

Assignment Title: Final Paper

Name: Evens Francois  
Campus Location: Nyack College - NYC Campus  
2 Washington Street  
New York, NY 10004

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Professor: José Carlos Montes  
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## Final Paper

### **People in need**

#### **in Haitian community SDA Church Brooklyn**

Today, the Church should do three-dimensional mission work in this world. These three dimensional are spiritual, physical, and mental, social. The church always tends to neglect the social mission of visiting and helping people in need. I learned in class discussion that urban ministry is not only consisting to preach people, but the church needs to create a space where people come to hear God's word, and they also, find a welcoming place that understands their critical situation. Especially, when it concerns people who need someone to help them and address their issues, and financial situation with the Church. The social reality of the Haitian church, which I address today, is critical because people face financial crises, housing, problem, language barrier, and different aspects I think the leaders should be addressed to help them.

The theology reflection of this social reality I develop makes me take the examples of Christ in the Bible. The Bible teaches that Christ responded to all men's needs. Before I give a bible let me say that this is a good example leaders should learn. "Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and infirmity among the people. His fame spread throughout Syria. They brought to him all those who suffered from various illnesses and pains, the demoniacs, the lunatics, the paralytics, and he cured them. Large crowds followed him, from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan." (Matthew 4.23-25).

The person in need in this community is poor, some of them homeless, elderly widows, and those discouraged and abandoned by their families and society. According to Jose, "His basic thesis is that the poor belong to the understanding of the mystery of the Church, or if you

wish to use another language, that the poor belong to the understanding of the very nature of the Church. He says that if the identity of the Church is found in Jesus Christ, *ubi Christus ecclesia*, then we must pay attention to the fact that Christ said that He would be present when his words were remembered and the meal was shared and that He would be present in the poor and oppressed.”<sup>1</sup> I agree with the author when he brought up the idea of the identity of the Church find in Christ. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Lord and Savior, but I know Christ means love. Thus, the identity of the Church is the love of Christ, and the followers of love should share compassion and love. It is essential to understand that the Church faces difficulties today, but it does not take away its identity. I choose this community to show the work is done, this community needs to do practical action to help its neighbors and members in financial crisis. This community has a lot of issues I can point out in this work. Whatever the type of people or issues I mention here these categories are facing a financial crisis. According to Ortiz, “Absolute poverty is a term used to describe poverty when people have an absolute insufficiency to meet their basic needs-food, clothing, housing. Indeed, many who are in absolute poverty starve to death... Relative poverty is found in the developed world and is measured by looking at a person's son's standard of living relative to others in the community or nation. It is sometimes called secondary poverty. It is a measure of the extent to which people are on the margins of society... It is often an exclusion from opportunity unity and participation, a marginalization from society.”<sup>2</sup>

I will focus my work on people in need, or poor. The word poor demonstrates people who are living in hardship conditions, crisis, finances, homelessness, and people in difficulties. The

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<sup>1</sup> Miguez Bonino, Jose, “*The Struggle of the Poor and the Church*” academic journal, *Ecumenical Review*, (Jan 1975), 40.

<sup>2</sup> Harvie M. Conn, Manuel Ortiz, “*Urban Ministry: The kingdom, the city and the people of God*”, IVP Academic, Kindle Edition, (Downers, Grove Illinois, 2001), Locations. 4337-4339.

most dangerous issues contain lack of affordable housing, poverty, low wages, and elderly people. These factors are the root causes of poverty. I choose to come out with research because I know the Haitian community is a large group of people living in Brooklyn New York, but they are some of them are suffering from a lack of knowledge, which helps them achieve their goals. I focus my research on Haitian the SDA Church in Brooklyn.

