



EXPLORING THE HOLISTIC MISSION
ACCORDING TO CHRIST'S MODEL:
EMPOWERING STREET FAMILIES IN MADAGASCAR

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Acknowledgment

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Abstract

Starting from the context of Madagascar, where many homeless people are found in the major towns, this writing contains the life of the homeless living in Antananarivo, the Capital of Madagascar. It reveals the extreme poverty that exists in Madagascar and the reasons why these people become homeless, and their lives enduring such misery. The purpose of this thesis is to persuade the Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (FLM or Malagasy Lutheran Church), to engage in the mission that awaits them in the care of these homeless. therefore, what has an important role in this writing is also to show God's mission that He was performing, indeed in Christ, for the poor and needy, manifested in words and deeds, in a holistic manner. That is the model He initiated, to be followed by all believers. And since the FLM in general, indeed in the local churches, is a church that gives great importance to spirituality, and besides, does not give much importance to social action, it is developed in this research that God's mission is holistic, where evangelization and social action are both important and interrelated. It is also presented in this research, how this holistic mission, where the relationship between evangelization and social action has been developing in the Evangelical circles and the Lutheran World Federation.

Keywords: God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Mission, Poverty, Homeless, gospel, transformation, reconciliation, empowerment, holistic approach, verbal communication, practical actions, church, Evangelicals, FLM, social action, and Diakonia.

List of Abbreviations

Biblical Abbreviations

Act.: Acts of the Apostles

Am.: Amos

Cor.: Corinthians

Deut. : Deuteronomy

Isa.: Isaia

Ex.: Exodus

Gen.: Genesis

Jas. James

Jhn.: John

Kin.: Kings

Lev.: Leviticus

Luk.: Luke

Mar. Mark

Mat.: Mathew

Prv.: Proverbs

Ps.: Psalms

Rom.: Roman

Zech.: Zecharia

General Abreviations

ATD: Agir Tous pour la Dignité Quart monde (All Together in Dignity)

FLM: Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (Malagasy Lutheran Church)

GDP: Gros Domestic Product

Gr.: from the Greek word

Heb.: from the Hebrew word

INSTAT: Institute National de Statistique (National Institute of Statistics in Madagascar)

km²: kilometer square

LWF: Lutheran World Federation

MLC: Malagasy Lutheran Church

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NMS: Det Norske Misjonsselskap

PPPs: purchasing power parities

UN-Habitat: United Nations Habitat

USD: United States Dollar

WCC: World Council of Churches

WHO: World Health Organization

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Chapter 01: General Introduction

This chapter will introduce the situation of poverty in Madagascar, that provokes homelessness. Poverty forces some families to live on the streets. That is why we call them street families. It will also present the literature that the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) takes as a foundation for its understanding of what its mission should be, indeed in the context of homelessness. Those two circumstances will lead to the research question, which will be developed later in the thesis outline.

1.1 Background of the Thesis

Madagascar, as an underdeveloped country, has always been struggling with difficulties when it concerns the lives of its citizens. Recently the poverty situation in Madagascar has been worsening. According to Victoria Kwakwa, the Regional Vice President of the World Bank for Eastern and Southern Africa, that is due to many reasons that never stopped evolving. Starting with climate change that increases natural disasters like hurricanes and floods that manifest every year and strike the island and bring much destruction to infrastructure and agriculture. In addition, the impact of covid-19, and the recent international crisis which provokes inflation in the whole world. furthermore, the policy maintained by the present government is far from being efficient for the development of the Island (Kwakwa, 2022). As a result, it is not easy for Madagascar to escape the situation of always being in economic difficulties.

These many different incidents cause extreme poverty for residents, that cannot be hidden. The report provided by the World Bank confirms that for these reasons, Madagascar is among the poorest countries in the world (wolrdbank.org, 2022). The reality in Madagascar displays this. Even foreigners who come to visit Madagascar immediately become eyewitnesses of the presence of so many homeless people in the street, because many of them for living, do not hesitate to ask the tourists for money.

Those homeless people have gone through many trials in their lives. Their lives and livelihoods have been completely ruined. Their only place of residence is on the side of the road, the reason for them also being called “street families”. In consequence, many of them

can't get out of that life because it has become like a curse for their generation to become street families. Some of them have been there since birth and cannot any more leave living in that situation, and their generation seems to be cursed to live there. Men and women of a huge range of ages, younger to the oldest, mothers with their small children and infants, wandering and living on and by the roadside.

In those cities where many street families often are localized, we also find the presence of many local FLM churches, so close to where the homeless live day and night. Therefore, when Sunday morning comes, some of these street families come to beg at the door of the churches. However, only some Christians give money to them, by compassion. Many of those local churches, as institutions, rarely take specific action to help them. We can even say that many churches have no projects for them if we look at the budget and activities in their annual planning. Whereas it is recorded in the constitution of the FLM, that FLM aims to develop the whole person.

This lack of action in outreach missions is evident in the history of the mission that the church adopted. The NMS, when they came to Madagascar, did social action, but later on, local churches became less involved. Then even though, the FLM is classified to be holistic in its mission (Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy, 2012, p. 8), one can constate that this holistic ambition is limited to the head office of the FLM and the project they create. But in the general corps of FLM, in other words in the local churches and congregations that constitute FLM, it is obvious that this holistic aspect does not gain place in the mission of the church. Spirituality, the salvation of the soul, and future life in heaven are the most stressed. Toromare Mananato the present vice Secretary of FLM affirmed this general position of FLM (Tørnby, 2017).

Then, as recorded in the book titled *Fiangonana misionaly* (Missional Church) written by Rivoniaina Razakandriana, the tradition and practice of the FLM were becoming all along the year more on proclamation. And even if the book records some holistic aspect of the mission of the FLM, evangelization through preaching is the most stressed, and invitation to take part in evangelization in the oral proclamation is becoming more funded (Razakandriana, 2011, p.43, 56). Nevertheless, this book is held as the manifesto for the mission of the FLM these last decades.

Even though the word “evangelical” is not incorporated in its name, FLM is an evangelic church in its nature. That is why the oral proclamation of the gospel is central within FLM. Because among evangelicals as in FLM, the importance of justification by faith is of great status; and the proclamation of salvation of the soul and the focus on eternal life predominate the mission of the church. Thus, the understanding of the meaning of mission is restricted to “evangelization” for most of the congregations and pastors within FLM.

Because of that, their conviction and motivation are to complete this task. Breaking new ground, by gaining new members through baptism, is understood as the efficiency of the mission of the church (Razakandriana, 2011, 38, 112). As a result, for FLM, one of the reasons for this lack of responsibility for the homeless is the incomplete understanding of the mission of the church, which causes the absence of concrete signs of the gospel for these street families.

In Consequence, FLM’s perspective when reading and understanding the Bible is biased by the salvation of the soul. Even the listener’s attention is reduced to only waiting from the preacher nothing more than a sermon, concerning Jesus Christ dying and rising again, for sinners (Bennet, 2014, p. 58). Moreover, the cases of disease, hunger, and poverty, recorded in the Bible, are understood and preached as something spiritual. And the physical matter is out of concern in most of the sermons, by almost all the pastors and theologians. Besides, Malagasy hermeneutic books affirm this point of view, It will be presented below.

In addition, the mission of the church is predominated by spiritual concern and is less active when it concerns social action. Consequently, the practice of Diakonia, even after so many efforts introducing it, and despite many formations about it, remains static, not dynamic in the lives of many local churches. Especially for the homeless, either evangelization or social action, or both, are undetermined yet, and remain of less importance in the mission of the church. We can even say that homeless people are marginalized vis-à-vis the church.

Rethinking the mission of the church is then needed. In addition, the concern for the poor and homeless should be put in the place where it has to be in that mission of the church.

Then, what comes to mind is what Boelsch (2002) expresses concerning it: "Evangelism is not the whole of the church's mission. We are also summoned to a ministry of service (diakonia), teaching (didachē) and prayer". The mission of the church goes beyond preaching

salvation, and the FLM needs to realize this. Because the gospel is not only about spirituality, stopping with the forgiveness of sins, it reaches the total being, and the mission of the church likewise goes beyond preaching.

consequently, rethinking the understanding of mission, indeed for the homeless is to take into consideration for the FLM, in the light of the Holy Scriptures, which is the foundation of the faith and which commands the church in all its actions and missions. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus who begs at his door, should alert the FLM. This parable is happening in real life, at the door of many FLM local churches, because as many of these street families come to beg at the door of the church every Sunday morning. Responsibility, attention, and care for those homeless are in fact knocking at the door of the church. The time has come to look closer just outside the church, a new mission is waiting for FLM.

1.2 Literature review

In the context of FLM, this topic is pioneering. But even though that is the case, the following kinds of literature that I present here, are books that shape and present the understanding of the mission for the FLM, in which proclamation is central, and social action is disregarded. It is recorded in the book *Homiletika* which serves as the basis of hermeneutic within FLM, that: “the gospel is “voice”, and the church is responsible for sharing it and Christ in the cross is the center”, in other word “Christocentric” (Tomren, 1991, 15), then FLM is extremely active when it concerns proclamation. This is moving the churches to forget the social responsibility, indeed in the life of local churches.

When it comes to the point where social action should take place, healing and feeding means to go and proclaim the gospel, that their souls will be healed and nourished. As Malvin Tomren stated, in the book guide of preaching, of Sundays texts, translated from Malagasy to English by the researcher:

“How to present the situation of sickness to the nowadays world, that Christ can heal? Because we are not able to cure their sickness, we cannot promise them recovering, but as we are sons of God, preach about the “*leprosy of the soul*” it is easy to preach forgiveness in that way ... and the solution is the Baptism” (Tomren, 2008, p. 235).

That is only one case of book, but almost every book which serves as a guide for the sermon that FLM, through their researchers, provides for the church, this model is copied, and most

of them emphasize spiritual concern. In consequence, in many cases where social action, instead of having the opportunity to take place within the church, is moved and became more and more neglected.

And concerning The *Fiangonana Missionaly* (Missional Church) book, it affirms that evangelization is a priority for FLM. In consequence, as project, reaching new areas with no Christians is the main goal, which is the first and most important aim for FLM, where preaching of repentance is the most emphasized. The institution of management and technical committee, named *Tafika Masina Maharitra* (TMM), was founded in 1969 for that mission. An elaboration of plans and strategy of evangelism remains the most central vision until the present day, taking the evangelization of Paul the Apostle as model, and predominated by proclamation. An invitation to the whole congregation to participate is also highlighted, because this task is not only for evangelists and pastors (Razakandriana, 2011, p. 33, 41, 44). About the gospel, proclamation is the most developed, but mission through deeds or social action is less stressed.

For both books, while chapping the mission of the FLM, it is almost not found the concern of social action. The life of the church, as its mission is becoming spiritual-centered. Talking about social responsibility remains unfamiliar and not central in the life and understanding of the mission of many churches within FLM. And concerning the homeless people, only rare churches among FLM has a program to reach them through action, or proclamation, one can say they are still marginalized for many local churches, and for FLM in general.

1.3 The Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy and the Street Families

It is recorded in the constitution of FLM that the vision of FLM is: "To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ... with words and deeds ... and to develop all people and the whole person" (FLM, 2013, p. 08). For this reason, homeless people are supposed to be included in the people who are made to bring the gospel. Inevitably, they also are included in the people the FLM should promote. However, rare urban churches have programs for homeless people. And the rare local churches which care about them, still have a lot of reliance on other partners in missions that work together with them. therefore, generally within FLM, figuring out a special budget for social action for street families is still non-important for the committees of many local churches.

The FLM has a special department for the special sectors that they think, need evangelization, such as sailors and Muslims (FLM, 2015, p. 13). They have a technical team to help them, and to develop effective strategies to deal with the approach to evangelizing or building good relationships with Muslims. But for the homeless people, the FLM does not have yet a special department to look over and care for them, neither socially (action) nor evangelically (proclamation).

Thus, if we go back to the question of Kjell Nordstokke when he visited Madagascar, in 2015, and share about Diakonia: “Who is being marginalized in the Gassian church today?” (Tørnby, 2017) One can answer that it is obvious that homeless people are still marginalized in many aspects. Evangelically, it is very seldom that the FLM reaches them. And concerning social action, fewer are the actions the FLM creates and develops for them. Consequently, FLM and the street families share the same street but do not share the same church. There is still a wall in between, namely the door of many churches, outside which, the homeless people place themselves.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the challenge is real, because of the social contexts of street families, which are not hidden but obvious and have existed for a long time in all the towns of Madagascar. Moreover, because the FLM is a living church and lives in such a society, it draws attention to the mission of the church and leads to the question:

How does the presence of a significant homeless population in urban areas contribute to the understanding of the theology of mission within the Fianganana Loterana Malagasy (Malagasy Lutheran Church)?

That must be held, to lead the church to be active and empowered in the holistic care of the homeless and its social action, and to be holistic in its missions concerning the sharing of the gospel in general, in other areas.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Facing the context mentioned above, especially as a church leader in the FLM, I feel that I have a responsibility and obligation, to bring more understanding to the FLM about its

mission within a context like this. To move forward, and fill the gap that presents an obstacle for social action, or Diakonia, so that it can be a church that brings about a change in the reconstruction of the world that surrounds it. This is exactly why I am interested in, and willing to write about this context, and try to achieve the following goals.

First of all, the purpose of presenting this writing is to explain in more detail, the life of the homeless, living in the towns of Madagascar. I want to make everyone realize that the lives they live are not easy, and they need help and hope to get out of their misery. For FLM, that means for the FLM, one of the contexts in which outreach should be developed, action from the church should take place. So that either all churches or all congregations that constitute the whole FLM, turn their intention closely to the homeless people, and bring the whole good news to their lives, in all its dimensions.

Secondly, to bring a turning point in the mission of the FLM, and try to bring more understanding to the FLM that the mission of the church is not to be predominated by preaching of spiritual concern, namely about the forgiveness of sins. Good news is beyond that, and reaches the whole person aspect of the human being. I want to convince the local churches within FLM that it is one of the missions that await her as a church to care for those street families. FLM has to elaborate an action plan to share the gospel for the homeless people.

Thirdly, to present a bridge for Diakonia, to flourish in this context of homelessness and poverty that those street families undergo. It will bring scriptural information about the magnitude and value of doing Diakonia work. As a result, the churches will have the zeal to include diaconal work for the homeless, in their work program and do it with full conviction, because of the feeling that it defines their identity as a church and its mission.

All that has to be unraveled, so that the faith of the church is shown to be real faith that is manifested in practice, precisely faith active in love, not a dormant and inactive faith. So that the church will prepare a project to take care of these street families, and give more priority and time for this mission. Because when those street families come to beg at the door of the churches at the time of worship, it is a call or sign for the church to do its mission in that context.

