

**Mission as Good Neighbour: Social Policy of the  
Methodist Mission Northern in the 21st Century**

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## **ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Name:           B. Prince Devanandan

Signature:

Date:

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B. Prince Devanandan  
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## ABSTRACT

The Methodist Mission Northern has provided social services to the community since 1851. The underpinning philosophy of Methodist Mission Northern's service provision is that of being a Good Neighbour. The concept of Good Neighbour derives from the Old and the New Testaments of the Holy Bible, the Hebrew Scriptures and also public policy.

A defining moment in the emergence of Christian universalism comes when the neighbour is asserted to include everyone, ... while the Levite and the Cohen pass by the injured man... the Good Samaritan comes to his aid and proves himself the true neighbour of his (injured) neighbour [Zizek, Santner, & Reinhard, 2005, p. 6].

What does Good Neighbour entail in the context of so many people suffering owing to poverty, injustice and social exclusion? This study set out to examine how the concept of Good Neighbour has been put into practice and how that is relevant in contemporary public policy setting. This research was undertaken using phenomenological enquiry approach which explored the experiences of the key stakeholders namely the Board of Governors, the staff and the clients or service recipients of the Methodist Mission Northern to understand the impact of service delivery on clients. This was done through a review of the Minutes of the Board Meetings and *Annual Reports* over a twenty year period from 1986 to 2006. The study found that for the greater part of the history the operation of the concept of Good Neighbour by Methodist Mission Northern tended to focus on the charity model which provides for the day to day needs of the clients such as providing food, clothing and shelter and other immediate needs. For Methodist Mission Northern's concept of Good Neighbour to reflect its underpinning philosophy more effectively the practice needs to move beyond the charity model into a community development model focussed on social change and transformation. This means meeting the needs of clients in ways that empower them to move towards independence and interdependent self sustainability.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

### 1.1 Prologue

Methodist Mission Northern with its mission as Good Neighbour has been serving the poor and the needy people for over 155 years. It is one of the mission organisations of the Methodist Church of New Zealand involved in social service since 1851 in Auckland. Despite the social services for the poor and the needy for a century and a half or so, the number of people who received the services from the Methodist Mission Northern has not decreased, but increased. I was elected to the Board of Governors of the Methodist Mission Northern in 2006. I began my role as a Board member with many questions about the project of the Methodist Mission Northern. They were not questions of getting to know the organisation but questions on the practices of the Mission. The *Annual Report* of the Methodist Mission Northern in 2006 stated its service delivery as “Airedale Community Centre was open 364 days enabling homeless people to access critical services including 42,172 meals, 206 treatments from our volunteer nurse and 5,749 support contacts from our Court Worker.”

When I read the above data I began to compare it with the data in the previous years. I realised that the social service of the Methodist Mission Northern has not reduced the number of people accessing the services. On the contrary there has been a rapid increase. This made me think about why the social service for a century and a half has not helped people to become independent to support themselves. My search for an answer to this question prompted me to undertake this study. My first step into this study was with a question of whether the Mission was operating as a philanthropic institution doing some good and feeling satisfied. It was a reflection of Archbishop Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara’s “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a Communist”<sup>1</sup>. My contention was whether the mission was involved in a palliative approach of giving food but not addressing the causes of poverty

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<sup>1</sup> Reference: Hélder Camara webpage in Wikipedia:  
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A9lder\\_C%C3%A2mara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A9lder_C%C3%A2mara))

by asking why the poor have no food. When I looked at the *Annual Reports* I found that some of the clients had been receiving services for up to twenty years. The evidence of this was explicit in the interviews conducted among the clients. So, my hypothesis was social services create a dependency on the services rather than moving clients towards independency.

The literature on the founding of the Methodist Mission Northern stated that

“The demands of poverty, of unemployment, of educational deprivation, and of family disintegration had profound effect on the shape of the congregational life. The Methodists of Auckland at that time reacted to the needs of their communities for traditional charitable motives. The Good Samaritan was their model and they did what they could” [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 141].

The Mission started with the Christian ethos of “love God and love your neighbour”. Since its foundation the Mission continued to serve the poor and the needy people for 155 years. When the Mission completed 150 years, Donald Phillips was given the responsibility to write the history of the Methodist Mission Northern. In his book “Mission in a Secular City” Phillips contended: “at the end of 150 years ... Cycles of poverty and dependence still have to be broken” [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 11]. So the question for me was what the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern had been for 150 years.

Methodist Mission Northern’s service delivery has not eliminated the conditions that create poverty in New Zealand society. Rather poverty persists, the conditions of the poor continue to deteriorate and the number of people receiving social services and assistance continues to increase. This demands that there should be an understanding of the structural issues that produce and reproduce poverty rather than focusing only on service delivery which is only a palliative measure.

In this context therefore it is imperative to revisit and re-vision the Methodist Mission Northern’s ministry of Good Neighbour serving the poor. The objective of this research thesis therefore is to envision the future ministry of the Methodist Mission Northern, with a view to recommending a new policy framework of the Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup>

century. This demands a paradigm shift that enables the organisation to move from a charity model service approach to a community development-social change paradigm. My endeavour in this thesis is to look at the social policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern over the years and how it has changed in its history. And then to collect data from stakeholders that would inform me to propose a more effective ministry in the future. The thesis seeks to contribute to the re-thinking and re-visioning of the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern in developing policies and practices that address the structural issues of poverty and social exclusion.

The study involves a review of literature, changes in the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern since its establishment, methodology and research methods used in the research, data collected from the stakeholders through interviews and data from the *Annual Reports* of Methodist Mission Northern and minutes of the meetings of the Board of Governors. With the information gathered from all these sources, the concluding chapter proposes a policy framework that would shift the Methodist Mission Northern in its mission as Good Neighbour from a charity model to an advocacy model and a community development model.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

Chapter two of this study explores the existing literature and research in the area of the concept of Good Neighbour. Within the scope of this study I consider the literature from Jewish and Christian religious perspectives that portray the concept of Good Neighbour as a practice of religion. Chapter three looks at the literature on the service delivery model of the Methodist Mission Northern and the literature that provides background information to the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern.

A critical examination of the social service models and the institutions that deliver the services raises the question of whether these social services seek to eradicate poverty that creates the need for such services in the first instance, or to maintain the poor and the needy so that these institutions could survive in perpetuity. This question is not only valid in New Zealand, but also in the global scenario, and applies not only to church-based agencies but also to many other service delivery agencies, in both developing countries as well as in the developed countries.

Whether it is a developed country or a third world country my observation is the vested interests of the economically powerful segments of society continue to consolidate while

the poor continue to depend on social services. In the modern world the reality is the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. Marcus Borg contends that the global economic system in the light of Christian belief shows that the economic system in a globalised world does not support the poor [Borg, 2004, p. 141]. The systems and the economic policies are drawn to serve a small powerful segment of humanity that continues to deprive the poor and the powerless. The literature reviewed in this study looked into these aspects to draw a relevant social policy framework for the Methodist Mission Northern.

### **1.3 Methodology and Method**

Chapter four is an exploration of the methodology of the study project and a description of the methods used to collect data. It looks into how the social service delivery phenomenon has an impact on the clients of the Methodist Mission Northern and how the clients have experienced the services delivered. It also focuses on the case study design as Methodist Mission Northern is the case investigated in this study and moves on to define the objectives of the research.

Chapter four also looks at the methods of data collection. Data was collected at two levels in this research. First, it was the data from key stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern. They were the clients, the staff and the members of the Board of Governors. These stakeholders were interviewed and the conversations were tape recorded. Secondly, data from the *Annual Reports* and minutes of the Board meetings were taken into consideration.

### **1.4 Data and Analysis**

Chapters five, six and seven were description and analysis of the data collected at the two levels. The data informs how the mission as Good Neighbour is at present and what shape it must take in the future.

### **1.5 Future Policy Framework of the Methodist Mission Northern**

In chapter eight the data and its analysis is used to look for a policy framework for the future of the Methodist Mission Northern. Since this study was undertaken the service

delivery at the Auckland centre of the Methodist Mission Northern has gone through many changes. The epilogue describes the changes that took place and how it impacts on clients.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This study has been a very useful one for me. I thoroughly enjoyed the research work. The information I gathered not only informed me but also proved that my hypothesis that social service in its present form creates a dependency on the services rather than empowering the clients to move on to independency. My findings in this research would inform not only the stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern to revamp its mission but also other similar social service organisations to reconsider their strategies in providing such services to the poor and the needy. And the findings prove that poverty and social exclusion cannot be eliminated by providing social services alone, but require advocacy roles to deal with the systemic and structural causes that are at government levels and at high echelons of the society. A bottom up strategy has proved to be less effective and the thesis concludes that a top down strategy is necessary to eliminate poverty and social exclusion.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONCEPT OF ‘GOOD NEIGHBOUR’**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Neighbour is a term used to describe another person to whom there is a relationship in the community in which that person lives. It is a term to describe a person's fellow human being. In a narrow sense the relationship could be by way of a connection, association or any involvement. Though the word neighbour describes another person the term connotes many other meanings. They vary from another person to be a neighbour to someone in need. In a broader sense all of humanity could be viewed as one's neighbour. Commonly neighbour is understood as someone living in the immediate geographic proximity. People think of their neighbourhood as the immediate proximity to their place of living and every one in the neighbourhood as neighbour. In addition, the word is commonly used to describe a person who shows kindness or helpfulness toward his or her fellow humans: 'to be a neighbour to someone in distress' [Dictionary.com Unabridged (V 1.1) <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/neighbour>]. However, the use of the term neighbour originates from the Hebrew religious perspective.

In the New Testament the concept of Good Neighbour gets a broader understanding. The foundation of Good Neighbour derives from the parable of the Good Samaritan in the gospel of Luke. It simply tries to demonstrate how a person can be a Good Neighbour to someone in need of help. This chapter explores the concept of neighbour in the Hebrew religious perspective and the New Testament understanding of Good Neighbour.

#### **2.2 Concept of Neighbour in the Hebrew Scriptures**

Neighbour in the Hebrew (Old) Testament denotes a fellow member of the people of the covenant. This fellowship among the covenant people involved assumption of moral obligations and the guarantee of certain rights for each member. Evidences of this sense of moral obligation toward one's neighbour are particularly clear in Exodus 20 (6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> commandments of the Ten Commandments); this

obligation is categorically enjoined in Leviticus 19:18: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”[Beck, 1962, pp. 534-535].

From a Hebrew religious perspective neighbour is not only someone who lives alongside a person but also one to whom a person has moral obligations to fulfil. That relationship requires guaranteeing certain rights for each member in the community. Therefore it is written in the law that govern the Hebrew people. Exodus 20:16 – 17<sup>2</sup> in particular states:

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

The Hebrew Religious Law in the Old Testament lays the basic guidelines in society towards behaviour of each individual and to maintain and protect relationships among people. In addition the teachings of the Hebrew Religious Law require support for one another. “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” insists that a person should go beyond fulfilling the last of the Ten Commandments in caring for the neighbour. There were no boundaries defined to describe the limits of being a neighbour. It is impossible to define or demarcate the neighbour, whether he or she should belong to the same nationality, ethnicity or religion. The teachings of the Hebrew Religious Law do not make provision of choice to be a neighbour. A person is expected to be a neighbour to anyone and everyone. Who is the neighbour and where or in which boundary is a person’s neighbour is not defined. On the other hand it is not clear whether the members who do not belong to the Hebrew religion could be considered a neighbour. The concept is left open. It is up to the individual or the community to decide who my neighbour is or where my neighbour is. The borderless concept of neighbour underpins the responsibility of every individual to care for that person’s neighbour irrespective of that person’s nationality, ethnicity, religion or any other identities. It is fulfilling responsibilities in terms of providing for the neighbour’s needs and maintaining good relationships.

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<sup>2</sup> All scripture passages quoted were taken from [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, 1996]

Good relationship as neighbours is taught by the Hebrew religion to the Hebrew people in order to have an integral life within the community. "...moral disintegration and national catastrophe follow when men deny the rights of their neighbours and when neighbours disregard their reciprocal obligations" [Beck, 1962, p. 535]. When there is a total commitment to love a person's neighbour as himself or herself, then there will always be a community life in which each member upholds the reciprocal obligations.

The book of Psalms describes a person's behaviour towards the neighbour as a prerequisite to dwell in God's presence.

"O LORD, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill? Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart; who do not slander with their tongue, and do no evil to their friends, nor take up a reproach against their neighbours; (Psalm 15:1-3).

The author of the Psalm describes the righteous behaviour of a person towards the neighbour as an important aspect in relation to holiness in front of God.

The Book of Proverbs focuses not only on a person's duties towards his or her neighbour but also in relation to economic prosperity. When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; ...By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted ... (Proverbs 11:10-11). City in this context could be the society within a geographical area, or a community that has opted to live within an area. Relationships among neighbours within a city, society or a community and their reciprocal obligations were viewed as prerequisites for a self contained economic unit. The Book of Proverbs provides the behavioural patterns of individuals irrespective of their status in community to be neighbours. Clements argues,

Apart from the warning not to sleep with a neighbour's wife in Proverbs 6:29, the remaining admonitions fall fairly into three categories. The first of these concerns the situation of a neighbour in need and serves most fully to identify why it is that being a 'neighbour' is so important to the community at large. The second category concerns wealth, or the lack of it ...Possessing wealth made neighbourliness easy, whereas lacking it made it very difficult. The third category of advice and warning concerns speech. What was said to, or more often apparently about, one's neighbour could have the most long-lived far-reaching consequences. Foolish talk could



prevent the possibility of making neighbours into friends [Clements, 1993, pp. 212-213].

Clements brings out from the Book of Proverbs the importance of neighbourliness for the right function of a community. He states further that possessing wealth made neighbourliness easy. Clement was right within the context that is described in the Hebrew religious community but not in the present context. In fact in the present context, in Aotearoa New Zealand, possession of wealth makes neighbourliness easy for the people who possess it; it does not make it easy for the people who receive the neighbourly service. It undermines the dignity of the neighbour in need. The neighbour in need is made to feel inferior in comparison to the wealthy neighbour who provides. On the other hand if all those in a neighbourly relationship were economically in the same state with regard to wealth or lack of it that would make them feel equals in front of one another. So long as the disparity between the rich and the poor prevails, whatever the rich say about the poor neighbours will not prevent the poor coming for assistance from the rich. To love neighbour as self means to make sure that the neighbour also is raised to the same status. 'A loving attitude towards one's fellow citizens is regarded as vital towards enabling the law to operate justly and constructively [Clements, 1993, p. 213].

The notion of love your neighbour as yourself in the Hebrew Testament underpins the operation of law justly and constructively. Love towards neighbour is imperative to maintain a just society with equality of all its citizens. The Book of Proverbs portrays further that a neighbour is more important than a closest kin or a relative. Proverbs 27:10: Better is a neighbour who is nearby than kindred who are far away. By raising the role of a neighbour more than kin relative, the Book of Proverbs shows how a person could be dependent on that person's neighbour rather than a kin relative in a distant place. In the Hebrew Testament the role of the neighbour is thus emphasised. It is not only relationships between human beings but also behaviour in society and in relation to holiness before God. However, the Hebrew Testament further shows that the breakdown of being neighbour in community leads to break down of many other aspects. The

prophets in Israel as described in the Hebrew Testament constantly remind the people of their failure in upholding the principles of love your neighbour as yourself.

Teachers of wisdom in the Hebrew Testament have striven hard to elevate the responsibilities and role of 'the good neighbour,' in recognising that circumstances will often limit the support-potential of immediate family [Clements, 1993, p. 216]. But the services of a neighbour are readily available or the person in need turns to his or her neighbour soliciting assistance. In addition to the teachings of 'love your neighbour as yourself' in the Book of Proverbs, the Hebrew Testament contains the prophetic voices that call the people to exercise neighbourly love.

Prophet Jeremiah proclaims a warning to the people as they fail in their relationship with their neighbour.

<sup>5</sup> They all deceive their neighbours, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent.

<sup>6</sup> Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: I will now refine and test them, for what else can I do with my sinful people?

<sup>8</sup> Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceit through the mouth. They all speak friendly words to their neighbours, but inwardly are planning to lay an ambush (Jeremiah 9:5-8).

Deception of neighbour and hypocrisy against neighbour is considered a rebellion against God. It is failure in knowing God; it is disintegration of the people's holiness before God as they deceive their neighbours. Prophet Jeremiah further criticises the employers for their failure in treating their employees as neighbours in their holy behaviour before God.

<sup>13</sup> Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbours work for nothing, and does not give them their wages; <sup>14</sup> who says, "I will build myself a spacious house with large upper rooms," and who cuts out windows for it, panelling it with cedar, and painting it with vermilion (Jeremiah 22:13 – 14).

A person who makes his or her neighbour to work for nothing and does not give him or her wages is counted as unrighteous. Jeremiah iterates that the employer should treat the employee as a neighbour in order to maintain holiness before God. Even the employer—employee relationship is a relationship of neighbours. Apart from a person's moral behaviour towards that person's neighbour as described in the Book of Proverbs, and employer—employee relationship in the book of Jeremiah, Prophet Ezekiel goes further to state that it is wrong to obtain by threat interest from the neighbour. "... You take both advance interest and accrued interest, and make gain of your neighbours by extortion; and you have forgotten me, says the Lord God" (Ezekiel 22:12). The acquiring of interest through the use of force from neighbour is condemned by Ezekiel as a sin of forgetting God. In every way the Hebrew people were expected to maintain their relationship with neighbour with love. That will assure the right practice of the law and right behaviour with holiness in relation to God. If that is not possible, if justice is not restored then the people were asked not to observe festivals or offer offerings to God. That was the cry of Prophet Amos to the people.

<sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. <sup>22</sup> Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. <sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. <sup>24</sup> But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:21 – 24).

It is more important to make sure justice and righteousness are maintained abundantly rather than religious observances. That requirement from the people reiterates the need of love towards neighbour. Worship without social justice is meaningless in Hebrew religion. A person cannot come before God without doing justice to his or her neighbour. These descriptions in the Hebrew Testament reflect the instruction of Leviticus 19:18 – "You shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord." The same instruction is further elaborated in the Deuteronomic Law with regard to its practice.

<sup>7</sup> If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbour. <sup>8</sup> You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. <sup>9</sup> Be careful that you do

not entertain a mean thought, thinking, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,” and therefore view your needy neighbour with hostility and give nothing; your neighbour might cry to the LORD against you, and you would incur guilt.<sup>10</sup> Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake.<sup>11</sup> Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land” (Deuteronomy 15:7 – 11).

In the light of these scriptural instructions to the Hebrew people Biblical Theologian Walter Brueggemann describes the God of the Hebrew people as “God of all Neighbourliness”[Brueggemann, 2000] It is this God of all Neighbourliness who commands people love their neighbour. It means living as neighbours, relating as neighbours, caring as neighbours, and treating each other as neighbours. The Deuteronomic law is given as a guideline towards behaviour of the people but the underlying instruction of this law is “Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.”

### **2.3 Concept of Neighbour in New Testament**

The Hebrew concept of neighbour is further developed in the New Testament. There is a shift in the concept of neighbour in the New Testament. That is because of the way Jesus Christ describes neighbour. The description has at least two aspects. One is in the gospel of Matthew. The other is in the parable of the Good Samaritan in the gospel of Luke.

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,<sup>45</sup> so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.<sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? (Matthew 5:43 – 46).

Jesus Christ redefines the commandment of “love God and love your neighbour” with a deeper meaning. In a person’s relationship with a neighbour, neighbourly relationship is taught as the absolute. There cannot be a role of an enemy. It is not only love your neighbour, but love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you. Jesus Christ declares that human relationship could exist only in terms of neighbours and not in any other rival forms.

The second aspect of neighbour in the New Testament is the parable of the Good Samaritan in the gospel of Luke. Beck states,

In the New Testament, where the injunction from Leviticus 19:18 is repeated with approval, the most important definition of the theological meaning of “neighbour” is presented in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25 – 37). Superficially the parable suggests that Jesus would have his followers recognize their neighbours as those in need of services, as individuals to whom assistance would be helpful and to whom it therefore should be offered. But actually Jesus did not use the parable in order to suggest that the man in need was the neighbour; rather, it was the man who had compassion who “proved neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers.” [Beck, 1962, pp. 534-535].

The Deuteronomic teaching portrays the neighbour as the person in need.

“If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbour. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be (Deuteronomy 15:7 – 8).

Jesus Christ's teaching of neighbour through the parable of the Good Samaritan emphasises the neighbour as the person who assists the person in need. It is not a question of ‘who is my neighbour’. But ‘to whom can I be a neighbour’. This is the concept Jesus Christ teaches in the parable of the Good Samaritan; the concept of neighbour shifts from second person to self. In other words it is for a person to ensure the total wellbeing of the neighbour. Wellbeing is described as “good quality of life” [Chambers, 1997, p. 9]. Love Chile states wellbeing as “an intrinsic part of human experience manifest in everyday living, which consists of meeting basic human needs of food, shelter, clothing and basic income” [Chile, 2004, p. 26]. What matters in a neighbourly relationship is wellbeing of the person to whom one relates.

Beck in addition shows the different ways in which Jesus Christ is recognised in a neighbourly relationship. “The ancient interpretation which viewed the Good Samaritan as a portrait of Christ himself properly proclaimed that he was the compassionate neighbour” [Beck, 1962] who helps the people who come to him in need. To the lawyer

who asked “who is my neighbour” Jesus’ question was, “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” The lawyer answered, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus directed the lawyer: “Go and do likewise” (Luke 25:36 – 37). Jesus Christ’s depiction of ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ is “to whom can a person be a neighbour”. Beck argues in Christian terms, “it further becomes the obligation of the followers of Christ to serve as compassionate neighbours in the world whence Jesus’ directive to the lawyer” [Beck, 1962, pp. 534-535].

In contrast to the portrait of Jesus Christ as the neighbour who helps the people in need, the gospel of Matthew presents Jesus Christ as the one among the needy people waiting to receive the neighbourly service from his followers. The parable of the “Last Judgement” in the gospel of Matthew presents another shift of the concept of neighbour. That is being a neighbour to someone in need is being a neighbour to Jesus Christ himself. Jesus Christ identifies himself among those who are in need of service.

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,<sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’<sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?’<sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?’<sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’<sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’ (Matthew 25:35 – 40).

According to Matthew’s gospel a service rendered to the people in need is equivalent to a service rendered to Jesus Christ himself. Beck says

In this Christological setting one’s neighbours are those of his fellow beings who come forth in a variety of ways to do him good, whether by offering services to him or by confronting him with their own desperate need and so involving him with Christ in the fellowship of suffering humanity [Beck, 1962, pp. 534-535].

The teaching through Matthew 25:31 – 46 shows the universality of neighbourliness. There is no identification of the known and the unknown but all in need. That is, Jesus

extended the concept of neighbour to include strangers, as in Matthew 25:31 – 46 and in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), and hence all humankind. The apostle Paul declared that “love your neighbour as yourself” is a supreme commandment (Rom. 13:9–10). Love for the neighbour extends unconditionally to strangers. There is no question of who a person’s neighbour is but who is not a neighbour. Everyone is a neighbour; there are no exceptions or exclusions. It is this concept of feeding the neighbour who is hungry and thirsty, clothing the neighbour who is naked, visiting the neighbour who is sick or in prison and receiving the neighbour who is a stranger which gave birth to the Christian social service. Methodist Mission Northern is one of the social service agencies that operates under this concept.

In focusing on strangers as neighbours Palmer argues that the stranger is a central figure in the biblical stories of faith and it is for good reason [Palmer, 1999]. The movement of people in history has always been into new lands where the immigrants are strangers to the natives and the natives are strangers to the immigrants. Even in a situation like this care for the neighbour is required. It is caring for the stranger to whom a person can be a neighbour. Palmer further argues,

Why does Jesus call our attention to the stranger? Deeper still, why does he hinge our salvation on the extent to which we have welcomed and served the stranger in our midst? On the face of it, the answer seems simple and direct: these are people in need, and we will be judged by our willingness to share our abundance with those who have little or nothing [Palmer, 1986, p. 65].

Palmer very clearly stresses the point of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The parable demands a sharing with the neighbour for the benefit of the neighbour rather than for the self-righteous feeling of “done good” of the doer. Pohl observes that the scope of a person’s responsibility to care includes anyone in need, even a person considered as an enemy. “Jesus also broadens our moral obligations to others when he explicitly includes the well being of our enemies in our circle of responsibility” (Matthew 5:43 – 48) [Pohl, 1999]. The neighbour is thus universalised to go beyond all barriers and boundaries to reach out to the person in need. Pohl argues further,

The practice of hospitality forces abstract commitments to loving the neighbour, stranger and enemy into practical and personal

expressions of respect and care for actual neighbours, strangers and enemies. The twin moves of universalising the neighbour and personalising the stranger are at the core of hospitality. Claims of all humankind, of welcoming “the other,” have to be accompanied by the hard work of actually welcoming a human being into a real place [Pohl, 1999, p. 75].

Pohl has given prominence to the core message of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The twin moves of universalising the neighbour and personalising the stranger are in fact two sides of the same. That move is to assure the real place for every human being. Pohl citing John Wesley observes,

Wesley also insisted that love of neighbour meant “universal benevolence,” “embracing neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies ...the good and gentle, but also ... the evil and unthankful ... every soul that God has made” [Pohl, 1999, p. 76].