God calls us to help the world understand the good news of Christ. This call is a call to save the world. Call to Save come with aspects of preaching, helping spiritually and physically to help people maintain and stay healthy in all aspects. According to Wright, “The mission of God’s people, then, calls them to participate in a long and rich tradition of sending and being sent that originates within God the Holy Trinity. The God of the Bible is the sending God – even within the relationships of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

For Jesus's earthly mission, He explained in Luke 4: 18-19 "18- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; He sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim deliverance to captives, and the blind the recovery of sight, to set the oppressed free, 19- To proclaim a year of grace from the Lord. According to Ronald, “This scriptural narrative is reflective of a consistent biblical theme that encourages believers in God to show special care for the welfare of those whose circumstances or situations in life make them vulnerable to disrespect and abuse in society. In scripture, these people are represented in terminology consistent with prominent social vulnerabilities of ancient times: widows, orphans, strangers, prisoners, the lame, or the blind. Further, scripture stresses that this concern/respect for

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<sup>3</sup> Wright J. H. Christopher, “*The Mission of God's People*”, Biblical theology for life, Kindle Edition, (Zondervan Academic, 2010), 289.

vulnerable people results from God's sovereign compassion for the believer whose faith in God, in turn, obligates him or her to show compassion for society's less fortunate"<sup>4</sup>

This biblical view is the fundamental theology of helping people in need. The mission is not consisting only of preaching, but of action, a practical example that can show the world the love and compassion God has for them. The text includes a quote from Isaiah 58: 6, probably mentioned by the statement made by Jesus because of his obvious aptitude to describe the ministry of Christ on earth. The Church represents the body of Jesus, and Jesus is the head of the Church. The church needs to practice the good practical work of Jesus on behalf of those in need. The gospel also touches on the social aspect that the church neglects as the Lord's Church. If the church's ministry does not have a social scope to help and evangelize by action, the work they do needs to be revised and recalculated the way to imitate Jesus's action. The Bible clearly shows that pure and unblemished religion consists of visiting needy people, not only to visit but also, to improve their living conditions. They can witness the glory and praise of God. In James 1:27 the fundamental reason for a holistic mission is in favor of people in need. James 1:27 "Pure and unblemished religion before God our Father is to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself from the defilements of the world." James 1:27 sometimes is misunderstood. Lay people and supporters of social Christianity use this verse for their personal needs, such as those who organize non-profit organizations to make money and those who use this slogan to politicize and accuse leaders, and those who preach a social work without God. But forget this call is personal, each Christian is calling to help people in need and share with them the good news of God.

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<sup>4</sup> Peters E. Ronald, "*Urban Ministry: An Introduction*", Kindle Edition, Abingdon Press, (Nashville, 2017), 55.

However, James does not talk about religion without God or the other strategy to earn and make money. But the context of this verse allows each Christian to study and help, visit, and support those in need to bring them to Christ and Christ only. This is one of the best ways to evangelize by action and win souls to Christ. They may call this mission, the holistic mission for those in need.

### **The Haitian community in Brooklyn SDA Church**

The Haitian community appeared in the United States between the two World Wars mainly in New York, before developing exponentially. It has been present in Florida since the 1960s, due to the dictatorial regime of former President François Duvalier. Haitians are fleeing in large numbers and are using all the means they can find to emigrate abroad. Many of them used more or less seaworthy boats to reach the Florida coast. Despite the vigilance of the US Coast Guard, many Haitian boat people were able to land in the United States. This immigration to the United States has led to an increase in the importance of Haitian communities, particularly in Florida and New York mainly.

Painting, sculpture, literature, music, Creole language... Haitian culture, in all its forms, is abundant and largely marked by the imagination of the voodoo religion. It was after the independence of Haiti in 1804, which put an end to slavery definitively, that we see the appearance of typically Haitian works. Music is an important part of Haitian life. The forms of musical cadences are varied. Kompa, messenger music, Twoubadou, zouk, and root rhythm form the basic quartet of the island's own culture. This music is undergoing changes to combine harmoniously with the rhythms of rumba, jazz, or rock.

A large proportion of Haitians immigrated to the United States, especially to Florida and New York. They experienced quite a bit of economic difficulty on the social front. It is a large

community in which we find all social classes, but that does not prevent me from the problem of poverty ravaging its brothers and sisters who attend these churches in Brooklyn. There is a more particular group of Haitians that I know, they are Adventists, and they are going through difficult times in the church and also the community in general. Many live alone, have no stable economy, and face daily immigration pressure. They are people who need strong support to be able to endure the difficulties they face.