1.6 Definition and Significance of Mission, Missions, and Holistic Mission.

The word Mission is not a biblical noun that could be highlighted by exegetical study. However, it has its root in the notion of “sending” which is derived from the Greek word “ἀποστέλλω”, or sometimes “πέμπο” translated in Latin “mitto”. In the New Testament, those words have the same meaning, but “πέμπο” is used when the stress is on the sending, and “ἀποστέλλω” when it is on the commission, and especially (in the Synoptics) when it is God who sends (Razakandriana, 2012, p. 07). But a definition of mission does not concern its origin, but it concerns as well in its use.

As D. J. Boch (1991, p. 100) underlines, mission is undefinable, and formulating some approximations of what mission is all about, is the most we can hope. We can consider that the definition of mission is not static, it might evolve, according to new explanations from scholars, which are varied from context to context, and epoch to epoch (Ferdinando, 2008, p. 45). In consequence, every definition is just an attempt, and it depends on what scholars want to emphasize, and here, we will focus on the mission as the church’s task.

The mission is primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, manifesting his love, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. God Himself is the basis of mission and the origin of Mission is in the heart of God (Ott, C. & Strauss, S.J., 2010, 61). That means the mission is first an attribute of the Triune God, and mission starts from the being of God, where the Father sent the Son, and then The Father and Son sent later the Holy Spirit (John 4:16; 20:21), which seek the gladness of people in the greatness of God (Callaham et al, 2009).

Through all the biblical history, this mission of the Triune God is underlined, Mission is from God and for God. And in every mission recorded in the Bible, from the creation of the world until the creation of the new human being through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection, which makes the new covenant, and sends the Holy Spirit. God does do the first mission, and then gives a following mission for some group of concerned people, that is the principle of God concerning mission (Callaham et al, 2009). To engage in mission is to participate, in the movement of God, which is a movement of love toward people.

Keith Ferdinando (2008, p. 49, 50, 52, 54), pointed out that there are four types of contemporary understanding of mission. The first one refers to the mission of God or the so-

called "Missio Dei", which represents God doing the mission according to His way and work, to humans and nature on earth, and calling and appointing people as his collaborators. The second is what he calls the "cultural mandate" which emphasizes the responsibility that God has placed on humans, which He made in his image (imago Dei) to work and take care of the fields (Gen.1:26-28). The third is what he calls "social action", watching and caring for the people who are under pressure, such as poverty for example. In this way, the work that awaits brings renewal and improvement of the lives of the people who will do the mission, aiming at their humanity (social dimension) and caring for them in it, which cannot be separated from the work that God has put in place. The fourth is "Making Disciples of all nations". This last one is the center of these four approaches, which is both important and essential, because it represents the Great Commission, and is based on the preaching of the gospel to all peoples, preaching the faith of the finished work of salvation. on the cross for the forgiveness of sins, bringing people back to live according to God's will again. These four approaches are complementary to each other in the mission, and for Christians in particular, although the last one is important, the second and third approaches to the mission that awaits them cannot be separated from it.

The words "mission" and "missions" are often confused in different writings. However, it is important to emphasize that the use of the word mission in the singular refers specifically to the mission that God does, or "Missio Dei", but in the plural, it is the mission of the church "missions ecclesia", to show that God is sending the church in mission. The missions is a task that cannot be separated from the church because God who started the mission appointed the church to continue the work. One could say that like fire is made for burning, the church is made for missions, and without performing the missions, a church is not a church. Being an instrument of God in His mission, the church is missionary by nature (Anekwe, 2003, p. 323, 324).

And regarding the missions of the church, we can give three main categories of missions that are entrusted to the church, so it is defined that mission is what the church is to be, it is also what the church is sent to do, and at last, it is what the church is sent to say. Therefore, he asserts that the church is sent to be Koinonia where community and worship are emphasized, and secondly sent to do Diakonia in which service and care are stressed, and

thirdly sent to say Kerygma, in which proclamation of the gospel is the central aspect. And in the church's mission, it is very important to highlight that church is serving as an instrument in the hand of God (Ott & Strauss, 2010, 61),.

Finally, the holistic mission is a concept that emerged from the Evangelical circle in the middle of the 20th century. Holding the conviction that followers of Jesus Christ have always been people of compassion and concern for the poor, it serves to practice social action alongside evangelization, which means "social responsibility and preaching of the gospel are equally authentic and essential part of church's responsibility" (Ott, & Strauss, 138, 140). It is affirming the gospel as a whole gospel including the restoration of the vertical and horizontal relationship of the human being. Bringing the fullest sense of salvation, inner conversion of individuals, and external transformation of social and economic relationships. It views persons through God's eyes as body and soul, living in a level of society, as individual, family, and nation. Loving neighbors, especially those in need, as Jesus did, it aimed to combine the full salvation, namely the forgiveness of sin plus social action (Sider et al., 2019).

1.7 Definition of Diakonia

As the research could serve as a bridge to deep engagement for the church to practice Diakonia, it is necessary to present some basic understanding. First of all, it is so important to highlight that: "Diakonia the very nature and Being of God" (Harahap, quoted in Nordstokke, 2009, p. 54). Diakonia is a word from the Bible, and the related phrases including Diak-words (διακονια, διακονειν, διακονος) occur about 100 times in the New Testament, it means "waiting at the table", and in a wider sense "provision for bodily sustenance" (Beyer, 1964, p. 81). It is not separated from caring for the poor and needy and the sick, so it is called "Christian love for the neighbor" (Nordstokke, 2020, p. 180). But the study and definition are still developing, and they are complementing one another.

The research done by John N. Collins brought information that convinced many theologians. His explanation is based on the study of several Greek texts. He pointed out that the word Diakonia is used to express the mission of the "Go-between" the kitchen and the table, to serve to the table, what is prepared from the kitchen. Then he established that Diakonia is a mission that is given or entrusted to a person, where trust is established, to this one is given

the power to carry out vital tasks. It is a holistic concept and practice rooted in the biblical story and the ministry of Jesus Christ, and Jesus then served His Father in his ministry of Diakonia. It started with Jesus and was also continued by the Apostles (Nordstokke, 2020, p. 180, 181). Those diaconal activities can be seen that it is an action to preach good news for the poor, as a go-between inter God and them. It is a mandate that the triune God has commanded, and the church is the entrusted instrument.

The World Council of Churches describes Diakonia like this: "Diakonia is the care that Christians offer to their fellow humanity, modeled on Christ's compassion, example and teachings. Such service can be described as "the liturgy after the liturgy" (oikoumene.org, n.d.). This means that the whole life of a Christian after liturgy is another work that is following it. Diakonia is both an expression of the very nature of the Church, and the manifestation of that nature in its daily life, plans, and projects. It is not only the nature of the church, but it is also its mission of "being church" (Messenger, 2009, p. 28). Therefore, it is a bridge that conducts the faith of the church to the reality of the society (Dietrich, 2017, p. 144).

The Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement defines diakonia as "responsible service of the Gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people." ("Diakonia", 2002). The emphasis is that Diakonia, as a responsible service, requires more than good intention, and Christians must be accountable for performing it. In addition, its focus is the need of people, and in tradition, this must pay attention to the sick, the poor, and the marginalized. It is active to support, accompany, and defend vulnerable people. But not only in that way, but also in addressing the condition that creates vulnerability, and working to give change (Messenger, 2009, p. 30, 40)

The WCC emphasizes that Diakonia is both Faith-Based and right-Based. It aims to assign the right that is suitable for a person whom the Diakonia is performed, but Diakonia is performed because of the faith in the Believer that leads to it, not by any other motivation, and that is what distinguishes the Diakonia among the common social actions in society, which are neither based on the Holy Scriptures nor are they dictated by faith (Messenger, 2009, p. 40).

1.8 Thesis Outline

Chapter one will present the general introduction, which includes the general context of Madagascar in poverty. It is in this poverty that the existence of street families was born, but it is in this context that the FLM needs to stand as a church. The latter, whose mission is limited to preaching the gospel, leads to the question we want to answer in this research, which is to propose a rethinking in the theology and understanding of the mission for FLM, leading to engagement in “social action” toward the poor and homeless.

Chapter two will present the methodology and methods used to obtain all the data used in the thesis. This is based entirely on qualitative research, including documentary research and observation. It also provides basic research resources. The limit of the study is also presented, which is based on the expansion of the FLM's mission in deeds, not just words.

Chapter three will present Madagascar and its inhabitants who live under the poverty line. This poverty which becomes deeper and deeper, and leads to having nothing. The reasons for the devastation of a person that incites homelessness are presented. It will present also how hard the everyday life of those homeless are hard. In addition, the consequence of being homeless in the life of a person or a family living on the side of the street.

Chapter four is about the theological and biblical roots of holistic mission towards the poor and the homeless. On one hand, it is contextual, because presented from the perspective and model in chapter four, about the context of poverty and homelessness, and God’s concern for the poor and homeless, incarnated in Jesus Christ whose mission was done in words and deeds towards the poor and homeless. In another hand, it will present a new perspective for the FLM, to not always get biased on molding the scripture toward spiritual poverty, but live in reality. It will also serve as a conviction and motivation in participating in the mission of God, that He calls his church to achieve toward the poor and homeless.

Chapter five is about the development of the holistic mission within the Evangelical circles. Because the same perspective that dominates the FLM in its mission, about the salvation of the soul, was one of their issues half a century ago. This chapter will present the successive congresses held in the Evangelical circles, over the years, rethinking mission, in the light of

Scripture, that came to a covenant and manifesto in which “social action” is understood as great importance in the mission of the church, and is interrelated with evangelization. Lutheran World Federation’s understanding of mission in context, as holistic also will be presented there.

Chapter six will present the concluding chapter in which some discussions are presented. We will also find in that chapter the contribution that this research could bring to the FLM. Moreover, the limit of the research and the recommendations for further research that should be investigated. In addition, the answer to the research question that led the study. And at last, the personal impact of the research, and the transformation it brought to me, lead to a new vision and a new conviction.

Chapter 02: Methodology and Methods

This chapter focuses on the methodology chosen to explore and gather relevant information for the thesis. It also presents the specific methods employed to conduct the research. Additionally, the chapter discusses the primary materials utilized in the investigation based on the selected method and outlines the scope and limitations of the study.

2.1 Methodology

The main goal of this study is to achieve an extensive and in-depth understanding of the lives and experiences of street families. In order to accomplish this objective, the chosen methodology is qualitative research. This methodology enables a thorough exploration of the unique world in which street families exist. As pointed out by John McLeod, a respected scholar in the field, qualitative research is characterized by its careful and rigorous approach, resulting in the creation of formal statements or conceptual frameworks that provide innovative insights into the social world. This type of research is particularly valuable for individuals working in areas related to learning and adaptation within social contexts (McLeod, quoted in Swinton et al., 2016, p. 30).

Four key concepts central to qualitative research are distinctions, process, closeness, and improved understanding. Qualitative research provides a means of distinguishing and gaining unique insights. The research process involves identifying a topic and locating relevant sources. Through this process, the researcher acquires knowledge and detailed information, thus allowing for an improved understanding of the topic at hand (Aspers et al., 2019, p. 151, 153).

In this study, the Emmaus Road model, where the current context leads to the explanation of God's intention and mission, is the chosen model (Messenger, 2009, p. 08). The phenomenon of homelessness serves as the starting point, leading to an examination of the mission of the church. A distinction is made between street families and the general population of Madagascar. And that context leads to focusing on the Mission of God towards the needy and homeless people, which calls the FLM to serve in that mission.

2.2 Methodology Used for the Research

The term “methodology” originates from the Greek word “odos”, meaning “way”, and can be defined as the rational path taken to acquire knowledge or demonstrate truth (Pelletier, 1994, p. 758). Offering genuine and credible evidences, Documentary research forms the foundation of this study (Mogalakwe, 2009, p. 52). It involves a comprehensive examination of written materials to gain in-depth knowledge about the lives of urban street families in Madagascar, and to provide valuable insights into the work of the FLM.

This research also utilizes hermeneutic methods to establish concrete evidence for the scriptural nature of mission-oriented social action. Given that the FLM is a church that values the Holy Scriptures, basing any new ideas or initiatives on scriptural references ensure greater acceptance and implementation within the church. Therefore, aligning recommendations with biblical teaching regarding the care for vulnerable individuals, including street families, facilitates the FLM’s acceptance and application of such recommendations.

Additionally, observations are employed to gain insights into the behaviors, practices, and methods of street families and the FLM. This research utilizes non-participant observation, allowing the researcher to observe from an external standpoint without actively in the observed phenomena. relationship between urban churches and the street families is indeed observed.

2.3 Materials Used for the Research

The study on street families in Madagascar relies on various data sources, including international and national reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations. These sources include the Ministry of Population in Madagascar, specifically the Institut National de Statistique (INSTAT), which provides official statistics on the country’s population and their living conditions. Reports from organizations such as the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), the French association Agir pour Tous pour la Dignité (ATD) Quart Monde, an International Non-Governmental Movement which aims to eradicate extreme poverty in the world. Furthermore, the Transparency International, United Nations

Habitat, and media outlets like Radio France International (RFI) and Studio Sifaka are analyzed. When reports lack individual authors or editors, the name of the organization or institution is cited in place of the author or editor's name.

To investigate the mission of the church and social action towards the needy, the Bible serves as the primary and indisputable foundation. Biblical references throughout the Old Testament, the Gospel, and the Acts emphasize God's care for those in need and their dignity. Additionally, historical documents related to the Evangelical movement, such as the Lausanne Covenant, the Manila Manifesto, and some Lausanne Occasional Papers, are examined to understand the shift towards active social action within Evangelical circles.

Since social action is closely linked to Diakonia, perspectives, books, articles, and documentation related to Diakonia, as well as materials from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), are incorporated into the research. Dictionaries, Ph.D. theses, and other relevant publications on poverty, homelessness, and holistic mission are consulted to provide further insights.

2.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study primarily focuses on street families and churches in urban areas, as street families are predominantly found in cities. The investigation specifically targets the cities of Antananarivo and Antsirabe in Madagascar. The choice of Antananarivo, the country's capital, is due to its significant population of street families. Antsirabe, the second-largest city in Madagascar, and the researcher's place of residence is also included in the study as it allows for direct contact with local churches and street families within their specific context.

The study aims to provide comprehensive information about the lives of street families, followed by a discussion of the biblical perspective on the importance of mission towards the poor and homeless, and the incorporation of social action within Evangelical circles. However, the research does not provide detailed information on Diakonia, nor does it outline specific steps to engage with homeless individuals. Instead, it offers theological and biblical reflections intended to inspire the FLM and prompt further consideration of its mission for the homeless.

Chapter 03: The Street Families or “4-Mi” in Antananarivo

Since street families are the context in which we want to bring reforms in the mission of the local churches within FLM, this chapter will present the lives of the homeless people. We will present the poverty that exists and is experienced in Madagascar. It will also be presented that even though this poverty exists, some are miserable and fall into extreme poverty, namely the street families.