Wesley argues that a person’s love for God should be manifested in that person’s love for the neighbour. For Wesley, every soul that God has made is a neighbour who deserves to be cared for. There is no distinction in terms of strangers, friends and enemies, and no difference in making choices of the good and the evil. Wesley in his address of love for God says,

... this commandment is written in his heart, “That he who loveth God, love his brother also.” And he accordingly loves his neighbour as himself; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of the Father of the spirits of all flesh.” That a man is not personally known to him is no bar to his love ... For he “loves his enemies”; yea, and the enemies of God, “the evil and the unthankful.” And if it be not in his power to “do good to them that hate him,” yet he ceases not to pray for them, though they continue to spurn his love, and still “despitefully use him and persecute him” [Heitzenrater, 1984, p. 154].

Though Wesley’s use of common nouns in the male voice was used in his day, the implication is that it is for the whole of humankind. Wesley insists on a borderless unconditional love for the neighbour as part of a person’s love for God. This concept of love God and love neighbour as self is the foundation of neighbourly services that paved the way for many Christian missions to get established. Methodist Mission Northern was one of them established to serve the needy people in a settlement colony.



## **2.4 Neighbour in Community and Public Policy**

Biblical concept of neighbour as stated in the above two areas emphasises that all individuals in a community live in a neighbour relationship. Caring for one another in that relationship is considered as part of the social fabric. Therefore it is not only in the Hebrew and Christian religious concepts but also in the secular life. "... the mark of a civilized society is the way it cares for people..." [Shannon, 1991, p. 2]. The Royal Commission on Social Policy stated "Social wellbeing exists when all members of the community have reasonable expectation of achieving those things which are generally accepted as necessary for a healthy and happy life" ["Royal Commission on Social Policy", 1987, p. 6]. It further stated "... social wellbeing includes that a sense of belonging that affirms their dignity and identity and allows them to function in their many everyday roles" ["Royal Commission on Social Policy", 1988, p. 473]. Though the word neighbour is not mentioned, the wellbeing of the people demonstrates a neighbourly care. However, the policy changes in the government sector during the 1984 to 1987 Labour government resulted in a dire need for neighbourly care as people were affected owing to the policy changes. Pat Shannon argues that "In the area of social security (income maintenance), it can be reasonably argued that the basic issue facing social policy is that of poverty" [Shannon, 1991, p. 22]. The issue of poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand society requires more and more neighbourly services.

Aotearoa New Zealand has gone through many phases of public policy changes. Starting in the 1770s with Maori society the country went through many changes. Two hundred years later in the 1970s and 1980s Aotearoa New Zealand was known to have an industrial society. These changes were summarised in this way:

In the earlier years, the overview of public policy development provided here tended to reinforce the conventional views of the origins of the welfare state. Once the Maori had been dispossessed and their resources appropriated, development can be fitted into conventional class-based account. Class struggles in both the 1890s and 1930s produced the welfare state, with both the form and content of provision (family wage welfare) in accordance with the interests of male wage-earning household heads [Shannon, 1991, p. 74].

The shift in the welfare-state has brought forth enormous changes. Methodist Mission Northern had been a neighbour to care for the victims of these policy changes over 155 years. “Inequality of wealth and poverty is indeed on the increase, and that the policies of successive governments over the past decade (1985 to 1995) have not remedied the situation—they have made it worse” [Kelsey & O'Brien, 1995, pp. 12-13]. Increased poverty was accompanied by the rise of foodbanks—an almost entirely new phenomenon since the mid 1980s [Kelsey & O'Brien, 1995, p. 21]. The rise of foodbanks was an indication of deterioration in the standard of life. While the policy changes at the central government level produced poverty, faith based social service agencies such as Methodist Mission Northern, Salvation Army, City Missions and other such organisations continued to provide services as neighbours to these victims of the government systems. The social effects of inequality and poverty was described as

- Delayed visits to the doctor
- Increased debt
- Inability to pay for repairs to deteriorating household items
- Lack of recreational activities and holidays for adults and children
- Inability to pay school fees and costs of activities like school trips
- Reduced spending on clothes and greater reliance on second hand clothing
- Reduced heating in winter months
- Decreased participation in community activities due to costs like transport
- An almost total lack of available resources to deal with emergencies

[Kelsey & O'Brien, 1995, pp. 24-25]

These issues have remained unresolved since the mid 1980s. How much can social service agencies like the Methodist Mission Northern do to resolve the problems of inequality and poverty in New Zealand society? Methodist Mission Northern serves the poor and the marginalised as a Good Neighbour by providing food and clothing. But the question is what it means to be a Good Neighbour. How can the Methodist Mission Northern address the root causes of poverty in this country?

Faith based organisations in this country have a vital role to play in the mission as neighbour caring for the victims. Their work of charity is no substitute for justice [Falzon, 2007, p. 3]. Falzon argues that charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the victim but it is the role of justice to prevent the attack. In a simple form,

faith based organisations being neighbour to the victims is not a sustainable solution. The organisations must deal with the systems that cause this victimising.

When it comes to dealing with the system, organisations like the Methodist Mission Northern can

either accept the oppressive structures and therefore join the neoliberal consensus that families are to blame for their own poverty due to bad behaviour, or we can take on the perspective of those who have been marginalised. (The Mission) can dare to critique the structures that make life impossible and degrading for so many families. (The Mission) can engage in the articulation of a philosophy from below, a philosophy of praxis, a philosophy of liberation [Falzon, 2007, p. 3].

Methodist Mission Northern has hitherto played the role of charity to meet the day to day need of its clients rather than addressing the structures that make life difficult. To render a service that would ensure the wellbeing of the client mission as neighbour must address the causes. It is a justice role to build the kind of society where everyone's need is looked into; the kind of society that is not built by means of the redistribution of goods and services but also by the redistribution of decision-making, the redistribution of the dignity, the redistribution of hope [Falzon, 2007, p. 3].

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODIST MISSION NORTHERN: THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Colin Scrimgeour the Missioner of Methodist Mission Northern from 1927 to 1932 stressed practical Christianity, good neighbourliness and hope for the future [A. K. Davidson, 2004, p. 111]. These were the objectives of the Mission not only during the recession period from 1927 but at all times. I believe practical Christianity and good neighbourliness must be the two sides of the same coin. These two must go together in the mission of Good Neighbour. The concept of being a neighbour is an essential part of life:

In both Judaism and Christianity, the commandment in Leviticus 19:18 to “love your neighbour as yourself” functions most canonically as the central law or moral principle par excellence, the ethical essence of true religion, in tandem with the commandment to “love God” [Zizek, Santner, & Reinhard, 2005, p. 5].

While these are the teachings in the two religions, a neighbour could be either helpful or not for a needy person. In the gospel of Luke a paradigm shift is made by Jesus Christ to show who could be a ‘good’ neighbour rather than just being a neighbour. The concept is defined in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Zizek, Santner and Reinhard contend

...even the most exclusive account must face the inevitable question of the choice of one particular neighbour over another, for to love any one neighbour is surely to fail to love another. A defining moment in the emergence of Christian universalism comes when the neighbour is asserted to include everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, in the parable of the Good Samaritan: while the Levite and the Cohen pass by the injured man in the road, ... the Good Samaritan comes to his aid and proves himself the true neighbour of his (injured) neighbour [Zizek, Santner, & Reinhard, 2005, p. 6].

In the parable and in real life the Levite and the Cohen too were neighbours to the injured man. However, they did not volunteer to care for the person in need. That does

not mean they were not neighbours. But the Samaritan who comes to the aid of the injured man is a Good Neighbour. A choice is made according to the neighbourly act of the person to identify a neighbour as “good”. The Samaritan who helped is known as the “Good Samaritan”. It is therefore imperative to make a choice between a neighbour and a Good Neighbour.

Methodist Mission Northern over 155 years has been a “Good Neighbour” to the people stricken by poverty and socially excluded. Photograph 1 illustrates the service delivery at the Airedale Community Centre of the Methodist Mission Northern in Auckland. Its mission has been a mission of a Good Neighbour within its geographical area north of Taupo up to Whangarei. This chapter explores the role played by Methodist Mission Northern as Good Neighbour in the lives of an unknown number of people over a period of 155 years as a church based social service agency.



Photograph 1: Meals served at the Airedale Community Centre

### **3.2 Church Based Social Services in New Zealand**

Church based social service agencies began their operation in the settler society in Aotearoa New Zealand. They came into existence through Christian missionary movements to provide services in a context where the poor people in the society did not have any means to survive. Peter Lineham describes: ‘Nineteenth century New Zealand was a harsh community. The poor law did not operate, so there was very little legislative provision for the needy’ [Lineham, 1994, p. 1].

Community-based organisations including trade unions, Church-based organisations and philanthropic individuals started to emerge in Aotearoa New Zealand as early as the 1850s in response to the social problems of the settler society and to provide services to the needy [Chile, 2006, p. 409].

In this context church based social service institutions and other philanthropic organisations by and large took an interest in the poor to assist them in their life. In addition philanthropic individuals cared for the poor in the settler society. Chile observes that Church-based organisations and philanthropic individuals started to emerge to respond to the social problems of the settler society as early as the 1850s [Chile, 2006, p. 409].

Voluntary social welfare played an important part in meeting social need in Victorian New Zealand. Religious charity was considerable, motivated by Christian concern about caring for one’s neighbour. ... Voluntary social work, the strong helping the weak, has a long and noble history in New Zealand. ...In Victorian society, benevolent organisations were seen as just middle class do-gooding. In Victorian society, benevolent organisations were seen as an alternative to government action [A. K. Davidson, 2004, pp. 78, 79].

As Allan Davidson observed, ‘caring for one’s neighbour was the concept that motivated social services in New Zealand. Whether they were Church-based organisations or individual philanthropists, they launched into providing services on the basis of ‘love your neighbour as yourself.’ The reason for such an approach was because of the influence and power of Christianity in the settler societies of 19<sup>th</sup> century not only in New Zealand but in many other parts of the world. Apart from worship and pastoral care

of the membership, the churches established social service institutions to care for the poor and the needy.

From the advent of the settler society the churches were deeply involved in the dispensing of charity. They did so from a position of some weakness, compared to their English equivalents. English parishes had endowments from which they dispensed assistance to the local poor ... In New Zealand church members were almost invariably on tight budgets, and there was little to spare for the foolish colonist [Lineham, 1994, p. 1].

The churches not only provided for the needy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century settler society, but also had to find the resources to support such assistance programmes. The church members did not have enough income to support the social services of the church. As Lineham comments, people in the churches supported charity from a position of weakness. Lineham's comparison with the English equivalents described the economic weakness of the people in the churches. The principal provision of social welfare particularly in the towns was provided by the charitable aid boards closely associated with hospitals [Lineham, 1994, p. 2; Tennant, 1989]. Lineham states further:

The churches did provide some practical care on their own, particularly in the countryside, although the most extreme needs which arose when a settler family's house burned down led to a general community response. And practical assistance was natural at times of need in more congregationally focused churches like the Methodists. Much of this help was in terms of voluntary part time assistance particularly by women, rather than financial aid [Lineham, 1994, p. 2].

Lineham's description highlights that people in churches like the Methodists were responding to the needs as and when they arose; in this instance when a settler family's house burned down. The individuals offer of services was based on the Christian belief of 'love your neighbour as yourself' which inspired people to help those in need. Another notable thing is the role of the women in providing services. It has been a general feature in a male dominant society that men were at work earning a living to support the family and the women got involved with voluntary work mostly through the church (During my conversations with a lady in my congregation who is 93 years old, I heard of this aspect of voluntary work in the churches). Apart from the church members' involvement on an individual or local congregational level with helping needy

people there were institutions established by the churches which served the needy people through the concept of love your neighbour.

In Britain there have been many charitable institutions owing to the needs that arose in the industrial society to provide assistance to the needy people. Commenting on benevolent institutions Lineham states:

The state had also been active in founding poorhouses and hospitals, for it was an age which thought of buildings and institutions as the proof of the seriousness with which ventures were tackled, and the evidence of real compassion. The churches' institutions focused particularly upon children, particularly upon orphans and education. These priorities deeply affected New Zealand charity [Lineham, 1994, pp. 2,3].

Parallel to the 19<sup>th</sup> century settler society in New Zealand, in Britain the church institutions' focus was on children. The churches established schools and there was a particular focus on the orphans and their education. This focus of the British churches on the one hand influenced the churches in New Zealand to follow this model; on the other hand highlighted the lack of resources for the churches in New Zealand.

In New Zealand the churches were short of resources, but they were eager to participate in the growth of institutional care, and many people gave generously to the Great British charities. Some local institutions provided enclosed institutional care for the relief of the poor and needy, and orphanages became the classic provision. The Parnell Anglican children's home was established in 1866, and St. Mary's Roman Catholic orphanage in the 1850s, and an undenominational Home for Neglected and Criminal Children was founded in Auckland about the same period. There were ten institutions in all by 1920; only two were government provided; the others were church or civic initiatives [Lineham, 1994, p. 3].

Amidst the shortage of resources charitable organisations were established to care for the poor and the needy. Lineham points out, between 1850 and 1920 there have been ten charitable institutions. Out of these two were government sponsored and the others were church or civic initiatives. The underlying concept for the establishment of these institutions was the concept of Good Neighbour. The settler society with its missionary influence was shaped by Christianity.



Besides the concept of Good Neighbour, church based initiatives of social services had an agenda of evangelism. For example the Salvation Army model has been 'soup, soap and salvation' which began with the work by two sisters of the Wellington corps concerned about helping the prostitutes and unmarried mothers [Lineham, 1994, p. 4]. Though this service had an evangelism agenda what must be noted is it served the needy people. In addition to the Salvation Army, there were Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Church based social service organisations. The data provided by the Methodist Mission Northern is an example of the need of the period to support the destitute.

The Methodist Mission set up soup kitchens in 1851 to feed the unemployed and distribute food, coal for fuel and clothing to the destitute; the Salvation Army established the Samaritan homes for unwed mothers in 1883. Charitable organisations in Auckland alone provided over 50,000 emergency accommodation beds [Chile, 2006, p. 409].

While there was so much need for social service in the society the churches were not in a position to meet the demands of the day. Lineham states that

The New Zealand churches did not have large capital resources or the imagination to develop such innovative approaches, but by the 1890s parish work in the inner city was a concern, and the wealthier denominations sought to grow some kind of systematic institutional work. William Ready of the Bible Christian Church, a Methodist style denomination, began the Dunedin Central Mission in 1890 which was taken over by the Wesleyans. This mission was primarily evangelistic with extensive temperance work and it attracted huge working class and unchurched congregations. The Wesleyan Methodist Church tried to repeat the same success in other towns, but not so successfully. Out of the Helping Hand Mission in Auckland and the Newton Mission the East Street Hall was founded, but it was the Primitive Methodist Church which had easier contact with the working class. Their attempts to form missions in Wellington and Christchurch were less successful. [Lineham, 1994, p. 5].

Lineham observes that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Anglican Church, the Salvation Army, the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Primitive Methodist Church were attempting in various ways to establish institutions to serve the poor and the needy in the cities of New Zealand particularly in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and

Dunedin. They were primarily caring for the children and women and for the sick. Church based hospitals and caring homes were also established for the caring of the sick.

### **3.3 The Origins of Methodist Mission Northern**

Methodist Mission Northern began in 1851 as Methodist Central Mission. It was a layman, Mr. J. Harris, to whom the Auckland Mission owes its origin.

He had written to Rev. Robert Ward in New Plymouth urging him to press the claims of Auckland upon the General Missionary Committee in England.

In response to this appeal, Mr. Ward wrote to the Committee on 28 July 1846, as follows:

“A few days ago I received a letter from Mr. J. Harris, a cabinet-maker, who was a member with us for some years at Cooper’s Gardens, London. He informs me that there are many people in and around Auckland, but there is very little religion. He begs that a Primitive Methodist missionary be sent there, promising that he will befriend him as far as he is able. I think Auckland would be a suitable missionary station; for as it is, the seat of Government, it is more likely that peace will be maintained there than in other settlements. Also some persons who were members have gone thither, and many persons who have been hearers amongst us, are likely soon to go” [Parker, 1971, p. 13].

Parker quoting one of Rev Ward’s journals states: Rev. Ward visited Auckland in 1849. Primitive Methodism began with the visit of Rev. Ward, a man appointed by the English Conference (of the Methodist Church) to inaugurate its work in New Zealand [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 13]. The events that followed were: on Sunday 28 January a prayer meeting was held at 7.00 am and at 10.30 am he preached and formed a Society which was the beginning of worship centred assembly. At 2.30 pm he preached in the town in open air to about 200 people. After his preaching he asked for a house to hold a prayer meeting and one was offered immediately and also to preach. The house was filled. A room was hired for services, a Sunday School was started in a private home and laymen were appointed as prayer leaders and preachers. This was the foundation of Primitive Methodism in Auckland founded by the Rev. Ward that led to the establishment of a Methodist Church in Auckland in 1849.

In 1850 Rev. Ward returned with his wife and family to the Auckland appointment. In 1851 the Governor, George Grey, made a Crown Grant of half an acre on what was then called Edwardes Street now known as Airedale Street and a church at the site was opened for worship on March 16 [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 13]. Together with the church the operations of Auckland Central Mission began in 1851. By this time the Wesleyan movement had already taken strong root in Auckland. Rev. Ward enjoyed the goodwill and cordiality from the ministers of the Wesleyan movement. In his comments about the founder of the Auckland Central Mission, Parker concludes that it was ‘one of the great city mission enterprise of the Pacific’ [Parker, 1971, p. 18]. The city mission enterprise out of its Christian belief of ‘loving the neighbour’ began to care for the needy people. Since 1851 the Auckland Central Mission which is now known as the Methodist Mission Northern played a significant role in assisting the poor and the unemployed. As Lineham observed churches were deeply involved in the dispensing of charity in the settler society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century [Lineham, 1994, p. 1]. Lineham’s observation is evidence for the need for such services. It was John Wesley’s teaching of ‘the gospel cannot be heard in an empty stomach’ that considered feeding the hungry and clothing the naked as requirements for the spread of the Christian gospel (Matthew 25:31-46).

The details of Methodist Mission Northern, its history and development over the subsequent 75 years are not included as it is not within the scope of this thesis.<sup>3</sup> However, the developments from 1927 to 1937 are momentous in the history as it was a time that the Mission was robust in its services in addressing the depression of that era.

### **3.4 The Depression: ‘the decisive decade’**

In the early 1920s there had been a move to close down the worship centre at Alexandra Street due to the gradual decline of people and to sell the property to the Salvation Army and shift the remaining inner city mission to Pitt Street [Faulkner, 1982, p. 4]. ‘Primitive Methodist Ethos of concern for the under-privileged in society, and for the working class in general, was not necessarily shared, or felt to the same extent by the Wesleyans, who had established a church in Pitt Street’ [Faulkner, 1982, p. 3]. Among the Methodists,

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<sup>3</sup> For reference into history and development see Donald Phillips’ – Mission in a Secular City: Methodist Mission Northern 1851 – 2001, Auckland 2001, Methodist Mission Northern.

Primitive Methodists were more in touch with the working class and the poor people of the time. They were operating from the Christian belief of love your neighbour as your self. When there was an attempt to shut down the Auckland Central Mission the objection was raised in terms of being in touch with the poor and the unemployed. This was made clear in the words of the then superintendent of the Home Mission Department, A. J. Seamer. He strongly opposed the move on the grounds that "Pitt Street had insufficient contact with the poor and the unemployed, and that Alexandra Street should be maintained as a social work centre"[Faulkner, 1982, p. 4; D. Phillips, 2001, p. 55]. The location of the centre and the engagement with the poor and the unemployed was significant for the Mission not only in the 1920s but also in the contemporary context. Phillips citing the minutes of the Airedale Street Trust of 5 November 1926 says,

Synod was requested to appoint committee to confer with the Airedale Street Trustees with a view to finding a 'suitable agent' to carry on the work of the church. The committee report ...was then presented to the 1927 Conference (of the Methodist Church) by the Home Mission Board and Conference agreed to reconstitute the Auckland Methodist Central Mission as a home mission station, based on Airedale Street, under the supervision of the Pitt Street Circuit Superintendent. A committee of management was appointed, and a grant from the Home Mission Fund was authorised [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 55].

The above mentioned observations by Faulkner and Phillips emphasise that the Methodist Mission Northern has played a significant role in the lives of the poor people during the depression of the 1920s and 1930s. It also highlighted that Methodist Mission Northern was caring for the needy people as Good Neighbour during this decisive decade. The observation states that the Methodist Church at Pitt Street was not serving the poor and the unemployed in the way the Methodist Mission Northern did. In the midst of many challenging times and lack of resources the Methodist Mission Northern has continued to serve the poor and the unemployed as a Good Neighbour in its mission. During the depression years the Home Mission Board identified the need and supported the Methodist Mission Northern in its service towards the needy people. It was the Home Mission Board's intervention that made the Methodist Mission Northern carry on its services as good neighbour and avoided the closure of the project. The significance of

the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern after its re-establishment was described by Phillips:

In 1927, for the first time, over 10,000 persons were assisted into employment, and there was a winter pack of nearly 3000 registered unemployed. Scrimgeour's (incumbent missionary) concern to witness at first-hand their needs was recognised and reported at length by the local news papers. He also learned of the low opinion held by the poor of church welfare agencies and workers. This experience enabled him to begin the business of organising relief programmes for those who came to the Mission, in a city where there was little, if any, organisation [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 56].

The incumbent missionary Scrimgeour's role in serving the needy people of his time through the Methodist Mission Northern was significant in terms of the number of people the mission served as Good Neighbour. However, it must be noted that there were other organisations operating in the city to care for the poor and the unemployed which was not covered by Phillips [A. K. Davidson, 2004, p. 109]. Davidson observes:

The ministry of Colin Scrimgeour provided an alternative model for the church in the depression period. A charismatic, unconventional and innovative figure, Scrimgeour ... took a lead in gathering support for relief work, began large scale Sunday evening services in picture theatre, showed films and was one of the early pioneer broadcasters becoming known as 'Uncle Scrim' or Scrim [A. K. Davidson, 2004, pp. 110-111].

What is notable in Scrimgeour's work is the alternative model for the church to engage in relief work. His relief work was supported by many prominent people and companies. The magnitude of the service and the support received was stated in the following:

In order to put the work on a sounder financial basis Scrimgeour in 1928 organised the Business men's Relief Service, which provided funds and discounted goods. In its first year of operation it distributed 10,000 food and clothing parcels and supplied 5000 meals and beds for the unemployed. Firms such as Farmers Trading Company, Smith and Caughey and R. & W. Hellaby Ltd were major contributors—the latter, for example, providing over 250 gallons of soup weekly in 1931 [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 56].

Scrimgeour's organising of the contribution to the needy people on the street through Methodist Mission Northern was remarkable. By his mission among the needy people he had become a challenge to the conventional churches though some people of the

conventional churches described him as a controversial figure. Scrimgeour's mission model was so significant that this needs a revisiting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for what it had done during the depression. Davidson citing Edwards' *Scrim: Radio Rebel in Retrospect* [Edwards, 1971, pp. 39-40] states:

Scrimgeour's evangelism has been described as 'rationalist rather than conventionally religious in form.' He believed 'it was time for the churches to abandon the old fundamentalist fables and threats of hellfire,' objecting 'to the churches' official Christ-image. "A weak, anaemic- looking individual ...in a long white robe with a lamb on his arm" [A. K. Davidson, 2004, p. 111].

Alternatively Scrimgeour looked at his mission as a Good Neighbour in the light of the depression and the Great Commandment of the Hebrew Testament affirmed by Jesus Christ in the gospels as 'Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.' Indeed he stressed practical Christianity, good neighbourliness and hope for the future' [A. K. Davidson, 2004, p. 111]. The Great Commandment and Scrimgeour's practical Christianity and good neighbourliness continued to influence the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern to be a Good Neighbour to the needy people who were in need of its services. In many ways Methodist Mission Northern continued to serve the poor and the needy as a Good Neighbour. The mission of its kind was made possible with a few of the firms being Good Neighbours to the Methodist Mission Northern. The role of the Mission is phenomenal. "In Auckland the Methodist Social Service mission under E.T. Olds and C. G. Scrimgeour recognised that identification with the poor was significant in attracting working class support" [Lineham, 1994, p. 9]. On the contrary, it is imperative to ask: if not for the services provided by the Methodist Mission Northern, how would all those poor and unemployed people survive in the society? It is a serious question that needs to be addressed at all times. The Methodist Mission Northern has been a unique Good Neighbour in a life saving exercise in its care of the people especially during the depression of late the 1920s and early 1930s.

Scrimgeour's role as a missionary in the Auckland Central Mission ended in 1932 with his resignation. Phillips describes the last part of Scrimgeour's services:

In Scrimgeour's last year at the Mission, the long term effects of the Depression had become more and more acute. Taxation had risen to

pay for the cost of Government relief services and Mission revenue had accordingly decreased. The missionary stated quite unequivocally that relief was the Government's responsibility ... Scrimgeour concluded his final report by saying: 'we feel that our energies must be directed to those channels of service that give more lasting results than the distribution of bread that perisheth, important though that work has been' [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 61].

Scrimgeour's argument that 'relief was the Government's responsibility' is beyond any doubt. However, if a Government fails in its responsibility in providing relief, should the needy people be left to perish? In the absence of any other organisation to fulfil this mission a need arises for the average Christian to be a Good Neighbour in caring for the needy. The need for the Methodist Mission Northern to provide services for the poor and the needy is the portrayal of the inefficiency or inability of the government to provide relief. On the other hand a question arises as to what is the outcome of the benefits that were provided by the government? This question needs to be answered in a different study not within this thesis. But the rationale for the operation of a mission of its kind by the Methodist Mission Northern still remains as before. Alternatively Scrimgeour's conclusion in his final report that 'our energies must be directed to those channels of service that give more lasting results than the distribution of bread' stands out in challenging the Mission to look into its policy for organising a better sustainable life for the clients rather than distributing bread.