Is the Christian community SDA Church able to help those people with their economic, social, and even spiritual difficulties? This question does not take away spirituality, but it does mean that they are not in good spiritual condition, but the problems they are facing may diminish their vigor in the Christian race. Because they need help to have a good moral and physical balance.

In this community I only see the church offering food pantries in different localities, which I visited which are not able to solve the problem of poverty, and the problem of nutrition in their community. Creating a food pantry is a great tool to help people, but it is not the only to help people get their balance economically, and socially to maintain their lives usually. It is essential to create a good organization with a good foundation that can help people in need. In the food pantry, I consider that a temporary solution.

### **Practical work of Christian**

Often, the church comes across questions about the poor, but the church should ask a question about their duties to the poor, the sick, the orphan, and other needy people who are a member of the Church and those outside, the world. They were puzzled for a long time, not knowing how to act with discretion in this case. God does require our brothers and sisters to take care of people who are living in hard conditions of hardship, like a poor, sick, needy family that

follows the message of the gospel, and those who are in the world. Many of them are in poverty for lack of attendance at work and the economy, and because they do not know how to use their money correctly. Helping them manage their life and giving them direction would not harm them. Some will always be poor. Providing them with all the advantages in the capacity of the church. Some people do not know what it means to give up on themselves. To give up means here, to help them to save to protect themselves from debts and to have a little money aside in case of need. They must share what the Lord has given us with others but educating them would also be an effective way to help develop spiritual, social, physical, and economic factors. According to Bakke, “Concepts like this change your view of neighborhoods and communities. Evangelism includes both the spiritual transformation of persons and the social transformation of places.”<sup>5</sup>

The Church should help such people instead of letting them alone, it would ultimately be harmful if the church supports them in a way to keep their balance. If they did not receive help whenever they needed it, Satan would attract them and cause them to be jealous and blame their colleagues for not doing their duty to them.

In reality, God, in His providence, has tested certain people to serve as a test for others. God has chosen to develop the character of those who think of themselves as disciples of Jesus Christ and allow them to manifest his character of love like Christ, the Redeemer. According to Howard, “THE religion of Jesus makes the love-ethic central. This is no ordinary achievement. It seems clear that Jesus started with the simple teaching concerning love embodied in the timeless words of Israel.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Raymond J. Bakke, “*A Theology as Big as the City*”, Kindle Edition, IVP, (Downers, Groves, Illinois, 1997), Locations 1247-1248.

<sup>6</sup> Thurman, Howard, “*Jesus and the Disinherited*”, Kindle Edition, (Beacon Press, Boston 1976), 89.

## **Ministry to the Poor in Old Testament**

Ministry to the poor requires special attention and great spiritual intelligence. The unequal distribution of material goods does not correspond to the ideal desired by God. If they go back to the Old Testament, they will see the Law of Moses allows the Israelites to transact in their property. Still, it requires that every 50 years, each family can freely return to the property that is the subject of their inheritance at the time of the country's division. (Leviticus, 25). This ordinance aimed at preventing land grabbing has not entirely overwhelmed poverty, sometimes due to the fault of an individual or his antecedents, sometimes to the circumstances for which God knows the reason.

### **Characteristics of the types of poor in the church:**

#### **The Poor**

In the Israelite theocracy, poverty resulting from laziness or crime is theocratically excluded; the poor are seen as unhappy and tried children, but they are God's beloved. According to the Law's provision, all the needy, especially widows, orphans, and foreigners, is the object of the Lord's solicitude and the pious Israelites, according to specific provisions of the Law.

The early Church was regarded as one of its most sacred duties of rescuing its resources. It is expressly recommended never to be disregarded people, and not to despise the poor whom God chooses to be rich in faith, and heir to God's kingdom. Of course, being rich or poor is not concerning salvation; but faithful Christians know how to support their brothers and sisters. According to Alexander, "In the Synoptic Gospels, the word *ptōchos* is used to refer to two groups: those who receive charity, and those who hear the \*gospel and inherit the \*kingdom of God. The poor as recipients of charity."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander T Desmond Rosner, Brian S, "*New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*", Kindle Edition, IVP, (Downers Grove, Illinois, 2000), 689.