3.1 An Overview of the Situation of Poverty in Madagascar

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world with an area of 587,041 km². The population of Madagascar according to the latest census is 28,177,762 inhabitants (INSTAT, 2021). Although Madagascar is a country famous for its natural beauty and has various kinds of mineral resources, it is a very poor country. It is included in the 57 countries whose population is poorer in 2000 than in 1975, many of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa. When we talk about Madagascar in this way at the international level, it is in this national category, which is also called "the Bottom Billion" (ATD Quart Monde, 2012, p. 12).

There are many ways to measure the poverty rate, used by international organizations that are implemented in Madagascar, but the World Bank's measurement is presented here. Since 1990, the World Bank introduced the dollar-per-day and has used Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs). Based on this, the value of the income per household was measured to calculate the poverty rate of the household and a country, obtaining the "international poverty line" which is also the national poverty line for poor countries, making it possible to measure the poverty rate in a country and compare it with other countries. It increased with inflation and time, so the changes were 1 USD a day in 1985 PPPs, 1.08 USD in 1993 PPPs, 1.25 USD in 2005 PPPs, 1.90 USD in 2011 PPPs, and 2.15 USD from 2017, where the poverty line is lower than the PPPs published by the World Bank, it is classified as a country considered in extreme poverty (worldbank.org, 2023).

The 2011 and 2017 PPPs are still used by the World Bank for Madagascar as seen in their recent reports. The World Bank points out that from 1960 when it gained independence to 2020, living standards have fallen by 45%, and in the past 60 years, the population has increased five times, but the economic activity has increased three times more than before.

It is estimated that 81.9% of the population lives below the international poverty line (Kwakwa, 2022) because they earn less than 2.15 US Dollars per inhabitant per day (worldbank.org, 2023). Accordingly, Madagascar is classified as one of the countries living in extreme poverty. Accordingly, in the last 20 years, this rate of people living below the poverty line has not stopped rising, because in 2001 it was 68%, and in 2012 it was 77.6% (worldbank, 2022, p. 16).

The poverty rate in Madagascar is constantly increasing, and it is classified among the countries that live under the extreme poverty threshold. As for the Gross Domestic Product, it is 539 US Dollars per inhabitant, placing Madagascar in the 5th place in the ranking of the poorest countries, or the most deprived, who produce less wealth per inhabitant in the world (Statista, 2022). Consequently, the gap between the rich and the poor is growing. However, this poverty rate published by the World Bank refers to Madagascar as a whole but included in that are those who fall into deep extreme poverty, namely the street families.

3.2 Presentation of the Causes of Poverty in Madagascar

There are many reasons for the extreme poverty experienced by the people of Madagascar. But it is because of the mission that the church is waiting for, to bring about reforms that will be highlighted and presented. According to the information provided by LWF, there are four main causes of extreme poverty in a country, namely weak governance, corruption, civil war, and climate change (Messenger, 2009, p. 17; WCC, 2022, p. 54). In Madagascar, three of those four cases are present.

3.2.1 Political Mismanagement

It is common in many countries around the world that the government that comes to power often abuses to exploit the national wealth. In consequence, the wealthy still gain more and more wealth, but those who are poor are becoming more and more miserable; they cannot enjoy even the benefits that should be available to the citizens (WCC, 2022, p. 59). Therefore, here in Madagascar, this also prevails, one can observe that the rich people keep getting richer, while the poor people are going deeper into poverty, and are always in difficulties.

In Madagascar, the political situation is very unstable, only a few presidents have completed their mandate until the end. The inability to manage is resulting in a mass descent, resulting

in rebellion. The most uprisings were those which happened in 2002 and 2009, which led to an economic crisis in the country (Ploch, 2009, pp. 5-7). For example, in 2009, many international funders left after the rebellion, and Madagascar was banished from the AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act), which had allowed Madagascar to export clothes made by textile companies in the free zone, duty-free to the United States. Many companies were closed, so that in Antananarivo forty thousand workers became unemployed. This also affected the loss of three hundred thousand indirect employees related to that (Rabemalanto et al., 2016, p. 97). This type of trouble often occurs when there is political instability in Madagascar.

It brought great damage to the economic sector in Madagascar and increased the poverty rate, because investors did not feel secure using their money in the country and left Madagascar, and many people lost their jobs after such crises (World Bank, 2022, p. 16). Obviously, at the time when there was such a political crisis, there must have been an economic crisis in Madagascar. The impact is not easy to solve, in the realm of the economy and the living conditions of the population, and rises to poverty (INSTAT, 2013).

3.2.2 High Presence of Corruption

According to the "corruptions perception index", which measures the corruption index from 0 to 100, with 100 being the best score, Madagascar's score is 26 (Transparency International, 2022). That concludes Madagascar is a country with high levels of corruption. Therefore, the reality and experience in Madagascar prove that, within all offices, like police, court, or in the field of education, corruption is present.

Corruption is a common phenomenon in Madagascar which marks unequal benefits. An example of this is the frequent acquisition of gold exported to developing countries. As was the case in 2022, in six months, 79 kg and 46 kg of gold were caught at customs in South Africa and Comoros. The gold had already left Madagascar, which had just been caught by customs in these countries. According to the investigation carried out in South Africa, all the documents related to the export of this gold were legally signed. That is to say, there was the participation of the authorities in releasing it from Madagascar (Bezain, 2022).

3.2.3 Climate Change

Madagascar in 2020 is included in the 10 countries considered as the most vulnerable to climate risks. The permanent drought and the increase in strong cyclones every year are among the most powerful ones. That presents a strong impact on the lives of Malagasy farming families, which reach 83,2% of the population (INSTAT, 2022). Regarding cyclones, according to research done in the last 20 years, it is found that the cyclones that enter Madagascar are becoming more and more powerful, and the infrastructure destroyed by them is also increasing, as well as the number of victims due to their passage. For example, the cost of damage recorded in the following years: February 2000, March 2007, Jan 2018, the cost of damage continued to increase, and respectively, reached more than 9.000.000 USD, 240.000.000 USD, and 462.000.000 USD (Rakotoarimanana et al., 2022, p. 16).

As a result of climate change, in 2017 there was a lack of rain throughout the island, and the rainfall has been unstable since then, causing serious damage to the agricultural sector, which is still the main source of 90% of Malagasy households. Agriculture is also the pillar of the economy in Madagascar. So bad harvest causes a decline in the Malagasy economy and also causes food insecurity in many areas (amnesty.be, 2021, p. 20). This applies to the lives of every household in Madagascar, and it also causes the increase of the price of local rice that people cannot afford to buy. The farmers are discouraged, and many abandon farming in the countryside and immigrate to the towns (Gössling et al., 2004, p. 134).

In addition to these issues, after the political crisis in 2009, the increase in the general level of prices is higher than the rate of economic growth, and the purchasing power of the population is lower (ATD Quart Monde, 2012, p. 13). Followed by more economic crises, which are often due to international reasons, such as covid-19, the war in Ukraine, the high cost of living, and the reduction of the purchasing power of the people are persisting.

According to all the situations recorded above, Madagascar is listed among the countries living in a huge economic disorder (Marguerat, 2003, p. 181). Only a minority of the population is rich, but the majority is poor. Therefore, it is in people's minds to establish that the solution for their life must be from themselves. In consequence, numerous Malagasy tend that one of the solutions they struggle with, is migration to the towns, indeed to Antananarivo, the capital, where they think their life will be better.

3.3 Antananarivo the Capital of Madagascar and the Mass Migration Toward It

Antananarivo is the capital of Madagascar, and geographically it is located in the central highlands of Madagascar, 1,300 meters altitude, and located between 18°55' South latitude and 47°32' longitude. Its surface area is 86.4 km². In terms of the weather, it has a tropical climate, so in the winter it is both dry and cold around 13° Celsius, and the summer is characterized by heavy rains (UN-Habitat, 2012)

Antananarivo is the main center of Madagascar's economic activities, and it is one of those that have a profile that attracts investors, to set up some companies. In 2010, Antananarivo has 60% of the structure of large companies established in Madagascar. (UN-Habitat, 2012, p. 08). Antananarivo also is the economic capital, it produces 42% of the national GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and 30% of the country's population lives there (WHO, 2017, p. 13). In addition, the informal sector is very flourishing in Antananarivo.

Due to the deterioration of the land for cultivation in many areas, Malagasy people are trying to reach a place where they think they can meet their basic food needs and feed their families. So often the idea of a big city convinces many, for the following reasons: well-being, enrichment, and employment (INSTAT, 2021). This can be because it is where the types of small businesses that are easy to find work are established, and it is also where there is a large population so it is easy to create small jobs such as selling, or driving rickshaws because there are many customers and a lot of traffic in towns, like Antananarivo.

The large migration to Antananarivo also is caused by the feeling that life is no longer going on if one stays in the countryside, and because of the difficulties they experience there. The lack of security also reigns in rural areas, so they do not want to live there. Therefore, many people leave the land they are used to and move to Antananarivo, and the latter receives one hundred thousand immigrants every year, of which 80% are from the Analamanga region (around Antananarivo), while the remaining 20% are from different parts of Madagascar (studiosifaka.org, 2022).

Due to these reasons of high migration to Antananarivo, the present population of Antananarivo reaches more than one million two hundred seventy-four thousand, and it increases by 2.9% per year, and compared to the distribution of the population living in cities

around the island, it is found that 50.2% of the population living in towns in Madagascar is in Antananarivo. It is classified as the overpopulated city in Madagascar, because the population density is 208.9 habitants per square kilometer, while the national average is 43.4 habitants per square kilometer (INSTAT, 2021).

Among the people who live and move to Antananarivo, some people have degrees and come to Antananarivo to find work, so that they will have a stable job in a company. But the majority of them are uneducated people who just want to leave the rural areas, there is no clear job waiting for them, but they hope they can find something that can benefit their lives and their families. Most of them are based on roadside selling, collecting goods, pulling rickshaws, and doing household work; those are jobs that require strength, not skills and knowledge (Andrianaivo, 2000, p. 187).

This migration to Antananarivo is not recent, it has been going on for a long time. And those people moving to Antananarivo, entered there with difficulties, and there is no clear foundation for their lives, so they live in what is called "Bidonville" (shantytown), some places, where the poor live, where one can build a wooden or brick house, and where the rent of the house is very cheap (INSTAT, 2020).

3.4 Reasons Why People or Families Become Homeless

Many of the farmers who came to Antananarivo did not frequent more than primary school and decided to leave the countryside to take a chance to find work. They leave the field they have cultivated because it is either small or unproductive. But when they get to Antananarivo, they do not find work as they expected, so the risk of becoming homeless is hundred percent. That is the main reason why many people become homeless in Antananarivo. Deception comes right away because what they intended to happen and experience when arriving in Antananarivo was not what they experience when being there (Andrianaivo, 2002, p. 187). In that situation, they are at the bottom of the ladder, before descending into being homeless.

The second reason that makes people homeless in Madagascar is because of job loss. As soon as a father or mother loses their job, they become street families. But with the loss of a job, and not being able to find what to eat, the first thing to do is to get into debt. When the

unemployment continues, so they are not able to pay the rent of their home, they are evicted because they do not pay the rent, and they end up living on the side of the road (studiosifaka.org, 2022). There is a Malagasy proverb that says "ny ory tsy havan'ny manana" (the poor are not considered as relatives of the rich), people affected by such situations cannot rely on their relatives. They immediately become street families after having tried hard to find the solution, but have not seen any results.

A third reason why a person may become homeless is the presence of a serious illness in the family, which has caused sudden difficulties, resulting in no money. So the rent is not paid, and there is no food, then, unfortunately, the family ends up living on the side of the road against their will (Marguerat, p. 193). Hopeless and the feeling of being marginalized meet together in their lives.

3.5 The Street Families or "4-Mi" in Antananarivo and their Life

As for the vocabulary that Malagasy people use every day, they do not call homeless people: "street families", they do not call them "very poor people", but the name they call them is "4-mi". There are different explanations proposed by the researchers who researched them and their lives, resulting in this name. The name "4-mi" comes from the French word "4 amis" (four friends), referring to 4 companions of misfortune, often found together looking for food in the garbage. Later comes the explanation from the French word "4-murs" (four walls), as the ironic name denotes that those people have no 4 walls where to live (Andrianaivo, 2000, p. 187). But when their number increased, the word "4-mi" was taken as a summary of these four Malagasy words that those people are always doing, namely "misotro" (to drink), "mifoka" (to smoke), "miloka" (to gamble), and "milely" (to prostitute) (ATD Quart Monde, 2010, p. 14). It's about a thousand people, unfortunate and falling into the deepest poverty, homeless, unemployed, looking for food in the trashes, mostly without civil status. As they always get into the garbage, the clothes they wear are dirty and torn, and there is always a bad smell on them (ATD Quart Monde, 2010, p. 41).

The latest official Malagasy population census that was carried out in 2017 shows that there are two thousand three hundred ninety-four homeless people in Madagascar. One thousand five hundred eighty-two of them are living in the cities of the Analamanga region, which has Antananarivo as the regional capital (INSTAT, 2021). According to ATD Quart Monde,

however, it is difficult to count the 4-mi because the counting done by the government goes from house to house, but they do not have a house, and they cannot find a place to sleep unless it is at night. When investigators from ATD Quart Monde approached the large communal dump of Andramiarana, they found many street families living around that area, counting five hundred seventy people, one hundred and twenty-one families. ATD Quart Monde, 2010, p. 75), so it is impossible to accurately describe their number, the number registered by INSTAT might be fewer than the actual number of street families in Antananarivo.

Their daily lives are spent searching through various types of waste, and they are regularly found next and in garbage bin sites, whether it is waste in the city, or in the municipal dump. There are two large areas, Andralanitra and Andramiarana where many street families of Antananarivo are often present. Collecting leftover food to eat, collecting coal to cook any food that can be cooked, and collecting boxes, bottles, and cans that can still be sold to buyers (Andrianaivo, 2000, p. 188). They are also collecting scrap iron, aluminum, and copper that are lost in the dump to be sold to the recipients (ATD Quart Monde, 2010, 47). They live their lives in dirt all the time, and there is no washing, neither their bodies nor their clothes are clean.

Because it is difficult for them to find a job in the situation they are in, and many of them do not have a job anymore, another alternative activity is to beg for money. What is obtained from this is the food to be eaten. Their children can serve as the tools that make people feel sorry for them, indeed their babies who are not separated from their mother but is always on their back. Little children from 4 to 10 years old also are sent to beg. Many people around them sympathize when they see them begging, and give some money (Ballet, 2010).

