



**The Contribution of Preaching for the Betterment of the Standard of Living of the Poor
in the District of Fandriana- Madagascar.**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates on the contribution of preaching to the betterment of the socio-economic lives of the poor in the district of Fandriana-Madagascar. Bevans' anthropological and praxis models of contextual theology, semi-overt participant observation were conducted. Our analysis shows a close relation between divine and human actions, and between the rich and the poor in society. Preaching should be the proclamation of Jesus and about Jesus as good news to the poor. Malagasy wisdom, recorded in the Malagasy proverbs, are the seeds already in the ground allowing a good understanding of a preaching for the betterment of the socio-economic conditions of the poor. We conclude that the call for the possibility of an earthly social justice, the proclamation of God's Words and action for a human behaviour change that which attenuate the system of exploitation within the society as initiation of the positive social change, and a call for diaconal works within the holistic mission of the church are and should be the contribution of preaching in the improvement of the standard of living of poor in Fandriana. It is worth noticing that social justice, positive social change and diakonia need actions per se to complete the positive transformation process of the society.

Key-words: standard of living, preaching, contribution, social justice, social change, diakonia

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ABBREVIATIONS

DPL: Dictionary of Paul and His Letters

FLM: Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy/MLC: Malagasy Lutheran Church

LWF: Lutheran World Federation

SALT: Sekoly Ambony Loterana momba ny Teolojia (Lutheran Graduate School of Theology)

SPAFI: Synodam-Paritany Fisakana

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UYT: Use Your Talents

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I. Chapter One: Introduction

1.1.Rationale for the Research

It is necessary to hold a research related to the standard of the living of the Malagasy people. Malagasy people are among the poorest in the world. Their standard of living is low. The Human Development Report classifies Madagascar among the nations who have low Human Development Index. Madagascar is now ranked 37th out of 55 in Africa and 173rd out of 192 in the World as far as Human Development Index is concerned (The United Nations Development Programme-UNDP- 2021-2022, 272-276). This hard and difficult condition is also lived in the district of Fandriana situated at the centre part of Madagascar. However, the condition of the poor is not the will of God. Poverty is a human construction; we have made the conditions of poverty (Gutiérrez, 2012). We need to continue fighting against poverty. Thus, it is very important to contribute to the improvement of this situation from where I stand as a preacher.

In addition, I have conducted a research on rural development in one of the communes in the district of Fandriana, Madagascar for the completion of my Bachelor level- on school wastage in 2006- and my Master degree- on periodical food insecurity in 2008- when I was a student in sociology at the University of Antananarivo. Concerning this second research, I have concluded that different reasons, within various aspects of life, constitute the causes of food insecurity which is one of the major manifestations of low standard of living of the people. First, there is the social reasons including educational system, health conditions, and organization of the society. Secondly, concerning economics, the attachment to the ancestral mode of production, the archaic way of product management, and the rarity of production infrastructure and materials, constitute the basic problems conducting to poverty. Thirdly, on

politics, local and national authorities cannot offer security and good services and materials to insure and assist people in their works. There is also cultural reasons, the most common cultural occupation in the district is the “Famadihana or Famadihan-drazana”, a kind of ancestral cult in which a family –as organizer of the event- shows respect and adoration towards their ancestors. In so doing the organizer gathers a very large family, more than 100 persons, for two to four days, and spends too much money for the festive, otherwise the territorial of Fandriana is a non-fertile land and there is not too many hectares of arable soil to be laboured. The importance of this research lays on the participation for the betterment of that bad condition of the standard of living of the people, through preaching.

Jesus was preaching for the benefit of the whole person and the society, and he commanded his followers to continue what he was accomplishing. He was proclaiming his words both for the forgiveness of human sins and for physical, psychological, social, economic, and political readjustment in order to make people’s living better. For Jesus, salvation concerns the improvement of the whole individual. Even though what he has done cannot be exactly reproduced in our days, his words, attitudes, and life, all about him, is still relevant since “Nihil nisi Christus predicantur” or nothing except Christ is to be preached (Meuser, 1983, 16). Further, the Hebrew and Greek word translated as salvation and redemption in the Bible can also be translated into liberation (Gutiérrez, 2012). The present research on preaching is an involvement in this process of the proclamation of that Christ saviour-liberator for the betterment of the people’s standard of living.

1.2.Previous Research Review

Biblical interpretation from the eyes of the poor or for the benefit of the poor has been developed considerably during the last few decades. Biblical scholars within the perspectives of the theology of liberation have been researching too much on new ways of Bible

interpretation by taking the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed, and the excluded into consideration.

One reliable case, Reimer, in his postcolonial interpretation of indebtedness of Luke 19:1-10 explains that Zaccaheus became an agent of fight against impoverishment and inequality when he was redeemed, liberated by Jesus (2006). Zacchaeus was an oppressor, an agent of the indebtedness of the others; but after receiving Jesus, hearing his words; he himself is liberated from oppressing and stealing others' goods. He was freed and acted in order that the others also may live and experience suitable socio-economic lives. However, this study is more oriented in the question of debt, but not on preaching. And I would like to analyse the contribution of preaching to the betterment of the standard of living of the poor in Fandriana. In Madagascar, churches from different denominations have been concerned with the human vulnerability in poverty, and have been yelling to fight against that. For more than a century, old churches in Madagascar like the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Reformed Church and the Malagasy Lutheran Church have been emphasizing the focus on the holistic human development. These churches focused on holistic ministries. They paid attention to the whole individual and with all the people without any segregations. However, they approached it within the perspectives of social action, separated from the preaching. Here, I am going to present only a review of Malagasy Lutheran church's involvement in the improvement of the people's standard of living.

Apart from the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, one of the main Malagasy Lutheran Church's (MLC) goals is the development of all the people and the whole individual (Malagasy Lutheran Church, 2012, p.8). This is among the identity of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (Modeste, 2015). In so doing, the MLC is working for the betterment of the health situations, and the living situation of all the people, without segregation of religious views and regions (constitution of the MLC, 2012, p.8). This same document even states specifically that

the MLC is concerned with the improvement of health situation and direct donations and trainings for work in order to improve the standard of living of the poor. In fact, the MLC is working for social and economic justice, and security. The most common project is the famous Use Your Talents (UYT) Project. Workshops are held in different levels of the MLC concerning Use Your Talents Projects, and some projects are already at work in different synods. In fact,

“the church and its members are involved in a lot of development work including building schools, building bridges or maintaining roads, tree planting, courses in cultivation of different plants, advisers in agriculture, building storage facilities for rice, building healthcare unit, protecting the environment, running care centres for the sick and needy people, etc” (Haus, 2017, 17-18).

However, the development programme seems to be separated from the proclamation of the Gospel.

Of course, the church cannot work in the place of social, economic or political agents to help them developing the living of the people. However, it can be noticed that, the Malagasy Lutheran church is concerned with the betterment of the standard of living of the people for decades. But the MLC’s fight against the low standard of living of the people is held mainly within the perspective of action and diakonia. Most of the time, the action is understood as separated from the preaching; that preaching is one mission and diakonia is another. It is important to contribute to that common fight through preaching since proclamation, diakonia and advocacy constitute the holistic mission of the church (Junge, 2019). And, there is a socio-economic dimension of preaching. And preachers in Fandriana should consider that.

1.3.Theory

The main theory in which I keep an eye on in this thesis is that preaching follow two dimensions which are the divine and the human action; and it take into consideration the whole person. Preaching is treated here as part of practical theology. In his “Christopraxis: A Practical Theology of the Cross”, Andrew Root emphasizes that, practical theology is ministry. As a ministry, it is both practical and theological. God is minister and ministry is the shape of divine action. Practical theology should be very attentive with divine action as it is the case with the human action. Practical theology is concerned both with divine and human action. Christopraxis practical theology of the cross places ministry at the very centre, claiming that ministry is practical theology because ministry directs human action as a response to the nature of divine action (2014). Preaching is among the basic constituents of practical theology. A sermon should present that perspective of divine and human dimensions of a text for the benefit of the whole person. A sermon should present divine action, as it recorded in the bible, to the benefit of the people’s living, and human action related to this divine action.

Further, practical theology is always in conversation with the everyday life of the church. Pete Ward, in his development on theological reflection emphasizes that practical theology exists to serve the church. Practical theology is part of the church’s conversation about its life and the life of God both for those who are doing theology directly on behalf of the Christian community and for those who are doing it in academic context (2017). The purpose of practical theology is not only a teaching given to people who are training for ministry; but also for producing an academic paper, a thesis or even a book. The purpose and the eventual product of practical theology should be the transformation of individuals and communities (Ward, 2017). Preaching, as part of practical theology, is among the basic means used to bring about this practical reflection. The preacher has two main tasks. The first is to understand and

interpret the Bible in the best way possible, and the second is to relate this first meaning to the lives of the people who are going to listen to the sermon (Ward, 2017). And when speaking about the lives of the people, the improvement of the standard of living of the poor is always at focus. This research takes part into that betterment of people's living conditions from the study of preaching.

A preaching is related to a sermon. In a sermon, there are exegesis and application. By exegesis, I mean the interpretation of the text within its original context. And, application is not merely the transition from theory to practice, but the movement from then, the time of the bible, to now, here and now. For instance, Pauline epistles often present both, first a "half" of heavy "theology," and, a second "half" of "ethical" exhortations and guidance (Westphal, 2012). Further, "it is especially through the preacher's voice that the people of God hear what God is saying to them in the here and now" (Westphal, 2012, 164). Both in the exegesis and in the application, the divine and the human action advanced by the text, should always be at a focus; and they are both related to the holistic mission of the church. Thus, preaching is the proclamation of God's action and human action for the benefit of the whole person and the whole world.

The hermeneutics of hope advanced by Gutiérrez is also taken into consideration. It advances that the condition of the poor is not the will of God. Poverty is a human construction; we have made these conditions. To be generous with the poor is not enough, rather ask one's position against poverty, against the structures of today. We must fight against the causes of poverty (Gutiérrez, 2012). In this thesis, the contribution for the fight against poverty is specifically focused on the improvement of the standard of living of the poor in the district of Fandriana; and only in preaching.

By standard of living, I mean the capability to live well for certain socio-economic class in a certain geographic area (Barreiro-Gen, 2019). It is within poverty in general. Poverty is a

matter of insecurity and trouble touching all the dimensions of life. It is a major source of distress. It is not only the actual reality under which billions of people in the world live, but also a permanent reality existing in a very long period. In fact, it is not a natural condition but a historical circumstance (RPP, 2011, 263). According to the Bible's perspective, poverty signifies deprivation, marginalization, incapacitation, and disfranchisement (RPP, 2011, 263). Standard of living, in the countryside of Madagascar, is concerned with the situation on food, education, health, community life, social security/insecurity, production.

So, in this research, I follow the perspective that presents preaching as both an action of God and an action of human being for the benefit of the whole humanity, experienced in the everyday life of the people. And the view of poverty including the low standard of living is not the work of God, but the work of men should be taken into consideration.

1.4.Thesis Statement

I have chosen preaching, a discipline in the field of practical theology. My intention is to conduct a research on what the contribution of preaching to the improvement of the people's standard of living are and should be. The art of communication is always important in the concept of preaching, but this is not a research on that. This is an investigation on how to express the contribution of preaching to the socio-economic living of the people. This work concerns the listeners of preaching since it is about the betterment of their standard of living, it is oriented to the socio-economic situation of the listeners of preaching, of the people in general. However, it is not a deep study of the audience of preaching in general.

What I am going to do is not merely diakonia since this work does not speak about the church's action per se but concerning a call and an appeal to act for the betterment of the standard of living of the poor in preaching Jesus Christ, his life, attitude and action. The contribution of preaching for the betterment of the poor's standard of living in Fandriana should be analysed because it will create a more just and peaceful society. I am going to

answer the question, what should be the contribution of preaching to the improvement of the standard of living of the poor in Fandriana? This overarching question can be subdivided into the next questions; who are the poor? What are the causes of the low standard of living of the poor in the district of Fandriana? How the relation between the rich and the poor look like? What are the contribution of preaching to improve the people's socio-economic condition of the people? What should be the contribution of preaching for the betterment of the people's standard of living?

1.5.Objective of the Research

The purpose of the research is to describe what the contribution of preaching to the improvement of the standard of living in the district of Fandriana are and should be. It aims at orienting preaching to pay attention to the betterment people's standard of living and concerns on the daily life of the people articulating human's action that flows from God's action experienced in the everyday life.

1.6.Outline

Following this introductory chapter, I present the methodology in chapter two. It is about two models of contextual theology: anthropological model and praxis model (Bevans, 2013). In chapter three, I describe what I mean by poverty and how I do observe about the poor in Fandriana. In the chapter four, I analyse a way of preaching of Luke 16:19-31, for the improvement of the standard of living of the poor in Fandriana. Chapter five is on improving the standard of living of the poor through a socio-economic change within the society: analysis of Luke 19:1-10. In the chapter six, the contribution of preaching in the betterment of the socio-economic living of the poor through analysing the relation between preaching and diakonia, will be developed. A conclusion is advanced in the last chapter.

II. Chapter Two: Methodology

Documentary analysis and participant observation are used in this research. I also opted for a contextual theology models, the anthropological and the praxis models.