## **The Homeless**

Homeless people are found on the streets and sometimes in inaccessible places. Imagine the general way to identify homeless people; being homeless is not only about having to find a place to sleep on the street, but it also shows the homeless are people forced to live in temporary housing, with unnecessary and insufficient quality. The most common difficulties and causes that can lead people to become homeless or poor which listed below in the context:

- a) Economic execution
- b) Unemployment
- c) Poverty
- d) Health problems
- e) Insufficient support from a health center, hospital,
- f) Insufficient prison support
- g) The problem of public establishments and apartments.
- h) Breaking up a relationship
- i) The problems of migration.
- j) Old age can lead to homelessness.
- k) The financial and economic problems for affordable housing for rent and buy.

I realize that the problem of homelessness remains a general problem all over the world. As Christians, the role they need to play in this great challenge is to act, like Christ, the truth must preach by action, that means integral evangelization. The homeless have faced reduced life expectancy, health problems, and discrimination; they are often in isolation and face difficulties access to essential public and private services. These things should motivate the church to take

into consideration or include in our project the problem of homelessness and poverty among Christians and the world.

### **The Widows**

The book of Deuteronomy 10 and Psalms 68 shows that God recommends having compassion on the unfortunate, among whom he counts widows. The mosaic, then the prophets, encouraged the Israelites to treat the widows according to justice. God will chastise those who wrong them, neglect to treat them and help them overcome their difficulties. (Exodus 22, Deuteronomy 14). The early Church was concerned for the needy widows as it reads in Acts (Acts 6, James 1:27, 1 Timothy 5). The early Church does not neglect widows who are in their congregation and those who live in society. From the end of the second century to the fourth century, ecclesiastical writers speak of old widows forming a kind of brotherhood responsible for caring for women coming to Church, especially younger widows and orphans. Today, the church's duty is to continue the work that the early Church instituted to relieve widows in difficulty.

### **The Sick**

The primary origin of sickness is that death is to be found evident in sin and the fall. Human-made in the God-image by a perfect creation was destined for a happy and eternal life, and not for all physical and moral suffering. When they analyze the coming of Jesus, they can count several ministers' forms as part of his coming to the earth. According to Isaiah 53: 4-5, the Messiah bore our sufferings and pains and healed us with his stripes. The first fulfillment of this prophecy was the Lord's healing ministry in Palestine (Matthew 8). The ministry of healing is an integral part of the Church today because all sick, or sick people are there in the church. There needs to be a rescue and healing plan or moral aid capable of helping the ill find healing and find

the word of God as a source of healing. There is a lot of work to do; the Church must not remain inactive; they must continue the mission that the Lord has entrusted to them.

### **The Orphan**

I realize the term orphan is a child who has lost one of their parent or fathers and mother, and the person responsible for their daily lives. In modern times, orphans, just like found or abandoned and neglected children were considered needy to be rescued and gave them help, while the poor were seen differently and deemed unworthy, and were left on their own. Fate, they are often called beggars. In the 20th century, they enjoyed a better status than illegitimate orphans or social orphans, which they call children abandoned by their families. If the father were to disappear, the orphans were left unprotected and become victims of human wickedness. But Merciful God intervenes and puts limits on arbitrariness. He is the Father of Orphans (Psalms 68: 6). He sustains (Psalm 146: 9. He comes to their aid (10:14) and does them justice (Psalms 10:18). We experience that the word of God is no respect for anyone. We as the church are our duty. to protect the orphans and to anchor them. The Church is considered a family, it is a duty to welcome in our midst the children without parents and to teach them that Jesus is the father of all those who seeks him. It is an essential ministry that we must consider.

### **Healing in the Early Church**

Christ had the power and the necessary power to heal any sick person. The events report twenty-six cases of individual healing, with ten examples of collective healing; seven times, it is specified that Jesus heals all the sick in Matthew 8,9,12,14. To the Apostles, he gave the power to heal all sickness and infirmity.