When those children are more than ten years old, they start participating in other activities that are considered to earn more money than begging. Their parents force them to find work to get money, and sending them to work is the way that leads them to independence. Some of these children are forced by their parents to give the money they get to their parents. But some are forced to guarantee the food they will eat so that their parents no longer provide for them (Ballet, 2010).

Some of those homeless people can work, but their jobs are often unfair jobs, that disregard humanity. Examples of these are breaking small stones in the quarry, which is a work for slaves a long time ago (Camacho, quoted in ATD QUART Monde, 2012, 14). There are parents, and kids, pounding stones from morning till night, and receiving very low wages. They can also do another small job, like waiting for cars in the parking, or they also work as "porteurs" where they carry heavy luggage while someone is shopping in the city market (Marguerat, 2003, p. 194).

The donations made by well-meaning people also sustain their lives. Those who often donate to them are the Indo-Pakistanis Muslims ("Karana" in Malagasy) who sell in almost all the towns throughout Madagascar. They prepare gifts to distribute to the needy every Friday, because this day is a day of prayer and giving in Islam (Gössling et al., 2004, p. 141). Every Friday, therefore, there is a large queue in front of the magazines of these Indo-Pakistanis, so they usually only distribute what they sell, apart from money. For instance, at the medicine shop of Muslims owner, there are very long queue of homeless people, waiting for medicines that are about to expire in the pharmacy.

But when the night comes, because they have no place to stay, and they are badly dressed, they go to save themselves under bridges, verandas, arcades, or porches of shops in the city. There they spread out a cardboard box, from what they used to sleep on, and cover it with a plastic bag (cellophane) to protect them from the cold in the winter, or the rain in the summer. The sleeping place does not change, there is always a small family sleeping together. (Marguerat, 2003, p. 193). They say it is not easy to sleep, especially when it rains, because their clothes are wet, and what they lie on and the cover is also wet, so they complain, telling "we suffer, we endure suffering" (Randriambololona, 2018, p. 51). And when morning comes, they must try to get up early, so as not to disturb the shop or the street where they slept

3.6 The Effects of Being Street Families

The effects in life as a 4-mi, are not separated from the situation they live in, which affects and defines their life. Some appear in their lives in childhood, and some appear in their lives in general. Some sad situations generate inevitably, and life of the homeless become more complicated.

3.6.1 Effects on the Babies and Children of the Street

For the homeless people, babies are born without any preparation to receive them, but in very bad conditions, without the necessities to welcome a baby, and without supervision from doctors, unless the NGOs do not take care of them. They are also born without birth certificate (ATD Quart Monde, 2021, p. 42). Dangerously, malnutrition is extremely high and fatal among the 4-mi (Marguerat, 2003, p. 193)

Street children also do not have the chance to go to school, becoming literally street children, street educates and nurtures them (Marguerat, 2003, p. 193). The place where they live is often dominated by delinquency, and this upbringing is becoming part of their being. And as it is on the side the street that they will pick up trash, or beg for money, encouraging them to go back to school and focus on their studies is not very easy when the opportunity is presented (Randriambololona, 2018, p. 42).

One of the negative effects of sending these children to beg is also violence against children. Because their parents only force them to go begging, these children must be abused by their parents if they don't beg, or if they put money into other activities. Both moral and physical violence are applied to these children, and it is very common to hear in the places where these street families are found that children are shouted at, cursed, kicked, and slapped. forced to beg, they undergo child exploitation and become an instrument for money and food for their parent (Ballet et al, 2010).

In sum, these children on the streets get such a bad upbringing, a life without supervision, so the children of street families become bad children, who speak dirty words, fight in the street, and early start smoking and drinking alcohol, and even tried drugs. Furthermore, children who gamble with dice and card games, and who are already involved in sex, they might even engage in prostitution at a young age. Those children experience the destruction of their humanity, because the society they live in and that raise them is always like that, and they endure that life until they grow up in the street living in a vicious circle that they cannot escape from.

3.6.2 The Effect of Being Homeless in their General Lives

Because an undisciplined lifestyle prevails in the lives of the 4-mi, and drunkenness is always present, there are often fights between the 4-mi. Violence does not leave the world of the 4-mis. When there is a disagreement, there are often heavy bad words in a noisy way between the 4-mis. (Marguerat, 2003, p. 192). It includes beating, and it will not be distinguished that both children and women are beaten, which often injures them. In such a situation, it is sad to remark that society ignores it, because, for many, such cases are already part of the ordinary things that appear in the lives of 4-mi.

They experience ignorance all along their lives, society ignores them in many ways, daring to pour dirty water on them or to say hurtful words. They lose their dignity, and it is sad to class that as “normal” because they are 4-mi. An example of this is when they are begging. Usually in places where people can eat or drink coffee and eat bread, these 4-mi come to ask for a piece of food or money, but the vendors are often very forceful and dismissive of them because they disturb the client. Often, they are persecuted, and there is no dignity given to them when the police from the urban commune come to evict them from a place where they slept (ATD Quart Monde, 2010, p 36, 48).

Because many of them do not have their National Identity Cards, they have hardly any rights in society. They do not even have the right in finding a decent job, which requires personal information. They have no right to participate in all elections which are going on, in Madagascar. Not only do they lose their right to life, but because they are uneducated and dirty, no one questions them, and their opinions are taken as lightly and nonsense (ATD, Quart Monde, p. 47).

The street families are not only homeless but their whole dignity is broken. Moreover, they do not have clean water, and they do not have latrines (ATD, Quart Monde, p. 48). In addition to not having the habit of cleaning, they are always at risk of diseases caused by uncleanliness such as stomach aches, cholera, and plague. In addition, even though they are sick, they cannot stop begging or doing their daily routing, because if they stop, they do not eat.

In addition, in the Malagasy values, the “*fiHAVANANA*” (peace) and the “*firaisankina*” (solidarity) are central. But the street families, can no longer be part of that, because they have been abandoned by their families (Andrianaivo, 2000, p. 187). They accept the fact that their relatives are rejecting them, but also, they reject themselves. Feeling banished, they no longer expect their families will again accept them (Anne-Marie Coquelin in Marguerat, 2003, p. 194). They are stuck in the streets of the town; they are not able to go back to their homeland.

There is also a great psychological impact in the lives of those 4-mi, according to the sociologist Martine Camacho, (in Marguerat, 2003, p. 194). She pointed out that many of them show global disinterest, not only in their families but in their whole lives. They are discouraged and refuse to get out of the homeless situation. Most of them think they and their descendants are destined to be kept in that situation forever until they die. Therefore, the entrance they entered in their past life, by becoming street families or 4-mi in Madagascar is like a way on a unique sense of no return.

Finally, many of them feel they are condemned to live on the side of the street forever, but there are still some who are hoping to leave that life one day. They believe that if their children can go to school, they will have a better future. Moreover, they also want and seek respect, dignity, and rights (ATD Quart Monde, 2010, p. 56). There are Nongovernmental Organizations that take care of them, trying to bring these people back into society. They usually take care of health, provide food, try to provide housing, send children back to school, and try to give training to parents so that they can have a job, etc. This raises the question: where and what is the role of the Malagasy Lutheran Church in rebuilding the lives of those street families?

Conclusion

In Madagascar, 81.9% of the population is still under the poverty line according to the criteria of the World Bank. Corruption, political mismanagement, and climate change are the main causes of poverty. Economically, the Island is very instable, and people do not hesitate to do a lot of sacrifices to meet their needs. One of the options is to move to Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, and try to find an occupation. Without any diploma, most of those immigrant persons will fall into the situation of being unemployed, and have no option than

living on the side of the street. Their lives are hard, and to survive, they are obliged to beg or search for something to eat or to use in the garbage bin. Without a home, they are obliged to live on the side of the street in the day as in the night. There, they lose their dignity, society is mistreating them. The feeling of being marginalized reigns, and the hope to escape this misery is very low for most of them.

Chapter 04: Biblical and Theological Reflection on Mission for the Needy

This chapter will present the concern of God for the poor and homeless as reflected in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This chapter is presented systematically. Accenting the Bible as the main source of understanding of mission, and demonstrating that God also is a missionary God for the needy, the presentation is focusing on what God is indeed doing concerning the poor and homeless. The mission of Jesus Christ is definitely affirming that when He was with them. His manners of giving them the gospel of Life is also the model of the early church when they were continuing this mission.

4.1 The Poor and Needy in The Old Testament

4.1.1 The Human Dignity in the History of Creation

The Old Testament, in Genesis 1:26, declares that human beings are created in the image of God. Nordstokke (quoted in Messenger, 2009, p. 25), is pointing out that as created in the image of God, human beings have the dignity that they inherited. In addition, Stephanie Dietrich (2014, p. 30) affirms that human beings obtain this Dignity from their relationship with God. In creation also, human beings are made to care for each other and created to be complementary and companion to one another, in the creation of, Adam and Eve are also made to help one another. It is God's call for humans to take care of each other in their duty to be stewards of the fields and the creatures.

The first poverty recorded in the Bible is what happened to Adam and Eve, when sin entered and destroyed the relationship with God, it also damaged any relationship between humans. don't. God had the initiative to kill animals for them because of this. There is already a symbol of the sacrifice for their sins in it because God made an animal sacrifice for their sins. The nudity of the couple shows that they are poor, and not clothed; therefore, God gave them animal skins, and that reveals God also operated on the physical part of their humanity, not just on the spiritual part (Manya, 2018, p. 45).

Therefore, this dignity He gave is very important, and God does not want the human being to lose it, but always own it. This dignity deserves also to the poor, so in front of God, the poor are not inferior. And because they also are created in the image of God, He is always aiming

to restore this dignity to them (Das, 2021, n.p.). God, then after the fall, in His plan of redemption, has a concern for the poor, in all their dimensions of life.

4.1.2 The Poverty as Recorded in the History of Israel

If we look at the poverty that is embedded in the children of Israel, it is caused by many considerations. Because of the many blessings that Abraham and the patriarchs received, for example, the Jews believed that being rich is a blessing from God, while those who do not have blessings are guilty (Levin, 2001, p. 254). The closing words in Deuteronomy confirm this, that those who keep the law will be blessed but those who do not will be cursed.

Brujipacher (in Goy, 1925, p. 293) affirms that poverty does not come from God unless it is for special reasons to bring his people back to him. God is fighting against poverty so that His people can live in peace, and He is rebuilding the society to live according to what He intended. God always provided water, food, and other needs for His people, even in times of famine, when they were still on their way in the desert. He is also the one who gives to His people the land He had promised, in which they can cultivate, and the production from that is also his blessing (Barga, 2017, p. 68).

In the captivity of the Children of Israel in Egypt, and their life in the land of Canaan, it can be seen that there were always poor people among the Children of Israel. Many reasons may have caused this, such as natural disasters, famine, death of caring fathers, unpaid debts, and enemy attacks in many different wars (Andran, 2004). Therefore, poverty does not have to be a curse, and God is pitiful and sorrowful in the face of poverty.

The monarchy implemented by the kings in Israel which is based on a system of taxes, which allows to increase the property and the power of the government, is one of the factors that increased poverty (Dussel, 1979, p. 116). It is obvious that the abuse by the monarchs, the authorities, and those who had power, in the government and in the court, has caused extreme poverty. Their property and rights of the poor were even taken from them, and they came to extreme poverty, for instance, those recorded in the book of Amos (Amos 2:6, 3:10, 8:5) fell into deep poverty.

In general, the Hebrew word "*ani*" (plural, *aniyyim*) is the name used to refer to the poor in the Old Testament, to refer to the afflicted, oppressed, poor, and humble. There are also

other Hebrew words such as "*dal*" which means low, weak, downtrodden, "*muk*": low, oppressed; "*ebyon*": waiting, needy and dependent, deprived; "*yarash*": dispossessed; "rush" destitute, the impoverished through dispossession. The word Poverty is widely used in the Old Testament, referring to people who are economically defeated, those who disinherit their land, and those who suffer from sickness, ignorance, marginalization, discrimination, and oppression by enemies or fellow citizens (Barga, 2017, p. 69).

The story of Job also shows the extreme poverty that a person can experience, losing property, losing children, and becoming homeless (Job 1:13-21). shunned by his wife, shunned by friends and society. It is also recorded in the oppression that the rich do to the poor (Job 24:2-14). It includes robbery, oppression and physical torture and pressure to perform work, not having a house to live in, clothing and food, enduring pain and suffering (Das, 2021).

4.1.3 God's Care of The Poor and the Needy

The Old Testament express God's care of the needy, in the whole aspect of their lives. So according to Timothy Tennent (in Wisner, 2021, 156), God's character is identified in three qualities, which are justice (Heb: *mishpat*), loving-kindness (Heb: *hesed*), and compassion (Heb: *rahamim*). In his presence in his people, God showed this, being jealous and caring for the poor (Ex. 22:21f; Ps. 68:5; 82:3; Isa 10:2; Jer. 22:3). In His treatment of the Children of Israel, especially in front of the poor in the land of Israel, God loved them not only with His words, but with His actions, and it is affirmed throughout the history of Israel.

This is confirmed, for instance, in the history of Israel where God took revenge on the Egyptians who captured and oppressed them, as it is written: The Lord said:

"I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So, I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey." Ex. 3:7-8.

Fretheim (1989, p. 40) articulates that God shows that He is a suffering God who suffers with his people and identified with them. Then, He decided to go down and set a purpose, and an agenda to free and bring the Children of Israel out of the slavery they lived in. He entered the history and the lives of Israel who were oppressed and freed them with his almighty power

and punish the Egyptian oppressors (Manya, 2018, p. 45). And when they were released from Egypt, Seffey (2006, p. 9) underlined that in addition of their freedom, the exodus from Egypt is accompanied with a reversal in their economic situation, because Egyptians, when asked for, provided them with jewelry. Later, God took care of their needs in the desert, if there was no water or food, YHWH provided their needs

Since then, God has always shown that He has a preference for the poor and ordered Moses to manage and distribute everything equally. He told the Children of Israel to always remember that they were captives. Therefore, they should care for the widows, the fatherless, and the sojourners within their gates (Deut. 5:13-15; 15:1-18). And it was remembered from generation to generation, and Israel was taught to do good to those in need, so for those who do this, the Holy Scriptures declares: "Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God" (Prov. 14: 31) (Ross et al., 2016, p. 95).

And when Israel asked YHWH to have a king, the king was entrusted with the duty of being the guardian of social order for the good of all. In this, he has to look at the justice and welfare of the poor and needy in his land, by establishing social justice and compassion as values that govern the kingdom (Das, 2021). This was reflected in the successive good kings of Israel. But when a bad king ruled, the oppression of the poor prevailed (1 Kin. 21:1-16)

4.1.4 God's Concern For The Poor And Needy in the Law and the Prophets

In the law that God gave Israel to live by and to treat each other when they arrived in Canaan, God made something special to protect the poor; and showed what should be done to help and save the poor from their suffering (Wright, 2007, p. 200). An example of this is to pay the day laborer, in which the poor are the main workers (Deut. 24: 14-15), not to pick the fall from the rice field but leave it for the poor (Lev. 19:9, 10). There was also the need to bring them if they had to do service to pay off debts they did not pay in service (Lev. 25:39-43) etc. Psalm 24:1 is affirming that while telling "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it". Consequently, for the people who observed the law, allow the poor and needy on the day of harvest to do God's command (Ruth. 2:1-10).