2.1. Participant Observation

2.1.1. Meaning

Participant observation is an embodied experience (Nabhan-Warren, 2022). The participant observer engages in bodily sensation as he or she sits with, eats alongside, laugh with, and sing with his or her interlocutors; he or she experiences hunger, thirst, cold, heat, sadness, happiness, and wide range of affects and emotions with his or her interlocutors (Nabhan-Warren, 2022). In this research, I need to know more about the “are” and the “should be” of the contribution of preaching to the betterment of the poor’s standard of living in the district of Fandriana. I have always been in contact with the people here in Fandriana weeks or months a year for decades, I am living here for months now. I talk with people about our everyday life, preaching to them, in different churches on Sundays, and at different opportunities. I participate to diverse social and cultural circumstances within communities. In addition, I cannot work on in-depth interviews due to restricted time for this research; so I chose participant observation. My findings are presented within the discussion held in some sections of chapters three and four of this study.

2.1.2. Use of Participant Observation in this Research

In this thesis I opted for a semi-overt and active participant observation.

2.2.1.1. Semi-overt Participant Observation

Researchers use participant observation frequently when they investigate on a private or hidden organization, or on a controversial subjects. In that case, the researcher uses an “observation participante couverte ou clandestine”, the researcher does not reveal his or her intentions to the participants but accomplishing underground investigations (Bastien, 2007).

Contrary to that, in the “observation participante ouverte”, the researcher does not reveal his intention to the participants but includes himself there clandestinely. For the same terminologies, Bracanti speaks of overt and covert observation (Bracanti, 2018). In this study, with my choice of using participant observation, I reveal my general intention to the participants, but only in some extent and about the general topic. The reason for presenting my intention in general is that sometimes I take notes or ask questions; so the participants will not be amazed or wondering why I am doing that. They know only that I am studying about preaching and on socio-economic matters. Then I proceed to a kind of semi-overt participant observation, the observation is overt only in some extent. In other words, I speak to my interlocutors that I study the “are” and the “should be” of the contribution of preaching to the socio-economic living of the people. The reason why I do not opt for a full overt observation are, first, the quest of an unbiased information. By the strong feeling of the presence of an official academic researcher within them, the participants may not behave naturally. They may change their behaviour when an official researcher is entering into their community. Second, I am an insider within the community and experience the life its members are living.

2.2.1.2. An Active Participant Observation

Contrary to the passive participant observation within which the researcher does not interact with his or her subjects; the active participant observation the researcher converses with his or her subjects and takes part in the daily life of the community that they study (Bracanti, 2018). Working as a pastor-preacher in different localities in Fandriana, I am in active interactions with the people from different part of the district of Fandriana. Since the subjects are really occupied with the situation of poverty, they are eager to speak about it, to share their experience on it and to find solutions together for it.

2.2.Contextual Theology

In this research, I am doing theology contextually.

2.2.1. Doing Theology Contextually

Doing theology contextually is nothing else but doing theology with the consideration of two things. First, it takes into account the faith experience of the past that is recorded in scriptures and kept alive, preserved, defended, and perhaps even neglected and suppressed in tradition. Second, it takes into account the experience of the present, the context (Bevans, 2013).

Classical theology is about considering the scriptures and tradition, but contextual theology takes also into consideration the experience of present when doing theology. On one hand, contextual theology must keep the content of faith. Bevans, quoting Koyama, explains that “the content of faith must be neither impaired nor mutilated” (Bevans, 2013). The experience of present includes the human experience, the culture, the social location, and the social change which are to be taken into consideration when one truly does a contextual theology (Bevans, 2013).

Preaching also is concerned with two things: the text in its context and the text in the context of the interpreter. Wilson, on one hand, speaks of trouble in the Bible and trouble in the world; and on the other hand, he states about grace in the Bible and Grace in the world. He explains that a sermon should be developed in two different spots, in the Bible (scriptures) and in the world (our present context) (Eslinger, 2002). This correspondence between contextual theology and preaching is the reason why I opted for doing theology contextually in this research.

Bevans develops six models of contextual theology. They are: the translation model, the anthropological model, the praxis model, the synthetic model, the transcendental model, and the countercultural model. A model is a presentation of way of theologizing that takes a particular context seriously and a representation of a distinct theological starting point and distinct theological presuppositions (Bevans, 2013). In this thesis, I opted for both the anthropological model and the praxis model. I speak about the contribution of preaching to

the social change of the present human experience. It is concerned with the improvement of the standard of living of the poor people in the District of Fandriana.

2.2.2. Anthropological Model

Anthropological model starts from the present experience of humanity. Bevans explains that, according to the insight of the anthropological model, “the theologian must start where the faith actually lives, and that is the midst of people’s lives” (2013, 61). Anthropological, here, includes the focus on the value and the goodness of *anthropos* (the human person); and the use of insights of the social science of anthropology. The first element, concerning the value and goodness of the human person, consists of the important consideration of the manifestation of divine presence within every person, and every society and social location and every culture. In addition, the anthropological model “focuses on the validity of the human as place of divine revelation and source (*locus*) for theology that is equal to the other two sources of scriptures and tradition” (Bevans, 2013). However, even if, the present human context is what the anthropological emphasizes, the past experience (scriptures and traditions) also is valuable to be taken into account for theology. The anthropological model should not be used in isolation of the other models. That is the reason why I chose also the praxis model. The Malagasy people, who have been living for centuries with mouth-to-ears, an oral tradition, do not have many written documents for the first decades of the twentieth century and before. Exaggerating a little bit, Dahl affirms that Malagasy people do not have literature (written documents) to read when one wants to learn about their belief and religions; but there are proverbs, taboo (Dahl, 2004). Therefore, cultural, social, political and even economic identities were preserved in proverbs and sayings, in the “Fady” or taboos, and in religious acts (Dahl, 2004). Malagasy proverbs, like “Aza ny lohasaha mangina no jerena fa Andriamanitra an-tampon’ny loha” and “Ny tany no tsy anaovan-dratsy, Zanahary no mahatahotra” can be considered as local manifestation of the divine presence in the Malagasy

context in general. Both of them existed long time before the arrival of European missionaries in the country. This is a perfect representation of the analogy “the seeds are already in the ground; just need to be watered to sprout” (Bevans, 2013, p.61). Among many others, they represent the socio-cultural value of humanity. The first proverb is about God who is always above us; present with us in whatever we do and wherever we are. “Andriamanitra” is the common word for God in Madagascar. And the one should always think about that divine presence but not on the calm valley where no person can see her or him. Thus, one should act in a virtuous and worthy way even if no one can see her or him. The second also is about the divine omnipresence. “Zanahary” is also a common word for God but this word emphasizes the fact that God is the Creator. It says that one should not act badly or in an unworthy manner toward others and all the creature since God is the Creator of all humans and natural elements. Therefore, proverbs like them should be considered as source for theology in the same level as scriptures and tradition. And they are worth to be reflected within preaching.

The second element in the “anthropological”, concerning the insights in social science anthropology, is related to the study of the origin and the development of human societies and cultures. In this study, I opted for the analysis of the socio-economic dimensions of societies. Of course, socio-economics cannot be isolated from the cultural, political and other dimensions of the society but here, I insist mainly on the social and economic dimensions. In fact, I do speak about food and social insecurities, about the economic and social relations between the rich and the poor in Fandriana. In this study, I follow the emic perspective. I adopt this insider’s view (Doda, 2005) through a participant observation of the society in its context. The choice of a study within only the district of Fandriana is supported by the fact that the Micro-focus, the focus on a small-scale society or community is a distinguishing mark of anthropology (Doda, 2005, 16). However, my anthropological analysis is only on the participant observation due to limit of time allotted to this study.

2.2.3. *Praxis Model*

What is principal in praxis model, is the consideration of social change, God is at work in the world and call men and women as partners (Bevans, 2013). This model not only seeks for various expression of the Christian faith but also, and indeed, commit to Christian action. Relation, permanent dialogue between expression of Christian faith and commitment to Christian action is at the basis of theology, within the praxis model perspective. The prophetic tradition insisting on both words and action (Isaiah, Amos); and the New Testament dictum of the need not only to hear the word but also to do it, are the Christian tradition on which the praxis model is processed (Bevans 2013). Therefore, the praxis model relates intimately the ethical behavior to the theological thought (Bevans, 2013). In this perspective, Bevans, referring to Sobrino, speaks about the Latin American theologians who orient themselves not to “ortho-doxy” (“right thinking”); but to “ortho-praxy” (right acting”) (Bevans, 2013). Malagasy culture includes also a strong saying on social action for social change, on religious thinking concerning social change. “Asa fa tsy kabary” is one of the most common sayings involving people in the action but not only in words. Literally, “asa fa tsy kabary” means action but not discourse. Even if it is always important to sit down and plan what process is better to be followed for any action, planning does not get anything done. To get something done, one must start the action. In addition, action, or work, embraces an important position in the Malagasy value (Randriamanjato, 2002). And this way of thinking is completely in accordance with what is written in James 1: 22: “But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves”. And, at the extreme point, there is the saying, “Andriamanitra tsy manampy izay tsy manampy ny tenany”. This means, God does not help those who do not help themselves. In a very common understanding, this saying allows us to say that God helps, blesses only those who are working. God blesses people in their work, when they are in action. The importance of action is emphasized here. The Malagasy wisdom

does not insist only on action but on good action. In fact, proverbs like “ny soa atao levenambola, ny ratsy atao loza mihantona”; or simply the good action one is doing will make money for her/him in the future, but the bad action one is doing represents a danger for her/him in the future time. Further, good action is held in accordance with the famous motto, socio-cultural value of “Fihavanana” and this fihavanana is presented by proverbs and sayings.

The “Fihavanana”-solidarity and union- is for the promotion of a peaceful community. That includes the social, the economic, the political and the cultural aspects of life. The “Fihavanana” is a set of rules and norms which define a code of good conduct in society (Sandron, 2008). At its basis, evokes the unity of the Malagasy people, speaks of the oneness of the Malagasy origin. For the Malagasy people, according to the ancestors’ way of thinking and understanding, “Fihavanana” is concerned with some people who are the generation of the same parents, it is all about consanguinity. Are called “mpihavana”, those who are within the same lineage; represent those who have the same “aina” or life. However, it is worth noticing that “aina” is not the life of one person, it includes the life of the lineage (Dubois, 2005), and so it is not limited only on the period of life of a person. Within the Malagasy concept of Fihavanana, they protect the “aina”, they are very concerned with not to hurt or kill a person (Dubois, 2005); they always act, as far as possible, in order to help people flourish. The respect of this value of Fihavanana was at the basis of the inexistence of civil war in Madagascar, even if there were many political crisis in the country.

Bevans’ praxis model of contextual theology includes the consideration of both the expression of faith and the right action held by Christians.

III. Chapter Three: on Poverty

In this short chapter, I present the meaning of poverty and the poor in Fandriana. Since I have chosen to use anthropological and praxis models of contextual theology, it is worth giving first a summary of the every day’s situation and experience of the poor in Fandriana. Of

course, families have their assets but the reality shows that many of the people in Fandriana are poor. I develop first a general meaning of poverty, and how it is understood in this work. Then, I speak about poverty according to the gospel of Luke. I close this short chapter by stating God's position against poverty.

3.1. Poverty

Poverty is a matter of insecurity and trouble touching all the dimensions of life. It is a major source of distress. Poverty is a scandalous material condition (Siker, 1996). It is not only the actual reality under which billions of people in the world live, but also a permanent reality existing in a very long period. In fact, it is not a natural condition but a historical circumstance (RPP, 2011, 263). And it will always be there unless both dominant and dominated people join their hands in an honest and decided durable action to fight against it.

Poverty is at the centre of the topic of development. Discussing about development, acting for development is prime and first for countries, governments, diverse organizations, enterprises, families; in all every kind of societies and communities. The development problems originated from two forms. First, there is the poverty which comes from insufficient development. Second, there is the poverty, an injustice, ecological degradation, and social pathology that come from poorly executed development (Hooks *et al.* 2016). Poverty can be then conceptualized within these two forms. Both those who are living under an insufficient development and those who are victims of injustice due to poorly executed development are poor people (Hooks *et al.* 2016).

According to the Bible's perspective, poverty signifies deprivation, marginalization, incapacitation, and disfranchisement (RPP, 2011, 263). In this perspective, poverty is the impact and the manifestation of a long-time impoverishment structure and action held by imperial people, countries over a dominated people, countries. The poor are those who are exploited and marginalized by the authority who establish the political structure and the law.

The poor are those, even willing to act for their liberation from the yoke of the oppressor, kept under subjection by the great means, which covers politics, economics, social and cultural dimensions of the life. Sugirtharajah speaks of atrocity of European and American powers which sponsored, sanctioned and sustained their domination over the others (Sugirtharajah, 2006, 6). And contrary to poverty, wealth means affluence, power, exploitation, and oppression (RPP, 2011, 263).

3.2. The Poor in the Lukan Gospel

The gospel of Luke is often called the gospel for the poor. According to Adewale the Lukan understanding of poverty are explained with the three Greek words *πενιχρός*, *ἐνδεής*, and *πτωχός*; all of them mean the poor (2021). The two first words appear only once in Luke's writing; the first in Luke 21:2 and the second in Acts 4:34. *Πενιχρός* has the meaning of lack of essential means of livelihood, poor, and needy (eds. Louw & Nida 1989) or represents someone with no possession or money (Friberg, Friberg & Miller, 2000). The second word, *ἐνδεής*, signifies poor or impoverished for Gingrich (1979). It is translated into lacking of basic needs, poor, needy, impoverished and poverty-stricken person when used as a noun (Friberg Friberg & Miller, 2005). *ἐνδεής* has similar meaning as *πτωχός*, but it emphasizes the severe lack of needed resources rather than the state of poverty and destitution ((eds. Louw & Nida, 1989).

