk the walk with this person and his or her significant others.

God is a God of compassion and we see it in the life of Jesus. Whenever Jesus looked at the multitude of people following him, he had compassion for them (Mt 9: 36). The call here will be to have compassionate trained Christians and non Christians committed to the cause of people who are infected by HIV. These Christians and non Christians should be working hand in hand with the medical team.

4.3.2 The family and friends

Family and friends constitute the closer group of the patient. These are people who share some of the intimacy of the patient. They are supposed to be in touch with the

⁴⁹ Cameron addresses the taboo questions of race, sexual orientation, poverty and stigma in the context of HIV/AIDS epidemic, writing almost always from personal perspective, but with an unconditional commitment to social justice.

⁵⁰ Johnson, P. 2000. Basic Counselling Skills: Applications in HIV/AIDS Counselling. Unpublished manuscript, UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology, Pretoria. P. 2

patient continuously. They therefore can provide with encouragement to the patients. Just their presence is very significant to the patients. They can be there for him/her at all times to bring comfort in times of despair. They can assist him/her to make sure that he/she takes the medications and that he/she has good nutrition. They can assist the patient with the day to day needs. For Iliffe (2006: 102), “everywhere in the continent, it appears, that families had a unique and morally inescapable obligation to care for their own”.

Most of refugee people do not live with their close relatives but they never live without friends. One cannot make relatives but can make friends. But in the Lord Jesus Christ the possibility to have a new family cannot be excluded. In this case of one who is suffering, the family and friend are the first groups to play a major role in being there for the patient as long as there is a need. “If there is no closer relative to assist, friends are the main role players, and there should be the need to inform the family members and see how far they can assist even from far” (Interviewee B.16 2011). In most cases people chose to disclose their secret to friend more than to relatives. The friends can then play an intermediate role between the patient and the family.

4.3.3 The neighbours and the community

A neighbour is anyone who can assist the person with a particular need. The parable of the Good Samaritan is exactly a good illustration of who the neighbour really is. The Good Samaritan was the neighbour to the victim (Lk 10:33). At the same time a neighbour can be the person next door. As for the person next door, one must have the compassion and concern for others. There are cases when the person next door gets involved in the situation of the patient. Some people can avail themselves to bring due assistance in times of need. They provide with food, encouragements, follow up and other forms of assistance. The neighbour next door can play a major role in assisting the patient because he/she is physically close to the patient. In a world where people are becoming busier, the neighbour next door can still have great opportunity to see the patient on a daily basis. The neighbour has the great privilege to live next to the

patient. As for the communities, AAA September⁵¹, as quoted by Iliffe (2006: 106), argues,

The community makes sure that patients are taken to the hospital, leads mobile medical teams to those who are too sick to travel, and even collects money every month to feed the poorer patients and help them wash and bath. Their devotion has, it is reported, and helped doctors at Nsambya⁵² reach 3-4 times as many AIDS patients as they could have without such a community support.

For Kirkpatrick (2001: 171), “An ethic of community will have come a long way toward its final realization when communities provide their members with the resources for living most authentically and deeply in and through the power of God”. There is no patient without a community where he or she belongs to. The emphasis here is that the patient can receive assistance from the community where he or she lives in order to meet his or her needs. The community can take care of the patients. It can be there for the patients in times of needs, like through visits, encouragements, providing food...

Communities are to be encouraged to be communities of the patients that one can feel the joy to belong to the community where he or she lives. Joy is one of the ways to healing. By being taken care of one gets the feeling of being accepted and that will help in the long run to inner healing. It is difficult to live in a community where none cares about you. The community always has something to give to the patients.

The African conception of UBUNTU⁵³ visualise the community as a single person. In the community every member sees every individual as another self. Personhood is a gift and a person exists only in relation to others. “Probably the most fundamental is the attitude towards others that sees them and treats them as ‘other self’. No distinction is made between their good and one’s own. Everyone, no matter how

⁵¹ AAA, September 1992. See also Smart and Fincham, ‘Study tour’, p. 29.

⁵² Nsambya is a home-care system supported by volunteer community caregivers backed by the original mobile health care in Zambia.

⁵³ UBUNTU is the name for the acquired quality of humanity that is the characteristic of a fully developed person and the community with others that result (Shutte 2001: 31).

foreign, is seen as being one of us” (Shutte 2001: 25, 26, 31). Therefore the patient’s needs will find their fulfilment within the community where he/she lives. The community is not an outside reality to the patient but it is himself/herself.

4.3.4 The church

The church is not only needed by the needy within but also outside itself (Interviewee B.1 2011). The church does not exist for itself but for the entire world. The church has mainly the calling to exist for others following the footprints of its Master. The church should be involved in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS working together with governments and organizations within and outside its community. “The church can set up its own program to educate people about the issues of HIV/AIDS” (Interviewee A.5 2011). With the church activities there should always be spaces for educating its members and its community members because it is called to be the church of the community and not just a church in the community.

As a church of the community, it is also recommendable that the church’s budget is to make space for the concern of the needy. A simple example is that of organizing food parcels to assist people who cannot afford to put something on their table as it is the case of the Claremont Baptist Church. The church is blessed to be a blessing to others. It cannot not only give food parcels but also assist with clothing and whatever it can afford. The church can assist with encouragement as members visit sick people and pray with and minister to them. The church can also assist with counselling where it is needed. About the church involvement in counselling Dyk writes:

In the first place religious counsellors should become part of HIV/AIDS counselling teams. Where possible, these religious counsellors should be members of the local clergy, and they should be adequately trained, and noted for their compassionate attitude towards the suffering (2005: 256).

Different opinions can be taken about the healing of the ill through prayer. As for me I am still convinced that through the power of prayer healing can take place. At this point I must emphasise that everything depends mainly on God who heals than on him/her who is praying or is prayed for. I personally came across a HIV/AIDS case

while I was in Zambia. A certain HIV positive man was discharged from the hospital because nothing could be done to help him because he was declared dying. A brother in the Lord who also was his neighbour told me about him. We visited him and introduced him to the Lord Jesus. From that time onwards we kept on praying with him and sharing the word of God. It was amazing to see how he recovered from his sickness, put on weight and became healthier without any antiretroviral drugs. Besides being a place of healing, the church should also be a place of refuge.

The church has always been a place of refuge. Whenever a church member is sick or has given birth, the church assists in different ways. Visits are paid from time to time by the rest of the church members. People assist with food, clothing and other forms of assistance. The church also intercedes in favour of the sick and encourages him or her from the word of God. Visitors are always welcome wherever they go. Visitors are assisted as much as possible according to their needs. When travelling, one needs only to enquire about the church location because there any stranger is most welcome and comfortable. Christians and non Christians both are welcomed by the church as long as they introduce themselves as strangers (Interviewee B.12 2011).

There are instances when people disclose their HIV status to their pastors during counselling. In this case the patient trusts the church to deal wisely with his or her situation. The church has to find better ways of disclosing the status to assist the family to properly deal with the patient. For one to perform rightly he or she needs knowledge. Those who are much closer to the patient need some proper information to help them know how to deal with the situation. The church can play an intermediate role between the patient and his or her family.

There are couple of churches and Christians organizations that offer different services to refugees. Among churches the Claremont Baptist Church, where I fellowship gives food parcels and other form of assistance to refugees and it also offers teaching of English to them. The Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) in Southern Africa⁵⁴ (Pretoria) offers the following services based on the assessment of the needs: emergency aid;

⁵⁴ Jesuit Refugees Services (JRS) in Southern Africa, available online on the website: www.jrs.net/

access to education and health care; and a long term facilitation of their integration into the local community.

This shows that the church in South Africa is holding its hands as far as refugees are concerned. The church is already there on the ground, and what is needed is to either improve the available services by bring more of the needed support or to add more lacking services. Because there are churches that are already doing something, others can join by either providing their own services or simply by supporting what is already going on.

4.3.5 Organizations and governments

Governments are supposed to provide with treatments, social assistance in the form of social grants to people who are not able to provide for themselves. Governments can support organizations involved in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Governments can finance HIV/AIDS projects and have a follow up of these projects. When governments only finance these projects it does not guaranty the proper use of the investments. The point is that the needs of the concerned people are met in due course. Governments should also design policies that ensure that people who come in the country are encouraged to get tested in order that every one can know his/her HIV status.

It should also be the governments' duty to provide antiretroviral drugs when people cannot afford to get them as it is the case of the South African governments. Governments can collaborate with all support groups to ensure that people are assisted. NGOs are to be the hands of the governments to administer whatever is to go to people in need. The Bible attributes governments the duty to reward people who do well and punish those who live contrary to the law (1 Pt 2:14). "The church can be praised by the government as it keeps on doing what is good. Assisting people like refugees is just one of the many good things that any government is supposed to do and carry on" (Interviewee A.19 2011). As the church is praised by the government it becomes easier for it to remind and assist the government about and in its responsibility.

In 1967, at the conference on Legal, Economic, and Social Aspects of African Refugee Problems in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Organization of African Unity (OAU, now African Union or AU), UNHCR and Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation there was a desire to link refugee assistance to the development needs of the host country based on the sharing of responsibility by host country, UNHCR, UNPD and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)⁵⁵.

The government of the host country and the different organizations are to work together. NGOs can even be the hands, feet, eyes and mouth of the government and to the government. They can help implement the strategies and policies of the government. At the same time they can inform the government about the real situation they encounter on the ground. Beside this cooperation NGOs need some political space speak out about whatever wrong they see in the way the government is handling state matters. Milner's book⁵⁶ recognises the important role played by international and national NGOs in refugee protection. For him beside all this NGOs at national and regional level in Africa need space to lobby and criticize the government⁵⁷.

The government can work through implementing the country laws which are written down in the constitution. Different countries have adopted different laws about the issues of HIV/AIDS and particularly with the administration of the antiretroviral. One good example is the South African law about free delivery of the antiretroviral to all that qualify for it. This is something all governments of the world should be encouraged to implement and achieve for a better life for all.

4.4 The Anti-retroviral Drugs

By definition, "Antiviral drugs are substances that inhibit the development and spread of virus by interfering with the viral life cycle" (Mombe 2004: 53). It is of importance to note that,

⁵⁵ FMO Thematic Guide: Camps Versus Settlements, available online on the website: www.forcedmigration.org/research-resources/expert-guides/camps-versus-settlements/fmo021.pdf

⁵⁶ Refugee, the State and the Politics of Asylum in Africa

⁵⁷ Book Reviews, available online on the website: <http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/110/440/503.full.pdf+html>

Anti-retroviral drugs are not like a familiar pill that one would casually take; ARVs should be used under controlled conditions that ensure their success. One must ensure that the treatment will be followed for life, under the supervision of someone able to monitor properly the therapy and give the needed information and counselling. Therapy must be initiated at an appropriate moment, taking in account the clinical stage, viral load, CD4⁵⁸ or TLC⁵⁹ count; and the drug regimen should be chosen so as to avoid failure or drug resistance (Ibid: 89).