While on the one hand bread needs to be distributed, on the other hand the Mission has to explore the means for lasting results. I would argue that all people must have a certain standard of living with sufficient income so that the recipients of service gradually cease to exist. That must become the ultimate goal of the Mission. The point I make here is that Scrimgeour has rightly pointed out the need for developing a mission that would bring forth lasting results in the lives of the people served by the Mission. Over the years after Scrimgeour's cessation as missionary the Mission or its management has not paid sufficient attention for a while to or has got distracted by other aspects that a policy toward 'lasting results' has not been effectively developed. There could be at least three reasons for this failure.

The first is the church's objective of evangelism. Phillips highlights this as follows:

Most of all, the reference to the 'stable basis' most likely points to an unease with the lack of a true evangelistic emphasis in the Mission's work. Evangelism meant, for the average Methodist, bringing people into a relationship with Christ as saviour. It did not mean the generalised gospel of Christian socialism, nor the social and political comment that increasingly marked Scrimgeour's public ministry. It is hard to imagine the Missioner being able to go on for much longer without reaching a confrontation with the church [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 61].

The Mission's objective of serving the needy people irrespective of evangelism was inconsistent with the belief of the average Methodists. Scrimgeour's public ministry was not viewed by the people of the pews as a form of the church's ministry. Most Christians keep the gospel of Christian socialism out of their religious practices.

The second is, a cycle of dependency. A perpetual operation of a charity model welfare mission helps the church's objective of 'doing good'. It becomes a means for the church to proclaim the gospel by feeding the people. This is not as I view it, the objective of the Christian gospel. Poverty and destitution must not be exploited to evangelise and assimilate people into church. Instead of a cycle of dependency, the church must take every step to eradicate poverty to overcome the cycle of dependency.

The third is the government's failure to provide relief. This means the existence of an underclass people in a society which raises a question of justice. John M. Breen stated: "In any society, the litmus test of its justice or injustice is how it treats its poor and powerless" [Breen, p. <http://home.twcny.rr.com/lyndale/Pentecost%2012C.html>]. The government of the time provided a half an acre of land to establish the church and Methodist Mission Northern. That does not mean that the government has addressed the plight of the poor and the needy.

On the church's side, as I look at the developments, it becomes clearer to me that intentionally or unintentionally a 'cycle of dependency' operated. It was with the



objective of maintaining a charity rather than restoring justice to the underprivileged people. Lineham argues,

During the depression years the coalition government felt forced to cut the unemployment benefit in order to balance the budget. This action was one of the factors which drew the churches into intervention in welfare ... Yet their objectives were not the establishment of a system of distributive justice or equality, but rather a provision for the welfare of each individual in times of crisis [Lineham, 1994, pp. 8-9].

Lineham is right in saying that the churches opted to provide for the needs but did not address the establishment of distributive justice. It is in this direction a need for an appropriate policy for the Mission arises. But the developing of an appropriate policy is not a simple task as there are many stakeholders.

After Scrimgeour's resignation from the Mission there were changes in the policy of the Mission due to the successor's interest in carrying out the evangelistic objective of the Methodist Church. Faulkner points out the view of the 1933 Conference of the New Zealand Methodist Church as, that a 'bold forward move' should be made to allow the establishment of a Methodist Mission Northern [Faulkner, 1982]. What the 'bold forward move' the conference was trying to achieve is not made clear within the available literature. However, the appointment of Rev. A. E. Orr as the missionary<sup>4</sup> of the Methodist Mission Northern in place of Scrimgeour brought changes in the Mission [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 63].

Orr brought to the Mission a definitive vision of how things should be conducted. He felt that the work conducted by the previous missionary was only touching the edge of the problem – acting as a relief agency for those who requested it. He was determined to make the work visible on an institutional basis.

Orr, perhaps because of his theological training, and his background, believed that the first note to strike in his new venture was an evangelistic one.

He believed 'that the emphasis should always be on the spiritual rather than on the material – to him the feeding of men's bodies (and presumably women and children's, too), important though it

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<sup>4</sup> When Rev. A. E. Orr was appointed he was a probationer who had just completed his training at the Trinity College. His appointment has been under the superintendence of Rev. A. J. Seamer – General Superintendent of the Home Missions Department.

be, should be placed second to the saving of their souls' [Faulkner, 1982, p. 19].

Phillips' description of Scrimgeour's ministry and Faulkner's description of Orr's ministry make it explicit that the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern had been shifting from social service to evangelism. The dualism of social service and evangelism or better described as 'feeding of the bodies' and 'saving of the souls' has been an issue for the missions engaged as Good Neighbour. My observation of this dualism and its practice in church based missions is that every time a missionary operates with feeding of the bodies a successor is chosen to save souls. The example of this was evident in the appointment of Orr to evangelise after Scrimgeour.

However, Orr has worked vigorously to carry on the social services of the Mission which has catered to many needy people even though the objective had been evangelising. Faulkner recognises two aspects of the Mission as the formation of the Social Service Association and the establishment of the 'Institutional' phase of Central Mission. He states further: 'In essence it is this which distinguishes the 'Scrimgeour period' from the 'Orr period'. It was during Orr's period at the 1933 Conference the Methodist Social Service Association was formed. Its aims and objectives were stated as 'the exposition of Christian principles, the development of social service work in City Mission, Orphanages and general benevolent work'. Faulkner states further

This national Association did not have the desired impact on the Auckland area, and Mr Orr was keen to see the co-operation of the Methodist social service agencies in the city. Accordingly in 1934 permission was sought from both Auckland Synod and Conference for an Auckland Methodist Social Service Association to be formed. Permission was granted in February 1935, and the first fully constituted meeting was held on 29 July... the inauguration was on 19 November 1935 ... Mr Orr in a stirring speech gave an interesting resume of the great scope of social work in which the church was actively engaged in New Zealand, embracing children's homes and orphanages, health camps, rest homes, old people's homes, hospital and prison chaplaincy, benevolent work, social work among the Maoris, and activities of the deaconesses in the cities and country [Faulkner, 1982, p. 20].

Almost all of these areas of work mentioned by Orr in his speech were areas that the government of New Zealand must have addressed. Nevertheless, during the depression the government reduced its expenditure on welfare [Lineham, 1994, p. 8]. When there was not enough provision by the government to care for the needs of the poor and the unemployed, church based social service organisations stepped in to care for them. But in the case of Methodist Mission Northern it was with an objective of evangelising as it was spelt out in Orr's mission objective.

Faulkner's description of the events and developments in the Mission shows the way it moved to serve the interests of the social services in a more institutional structure under different categories. Certainly the institutional structure served the people of all ages at the time. And all these services were co-ordinated by the newly formed Social Service Association. A service oriented institution was an imperative of the period and the Mission filled this need. Thus Orr's period becomes a significant one in building on Scrimgeour's. Further developments in the Mission were stated in this:

The work of the Central Mission was changed in character. It no longer consisted of the congregation and its relief department. With the establishment of the Association and the development of the Campbell's Bay Health Camp, the maintenance of the work went beyond the resources of the local and provincial church. The Government was involved through the granting of subsidies, and in recognition of this extra load, the Board of Management was reconstituted to include those with experience and business acumen which would contribute to the overall administration of the mission and its social services [Faulkner, 1982, p. 21].

Whatever the 'bold forward move' the Conference proposed in 1933, it has to be said that Orr took not a single, but many 'bold forward moves' to strengthen the work of the Mission in Auckland. The objectives of the moves may have been evangelism but the Mission continued to serve the people with many kinds of needs from children to the elderly. While on the one hand the Mission carried the social services on the other hand it got the support of the people across the Methodist congregations in Auckland and even from other churches by crossing ecclesial boundaries. It must be said that the developments and improvements of the mission during Orr's period in the history of the Methodist Mission Northern has been built on what Scrimgeour started. Faulkner names

this period as ‘the decisive decade’ of the Auckland Central Mission [Faulkner, 1982]. Thereafter another move came in with a policy change once more. The Methodists felt that the objective of evangelism had been lost and it needed to be revived. Phillips observes,

If there was a basic policy for the Central mission it was given clear expression some years later in the ‘Manifesto on Peace and War’ adopted by Conference in 1940. Among other things it stated: ‘... the central task of the Church is to make Christians rather than social programmes’. In saying this Conference was simply reminding itself that Methodism was a creature of the Evangelical Revival. By not accepting the centrality of ‘social programmes’, and thus of social action and advocacy, the Church was also being consistent with its belief in the separation of the religion and politics. Yet the Mission was inextricably linked to both dimensions through its work with and for those who were the victims of religious inaction and political policy [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 64].

The pendulum swung on to evangelising once again. The church was more worried about evangelising and separating religion from politics. The Church reiterated its centrality and purpose as ‘making Christians’ rather than providing social services. However, Phillips’ observation raises the justice issue in relation to the beneficiaries of the social services as the ‘victims of religious inaction and political policy.’ The plight of the poor and the powerless had not changed over the decades of providing services by the Methodist Mission Northern. Photograph 2 illustrates the way the people stand in a queue to receive the food served at the centre. On the contrary it could be argued that in favour of the church’s objective of ‘making Christians’ the inadequate ‘political policy’ that creates poverty was beneficial for the church. This was exploiting the penniless powerless people for the church to increase its number under the banner of ‘soul saving.’ But in fact, Phillips was right when he said that it is both religious inaction and political policy [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 64] that results in poor and powerless people in the society.

Religious practice as Good Neighbour must address causes of poverty and powerlessness and engage in advocacy with the government’s policy makers to address the causes of victimising in the society. The history and development of the Methodist Mission Northern shows that the social service of the Methodist Mission Northern as

Good Neighbour suffered owing to the swinging between evangelising and social service. On the other hand it could be argued that evangelising also is a way of being Good Neighbour. However, the Jewish and Christian concepts of good neighbourliness discussed in chapter two direct the mission as Good Neighbour to serve the material needs of a person. In practical Christianity mission as Good Neighbour would mean ensuring the wellbeing of the person rather than defining whether the person is 'saved' or not. As Scrimgeour said, the Mission's energy must be directed to those services that give more lasting results than the distribution of bread [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 61].

A need for a policy change arises once more for the Methodist Mission Northern to address the causes of poverty and powerlessness of the so called underclass in New Zealand society. And also to take a firm stand with its mission of addressing this issue as a justice issue and not to swing back and forth between evangelising and social services.



Photograph 2: Food being served to the clients

### **3.5 Towards a Policy**

After a time of back and forth with evangelism and social service, Methodist Mission Northern was given the mandate to work with the objective of providing social services.

The Mission continues to struggle owing to the limited resources for its operation to meet the demands placed on it by way of providing for the needy people. The same could also be said of other similar missions of that time. The Conference of the Methodist Church understood this situation. As a result the Methodist Social Service Association was established in 1933. Phillips described the establishment of the association as ‘... official recognition of institutional and social service work, and of the need for coordination and the definition of policy’ [D. Phillips, 2001, pp. 64-65]. The interest that the Conference showed in 1933 must have become an important turning point in the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern and other similar missions within the Methodist Church.

This development was also motivated by the need to have access to funds for specified welfare purposes. Conference was beginning to take note of the work of missions, the orphanages, the deaconesses, of food and clothing depots, and wider benevolent work of the circuits. There was even a suggestion that there should be a specific Social Service Department of the Church ... All these things, it was suggested, should be a connexional priority and responsibility [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 65].

It was a significant move for the connexion to elevate the necessity of the social services and pay attention to promoting the services of the mission. But it did not move in the way it was expected to move. ‘The Methodist Social Service Association lapsed into inactivity soon after being launched’ [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 65]. There was an Auckland District Social Service Association for a brief time. The Association only represented three orphanages, the prison and hospital chaplaincies, Maori work in the city, suburbs, and country areas and the benevolent work of Pitt Street and other churches [Faulkner, 1982, pp. 20-21]. In relation to this period and the developments Phillips notes,

Unemployment had been for many years the most intractable problem arising from the Depression. But it was not until 1932 that Conference (of the Methodist Church) issued a ‘Pronouncement on Unemployment’. This statement, amended the following year, looked for a ‘new spirit’ rather than ‘economic guidance’. It encouraged the Church not to engage in party politics but to confront an ‘unsound social order’. Its answer was the Christianising of the nation and the awakening of the conscience [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 65].

Phillips describes the social policy being side-tracked once again. The move towards Christianising of the nation and the awakening of the conscience rather than good neighbourly services to the needy became the objective. The outcome of the statement was:

Practical steps were suggested: adequate relief payments; sustenance allowances for family needs; village settlements rather than compulsory camps; abolition of taxation for the low paid unemployed; compulsory unemployment and health insurance; a review of the monetary system; and a full government enquiry into the whole situation.

In 1936 the Public Questions Committee came up with more realistic proposals for the changes in administration of relief funds. These, however, were overtaken by the new Labour Government's moves taken between Christmas 1935 and the following February. Thereafter the Committee's reports to Conference touched on many things but no longer on the issues of poverty and unemployment which still brought their hundreds of needy supplicants to the central missions. Instead it would seem the Church's principal concerns about New Zealand society related to such things as Bible in schools, temperance and licensing legislation, juvenile delinquency, spiritual advance and the 'Crusade for Christ and His Kingdom'. Making policy on evangelism and social service delivery was, thus, almost by default, left to the Missions [D. Phillips, 2001, pp. 65-66].

The statement shows the concerns of the church. The questions of poverty, unemployment and other social issues were left for the missions. Neither the churches nor the Government showed any interest in addressing poverty and its related issues. However, with the creation of the missions by the Methodist Church the responsibility was passed on to the mission which was a good move. It gave a clear mandate and independency to the Methodist Mission Northern to develop its social policy and its practice without getting stalled by the Methodist Church's evangelism objectives. The work of the Methodist Mission Northern among the poor and the unemployed continued to be an important good neighbourly service as there were people seeking support for their existence. Five years later, in the 1940 Conference of the Methodist Church management matters of the missions were addressed. The Synods of Auckland and Otago-Southland were directed to appoint committees to draw up comprehensive policy on city mission work. Phillips noted this phase of the developments in the missions in the following:

Missions were seen as centres of evangelism, appealing to those 'outside', and the chief means of carrying out social work in cities. They should have a claim on financial support of all Methodists; and were authorised to conduct appeals within Methodism and the general public. Missions should be located in well-equipped buildings and attention was drawn to the state of the Auckland facilities [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 67].

By stating this Phillips observes, 'What is most evident in this statement is that it deals with structure, rather than with what should be the social work emphases of the Missions' [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 67]. It must be noted that the structures are essential for effective operation of the services. Without them there cannot be organised regular service delivery. Social services need to be delivered from well equipped locations to be effective in serving the needy people. Therefore the operational budget has to cover the costs of maintaining the structures and buildings. In drawing the policy of the city missions, Phillips notes, "An Auckland Synod Committee had prepared what the 1941 Conference (of the Methodist Church) adopted as a 'Policy for City Missions'." [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 67]. In all avenues E. A. Orr had worked towards achieving the well-equipped buildings for the Mission. They continue to serve as the necessary structures of the Methodist Mission Northern to provide its services to date.

In his analysis of the 'decisive decade' of the Methodist Mission Northern Faulkner concludes:

The days of the city mission with its relief department, supported by dwindling population, working out of dilapidated buildings has passed. Here in the heart of the city was the Methodist Central Mission, headquarters of the Auckland Social Services Association, involved not only in relief and benevolent work, but in orphanages, prison and hospital chaplaincies, the work of the deaconesses north of Kawhia, the Martin Memorial home, the Radio Church of the Helping Hand, and Health Camp work. With the Street site, Mr. Orr's vision that things should become visible on an institutional basis had come a step closer. After many more years of negotiation, planning and set-backs the new building was opened by Prime Minister Holyoake on 7 February, 1964 [Faulkner, 1982, p. 23].

These structural developments remain milestones in the history of the Methodist Mission Northern. It had emerged as an efficient social service centre to feed the hungry, clothe



the neighbour and to care for the needy as a Good Neighbour. However, the question that is yet to be answered is, has the Methodist Mission Northern addressed the problem of poverty, unemployment and the plight of the needy people adequately as a Good Neighbour? Has the Methodist Mission Northern looked into a holistic approach in its care of the poor and the marginalised as their Good Neighbour is something that needs to be explored further. The Mission's services to the needy as Good Neighbour to evangelise or to be a Good Neighbour is another question that has to be considered in its policy making. Love for the neighbour is unconditional as observed in chapter 2. The mission of the Methodist Mission Northern must not have a condition of making Christians by providing services. This notion of 'unconditional love for the neighbour' needs to be expressed in the policy making of the Methodist Mission Northern.

During the period between 1950 and the 1970s there were further developments in the Methodist Church of New Zealand with regard to its policy and practice of social service.

The New Zealand Methodist Social Service Association was formally established by the 1952 Conference 'to initiate, develop and coordinate the social service work of the Methodist Church of New Zealand' and to ensure its publicity and support. The Association included the central missions, social service trusts, community centres approved by conference, orphanages, Eventide Homes, and Maori social welfare work ... Conference also agreed to setup a commission to examine the place of central missions in the light of modern trends, and this move was probably connected with the Dunedin Central Mission's report, under the heading 'The Church, the Welfare State and Social Services'. ... the Commission eventually reported to the Conference in 1956 and 1957, reaffirming the continuing need for a specialised ministry in the larger cities [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 85].

These developments Phillips described moved the Missions of the Methodist Church from strength to strength in serving the poor and the destitute in the larger cities; in this case in Auckland. He added that

Throughout this period of considerable national prosperity, the Connexional watchdog, the Public Questions Committee, rarely addressed matters of political, social or economic concern which were then referred by Conference to the missions for action. ... Its (the Public Questions Committee) reaction, for example, to a rise

in unemployment figures in mid 1967 was that the answers lay with the government and there should be no Church action [D. Phillips, 2001, p. 86].

Phillips' description of a period of national prosperity did not lead to the closing down of the Methodist Mission Northern and its operations. Whatever the national prosperity had been there were people accessing the social services from the Mission. The historical records of Faulkner and Phillips portray the Methodist Church's interference with the work of the Methodist Mission Northern at various phases to give priority to its evangelising programmes. However, the Mission had a certain amount of autonomy to plan and work its social service programmes. Hence the mission as Good Neighbour continued<sup>5</sup>. The mission of the Methodist Mission Northern started on a small scale and has now developed into providing services not only to the poor and the needy in terms of food and clothing but also in terms of care of the elderly through its elders' homes and the care of children and parents through its West Auckland Family Services. In 1971 after 120 years of Methodist Mission Northern's service to the people in Auckland Parker wrote:

The City of Auckland and the Methodist Central Mission have grown up together ... The record of the Mission is just one more instance of the parable of the mustard seed at work in the world. One hundred and twenty years ago the seed was sown on ground where the Mission now stands. "Smallest among seed," it certainly was. But it took root. Its branches have spread across the City and beyond to other centres in Auckland Province [Parker, 1971, p. 11].

Parker presents the establishment of the Mission as a small organisation and at the end of 120 years it has grown up to provide its services throughout the Auckland Province and now extended to Whangarei in the North and Hamilton in the South. In describing the services of the Mission Parker observes,

In the Mission's work of social out-reach, homes and hospitals have been built. Health camps have been established for ailing children. Recreational areas and hostel accommodation have been provided for youth; holiday facilities for needy families; shelter for the homeless and solitary [Parker, 1971, pp. 11-12].

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<sup>5</sup> The chronological details in history are not stated here as it is not within the scope of this thesis. For historical records see Donal Phillips' *Mission in a Secular City* and Wesley Parker's *In the Midst of the City*.

Over the years the services have changed according to the needs of the clients and more precisely according to the availability of resources. With regard to the operation of the Methodist Mission Northern it must be said that the Methodist Church's Conference being a governing body attempted to set the policy for the Methodist Mission Northern many times. The Mission had to grapple with the question of evangelism and social services. It must be said that evangelism and social services are two distinct ministries of the church. The objectives of the two ministries are totally different. One may complement the other but one cannot take the place of the other. Mission as good neighbour is required by Christianity to care for the needy in relation to a Christian's faith in God. The fundamental teaching as discussed in chapter two shows that a person cannot relate to God without relating to that person's neighbour. If the neighbour is in need of help it is required of a Christian to provide the good neighbourly service. Methodist Mission Northern has fulfilled that role for over 155 years since it started to serve the poor and the needy in New Zealand settler society. But the question is what the Methodist Mission Northern achieved by providing services for 155 years.

Methodist Mission Northern existed for a century and a half and cared for numerous people. But the number of poor people accessing the services has not decreased but has increased. Poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand is still persistent. So the next question is, what is the result of the social service provided by the Methodist Mission Northern. Why is it that the people who receive services from the Methodist Mission Northern keep coming back to receive services? Is it because the social service of the Methodist Mission Northern is only a palliative measure that does not address the cause of poverty? To answer these questions, further data is required from the contemporary stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern. This study attempts to collect that data to find a social policy for the Methodist Mission Northern in its mission as Good Neighbour.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is an exploration of phenomenology as a methodology for the project. The term phenomenology has become so widely used that its meaning has become confused [Paton, 1990, p. 68]. Defining the term phenomenology is not the purpose of this research. The concept of phenomenology for the research is as Michael Quinn Paton states

... Phenomenological inquiry focuses on the question of what is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for the people. ...The phenomenon may be a program, an organisation, or a culture... By phenomenology Husserl (c.1913 – 1962) meant the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses [Paton, 1990, p. 69].

The methodology for this research focuses on phenomenological inquiry into the impact of social service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern. It looks into how the social service delivery phenomenon impacted on the clients of the Methodist Mission Northern in Whangarei, Auckland and Hamilton. The phenomenological inquiry explores how the clients have experienced the service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern.

A phenomenological perspective can mean either or both (1) a focus on what people experience and how they interpret the world (in which case one can use interviews without actually experiencing the phenomenon oneself) or (2) a methodological mandate to actually experience the phenomenon being investigated (in which case participant observation would be necessary) [Paton, 1990, p. 70].

In this instance the focus is on what key stakeholders experience and how they interpret the service delivery in order to investigate the phenomenon Methodist Mission Northern. Methodist Mission Northern has been involved as a social service provider in Auckland since 1851. The project has been operating to provide services to clients based on the biblical commandment of love your neighbour, as taught in Christianity. ‘Love your

neighbour' is the theological and philosophical concept that underpinned the delivery of services of Methodist Mission Northern.

The experience and the interpretation of the experience by the key stakeholders in order to investigate the phenomenon Methodist Mission Northern could be done in many ways. Martin Tolich and Carl Davidson point out

Quantitative research counts its variables because it is able to do so – because it knows in advance which relationship between the variables it wants to count. It then uses measures of strength of the relationship to answer whether the original hypothesis has been supported or not. ...Quantitative research deals with 'hard' data. It counts because the data can be counted (measured) and because its researchers know in advance what to count. Qualitative research focuses on reflecting the quality of something. So rather than asking how many ... a qualitative researcher would ask how it felt and what it meant ... This would be followed up with questions about what was different each time [C. Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 19].

My attempt is not to quantify the effect of the service delivery, because the hand-out model is widely supported by key stakeholders. I did not choose this option as it would conclude with the majority agreeing to maintain the existing hand out model. My intention in this research is to explore the possibilities for a community development model that would lead the clients to become self-supporting independent stakeholders. To explore this it is imperative to do qualitative research with how it felt and what it meant for the stakeholders.

It is certainly true that exponents of the case study design often favour qualitative methods, such as participant observation and unstructured interviewing, because these methods are viewed as particularly helpful in the generation of an intensive, detailed examination of a case [Bryman, 2001, p. 49].

When it comes to qualitative research the phenomenon to be investigated becomes the focus, the case for the study. The case needs to be studied intensively with detailed examination. This cannot be done by quantifying the variables but rather be done with details. As Allan Bryman states "The most common use of the term associates the case study with a location, such as a community or organisation" [Bryman, 2001, p. 49].

## **4.2 Case Study Design**

A case study entails the detailed exploration of a specific case [Bryman, 2001, p. 27]. As Allan Bryman argues the intense study of the organisation could be examined as experimental design, cross-sectional survey, longitudinal design, case study design or comparative design [Bryman, 2001, p. 27]. The search for a social policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern could be done in one of these methodologies. Each of them has their strengths and weaknesses. In this project I have chosen case study as the design of the research. Why did I choose this design?

The basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. ... case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question. Some of the best-known studies in sociology are based on this kind of design [Bryman, 2001, p. 48].

The most common use of the term associates the case study with a location, such as a community or organisation. The emphasis tends to be upon an intensive examination of the setting [Bryman, 2001, p. 49].

As Bryman states, case study is an intensive analysis of a single community or organisation. It is not making comparisons with other similar institutions to find out which institution is delivering a more effective service. It is an uncontrolled exploration of the organisation. No comparison is made [Warren R. Dunn, Stephen Lyman, & Marx, 2003, p. 870]. Rather it is an exploration of what must be a social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern that could have greater impacts through service delivery for its clients in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so that the clients could move from dependency on services delivered into a long term self supporting sustainability.