The third word, *πτωχός*, is used ten times in Luke. Lukan materials presents six of the ten occurrences (Lk 4:18; 14:13; 14:21; 16:20; 16:22 and 19:8); two are found within the Q materials: Luke 6:20, which is paralleled in Matthew 5:3 and Luke 7:22; and the last two are in the Synoptic tradition (Lk 18:22 and 21:3) (Adewale, 2021). Adewale continues that *Πτωχός*, in LXX, translates six different Hebrew words. The meaning of these six Hebrew words are; first, the word has the meaning of afflicted, oppressed, poor, humble; a religious concept of piety: the poor trust in God who is his only defence (Adewale, 2021). In other

words, the kingdom of God belongs to the poor who are aware of their need and are ready to allow God to fill it (Luke 6:20). Second, it denotes a physical weaknesses (needy, poor, lowly, scrawny, and haggard). Third, it means a beggar, one who seeks alms. Fourth, this word designates the poor, famished, and oppressed. It also refers to socially poor, penury, scarcity. And the sixth Hebrew word translated into *πτωχός* means simply poor and afflicted (Adewale, 2021).

And quoting Upkong, Adewale states that “*πτωχός* covers economic, social and religious dimensions as the term embraces the materially poor, the socially alienated, the physically weak and the psychologically afflicted who then become pious and humble placing all their hope in God” (2021, 2). Thus, poverty in the gospel of Luke refers to all kind of insecurities, troubles and suffering. And Jesus, according to many Lukan writings including 4:18, emphasizes that the reason for his coming on the earth is to preach good news, and to act for the betterment of the life of the poor.

3.3. Poverty is against God’s Will and It Is to Be Eradicated

Jesus uses Deuteronomy’s message that God hates poverty and has commanded us to end poverty by forgiving debts, by outlawing slavery, and by restructuring society around the needs of the poor, when he is referring to Matthew 26: 11, “You will always have the poor with you” (Theoharis, 2017). It does not mean that Jesus accepted that neither there are always poor people in the society, nor that God predetermined poverty. For him; poverty is created by human beings—by their disobedience to God and neglect of their neighbour (Theoharis, 2017). Therefore, if the poor are always within the society, it denotes the people’s failure to follow God’s law and commandments, and it instructs us on how to establish a reign of prosperity and dignity for all. In God’s kingdom, there will be no poor because poverty will not exist (Theoharis, 2017).

Poverty should be fought against. Gutiérrez identifies three reasons for the disallowance of poverty: first, poverty contradicts the meaning of the Mosaic religion which follows the perspective of deliverance from slavery, exploitation, and alienation. Second, poverty contradicts the Genesis mandate for human prosperous life on the earth. Third, human poverty is an offense to God, since human beings are created in God's likeness, so that the impoverishment of human beings, the oppression of the poor, contradicts God's intentions for humanity (Siker, 1996, 53). For Gutiérrez, the Bible teaches that "the existence of poverty represents a sundering both of solidarity among persons and also of communion with God," and is "incompatible with the coming of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of love and justice" (Siker, 1996, 53).

And we should fight against this poverty like Jesus did and ask Christians to do. In the theology of ancient Israel as recorded in the Old Testament poverty is understood as divine punishment. Because of the anti-Semitism found in Christian history it is usually best to steer clear of making statements about the Jews or Jewish people when you are a Christian theologian. However, poverty is against God's will, it is not divine punishment (Kügler, 2012). It does not separate people from God. Further, the poor are the primary recipients of Jesus' gospel (Ndekha, 2016) and will be liberated from suffering. In another words, poverty has no place in the kingdom of God, it will be eradicated (Kügler, 2012). In the same perspectives, Barram states that,

“In Luke's Gospel, Jesus draws from the prophet Isaiah to articulate his own mission statement, indicating that radical, upside-down changes to the social status quo are part and parcel of what he—and the gospel he announces—is all about. Good news comes to the poor, captives are released, the blind see, and the oppressed are emancipated (Luke 4:18)” (Barram, 2022).

Jesus's mission is to offer a holistic improvement of the life of the poor and the marginalized, to eradicate all kind of injustice.

IV. Chapter Four: A Call to the Improvement of the Standard of Living of the Poor: A Way of Preaching Luke 16:19-31

In this chapter, I present and discuss, through an anthropological and praxis model of contextual theology, what are and should be the contribution of preaching for the betterment of the poor's standard of living? I relate the past human experience of some biblical figures to the here and now experience of the people in Fandriana in order to analyze the contribution of preaching for the improvement of the socio-economic livings of the poor. In so doing, I present and discuss the past human experience for both the rich and the poor, the relation between them and the call for the betterment of the standard of living of the poor through analysing the narrative of Luke 16:17-30. This chapter presents and discuss the possibility of improving the poor's standard of living, only' on the earth, but not in the postmortem situation.

4.1.Human Present Experience

In Fandriana, there are few rich people who are in control of the economy, the political life of the people.

4.1.1. Rich People in Fandriana

In general, children of rich people, actors in commerce, transport cooperatives and politicians constitute the main rich people in Fandriana. They are few and they are extending their possessions time to time.

There are lineage of rich people. Lineage of rich people invests in different local small and medium enterprises. Water, electricity, schools, etc. In general, people that are from the generation of rich people inherit the business of their predecessors and have enterprises to

manage. They do not need to start a new business; rather if the children are smarter than their parents, they can even enlarge their possessions.

Politicians and local authorities. Like the same cases in many underdevelopment countries, political authorities in different levels are always among the rich people. Not only they get good salaries but also they have the opportunity to get much more money from diverse indemnities they get when doing their jobs. In addition, many also are corrupted and take advantages from the money the State and different funders give for the accomplishment of the common development projects. A tangible example that can be quoted is the fact that there are many trucks transporting wood for construction from the district. Each truck gives specific amount for the recovery of communal roads to the local authorities but there are no, or only small initiatives from these authorities in the rehabilitation of the roads. As a result, it is the poor peasants who are victims of the increasing of the price of daily used merchandises.

Transport cooperative owners also are very rich. There is no public transport relying Fandriana to the other districts throughout Madagascar. Investment in transport, from another place to Fandriana and from Fandriana to another place, are held by private cooperatives of a small number of rich people. They have full control in dictating the price of transportation and take advantages from it. When the movement from regions to regions is restricted during the Covid19 apogee period, transport business seemed to be in trouble. Nevertheless, with the few passengers who must travel, they still got benefit by increasing the price. Then, once the normal season came again they do not decrease the price of transport, and they get more profit. Besides, the very bad state of roads provokes also a growth of the price of transportation. Accordingly, owners of transport cooperatives always earn considerable benefits from their activities, unlike the employees who can only survive from their miserable salary.

Behind any trades in different commercial items including wholesalers in basic necessities of all types, precious stones trade, and gold trade, there are few rich investors who control the main activities. In the city of Fandriana, a family who own a big grocery does not have a big problem to open a new one for the little brother or the child. With a solid guidance from their parents, and since they have been trained for many years, are promoting in the trade business. Children can either follow their parents' within the type of grocery or opening a new kind. But it is well to notice that they rarely fail. And if that is the case, the parents help the children to find permanent solutions and never let them down. The parents know how hard the life poor people is struggling within their everyday lives; and do everything for their children to prevent and escape that situation.

Trade of gold and precious stones make some rich person become richer. There are many small exploitation of precious stones and gold throughout the district. However, there are only few rich persons who are buying the product from villages to villages. Those people earn a lot in buying and then reselling those stones and gold.

Rich people and the "lova tsy mifindra". This specific tradition about marriage in Fandriana consists of marriage between the children of family members only. Of course, it does not concern close relatives but of far cousins. For example, the grand children of a siblings can marry between them. The reason of this arrangement between families lays down in the very signification of "lova tsy mifindra". In fact, this concept means the inheritance should be protected inside the big family; it should not be thrown away to another family. That is the reason why it is now an affair of rich people since poor people do not have considerable inheritance to hold.

Rich people in Fandrina work hard to hold their social status. They conduct their business in the way they can always earn more profit. They use many ways to get much more benefits; they know how to take profit from all circumstances. Accordingly, they make a chasm

between them and the poor. The inequality becomes more radicalized. They also, help their close family to start their new business and to be effective.

Rich persons in Fandriana are few but they control the main economic activities in the district; they are the local political authorities; and they can organize social and cultural activities in the community.

4.1.2. The Poor in Fandriana

I develop this section through both reading documents and participant observation. The district of Fandriana is one of the four districts existent in the Region of Amoron'i Mania, in the centre part of Madagascar. I have been living in the city of Fandriana from December to mid-march and I was in contact with different people from all over the district of Fandriana. In fact, my wife and I are selling handcrafts' product we buy from women coming living in different areas in the countryside of Fandriana. I have then opportunities of 30 minutes of even more than an hour of discussion with them, many times a week. In addition to that, I teach the module of "Preaching within everyday life in the society" to the future "Mpiandry", or simply lay preachers, at the Toby Andranoraikitra Fandriana a day (6 hours) every month. A Toby is a place where the Malagasy take care of people with mental trouble; a pastor and some "Mpiandry" are staying there to take care of those sick persons. Within some plenary sessions, I can discuss with them about the problem of poverty, its causes, and possible contribution of preaching to its eradication, or at least to its attenuation in a visible way. Besides, I also had the opportunity to teach for two hours, for two times, preaching to the wives of pastors and catechists from all the local congregations of the Regional Synod of Fisakana- Malagasy Lutheran Church on the 12th and 13th of April). Discussion with these women, as lay preachers in the Malagasy Lutheran Church, were very promoting in the sense that they are ready to improve the contribution of preaching to the betterment of the socio-economical lives of the people, to take part in the holistic mission of the church. Discussing

mainly on social and economic situation of the people, I can talk about the next features on their standard of living.

From mid-march, we moved to Andranomena, a village located at five kilometers in the west part of the city center and is inhabited by peasants of all kind, a road of peasants who are moving two to three times a week to sell and to buy products at the city market. The poor in Fandriana coincides to what Boff & Boff affirms as mostly labourers of the countryside (1987:4); and they are numerous, represent more than 90% of the population in the district (Ministère de l'Agriculture de l'Élevage et de la Pêche, 2003). These peasants constitute what Gutiérrez summarizes by the dominated peoples, exploited social classes, despised races and marginalized cultures (Gutiérrez 1996:23). They are impoverished people since they are victims of socio-economic, politic, and cultural oppression and manipulation. Gutiérrez continues by explaining that the poor constitute a de facto social collectivity who live in a situation of inhuman misery and anti-evangelical poverty. Here, preaching has many words to say (Gutiérrez, 1996). Evangelical preaching should focus more on the non-evangelical dimension of poverty and speaks more about it, calls the listeners of preaching to act against poverty.

First, the poor in Fandriana are those who are victims of the temporal food insecurity.

Gutiérrez states that the inhuman misery under which the poor includes the shortage of food (1996, 23). In fact, the poor in Fandriana can neither eat properly and rich quality of food; nor eat three times a day or more. Food insecurity reigns because of the considerable climatic change that affects the production. This is in parallel with the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report explanation that food insecurity increases due to the disruption of the production as effect of extreme weather (2021/2022, 79). People in Fandriana are in situation of food insecurity for weeks, even for months every year. Even though, they can have products rice, cassava, corn, sweet potatoes and potatoes; they have

vegetables, rarely some meat, fish; they are not enough in quantity and quality. Moreover, they need to sell the part of them for other daily necessities. New way of thinking and new way of producing is necessary for the improvement of their nutritional situation.

Second, the poor in Fandriana is the great family, household of brothers and sisters who are living in a single house. This problem of housing is also evoked by Siker (1996, 23). Each family of more than three person occupies one or two rooms. There is no comfort in daily living. All the households living in the house share a small bathroom and a small toilet built outside the house. Sometimes they live with farm animals like rabbits or chicken and ducks in the house because of the fear of the thieves who may steal their goods; or because they do not have a place where to put those animals. They need not only a change within their mind, but also all inclusive social change for the improvement of this situation.

The poor in Fandriana are families who are, sometimes, pushed to steal food from others, or to borrow some food in the summer and return them back in the winter with 50% of extra-charge; since they do not have anything to eat. For the first case, they may be caught and may be punished either by the community or by the state security. For the second case, they must live a harder food insecurity year after year because each year, they have to repay what they have borrowed the previous year. They need a kind of social change for the betterment of their life.

The poor in Fandriana are those who cannot send some or all of their children to school because they cannot afford the school fees. In fact, poor parents are generally, those who did not have the opportunity to reach the university or at least the high school. As a result, they can only cultivate the land and raise animals for their living. Yet, some peasants are very skilled in handcrafts and get some extra income, but they cannot get much in selling the product. So, a good educational background is one of the most assured possibility to get people's income increased. And if the poor parents cannot send their children for further

studies, the risk for children to be poor in the future is great. Here also, change within the society is required.