The realities surrounding the anti-retroviral drugs are very complex and need serious implication of compassionate people. The patients on medication need to be encouraged and reminded to get the medication. Someone should be there for them to ensure that quality food is taken. This means that beside the counsellor, a relative or a neighbour or a friend or a church member must be there to accompany the patients on their difficult journeys.

Sunter & Whiteside (2000: 21) mention three stages in the treatment of HIV-positive people. The first stage is when they are infected, but CD4 cell counts are high and the emphasis is on positive living' – staying healthy, eating the correct food and so on. The second stage is when the CD4 cell count begins to drop. At this stage, prophylactic treatment to prevent TB and other common diseases is normally begun. The third stage is the use of antiretroviral drugs to fight HIV directly. This can start when the CD4 cell count drops below 350.

Because HIV damages the immune system of the body which protects it from viral and other attacks, there should always be a good and balanced relation between free ARVs and nutrition. This point will be expanded in chapter 6. According to Brand (2005: 56),

⁵⁸ CD4 stands for cluster of differentiation. CD4 is a molecule on the surface of some white blood cells onto which HIV can bind. The immune cell that carries the CD4 on its surface is called CD4 cell. It is known as CD4 lymphocyte, T-Helper cell or T4 cell. CD4 cells play a key role in the immune system activities. They are the preferred targets of HIV. Their destruction is the major cause of the immunodeficiency observed in AIDS (Mombe 2004:19).

⁵⁹ TLC stands for total lymphocyte (white cell) count. It can be used in place of CD4 count to determine immune status and to decide when to initiate ART in HIV-infected persons (Ibid: 65).

HIV attacks the body's immune system, making the body less resistant to fighting infections. While nutrients alone cannot destroy HI virus, healthier eating can help you to live a healthier life. The provision of ARVs is vital to this process, and they should be an option that is freely available to every South African. However many medicines and drugs (including ARVs) result in the body losing essential nutrients. Good nutrition therefore complements and reinforces the positive effect of any medication taken.

The availability of the antiretroviral is not enough in the treatment and care for HIV/AIDS. There are a number of elements that need to be considered and one of them is nutrition. All these elements that will be pointed out below are important and none of them is to be excluded if we want to get a better result in the treatment and care for HIV/AIDS. The necessity and complementarity of these element is well described as we read,

Treatment and care for HIV/AIDS consists of a number of different elements apart from ARVs. These include voluntary counselling and testing, food and management of nutrition, follow-counselling, protection from stigma and discrimination, treatment of other sexual transmitted infections, and the prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections. Alongside antiretroviral treatment, all of these elements should be made available for all people living with HIV⁶⁰.

4.5 The church and the Issues of HIV/AIDS

The main concern here is the ways in which the church handles the issues of HIV/AIDS as far as refugees are concerned. The church is called to expound the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdom of God is not about the church but about the world. This kingdom is about the well being of the whole creation. God who created all things is still concerned about the whole of it. When it comes to HIV/AIDS, the church has the duty to educate and assist in order to prevent the spread of the virus and to take care of those who are already infected and affected. Some of the church

⁶⁰ HIV and AIDS in Africa, available online on the website: <http://www.avert.org-aids-africa.htm>

programs should be directed towards addressing the issues of the disease among its community and also in the community of refugees.

Church members can also be conscientised (made aware) of the suffering of women and children, encouraged to join with the nation in prayer, act within their own churches, and give money and help the organizations active in this work. These and other form of moral actions, together with God's grace, can promote salvation, healing and liberation in the lives of marginalised women and children (Kretzschmar, Bentley & Niekerk 2009: 94).

The church is to carry on with the message of Luke 4: 18-19, "to preach good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are bruised". There are instances when the church seems to deny and distance itself AIDS for because it is believe to be something of outsiders, people who are not its members. Some research has confirmed this in the following words,

In South Africa religion plays a major role in lives of most communities. As a result, religion has become a perceived safe zone from which to deny and distance AIDS as a problem that affect those outside one's religious space... A white protestant priest from Free State, declares, 'I will not encourage my parishioners to go for AIDS test because I think the risk factor at this stage in our parish, a white parish in Free State, with professional people, is low. There are extremely low members who fall in this category'⁶¹.

The view that the church adopts in regard of HIV/AIDS becomes very important because of the church's role in the life of most communities in South Africa. This shows how the stance that the church will have towards HIV/AIDS will have impact on church members. Like in the case of the Interviewee B.3, 'In our church they don't speak about HIV/AIDS and I don't have much information on the subject" (Interviewee B.3 2011). Therefore there is still need for the church to adopt a positive stance towards HIV/AIDS to bring its contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

⁶¹ Culture, Health and Sexuality: An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care, available online on the website: <http://www.tandfonline.com/di/full/10.1080/13691050500341489>

Eagleson and Scharper, as quoted by Karris (1990: 13-14), give a preferential option for the poor in the final document of the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate, Puebla, Mexico, 1979 emphasising the members' preference for, and solidarity with, the poor. This conference opted for the church's commitment to the poor and the oppressed. Members confirmed the constant challenge of the poor to the church.

The commitment to the poor and oppressed can be understood in this particular concern as the commitment to the causes of refugees and to those who are on the antiretroviral to improve their life conditions. The church should emphasis the same commitment because this is its mission in the world where justice needs to be done. The presence of refugees is to be understood as a constant challenge to the church.

The church should assist Christians who are HIV/AIDS patients to achieve their healing process through confession and prayer. If the disease is caused by a specific sin in a Christian's life, Getz (1984: 172) describes the healing process, "Sickness that is caused by a specific sin in a Christian life should be dealt with in two ways – through confession and prayer. Therefore, James definitely established continuity between his previous statements about illness and healing, "*confess your sins to each other.*" And then he wrote, "Pray for each other so that you may be healed" (Jas 5: 16).

The church detains a valuable asset, which is needed in the world. The light is for importance only in areas of darkness. Jesus spoke one time of the use of the light that it is not to be put under the table once lit. The light is to light all the place where it is placed and men are to see the good works to glorify God (Mt 5: 15-16). In all the confusing situations and realities of this world, the church is to be called in for actions. It has been placed on earth not elsewhere to light the earth. While people worldwide are struggling to find solution to the issue of HIV/AIDS, the church should rise up and show by deeds the rest of the world how these issues can be handled for a better future of the globe.

The church is to get engaged with the issue of HIV/AIDS throughout its existence in the world by both words and deeds (Interviewee A.3 2011). Both words and deeds are

to play a major role in prevention and the cure and care of HIV/AIDS. The church's teachings and lifestyle are what is needed in the prevention of the spread of the virus. The church can also participate in the cure of those who are already infected and affected by the virus through prayers, counselling and the sharing of the word of God. As for the care of the patients, the church can assist with food, shelters, and other kinds of materials that can contribute to maintaining the good health. While teaching, the church should hold on its biblical instructions.

Anderson and Rüppell⁶², as quoted by Dyk (2005: 256), understand the role of the church in HIV/AIDS by arguing:

All religious institutions should be encouraged to become involved in an organized way in HIV/AIDS care and counselling, for example by financially and physically supporting existing hospices or by founding such caring facilities. Research has shown that it is far more desirable in the long term to involve local agencies and religious institutions than to depend on often undependable foreign support. The World Council of Churches sees the role of the church as providing a climate of love, acceptance and support in everyday life of the church, reflecting on the theological and ethical issues raised by the pandemic, and physically taking care of the immediate and long-term effects of HIV/AIDS (Dyk 2005: 256).

The church should have action plans to respond to the many challenges of life. It can teach believers the basics of Home Based Care and teach people to care for their loved ones. The church can encourage believers to consider adopting a child whose parents died of AIDS; it can get involved in caring for people with HIV/AIDS who can no longer take care of themselves. The church should tell the people the truth in love about HIV/AIDS, from God's perspective. "The church can break the stigma of HIV/AIDS by accepting people who are HIV positive" (Interviewee B.7 2011).

The church is to encourage people, especially members, to get tested and in case of HIV positivism, encourage them to get treatment. As Paul encourages Timothy to

⁶² Anderson, K. & Rüppel, G. 1999. Facing Aids: education in the context of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Geneva: World Council of Churches.

drink a little wine for his stomach's sake and his frequent infirmities (1Tm 5:23), the church should encourage HIV positive people to take antiretroviral drugs for the sake of their health. About healing both prayers, drugs and good nutrition are to be promoted by the church as it works for the better life of all. In the fight against the spread of HIV, some church confessions are promoting the use of prophylactics and other are against. Though the issue is debatable it is true that there are cases when people should be encouraged to use them.

The use of prophylactics

In the prevention against the spread of the infection of HIV, three methods emerge: the first is total abstinence from sexual behaviour; the second is faithfulness to and within marriage and the third is the use of prophylactics. As Christians there is nothing to debate about the two first because they meet with the teaching of the church. But questions arise when it comes to the third method. Different opinions will be given by different Christians or simply by different church organisations. Now let us look at the two sides of opinions and I will give my personal opinion as well as a Christian.

Magesa, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike (1999: 209-10), writes on the use of prophylactics,

From the viewpoint of sexual behaviour, the major approaches towards the containment of HIV infection and Aids revolve around three alternatives: total abstinence from sexual relations, absolute faithfulness to one sexual partner (or exclusively to the spouses in a plural marriage) and the use of prophylactics. The first two present no matter for discussion. And, of course, they are the surest ways to contain the epidemic. They are as well the most that ought to be continually educated in them. If they were followed, there would be no problem of Aids. But it is precisely because they are not, cannot, be followed to the optimum, given the human condition, that the epidemic looms large. At this point the issue of prophylactics arises... What they are saying is merely that, from the viewpoint of Christian

compassion, it is necessary to provide “information” to those who cannot refrain from sexual networking for whatever reason; that such information would merely be “part of the factual picture.

The third method of prevention of the infection of HIV is still debatable. But for all Christians the two first methods are hundred percent within the Christian context. What is questionable here is what Magesa calls “Christian compassion”. If compassion is to be understood as a practical love then Christian should stand on their ground by calling the other groups to observe the two previous methods. Christians are called to transform the world into a place where life is lived according to the will and purpose of God. The question that will rise again and again is to know the impact of using condoms outside marriages has on the behaviour of those who cannot refrain against sexual behaviour.