## **4.3 Objective of the Research**

The objective of this thesis research therefore is to explore the future ministry of the Methodist Mission Northern, with a view to re-vision its social policy framework for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The services delivered by the Methodist Mission Northern have met the needs of its clients by way of feeding and clothing. In addition it has provided health care and budgeting services. The Methodist Mission Northern has also been involved in advocacy

programmes to arrange for social benefit for the clients. Corrie Haddock, Service Delivery Manager of the Methodist Mission Northern in Auckland in his report to the Social and Community Services Committee<sup>6</sup> reported that “the services helped the homeless to remain homeless rather than assisting them out of it” [Haddock, 2008]. Haddock’s statement confirms my hypothesis that the service deliveries have not assisted the clients toward their becoming independent self-supporting sustainability but maintained them in their recipient state. My observation is that in spite of 156 years of services the number of clients receiving services from the Methodist Mission Northern has not decreased but increased. The purposes of the services delivery by the Methodist Mission Northern as a Good Neighbour had not been met. There is a need to reconsider the service delivery model.

#### **4.4 Methods of Data Collection**

Two methods of data collection was used in this research.

1. Interview schedules as a method of data collection.

The key stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern were interviewed according to the interview schedules prepared for each category of stakeholders. They were the Board of Governors, Service delivery staff and clients.

2. Reading through the *Annual Reports* of the Methodist Mission Northern as a method of data collection.

Information available in the *Annual Reports* for the period 1986 to 2006 was used as data for the purpose of this research. The *Annual Reports* gave a summary of the events by way of reporting to the wider community who were interested in the ministry of the Methodist Mission Northern. The reports also reflect the changes to policy, changes to personnel and developments within the Methodist Mission Northern. The reason for choosing the year 1986 as a starting point is due to the rapid political and economic changes that took place in New Zealand since then. Jane Kelsey outlines these changes,

The basic formula for the New Zealand experiment mirrored the structural adjustment programmes implemented in the poorer

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<sup>6</sup> Social and Community Services Committee is a subcommittee of the Methodist Mission Northern that looks into the management of the service delivery in Auckland.

countries of the world. The fourth Labour government took office after a snap election in July 1984 [Kelsey, 1998, p. 2].

A universal goods and services tax (GST) was introduced in 1986, covering all final domestic consumption, including food, and excluding only financial services, real estate transactions and very small businesses. ... From 1986 any state activity with a potentially commercial function was corporatized, placed in the hands of a government-appointed board of entrepreneurial directors and required to run as an equivalent to private sector business. A majority of state owned enterprises (SOEs) and other assets were later fully or partly privatised, including three state banks and the trustee savings bank system, state insurance company, railways, the national airline, local transport, shipping, telecommunications, electricity distribution, petroleum and natural gas reserves and refineries, forests, fisheries, hotels, housing mortgages, computing services and the Government Printing Office. [Kelsey, 1998, pp. 3-4].

These rapid changes resulted in the state welfare sector moving to a profit oriented operation with a policy of 'users pay for the services.' The economic impact of these changes was 'Churches and charities were expected to cover the government's withdrawal from social and income support. Expenditures on police, courts and prisons continued to grow' [Kelsey, 1998, p. 5]. These outcomes were the direct impact of the political and economic changes of that time. It is not possible to cover the entire history of the Methodist Mission Northern within the scope of this thesis. With regard to finding an effective social policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the immediate past and the beginning of rapid political and economic changes of this era becomes crucial. For that reason the researcher looks at the records in the *Annual Reports* from 1986 to 2006.

## **4.5 Participants**

For the purpose of this research what people experience and how they interpret the phenomenon is vital. The participants were selected from among the key stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern. They were: The Board of Governors, Service Delivery Staff of the Methodist Mission Northern in Whangarei, Auckland and Hamilton, and the Clients of the service delivery centres in Whangarei, Auckland and



Hamilton. The researcher selected the Board of Governors and the service delivery staff because of their knowledge of the organisation and the services delivered. The clients were selected because of their experience at the service delivery centres and the benefits of the services to them.

#### **4.5.1 Clients**

All clients over the age of twenty years were invited at the three service delivery centres of the Methodist Mission Northern to participate. The criterion for the selection of the age of twenty years and over was to get the informed consent of the participant. This eliminated the question of getting the consent of the parent or a guardian of an under age participant. The response rate was twelve at Auckland, seven at Hamilton and one at Whangarei.

#### **4.5.2 Service Delivery Staff**

All of the service delivery staff employed full time or part time in the centres at Whangarei, Auckland and Hamilton were interviewed. The two staff members of Auckland Airedale Community Centre were employed on a fixed term contract. This was due to the transition at that time in the centre. Ninety percent of the staff were interviewed. The other ten percent were either support staff in administrative roles or they were not available at the time the interviews were conducted.

#### **4.5.3 Board of Governors**

Eight out of the ten members of the Board of Governors were interviewed. There was no selection or sampling with regard to these participants. The two members not included were the researcher and a member who died during the time the interviews were conducted.

### **4.6 Selection of the Participants**

Following the approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee, Board of Governors and staff were invited through personally addressed letters to them. Clients were invited through notices placed on the notice boards of the three service delivery centres and by making announcements during meal times at the Auckland and Hamilton centre. Whangarei centre does not deliver meals to clients.

## **4.7 Procedure for gaining informed consent**

Prior to the interviews, the researcher hand delivered to each of the staff and Board of Governors

- (a) A letter of invitation to participate in the research
- (b) A participant information sheet
- (c) A consent form

Prior to the interviews each of the clients were given

- (a) A clients' participant information sheet
- (b) A consent form

## **4.8 Conflict of Interest**

The Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee pointed out that there was a significant conflict of interest in conducting the interviews due to the role of the researcher being a member of the Board of Governors. Upon the instructions from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee an independent third party was engaged to conduct the interviews and an independent transcriber was recruited for the transcribing of the tape recorded interviews. By following these steps the information given by the participants remain anonymous to the researcher.

## **4.9 Protection of the participants' privacy and rights**

The independent third party interviewer explained to the participants the interview process and asked the participants to sign the informed consent forms. The participants were allowed to select convenient times and places for the interviews. The Board of Governors were interviewed in their work places or homes according to their requests. The staff were interviewed during normal working hours in the service delivery centres. A part-time staff member was interviewed in his second work place. The clients were interviewed during their normal visits to the centres to receive services.

Confidentiality was ensured through participant information sheets. No names were used in reporting the findings through the interviews. Each participant was stated by a numerical number. The participants remain anonymous to the researcher as the independent third party interviewer and the transcriber have followed the instructions of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee.

Auckland University of Technology counselling services were made available to the participants in the event of a need for counselling due to the interview process. However, there was no request for such services. The participants were given the option of withdrawing from the interviews and research at any time prior to the submission of the thesis.

#### **4.10 Interview Schedules**

Three different interview schedules were used for the purpose of collecting data from the key stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern.

**4.10.1 Interview schedule 1** was shaped with three key questions with space opened for the interviewer to ask further questions if considered appropriate. These interviews explored the following areas:

- I. What kinds of services do you receive from the Methodist Mission Northern?
- II. What are the changes that came about in your life as a result of these services?
- III. What kind of services could the Methodist Mission Northern offer you to have a greater difference in your life?

**4.10.2 Interview schedule 2** was shaped with four key questions with space for the interviewer to ask further questions. These interviews explored the following areas:

- I. What is your role as a staff member in the service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern?

- II. In your view how does the service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern impact on the clients?
- III. What approaches to service delivery do you think will have the greatest positive impact on clients?
- IV. Seeking to be a good neighbour what could the Methodist Mission Northern do towards long term sustainability (for the clients to become independent and self supporting) of the clients?

**4.10.3 Interview schedule 3** was prepared with six key questions with space for the interviewer to ask further questions. These interviews explored the following areas:

- I. What impacts do you expect from the existing social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern?
- II. What overall approaches do you think will deliver the greatest positive impact on the clients?
- III. In what ways can the service deliveries impact most effectively towards the long term sustainability (for the clients to become independent and self supporting) of the clients?
- IV. What is your understanding of the concept of good neighbour as it relates to the delivery of the service to the clients through the Methodist Mission Northern?
- V. In what ways can the Methodist Mission Northern be a good neighbour to people in their long term sustainability to become independent and self supporting?
- VI. To reach this goal what steps do you believe need to be taken by the Board of Governors?

## **4.11 The Limitations of the Interviews**

The data collected through the interviews was dependent on what the independent third party interviewer obtained from the key stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern. It is further confined to the independent transcriber's limited understanding of the subject. Though the space was opened for further questions to explore the data provided by the key stakeholders, it was limited to the questions asked by the independent third

party interviewer. With all these limitations pre-acknowledged, the interviews were conducted in Whangarei, Hamilton and Auckland. Conversations were tape recorded and the contents transcribed.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

The researcher has provided the reasons for choosing phenomenology as a methodology for the case study of the Methodist Mission Northern. Phenomenology was chosen as the concept and philosophy of good neighbour as taught in Christianity being the underpinning for the service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern. The data was collected from two sources: interviewing key stakeholders and information from the *Annual Reports* of the Methodist Mission Northern from 1986 to 2006. The next chapter is an analysis of the data to identify the key themes emerging from them.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **MISSION AS GOOD NEIGHBOUR: PRESENT AND FUTURE**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern at present is providing relief to poverty stricken people within its immediate geographical area. The centres that provide these services are operating in Hamilton and in Auckland while the centre in Whangarei deals with emergency housing needs and food parcels to those who approach the service delivery centre. With regard to those who receive the services, a provider-client relationship is in place. It is a hierarchical relationship where the client is dependent on the service deliverer. The service deliverer has the power to decide whether to deliver the service or not while the client has no say in it. It does not operate with client participation in the decision making process of the Methodist Mission Northern. On the other hand the client feels secure within the existing relationship even though it undermines the dignity of the client. It is the poverty and social exclusion of the clients that continues to bring them to the service delivery centres to receive the services.

The issues of poverty and social exclusion of the clients compared to the large number of self-supporting population fundamentally reflect a social justice issue. Poverty and exclusion are unjust be it economic, racial, gender or any other factors that discriminate against people. Therefore the mission of the Methodist Mission Northern as good neighbour must address two aspects of the problem. First, the mission as good neighbour must seek a way to move people from dependency on the services delivered to an independent life of their own. This requires a service delivery model that empowers the service recipients to live an average standard of life independent of receiving social benefit services. Secondly, the Methodist Mission Northern as good neighbour must address the causes of injustice that result in poverty and social exclusion. What needs to be analysed here is

1. What are the key areas of social services delivered by the Methodist Mission Northern?
2. How have the delivery of services addressed the root causes of poverty and social exclusion?
3. What strategies could the Methodist Mission Northern develop to move the organisation from a social welfare approach to a community development paradigm to enable it to more effectively address the root causes of poverty and social exclusion?

## **5.2 Data collected from clients and analysis**

The number of clients proposed to be interviewed in each centre was approximately 10 percent of the total clients. The reason to choose 10 percent of the total clientele is that it is not possible within the time frame for the data collection to interview all the clients as the total number exceeds 100. It is also not possible to get every client to volunteer to participate in the interviews.

Clients over the age of 20 years were invited to participate. The clientele at the service delivery centres does not include anyone under the age of 20 years unless they come as children in family accompanied by their parents. In addition clients under the age of 20 years were excluded as they have other provision in place for the maintenance of social welfare under the Child Youth and Family Services that is not covered in this research. All who volunteered to be interviewed were chosen. All the clients responded were over the age of 20 years. The response rate was: 12 clients from Airedale Community Centre Auckland, 7 clients from Methodist City Action Hamilton and one client from One Double Five Whare Roopu Whangarei.

The clients in the centres of Airedale Community Centre Auckland and Methodist City Action Hamilton come to the centres for meals. One Double Five Whare Roopu Centre in Whangarei does not provide meals as in Auckland and Hamilton. Instead the clients come to the One Double Five Whare Roopu Centre Whangarei for emergency housing needs and for collecting food parcels. When the invitation was extended the clients there did not turn up to be interviewed. The one client who volunteered to be interviewed was

also working as a volunteer in the centre assisting other clients with the service delivery. According to this client other clients were feeling shy and not willing to be interviewed. The data collected through interviews of the clients are listed below in Tables 1 to 4. Photograph 3 is an illustration of the clothes being sorted at the centre to provide for the clients.

**Table 1 – Services Accessed by Clients in the Centres –**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Services Accessed</b>	<b>Number of Clients</b>
<b>Auckland</b>	Food only	3
	Food and Clothes	6
	Shelter	0
	Food, clothes and Shelter	3
	Food parcels	2
	Banking Services	1
	Other service – shower, mail service, court support, social benefit service, furniture, crockery & cutlery	4
<b>Hamilton</b>	Food only	2
	Food and Shelter	3
	Shelter	0
	Food parcels	1
	Budgeting assistance	1
	Learning Computer Skills	2
	Housing issues with HN <sup>7</sup>	1
<b>Whangarei</b>	Emergency Housing	1

<sup>7</sup> HN<sup>7</sup> – Housing New Zealand Corporation



In Table 1 the numbers in column three (number of clients who access services) do not add to the total of 12 or 7 because some of the clients access multiple services from the centres while two clients from Hamilton access only the computer skills lessons.



Photograph 3: Donated clothes are sorted to make available to the clients

Clients who accessed services in Airedale Community Centre in Auckland mentioned the duration of receiving services voluntarily. Clients from Hamilton and Whangarei did not state the duration of accessing services.

The data in tables 1 and 2 indicate that 12 clients from Auckland and 5 clients from Hamilton came to the centres to access food delivery services. In addition, 9 clients from Auckland said they came for clothes as well. Photograph 3 is an illustration of the

sorting of donated clothes to distribute to the clients. A further 3 clients from Auckland and 3 clients from Hamilton said they came for shelter. The only client from Whangarei said he came for emergency housing. It must be noted that the service delivery centres do not offer shelter at Auckland and Hamilton, but liaise with temporary shelter providers like the night shelter or Wesley Hospital on a case by case basis to refer a client to the shelter services. As for the client from Whangarei, it was exclusively for emergency housing, but found the centre was more helpful to assist that person with moving forward in life. Further to these, 4 of the clients in Auckland said they came to get the shower services and washing facilities now available at the Airedale Community Centre, others said they do not use the shower facilities as they live in flats.

**Table 2 – Duration of the Services Accessed**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Length of the receiving of services</b>	<b>Number of Clients</b>
<b>Auckland</b>	0 – 6 months	1
	7 – 12 months	2
	13 – 24 months	1
	More than 24 months	3
	More than 10 years	6
<b>Hamilton</b>	Clients did not state the duration	
<b>Whangarei</b>	Clients did not state the duration	

Other than the above mentioned basic services there were other services that the clients received from the centres. The clients from Auckland mentioned these services: general help with benefit problems, assistance to move from hospital to Wesley Village, the centre helped to keep out of alcohol problems, care provided by the service delivery staff, friendship and fellowship with other clients during the meal times, furniture, crockery and cutlery received for the flat, food parcels received for family, financial assistance received towards Maori studies at degree level, support at court and used the centre as a contact address for mail and banking services.

The clients from Hamilton mentioned these services: Two clients said they learnt computer skills. Two clients said they received emergency housing through the centre as the staff worked with the Housing New Zealand Corporation to get a shelter for them. Other services received by the clients were food parcels for family and budgeting advice and help, and friendly conversations during meal times.

The client from Whangarei said that the centre is more of a whanau environment where that person can feel at home with the staff and other clients.

With regard to the duration of their receiving the services at Auckland it varied from six months the lowest to 20 years or more the highest with one person saying many years. Clients at Hamilton and Whangarei did not state the duration they have been receiving services. The interviewer has not raised this as a sub question with the clients of these two centres.

The duration of accessing the services at the Airedale Community Centre in Auckland and the kinds of services accessed show a long term dependency of the clients on the services delivered. As one client said, one could become lazy to do anything else in life because these services were freely available. This statement raises an issue of whether the services provided have become an obstruction to empowerment of the clients.

The services delivered by the Methodist Mission Northern as a good neighbour are more a model of welfare. My contention with regard to the welfare model in this instance is that (a) it does not empower the clients towards self-supporting community development, and (b) it does not address the root causes of poverty that lead people to opt for welfare services. This model has created a dependency on the Methodist Mission Northern. In that sense the fundamental questions that need to be asked were:

- (a) Were the services delivered towards the well being of the clients?
- (b) Were the services delivered for the service deliverer to feel good in terms of his or her love for the neighbour?

- (c) Were the services delivered to maintain a welfare model service delivery centre so that it could help the institution towards its existence?

It is basically a question of who has benefitted from these services. The concept of good neighbour that underpins the service delivery must seek the total well-being of the client. The Christian commandment of love your neighbour has to ensure that the client is assisted to live an independent life in his or her capacity. Well-being would be the experience of a good quality life [Chambers, 1997, p. 9]. A good quality life is for a person to live with food, clothes, shelter, health and security. These are basic human needs. Love M. Chile describes this:

It is an intrinsic part of human experience manifest meeting basic human needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and a basic income. Holistic well-being extends beyond these basic needs to include security and freedom from fear, the experience of fun, love, good relations with other people, and a network of friendships. It also relates to having peace of mind, adequate information and resources to make informed choices, and to be an active and effective member of one's community [Chile, 2004, p. 26].

Mission as good neighbour must ensure all these aspects for the clients who receive services. The clients who received services for more than 20 years have continued with receiving the services delivered but have not been ensured well-being. These clients are socially excluded as they are looked upon as a drain on the resources and a burden on the taxpayer. Compared to an average citizen who has most of the basic human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health and security, these clients have only food and clothing, with a few of them having shelter. Others are homeless people who roam the streets during the day and sleep along the streets of the city by night. Though some of them claim they are happy with the services and they enjoy meeting their friends during the meal times in the service delivery centres, they lack peace of mind with resources to make informed choices. This aspect is explicit in the behaviour of some of these clients and in the law enforcing officers tracking them down for offences they have committed. I make this point as a member of the Board of Governors who receives reports on these issues. One client mentioning the service of assistance at the courts highlights the discrepancies in their well-being. The clients alone cannot be blamed for this

discrepancy. So it becomes imperative for the Methodist Mission Northern to reconsider the adequacy of the services delivered to these clients. The search for a relevant social policy framework for the Methodist Mission Northern shows that it becomes even more important to be the good neighbour.

The data collected from the clients makes it clear that they have benefitted in many ways in meeting their day to day needs, but there were no projects to get the clients out of their dependency on the services. The well-being of these clients was not in the focus of the good neighbour mission. Beside the benefits for the clients, the data portrayed that the clients were prepared to be empowered towards their well-being. Even the one who said he had become lazy to look for jobs expressed that he was willing to go back to his former job of a painter. However, there were no adequate projects or programmes available for the clients to move in the direction of well-being. In this context it becomes imperative for the Methodist Mission Northern to reframe its policy toward a relevant mission as good neighbour in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The data in Table 3 shows that responses varied according to each individual. The clients from Auckland said: a place to meet and chat, a place where one could do some voluntary work, the services kept the person out of trouble, helped to stay off drugs, get healthy food, changed the self appearance, got a flat through the help of the Airedale Community Centre, helped paying bills and rents, helped to think of tomorrow, better relationships with present staff, shower and clothes helped to look better, more coherent with life and receive nourishment through food, helped with banking services to open bank accounts, got the facility of living in a house, and life more settled and became lazy. One client said that when the marriage split for this person nobody cared except the people at the Airedale Community Centre and the relationship that developed with the staff after that assisted him to get over the problem.

The clients from Hamilton said: learnt computer skills, gained advanced knowledge of computers, looking positively into the future, helped the person to stand on his or her own feet, counselling and advice helped, a space and opportunity for social interaction.

**Table 3 – The changes that came about in the lives of the clients due to accessing services from the Methodist Mission Northern**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Changes in the lives of the Clients</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Auckland</b>	A place to meet friends have chats	2
	A place for voluntary work	2
	Services keep the person out of troubles <sup>8</sup>	1
	Helped to stay off alcohol and drugs prohibited by Law	2
	Healthy food helped healthy living	4
	Changed self appearance – clean looking through shower and clean clothes	3
	Got a flat to live	2
	Helped paying bills and rents	2
	Built relationships with the staff	4
	Received help to open bank accounts	1
	Got into a more settled life and became lazy	1
	Helped to look into the future positively	1
	Living without a social benefit with services from the Airedale Community Centre	1
	Do not expect changes, like to continue as usual	1
	No changes, only the food	1
<b>Hamilton</b>	Learnt computer skills	2
	Gained advanced knowledge of computers	1
	Helped me to stand on my own	1
	Looking positively into the future	1
	Counselling and advice helped	1
	A space and opportunity for social interaction	2
	No changes, happy with the existing services	1
<b>Whangarei</b>	Prevented suicide and got away from addiction to marijuana	1

<sup>8</sup> What the clients meant by this was that they did not get into punishable offences for the police to deal with them.

The client from Whangarei said: before coming to the centre that person contemplated suicide as there was no other way to live, addicted to marijuana. Now the centre has given a sense of knowing 'who I am' and 'how I can be of help to others.'

Table 4 shows the responses to the question of what services could the Methodist Mission Northern provide to have greater difference in the life of the clients. One client in Auckland said that the Methodist Mission Northern could offer things like barbeque, holiday programmes, picnic in parks, a sports day, get together, day trips and fishing, other kind of leisure activities. Another client said: happy with what is offered now and nothing more. These two clients are clear examples of looking forward to continue to be dependent on the existing services. They do not look for any greater changes. And a third client said: happy with the way the Methodist Mission Northern operates, but get the young ones into work. A fourth client said accommodation for single males where he could meet with children when they visit their fathers on the streets as they can't afford to rent a flat or a motel for the visitor. Other clients mentioned in general the following: nursing service, instruction into health and hygiene, budgeting service, banking service and advocacy. These clients were more interested in maintaining what exists for their benefit rather than to be empowered for a better life. These ones fall into the category of the long term dependents.

There were four clients who said that services such as educational programmes like at high school, skills training, providing access to jobs and help with moving on in life would make greater changes in their lives. Two of these clients said that the Methodist Mission Northern must get the young ones into skills training and get them to work. One of them said a rehabilitation centre to rehabilitate people to help them move towards work. These clients are examples of being prepared to be empowered for a better life but in reality did not have the opportunity.

Among the clients in Hamilton three of them said: provide driving school for driving lessons, advocacy to get help from available resources of the government departments, help to find jobs, train for jobs, help making their resumes, and vocational training for young ones. Apart from these, another two of the clients in Hamilton said: find

affordable housing and flatting arrangements. One of the clients said to help people who abuse solvents, alcohol and drugs to get them out of danger.

**Table 4 – What kind of services could the Methodist Mission Northern offer towards a greater difference in the client’s life?**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Kinds of Services that could have a greater difference in their lives</b>	<b>Number of clients</b>
<b>Auckland</b>	Barbeque, holiday programmes, picnics, sports day, get together and fishing	1
	Courses through University	1
	Training in work skills	2
	High school like education to move people	1
	Health care, services of a nurse, training in hygienic living	3
	A safe place to sit and relax, a place of refuge	2
	Budgeting and banking services	1
	Provide access to jobs	1
	Rehabilitation centre to be relieved from addictions	1
	Teach the younger clients skills	2
<b>Hamilton</b>	Driving school for driving lessons	1
	Advocacy to get help from available resources, government departments	1
	Affordable housing	1
	Education	1
	Access to jobs	1
	Rehabilitation of solvent abusers, alcohol and drug addicts	1
	Vocational training for young school leavers	1
	Training in job skills	1
<b>Whangarei</b>	Emergency housing	1



One of the clients said that one is happy with the kind of services offered as that one is waiting to undergo surgery due to an existing neurological condition.

The client from Whangarei said that the Methodist Mission Northern must try to find more emergency accommodation as that is an immediate need in Whangarei.

These responses from the clients range from maintaining the existing status quo to a model of empowerment for better life. The Methodist Mission Northern to be a good neighbour in its service delivery must look into the possibilities of ensuring the well being of the clients as described by Chile [Chile, 2004, p. 26]. That requires the Methodist Mission Northern to move from the existing model of providing services of meeting the day to day needs to offering training in skills and organising opportunities for jobs.

### **5.3 Data Collected from the service delivery staff**

The services delivery staff of the Methodist Mission Northern were interviewed because of their knowledge in the services delivered and their interaction with the clients on a daily basis. The staff were aware of the impact of the services delivered in the lives of the clients. All the service delivery staff of the three centres were invited to participate in the interviews. The response rate was 99 percent.

#### **5.3.1 The role of the staff member in service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern**

In the Airedale Community Centre Auckland out of the three staff, the service manager and the operations supervisor volunteered to be interviewed. The third, who is a chef declined. The service manager was in charge of operations of the service delivery centre. The operations supervisor was coordinating with the clients and looking into their day to day needs in providing the services of food and clothing delivery and responding to the requests for food parcels as and when the requests were made. Photographs 3 and 4 illustrate the preparation of food parcels and storage for distribution. Apart from the three staff members some clients were assisting as volunteers with the services delivery. Those volunteers were interviewed as clients.

Among the staff members in Methodist City Action Hamilton, the director of the centre has the role of strategic planning, overseeing the operations, human resources management, and linking with the night shelter trust and the food bank trust. The director also represents the Methodist City Action in the governance of these two services. In addition the director liaised with the University of Waikato, Buddhist Organisations, a Korean Christian organisation and the Maori mental health organisation. The director was involved with all these organisations to get their support towards the service delivery. The Buddhist and Korean organisations came to the Methodist City Action Centre regularly to provide food for the clients.

The community development coordinator's role was to get to know the beneficiaries to learn from them what they want as service delivery from the centre, and to facilitate projects under which the client would move forward. It involves networking with other organisations to refer people and to avoid duplication of the service by different organisations to the same client. The coordinator of the night shelter plays the role of taking care of the night shelter and its function, report to the trustees, supporting the volunteers and advocacy work with Work and Income New Zealand, Housing New Zealand Corporation, foodbank, and the Salvation Army.