The poor in Fandriana are those who are victims of the oppression by the local authorities; those who are victims of ineffective management by the authorities. Bad services offered by the local authorities have serious impacts to the standard of living of the people, mainly the poor. The miserable state of roads, for example, is a reason of expensive price of the Product of First Necessity in different localities within the district. Accordingly, the situation of the poor is getting worse and worse.

The poor in Fandriana are those who produce enough crops but due to the very bad state of communal roads must sell their products in a very low price to buy other daily needs.

Example, Fandriana is one the major producers of apple in Madagascar, the price of a kilo is 150-200Ar in the field of production; 400-500Ar in the Commune of Miarinavaratra. 600-700Ar in the district of Fandriana; and 1500-2000Ar in Ambositra, a district located in 49 km from Fandriana. If the state of roads is better, the farmers can transport by “Sarety” their product to Fandriana and get better price.

The poor in Fandriana are those who are indebted by the local microfinance agencies. One of the major problem, peasants in Fandriana face is the debt system in relation to microfinance agencies in the district. People in Fandriana can borrow money from microfinance agencies. Nevertheless, the interest is very high and people struggle to return back the money they have borrowed. Moreover, people do not know exactly how to invest the money they got, or sometimes, they borrowed money to pass the temporal food insecurity they live for weeks. Consequently, most of the time, they must sell important goods, a part of their land to repay the agency with the interest.

Besides, the poor in Fandriana are also those who are victims of the breaking down of the Fihavanana. The “Fihavanana” is for the promotion of a peaceful community. That includes

the social, the economic, the political and the cultural aspects of life. The “Fihavanana”, at its basis, evokes the unity of the Malagasy people, speaks of the oneness of the Malagasy origin. For the Malagasy people, according to the ancestors’ way of thinking and understanding, “Fihavanana” is concerned with some people who are the generation of the same parents, it is all about consanguinity. Are called “mpihavana”, those who are within the same lineage; represent those who have the same “aina” or life. However, it is worth noticing that “aina” is not the life of one person, it includes the life of the lineage (Dubois, 2005), and so it is not limited only on the period of life of a person. Within the Malagasy concept of Fihavanana, they protect the “aina”, they are very concerned with not to hurt or kill a person (Dubois, 2005); they always act, as far as possible, in order to help people flourish. The respect of this value of Fihavanana was at the basis of the inexistence of civil war in Madagascar, even if there were many political crisis in the country. Within the protection of the “aina”, the Malagasy people take care of one another, they are serving each other. The “Fihavanana” is concerned about both way of thinking and action, attention to the well-being of others and action for a better society.

The poor in Fandriana are those who have low standard of living and can develop their own socio-economic activities which are controlled by the rich.

4.1.3. 4.2. Relation between the Rich and the Poor

Long time ago, before the arrival of the colonizers, socio-economic relation and structure in Fandriana, as well as in Madagascar in general, were organized within the “Fokonolona”, an organization of neighbour villages who are of a lineage of the same elders. The “Fokonolona” is characterized by the ruling of the elders who wisely organized all activities and work within the community, distributed equitably the production to families and managed in a better way conflicts. There was cooperative labour for the production of common goods. People help one another so that no one is left behind, and no one misses the opportunity to be part of the all-

inclusive society. However, once the system of exploitation was radicalized during the implantation of the colonization, this well-organized society fell down progressively. And now, the inequality between the rich and the poor is completely established. If all the members of the society was guaranteed in the elders' leading of the "Fokonolona", nowadays, there are many people who are victims of exploitation and marginalization. This is just the same as the words of Elliot "the gap between the landed 'haves' and the landless 'have nots' was growing, village patterns of cooperative labour and reciprocal social relations were being destroyed, and the poor and the powerless, once protected by the norms of Torah, were now the objects of exploitation and abandonment" (1991, 114).

Rich people exploit the poor. They use many poor employees, and pay them a low salary. Even if this way of thinking and acting is contradictory to the Malagasy identity concept of doing good action for the betterment of others' life; they still continue working in this perspective. Within their way of acting one can say that they forget the fundamental Malagasy ideological identity on the divine omnipresence "Aza ny lohasaha mangina no jerena fa Andriamanitra antapon'ny loha". They also do not care about the fear of God leading to good actions toward the others; as it is taught by the proverb "Ny tany no tsy asian-dratsy, Zanahary no atahorana". Here, I can say that rich men in Fandriana think and act in a way opposing the Malagasy culture. And by culture, I mean what Kamudzandu speaks about people's world view including their identity, their origins, their purpose, and their way of worship (2012, 5). Malagasy world view, apart from that consideration of God the Creator, is about the solidarity and interdependence between all members of the society. And, the rich, even if they know that they need the poor people to work for them do not consider themselves dependent to the poor. According to them, the needy must work for their subsistence however they treat those poor people. There is a chasm between the rich and the poor.

Rich people in Fandriana, when they want to start a new business, are used to make the poor happy for days or for hours. They try first to show compassion to the people by organizing events that interest many people, mainly the youth generation. Recently during this year, for example, some businessmen and businesswomen who will present themselves as candidates for the next elections of deputies and mayors organized cultural events like “Savika” (a famous cultural event within which some strong trained young people are called to), and artists concert in different communes of the districts. These events make people happy and feel free for the daily struggle in their life. However, attendance to these events do not solve any of their problems; rather, they spend money for the entrance price and for drinks once they are in. as a result, the businessperson both get money and appreciation from the poor peasants.

Rich people also are corrupted and force the others to enter in corruption. In order to make their activities flourish they are involved with the different kind of corruption with the local authorities and the police. Özsahin and Üçler quotes The International Transparency Agency when defining corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Özsahin and Üçler 2017). Corruption in Fandriana is the logic continuation and result of the national level of corruption.

According to Pring and Vrushi, 76% of the Malagasy people asserted that corruption increased in the last 12 months (2019, 41). Further, from 2015 to 2019 corruption in local governments increased from 13% to 17% (Pring and Vrushi, 2019, 41). And, the bribery rates in public schools doubled in these four years, 2015 to 2019 (Pring and Vrushi, 2019, 41).

The next case is a perfect example of this case. There was a man from a commune in the district of Fandriana who was nominated to be a chief of staff of the ministry of education few years ago. What he has done during his first year of nomination was recruiting many of his cousins to be state employees as teachers and state educational staff even if some of them did

not fulfil the required qualifications for the positions. These young people are now both state employees and they also continue to work with their own business. They are children of rich people and they continue to live as rich people.

This act of corruption has its consequences in the society. First of all, there is inclusion of honest people into corruption. During the recruitment, few honest and qualified persons are also recruited with the close relatives in order to make any opposition quiet. They are recruited and then asked before the media to answer the question concerning the legitimacy of their recruitment. Since they did not pay anything for bribery and they also were afraid to be assigned in another place than theirs, they declared that the recruitment was good. After their recruitment, they are in some extent forced to accept corruption. In other words the principal agent of the corruption acts for the legitimization of his act by including honest people, at least at the moment of their recruitment, into corruption.

Another consequence is that, seeing what was happening, other people candidates to the positions try also to enter in the play by briberies. They approach the chief staff or his close relatives in order to get position the soonest possible. The first act of corruption led to many other acts. In addition, being recruited or not is question of life or death. Getting a monthly salary means a lot in the improvement of the standard of living of a family. And once, they are entering into the play, they do not speak anymore on the corrupted way the recruitment is processed.

Other candidates express the unfaithfulness of recruitment process. They speak loudly and permanently about the corruption existing in the recruitment process in the society. As a result, the side of the chief staff tries to make them silent through different means. They try to convince the candidates that they never get position if they still continue working like this. The last one is to wait for the next legal recruitment; and then you may be waiting for years and struggle for living. People within this last case who are qualified people since they are not

close relatives of the chief of staff, are recruited only few or many years later. They have been struggling all these years for their living.

Rich people benefit from the hard labours of the poor. Rich people have lands in different places in the district. Sometimes, they control all the process of production and use peasants to labour their land, to fulfil all the production process. Poor people like working for them in order to get seasonal and temporal works because they need to work for their living and they cannot always find jobs. However, a daily work of 7 hours in the land costs a lunch and a sum of 4000-5000 ariary (about one Euro) for a worker. The work relation between the rich owners and the poor labourers then give palpable profits for the rich people who will benefit from the production in the harvest time. In another case, the rich owners loan their lands to peasants, who take care of all the production process, and get one-third of the production without doing anything. Even if the poor peasants understand that they are exploited in this contract, they still want to consent because they do not have enough land to labour, and they need a job. Poor peasants must work for their subsistence.

In sum, rich people exploit the poor in order to make their wealth grow and their possessions enlarged; and poor people must submit themselves to the way the rich treat them because they control nothing except their own production which is not enough for their subsistence.

4.2.Human Past Experience

Luke 16:19-31 is a parable on a rich man and Lazarus. This is a representative example of the great inequality between rich people and poor ones. Van Eck speaks of an illustration of the great class disparity that existed in the first-century Palestine between urban elite and exploited peasantry (Van Eck, 2009). The rich man represent the elite rulers and Lazarus the poor peasants. In the light of the patronage clientism perspective, the rich man is a patron and Lazarus is not even a client, he cannot be considered as a client since he is not able to do anything. The relation between rich elites and poor peasants is a kind of domination of the

rich over the poor. Hollenbach speaks of an oppressive aristocratic-peasant societies, in which peasants are dominated and exploited by aristocrats; peasants are the poor and aristocrats are the rich. The poor and the rich were therefore also permanent groups within society, mainly in economic and political dimensions of life (Hollenbach 1987, 58). The parable speaks about both the earthly society and afterlife situation.

4.2.1. Human Experience of the Rich Man

Salvation is nothing else than liberation, and liberation theology observes that the biblical message of God's liberation has both historical and eschatological dimensions (Nwadiolor & Nweke, 2013, 85). Jesus' liberation of the poor was a fact in history and it also concerns both the earthly and postmortem human experience. To put it in other words, salvation takes place on the earth and it also has its impact on the afterlife. First, I am going to speak about the human experience within the earthly society.

4.2.1.1. Earthly Human Experience of the Rich Man: The Possibility of Improving the Poor's Standard of Living on the Earth

The rich had the ability to give, to help the poor but he did not care of it. First, he is clothed with in purple and fine linen. He is dressed with a rare and expensive Egyptian linen underwear and purple clothing (Van Eck, 2009). He could help the poor and disable Lazarus who was put outside his gate every day, but he did not do anything because Lazarus has nothing profitable to bring to his business and status.

First, the rich have more than enough to share. Every day feasts, expensive clothing, land, other possessions. Second, He had food and friends in abundance. He had many clients working for him. He had many thing that could make Lazarus experience less suffering and starvation. For example, he could ask one of his client to clean Lazarus' sores and made of him an able client who could later work for him. But, he had not enough compassion to work with love for the poor Lazarus. He could also ask another client to take from the rest at the

table and give it to Lazarus for nourishment. That would make him stronger and then give him the ability to work. All of that is of no price to him but he did not care. All of them would make him a better and strong patron among the others but he was not compassionate enough to be attentive to Lazarus' case.

Then, they will not become poor if they help the others. Examples in the same gospel of Luke show that the rich did not become poor when they love the poor and help them. Consequently, the rich did not become poor but rather, they get reward from the Lord. Szkredka mentions some Lukan narratives showing different people who were compassionate to the poor; and received reward for what their attention to the poor and their action (2019). First, there is the Roman centurion, someone who loves the people. He even built a synagogue for them. When he met Jesus, he had his son saved from death (Luke 7:1-10). Second, in Acts 3:36, Tabitha, who was devoted to good works and act of charity, was resuscitated. Then, there is Cornelius who received the repentance that leads to life (Acts 11:18) because he gave alms generously (Acts 10:2; 4:8).

Third, the rich become rich because of the poor's hard labours. Fourth, he was among the Jewish aristocrat who had official power. His way of clothing is status marker because purple is the colour of kings and honourable men, a mark of luxurious living and sign of official power worn by those who are proud of their wealth (Van Eck, 2009). He had the ability to maintain his wealth; or even more, to enlarge his possession because he could compete for clients among the poor and peasantry (Van Eck, 2009). In addition, he was in position to control more and more land, produce, and labour (Van Eck, 2009). All that shows the rich man's ability to help, but he totally ignored the poor Lazarus who was brought every day at his gate to get some of what is left in his table.

Besides, he was a man of honour. Every morning, he received daily salutation from his clients. He feasts every day to enhance his honour. He received good things and experience

comfort (Van Eck, 2009). But, his willingness to protect his honour and status made him blind and made impossible the possibility to help the poor.

Fifth, the law and the prophets call permanently for the love of the neighbours. And Jesus himself did likewise and asked people to do likewise. In this text, Abraham, when asked by the rich man to send a person to warn his brothers on the earth replied that “they have Moses and the prophets, they should listen to them” (16:29) who permanently warn them. In Deuteronomy 15: 7-9, Moses himself says that

“If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbour. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought... and therefore view your neighbour with hostility and give nothing; your neighbour might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt.”

The prophet Isaiah also follows by saying,

“Is this not the fast that I choose: to lose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? ... Then shall you call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, ‘Here I am’” (Isa 58:6-9).