“Yet we are also aware that people even believers don’t always live according to their position in Christ. Our tendency is always to satisfy the desires of our sinful nature. Because this is an undeniable fact; the church should encourage and promote the use of condoms for those that are failing to live up to God’s standard” (Interviewee A.17 2011).

The question is to find out why people want to use prophylactics. If people want to use prophylactics because they fear the virus they should rather learn to fear God and the fear of the virus can be banished (Interviewee B.3 2011).

We can somehow stop the spread of the virus by using prophylactics, but the question will be to know what kind of a world we are establishing. The dilemma is that we want to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS on one hand, and on the other hand we work to stop the unworthy sexual behaviour. One would like to know where the use of prophylactics fits in both stopping the spread of the virus and the carrying of the mission to see behaviour change in the light of the will and purpose of the Creator. But Moore⁶³ quoted by Magesa, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiya-Wasike (1999: 213), sees things in this way:

⁶³ Moore, G. 1990. “The Church, Homosexuality and AIDS,” *New Blackfriars* 71 (840). p. 342.

Anybody who helps people to do that, for instance by giving advice on safer sex, is assisting in the exercise of virtue. To give advice safer sex is not to give advice on safer sin, and in no way involves condoning or approving any activity condemned by the church as unchaste and therefore sinful. It is on a contrary an attempt to prevent sin, and as such is something that any catholic can do with a clear conscience, part of the work of the church. Indeed, to refuse to give such advice, should be the opportunity present itself, might well itself be regarded as sinful, since it is shirking the church's mission to protect life and to promote virtue, to preserve bodies and nourish souls.

After reflecting on different options about the methods to be applied in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS I personally agree with Kirkpatrick on his understanding of the ontological foundation of the Christian ethics when speaking of 'Moral and Scripture Foundations'. For everything God has created, man must find out God's intention for its use. God did not create just because He wanted to create, but rather he has a plan for whatever he created. Therefore the conflict arises when we fail to discover the intention of God in creation. The main concern should be to discover the purpose of God by creating two opposite sexes and then questions about how and when to use them will be easy to get answered. Kirkpatrick argues:

The overarching divine intention requires that human life be lived in some particular ways if it is to be in conformity with the divine intention that persons be enabled to experience fully what it means to be fulfilled as persons. It is not compatible with every conceivable form of human behaviour or with every possible notion of human nature; this means that a Christian ethic has a shape and content that specify it, and differentiate it from other "life-plans" that are live options in the world today; this means that morality is the actual living of human life in conformity with the conditions God has laid down for fulfilment... (2001: 4).

In reality there is no problem with the use of prophylactics, but the problem is with the ways this issue is handled. In other words the question is to know who is to use them and how to communicate the message about them. "Christians have the obligation to abide by the will of God and hold on the truth. The world has been

corrupted from the fall of men and it is in need of redemption. The church has its mission in this redemption plan by living a right life and teaching the word of God accordingly” (Interviewee A.21 2011).

The problem is not the use of condoms, but rather the use of sex. There is no problem with a gun, but there will be concerns with its use. When used properly it becomes a good thing, but it become dangerous when used improperly such in cases of robbery. There is therefore need to teach the proper way the gun is supposed to be used to try avoid any misuse and even to make sure there is good control of gun possession.

As Christians we are in front of a challenge and should respond to it. If we all agree with abstinence and faithfulness, we should also agree about the use of prophylactics or not. The church should first of all agree on the proper use of sex. If the church agrees that sex is to be used only in marriage then all should speak the same language about the use of prophylactics. The first message should be to say that the use of prophylactics is not bad in itself and there are circumstances when one can use them. In this case let us consider the case when one partner is HIV-positive. In this case the other partner should be encouraged to use condoms to avoid getting infected. If the church wants to speak about the use of prophylactics, it is not supposed to support encouraging people to use them just because people should avoid being infected by the virus. The church should carry on with its mission of spreading good news.

The word of God reminds us that there is no profit we will get by gaining the whole world when we lose our souls (Mk 8: 36). Jesus teaches us not to fear those who kill the body, and cannot kill the soul, and to fear him who destroys both body and soul (Mt 10: 28). HIV/AIDS seems to only kill the body but can also kill both the body and the soul. God both instructs us to learn to control our bodies and cautions us from taking sexual advantage. We read in the book of 1 Thessalonians 4: 3-8 that,

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have

already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Preliminary Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the issues of the virus as the agent that causes AIDS. The point here is to present the virus of HI and the different ways of its transmission from human to human. It is noted that the virus has three ways of transmission and three approaches have been pointed out in the fight against the spread of the virus.

Refugee Women and children are presented as the most vulnerable to the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. This has been explicated by some of the life's conditions in which people live upon arrival or later during their stay in the country. There should be a great concern by the church to see that conditions are improved in the lives of refugees, especially in order to protect women and children.

Refugee patients have different needs grounded on the need of support. The needs may be physical or spiritual and someone should be there for the patient. Five support groups are most important to the patients and each one plays a major role and needs to work hand in hand with all the others.

The church is called to minister about HIV/AIDS. The church can teach, educate and feed people in line with their needs. It is to be there for all those people who need assistance and support. It is established in the world to be the salt and light of it. About the use of prophylactics in the fight against the spread of the disease there are two opposite opinions, but what is required of the church is to stick to its message and calling. The church should carefully consider the ways in which it teaches about the use of the prophylactics and avoid joining the mass just because that is the way others see things. The prophylactics in themselves are not bad to be used but all depends on the motives of their uses. The church is against promiscuity.

In the next chapter I will focus on human dignity. The reason of the chapter is that God gives more value to human life. So the church should be engaged in valuing

human's life. As human beings, refugees would like to see that they are treated with respect and are valued. The chapter will point out what are the dues of all humankind, then those of refugees.

CHAPTER 5

HUMAN DIGNITY WITHIN THE REFUGEE PHENOMENON

5.1 Introduction

The choice of the phrase “human dignity” in this chapter of the thesis is based on the understanding of the Catholic Church that insists that ‘the dignity of the person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God’⁶⁴. Any human being that is created in the image and likeness of God has the dignity of a person. The bible declares that man and woman were created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1: 26-27), therefore all human beings including refugees have their human dignity. Kant⁶⁵ sees human dignity as being related to human agency, the capacity of humans to choose their own actions⁶⁶. It is only when Christians will see the image and the likeness of God in the refugees that they be moved to assist them to improve their situation in the host country in ways to have their dignity respected. Here are two illustrations of how refugees are concerned about their dignity.

There is an increasing concern among refugees, in Cape Town/South Africa, about the way women who give birth to values are treated. It is noticeable that many refugee women deliver through caesarean and that only few make it normally. People are becoming worried just because there is no proper explanation to this. What is happening to refugee women is calling in for serious investigation because some people are beginning to speculate on the country’s policy towards refugees. Refugee women should be treated in all situations with dignity as human being. Should they deliver by caesarean because that is the only possible way to save life, is not a problem; the main concern is if there might be any other reason to apply caesarean. There are cases when the caesarean is done successively, leading women to be much concerned about the next delivery.

⁶⁴ Human Dignity, available online on the website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_dignity

⁶⁵ Immanuel Kant is a philosopher of the Age of Enlightenment (17th and 18th centuries)

⁶⁶ Ibid

Here is a story of a lady among many others about delivering by caesarean. Her first delivery was achieved through caesarean. Two years later she went to deliver her second child. At the time she was in pain to deliver she was brought to the maternity ward and was told that she was to deliver that same night around 2:00 because the baby was only few centimetres away from the uterus way. When the supposed time was over, they injected her for induction and after a short while all the pains were gone. Thereafter she was told that the baby was weak and that caesarean was the best way to save the life of the baby, which she accepted because she wanted to have her baby alive. But after the caesarean she was very concerned because for her she could deliver normally (Interviewee B.4).

This is the experience of another lady of her later delivery. On December 21st, 2009 she was booked for induction to take place on December 24th, 2009. To avoid much pains of induction, she prayed asking God the grace to deliver before the date of appointment. On the same day pains started at night and she was admitted to the hospital and the test result showed that the baby was about six centimetres away from the uterus way but till the morning there was no change in centimetres. In the morning a man came to her and told her that she was to deliver only by caesarean which she opposed. The man told her that the machine has showed that there is no other way but caesarean, but she replied that that was the machine report and that God had not spoken so. After argument she accepted to sign the document refusing to deliver by caesarean and later the man left. Ten minutes after the man's departure she delivered normally and when the man came back he only wished her, "Well done, thank God" (Interviewee B.8 2011).

"The issue of caesarean in South Africa has been for a long debate". The issue is all about a culture shock because caesarean is normal for South Africans but at the same time it is badly perceived by foreigners especially by refugees. There are cases when women deliver normal while waiting for caesarean. We have on one hand those who find caesarean just as a way used to assist women deliver their babies and on the other hand those who are suspicious of the practice of caesarean (Interviewee B.9 2011).

For Interviewee B.20, to be a refugee has made her lose her country, friends, house, relatives, and especially her dignity. Local people are not even interested to know

who she really is. They call her Somali when she is a Rwandese. Some local people call her “Makwirikwiri” as if she is nobody who does not even have a name or a nationality. “My name is..., and I am from Rwanda and not from Somalia”, she told me. She is very concerned about her dignity and that of others living in the same conditions as refugees. She wants to see that being a refugee does not make anybody less human than others. “Being a refugee has damaged my identity, it seems as if I am no more who I really am”, she said (Interviewee B.20 2011).

5.2 Human Rights

Human rights can be understood as those rights that are to be attributed to any person as human being. Each and every man and woman created by God has to enjoy certain rights that are and should be shared by all the members of any given community. The respect of human rights depends on the establishment of justice. Justice works for the establishment and respect of human rights. Smedes explains all this as follows:

Justice exists where people’s rights are respected. Righteousness exists where people care for their neighbours and befriend them, concerned not merely that they get their due, but that their deepest personal needs are satisfied (1983: 30).

There is no boundary to the enjoyment of human rights. These rights are for all those who live on the globe. There are different constitutions, but human rights are the same for all. All human beings were created in the image of God and his likeness (Gn 1: 27). The image and the likeness of God is what are common in all of us. Citizens and non citizens are but to be treated in the same ways because they all partake in the image and likeness of the Creator. Actually it should be that the rights of the citizens are also the rights of the non citizens. Because of the fall, men are led by their sinful nature to the point that some do not see the same image and likeness of the Creator in others. This state of affaire leads to division, segregation and the like.

