

**PASTORAL CARE IN A CONTEXT OF POVERTY: A
SEARCH FOR A PASTORAL CARE MODEL THAT IS
CONTEXUAL AND LIBERATING**

By

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DECLARATION

I Olehile Andries Buffel hereby declare that this thesis is a product of my own original work, unless otherwise stated. Conclusions reached are my own and may not be attributed to any other individual or association. Furthermore declare that this research has not been submitted to any other University.

Date _____

Signature

SUMMARY

This research deals with poverty as a context in which pastoral care is developed and practiced. The research is done from the “belly of the whale” as liberation theologians usually say. Efforts are made to study poverty from the painful reality as experienced by the poor. It is theology (pastoral care) from the “underside of history.”

The research:

- Studies poverty from the perspective of the poor, with specific reference to their pastoral care needs.
- Critically reviews pastoral care literature, with specific focus on the stand taken on poverty in the past and present.
- Consolidates what emerged from literature with the empirical, qualitative research that is conducted amongst the poor. This is in view of developing a pastoral care model that is contextual, relevant and liberating.

Having listened to the poor as the “living human documents” and having compared that with literature this research proposes a model of pastoral care that is contextual and liberating. The proposed model takes the following seriously:

-African worldview, which is communal and systemic in contrast to the Western worldview, which is individualistic.

-Socio-economic and political conditions and context of the poor. This model takes seriously the socio-economic and political dimensions of life as experienced by the poor. These conditions are to be addressed pastorally by a holistic and multi-dimensional model that is proposed in this research

-The poor as “living human documents” are not only read and understood, as if they merely passive participants but are taken seriously and regarded as central to the both the pastoral action and the liberation process. Pastoral care has to help establish an environment of empowerment in which the poor play a central role in uprooting socio-economic and political roots of their problems and troubles.

-Liberation theology and its methodology.

-The preferential option of God, which should be adopted by the church and by pastoral care. Both the church and pastoral care should also be politically committed to the poor and be in solidarity with the poor

The proposed model is referred to as holistic-multi-dimensional pastoral care

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