Within his discussion to a lawyer, Jesus preaches that to love God and to love the neighbours, as it is written in the laws, is the way of inheriting eternal life (Luke 10: 25-28). The lawyer completely gets the point on it. However, concerning the practical life, about living in accordance to what the law says, the lawyer fails. When the lawyer asked Jesus “Who is my

neighbour? Jesus explained that the one who took care of the man who fell into the hands of the robbers would be his friends. In addition, Jesus invited the lawyer to “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). Jesus’ compassion for the poor is a mark of Christian church. Here, Verster utters that the church cannot be church unless it follows Jesus in his compassion for the poor; and Luke 10:25-37 is an example of the calling to fulfil the church’s duty in love (2012).

4.2.1.2. Postmortem Experience of the Rich Man: The Impossibility to Improve the Standard of Living of the Poor in the Afterlife

The rich man was not rich anymore when he died. He could not bring any of his wealth in his post-mortem experience. If the rich man’s situation on earth presented all the possibilities for him to help the poor, his situation in the afterlife does not allow him to do anything. Rather, he is in a miserable and perpetual conditions. Here, I am going to speak first about the rich man’s situation in the post-mortem with its causes and about what it should be if he was listening to Moses and the prophets.

Put into the Hades, he was in a perpetual torment, he was in agony. Therefore, he was among the poorest people, he was an expendable. First, He became among the physical poor and then wanted to get other’s help and compassion for him. In fact, he lacked of water, a very affordable needs, but he cannot get. Then, he called to Abraham “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue” (16:24). But his demand was absolutely rejected because he had comfort on earth but did not pay attention to the situation of the poor and also because there is a great chasm which cannot be passed through between Abraham’s place and the rich man’s place.

He was outside the gate of the kingdom of God. He was among those who are left outside the closed doors, and despite their acquaintance with the Lord – “We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets” (Luke 13:26) – will not be allowed to enter the heavenly banquet (Szerdka, 2019). He sees Abraham and other patriarchs and prophets eating in the kingdom of

God (Luke 13:28-29), but he was thrown outside, in Hades. He feels that he needs to pass the gate to go inside the kingdom but he cannot (Van Eck, 2009). He was among those who are condemned for being workers of injustice (Luke 13:27). And in accordance with the logic of Luke's narrative, they failed to listen to Jesus, to whom the law and the prophets testify (Luke 9:28-36; 24:44-46) (Szerdka, 2019).

Second, he asked Abraham to send from the dead to warn his brothers since they were still on the earth (16:27-28), but Abraham's answer was very clear, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them" (16:29). He asked Abraham to send people from the dead to warn his brothers so that they share their wealth and have compassion to the poor; to be a right man of God unlike him. In this perspective, richness is a challenge and it has to be shared and it urges to struggle for justice in economic and social structure (Kügler, 2012, 11). For if the rich do not take part actively in the struggle for social justice, they are not really part of God's chosen people (Kügler, 2012, 12).

He feels that he needs friends, but he cannot have one who help him go outside the fire torture. In addition, He feels that he was for his first time outside the gate. He had not the possibility to go inside the kingdom. All the possibility he had on earth are lost when he died and put into Hades. The fundamental cause of his situation in the afterlife is his failing to be compassionate to the poor but not to be wealthy.

4.2.2. The poor in the Bible (Lazarus)

4.2.2.1. Earthly Human Experience of Lazarus

Contrary to the rich man, Lazarus struggled in every dimension of his life.

He was an expendable. He was physically, psychologically, socially and economically disabled. First of all, he could not walk. He was brought to the rich man's gate every day, and he laid there but neither stood up nor seated down. Mitzi Smith states that Lazarus languishes at the rich man's gate (2019). He was longing there to eat what fell from the rich man's table.

He laid down outside the gate and cannot pass through it because he had both no ability to enter inside by himself and was not allowed to get inside.

Second, Lazarus was waiting for the remaining food from the rich man's table. He longs for the crumbs but never receives them (McWhirter, 2015). He did not have anything to eat and must wait that the others who passed in front of him would be compassionate to him and gave something for him to eat. He could not beg. He could only wait for a compassionate person passing in front of him and giving something to eat, or to use.

However, Lazarus was a human being. The fact that he was named implies that he was really a human being. Smith underlines that naming Lazarus is nothing else that humanizes him (2019). But, the rich does not see him as a human; he totally ignored Lazarus. In this perspective, as far as patronage clientism is concerned, Lazarus could not be a client to the patron due to all his disabilities. He was of no use to the rich man (Van Eck, 2009).

Besides, Lazarus was among the product of the rich man's exploitation (Van Eck, 2009).

Before he became an expendable like this, Lazarus perhaps was among a small holder of land. Nonetheless, because of rich's strategy for exploitation of the poor; he ended up in his miserable situation. Palestinian adults in the first-century had to pay taxes to the local authorities and to the Roman Empire. Small holder of land could not pay these heavy tax burdens. Then they were pushed to accrue heavy debts and could not repay. As a result, they lost their land and properties and became tenants. After that, they became a dependent labourer and ended up as expendables (Van Eck, 2009).

Third, he was totally alone. Apart from the people who brought him every morning at the gate of the rich man, he had no one to take care of him. He had no families ties left (Van Eck, 2009). He also was rejected by the society as an impure. He was covered with sores. He was socially and ritually impure (Van Eck, 2009). He received evil things and anguish. He could not do anything, he was powerless.

4.2.2.2. Postmortem Human Experience of Lazarus: Perfection of his Salvation by God

Within the explanation of Lazarus' situation on the earth, God sided on him and considered him as human being. His postmortem situation just underlines that fact.

He was brought to the place where Abraham was. He is reconsidered again as a child of Abraham. He experienced comfort (Van Eck, 2009). He had in abundance and had the possibility to give. His salvation is perfected by God.

He lacks nothing. He is no longer a poor man anymore. He was reintroduced in the kingdom and share the banquet there.

4.3. Preaching Luke 16:19-31: a Call to contribute in the Betterment of the Standard of Living of the Poor

Preaching is nothing else but the proclamation of the good news to the poor. Good news is concerned with divine action as it is recorded in the Bible, and human action as it can be seen in the present human experience. Jesus' gospel is directed toward the poor. Ndekha, quoting numerous researchers, summarizes the meaning of the Greek word "euangelion", good news, in its Greco-Roman and Jewish setting as reward for a message of victory; related to the Hebrew word basar, as a glad tidings of messianic restoration. Besides, basar rendered as euangelion, was commonly associated with the proclamation of "shalom" which denotes completeness in the meaning of "possessing a fullness of welfare, health, security and prosperity for the whole community" (2016, 48). Then the word shalom, associated with "yasha" having the meaning of to deliver or save. And, there also is the word "eirene" or peace, which, in addition to its use as a form of greeting based on the heart to bless, was also used to denote good news of victory over enemies (2016, 49). Then, he further explains that the "association of euangelion with victory over difficult situations suggests that shalom/ gospel/ salvation of and from God was often decisively exercised in situations of adverse lack

or misery associated with being poor” (2016, 48). In this perspective, it is clear that the good news has a socio-economic dimensions here and now; and also for the hope of perfect afterlife condition.

Preaching is an act. It is a grace-giving action of speaking in God’s name and with God’s power to the people of God (Dominic, Stanley C., 2019, 70). Preaching is a specially graced ministerial act in the Church whereby a divinely commissioned preacher speaks the word of God publicly and so moves his hearers to saving acts of faith and love (Dominic, Stanley C., 2019, 70). Preachers are overseers, ensuring that society as a whole leads a godly life, and no sphere or person is beyond their grasp (Tilli, 2019). The powerless poor cannot help themselves to get portion from the rich’s possessions. Lazarus was unable to lay his hands on the leftovers from the table (Adewale, 2021). Therefore, and according to Luke 16:19-31, the preacher needs to call the rich to open their hands to help their poor neighbours. And the sharing should be accomplished on the earth because it is of non-sense in the post mortem conditions. This narrative is a call for the improvement of the socio-economic situation of the poor so that all people will live better both on earth and later in post-mortem situation. It is a call directed toward the rich people on earth to include poor neighbours in their daily banquets in accordance with Jesus has always done, and is always calling and expecting rich people to do here and now.

Preaching is God’s event as saving here and now (Dominic, Stanley C., 2019, 74). In fact, preaching concerns the present human experience of the people. Focusing on the contribution of preaching to the betterment of the standard of living of the people, one must utter that Jesus himself is concerned with the poor’s situation here and now. The narrative recorded in Luke 16: 19-31 about the rich man and Lazarus is a solid text for the proclamation of the good news of shalom and salvation of God and from God over the difficult situations the poor face in their daily living. Those difficulties are mainly related to their low and uncomfortable

standard of living. This biblical text and many others which are similar to it should be preached following this perspective. God is acting for the improvement of the living of the poor through the sensitization of the rich to have compassion of the poor; through not ignoring but helping the poor on the earth. Earthly wealth are of no use in the afterlife, they are given to be used faithfully here on the earth. In other words, improving the level of living of the poor is only possible on the earth.

Living well together was the focus of the old community in Fandriana. This narrative invites the preachers to call the rich, who take the place of the elders in managing the society, in organizing the working conditions, in distributing the common products. The rich people in Fandriana are also people of the church, then they are children of Abraham. The preachers need to call the rich to become and live as true children of Abraham. True children of Abraham do not ignore the poor on earth; rather, they have compassion to them and helping them to become their friends but not to abandon them as useless individuals, as non-human. True children of Abraham are those who obey Moses and the prophets and who share their wealth to the poor (Van Eck, 2006).

It is a warning directed to rich people who conduct themselves like unhuman and dehumanize the poor humans. Even though the poor is ignored on the earth, Jesus is always concerned with their case. God wants them to live within a high standard of living and is on their side. God wants rich people in Fandriana to help the poor in order that they live better. However if the rich would not like to help since they are still on the earth, they will be rejected in the afterlife and put outside the kingdom for torment. Here, the importance of the “already and not yet” in the reign of God is worth noticing. The reign of God embraces both the here and now on the earth and of the post-mortem situation. God wants us to live better in this world and to live nearby Abraham in the post-mortem. But, those do not want and fail to work for social justice on the earth will experience suffering life in Hadès.

V. Chapter Five: Improving the Standard of living of the Oppressed Through a Socio-economic Change within the Society: A Way of Preaching Luke 19:1-10

The previous chapter spoke about preaching the possibility of helping others, but this one is concerned with both the possibility and the initiation of social change, for the betterment of the poor's socio-economic situation, through preaching the narrative about Zacchaeus. This is as an example taken from myriad of biblical texts presenting the 'should be' of the contribution of preaching, the behavior change of Zacchaeus. He was first an oppressor, but once saved and liberated by Christ' words and action, he became an active agent of social change and initiate the process of social change in its positive aspects. In doing so, I express first the case of oppression in Fandriana as similar to case in Africa in general. Then, I present about the human present experience of the oppressed and the oppressor. In the third section is analysed the past experience of the oppressor and the oppressed a sit recorded in the Bible. Then, the chapter is ended by a concluding comment on the case of Zaccacheus

5.1.On Oppression in Africa and Fandriana-Madagascar

5.1.1. *The Situation*

Oppressive system is reality in Africa. Oppression is the exercise or display of raw power by the powerful over the less powerful or weak (Ediogwiawerie, 2011). Ediogwiawerie when speaking about the domination of few elites of the bourgeoisie class over proletarian masses in Africa, explains that the oppression does not only exist but is in increase (2011, 128-129). Oppression is the essence of injustice (Saiedi, 2016). Nwaliador and Nweke underline that African liberation theology is developed because of "the people's own experience of life situation as unjustly dominated (Politically) hence systematically exploited, racially oppressed, structurally poor, and in many cases, violently brutalized" (2013, 82). In this perspective, oppressive system affects many victims.

So many Malagasy common proverbs and sayings explain also that this situation of oppression is also lived in Madagascar, and in Fandriana. First, the proverb “Andriamanitra tsy andrin’ny hafa andriko ihany” emphasizes the existence of injustice accomplished permanently by corrupted high and mid-classes people toward the weak poor. According to this proverb, and many similar others, the oppressed poor and weak are asking directly for help from God, and are waiting for God’s deliverance from the hands of corrupted rich. The poor, who feel that they are not considered as having the same human values as the rich also claimed that “Ny ory tsy havan’ny manana”, or the poor are not friends of the rich. Further, the situation is understood as similar to the case of a group of bulls which marginalize the lean animal as it is recorded in the saying “Ny omby mahia tsy lelafin’ny namany”. The poor, who fell oppression and rejection cannot do anything but calling God to help them.

5.1.2. Fight against Oppression

African theologians join the social scientists and different development actors in the fight against any kind of oppressions. In the perspective of liberation theology, Christian faith is defined as ‘a motivating force which demands that the oppressed must be liberated in order to make room for the realization of the salvific deed of Jesus and the salvific will of God’ (2013, 79). The Malagasy sayings “Aza manao tsindry hazo lena” and “Aza manenji-dresy”, both of them means do not oppress those who are already victims of injustices, become weak and cannot speak, act because they have lost their resources. They only need help and support to get back to their feet, to stand and restart a better life. In this perspective, the Malagasy wisdom is in accordance with what the Old Testament prophets have done. They unequivocally condemned the neglect of the Mosaic provisions for assistance to the poor and disobedience to Moses’s prohibitions against the misfortunes of the poor (Nebechukwu, 1991, 265). The Malagasy call for the caring of the poor also is in agreement with Jesus’ preaching

of the kingdom of God as-historical reality to overturn the existing unjust social order- a good news for the poor who will benefit from it (Nebechukwu, 1991, 271).