The clients' coordinator's role was to make contact with the clients who come for meals and other services delivered to maintain a database, coordinate with the volunteers, and refer clients to other organisations where resources are available for their needs, and to administer the place. The clients' coordinator refers the clients to available services such as Work and Income New Zealand, Housing New Zealand Corporation and Maori Health services to get available resources to support the client. The computer tutor runs the computer education programme, administers the computers of the centre and operates as the health and safety officer.

The aerobics instructor has the role of facilitating healthy lifestyles and to provide dietary advice, organises 'move to music' programmes and physical exercises for the clients. The staff of the Methodist City Action Hamilton were working in similar roles to

deliver the services to the clients in their needs. However, most of these services except the computer education and aerobics programme were palliative measures to meet the immediate needs of the client rather than empowering the clients for their long term independent sustainability. The computer education programme was provided with the objective of helping the clients to learn more advanced skills in order to get better jobs. The aerobics instructor was looking into the clients' health and healthy food aspects.

Among the staff in One Double Five Whare Roopu in Whangarei: the coordinator of the centre manages the staff of the centre, facilitates community projects, provide counselling, advocacy work with government organisations and social work. The two staff members of the emergency housing trust play the roles of administrators of the centre, documenting, interviewing clients, inducting clients into emergency housing, networking with partner organisations and manage the house managers who run the emergency shelters. The technician fixes computers and facilitates the community in producing television programmes for the television station run by the One Double Five Whare Roopu. The television station was started as an attempt to create awareness among the clients and the general public in terms of healthy living and advices to go for help when needed.

The diverse role of the staff in each of the service delivery centres of the Methodist Mission Northern show the complexity of the issues and how local the issues are according to the location. The commonality is the provision of food, clothing and shelter as the basic human needs in these centres.



Photograph 4: Packets and canned food on shelves to go in food- parcels



Photograph 5: Staff preparing the food-parcels for distribution to the clients

### **5.3.2 The staff's view of the impacts on the clients due to the services delivered by the Methodist Mission Northern**

Both staff members from Airedale Community Centre Auckland said: this is the critical element of service delivery. At one level meeting the client's basic needs of everyday living and at another level they have fellowship and can communicate with each other. The provision of food, clothing and a shower makes them have a better day. They also receive support through the court worker. The court worker stays with the clients as a support person when they face charges in the court and have their cases heard. The staff very clearly stated that the significant impact is the development of relationships. From the staff point of view it was a significant impact as they were looking at the service delivery as social service to help the clients. However, the staff have not realised that the way the services were delivered resulted in a long term dependency on the services. The clients build relationships among them as well as the centre, particularly with the staff. For the staff it was more a community rather than a place of dependency.

According to the two staff at the Airedale Community Centre, the impact is that the clients are fed and clothed. These two staff were of the view that this is the best the Methodist Mission Northern could offer. Their view indicates an expression of maintaining the centre in its existing state. The soup kitchen model of handouts to the clients was the model that the staff thought as the best model. The community that meets together and the building of fellowship among the clients were positive impacts from the clients' and the staff point of view. Yet they were a community of dependents; they depend on the services delivered by the Methodist Mission Northern. While staff got personal satisfaction from their work with clients, there were still issues as to how "the soup kitchen" approach had life-transforming impacts. The concept and philosophy of being good neighbour has not had an impact on the clients to the extent of building a better standard of life.

Staff members from One Double Five Whare Roopu Whangarei gave their responses: the impact is only temporary relief, provides a safe place, listening to their stories help them to relax, welcome the clients, the doors open for them, the confidence people have

that Whangarei Emergency Housing would do something for them. The impact of these services stated by staffs were that the emergency housing prevent the clients from ending up on streets, they get budgeting advice while in the temporary housing, counselling and then they get referred to other organisations like Work and Income New Zealand and Housing New Zealand Corporation. The television technician said that the promotion of the film industry in the area provides opportunities for youth to get creative pathways by learning film and video making skills. Through the films and video messages to promote anti gambling, good money making and healthy eating were delivered. It also provides opportunities to bring out the talents of the cultural groups, encourages people to produce programmes in Te Reo and in other languages and creates an outlet for local products.

The staff at the Whangarei Centre were aware of the temporary services they provide but they work towards independent long term sustainability of the clients by providing them with the skills, knowledge and referrals to sustain them in independent living. The programmes locally produced target specific problems in the area and help create awareness in among the general public. The key areas have been educating people against gambling, giving skills in good money making and healthy eating. These services were assisting the clients in their sustainability. However, the services contribute only on a small scale as the need in the area is much higher. Methodist Mission Northern in its mission as good neighbour must look into the ways of expanding the services to serve a wider community. That would ensure the well being of the clients.

Staff from Methodist City Action Hamilton said that the services delivered met the immediate needs such as meals, food parcels, and temporary shelter. In addition clients were directed toward using their abilities and talents and they were given budgeting advice. Referrals to other organisations like Work and Income New Zealand and Housing New Zealand Corporation, were directed toward specific agencies that deal with the kind of problem the clients have. In addition to these services delivered, clients learn computer skills. The intellectually disabled came for computer lessons. This was a special service the Methodist City Action in Hamilton delivers to assist the intellectually

disabled who seek a way to be empowered. The staffs coordinate with the District Health Board to help intellectually disabled clients receive benefits available for them. Besides computer skills clients also enhance their skills toward their work to get better jobs and also learn team skills. The night shelter provides temporary relief, a place to stay warm and dry as well as a place of restoration. The clients were helped to achieve their goals, no matter what their pasts were, they were encouraged to be inclusive, to be part of a community, enhance their abilities in the midst of their intellectual disabilities and they were helped to move towards independent living. People also join and exercise through the 'move to music' which gives them better health, people make new friends and build up new relationships, one person gave up smoking through this healthy living programme and clients get guided into a healthy lifestyle.

The services delivered at the Methodist City Action Hamilton result in positive outcomes for the clients. Mission as good neighbour in the context of Hamilton identified the local needs and developed the delivery of services to empower the clients towards their independent sustainability. The Methodist Mission Northern must take into account these positive moves in framing a relevant social policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **5.3.3 The approaches to service delivery that will have the greatest positive impact on clients**

The staff at Airedale Community Centre Auckland said: nursing services, budgeting services, support for the socially excluded due to mental health issues, a place where people can be detoxified, a place where people with dual diagnosis like alcohol and drug addiction issues can get help to come out of it (as there is assistance available for people with mono diagnoses), a place where people could feel safe to talk about their addiction problems, literacy skills teaching, training for youth, and running of at risk youth camps.

The staff from One Double Five Whare Roopu said: long term financial support to promote the television station, help for the local producers of programmes, and running of the industry of the television station, getting people into budgeting services, providing a temporary shelter and extending the duration of stay from 6 weeks to 3 months, having a counsellor, provide housing for people on waiting lists, provide a setting change so

that people will not return to the same situation, help people to take control of their lives, breaking the cycles of poverty and violence. Long term follow-up is needed to ensure that repetition of the past is avoided along with the taking of preventative measures to avoid the next generation going through the same plight. Being with the clients out there where they live is crucial to ensure that things are working well along with the provision of a restoration process. Teaching skills to live in a house, paying bills, paying rent – all these are part of budgeting, providing skills training, literacy skills and employment opportunities. For all these to happen the fundamental need is a roof over their heads; otherwise no other programme will work for these people.

Staff members of Methodist City Action Hamilton said: looking at things from a strength based perspective, to put cycles of hope in place with a focus on community development would have the greatest impact on the clients. They further stated to move away from the charity model, will provide an opportunity for people to give back rather than only receive, conversations as to how the lives of the clients could be made richer, explore the possibilities for the clients to become participants, educational opportunities and workshops, telephone services and internet services in addition to meals and mental health programmes. A social worker to work alongside the service delivery would help clients more effectively. In addition to the night shelter, a day shelter to provide education, advocacy, skills training, and life skills and community support. A Methodist Computer Education programme open for all ages that would help people to learn to use computers.

The staff of the service delivery centres stated many approaches that would have greater impact on clients. By analysing the data provided by the staff and the clients a few common areas become explicit. I find that the common approach identified by the clients and the staff were educational programmes and training in work skills that would empower the clients. In addition to the existing computer training programmes, the clients look for driver training and driving lessons. Just as a night shelter provides accommodation a day shelter would provide these educational programmes that help the clients. The data presented by the staff and the clients highlight the fact that there were



clients who wanted to get into better ways of life by upskilling themselves while a few clients do not want any changes to the existing soup kitchen model of service delivery. It is imperative that the Methodist Mission Northern moves towards a social policy framework that serves the clients to empower them for greater impact in their lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My assessment is that the 18<sup>th</sup> century charity model is not relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to provide services as a Good Neighbour.

Further to these programmes that would empower the clients it becomes clearer that the programmes need to be established according to the location. The needs of the clients in each of the service delivery centres are different as stated by the clients and supported by data from the staff. Whangarei clients have a shortage of affordable housing and a greater need for emergency housing. One Double Five Whare Roopu is also looking at an awareness programme to educate the general public to address the issue of gambling and addiction to alcohol and drugs. Methodist City Action Hamilton looks at getting existing government services to assist the clients. Airedale Community Centre needs to look at introducing skills training for its clients who are dependent on the services provided. The need for localised empowerment programmes in each location require Methodist Mission Northern to look for being Good Neighbour that ensures clients' well being rather than meeting the day to day basic needs.

#### **5.3.4 Seeking to be Good Neighbour: the services the Methodist Mission Northern could provide toward the clients to be independent**

The response from the staff of Airedale Community Centre in Auckland was to provide a place for the people with dual diagnosis to get rehabilitated and to have follow-up programmes that would ensure that the clients do not fall back into their addictions. During the interviews one of the staff at Auckland mentioned that there are facilities available to assist mono diagnosis such as gambling problems, alcohol problems or drug addiction problems but no facilities for those dual or multiple diagnosis people who are affected by more than one of these problems. The Methodist Mission Northern will have to explore whether to provide this service or to raise the subject with the district health boards and other state services that deal with these problems to find a way to assist the dual diagnosis or multiple diagnosis clients. The Methodist Mission Northern could be a

good neighbour by working with government agencies to make available the services to the clients.

Being Good Neighbour in Whangarei would mean addressing the issue of affordable housing. Staff at the Whangarei centre mentioned that the shortage of houses in Whangarei is the major problem that they have to address. They said that there are over 600 applicants on the waiting list for state housing. This again requires Methodist Mission Northern to work with local government, national government, Work and Income New Zealand and Housing New Zealand Corporation to explore ways of providing affordable housing for the clients.

Among the staff at Methodist City Action Hamilton, one member who is a Buddhist said that the concept of good neighbour does not mean anything. This member was not aware of the Christian teaching of Good Neighbour. However, as a Buddhist the particular staff believed that the people in need must be helped in whatever possible way. Other staff at the Hamilton centre stated that for the Methodist Mission Northern to be a Good Neighbour would mean to be a voice for the voiceless and get involved in advocacy programmes with an inclusive inter-agency approach to community development in Hamilton. Networking with government agencies, business enterprises and not-for-profit organisations become essential in the mission of being a Good Neighbour to be alongside the poor people.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

The responses from the staff in each of the locations highlight the need for localised community development programmes. The responses from the clients brings out the fact that some of them were willing to be empowered but adequate services are either not available or even if they are available outside the Methodist Mission Northern's services these people cannot afford to get the training in the skills they look for. Methodist Mission Northern seeking to be Good Neighbour would mean playing an empowering role in organising localised programmes in the areas toward the well being of the clients. Responses from the clients as well as the staff portray the need for a fresh social policy

framework to serve the people as Good Neighbour. This data underscores the need to move from the charity model to a community development model.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **MISSION AS GOOD NEIGHBOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE METHODIST MISSION NORTHERN**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern at present and the steps the Board of Governors have to take toward framing the social service policy of the Methodist Mission Northern in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **6.2 Data collected through interviews of the Board of Governors of the Methodist Mission Northern**

During the process of the interviews Methodist Mission Northern was moving towards reorganising the service delivery at the Airedale Community Centre in Auckland. Hence the responses from the Board of Governors reflect these changes. The response rate was 90 per cent. No one was excluded, except for the researcher himself. Nine members were approached with eight members being interviewed. One member who volunteered to be interviewed was hospitalised and subsequently passed away. The interviews were conducted by an independent third party interviewer with the interview schedule prepared to explore six key areas with the Board of Governors.

##### **6.2.1 Impacts expected from existing social policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern**

The Board of Governors responded with the existing policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern; that is the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa's social service policy as declared in the document named 'Cycles of Hope'.

This document states:

We continue to affirm and commend the journey from ka mate (death in the midst of life) to ka ora (life in the midst of death). We reaffirm the commitment required.

We are all encouraged to recognise we live in a changing, damaged and fragile world to seek innovative solutions to respond to immediate need to enable people to achieve their own goals to

strengthen children and adults of all ages to build better neighbourhood to move from “charity” to transformation Acknowledging these challenges we, the people of Te Hahi Weteriana O Aotearoa, declare again that there is an alternative way: to organise society as a neighbourhood, where we belong to each other, rather than compete against each other. Our recommitment to Breaking the Cycle is a commitment to Cycles of Hope. It is a calling to listen and respond in humility to the stories of the people, tangatawhenua and tauwi; to support individuals, tamariki and whanau to reach their goals and build true neighbourhood [WesleyComAotearoa, 2007].

The above mentioned document explains the existing social service policy of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa. Methodist Mission Northern operates within this policy framework. The other regional social services within the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa such as Wesley Community Action Wellington, Christchurch Methodist Mission, Methodist Connect Dunedin and Methodist Social Service Centre Palmerston North operate also within this policy document.

In responding to the interview schedule one member of the Board of Governors stated:

“The immediate effect of the existing practice is people come to the Airedale Community Centre to receive services. The needy people were provided with food and clothing. Their immediate needs were met but the ultimate effects depend on the government policies. Service Delivery has to be relevant according to the changing circumstances. Therefore the service delivery has got to change. There seems very little benefit in the mission trying to maintain its status quo. The recent research and its outcome point toward ‘no more hand outs but hands up’ kind of service.”

Instead of dependency on the services delivered, an attempt was made to show a way forward for the clients.

“While meeting the day to day needs of the needy people if the kinds of services that empower them towards their development were delivered some of the people would take advantage of them and come up in their lives. That would be creating ‘cycles of hope’ as stated in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa’s social service policy. Together with providing meals, the attempt would be to restore the dignity of the person. It would help the persons to feel worth to get motivated so

that they would have a pride in themselves. Train the clients in appropriate skills tailor-made to suit the individual.”

The existing social policy as stated in the ‘Cycles of Hope’ provides a framework for the effectiveness of the services delivered and gives directions for further developments. The same Board member mentioned that there must be programmes to train the clients in skills that suit the client. This comment emphasises the need to organise training in many work areas as the preference of profession differs from client to client.

Besides the service delivery at the Airedale Community Centre Auckland, another kind of service is delivered to children under the age of 16 years through the West Auckland Family Services. As a Board member described this service:

“This is a government-funded contract run by the Methodist Mission Northern. The younger ones who are victims of family violence or divided families are referred for care in this centre often through no faults of theirs. The West Auckland Family Services provide a positive contribution that helps these victims by caring for them under contracted care givers of the centre.”

This service has an impact on these young children. It responds appropriately to the immediate needs of the victimised children. This service serves the community in this capacity; but it is not a service confined to the concept of Good Neighbour. It is a service provided by the Methodist Mission Northern for which the government pays. On the one hand it is different from being Good Neighbour because the Mission is fulfilling a paid contract. On the other hand, the question is who else is there to undertake this job. An argument could be that the Child Youth and Family Services could provide this service. If that is so, then why is it the children are sent to the West Auckland Family Services to provide care. Even though it is a paid contract, the service is caring for the victimised children. Therefore it becomes a service as Good Neighbour.

In responding to the expected impact of the existing policies all members of the Board of Governors made reference to the ‘Cycles of Hope’. They stated that the Cycles of Hope cover a whole raft of areas. They were aware that the policies that relate to the delivery of government contracts require a compliance with the terms of contracts. However, the contracted service could be viewed as a Good Neighbour service as it serves the

immediate needs of the victims referred by the government officers. The other area is the work among the homeless and the poor at the Airedale Community Centre. This service is the major component of the Methodist Mission Northern. It is not only feeding and clothing these people but also addressing the question of why they are in this situation and what more could be done to help these clients to obtain a better way of life.

Compared to providing the day to day needs of the clients, the Mission as Good Neighbour would be more relevant if the Methodist Mission Northern could address the root causes of poverty that have led these clients to receive services. That does not mean stopping the services of feeding and clothing. They are imperative services to care for the needy people; but more must be done to address the root causes.

#### **6.2.2 Overall approaches that will deliver greatest positive impact on the clients**

The following responses from the Board of Governors demonstrate a variety of responses to the issue of what form of service would deliver the greatest impact:

“Research at sufficient depth to find out what really drives people to be beneficiaries is an approach that would make the greatest positive impact. Providing a basic service is not sufficient. Together with meeting the immediate needs of the person we must think ahead of looking into the future of that person. By using strength based model Methodist Mission Northern can offer something in excess of the expectation. Asking the right question and guiding the client into motivation would have greater impact. Doing a kind of ‘market research’ to find out what is really needed and is not there will be very helpful. Provide the clients with life skills and choices so that they could become independent persons who support themselves through steady income for living. By becoming an organisation that has developed knowledge over the years with regard to the social service delivery, having the information, statistics and the data, and operate by avoiding duplication, networking and developing relationships with other agencies will have greater positive impact.”

The above responses from the Board of Governors emphasise intervention of a multi directional nature. They point to the need for ongoing research around the issue of social services delivery. The need for Methodist Mission Northern to develop a database with information about clients and statistics is highlighted. There has to be individual

assessment for the Methodist Mission Northern to consider what it is going to focus on in its mission as Good Neighbour to each of its clients.

In terms of the services at the Airedale Community Centre the members of the Board of Governors believe that the responsibility is to ensure that the Methodist Mission Northern welcomes people to be part of a caring community. On the one hand it would mean for the Methodist Mission Northern to be a community that cares for the needy people. On the other hand, it would be creating a community of needy people in which they care for each other.

In addition a Board member said: “the Airedale Community Centre is a community of transitions. The community is to provide transition so that the clients can live in dignity rather than be dependent on the services delivered.” In its attempt to be Good Neighbour it is important for the Methodist Mission Northern to constantly renew its policies on mission, services and activities, and evaluate them periodically in order to achieve the objective of a community development model. “It is an evaluation of,” as one Board member put it, “whether we are creating a dependency with the people that are more about survival than what is better for them.”

Another of the Board members said: “Increasingly we are sharpening our focus to say that the mission service is not about the growth of the mission but the empowerment of those we call clients”. This is a precise way to have a greater impact on the clients. It is not only the giving of handouts but also engaging people to think about where they would go, to assist them to make life changing decisions and to help them to have goals and purpose in their lives. One response from a Board member was “Further to these (the services delivered), influencing the local and national government policies which will have greater impacts on clients.” These aspects become absolutely important for the Methodist Mission Northern to be a Good Neighbour in caring for the needy people who come to the service delivery centre. These aspects expose further that the mission as Good Neighbour must serve not the growth of the institution and increasing the number of clients, but the wellbeing of the clients. In the long term, if all the clients get empowered to look after themselves, and if preventative measures are taken to stop



people from falling into the poverty trap, there will not be a need for social service agencies. But the social, economic and political system in operation provides little to that effect. In reality, to achieve this goal a global poverty alleviation programme will be of the essence. However, Methodist Mission Northern could work towards reducing the number of clients falling into situations of poverty. For this to happen it is important to have networking and collaboration among all the social service delivery agencies and relevant government agencies.

Another member of the Board of Governors commented that

“Research will give more information about the areas of work the Methodist Mission Northern must get involved with. This research will point to the ways of having greater impact on clients. The assistance to families breaking down owing to violence is an area that needs further development. Early intervention into families would pick this up before it spills over into families falling apart. There is so much work done for the adults, rough sleepers, elderly people and people with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. If the focus on the younger group is increased, many things could be prevented before they happen.”

The above response from the Board member highlights the need for prevention rather than simply meeting the immediate needs of clients. Mission as Good Neighbour is not only caring for the victims but also ensuring no more victimising that drives people on to the streets to become recipient of social services.

One other comment by a Board member was “to ensure that financial support for the Methodist Mission Northern continues to be strong for the future so that the mission could continue to have greater impacts on its clients.” In this comment it is envisaged that the need to deliver services will continue. Therefore financial provision needs to be in place for the services to continue.

As I have understood the members of the Board of Governors come from professions of financial and business management, law and religious organisations and churches. Their responses vary and they are vital for the mission as Good Neighbour. Analysing the responses from the Board of Governors I conclude this area of inquiry noting the following as themes that emerged for consideration:

1. Policy at Board of Governors level.
  2. Practice of the policy at staff level.
  3. Empowerment at the clients level.
  4. Networking and collaboration with other agencies and local and central governments.
- In the next section the question of how these can be achieved is further explored.

### **6.2.3 Ways in which the delivery of services impacts most effectively towards the independency and sustainability of the clients**

A Board member responded:

“Recent research conducted by the Methodist Mission Northern has highlighted that we go into long term sustainability in stages. It also involves working with other agencies. The research also points out that rather than going over to receive twelve kinds of services in twelve different places we should consolidate the services in one structure. All this time we have been helping those in need. Now we are moving into other aspects. These people who receive services have so much to offer.”

This response by the Board member opens up the possibility of the clients to offer their abilities and talents towards their own independence and self-supporting sustainability. The need for networking with other agencies is highlighted once again.

Another response of a Board member was:

“When the clients are taught some skills for life and they are able to use them confidently the Methodist Mission Northern will not have to be in the scene. It is working smarter in this new era. It does not mean that the way the Methodist Mission Northern started its mission is not relevant, but times have changed and that requires a new approach to the mission.”

This comment while acknowledging the origins and objectives of the institution, points to clients achieving their own independence. It also states the need for change in the approaches of the Methodist Mission Northern.

A further response notes:

“It is also important for the Methodist Mission Northern to know why they (clients) get into the situation they are in. That knowledge will assist the Methodist Mission Northern in making

its social policies. Further, there has to be a process in place for long term sustainability (from dependence to independence) of the client; and also a regular review of the progress the client makes. A support group, peer support or others who have gone through the process must be made available to support the person towards long term sustainability.”

This comment shows that there has to be ongoing research into why people fall into the situation they are in. It also talks about the need to empower clients.

Another Board member responded:

“The most effective way would be not how we can make this client accept the services we offer, but actually how quickly we could encourage the client to see that we are helping the clients to help themselves. That would ensure the Methodist Mission Northern respond to a changing clientele rather than locking itself in caring for the existing clientele. That would require the Methodist Mission Northern to be well informed, knowledge based, educated, research based and going forward. It has to be ‘knowing and delivering’ the services that would empower the people so that they would not come back to the centre. It is important for the Methodist Mission Northern to link with other agencies to provide that long term sustainability. That must include the Auckland University of Technology to provide training and education to the clients. That kind of an enhanced service would make the Airedale Community Centre to be one of the variety of services in the area rather than a hub of the homeless.”

These comments further highlight the need of empowerment in terms of skills training and educational programmes for the clients. Mission as good neighbour must include empowering the clients. That will ensure that they will not get locked in an underclass state but rather move towards a self-supporting lifestyle.

#### **6.2.4 The understanding of the concept of Good Neighbour by Board Members as it relates to the delivery of services to clients**

One member of the Board said “Basically love your neighbour as yourself is what Christianity teaches us. Look at the parable of the Good Samaritan. That is the concept that applies to those people who come to receive the services from the Methodist Mission Northern.” This comment shows that the board member’s understanding is that the delivery of services in the way the Methodist Mission Northern delivers now is the

best practice of the concept of Good Neighbour. It does not point toward the empowerment of the clients but rather tends to maintain the charity model of services as it is carried out at present. These comments portray that the traditional 'soup kitchen' model of delivery of services is the ideal one in practising one's religion as taught by the concept of Good Neighbour. It is a philosophy that the deliverer of the services must always have clients so that the deliverer of the services could continue to be a Good Neighbour. If the clientele is removed then there will not be an opportunity to be the Good Neighbour. This philosophy is not the implication of the concept of Good Neighbour. It is not only meeting the daily needs of the person who comes for the services but also ensuring the total wellbeing of the person. Mission as Good Neighbour must empower the clients to move towards a state of independence. Methodist Mission Northern must look for a service delivery that will lead people from where they are to an independent self supporting state.

The Board member stated further:

"It is journeying along without a question. That is fundamental, providing an ear to listen to their problem and help them resolve their issues rather than telling them how to resolve their problems. It is going out to the community where the people are rather than getting the people to come to our centre. It also involves building relationships with people of other faiths in the community. Accommodating people of other faiths may be a hard one for the church; but it is part of being a Good Neighbour in the community."

These comments broaden the concept of Good Neighbour in terms of listening to the clients and assisting them to resolve their problems, rather than telling them what to do. This positive approach of the Board member points to an empowerment model of being Good Neighbour. That will ensure the wellbeing of the client whilst meeting his or her day to day needs. It also looks further into accommodating people of different faiths and beliefs. It would be working together with diverse people with a common goal of caring as Good Neighbours.

In responding to the understanding of Good Neighbour another Board member said:

“In the past we thought being a Good Neighbour was to hand out things for the needy. I think our concept of Good Neighbour is changing. We are standing alongside the people, standing in their shoes, understanding their needs—that is more being a Good Neighbour.”