The Sabbatical year is one, and great, law that God established. There is an ecological purpose in it, but also full consideration and concern for the poor (Exod.23:10-11; Deut. 24:18,22; Lev. 25:2-7), because it is time to erase the debt that the poor could not afford to pay. This is also the liberation of those who had to accept being slaves in Israel due to unpaid debts, and the master they served still gives them property to bring them to face their lives again. The Sabbatical year gives justice to the poor, and maintains equity in Israel. It also manifests God's love and cares for the poor without ceasing so that there will be no poor but everyone will live with God's blessing on all of Israel (Barga, 2017, p. 71).

Even though the law mandates that the poor should be considered, a lot of inequality was recorded in Israel's society. When evil rulers were kings, oppression toward the needy was always present. Therefore, the poor continued to be neglected, and the number of the poor continued to increase in Israel, and that happens even until the Babylonian captivity. In consequence, the existence of a group of poor people in Israel after the captivity is very evident (Levin, 2001, p. 254, 264)

Nevertheless, God sent many prophets to nurture and bring Israel back to His will. To the poor were brought the words of hope, and for all of Israel, words reminding them what they should do to the poor, and to not oppress them. In addition, they were to advocate for justice and equality in the land of Israel (Goy, 1925, p. 19), like the verses recorded in Zecharia:

This is what the LORD Almighty said: "Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other." (Zech. 7:9–10)

4.1.5 Hope of the Poor for Salvation from YHWH

And in front of the bitter oppression of the poor in the land of Israel, there are many complaints of the poor written in the Psalms (Ps. 63, 69, 73, 77, 86, 140, etc.). Moreover, they expected revenge on their oppressors, judgment, and revenge from God to turn their history upside down, to humble the proud (Am. 4:13; 5:8; 9:5-6; Isa. 24: 14-16; 25:1-5; 26:1-6; 26:5-6) (Manya, 2018, p. 46). Recorded in those verses, the Lord is the only one, on whom the poor look forward for salvation and justice.

The poor were also eagerly waiting for a Messiah who would restore peace to them. Isaiah 61 was believed to be the words of the king who was anointed by God and has the spirit of God, to restore peace and restore the lives of the oppressed. Those are famous verses that will be spoken by those who will be anointed by YHWH, to bring deliverance and redemption to the poor and to preach the year of grace. This hope was always alive in Israel in their suffering and oppression.

And the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 is the climax of that hope, which prophecies about the coming of the Messiah identified among the poor, to bring a kingdom of shalom again, to restore the disorder that existed, It was a word sent to the prophet, revealing God's purpose of always hearing the calls of the poor, and bringing salvation to the suffering that befalls them. Those who were impoverished, according to Isaiah 61, were given the Spirit of YHWH the Messiah to preach the year of gratitude, and to bring retribution and judgment to their oppressors (Levin, 2001, p. 266, 268).

4.2 Poverty and Homelessness in the Gospel

4.2.1 The Mission of Jesus to the Poor and Homeless

In the New Testament, Luke's writings contain the most concern about the poor, marginalized, and oppressed people (Luk. 4:18-19, 6:20, 7:22, 11:39, 12:33, 14:13, 21, 16:20, 22, 18:22, 21:3). The context of the lives of the Jews under Roman slavery hastened the gap between those who benefited from the Roman state, and the people who were obliged to pay taxes to the Roman authorities (Douglas et al., 1988, p. 1254). Luke reveals the suffering of such people, and he emphasizes that their human dignity is lost under such conditions. The suffering that these people suffer affects all aspects of their lives, whether physical, moral, social or political. Luke is not stressing only spiritual poverty, but rather human or social poverty (Sheffer, 2013, n.p.)

After Jesus was baptized, as written in Luke, and following that, after being tempted, He entered a synagogue, as a Jew, and read Isaiah 61:1-2:

“The Spirit of Lord is on me because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”

And after Jesus had read the word, He announced that the word He read was fulfilled at that moment. That was a stumbling block for many of those who were there, but, for Jesus, because it is a word that designates His Messiahship, this verse is the manifesto that guides and assigns his mission (Messenger, 2004, p. 25).

In addition, those verses emphasize that the mission of Jesus is a holistic mission to the poor (Myers, 2011, p. 73). And in the ministry of Jesus, the poor, who have been excluded by society, have great importance. Jesus brought salvation to all people and the whole world. In Him faith is fond and is fruitful, within Him, the hope of transformation in a holistic manner is occurring (Messenger, 2004, 23).

According to Wiher (2021, p. 154), the mission that Jesus sent to the world was to preach the gospel (Gr: Ἐυαγγελισομαι) (Mk. 1:38; 16:15) and teach (Gr: διδασκῶ). The Greek word ἔυαγγελισομαι is the verbal proclamation of the Gospel, but it also represents the activity of Jesus in His ministry, that is, the preaching of the gospel has many aspects beyond the verbal but is not limited to the verbal proclamation. In this way, this evangelism in deeds has even become synonymous with "making disciples". Therefore, with His words and actions, He showed this teaching. The action is not separated from the sharing of the gospel and teachings of Jesus, so whether He claims to be the Messiah (Luke 14:8). When He sends his disciples, He highlighted actions along with proclamation: to heal, cast out demons (Mat. 8:13, 16; 12:15; 19:2; Mk 1:34; 16:17; Luke 14:4). Concerning His non-verbal activities, Jesus refers to Himself as coming to serve (Gr: Διακονεῶ). Here the use of this word from Jesus refers to serving his Father by doing His will, and this will of the Father places Him as a servant of others, and to give His life as a sacrifice to them (Mrk. 10:45) (Lee Kon, 2019, 27).

Jesus did not separate words and deeds, and those are always interrelated during His ministry. When He performed words and deeds, He aimed to bring transformation to the individual, society, or community where he did his work. Accordingly, from time to time, alongside with Jesus's call for partners to carry out this mission, the model He presented remain the same (Myers, 2011, p. 73). He is teaching them with his words an deeds, before sending them (Jhn. 13:12-15).

4.2.2 Jesus Identified in The Poor and the Marginalized

In the incarnation, Jesus enters the totality of human existence. This shows God's attitude of mercy and care for the poor. He was born into a poor family, and He identified himself with the poor and the marginalized (Wisher, 2021, p. 157). His name is Immanuel, or "God with us", accordingly, the poor were benefiting from it. In this way, Jesus is also God who lives among the poor, living in the condition that they lived in, and living in solidarity with those in need.

The baptism that was done to Jesus also indicates that He came down to the place of the poor, so He placed himself as one who does not have and begs. His request to John shows this, because John is convinced that truly, he should be baptized by Jesus, but instead, Jesus was asking John for baptism. According to Balia (2010, p. 28), His request for baptism from John places himself in emptiness and lack of possessions, thus Jesus was putting aside His identity as God, the Lord of everything, and accepting there is a gap that He will not have if it is not given or done to Him, the unction He received, as the lamb of God.

Myers (2011, p. 72) pointed out that most of the places where Jesus did his ministry were among those who were outside the wealth and progress. That is clearly shown in the difference between the advanced and full of prestige life in Jerusalem, and the humbleness of Galilee or Nazareth, also called a weak place, without honor and power. Even in a village, Jesus spent time inside as outside it, for example in the time He met the marginalized lepers, outside the city, and brought healing to them. Besides, He is also going around the desert, where starvation and death dominated. Jesus preaches the word and performed action when He fed the four thousand and five thousand men in the desert (Luk. 9:10-17), Jesus embraced a life near the poor and marginalized.

The death of Jesus on the cross also represents Jesus identified on the poor and the marginalized. Jesus accepted to be abandoned when He faced His death on the cross because His friends abandoned Him, and even the Father abandoned Him (Mrk. 15:33). The abandonment from His Father was very painful for Jesus, He experienced alone the agony on the cross. There, Jesus was suffering, and His suffering and cries for help bound Him with the poor and cries of the poor, because of the suffering that is applying to them. He was enduring even deeper suffering (Linzuwa, 2014, p. 214).

Jesus also told that in the last days, by answering people according to their deeds, what they did to the little ones who are hungry, thirsty, and have no clothes, counted. Jesus told that what was done to them was done to Him, and what was not done to them was not done to Him (Matthew 25: 31-46). That shows his compassion for the poor and afflicted, vulnerable and oppressed. It shows that Jesus is identified in them, sharing their suffering, as an incarnated God. When Jesus told: "The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me" (Mrk 14:7), He emphasized this compassion and union with the poor and the afflicted, even He is not always physically present among them.

4.2.3 Jesus's Concern for The Poor in His Words

The Gospel according to Luke is called the gospel for the poor. Luke says that Jesus said: "Blessed are you who are poor..., Blessed are you who hunger now..., Blessed are you who weep now". The poor are 'blessed' because they long for justice and their hope for liberation and a life of human dignity, and they expect that from God. God also agrees to give them this desire and lack in his life (Ross et al., 2016, p. 96). Therefore, when it comes to the fact that Jesus cares for them with his words, his parables, and Sermons will reflect this.

When telling about the great commandments, which is to love God and your neighbor yourself (Luke 10:26-36), loving the poor and needy is underlined. Because when asked about what neighbor, Jesus answered the parable of the good Samaritan. He replies that the friends meant to be loved are those who, even not close to you, and have nothing to do with yourself, but have been oppressed, those who have been killed and impoverished, and are sick and weak and can no longer move by themselves, because of the oppression done to them. Being close to such people and loving such people is what is expected of His followers, and He is the good Samaritan they point to, leaving them to learn, (Thiongo, 2009, p. 44).

This illustration is also a foundation that represents diaconal work done for a person who has been impoverished and reached a situation of vulnerability. There is a lot of sacrifice given by the Samaritan who saved him. He did not care about the distance between him and the seriously injured person, but he brought him salvation. He also sacrificed time and property to help her. The rescue that he did is divided into two parts, there is taking care of the patient's needs right away, taking care of his wounds, and carrying him (emergency care).

After that come the long-term care he gave him when he got to a place where he could be treated. There is immediate action (emergency) and there is action to follow up (permanent). Everything he did was not aimed at profit, but he did it out of love (Nordstokke, 2009, p. 41).

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man puts a great message about God's will for the poor (Luke 16:19-31). Guzik, (2018, n.p.) pointed out that it is not the wealth of the rich that is a sin for him, but that he does not realize that one of the reasons for his wealth is to take care of and feed the poor and homeless. Instead of doing so, he neglected and ignored Lazarus. This is the reason for the eternal suffering that happened to the rich man, so he wanted to reprimand his brother. It is emphasized in the cause of loss that unbelief (v. 31), that is if this rich man had believed, he would have known what he should do to this poor man, but he had to follow this belief with action. Besides, it is not the poor man's poverty that saves him, but because he has full confidence in what God is doing for him, he has confidence in expecting salvation in all forms, because there is no self-sufficiency in him.

The parable of the banquet (Luk. 14:16-24), refers to the people on the side of the road, and the edge of the field. They are unemployed and waiting for what is harvested from the fallow field (cf Lev. 19:9, 10). So it refers to the poor and homeless in the New Testament. But Jesus said that he has a share in the kingdom of heaven. That kingdom of heaven from a holistic perspective, is a life "already" that has been given and entered into the world. God reigns and provides full salvation, for all dimensions in him as a human being, accordingly, Jesus says:

“When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” Luk. 14:13-14.

In the Lord's prayer, the value of the kingdom of heaven, or the reign of God is of great significance (Mat. 6:10), Jesus affirmed that it will be preached to the ends of the earth (Mat. 24:14). Therefore, it has great importance in the words and deeds of Jesus. It is the transformation God brings to a society marred by sin. It is not waiting in heaven, it is "already" with God, in His presence and redemption in the earth. People do not receive the gospel to leave or to be separated from the earth. The kingdom of God brings renewal in the land where they live, even if it has not yet reached its completion. Even though its fullness is

still in the futur. According to E. Stanley John (quoted in Myers, 2011, p. 88)., this Kingdom is Jesus himself, bringing transformation to the people and society that receive Him, and bringing them renewal in all aspects

Consequently, His followers have to bear in mind, that words or prayer require actions. Throughout the gospel, Jesus's command of care for the poor is highlighted. When in the desert where many people had nothing to eat, Jesus directly told the disciples: "You give them something to eat" (Mrk. 6:37), this sentence emphasizes that caring for the literal poor must always be a continuing responsibility for whoever following Jesus. This is also confirmed by his words to the rich man who came to say that he was right in front of him, the truth that Jesus demanded of him is to sell all his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow him (Luk. 18:22). The use of wealth, according to God's will, is to care for the poor.

4.2.4 Jesus's Care of the Poor in His Deeds

Jesus did not only preach to the poor through words, His actions or deeds also expressed His care for them. Manya (2018, p. 46) pointed out that poverty is the result of sin that entered into humanity, God who brings medicine and salvation from sin brings salvation from poverty. God brings a solution to this with great love, and when he gave his Son to the world, he offered this double salvation. which people receive through repentance and forgiveness. The love that God gave in His Son shows the compassion that He has, and He gave it to all kinds of situations and conditions that happen to the people that He saved.

When Jesus comes to people, especially the poor, he brings transformation and reconciliation (Messenger, 2004, p. 25). So when John asked Jesus if He was the Messiah, He responded with signs and acts He has done and said:

“Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.” (Mat. 11:4-6).

Those signs demonstrate Jesus was taking care of the poor and needy. In Jesus' mission, the sinners, the poor, the hungry, the sick, and the alienated were of great importance. And in the story in the New Testament, they also have other defects at the same time, such as blindness, and leprosy, which aggravate their situation, then they were extremely poor and

beg (Mrk .10:46; 5:25-34; Luk. 17:1-19). Wherever Jesus heals them in the Power He received from the Father, He forgives their sins and heals, restores them to their dignity, and sets them free from poverty by empowering them and bringing them back to the society which has excluded them before (Dietrich, 2014, p. 38; Douglas et al., 1988, p. 1255).

If we are talking about the homeless literally, the story of the Demoniac in the tomb is one of the references taken by the researchers (Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39). The main problem that existed with this person was that he was a demoniac, so he did not have a home but instead wandered around the cemetery. This man was also naked, and society abandoned him. But when he met Jesus, he cast out the evil spirit that oppressed him, and he was healed. He was clothed, and he returned to the community where he belonged. The mission that Jesus did to this demonic man was gospel in deeds, and it was completely holistic because it looked at the whole aspect, both spiritual, mental, physical, and society, and fully restored the dignity that Jesus had in him, so he sent him as a witness to his community.