5.2.Human Present Experience

There also is an oppressive system in Fandriana, and the case is similar to what is experienced in all Africa. However, there are not many academic writings on the fact.

5.2.1. The Oppressed in Fandriana

Among the poor, there are the oppressed. One cannot say all poor people are oppressed, however, oppression is one the most serious causes of poverty. Physical oppression is dangerous, but the social, economic, cultural and political oppressions are more perilous. Saiedi explains that oppression encompasses not only material deprivations of every kind, but also has psychological and spiritual dimensions (2016). I have explained in the previous chapter the present experience of the poor in Fandriana. One of the main cause of poverty is oppression. In fact, the oppressed are among the poor.

5.2.2. The Oppressor in Fandriana

The oppressor are always those who are in control of the society, the rich. Of course, all rich men do not oppress directly the others but for the growth of their possessions, they all dominate the poor masses in different activities and ways of thinking. The oppressor in Fandriana can be easily identified with the rich cheaters like Zacchaeus. However, they think little about the restitution of the poor's possession and hard labour which made them rich. They are, in great extent, still oppressing the poor.

5.2.3. Relation between the Oppressor and the Oppressed

There is a Malagasy proverb relating to the importance of the community than rather than the love of the money. "Aleo very tsikalakalam-bola, toy izay very tsikalakalam-pihavanana", or simply it is good to lose money rather than to lose relatives. However, the reality shows that many of nowadays' people do not care about that. People are more concerned with money

than by relatives except the consideration of the very close relatives. The rich, because they hold the local authorities or they friends of those who are in positions of power have the control on the main resources existing in the district use their ability to extract the resources from the poor without any consensus or agreement from the poor. This is in some extent similar to what Jacobs utters,

“Whereas the non-elite attempted to keep resources decentralised in order to develop and sustain village life for the wellbeing of actual kinship (domestic economy), the elite employed political religion and political kinship in order to centralise political power and extract resources from the non-elite” (2018, 120).

Even if the poor try to protect their resources, they cannot do anything due to the exploitation system established in advance. In fact, the rich and powerful own and control the resources, then they use them for the elite benefits. By resources, I mean not only the materials but also the human resources. Of course the poor live in their proper residence and work for themselves, but when it comes to socio-economic activities like commerce, they have just to follow the rules instituted by the rich. In sum, the rich oppressed the poor.

5.2.4. How the Rich Oppressed the Poor?

Facts show that the rich oppressed the poor by making their lives miserable, depriving them from any comfort. In their respective fields of intervention, the rich are exploiting the poor. First, merchants cheated the customers as it was the case in the Old Testament times (Nebechukwu, 1991, 269). Merchants were not honest in the treatment of their clients since they know between them and they set together the same price. Thus, the rich can exploit the poor by increasing in a dishonest manner the price of the articles. Small merchants are only resellers of the articles, wholesalers have imported from other regions. Consequently, they take part in the enrichment of the rich wholesalers. The people must buy goods in the price the rich set, as a result, they are weakened.

Politicians and local authorities are corrupted, they cheat the people. In fact, they get money from entrepreneurs to improve the conditions of the service they offer to the people but they pay do not care. According to Pring and Vrushi, the corruption concerning the local government officials increased from 13% to 17% in four years, 2015-2019, in Madagascar (2019, 41). The district of Fandriana also is concerned with this case. For example, Fandriana is well-known with its pine forest exploitation. Every day, there are trucks which come and pick pine planks, board and batten from Fandriana, truck owners give rebate to the local authorities for road maintenance. The local government also receives a subvention from the central government but they do not rehabilitate the roads. Bad road conditions provoke increasing of the basic necessities' price due to the difficulty of transportation of merchandises. And this leads to the impoverishment of the poor.

5.3.Human Past experience

5.3.1. The Oppressed in the Bible

The crowd represent the oppressed. The crowd are those who must pay tax. Paying tax is burdens because it is just impossible for small holders, daily workers pay the amount fixed by the State.

They have muttered, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner" (19:7). According to the text, the reason of their murmur is the fact that Jesus accepted to be Zacchaeus's guest. Even if it is not clearly mentioned in the text, this hosting action includes a shared meal. In the ancient world, a meal with somebody meant communion between the two parties (Cuany, 2018, 15).

They hate Zacchaeus because of his wrong-doing to them. The people were oppressed by Zacchaeus who was a Roman representative, an official power pushing them to serious case of poverty.

In the case of the narrative on Zacchaeus, the oppressed were victims of different kind of oppression. Physically, they must work harder and harder in order to get the great amount of

money they must pay as taxes and for the living of their own family (Reimer, 2005).

Psychologically, they were living under the fear of being imprisoned, sold as slaves or deprived from their possessions in case they could not pay the taxes (Reimer, 2005). Socially, they are oppressed since they were pushed to the bottom of the social class.

5.3.2. The Oppressor in the Bible

Zacchaeus, like many other rich people, as it is recorded in the Bible were oppressing the others. First they were confined in doing wrong to the masses and were considered as sinners. Few of them, realizing that they were acting falsely, hated by the masses, and were outside the kingdom, they wanted to be liberated.

Zacchaeus as a Chief tax collectors was involved in cheating and theft. They are more than that, Quoting Amy-Jill Levine, LeCrone states that, ‘a tax collector "was a traitor to his people; the government for which he worked, the Roman Empire, used the Temple as its personal bank’ (2022, 94). Tax collectors used their position to steal and enrich themselves (cf. Luke 3:12—13; 19:8), and they were accused of colluding with the Romans (Cuany, 2018). LeCrone, by quoting Fred Craddock this time, adds a chief tax collector is worse than that by the fact that ‘he had to pay the Romans in advance for the tax assessed for his district, and then farmed out the actual work to employees, his profit consisting of all that he could extract from the population beyond his original purchase price’ (2022, 94). In this perspective, though technically an Israelite, then, Zacchaeus is nonetheless an oppressor working for the political masters of Israel—the Romans (Cuany, 2018).

The tax collectors, indeed the chief tax collectors, were among the people who are disgusting from the side of the masses because they are considered as sinners. Tax collectors are usually associated with ‘sinners’ in Luke’s gospel and detested by the Pharisees and the scribes (5:30; 15:1-2; 18:11) (Cuany, 2018). They were wrong-doers and Zacchaeus personally recognized his false past intentions and actions. He felt that he is outside the kingdom. Thus, he wanted to

see Jesus, the savior. Even if Zacchaeus' physical stature, he was short, did not allow him to see Jesus in the crowd, he did what was incorrect for a rich man to do in order to see Jesus. Then, he ran ahead the crowd and climbed a sycamore-fig tree. He felt that he really need at least to see Jesus. For Jesus, Zacchaeus was among the lost and needed to be found by the savior. Then Jesus passed by to seek him and to reintroduce him in the kingdom again. Zacchaeus was among the lost. He was lost because he was a sinner who stole from the others. He was a dishonest man. He was lost, his relation to God was broken and so do his relations to the people (Cuany, 2018). According to the text, 'all the people' accuse Zacchaeus (19:7). This unanimous accusation reflects the strain of his social relationships despite his wealth (Cuany, 2018). In addition to that, he was lost because he lost his identity as a son of Israel (Cuany, 2018). Fortunately, Jesus did not want to let him down in this desperate situation for the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.

5.4.Relation between the oppressor and the oppressed

5.4.1. Before Jesus' Salvation

Before the salvific act of Jesus, the oppressors kept oppressing the poor and the oppressed continued hating the rich. The rich abuse poor masses. The rich oppressed the poor, cheated on them and made them struggling with everything. Tax system is one of the main means used for pertaining domination and oppression in the Roman Empire. In fact, it has important place in the economic situation of the people. Reimer explains the system of domination in matter of taxes. If the people cannot pay taxes they are unable to sell their products in the market, or sell them clandestinely, running the risk of imprisonment. If they cannot pay taxes, they are in debt with the state's tax organization. The interest owed on the amount continued to rise. If they cannot pay taxes, their merchandise are seized. If they cannot pay, they can be sold as slaves (Reimer, 2005). Thus, they run the risk of being deprived of their property, be

imprisoned and of becoming slaves in their everyday life. They could not do anything so they were waiting for liberation, for salvation.

As a chief tax collector, Zaccaheus was part of the system through which the Romans maintain domination over the people. He was either a functionary in the toll center or a rich man who buys the right to collect tolls. Zacchaeus was one of the chief responsible of a toll center since he was a chief tax collector. He, with other local magistrates and liturgical officials, were in charge of collecting taxes in the city territories. Taxable individuals was “liable to his city, the city to the Roman government” (Udoh, 2005, p. 239). Thus, people in his locality is reliable directly to the city for which he is the responsible of the collection of taxes.

Chief tax collectors also has power and position and impoverished people. His title of “architeldnes”, literally ‘chief’ tax collector, also suggests that he has a position of power and leadership (Cuany, 2018). The chief tax-collector, or to be more precise, Zacchaeus as toll collector used all the needs authority to make people pay. Here, he even intimidate the poor people and forced them to pay. Consequently, they become indebted, sold as slaves, forced to labour (Reimer, 2005). In one word, tax collectors impoverished people. And, this fact widens the gap between the rich and the poor; inequality is accentuated.

5.4.2. After Jesus’ Salvation

When Jesus is acting graciously, there is a change within the society. Jesus changes completely the kind of relation existing between the oppressors and the oppressed. He changes the society from oppression-recession relation to right and just relation between the people. When Jesus came and asked "Zacchaeus, come immediately. I must stay at your house today." (19:5); He came down at once and welcomed him gladly (19:6). As a result, Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four

times the amount (19:8)”. After hosting Jesus and receiving him, Zacchaeus became an actor of social change. Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house” not because what Zacchaeus did (19:8), but because he, because is a son of Abraham, too. (19:9) here, “the grace of God has called, and Zaccheaus is responding” (LeCrone, 2022, 96). In addition to that, Jesus clearly affirmed that the “for the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost” (10). And, since Zacchaeus is a son of Abraham, he is among the church. The role of the church as a change agent is the result of God’s reconciliatory action in history (Wood, 2018). In other words, Zacchaeus, the liberated oppressor was reminded that he also is son of Abraham then he wanted to act in accordance with that.

5.4.2.1. The Oppressor liberated

When the oppressors receive Jesus, or when Jesus comes in the house of the oppressors and they accept to host him, they are liberated through oppressing the poor. They are also liberated from the practice of injustice and turn to the poor, helping them. Concerning the narrative in Luke 19:1-10, When Zacchaeus declared that he would make restitution for past injustices and present inequities, Jesus announced his salvation (Barram, 2022). And, Barram adds that today’s white Americans should also follow the chief tax collector’s path by rethinking of the right redistribution of wealth to the others (Barram, 2022).

The liberation of Zacchaeus in this narrative was accomplished under two actions of Jesus. First, Jesus said to him, "Zacchaeus, come immediately. I must stay at your house today." (19:5). Jesus seeks to find the lost Zacchaeus, and when he found him, he was staying at Zacchaeus’ house. Staying at Zacchaeus’ house is sharing table and eat with him. Knowing Zacchaeus as he was, Jesus still want to dine with him (Gatta, 2009). As a mark of his liberation, Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus to his home with great joy. For Masaki, “this is the word of faith. This is the word of the gospel. Just like when a shepherd found a lost sheep (15:5) or when a father found a lost son (15:32) or when a sinner repents (15:7, 10)” (Masaki,

2022). In the same perspective, Cuany states that “it is Jesus’ presence and his communion with Zacchaeus that provokes in him the repentance and transformation that characterizes salvation” (Cuany, 2018). Then Zacchaeus was liberated from his sin and his wrongdoing. Second, Jesus’ salvation of Zacchaeus is perceived within his words, “Today salvation has come to this house” not because what Zacchaeus did (19:8), but because he, is a son of Abraham, too. (19:9) here, “the grace of God has called, and Zaccheaus is responding” (LeCrone, 2022, 96). Zacchaeus was one of the many Abraham’s sons who were lost. And the savior came to save him. Here, again divine action is fundamental on human salvation. The lost son Abraham was found again and produce the fruits of repentance. “By saving Zacchaeus, God is thus actively working at restoring God’s people as a holy people who bear fruit of repentance” (Cuany, 2018). The fruits of repentance include both the transformation within the life of Zacchaeus himself, and the social change in community where he was living.

5.4.2.2. The Ex-Opressors Liberate the Others

The Christian faith is not something extrinsic to the afflictions of the oppressed, but it is rather a motivating force which demands that the oppressed must be liberated in order to make room for the realization of the historical translation of the salvific deed of Jesus and the salvific will of God (Nwadiolor & Nweke, 2013). Liberation in its simplest meaning connotes the salvation of both the soul and the body, a quest for incarnated Christianity (2013). Salvation has both individual and social dimensions (Cuany, 2018).