No Christian doubts that God can heal now as before. The question they must ask is how? When? What should the Christian do in the event of illness? James 5: 14-16 answers the

question. The sick person is called to examine himself to determine the meaning of the trial, to confess any sin of which the Spirit convinces him; he must call the elders of the Church, for the suffering is that of the whole community. The leaders benefit from the instruction that the Bible gives them, like a sentinel for their ministry. They do not need much, but they need good faith, prayer, and the word of God to do the work, help the sick and support them in their afflictions while seeking healing through prayer, and faith, in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **The sharing and ministry of love**

This ministry is a sign of love and affection for those who are destitute of goods and food and shelter. The church has great things that the Lord has invited to us. The church has no time to waste, their duty is to go and save the people, orphans, widows, and those in need. According to Cimperman, “A bias is usually present in social analysis; social analysis is rarely if ever value free. Values are key factors that guide the analysis. As Christians, we say that our values are to bring forth God's kingdom by loving God and loving our neighbors. Anything that does not move toward these ends is not a Christian value.”<sup>8</sup>

In Isaiah 58: 6-8 "6-This is the fast which I take pleasure in: Loosen the chains of wickedness, Loosen the bonds of bondage, Set the oppressed free, and let every kind of yoke be broken; 7-Divide your bread with him who is hungry, and bring the poor without refuge into your house; If you see a naked man, cover him, and do not turn away from your fellow man. 8-Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your healing will spring up quickly; Your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will accompany you". It is the effective work Christians want in a partnership with the Lord and faithfully accomplishing the mission that God has entrusted to them. The Lord always provides the knowledge to accomplish

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<sup>8</sup> Cimperman, Maria, “Social Analysis for the 21st Century”, Orbis Books, Kindle Edition, (Maryknoll, New York, 2015), Location 1421.

the things God commands them to do. The invitation to visit the poor and needy, orphans, widows, the sick, and even those who are in prison to understand their needs and to serve them better, in the Lord's way. The church has a responsibility and represents the father and mother of those who are facing difficulties among them. According to Brooks, "The word used to describe our neighbors and began to realize how dangerous the dichotomy between community and congregation had become. We were the service providers and neighbors were the service recipients."<sup>9</sup> As providers, the church does want to feel guilty for not providing enough, and the recipients, as neighbors should grateful for what the church can provider can provide them. However, if the church does have resources to help, it is essential to go out to find resources that government provides to support the poor, homeless, and anybody who suffers hardship and contact the charity organizations to maintain the service the church offers in the community.

### **The implementation plans and strategies for those in need**

1- Plan to visit and prayer group, their job is to visit the widows, orphans, homeless, widows, and the sick and their job is to pray with them and encourage them to trust God who can help them in their needs. The group needs to be prayed for them in church services and their prayers.

2- Form a social group, in this category, they must provide social assistance to people, seek to help them find daily food according to their financial, guide them to find work or show them how to manage their things and help them organize their social lives. They must teach them how to manage the funding they will receive from the church or personal people. But all of this must be done with caution and modesty.

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<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Brooks, "*Church Forsaken*": Practicing presence in neglected neighborhoods, IVP, (Downers Grove, 2018), 126.

3- Form a group of sponsors, they must look in the church, families, their neighbors, and those who can help economically to take care of people in need and work to find help in public and private organizations to support the plans and the projects.

4- Form a Bible study group; this group will be available to provide and give Bible studies to people who want to serve God according to the support they have received to show their gratitude to the Lord.

Ministry to people in need allows Christians to understand their role as Pastors, evangelists, ministers, and Christians in the work of God. This work allows them to realize their weaknesses and strengths to help restore ministry to its full form like Christ did. The church should see those in need, are people like them, especially children of God. They must encourage them, visit them, help them with their daily needs, and form a family, a community of love and compassion that can glorify God and come with the objective to help them save their soul. God calls each Christian to go into cities and everywhere to share the good news of love with those who are suffering in the world.

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