When those who were hungry came to Jesus, He did not only preach to them but also fed the four thousand and five thousand men in the desert, and they were satisfied (Matthew 14: 13-21, Mrk. 6: 30-44, Luk. 9: 10- 17). Here, it is a material need that lacks: the need for food, and Jesus had given bread, and had fed the people. But later, He gave them the bread of life when he declares himself as the bread of life, that whoever eats it will no longer be hungry (John 6:35). Social action is introducing the proclamation in this story, and Jesus Himself performed the model.

The salvation that Jesus did on the cross brought a new relationship between God and people, and He also did and established it between people. It was there that Jesus brought about a great transformation, that is why Paul the Apostle said, that Jesus denied himself, and took the form of a servant, to fulfill this reconciliation (Philippians 2:5). But He rose again on the third day and brought a great transformation: changing death into life. Not only for spiritual matters, but that is also the time He raised the poor from the dust. (Myers, 2011, p. 75).

Consequently, for the needy, this is both forgiveness of sins, peace with God, and new hope that God will restore their lives full of suffering and move them to a new and better future. It was in this world that Jesus conquered death, and this renewal for the poor is also starting

here. According to John Stott, stated in (Das, 2021), the salvation that Jesus brought is a combination of "*saved from*" and "*saved for*". In this way, salvation first brings liberation from sin and liberation from the effects of sin that appear in many forms. This freedom (liberation) leads to a new life, and it leads to glorious freedom, namely the freedom of God's children. Because the resurrection marks a new starting point, for the hope of change.

4.3 Mission that Calls the Early Church to the Care of The Needy

Wiher (2021) underlines that Jesus calls for the disciples to serve. The process of sharing of Life that Jesus did for them, to be servants like Him, during the time He was with them, is a process of transformation, with many verbal and non-verbal. That was the process Jesus established for those disciples to become His witnesses. They were given the Holy Spirit and preached the gospel with words and deeds, to convince people that Jesus is the Christ, and this continued in the life of the church. Consequently, the church is not the purpose of the gospel, where it ends. It is an instrument to bring transformation and reconciliation to the whole world.

4.3.1 The Life of the Early Church in Care of the Poor

As written in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, the first Christians shared their possessions. The aim is that there would not be rich people and not poor people, but there would be equality (Act. 4:32-36). It showed the unity in mind and clearly showed the unity of the early church, ruled by communion. Joseph was said to be one of those who had a lot of property, but he sold his own and gave the price to the Apostles. He was also called Barnabas, which means "Son of encouragement", the first church called him "Son of consideration" because he agreed to see and care for those living in poverty. His attitude became the Theology of the New Testament regarding "poor" and "poverty" (Ogbari, 2016, p. 5), a model to follow so that those who own goods, will have generosity and share with those who do not have.

This communion with the property is a sign of their union, so they demonstrate it in the worship they performed, and the liturgy they practiced was a celebration of their fellowship. In the Eucharist where they ate the Blood of the Holy Spirit together, they affirm the presence of Jesus within the church (Act. 2:42-46; 20:7-11; 1 Cor. 10:16) (Lee Kon, 2019, p.

30). Not forgetting that in their context, the meaning of sharing a table, represents unity, class equality, absence of gaps, mutual respect, and fellowship (Dunn, 1998, p. 191). There was no discrimination, they lived their communion marked by this table communion. However, it did not differentiate, but the life that they lived their communion, is marked by this table communion

In the days of the early church, many of the Jews who converted to Christianity and were expelled from the Jewish community and synagogue did not have any part of what they had before and became poor. But they were welcomed to the church, and an attitude of inclusiveness reigned. That is the reason why the relief work done by the churches in Galatia turned to the poor churches, especially to the church in Jerusalem, who gave up sharing and giving from their possessions, even though they were also poor believers there (Ogbari, 2016, p. 6).

The early church met the needs of the poor according to the talents and grace they had. John and Peter gave healing to the beggar at the gate of the synagogue. When he was healed, he left the position of a beggar and became a witness to make others believe in salvation (Act 3:6-10, 12-19). Here, social action again serves as a bridge for evangelization. In addition, Tabitha (Dorcas) was also one of the believers who has the zeal to do social action, the Scripture affirms that: "she was always doing good and helping the poor" (Acts 9:36). In addition, the church in Antioch gave help for the brother and sister in Judea when there was a famine during the reign of Claudius (Act. 11;29).

According to Act. 6, the mission of the church is the proclamation of the welfare of the needy. Therefore, the Apostles put in place arrangements to make the proclamation their responsibility, but the "service of the table" was put in the hands of the deacons. According to Nordstokke (in Lee Kon, 2009, p. 30), it can also be interpreted as the "daily distribution of food", and it was a diaconal work. The first churches did not put a hierarchy on it, that proclamation is necessary before diaconal work, but both of them were done according to their respective needs.

4.3.2 The Epistles and the Care of The Poor

In the Epistle of Paul, he teaches that when believers are given the Spirit, they both receive renewal and bring renewal to those around them. The starting point of the new life and bringing of change in society is the Love of Christ manifested in the Cross, which brings reconciliation. Therefore, being reconciled in Christ, the church is the body of Christ, present in this world (Rom. 12:5; I Kor. 12:12-27), is following and practicing the model of Christ.

Moreover, Because the work of the Holy Spirit creates love inside the believers, the same Spirit draws them to serve others and be generous towards the poor (Gal. 5:22, 1 Cor. 13:3). Therefore, he encouraged the concern for the poor church in Jerusalem and the needy (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13; Gal. 1:10; 2:9-10; Rom. 15:26). Faith in Christ is the movement that leads believers to do this, and it is a testimony of Christ Jesus, who agreed to be poor to make the believers rich and serve the poor. Consequently, when Paul stated that what remains is faith, love, and hope, he highlighted that the greatest is Love (Gr. Agape), or love of God, given for everyone in Christ, and productive within each believer, to bear the fruits of love (I Cor. 13).

The Epistle of John also overlaps with this, emphasizing this love. It is recorded there that the Holy Spirit brings faith into the hearts of believers and unites them with Jesus, thus bringing renewal. Accordingly, whoever believes receives, and has the love that Jesus loved in his heart because he is united with Jesus. This love always moves him to love and serve his needy brother. This needy brother is the representative of God to him, so his love for God must be seen in the love he applies to his brother, otherwise, he cannot be said to abide in God. It is a love not only through words but in deeds and truth. (1 Jhn. 3:18; 4:16, 20-21)

And in the epistle of James, the importance of action and deeds are emphasized, actions are the fruits of the faith of the believers. It is noted in the epistles that faith is empty without works. The commandment of love that Jesus set is the highest, James brings to life the action expected of believers to do to the poor, and he emphasizes that: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" Jas. 1:27. And in James's explanation, about faith and work, it is the work not done that will judge and condemn those who do not care for the poor. That is, faith that does not look at the poor in their suffering is an empty

faith. He highlights the peace the poor need in their life, and this is nothing else than the acts and deeds, that they physically need when believers tell to them: “Go in peace”, in their lives.

Conclusion

From the beginning, in creation, God’s eyes are on the poor, and they have dignity before Him. The poor are so important to Him, and He listens to their cries and saves them. He is even identified with them, which is revealed in the life of Jesus Christ, and He manifested His love for them through words and deeds. Jesus saved the poor and needy from all the suffering in all their human dimension, be it spiritual, mental, physical, or social, and he did not separate them. The transformation and reconciliation He gave them are healing offered with forgiveness, removing them from their poverty, bringing them back their dignity, and returning them to society. It was centered on the cross, and the salvation it brought brings peace and transformation to them in all dimensions, not only spiritual but also in the physical or material dimension. Consequently, those who follow Him will be revived by His Spirit, will work for the poor, receive them together in the church, and do good work for them as He did. And that is identified within the church, where fellowship reigns so that it will be part of its mission until the end.

Chapter 05: Holistic Mission in the Evangelicals Circle, and in the Lutheran World Federation

By nature, the FLM is part of, and among the Evangelical Churches, even though the word Evangelical is not included in its name. The reason is that Evangelicals, are well-known for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which gives salvation and justification by faith (Melton, 2023). The understanding of the mission as evangelization has occupied a most important place within the Evangelical churches, as nowadays also for the FLM. However, a new concept was developed in the realm of the Evangelicals, and a new understanding of mission as holistic emerged. Based on biblical understanding, social action is becoming important in the missions of the churches. That context will be presented in this chapter because, in addition to scripture, the church's history also can help to think about missions. This chapter will present the mission of the LWF as holistic.

5.1. The Concept of Holistic Mission in The Evangelical Circles

To explain the cause of the Holistic mission among the Evangelicals, the International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974 is central. Many meetings followed by debates between the participants from many countries will be presented. Many subjects were discussed, but what will be presented here is the rise of the consideration of the holistic mission of the church, in doing social action. During the various meetings where the theologians met to discuss the missions that awaits the churches, this new perspective was born, developed, and expanded. Through all the meetings, they were convinced that the mission is more than the "salvation of souls", social action is undeniably part of missions.

The initiative emerged from two theologians, in the Latin American Theological Fraternity, named René Padilla and Samuel Escobar. When they studied the poverty of their countrymen, they realized that the definition of mission given by Western theologians is limited or restricted (Wiher, 2022, p. 09). Those theologians brought changes in the churches' understanding of the missions that await them, related to the context they live in.

5.1.1 Form Wheaton (1950) to Lausanne (1974): The Lausanne Movement

Since the 1950s, the term "Evangelism" has been less and less used in the WCC, which began to look at the human side concerning missions. The so-called "social gospel" and "liberation theology", which aimed to emphasize freedom for the captives, emerged. The reason is that life on earth, due to the context of slavery and poverty, the material concerns should be higher than the spiritual dimension (Wiher, 2022, p. 15). The evangelical movement, however, value the salvation Jesus accomplished on the cross to be preached for the salvation of the soul, or also individual salvation so much that that became the sole value and priority of the church, not the other. Despite this, the context that existed in the WCC continued to gain momentum, causing the evangelicals to hold many different meetings, examining the issues of evangelism and social action, and making a declaration that gradually evolved, changing the point of view.

The theologians from Evangelicals held again a missionary congress in Wheaton in 1966. There, they began to think if the problem that people are facing today in terms of social problems will make an impact on how people view the role of missions. They stated that the Bible is the only guide for the Evangelicals, so the Bible was studied to determine what missions await the church. They apprehended that in the Bible, God did not focus only on the spiritual side, but also on the human side. Like what Jesus did with the Samaritans, which included racial, social, and spiritual issues but all of them had an impact on Jesus' meeting with them (Luke 9:51-56; 10:25-35; John 14: 1-30). In addition, the "Two Great Commandments" command Christians to love God and their neighbors, so they should be followed as disciples of Jesus. The meeting in Wheaton began to bring a new perspective, calling for social action. But even so, it was established that only preaching is the priority, and social action does not yet have the same priority (Wiher, 2022, p. 20).

In the same year, another meeting was also held in Berlin in October, and what was emphasized in that meeting was that the main task of the church is evangelism, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. John Stott, the one who directed to Congress, pointed out, in that meeting: "The commission of the church is not to reform the society, but to preach the Gospel" (Wiher, 2022, p. 21). There was a decline in the conviction to practice social action here, among the Evangelicals. But even so, they are convinced that if people accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord, it will have an impact on the community.

There was a lot of difference in opinions between the Evangelicals, after that meeting, because there were those who were convinced that the role of the church must have social responsibility. Some strongly held that evangelism is the priority, and still neglected social action (Wiher, 2022, p. 22). Then, a lot of diversity among the Evangelicals, after that.

Therefore, The Evangelicals wanted to do a deeper reflection on world evangelism. Summoned by the American world evangelist Billy Graham, Evangelicals held another congress in Lausanne in 1974, examining world evangelization, where more than 150 nations participated. The theme that was set as "the whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world", brought to debate with the evangelical background whether salvation is salvation "out of" the world or "of" the world (Ross et al., 2016, p 159). What was decided in Wheaton, regarding the priority of evangelization, was maintained. Since then, the conviction changed: the mission has a great meaning and is much more than evangelism, and social action is part of it. From this congress was born "The Lausanne Covenant", where social action is also considered to be the duty of the church, but "evangelism is primary" (Wiher, 2022, p. 23).

There was a meeting between John Stott, the director that led the Lausanne Movement, with René Padilla and Samuel Escobar. That meeting brought information about the responsibility that awaits the church facing poverty in the country where they live. Stott convinced them to bring a proposal for the church to have a mission in that context. The view of Stott has changed since then and he said that the mission is about all the work that God sends his people to do, so it includes evangelism and social action. Because both of them are expressions of love for neighbors. Accordingly the Formula of the missionary mandate, according to John Stott, is "Great Commission plus Great Commandment" (Wiher, 2022, p. 24).

It was established in the Lausanne Covenant, that evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel, where Jesus Christ's death and resurrection from the dead are central, and Jesus is the essence of the gospel. Preaching the gospel is indispensable because it is forgiveness and redemption to those who believe. However it does not stop at the oral proclamation, evangelism is the whole ministry of Jesus and the Apostles, manifested in words and deeds, (Stott, 2009, p. 40).

Consequently, the missions of believers are to preach it in the world and to persuade people to come to Jesus Christ and be reconciled to God. But the missions of the believer do not stop there. The reason for that is that God is both Creator and Judge. Christians also should share the concern of God bringing justice and reconciliation to human society, and preach freedom from any kind of oppression. Because those people have the image of God, and they have dignity, so they should be given respect and service, not exploited. Both are Christian duties, and both are expressions of authentic love, and it is stressed in the Lausanne Covenant that “faith without work is dead”. Here, the expression of penitence for neglecting Christian responsibility was also recorded (Stott, 2009, p. 45).

In sum, in the Lausanne Covenant, social action is argued for. Both of these are part of the Christian duty, but the Lausanne Covenant always emphasizes that evangelism is primary (Wiher, 2022, p. 25). But both of them are motivated by love, and both of them show love for evangelization and social action. The purpose of God in mission is that church that He has called from the world, is now sent back to the world as God’s servant and witness, in which obedience to Christ is emphasized (Shreiter, 2011, n.p.).

The declaration made by the group of theologians from the South, continuing the initiative of Samuel Escobar and René Padilla, was also one of the approved Lausanne Covenants. The latter declared that the Evangelicals should confess the way they separated the Jesus Christ Savior from Jesus Christ the Lord, and the distortion in biblical understanding. Among them, the human being is a total being, not only soul or spirit, and salvation is related to that, so there are personal, social, and global dimensions. Jesus brings His peace (shalom) to all those dimensions. That is, the gospel is good news for liberation, restoration, and the fullness of salvation. John Stott, who was the director of the Lausanne movement, signed the proposal they announced, to be included in the covenant (Wiher, 2022, p. 27).