First, the conversion of Zacchaeus has its good social impacts. Zacchaeus himself was likely to be part of the elite oppressors, as a wealthy chief tax collector. His unexpected conversion promises well for a wholesale change of the attitude of the elite towards the non-elite, as well as a redistribution of wealth (Jacobs, 2018, 131). Even if Zacchaeus’ conversion was to be the exception (Jacobs, 2018) since many rich people continue oppressing the others, the case

speaks that social change is not only possible but it can really take place in the today's society.

5.4.2.3. What Zacchaeus has accomplished?

Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, and in front of everyone who attended there, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount (19:8)".

He restitutes four times the amount what he has stolen from people. Zacchaeus' action was a result of God's intervention into his life. Jesus reached Zacchaeus, the lost, and forgave him (Masaki, 2022). He gives half of his possessions to the poor. Zacchaeus's repentance and faith manifested themselves in his plan of returning his properties as he followed the stipulation written in Exodus 21 (Masaki, 2022). In this perspective, Zacchaeus' repentance provokes positive social change; it improve the socio-economic living of the people.

5.5. Betterment of the Standard of Living of the Poor through Initiation of a Social Change

A change is a transformation within a society either a micro (small-sized community) or macro (large) society. It is a fundamental social change; a movement from what is to what ought to be (Nwadiolor & Nweke, 2013). "The change theory of Malina and Pilch as social scientific model suggests the following: change creates awareness of a need for change; exchange information, identify and explain the problem; motivate change; initiate change; stabilise and prevent discontinuity of change; and terminate the relationship after successful implementation (Malina & Pilch's 2013:235–238, quoted by Nwadiolor & Nweke, 2013)".

Within preaching, one can make listeners' awareness of a need of change plausible, one can identify and explain the problem, motivate change, initiate change (through change of mind), however the whole process- action for change is not completed within preaching itself, but within diakonia, another being of the holistic mission of the Christians.

According to Bevans, God is at work in the world and he calls men and women to be his partners (2013). Men and women should work for social change. The praxis model of Bevans' contextual theology focuses not only on Christian faith but also on Christian action (Bevans, 2013). In this chapter, I analyzed the narrative on Zacchaeus on preaching social change for the betterment of the standard of living of the oppressed. In this text Jesus' preaching produces faith for and in Zacchaeus; in fact he got salvation and, in his turn, pronounced salvation to the others. For Tilli, "preaching produces faith, the only criteria for salvation" (2019, 10). In this perspective, preaching is source of social change. Relating this to the praxis model of Bevans, God is at work in the world through preaching, creating faith, and calling men and women to be actors of social change.

The mention of social change also is related to the Lukan conception of Salvation. According to the Lukan writings the good news has a noticeable salvific aspect. Monique Cuany argues that the very first chapters of Gospel are filled with soteriological terms presenting Jesus as a 'horn of salvation, a 'savior' (2:11), even 'salvation' itself (2:30), and associating his birth with God making 'redemption' for God's people (1:68; 2:38) (2018, 12). God's salvation in Luke concerns not only the salvation of people of God from their enemies and military bondage (1:68—71), but also intend to reach every one, as forgiveness of sins (1:77) and liberation of the poor and the marginalized. Furthermore, the Lukan salvation includes also the social aspect of the community life. In this narrative on Zacchaeus, the both the individual and the social dimensions of salvation are perceptible. Zacchaeus as an individual was saved from greed and wrongdoing, he was liberated from the people's mockery, and he was introduced again in the kingdom of God as a true son of Abraham. Zacchaeus' salvation, then contributed to the liberation of the people who were cheated by him. He restituted four times of the amount what he has stolen; he hand over the half of his possessions to the poor.

Preachers should also preach that Jesus' salvation freed rich oppressors from wrong thinking and doing in order that the saved rich people promote help their poor neighbours. Rich people in Fandriana should reconsider how they remunerate the poor who are working on them and constitute the guarantee of their success. They need to hear effective preaching similar to the case of the narrative on Zacchaeus, receive God's salvation, freed from greed and dishonesty, think and act for improvement of the standard of living of the people. Preachers should call them to reconsider the Malagasy wisdom on kinship is superior to money, and pay attention to the afflicted who are deprived from their small possessions for decades and exploited in different ways.

If Jesus received Zacchaeus as a real son of Abraham again, he is doing the same to the rich people in Fandriana. In addition to that, rich people in Fandriana are among the Malagasy people who have been always emphasizing the presence of God in the daily life of the people; and who is requesting from them to do the right thing in the right way. They also, are called to work for the betterment of society, to construct an all-inclusive community who will never left anybody behind. In fact, true children of Abraham are those who do not ignore but have compassion to the poor (Van Eck, 2009). It is worth to say that true children of Abraham are rich people who are ready to hand over important part of their possessions for the betterment of the humans living in their society, for a transformation, for a holistic social change. True children of Abraham are those who, attentively listened and obeyed preaching, and are now transformed as agent of change for the betterment of the poor' living in the community, for a peaceful society, for a socio-economic justice.

Some Christian people in Fandriana help the poor for social justice. Those who are helping are either rich people or good intended middle-class workers. In fact, they are involved in many good actions. Their actions cover different social and economic dimensions of life. For instance, some participate in social aspect of life like education by helping poor children to go

to school, they buy the furniture and help for the food, they also get involved in the building of new classrooms and in the rehabilitation of old schools. They also are very active in helping people who are victims of natural disasters. These actions are helpful for the poor. But, these actions are often taken as just a social humanitarian action. Preaching which pays attention to the socio-economic dimension of the Gospel is one effective way of teaching them to understand that good action is based in the God's good work through Christ who saved them to do the work of the Lord.

Others take part in improving the poor's economy. Therefore, they try to employ as many workers as possible, and increase in some extent the remuneration of their employees. For example, Rasoarimalala Hanta, a pastor's wife, an animator and one of the pioneers of the Use Your Talent Programme in Madagascar, from the middle-class category is encouraging handcraft-women and men to produce hats, hand bags, and different handmade articles. She collects the products from them and sells them throughout Madagascar, she has works with resellers in many region of Madagascar. The woman explain about her involvement in using her talents and states that: "It is helpful to use talents. The more you use it, the more it develops. Use your talents, don't keep it. It will help you and others. (Rasoarimalala, 2017, 42). And at her beginning, he was inspired by what is recorded in Proverbs 3:27: "Withhold not good from them it is due, when it on the power of yours and do it". Then, she started using her talents, developed the way she used it and now she is very well-known in this field, not only in Fandriana but throughout Madagascar and even in other countries like Kenya, Ethiopia.

Social change for the betterment of the standard of living of the people is initiated by God mainly in Christ. Unless saved and liberated by God, Zacchaeus, and all people today cannot act for positive transformation of the society. Then God's work is preached to others in order that they also can be changed and become change agents with those who are already in action.

VI. Chapter Six: Improving the standard of living of the poor by Emphasizing the Relation between Preaching and Diakonia

The contribution of preaching to the improvement of the standard of living of the poor also can be understood through the relation between preaching and diakonia. After presenting a short biblical insights on preaching and diakonia, I present and discuss the betterment of the socio-economic lives of the poor by developing the relation between preaching and diakonia. I speak shortly about the Malagasy understanding of preaching and diakonia at the end of this chapter.

6.1. Biblical Foundation of Preaching and Diakonia

6.1.1. Preaching

Kerygma-proclamation or preaching- of Gospel and diakonia-Gospel in action- are both constitutive of Jesus' words and service for the poor. Diakonia and preaching both of them, with advocacy are different parts of God's holistic mission in the world, through the church (Junge, 2019).

Preaching, as the common translation of the Hebrew word *basar*, means to bear tidings, to gladden with joyful message; or simply to proclaim good news. Good news includes joyful news, like a victory (1 Sam.31:9; 2 Sam. 1:20; 1 Chr. 10:9; Ps. 68:12), a birth of a son (Jer. 20:25); and the reiteration of God's reign with God's salvation (Isa. 40:9-11, 41:27, 52:7).

And this message is for the whole person and for all people. In fact, a famous verse in Isaiah 61:1 states clearly that "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free". Therefore, preaching is the proclamation of God's achievement to men.

In the same perspectives, news of a victory is peace since it is claimed that we are saved and it is held within the reign of God (Jørgensen, 2018). This reign of God means shalom, peace, the

end of brokenness. Preaching is all about the proclamation of the kingdom of God within which the poor is saved and delivered from all what have broken them. In fact, the reign of God breaks the chains of evil, sin and Satan, and leads to salvation, a good news for all creation and all humanity since God will bring wholeness and fullness when we are at peace with God, ourselves and the world (Jørgensen, 2018, 8-9). Here preaching underlines the social dimension of the God's good news to the people.

In the New Testament, kerygma is used for preaching. In Luke 4:17-21, Jesus identifies himself to the one who is recorded in Isa. 61. The text is a programmatic statement of Jesus' ministry to preach or proclaim the kerygma – good news to the poor, the blind and the captive (Jørgensen, 2018; Werner and Ross, 2021). Jørgensen adds that the “key term that encapsulates Jesus' message and the message about Jesus is gospel as we find it both in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom (Mark 1:14-15) and in the apostles' preaching of the crucified and risen Jesus” (2018, 8). God was reigning in and through Jesus, through his words and through his works (Jørgensen, 2018, 9). He continued that when Paul recapitulates this message (e.g. Rom. 1:3-4), he understands it also as a message of transforming power to those who believe: ‘It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith...’ (Rom. 1:16) (Jørgensen, 2018).

6.1.2. *Diakonia*

Referring to Luke 22:18; 4:18, Werner and Ross, explained that “Jesus understood his ministry as one of diakonia to the poor and marginalized” (2021, 10). Diakonia is the call to participate in God's caring and liberating action for the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed (Jørgensen, 2016, 10). In the Old Testament, God's righteous character is exemplified through his care for the poor, the weak and the powerless. Justice (*mishpat*), kindness/faithfulness (*hesed*), and compassion (*rahamin*) are listed as qualities that exemplify a healthy community (Jørgensen, 2016, 10). In the Bible, diakonia is used sometimes to refer

to the specific kind of help to any people in need; at other places, it means to serve at tables; and in still others, it denotes the distribution of financial resources (Jørgensen, 2016, 10).

Thus, diakonia encompasses all types of actions and works that which are directed to the poor, to the people in need, and for their benefits. Diakonia is not just care for people in need, but a call to stand together in service to each other and humanity as a whole, and in the fight for a better life for our global society (Dietrich, 2017).

Both preaching the gospel diakonia are developed independently and related to each other as it is recorded in the Scriptures.

6.2. Basic Relation between Preaching and Diakonia

Both diakonia and preaching are constitutive part of the ministry of the church. Preaching is proclamation ministry of the church. Diakonia is the social ministry of the church (Dietrich, *et al.* 2014). “The ministry of the church in society includes the Great Commission and the Great Commandment- a commission to make disciples and a commandment to love your neighbour as yourself” (Jørgensen, 2016, 367). In fact, both preaching and diakonia cannot be separated from the Gospel. Preachers always proclaim the Gospel and diakonia is the Gospel in action. The starting point-of diakonia is Jesus’ ministry (Jørgensen, 2016, 11); and so do the starting-point of preaching. Jørgensen adds that the Gospel combines good news and good deeds (2016, 11).

Preaching has its impact on diakonia, and diakonia has its impacts on preaching for the accomplishment of the holistic mission of the church. The Lutheran World Federation underlines that even if word and deed cannot be separated, they should not be mixed in a manner in which one of them is reduced to being an instrument of the other (LWF, 2009).

Doswett underlines that

“Evangelism and proclamation have social and diaconal consequences as we call people to discipleship and to be salt and light in all areas of life. And

diakonia and social involvement have evangelistic consequences as we demonstrate faith in action and witness to transformation.” (Dowsett, *et al.* 2016).

Preaching and diakonia are not two separated missions of the church but two united constitutive part of the one and holistic mission of the church. “If the gospel is good news of the kingdom, good works are the signs of the kingdom. Good news and good works are united” (Jørgensen, 2016, 13).

6.2.1. The Contribution of Preaching to the Betterment of the Poor’s Socio-economic living within the Relation between Preaching and Diakonia

6.2.1.1. The Impact of Preaching on Diakonia

On one hand, preaching has its impacts on Diakonia, and preaching must interpret the deeds. The impacts of preaching in the diaconal works can be analysed within some lines. First, in the preaching of many biblical texts containing clear references on diaconal works, preaching must speak about diakonia. Preaching cannot ignore diakonia. In this perspective, preaching results undeniably in the betterment of the poor’s standard of living. Apart from the narrative on Lazarus and the rich man, there are myriad of biblical references highlighting diakonia as constitutive part of preaching. In this case, preaching itself conducts to behaviour change which is an important starting point of diaconal action.

Second, church’s ordained ministry equip diaconal work and empower the Christians through its preaching. Even if preaching does not complete the full process-action of diakonia, the right role of the ordained preachers in the church is equipping Christians to serve inside and mostly outside the church. In the same perspective, Jørgensen explained that the missional church understands the role of ordained ministry as equipping God’s people for service (2018). Besides, God is proclaimed to be the source through which the church is empowered to become an actor of transformative diakonia (Swart, 2021). Consequently, the diaconal

dimension of preaching lays down also in the fact that preaching should strengthen and push the listeners to go through diakonia.