The problem of refugees is to be considered in the first time as a human right problem. Refugees are human beings whose rights have been violated and are just come to conditions in which they can enjoy them. Whenever people run from their

countries, others should see in them the very needs of seeing their rights respected. With this in mind, from governments' officials to common people, it becomes understandable why to welcome these foreigners and how to assist them. Refugees run for the protection of their lives (Interviewee A.18 2011).

Any country that stands for human rights respect is that where everyone living in it is granted his rights as human being. On one hand we have human rights and on the other rights that are provided by constitutions. Human rights are those rights according to the plan and purpose of God for all people, whereas constitutional rights are those rights according to the mind of human beings. The first are perfect because they concern all the people of the earth without any distinction or privilege. The second are imperfect because they divide and separate people on the basis of their citizenship and non citizenship.

For any person to enjoy his/her rights he/she must have the knowledge of his/her rights. Ignorance is very destructive because those who are ignorant are always exploited by other contrarily to their rights just because they do not know them. There are also people who are well aware of the rights of others but ignore them just because they don't meet their aspiration. There is a great need of both educating people for their rights and also educate those who are supposed to do justice to effectively implement it. People can easily be misled by own ignorance or by him/her who is not willing to do justice. In the two cases, the second case is more dangerous than the first. Speaking about the South African constitution Chaskalson⁶⁷, as quoted by Cameron (2005: 152) writes,

The constitution offers a vision of a future. A society in which there will be social justice and respect for human rights, a society in which the basic needs of all our people will be met, in which we will live together in harmony, showing respect and concern for one another. We are capable of realising this vision but in danger of not doing so. We seem temporarily to have lost our way. Too many of us are concerned about what we can get from the new

⁶⁷ Chaskalson, A. delivered the Bram Fischer Memorial Lecture, honouring a brave Afrikaner lawyer who allied himself (through the Communist Party) with the black majority's struggle for freedom and justice. Chaskalson was at that time chief justice.

society, too few with that is needed for the realization of the goals of the constitution. What is lacking is then energy, the commitment and the sense of community that was harnessed in the struggle for freedom.

Cameron's concern of social justice and respect of human rights calls for a great need of just people to implement them. Rights come before justice which is only called on to restore rights to the owners. In all the institutions of the world there is great need to have just people. Without them, i.e. with unjust people, rights will never be respected. In the book of Proverbs (29: 2) we read that, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn". The whole world is crying out for just people.

If the church does not play its role of 'salt' and 'light' of the world; the later will not fully experience real justice. Those who are 'salt' and 'light' are the righteous the world is looking for to implement justice. Refugees worldwide have rights that are not respected and there is need to have just people who can stand with them to claim such rights. Let us now listen to the words of Kanyandago, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike (1999: 177),

The phenomenon of refugees in Africa is a wound against Africa in particular and against humanity in general. Recognition of this common identity should inspire us to fight against all that dehumanises others. We do not exist as individuals only but share a common identity and destiny. Refugees and the displaced are brothers and sisters crying that their rights be respected, especially the right to belong to a nation. However much is done for them, as long as refugees remain strangers they miss something important which they need for the full restoration of their human dignity.

5.3 Refugees' Rights

The South African constitution grants specific rights to refugees living in the country. Here are just some of these rights that every recognised refugee and asylum seeker has to enjoy. "Recognised refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa have the right to have access to adequate housing, and right to equitable treatment in accessing

housing. They have the right to seek employment under the Refugees Act and the international conventions that South Africa has signed... This includes the right to self employment, and to enter into contracts and leases. The right to seek employment supports the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into local society, under the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2) of the constitution of South Africa.”⁶⁸

The Bill of Rights of the South African constitution states that “access to education is a basic human right of everybody. This means that refugees and asylum seeking children have the right to study in public government schools in South Africa and they cannot be sent away from schools if they cannot pay the school fees.”⁶⁹

“Protection provided under Chapter 2 of the constitution of South Africa of 1996 means the right to human dignity, the right to life, freedom and security of the person, freedom of religion, belief and opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of movement and residence, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom from torture, protection from abuse use of state power authority, the right to be considered as a person in front of the law and to have access to courts of law. According to the South African Bill of Rights and the Refugees Act, refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa are entitled to the same health care services that South African nationals are entitled to. This means that they have the right to receive the same health care services and pay the same fee as South Africans in similar social and economic circumstances”⁷⁰.

Because refugees are human beings they should share the same right with the citizens of the host countries. The main reason for people to leave their countries is to find a place that offers opportunities to keep together soul and body. “Life is the main reason that makes people to change their identity according to human languages” (Interviewee A.23 2011). None is born a refugee but one becomes a refugee due to some circumstances. The fact one runs from his/her country does not affected his/her humanity. All human persons have right to life without any discrimination or distinction. Timothy Backous and Graham are correct to say that,

⁶⁸ Refugee Rights, Information Booklet, Information for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Cape Town, Available online on the website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/>

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid

The first right of the human life is his life. He has other goods and some are more precious, but this one is fundamental – the condition of all the others. It does not belong to society, nor does it belong to public authority in any form to recognise this right for some and not for others: all discrimination is evil, whether it be founded on race, sex colour or religion. It is not recognition by another that constitutes this right. This right is antecedent to its recognition; it demands recognition and it is strictly to refuse it (1997: 254).

There is no refugee right, but only human rights. Refugees are not less human than the community that hosts them. Their rights are the same as those of the rest of the people of the host country. To speak about refugees' right is just to try to make it clear that people who are called refugees have their rights, and these rights are not different from those of the rest of the people of the world. This point is made because in some cases refugees are denied their rights or they do not enjoy their rights just because they are ignorant of them. There have been, from time to time, some cases when refugees are denied to open a bank account just because they do not have a green ID carte. This has been a nightmare for the refugees especially when they are asked to give their bank accounts at the working places.

This situation happened to me personally in 2010 when my account was frozen because I did not update the proof of residence. As I went to the bank they openly told me that my paper (Asylum Seeker Temporary Permit Section 22) did not qualify me to open a bank account. I had to go to UCT Law Clinic for help, and I was told that the issue was taken to the court and that many people were affected. Thank God because after the lawyer called the bank, he passed me the phone and I was asked questions to prove that it was really my bank account. After the questions and responses, it was established that it was my bank account. The person who talked with me sent me to my branch and gave me the name of the person I had to see to sort the situation out. I finally went to the bank branch and was served without any other conditions.

One thing that is noticeable is that some refugees don't have the needed information about their rights. In many cases people just get what is discussed and said on the streets. There are many speculations on the streets about what is and is not a right of

the refugees. An example is about the citizenship of a child born in South Africa from refugee parents. Many people are told and still think that their children have the South African nationality just because they are born here. There is not clear information about this issue and refugees are still confused. Every one is holding on what he/she knows and had been told.

Refugees should have right to proper information in connection with their situation to live responsible in the host countries. There is no proper information people get from reception centres and everyone learns from friends and relatives who are already in the country. It is very difficult for a new comer who has none to help him or her on his or her arrival to get right information. People are struggling to find out where to go and how to get assistance and it always takes time. Refugees should be informed from the reception centres about institutions and organisations that can assist them. It is unconceivable to see that there is no literature about refugees' rights even at the UCT Law Clinic (Interviewee A.9 2011).

What is happening at Cape Town Refugees Reception Centre requires the attention of good people to step in (Interviewee B.11 2011). Hygienically conditions are not good. The right of refugees to good sanitation is not respected and one can notice it once he/she visits the premises of the centre. On the 6th October 2011, we went to renew our papers. I was deeply concerned with my son's health when I took him to the toilet. I wished to have him help himself somewhere outside than in the toilet. I ended up keeping him in the toilet though within myself I was very worried. The other thing is that when the water was finished my son cried to drink water, but there was no tap to get it. People can stay for more than six hours in these conditions.

5.4 God and Human Dignity

In the book of Genesis we read a very wonderful story of creation (Gen. 1 & 2). Of all that God created, human beings are the only creation bearing the image and the likeness of the Creator. Therefore one can realise how much God values human beings. The dignity of the later comes from his Creator and not from any other creatures. We are called to value what God values. Life is to be lived according to the plan and purpose of the Creator. God values each and every individual regardless of

the place where one is or comes from. Citizens or non citizens are both valued by God.

For Kanyandago, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike (1999: 180) demands that, “After having affirmed the importance and dignity of the human person, it should be stated that a human being cannot exist in abstract. Human beings need certain material and social conditions to be able to realise their destiny”. On the same issue and in the same book Abbot, argues that,

God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus as men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis. Whatever the form of ownership may be, as adapted to the legitimate institutions of people according to diverse and changeable circumstances, attention must always be paid to the universal purpose for which created good are meant... If a person is in extreme necessity, he has the right to take from the riches of others what he himself needs (Ibid).

Here both Abbot and Kanyandago, the stress on human dignity is made on the provision of materials and social conditions to enable people reach their destiny. In other word as far as human dignity is concerned, people are to live their life according to the plan and provision of God. Refugees need material and social conditions to fulfil their destiny in the host country.

Some biblical depictions of God help to realise his concerns about humanity. God is depicted by Hinga, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike in the following ways: He created and continues to sustain His creations. ‘God guides the created order towards to a certain goal or climax in the future’. God is involved with human beings in an intimate way. He is stepping into history to affect change or to correct undesirable aspects of social historical circumstances (example of the Exodus)... He stepped into history in the person and work of Jesus Christ who understood his mission and purpose as God’s agent to effect social change (Ibid: 39-40).

God demonstrate his concern of human beings by sending Jesus in human form, to live among them and die for them. Jesus was always ready to help restore dignity of the marginalised of the community. He was very practical while showing his love; he healed the sick (Mt 15: 22-28), fed the hungry (Mt14: 13-21), taught (Mk 6:34) and comforted the afflicted (Jn 11: 17-37). Jesus death is a demonstration of his love for sinners (Jn 3: 16). Yeomans, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike, is correct to argue that,

In initial emergency situations it is clear that food, shelter, medical attention are major needs and must be met as soon as possible. That would seem obvious and simple. It is not. People who are starving, homeless, friendless so easily lose the sense of their human dignity. It is not enough to give them what they need. I must give in such a way that my giving restores their self-worth, their human dignity; in such a way that their hope and trust in humankind are re-kindled. This gives a whole new understanding of why Jesus insists so vehemently in word and gesture that he is the slave of all (Ibid: 179).

In chapter 2 there was the particular situation of Cain to illustrate the reality of refugees in the Bible. Cain was moved not only from the presence of God but also from the land where he was living to an unknown place. God who drove Cain out of the land did not expose him to destruction but revealed his great concern for the life of Cain. The deeds of Cain were the main concern of God, and still he valued the life of the fugitive. This is a good example to help church people to realise how they should value what God value the most, the human life. It came to pass that Cain expressed clearly his concern about his security and God responded by intervening with vengeance to anyone who would kill Cain and by setting a mark upon him. We read it in Genesis 4:13-16,

Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." But the LORD said to him, "Not so, if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who

finds him would kill him. So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod east of Eden.