This comment portrays a position of interdependence. While the Methodist Mission Northern provides social services to its clients, there is also an ongoing process of the Mission continuing to extend an understanding of what Good Neighbour means, towards that state and nature of interdependency. This understanding is further elaborated in the next comment:

“The concept of Good Neighbour comes to doing to others as you would expect them to do to you. I do not mean exactly the same as my needs are different from theirs; but it is taking cognisance of who they are as people and what their needs are. It is to consider people on an individual basis and to work with that person as to what is good for that one.”

A fourth member of the Board of Governors said,

“Methodist Mission Northern can easily forget about being a Good Neighbour by saying it is a large social service organisation with over 300 employees and a 12 million dollar annual budget. Therefore it takes on not the concept of Good Neighbour but the concept of big brother and that is always a trap. Methodist Mission Northern has to constantly remind itself that Good Neighbour is very much about the level we are, making no assumptions with whoever we are working with, they are the most important people in the world.”

“That is the beginning of neighbourliness. It is recognising the neighbour and that the neighbour matters. That is to say that they are people; they have an identity, a culture, a value system; they have opinions. We have to work with that and we have to constantly remind ourselves of that. So what good neighbourliness means is actually ensuring that our engagement is not one of hand downs and hand outs. It is actually about helping people to live with dignity with us and near us because we are with them in their need as the good neighbour.”

These comments show that the particular Board member understands what it means to be a Good Neighbour in serving the clients in terms of interdependence rather than a big brother supporting a needy people. The member also raises the issue of whether the Methodist Mission Northern is just a large social service organisation or whether it is delivering services as a Good Neighbour. Methodist Mission Northern must look to

being both in its mission as Good Neighbour. That is while providing for the needs of the clients it must carry on its role as social service organisation. My emphasis would be while maintaining the paid contracts of the Methodist Mission Northern, it is important for the service delivery to engage in an empowerment agenda for the clients.

The above comments of the Board members agree on the need to look afresh at the concept of Good Neighbour in terms of understanding who the clients are and their needs on an individual basis. They agree on a model to empower the clients. These comments pave the way for future social policy changes in the Methodist Mission Northern.

Other comments by the Board members further elaborate their understanding of the concept of Good Neighbour:

“The concept of Good Neighbour gives clues to how you relate to the people that you are working with. That is treating people as equal, not patronising, and to be treating them in the way you would wish to be treated yourself. We look after each other. The strong look after the weak. We put into action the love Jesus has for us. I suppose that not only benefits who we help, but also ourselves. That is to feel that I am in this ministry and this is my calling. So it is a reciprocal thing. Our love for the neighbour requires us to treat our neighbours well with dignity. The other thing is when you look after the marginalised, in fact you look after the community as well; and also look after yourself.”

The comments as stated in this chapter show that almost all the Board members had diverse understandings about the concept of Good Neighbour. All of them were of the view that they practise the concept of Good Neighbour as taught in Christianity. However, the practice of the concept of Good Neighbour has contributed little towards the wellbeing of the clients. The clients who continue to receive the services delivered were maintained in their dependency state rather than providing ways to empower them [Haddock, 2008]. So the Airedale Community Centre has become more a hub for the homeless and needy people rather than a centre that empowers the people.

The social service policy of the Methodist Church of New Zealand says: “We continue to affirm and commend the journey from ka mate (death in the midst of life) to ka ora (life in the midst of death). We reaffirm the commitment required”

[WesleyComAotearoa, 2007]. The delivery of services by the Methodist Mission Northern affirms life for the clients amidst the threats of death due to poverty but the concept of “moving from charity to transformation”[WesleyComAotearoa, 2007] has had seemingly little or no significant effect on the clients in the long term. Therefore the need arises to look afresh at the Mission as Good Neighbour in order to consider its relevance in and for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **6.2.5 Ways in which the Methodist Mission Northern could be a Good Neighbour to people: From charity to empowerment**

The members of the Board of Governors were asked: In what ways can the Methodist Mission Northern be a good neighbour to people in their long term sustainability to become independent and self supporting? The responses covered a wide range of views. One comment was:

“We have to ensure that the programmes of the Methodist Mission Northern remain relevant and effective to a wide range of people ... I am a firm believer in when we do good we have to be seen as doing good. The work of the Methodist Mission Northern has got to be different from what other organisations are doing. What must be always assessed is, is it making a difference, is it improving or assisting those that are coming for services at the centre? One of the big strengths would be through market research when we can be a provider of well researched and reliable data.”

Following on this comment the interviewer suggested: “the ultimate goal would be to do yourself out of a job.” The Board member responded: “philosophically that would be correct, practically that is not going to happen.”

The ultimate goal would be to get them off the streets and help them live in a shelter, with a roof over their heads, being independent and looking after themselves. To some extent that is to achieve long term personal sustainability. The Methodist Mission Northern’s role must look into working toward this goal; that is empowering clients towards an independent life of their own. This view is supported by a further Board member’s comment in relation to the homeless clients:

“The people need to be provided with the skills as well as training as they do not know how to live in a house. The solution is not to put them in a house where they do not have the skills to live in a

house; you have to provide them with those skills. It takes ages to motivate these people into all these aspects; it is an extremely complex situation. They need to learn to manage their bank accounts, pay their bills and so on.”

The Board members and the staff are conscious that the clients who live without a house or shelter for themselves may not be fully aware of the responsibilities of living in a house. The empowerment of such clients would mean training them in managing household responsibilities as well as shopping for groceries and clothes and paying the bills for power, water and other basic amenities.

Another Board member responded:

“Irrespective of hierarchy, treating everybody in the way we wish to be treated is important. Respect and integrity of people need to be taken seriously. The key to that is never allowing people to assume they are going to buy into the long term comfortable relationship with the Methodist Mission Northern. As a person at the West Auckland Family Services put it, “we want every person who comes in here for their first visit to recognise this is close to their last.” That is an enormously powerful statement. The proper thing is to ensure that whatever we are doing is about them taking ownership for what is happening in their lives; taking responsibility for their transformation. Our job is to simply give them the tools. Our job is not to be the agency that builds a dependency relationship with them. And so their relationship with us as a community is always in a state of tension and flux, unless it is that you are failing dismally.”

It is imperative for the Methodist Mission Northern that whatever it does leads to clients taking ownership for what is happening in their lives. To be empowered enables taking responsibility for one’s transformation. The delivery of services has to include training in skills required for the independent living of the individual. Alongside this clear perspective the following comments by one of the Board members depicts a need for an ongoing charity model as well.

“By creating a knowledge base through which we can determine the appropriate way forward. By making sure that we share that knowledge with people who make decisions which impacts upon the very client that we are dealing with. By working with them as much as they will allow you to work with and all you can do is provide the conditions and the support. That is the best you can do. We cannot get all of them as some are having mental health issues.



They should be in mental health institutions. We cannot provide that. The government is not going to provide that. So you will continue to provide that service while under this government policy as it is to have those people and the best you can do is to be there for them all the time. Some of these people are dangerous and if you start interfering with their lives as opposed to supporting them and making decisions, you are taking on quite a risk.”

The clients with mental health issues need to be looked at from a different point of view. The Board member’s comment illustrates a particular view point that the clients with mental health issues need to be in mental health institutions, believing it is for the government to provide this service. As Jane Kelsey argues, “institutions for the mentally ill, elderly and young closed their doors in the name of community care ... Churches and charities were expected to cover the government’s withdrawal” [Kelsey, 1998, p. 5]. The discrepancy in providing adequate service through mental health institutions by the government has compelled agencies such as the Methodist Mission Northern to take care of these people. Kelsey is right in stating that the government-run institutions have not responsibly fulfilled their role and therefore faith based social services agencies have opted to care for the people with mental illness. In this regard a need arises for Methodist Mission Northern to take up an advocacy role with the government to ensure adequate facilities for people with mental health issues are being provided. Being Good Neighbour means also being advocate in such situations assuring the wellbeing of people with mental health issues. Therefore it becomes imperative for Methodist Mission Northern to reconsider the policy framework.

As a Board member stated:

“Getting the lives of these people turned around is the hardest part, but it is the key ingredient; and also by continuing to provide the support network. They often don’t feel they have a friend in the world, and if we can provide that sort of ongoing assistance and contact that they are able to relate to—that would be the work done well. We can set up a feed back loop so that we can stay in touch with the people that have been helped by the Methodist Mission Northern a bit longer so that we can keep that connection going. Record keeping is a good way that ensures we stay in touch.”

Besides the empowerment programme a need arises in the above comment to remedy a situation of estrangement for the clients. The Board member proposed an ongoing client

coordination programme supported by a database to ensure that the client's life goes well. It is another way of being a good neighbour in caring for the person not so much in terms of delivering services but by being a friend to give encouragement and support.

In concluding the comments on the ways in which the Methodist Mission Northern could be a good neighbour, enabling clients to move from charity to empowerment I quote one other comment made by a Board member:

“We deliver the services but do we ask the question of where would this person be in twelve months time or in five years time? We should be thinking more on behalf of the person who receives services and making suggestions about some options for them.”

It draws the stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern to plan for each client's future as the client comes to receive the delivery of services. This plan will have to consider the client's abilities, interests and desired skill. Methodist Mission Northern could do more to empower the clients towards training in skills for a self-supporting life.

#### **6.2.6 Steps to be taken by the Board of Governors to reach the goal of moving from charity model to empowerment approach**

The Board members were positive about moving from the charity model to a community development model that focuses on empowerment of clients towards their self-supporting life as stated in chapter five [Chile, 2006, p. 26]. Thereafter the interview schedule focused on finding out what steps the Board of Governors would take to reach the goal of moving from a charity model to a community development model. The responses varied from making structural adjustments to finding financial support to continue the mission as Good Neighbour. A Board member commented:

“First of all it would be to make certain that the Methodist Mission Northern is structured to achieve this goal and finance is made available to do the work. Getting the financial resources right is probably the most fundamental thing. The second thing is getting the right people involved. It requires proper administration of the properties to generate the funds. The separation of the property

trust from the service trust has come at the right time.<sup>9</sup> The property trust can look into the commercial side of the property to generate income to support the community services. The community services trust can look after the service delivery and also apply to other funding sources. And the governing board will set the overall policy and budget of the two.”

These comments underpin the need for a structural adjustment to deliver better services in terms of community development. Separating property management from the management of services is envisaged. These steps would make changes at management level with an objective of providing more effective services in terms of empowering the clients towards independent self-supporting life patterns. The steps required for moving from a charity model to a community development model is already visible in the analysis of the data collected from the Board of Governors. This will open up the need for policy changes at the Governing Board level.

A further comment speaks of Methodist Mission Northern needing “to take little steps, quickly. Preliminary to that is to have a good branding<sup>10</sup> that you can sell to the corporate world. That is the practical reality of running a social service agency.” Also:

“With regard to the branding there should be one branding for the national church with consistency which defines us as the Methodist social service like the Presbyterian Support. There should be better connections between the church and the Methodist Mission Northern.”

Whether the proposed branding of the Methodist Mission Northern is acceptable to other social service organisations of the Methodist Church of New Zealand is a discussion yet to take place. What the brand name will be and what it entails for the future of the Methodist Mission Northern is another area of research that is not covered within the parameters of this study.

A further comment by a Board member related to future direction:

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<sup>9</sup> The Methodist Mission Northern Board of Governors have proposed a change in the management of the property and the management of the service delivery. Discussions were held at the Board level during the time of these interviews. The Board member was referring to these discussions.

<sup>10</sup> A Brand Name was proposed in place of using the term Methodist Mission Northern so that the institution could be advertised among the donors effectively for support for the service delivery.

“The Board of Governors must constantly check that the things that give us satisfaction and enthusiasm might not be the best things. The Board of Governors has the responsibility to scrutinise all policy; but also all delivery plans to ensure they are not about reinforcing a dependency mode. The Board of Governors have to make sure that the managers are equipped to do those things that fulfil Methodist Mission Northern’s objectives and the church’s commitment to the dignity of people. The other part that is important to the Board of Governors is that the members must have the ability to assess social information and to look carefully at cultural diversity and nuances so that they can critique things from their own life experiences, not their own prejudices, but come to things with good knowledge and good information.”

The above comment underscores the responsibilities of the Board of Governors to scrutinise the policy and ensure that dependency on current and future service delivery is avoided whilst also establishing how the Board of Governors must assess the available information with cultural sensitivity. Being sensitive to cultural diversity in any social service delivery is important to ensure respect and dignity to and of one another. Clients must be cared for according to their cultural identities as different cultures emphasise values differently. These factors need to be considered in framing a relevant social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern.

It was also pointed out by a Board member that

“Increasingly different departments are moving to the not for profit, non governmental organisations to deliver service. We must ensure that we do not end up being a mini client of government departments; that we do not end up subsidising government policies and their departments’ actions to the cost and detriment of retaining our prophetic voice, which means that we want to reserve the right and at times with financial costs, to critique and maybe challenge social and cultural policy of any government department. You need to hold that intention within your compliance issues. I think at the end of the day our commitment to the cycles of hope [WesleyComAotearoa, 2007] and commitment to a strength-based model takes precedence over our desire to have a contract which requires us to comply with things we do not believe fit with our policy.”

This is a very important component in framing any future social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern. Methodist Mission Northern must ensure that it does not become just

a service deliverer for the government departments. As the board member pointed out here, the Mission is not an agency to just deliver the services for the government departments. The Mission must reserve the right to be prophetic in being the voice of the voiceless as stated by staff during the interviews. As already stated often the contracted services assigned to the Methodist Mission Northern are tied up with the conditions of the contracts, and must be the responsibility of the Board of Governors to ensure that the conditions of these contracts do not undermine the policy of the Methodist Mission Northern. This could be at times with particular financial costs as one Board member stated. It may mean the Mission not getting a particular contract if there is a conflict between the conditions of the contract and the policy of the Mission. In such instances the Board will have to consider what is best for the Methodist Mission Northern in making a decision.

A Board member responded: “We have a duty as a mission organisation to speak out so that the wider community is aware of the problem. It is important that the general public get an appreciation of what the situation is.” In addressing the social issues, my opinion is the Methodist Mission Northern must be more a people’s voice as Good Neighbour of the victims rather than a Good Neighbour to the government to deliver contracted services. The Good Neighbour not only meets the immediate needs but also cares in the long term. As Zizek, Santner and Reinhard argued [Zizek, Santner, & Reinhard, 2005, p. 6], Methodist Mission Northern must not walk like the Priest or the Levite by standing with the government, but be like the Samaritan to the victim and raise the concerns of the poor and the needy people it encounters in its service delivery.

A further step to reach the goal of moving from a charity model to a community development model as stated by a Board member was:

“It is essential to network with other similar organisations like the Salvation Army, the Auckland City Mission, and the Presbyterian Support to avoid duplicating the services. Also that would provide an opportunity to refer people to the right service. There are quite a number of areas that we should work collaboratively and collectively in terms of not only spreading the Christian message, but more importantly working to help provide the resources to

solve some of the difficulties we have got. We must be also sharing our research data with others.”

The same Board member also points out the need to refer clients to the right kind of service that will enable the Methodist Mission Northern to shift toward a community development model. This requires the Mission to network with existing services be it government or other faith based social service agencies.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The data collected from the Board of Governors and the subsequent analysis identify a need and an openness to develop policies that would shift service delivery away from a charity model towards a community development model. These policy changes must happen at Board level with the implementation thereof at staff level with the desired effect occurring for clients along with their participation. Policy changes for a relevant social service in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must include networking and collaboration with other social service agencies and advocacy with national and local government agencies. It is to this effect that the policy framework will ensure that Mission as Good Neighbour focuses on the wellbeing of those with whom the Mission engages.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SOCIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE OF METHODIST MISSION NORTHERN**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores three areas of the mission as Good Neighbour carried out by the Methodist Mission Northern.

- (a) How the Methodist Mission Northern has been a Good Neighbour in delivering services to the needy in the past within a social policy framework.
- (b) How the delivery of services has changed since 1985.
- (c) How the social policy of caring for the poor, needy and socially excluded people by the Methodist Mission Northern has gone through changes since 1986.

I have chosen the period from 1986 to 2006 to focus my research in depth. The year 1985 was a year of rapid economic changes in New Zealand society. As Jane Kelsey describes this period:

In 1984 the new Labour government embarked on a programme of regulatory reform designed to generate sustained economic growth through increased competition, reduced rigidities and low inflation [Kelsey, 1998, p. 5].

These economic changes, known as the ‘Rogernomics Experiment,’ were named after the then Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas [Kelsey, 1998, p. 6]. Kelsey argues that the so-called economic reforms failed to deliver the expected outcome of ensuring economic growth for the people. These reforms rather, in Kelsey’s view, paved the way for the rich to become richer and the poor to become poorer. These economic changes had a direct impact on the delivery of services of church-based social service agencies including the Methodist Mission Northern.

#### **7.2 The Immediate Impact**

The immediate impact of the changes owing to the economic context was the increase in the number of people who came to receive social services from the Methodist Mission Northern’s Service Centres. My reading of the data from the *Annual Reports* and minutes of the meetings of Methodist Mission Northern shows a 228 per cent increase in

the numbers of people receiving the services between 1986 and 2006. Ten years of experimenting with the economic changes of 1984 resulted in 18,423 meals served, and 1115 food parcels delivered to 2793 clients by the Methodist Mission Northern in 1996 [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1996]. After another ten years, in the year 2006 the number of meals served by the Methodist Mission Northern increased to 42,172 [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 2006]. This data indicates that the rapid economic changes begun in 1984 have either not helped at all or helped little those most in need to improve their standard of life. Instead they had to seek assistance from social service agencies. Methodist Mission Northern as a social service delivery agency has continued to serve these needy people. The question I raise of the data here is, did the Methodist Mission Northern attempt to address what caused the people to come to the Mission to receive services? My attempt to find an answer to this question leads me to look at the data recorded in the *Annual Reports*.

### **7.3 The issues identified in the *Annual Reports* between 1986 and 2006**

The service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern was carried out with a policy framed by John Wesley's teaching: "The Gospel cannot be heard on an empty stomach or over the cries of a sick hungry child" ["Wesley Action", 1999]. This social service delivery policy was most often framed by way of a soup kitchen model with the objective of evangelising and bringing people to church. The soup kitchen model of service delivery had an agenda geared towards a growth of church attendance in numbers. The philosophy behind this policy in my observation is, the more the people become poor and receive services the more the church can evangelise and increase its number. I am compelled to think thus because there is very little evidence that the policy statements discussed in the *Annual Reports* were followed through with concrete actions to address the root causes of poverty. Thus this approach leads me to a further question of what does good neighbour mean?

A church member could contend that he or she is caring for the needy person so that the needy person can become a church member like him or her. That person's love for the neighbour had an agenda to bring the poor and the needy to church and to make them



hear the gospel. On the contrary the concept of Good Neighbour means to ensure the total wellbeing of the person. It is not a question of what the religion is of the person but a question of whether the person in need is given the means to develop his or her potential to enable them to attain what Chile refers to as holistic wellbeing [Chile, 2004, p. 26]. It is not just a question of providing hand outs to the poor to help them meet their day to day needs. This is not to suggest that there have not been some attempts by staff and governance at the Methodist Mission Northern to address the causes of poverty.

Jim Greenaway, the director of the Methodist Community Social Services in his report in 1985 illustrated the poverty cycle:

People are being hurt ...If you have heard of the 'poverty cycle' and wonder what it means, think of a flat tyre. Every time someone puts some air into the tyre, the flat part at the bottom benefits a little; movement is possible but the pressure is always on the bottom. As the air escapes again, the bottom flattens out and the tyre takes all the weight. All of this time, the tyre at the top is free of pressure. For people in poverty, it's like living continuously at the bottom of a faulty tyre. You get a few more dollars, a few more goodies now and again, yet somewhere else others getting your share and more, while you are carrying their share of the burden as well as your own. The people are constantly in a trap. For them, family care, a new benefit or temporary uplift from a neighbouring construction site is no more than a puff of air in a continuously flat cycle of poverty. Methodist Community Social Services may not have the ability to repair the system or ensure equal opportunity. They do, however, have access both to people caught in the trap and to resources and systems with power of change [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1985].

Greenaway highlights a very important point that needs to be taken into consideration in further framing a social policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Greenaway was right in saying that Methodist Mission Northern has access both to the people caught in the trap (poverty) and to the systems which hold the power to change. Mission as Good Neighbour has moved very little to intervene with those who have the power to change. During my conversations with Mary Caygill, a former member of the Board of Governors, she stated that in the past the superintendent of the Methodist Mission Northern periodically went to the office of the social welfare minister in parliament to discuss the needs of the poor the Mission cared for. In the present

context being Good Neighbour requires an addressing of the root causes of poverty. It is important for the Methodist Mission Northern to make intervention at the systemic level to address the root causes of poverty. That has to be done more at the level of those who have the power to change while working with the clients to empower them towards independent self-supporting life. It is at that level that Methodist Mission Northern has to work towards a better standard of life that ensures wellbeing while carrying out the service delivery to meet the immediate needs of people. Greenaway's illustration depicts further that the government policy on social welfare benefits is in itself not a solution but rather a way which so often maintains the 'poverty cycle'. It is not only the government policy, but also the economic system in which both government and private sectors are stakeholders which contributes to maintain the poverty cycle. The economic system and its role in contributing to poverty in New Zealand are not covered within the parameters of this research as it requires detailed research in its own right. The core challenge is for the rich and the powerful together with the central government to take a different approach to find a solution to the problem of poverty.

In terms of being a Good Neighbour

The Christian tradition of prophets, from Isaiah and Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea and Micah to Jesus, to Wesley, Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King or Helder Camara, spoke not by word alone. Their action and movement among the people gave them feeling for and solidarity with the entrapped, the suffering and the broken in spirit and soul [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1985, p. 14].

The *Annual Report* 1985 talks about solidarity with the entrapped, the suffering and the broken in spirit and souls and how traditionally Methodist Mission Northern has felt for and has sought to be in solidarity with those suffering from adverse levels of poverty.

Data available in the *Annual Report* of 1985 raises a further issue. That is, while the Methodist Mission Northern had been aware of these facts in 1985 why did it continue to do what it was doing? In my view it must have been due to the understanding of the concept of Good Neighbour as caring in terms of hands out to the needy. The *Annual Reports* from 1986 to 2006 provide information about how the Methodist Mission Northern has continued with social service delivery. That is not to suggest that the

Methodist Mission Northern has not done anything other than hand outs. The *Annual Reports* of the period from 1986 to 2006 recognise at least eight key themes that Methodist Mission Northern has been trying to address. These are poverty eradication, social justice, empowerment of the clients, social transformation, partnerships, advocacy, caring for the oppressed and an holistic approach to individual and community development.

### **7.3.1 Poverty Eradication**

Part of the poverty eradication programme envisaged by Methodist Mission Northern was to seek to work with the oppressed and the poor to develop their personal skills and resources. These attempts were

... not to impose programmes of education or encourage more dependency on welfare but rather to enable people to take charge of their lives. Methodist Community Social Service workers have developed a close working relationship with these groups as the providers of skills, organisation, training and access to resource and funds [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1985].

We commit ourselves to continued wrestling with the biblical mandate to care for the “least lovely,” the most needy, the poorest, as the loved of God. We recognise a primary obligation to serve and to work with those who feel they are neglected and helpless to change their own situation. We seek, within the limitations of our resources, to provide assistance to those in need regardless of their capacity to pay [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1986].

With these objectives Methodist Mission Northern has attempted to enable clients to work towards the goal of taking charge of their lives. With this objective programmes were designed to work from below; from the level of the people in need. Nevertheless there is no data to substantiate any attempts made to engage with the people who have the core power to bring about change. As Greenaway mentioned in his report Methodist Mission Northern has access to the people in power to change. More work is required in this area to work with the people in power to bring about change in the social and economic system. What must be said here is poverty eradication programme will not achieve its goal unless and until the people who have the power to change engage in these programmes. Methodist Mission Northern in its Mission as Good Neighbour has

yet to work out a way to engage the powerful people of the society to make changes at their level to eradicate poverty.

The New Internationalist magazine in its July 2008 issue stated the following:

Farmers across the world produced a record 2.3 billion tons of grain in 2007, up 4 per cent on the previous year. Since 1961 global output has tripled, while the population has doubled. There is enough food being produced to feed everyone in the world. The problem is that it isn't getting to all who need it [New-Internationalist, July 2008 Web Edition][New-Internationalist, July 2008 Web Edition, p. web page].

According to this article there isn't any actual shortage of grain in this world. Since 1961 the world population has doubled while the grain production has tripled. However, there is a shortage of grain in the sense that those who hold the power controlling the distribution of grain corruptly make an extra profit out of it. Walter Brueggemann calls this situation, "material deprivation, fostered by a myth of scarcity and economic violence embedded in free market ideology" [Brueggemann, 2000, p. 6]. So long as material deprivation and economic violence prevail poverty eradication will not bring any positive results. Brueggemann describes the myth of scarcity in the following way:

The majority of the world's resources pour into the United States. And as we Americans grow wealthier and wealthier, money is becoming a kind of narcotic for us. We hardly notice our own prosperity or the poverty of so many others. The great contradiction is that we have more and more money and less and less generosity—less and less public money for the needy, less charity for the neighbour [Brueggemann, 2000, p. 69].