Third, preaching is a call for diaconal works. By one mission, Wilson explains, “I mean primarily one act, one action of ministry that listeners may contemplate doing as a result of the sermon” (1999, 56). Here, the connection between preaching and diakonia is somehow preaching, as a proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, includes a call for diakonia. There are words about diakonia in preaching. In other words, diakonia is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its call to discipleship (Dietrich *et al*, 2019). Diaconia was “an intrinsic element of being Church” which is “deeply related to what the Church celebrates in its liturgy and announces in its preaching” (LWF, 2009, 29). Preaching is not an action per se, but a call for action, action is held within diakonia and advocacy. If the call for action, rooted in the gospel, is really taken into consideration in every sermon a preacher delivers; then permanent and effective works for socio-economic justice are always carried out by church members; not just as an ordinary social action but as Christian social action, a diakonia.

Fourth, preaching calls for conversion and repentance which are very important for the behaviour change of the people. Humans who are self-centred are called to be God centered and think about the others. In fact, self-centred humans are called to be transformed by God’s Words and then to transform the world through the Christian terminology metanoia or conversion. For, Deifelt, metanoia is a conversion which is a radical change of path and way, and can be illustrated by a change of heart and mind toward other people and cultures (Deifeilt, 2021). This “metanoia” is a transformation from what Martin Luther named a self-centred creature (*incurvatus in se*) to a new creation centred on God and concerned with the wellbeing of others (Deiflet and Hofmann, 2021). In this perspective, action for the wellbeing of others is nothing else than diakonia. Thus, if preaching is a call for conversion, consequently, diakonia is the action accomplished by the converted people.

Fifth, preaching is the proclamation of the Gospel and the law. Once a person receives faith through the preaching of the Gospel, he is called to obey God's law. According to Eale, "diaconia is part and parcel of our obedience to God's law" (2021, 186). And, New Testament shows clearly that obedience to God's law requires not a legalistic obedience, but the loving obedience which derives from faith: the attitude and actions which are the expression of faith (Eale, 2021). In the same way, diakonia as obedience to Jesus' command leads to the transformation of physical, social and spiritual lives, follows the teaching is the proclamation of the Gospel about Jesus and of Jesus through his person, words and works. Preaching has an impact on diakonia for the betterment of the standard of living of the poor.

Sixth, for Luther God uses two different but interrelated strategies to extend His kingdom.

Each of these strategies employs specific means to reach God's purposes (Nessan, 2021).

There is the right-hand strategy within which God has accomplished salvation by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. The work of Jesus Christ is for the justification by grace through faith. Salvation is entirely God's merciful work granted to sinners for Christ's sake alone. This gift is mediated through Word and Sacrament, the means of grace, by which the Holy Spirit delivers to recipients Christ's real presence and the gifts that belong to Christ (Nessan, 2021). Preaching the Word accomplished both by trained preachers inside the church's walls and by all Christians outside, in their various roles and relationships, through verbal communication of the promise of Christ to others in daily life. According to Luther, a central gift of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is Christian freedom. Jesus Christ grants freedom from everything that holds people in bondage; he sets us free from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil (Nessan, 2021). For Lutherans, the law is characterized not so much by the Christian's freedom from moral blemish, but by the freedom to do good works which assist and help the neighbour in distress (Stephenson, 2008). The same way, Christian freedom always means freedom for service to the neighbours God gives us in this world,

including creation itself as our neighbour (Nessan, 2021). Accordingly, this is a freedom to accomplish diaconal works according to the left-hand strategy. Thus, Christians are set free, by preaching, to accomplish diaconal action.

Seventh, preaching underlines God's presence here and now in the world by God's Word, the incarnate Jesus. God news is not good news unless it reaches people and has impacts on their lives and empower them. However, new converted Christians may wonder why they should act, how they can accomplish the service to others as Christ's disciples. Serving the others is diakonia. Changed and empowered people, as an agent for transformation, can work as a transformative diakonia. For Werner and Ross, transformative diakonia becomes a reality because of "God sharing power (dynamis) with people for participating in God's mission. Thus, people are empowered by the proclamation of God's word, then they accomplish transformative diakonia.

6.2.2.2. The Impact of Diakonia on Preaching

On the other hand, diakonia has also impacts on preaching. First of all, it is worth noticing that diakonia is not a tool for the proclamation of the Gospel. Diakonia is not merely an opportunity to increase new church members. Christian social workers do not practice diakonia for any other purposes of church except performing acts of unconditioned love, as it is instituted by Christ in the great commandment. Diakonia should follow the fact that "in any case, it must be strongly affirmed that as God's love is unconditional, the Church also is called to be unconditional in its service to people in need" (LWF, 2009). In other words, diakonia has its roots in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in his call to discipleship, thus diakonia is constitutive for the being and the doing of the church (Dietrich *et al*, 2019). Diakonia is part of the DNA of the church (Dietrich, 2017). To this regards, preachers should think about diakonia as another important constituent of the holistic mission of the church,

and think about preaching including words on diakonia. Similarly, preaching alone cannot complete the whole mission of the church, but must pay attention to diakonia.

Diaconal works also lead to reflection on the way to preach and invite preachers to reconsider how they should communicate of the message of their preaching. Preachers speak about God's love sometimes without understanding what does love mean clearly, listeners to a sermon hear words about love but they also do not understand the vitality of it unless they are committed to an action of love. However, once they perform acts of love, they realize how important loving their neighbour is. Diaconal works help preachers understand the word they proclaim and pay attention to their preaching act in the future.

Diaconal action has also its impact on preaching by the fact that it must be able to interpret reality and processes of social change in a holistic manner (LWF, 2009). Social change, in its positive aspect allows people to understand that preaching is not the only mission of the church, and preaching does not constitute all the parts of the holistic being and mission of the church. Diakonia, here assure the completion of the good news in the people's living and help people understand more proclamation.

In addition, diakonia's impact on preaching is manifest in the fact that because of deeds, preaching is not empty words. Preaching is only meaningful with and in context of diakonia. In this perspective, Jørgensen explains that without healings, the kerygma may just be empty words (2016, 14). In fact diakonia has impact on preaching through making the proclaimed words reality the people live in their daily life. And diakonia here is not just a charity but a permanent act of love performed by Christians who act, from the basis of their faith in Christ, and for the benefit of the society and the all creature.

Diakonia grows out of the sacrificial life of Christ. It is therefore this Christ-centeredness which makes diakonia Christian and gives it motivation and power (Jørgensen, 2016).

Diaconal action must underline its faith-based identity (LWF, 2009). In this sense, believers

can do diaconal works by starting immediately from the ministry of Christ, and by they trust in Christ. Diaconal works held by Christians support the preaching of the words in the way that Christ does not want only the believers to proclaim salvation and peace, but also to love the neighbours through tangible act in the world.

6.3.Relation between Preaching and Diakonia for the Betterment of the Socio-Economic Living of the Poor in Fandriana

The Malagasy proverbs “Ny tany ny asian-dratsy, Zanahary no mahatahotra” and “Ny soa atao levenam-bola, ny ratsy atao loza mihantona” are common expressions of the Malagasy socio-economic value underlining the importance of accomplishing good actions. The first emphasizes that because of the respect and fear of God, one should not be wrongdoers on the land. The land here is better translated into the world including humans and all the creature. In fact, Malagasy people are expected to acts for the betterment of the livings of all people in the society. The second, a determinism dualistic way of thinking and acting, stresses that, on one hand, good action one is accomplishing will be a treasure for the future, and on the other, bad actions completed by an individual will become a woe, a danger in the future. The consequences of one’s actions either good or bad comes back and will come back to him or to his descendants in any manners.

By relating these two Malagasy proverbs about the principle of good action to preaching and diakonia, people in Fandriana can understand clearly about the diaconal works which is rooted in the divine commandment as they can understand the importance of the Gospel in preaching. The seeds are already in the ground, and it is only required to take care of them. That is to say, preaching that leads to the organisation of diaconal works or diaconal works that leads to rethinking of preaching can be both understood by people in Fandriana.

The prior position accorded to God as foundation of good actions in the proverb “Ny tany ny asian-dratsy, Zanahary no mahatahotra” corresponds to what Jørgensen explain about the

reconciliation with God, which is evangelisation (2016, 369). And the good works for the betterment of the socio-economic living of the people advanced by the saying “Ny soa atao levenam-bola” corresponds the Jørgensen’s words about the service or reconciliation among humans.

This correspondence is even clearer within the theology of creation and incarnation.

“Zanahary” is to be respected because he is omnipresent, he is in the world he created.

Concerning the theology of creation it is God himself who asks his people to take care of the humankind and of all the creation.

VII. Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The research aimed at identifying the contribution of preaching for the improvement of the poor's standard of living in the district of Fandriana. Preaching has its words for the betterment of the socio-economic conditions of the poor.

The way of preaching which reminds the rich that helping the others is only possible on the earth but not in the post-mortem situation as it is developed with the way of preaching of Luke 16:19-31 present what should be the contribution of preaching to the betterment of socio-economic living of the poor. For the case of the district of Fandriana, the rich are called to rethink on the Malagasy understanding of God who is present everywhere and whenever, and who is always asking people to work for the benefit of the poor, when they are still on earth. The purpose of the good actions is both for the betterment of social life on earth and for the avoidance of the suffering in the post-mortem situation. Thus, the contribution of preaching to the improvement of the socio-economic living of the poor is the proclamation of the Gospel as a call for the possibility of good actions toward the others.

The research also showed that helping the others was not only a possibility but also a reality within which many rich people who were oppressors became agents of social change for social justice because of Jesus' words of salvation and liberation. Like Zacchaeus, many other biblical figures of rich men and women who were liberated by Jesus performed good actions for the betterment of the standard of living of the poor in the society. Zacchaeus corrected his previous bad attitudes and actions, within which he oppressed the poor masses, by restoring what he has stolen from them, and by offering them a new chance to start their life in a better way. The behavioural change of saved and liberated rich people led to the initiation of a social change process. Proclaiming that behavioural change as basis of social change is and should be the contribution of preaching to the improvement of the poor's standard of living. About the case concerning the poor in Fandriana, the proclamation and reconsideration of the values

which emphasize human beings and kinship above the value of money and by considering God who asks people to act for the benefit of the others are participation to the betterment of the lives of the poor.

Another point developed in the research is the relation between preaching and diakonia. Preaching that leads to and encourages diaconal action contribute in an important way for the betterment of the standard of living of the poor. Preaching and diakonia are constitutive part of the holistic mission of the church. Preaching is the proclamation of the Gospel-Jesus' salvation and liberation, and diakonia is the Gospel in action. The contribution of preaching for the betterment of the socio-economic lives of the poor is proclamation that presenting reconciliation with God, which is followed by reconciliation among humans and reconciliation with the creature. Speaking about Fandriana, coming back to the real Malagasy values on the respect and fear of God leading to a care of the whole human dignity and help of the others through good action should be preached for socio-economic justice.

Semi-overt participant observation, with the use of the anthropological and praxis models of contextual theology, according to Bevans, provided important data for the research mainly within the context of the Malagasy people in general and Fandriana in particular. Participant observation helped for the understanding of the Malagasy values –based on proverbs and sayings- on which people in Fandriana stand. The theoretical principle of these values is the expression of respect to God and God's presence as the basis of the ethical conduct of the Malagasy people. The ethical principles are solidarity and union for a peaceful community. Further, the two contextual models allowed to organise the structure of some chapters in a very practical way. But to be honest, within the research did use, even in some extent, the other models of contextual theology stated by Bevans.

The research underlined that there are truly contribution of preaching for the betterment of the socio-economic lives of the poor. It is a good starting point for church leaders, mainly in

Fandriana and in places experiencing similar contexts, who want to analyse the socio-economic dimensions of preaching. The improvement of the poor's standard of living is not only the mission of diakonia but also of the preaching. Besides, this research help the preachers to be more holistic in their proclamation of the Gospel. Preachers in Fandriana, and many preachers all over the world, insist much on the spiritual and on the post-mortem rather than on the actual human life here and now. However, the Gospel consists of both the earthly living and the post-mortem conditions of humans. Preachers also accord less importance to the creature, and this research invite to emphasize that the Gospel is for the world that includes humans and all the creature.

This research is limited in some ways. Even if important data was provided by the participant observation, deep understanding of a particular context and of a particular social values need other qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group. The limitation of our research is also apparent in the limit of written data available about Fandriana, mainly the data on the Malagasy values. And finally, the lack of previous study on preaching related to socio-economic dimension of life in Madagascar is worth mentioning.

Based on this conclusion, practitioners should consider to combine qualitative methods as much as possible to get much varied and in-depth data of the context of the research place. Concerning the contextual theology models, a use of the other models can offer another way of accomplishing the research for emphasizing other dimensions of the research. Further research also is needed the effective way to put the gospel into action in order to complete the process of social change by action. More researches and investigation on the socio-economic dimension of preaching are still needed.

Understanding the relation between the biblical passages emphasizing the call to social change and expressing the accomplished social change, and the Malagasy values on God and the humans for social change help church leaders, not only in Fandriana, but also in

Madagascar and in other places that experience similar contexts think and analyse much more about the role and contribution of the church to the help of the poor for social justice.

Preaching which considers the socio-economic aspect of the Gospel, the holistic dimension of the Gospel is a good means to make the Malagasy people rethink on their proper wisdom values on the Zanahary who is present here and now, and who is calling people to trust on him and to act accordingly, to act for others.

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