Because God valued the life of the fugitive Cain he made a provision for its security. The mark that was set on Cain constituted a source of assurance of his safety wherever he was moving. All refugees, regardless of who they are or what have made them run, should be treated first of all as human beings who deserve to live. Their lives are and should be valuable to all who encounter them. Wherever people run for their lives there should always be condition to protect lives and the church should be first of all an agent to ensure the establishment of such conditions.

5.5 The church in Response to the Situation of Refugees

The church is a place of refuge where people can run to for help. It is established by God on earth to be the salt and the light of the world. It was very challenging to see how the church in South Africa responded to the needs of foreigners during the time of xenophobia in May 2008. The church was mobilised as one man to respond without any delay to the situation of the displaced by xenophobia. Some churches, like the Methodist Church of Wynberg, even opened their doors to host foreigners. I myself visited the Methodist Church of Wynberg and that of Salt River where people found their refuge. Food, clothes and other form of helps flooded these places. The church did not respond alone to the situation, but NGOs, business people and the government were all part and parcel of the solution to the crises.

The church' presence in the world is to represent God' kingdom and it is also to be used as instruments for the extension of the kingdom. Nürnberger's conception of Christians stands in this regard; "And we, God's people, are meant to be involved in God's sacrifice for others. We are God's representatives and the instruments of his creative and redemptive activity on behalf of this world" (2004: 167). As the church engages to assist refugees by addressing their situations, it becomes the visible representation of the activities of God in our broken world. The church in South Africa is yet to embrace refugees and minister to those affected with HIV/AIDS as demonstrate it during the time of xenophobia.

During the time of xenophobia in 2008, a refugee man told me that, together with his wife and his two sons, they fled from the location of Capricorn to Pineland where they found shelter at the Pineland Anglican Church for one month. He told me that they were given food and other needs were met as well. The church went further assisting them to get jobs at the same time (Interviewee A.4 2011). What a good example one can learn about the way this church handled the needs of the refugees. This is just one of the many forms of assistances to displaced people during that specific time of xenophobia.

Foreigners, just like us, have been created in the image of God and therefore have great dignity... Respect for foreigners begins with respecting their basic rights... As citizens, we have to be on guard lest the rights of foreigners in our country become a mockery. Our society should solidarity with foreigners and all other disadvantaged people, respecting the diversity of its members. As Christians, we have a duty to befriend foreigners and a responsibility to show them the love of God in Christ Jesus⁷¹.

The point to be made is to remind the church of its role in the life of the refugees as it responded during the time of xenophobia. Different denominations responded without hesitation to the situation of the people who were in a situation of threat. It is good to give food and clothing, but it is better if one can help the other to be self dependent. The church can assist refugees in finding jobs because some of them are educated and even have work experiences that can be used in the host countries.

Local churches play a crucial role in resettlement. Sometimes one church will take full responsibility for a family, but churches unable to make this kind of commitment can also help by supplying one or two of the many refugee needs: food for an initial period, housing, furniture, help with job hunting, language instruction, and other basics... Action by Churches Together (ACT) is a worldwide network of churches and their related agencies meeting human need through coordinated emergency response and common identity. The ACT network is organisationally based in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

⁷¹ Aliens, Strangers and the Gospel, available online on the website: www.intervarsity.org/ism/article/439

and the World Council of Churches (WCC) and it is a coordinating rather than operational office⁷².

The Church as the body of Christ is called to carry on the work of Jesus in the world. Jesus carried out his terrestrial ministry by identifying himself with the marginalized and cast outs and poor of the community. Therefore his body, the church, is to be on the side of those whose rights are violated by others. Commenting on the prohibition against killing, Luther, as quoted by William C. Spohn (1984: 9), writes,

Not only he who directly does evil breaks this commandment, but also he who unnecessarily omits a service to his neighbour which he might render by anticipating and restraining, and by protecting and rescuing his fellow man from bodily harm and suffering. The chief design of God is that we permit no injury to befall a person, but that we show to everyone all kindness and love.

Thank God for the presence in some places of the world of churches established by foreigners or mainly by refugees. Some of these churches are doing very wonderful jobs when it comes to dealing with refugee issues. There are churches that have opened their doors to shelter newcomers for couple of months before they can start on their own. Most of these churches do not have their own premises and are simply hiring a hall for their meetings. What they do is that people who newly come and do not have anywhere to go, are welcomed and can sleep in the hall and in the meantime try to find a job or somewhere to go. Once one finds a job, he is encouraged to leave and be independent to live outside of the hall. The hired hall serves at the same time as a place to worship God and to shelter those who have nowhere to go.

In Parow/Cape Town there is a church established by refugees/foreigners and the name of the church is Seraphim Church. The church is doing a good and wonderful job by welcoming newcomer refugees who do not have anywhere to stay. They are given chance to sleep in the same premise that is hired for church services for a couple of time. Once one finds a job and is able to pay the rent he/she is dismissed

⁷² The Plight of Displaced People, Available online on the website: gbgm-umc.org/umcor/refugees.stm

that others can also be accommodated. At the same time the church can assist these people as much as it can to meet their needs (Interviewee A.12 2011).

This is a good example that local churches should also follow. Most of local churches have premises which they can use to shelter newcomers for a period of time. What can be seen as a problem is just the willingness of these churches to open their doors to people they do not know, or simply because they are not too interested in the issues of refugees. If people who live as foreigners can achieve something like this how much more local churches can achieve it if they are willing to show love and interest in people who are desperate and do not have anywhere to go. The church is to be a welcoming church to all, members and strangers.

Local churches cannot only follow the example of the churches established by foreigners in welcoming refugees, but they should also assist or partner with them to fulfil the duty of love. What are needed in this case will be financial aids or goods such as food and clothing. They can also assist with information about jobs and employment and other kind of information according to the needs of the newcomers. Some local churches are also doing a good job as they teach English to newcomers for free. The demand is high and these churches only have limited places. Other churches should be encouraged to step in to assist newcomers as they struggle with their new life with a new language.

Through the initiative of expressing his love, God always takes the first step to reach out to people. Therefore he has established his church to be used as a vehicle to be used in demonstrating his love in the world (Johnson 1995: 9). I fully agree with Johnson as he further describes the church in these words;

God intends for his children to be world and kingdom citizens fully committed to his purpose in the world. A church is the most valuable resource God has in any community, state, or nation to minister to people. Government and social and humanitarian agencies cannot begin to match the power and resources the Lord can provide through his people who minister in his name (Ibid: 123).

God promised to bless Abram that he may be a blessing to the nations (Gn 12: 2-3). Whatever God entrusts to us is not only for ourselves but rather for us and for others. The church is blessed to be a blessing to the world. Now that refugees are part and parcel of the world, they are entitled to enjoy the support of the church. As a church we do not only exist for Christians, but for anyone who is created in the image and the likeness of God. About this Johnson writes,

God empowers us to minister with his resources according to his will. He allows us to be channels of mercy and minister to others. The Holy Spirit touches the lives of believers to show them the needs of humanity across the street and across the world. He wants us to bear the burden of love he has for those persons and to minister to them (Ibid: 99).

Many churches are not very concerned about what is happening about the situation of refugees. Only few churches can be mentioned to have been fully involved as they stand on the side of the refugees. One good example is the stance that was taken by the bishop of the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg. His stance was not that bad to be criticised, but what is lacking is the full implication of all the body of Christ to value what the bishop has initiated. If there is an influx of refugees, other churches should stretch their hands and open their doors to ease the burden of the bishop. The sad part of the story is to notice that the bishop was not fully backed by the body of Christ as if he was doing something of his own.

There are three requirements of the gospel from the biblical teaching on foreigner: watchfulness, clear mindedness and tolerance, and evangelism. First the church should play its role in encouraging governments to develop international relations founded on the principles of solidarity and equity. Second Christians should do to others what they would like them to do to them (Mt 7:12) because Christians know that ‘the hardest barriers to break down are not geographic, political, economical or cultural, but spiritual’; and that ‘even very just laws cannot in and of themselves

guarantee respect for the rights of foreigners'. Third Christians should share their lives and not just their words that foreigners may see that Jesus Christ is unique⁷³.

The church as a community of love should show its love to all people in need. Refugees are part and parcel of the people to whom the church can extend its hands of love. The church should be present both in words and deeds. It has to make sure that all the social, human, economic and political barriers are removed to allow all people to enjoy the gift of life. This is how the church can show its love to foreigners (in our case to refugees),

Loving foreigners as ourselves, then, means coming to their aid when they are in need. More generally, it means having a loving attitude towards them, overcoming the prejudices held against them, taking the initiative in making contact, as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman, so as to break through the wall of silence between us. Loving foreigners also means realizing they are qualities, as Jesus did with the Samaritan who was the only one of ten healed lepers to show his gratitude (Lk 17:11-19). Loving foreigners sometimes means accepting that we are going to be rejected, without wanting to get our own back, as Jesus pointed out to his angry disciples when they were not welcomed in a Samaritan village (Lk 9:51-56)⁷⁴.

The way UMCOR Refugee Ministry handle the issues of Refugees/Immigration through its programs is something to be encouraged within the body of Christ. "Through UMCOR's Refugees/Immigration programs, congregations that reach out to refugees and immigrants in a spirit of welcome and sharing find their lives enriched and their understanding of the world broadened. They gain a deeper insight into the biblical command, 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it' (Heb 13: 2)"⁷⁵.

⁷³ Aliens, Strangers and the Gospel, available online on the website: www.intervarsity.org/ism/article/439

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ UMCOR Refugees/Immigration, Available online on the website: gbgm-umc.org/umcor/refugees.stm

Preliminary Conclusion

By way of conclusion, this chapter is about the rights of refugees as human beings. People are not refugees first, but humans. One is not born a refugee but one becomes a refugee. To become a refugee is both a matter of choice and of force depending on circumstances. Some people are forced to leave their countries because the threat upon their lives is too high while others chose to leave their countries because they do not want to see a danger upon their life in times to come. But still both groups should be treated equally as human beings enjoying human rights.

Countries have their particular constitutional rights they grant to refugees, but it should be reminded that refugees are and will never be less humans than any local citizens. Above all God values the rights of all people he created in his image. Being refugees or non refugees does not matter to God, but only life matters. The dignity of refugees should be respected wherever they go and live. Refugees should be treated with dignity as God treats them with dignity.