What Brueggemann describes of the American society is also true of the society in Aotearoa New Zealand. The only exception to Brueggemann's statement is world's resources do not pour into New Zealand in the way they pour into America<sup>11</sup>. As Greenaway claimed those who do have the power to change [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1985] may well not be committed to the approach of social transformation. In fact there must be little acknowledgement of their prosperity

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<sup>11</sup> Brueggemann states that American society consumes most of the resources of this world. New Zealand population is not even close to that level of consumption. That is the exception in this case for New Zealand.

and the poverty of others. Brueggemann is right in saying that those people in power who have more money have less generosity. A country's wealth must not be calculated in terms of how much wealth is owned by the rich, but in terms of how much public money is available to meet the needs of those at the lower end of the social ladder. This is not about calling the rich to give more toward charity. Rather it is about calling on those who have the power to change to be considerate of the more needy persons in the society and to reduce their greed of making an extra profit. The transformation required is reducing excessive accumulation of wealth and to work towards a tax system that provides more money for social welfare in order to maintain a more common standard of life for all people. It will be a challenge for those who have the power to change to reconsider a tax system that will collect more from the rich in order to support public infrastructure and services that will thus address the issues faced by the poor. It is through such action that the disparity between those who have plenty and those who do not have at all can be reduced. In short,

... finance liberalization has made it easier for investors to control markets for their own private benefit. The fundamental cause of today's food crisis is neoliberal globalization itself, which has transformed food from a source of livelihood security into a mere commodity to be gambled away, even at the cost of hunger among the world's poorest [New-Internationalist, 2008, , July 2008 Web Edition, p. web page].

Mission as Good Neighbour in the area of poverty eradication requires Methodist Mission Northern to work with an objective of reducing the disparity between the needy and the wealthy in this country. The social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern needs to seriously take this aspect into consideration.

### **7.3.2 Social Justice**

Allan Woodley, a former Superintendent of the Methodist Mission Northern when commenting on the Budget of 1991 stated:

The earth is not flat—the world is not a level playing field. All New Zealanders look for fairness and justice in the carrying of a fair share of economic load and for a government who will be fair in governing [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1991].

As Woodley stated the carrying of a fair share of the economic load has almost disappeared in New Zealand especially after 1986. Economic disparity has paved the way for injustice for the poor. The reality of the popular adage almost rang true that the working class is “overworked and underpaid” while the wealthy people are busy multiplying their assets seems to also ring true. A government truly committed to a fair and just society would ensure a fair sharing of the economic load. It is this lack of a fair sharing of the economic load which results in social injustice and economic disparity.

Mission as Good Neighbour means being a voice to the voiceless who do not have a fair share of the economic resources of society. The Methodist Mission Northern will have to address the issue of social justice more effectively. This exercise could well mean Methodist Mission Northern becoming unpopular in the circles of those who hold the power to change. It would also require Methodist Mission Northern to address issues of social justice at the level of those who cause poverty. It would in fact require a change of strategy with the Methodist Mission Northern choosing to stand with the neighbours who are marginalised, needy and seeking social justice. This would be in line with the vision of the Methodist Mission Northern which was spelt out in 1993, when the economic changes of 1984 were creating serious social and economic distress for the most vulnerable population. The vision for Methodist Mission Northern was spelt out in the following: ... to help “create a fair society in keeping with the Treaty of Waitangi by offering hope to the least advantaged, seeking to empower, advancing social justice and preventing social need” [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1993]. This vision included a strong commitment to the bicultural partnership.

In 1992 Methodist Mission Northern spelt out its goals with a view to a holistic approach in its mission amongst those in need. These goals were as stated below:

1. To provide resources and services in order to stimulate and encourage the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, with a particular focus towards those who are the most socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged.
2. To pursue, as appropriate, working partnerships with the Maori Division of the Methodist Church, Iwi authorities, ethnic communities, social service groups and government agencies, for the delivery of services for the people of our region.

3. To develop and encourage provision of targeted social service ministries by local congregations as a practical expression of the mission of the church.
  4. To support and assist the development of worship, fellowship and hospitality of the inner city ministries of the Aotea Chapel community within the Central Parish and Mission (Methodist Mission Northern).
  5. To research, advocate and educate for peace, justice and resource distribution.
  6. To maintain and, as appropriate, develop community and residential services to the elderly.
  7. To manage and develop the assets and resources of the Mission.
- [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern, 1992*]

These goals while emphasising a holistic approach in good neighbourly mission, also had a component of connecting clients also with the Aotea Chapel. Despite the attempt to connect clients with the chapel, the goal's main aim was to minimise suffering and empower the clients. As Superintendent Allan K. Woodley states in his 1992 report:

Although the message from the Government is that the economy is recovering, the rate of unemployment remains high and the level and effects of hardships and poverty, deepening. These needs are apparent in the increased demands on our Family and Community Services and in the desperation of those presenting for help at our Inner City Community Centre (Airedale Community Centre) [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern, 1992*].

Woodley's description highlights the fact that the policy changes at central government level were directly impacting on New Zealand citizens. The end result of this impact was more people turning to the Methodist Mission Northern for support for their survival.

The issue of social justice has always been a very difficult task. It requires a lot of courage to take intrepid steps to confront any prevailing social injustice. A policy change and the implementation of that policy become imperative to restore social justice to the victims of unfair economic practices. Woodley referred to this societal group in his report as the 'people turning to the Methodist Mission Northern for support for their survival'. In the framework of social policy to uphold social justice, a firm commitment to the bicultural partnership has to be addressed adequately. This would strengthen the commitment to the bicultural partnership of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

### **7.3.3 Empowerment of clients**

Mission as Good Neighbour clearly includes empowerment of the clients. Empowerment could be of an individual as well as of a community. Deborah Eade defines empowerment as follows:

Gaining the strength, confidence and vision to work for positive change in their lives individually and together with others is the process of empowerment. Women and men become empowered by their own efforts, not by what others do for them. When development and relief programmes are not firmly based on people's own efforts to work for change, their impact may be disempowering [Eade, 1997, p. 4].

My reading of the data from the *Annual Reports* of the Methodist Mission Northern makes me conscious that the services delivered have not empowered the clients; instead, many have become further disempowered. Methodist Mission Northern instead of assisting the homeless people to come out of homelessness has more often than not helped them to remain homeless. Corrie Haddock, the service delivery manager of the Airedale Community Centre further states that the social services of the Methodist Mission Northern maintained the people in a homeless situation rather than helping them to seek for life as an average citizen with all the basic amenities of food clothing and shelter [Haddock, 2008]. As Eade describes, where the clients do not work for change with their own efforts the outcome of the efforts of the service providers have resulted in the disempowering of clients. The vision advanced in the *Annual Report 1985* has still to be achieved. The vision stated:

Good health, employment, housing, family and social relationships, along with cultural, recreational and educational pursuits are all elements of people's visions. The task (of Methodist Mission Northern) is to remove the barriers to progress towards a more healthful and just life and to provide the services necessary for the process [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1985].

Though the above *Annual Report of 1985* expressed the necessity of services to remove the barriers to progress, there is very little evidence that the service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern made significant progress in the period 1986 – 2006 towards its stated goals. During this period there is little evidence to demonstrate that services delivered have empowered the clients. Out of the thirteen clients interviewed at



Airedale Community Centre six stated that they had been receiving the services for over ten years. This observation was further confirmed by other interviewed clients. Some clients suggested that they had become lazy to do anything about their situation because food and clothing were provided by the Methodist Mission Northern. One client said: “Happy with what is offered now and nothing more”. Another client said: “I have become lazy to do anything else in life because these services were freely available”. However, there were also instances in which clients were empowered. *The Annual Report 1998* reported about this success when it described the following case.

Ian (not his real name) is one such individual who came out of prison two years ago to find his two young daughters abandoned by their mother. Ian decided to care for the girls and was referred to the West Auckland Parenting Programme provided by the Wesley Social Services<sup>12</sup>. He learned parenting skills from scratch. As part of the course Ian made contact with the Mission’s (Methodist Mission Northern) Budget and Safe Banking Service, and continues with it today. When Ian and his daughters were ready to move to their own home the Mission’s Restart Furniture Service assisted and when necessary food parcels and other practical aid has been made available [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1998].

This case demonstrates what Eade has argued about empowering and also shows that the capacity Methodist Mission Northern has to empower its clients. What is required is for the Methodist Mission Northern to develop appropriate policies and strategies to move its service provision consistently towards an empowerment model. Such empowering service delivery requires tailor-made programmes to suit each individual according to the need, ability and the effort of the client. In the long term Methodist Mission Northern has to take steps that are necessary to overcome the discrepancies of the service delivery that prove to be barriers to empowerment. The participation of the clients needs to clearly be in focus and the role of Methodist Mission Northern is to assist persons to access the necessary resources to ensure their own wellbeing. A central task of the support process would be for Methodist Mission Northern to play a stronger advocacy role. Methodist Mission Northern must continue to stress that the empowerment of those in most need does not come from long term dependency but by working at the level of

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<sup>12</sup> A service delivery of the Methodist Mission Northern in 1998.

those who have the power to change and in interdependent partnerships with the clients themselves. The best way to address poverty and need is to develop programmes that will lead towards both individual and community empowerment. Such Mission as Good Neighbour that empowers clients in the above manner is what leads to social transformation.

#### **7.3.4 Social transformation**

When clients are empowered as individuals and as communities an envisaged paradigm shift is brought about in reality. Instead of poor and needy people receiving benefits, they are empowered to be equal partners of their own process toward wellbeing. They are empowered to make use of the resources and abilities to work for a better life. When this happens the outcome is likely to be that of a positive move towards a better standard of life. This becomes then a model with justice marked by enough bread and freedom from debt, worry and sorrow [Borg, 2004, p. 143]. The social transformation that is needed now is portrayed as “If bread is broken and shared, there is enough for all. ... Jesus transforms the economy by blessing it and breaking it beyond self-interest” [Brueggemann, 2000, p. 74]. A transformation in that sense brings forth a different society. As Brueggemann argues:

Another world is possible—we imagine—in public policy, for we do not doubt that the small deed—here and there—ripples into reallocated funds, redirected vision, reassigned power that issues in caring health, in mercy as policy, in peace that overrides war, in hope that overcome poverty. This is not often possible, however, because of the stubbornness of Caesar (government) and the intransigence of corporate wealth [Brueggemann, 2000, p. 17].

Brueggemann points out that a social transformation is possible but is rare largely owing to the unwillingness of those in power to change. Brueggemann is right in saying that the unwillingness of those in power to change will not let agencies like Methodist Mission Northern address the root causes of poverty. An alternative society becomes a reality only when individuals who hold the power to change make the changes required. In addressing such social transformation the *Annual Report 1986* stated the following:

As part of the Methodist Church of New Zealand we recognise our accountability within the body of the Church. We share the traditional emphases of the Methodist movement, particularly:

- (a) the close relationship between personal and social transformation;
- (b) the capacity of people to care for one another;
- (c) the social creed of the Methodist Church of New Zealand;
- (d) the need for new structures to embody new responses in mission;
- (e) our mission as co-operation with the spirit of God already present and at work in every person.

As part of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, we acknowledge our relationship to the Methodist parishes. The Mission seeks to model servant and prophetic ministries and to help parishes to develop appropriate ministries in their neighbourhoods [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1986].

Methodist Mission Northern aiming at social transformation took an holistic approach being not only about the transformation of the individual but also the transformation of families and communities. This approach saw Methodist Mission Northern look to the contribution and participation of the local parishes equally as partners in achieving these objectives. Historically this approach has its origins in the Methodist movement of 18<sup>th</sup> century society in England. Adopting the model practised by the Methodist movement in England, Methodist Mission Northern stated that:

Based on our Theology for Mission, and acknowledging the Treaty of Waitangi as covenant, the Methodist Mission Northern will provide ministry and social services:

- (a) Focusing on the most disadvantaged and needy
- (b) Challenging injustice and inequality
- (c) Respecting individual needs and differences
- (d) Believing in and respecting self-determination
- (e) Sharing our resources, knowledge and skills
- (f) Modifying and developing existing and new services according to changing needs and priorities. [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1992]

Though the focus of the Mission as Good Neighbour is aimed at social transformation in practical terms this concept has not been fully embodied. Though these goals were clearly set there was not a clarity of either action or strategies determined to systematically pursue these goals. Analysing the data from *Annual Reports* there is shown a disparity between the policies spelt out and the actions which followed. There is no consistent data which substantiates the embodiment of these goals. On the other hand, Methodist Mission Northern continued to provide services which were only palliative

measures. The resources were utilised for the social service delivery and not towards an empowerment programme that aimed at a social transformation. Mission as Good Neighbour has to find ways of making these goals a reality. It is not only the drawing up of a new policy framework that is relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century context but also must emphasise a need for a service delivery plan that will lead the Methodist Mission Northern towards achieving its goals of social transformation.

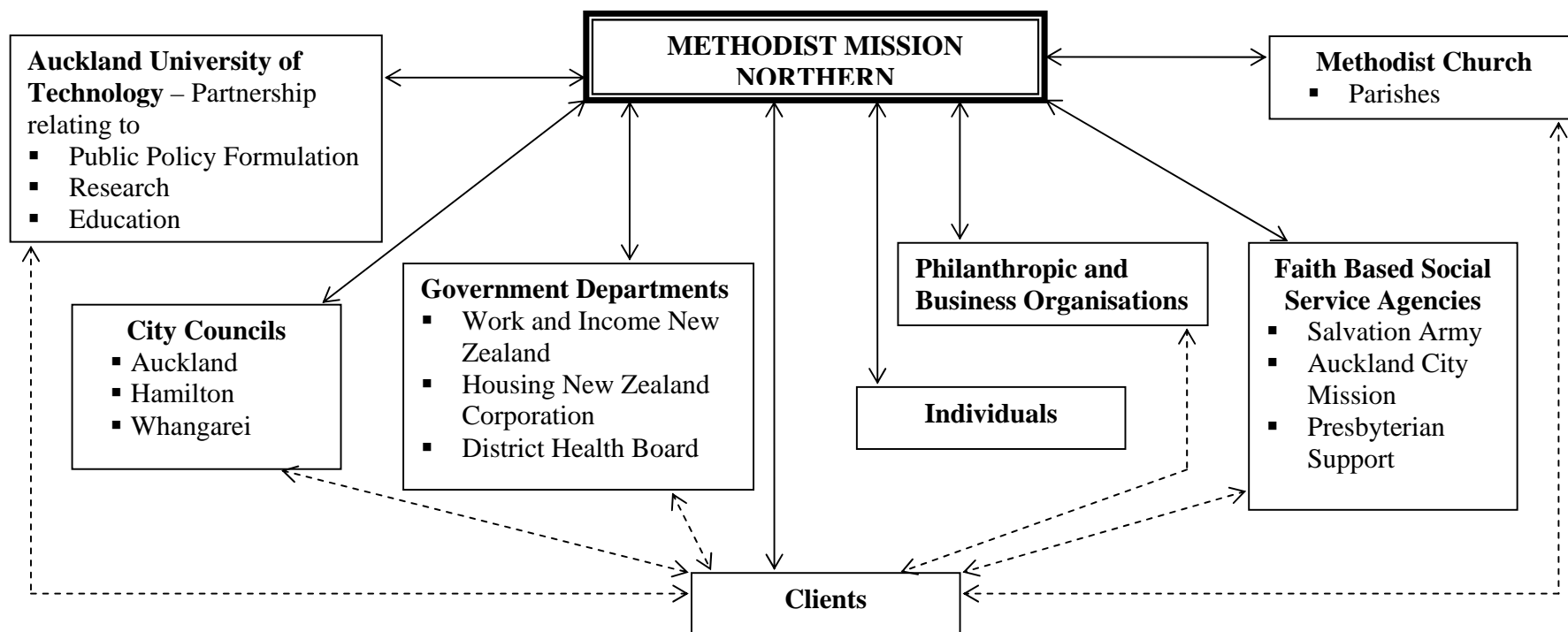
### **7.3.5 Partnerships**

Methodist Mission Northern is charged by the Methodist Church of New Zealand to engage in social service delivery in the Northland, Auckland and Waikato – Waiariki regions. Partnerships for the Methodist Mission Northern as Good Neighbour have at least five areas. Chart 1 on page 117 describes these areas.

First, the Methodist Mission Northern has to build partnerships within the Methodist Church of New Zealand with local Parishes and liaise with them to carry out its mission within the northern region as demarcated by the Methodist Church of New Zealand. Secondly, it has to build partnerships with other social service agencies such as The Salvation Army, The Auckland City Mission and The Presbyterian Support. Thirdly, partnerships have to be with government departments namely Work and Income New Zealand, District Health Boards and Housing New Zealand Corporation. Fourthly, partnerships have to be with philanthropic institutions and business organisations. Fifthly, a partnership needs to strengthen the links with Auckland University of Technology. Auckland University of Technology's involvement in providing education and skills training for the clients to empower them needs to happen more effectively. Sixthly partnership continues with the clients to develop their skills and support them towards independent self supporting life.

At another level partnerships within the Methodist Church of New Zealand operate according to the theology of mission of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

**Chart 1: Methodist Mission Northern's Partnerships**



Partnerships with faith based social service agencies need to function within a framework of mutual support and sharing of resources. Partnerships with the government departments such as Work and Income New Zealand, District Health Board and Housing New Zealand Corporation need to be maintained to work for the wellbeing of the clients. Partnerships with organisations such as philanthropic institutions and business agencies have to be maintained as their donations support the mission as Good Neighbour.

Former Superintendent of the Methodist Mission Northern Keith Taylor in 2006 spoke of the potential Partnership with the Auckland University of Technology (AUT):

In response to growing concerns about social fabric of New Zealand Society, we have continued to develop strategic partnerships and respond to opportunities that will enable the Mission to make positive contribution in building communities. Such partnerships include our links with AUT's Institute of Public Policy and their Community Relations Team ... [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 2006, p. 7]

As Taylor superficially comments, the above partnership is vital for the Mission to use the knowledge and expertise of the Auckland University of Technology in its strategy of building healthy communities. Besides the educational and skills training for clients, Auckland University of Technology's community relations team supports the Methodist Mission Northern as a bridge to connect Methodist Mission Northern with the business community of Auckland.

Finally, partnership with the clients has to be maintained to ensure that any community development programmes truly work for the wellbeing of the clients. This would mean providing educational programmes and skills training identified by the clients and service delivery staff and ensuring that the clients participate in these programmes to benefit from them. It would also require an ongoing relationship with the clients to ensure that they are on the right path towards a better standard of life.

The data from the *Annual Reports* show that while maintaining its independence Methodist Mission Northern has assisted in parish and community partnerships. In the

*Annual Report of 1993* examples of what was referred to as “partnership of love in action” was described as follows:

The Methodist Mission Northern is also assisting a wide range of community and parish partnerships. Through the role of Parish Liaison and the impetus of Regional Forums, support to many innovative projects has been given to assist local parishes in response to specific needs in their localities. “One Double Five”, the St. John’s Community House in Whangarei, is a notable example [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1993].

The project that operates at One Double Five Whare Roopu is a significant example of the Methodist Mission Northern’s work within the Methodist Church of New Zealand in partnership with the local St. John’s Parish.

This partnership involves mutual support for each other. While St. John’s Parish collects donations from its members to support the food parcel distribution, One Double Five Whare Roopu shares its resources and refers its clients for spiritual guidance to the parish. The same is the case with the Airedale Community Centre in Auckland and Methodist City Action in Hamilton. In all the locations of the service delivery centres of the Methodist Mission Northern partnerships with the local Methodist parish are maintained.

With regard to partnerships with the social service agencies that operated under the central government of 1994 Allan Woodley, former Superintendent of the Methodist Mission Northern, wrote:

...the sense of partnership with the State for social service agencies like the Mission (Methodist Mission Northern) has been lost with the passing of the welfare state. The Mission it seems is now a contractor and no longer treated as providing social service in partnership with the State. In the last eight years (1986 – 1994) the State has progressively reduced social services to the peoples of this country. As a consequence the Mission is constantly challenged by people’s unmet needs and especially those who easily fall through the safety nets – particularly the vulnerable young and old of all cultures. Whether the Mission should respond to the newly created gaps or advocate for a State response is more easily responded to ideologically than when confronted by basic human need. The Mission is therefore faced with a key dilemma. If it is to be true to the Gospel mandate of a bias towards the poor

and vulnerable, then it must work in contractual relationships with the State [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1994].

Woodley's report highlighted the constraints Methodist Mission Northern faced with changes in the welfare state after the economic changes of 1984. Methodist Mission Northern was no longer seen as a partner with the government in addressing social needs but a contractor to deliver contracted outcomes. The challenge then was how to care for the people whose needs were unmet because of the limits of the government. Where would it find extra resources to meet the demands of the clients arising from the government's policy changes? This is the challenge that Kelsey referred to when she commented, "While the government gradually withdrew from welfare, churches and faith-based social services agencies were compelled to embrace the people who did not have any other means to live" [Kelsey, 1998, p. 5].

Highlighting this difficult situation Woodley commented in the *Annual Report 1994*:

But to work with the State means receiving fewer financial resources to undertake this work; therefore requiring more and more Mission funds to ensure both the provision and the quality of its services. The prospect of the Mission only providing services on user-pay basis is not an option for the Mission. Therefore the role of our friends who support the Mission has never been more critical [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1994].

Woodley's comments emphasize that the lack of financial resources through partnerships with the government compelled Methodist Mission Northern to look for other sources of funding. The support from organisations such as business and philanthropists became imperative to continue the social service delivery. This was an important aspect of partnership for the Methodist Mission Northern. A grant by the Prince Albert College Trust of the Methodist Church of New Zealand assisted the Methodist Mission Northern in establishing the Employment Generation Fund, which as was explained in the *Annual Report 1993*, is:

Another type of partnership is the Employment Generation Fund which has gathered momentum and is now in the process of becoming an independent trust. With grants from the Methodist Prince Albert College Trust the fund is actively supporting business ventures that have employment-generating potential. The fund has achieved improved viability for many small businesses,



increased job opportunities for individuals and growth benefits for local communities [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1993].

The Employment Generation Fund helped and still continues to support clients to improve their income earning potentials through skills training, business start up loans and business mentoring.

In addition Methodist Mission Northern continued to work with government agencies despite the challenges it faced with associated contractual requirements. In 1995 Superintendent Allan Woodley stated,

“The Mission looks to those who share in our vision to help and strengthen our work. We will continue to listen and speak with those who are vulnerable, overlooked and excluded from assistance by the policies of the State” [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1995].

This was a clear indication that Methodist Mission Northern would not walk away from working in partnership with all who share in the vision and help strengthen its work with the marginalised in society. His statement also emphasises the need for advocacy to speak out with the vulnerable, those overlooked and excluded by state policies. Thus Mission as Good Neighbour signified the crucial importance of building partnerships with a range of agencies, philanthropists and churches, and clients to address their needs.

#### **7.3.6 Advocacy**

The role of Methodist Mission Northern’s Mission as Good Neighbour involves advocacy which consists of the act of pleading for, supporting, and/or recommending for and on behalf of the people who are cared for by the Mission. Government policy changes and reduction in spending on welfare from 1986 have had negative impacts on the provision of social services by the voluntary and faith based agencies who were burdened with the responsibility to pick up the people who turned up at the Methodist Mission Northern. Methodist Mission Northern’s belief in the Christian ethos of ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ took on the mantle to care for the poor and the needy not only to provide meals, shelter and clothing, but to advocate on their behalf. As Allan Woodley stated:

... the Mission is resolved to be more proactive and strong in advocating on behalf of those denied a fair share of health and welfare. It is our belief that together with other Christian social service agencies, we must take a prophetic stance with the poor. Prophetic action is about challenging the inadequate doctrines of the new right and the old left, while announcing an alternative vision and new possibilities where personal and social transformations are inextricably linked, bringing peace and justice for all [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1995].

This was its mission as Good Neighbour. In a context of unemployment, mental health service closures and shift in the services of the Department of Social Welfares due to economic changes of 1984 Allan Woodley contended:

For many years Mission has helped people resolve their needs through referral to Government agencies. Today, Government agencies refer disadvantaged people to the Mission and to other social service groups to have their needs met [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1991].

Caring for people and addressing issues of unemployment and mental health requirements are responsibilities of central government. Failure to do so adequately constrained Methodist Mission Northern and other faith based agencies. In 1996 the then superintendent of the Methodist Mission Northern, Graham Whaley explained why advocacy was an important aspect of Methodist Mission Northern being Good Neighbour.

Why are we involved? ... Through the services we offer, we attempt to share something of the compassion of Christ; for the poor and the needy, the disadvantaged and the marginalised, the vulnerable and the powerless in our society. We are advocates of the voiceless and committed to the social justice of all [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1996].

While caring for the poor and the needy was imperative as the socio economic situation deteriorated and the wellbeing of many people suffered, Whaley argued that

While we have seen this (caring for the needs of the poor, marginalised and vulnerable) as our major task, we have become increasingly aware of the necessity to generate a desire among those we help to seek changes to systems in our society that perpetuate injustice and create dependency. We believe such changes will only occur when people get together to solve

problems collectively for themselves [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1998].

As the provision of health and welfare services continues to be rationalised, we have found ourselves thrust more and more into this role of advocacy. This was inevitable because of the Mission's position within the community and was foreseen and prepared for. While this role and these preparations are not very apparent, being an advocate at governmental / policy level is necessary to help ensure that society is seen to be providing its social services in a just and equitable way [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1999].

The most critical point highlighted in the two extracts from the reports above is that Mission as Good Neighbour must continue to seek changes to those key systems in our society that perpetuate injustice. Working in partnerships with its clients requires advocating at governmental policy level to ensure the development of a just and equitable society. Mission as Good Neighbour requires Methodist Mission Northern to be an effective advocate to address the root causes of poverty. The role of advocacy becomes inevitable in a society where there is a dire need for caring for those oppressed and marginalised.