5.1.2 The Congress in Grand Rapids (1982)

Despite of the Lausanne Covenant, the Evangelicals did not always have the same opinion, but those from the South wanted to emphasize social action when they met in India in 1979. But for those from the North, while they met in Thailand (1980), the importance of the preaching of the gospel in the oral way (“how can they hear”) was emphasized. The reason is that there are still those who have not heard the gospel, so they disregard social

responsibility as mission of the church, in the North. At the same time, the ecumenical side, seeing the context of poverty and hunger, elaborated on "your kingdom come" and led the mission to that context. So the evangelicals were still in complete ambiguities about the need to do social action, and the debate about it continued.

For that reason, John Stott made another consultation in Grand Rapids, to consider it again. Therefore, the objectives that have been set are to study scripture, theology, and history, and the interaction between them. Starting from this point, it is believed that it is possible to share understanding and get the point of view from both sides. In that meeting, all agreed on the relationship between the proclamation and the social action, and as stated in the paper reporting it: Jesus is the motivation for the social action, because he executed justice for the oppressed in His time, and gave food for the hungry. Both proclamation and then social action or the other way around are correct according to the story recorded in the Bible. Three models can be used to classify the relationship between evangelism and social action:

- The first is that "social action is a consequence of evangelism", which emphasized that when the believer is saved, the new birth he received leads him to a service expected of him in society. Faith works through love (Galatians 5:6; James 2:18; I John 3:16-18). More than that, social action is stated as the principal aim of evangelism.
- The second one was called "social action as a bridge toward Evangelism". Here, social action is positioned as one of the ways to bring Jesus to the neighborhood. Here, they are convinced, that if the church is blind to the oppression and suffering of lives in society, the church should not be astonished if the society, in consequence, would be deaf concerning the proclamation of the Church.
- The third one is "social action as a partner of evangelism", this latter one was described by John Stott with a metaphor. He said that evangelism and social action are like "two wings of a bird". They are not the same, but they are interrelated, they have to identify with one another, and the absence of one of them is a handicap for the missions of the church. That is to say, evangelism has a social dimension, and social responsibility has an evangelical dimension.

Accordingly, evangelism is no longer considered as the main "priority", both missions are looking for believers to live them out, and both are important. However, evangelization has been given the form of "primacy". Evangelism is associated with the eternal destiny of man

and is then a specific task for Christians. Nonetheless, the duty of Christians does not stop there, because from them, as converted, social responsibility is required (Stott, 1982, n.p.).

Since then, social action has gained more and more importance, and when consultation about it was done again, in Wheaton (1983), it was developed on the term "Transformation". Its purpose is the change from a condition of human existence, which was before contrary to God's purpose, to one another good condition in which people are able to enjoy the fullness of life in harmony with God. (John 10:10; Col. 3:8; Eph. 4:13) (Wiher, 2022, 32). The cause of such transformation is the obedience to Jesus Who brought Life to believers. Thereafter, it is fulfilled in believers' lives, and they bring and share the love of God among their neighbors. In consequence, the purpose of God applies to society, in all areas, be it spiritual, social, or economic. It is emphasized that this transformation is God's mission, a mission that He also entrusts to the believers.

5.1.3 The Congress in Manila (1989) or the Lausanne II to Pattaya (2004)

All the evangelicals have come to the conviction that both proclamation and social action are mission and duty for the believers, and also, both are expressions of love, and the relationship between them cannot be separated. Another congress is later held in Manila, gathering more than four thousand theologians, from more than one hundred seventy countries. That meeting established the "Manila Manifesto", stating what work awaits the Christians in that. The adopted slogan is "Proclaim Christ until he comes". Here, evangelism came back as a "priority", but despite this, the feeling of social action being a work in progress continued to develop. It is recorded in the Manila manifesto, that it is in the scripture, the Old and New Testament that authoritative disclosure of the character, will, redemptive act, and mandate of God is given to us (Shreiter, 2011, n.p.). In other words, our mission as participation in God's mission is founded in what is written in the scripture.

It was established that "good news" and "good work" cannot be separated. Christ, Who is preached as Life, is preached as Lord and Savior. He did not preach the kingdom of Heaven with words but he also did works full of mercy and love to show it. Therefore, the saved people are also meant to preach Jesus Christ for salvation and forgiveness, and with that he is also sent to heal the sick, to feed those who are hungry. Words and actions are not

separated, because the biblical gospel has social implications (Wiher, 2022, p. 34). So it is stated in the Manila manifesto that:

“The gospel must become visible in the transformed lives of men and women. As we proclaim the love of God we must be involved in loving service, and as we preach the kingdom of God we must be committed to its demands of justice and peace.” (The Manila Manifesto, 1989).

The gospel is here understood as the whole Gospel. Jesus did not only proclaim the gospel or the kingdom of God, but a demonstration by work of mercy was also accompanying it. That must also be the model the church has to continue. To engage in social implication as a consequence of the Biblical gospel (The Manila Manifesto, 1989).

Evolution in social actions then started to flourish, for instance, the Micah Network, which was born in 1999, is a Christian organization dealing with humanitarian aid and development. They put forward the "Micah Declaration on Integral Mission" at their meeting in Oxford in 2001, and René Padilla was one of those who had a major role in developing it. They emphasized that the transformation that is expected from the Christian is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel, so the proclamation that is done causes social consequences, and social involvement causes evangelistic consequences. When Christians are performing them together, they are witnesses of the transformation that Jesus brings to the world. They emphasized clearly, that when Jesus did his work: "being", "doing" and "saying" are interrelated, and that is the heart of the integral mission.

Before the year 2000, the terms "mission" and evangelism were used interchangeably. Since 2000, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism has published a document showing the difference between the terms "Mission" and "Evangelism". Accordingly, the mission is understood in a holistic way, and it includes sharing the Gospel through the word (Gr: Kerygma), deed (Gr: Diakonia), prayer and worship (Gr: Leiturgia), the witness that is done by Christian life (Gr: Martyrdom) and uniting people with God and encouraging them. On the other hand, evangelization is based on the oral proclamation of the Gospel, to persuade people to repent and have a new life in Christ (Ross et al., 2016, 160).

At the meeting in Pattaya in 2004, the participants had their presentations on the scope of the holistic mission waiting for the Christians and the churches. It has now been realized that the definition of mission was narrow in the past, but the mission of God which is given to

Christians is wide in many areas, and affirmation of the priesthood of all believers calls all members of the church to be part and agents of missions. Being continuously transformed and led by the Holy Spirit, believers are working together, to bring transformation to social and economic Transformation (Claydon, 2005, n.p.).

René Padilla, while announcing the biblical basis of this, offered three types of approaches, to say about this holistic mission, done with neighbors, waiting for the church. The first one is based on the purpose of God working on the whole creation, so the mission as a holistic one includes all dimensions regardless of what people live in (geographical, cultural, social, political, etc.). The second one follows this holistic mission of expanding the human being as a unity of body, soul, and spirit. Consequently, the holistic mission is a mission that deals with providing for the needs of the whole person, whether it is the deepest need for God, spiritual or physical, like the need for food, or clothing, or psychological needs like the peace of mind, or human dignity. The third and last one is based on what Jesus ministers in His words and deeds, in His life and His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His exaltation. (Wiher, 2022, p. 37).

And one of the ideas that were especially emphasized was that: "The church must embrace and teach a biblical understanding of the poor and poverty". By poverty, we can relate it to "poverty as oppression", where the context in which the poor is living reduces them to powerlessness. Secondly, the "poverty of being", in which all conditions that demonstrate their situation are gathered, like suffering, deception, and exclusion. In that case, the church has to bring them back to who they truly are, and why they are created. And thirdly, the "poverty of spirit" which indicates the brokenness of the heart. In consequence, the church should engage in its mandate to care for the poor, denounce injustice against the poor in a prophetic mandate, and announce economic justice (Befus & Bauman, 2004, n.p).

5.1.4 The Congress in Cape Town 2010 Or Lausanne III

The third Congress for World Evangelization was held in Cape Town, where Christopher Wright led the formulation of the commitment. What was decided in the Lausanne Covenant and the Manila Manifesto, was maintained and addressed directly to the context of the 21st Century. The theme of the meeting was: "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself". Therefore, evangelism was changed to "reconciliation" and "witness". To bring love

through action was firmly accentuated in the document that was published, love based on faith.

Between evangelism and social action, the commitment emphasizes “integration”, but not distinction. It speaks of “evangelism and transformation”, and tends to develop a holistic mission, in all its dimensions, including evangelism, bearing witness, peacemaking, social engagement, caring for creation, etc. And in Bangkok, in 2010, witnessing is both acting in God’s love, which means a witness marked by lives of love; imitating Jesus Christ, the perfect example of sharing love, in His proclamation, teaching, and act; in order to practice an acts of service and justice to others, namely those people that Jesus calls brothers and sisters (Wiher, 2022, p. 40).

The holistic mission was not only rooted in the Evangelicals but it was recorded in Edinburg 2010, which is the 100th anniversary of the meeting of many different missiologists around the world, that:

"We would like to point out, however, that the Christian mission needs to be holistic to be perceived as valid and relevant. It is always proclamation, dialogue, and action in service and for justice; it is always word and deed". (Balía; 2010, p. 79).

In Cape Town, confession of faith is stressed, and this confession must lead to its commitment. Love and reconciliation are the bearing fruit of faith, and when it concerns love, the love stated in the Gospel of John, namely Agape, is central. And when it comes to reconciliation, the epistle of Paul concerning the cross of Christ is the foundation (Schreiter, 2011, n.p.).

5.2 Holistic Mission and The Lutheran World Federation

In the document of the LWF untitled “Mission in Context: Transformation, Empowerment, Reconciliation”, published regarding the mission of the Lutheran Churches, the holistic nature of the mission is emphasized. The mission is not only in the spiritual dimension but it affects all aspects of people's lives. In one context, the mission is to bring Transformation and change to complex contexts, searching for advocacy, reconciliation, and empowerment. And the church has to engage in mission praxis holistically and contextually (Messenger, 2004, p. 32-35).

the 12th assembly of the LWF affirms that mission is at the core of its identity and mandate. Participating in God's mission holistically is reaffirmed, and that includes proclamation, Diakonia, and advocacy. LWF also acknowledges the many challenging contexts that churches are living through. Therefore, at its 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the LWF stresses that: "As churches in ongoing reformation we call on each member church of the LWF to rethink its being church in its context and its role in God's mission" (2017.lwfassembly.org). That means the church members should from the context they live through have to understand God's mission, search the role of the church and participate in it. And they should share the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in their contexts.

5.2.1 Transformation

Concerning transformation, this is what is recorded in the document:

"The scriptures speak of transformation as an ongoing process of total reorientation of life with all its aspirations, ideologies, structures, and values. Transformation is a continuous process of rejection of that which dehumanizes and desecrates life and adherence to that which affirms the sanctity of life and gifts in everyone and promotes peace and justice in society. This comes from the knowledge of the gracious will of God, who calls, justifies, and empowers people, through the Holy Spirit, to be conformed to the image of God's Son, offering the self as the instrument of righteousness (Romans 12:2, 6:13, 8:29; 1 Peter 1:14–25; Ephesians 4:15–5:10; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 1:10–14; Titus 3:5)" (Messenger, 2004, p. 33).

If the document mentions the transformation that brings hope in the lives of those around the church, it is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, thus changing death into life. There is also the work of the Holy Spirit that brings this transformation to the world through the church. So that it will lead to the lives of the society around the believers. Consequently, the "already" of renewing life in the kingdom of God will already be experienced.

And concerning the grief and suffering that surrounds the church, that last is made to imitate Christ in the incarnation. So that it will be identified in the suffering experienced by those who live in suffering and are oppressed in society. Therefore, the roles of the church are proclamation, advocacy, and service (Diakonia). Just as Christ experienced it, the church must endure adversities to bring about transformation in society (Messenger, 2004, p. 33).

5.2.2 Reconciliation

Regarding reconciliation, the LWF refers to it as the work of God reconciling the world to Himself, in Christ, according to what is written: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself ... and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Therefore, the church stands as an ambassador of God, preaching and restoring this peace, both in words and in deeds. Bringing this reconciliation through the proclamation and the service they do is the work that awaits the Christians in this regard. Sharing faith and repentance, so that people can have peace with God again and peace between people, this reconciliation creates communion and peaceful coexistence.

In addition, it is still the role of the church to maintain the fellowship it established in its mission. And about the imitation of Christ and his suffering, it is confirmed in the document, that the church takes on itself the suffering of the victims, and it also takes on itself the pride of the perpetrators, and convinces them, to stop such oppression, to restore justice. To sum up, the mission of the church is to build a room of peace (Messenger, 2004, p. 34). This shows that the church is not meant to discriminate in the reconciliation it performs.

5.2.3 Empowerment

While the LWF talks about empowerment, it refers to God who gives power to those who are active on the mission, despite the difficulty of the mission that awaits them. It is God's work to give the Holy Spirit to individuals and the church in the holistic mission that they do. The power that God gives to the church holds and makes it stand as a real witness of his unlimited and infinite love. The church is both empowered and encouraged in the mission that awaits them and they do.

The fact that God gives strength is also the strength that the church will bring to complete the diaconal work that awaits it and serve Him by taking care of and helping others with their basic needs in their misery and weakness. Consequently, the church has to empower them, either for their immediate need or for their good future. The aim is to strengthen them to return to their dignity, the missions of the church encompass all dimensions which are emotional, relational, mental, and spiritual needs.

Poverty is one of the numerous contexts where the mission is directed and the eschatological kingdom of God is spread. This includes the extreme poverty that exists in many places, leading to homelessness. Therefore, the theology to be developed here is based on the mission of God in that context. It brings transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment, in its holistic nature. And because the theology of mission is based on God's holistic mission, the mission He entrusts the church to do is the same (Messenger, 2004, p. 20).

Conclusion

It is common in the Evangelical circle to focus on how to reach people and proclaim the gospel to them. For FLM the same point of view is also common in some aspects, undeniably in the understanding of congregations and many pastors. In the Evangelical circles, the context and the worldview surrounding the life of the church, like poverty, and liberation theology, push them to rethink again about their mission. They then gathered in Lausanne in 1974, and some preparation was also done before it, and another meeting also took place in other places to debate the mission of the church. Theology, history, and the Scripture are the main frame they used in the different meetings they organized. The relationship between proclamation and social action was treated through those meetings and congresses. Conviction was held from each meeting that the mission of the church is both by word and deeds, because the church inherited its mission from Jesus Christ, and that is the model He presented. As Jesus's concern also is not only on spirituality but on the whole dimension of human beings, the mission of the church should be holistic. To love God and to love the neighbors is manifested in both proclamation and social action, they are interrelated. God in Christ brings transformation for believers, society, and the world, and believers are agents of transformation. As the meeting in the Lausanne Movement gathered a large number of theologians, that had fundamentally convinced of the absolute supremacy of proclamation, but later admitted the social action as the duty of the church, interrelated to it: that might serve as argument and reflection for churches that held the same point of view, like the FLM, in their understanding of their missions.