There are some kinds of abuses that are committed towards refugees and which need to be addressed by the church in order to restore the dignity of refugees. The church should start to take seriously the dignity of refugees from within its midst before it can impact on the nation.

All the refugees should enjoy their human rights. None can claim his or her rights unless he or she has knowledge of them. How can refugees know their rights if there is none to tell them. As long as refugees are ignorant or are kept ignorant of their rights, they will never fully enjoy their human rights and their identities will be affected as well. This also requires that their rights are respected.

The next chapter will consider the challenge that the situations of refugees have on the church. It focuses on the ways the church can be involved in meeting the needs of refugees especially by following the example of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 6

REFUGEES' SITUATION AS A MISSION CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

6.1 Introduction

Those who have captured the heartbeat of the Master and whose hearts beat with his love and justice are people who determine the destiny of our world. There are in history men and women who have given themselves to transfer the character of the Master from one generation to another (Grigg 1984: 67). The church's mission does not deny its involvement in working for better conditions of lives of refugees. The church is to listen to its Lord's concerns about the whole of creation. Grigg rightly understands it in these words,

This involves going back to the scriptures to find a discipleship that brought together all of life – social, economic, political, spiritual – under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, a discipleship that dealt with today's injustices (Ibid: 69).

The presence of refugees in the country is a serious challenge to the church. When people suffer there is much possibility to join any one who offers help. This is happening in the City of Cape Town where some Congolese have joined Islam just because they are proposed jobs and employments. Because they have no other choice, they simply accept the offer to join Islam and only then they may get jobs. What can be said here is that if the church is not much involved in helping refugees to be self sufficient then others will take over doing what the church has failed to do. The church should side with the needy as the Lord Jesus was during his earthly mission. There is a great need to see the church assisting refugees to meet their basic needs and to become self sufficient.

6.2 Assessing the Situation

The situations of the refugees who enter different host countries are not the same. Refugees go through different experiences on their way to countries of refuge leading to the loss of materials and even to the loss of human lives. Not all refugees need to

be assisted on their arrivals in the same way, but there are different realities calling for different responses. Some people enter countries after very long and perilous journeys when others only fly into the countries. To the first group much attention is needed than to the second. Some refugees enter countries in a very good health situation, when others are not in good health. Much attention should be given to the second rather than to the first.

It is only after the right knowledge of the situations of the refugees that a proper intervention can be offered by those in position to help (Interviewee A.2 2011). Sometimes what is written down in the countries' constitutions are not exactly what is taking place at the different refugee reception centres. In some instances there might be cases of corruption or mistreatment and refugees have no word because all they need first is to get their documents. There are cases when women and children suffer the most to get into the centres when people are too many to be attended to normally. Sometimes people who are at the centres especially children do not have food or water because it takes almost the whole day to be at the centres until one gets his or her paper.

Because the situation of the refugees is not the same, some refugees do not have any problem with getting food which they can buy right outside the centres. At the same time there are miserable and hungry refugees who are not able to buy anything for themselves or their children. This is a very sad experience to go through. I can remember at the time the Refugee Reception Centre of Cape Town was still in the location of Nyanga. After people have paid for transport some would not be able to spend any more money for food. At that time there were two groups of churches who were coming once per week to give food and drink free of charge to those who were in need. It is believed that these churches knew something of what was taking place at the centre before they got involved in feeding people.

The situation at different refugee reception centres should be assessed in order to get a real picture of what is going on. From own experience I will like to relate what was happening at some extent at the refugee reception centre in Cape Town when it was located in the township of Nyanga. There came a time when people were sleeping outside the centre or wake up early in the morning (around 1:00 a.m.), and children

were not spared, in order to be attended to first. I remember going to the centre at 2:00 a.m. with my wife and son. Despite going there at such a time we were not served and unfortunately someone also stole my wallet. During that time people spent nights at the centre and many lost their goods. The situation created a climate where corruption was one of the means to get in the building of the centre. In short there was a real chaos at the centre and none cared. I personally had my papers not renewed for couple of months. The situation was common to many and thanks to UCT Law Clinic people got helped in the process of time.

This point is added to this chapter also to give some suggestions that will help in the identification of the real situation of anyone living on the antiretroviral drugs in order to see if only there is an urgent need of assistance or not. In fact, not all refugees can afford to have proper feeding or are to be assisted, but only those who cannot afford it can be assisted as much as possible. Once the situation has been assessed, some actions will be directed in providing food help and any other form of assistance that is directly connected with the needs to improve the conditions of life of the patient.

The reason to assess the situation of the refugees is explained by the fact that we value them as we value our own humanity. It is very difficult to intervene in any situation if we are not aware of what is exactly going on. As we assess, we become more aware of the situation of the other human being and find out the quality of help that is needed. Appreciating the gift of life, Timothy Backous and Graham (1997: 266) write, "Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good".

To assess the situation is a process through which we try to get a picture of refugees' or refugee patient's situation. This process is to lead to exploring all the available sources that will lead to the understanding of the financial situation or other forms of situations of refugees or of the patient. At this point I will suggest three sources that may help us assess the situation of a patient to see if there is need of support or not. The first source should be that of all the information delivered at the reception centre by the client, the second source is to be obtained from dialogues with the patient and the third source is that of people who are related or are close to the refugee/patients.

6.3 The Example of Jesus

In his book, 'Jesus and the Marginalised in John's Gospel', Karris (1990: 22-32) speaks of 'Alms to the poor' and points out to the following: First the money of Jesus and his Disciples is for almsgiving for the poor (Jn 12: 5-6); Secondly, Jesus and his Disciples use their money for almsgiving to care for the poor (Jn 13: 29); And thirdly, the money of Jesus and his Disciples is used to supply for the needs of others (Jn 6: 5-8). James M. Childs describes the ministry of Jesus in these words,

There are points in his ministry that demonstrate Jesus' identification of his person and his work with prophetic expectations for the reign of God. Those expectations included the triumph of life over death, the healing of infirmities, good news for the poor, and the end of oppression (Mt 11: 4-5; Luke 4: 17-21). Jesus' works of healing, his empathy for those on the margins of society, his ability to face down the temptations of evil, his outreach to all sorts and conditions of people, and finally his conquest over death all point to him as the one who fulfils the prophetic hope (2000: 13).

The church has its Master to whom it is looking to imitate the way of a good life. Jesus came to live on the earth to show us the way of life according to the will and purpose of the Creator. The church has to walk in footprints of its Lord who humbled himself by coming in this world lived on the side of the needy. He always considered human life in its totality. He once taught the multitude and when they were hungry he recommended his disciple not to send home the multitude, but to give them something to eat (Mt 14: 16). The Lord Jesus provided at this circumstance both the spiritual food and the physical food because there was need of doing so. As the church of Jesus Christ we are to act and consider what Miranda, as quoted by Karris (1990: 108) has to say,

Remember, though, that Jesus' miracles were not simply what we call 'good deeds'; they were messianic 'good works.' They implied the terrifying revolutionary thesis that this world of contempt and oppression can be changed into a world of complete selflessness and unrestricted mutual assistance. Jesus created an intolerable situation; his behaviour and his words

were a constant good to the 'world'; they inescapably demanded a collective decision.

6.4 Both the Drugs and Food

The antiretroviral drugs are given free of charge to any one who is tested HIV positive after being tested by his/her own consent. In South Africa both citizens and non citizens are entitled to get these drugs for free. But it is a concern that refugees cannot have access to social grant which can only be provided to citizens. It will not be enough to give the drugs if one is not able to have proper feeding. If what is most expensive (drugs) is freely delivered, it is much easier to provide with the feeding that must correspond to the need of the patient. "There is need of a collective response to the needs of people who are on the antiretroviral drugs" (Interviewee A.6 2011).

There are couple of NGOs which are assisting refugees in the city of Cape Town and one of them is the Cape Town Refugee Centre. According to Henda the organization is sponsored by the department of Social Development and the UNHCR. The organisation assists refugees with food, shelter, facilitate skills training and other forms of assistance to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers. But the organization has no policy to help/assist refugees who are HIV positive and are taking antiretroviral drugs (Interviewee B.5 2011).

"Most people who die of HIV/AIDS die of malnutrition. Many studies have shown that HIV-infected patients who are malnourished are likely to get sick more often, and have lower survival rates than other HIV positive persons who are well nourished. With the lack of adequate and balanced diets that characterises poor-resources settings like sub-Saharan Africa, many people living with HIV/AIDS die earlier than those living elsewhere. Researchers have reported that those with the virus who do not have adequate, hygienically prepared food may only live two years with full-blown AIDS. The causes of malnutrition include poor food intake and poor absorption by the body, while the consequences of malnutrition are mainly weight loss and the rapid progression of HIV infection to AIDS" (Mombe 2004: 119-20).

Nutrition plays a major role in promoting the health of the patient. Generally nutrition is important for both the healthy and the ill persons. The question that one may ask should be to know if those who are HIV positives and especially those who are taking the drugs are able to have the needed food. Patients are more in need of good nutrition than those in good health. A HIV infected person faces two problems in connection of his or her nutrition: the first is that of being sick and the second is that of being on medications. Any body needs a good nutrition and above all a sick person needs better nutrition. Mombe also argues,

We stress that an HIV/AIDS patient must eat more than normal, and must eat balanced diet that will help strengthen his or her immune system. Nutrient deficiencies are common in HIV infected people. It is also important to adapt the diet to the state of the patient. Nutritional care and support is perhaps the most significant way in Africa can express our solidarity to those who are infected. African governments must give special attention to this area of managing and treating HIV/AIDS (Ibid: 135).

About the drug, the inspiration has mainly been drawn from the South African policy of free distribution of antiretroviral. The drugs are costly and some governments, like that of South Africa, have come up with policies to give free the drugs. Refugees who live in South Africa can also get the drugs free of charge. “Some refugees and asylum seekers with AIDS are eligible for anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment. Refugees who fit the medical criteria for ARV have the right to access ARV medications free of charge through the South African government ARV programme.”⁷⁶

6.5 The Mission Challenge

According to Mills, as quoted by Ephick & Davenport (1997: 337), “Religion, and specially Christianity, is often portrayed as a tool of the dominant classes. Yet religion has helped shape the political ideas and the behaviour of most groups and classes in South Africa in ways that are more complex, contradictory, and changing than this portrayal suggests”.

⁷⁶ HIV/AIDS Information for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Available on line on the website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/>

The church is supposed to both teach and encourage members to stretch their hands out to meet the needs of others as much as they can. “When all else fails, when we’ve done what we can, we still have this essential reassurance to offer one another. It comes as each of us moves beyond attachment to separateness into a greater sense of Unity. ‘To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between Self and Other’ (Dass & Gorman 1985: 50). The church’s teaching and deeds should help remove all kinds of barriers that impede people from acting for the sake of those in need.