#### **7.4 A holistic approach to individual and community development**

Mission as Good Neighbour must ensure the total wellbeing of the individual as well as the community. Thus far the role played by the Methodist Mission Northern as Good Neighbour has largely focused on service delivery that meets the immediate needs of clients. Holistic approaches are evident in a few instances of the Methodist Mission Northern's work. From the data available in the *Annual Reports* between 1986 and 2006 it was clear that the Methodist Mission Northern sought a holistic approach to individual and community development.

We desire to hold together the total work of the Mission in unity, while recognising the need for specialised divisions within that unity. These divisions will offer a whole range of services from institutional care for the aged, to community development programmes. ... We have a commitment to the unique worth of every individual as loved of God. Whether the care we offer be institutional or community based, we seek to honour the unity of persons in the context of their community and culture. We seek to work with people to enable them as far as they are able, to take

responsibility for their own lives and communities, and we desire to help people reach their highest possible potential, and the attainment of personal wholeness [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1986].

However, the attainment of this objective has been limited by the changes in government policies, the increasing varied needs in the community, and limited resources to apply to the range of strategies to chase this objective. In 2006 the *Annual Report* stated:

We are committed to supporting all people unconditionally, reducing and preventing social disadvantage, responding to the changing social and economic environment, building inclusive and caring communities, helping those in need to have a voice that is heard, raising awareness of issues of social justice and equity, being advocates of change [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 2006, p. 3].

The search for a relevant social policy for the Methodist Mission Northern that realises this holistic approach to the individual and the community in its service delivery is what would set it apart from other agencies. Such an approach would consist of meeting the needs of its clients through poverty eradication strategies that address the fundamental causes of poverty, issues of social justice and transformation. This would involve building partnerships with clients, other agencies, the business and philanthropic sector as well as government and also taking on the role of advocate to change policies that oppress the poor, marginalised, and vulnerable of society.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **TOWARDS SOCIAL POLICY OF THE METHODIST MISSION NORTHERN IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

The literature reviewed, the data collected and the analysis of the data of the Methodist Mission Northern indicate generally a charity model of service delivery. Nevertheless, the well being of the clients was always paramount and there was evidence that part of the vision of the Mission was empowerment. While the charity model of the service delivery meets the day to day needs of the clients, the long term objective is that of shifting to a community development model that empowers the clients to become independent, self supporting citizens. To effectively move toward a community development model requires a change in the organisation's policy and strategy. This chapter explores what would be a relevant social service policy for the Methodist Mission Northern to fulfil its mission as Good Neighbour.

#### **8.2 Social Policy of the Methodist Mission Northern at Present**

The existing social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern is spelt out by WesleyCom in its document 'Cycles of Hope' (Chapter 6). The concept in this document is "We continue to affirm and commend the journey from *ka mate* (death in the midst of life) to *ka ora* (life in the midst of death). We reaffirm the commitment required" [WesleyComAotearoa, 2007]. The concept and philosophy of Good Neighbour in practical terms assures those in need a journey from *ka mate* to *ka ora*. Methodist Mission Northern has in different stages in its history attempted to work within this social policy framework. Allan Woodley in his letter titled 'Just Another Experiment – A critical Analysis of the 1991 Budget' wrote

All new Zealanders look for fairness and justice in the carrying of a fair share of the economic load and for a government who will be fair in governing.

- Fairness in employment – Equal opportunity
- Fairness when there is no work – Financial system that recognises unemployment

- Fairness in education – Equal educational opportunities for all
- Fairness for the elderly – Pensions guarantee, security benefits create uncertainty
- Fairness where there is hardship, suffering or disability – Provision of services with dignity, Survival without begging
- Fairness to all New Zealanders – Justice being the ‘spirit level’ in the market place
- Fairness in access to health services – Equitable, affordable and accessible
- Fairness in taxes to pay for a society that meets the social needs of all new Zealanders.

These are the issues that continue to be the agenda of the Church, the Mission and all concerned and caring New Zealanders [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1991].

These objectives point to Methodist Mission Northern’s policy on social justice. However, the quest for a fair and just society and the eradication of poverty becomes the major issue faced not only by Methodist Mission Northern but all who work in this area. The task for the Mission is to address this challenge from the concept and philosophy of Good Neighbour as spelt out in the Christian gospel imperatives and with an understanding of and commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi as covenant. In agreement of this

... the Airedale Community Centre has developed into an effective and available service to the inner city reaching homeless, isolated, lonely and needy people. The underlying philosophy is to provide a place of **unconditional acceptance, hospitality and belonging**. The provision of meals, a safe banking and mail service, budgeting, health monitoring, an activities programme, counselling, social work support and advocacy, are some of the ways the sense of belonging is fostered [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1993].

The objectives spelt out by Woodley in 1991 and in the *Annual Report* of 1993 focus on almost all aspects of life. They address the difficulties faced by the people who were affected as a result of the government economic and welfare policy changes. The objectives spelt out by Woodley in 1991 as ‘Just Another Experiment – A critical Analysis of the 1991 Budget’ remain relevant still after seventeen years. Governing political parties have changed but not the economic state of the poor and the needy of this country. The economic policies of governments since 1991 have not addressed the issue of poverty adequately, causing more people to become recipient of social services.

This is evident in the increase of the number of clients accessing services at the service delivery centres of the Methodist Mission Northern. Amidst this reality it is vital for Methodist Mission Northern to take into consideration the objectives spelt out by Woodley in 1991 in articulating its social policy in both theory and practice. Woodley's objectives pave the way for social justice and fairness for all people. They call the policy makers of the Methodist Mission Northern of modern time to be more proactive and effective in practising a social policy for service delivery as Good Neighbour in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **8.3 The issues emerging from the data**

The Mission of the Methodist Mission Northern has always been to be beside with those most marginalised. The following comments from the *Annual Reports* of 1985 and 1986 reiterate this commitment:

... seeking to be with today's (1985) oppressed and poor, not to impose programmes of education or encourage more dependency on welfare but rather to enable people to take charge of their lives. Good health, employment, housing, family and social relationships, along with cultural, recreational and educational pursuits are all elements of people's visions. The task is to remove the barriers to progress towards a more healthful and just life and to provide the services necessary for the process [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1985].

We seek to work with people to enable them as far as they are able, to take responsibility for their own lives and communities, and we desire to help people reach their highest possible potential, and the attainment of personal wholeness [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1986].

While the services delivered meet the day to day needs of food and clothing, the mission as Good Neighbour seeks to help people reach their fullest possible potential and attainment of personal wholeness. Work with people to enable them to take responsibility for their own lives and communities is an outworking of Deborah Eade's argument discussed in chapter seven in subsection 7.3.3 under empowerment of the clients [Eade, 1997, p. 4]. Work to enable people to take responsibility for their own lives has progressed very little in Methodist Mission Northern's mission of being Good Neighbour. So the critical question is to what extent the current charity model has

helped clients to attain their full potential and personal wholeness. On the contrary the comments by two clients during the interview indicate that the charity model helped them to be dependent on the social services (Table 3 on page 70: no changes only the food and happy with what is offered).

An analysis of the interviews with clients (Table 1 – page 64) and the statement by Haddock: “Methodist Mission Northern instead of assisting the homeless people to come out of homelessness has helped them to remain homeless” [Haddock, 2008] indicate that there has been limited impact on empowering clients.

The number of clients accessing social services of the Methodist Mission Northern increased over the period 1986 to 2006. As the needs multiplied the agencies responded with palliative measures. Mary Caygill, preaching at the celebration of 150 years of social service at the Aotea Chapel described this situation as being ‘band-aid’ measures to structural injustices [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 2001] rather than measures that address the root causes of poverty and socio-economic marginalisation. While palliative measures are necessary for the survival of the people who fall between the cracks to ensure survival, Mission as Good Neighbour must go beyond the basic necessities for survival.

Though the Methodist Mission Northern resolved in 1995 to become more proactive as a strong advocate on behalf of those denied a fair share of health and welfare, analysis of data from key stakeholders and materials from the *Annual Reports of the Methodist Mission Northern* show that Methodist Mission Northern has achieved little in the area of advocacy. A number of factors were identified to explain this, including the limited resources of the Mission being diverted toward “caring for the hungry and clothing the naked”, delivering charity rather than addressing the root causes of poverty. The desire to work in partnership with other agencies articulated in 1985 “... that together with other Christian social service agencies, it must take a prophetic stance with the poor. Prophetic action is about challenging the inadequate doctrines that cause injustice, while announcing an alternative vision and new possibilities where personal and social



transformations are inextricably linked, bringing peace and justice for all” [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1985] was not achieved.

Methodist Mission Northern has to be prophetic in being the voice for the voiceless as stated earlier. The prophetic role has to clearly speak out that poverty and injustice are caused by the system that is in operation. The prophetic role must ask for an alternate policy from the central government that will ensure a common standard of life for all citizens of New Zealand. In addition to this prophetic role, Mission as Good Neighbour after 155 years of service must focus on the following issues:

- Affordable housing for the clients
- Empowerment of clients toward skills training to earn a living
- Programmes to create awareness that prevents people from addiction to gambling, alcohol and drugs
- Unemployment
- Lack of adequate social benefit for unemployed to support a standard of living
- Personal health care
- Healthy food and clothing
- Lack of services for the people with mental health issues.

These areas are too large for Methodist Mission Northern alone in its mission as Good Neighbour to address. A collaborative project in partnerships with the agencies identified (page 114) is essential to address these areas adequately whilst addressing the factors that impede the attainment of the vision so clearly articulated in 1985. What needs to be done to develop a framework that would enable Methodist Mission Northern to move from charity to a community development model that will empower clients towards self-supporting independence?

#### **8.4 Factors that impeded the move from a charity model to development approach**

The interview materials of the staff and the data collected indicate that staff agreed that through the service delivery centres immediate needs of the clients were met but it was only a temporary relief. However, the ‘temporary relief’ for most clients has become the

‘permanent way of life’. Data collected from clients at the Airedale Community Centre shows (page 61) that out of the thirteen clients interviewed ten were accessing services from two to twenty years. This shows a lack of transition from a dependence on charity to a self reliance and empowerment towards independence.

There were very limited opportunities and facilities to move clients from dependence on social services to independence. The ‘hand out’ mission or the soup kitchen model was still the dominant practice. To some extent it could be argued that a key factor was a sense of co-dependency. As a Board member said, “These people are dependent on the Methodist Mission Northern and we are dependent on these people”. This seems to fit with the charity approach to do some good and feel better.

Another set of factors that impeded the move from charity to community development model were changes in government policies. The changes in policies starting with the fourth Labour government with the introduction of “Rogernomics” in the mid 1980s, through to the period of Ruth Richardson and Jenny Shipley in the mid 1990s did not only fail to address the systemic causes of poverty but in fact caused further poverty itself. It is imperative to address these impediments as primary causes of poverty. Policy changes in the governments from 1985 have not improved the living standard of the poor but have caused further suffering. To practice mission as Good Neighbour Methodist Mission Northern requires critical engagement with the policy framework of the central government and other similar social service agencies in order to engage in a collective mission as Good Neighbour so that the causes of poverty and social injustice could be addressed more adequately.

## **8.5 Requirements of a Policy Framework**

To develop a framework that moves Methodist Mission Northern from a charity to a community development approach requires focusing on the following three key areas.

- (a) Developing strategic approaches that address the systemic issues that cause poverty to prevent people needing to come to and become dependent on the services of Methodist Mission Northern.

- (b) Developing strategies that empower those who come to the service and help gain the skills and confidence to become self supporting independent people.
- (c) Developing strategies that lead to a paradigm shift of what is accepted by the Mission as Good Neighbour from a charity paradigm to a social transformation paradigm that would ensure a common standard of life for all citizens of New Zealand.

These three areas derive directly from the findings of this study as reported in this thesis. The stakeholders agree on the development of the suggested policy framework. For example a member of the Board of Governors stated during the interview that the “soup kitchen model is good as a very simplistic and workable model; but it did not address the fundamental cause of dependency”. It would seem that the consensus of the Board of Governors is that:

“There needs to be further work on redefining the purpose of the Methodist Mission Northern in terms of its future direction. That is by looking into the existing services to see whether they fit into the policy framework that is consistent with the national framework of Cycles of Hope. Cycles of Hope is very much a community development framework which talks about encouraging communities and people to the best of outcomes for themselves. It is moving away from the charity model, moving beyond the cycle of dependency. It is a progression.” (From interview with a Board member, October 2007).

The basic infrastructure for developing such a framework already exists. What is needed is to put some flesh on to the skeleton in terms of developing programmes that would serve those people in need to engage in skills accessing work and life. On the other hand, providing the skills alone will not be sufficient. The skills training must be targeted to employable areas or in the areas of self employment which can generate income for clients.

### **8.5.1 Addressing the Root Causes of Poverty**

The *Annual Report* in 2004 said “We must continue to not only support those in need but also address the underlying root causes”[*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 2004]. The underlying root causes are due to existing economic policies and

structures. Marcus Borg's description of the failure of the system within the context of United States of America is also relevant to the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.

... the wide range of widening gap is a "systems" result, the product of the way our economic system is structured. "Economic system" includes specific economic policies (taxation policy, regulation policy, interest rates, and so forth) as well as the degree of freedom and incentive built into the system. Obviously, the way our economic system has been structured has favoured the very wealthy. How else can one account for their accumulation of wealth during a period when the economic situation of the majority of Americans remained stagnant or declined? ... Moreover the structuring of our economic policy in the interests of the very wealthy continues [Borg, 2004, p. 141].

This is reflected in the case of New Zealand, and especially in the period covered by this study, 1985 to 2006. Phillips argue that

In the twenty-year period between the late 1970s and the late 1990s, the percentage of total wealth owned by the wealthiest one percent of our (American) population nearly doubled, increasing from 21 percent to just over 40 percent. During the same period, the economic situation of the majority of Americans worsened. In real dollars, both the annual income and net wealth of the bottom 60 percent of our population actually declined [Phillips, 2002, pp. 111, 123].

In addition to these statistics the magazine *New internationalist* draws attention to the problem of poverty at the global level:

These profits are no freak windfalls. Over the past 30 years, the IMF and the World Bank have pushed Majority World countries to dismantle all forms of protection for their local farmers and to open up their markets to global agribusiness, speculators and subsidized food from rich countries. This has shifted most developing countries dramatically from being net exporters of food into importers. On top of this, finance liberalization has made it easier for investors to control markets for their own private benefit. The fundamental cause of today's food crisis is neoliberal globalization itself, which has transformed food from a source of livelihood security into a mere commodity to be gambled away, even at the cost of hunger among the world's poorest [New-Internationalist, July 2008 Web Edition].

These were some of the outcomes of the systemic failures not only in Aotearoa New Zealand but also in the broader global context. Mission as Good Neighbour must address

the root causes of poverty and challenge those structural inequalities that cause poverty. This mission as Good Neighbour needs to be taken seriously not only by the Methodist Mission Northern but also by other social service agencies addressing the cause of poverty that leave people in need while there is an abundance of food and resources to go around.

The development of a strategy and an effective advocacy role is of crucial importance for mission as Good Neighbour. This will not be a completely new approach for the organisation because it has been part of the strategic direction of Methodist Mission Northern for a long time; and reflected in many policy statements.

“The Mission has to thrust more and more into the role of advocacy. This is inevitable because of the Mission’s position within the community ... being an advocate at governmental policy level is necessary to help ensure that society is seen to be providing its social services in a just and equitable way”[*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 1993].

Furthermore, the decision of the Conference of the Methodist Church of New Zealand in 2000 to promote and implement the “Breaking the Cycle” report, suggests that one of the means to breaking the poverty cycle was for Methodist Mission Northern to move from social services to social justice. It argued that the significant statement of theology and social responsibility was to strengthen the role of advocacy.

Developing an advocacy strategy does not mean doing away with the existing service delivery of the organisation. The services to care for the people in need whose lives depend on social services must continue to take care of people until a more substantial way of independent living is ensured. At the same time there has to be no naïve thinking that advocacy alone will succeed in eliminating poverty. The objective is to effect policy changes that will lead to reduction in the number of people falling between the cracks of the society due to policy that in itself creates and perpetuates inequalities. This will require working in partnership with those with the power to change the system, so that the delivery of social services is undertaken “with increasing emphasis on furthering the delivery of just social policy, public education, sustaining healthy communities, networking and partnerships” [*Annual Report of the Methodist Mission Northern*, 2004].

### **8.5.2 Empowerment of Clients**

Mission as Good Neighbour must look to the total wellbeing of the clients who come to services at the Methodist Mission Northern. While the clients' every day needs of food and clothing are met in the shorter term, a strategic approach must be developed with programmes that aim to empower clients towards becoming self supporting and independent. This approach will have the support of the key stakeholders, because evidence from the study shows that the Board, staff and clients all agreed that this was the way of the future. For example twelve out of the nineteen clients interviewed said that an empowerment approach would be an appropriate strategy for the organisation. For example, some suggested "this must become a place to move on", "help the young ones to learn work skills", "provide access to jobs", "make it a rehabilitation centre to help people to work", "provide a driving school to get lessons and learn to drive", "provide heavy truck driving skills" and "train in job skills".

The Board of Governors and staff support for the empowerment approach of the community development model is further illustrated in the statement: "we want every person who comes in here for their first visit to recognise this is close to their last". This is a demonstration of their desire to empower clients to move forward rather than become dependent on Methodist Mission Northern services.

Developing an empowerment approach may mean, that a strategic approach of Methodist Mission Northern may need to operate its social services at two levels. First, a short-term palliative level that focuses on addressing the every day needs of clients such as food, clothing and emergency shelter. This may also include services to the elderly, budgeting advice and support and these services that Methodist Mission Northern provide to ensure that those in need do not experience hardship. At the second level would be the individual and community empowerment programmes. This level will consist of targeting individuals, families and communities, assessing their needs and developing appropriate programmes to address their medium to long-term needs. Some of these may well include current programmes such as vocational training, employment programmes, income generating programmes, business mentoring and partnership with

government, business, philanthropy and other organisations that meet the empowerment outcomes.

### **8.5.3 Paradigm shift for the Mission of Methodist Mission Northern**

Methodist Mission Northern's understanding of the concept of Good Neighbour must change for the organisation's policies and practices to reflect the transformational approach required and implied in a deeper understanding of Good Neighbour. This will demand a critical self examination of the mission, vision and practices of the organisation.

Providing for the needs of the poor through faith-based social service agencies creates spaces for some people to practice philanthropy. The paradigm shift envisaged in service delivery is not to do away with philanthropy but to use the philanthropic resources to develop and provide programmes that will empower and engage clients. What needs to be emphasised is that the service delivery of the agency is not for the satisfaction of the philanthropist but to serve the best interests of the people in need. This is what Neal refers to when she argues that:

Theoretically, Christianity stands with the poor of the world against all established interests that work to the manifest advantage of the rich seeking to get through the eye of the needle. Historically, then, it should always be in judgemental tension with societal systems, especially as these have come in time to institutionalise the interests of the advantaged segments of the society. Such, however, has not been the case [Neal, 1977, p. 36].

The paradigm shift envisaged is to move from a charity model to a community development model that will empower clients. This would be the first step towards an independent self-supporting life. The next step would be to work towards social transformation that would not marginalise and exclude people but would include everyone within a common standard of living. This needs to be done in partnership with organisations identified earlier (page 114). These paradigm shifts of the Mission of the Methodist Mission Northern need to provide the framework that will inform the policy, strategy and practice of Methodist Mission Northern.

The gospel injunction of love for the neighbour must be understood from the public policy position that all people have equitable access to national resources, and the national economy is operated in ways that no one lives in abject poverty and social need. The neighbour will stand with the poor, be partners in social-action that effectively address the root causes of poverty.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

What must be the social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern in its mission as Good Neighbour? In forming a policy framework relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are three key areas the Mission must focus on. They are: (1) Advocacy (2) Empowerment (3) Partnership and integration. These three must be the underpinning of the social policy framework of the Methodist Mission Northern. Without these three areas in the policy Methodist Mission Northern cannot affirm life in the midst of death.

As discussed earlier in this study (page 84) affirmation of “*ka mate* (death in the midst of life) to *ka ora* (life in the midst of death)” is a significant aspect of mission as Good Neighbour. Love for the neighbour in every way must ensure life for those who live amidst the threats of “death” due to starvation, social exclusion and deprivation. Mission as Good Neighbour must access those who hold the ‘power to change’ in order to address the root causes of poverty due to economic inequalities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Methodist Mission Northern as an agency working with those in need and those excluded has a wealth of experience and resources in partnership with other organisations to access systemic structures and those in power. To move in the direction the key stake holders have indicated it will require Methodist Mission Northern become empowered to take bold steps in order to be a more effective advocate. The policy framework undergirding the work of advocacy must be nothing less than the objective of reducing the wide disparity between rich and the poor in Aotearoa New Zealand. Methodist Mission Northern’s policy must contain an addressing of the root causes of poverty with policy makers in the central government and in all other spheres of society be it governmental or non governmental to ensure that a fair distribution of wealth is in place and the Aotearoa New Zealand citizens are free of exclusion and want.



A policy framework that assures empowerment of the clients to move them from dependency to independency is essential for the Methodist Mission Northern in its mission as Good Neighbour. Empowerment must be programmed for positive change in the lives of the clients with their own effort. Programmes must focus on assisting clients with their participation to empower them towards wholeness in their lives. It will require tailor-made service delivery to provide the clients with skills to have positive changes in their lives.

Methodist Mission Northern's policy framework must focus on partnership with other social service agencies such as not for profit agencies, faith based social service agencies and government agencies. It is indispensable to have integrated approaches on multiple fronts to address the issues of poverty and social exclusion and to empower the disempowered.

Working in the areas of advocacy, empowerment, partnership and integration would ensure that the mission as Good Neighbour uplifts people who receive the services to the state of the Good Neighbour who serve them. That is the true meaning of loving neighbour as self.

## EPILOGUE

Since 2007 Methodist Mission Northern has gone through a transition period with new developments under the re-creation project. The Airedale Community Centre projects were in place to empower existing clients with an objective of moving them from dependency to community development. The Methodist Mission Northern hired an independent consultant in business management to conduct research into the service delivery at the Airedale Community Centre. The independent consultant proposed possibilities of offering better services. After interviewing and having discussions with the key stakeholders of the Methodist Mission Northern the consultant came up with a proposal of 'hands up' in place of 'handouts'. It must be noted that what the consultant came up with is not a new notion but was proposed as a model stated in the *Annual Report* of the Methodist Mission Northern in 2003. As I stated in my thesis the *Annual Reports* of the Methodist Mission Northern during the twenty year period considered for study in this project carry this proposal but there was little or no action. Based on the consultant's report the aim of the re-creation of Airedale Community Centre was spelt out as being that of:

Re-creation is primarily to establish a service that moves people into housing rather than to maintain them in homelessness, utilising a model that is consistent with contemporary practice in the mental health and AoD (Alcohol and other Drug) fields, and in collaboration with other key agencies. ... The focus will not simply be on maintaining clients in their current lifestyle. Rather through 'Pathways Out of Homelessness' motivating and enabling them to address issues that maintain a marginalised lifestyle, learn necessary skills, and reach their own goals. Programme staff will do this from Airedale Community Centre's inner city base, but will be expected to provide outreach support for clients who transition from the streets to housing. Clients' continued access to the centre will be monitored in accordance with their participation in the new client case management system ["Appendix Four of the Minutes of the Board Meeting of Methodist Mission Northern 27 February", 2008].

This was a positive move to enable the existing clients of the Airedale Community Centre in Auckland to shift to a community development model. Methodist Mission Northern was thinking, planning and acting on moving people toward independent self-

supporting life. When this programme is implemented the clients would hopefully become independent taking responsibility toward their lives. However, this measure does not prevent new clients getting added to the Methodist Mission Northern's service delivery. In the present context if 'X' number of clients were moved to be independent another 'X' number of people will get added to the clientele of Airedale Community Centre. The increasing inflation and the economic constraints on low income families at present will no doubt increase the number of people coming to receive social service delivery thus Methodist Mission Northern will have to work in its advocacy role with government and other social service delivery agencies to prevent people falling into dependency on receiving social services. This process requires further research. The need is always there to explore ways to minimise the number of people falling into dependency on social service agencies.

Apart from the changes that occurred at the Airedale Community Centre, Methodist Mission Northern has changed its name. Since April 2008 Methodist Mission Northern is known as LifeWise. Whether LifeWise will succeed in its role of advocacy, empowering of clients and establishing partnerships to work out integrated social service delivery programmes will be the critical question that needs to be answered over the forthcoming years. It will be for the Board of Governors as policy makers to set the way LifeWise would manoeuvre their way as an organisation to critically address the root causes of poverty and social exclusion that are an ever present reality in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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## APPENDIX ONE: ETHICS APPROVAL



### MEMORANDUM

#### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

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To: Love Chile  
From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC  
Date: 6 July 2007  
Subject: Ethics Application Number 06/233 **The Mission as Good Neighbour: social policy of the Methodist Mission Northern in the 21st century.**

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Dear Love

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 14 May 2007 and that as the Executive Secretary of AUTEC I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 13 August 2007.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 6 July 2010.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit to AUTEC the following:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>, including when necessary a request for extension of the approval one month prior to its expiry on 6 July 2010;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 6 July 2010 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is also a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence and that AUTEC approval is sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to the participant documents involved.

You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that any research undertaken under this approval is carried out within the parameters approved for your application. Any change to the research outside the parameters of this approval must be submitted to AUTEC for approval before that change is implemented.

Please note that AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at [charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz](mailto:charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the Committee and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda

**Executive Secretary**

**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: Prince Devanandan [prnced@orcon.net.nz](mailto:prnced@orcon.net.nz)