Chapter 06: Discussion And Conclusion

Even though the FLM has the vision to be holistic in its mission, the vision is not yet shared to the whole churches and congregations that constitute FLM. It is obvious that for most of the local churches, congregations, and pastors, Spirituality is the main mission of the church. Whereas poverty and homeless is reigning in all part of the country. The central question addressed in this study is:

How does the presence of a significant homeless population in urban areas contribute to the understanding of the theology of mission within the Fianganana Loterana Malagasy (Malagasy Lutheran Church)?

According to the guidelines provided by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Emmaus model, the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and comprehension of God's intentions are influenced by the contextual framework. This research followed the same model by initially examining the context and subsequently exploring the teachings of the Holy Scriptures regarding mission in that particular context. The key concepts that are relevant to this discussion include: God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Homeless, poverty, mission, gospel, transformation, reconciliation, empowerment, holistic approach, verbal communication, practical actions, church, Evangelical movement, FLM, social action, and Diakonia.

6.1 An Overview of the Thesis

In Madagascar, profound poverty often leads to homelessness. Various factors contribute to this situation, including climate change, political mismanagement, and corruption, resulting in unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities. Additionally, specific circumstances such as illness or relocating to urban areas without finding employment and sustenance can render individuals homeless. When individuals become completely destitute, they are forced to sell their possessions and are unable to afford housing, consequently residing on the side of the street day and night. Typically, they survive through begging or engaging in menial jobs that offer minimal income. Society neglects and stigmatizes them, causing them to lose their dignity, respect, and fundamental rights. Their lives suffer in all aspects physically, mentally,

socially, economically, and spiritually. Many of them lose hope, believing that they are irretrievably lost and will never recover in the future.

The study of the Holy Scriptures enables us to recognize God's concern for the poor and homeless and the mission He has undertaken for them. Human beings possess inherent dignity as they are created in the image of God. In the history of the fall, poverty arose as a consequence of human sinfulness. When God sacrificed an animal, for Adam and Eve, it signified both a blood offering and a demonstration of physical care. God's concern extends beyond mere spirituality and encompasses the entirety of the individual. He exhibited His love and consideration for the poor throughout the history of the Children of Israel. Though, the poverty gain area due to the bad attitude and comportment of persons who have disobeyed the will of God, God always expresses His compassion and concern for the poor. Moreover, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God identified with the poor and homeless, conducting His mission specifically for them. This mission involved both verbal proclamation and practical deeds, leading to a holistic transformation in their lives, encompassing both spiritual and material aspects. Through this mission, the poor experienced reconciliation with God, with others, and with society at large. God provided comprehensive salvation to the poor, choosing to accomplish it through the integrated message of the gospel and tangible actions. Consequently, He fed the hungry, restored joy and hope to the destitute, and reinstated their dignity, liberating them from the positions of beggars and the homeless. They were reintegrated into society, and empowered to contribute through meaningful work. These were the fundamental mission God undertook for the poor. When these missions were entrusted to the church, the early Christian community did not separate proclamation from Diakonia (service to others). They genuinely served those in need and performed numerous acts of kindness. Their actions demonstrated their faith and love, showcasing their commitment to the well-being of the poor among them.

The same context on poverty, and also mission centered to evangelism is not a new phenomenon within the history of missions. The Evangelicals also were motivated only by proclamation, and spirituality. But the context of poverty emerged in Latin America, lead the Evangelicals circle to deliberate on the role of "social action" within this framework at a conference. This gathering prompted a reevaluation of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. It highlighted that Jesus' mission among the needy and impoverished was holistic, considering

the entirety of the individual and encompassing both words and deeds as integral components. This principle was documented in the covenant resulting from various congresses. Consequently, it was established that the mission expected of the church is also holistic in nature, addressing all dimensions of humanity: material, spiritual, and social. Subsequently, social action gradually became an integral part of church missions, alongside oral proclamation. The Lutheran World Federation also is adopting a holistic mission, when presenting the mission in the context, that awaits the church and points out our reconciliation and transformation, as the impact of the mission of the church.

6.2 Addressing the Gap in the *Fiangonana Misionaly* Book and the FLM Sermon Guide Books

In the book *Fiangonana Misionaly* (Missional Church) by Rivoniaina Razakandriana, the dominant focus is on the historical mission of the FLM, where proclamation predominated. However, the book tends to portray the church which is merely an instrument, rather than emphasizing God as the missionary God and the ultimate source of mission. This research, in contrast, highlights the significance of mission based on God's actions, centered on Jesus, which encompasses both words and deeds, with particular attention given to practical actions and social engagement.

Furthermore, the concept of mission as the mission of God is largely absent in the book. It presents the model and strategy of evangelization primarily through the lens of Paul (Razakandriana, 2011, p. 29). However, if mission is the concern, God as the missionary God should be the primary model, with Paul assuming a secondary role. In this writing, God's actions through words and deeds, proclamation and deeds, take central importance. To respond to the call for mission, the church must prioritize reference to God as a Missionary God.

A notable observation that can be drawn from the same book is the church's inclination to preach primarily the gospel through proclamation. While the book offers valuable insights into effective communication of the gospel through words that people can understand, it places less emphasis on social action. In contrast, this research strongly emphasizes that words and deeds are inseparable, as this is the model of mission exemplified by God.

Therefore, the genius model followed by the church is to integrate social action with the proclamation.

The book also briefly touches upon the future of the “Missional Church” in relation to its work with the poor and needy (Razakandriana, 2011, p. 113). However, this research extensively expands on this point, highlighting the significance of the poor and needy from God’s perspective and emphasizing the mission directed toward them. So that the church is urged to prioritize the poor and the needy, and admit the mission toward them is of great importance.

Additionally, when examining Malagasy hermeneutic books in general, a tendency is observed to immediately spiritualize terms related to poverty in the Bible, such as paralysis, blindness, leprosy, etc. In this research, it is pointed out that Jesus approached impoverished or sick individuals holistically, addressing their entire being rather than solely focusing on their spiritual state. Jesus undertook a holistic mission, and consequently, preaching should also adopt a holistic approach. It is necessary to preach and explain together the spiritual poverty that necessitates repentance, but also the tangible material poverty that many Malagasy priests are hesitant to address. The church is called to emulate what God did for the poor and needy, restoring their dignity and lifting them from destitution. Simultaneously, the audience is encouraged to take responsibility in such cases, as it aligns with their true identity and the fundamental work of the church.

In summary, the research conducted does not contradict previous literature but rather brings attention to points that were unclear or overlooked in their understanding. Moreover, it delves further into the realm where the church needs to expand its mission, particularly in relation to the FLM’s mission development, actively engaging with the issues of poverty and homelessness.

6.3 Impact of the Research in the FLM’s Practice of Mission

This research serves as a reminder to the entire FLM of the visions outlined in its constitution: the first vision is to preach the gospel to all people, and the fifth vision is to develop all people in their entirety. Unfortunately, the FLM, particularly its local churches, often separate these two visions in their mission activities. However, according to the

findings of this research, these visions are not meant to be separate but rather complementary and should be pursued together as the true mission of the church, incorporating both words and deeds for each target audience. It is essential for all branches within the FLM to recognize their interconnectedness and work collaboratively to unite words and deeds in their missions, as John Stott stated they are like “two wings of a bird” (Stott, 1982, n.p.), the two wings are together indispensable for church’s missions is productive.

Regrettably, the FLM tends to undervalue the task of bringing the gospel to the poor and homeless, resulting in very few churches engaging with this issue. The church must remember the consequences faced by the rich man in the parable and the separation of the sheep to the right, which arose from their neglect of the hungry and thirsty among them (Luke 16:19-31, Mathew 25:31-46). The rich man’s plea to Abraham in the parable highlights the fact that he considered himself a faithful follower, as he referred to Abraham as his father. However, his faith proved to be unfruitful and in vain because true faith necessitates tangible actions. These parables demonstrate that God evaluates the fruit of faith, as genuine faith should produce observable outcomes.

Faith in a believer demands “social action”. This also applies to sharing the gospel with the poor and homeless among them. The term “share” is preferred over “preach” to emphasize the significance of combining words and deeds. Just as Jesus did, these two elements cannot be separated. Jesus never underestimated the value of the poor and homeless; in fact, they were a priority for him. His presence among them brought transformation and reconciliation. Consequently, this mission is now entrusted to the church. The church must convey a holistic gospel that brings about transformation encompassing the spiritual, physical, mental, and social dimensions of the homeless. Through this mission, in both words and deeds, they are invited to become part of the church, experiencing fellowship and communion with Jesus in a tangible manner. E. Costa (quoted in Ott & Strauss, p. 99), pointed out about it:

“To incarnate Christ in our World is to manifest the transforming presence of God’s Kingdom among the victim of sin and devil. It is to make possible a process from personal and corporate evil to personal and collective freedom, justice, and well-being”.

And then at church, everyone will be welcomed and united in worship and communion, erasing any barriers that may separate those inside from the poor begging outside the

church doors. The love of God that invites the poor and homeless must be manifested in the lives of the church so that fellowship reigns, and those homeless are welcomed into the church, and be among the church, with holistic care.

Furthermore, this research emphasizes the importance of Diaconal work, urging the church not to hesitate in its diligent pursuit. One common reason why the FLM or local churches perceive themselves as unable to engage in Diaconal work is due to the self-perception of poverty. However, God does not require a church to become wealthy before engaging in social action. The feeding of the four thousand in the desert serves as an example, where Jesus asked, "Do you have any food?" (John 6:9). The meager offering of two fish and five loaves from a young boy was not much, but it was given with love. Therefore, it can be concluded that God does not seek what is lacking in the church but expects believers to willingly share what God has already provided to them, whether it be material possessions or talents.

In addition, this writing opens the door for Diakonia, so that the church does not hesitate to do Diaconal work; it also encourages the church to do it diligently. One of the reasons why we FLM or local church think that we are unable to perform Diaconal work is the self-estimation that "we are poor". God does not wait that a church becomes very rich before He sends them to do social action. Because if we look at the story of the feeding of the four thousand in the desert, when Jesus asked: "do you have any food?" (John 6:9), the food that the little boy offered was just only two fish and five loaves, it was not much, but he gave with love. Therefore, we can conclude that God does not look for what is not available in the church but expect that believers love to share what God has given first to them, whether it is property or talent.

Lastly, the FLM should consider establishing a new department specifically dedicated to addressing homelessness. This department, similar to existing departments, would focus solely on homelessness and develop strategies for sharing the gospel with this demographic. It would bring together experts in various fields, including theologians specializing in the Old and New Testaments, Practical Theology, Diakonia, and Missiology, along with experienced professionals from the fields of homelessness, hospitals, FLM schools, and agricultural training programs. It is crucial for these talented individuals to collaborate effectively in fulfilling such a mission.

6.4 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations

Despite the efforts invested in this writing, it is important to acknowledge its limitations and weaknesses. The following remarks highlight these aspects:

The methodology used to gather data in this research is limited, particularly in terms of interviews. Due to time constraints, interviews with homeless individuals could not be included in this writing. These interviews would have provided valuable insights, especially regarding the homeless population's relationship with the church.

Another aspect missing from this study is an examination of how the early church addressed poverty and the needs of the vulnerable in their time. Understanding their zeal and the strategies they employed would serve as valuable models and sources of inspiration. The churches of Macedonia, for example, despite their limited resources, generously contributed what they had to support the church in Jerusalem.

While this research recognizes the significance of Diaconal work, there remains a gap to be explored regarding the specific actions the church should undertake to assist the needy. Although the foundation of Diakonia is clearly stated in Jesus' selfless service to God and others, the details of how the church should carry out this work are not covered in this writing. Additionally, an effective strategy for sharing the gospel with the poor is not provided.

Given the incompleteness and limitations of this writing, it is recommended to pursue further research in order to enhance the mission that awaits the church in its work with the homeless. For instance, conducting qualitative research based on interviews that delve into the lives of homeless individuals and their relationship with the church would yield valuable insights. Similarly, developing an effective strategy for sharing the gospel with the homeless, both in words and deeds deserves further exploration. Additionally, studying the specific Diaconal work that the church should engage in for the homeless is a field that merits investigation.

6.5 Final Conclusion

In the eyes of God, the poor and homeless are precious and loved. He is attentive to their suffering and identifies with them, as demonstrated by His incarnation in Jesus, who specifically reached out to them, offering hope, holistic salvation, and transformation that encompasses their spiritual, material, and social lives. In Jesus' mission to the needy, words and deeds were inseparable, demonstrating the interconnection between faith and action. The church is entrusted to continue this mission, bringing the holistic gospel to the homeless through transformative acts of love and reconciliation.

Therefore, based on the research question posed at the beginning, it can be concluded that God, in the context of poverty and homelessness, is not silent but actively speaks and works, serving and even sacrificing His life. This is done to offer the holistic gospel to the homeless, bringing transformation, hope, and reconciliation. The church is also commissioned to carry out this mission, following the example set by Jesus. The faith and love bestowed upon the church compel it to actively engage in this mission, not as an option but as a highly significant duty. By bringing the true peace of Christ to the needy and homeless, they can regain their dignity and be transformed and reconciled to God, the church, and society.

Personally, this writing has profoundly changed my perspective and commitment to the mission toward the homeless. As a pastor, I now understand that the Holy Scriptures should not be limited to addressing solely spiritual matters but should be preached with a holistic purpose according to God's intentions. Sharing the gospel entails more than mere verbal proclamation; it must be accompanied by tangible acts of love. I feel compelled to encourage and inspire the church wherever I go to passionately engage in the mission among the homeless and bring them the holistic gospel. This writing has also ignited within me a desire to identify with and share the gospel with the homeless, unashamedly embracing my role as a pastor and serving alongside my family in the mission to the homeless among our fellow Malagasy citizens.

Finally, the church, as a witness and the embodiment of Christ, should contemplate the idea of Christ being identified among the poor and hungry. It should consistently question: What actions did Jesus Christ take when he encountered the impoverished, hungry, and sick? If the church genuinely centers its preaching on Christ, it must also center its actions on Christ, for

Jesus shared the gospel through both words and deeds. By living out the awaited mission work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church will engage in both preaching and diligent social action, thereby impacting the poor and homeless within its midst. When the church truly thrives in its faith, such a mission will flourish abundantly, bringing living hope to Madagascar and transforming the prevailing despair into a life filled with hope. This aligns with the biblical passage in 1 John 3:16-18:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

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