According to Kretzschmar, Bentley and Niekerk (2009: 94, 175) the church is called to join hands with the civil society and government to take action on issues that affect our societies. In the fight against HIV/AIDS, churches, doctors, the TAC (Treatment Action Campaign) and many others, have combined to fight the disease. South Africans (and members of other nations) need to speak up against corrupt leaders and expose whatever is evil. The church can work on its own or together with other organizations and governments to assist people in need.

Christians can learn ways to care for those in need as they work hand in hand with the non Christians. The church can learn to speak the truth to those in position of power only when it stands alongside those in need (Morisy 1997: 80). The church is to listen to the cries of the needy and engage to work with those outside of its borders in order to speak on the behalf of the needy. The church should be the voice of the voiceless for the implementation of their rights. Kanyandago, as quoted by Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike (1999: 178-9), is right to write,

A Christian answer to the refugee problem should be integral. It should take into account all the needs of the human person. The African Church could help to co-ordinate the efforts of all those trying to restore the humanity of the wounded brothers and sisters. In this regard, refugees are often excluded from participating in looking for and proposing solutions to their problems, as if by displacement they lose their capacity to assume their own destiny.

The church is still to play a major role in the situation of refugees in the host country like Joseph played his for the people of Israel in Egypt. Joseph acknowledged that

God placed him in that position not for himself but for others. The church is always in the position of power because it gets its mandate from God. The church's strategic position in the world is definitely for others as it was the case of Joseph. The Israelites became settled in Egypt under the position of Joseph who was promoted by God through the king of Egypt. About the situation of the Israelites Birch writes,

Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and granted them a holding in the land of Egypt, in the best part of the land. From sojourners whose sole security was reliance on God's promise, Israel's ancestors now become dwellers reliant for security on their own landholding and the powerful position of Joseph (1991: 113).

The church is to carry on with the mission of its Master who set up an example to be followed by all who are his true disciples. The mission of Jesus was both in words and in deeds. He came and showed the true meaning of being a human. The church does exist in and for the world. The church is on a mission that can only be understood as we focus on the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church's Lord is a triumph Lord who conquered evil; therefore the church is to be the anticipation of the triumph of the kingdom of God. Thus I agree with James M. Childs, who writes,

When Christians uphold the sanctity of life against all that threatens it, they anticipate the triumph of life in the reign of God. When Christians not only visit the sick and comfort the suffering, but also seek to alleviate hunger and actively pursue health care for all, they bear witness to the health and wholeness of God's final future foreshadowed in Jesus' works of healing. When Christians identify with the poor and oppose all forms of oppression, they anticipate the shalom of God's rule where our final freedom from sin dissolves all oppression in the perfect freedom of life with God (2000: 13-14).

Whatever is happening in our world and is dehumanising should be the very concern of the church. Even most of the issues that lead to the displacement of people who now seek for asylum should be seriously addressed by the church. The church should be able to address the issues of conflicts causing civil wars, issues of dictatorship,

issues of liberty of religion and the like. There is no issue that should escape the full involvement of the church. Whatever is taking place in this world is directly to be seen as a challenge to the church. Because some people feel forced to leave their countries on the basis of their sexual feelings, such as the cases of homosexuals, the church can still play a role to make sure that people are not mistreated on basis of their feelings. The church can even assist the government to finding proper ways to deal with such difficult issues to avoid any situation that constrains people to move.

All that happens around us should be understood as God's ways to get our attention. If only the church could open the ears and eyes it could both hear and see God calling for direct involvement. Whatever happens around us, like the situation of refugees, should be interpreted in relation to God's great concern about his creation. The church should sometimes slow down its activities and get more practical by addressing all the rising issues of our world. Wenham⁷⁷, as quoted by Eareckson & Estes (1978: 74) writes,

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a death world. We would have gone comfortably right through our lives, scarcely giving Him or our eternal destiny a passing thought – until we got there. And God mercifully puts pain and suffering in front of us as a blockade on the road to Hell.

When people are desperate or are living under some conditions of suffering it is easier to get them by reaching out to them. "Actions will always speak louder than words" because how can a hungry stomach listen to mere words when he or she is expecting to get first something to eat (Interviewee A.1 2011). As the church starts assisting refugees, it opens big doors to reaching out to them with the word of God.

The church is to make all nations the disciples of the Lord Jesus according to the mission that is assigned to it. People who come as refugees in the country are a fertile ground for evangelism. Refugees do not only come in the country as people who need human protection, but they are first of all in need of the protection of their Creator.

⁷⁷ John W. Wenham, *The Goodness of God* (Downers Grove: Inter-varsity Press, 1974), p. 56.

The church should create opportunities to allow refugees to find refuge in the Lord Jesus. In this regard the words of Nürnberger (2004:178-179) find their meaning,

In the proclamation of Jesus, God's expectation is no longer seen as Israelite's side of the Mosaic covenant, but as a manifestation of the kingdom of God in us and among us. The kingdom of God is God's redemptive vision for the world. This vision envisages the comprehensive wellbeing of God's creation. And because God's aim is comprehensive wellbeing, any deficiency in wellbeing, and kind of suffering in any aspect of life, is a cause of concern for God. Anticipating and enacting the kingdom, Jesus deals with the needs of the people as they come... And Jesus sends out his disciples to do the same (compare Mt 9:35f with Mt 10:1).

The challenge mission of the church is to carry on with the vision Jesus had in the world. As people come to the country, the church should avail itself to respond to all the needs especially to those of the refugees. According to Nürnberger there is no aspect of life where Christians cannot address. The situation of refugees is just one of the many people who come and need to be assisted. The church has received its capacity to act from the mandate it receives from the king of the kingdom who is Jesus Christ. The church is sent in the world to carry on its mission to preach good news (Mark 16:15). Preaching includes both words and deeds.

Preliminary Conclusion

This chapter is to show how the situations of refugees are a challenge to the way the church carries out its mission in the world. Everything should start with the assessment of the situations of the refugees in the host countries. The church should be in touch with refugees and government institutions and any organisation dealing with refugees to find out what really is going on before it can come up with any kind of solutions.

The church should understand the situations of refugees as God's call for its attention and actions. As the church becomes involved with refugees, it becomes much easier

to reach out to them with the good news of the kingdom of God. The church is called to proclaim and to act.

In cases of HIV/AIDS, the same kinds of assessment should be carried out by the church that the finding can help implement proper ways of intervention by the church. The church should be on the side of the refugees who are HIV positive to ensure that bodies and souls are kept together. The church should follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in its mission among refugees. The church should ensure that people who qualify to have the antiretroviral, both gets the drugs and have proper food. Above all a serious assessment should be considered before taking any action. The church is still on its mission and what is needed is a more commitment to the situations of refugees and it is true that something is already taking place.

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL CONCLUSION

7.1 Observations and suggestions

This study was conducted in order to investigate the socio-economic situation of the refugees, especially those who are HIV positive, in the host country and its impact on the issues of HIV/AIDS. It was also to find out ways in which the church can play its role to assist refugees in order to fulfil one of its missions.

The church can play a major role in assisting refugees and in pleading their cause to individuals, organizations and to the South African Government which can come on board to support provide proper feeding of the refugee patients who are on the antiretroviral drugs after their situations have been carefully assessed. The church can also play its advocacy role in agitating the UNHCR and governments to help improve the conditions of refugees.

The phenomenon of refugees is not new on our globe and the Bible tells many wonderful stories of people running for their lives. God recommended the building of cities of refuge for people to run into for their lives. The situation of refugees is to be for great concern for all people of the globe. There are different realities connected to refugees. In host countries, refugees face new challenges that can impact on themselves or on local people. Refugees have different backgrounds, experiences and stories to tell that need to be exploited as they are getting assisted.

The arrival of refugees can be at the same time a blessing and a curse to the communities of host countries. Everything depends on how the needs of the local people are addressed in first time or not. Whenever local people start realising that they are not taken care of by their governments, they will start developing hatred towards refugees as it was the case of South Africa in 2008. Therefore local people needs should be addressed in ways to help harmonise relationship between the two groups especially if they are to live side by side.

When people move to become refugees they move with their skills and gifts that can be used to produce something good. Within the church, refugees' gifts can be used for the blessing of the church community. Some refugees can even be called in church ministries and perform. Refugees can also be a blessing to the social life of local people as they bring in initiatives and work with NGOs. They can play a certain role in the economic life of the host countries as they work or initiate their own business.

People may be vulnerable because some run without even knowing where they are going and how they are getting there. On the run journey anything can happen even leading to the loss of life. They are different needs that should be addressed by host countries' governments together with organisations and the UNHCR. One way of dealing with these different issues is to establish some support teams to assist in case the situations need intervention. One of the support teams is the medical team. Some realities can be unfolded just during the interview as one tells his/her story while others should need the implication of competent people.

Lot of things are happening in our world today. One of the major concerns of world leaders is the issue of HIV/AIDS. A lot has already been written and done, and is still being written and done in our days about HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS is a world challenge and an invitation to all to do something about it. The main concern about HIV/AIDS is to find means to contain the spread of the infection of HIV and to assist people who are already infected and those who are affected directly. Every human has the duty and responsibility to act in our common efforts to combat the spread of the virus and assist infected and directly affected people by the virus. The situations of refugees can have negative impacts on the spread of HIV if they are not dealt with seriously.

All refugees are human beings and must enjoy all the rights that any human being is entitled to enjoy. The rights of refugees must be respected and refugees should know what their rights in host countries are. The world needs to have just people who can grant to refugees their rights. Justice works to establish rights. Justice is called on so that people get their rights. It is very important to make sure that in all the institutions that are to deal with refugees there are just people who implement justice by granting to refugees what belong to them.

The church is placed in our world for a reason. It is to show to the world the right way of living a life according to the plan and purpose of God. The church should be involved in any organization that stands for promoting justice. Scripture disclose that Christians are called just (Heb 10:38). They are called to respect and make respect the rights of all. It is arguable that Christians should be part and parcel of human rights organisations and institutions to ensure that justice is implemented. The church is to speak on the behalf of the people who are or have become voiceless to have their concerns heard by those in power of execution.

God values all human lives. Anyone who is created by God has his image and his likeness. The gift of God is life. He wants people to live and calls all to respect life in all its integrity. Refugees do not become less human than others just because they have left their countries of origin. The presence of refugees in the world must be well understood for people to have right reactions and avoid rejection. Whenever we see refugee we must see the image of God in them. They are people like anyone in search of a place to keep their bodies and souls together. Because refugees are human beings like all other people they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

7.2 Findings

The phenomenon of refugees is real and needs the world community's attention. Refugees are to be classified among the vulnerable people of the globe and their vulnerability can be an open door to the spread of HIV/AIDS and needs serious considerations.

The church has been assisting the marginalised of the community and has made considerable impact in the transformation of human life. Among the people the church has been assisting are strangers and refugees are but strangers.

A refugee patient experiences different needs that are physical, educational, informational, material... Five support groups are suggested to meet these needs: medical team, family and friends, neighbours, church, and organizations and governments. These groups should work hand in hand without any exclusion for the total wellbeing of the patient. Each one of the five support groups can play a

particular role in meeting specific need of the patients. The point here is that patient's needs should be identified and met through support groups.

Nutrition plays an important role for the health of any human being. Healthy and sick people all need good nutrition to kept their bodies in good health. Mostly sick persons have great need of good nutrition to help their bodies fight against body attacks. Refugees can be assisted with food especially when they are HIV positives or on the antiretroviral drugs. Some refugees can afford to have good nutrition while others cannot. What is needed here is a proper assessment of the situation of the refugees before any action is taken. From information delivered at the reception centres to special contacts and dialogues with the patients decisions can be made up to assist patients who are truly vulnerable.

The Bible teaches us that prayer can bring healing and that God can prolong life and bring spiritual restoration. The Bible also teaches us that we should take medicine and supplements that can add value to our bodies and give us better life to enjoy and serve him as it is the case of Timothy (1Tm 5: 23). Christians are by implication called to both pray and help create healthy conditions for the body.

7.3 Recommendations

There is a need to assess both the situation at the reception centres and at the established camps. An assessment should be made first to establish the needs in order to take proper actions. The church should play a role as it involves directly in the situation of the refugees. The church should therefore avail itself to assess what is going on at reception centres and within established camps or the situation of particular individuals especial those infected by the virus. The assessment will help the church to set proper ways to address whatever reality needs to be addressed and which affects refugees.

The church should be a challenge to governments and to national and international aid organizations. The church should live by example. The church should try to create some conditions that can help refugees to cope with the new life as they arrive in the countries, and once there is visibility of what the church is doing, it will be much

easier for the church to influence governments and other organizations to come on board. It will be difficult for the church to simply raise the issues of refugees when it is passive to the cause of refugees. Here stands the saying, “actions speak louder than words”. The church should initiate projects to respond to the needs of refugees.

When refugees come in the host countries there should be need of information and education about the issues of HIV/AIDS. There should also be established structures to encourage people to get tested to help them discover their HIV status. That will help people to act as soon as possible and behave responsibly. For Cameron,

AIDS is above all a remediable adversity. Our living and our life forces are stronger; our capacity for wholeness as humans is larger, than the individual effects of the virus. Africa seeks healing. That healing lies within the power of our own actions. In inviting us to deal with the losses it has already inflicted, and, more importantly to action in enjoining us to avoid future losses that our own capacity to action make unnecessary, AIDS beckons us to fullness and power of our own humanity. It is not an invitation that we should avoid or refuse (2005: 214-5).

What is needed in all these is that conditions must be created to help people behave in ways to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. People should be assisted from the time they enter the host countries to create great possibilities to contain the spread of the infection of HIV. Most of the basic needs should be met to avoid that people misbehave and to help stop the spread of the virus. There should be established structures in host countries to welcome and support newcomers as they enter the countries.

The church should be involved in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. The church must contribute to this fight by spreading the message within and outside itself. A church is one of the best places where propagation is much easier. There are many churches of refugees in places like South Africa, and the church leadership only needs to be conscious of their mission to start speaking out about the issue of HIV/AIDS. The church should give correct information and contribute to the

education of its members and of those of its community. The church should also assist with counselling where it is needed.

As for people who are tested HIV positive, the church should play a major role in assisting the patients. The church can be there for encouragements, financial assistance, food parcels, clothing and healing. The church should speak to governments and to the UNHCR that the situation of refugees are addressed especially that of those on the antiretroviral drugs. The church should work in its capacities to ensure that people are tested and those who test HIV positive be given the medications and that they have good nutrition.

The AIDS pandemic can be countered only if it is fought on all fronts – which includes the church and all other religious institutions being willing to preach publicly about behaviour change and to become actively involved in caring for sick and orphaned people. If they fail to do this, their failure will probably become one of the greatest failures of organised religion ever witnessed. If religious institutions fail us in this crisis, they will forever compromise their credibility and their relevance and role in society (Dyk 2005: 256).

The church should assist governments and the UNHCR in their responsibilities to address the issues of refugees to ensure that they are treated in ways that are human and that they know their rights and that their rights are respected by the authorities in the host countries. The church should intervene wherever people rights are not respected, and expose and act to combat any form of mistreatments of refugees because they are human beings. Practically the church should have structures and projects that assist refugees. The church should build shelters to receive newcomers before they become independent especially those who have nowhere to go.

Pastor Smallbones describes the church as the “salt and light” of the world. Renewed church members have in their hearts the salt and light to influence changes and preserve against the world decay. The church needs to change social justice in our world which is in darkness and in a state of decay. With a renewed church people have renewed hearts. The church is a lighthouse and salt was mostly used for

preservative against decay. The impact of light is in darkness and that of salt is in decay. To the church are attached the realities of light and salt and to the world are attached darkness and decay. The church has two main reasons to exist in this world: to influence changes and to preserve against decay (Interviewee A.26 2011).

For a true assistance of refugees to improve their situations in the host countries, the church should make sure that refugees are part and parcel of any organization that is to deal with them. To treat refugees with dignity should be done by incorporating refugees in all that is a concern about them. Refugees should not to be passive recipients of any service because only refugees know and understand what the true needs of refugees are. Non refugee people should only assist refugees to deal with their own situations as much as they can and not try to do things for refugees as if they were kids who need to see things done for them by grown up. The church should assist refugees to improve their conditions and especially the church should ensure that refugees become fully implied in the fulfilment of their destiny.

APPENDIX
INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE

These open-ended and closed questions are to serve as the interviewer's guide to collect information efficiently by the interview method. The procedure will take the form of individual, face to face, verbal interchange. The responses will be documented in handwriting notes or set down on tape-recorder.

Title

**THE AGENCY OF THE CHURCH IN HIV/AIDS AMONG REFUGEES IN
RELATION TO THE HOST COUNTRY**

SECTION 1

Identification of the Interviewee

Identification

1. Name of the interviewee.....
2. Sex.....
3. Age.....
4. Marital Status.....
5. Educational Attainment.....
6. Occupation.....
7. Name of the Church or Organization.....
8. Position held in Church or Organization.....
9. Nationality.....
10. Identification Document.....

SECTION 2

Introductory Phase: Background of the Refugees

11. Why did you leave your country?
12. How did you travel to come to South Africa?
13. Do you have relatives in South Africa?

14. Who do you think is a genuine refugee?
15. How do you feel to live as a refugee?
16. What do you do to make your living?
17. How many people do live with you?

SECTION 3

Working Phase: Refugees' Situations in the Host Country

a) Refugees' Realities

18. What is your experience as a refugee in South Africa?
19. What was your experience when you entered South Africa?
20. What were your expectations when coming to South Africa?
21. Who assisted you on your arrival in the country?
22. How did you manage to go to Cape Town Refugee Reception Centre?
23. How many organizations do you know that assist refugees?
24. What are the challenges you face as a refugee in South Africa?
25. According to you what can be the connection between the situations of refugees and the spread of HIV?
26. Is your husband/wife working?

b) Refugees and HIV/AIDS

27. What do you know about HIV/Aids?
28. What is your opinion about the use of condoms in the fight against the spread of HIV?
29. Have you ever tested for HIV?
30. How is your attitude towards people living with HIV?
31. What do you know about the antiretroviral and the South African policy about the drugs?

c) Refugees and church

32. Does your church teach about HIV/AIDS?
33. Does your church have programme about HIV/AIDS?
34. What do you know about the prevention against HIV?

35. What is your church position concerning the use of condoms in the fight against the spread of HIV?
36. What do you think the church can do to assist refugees to improve their situations?
37. Does your church have refugees involved in ministry?

d) Organizations dealing with Refugees

38. What is the origin of your organization?
39. How many staff members do you have?
40. What was the purpose of establishing the organization?
41. What kind of assistances/services do you offer?
42. Who sponsor the organization
43. Who is qualified to get assistances/services
44. Do you come across situations whereby people disclose they are HIV positive in need of some assistance?
45. Do you have any policy to help/assist people who are taking the antiretroviral?
46. If yes, what is it?
47. How do you contribute to the fight against the spread of HIV as an organization dealing with refugees?
48. What kind of difficulties do you encounter?
49. Are refugees entitled to getting social grants from the government?

SECTION 4

Terminal Phase

50. I have learnt what your understanding of the realities of refugees in the host country, your understanding of the issues of HIV/AIDS and your understanding of the roles of the church are. Thank you very much for giving the time to consider the questions.

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Interviewee A.5, Cape Town
Interviewee A.6, Cape Town
Interviewee A.7, Cape Town
Interviewee A.8, Cape Town
Interviewee A.9, Pastor, Cape Town
Interviewee A.10, Cape Town
Interviewee A.11, Cape Town
Interviewee A.12, Reverend, Cape Town
Interviewee A.13, Cape Town
Interviewee A.14, Pastor, Cape Town
Interviewee A.15, Cape Town
Interviewee A.16, Cape Town
Interviewee A.17, Pastor, Cape Town
Interviewee A.18, Pastor, Cape Town
Interviewee A.19, Cape Town
Interviewee A.20, Cape Town
Interviewee A.21, Cape Town
Interviewee A.22, Cape Town
Interviewee A.23, Cape Town
Interviewee A.24, Cape Town
Interviewee A.25, Cape Town
Interviewee A.25 Mr. Peter Smallbones, Reverend, Cape Town

B. Women

Interviewee B.1, Cape Town
Interviewee B.2, Cape Town
Interviewee B.3, Cape Town
Interviewee B.4, Cape Town
Interviewee B.5 Mrs. Henda Christina, Cape Town
Interviewee B.6, Cape Town
Interviewee B.7, Cape Town
Interviewee B.8, Cape Town
Interviewee B.9, Cape Town

⁷⁸ The information collected from the people listed here was given at various stage of research and has been used through different chapters.

Interviewee B.10, Cape Town
Interviewee B.11, Cape Town
Interviewee B.12, Cape Town
Interviewee B.13, Cape Town
Interviewee B.14, Cape Town
Interviewee B.15, Cape Town
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